

WHITLEY BAY u3a NEWSLETTER April-May 2026

Reminder: Entries for the next newsletter (16th May-20th June) should be sent to Ann at wbu3anews@gmail.com by midday on **Friday 15th May**. Group leaders can send in entries at any time during the month, as long as they arrive before the deadline. You can also access the WBU3a newsletter on our website at <http://whitley-bay.u3asite.uk>

Monthly General Meeting – everyone welcome Linskill Centre, North Shields, 2pm
Wednesday 15th April AGM Speaker: John Stirling - *The Arts and Crafts Movement*
Wednesday 20th May Speaker: Ken Hutchinson – *The Hartley Pit Disaster*

CHAIR'S REPORT

There is no Committee update from me this month, as we delayed the meeting for a week because of Easter. A reminder that our Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 15th April at 2pm, prior to the talk by our excellent speaker, John Stirling. We shall review the year, consider the accounts, and elect a new committee. It will be possible to take committee nominations from the floor, but it would be helpful if you could let me (and the individual concerned!) know before the meeting if you plan to do so. The agenda and papers have been sent to all members by email, and hard copies for those without email will be available on the day. I also attach details below for the regional AGM.

David Slater

Hi, my name is Tracey Haswell and I have just taken over from Yvonne as treasurer for the Whitley Bay u3a. I just wanted to say hello and provide some current updates.

As you are aware all memberships were due for renewal from 1st April. We have received a number of renewals, thanks everyone, but we still have a way to go. Membership can be paid by BACs or cash (at the monthly meeting) and is currently still £20.00. We have managed to keep the price the same as last year but may not be able to do this for future years due to increasing costs. We will always do our best to keep the cost as low as possible. One thing to be aware of, if you are paying by BACs and have selected to allow Gift Aid from your membership, is that if you are paying for two membership renewals, it would help us if you pay by two lots of £20 rather than a single payment of £40. This would allow us to claim the tax back on both membership payments.

Finally, I would just like to thank Yvonne for her patience and guidance during the handover of this role, and promise her that I will keep my pleas for help to a minimum.

Tracey Haswell

Regional and National u3a

u3asites.org.uk/northumbria (regional)

u3a.org.uk (national)

The Northumbria Regional u3a's newsletter, *The Messenger*, has details of u3a news and events throughout the region; go to northumbria.u3asite.uk/messenger

We know that many members prefer to get information from Facebook instead of via a website. For those interested in regional u3a events and news, there is a dedicated Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/Northumbria.Region.u3a>

Northumbria Regional u3a AGM 24th April 2026, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Venue: Bowburn Community Centre, Durham Road, Bowburn DH6 5AT

Two resolutions will be put to the meeting as follows:

1. That the name be changed from Northumbria u3a to u3a North East Region.
2. That a new constitution be adopted.

Go to the regional website for

- agenda for the meeting
- a pdf version of the proposed constitution
- a form for submitting nominations for committee posts and for submitting resolutions
- the booking form for the meeting

Third Age Trust - online events Talks, demonstrations and other events for u3a members are held online via Zoom. All events are for u3a members only. Go to learning@u3a.org for details, and for news and stories from across the u3a movement, go to u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter

u3a Festival is back – The biggest celebration of the curiosity, creativity and community spirit that makes u3a so special. Join us for three days of hands-on workshops, musical performances, sports tournaments, fascinating talks and many more surprises.

u3a Festival 26 booking now open. Tickets are limited - book now and avoid disappointment!

1st -3rd July 2026, University of York. Tickets cost £18 for a day, or £50 for all three days.

GROUPS NEWS

**** Please note** there will be no seated yoga class on Tuesday 28th April.

Archaeology Group Contact Roy

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (excluding July and August), 2-4pm at the Linskill Centre. We will have a guest speaker, and we make a charge of £5 per person at each meeting to cover the costs for hiring the hall and speakers etc. We have also had guided visits to Ryhope Pumping Station, Tynemouth Priory, Willington Dene Viaduct and Cresswell Pele Tower. We always try to keep the charges for such visits as low as possible, and where necessary we will often be able to provide lifts for our site visits to those members without transport.

Art Group Contact Maureen

**** Please note new contact** We are a friendly group who meet on the first and third Friday of the month 10.30-1.00. Members bring along their own ideas and stimulus, although we occasionally have a shared focus. We use a range of mediums from watercolour to acrylic and provide our own materials. We have use of the community room at Morrison's supermarket, Preston Grange, which is a very pleasant venue and free of charge. All abilities welcome. Anyone interested contact Catherine.

Bell Ringing Contact Cathy

**** Please note** The training session for Church Bell Ringing starts on Tuesday 28th April, 6pm at Christchurch, North Shields. There is room for more members, so please contact Cathy if you are interested.

Board Games **Contact Ann E**

We meet on the second Thursday of the month, 2-4pm in the Community Room at Morrison's, Preston Grange. We hope people will bring games, old favourites as well as new ones, for everyone to share in a sociable meeting. New members welcome.

Book Group **Contact Sandra**

The Book Group meets on the 4th Thursday of every month from 10am in Whitley Bay Library. We are a friendly group and we like to read from a wide range of books including crime, historical, science fiction, biography, travel and social commentary. Books include *The Glassmakers* by Tracy Chevalier, *The Humans* by Matt Haig and *The Cold, Cold Ground* by Adrian McKinty. We have also left spaces in our programme to be able to include topical works on current issues. At present we have two vacancies and new members would be given a warm welcome.

Bookworms **Contact Terri**

We meet at Whitley Bay Library, (St Mary's Room) on the second Tuesday of the month at 10:30am. The group is currently closed to new members as we are at capacity, but places may arise in the future.

Bridge Group **Contact Ron & Trish**

Every Wednesday at 2pm, except u3a meeting days, in the Kittiwake Pub, Claremont Road, Whitley Lodge. There is ample parking and refreshments are available. I look forward to seeing present members and would welcome new Bridge players to the group.

Canasta **Contact Judith**

We are a friendly group who meet in Whitley Bay Library from 2-4pm on the first and third Friday of each month. New members welcome, no previous experience of the game needed.

Carpet Bowls **Contact wbgrouppcoordinatoru3a@gmail.com**

We play every Tuesday, 12.15 at Cullercoats Community Centre. We are currently at full capacity but please let us know if you are interested in joining and we will add your name to the waiting list.

Chair Pilates **Contact wbgrouppcoordinatoru3a@gmail.com**

Please note, this group has no vacancies at the moment. Our friendly group meets every Saturday in the Linskill Centre at 10am for an hour of mostly seated movements adapted from Pilates. Members are led by an experienced tutor through exercises designed to improve flexibility, core strength, balance and well-being.

Coffee with Friends **Contact Anne**

Meet 11am on the Saturday following the monthly meeting, in the Champagne Bar at the Dome. Any queries, please contact Anne.

Country Walking Group Contact Kevin, Ian

We meet on the second Tuesday of each month and do a variety of coastal and country walks generally about 5-7 miles. A moderate level of fitness is necessary and we have a meeting in December to plan our programme for the following year when members within the group undertake to plan and coordinate one of the walks. The walks are not generally on public transport routes so car ownership is unfortunately necessary although car sharing is encouraged. We are a friendly group who mix walking and talking in equal measure and usually have a snack/coffee break during the walk or a visit to a coffee shop or pub at the end of the walk.

Fine Dining Group Contact Helen P

The group was set up for members to eat well and support local, independent businesses. It's now a thriving group of over 40 u3a members. We are a mix of single people and couples but we are all interested in eating out. We go out one evening a month and the 3-course menus are around £40pp excluding drinks. We seek good value by opting for the early bird option if available. In the last year we have visited Dobson & Parnell, Blackfriars, Hinnies, Peace & Loaf, Restaurant 21, Six @ Baltic, Ophelia's and 31 The Quay. Members choose which month(s) they want to attend, but a deposit is required to secure a place at dinner.

French Conversation Contact Helen B

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10am to 12.00 in Newcastle Building Society, Whitley Bay. The group is closed to new members as we are at capacity, though we are happy to add any prospective new members to our waiting list.

German Conversation Contact Muriel

Please note - this group is now at full capacity, although spaces may arise in the future. The group meet every 3rd Monday of the month at 10am-12 noon in the Leader's home. A basic grasp of German is necessary to participate as tuition is not be given. Instead, members help each other to improve their language skills with friendly advice and support.

Jigsaw Corner Piece Contact Jean, Vicky

So many to choose from!

Knitting Contact Gillian H

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 1pm-3pm, in Newcastle Building Society, Whitley Bay. There is no charge to attend and refreshments are available. Members bring their own knitting (or crochet) projects and equipment. You will be very welcome whether you are experienced or if the last time you knitted was at school!

Listening to Music Contact John

We meet on the 3rd Monday of the month, usually at a member's home. We listen to and discuss music, mostly but not exclusively classical, on good hi-fi equipment. We try to listen carefully, to play complete items and discuss what we have heard afterwards, rather than chat during the music. John will usually have ideas for a programme, but members are encouraged to suggest items and to present them if they wish.

Mah jong **Contact Pat**

Every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month, at Morrisons community room at 1.30 for 2 hours of play.

Poetry group **Contact Brenda**

The poetry group has room for a couple of new members – contact Brenda if you are interested. We are a friendly and relaxed group which meets at Newcastle Building Society in Whitley Bay on the third Thursday of each month at 10.30am. We usually choose a poetic theme and bring in relevant poems of our choice. Recent topics have been Humour, The Sea, Childhood and Winter. We read and discuss the poems. There is no necessity to know anything about poetry before you join. Just come along and enjoy.

Real Ale Group **Contact Tim**

Cheers! The group had its first meeting on 7/11/25 at Left Luggage in Monkseaton. The eight members agreed future meetings would be planned by those members present and would change days so as not to possibly exclude some members. Future meetings may be a drink and a chat in a single location or visiting a few hostelrys. We may also look to have brewery visits, talks or meals. We are social drinkers and will probably meet for about 2 hours. New members are very welcome and should get in touch with Tim.

Seated Yoga **Contact Kate**

**** Please note** there will be no seated yoga class on Tuesday 28th April.

The seated yoga class is now up and running on Tuesdays 4pm at St Aidan's Church Hall, Billy Mill. We still have space so come and join us for a fun class to strengthen and stretch key muscle groups and improve flexibility. Suitable for all abilities. Feel free to contact Kate for further details.

Short Walks **Contact Ann N, Tim**

We meet first Thursday of the month between March and November. Walks are 3-5 miles, lasting 2-3 hours and using public transport. We are a friendly group, usually with coffee or lunch at the end of the walk. Places are limited, booking is essential.

Table Tennis 1 **Contact Vicky**

Every Thursday, 11am-1pm, at Waves Leisure Centre, Whitley Bay.

Table Tennis 2 **Contact Vicky**

Every Monday, 11am-1pm, at Waves Leisure Centre, Whitley Bay.

Tai Chi Group 1 **Contact Dorothy**

Every Monday 9.55-10.55am at St. Aidan's Community Centre. Gentle exercises recommended for mobility and balance. This group is now full – please contact Dorothy to be added to a waiting list.

Tai Chi Group 2 **Contact Gill**

Every Wednesday 9:30-10:30am at St Mary the Virgin, Claremont Gardens, Whitley Bay. Please contact Gill to be added to the waiting list.

Tai Chi Group 3 Contact Mike

Every Wednesday 10.40-11.40 at St Mary the Virgin, Claremont Gardens, Whitley Bay.
Please contact Mike to be added to the waiting list.

Tai Chi Group 4 Contact Joan

Every Friday 2.00-3.00pm at St Mary the Virgin, Claremont Gardens, Whitley Bay.
Unfortunately this group is now at full capacity.

Tai Chi Simplified 24 Contact Barbara

Every Wednesday 11.00–12.00 at the Hub (formerly the Job Centre) in Whitley Road. Floor 1 - there is a lift. Tai Chi Simplified 24 is based on Martial Art, but slower and gentle flowing movements. There are 24 'bits' joined by moving gently and walking - exercises the body and relaxes and quietens the mind. One new movement added a week so about 26-30 weeks - not Half Terms or Christmas or Easter.

Wine Tasting Group 1 Contact Julie

The well-established Wine Tasting Group meets on the first Wednesday of every month from 7.00pm to 9.00pm, at St. Andrew's Church Hall. We are a friendly and sociable group who take it in turns to provide seven different bottles of wine, and some nibbles, each month, and lead a discussion on what we think of them. We share the costs through an attendance fee of £8 per person. This group is currently at maximum capacity, due to bottle size limitations.

Wine Tasting Group 2 Contact Derek

Fourth Wednesday of the month, 7.30 at St. Andrews Church, Eastfield Avenue, Whitley Bay NE25 8LU. This friendly group now has room for several more members to appreciate the varied wine selection on offer from near and far.

Wine Tasting Group 3 Contact Chris, Alan

First Thursday in the month, 7pm at St. Andrew's Church, Monkseaton. The cost is £10 and involves tasting seven wines with a different theme for each session. Themes may be based on a particular grape variety or blend of grapes, comparing two wine sellers or tasting from a specific wine producing region/country. The evening is intended to be a relaxed light-hearted approach to tasting new wines and hopefully discovering some new wines. The evening normally includes snacks to accompany the wines, typically some home-made cake, grapes and a selection of cheeses. Please bring your own glasses, normally two for wine and perhaps a water glass if you want to refresh your palate between wines. Contact Chris for details.

DIARY DATES 11th April - 23rd May
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Wednesday 15th April Annual General Meeting – everyone welcome

Linskill Centre, 2pm. Speaker: John Stirling - Arts & Crafts Movement *A house to visit and a house to stay in.*

Thursday 16th April Scrabble Contact Liz, Dave

2.30 at Park Lodge. Please let Liz know if you cannot come to the meeting.

Saturday 18th April Coffee with Friends Contact Anne

Meet at 11am at the Champagne Bar at the Dome. Any queries, please contact Anne.

Friday 24th April Mah jong Contact Pat

1.30pm in the Community Room at Morrison's, Preston Grange.

Saturday 25th April Art Appreciation Contact David & Jan

The art appreciation group will be seeing an exhibition at the Hatton, but we'll start as normal with coffee. We'll meet at the café at the Great North Museum at 10:30. The exhibition is called *Happy!* and features works by British artists such as Gillian Ayers, Eva Rothschild and Maggi Hambling.

Monday 27th April Quiz Group Contact Tracey

St Andrew's at 2pm, £2 entry, and remember to bring a mug. Next quiz 18th May – a week early, due to the Bank Holiday.

Tuesday 28th April Real Ale Group Contact Tim

Meet at 2pm at the Low Lights, Brewhouse Bank, North Shields.

Tuesday 28th April Bell Ringing Contact Cathy

The training session for Church Bell Ringing starts at 6pm at Christchurch, North Shields. There is room for more members, so please contact Cathy if you are interested.

Tuesday 5th May Scrabble Contact Liz, Dave

2.30 at Park Lodge. Please let Liz know if you cannot come to the meeting.

Wednesday 6th May Wine Tasting Group 1 Contact Julie

7.00 pm at St Andrew's Church Hall. Julie will be providing the wines and snacks this month.

Wednesday 7th May Discussion Group Contact Jean

10.30 am at the usual venue to discuss items in *u3a Matters*.

Thursday 7th May Short Walks Contact Tim

The May walk starts at 11am at the Monument entrance to Eldon Square. Following the route of the Town Walls it is about 3miles and includes some steps and slopes.

Friday 8th May Mah jong Contact Pat

1.30pm in the Community Room at Morrison's, Preston Grange.

Wednesday 13th May Archaeology Contact Roy

2pm at Linskill Centre. Speaker: Tim Cook - *Newcastle Town Walls*

Monday 18th May Quiz Group Contact Tracey

St Andrew's at 2pm, £2 entry, and remember to bring a mug. Next quiz 22nd June.

Wednesday 20th May Monthly Meeting – everyone welcome

Linskill Centre, 2pm. Speaker: Ken Hutchinson – *The Hartley Pit Disaster*

Thursday 21st May

Scrabble

Contact Liz, Dave

2.30 at Park Lodge. Please let Liz know if you cannot come to the meeting.

Saturday 23rd May

Coffee with Friends

Contact Anne

Meet at 11am at the Champagne Bar at the Dome. Any queries, please contact Anne.

And finally . . .

Agonizing anagrams for you to solve

1. Hotel match women arranged for association of countries (3,12)
2. Occupation of person is unusual (10)
3. Freak newt lost in Hollywood (10)

Last month's answers

1. Stage directions
2. Grandiose
3. Initiated **

*(** My apologies! The clue should have been 'dietitian' – Ann)*

Jean