

WHITLEY BAY u3a NEWSLETTER May - June 2026

Reminder: Entries for the next newsletter (13th June–18th July) should be sent to Ann at **wbu3anews@gmail.com** by midday on **Friday 12th June**. 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>**

Please note: Contact details for group leaders are not included in the website newsletter – full details are in the newsletter emailed to members, and in the yellow booklet.

Monthly General Meeting – everyone welcome Linskill Centre, North Shields, 2pm
Wednesday 20th May Speaker: Ken Hutchinson – *The Hartley Pit Disaster*
Wednesday 17th June Speaker: Catherine Stevenson - *North East Unsung Heroes*

CHAIR'S REPORT

Committee Meeting

The new Whitley Bay u3a Committee met for the first time on 11th May. We had a fairly informal session with Tim and Chris, the new Committee members, who have taken over running Beacon and the website from Dorothy and Peggy. We have prepared an induction pack, so that they are not just cast adrift in the new role - and Dorothy and Peggy are still on hand to help as well.

We made the detailed arrangements to distribute the new yellow booklet for members - copies will be available at the monthly meeting. Please only take one for yourself, unless you are specifically collecting for another member. Anyone who does not attend the monthly meeting should also be able to get one on request from the leader of the group they attend, and, finally, we will have a collection point for anyone who does not make it to meetings. We also finalised arrangements for a thank you and training session for group leaders on 10th June. It will be fun, and not hard work, but we do want to learn what is working well and what we can improve.

Finally, a reminder that Whitley Bay has its own tree at Linskill - at the front, further down from the entrance. It is a flowering cherry tree, planted in 2022 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of our founding at the behest of Dave Haddock (who is sadly no longer with us), Jean Lawson and others. It is looking very well.

David Slater

Reading in Schools

David Slater is planning to organise reading for individual primary school pupils through a national charity called Schoolreaders. Each reader will be allocated to a local school, generally of their own choice. DBS checks will be arranged by the charity. Readers will commit to at least one hour a week, when they might listen to seven or eight pupils reading from either texts supplied by the school or by the reader. Please contact David for further details, or look at the website schoolreaders.org.uk

Regional and National u3a**u3asites.org.uk/northumbria** (regional)**u3a.org.uk** (national)**Visit to Durham Botanic Gardens with guided tour - Monday June 22nd 2026**

This visit has been arranged by Northumbria u3a Events Team.

Meet at the main entrance to the Gardens between 10.30 - 11.15 am to be checked in, after which you are free to go into the gardens, visit the café etc. The guided tour led by someone from the gardens begins at 11.30 and takes an hour, then your ticket allows you to remain in the gardens as long as you wish until they close at 4.30pm.

The website at *Botanic Garden - Durham University* has full information about the gardens.

Sorry, no dogs except assistance dogs. Further information will be supplied when we hear from the Gardens about arrangements for the tour. The cost is £6.65 per person, including the tour. Book your place now with Kathy Clegg, email kathy.clegg@u3a.org.uk

Regional Birdwatching Group

This group is seeking new leaders, but before that process goes very far it seems sensible to try to assess the likely demand. If you might be interested in joining the group for monthly birdwatching sessions with experts in various parts of the Region, please send a quick message saying so (with no obligation of course) to kathy.clegg@u3a.org.uk. I'd also be very pleased to hear from any experienced birdwatchers who might be willing to share in the leading of this group. Thanks!

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>

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

GROUPS NEWS

The next **History Topics Group**, looking at the 1930s starts on Friday 15th May, at 1.30pm for one hour in St Mary's room at Whitley Bay Library. The class is full, but please let David Slater know if you cannot make it any more or you have signed up but have not received the email reminder David sent on 30th April.

STEM Group Update: The first meeting of this new group for those interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics will take place on Monday, 8th June, 2-4pm at the Kittiwake, Whitley Lodge. If you would like the details, please contact John Appleby.

Town Walls walk - Archaeology group

Following his talk to the May meeting on the Newcastle Town Walls, Tim Cook is organising two walks for those who want to visit the sites. Even if you missed the talk, you can still come. Priority will be given to Archaeology Group members but if there are any spaces they will be available to other members. The first is at 2pm on 18/6/26 and the second on 22/7/26 at 11am. Both will start at the Monument entrance to Eldon Square. The short walk group recently did the walk and it took 2 hours. There are steps and slopes. If interested please contact Tim.

Naworth Castle - Archaeology group

David Slater is organising a trip to Naworth Castle on Wednesday 24th June, and will be collecting the balance of the £30 cost of the private tour which the Earl of Carlisle is giving. If your name is down to go, and you cannot make the Archaeology Group meeting on 10th June (when John Stirling will be giving a brief introduction to the family's links to William Morris), please contact David, and he will provide Bank transfer details or other arrangements for payment. Let David know if you can offer or need a lift as well, if you have not already done so. The Castle is between Brampton and Lanercost Priory, off the A69. It takes about 75 minutes to drive there, there is plenty of parking, and the tour starts at 12. It will last for about 90 minutes, with light refreshments provided afterwards. We will be meeting at the Linskill Centre at 10.15 for a prompt departure at 10.30, unless you have let David know you will travel straight from home.

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

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 Maureen.

Bell Ringing Contact Cathy

Every Tuesday, 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.

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 N

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

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. With some new members joining our group we are now full - there are limits on a bottle of wine! We will operate a reserve list whilst we see if the newer members stay the distance.

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 16th May-20th June
Monday 18th May Quiz Group Contact Tracey

St Andrew's at 2pm (a week early, due to the Bank Holiday). £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.

Friday 22nd May Mah jong Contact Pat

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

Saturday 23rd May Coffee with Friends Contact Anne

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

Saturday 23rd May Real Ale Group Contact Tim

The group is having its first outing when we have a tour of the Brinkburn Brewery in Ouseburn from 12-2pm. Members get the tour and sample three beers for £26.25, and some may choose to stay and eat in the restaurant. If you have any queries about this or the group please contact Tim.

Friday 29th May History Topics Contact David S

Session 2 of 4. 1.30pm, St Mary's room at Whitley Bay Library.

Saturday 30th May Art Appreciation Contact David & Jan A

The art appreciation group will be meeting at the Biscuit Factory. As well as the chance to see the varied artworks on show, there are two solo exhibitions. Kathryn Williams paints miniature portraits; Jo Sharpe says she is inspired by verges and hedgerows and has created a series of still life paintings in oils. We'll meet at 10:30 upstairs in the Factory Kitchen.

Tuesday 2nd June Scrabble Contact Liz, Dave

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

Thursday 4th June Short walks Contact Ann N, Tim

Bedlington Circular. Meeting Haymarket bus station to catch x21 at 10.25 stand P. 30mins bus ride. Walk along River Blyth to stepping stones and reverse. Picnic at stepping stones. Uneven paths, could be muddy. Steep incline at end of walk.

Wednesday 3rd June Wine Tasting Group 1 Contact Julie

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

Monday 8th June STEM Group Contact John A

The first meeting of this new group for those interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics will take place from 2.00-4.00pm, at the Kittiwake pub, Whitley Lodge. If you would like the details please contact John.

Wednesday 10th June Archaeology Contact Roy

2pm at Linskill Centre. Speakers: Sue Shaw - *The Work of the Northumberland Archives Trust*, and John Stirling - *Naworth Castle*.

Friday 12th June Mah jong Contact Pat

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

Friday 12th June History Topics Contact David S

Session 3 of 4. 1.30pm, St Mary's room at Whitley Bay Library.

Wednesday 17th June Monthly Meeting – everyone welcome

Linskill Centre, 2pm. Speaker: Catherine Stevenson - *North East Unsung Heroes*.

Thursday 18th June Scrabble Contact Liz, Dave

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

Saturday 20th June Coffee with Friends Contact Anne 07854 443987

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

And finally . . .

Agonizing anagrams for you to solve

1. Staid animator reviewed stage version (13)
2. Become very angry offhand they fell and broke (3,3,3,6)
3. Getting bather's wet top, he upset those in authority (3,6,4,2)

Last month's answers

1. Commonwealth
2. Profession
3. Tinseltown

Jean