

WHITLEY BAY u3a NEWSLETTER

July - August 2026

We regret to report the death of Kath MacEachan in June.

Reminder: Entries for the next newsletter (15th August -19th September) should be sent to Ann at wbu3anews@gmail.com by midday on Friday 14th August. 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 July Speaker: Following a family bereavement Paul Isherwood is unable to give his talk on child gambling. We are pleased that John Appleby from our own u3a is able to deliver an excellent talk in its place.

Wednesday 19th August The August monthly meeting is planned to be a disco. Our original DJ has pulled out for health reasons, but we have access to a system, and David Slater has offered to organise and present. If for any reason there is a problem, we will have a talk ready to go. Until then, spin the mirrorball and get your dancing shoes polished up.

CHAIR'S REPORT

We have had the sad news of the deaths of Mo Brown, active locally, regionally and nationally, and Kath MacEachan, a serving Whitley Bay u3a Committee member who had been involved with many different groups and who was until last year Group Coordinator with Dorothy Garman. Kath's funeral on 8th July was attended by thirty or so WBU3a members and the large congregation bore witness to the breadth of her interests in u3a and beyond, and the deep affection so many felt for her.

The Committee meeting took place on 6th July. We agreed to offer a £10 discounted rate for new members joining from 1st January to 31st March each year, to encourage renewals at the usual time in April. Renewals have been very strong this year, and we are nearly up to the 500 members we ended with in March. We allow 8 weeks for renewal, so anybody who has not renewed (almost always for good reasons - we have had no negative feedback) is now being taken off membership lists.

We held a successful event for our wonderful Group leaders on June 10th. We encouraged feedback and discussed this at the Committee meeting. The points covered everything from the problems of using the Beacon system to changing our name to North Tyneside u3a (it would make sense to do so, but would require approval nationally, and a whole lot of consequential changes to everything from charity articles to bank accounts. We are not convinced about making the sustained effort it would need).

We have a number of new groups starting and under development. I will not share details just yet, as Edith Charvat, our Group Coordinator, and her team are working hard to get them up and running. I will mention the Group I am setting up to facilitate community activity - called (until I hear from Andrew Lloyd-Webber's lawyers) the Really Useful group. We are holding a meeting with schoolreaders.org.uk on 22nd July to set up reading sessions for Primary School pupils.

Finally, if you have not already collected your yellow booklet, we will have copies available at the July meeting. If you cannot make that or one of the Group meetings, contact Membership Secretary Anne Hudspith or myself and we will drop one off or post it.

Naworth Castle trip

On 24th June, 33 members and partners enjoyed a guided tour of 14th century Naworth Castle (near Brampton in Cumbria). The Castle is not normally open to the public, and our (very amusing and well-informed) guide was the owner, Philip Howard. The weather was glorious, the castle enchanting, and most also visited St. Martin's church in Brampton, with its wonderful stained glass.



David Slater

Newcastle Town Walls Walk

In May Tim Cook gave a talk to the Archaeology meeting on the Newcastle Town Walls. He is organising a walk for any Whitley Bay U3A member who wants to visit the sites on 22/7/26 at 11am and has a couple of spaces left. It will start at the Monument entrance to Eldon Square, nr Newcastle Building Society. The walk takes about 2 hours, and that includes several stops to look at the remains and read the information boards. There are steps and slopes. If interested please contact Tim on timck60@gmail.com

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>

Regional / National events – see website for more details

- **Historic Stockton 30th July** Join us for this illustrated talk, followed by a guided walk, taking in the new riverside Urban Park, the latest addition to the historic High Street.
- **Short Story/Poem Competition** You don't have to be a member of a creative writing group to enter. All u3a members of the u3a North East Region are welcome to submit a short story, of no more than 1,500 words and/or a poem of no more than 16 lines, on the theme of 'Happiness'. Your entry must be received by 12 noon on Friday 11th September 2026. The competition is free to enter.
- **New Geology Network** Monthly talks and discussions via Zoom by Elizabeth Devon. This is a new session introducing concepts to help people interpret the landscapes around them.
- **This year's u3a essay competition is now live** It's time to get writing! This year we want you to take us on a remarkable real-life journey - of discovery, adventure or transformation - and bring the story to life in fewer than 1000 words.
Free entry: open to all u3a members Deadline: 31st July 2026
Prize: book bundles for the winner and two runners-up, kindly donated by *HX Expeditions*.

- **Save the date - u3a week 2026 19th-27th September** This year's theme is *expanding horizons*. We're planning a brilliant line-up of online talks and events. Across our social channels we'll be asking people to expand their horizons and try something new just for fun. We'd love to hear from members who are willing to take part and see what they might discover for the first time. If your u3a is planning to take part, or would like any ideas or resources, please send an email to communications@u3a.org.uk

Join the Board of Trustees Could you help shape the strategy of the Trust?

Nominations for Board Trustee open now We'd like to invite members to put themselves forward for the vacant role on the u3a Board of Trustees. The deadline for applications is Thursday 30th July. Further details are available on the u3a website, as are a motion for the Annual general meeting to be held in the autumn, and the annual finance report.

Please note A member of the Whitley Bay u3a committee, Jean Cubbin, has previously been a trustee and is happy to share her personal insights into the role of a member of the Board of Trustees.

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

Staying connected with u3a Friends Each edition of the *u3a Friends* newsletter features exclusive member offers, national u3a events, new learning opportunities and the stories from across the movement. Sign up at www.u3a.org.uk/about/u3a-friends.

GROUPS NEWS

**** Group Leaders** Many of you already use the Beacon system to send emails to your group members, to access contact details or check they have paid their subs. If you don't use the system and would like more details on what it can do and how to use it, please get in touch. I can give you a 1-to-1 demo or access to a demo system to "play" with. Contact Tim Cook, timck60@gmail.com

**** Summer holidays, please note:**

- **Archaeology** No meeting in July or August, starts again 9th September
- **Carpet Bowls** Final session 14th July, starts again 1st September
- **Chair Pilates** No meeting on 18th July. All other sessions will run as usual.
- **Scrabble** No meeting on Thursday 16th July - next meeting 4th August.
- **Seated Yoga** No meeting through the whole of August.
- **Short walks** No walk in August. Next walk 3rd September.
- **Tai Chi Simplified 24** starts again 16th September.

Bookbinding course Contact Tracey haswelltracey@gmail.com

There is still time to sign up for our Bookbinding course that starts in Autumn, but be quick as spaces are limited. All equipment is provided. Look out at the meeting for the lovely examples of what you can create on the course. Contact Tracey for further details or speak to her at the meeting.

Looking for a new activity? Some of the groups looking for more members are: Scrabble, Board Games, Bridge, Church Bell Ringing, Discussion and German Conversation. Check the Yellow Booklet and website for details and contact the Group Leader.

Archaeology Group Contact Roy 07725 472017, roykilborn@btinternet.com

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 maureen.tench@hotmail.com

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 257 2401, cathybream@hotmail.co.uk

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 253 4317

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 07715 171823

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 280 0180

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 253 1695

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.

Contact Judith 296 5311

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

**** Please note** Summer break - final session 14th July, starts again 1st September.

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** as the tutor will be away, there will be no Chair Pilates on 18th July. All other sessions will run as usual.

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. Unfortunately this group has no vacancies at the moment.

Coffee with Friends

Contact Anne 07854 443987

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 07593 822584, Ian 07773 233373

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 07595 248581

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 07944 556395

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 251 1904, hulmemuriel6@gmail.com

Please note German Conversation is happy to welcome new members. Spaces are limited though, so please let Muriel know as soon as possible if you would like to join our friendly group.

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 given. Instead, members help each other to improve their language skills with friendly advice and support.

Jigsaw Corner Piece Contact Jean 252 8169, Vicky 07966 032877

Find time to do a puzzle!

Knitting Contact Gillian 07914 495482

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 07432 203128

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 07983 479147

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

Poetry group Contact Brenda 07909 116111

This group is now full but has a waiting list. A taster session can be arranged if a member is absent - contact Brenda for details.

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 timck60@gmail.com

Sessions take place in various local hostelrys - times and venues are decided by the members. New members are very welcome so if you enjoy sampling the real thing in good company while supporting local businesses, please contact Tim.

Seated Yoga Contact Kate 07703 492403, bassetak@gmail.com

**** Please note** There will be no meeting through the whole of August as this will be the summer break. Please also note the change of venue.

Tuesdays 4-5pm in Morrison's Community Room, Preston Road, North Shields. 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 07708 227418, ann.nicholson30@yahoo.com****Tim timck60@gmail.com**

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 07966 032877**

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

Table Tennis 2**Contact Vicky 07966 032877**

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

Tai Chi Group 1**Contact Dorothy 252 3726**

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 07817 154596**

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 07810 274974**

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 07808 067934**

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 257 3063**

Please note This group has closed for the summer – starts again on 16th September.

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 07758 267001**

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 01670 733122**

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 07702 512987, Alan 07931 567579

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 July – 22nd August

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- **Scrabble** No meeting on Thursday 16th July - next meeting 4th August.
- **Seated Yoga** No meeting through the whole of August.
- **Short walks** No walk in August. Next walk 3rd September.
- **Tai Chi Simplified 24** starts again 16th September.

Monday 13th July S.T.E.M. Group Contact John 07742 731766, johncappleby@gmail.com
2.00-4.00pm, at the Kittiwake pub, Whitley Lodge. For those interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics - if you would like details please contact John.

Wednesday 15th July Monthly Meeting – everyone welcome

Linskill Centre, 2pm. Following a family bereavement Paul Isherwood is unable to give his talk on child gambling. We are pleased that John Appleby from our own u3a is able to deliver an excellent talk in its place.

Saturday 18th July Coffee with Friends Contact Anne 07854 443987

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

Thursday 23rd July Real Ale Group Contact Tim 07986 583553 timck60@gmail.com

The next meeting is at 2pm at the Bridge Hotel in Newcastle. If there are any WBU3a members interested in joining the group, please contact Tim.

Friday 24th July Mah jong Contact Pat 07983 479147

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

Saturday 25th July Art Appreciation Contact David & Jan 07962 020404

We will be going to the Baltic this month. There is always a lot to see there, but the main attraction for me is the new exhibition Tish Murtha & Kuba Ryniewicz: *Close to Home*. Tish Murtha's work captures life in Tyneside in a time of change and conflict. It's forecast to be one of the Baltic's most visited exhibitions. Meet for coffee at 10:30.

Monday 27th July Quiz Group Contact Tracey 07446 163559, haswelltracey@gmail.com

St Andrew's at 2pm. £2 entry, and remember to bring a mug. Next quiz 24th August.

Wednesday 29th July Discussion Group Contact Jean 252 8169

We will meet at 10.30 at the usual venue to discuss items in the u3a magazine.

Tuesday 4th August Scrabble Contact Liz 253 0288, Dave 07399 460464

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

Wednesday 5th August Wine Tasting Group 1 Contact Julie 07758 267001

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

Friday 14th August Mah jong Contact Pat 07983 479147

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

Wednesday 19th August Monthly Meeting – everyone welcome

Linskill Centre, 2pm. The August monthly meeting is planned to be a disco. Our original DJ has pulled out for health reasons, but we have access to a system, and David Slater has offered to organise and present. If for any reason there is a problem, we will have a talk ready to go. Until then, spin the mirrorball and get your dancing shoes polished up.

Thursday 20th August Scrabble Contact Liz 253 0288, Dave 07399 460464

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

Saturday 22nd August 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. Eccentric careless, quieter in this part of London (9,6)
2. Somehow take pear from parrot (8)
3. Ordering girl a hot bun, hero uses a title of respect (5,10)

Last month's answers

1. All powerful
2. Après ski
3. Numerical

Jean