

WHITLEY BAY u3a NEWSLETTER

August – September 2026

Reminder: Entries for the next newsletter (12th Sept – 24th Oct) should be sent to Ann at wbu3anews@gmail.com by midday on **Friday 11th September**. 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 19th August 70's disco.

Wednesday 16th September Speaker: Amber Brady - *Boxercise*

CHAIR'S REPORT

We are looking forward to the Disco at the monthly meeting on 19th August. Both this meeting and the following month (which is a Boxercise class) will see more activity-based sessions. Do come if you can, and do let us know what you think. It has been billed as a 1970s Disco, but I will play a broader range of music, designed to get you up and moving (but we will have tables for if and when you want a sit-down).

We will start to put together our 2027 programme of monthly meetings in September - any ideas are very welcome. Suggested subjects for talks are useful, but even more useful are the names and contact details of speakers you think would suit us and interest us.

We are busy - or, rather, our wonderful team of group Coordinators are busy - with setting up new groups. My own community volunteer group, the (really) Useful Group met Susan from School Readers in July, and about a dozen members are thinking about signing up to read to children and hear them read. We are also starting a social group, Come and Meet Each Other (CAMEO), a Line Dancing Group, and a friendly philosophy group, to be called Chewing the Cud. More details soon. In addition, Tim Cook, one of our committee members, has set up a visit to an Amazon warehouse in September, and you will see some details for possible Group travel on the noticeboard this month - plenty to look forward to and keep an eye out for.

We have also partnered with Northumbria University on research they are doing to develop a tool to help older people combat digital fraud, using Artificial Intelligence. The university will be seeking volunteers to take part - it is entirely voluntary, it will be entirely anonymous, and all data will be safeguarded. We have also had an offer from a group of volunteers who are happy to provide advice on how to set up and use digital devices, including phones and tablets – see below.

David Slater

Need help with IT?

We have received offers of support from a former IT Manager who was until recently helping other charities in North Tyneside with members' IT problems. We would like to take up this offer, but we need a clearer idea of what help might be needed, on what scale. Please contact any committee member by phone, email, or in person at the monthly meeting if you think it is possible you could benefit from advice, and whether this would be for a mobile phone, tablet, p.c. or other device.

CAMEO (Come and meet each other) aims to help members to get to know each other in a more relaxed way than monthly meetings. We will have coffee and a chat and then members suggest activities they'd like to do - which may not be covered by other groups – and ask if anyone else would like to come along. Members then make their own arrangements to meet up. It can be anything, e.g going to live music events, museum visits, a bus pass safari or afternoon tea. Guidance from a u3a running the same group suggest the activities are usually ad-hoc or one-off things and can range from just two people who share the same interest to a few people deciding to get together to do something. The facilitator will give further explanation and suggestions at the first meet up. There is no requirement to sign up, the only proviso is that if you come along with a friend or partner you don't sit together please. Everyone is welcome and so please come and join us and bring details of anything you'd like to do.

When: the third Monday of the month at 11.00am

Where: The Kittiwake Pub, Whitley Lodge

First Meeting: 21st September.

Do come and meet each other - we'd love to see you there.

Amazon Fulfilment Centre Tour

Have you ever wondered how those brown packets find their way to you? Come along on a free tour of the Fulfilment Centre on 28/9/26 at 12noon. This is a massive, highly automated robotic fulfilment centre. It spans multiple floors, features over six miles of conveyor belts, and utilizes thousands of robotic drives to move product pods. The centre is at Follingsby Lane, Gateshead, NE10 8YA.

- Each tour is 60-90 minutes long and is under 2km and does involve some stairs.
- Visitors must wear flat, closed toe and heel footwear. Long hair must be tied up.
- Govt. issued photo ID is required, which must match the details given at booking.
- No photography is allowed on the tour.
- You are only allowed to carry a wallet, keys and transparent water bottle. A safe location is available for anything else.

(This is a summary; the full rules will be sent to those who book).

To book a space contact Tim Cook.

Volunteers needed

Age UK North Tyneside is currently developing a new community initiative in North Shields to help older people who have become socially isolated reconnect with their local community. We are looking for volunteers who would be willing to spare a little time to support older people who may no longer attend groups or social activities. This could involve accompanying someone to a local group, suggesting activities that match their interests, or simply spending some time finding out what they would like to do. The people we hope to support are those who may have become disengaged through bereavement, ill health, mobility or transport difficulties, or other life changes. We will be working with other community organisations to help identify people who would benefit from this support. Volunteers will receive support from Age UK North Tyneside, along with access to a directory of local groups, activities and opportunities to help people reconnect with their community.

There is no minimum time commitment, people can volunteer as much or as little as they are able. Even a small amount of time can make a significant difference. If you would like to find out more, please contact Paula at Paula.Bennett@ageuknorthtyneside.org.uk, who would be happy to discuss the opportunity further.

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 websites for more details

- **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
- **Short Story/Poem Competition** A reminder that the deadline for entries is 12 noon on Friday 11th September 2026. The competition is free to enter. 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' More details and the competition rules are on the website.
- **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.
- **u3a Festival of Fun, Music and Learning** This festival held on May 12th 2026 at Ushaw Historic House, Chapels and Gardens DH7 7DW was such a great success that the Regional u3a Events Team and Committee have decided to organise a similar day in 2027 on Wednesday 19th May. Can any member or group of members offer to present a workshop or an activity for everyone to enjoy? The staff of the historic house will also be able to offer tours of the house giving an insight into its history. Please contact Cecilia Coulson cecu3a@gmail.com for further information
- **'Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Poetry'** Tours of the Laing Art Gallery exhibition are being arranged for our members of u3a North-East Region. If you are interested, please email Catherine Stevenson Intoto444@hotmail.com. Only when we know the cost of the exhibition will money be taken and then places will be confirmed by email.

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

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

- **Carpet Bowls** starts again 1st September
- **Seated Yoga** starts again 1st September
- **Archaeology** starts again 9th September
- **Tai Chi Simplified 24** starts again 16th September

**** New Group 'Chewing the Cud'** Inspired by the book *101 Dilemmas for the Armchair Philosopher*, our own member Brian is experienced in leading twice-monthly sessions where wide ranging issues such as "What would your view be of animal testing if the life of a loved one depended on it?" and "Should any subjects be off limits to comedians?" are discussed. Expect friendly, respectful and lively debate but no 'correct' answers. Interested? Look out for the sign-up sheet at the monthly meeting or contact Edith Charvat.

**** New Group: Floristry - flower arranging for beginners.** A course of 6 two-hour sessions is ready to go, starting on Thursday morning, 4th November. Through demonstrations and practical sessions, Carol, a qualified college lecturer, will teach the basics of this beautiful art. Members will ultimately produce a wreath for Christmas! Tuition and venue are free and materials/equipment will be covered in first meeting, just bring yourself. Look out for the sign-up sheet at monthly meetings or contact Edith Charvat.

**** Potential New Group: Yee-ha! Line Dancing/Beginners.** Keep fit, have fun and stomp your cares away. If enough members are interested, we can start a weekly hour of Line Dancing for Beginners. Tuition will be free with a small charge for the room. (Stetsons/boots optional, strictly no horses!) Be quick to secure your place. Sign up at the monthly meeting or contact Edith Charvat.

Archaeology Group**Contact Roy**

**** Starts again 9th September.** 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.

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. This year's 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. A fee will be charged to cover the cost of hiring the room.

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. The session is informal and a partner is not needed to join as pairings and playing groups are dependent on attendance. This is not a class for absolute beginners, but new members are very welcome as long as they have a basic knowledge of the game. We all look to improve our game with friendly advice always available on bidding, scoring and conventions. All cards, bidding boxes and scorecards are provided. The venue has ample parking and refreshments are available.

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. We are a small friendly group of Canasta players; a game which may be played by groups of two, three or four people. Unfortunately, this group has no vacancies at the moment.

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

**** 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 Kath**

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**

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 dining group is for u3a members who enjoy the food scene and an occasional three-course meal in a good restaurant. The group meets monthly to enjoy a meal and support local restaurants. Currently half of the group are couples and half singles who all relish a night out. We go for the early bird specials and so far it has been around the £40 mark for three courses and drinks. Members attend as and when they are able.

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

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, Vicky

No puzzles in August – back in September.

Knitting Contact Gillian

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 talk about, the music we enjoy. Our members may mostly lean towards classical music, but jazz, popular etc. are not excluded! It is just about sharing one's enthusiasm for music with other members.

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**

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**

Sessions take place in various local hosteleries - 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**

**** Starts again 1st September.** 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 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

**** Starts again 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

This is an informal, yet informative group who meet on the first Wednesday in the month from 7.00pm to 9.00pm, at St. Andrew's Church Hall. The cost is around £8 and we taste six or seven wines. Though the evening is light-hearted, you will, hopefully, attain some knowledge along the way. Our group is currently full, but you can add your name to our waiting list by contacting the Group Co-ordinators.

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 15th August – 19th September

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

- **Carpet Bowls** No meeting in August, starts again 1st September.
- **Seated Yoga** No meeting in August, starts again 1st September.
- **Archaeology** No meeting in August, starts again 9th September.
- **Tai Chi Simplified 24** starts again 16th September.

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, Dave

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

Saturday 22nd August Coffee with Friends Contact Anne
Meet at 11am at the Champagne Bar at the Dome. Any queries, please contact Anne.

Monday 24th August Quiz Group Contact Tracey
St Andrew's at 2pm. £2 entry, and remember to bring a mug. Next quiz 27th September.

Friday 28th August Mah jong Contact Pat
1.30pm in the Community Room at Morrison's, Preston Grange.

Friday 28th August Real Ale Group Contact Tim
The August meeting at the Whitley Bay Beer Festival meeting at 2pm. More details and booking information are on <https://www.whitleybaybeerfestival.com/tickets>

Saturday 29th August Art Appreciation Contact David & Jan
The group will be meeting in the café of the Laing Art Gallery at 10:30. The picture of the month talk at 11:00 is Charles Napier Hemy's '*Betrayed by moonlight*'. It's an unusual subject for a painting and it will be interesting to find out more. You might also want to visit the paid exhibition from the National Portrait Gallery's annual competition before it closes.

Tuesday 1st September Carpet Bowls Contact wbgrouppcoordinatoru3a@gmail.com
Starts again after summer break, 12.15 at Cullercoats Community Centre.

Tuesday 1st September Scrabble Contact Liz, Dave
2.30 at Park Lodge. Please let Liz know if you cannot come to the meeting.

Wednesday 2nd September Wine Group 1 Contact Julie
7.00 pm at St Andrew's Church Hall. Terry will be providing the wines and snacks this month.

Thursday 3rd September Short Walks Contact Ann N, Tim
Bedlington: a walk along River Blyth to stepping stones. Bring a picnic. Meet 10.15 Haymarket bus station stand P.

Tuesday 8th September Seated Yoga Contact Kate
Starts again after summer break, 4-5pm in Morrison's Community Room, Preston Road, North Shields.

Wednesday 9th September Archaeology Group Contact Roy
Starts again after summer break, 2-4pm at the Linskill Centre. Speaker: David Petts - *The fishing heritage at Holy Island*

Friday 11th September Mah jong Contact Pat
1.30pm in the Community Room at Morrison's, Preston Grange.

Monday 14th September S.T.E.M. Group Contact John A
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 16th September Tai Chi Simplified 24 Contact Barbara
Starts again after summer break, 11.00-12.00 at the Hub in Whitley Road.

Wednesday 16th September Monthly Meeting – everyone welcome

Linskill Centre, 2pm. Speaker: Amber Brady – *Boxercise*.

Thursday 17th September Scrabble Contact Liz, Dave

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

Saturday 18th September 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. Given free roast, we chat spoiling meteorologist's prediction (7,8)
2. He's reshipped new dish (9,3)
3. Monarch's representative showing anger over longer broadcast (8,7)

Last month's answers

1. Leicester Square
2. Parakeet
3. Right Honourable

Jean