

BARNSTAPLE u3a

NEWSLETTER

JULY, 2025

Issue 461



www.barnstaple.u3aite.uk

barnstaplethirdagegroup@rocketmail.com

Chairman: *Keith Luckhurst*

Membership Secretary: *Julia Denton*

Business Secretary: *Philip Hawkins*

Groups Co-ordinator: *Laurence Hillel*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We extend a very warm welcome to the following new Members have joined us in June 2025

Mr Russ Allen

Mrs Patricia James

Mrs Stephanie (known as Anne) Saltearn

Mrs Carol Wood

Mrs Linda Levett

Mrs Cheryl Tachon

Mr Ray Fordham – Affiliate member

Mrs Maureen (Mo) Rowe – Affiliate member

The following members have re-joined us in June.

Mrs Louise French

Mrs Anita Moss

SPEAKER

Our Speaker on Thursday 3rd July is Stephen Powles talking on Hornets. Stephen gave us an excellent talk on Tawny Owls in April 2024 and we look forward to hearing him again.

Barnstaple u3a Contact List – see groups entry for more details

Group	Date and time	Venue	Contact Details
Art	Tues 10-12am	Rhod. Ave. Methodist Church	Brian Steward
Bonsai	1 st Wed of month – 2pm	Venn Valley Vineyard	Nigel Wright
Book Lovers	Last Wed. in month	Various	Margaret Ryan
Canasta	To be arranged	Ann's house	Ann Brand
Coffee morning	1 st Thur of month - 10.30am	R'ndswell Comm. Hall	Any Committee Member
Croquet Braunton	Recommence April 2025	Bple Croquet Club	Anne Young
Evening Dining	2 nd Tue of month	Various	Mary Young
Garden Days (Taw)	Various	Various	Roxanne and Graham King
Geology	July/Aug holiday	Frem. Meth. Hall	David Dickinson
Hikers	Mon 10.30am	Various	Pauline Markey Karen Wagstaff
How it Works	July/Aug - holiday	Fremington Meth. Hall	David Dickinson
Knit and natter	Second Mon of month	TBC	Sue Thomas
Literary Studies	3 rd Tue 2.30pm	Imperial Hotel	Ellie Bray
Local History	Restart September	Barnstaple Library	Jackie Brayley Yvonne Partington
Music	1 st & 3 rd Wed. 10.30-12.30	Fremington Methodist Hall	Doug Joslin -
Mosaics	Fridays 10am – 12.30pm	Rhod. Ave, Methodist Church	Jackie Brayley
Poetry	2 nd Sat of month, 2pm.	Various	Margaret Ryan
Practical Gardeners	Last Thurs of month, 10.30am normally	Various	Andy Jones
Quarterly Lunch	September – tba.	Williams Arms	Sue Thomas
Ramblers	2 nd Thurs 10.30	Various	Karen Wagstaff
Scrabble	1 st Wed 10am - 12.30pm 3 rd Thurs 10am - 12.30pm	Pam's house	Pam Harman
Singing for fun	2 nd Wed 10-12.	Fremington Meth. Hall	Patricia Hayhurst
Skittles	Thurs, fortnightly 4-6pm.	The Fox, Fremington	Elizabeth Howson
Strollers	4 th Thurs. 11am normally	Various	Bob Smith
Table Tennis	Tuesdays 2-3.30pm	Tarka Tennis Centre	Agnes Gabi Engels-Hearn
Trekkers	3 rd Friday of month, 10.30am	Various	Michael Elliott
Wine Group	Last Wed. of month, 2pm	Room 3b, Barnstaple Library	David Rowe

POSSIBLE NEW GROUP – SEATED EXERCISE



A date for your diaries, if enough interest is shown:

The first seated exercise session at the Tarka Leisure Centre; Barnstaple will start at Monday 1 pm on the 8 September. The group will be run by the Leisure centre staff; they have several trained in running seated exercise classes.

Chair-based exercises are low-impact workouts performed while seated or using a chair for support. They help improve strength, flexibility, and circulation without putting strain on the joints. These exercises are ideal for beginners, older adults, or anyone with limited mobility. Regular sessions can boost energy, support better posture, and enhance overall wellbeing.

The cost is £6 per session.

More information will follow on the website and in the next newsletter.

Maureen Penny

ART



We meet at the Methodist church hall in Rhododendron Avenue, between 10 am and 12 noon, every Tuesday apart from the third Tuesday of the month. We now have space for a few new members, if you interested, please get in touch with the Group Leader.

Brian Steward, Group Leader



BONSAI – An introduction. Wed 2nd July 2.00pm at the Vineyard.

We are meeting as usual at 2.00 pm at The Vine on Wednesday, 2 July. Please bring any material that you have so the group can have a look at it and make suggestions.

Nigel Wright, Group Leader



BOOK LOVERS

Last Wednesday in month 2-4pm.

Dale	: DESERT ISLAND DISCS - FLOTSAM & JETSUM. Celebrates 70 th Anniversary.
Jo	: THE GIRLS LEFT BEHIND by Emily Gunnis (daughter of author Penny Vincenzi)
Margaret Ellis	: DISSOLUTION by C J Sansom
Christine Lovelock	: LIGHT ON SNOW by Anita Shreve
Charles	: JOURNEY THROUGH BRITAIN by David St John Thomas by rail and little car.
Diane	: THE SILENT PATIENT by Alex Michaelides
Christine Doe:	: OUR HOUSE by Louise Candlish
Margaret Ryan	: THE HUNTING PARTY by Lucy Foley
Maggi Charters	: CARROTS, A Shelby Nichols Adventure by Coleen Helme
Gillian	: FATHERLAND by Robert Harris

Please contact Margaret for more information if you are interested.

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



CANASTA

If anyone want to learn canasta please contact Ann Brand.

Ann Brand, Group Leader



CROQUET (BRAUNTON)

Tuesdays 2-4pm.

Braunton U3A run a croquet group during the summer and invite members from the surrounding U3A's to join the group.

The group meets weekly at Barnstaple Croquet club, Raleigh Meadow, off St. Georges Road, Barnstaple, EX31 4UX.

No experience is necessary and all equipment and coaching is provided. The cost is £4 to join or re-join the group and £4 for every session you attend. Come along to meet friendly people for a fun afternoon. Contact the Group Leader for more information and to book your place.

Anne Young, Group Leader



EVENING DINING GROUP

Second Tuesday

Our June venue was a gourmet extravaganza - the service was 1st class and we were very well looked after at the Imperial Hotel - food was good too!

Our next venue is Heanton Court on the 8th July 6.30 pm - hoping the weather stays kind so we can enjoy the views.

Next few dates for your diaries

August	Break for holidays
September 9th	Fulham 7 pm
October 7 th	Black Horse Brauton 6.30
November 11 th	Lush 6.30
December 9 th	Imperial Hotel - festive 6.30 menu

Please contact the Group Leader if you are interested in joining this group.

Mary Young, Group Leader



GARDEN DAYS

Wednesday August 27th: 'Glendurgan, Cornwall'. An historic and exotic wooded valley garden that leads leads down to the Helford River.

Barnstaple members are very welcome to attend.

Cost: National Trust members £20.00, non-NT members £32.50

Booking: via our email. Once your place is confirmed, please send cheque (Taw U3A) to our home address (please see Taw's previously-sent list of all group leaders' contact details) by end of June. Write pick-up point and trip on back. If we don't already have phone (mob if possible), for security write on separate paper.

Pick up times: Chilpark 09.30,
New Inn 09.35,
Ellerslie Rd 09.40,
Newport Park and Ride 09.45

Wednesday July 23rd: Abbotsbury Tropical Gardens and Swannery:
Pick up times as above

Group Leaders - Roxanne and Graham King,



GEOLOGY

Meeting – Friday 12th SEPTEMBER, 1-45 for 2-00pm

At our June meeting we had Prof Malcolm Hart who talked about Mary Anning; her life in Lyme Regis; the Triassic cliffs at Budleigh Salterton and the hominin jawbone (41,000 years' old. This was found in Kent's Cavern, Torquay. In Devon we are fortunate to have the most diverse English landscape and geology. There is a plan to form Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark - who can predict what the future will hold?

We are on our summer holiday for the next two months.

David Dickinson, Group Leader



HIKERS

Monday 14th July

This month's walk is an 8m circular walk from Parracombe to Challacombe with amazing views across this beautiful part of North Devon. We will be walking across Challacombe Down, through fields and along quiet lanes. New members very welcome.

Please contact us if you would like to join us so that we can send you further details.

Group Leaders: Pauline Markey & Karen Wagstaff



HOW IT WORKS

Next meeting Date: Friday 26th SEPTEMBER at 1.45 for 2.00pm.

Three members of the group gave talks that delighted the audience of 27 people. Gerry Hitchin a founding member of U3A UK, and gave a detailed insight of the people involved in the creation of this organisation and how the objective was to continue further learning in life after retirement - 34 years later with over 1000 groups in England it shows it is a huge success.

David Butler then enlightened the group as to his career as a science teacher, then Schools inspector followed by the dreaded position of an Ofsted Inspector. This covered some interesting events with regard to safety and the inventiveness of pupils and teachers who enjoyed teaching.

Dale, has followed the remains of the Dartmoor Granite Railway, a unique method of exporting the rock to ships on the coast. This was built at a time before Iron rails or steam engines, and the track still survives today. It has now stimulated an interest in visiting the area for the scenery, historical aspects and geology; superb pictures complemented the talk.

We are now having a summer break - at our next meeting in September we have Dr Sarah Hotchkiss who will talk about the history and use of seaweed as a fertiliser, food source and its future use around the coast of the South West.

David Dickinson, Group Leader



KNIT AND NATTER

Second Monday at 2pm-4pm

Bring your current project with you and exchange tips and ideas over a cup of tea. Due to limited space this group is now full.

Sue Thomas, Group Leader



LITERARY STUDIES GROUP

Tue.15th July, Tue 19th August – Imperial Hotel 2.30pm.

We were disappointed in Alan Bennett's non-fiction book, *The Lady in the Van*. It was supposedly excerpts from the author's diary, and despite admitting to not always remembering the facts accurately, he could use the English language to great effect, and (we suspect), embellish the facts to produce a more commercial product.

We queried why he even wrote it, as it was a sad reflection on him - the supposed benevolent man giving over his garden to a homeless woman (Miss S, not her real name) – but, for 15 years, without attempting to improve her quality of life? His distasteful descriptions of the supposed squalor in which the lady lived again beg the question – why did he do nothing to improve the situation?

Where, throughout the years, were Social Services or interfering neighbours! To conclude, this was a clever embellishment of true-life events, and the introduction of Maggie Smith in the title role committed it forever to the nation's psyche, but really, there was so much more to 'Miss S' and her true back-story could have been explored and included in the book.

Group Leader - Ellie Bray



LOCAL HISTORY

We have now finished this season of talks and will start again in September. We are always pleased to receive suggestions for topics or speakers and we will then do the research and hopefully include it in the next session. Please contact either of us by phone or at the monthly coffee morning. Thank you, Jackie and Yvonne.

Group Leaders: Yvonne Partington & Jackie Brayley



MOSAICS

We meet at the Methodist Church Hall in Rhododendron Avenue on Friday Mornings from 10 to 12.30 (apart from the last Friday in the month).

Group Leader Jackie Brayley,

MUSIC



We meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month 10.30am – 12.30pm. at Fremington Methodist Hall. Please contact the group leader for more details.

Doug Joslin, Group Leader

POETRY



Second Saturday of month 2pm. For more information, please contact Margaret

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader

PRACTICAL GARDENERS



Apologies from the Editor, the first paragraph of the following report should have been in the June newsletter:

The members of the Practical Gardening Group enjoyed a visit to Geraldine Eacott's garden in Sticklepath on Thursday May 29th. Tea or coffee and delicious home-made cake got the morning off to an excellent start before we were given a guided tour of Geraldine's beautiful garden which featured a magnificent sambuca, displaying wonderful flowerheads, a wide variety of plants, including many hardy geraniums and salvias and an impressive range of vegetables and soft fruit. All the flowerbeds were packed with interest and a wide range of expertly nurtured plants. Geraldine then gave a short practical demonstration of her methods of taking cuttings before the group moved on to a collection of the plant's members had brought along for sale in aid of the nearby South West Children's Hospice. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and informative morning.

June Report

In June, sixteen group members set out for Quince Honey Farm in South Molton. Our extremely knowledgeable tour guide Suki, who wisely had a microphone on, then gave us a guided tour of the attractive and well laid out gardens, including her detailed knowledge of the plants and the sort of honey they produced.

After handing out various seeds from pollinating plants from the gardens, she then gave us a tour of the honey factory, and then in the beeswax area, we were encouraged to roll our own candles!

After lunch in the busy cafe, Suki, in full beekeeping garb, gave us a marvellous demonstration of the process of beekeeping, with a camera showing us the bees up close. Interesting fact: a teaspoon of honey contains the life's work of 12 honey bees!!

Our next meeting is a trip to Taunton Flower Show on Saturday 2nd August. Anyone interested should contact David or Andy.

David Green, Andy Jones, Group Leadership Team



QUARTERLY LUNCH

Our next quarterly lunch will be in September. Details nearer the time.

Sue Thomas, Group Leader



RAMBLERS

Thursday 10th July

This month we hope to do our walk that was cancelled in June due to bad weather....

We are venturing into the beautiful countryside of Mid Devon for a lovely 5m circular walk beginning in Bickleigh and passing through the village of Cadeleigh. There are some stunning views throughout with a steady climb and one longer steep climb which we will take slowly whilst admiring the scenery.

If you plan to join us please let us know so that we can send you further information. New members very welcome.

Group Leaders Karen Wagstaff and Pauline Markey 07976 696604



SCRABBLE

July 2025 Wednesday 2nd 10-12.30pm, Thursday 17th 10-12.30pm.

We now have a waiting list for new members who may be interested in joining. For further information contact Pam. **01271 377872 or 07769 803003**
pamharman19@gmail.com

Pam Harman, Group Leader



SINGING FOR FUN

Second Wednesday 10-12noon

Despite several apologies from regular members (thanks for letting me know) we had an excellent turnout to welcome Sue after her trip away in May. We sang many of our group favourites and added a new one to our repertoire.

At our next session on 9 July we'll be welcoming back John, who also enjoys accompanying us. As a group we are so lucky to have Sue who teaches singing and John who sings, i.e. two professional musicians who give their services because we are such a 'friendly' group!

So, for your friendship and support I sincerely thank you all, and look forward to seeing you again in July.

If you are interested in this Group please contact the Group Leader **-Patricia Hayhurst,**



SKITTLES

Second and fourth Thursday of the month. 4-6pm

The skittles is going along very well, and we still have room for more players. We meet at The Fox at Fremington and all newcomers are welcome.

Elizabeth Howson, Group Leader



STROLLERS

Thursday 31st July 11 am. Ashford Garden Centre – Tarka Trail

Meet main entrance doorway 'Parking' in their Car Park (plenty). Take care to walk down to the MAIN ROAD and carefully cross over to gain entrance to the TARKA TRAIL.

Walk right towards Branton and Chivenor (stop where road into Chivenor crosses Tarka Trail) then return to the GC for refreshments – 3 miles there and back.

Please contact me if going - in case circumstances force a last-minute cancellation.

Bob Smith, Group Leader



TABLE TENNIS

Tuesday afternoon from 2.00 to 3.30pm at the Barnstaple Tarka Centre.

The Table tennis group has continued to play weekly. Good, competitive, but friendly games seem to be enjoyed by everyone.

Attendance has been high and this is okay now as the Tarka Centre is providing us with an extra (new!) Table. Thus, we play on three for the one and a half hours. The waiting list is gone and new Members are again welcome. Contact Agnes or Gabi.

Gabi & Agnes Group Leaders



TREKKERS

Friday 18th July Please check with the Group Coordinator for information.

If you would like to join the group just let me know and I will add you to the email list.

Michael Elliott, Group Coordinator

WINE



The group continues to meet on the last Wednesday of the month in Room 3b of Barnstaple Library at 2pm. We are an open and welcoming group with a wide range of knowledge and interest in wine from beginners to those with in depth knowledge of specialist areas.

If you fancy giving the group a try just to see if it would be of interest to you, please drop me a line

David Rowe, Group Leader

Taw u3a have sent us the following details regarding their Badminton Group:

To Barnstaple U3A

Taw U3A have a badminton group that is seeking new members and would appreciate it if you could advertise in the next Barnstaple Newsletter, as follows:

"If you are keen for some exercise, both physical and mental, we now have a few places available for new players in TAWU3A Badminton group.

In term time we play weekly on Tuesdays from 09.30 to 10.30 am; also, on Thursdays from 2:00 to 3:00pm at the Tarka Leisure Centre in Barnstaple.

Contact us to arrange a free trial session. We can loan a racquet for the trial session if needed.

Contact Carol Griffiths

Why not start a new group

Barnstaple u3a encourage all members to start a new group on any subject in which they are interested.

The group leader or multiple leaders can be modestly helped with finances where applicable and be provided with helpful details for its start-up.

If you feel you could contribute, please do not hesitate to contact our group co-ordinator Laurence, or any committee member.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The list of activities on Page 2 of this edition is to help members by showing the venue, day, time and contact numbers.

Please keep communicating by emailing the Editor at:

barnstaplethirdagegroup@rocketmail.com If you have any group photographs please send them to this address.

Group Leaders: Please note that the next edition will be circulated about the **29th July**, please submit any articles before the **23rd July** if possible.

Lynne Dickinson, Editor

Nature Discovery Group with Laurence and Deirdre at Branton Burrows on the 18th June 2025. Wonderful walk with nature at its best in glorious weather, thoroughly enjoyed by all participants.

Heartfelt thanks to Laurence and Deirdre for leading the Nature Discovery Group these last few years.



Practical Gardeners – Geraldine Eacott's garden in Sticklepath



Hikers – June - Sheepwash and Buckland Filleigh

