

BARNSTAPLE u3a

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER, 2025

Issue 464

www.barnstaple.u3a.org.uk

barnstaplethirdagegroup@rocketmail.com



Chairman: *Keith Luckhurst*

Business Secretary: *Philip Hawkins*

Membership Secretary: *Julia Denton*

Groups Co-ordinator: *Laurence Hillel*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We are delighted to welcome the following new full Members who have joined us recently.

Mrs Jo-Ann Middleton

Mr Steve Smith

Mr. Martin Long

Mr. Nigel Oates

We also welcome the following new Affiliate Members

Mr Stephen Percival

Miss Patricia Isherwood

Mrs Ann Overton

CHANGE OF SPEAKER

Unfortunately, our proposed speaker for the October coffee morning has had to cancel, at a late stage, and consequently a replacement had to be found.

Luckily, our chairman, Keith, has agreed to give a talk on *THE BIG STINK*, the story of the building of the London sewer system.

Hope you can make it, and we look forward to seeing you.

Coffee rota at Roundswell - Reminder

Many thanks to those who have volunteered to serve the refreshments at the u3a coffee mornings.

The rota is as follows:

2 October Pam Harman, Rita Granger, Liz Craft, Marjorie Keefe

6 November Tom and Dee Street, Marjorie Keefe, Mary Young

Coffee rota co-ordinator is Dee Street, although Pam will be overseeing proceedings on the 2 October.

If you feel you can help on other days, please contact Dee or Tom, your help would be appreciated.

Taw u3a Badminton Group

If you are keen for some exercise, both physical and mental, we have places available for 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 which they are interested in.

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

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

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
Board Games	Mon 2-4pm New	Frem.Meth. Hall	Mary Young Sue Thomas
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 Th of month - 10.30am	R'ndswell Comm.Hall	Any Committee Member
Croquet Braunton	Recommence April 2026	Bple Croquet Club	Anne Young
Christmas Lunch	Thurs. 4 December	Barnstaple Hotel	Sue Thomas
Evening Dining	2 nd Tue of month	Various	Mary Young
Garden Days (Taw)	Various	Various	Roxanne & Graham King
Geology	2 nd Fri of month 1.45pm	Frem. Meth. Hall	David Dickinson
Hikers	Mon 10.30am	Various	Pauline Markey Karen Wagstaff
How it Works	4 th Fri of month 1.45pm	Frem Meth Hall	David Dickinson
Knit and natter	Second Mon of month	Frem. Meth. Hall	Sue Thomas
Literary Studies	3 rd Tue 2.30pm	Imperial Hotel	Ellie Bray
Local History	2 nd Wed. 2pm	Barnstaple Library	Jackie Brayley Yvonne Partington
Music	1 st & 3 rd Wed. 10.30-12.30	Frem 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
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
Seated Exercise	Mondays 1pm	Tarka Leisure Centre	Maureen Penny
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 Adams 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



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. The group is now full, if anyone is interested in joining, they will be put on a waiting list. Please get in touch with Brian the Group Leader.

Brian Steward, Group Leader



BOARD GAMES **New**

Alongside the Knit and Natter group, we are suggesting a board games afternoon. This will also start on Monday 13th October at the Fremington Methodist Church Hall 2.00 to 4.00 p.m.

The cost per person will be £3 to cover the cost of refreshments and hall hire. A selection of traditional board games will be provided so why not come along and join in.

Mary Young & Sue Thomas, Group Leaders



BONSAI – An introduction.

In August I had surgery on my duff hip where some arthritis has truly made itself felt! That means due to the long and careful recovery required I shall not be able to do our u3a Bonsai group for a few months. December and January dates will not be available as we are going away. So, in practical terms, if all things go well, we should be able to meet on 4 February 2026! Clearly, I shall keep you all posted of events. I apologise for this interruption but I have come up with an alternative. A competition!!!

A documented, (i.e. just with photos of the start) Bonsai, that you have created from scratch. This could be from dug up material (yamadori) – please ask the owner - or bought starter material that you have styled. There will be a prize for the tree that is considered to be the best at the showing on the rather apt Wednesday, 1 April. We will learn the rules for showing trees, so everyone can make their own suggestions. You therefore have about 7 months to produce a Bonsai from scratch – simples.

Nigel Wright, Group Leader



BOOK LOVERS

Last Wednesday in month 2-4pm.

Maggie	The following are choices of members at the session on 24 September
Jo	"Everybody Lies" by L J Breedlove, novel set in Alaska. (2014)
Margaret E	"Daughters of the Night" by Elizabeth Buchan, novel set in Paris. (1988)
Christine D	"Watermelon" by Marion Keyes, novel set in Ireland. (1995)
Christine L	"Rescue from Captivity," by Linda Thomas, novel set in Cairo. (2014)
Charles	"Human, Animal" by Seth Insu novel set in U.K. (2025)
	"To the Letter" by Simon Garfield in praise of writing letters. (2013)

Sent by Charles Esmond-Cole on behalf of Margaret Ryan. Book publication dates in brackets.

Please contact Margaret for more information if you are interested in this group

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



CANASTA

If anyone want to learn Canasta please contact Ann Brand,
Brand, Group Leader



CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Our Christmas Lunch will be held on Thursday, December at the Barnstaple Hotel, 12.15 for 1.00 p.m.

The cost per person is £24 and is for a two-course carvery plus tea/coffee with vegetarian option available. There will be entertainment and a raffle. Tickets will be on sale at the October coffee morning or by contacting Sue Thomas

Sue Thomas, Group Leader



CROQUET (BRAUNTON)

Tuesdays 2-4pm.

Brauton U3A runs a croquet group during the summer and invite members from the surrounding U3A's to join the group. The U3A Croquet Group will be starting on Tuesday 28th April.

The group meets weekly at Barnstaple Croquet club, Raleigh Meadow, off St. Georges Road, Barnstaple, EX31 4UX. Tuesday, weather permitting, during the summer from 2pm to 4pm.

No experience is necessary and all equipment and coaching is provided. The cost is £4 to join or rejoin 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

After a very successful meal at the Fulham our next venue is the Black Horse in Brauton on 7 October at 6.30 - preordering is required this time and the menu can be found on their web site - as I'm on holiday!!

Please e mail Maureen with your requirements who will be coordinating this one!

I'm back in November for the visit to Lush - on the 11.

Please note that parking may be difficult at the Black Horse may I suggest car sharing??

If you are attending the Imperial Hotel's festive event on the 9 December please may I have confirmation and a £10 deposit as soon as humanely possible! Thank you.

Enjoy the Black Horse and see you in November.

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

Mary Young, Group Leader



GARDEN DAYS

The last garden visit for the year was in August. Details for next year will be in the newsletter and website at a later date.

Roxanne and Graham King, Group Leaders



GEOLOGY

Next Meeting – Friday 10th October, 1-45 for 2-00pm

In September David gave a talk about Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace two of the greatest minds of the 19th C who both established the theory of Evolution.

In October Prof. John Winchester will tell us about his early life as a geologist in Australia during the hectic time of a mineral boom.

In November we have two group members talking about their experiences in the Alps, Agnes Adams born there, and Robert Down who has climbed there. We will ensure that the heating is switched on before they commence, but we can console ourselves with hot drinks at the interval.

David Dickinson, Co-ordinator



HIKERS

Monday 6 October

This month we plan to do a 7m circular walk beginning in Berrynarbor. The route will include footpaths, fields, quiet lanes and part of the SWCP a mix of ups and downs. If you would like to join us please let me know so that we can send further details. New members always welcome.

Group Leaders: Pauline Markey & Karen Wagstaff



HOW IT WORKS

Next meeting: Friday 24 Oct at 1.45 for 2.00pm.

Unfortunately, our Speaker in September, Sarah, had to pull out due to a family illness. She will give her talk on seaweed at some future time. Luckily, David and David Butler had prepared a talk on SALT which informed the meeting how it was harvested and its many uses, it's a necessity for all life forms on this earth.

In October we have a talk by our own member Marjorie Keefe on "LIGHTNING". We may love it or hate it but it's one of the most spectacular sights we experience. Don't miss this talk it's not all flashes and bangs.

David Dickinson, Group Leader



KNIT AND NATTER

Second Monday at 2pm-4pm New Venue

The venue for this group has been moved to Fremington Methodist Church Hall to provide extra space and new members are welcome. The group meets on the second Monday of the month 2.00 to 4.00 p.m. and the first one will be Monday, 13 October. The cost will be £3 per person to cover the cost of the hall hire and refreshments, and there is plenty of parking. If you would like to join, please contact Sue Thomas, or see her at the October coffee morning.

Sue Thomas, Group Leader



LITERARY STUDIES GROUP

Imperial Hotel 2.30pm

Tuesday 21 October,

Tuesday 18 November

Our last book was *In Little Stars* by Linda Green, a powerful, moving, and thought-provoking modern retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*. The novel is set against the backdrop of post-Brexit Britain and the hatred and violence that this fuelled. Consequently, there is inevitability to the tragedy that unfolds. From very early on in this story, as you read that the two families involved are divided by class, religion and culture, you know that it's only going to go one way. Everyone had read the book and agreed that it was well written and easy to read. However, in terms of content, it was not such an easy read, with some upsetting and disturbing topics and scenes. This prompted much discussion about racial tension, not necessarily confined to any particular colour or race, and the part that the media plays in fuelling this tension. Reading this book now during times of increased racial hatred and abuse - for different reasons - made it all the more realistic and distressing.

Ellie Bray - Group Leader



LOCAL HISTORY

We meet in Room 2A on the second floor of the Barnstaple Library and start at 2pm. As before, please contact either Yvonne or Jackie to book a place.

At our 8 October meeting we will have Robin Ravilious talking about her father James Ravilious. *"A Chronicle of Country Life"* (a photographic documentary of rural life)

On 12 November we have Philip Dalling talking about "Parson Jack of Swimbridge" Please can we gently remind everyone to wear their lanyards with their emergency phone numbers please?

We look forward to seeing you again and welcoming new members.

Yvonne and Jackie- Group Leaders



MOSAICS

We meet at the Methodist Church Hall in Rhododendron Avenue on Friday Mornings from 10.00 to 12.30 (apart from the last Friday in the month).

We currently have a vacancy so please contact me if you are interested in joining our group.

Jackie Brayley, Group Leader



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

In September we chose our favourite poems. Here is a selection:

You're Bored Child by Felix Dennis

Love's Philosophy by Shelley

Ode To Autumn by Keats

Blackberry Picking by Seamus Heaney and The Wild Swans at Coole by W B Yeats

Metaphysical poems: To His Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell and The Good Morrow by John Donne

Some straightforward humorous poems including Valentine by Wendy Cope, They Should Have Asked My Husband and I Am Ready Mr Prescott both by Pam Ayres. Also, life in the Orkneys by Captain Hamish Blair.

Our theme next month is poems about children or written for children. Christine Doe has kindly offered to host but still to be confirmed.

For more information, please contact Margaret

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



PRACTICAL GARDENERS

Twenty four members of the PGG braved the showery weather to visit Steve and Dawn Morgan's remarkable garden in Yelland. In a relatively small area, they have produced a garden full of exotic and tropical plants that often tower above their visitors: cannas, bananas, gingers and an amazing range of passion flowers fill the prepared beds and the large cedar wood greenhouse; several varieties of rudbeckia, salvias and some gorgeous dahlias added to the kaleidoscope of colour.

The owners clearly love cultivating and hybridizing their plants and were only too willing to offer information and advice to our group. It was a memorable visit – finished off nicely with a cream tea!

Contact Andy for further information.

David Green, Andy Jones, Group Leadership Team



RAMBLERS

Thursday 16th October

Please note our walk this month is on the **third** Thursday ~ 16th October.

We plan to follow a circular route of approximately 4.5m beginning at Hartland Quay. We will walk along parts of the SWCP as well as through fields and along quite lanes whilst taking in spectacular views.

If you would like to join us please let me know so that we can send further details. New members always welcome.

Karen Wagstaff & Pauline Markey Group Leaders



SCRABBLE

Wednesday 1 October 10.00 -12.30pm

Thursday 16 October 10.00 -12.30pm

We now have a waiting list for new members who may be interested in joining. For further information contact Pam

Pam Harman, Group Leader



SEATED EXERCISE Weekly on Mondays at 1.00pm

The seated exercise sessions have been really good; we exercise to music and those of us who have the breath left sing along and even sometimes find time to laugh with the trainer! Everyone who attends says they really enjoy themselves and with the added benefit of trying to get fitter. The coffee and chat after the session seems to be popular as well. There are some seats left so if you want to come along to the Tarka Leisure Centre at 1.00pm on a Monday let me know – Maureen.

You must bring along your u3a membership card to participate. As places will be limited please contact Maureen so that I can make sure we have enough seats! Thank you.

Maureen Penny, Group Leader



SINGING FOR FUN

Second Wednesday 10-12noon

What a wonderful group you are! I was too unwell to attend on 10 September, but with the group members' co-operation, the session went ahead (with Sue back as accompanist) in my absence.

Thank you so much for your 'get well' card and the flowers which are still displayed in my lounge, plus the many messages and offers of help I received. I now feel so much better, and should be with you again on 8 October. Now it's your turn to take care of yourselves! Any queries, please get in touch. If you are interested in this Group please contact me.

Patricia Hayhurst, Group Leader



SKITTLES

Second and fourth Thursday of the month. 4-6pm
The skittles is going along very well, and the group is now full.

We meet at The Fox at Fremington, if you are interested, please contact the group leader for information.

Elizabeth Howson, Group Leader



STROLLERS

Thursday 30 September – 11.00 am.

Walk over the main bridge to ROCK PARK via the TARKA TRAIL over the IRON BRIDGE to the Park, returning to start point.

Refreshments - suggest Tea on the Taw. Distance 2.0 miles

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.

We meet at the Tarka Centre on Tuesday afternoons from 2.00pm.

We have three tables and play doubles for one and a half hours. Games are stimulating, competitive and fun. New members welcome.

Gabi & Agnes Group Leaders



TREKKERS

Unfortunately, the September Walk to Haytor was postponed due to closure of the M5 on the day. The walk leader is not available in October, so the Haytor walk will be held on a future date, to be arranged.

The next Trekkers Walk will be on 17 October, a 7½ mile walk to Dunkery Beacon, the highest point on Exmoor, with fine views in all directions. Meet at the car park at Webber's Post, near Luccombe, postcode TA24 8HY, for a 10:30 departure. As usual bring snacks, lunch and plenty to drink and be ready for any weather. Further details nearer the time.

If you would like to be added to the Trekkers email list to receive further information about our walks, please contact me.

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 contact me.

David Rowe, Group Leader

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The list of activities on Page 3 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 October**, please submit any articles before the **24rd October** if possible.

Lynne Dickinson, Editor



The Ramblers and Hikers walking holiday in the Peak District



Seated Exercise Group



Evening Diners Group



Practical Gardeners Group visit to Yelland

