

BARNSTAPLE u3a

NEWSLETTER

JUNE, 2026

Issue 472



New Committee:

Standing – Chairman, Nigel Wright,

l-r Keith Luckhurst, Maureen Penny, Linda Southgate, Mary Young,
Andy Jones, Philip Hawkins, Sue Thomas.

Apologies: Julia Denton

www.barnstaple.u3asite.uk

barnstaplethirdagegroup@rocketmail.com

Chairman: *Nigel Wright*

Business Secretary: *Philip Hawkins*

Membership Secretary: *Julia Denton*

Groups Co-ordinator: *Mary Young*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Mrs Elizabeth Stewart

Mrs. Helen White

Ms Joy Hatch

Returning Member – Mrs Jean Frances Hill

We also welcome a new affiliate member: Ms Jill Wells

JUNE SPEAKER

The speaker for the Coffee Morning on Thursday 4th June will be Jill Ackland who is the manager of Age Concern in Barnstaple

Barnstaple u3a has a new Chairman – Nigel Wright

Hello. It has been suggested that I write a few words about myself by way of an introduction having been elected as your Chairman.

I feel very honoured to have been selected and know that there is much heritage to be followed as Barnstaple u3a was the 6th to be created.



Chris my wife and I moved to North Devon in 1982 and we bought a highly dilapidated half of a long-house in Bishops Tawton. I took up a teaching post at Braunton Academy until retiring some 30 years later!

In the forthcoming months I would very much like to learn from you what you would like our u3a to be. If you are happy as it is, great, just let me know. If you would like a different format to the monthly coffee mornings, please again, just let me know. We have about 25 Interest Groups covering a most varied range of activities. If you would like a different Group, let's talk and see what we can do – start-up money could be made available.

Finally, I would like to thank all the folk who work so diligently in the background making Barnstaple u3a the society we enjoy: the Committee, the Group Leaders, the 'Technical Boys', the Newsletter production team, the new website team, the coffee morning helpers with the Reception team. Thank you.

Nigel

My contact details are

E: chair@barnstapleu3a.uk

M: 07974 998032

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:

June 4th Caroline Oldfield, John Vooght
July 2nd Pam Harman and Gill Mulligan

August is sorted, but if anyone knows they are free for October and November and feel they can volunteer, we should be most grateful.

Coffee rota co-ordinator is Dee Street.

If you feel you can help on other days, please contact Dee or Tom on the following telephone numbers. Your help would be appreciated.

Dee: 07775 800810 Tom: 07714 515298 Email: tomanddee@btinternet.com

Barnstaple u3a Contact List – see groups entry for more details

Group	Date and time	Venue	Contact
Art	Tues 10-12am	Rhod. Ave.Meth Church	Brian Stewart
Board Games	Second Mon 2-4pm	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
Coffee morning	Th.4th June - 10.30am	R'ndswell Comm.Hall	Any Committee Member
Croquet Braunton	Tue. Weekly 2-4pm	Bple Croquet Club	Anne Young
Embroidery	Second Mon of month	Frem. Meth. Hall	Christine Robilliard
Evening Dining	2 nd Tue of month	Various	Mary Young
Geology	2 nd Fri of month 1.45pm	Frem. Meth. Hall.	Mike Kelly
Hikers	Mon 10.30am	Various	Pauline Markey Karen Wagstaff
How it Works	4 th Fri of month 1.45pm	Fremington Meth.Hall	Dale Hall
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	Resume September	Barnstaple Library	Jackie Brayley - Yvonne Partington
Mosaics	Fridays 10am – 12.30pm	Rhod. Ave, Meth Church	Jo Archer –
Poetry	2 nd Sat of month, 2pm.	Various	Margaret Ryan
Practical Gardeners	3 rd 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
Spanish Conversation	1st Fri of month 10am NEW	Fremington Meth.Hall	Linda Southgate
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	Dale Hall
Wine Group	Last Wed. of month, 2pm	Room 3b, B'ple Library	David Rowe

ART



We meet at the Methodist church hall in Rhododendron Avenue, between 10am 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 Stewart.

Jackie Hill & Brian Stewart, Leadership Team

BOARD GAMES



Second Monday 2-4pm.

Alongside the Knit and Natter group, we are running a board games afternoon. This is on the second Monday of the month 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 Leader



BONSAI – An introduction.

It has been requested that we have a look at the creation of a 'Group Planting' Bonsai. How to go about one of the easiest styles once all the bits are organised. The Vine, 2.00pm, Wednesday 3 June. Please bring any materials along so we can have a natter and learn from each other.

If any of you have one of those bright blue plastic mushroom trays about 30 x 20 x 5cms, may I borrow it please as part of my demonstration - thanks.

Nigel Wright, Group Leader



BOOK LOVERS

Last Wednesday in month. Below is the list of the books that we reviewed in April. Watching Over Her by Jean-Baptiste Andrea, Leap of Faith by Kate Hewitt, The Wish by Nicholas Sparks, The Boy from the Sea by Garrett Carr, A Natural History of England by John Lewis Stempel, Eleanor - A 200 Mile Walk in Search of England's

Lost Queen by Alice Loxton, 1001 Songs You Must Hear Before You Die by Robert Dimery. Please contact Margaret for more information if you are interested in this group.

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



CROQUET (BRAUNTON)

Braunton U3A run a croquet group during the summer and invite members from the surrounding U3A's to join the group. The U3A Croquet Group started again on **Tuesday 21st April 2026**. The group meets weekly at Barnstaple Croquet club, Raleigh Meadow, off St. Georges Road, Barnstaple, EX31 4UX, Tuesdays,

weather permitting, during the summer from **2pm to 4pm**. No experience is necessary and all equipment and coaching is provided wear comfortable clothes and flat shoes, you may need a waterproof coat and a drink. The cost is £4 to join or rejoin the group and £4 for every session you attend. Contacts below for more information and to book your place. Come along to meet friendly people for a fun afternoon.

Anne Young, Group Leader



EMBROIDERY

Our group had another lovely afternoon of stitching and chatting. During the session we shared books, websites and workshops that might provide inspiration for our work. We meet on the second Monday of every month at Fremington Methodist Church Hall, 2-4pm. New members welcome. If you are interested, please contact Christine.

Christine Robilliard, Group Leader



EVENING DINING GROUP

Second Tuesday

Our May evening dining was at Siam bistro in Braunton. We were surprised at how busy it was for a Tuesday evening. Consequently, the service was very slow and 15 of us felt a little cramped at the table. The food wasn't the best, we have fingers crossed for June. **Future venues:** Our 9th June venue is once again the Wayfarer at

Instow on the 9th at 6.30 - no deposits necessary just numbers!! I'm hoping that afterwards we may be able to amble along the prom!! Obviously, weather permitting!!

July's venue is the Fulham on the 14th @ 6.30 which deposits of £ 10 pp are required please. No walk this time unless it's around the market car park! I'm happy to be 'banker' my details are available upon request!!!! Please contact the Group Leader if you are interested in joining this group

Mary Young, Group Leader



GEOLOGY

Next Meeting – Friday 12th June, 1.45 for 2pm

Andy Gordon's (Somerset Geology Group) presentation to the u3a Geology Group 8th. May 2026 started with an overview of our geologically diverse neighbouring county of Somerset before examining the fossils of the Somerset Coalfield (the largest collection of Carboniferous insects in Britain and the largest insect ever to fly). The contribution of two early geologists associated with Somerset (John Strachey 1671-1743 and William Smith 1769 – 1839) was discussed and the well-structured and intriguing talk finished with a review of the complex geology uncovered at the "coalface" using contemporary maps and cross-sections.

The forthcoming talk on Friday 12th. June 2026 will be on the United Downs (Cornwall) Deep Geothermal Power project by Jane Charman. Company policy is not to travel outside Cornwall but we are delighted they have overlooked this rule for ourselves, the enormous depth they have reached in their drilling (4800 metres) enables them to raise water to the surface at 180deg C and power electrical generation and also the extraction of lithium. This will possibly be a welcome new industry for Cornwall.

The meeting will not be at our usual venue of Fremington Methodist Church as a funeral has been arranged for the same day/time. We are looking for an alternative venue, members will be informed by email well before the 12th June.

Mike Kelly, Group Leader



HIKERS

Monday 1st June

We are hoping for some lovely weather to enable us to take in the amazing views whilst doing a 5.5m circular walk from Bampton. Using footpaths, bridleways and quiet lanes as we make our way towards Morebath. Be prepared for some ups (mostly at the beginning) and downs but nothing too strenuous. Further details to follow. If you are not already a member of our group and would like to join us you are most welcome. Please let me know so that I can ensure you receive all the information.

Pauline Markey, Karen Wagstaff, Group Leaders



HOW IT WORKS

Next meeting: Friday 26th June 2026 at 1.45 for 2.00pm.

'How It Works' grew to be a popular group while ably led for many years by David Dickinson – so thanks for his inspiring work! David is not leaving but lessening his role while I try to follow his footsteps. In May, Peter Loombe's talk on Leon Theremin who invented espionage devices and created the **Theramin**, an electronic musical instrument of mysterious sounds, was both informative and entertaining. The next meeting on **June 26th** includes Peter Kyle on **The Life Cycle of Atlantic Salmon** – hatching in rivers, migrating to the ocean and then returning to their specific rivers of origin! David Dickinson will also talk about **Dragonflies** which are one of the oldest living life forms, having existed for over 350 million years! The last meeting voted to meet in July (when Dale Hall will talk about **Islam**) while recognising that our plans may be affected by the extensive road works. **For more information**, contact Dale

Dale Hall, Group Leader



KNIT AND NATTER

Second Monday at 2pm-4pm

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. 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.

Sue Thomas, Group Leader



LITERARY STUDIES GROUP

Tue 16th June 2.30pm Imperial Hotel: Tue 21st July 2.30pm Imperial Hotel

Our last book was *None of This is True* by Lisa Jewell, a prolific writer of psychological thrillers. This was a very popular read amongst the majority of the group. Although unsettling and shocking, the story's gripping twists and turns and the suspense created were really appreciated, as was the story's unusual construction throughout. Although this genre is not to everyone's taste, even the few who did not enjoy it found it a compulsive, easy read, very cleverly written, but just a bit too dark and disturbing. The complicated relationships between the terrifyingly real characters were well drawn, and the writer did not attempt to clarify their motives until the very end - a clever move. Perhaps by then it should have been clear who did what, but no, with a most original flourish, the author introduced a 'bonus chapter' which left us with more questions than answers! In conclusion, this book certainly lived up to its title, and those who enjoyed it will be reading more from Lisa Jewell! "People can lose their lives in libraries. They ought to be warned." (Saul Bellow – Canadian/American writer

Ellie Bray, Group Leader

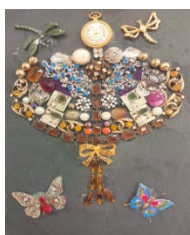


LOCAL HISTORY

Local History meetings will resume in September.

We are always pleased to receive suggestions for topics and 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. We look forward to seeing you again and welcoming new members. Yvonne and Jackie

Yvonne Partington, Jackie Brayley, Group Leaders



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). We now have two places available in the Mosaic group, if you are interested and would like to have a try at Mosaics please phone our Group Leader, Jo

Jo Archer, Group Leader



POETRY

Owing to holidays this month our meeting was cancelled. Julie has kindly agreed to host next month and the theme will remain Colour. We still have room for new members. We are a small friendly group who meet on the second Saturday of the month at each other's houses starting at 2pm and usually ending 4.30-5pm. Refreshments are provided halfway. Contact Margaret for further details.

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



PRACTICAL GARDENERS

The Practical Gardening Group visited Taw Organic Plant Nursery near Tawstock on May 21st. The 18-acre site has been developed over 7/8 years by just three full-time staff and includes a large polytunnel, two greenhouses, an ever-expanding number of plant beds, a pond and an impressive orchard. David and Liz slow to buy some. The nursery is open on Saturdays (or by appointment) and purchases can also be made online. Well worth a visit, &

here is their website address: www.tawvalleyorganics.com. In June we will be visiting East Woodlands Farmhouse in Alverdiscott, Newton Tracey - for more details, see our programme on the website. Finally, new members are always welcome to join us - just contact one of us. Andy Jones & David Green. Contact Andy for further information

David Green, Andy Jones, Group Leaders



RAMBLERS

Thursday 11th June

This month we will be doing a 4m circular walk from Parracombe, followed by lunch for those who would like to join us. We will be following quiet lanes and crossing fields. A bit hilly in places but fairly easy underfoot for the most part. Further details to follow, new members are always very welcome. Please let us know if you are interested so that we can make sure we send you full details of the walk.

Karen Wagstaff, Pauline Markey, Group Leaders



SCRABBLE

June dates - Wed 3rd 10-12 30pm & Thurs 18th 10-12 30pm

July dates - Wed 1st 10-12.30pm & Thurs 16th 10-12.30pm

The meetings are held at Pam's home and 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. **Next meeting 10th June, 2026.**

This continues to be a popular group. Having sorted out our favourite 20 songs, we went on to go through several new songs, and the members appeared to enjoy our new selections. My gratitude to Sue Trick and all those members who took part and helped me with the admin side. See you again on 10 June!

Patricia Hayhurst, Group Leader



SKITTLES

Second and fourth Thursday of the month. 4.15pm – 6.15pm

We play every week on a Thursday at The Fox at Fremington. We have a full group at the moment. I have started a waiting list so if anyone would like to put their name on it let me know.

Elizabeth Howson, Group Leader



SPANISH CONVERSATION **NEW**

This is a new group starting up. It is basic Spanish Conversation aimed at giving interested parties enough knowledge of the language to be able to hold a simple conversation, order from a menu and purchase from a store. Initially the group is meeting on the first Friday of the month at Fremington Methodist Hall at 10 a.m. The next meeting will be Friday 5th June. There is a fee of £3 to cover costs and members should bring their membership cards/lanyard. For more information contact Linda.

Linda Southgate, Group Leader



STROLLERS

Thurs 25th June 11am.

Meet at front door of Barnstaple Museum.

Walk along River Taw towards Rock Park. Proceed along river to the top of Rock Park (next to iron bridge). Turn left towards Park School; turn left along road beside Rock Park. Proceed along road (or path in Rock Park if dry) to new tarmac path following that along right side of Rock Park till the road from Newport. Cross this road, veering right then onto path through Trinity Graveyard past Trinity Church and along Trinity Street to the bus station. Go past the bus station, along Queen Street to Boutport Street. Go along this street to Mermaid Cross, down and past the Council offices, through its car park to the Tarka Trail. Take a left here and go along the TARKA Trail. Royal And Fortescue or Queen Anne's for lunch. Distance 2.8 miles; about 90 minutes.

Bob Smith, Group Leader



TABLE TENNIS

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

Table tennis continues to be played with great enthusiasm. Every Tuesday, we have a large group of 20-25 players. This is great as the Tarka Tennis Centre continues to provide us with three tables to play on. We play Doubles for 1.5 hours and everybody gets quite a few games in. In between social chat is light and friendly. All together good for fitness and good for the mind. New members welcome. Contact Agnes or Gabi.

Gabi, Agnes, Group Leaders



TREKKERS

Friday JUNE 19: Cheriton Ridge and Upland Exmoor

Route: From Hillsford Bridge (Watersmeet) to Cheriton Ridge and Hoar Oak Water to the Hoar Oak Tree, taking in parts of the Tarka Trail and Two Moors Way.

Return via the abandoned Hoar Oak Cottage and Furzehill Common to Cheriton and Combe Park Wood. The walk provides good examples of Exmoor's archaeology as well as wide ranging vistas. Grade: An easy/moderate 8.5m with one steep ascent at Smallcombe Bridge. Some parts likely to be muddy even in summer. Rendezvous: Meet at Hillsford Bridge (Watersmeet) Car Park at 10.15 for 10.30 start. More details: Contact Mike

Friday JULY 17: Cow Castle and River Barle

Route: From Simonsbath, outward on the high path above Cow Castle (Iron Age fort) and back along the River Barle. Easy/moderate 8m with great views, skylarks and deer. For more details, contact Peter Loombe

Friday AUGUST 21: Morte Point, Bull Point and Damagehue Rock

Route: From Morte Hoe, towards Woolacombe, then a clockwise circuit along the SWCP and back across countryside paths. Easy/moderate 7m. For more details, contact Dale (below).

New ideas, routes and leaders are always welcome – so please volunteer to lead walks and/or propose routes. All suggestions are gratefully received!

Dale Hall, 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

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 **28th June**, please submit any articles before the **24th June** if possible

Lynne Dickinson, Editor

Visit of Charles Hanson of "Bargain Hunt" fame on the 15th April. Summary provided by Linda Southgate.

A visit to our group by auctioneer Charles Hanson of 'Bargain Hunt' fame was an enjoyable evening. He shared with our audience of 50 or so members, many anecdotes from his early career in antiques to the present day. His charm and his wit were entertaining, keeping the listeners engaged and the time passed quickly. He took questions from the audience and answered them with his inimitable humour.

Trekkers bluebell walk on Dartmoor



Another photo on the bluebell walk



Practical Gardeners – by the pond



In the Potting Tunnel



In the orchard with our hosts Liz and David



Ramblers in May – Withypool to Landacre Bridge returning along the River Barle



