

BARNSTAPLE u3a
NEWSLETTER AUGUST, 2026 Issue 474



www.barnstaple.u3asite.uk

barnstaplethirdagegroup@rocketmail.com

Chairman: *Nigel Wright*

Business Secretary: *Philip Hawkins*

Membership Secretary: *Julia Denton*

Groups Co-ordinator: *Mary Young*

The September coffee morning (Thursday 3rd) will be dedicated to a member's CRAFT AND COLLECTION morning, held within the Roundswell community hall. If you have a particular craft skill, or a collection of a special item and feel that you would like to exhibit at the show, please do contact me, so that I can allocate a table and give you further details. The show will be free entry, with normal tea/coffee facilities and anyone is welcome. Many thanks, Keith Luckhurst.

AUGUST SPEAKER

Our next speaker will be Ian Gasper whose talk is entitled "A taste of Japan in Winter".

Speakers at Coffee Mornings

You may be aware that we have changed our monthly speaker a few times recently at short notice. In each case this has come about through unforeseen circumstances. We will do our best to arrange a replacement but this is not always easy. The attendance at Coffee Mornings has been a little disappointing of late and the Committee would urge you to attend if at all possible. The money collected on the first Thursday of the month helps to cover the cost of a speaker's fee as well as the refreshments and hire of the hall. If numbers attending continue to dwindle, then the Committee will have no choice but to consider raising the charge above the existing £1. Linda Southgate, Speaker Secretary

Coffee rota at Roundswell - Reminder

The rota is as follows:

August 6th Chris Wright, John Vooght

September 3rd Dale Hall, Carolyn Oldfield

Many thanks, as ever, to all who volunteer to provide a good service for our U3A members. If anyone feels they are available to volunteer for the meeting on 01 October, please let either Dee or Tom know at the next meeting.

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 August**, please submit any articles before the **24th August** if possible. **Lynne Dickinson, Editor**

Many of our Groups are having a break for summer, some because of the road works at Roundswell. Please carefully check the entry for the Group you are interested in for change of venue or summer holiday. Editor

Barnstaple u3a Contact List – see groups entry for more details			
Group	Date and time	Venue	Contact
Art	Tues 10-12am	Rhod. Ave.MethChurch	Brian Steward
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.6 th Aug - 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 Sept. 2 nd Wed 2pm	Barnstaple Library	Jackie Brayley - Yvonne Partington
Mosaics	Fridays 10am – 12.30pm	Rhod. Ave, Methodist 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	Thursday 4.15-6.15pm.	The Fox, Fremington	Elizabeth Howson
Spanish Conversation	1 st Fri of month 10am	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, Barnstaple 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.

Jackie Hill & Brian Steward, 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.

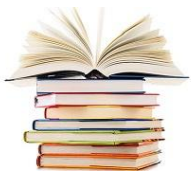
Mary Young, Sue Thomas, Group Leaders



BONSAI – An introduction.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, 5th August at our usual excellent venue of The Vine, at 2.00. We shall be looking towards preparing trees for the Craft and Hobbies show on 3 September. If you have anything please bring in your material for discussion and admiration and of course for our mutual learning.

Nigel Wright, Group Leader



BOOK LOVERS

Last Wednesday in month.

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 friendly embroidery group meets the second Monday of each month from 2 to 4 pm but **please note that our August meeting will be at a member's house because of the Fremington road closure.** We include all kinds of stitching and new members are very welcome. If you are interested, please contact Christine.

Christine Robilliard, Group Leader



EVENING DINING GROUP

Second Tuesday

The last outing for the dining group was to the Fulham in Barnstable little disappointing service wise but the food was good as the empty plates testified! Our next outing will be in September - I'm leaving August out because of holidays etc. but on **September 8th** it will be Morans at 6:30 deposit of £5 per person is required as soon as possible please and we will need to pre-order about a week before but I'll sort that out when it comes through to me.

October 13 will see us at the Goldenhorn in Barnstable, no deposit this time, but I will need to confirm numbers about a week before. **November 10** at 6:30 will see us at Lush restaurant in Barnstable. It was very successful last time, no pre-orders no deposits this time. **December** will be on the eighth at 6:30 at the Wayfair in Instow. We will need to pre-order this but no deposits are necessary - I will need to confirm numbers about a week before. Looking forward to all of these!!! Please contact the Group Leader if you are interested in joining this group

Mary Young, Group Leader



GEOLOGY

A Geology Group update this month; we do not resume our meetings until **11th September** in Barnstaple Library prior to which we have our field trip to Radstock, Somerset. Please note - the following meeting on the **9th October** will be at **Goodleigh Village Hall** at the usual time of 2.00pm as the library is not available on that day. I will be sending out a schedule of Geology Group talks to members shortly.

Mike Kelly, Group Leader



HIKERS

This month's Hikers Walk started at Duckpool, Cornwall. We made our way inland, along woodland paths to the imposing farm house of Stowe Barton. We then walked across fields and farm tracks towards Northcott Mouth where we had lunch on the beach, whilst taking in beautiful views. After lunch we set off along the SWCP eventually arriving at Sandymouth for refreshments as we braced ourselves for the final leg back to Duckpool. Lovely weather, great company and lots of chat and laughter along the way! A total of 6.89 miles.

Hikers and Ramblers

Thursday 13th August

Once again, we will be having a joint Social Event for August. We will be doing a short(ish) walk along the River Taw to Tawstock and Lake followed by lunch at Queen Anne's Cafe on the Strand in Barnstaple afterwards for those that would like to. If you would like to join us please let us know by

Wednesday 5th August so that I can confirm our booking with the Cafe and also forward you further details.

Pauline Markey, Karen Wagstaff, Group Leaders



HOW IT WORKS

4th Friday of each Month

We're on holiday until September 25th when We'll Meet Again to hear **Rita Granger's** fascinating talk on "**Pythagoras: Man, Myth and Mathematics**". The venue is yet to be confirmed depending on how the road works are going, but you'll be notified in good time. Our other events will then be:

23/10 An Infidel's Guide to Islam: Dale Hall

27/11 The Workshop of the World: Arthur Hodgetts

11/12 Joint Christmas Party with Geology – with a seasonal *Christmas Cracker* entertainment

Everyone is welcome to this eclectic group. Meetings are at 1.30 for 2.00pm and generally last until 4pm.

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 18th August 2.30pm Imperial Hotel: Tue 15th Sept. 2.30pm Imperial Hotel

Several years ago, HarperCollins embarked on a project to publish modern retellings of Jane Austen's six classic novels, by six contemporary authors, one of which was *Sense and Sensibility* rewritten by Joanne Trollope. This was our last book.

We all agreed that this was a very easy read. For those who did not compare it with the original, it was a straightforward, thoroughly enjoyable, relaxing story with a clear-cut storyline and good characterisation. Something to look forward to at the end of another long hot day! However, others were disappointed, pointing out that although Ms Trollope remained faithful to the original story, the language and content used was not sufficient to bring it into the 21st century. Jane Austen's horse-drawn carriages were replaced by 21st-century automobiles, and there was reference to iPods, laptops and social media, but none of this was enough to make the story 'fit' in this day and age. The original book was of its time, but the roles and expectations of women in today's society differ considerably from Jane Austen's 19th-century world, and Ms Trollope's adaptation did not emphasise this enough. Our final thought: why attempt to rewrite a true classic in the first place? We discovered that of the six Jane Austen novels planned for rewriting, the final two did not materialise, but we would like to know how the completed ones were received. I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading" (Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*)

Ellie Bray 01271 371506 Group Leader



LOCAL HISTORY

Second Wednesday, 2pm.

We re-start our Local History meetings on Wednesday, 9th September at 2pm. Our speaker will be David Carter and he will speak on The Pubs and Inns of Appledore. Please note that for **THIS TALK ONLY THE VENUE WILL BE AT THE CASTLE CENTRE** as the Library is not available. The rest of the meetings will be held at the library as usual. 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 of the month). Our new logo is a mosaic by Carol Hawkins. 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 Archer, Group Leader



POETRY

This report was kindly provided by Gillian Kerr.

Women poets provided our theme in July and we enjoyed a wide range of interesting poems from the 16th century to the present day. In between, Christina Rossetti, Emily Bronte and Elizabeth Barratt Browning all put in appearances.

Modern women poets such as Wendy Cope and Carol Ann Duffy are always popular and, of course, we had to include some fun-filled offerings by Pam Ayres! However, one of

her poems, new to us all, *Down the Line*, proved to be a very serious poem about the First World War, and showed us a very different side to the Pam Ayres we thought we knew.

There will be no meeting during the month of August. We meet next on September 12th when our theme will be poems from the 18th century and Dale has kindly volunteered to host.

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. For more information, please contact Margaret

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



PRACTICAL GARDENERS

On Thursday July 16th the Practical Gardening Group went to Tapeley Park gardens, near Instow. The estate has been in the hands of the Christie family since the late nineteenth century and has stunning views of the Torridge estuary. The ethos is on sustainability so the permaculture garden features companion planting of mainly herbs and vegetables interspersed with the bright reds of crocosmia, all of which attract abundant wildlife. With formal terraces, woodland, a labyrinth and a lake surrounded by hydrangeas in every shade of blue, there was plenty to enjoy in the sunshine. Our next meeting is to "Dahlia Paradise" at Lake, near Tawstock, on Thursday 20th August. If you fancy joining us, please get in touch.

David Green, Andy Jones, Group Leadership Team



RAMBLERS

Hikers and Ramblers

Thursday 13th August

Once again, we will be having a joint Social Event for August. We will be doing a short(ish) walk along the River Taw to Tawstock and Lake followed by lunch at Queen Anne's Cafe on the Strand in Barnstaple afterwards for those that would like to.

If you would like to join us please let us know by **Wednesday 5th August** so that I can confirm our booking with the Cafe and also forward you further details.

Karen Wagstaff, Pauline Markey, Group Leaders



SCRABBLE

There will be no scrabble in August

September dates - Wed 2nd 10-12.30pm & Thurs 17th 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

Seated Exercise sessions have now been running for about 9 months. We exercise to music and as one of the members says 'I wonder what our 18-year-old selves would think of us doing exercises to music that we used to dance to?' Other comments are 'gives me a mental lift', 'challenging but fun', 'my body is now more toned', very rewarding and gets me out to meet people'. Anthony (our trainer) is very able, professional and funny, he is sitting at the very front of the photo of us all after we have finished our session on a very hot Monday! Everyone who attends says they really enjoy themselves and with the added benefit of trying to get fitter and quite a lot stay for coffee and chat afterwards. There are some seats left so if you want to come along to the Tarka Leisure Centre at 1.00 every Monday let me know. **You must bring along your u3a membership card to participate.**

Maureen Penny, Group Leader



SINGING FOR FUN

Second Wednesday 10-12noon. **Next meeting 9th September, 2026.**

Despite it being holiday time, most of our group members attended our last session, when, after a light-hearted 'warm-up' with Sue, we sang a mixture of songs both old and new with sheet music or printouts of words. With the prospect of necessary but highly disruptive roadworks due to block the road from Fremington to the Cedars from 15 June until 23 August, the members took a vote on whether we should cancel our meetings scheduled for 8th July and 12th August. This resulted in a decision to postpone our next session (and the Group lunch intended to follow our meeting on 8th July) until 9th September. Group member Jane (responsible for booking our lunch at a local hostelry) produced copies of the menu and order forms for us to state what meal we'd like to choose. As always, thank you all for your support, take care of yourselves, and see you in September.

Patricia Hayhurst, Group Leader

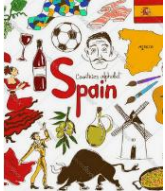


SKITTLES

Thursday 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

This group 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. We are taking a break until September on account of the roadwork problems. We shall resume on Friday Sept 4th at Fremington Methodist Hall at 10 a.m. and then another session on Fri 11th Sept at 3pm. Each session will last an hour and costs £3 which covers the rent, refreshments and printing. Members should bring their membership cards/lanyard. For more information contact Linda.

Group Leader, Linda Southgate



STROLLERS

Strollers are taking a break and there will be no walk in August. The next walk will be on Thursday 24th September

Bob Smith, Group Leader



TABLE TENNIS

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

We will have our Summer break in August with Table Tennis recommencing on 1st September 2026. New members welcome.

Gabi, Agnes Group Leaders



TREKKERS

Big thanks to Peter Loombe for leading a fine walk in July from Simonsbath to Cow Castle and back along the River Barle...



Coming walks...

Friday AUGUST 21: Morte Point, Bull Point and Damage Hue

Route: From Morte Point, a clockwise circuit along the SWCP and back via farmland paths. A moderate 6.5m with 1.6K ft climbing overall. **Rendezvous:** Morte Point Car Park at 10:15 for 10:30 start. It's payable so car sharing is attractive (via WhatsApp?). **More details:** Contact Dale Hall.

Friday SEPTEMBER 18: Exford, Room Hill and River Exe: A southerly circuit using the Exe Valley Way from Exford to climb Room Hill before returning along the River Exe. An inviting tearoom at the end. More details, contact Janet Ellis.

Friday OCTOBER 16: To be arranged: Peter Loombe will lead a coastal, countryside or moorland walk. More details, contact Peter.

New ideas, routes and leaders are 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

Strollers - Chivenor



Seated exercise – Trainer Anthony seated in front



A delightful and enjoyable fine day, was spent by members of the Barnstaple u3a Geology group, fossil hunting at Hellwell bay. Ammonites were clearly spotted in the beach rocks, and photographed accordingly, the largest ammonite being almost 600mm in diameter. Afterwards, a ten minutes' walk to the Brunel historic Watchet harbour, to have lunch, and visit the small comprehensive museum, together with the two rivers paper company, to experience the hand manufacture of fine traditional paper, of various thicknesses, using cotton and/or linen.



Hikers – Duck Pool





Ramblers – Frithelstock and Torrington



Practical Gardeners – Tapeley Park and Gardens

