BARNSTAPLE u3a

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER, 2026 Issue 476

www.barnstaple.u3asite.uk barnstaplethirdagegroup@rocketmail.com

Chairman: *Nigel Wright* **Business Secretary:** *Philip Hawkins*

Membership Secretary: *Julia Denton* **Groups Co-ordinator:** *Mary Young*

Message from Keith, (who did a great job organising the craft morning):
"Just to say many thanks to all exhibitors and associated helpers who made the exhibition a great success. Lots of compliments were received, from the many visitors, concerning the quality and craftsmanship of the various articles.
It always astonishes me to see the hidden local skill within North Devon"







WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Ms Cherry Brown Ms Susan Holmer Mrs Lynda Shipman
Mrs Annette Mew-Schaefer Mrs Susan (Sue) Giblett Mrs Sandy Barnes
Mrs Sharon Linnecar

Our Speaker on Thursday 1st October is Ashley Jones who will be talking about the British Honours System. We have had Mr. Jones before and he got a very good response.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



The Practical Gardening Group have a very special speaker, Alan French, for their meeting on Thursday October 15th, on the subject 'The Winter Garden', and all U3A members would be welcome to join us at Fremington Methodist Church Hall at 2.30pm. Contact Andy Jones.

Coffee rota at Roundswell - Reminder

The rota is as follows:

1st October: Chris Wright, Dale Hall

5th November: John Vooght, Yvonne Oram

If anyone feels they are available to help at the first meeting in 2027 (7th January) please let me know at the next meeting, or contact us. Coffee Co-ordinators are Dee Street and Tom street.

NEW GROUP – CANASTA

The first Canasta group has now met and it seemed to go very well, lots of the players were new to the game so we created a crib sheet which was appreciated. We decided to run canasta fortnightly so next one will be on Saturday 3 October at 2 o'clock, then Saturday 17th and so on. The cost is £2 per session, this covers tea, coffee & biscuits etc. To keep costs down this will be run from my home and if you would like to join us, please contact me directly.

Maureen Penny, Group Leader

Barnstaple u3a Contact List – see groups entry for more details			
Group	**Date and time**	**Venue**	**Contact**
Art	Tues 10-12am	Rhod. Ave.Methodist Church	**Brian Steward**
Board Games	Second Mon 2-4pm	Frem.Meth. Hall	**Mary Young Sue Thomas**
Bonsai	1st Wed of month – 2pm	Venn Valley Vineyard	**Nigel Wright**
Book Lovers	Last Wed. in month	Various	**Margaret Ryan**
Coffee morning	**Th. 1st Oct. -** 10.30am	R'ndswell Comm.Hall	**Any Committee Member**
Croquet Braunton	Recommence May 2027	Bple Croquet Club	**Anne Young**
Embroidery	Second Tue. of month	Members' homes	**Christine Robilliard**
Evening Dining	2nd Tue of month	Various	**Mary Young**
Geology	2nd Fri of month 1.45pm	Frem. Meth. Hall.	**Mike Kelly**
Hikers	Mon 10.30am	Various	**Pauline Markey Karen Wagstaff**
How it Works	4th Fri of month 1.45pm	Fremington Meth.Hall	**Dale Hall**
Knit and natter	Second Mon of month	Frem. Meth. Hall	**Sue Thomas**
Literary Studies	3rd Tue 2.30pm	Imperial Hotel	**Ellie Bray**
Local History	Wed. Sept. 9th 2pm	Barnstaple Library	**Jackie Brayley, Yvonne Partington**
Mosaics	Fridays 10am – 12.30pm	Rhod. Ave, Meth Church	**Jo Archer**
Poetry	2nd Sat of month, 2pm.	Various	**Margaret Ryan**
Practical Gardeners	3rd Thurs of month, 10.30am normally	Various	**Andy Jones**
Ramblers	2nd Thurs 10.30	Various	**Karen Wagstaff**
Scrabble	1st Wed 10am-12.30pm 3rd Thurs 10am-12.30pm	Pam's house	**Pam Harman**
Seated Exercise	Mondays 1pm	Tarka Leisure Centre	**Maureen Penny**
Singing for fun	2nd Wed 10-12.	Fremington Meth.Hall	**Patricia Hayhurst**
Skittles	Thurs 4.15-6.15pm.	The Fox, Fremington	**Elizabeth Howson**
Spanish Conversation	1st Fri of month 10am	Fremington Meth.Hall	**Linda Southgate**
Strollers	4th Thurs. 11am normally	Various	**Bob Smith**
Table Tennis	Tuesdays 2-3.30pm	Tarka Tennis Centre	**Agnes Adams, Gabi Engels-Hearn** -
Trekkers	3rd 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.

If anyone has any puzzles they would like to donate, I'm happy to collect them - just give me a ring and I'll sort something out!!

Mary Young Sue Thomas, Group Leaders



BONSAI – An introduction.

Following several requests about "How do you actually start a Bonsai.", I shall be going back to the basics with the aid of some trees that have been in the garden in pots for some while but never had an initial styling. If you would like to also bring along some 'unstyled' material we can look at the needs of different species. Again, we shall be meeting at the Vine Restaurant, Landkey, 2:00 – 4:00 pm, Wednesday, 7 October

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)

Croquet has finished for the season. We will begin again in May 2027. Contact Anne Young.

Anne Young, Group Leader



EMBROIDERY

We are a friendly group who enjoy all kinds of embroidery and stitching. New members are welcome. From October our group will meet in members' homes on the second Tuesday of the month from 2 to 4 pm. If you are interested, please contact Christine.

Christine Robilliard, Group Leader



EVENING DINING GROUP

Second Tuesday

Our recent dining event was held at Morans Thai restaurant in Westward Ho! 16 of us enjoyed an excellent meal with very attentive staff. All in all, a very sociable evening in a comfortable setting – Rita Price. Our October venue is the Golden Horn in Barnstaple on the 13th at 6.30 - no deposits but I do require numbers please by the 10th October- thanks. Hope to see you all soon. Please contact the Group Leader if you are interested in joining this group

Mary Young, Group Leader



GEOLOGY
2nd Friday, 1.45 for 2pm

The Geology Group talks resumed on 11th. September in Barnstaple Library with a presentation by the group's Richard Attenborough on 'Wiggly lines generated whilst drilling for oil and gas'. The well-illustrated talk enlightened the audience about the complexities of directional drilling and the wealth of information collected whilst drilling through the use of associated sensors and in situ sampling. October's talk will be by Rick Stewart on 'Deep Mining in Cornwall Enabled with Steam Power' on 9th October at 14:00 at **Goodleigh Village Hall**, a one-off venue due to the unavailability of the usual room in Barnstaple Library on the day. All most welcome.

Please note that the funeral for our late colleague David Butler is on Friday 2nd October at 11.30am at Barnstaple Crematorium – Lynne Dickinson, Editor.

Mike Kelly, Group Leader



HIKERS

We are looking forward to our Walking Holiday in the South Downs this month. Unfortunately, there will be no Hikers this month due to this. New members very welcome - Karen and Pauline

Pauline Markey, Karen Wagstaff, Group Leaders



HOW IT WORKS
4th Friday of each Month

Many thanks to **Rita Granger** for her excellent talk on "**Pythagoras: Man, Myth and Mathematics**" in September. She brought her subject to life, showed what an ambiguous character he was, and exercised our minds with the Theorem Proofs!

Our next events on Fridays are:

23/10 An Infidel's Guide to Islam: Dale Hall (Library 2A)
Including: *Why Islam is important; reverence for the Qur'an; Mohammad as Prophet; his views of Judaism and Christianity; the Sunni-Shia divide; Sharia law; Jihad and holy war.*

27/11 Workshop of the World: Arthur Hodgetts (Library 2A)

11/12 Joint Christmas Party with Geology, with a ***Christmas Cracker*** of prose and poetry! (Venue to be confirmed)

ALL the meetings are in **Barnstaple Library**. All U3A members are welcome to attend this eclectic group. Meetings include refreshments and are at 1.45 for 2.00pm.

Please note that the funeral for our late colleague David Butler is on Friday 2nd October at 11.30am at Barnstaple Crematorium – Lynne Dickinson, Editor.

Dale Hall, Group Convenor



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 20th Oct. 2.30pm Imperial Hotel: Tue 17th Nov. 2.30pm Imperial Hotel

Our last book was Custard Tarts and Broken Hearts, by Mary Gibson. We agreed that this was an easy read, which described 'a story of real hardship and friendship in East London in the years leading up to World War 1' and in this respect, it did not disappoint. The vivid descriptions of the lives and struggles of factory girls and their fight for equal rights were the strong elements of the story, and for some, this made the book enjoyable and interesting. However, others thought the author did not develop the potentially interesting social-history aspects enough, and that the characters did not come to life. Too many promising storylines were soon lost under insufficiently developed threads, leading to a lacklustre read.

"The man who does not read has no advantage over the man who cannot read" (Mark Twain)

Ellie Bray, Group Leader



LOCAL HISTORY
Second Wednesday, 2pm.
Our speaker for 14th October is Trish Andrews talking about the Devon Dialect.
We're back in the library in our usual room for this and the rest of our talks.
At the meeting on 11th November, we have Philip Marlow talking about North Devon 250million years ago to the Romans based around Abbotsham.
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).
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
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 September 17th 14 members of the Practical Gardening Group visited Marwood Hill Garden, just north of Barnstaple. The garden has survived the summer heat rather well and there was plenty of colour in the banks of blue hydrangeas, the many sun-loving plants from the southern hemisphere, as well as a wide assortment of salvias. Danny, one of the gardeners, gave us an excellent talk about the way the garden is adapting to climate change to indicate that this is a garden responding positively to horticultural challenges. It was a most enjoyable morning.

Next month we have invited to our first visiting speaker to Fremington Methodist Church Hall at 2.30pm on October 15th to talk about "The Winter Garden". All members are encouraged to attend. Contact Andy for further information.

David Green, Andy Jones, Group Leadership Team



RAMBLERS
As we are away on Hikers Walking Holiday this month there will be no Ramblers walk this month. Our apologies. New members always welcome – Karen and Pauline.

Karen Wagstaff, Pauline Markey, Group Leaders



SCRABBLE
October dates - Wed 7th 10-12.30pm & Thurs 22nd 10-12.30pm
November dates – Wed 4th 10-12.30pm & Thurs 19th 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. 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 - Maureen

You must bring along your u3a membership card to participate.

Maureen Penny, Group Leader



SINGING FOR FUN

Second Wednesday 10-12noon.

On 9th September, everyone was eager to sing again after our 2-month break, and Sue started us off with reminders of the Italian instructions about the pace and expression each song required, which of course, we sang. The group sounded great, and we tackled some new material as well. Most of us went on to the New Inn for a meal afterwards, when there was still plenty of chat except when we were eating. After many months without paying any subscription, the Committee has asked us to restart these "subs" so can everyone please bring £5 to our next session on 14th October to cover the months of October, November and December 2026. Thank heaven our accompanists don't make any charge for their services. Thank you again for being such a friendly group - I look forward to seeing you on 14th October.

Patricia Hayhurst, Group Leader

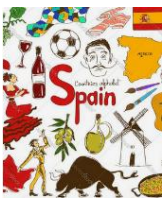


SKITTLES

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.

The dates for the rest of the year are as follows:

Friday 2nd October 10am Friday 16th October 3pm Friday 6th November 10am
Friday 20th November 3pm Friday 4th December 10am Friday 18th December 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

Thursday 29th October, 11am.

Meet at St John's Garden Centre, Newport.

Meet at GC main entrance door (plenty of car parking)

Walk over road past Tesco to underpass. Walk through underpass along pavement of Whiddon Drive to end (past primary school). Turn left down Larkspur Gardens to Whiddon Valley Woods walk. Walk along path next to Coney Gut till path joins Whiddon Drive. Walk along road back to underpass past Tesco back to start. Distance 2.1 miles.

Bob Smith, Group Leader



TABLE TENNIS

Tuesday afternoon from 2.00 to 3.30pm at the Barnstaple Tarka Centre.
Table tennis Sessions have restarted with much enthusiasm after the summer break. Everyone is coming and some new members have been joining. This is great as it shows that the sessions are enjoyed. However, it does mean that there is full occupancy of the Hall and of our tables. Therefore, for the time being, there will be a waiting list for newcomers. Contact Agnes or Gabi.

Gabi, Agnes, Group Leaders



TREKKERS

Big thanks to Janet Ellis for leading a fine walk from Exford, across moorland and back via the Exe Valley Way.



NEXT WALK: Friday OCTOBER 16: **Merton and Dolton**
A countryside circular walk of about 9 miles led by Peter Loombe.
Rendezvous: meet a Merton car park near the church (EX20 3EE) at 10.15 for 10.30 start. For more details, contact Peter on ploombe@yahoo.co.uk.
Arrangements: BYOF&D for picnic stop and wear shoes and suitable clothing for whatever weather is likely. Walking poles are recommended.
Forthcoming walks
Friday NOVEMBER 20: Mike Kelly: Exmoor
Friday DECEMBER 18: Michael Elliott: Heddon's Mouth and Woody Bay 6-mile walk via the high and low pathways.
New members are welcome to join this friendly group. Route suggestions and offers to lead walks are also welcome.

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 **29th October**, please submit any articles before the **24th October** if possible.

Lynne Dickinson, Editor

All of the following photographs were taken at our Craft and Collection Coffee morning on the 3rd September.




















BIBBY LINE
WEEK END CRUISE




Acting Up
DARE TO ACT






DRAUGHTS
Boggle



