BARNSTAPLE u3a

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER, 2026 Issue 477



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 Member who has joined us recently:

Mrs Sue White

We also welcome the following new Affiliate members:

Ms Annabel Marriott Mrs Carol van Zyl

Our Speaker on Thursday 5th November is Julie Layzell who will talk about The Dark Sky Initiative

CHRISTMAS IS COMING



We will be delighted to welcome you at the Barnstaple Hotel on Thursday 3rd December 2026

A 2-course carvery lunch with a vegetarian option available plus tea/coffee at a cost per person of £24.50. Time 12.15 for 1pm lunch. There will be a raffle plus entertainment.

CONTACT SUE FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

TICKETS WILL BE ON SALE AT OUR NEXT COFFEE MORNING ON THURSDAY 5TH NOVEMBER. PAYMENT CAN BE BY CASH OR CHEQUE (MADE PAYABLE TO BARNSTAPLE THIRD AGE GROUP) OR MEMBERS CAN PAY BY BACS QUOTING "Xmas Lunch" WITH RESERVATION CONFIRMED ONCE THE MONEY IS IN THE BANK, WHEN TICKETS WILL BE ALLOCATED. Sue Thomas, Treasurer.

Coffee rota at Roundswell - Reminder

The rota is as follows:

5th November: John Vooght, Yvonne Oram

7th January 2027 Chris Wright, Karen Hasler

We ask that you arrive a little earlier than usual (**09.30**) to help set up the service ready for when members arrive. If you have any queries at all please do not hesitate to call either Tom or Dee.

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The list of activities on Page 4 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 **27th November**, please submit any articles before the **24th November** if possible. **Lynne Dickinson, Editor**

NOTICE FROM MARY YOUNG

RENT A PUZZLE

Jigsaw puzzles are available to rent at £ 2 for as long as you need! Available at our coffee mornings only - any donations to this venture would be very welcome - collection can be arranged - Mary Young

Barnstaple u3a Contact List – see groups entry for more details			
Group	**Date and time**	**Venue**	**Contact**
Art	Tues 10-12am	Rhod. Ave. 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**
Canasta	Saturday 2pm fortnightly	Maureen's house	**Maureen Penny**
Coffee morning	**Th. 5th Nov. -** 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	Barnstaple Library	**Mike Kelly**
Hikers	Mon 10.30am	Various	**Pauline Markey, Karen Wagstaff**
How it Works	4th Fri of month 1.45pm	Barnstaple Library	**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	Second Wed. 2pm	Barnstaple Library	**Jackie Brayley, Yvonne Partington**
Mosaics	Fridays 10am – 12.30pm	Rhod. Ave, Methodist 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	Thursday 4.15-6.15pm.	The Fox, Fremington	**Elizabeth Howson**
Spanish Conversation	1st Fri of month 10am & 3rd Fri of month 3pm	Fremington Meth.Hall	**Linda Southgate**
Strollers	4th Thurs. 11am normally	Various	**Bob Smith**
Table Tennis	Tuesdays 2-3.30pm	Tarka Tennis Centre	
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.

Our last Bonsai meeting this year will be at The Vine on Wednesday, 4th November, starting @ 2:00pm. As life is generally very busy around Christmas, we shall **NOT** be having a meeting in December. That means Wednesday, 6th January will be our starting point for 2027.

As we are now approaching autumn I shall be going through the routine of repotting two different species of trees. Please bring any material along so that we can all discuss the way forward with your Bonsai.

Nigel Wright, Group Leader



BOOK LOVERS

Last Wednesday in month. This is the report from the meeting on the 30th September, which took place too late for entry in the last newsletter – editor.

Clare Leslie Hall - Broken Country, a suspense love story set in North Dorset to be adapted into a film.

Rev. Richard Cole - The Canon Clement murder mysteries books 1-5. Enjoyed how the characters develop over the series.

Devon historian, Michael Hawkins - Devon Roads (pub 1988) provides an illustrated history of the development and management of Devon's highways.

David Lodge - Therapy, a comic novel exploring mid-life crisis through the journal of a wealthy TV writer.

C J Sansom- Sovereign, third in the 6 Shardlake historical crime series.

Jung Chang - Wild Swans: Three daughters of China, a family history spanning a-century chronicling the turbulent Chinese politics.

Robert Harris - Precipice, a historical thriller novel which centres on the real-life love affair between British Prime Minister

H Asquith and aristocrat, Venetia Stanley, involving sharing secret state documents in 1914 on the brink of WW1.

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

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



CANASTA

Canasta will be run fortnightly on a Saturday at 2pm, starting from the 3rd October, then the 17th and 31st. November dates are: 14th and the 28th and so on. The cost is £2.00 per session, this covers tea, coffee & biscuits etc. If you would like to join us please contact Maureen

Maureen Penny, 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

Our friendly embroidery group meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 2 to 4pm at members' own homes. We include all kinds of stitching and new members are most welcome. If you are interested, please contact Christine.

Christine Robilliard, Group Leader



EVENING DINING GROUP

Second Tuesday

The visit in October was to the Golden Horn in Barnstaple - lovely evening with far too much delicious food!!
In November the venue is Lush restaurant and bar in Boutport Street on the 10th November at 6.30 pm please let me know if you are interested in joining us there.
In December the venue is the Wayfarer in Instow on December 8th - at 6.30 I am taking reservations for this one too. It will be a special menu and we will be required to pre order on this occasion - book early for Christmas!! Please contact the Group Leader if you are interested in joining this group

Mary Young, Group Leader



GEOLOGY

2nd Friday, 1.45 for 2pm

At our meeting in October Rick Stewart gave an excellent talk regarding the use of steam powered pumping to remove water from Cornwall mines that then allowed the mining of these rich ore bodies. Rick has the ability to easily communicate with the audience in an enjoyable manner.

Dr Sam Hughes 13th November

The geological story of Southwest England is a complex one, rich in drama and intrigue. It is an enthralling tale of shifting tectonics and dynamic environments that have shaped the landscape we see today, having a profound effect on the region's history, and future. The rocks beneath our feet tell us about times when Southwest England was at the bottom of an ocean, or the centre of a giant mountain range. A former lecturer at Camborne School of Mines, Sam is now a geology educator and science communicator with a passion for promoting, conserving, and sharing Cornwall's fascinating geological history – David Dickinson.

Mike Kelly, Group Leader



HIKERS

Monday 2nd November

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we are unable to offer a walk for the Ramblers Group this month, therefore, we are proposing a joint walk of approximately 3.75m from Bideford to Appledore with return option for those who would like it (total 7.5m) otherwise there is the option to return to Bideford by bus. Please let us know if you would like to join us so that I can send you further information. New members very welcome - Karen and Pauline

Pauline Markey, Karen Wagstaff, Group Leaders

HOW IT WORKS

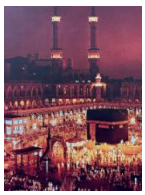
4th Friday of each Month

In October, Dale Hall presented an illustrated ***Infidel's Guide to Islam*** on why Islam is important; Mohammad as *the final* Prophet; Islam's early expansion, the Qur'an, sharia law and the five pillars of Islam; hell, and heaven; Islam on Jews and Christians; the Sunni-Shia schism; and prospects for the future. (Picture is the ah'ba in the holy city of Makkah where millions go on pilgrimages).

ur next events on Fridays this year are:

27/11 Workshop of the World: Arthur Hodgetts (Library 2A)
It is generally considered that the British Isles were in the forefront of the Industrial Revolution. Two places a few miles apart were claimed to be the 'Workshop of the World'. How did they work? Was the claim justified? How are they considered today?

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



ALL the meetings are in **Barnstaple Library**. All U3A members are welcome to attend this eclectic group. Meetings include refreshments for £3 entry and are at 1.45 for 2.00pm. For more information, contact Dale

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 17th Nov. 2.30pm Imperial Hotel, Tue 15th Dec. Our Xmas meeting
Our last book was 1984 by George Orwell, which caused contrasting opinions. Some had read the book before and had thought that it was very forward-thinking, if perhaps a little far-fetched. Now, on a second reading, they observed how remarkably accurate the author's predictions were and appreciated it more. However, others in the group were not enamoured by the book, finding it too convoluted, too intense, and too far-fetched. But despite these varied opinions, all agreed that the concept of 'Big Brother' watching is very real. We live in a surveillance society monitored by doorbell cams and CCTV: our use of computers can be monitored, personal data accessed, smartphones track our location and interests, and we may have Alexa in our homes listening in. Spin or half-truths now seem normal, and politically correct thinking is required. Mr Orwell's observations on world politics are reflected today, causing us to question who to believe, and some regimes even practice brainwashing. So, although a challenging read, the book provided food for thought.

Ellie Bray, Group Leader



LOCAL HISTORY

Second Wednesday, 2pm. Barnstaple Library.
At the meeting on 11th November, we have Philip Marlow talking about North Devon 250million years ago to the Romans based around Abbotsham.
There is no meeting in December. The first meeting in 2027 is on the 13th January with Lucy Scarrott talking about 1920's Barnstaple.

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

Our speaker at The Practical Gardening Group October meeting was a resounding success. On the subject 'The Winter Garden', Alan and Linda French arrived with a car stuffed full of scores of plants which he used skilfully during his talk to show how to combat the effects of climate change.

Revealing a lifetime's knowledge gained from working at plant nurseries, he suggested we consider growing plants such as mimosa, abelia, phormium and various foliage plants that were considered less suited to our climate until recently. In between introducing plants, he offered valuable suggestions about combating problems with peat-free composts and gave comprehensive advice about nurturing the plants he was featuring. He demonstrated how to plant up a bulb 'lasagne' using daffodils, tulips, crocuses, pansies (and several more), that could be used for a Christmas gift. It was a whirlwind of horticultural knowhow, learned from practical experience, and we hope to see him again.

The afternoon was completed with tea/coffee/biscuits together with some wonderful homemade cakes donated by members - thank you!

Our final meeting of 2026, on November 19th, will be a roundup of 2026 & ideas for 2027, timings etc to follow. Contact Andy for further information

David Green, Andy Jones, Group Leadership Team



RAMBLERS

Monday 2nd November

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we are unable to offer a walk for the Ramblers Group this month, therefore, we are proposing a joint walk with Hikers of approximately 3.75m from Bideford to Appledore with return option for those who would like it (total 7.5m) otherwise there is the option to return to Bideford by bus.

Please let us know if you would like to join us so that I can send you further information. New members always very welcome.

Karen Wagstaff, Pauline Markey, Group Leaders



SCRABBLE

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.

The twenty-two who attended our session on 14th October included four new members, with a further five unable to be with us on this occasion. As usual, our accompanist Sue got us off to a lively start and we sang a variety of songs.

Some Christmas songs are planned for our next meeting on 11th November, with old favourites from our regular list included too. We're certainly going to be busy singing the songs we enjoy over the next two months, but not too exhausted to enjoy the Festive season when it comes!

My thanks to Sue Trick and all those who support the Group - you ALL make it fun!

Patricia Hayhurst, Group Leader

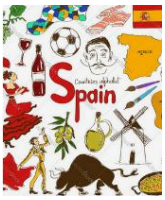


SKITTLES

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 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 26th November, 11am – meet at 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.
Everyone is attending regularly, and some new members have joined. 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

NEXT WALK: Friday NOVEMBER 20: **Exmoor**
An 8-mile circuit from Exford in the heart of Exmoor with two moderate ascents up Room Hill and Bye Common, both with far reaching views of Exmoor, followed by an attractive return along the River Exe. When reconnoitring, Mike took these pictures.





Rendezvous: meet in Exford's carpark (Chapel Street, TA24 7PP) at 10.15 for 10.30 depart. For more information, contact Mike on mike@planningpartnership.org.
Arrangements: BYOF&D for coffee/tea/lunch stops, and wear suitable boots and clothing for whatever weather is likely. Walking poles are normally recommended.
Forthcoming
Friday DECEMBER 18: Michael Elliott: Heddon's Mouth and Woody Bay 6-mile walk via the high and low pathways.
September's Walk had wonderful weather and views.





New members are welcome to join this friendly group.

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

Rick Stewart talking to the Geology Group with great enthusiasm:







Practical Gardeners listening to an excellent talk with Alan and Linda French:

Some of the members of the Mosaic Group:



Hikers trip to the South Downs:









