

## WELCOME TO YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR: SEPTEMBER 2026

### Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our new 'year'; behind the scenes the committee have been working hard over the summer to get everything ready!

We are really looking forward to meeting many of you at our forthcoming **Members' Morning** on Tuesday 1st September.

This is an opportunity for you to meet group leaders and sign up for groups. This will be held at St Aidan's Hall between 1030-1200.

We strongly recommend that you pay for/renew your subs before this date as Members' Morning does get extremely busy. Refreshments will not be offered on this day as we will be repurposing the kitchen. Entry/exit will be via the large double fire door as you walk up the pathway. Group leaders and sign ups will be in the main hall and in the back room. Membership will be in the office and overflow into the kitchen.

**New Groups:** Quite a few members are interested in our new **Pickle Ball** group, held at the Leisure Centre. If you're interested, please contact Helen (helen@berwicku3a.org) our Group Coordinator or Adele, Group Leader via the website or of course join up at Members' Morning.

Another new group for this year is **Bridge**, read on for more details.

For book lovers our new **Book Group 4** still has some vacancies- please contact the Group Leader Vanessa via our website or at Members' Morning.

**Homer's Iliad Group** is moving onto the **Odyssey**- see update on p6.

As always we are always keen to start new groups, if you have any interests or skills you can share, again Helen is your first port of call.

Sadly the Tai Chi groups are no longer on offer as u3a groups, but continue as independent groups under the 'Berwick Tai Chi' banner. We would like to thank Pete for all his work and dedication with Tai Chi for our u3a.

We are keen to offer other physical/exercise groups- if you have any suggestions please do let myself or Helen know!

It's been a very busy time in Berwick and locality with many events happening- I visited the Berwick Arts Group exhibition a couple of weeks ago, it was wonderful

**Contact us:**

**Tel : 07561 626690**

**Website: <http://berwick-upon-tweed.u3asite.uk/>**  
**(or scan QR code)**

**Email: [info@berwicku3a.org](mailto:info@berwicku3a.org)**



to see many members of our own Art Group exhibiting their works- what a very talented group!

**Help required:** Being a member of our wonderful organisation does entail a commitment from the members too, we ask that you look to support us in many ways. One way is to offer your support by taking on a non committee role. The following are vacant:

- Deputy Treasurer, supporting Cian, our Treasurer, and getting to know the role. If you have some financial expertise please do consider this role.
- Publicity, supporting Phil our Publicity Officer, mostly with ensuring our Facebook page is up to date.

Barry Tymon has for some years signed off on our annual accounts, he has decided to step back from the role. I would like to thank him on behalf of you all for taking on this essential role.

That's all folks, looking forward to seeing you on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September at Members' Morning!  
Rowena x

### **Open Meeting: June 2026 Paxton House**

The building of Paxton House was initiated by Patrick Home of Billie between 1758 and 1766 in an unsuccessful attempt to impress and wed a wealthy Prussian heiress, Sophie de Brandt. The Home family history can be traced back to the eleventh century. Over the years, it has been associated with the building of many fine houses in the Scottish Borders, including Wedderburn Castle and the Hirsell. Paxton House was designed originally by architects James and John Adam and was fitted with world-class Chippendale furniture and, later, a magnificent picture gallery including works from the National Galleries of Scotland.

The estate's historical ties with the slave trade originated in 1773, when Ninian Home, the wealthy owner of a sugar plantation in Grenada, bought the House. The property remained in the Home family until 1988, when the last private owner, John Home Robinson, gifted the House and its historic contents and extensive grounds to the Paxton Trust for public preservation.

Today, the House and grounds are open to the public, with guided tours and a variety of events and exhibitions. Tourists can camp in the Walled Garden caravan park or stay in one of the glamping pods within the estate.

Jim Casey gave a very knowledgeable and detailed account of the complex history of the Home family through the ages, culminating in the development and preservation of a luxurious Georgian home which can still be visited and enjoyed today.

Barbara Russell, Speaker Secretary

## Northumbria u3a - Events

### 1. Ushaw Event 2027

The Festival of Fun, Music and Learning held on May 12th, 2026, at Ushaw Historic House, Chapels and Gardens was such a resounding success that The Regional u3a Events Team and Committee have decided to organise a similar day in 2027.

This special day at Ushaw House will be on Wednesday 19th May 2027.

To enable this day to be a success we rely on members to contribute to the day.

We had a great response from members for 2026, but we would like others to put their names forward.

Can any member, or a group of members, offer to present a workshop or an activity for everyone to enjoy? Is your expertise in e.g. history, geography, crafts, such as card making, genealogy, photography, calligraphy, playing an instrument, singing in a choir etc. Could you lead a walk from Ushaw Historic House? Could you give a taster session about carpet bowls, any genre of dancing, ceramics and so the list goes on. The staff of the historic house will also be able to offer tours of the house giving an insight into its history.

Please contact Cecilia Coulson cecu3a@gmail.com for further information.

### 2. Pre Raphaelites Tour @ Laing Gallery on 20<sup>th</sup> October, click [here](#) for more info.

### National u3a: **Online Talks** in September - here is a selection:



#### Wild, edible autumn seeds

Join Hedgewitch Kat to discover the fascinating world of wild edible autumn seeds, from identification and folklore to practical uses.

Friday 4 September at 10am

Free - online via Zoom



#### "The Titanic Sails At Dawn" - punk in the 1970s

Join Lee Wellbrook to explore the origins, growth and legacy of punk in the UK in the 1970s.

Thursday 17 September at 10am

Free - online via Zoom



#### Triumph to trauma

##### Triumph to trauma

Triumph to Trauma (940 to 1042) - Danes before Normans: the Conquest before The Conquest!

Discover how the Danish conquest, Cnut and Emma of Normandy shaped England before the Norman Conquest.

Monday 7 September at 2pm

Free - online via Zoom

Please click [here](#) for more information and to book via Eventbrite.

## Regional Quiz

On Wednesday 7th October a u3a regional quiz will be held at Sunnyside Social Club, Sunnyside, NE16 5NA. Over the last few years Berwick has entered 1, 2 or 3 teams at this competition. We've never won, but one of our teams came 2nd last time and we've usually had creditable scores. We plan to car share to get there, and participants will be expected to contribute to fuel costs. There are already several people from Quiz Group interested in going but it is open to all Berwick u3a members – there won't be qualifying competition!

Please contact me via the Quiz Group webpage, or speak to me at Members' Morning, if you are interested. Here is the poster for the event, with more details.  
Anne Berry

## News from our Groups

### Latin and Classical Studies -

It doesn't matter whether you're a complete beginner, last did Latin at school, or have other experience of learning the language. Each session aims to introduce you to ideas for making progress at your own pace using the reference resources provided. There'll be a chance to do a bit of Greek, too. And you'll get to take a look at language in its classical cultural context of the ancient Graeco-Roman world. The group meets every other Tuesday morning at Berwick Library from 10am-11

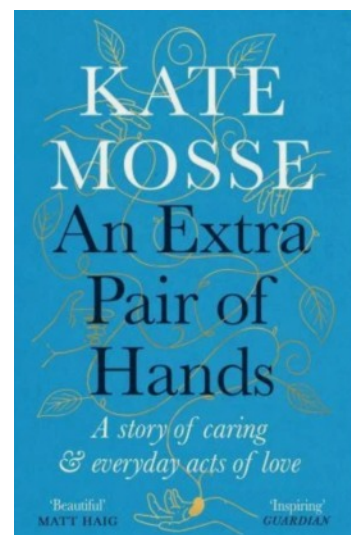
Steve Havelin

### Book Group 3

Kate Mosse: An Extra Pair of Hands

It is very unusual for our book group to unanimously agree with a chosen book. This time we all felt similar! Prolific writer Kate Mosse had written a personal story of caring for elderly relatives, in her case her Mum, her Dad and her Mother-in-Law as their respective health failed. She did admit that her wealth enabled her to purchase a house big enough for all of them, that her being self-employed was useful, that her siblings were nearby to help, and everyone in her extended family got along well together. But we felt that Mosse failed to acknowledge that her privileged experience was so far from the reality of the majority of women's lives as carers, and resulted in comments from us such as "smug", "annoyed", "no point to the book". We gave it an average score of 4, which is very low for us.

Linda Pepper



### **French Improvers** Status: waiting list

This small, informal and friendly group is following a structured learning plan to provide a foundation for dealing with personal, practical and transactional situations. We use textbooks, Power Point presentations, audio clips, reading passages, games and quizzes. The members are of mixed ability; those with greater knowledge are supportive of the ones with less experience. The group meets twice a month on Tuesday mornings between 9.45 and 10.45am during weeks 2 and 4.

### **French Conversation** Status: waiting list

The members of this group have a good working knowledge of French and are confident in speaking the language. The majority of each session is conducted in French. We exchange news and views as well as holding more in-depth discussions on topics chosen by different members. This past year, we have also shared our favourite poems and read a short story and a novella. The group meets twice a month on Tuesday mornings between 11am and 12 pm during weeks 2 and 4.

### **Intermediate French**

This is a new group which is offered for speakers with 'O' to 'A' Level experience who may not have used French for a long time. It is based on reading graded and abridged classic French novels, with a view to building up confidence to take part in simple discussions. Following each short chapter, helpful grammar tips and exercises are provided, as well as activities to check comprehension. Additional help and support will also be given by the group leader. The group will be held once a month on Tuesday mornings between 10 and 11am during week 3.

Barbara Russell

### **Wildlife Group**

We had our final event before the summer break in June, an enjoyable, informative and successful bird sighting walk at Goswick Dunes.

Our next scheduled meeting will be the **16th September**, with a talk from the Tweed Forum on their current projects which include river management and invasive species.

If you want to keep in touch over the summer join the WhatsApp group. Pat has made it possible for any current member of this to add other members.

Given that there still seem to be problems with emails getting through to me (something to do with the Beacon system?), it has been suggested that indication of attendance/non-attendance at events could be done through WhatsApp.



Attached is a picture of a kestrels nest that I found at our motorhome site last weekend. The prgoramme for 2026/7 is as planned:

- 16th September - Tweed Forum projects
- 18th November - Vincent Wildlife Trust. Pine Martens and Polecats.
- 21st October - Keith Knight. Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory.
- 16th December - Tom Cadwallender. Summer Birds of the Northumberland Coast.
- Jan/Feb/Mar - TBC
- 21st April - Tweed Pollinators/Buglife project (with possible short workshop)

Simon Wright

### Homer's Odyssey Study Group

More Ancient Greek poetry in translation, following last session's Iliad study group. There is no need to have read the Iliad to read the Odyssey. We won't spend more than 5 minutes discussing That Film!

To get most out of the group reading and discussion you will need to do some pre reading or listen to a recorded reading. At the first session we will discuss dates and venues for future meetings.

The first meeting will be 10am on 25th September, venue tbc nearer the time.

There will be some pre reading (or listening) which will be sent out after Members' Morning. If you're interested please contact Evelyn Grant, via the Groups page on the website.

Evelyn Grant

### Book Group 3: Our Man in Havana ' by Graham Green

Written in 1958, and set in Cuba, Our Man in Havana was one of Green's novels he referred to as 'entertainments' in contrast to his other more serious books, which often centered round conflicting moral and political issues. Green was a prolific writer (over 25 novels plus plays, biographies and screenplays). He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature several times.



Book Group 3, as ever, debated enjoyably divergent views of 'Our Man in Havana' - including boring, confusing, hard going, dialogue dominant, well written, farcical, a spy satire or even 'spoof', amusing, dark, a parody of the Cold War and 'of it's time' with at least 2 casual racist references.

Themes included human frailty, family obligation, friendship, cultural differences and corruption.

Ranging from 4 to 8, our cumulative score was 6.2.

Lesley Angell (Group Leader)

### **Tracks and Tales**

Join us on the first Wednesday and third Friday of every month at 10.30am, meeting at Horncliffe Memorial Hall.

- Gentle guided walk (up to 60 mins)
- Creative writing session with refreshments (60 mins)
- Sturdy footwear recommended — sorry no dogs allowed
- Writing materials provided or bring your own
- We aim is to publish a small anthology celebrating members' work

Walk a while. Write a while. Feel a little lighter

For more information contact Maggie via the Groups page on the website.

### **Natural Non Fiction**

Natural Non-Fiction starts next month on 23rd September at 2:15 in Newcastle Building Society, Hide Hill.

We will be discussing. Lost Wonders: Ten Tales of Extinction from the 21st Century, by Tom Lathan.

Stephen Block

### **Martin Rowell's Groups:**

Just like to ask if you have taken notice of the u3a motto. Which is Learn, Laugh, Live. We are all living, and having a good laugh. But are you learning, or even doing somethiung new. So come on now and do something new. Why not give the likes of Backgammon or Chess a go to keep our brains active. Or even Table Tennis, which is very good for hand and eye co-ordination. So go on and LEARN.

The Silver Short Striders will be meeting on Tuesday 1st September. However because there is a u3a event in the morning, we will meet up for 2 pm **at Wallace Green/The Parade.**

## **Bridge - Social Bridge Group**

If you enjoy playing Bridge but feel a Bridge Club Setting is not yet for you, our new Bridge Group could be just right. Meeting on two Wednesdays mornings each month we will play in a relaxed and supportive environment with a short refreshment break. You don't need a partner. More information and contact details on the Groups Page.

Andrew Wilson

## **Busy Bees Crafts**

We will be starting up our monthly meetings on September 11th at King James court, West St, Berwick. This is a general meeting to discuss what projects we will look at for Autumn and Christmas. Members are to bring their own project to work on and any to show that they have done over the summer break.

Busy bees welcome new U3A members to join the group. We constantly look to try out a range of crafts to suit individual needs and explore new ideas. We also support those working on their preferred craft. Monthly fee currently is £2 for hire of room and refreshments.

We meet on the second Friday of the month at King James court, West Street Berwick on the second Friday of each month 10am – 12 noon.

September 11<sup>th</sup>, October 9<sup>th</sup>, November 13<sup>th</sup>, December 11<sup>th</sup>

For further information please contact

Theresa Wilkinson

## **Ride & Stride**

After the last walk over Goatscrag Hill and through Ford village to Heatherslaw, a short 5.7 mile one is planned for Friday 28th August from Lowick to Fenwick with a later start. Bus 11.05 from Berwick Railway Street route 464 to Lowick, returning from Fenwick Bridge at either 14.47 or 15.47. Following that, the 25th September walk will be 6.8 miles from Lamberton Bridge to Eyemouth on the coast path. Bus route 60 at 09.15 from Tweedmouth Retail Park, or 09.20 Golden Square to Lamberton Bridge, with a planned return from Eyemouth at 14.32. As always, details will be confirmed by email a few days before each walk to those on the contact list for this group.

Derrick Joanes

## **Art Appreciation**

The group is looking forward to a varied programme of discussions and exploration of a wide variety of art. The first meeting of the new season is on Wednesday 23 September when June Neilson will be giving an introduction to the life and work of Joan Eardley. There is still time to visit the exhibition of Joan's work at the Granary gallery: 'The Sea at Catterline', on until 11 October.

Trudy Gray

## Blues Jam

Well, it's not just blues and it is not only a jam. We play simple songs, including blues songs, usually with the chords and lyrics. The group includes guitars, bass, harmonica, violin, percussion, sometimes keyboard and saxophone. We welcome anyone who can play a few chords or equivalent on their instrument.

Richard Hammersley

## Community Events:

### 1. HODS volunteers needed

Hello Everyone

It's that time of year where we start to organise our events for Heritage Open Days. This year will be the 35<sup>th</sup> year that Berwick has taken part and as usual we have a bumper crop of walks, talks and venues that will be open to visitors and residents.

Last year 60 volunteers gave 329 hours over a 10 day period to make the festival a success and I am hopeful that you'll join us once again to celebrate Berwick's unique heritage. We have a variety of roles to suit everyone. The main job is stewarding the sites, making sure that visitors are made welcome, given information and safely guided in and out of each venue. We also need volunteers to act as back markers for walks, talks and tours. In addition, help is always needed with collating information packs leading to the event itself.

This year, the main weekend will be Friday 18th to Sunday 20th September.

There will also be a few events over the course of the preceding week Fri 11th onwards. We would be really grateful if you could offer a little time to support events. Please contact Jacqui via [berwickhodsvols@gmail.com](mailto:berwickhodsvols@gmail.com) for more information.

**2. Berwick Literary Festival:** for the latest updates click [here](#)

### 3. Saxon Food event at the library

We are covering another aspect of Saxon life with another event at Berwick library. We are covering their cooking. This is on 9th September 7pm- 8pm. See attached a poster with all the details.

Thanks,

Gerard Young

Library Assistant

#### 4. INVITATION : EVENTS FOR THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF DAVID HUME'S DEATH: Come join us!

Come and join us for 3 free events marking the 250th anniversary of the death of the greatest of 18th century philosophers and the towering genius of the Scottish enlightenment, David Hume. We will be celebrating his life and continuing world-wide influence in his home village of Chirnside on Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September. See attached for more information.

**DISCOVER THE REAL DAVID HUME**  
in  
**EVENTS MARKING the 250th ANNIVERSARY of HIS DEATH**



**EXHIBITION: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DAVID HUME**  
Sat 12th Sept 10-5pm (GMT+1)  
Sun 13th Sept 10-4pm (GMT+1)  
Venue: Chirnside Community Centre TD11 3XR  
**FREE**

**RUSTIC BEGINNINGS: DAVID HUME'S EARLY LIFE IN C18th BERWICKSHIRE**  
Fiona Houston presents a fascinating, insightful account of some of the realities of Hume's rural upbringing at Ninewells, Chirnside, enlightened by her own experiences attempting to live for a year in similar challenging '18th century' circumstances.  
Sat 12th Sept: 11am – 12 noon (GMT+1)  
Venue: Chirnside Community Centre TD11 3XR  
**FREE BUT TICKETED** via Eventbrite due to limited seating  
Eventbrite link: [https://Rustic\\_Beginnings.eventbrite.co.uk](https://Rustic_Beginnings.eventbrite.co.uk)



**THE WARMTH, WIT AND WISDOM OF DAVID HUME: A CELEBRATORY GATHERING TO REMEMBER ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST THINKERS**  
A moving mix of down-to-earth, live personal accounts from round the world, of the difference David Hume and his philosophy have made in their lives and outlooks interwoven with readings from those who knew him personally and music of Hume's day.  
Sunday 13th Sept: 4 -5.30pm (GMT+1)  
Venue: Chirnside Community Centre TD11 3XR  
**FREE BUT TICKETED** via Eventbrite due to limited seating  
Eventbrite link: [https://Warmth\\_Wit\\_and\\_Wisdom.eventbrite.co.uk](https://Warmth_Wit_and_Wisdom.eventbrite.co.uk)  
**ALL WELCOME!**  
For more info visit the Eventbrite site Or email: [DAVIDHUME2026@gmail.com](mailto:DAVIDHUME2026@gmail.com)



**And finally....**

Many Thanks to the group leaders for their contributions. Please email contributions to the chair by the 20th of each month:

[chair@berwicku3a.org](mailto:chair@berwicku3a.org)

**Digital version of 'u3a Matters' magazine:** There is a digital version of the 'u3a Matters' magazine that you can read and download for free via the national u3a website.

It's a really good read!



#### **Note about the newsletter**

You will still be able to get your copy in one of the following ways:

1. Via email
2. At an open meeting
3. From the library
4. By providing a stamped addressed envelope for it to be posted to you

If you would like to chat about your delivery or opt out of receiving the newsletter please contact the chair: [chair@berwicku3a.org](mailto:chair@berwicku3a.org)