

WELCOME TO YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR: NOVEMBER 2026

Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our newsletter for November 2026- I'm sitting in our conservatory as I write this, with a beautiful blue sky and a myriad of coloured leaves distracting me. There really is no better place than Berwick, particularly on a sunny day.

In October we had three new groups starting: Ballroom Dancing, Natural Non Fiction 2 and Bridge. We really do have a wonderful range of groups on offer, a big thank you to the Group Leaders who volunteer to share with us their time and expertise.

Christmas Lunch

This is booked for Thursday 10th December, again at the Greenses Restaurant 12 noon for a prompt 12.30pm start. Once we have final details we will circulate the menu choices and costings which will include £1 towards a raffle. It is always a fun event, please do consider joining us!

Open Meeting:

Monday 2nd November 2026, 10am for a prompt 10.30 start at St Aidan's Hall. Roger Houchin, our Group Leader for Philosophy, will share a talk about the Impact of the European Convention on Human Rights on us in the UK. This sounds fascinating and rather thought provoking. Thank you Roger for offering to lead this talk. Sadly I won't be there for this talk as I will be at a national u3a workshop day in Newcastle.

RUG team: I would like to thank all those who responded to my call for help in putting themselves forward to join our RUG team (Really Useful Group). At the last Open Meeting tables and chairs appeared in the blink of an eye- what a team, thank you so much. I will be in touch with them soon seeking help for our next meeting.

HILDA HOUSE Festival of the Elder- the committee will have a table at this event on Saturday 14th November, Spittal Community Hall (please see attached poster).

Contact us:

Tel : 07561 626690

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

Email: info@berwicku3a.org



Committee News:

Andrew Wilson has kindly offered to join the committee. As a former chair of Kelso u3a and adviser for national u3a, he brings with him a wealth of experience. Thank you Andrew.

Anne Berry, Business Secretary, after many years of being on the committee, has decided to take a sideways step away from the committee and into the Publicity role. Anne has been an incredible asset to the committee- we will really miss her but I'm so glad we will continue to benefit from her skills and expertise! A huge thank you to Anne. Phil Ravetta is our admin for our Facebook page.

Christine Chapman, currently Minutes Secretary, will take over the Business Secretary role too, thus combining both roles back together as they used to be a while back. Thanks so much Christine!

That's all folks, wishing you a wonderful time as a Berwick upon Tweed u3a member,
Rowena x

Berwick U3A Open Meeting October 5th

The Runaway Slave who Came to Dunse

David McLean delivered a detailed and fascinating talk on the life of Jim Pembroke, who was born into slavery in Maryland, USA, in 1806. At the age of twenty, he ran away from the farm where his family provided slave labour and into the free state of Pennsylvania where, in his attempts to avoid capture, he had the good fortune to meet a family of Quaker anti-slavists who, as part of a network, helped him to escape to Canada. Thanks to these people he learned to read and write, became a Christian and changed his name to James W.C. Pennington. A gifted speaker and advocate for the African community, he eventually became a minister for the African Church of Connecticut. His work brought him to attend the first Anti-Slavery Convention in London in 1843 and thereafter to spend time on speaking tours in Britain, eventually making his temporary home in the Scottish borders. When the Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850, James ran the danger of deportation and a return to slavery. Thanks to the funds raised by the Presbyterian congregations of Dunse, Kelso and Berwick, his freedom was purchased for the sum of 150 dollars and he was able to return to America as a free man. He wrote a letter expressing his heartfelt gratitude to those who had helped him. Back in America, he continued his civil rights work up to his death in 1870.

We are grateful to David for his painstaking research on a remarkable person whose name would otherwise have remained unknown in Britain and for telling a story which highlights the goodness of our communities in putting right a great injustice.

Barbara Russell

Regional Quiz

On 7th October 2 teams of 4 from Berwick u3a travelled to Sunnyside Social Club (about 4 miles from Team Valley) to the Regional Quiz. There were 15 teams from all over the Northumbria region, the number of teams taking part is slowly declining. We had travelled the furthest. Thank you very much to the drivers.

There was a picture round of British TV sitcoms, a picture round of royal residences, a music round and some traditional general knowledge questions. In the interval there was quite a range of refreshments provided by the participants along with a hot drink available. Our teams did well, one team came 4th and the other 8th.

Anne Berry

Northumbria u3a - Events

1. Ushaw Event 2027

The Festival of Fun, Music and Learning held at Ushaw House and will be on Wednesday 19th May 2027.

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

2. St Nicholas Cathedral Tour and Organ Recital 16th November, 10.45 start. Click [here](#) for more details.

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



Soulsville USA series – The History and Legacy of Stax Records

Join Lee Wellbrook to explore the rise, sound, struggles and legacy of Stax Records. A series of 4 talks.
Thursday 5 November and Fridays 13, 20, 27 November at 10am

Free – online via Zoom

u3a Rewind



Melancholy as a creative force: Joni Mitchell's Blue album

Join Prof. Chris Dowrick to explore how Joni Mitchell's *Blue* transforms melancholy into a creative force, opening a path to self-awareness and self-possession.

Friday 6 November at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom

u3a Rewind



Shaping fashion: the Elizabethan bodice, buckram and busks

Join Constance Mackenzie to discover how 16th-century bodices were constructed, shaped and stiffened using historical materials and ingenious techniques.

Wednesday 25 November at 10 am

Free – online via Zoom

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

Jigsaw library:

There will be a good selection of jigsaws for members to borrow at the November and December meetings, including seasonal themes. Perfect for those long winter evenings. Just help yourself, but please remember to return any you may have had for a while.

Thanks. Cathy and Graham

News from our Groups

Busy Bees Crafts

The 9th October meeting was well attended. Members brought yarns to swap for making twiddle muffs. Three muffs had already been made to show others. Members also brought in Halloween items. Members were encouraged to make a Halloween card from fabric and felt. All items were photographed for the website. As a result of stash items brought, a challenge of a wreath for the December meeting was set. Those missing the meeting will receive the base at the next meeting.

We plan to make Christmas cards at the next meeting using die cuts and printed stamps. Members were asked to bring colouring pencils and pens. 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.

The next meetings are November 13th and December 11th

For further information please contact

Theresa Wilkinson Busy-bees crafts

Hill Walking Group

In September, the Hill Walking group completed a seven and a half mile loop of the Pennine Way. The ascent was 1250 feet. There were 13 of us plus two dogs. We were blessed by sunny weather and, despite being above the Halterburn Valley by Kirk Yetholm, we had grand views of the sea over 20 miles away.

Kind regards

Bruce Balden



Tracks & 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:

email: tracksandtaleshorncliffe@gmail.com

Book Group 3

A select group of 4 met to discuss 'The Foundling' by Stacy Halls. 2 members unable to be present, sent their thoughts.

The story is set in London, 1754. Six years after leaving her illegitimate daughter Clara at London's Foundling Hospital, Bess Bright returns to reclaim the child she has never known.

Dreading the worst, that Clara has died in care, Bess is astonished to be told she has already claimed her. Her life is turned upside down as she tries to find out who has taken her little girl – and why.

And so the story unfolds.....

We found that our shared views were remarkably and unusually similar! Positives included an interesting topic, an enjoyment of apparently well researched historical facts, a believable sense of time and place and a 'rattlingly good yarn'. Social class, family, privilege, inequality, mother/daughter relationships and trauma effects were all explored.

However, there were just too many implausible co-incidences and the ending was, we thought, unbelievably and disappointingly 'twee'!

You may think differently.....

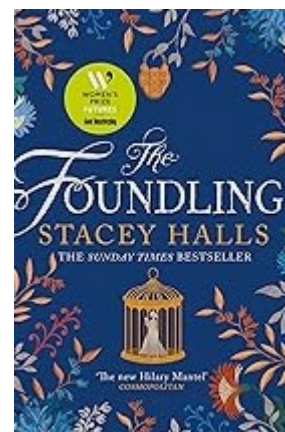
It was a good book to read 'at the end of a long walk with a comfy chair, glass of wine and cosy fire'! (Member Quote).

Our averaged score was 5.

Best regards Lesley Angell

Introductory Latin & Greek + 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 2nd and 4th Tuesday morning of every month at Berwick Library from 10am-11am with time from 1100-1130 for everyone each to have a few minutes of individualised guidance.

Steve Havelin

New(ish!) Book Group 4

Looking for your next good read and a diverse group of people to talk with? Come join us!

We meet once a month to exchange views about our latest book choice, share a cup of tea and have a general chat. We are a friendly, relaxed group, and there is absolutely no judgment if you don't manage to finish the book some months!

Vanessa Wilson

Ballroom Group

St Aidan's Hall became Rio de Janerio as the dancers started off their journey with a party Samba . There were chuckles as everyone navigated the Boto Fogos and Voltas.

Then came the social foxtrot which was progressing nicely around the room to the sound of Tuxedo Junction.

Lots of smiles as everyone departed. Next lesson continues with social foxtrot and ballroom quickstep.
Anne and Eddie Cerexhe Burness



Berwick u3a Art Group

The group is back in full swing each Wednesday morning at the YHA. We have spaces for any members wanting to give us a try. FYI

Some of this term's pictures have been uploaded to the Website.

Contact the group Admin for more info if necessary

Kath Johnson-Jones

Spanish

Conversation remains at the heart of what the group does. We tend to choose a broad topic that everyone can interpret however they wish. Education and Food provided plenty of angles for us to explore, along with attempting to overcome our ignorance/fear of the second person plural so we could address the whole group. Heady stuff! One of the group introduced us to a poem by Guatemalan Margarita

Carrera in which she laments the death of her brother during the Civil War - simple and profound.

Ros Richardson

Geology

The Geology group is up and running for the new session. So far we have reviewed some of the summer events celebrating the life of James Hutton and his understanding of 'Deep Time', had a global perspective of the opening of the Atlantic Ocean and a look at the coastal rocks at Cocklawburn. By looking at the rock formations exposed at present, we will work our way north as far as Burnmouth and try to understand what has happened in the past.

Examining rocks and rock structures to understand crustal processes and backing this with personal research is the focus for this session. By sharing findings, we have an interactive group with a wide range of experiences to keep our brains active.

Ann Kellie

Community Events:

1. **Saxon Surgery and Medicine**- a talk by Michelle Gibbons on Wednesday 4th November 7-8pm in Berwick Library.

2. **Hilda House 'Wisdom of the Elder'** is in a month's time and will cover various aspects of the theme, with speakers, conversation, stalls, and music. This will take place at Spittal Community Centre on SATURDAY 14th NOVEMBER. Berwick u3a will have a stall, so please pop along to say hello. Please see attached poster.

3. Berwick Male Voice Choir

Berwick Male Voice Choir will be bringing along some guests - the acclaimed all female a cappella group Tribe!

So an even better reason not to miss what will be a wonderful evening of music in beautiful Norham Church, now with improved heating and lighting!

Refreshments available

Berwick Male Voice Choir with guest singers Tribe!

Friday 27th November 7pm

Tickets available on the door

£10; U16s Free

St Cuthbert's Church Norham TD15 2LF

4. **Tweed River Jazz Band** at Tweed Gallery on 14th November 7.30-10pm

5. **Morris dancing:**

Rag Bag Border Morris dancing are trialling a new venue in Berwick for some of their practice sessions. If anyone wants to come along and meet us, see what we do, or have a go you'll be very welcome. We would love to have some new dancers and/ or musicians.

Venue: The Maltings on Hide Hill (next to Newcastle Building society)

Dates: Tuesday 3rd November and Tuesday 1st December

Time: 7pm until 9pm

For further information email: cathyjt63@gmail.com or just turn up.

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

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

