

WELCOME TO YOUR NEWSLETTER FOR: OCTOBER 2026

Notes from the Chair

Welcome to our newsletter for October 2026- where does the time go! Most groups have now started, with Tap Dancing, Bridge and Family History restarting in the first week of October.

New Groups: We are also currently meeting with folks who are interested in starting a Ballroom Dancing group (see page 4 for more information) and another Natural Non Fiction book group. If you would be interested in joining either then please email Helen- helen@berwicku3a.org

Website: Over the summer we have been updating and refreshing our website- I would like to take this opportunity to thank Isabel Gillies, our webadmin, for all her work behind the scenes. It is a huge job and she undertakes it with great efficiency and a sense of humour! Thank you!

Open Meeting:

Monday 5th October 2026, 10am for a prompt 10.30 start at St Aidan's Hall. Due to ill health Roger has sadly taken the decision to postpone his talk. However I'm pleased to tell you that one of firm favourites, David McLean, will return with a talk all about 'A Runaway Slave from Dunse'- a true story! Do join us for what promises to be a really compelling tale; I'm sure those who have attended his other talks will agree that he is a wonderful speaker- we are in for a treat!

Help required: 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). Do let me know if you would like to join this select band- jobs will include setting up chairs and tables, perhaps helping in the kitchen, washing up etc.

For those more technically minded Phil our Publicity Officer would like a bit of help, mostly with ensuring our Facebook page is up to date.

Contact us:
Tel : 07561 626690
Website: <http://berwick-upon-tweed.u3asite.uk/>
(or scan QR code)
Email: info@berwicku3a.org



On the theme of supporting us, I would like to thank Laura McGinlay for taking on the Deputy Treasurer role, supporting Cian.

Finally I would like to wish our quiz teams 'good luck' in the forthcoming u3a Regional Quiz on October 7th at Sunnyside.

That's all folks, looking forward to seeing you on Monday 5th October.

Rowena x

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

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

3. 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:



A history of the world according to sheep

Join Alan Freeland to discover how sheep, wool and the wool trade have shaped British history, built fortunes, influenced society and even helped win wars.

Monday 5 October at 2pm

Free - online via Zoom



Darkness on the edge of town: Bruce Springsteen and the American dream

Chris Dowrick explores how Bruce Springsteen turned personal alienation into a musical mission to expose the gap between the American dream and reality.

Thursday 8 October at 2pm

Free - online via Zoom

u3a Rewind



David Hockney as I knew him

The world of David Hockney, a bright star of British art - a talk by Peter Webb.

Thursday 22 October at 11am

Free - online via Zoom

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

News from our Groups

Word Games

The September meeting began with the task of changing one letter in a bird's name to make another word - and there were 26 of these. There were several suggestions for 'owl' and 'jay' but 'swallow' and 'merlin' proved a bit harder.

There were several other games which, as usual, seemed to involve quite a bit of laughter, and there was general approval of the choice of biscuits!

Kay Gardiner

Cribbage

A small group but would love to increase our numbers. We'd be very happy to welcome new members - experience not essential! (No charge but bring a drink if you want)

Scrabble

We have space for new members - increase your word power in a friendly and relaxed session (£2-£3 depending on numbers)

Needles and hooks

A knit and natter group including all needle crafts - tapestry, crochet, embroidery, sewing as well as knitting! Enjoy the company as you enjoy your craft (£2-£3 depending on numbers)

Frances Schamberg

Natural Non-Fiction

The group is currently full but there is now sufficient interest and something of a waiting list

Moves are afoot to start a second group!

Stephen Block

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

Art Group

The Art group has returned with, alas, a few empty chairs! Particularly for the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays..... do give us a try if you've always wondered if you could be that Picasso or Michaelangelo hidden in plain sight!

Friendly and supportive group in the Heart of Berwick.

Kath Johnson-Jones

Book Group 2

We are starting the year with a full complement of 10 people. Our next book is Catch 22 by Joseph Heller which was first published in Britain in 1962. Some of us are re reading, others are discovering it for the first time! There can't be many books though where the title ie Catch 22 is often quoted by people who have never read the book. Considering that it is over 60 years since it was published that is quite an achievement!

Yvonne Scott

Spanish

It felt good to reconnect after the summer break. We weren't up to full strength, with some of the group unwell and others out of Berwick. But we enjoyed hearing two of the group talk about their time in Spain since our last meeting and managed to remember enough of our Spanish to engage in conversation. We look forward to new challenges in the year ahead, but also anticipate that the laughter which has been a key element in the group will continue.

Ros Richardson

Ballroom Dancing taster sessions

Where : St Aidan's Hall , Berwick

When : Fridays 2-30 - 3-30 For 5 sessions running fortnightly and starting 16th October 2026

How much : £2 per person

What do I wear ? Smooth soled shoes , no stilettos .
And clothes that you are comfortable in.

The sessions will be hosted by Eddie and Anne , two local competitive dancers. They are former Senior Scottish Closed Ballroom Champions and Over 50's British Closed Championship finalists .

Eddie and Anne

Busy Bees Crafts

It was great to see all who could make it to the September meeting. A chance to catch up and plan long-term and short-term projects.



The next meeting is on the 9th October, as always bring your own project to work on.

Members are invited to bring fancy wools and yarns to share and swap in our plan to make twiddle muffs. Also, they are invited to bring an item to show a Halloween theme. If they have time to make and bring an item that would be great.

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

Quiz Group

The Quiz Group welcomed 3 new members to the group in September. One of them even brought some general knowledge questions for us. Unusually, we had a couple of music rounds, as practice for the Regional Quiz where there will be a music round. We also had a picture round of World Cities. The teams were obviously evenly matched because just 2 points separated all 4 teams at the end of the afternoon – we might need more tie-breaker questions in future!

The September meeting was the last meeting at King James Court. The group has decided to relocate to a meeting room at the Granary/YHA because when the building works start for the Maltings, the Eastern Lane car park will close. There is convenient public parking at the Granary.

Anne Berry

Book Group 3

Our September book was Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver, a clever reworking of David Copperfield set in modern day Appalachia against a background of extreme poverty and opioid abuse. The group enjoyed the short chapters and first person narrative, but some felt that it lacked pace in the middle section - this may have been deliberate in order to focus on the awfulness of Demon's situation. It was much darker than David Copperfield and the relentlessness of the difficulties in Demon's life was harrowing in places. Nearly all appreciated the glimmer of hope for him at the end of the book.

Kingsolver appears to understand or have researched social issues well and seems passionate about raising awareness of them and challenging perceptions through her writing.

All agreed the book was extremely well written and that it had provoked an excellent discussion.

Susan Block

Art Appreciation

24 members attended the first meeting of the new season and enjoyed a fascinating and informative talk by June Neilson about Joan Eardley. Although born in England, Joan's father was Scottish and Glasgow children and seascapes from north east Scotland where she lived were a major inspiration for Joan's work. Her work became more abstract over time before her untimely death from illness at the age of 42.

Trees will be the subject at the October meeting where we will split into groups to discuss works by various artists before pooling our thoughts.

Carole Lawrence

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 2

We meet on the second Thursday of the month to discuss a much wider range of books than most of us would otherwise have considered reading. And we disagree a lot - in a good way.

We are, quite by chance, on trend (yes, at our age). Recently we have found ourselves discussing 'Lord of the Flies' in the same month it was serialized on tv, 'Hamnet' when the film came to the Maltings, and 'Where the Crawdads Sing' streaming on Netflix since 2022 (I know that's a bit older, but then so are we). Other recent titles have been 'Catch 22' (far too long), 'Treasure Island' (darn good) and 'Breakfast at Tiffeny's' (a bit disappointing - and was Audrey Hepburn mis-cast?) Our next book is 'The Salt Path', ripe for more controversial discussion. But then it would be a pretty boring book group if we agreed with each other all the time. And boring we are not.

Shirley Neilson

U3A Book Group 3

Our group started in 2015 and, with a few new faces, has maintained a robust membership since then. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 3.00-4.30 in Berwick Library. Our chosen books are obtained from the free Northumberland Library 'book collection for book groups'. The collection keeps about 450 book titles usually with 10 books per title available. There are a few new book titles

available each year. We request our book choices from the list about a year ahead with each book group member choosing 2 book titles.

In a meeting we take it in turns to share our views of the current book. There are usually good natured, stimulating and often disparate views!

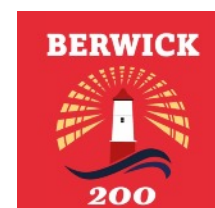
We also arrange a popular optional lunch between meetings.

We have one strict rule - in Book Group meetings we only talk about the book and at lunch we never talk about the book!

This helps keep in depth book discussion separate from enjoyable and wide ranging 'chat'! Lesley Angell (Book Group 3 Leader)

Community Events:

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



2. Berwick Lighthouse 200

Did you know it's the 200th anniversary of Berwick Lighthouse. Various events are organised including the premiere of the Berwick Lighthouse 200 music specially commissioned for the event on Saturday 17th October (pm) at the Lowry shelter. HODS also have an online film about the history of the lighthouse- click [here](#) for more information.

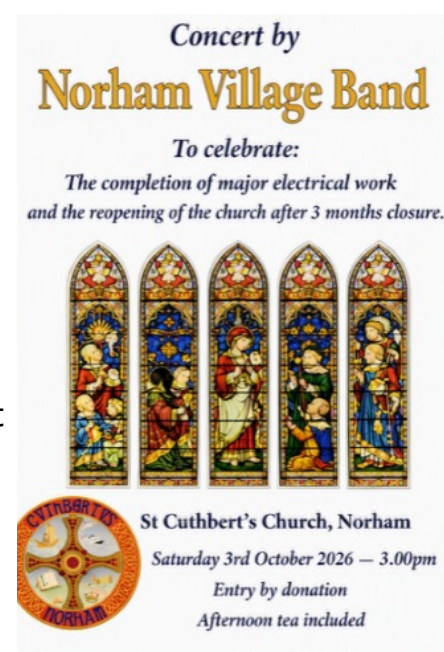
3. **Saxon Surgery and Medicine-** a talk by Michelle Gibbons on Wednesday 4th November 7-8pm in Berwick Library. See attached flier for more information.

4. After 3 long months of closure for major electrical works **St Cuthbert's Church** will reopen with a bang on 3rd October 3pm with a concert from Norham Village Band to celebrate the installation of a new heating system (yes!) and new lighting.

A once in a generation (if not two) transformation of an already beautiful building!

Come and enjoy afternoon tea and be among the first to see the changes, and hear our incomparable Village Band !

Entry by donation!



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