

BARNSTAPLE u3a

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 2025

Issue 455



THE CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE OF BARNSTAPLE u3a WISH EVERYONE A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2025

www.barnstaple.u3asite.uk

barnstaplethirdagegroup@rocketmail.com

Chairman: *Keith Luckhurst*

Business Secretary: *Ian Woodward*

Membership Secretary: *Julia Denton*

Groups Co-ordinator: *Laurence Hillel*

SPEAKER

THE NEXT COFFEE MORNING AT ROUNDWELL HALL WILL BE ON THURSDAY 2nd JANUARY 2025 AT 10.30am. WHEN OUR SPEAKER WILL BE JOHN RIDDINGTON-YOUNG, WHO WILL BE TALKING TO US ABOUT “VAN GOGH’S EAR”.

A NOTE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

After 10 years presenting the successful Science group, Austin is to step down in the very near future, and consequently a replacement is required.

The group meets once a month and is attended by around 20 persons, all of whom enjoy the afternoon with a variety of speakers and subjects.

It would be a shame if this successful group was to cease.

Do you think you could take over? Austin will provide a suitable handover.

If so, and you wish to know more, please do not hesitate to Contact Laurence, our group co-ordinator. See above for contact details.

Barnstaple u3a Contact List – see groups entry for more details

Group	Date and Time	Venue	Contact Details
Art	Tues 10-12am	Rhod. Ave. Methodist Church	Brian Steward
Bonsai	1 st Wed of month -5 th Feb	Venn Valley Vineyard	Nigel Wright
Book Lovers	Last Wed. in month	Various	Tim Toghill
Bridge	Fri. 2.30-4.30pm	Jane's house	Jane Keatley
Canasta	To be arranged	Ann's house	Ann Brand
Coffee morning	1 st Thur of month - 10.30am	R'ndswell Comm.Hall	Any Committee Member
Croquet Braunton	Recommence April 2025	Bple Croquet Club	Anne Young
Garden Day (Taw)	Various	Various	Roxanne and Graham King
Geology	2 nd Fri. of month 1.45pm	Fremington Meth Hall	David Dickinson
Heritage Explorer	Various	Various	Laurence Hillel
Hikers	Mon 10.30am	Various	Pauline Markey Karen Wagstaff
How it Works	4 th Fri of month 1.45pm	Fremington Meth.Hall	David Dickinson
Knit and Natter	Second Mon of month	TBC	Sue Thomas
Literary Studies	3 rd Tue 2.30pm	Imperial Hotel	Ellie Bray
Local History	2 nd Wed. of month	Barnstaple Library	Jackie Brayley & Yvonne Partington
Music	1 st & 3 rd Wed. 10.30-12.30	Fremington Methodist Hall	Doug Joslin
Mosaics	Fridays 10am – 12.30pm	Rhod. Ave, Method Church	Jackie Brayley
Nature Discovery	3 rd Wednesday with variation	Nature Trips and some talks	Laurence Hillel Deirdre Johnson
Poetry	2 nd Sat of month, 2pm.	Various	Margaret Ryan
Practical Gardeners	Last Thurs of month, 10.30am normally	Various	Andy Jones
Quarterly Lunch	March – tba.	Williams Arms	Sue Thomas
Ramblers	2 nd Thurs 10.30	Various	Karen Wagstaff
Rummikub	Wed, Th. 2pm weekly	Ann's house	Ann Brand
Science	2 nd Tue of month 1.45pm	Rhod.Ave, Methodist Church	Austin Philp
Scrabble	1 st Wed 10am-12.30pm 3 rd Thurs 10am-12.30pm	Pam's house	Pam Harman
Singing for fun	2 nd Wed 10-12.	Fremington Meth.Hall	Patricia Hayhurst
Skittles	Thurs, fortnightly 4-6pm.	The Fox, Fremington	Elizabeth Howson
Strollers	4 th Thurs. 11am normally	Various	Bob Smith
Table Tennis	Tuesdays 2.00 - 3.30pm	Tarka Tennis Centre	Agnes Adams Gabi Engels-Hearn
Trekkers	3 rd Friday of month, 10.30am	Various	Michael Elliott
Wine Group	Last Wed. of month, 2pm	Room 3b, Barnstaple Library	David Rowe

A note from our Chairman

Barnstaple u3a are inviting members to join the committee, to form a shadow committee, to assist in the smooth running of the organisation.

These positions are not onerous, and are available for the forthcoming AGM, held in March next year.

If you feel you could participate, please do not hesitate to contact any committee member.

Many thanks

TWO POSSIBLE NEW GROUPS

Creative Writing

Hi, my name is Carol and I am proposing to start a New Group that you may be interested in. I would like to start a Creative Writing Group to be held on a Mon 10-12noon on the 1st Mon. of each month. Hopefully if there are any takers, starting in the new year.

If this appeals to you and you would like to have a go, please contact me.

Carol Young proposed Group Leader

Poetry Writing

Hi, my name is Carol and I am proposing to start a New Group that you might be interested in. I would like to start a Poetry Writing Group to be held on a Tues between 2pm - 4.00pm on the 1st Tues of each month. Hopefully, if there are any takers, we will start in the new year.

If this appeals to you and you would like to have a go, please contact me.

Carol Young proposed Group Leader

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The list of activities on Page 2 of this edition is to help members by showing the venue, day, and time.

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 28th January, please submit any articles before the 24th January if possible.

Lynne Dickinson, Editor



ART

We meet at the Methodist church hall in Rhododendron Avenue, between 10 am and 12 noon, every Tuesday apart from the third Tuesday of the month. **This group is now at full capacity. Anyone interested in joining will be put on a waiting list.**

Brian Steward, Group Leader



BONSAI – An introduction

Thanks are due to Xenia and Ashley the new managers of 'The Vine' bistro at the Landkey vineyard, who are allowing us back into the venue we have grown to like very much.

The details are that we will start our u3a Bonsai group again on Wednesday, **5 February 2025** at 2:00 pm. The food at the Bistro is truly excellent and at a really good price – so if we buy a coffee, a cake, or indeed lunch the u3a will not be charged for the venue.

Our format will be the same as before in that you bring in your own trees so we can have a chat about them and I will have a theme to demonstrate on my trees. We need to finish and be away by 4:00 pm. It will be great to have us all back together again.

Nigel Wright, Group Leader



BOOK LOVERS

Our meetings are normally the last Wednesday of the month from 2pm to 4pm. The following is our report for our November meeting:

The recently published Exmoor Farms by Victoria Eveleigh is a tribute to all who work and live on Exmoor recording a year in their lives complete with glossy photos and marks the 70th anniversary of Exmoor becoming a National Park.

A legal thriller, The Reversal by Michael Connolly

The Ordeal of Miss Lucy Jones by Liz Shakespeare set in 1879 in Torrington where a young lady is falsely accused of improper conduct with a deeply unpopular vicar and she faces ostracism and their effigies are burnt "Rough Music" on the village common.

The Country Girls - a trilogy by Edna O'Brian released in 1986. The first novel set in 1960 is about 2 girls growing up in rural southern Ireland and is often credited with breaking silence on sexual matters and social issues during a repressive period in Ireland. All 3 novels were banned by the Irish censorship board.

Heads You Win by Jeffrey Archer is reminiscent of the film Sliding Doors. Alexander Karpenko is forced to flee Russia with his mother after his father is assassinated by the KGB for defying the state. At the docks they randomly choose which ship to board as they just don't know. One ship is bound for London and one for New York. We then follow Karpenko in a gripping tale through the parallel lives of Alex in New York and Sasha in London over a span of 30 years.

England their England by A. G. Macdonell marvelling at the peculiarities of the English way of life from the perspective of a Scotsman e.g. winning cricket games is almost more important than life and death.

The Ice House - a debut detective novel by Minette Waller.

Be A Birder by wildlife cameraman Hamza Yassin. An illustrated guide to Birding designed to appeal to kids as well as adults. Being severely dyslexic Hamza dictated the entire book. It is full of anecdotes and has an easy conversational style. He has appeared in several tv programmes.

There will be no meeting in December and the host for January has yet to be decided.

Article submitted by Margaret Ryan

Tim Toghill, Group Leader



BRIDGE

Fridays 2.30pm to 4.30pm.

Members meet at Jane's house and if you are interested please contact her for details.

Jane Keatley, Group Leader

CANASTA



If anyone is interested in learning to play canasta Ann will hold sessions at her house. Please contact her if interested and a meeting can be arranged.

Ann Brand, Group Leader



CROQUET (BRAUNTON)

Tuesdays 2-4pm.

Braunton U3A run a croquet group during the summer and invite members from the surrounding U3A's to join the group. This will recommence in April 2025.

Anne Young, Group Leader



GARDEN DAYS

No visit in January or February. Lynn is organising the post-Christmas lunch. If interested and not already booked please contact her (via us).

Roxanne and Graham King, Group Leaders



GEOLOGY

Second Friday monthly. Next Meeting - Friday 17th January at 1-45 for 2-00pm

The Christmas party was a combined event with the HIW group and included a re-written carol by Jude and sung by everyone, a talk on Patagonia by Peter, viewing and explaining members' fossils, lots of delicious food and a quiz organised by Terry. 32 members and guests attended and an enjoyable time was had by all.

The meeting in January 2025 will be on the **third Friday i.e. the 17th for this month only** but will revert back to the 2nd Friday in February.

We have Douglas Bateman talking from South Devon about Copper This metal was extensively mined along the Tamar valley and in North Wales on the Island of Anglesey. The talk will also include the use of copper as a means of transmitting electricity, an extremely important part in the change from fossil fuels used for transport.

David Dickinson, Group Leader 01598 710480



HERITAGE EXPLORER

Our next visit will be in the New Year – details will be published later.

Group Leaders - Laurence Hillel & Keith Luckhurst



HIKERS

Monday 6th January

We hope to begin the New Year with a circular walk of approximately 7.5m from Eggesford. Details tbc. New members always welcome.

If you would like further details, please let us know so that we can make sure you receive them.

Group Leaders: Pauline Markey & Karen Wagstaff



HOW IT WORKS

Friday 28th January, 1.45 for 2.00pm.

Our Christmas meeting was a joint effort with the Geology section. See above for a report.

Michael Kelly will be our speaker on 28th January “Church Buildings of the South West”. If you had wondered why churches were designed and built in a way that now seems strange why not come along, listen, and ask questions. £2 gives you a hot drink, biscuits and a warm room on a January afternoon.

David Dickinson, Group Leader



KNIT AND NATTER

Second Monday at 2pm-4pm

Bring your current project with you and exchange tips and ideas over a cup of tea. Due to limited space this group is now full

Sue Thomas, Group Leader



LITERARY STUDIES GROUP

Tue 21st January 2025 – Imperial Hotel 2.30pm.

Tue 18th February 2025 – Imperial Hotel 2.30pm.

As the last newsletter entry of the year, I had hoped to finish with a really positive, happy review of our latest book - The Dance Tree by Kiran Millwood Hargrave. But alas, it was not to be! We were again divided with many finding the book depressingly sad. Set in Strasbourg in 1518 in an era of superstition, hysteria and inspired by true events, it is a story of family secrets, forbidden love and women pushed to the edge. We agreed that it was well written and immersive with good characterisation, and whilst a few gave the book top marks, for others it was a thumbs down. We hope for more literary harmony in 2025, although with a psychological thriller as our next read, perhaps I'm being a bit optimistic!

We wish everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy 2025.

Ellie Bray 01271 371506 Group Leader



LOCAL HISTORY

Room 2A Barnstaple Library 2pm

We meet again on 8th January, 2025 and our speaker is Sharon Snell with Part 4 (and final part) of the amusing Braddicks Story.

We look forward to welcoming everyone. Please contact one of us to book your seat.

Group Leaders: Yvonne Partington & Jackie Brayley

MOSAICS



We meet at the Methodist Church Hall in Rhododendron Avenue on Friday Mornings from 10 to 12.30 (apart from the last Friday in the month).

Group Leader Jackie Brayley



MUSIC

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month 10.30am – 12.30pm. at Fremington Methodist Hall. Please contact the group leader for more details.

Doug Joslin, Group Leader 01271 345080



NATURE DISCOVERY

We will have a short walk with a raptor theme, followed by refreshments. Date: Wednesday 15th January. Time: 10.30. Location To be confirmed by group email.

We hope everyone has an enjoyable Christmas. Laurence and Deirdre

If you are interested in joining our group and being put on the email list, please contact Laurence Hillel

Group Administrators: Laurence Hillel & Deirdre Johnson



POETRY

Wendy Cope's poems proved very popular ranging from A Christmas song and The Christmas Life to Rose Mulligan, Dust If You Must; the latter beseeching women to cut down time on housework and use their time more creatively... (such as joining U3A groups). Among the other poems were favourites such as Talking Turkeys by Benjamin Zephaniah, Crabby Christmas and Goodwill to All Men: Give us Your Money by Pam Ayres and a newly introduced riotous song by Noel Coward I Went to A Marvellous Party. On a more serious note, we had Roger McGough's The Good Ship Attenborough referring to the pressing subject of climate change. We had a lovely light-hearted meeting with warm mulled wine and delicious eats. Thanks to everyone for bringing along food and their cheery selves. Wishing everyone at U3A a very merry Christmas and a healthy New Year!

As the numbers are so low we have put our group on hold to see if more people would like to join so there will be no meeting in January. We have always included those who wish to present their own poetry. Please get in touch if you would like to join our friendly group.

Margaret Ryan, Group Leader



PRACTICAL GARDENERS

The group has a new leadership team, namely Jackie Smyth, David Green and Andy Jones. We will take a break until Spring next year.
Contact Andy for further information.

Jackie Smyth, David Green, Andy Jones, Group Leadership Team



QUARTERLY LUNCH

Our next quarterly lunch will be in March. More details later.

Sue Thomas, Group Leader



RAMBLERS

Thursday 9th January

Please join us for our first walk of 2025. We plan to follow a 4m circular route beginning in South Molton. A fairly gentle walk but a steady uphill as we return to the town. We will be going to Quince Honey Farm for lunch afterwards for those who would like to join us. New members very welcome.
Please let us know if you will be coming along so that we can send further details and notify you of any changes.

Group Leaders Karen Wagstaff & Pauline Markey



RUMMIKUB

Ann holds weekly sessions every Wednesday and Thursday at 2pm. Everyone is welcome but please phone Ann first. Venue: 11 Andrew Road, Sticklepath.

Ann Brand, Group Leader



SCIENCE

Rhododendron Ave Methodist Hall. January 2025

There will be no meeting this month.

Austin Philp, Group Leader



SCRABBLE

January 2025 Wednesday 8th 10-12.30pm, Thursday 23rd 10-12.30pm

We now have a waiting list for new members who may be interested in joining. For further information contact Pam.

Pam Harman, Group Leader



SINGING FOR FUN

Second Wednesday 10-12noon

We had an enthusiastic gathering this month, and even with some extra goodies to consume at our tea/coffee break, we covered loads of songs from our usual songlist, then a mixture of Christmas carols and songs. Sue's great at getting us all to take part!

Our guest accompanist will be with us on 8 January: John's covered for Sue once before, and he's looking forward to meeting 'such a friendly group of people' again.

My thanks to all who attend, and contribute to the fun. A very Happy Christmas & New Year to you all.

Patricia Hayhurst, Group Leader



SKITTLES

Second and fourth Thursday of the month. 4-6pm

The skittles is going along very well, and we still have room for more players. We meet at The Fox at Fremington and all newcomers are welcome.

Elizabeth Howson, Group Leader



STROLLERS

Thursday 30th January 11.00am Westward Ho!

Meet at main entrance CAR PARK on GOLF LINKS RD (current charges - up to 4 hours £4.00 - we will need 2 1/2 hours min). Bus stop and Rock Pool café are opposite

Walk out along pathway past the PIER HOUSE to the old Seafield house and beyond for 40/45 min walk, then return. NB. 2-sided signpost "Coast Walk" is 1.5 miles from car park (route goes sharply downhill after this point)

Refreshments - various places: Rock Pool café (recommended), Waterfront Inn, Country Cousins, fish n chips restaurant.

Please contact me if you are likely to come, then I can email you back if I have to cancel (weather etc)

Bob Smith, Group Leader



TABLE TENNIS

Tuesday afternoon from 2.00 to 3.30pm at the Barnstaple Tarka Centre.

The Table Tennis Group is going from strength to strength with us becoming athletes of the highest calibre - just kidding - but we are all of a standard that is noteworthy and individually pleasing. Spirits are high and social in between games.

We are now 30 members and potential new members may have to go on a waiting list. We resume on Tuesday 7th January 2025.

Gabi & Agnes Group Leaders



TREKKERS

Normally third Friday of month, 10.30am but note the date for January.

The first Trekkers walk of 2025 **will be a week earlier than usual, on Friday the 10th of January.** Led by Peter, we will start at 10:30 am by the church in Molland for a seven-mile walk. Meet at St Mary's church, Molland, postcode EX36 3NG, near the pub, the London Inn. As usual bring snacks, lunch and plenty to drink, and be ready for any weather.

If you would like to join the group, please let me know so I can add you to the list.

Michael Elliott, 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 contact me

David Rowe, Group Leader

The following are a selection of photographs taken at the Christmas Lunch on the 5th December 2024







The Literary Studies Group had a Christmas lunch in December



Photographs of the Hikers at Heddon's Mouth and Woody Bay



The Geology and How it Works Groups had a joint Xmas Party in December

