

In Brief & Contents

Speaker Events

- ▶ The 2nd Wednesday of February & April
- ▶ Open 1.15pm for refreshments & chat
- ▶ Talk 2 - 3pm
- ▶ Town Hall, Stokesley
- ▶ Access via stairs or lift
- ▶ Induction Hearing Loop

Feb 11th:

Dr Fred Stevenson "Are we alone in the Universe"

Apr 8th:

Dr Jane Atkinson "Waste Not, Want Not"

Contents:

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- ▶ 5-9: Group Leaders' updates
- ▶ 9: Quiz answers & photos
- ▶ 10: Summer School

Please check out the notices

Group Co-ordinator

To start or lead a group..
Ideas for short groups.
please contact Sue Tapper, via the website



Letter from the Chair

Firstly, a very Happy New Year to you all, and I hope it has started well.

Secondly, welcome to the over sixty new members who have joined us since September. I hope you are all settling in, and finding groups that interest you. We would always be interested in hearing about your initial experiences, what went well, and what we could perhaps improve. Don't be shy, let us know.

Given New Year Resolutions and all that, I thought I would suggest a few new ways you could consider enjoying your u3a membership.

Join a new Group ! Something that you wish you knew more about, something you have always wanted to try, or learn a new language, or trace your ancestors. It's free to try, will make you think, and you may just find you enjoy it! If not, a polite explanation to the Group Leader, and go try something else.

The u3a offers many on-line learning events, from "AI" to "How do Medicines work?", "Sign Language" to "Progressive Rock", and plenty more. All are on Zoom, and totally free to u3a members. Go to: u3a.org.uk. click on "online learning events", and see what you can find.

Finally, there are "Interest Groups Online". These operate just like the interest groups in Stokesley, but they are on-line (hence the name!). There are well over 100 of these groups, with a national (in some cases international) membership. There are waiting lists for several, but many are open to new members. See what there is that might interest you. These groups are not part of your normal u3a membership, and a separate annual fee of £12 is charged, but it is still excellent value. Go to: u3a.org.uk and click on "Interest Groups Online".

Updates from Group Leaders

On pages 6–10 are updates for the following groups.

- ▶ Archaeology
- ▶ Art
- ▶ Art Appreciation
- ▶ Beginners' French
- ▶ Folk Dancing
- ▶ Life Drawing
- ▶ Long Walks
- ▶ Piano
- ▶ Quiz
- ▶ Science
- ▶ Singing for Pleasure
- ▶ Yoga
- ▶ Photos from long walks

Your u3a committee

- ▶ Contact: [Contact Committee link](#)
- ▶ Peter Collins: Chair
- ▶ Dermot Roddy: Secretary
- ▶ Martin Sutton: Treasurer
[Contact Treasurer](#)
- ▶ Peter Atkinson: Vice Chair
- ▶ Karen Boddy: Social Media
- ▶ Diane Bush: Newsletter Editor
[Contact Committee link](#)
- ▶ Dr Madeline Fisher: Speaker Finder
[Contact Committee link](#)
- ▶ Tracey Fox: Membership Secretary
u3amembers@outlook.com
- ▶ Ian McCulley
- ▶ Carol Rowntree: Membership Assistant
u3amembers@outlook.com
- ▶ Hermione Wappat: Committee Member

Back in Stokesley, we continue to have new groups springing up, we have the new "Speaker Events" and are working on several more new ideas for 2026. Watch this space.

Enjoy your journey!

Peter Collins

Stokesley & District u3a Committee Chair

[Contact Committee link](#)

Letter from the Editor

Hello,

Welcome to 2026, hope you all enjoyed the Christmas and New Year Celebrations, whether rowdy, quiet or now require some rest & recuperation!

The image on the front page is a *looking forward to..* Spring image taken in Mount Grace garden. There are fabulous images of the long walks, see pages 7 and 9.

In this newsletter, we have again a plea for a treasurer to assist Martin in his last year and take over this vital and Stokesley & District (S&D) u3a saving role. See "Notices" for more information.

In October I also step down having completed a three year tenure as Secretary, and another as a Committee Member, meaning my six consecutive years allowed are up! I shall be sad to leave the committee – We moved to Stokesley in 2019 from out of the area and this has enabled me to feel part of a community, useful (ok, up for debate..) and, as well as making valuable friendships I feel I made a contribution to keeping the S&D u3a running.

I now co-lead two groups, and enjoy taking part in others. The u3a and Committee has kept me uplifted and positive. Later in the year we will be asking for nominations to the committee, so please consider it. Ask any committee member about it.

On the last page we have the details for the Summer School, held as usual just down the A19 at The Hawkhill, Easingwold. You can stay over or travel daily, and there are 10 courses to choose from all with limited numbers, so check it out and book as the first deposit should be in by 15 Feb. Places go quickly.

Link to the Summer school page: yahru3a.uk/2026-summer-school/

Diane.

Diane Bush, Newsletter Editor.

Website for all contact and general information:
stokesley.u3asite.uk

Notices:

We'd like your suggestions!

Venues: We now have over 600 members and around 50 groups – we also noticed that many of you live out of Stokesley. So if there's a venue near you that could be useful for a group, please email me, Martin Sutton or Sue Tapper and we will follow it up.

Short group or Events: There have been some very successful short groups or activities lasting for one or two sessions. Some groups have run for six sessions. What would you like to do or watch/listen or take part in?

Please send Sue Tapper any suggestions, all will be gratefully received.

Sue Tapper email: [Contact Committee link](#)

We need you...

There are vacancies for your Stokesley & District u3a committee coming up in October when current committee members complete their three year tenure.

Two of these are roles essential to keep the u3a running, these are the Treasurer and the Chair. We currently have a vacancy on the committee so that we can appoint someone to learn the role of Treasurer and to see what happens on a regular basis.

Some computer skills are required and the role can be separated into smaller roles than the one operated by Martin at the moment. For more information, please have a chat if you see them or contact Martin Sutton, Peter Collins or Dermot Roddy; for information regarding the role of Chair, Peter Collins.

In October, as well as the Chair and Treasurer, three committee members will have completed their tenures and are leaving vacant places on the committee, so that's five vacancies in all.

I have mentioned in "Letter from the Editor", what being on the committee has meant to me, so please read if you haven't already.

Diane

[Contact Committee link](#)

Links to: Peter Collins (Chair)

Dermot Roddy. (Secretary)

Martin Sutton. (Treasurer) [Contact Treasurer](#)

Check out our Facebook page!

Group Leader Mark de Cosemo and Committee member Karen Boddy are joint administrators for the page and would love to hear from you if you have u3a news to share.

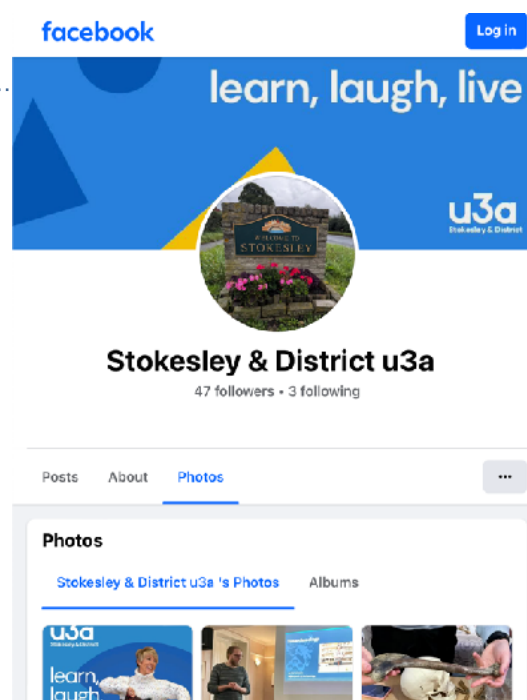
You can find the page by searching for "Stokesley & District u3a" on Facebook, or from this [link to our u3a website](#).

Please follow and share our posts with your friends.

Contact:

Karen Boddy [Link to contact page for Karen Boddy](#)

Mark deCosemo [Link to contact page for Mark de Cosemo](#)



Dates for your Diary

Speaker Events Calendar 2026

Held in Stokesley Town Hall

Wednesday 11 February 2026 1.15–3.00pm

Dr Fred Stevenson, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society

Is There Life on Mars?

Wednesday 8 April 2026. 1.15–3.00pm

Dr Jane Atkinson CBE, FEng, Chief Operating Officer, Enfinium

Waste Not, Want Not

Dr Atkinson will explain how household waste is converted into energy and explore how her industry creates power from everyday waste.

Wednesday 10 June 2026. 1.15–3.00pm

*Catherine McPartland

The Outstanding Contribution of Some Women to Society

Wednesday 12 August 2026. 1.15–3.00pm

Speaker and topic to be confirmed

Wednesday 14 October 2026. 1.15–3.00pm

AGM, followed by the Wars of the Roses Group

Did King Richard III murder his nephews?

The evidence for and against this supposition will be presented to the audience, who will then serve as Judge and Jury and deliver their verdict.

Wednesday 8 December 2026. 1.00–3.00pm

Christmas Event

Christmas carols, a Christmas reading, and a Christmas-themed quiz, set and managed by the Stokesley and District u3a Quiz Group.

Refreshments

The Brunton Room will be available for tea and coffee from 1.15–1.50 pm.

The Main Hall will open for the speaker at 1.50 pm.

For further information, please contact the Groups Co-ordinator:

Sue Tapper

* Dr McPartland has provided us with further details about her talk "Local Women in Entertainment and the Arts"

I am a retired lecturer, with experience of teaching in both further education colleges and universities. After leaving full-time work I pursued my long-standing interest in history which led me to a research project for International Women's Day, focussed on the lives of women in Middlesbrough's early history. What started as a one-off initiative quickly became an ongoing passion, and I've spent time since uncovering the stories of local women whose contributions have often been overlooked.

Contrary to common assumptions, our region has produced many notable women whose achievements enrich our local history. My research has uncovered many remarkable figures, in medicine, nursing, education, politics, and many other fields. Their stories paint a much richer picture of our local history than many realise.

This talk on local women in entertainment and the arts grew naturally out of that work. I've discovered our region produced the world's first beauty queen, the first woman to sing O Mio Babbino Caro and a star of a well-known soap opera as well as many other extraordinary performers. Every time I give this talk, I come across even more fascinating stories, often ones that have been hidden for far too long.

I'm looking forward to sharing some of these stories with you.

SPEAKER EVENTS 2026

Held at Stokesley Town Hall

Start 1.15–1.50pm (refreshments and displays) held in the **Brunton Room**, downstairs.

Speaker Event 2–3pm – upstairs

Wednesday 11 February 2026

Our first Speaker Event of 2026 will be held on Wednesday 11 February at Stokesley Town Hall.

We are delighted to welcome Dr Fred Stevenson, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, who will explore the fascinating question:

“Is There Life on Mars?”

The Brunton Room will be open from 1.15 pm for tea and coffee, giving members the opportunity to meet friends and socialise before the main hall opens for the talk at 2.00 pm.

There will also be an Information Table and screen highlighting current u3a activities. In addition, the Family History Group, Poetry Group, and Sewing Group will be showcasing their work and activities.

Wednesday 8 April 2026

Our speaker on this occasion will be Dr Jane Atkinson CBE FREng, Chief Operating Officer of Enfinium.

Dr Atkinson will explain how household waste is converted into energy, offering insight into modern waste management and sustainable energy production.

The Brunton Room will be open from 1.15pm for tea and coffee prior to the talk.

For more information, please contact:

Sue Tapper [Contact Committee link](#)

Group Leaders' Updates

If you are not a member but would like to attend any please contact the membership secretary:
Tracey Fox: Membership Secretary: u3amembers@outlook.com

Archaeology Group – Tricia Virgo & Dave Chadwick

The group is now in the middle of the autumn/winter programme of inside talks. Unfortunately our November speaker was snow-bound, so we had a brief talk and film about the Must Farm excavation – named by some as Cambridgeshire's Pompeii. At our Christmas social, members gave short talks on such diverse topics as the Mary Rose, the Terracotta Warriors and an interesting area of Newcastle. They say variety is the spice of life! As I write, we are anticipating a visit from a zoo archaeologist (animal bones can tell us a lot about how people lived) and then in February a speaker from Teesside Archaeology will be telling us about local sites and recent digs. We round off the winter with an illustrated talk on Orkney. Our summer visit programme is still being finalised, but if you want to know more, come along to the Town Hall on the third Wednesday at 2pm. For more information contact Tricia or David.

[Link to Archaeology](#)

Art – Diane Bush, Ruth Davies, Elizabeth Dawson, Ian McCulley

The aim of our Art Group is to use six sessions to create seasonal images of Autumn, Winter and Spring while experimenting with colour combinations using watercolour pencils (easy to transport). Present members range in ability from never tried Art before to several who are very creative.

Help and support for the Art aspect comes from Group Leaders Diane and Ian but members interact and help each other. It is a fun two hours, and when members say on leaving “I really enjoyed that looking forward to the next one”, it’s encouraging. The images produced are so individual it’s really interesting to see.

At the moment we are full but we hope to start again in September so look out for an email later in the year providing information on when we start again.

Diane, Elizabeth, Ruth and Ian.

[Link to Art](#)

Beginners’ French – Dermot Roddy

We have been meeting once a week since the middle of May, working our way through a basic French textbook (with accompanying App to promote a good, authentic French accent), and aiming to complete it within a year.

As this Newsletter goes to press, we are working through the eighth of twelve modules – so we’re broadly on plan. Inevitably, a few people will miss the odd class – but everyone is being very diligent about catching up in their own time. Some are already planning to join the Intermediate French group when we reach the end of the book.

Dermot Roddy [Link to Beginners French](#)

Folk Dancing – Martin Sutton

If you are looking for some light mental and physical exercise and are prepared to mix and have a laugh, then perhaps the Folk Dancing group is for you.

Recognising that we all are not as young and agile as we once were, suitable dances are carefully selected from “court” dances published in the 17th and 18th centuries, traditional folk dances documented by Cecil Sharp and newer dances composed in the 20th and 21st centuries. Tuition is given for all dance movements with dances. Dances are walked through and instructions called during the dance. Recorded music is used with the ability to reduce the speed as necessary.

Prospective and new group members are always welcome. No previous experience is necessary and there is no need to come with a dancing partner.

The group usually meets between 2:00pm and 4:00pm on the 1st Wednesday of the month in Kirkby Church Hall.

If you wish to join the group or would like more information, then please contact Martin Sutton on [Link to Folk Dancing](#)

Life Drawing – Isabel Miles

We no longer have a waiting list but the group is at full capacity. Because of the requirement for everyone to have a clear view of the sitter, the number attending this group has to be limited.

Nevertheless, anyone interested in joining a waiting list should contact Isabel and they will be contacted should a space, or spaces, arise.

Isabel Miles. See the groups pages.

Long Walks – Dermot Roddy

Steve Weighell and Keith Robinson led us on a lovely 9-mile Autumnal walk in November to see the Thorodale woodlands in all their splendour.

Starting off from Hawnbly All Saints Church, we headed northwards to New Hall and on towards Mount Pleasant farm. From there we headed westward through Thorodale and up to the well-known Drovers Road at the top of Kepwick bank, with fine views over the



November Walk – Photo Dermot Roddy



November Walk – Photo Steve Weighell (also above) kind permission of participants

Vale of York. We then travelled back east towards Arden Hall, Coomb Hill House, Nag's Head Wood and back to Hawnbly Church. It was great to have some new members joining us on this occasion, swelling our numbers on the walk to 17.

In December, Janice Ronsano led a band of 12 keen walkers on a lovely 8-mile winter walk. Starting off from Kildale Station, we followed the Cleveland Way path to Captain Cook's Monument, then down to Gribdale and over Great Ayton Moor to Newton Moor and Hutton Moor. We then headed along a cold and windy Percy Rigg before taking a more sheltered track on the right down through New Row. From there we made our way back along the road to Kildale. Despite all the recent rainy weather, we had a dry day and paths that were much less muddy than expected. To round off the day, we then repaired to Fletchers Farm for some welcome hot drinks.

We had an impressive turnout of 16 intrepid walkers for our early January walk, braving the near-zero temperatures as we made our way from Great Broughton in the direction of Kirkby, cutting across fields towards Holme Farm, Willowbrooke House and Solomon's Porch.

The crisp, dry weather had its advantages, of course: the sometimes-muddy fields were solid underfoot. We then headed off towards Toft Hill to enjoy a great view of the surrounding area along with an information board explaining the local history of quarrying sandstone and mining jet and alum. From there we headed back via Hunton's Folly and Bank Lane in time for our annual lunch at the Jet Miners.

If you would like to know more about the Long Walks group, please contact Dermot Roddy.

[Link to Long walks](#)



January '26 Walk – Photo Dermot Roddy



January '26 Walk – Photo Dermot Roddy



January '26 Walk – Photo Dermot Roddy

Piano Group – Dermot Roddy



The group meets once a month in one another's houses to play piano music. Over the last three months we have enjoyed playing a wide selection of piano music in many styles: various classics by Chopin, Schubert, Brahms, Mozart, Rubinstein and Satie; some more contemporary pieces by Gershwin, Irving Gordon, Mark Knopfler, Howard Blake and George Shearing; a variety of seasonal music for Christmas; and some rather exciting Argentinian

Tango music. Everyone is encouraged to come to the meeting with one or two pieces of music that they are prepared to play in front of the rest of the group, although some prefer to just listen initially. We're a friendly bunch – so no-one need feel anxious about joining us!

We have a good range of abilities in the group from near-beginners to people who have not played much since their school days and some highly proficient players. We are all aiming to improve our performance from whatever our starting point happens to be.

Anyone interested in joining should contact Dermot Roddy to find out where the next meeting is taking place. Dermot. [Link to Piano Group](#)

Quiz Group – Tricia Virgo & Victoria Baskerville

The quiz group continues to be very popular. With members taking turns to provide the quiz each month, there is plenty of variety amid good company. There is room for more competitors, so if you are free on the first Friday of the month at 1.30pm, why not come along to the Community Association meeting room and have a go?

To whet your appetite, here are a few questions on the year ahead: *answers on page 9*.

1. Which British King was crowned 400 years ago?
2. Which country declared its independence 250 years ago?
3. 100 years ago, why did the UK declare a State of Emergency?
4. Which naturalist and broadcaster was born on 8th May 1926?
5. Which fictional bear first appeared on bookshelves in October 1926?

For more information contact Tricia or Vicky

[Check out the groups page](#)

Science Group – Peter Atkinson

We have some interesting talks to start the new year. In February, Sean King from our neighbouring Guisborough u3a will be looking at the technical aspects of "Communications". I'm sure this will cover a wide range of topics, all very relevant to our modern lifestyles.

Then, in March, Roger Strachan will be telling us about "The Weather". Again, a very wide subject but one that is always very close to our hearts.

Let me know if you are not already a member of the science group but would like to join us for either of these.

Peter Atkinson [Link to science group](#)

Singing for Pleasure – Angela Bennett

The group continues to welcome new people. Singing sessions for the remainder of this term will be on January 29th, February 3rd and 17th and March 3rd, 17th AND 31st. This last date is a 5th Tuesday which will be a substitute for the first Tuesday in April, Easter Tuesday, which was felt

too early – for holiday-ers and grandchild-looking-after-ers in our mixed group of singers – soprano, alto, tenor and bass – once decided!



We will resume for the Summer Term on 21st April which will, most likely, finish on 7th or 21st July (to be decided) with a Summer Buffet Lunch in St. Joseph's Hall.

We continue to learn and enjoy singing a variety of folk, spiritual and 'classic' pop arrangements and look forward to welcoming singers of all experience and none – though recent new interest has been female and so more men would be made very welcome!

Angela Bennett, Group Leader. [Link to Singing for Pleasure](#)

Yoga Group – Amanda Brown

The current twice monthly series will end in early March and a new series will start up late April. Please contact Amanda if you would like to go on the waiting list for the Spring/Summer series. Amanda Brown.

Answers to the Quiz Group Questions

1. Charles I; 2. USA; 3. General Strike; 4. Sir David Attenborough; 5. Winnie the Pooh



November Walk – Photo Steve Weighell



January '26 Walk – Photo Dermot Roddy



January '26 Walk – Photo Dermot Roddy



November Walk – Photo Steve Weighell



January '26 Walk – Photo Dave Simpson

Thankyou, Dermot for sending these photos from yourself, Steve and Dave on the Long walks – looks fabulous!

To all – It's lovely to see what groups are doing, so as long as everyone in the picture agrees, send in a photo. No need to edit it, I'll do that if necessary. Diane, Newsletter Editor.

Follow this link (as the link on the notice takes you to recent years summer schools!)

<https://yahru3a.uk/2026-summer-school/>



Yorkshire and
Humber Region

Registered Charity Number 1211388

Summer School

24th to 27th August 2026

The Hawkills, Easingwold, YO61 3EG

The aims of our Summer School

Provide members with new learning opportunities

Enable members to explore a topic their local u3a may not be able to offer

Enable delegates to share time out with other members from across the region and beyond

In 2025 we had delegates from ten of the twelve u3a regions and nations, with feedback such as

"An excellent summer school, as always!" "A wonderful venue – we were so well looked after."

"The courses, food, and company were all first-class"

The Hawkills is again the venue for our 2026 Summer School

You can read about this superb venue here <https://thehawkills.com/>

The courses to choose from

Britain through Literature, Art, Poetry and Speeches of the 1960s	Conversational Spanish
Crime Fiction from Sherlock to Vera	The Changing English Language
Drama – Intermediate Improvised Drama	Making Sense of Everyday Mathematics
Fungi and Lichens	Outdoor Painting and Sketching
An Introduction to Practical Geology	Stained Glass in English Churches Art, Science and Symbolism

Costs for our three-night residential Summer School:

Full Board Delegate £495pp

Day Delegate £256pp (inclusive of lunches and dinners)

For more information, including course details and the booking form, go to

<https://yahru3a.uk/summer-school/>

We look forward to seeing you

