

In Brief & Contents

Speaker Events

- ▶ The 2nd Wednesday of August & October
- ▶ Open 1.15pm – 1.50pm for refreshments & chat
- ▶ Main Hall Opens 1.45pm
- ▶ Talk 2pm – 3pm
- ▶ Town Hall, Stokesley
- ▶ Access via stairs or lift
- ▶ Induction Hearing Loop

Aug 12th:

Vanessa Smith – “How to Solve a Murder”

Aug 12th:

U3a AGM followed by the unsolved – Did Richard III murder his nephews?

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- ▶ 5–10: Group Leaders' updates
- ▶ 10: Extra bits! & Long Walk photos

Please check out the notices page 3.

Group Co-ordinator

To start or lead a group, or if you have an idea for any short groups –

Please contact Sue Tapper



Letter from the Chair

I hope summer has several weeks still to run, but we are already starting to plan for the autumn. The first task is the end of our financial year in July, and production of the accounts, so that they can be reviewed then approved at the Stokesley and District u3a Annual General Meeting (AGM) in October.

The very busy time processing membership renewals starts in August, with new members joining from September. Full details will be sent to you and it would help enormously if you could renew on-time.

Finally, we have our AGM in October, when you, the members, approve our finance report, receive my report on the year, and elect new Committee members for the year ahead. Full details and paperwork will be circulated to you, and it would be very supportive if you could vote at this important event, on-line or in person (it is the only meeting we are legally obliged to hold).

At the AGM we will be voting to elect those members nominated for the positions on the new Committee. We already have several excellent candidates who have indicated their interest in standing and, if you wish to join them, please consider putting your name forward on the nomination forms that will be circulated in mid-August.

Our u3a continues to go from strength to strength, with 120 new members since last September, and over a third of the membership having joined in the last three years. This is excellent news, though it does, and will, present future challenges ensuring there is group capacity for everybody. There will always be a few groups that are “full” but we are continuously working to reduce this impact.

We have seen several new groups starting, and being very successful, there are even more proposals in the pipeline, so keep watching for news, and see if they might interest you.

Updates from Group Leaders Pages 4 to 10

- ▶ Archaeology
- ▶ Art
- ▶ Art Appreciation
- ▶ Beginners French
- ▶ Bowling
- ▶ Classic film
- ▶ Life Drawing
- ▶ Long Walks
- ▶ Outings
- ▶ Piano
- ▶ Railway History
- ▶ Singing for Pleasure
- ▶ Ukulele
- ▶ Walking Tennis
- ▶ Yoga

Your u3a committee

- ▶ To contact any member of the committee:
[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
- ▶ Dr Madeline Fisher: Speaker Finder
- ▶ Tracey Fox: Membership Secretary
u3amembers@outlook.com
- ▶ Peter Irvin
- ▶ Ian McCulley
- ▶ Carol Rowntree: Membership Assistant
u3amembers@outlook.com
- ▶ Hermione Wappat:

As this is my last newsletter before I get “retired”, I would just like to thank the people who have given their time to support our u3a over the past few years. To all the Group Leaders, a very special “Thank you” the u3a could not run without you, and you have done the role superbly well. To those behind the scenes, who also support us, Beacon Administrator, Website Manager, Meet and Greet team for the Speaker Events, Speaker Finder, Membership Secretary, Group Leader Coordinator, Newsletter Editor etc etc. The list is long. Whilst you do not see them often “front of house” they are all keeping the wheels turning behind the scenes.

A very big thank you to all my Committee colleagues with whom I have worked for the past few years. A special mention to those who are standing down with me in October, Martin Sutton (after six years as our Treasurer), Diane Bush (after a term including Secretary, and Newspaper editor) and Madeline Fisher (Speaker Finder). The rest of the team will, I am sure, continue to guide the ship in the correct direction.

Finally, a big thank you to you, the members, who make this organisation what it is.

And now, it’s Goodbye from me.

Peter.

Letter from the Editor

Thank you Peter, and I have to add. Peter has chaired the u3a committee and “steered the ship” after being secretary, and he continues to lead a number of our groups, as well as updating us with “Letters from the Chair”. So a very big thank you to Peter for his commitment, enthusiasm and strategic development of our u3a.

During August we will be sending reminders by email or post (if you do not have email) of how and when to vote to keep Stokesley & District (S&D) u3a going, so keep a lookout we really want (and need) your votes!

I also “get retired” from the committee this AGM after a total of six years; I’m grateful to my fellow committee members, past and present, it’s been a positive and enjoyable experience after moving into the area and not knowing a soul! I will continue to edit the Newsletter, the next one will be the November edition and will include the AGM results.

We have some fabulous photos from the Archaeology group (who are on the title page – *Group Readers Updates* will tell you where they are) and the Long Walks group, it looks like some sunny and quite hot days if the number of water bottles are anything to go by!

As ever, many, many thanks to all the contributors, and the group leaders, it is much appreciated.

Keep cool and enjoy the summer!

Diane.

Notices

If you are interested trying out a group before joining the S&D u3a, please contact the Membership Secretary first as we need your name and details prior to attendance at any of the groups. Membership secretary – Tracey Fox. u3amembers@outlook.com

Renewing your Membership

Membership fees will be due on 1st September and will remain the same as last year (£17 for full members and £13 for associate members).

Payment can be made online or by a cheque, payable to “Stokesley and District u3a”. Cash payments can be made at the Speaker Event meetings. Please pay online if you can as this simplifies the process.

You will not need to complete a form when *renewing* your membership. You should receive an email or letter at the beginning of August that will include the contact details we have for you. Please check these and let me know if anything needs changing. There is no need to confirm if they are correct.

As you won't be submitting a form with your fee please ensure you follow the instructions in the email about the information we need with your payment, so that we can update the correct record.

Cheque payments can be posted to me or handed in to a member of the Committee, at the Speaker Event at the Town Hall on 12th August 2025.

Only new members need to complete an application form. This is available on the website or by contacting me. If you have any questions please contact: Tracey Fox (Membership Secretary)

u3amembers@outlook.com

A reminder – Gift Aid

The HMRC rules on eligibility to claim Gift Aid on Membership fees have changed. The Committee have concluded that it is not possible for us to claim Gift Aid for the tax year ending 5th April 2026, and that we will not claim it for the following year either.

Consequently, if you have previously indicated that you wish to gift-aid your subscription, and if you usually complete for HMRC a “Self-Assessment” or any other Income Tax related document, you are advised not to declare your 2025–26 or your 2026–27 Stokesley & District u3a membership subscription as Gift Aid. For more information [Contact Treasurer](#)

Martin Sutton, Treasurer

Check out our Facebook page! [Click this link](#)

Please follow and if you wish to contribute, contact:

Karen Boddy Mark deCosemo



Dates for your Diary

Poetry Competition

The Theme is “Over the Hill” so interpret it in any way. Open to all u3a Stokesley and District members. There was a fabulous response to the Short Story competition last year, and we are hoping to repeat the success. The winner will be announced at the AGM on 14th October 2026.

Whether humorous, reflective, nostalgic, or inspiring, we invite members to explore the theme in their own unique way.

Entries are open to all members of Stokesley and District u3a.

- ▶ Closing date for entries: 27th September 2026
- ▶ Entries must be submitted by post

Submission Requirements

- ▶ Poems must be typed
- ▶ Entries must be no longer than 40 lines excluding the title
- ▶ All work submitted must be the entrant's own original work
- ▶ Poems must not have been previously published
- ▶ Entrants' names must not appear on the poem itself, as entries will be judged anonymously
- ▶ A separate covering note should be attached, including the entrant's name and contact details

Judging

Three eminent and experienced judges will judge the entries and their decision will be final.

- ▶ Closing date for entries: 27th September 2026

Speaker Events 2026

1.15pm – 1.50pm for Refreshments.

1.45pm Doors open to the Main Hall.

Wednesday 12 August 2026. 1.15–3.00pm

Vanessa Smith – How to Solve a Murder

A 999 call to the police ends abruptly and officers are dispatched to the scene. What has happened—and how do you bring the perpetrator to justice?

Drawing on her experience as a former Detective Superintendent, Vanessa Smith guides us through a realistic fictional murder investigation. As the case unfolds, clues are revealed and the audience is invited to help piece the evidence together in this interactive and fascinating insight into real-life policing.

Wednesday 14 October 2026. 1.15–3.00pm

AGM, followed by the Wars of the Roses Group

Did King Richard III murder his nephews?

Evidence from contemporary historians for and against this supposition will be presented to the audience by Peter Collins and Sue Tapper another murder mystery – will it be solved?.

Wednesday 8 December 2026. 1.00–3.00pm

Christmas Event – Christmas carols, a festive 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 Christmas Event at 1.45pm.

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

See website contact page



Group Leaders' Updates

Archaeology

Our summer programme of visits continued in May with (due to a hiccup by English Heritage) a hastily arranged self-guided visit to the Roman Camps at Cawthorn, followed by a visit to the beautiful frescoes in Pickering Parish Church.

In June we braved a very sunny but blessedly windy Scarborough Castle (where the photo on page 1 was taken) with an enthusiastic and well informed volunteer guide. This was followed by a brief tour to the Sally Port overlooking the main harbour, and then a look at the damage incurred to St Mary's Church during the Civil War. Our guide this time was Jean, one of our members, who had previously given us a talk about the Civil War sieges. We had a complete contrast in July, with a visit to the recently refurbished Hopetown Railway Museum in Darlington.

Again, a guided tour gave us an insight into how the Stockton and Darlington railway changed this country – and eventually the world – forever.

In August we will be back to the Romans with a visit to Piercebridge, and in September we will be visiting Leake church – yes, that one just off the A19 which you always look at and say you must go and see it one day! Then in October we will be back into the Town Hall for our winter programme – which will include talks on Roman Campania (Italy) and Bronze Age Ireland to name just a few.

We have plenty of room for new members, so if this sounds of interest, and you are free on the third Wednesday of the month, please contact:

Tricia: or David: See the website groups page

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

We have just met to start planning our next set of six sessions, starting in October. Members with no experience to proficient were all together happily last time and we are looking forward to providing a set of sessions for everyone again.

There will be an email sent in August for u3a members to enrol for the new group, so please keep an eye out! Diane, Elizabeth, Ruth and Ian. See the website groups page

Art Appreciation – Sue Tapper, Diane Bush & Tony Daniels

The Art Appreciation Group has now completed the ten-session course British Artists from Hogarth to Hockney. The sessions were very well received by the members, and we were delighted with the feedback we had. We would like to thank all the members who made contributions through presentations and discussions.

The group is now taking a well-earned break until the New Year. The plan is to contact all members of Stokesley & District u3a in February to invite them to apply to join the next course. This will be wide-ranging and look at the different Genres/Subject Matters in Art History, i.e. landscape, still life, portraiture, history paintings, religious, etc.

We will be looking for about 30 interested members to join the course. We will then invite them to a Planning Meeting on Thursday, 4th March when hopefully people will volunteer to give talks on artists/paintings appropriate to the subject matter of that session.

We then expect to start the new course on Thursday, 1st April.

Our aim for the group, as in the past, is to encourage as many members to contribute talks as we can fit into a two-hour session, usually four to five 15–20-minute talks by different speakers. This results in a variety of presentations and avoids long lectures. The comments arising from the talks have resulted in some interesting discussions.

Tony, Sue and Diane. For further details follow the link: [Link to Art Appreciation](#)

Beginners' French – Dermot Roddy

The group completed its remit as planned at the end of July, having brought a keen group of beginners up to a level of capability that enables them to join the Intermediate French group if they wish.

Bowling – David Oxley

The bowling group has been going for six weeks now and I must say that the group of novices who started are now promising bowlers. They have got to grips with the eccentricities of both the bowls and the green which is not straightforward.

There is some friendly competition developing which demonstrates their increasing competence and confidence. However, best of all is that the group are playing with smiles on their faces and are enjoying the experience.

For more information: [Link to Bowling](#)

Classic film – Mark DeCosemo

The Classic Film Group will continue to meet on the 4th Wednesday of the month throughout the summer. We are continuing to choose a different decade each month, the 1990s film was *Sneakers* shown in July.

All films are shown at Stokesley Community Library, starting at 2pm.

August: *Life of Pi* (2012) – based on the best selling book. Stunning cinematography. And a man sharing a boat with a tiger.

September: *Roman Holiday* (1953) Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn in a classic Hollywood romance.

October: *Midnight Run* (1988) Robert DeNiro in his first comedy. Very funny but full of swearing. Classic 80s comedy.

Mark. [Link to Classic Film](#)

Life Drawing – Isabel Miles

In order to accommodate more members we have moved to a bigger room in the Stokesley Town Hall and now have ample space. Anyone interested in joining us should contact Isabel Miles. See the website groups page

Long walks – Dermot Roddy

We had glorious weather out on the Moors for our 10-mile walk in May. Starting in Chop Gate, we set off via Cold Moor Lane and Garfit Gap to climb over the Wainstones. We then headed via Carr Ridge to Round Hill – the highest point on the North York Moors.

We then made our way via some clear paths and some invisible heathery ones to Collar Ridge and then to Black Intake, and through William Beck Farm back to our starting point.



May Long Walk – image Dermot Roddy



May Long Walk – image Dermot Roddy

Temperatures peaked at 25 degC, but there was a mercifully cool breeze at various points along the way. It was great to welcome a new member to the group.



Dave Simpson led our June walk. We were blessed with warm dry weather and a walk starting on the X76 bus. We walked from Winston past the West Tees Railway bridge, through Gainford, Piercebridge with its bridge and High Coniscliffe along the Teesdale Way and back to Low Coniscliffe. The walk was 10 miles in total, but with very little climbing. There were lots of lovely flowers along the way, and we had the River Tees as our constant companion.



Our July walk was led by David Martindale, taking us from Egton Bridge to Goathland. We had a perfect day for it, free from the recent heat-wave conditions and with just a gentle cooling breeze on the hilltops. Starting from Egton Bridge, we took the Toll Road to Grosmont, then headed on through Crag Cliff Wood to Green End, over Cass Hill – one of a few steepish climbs – and on to Goathland where we had lunch in the “Harry Potter” railway station. Suitably refreshed, we set off via the rail trail to just beyond Beckhole, up Murkside via Murk Esk Cottage, over to Blue Beck Cottage via High Burrows & Low Hollins Farms, and then back to Egton Bridge. It was nice to welcome yet another new member of the group.

We aim for a distance of 8 to 10 miles on our walks. As you can see from the photographs (see also page 10), we cover some interesting terrain and enjoy some excellent views. If you would like to know more about the Long Walks group, please contact Dermot Roddy [Link to Long Walks](#)

Outings Group – Peter Collins

The group continues its very successful first season. We have recently had very enjoyable theatre visits to see “Red Shoes” and “Operation Mincemeat”, with Ushaw House and Belsay Hall providing the outside visits.

The forward programme continues with:

August 22nd	Kynren	Fully Booked
September 12th	“The Car Man”	Fully Booked
October 7th	Bishop Auckland	Booking opening early August
November 25th	Leeds and the Armouries	Booking opening late September



This will end our 2026 season, I will go away, lie down in a darkened room, and think about next year's programme.

Which starts with:

February 24th 2027	“Christmas Carol goes Wrong”	Booking opening early November.
March 18th 2027	“Jesus Christ Superstar”	Booking opening early December
April date tbc	Ampleforth College and Nunington Hall	

Interested? Come and join us. Contact Peter Collins. See the website groups page

Piano group – Dermot Roddy



Image: Hermione Wappat

We had a good mix of music at our June meeting. There was some classical music: Haydn's Little Serenade, Handel's 6 variations on a Chaconne, Mozart's Variations on Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman (better known here as Twinkle, twinkle, little star), and Melody by Kohler. We also had a couple of pieces from the Norwegian classical repertoire: The Watchman by the famous Edvard Grieg and Sommervise by the less well-known female composer, Agata Backer Grondahl. Turning to other genres of piano music, we had a lovely piano arrangement of the music from the balcony scene in the film version of Romeo and Juliet, and a Cole Porter piece called What is this thing called love? Along the way we had some interesting discussion about women composers down through the ages.

There was something of an international flavour to the playing in our July meeting. The influence of the World Cup? From the US, we had Scott Joplin's Pineapple Rag (with pineapple provided!) and Florence

Price's Ticklin' Toes. We had an interesting discussion about whether it was possible to detect any trace of the hard life that Joplin experienced underneath the scintillating melody line, and about the challenges that Price had faced as a black female composer growing up in the Deep South of the early 20th century. This was followed by Pure Imagination from “Willie Wonka and the chocolate Factory”, played initially in the style associated with the film and then with more of a swing rhythm.

Staying with the world of films, we had Over The Rainbow (from the Wizard of Oz) in an interesting arrangement by the jazz composer David Stapleton. This was followed by piano arrangements of the songs My Lagan Love and The Town I Loved So Well by the Irish composer Phil Coulter. We had an interesting discussion about how composers sometimes reflect their national roots in their compositions, as also do performers in their playing. After renditions of JS Bach's Minuet and the well-known hymn Abide With Me, we had a stunning performance of Debussy's Arabesque by one of our members to inspire us in our practising. To round off the session, we had a game of “Name the country for this National Anthem”!

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

Railway History – Stephen Rabone

The Railway History Group will be restarting its meetings in October. The group meets on line using Zoom at 7.30pm on Wednesdays for about an hour. The illustrated talks cover a wide variety of subjects about railways including both current and historical topics as well as railways in both Britain and overseas.

Meetings take place roughly every month during the autumn, winter and spring. Details of meetings will be sent out nearer the time for each talk. To join the group contact Stephen Rabone through the group page on the website. [Railway History Group](#)

Singing for Pleasure – Angela Bennett

The Singing for Pleasure Group held its last session of this academic year on Tuesday, 21st July. We will be finishing our year and term with a summer buffet for 48 people in St Joseph's Hall or grounds after singing through our Summer Term repertoire which has included spirituals, folk-songs and 'classical' pop items. We have had a good year with numbers being consistently in the mid-forties (if not our ages!).

We will start singing again on Tuesday, 1st September and will meet on the first and third Tuesday mornings of each month (except August). Newcomers are always welcome to join our all-comers, mixed levels of experience, friendly group. Music is provided and is taught and explained in an informal atmosphere and sustained by a mid-morning coffee/tea and biscuits break.

Please contact me towards the end of August if further information and encouragement is required. Angela Bennett. Group Leader. [Link Singing for Pleasure](#)

Ukulele – Suzanne Dalton

Although numbers have fallen we continue to enjoy our bi-weekly Ukulele Tuesday mornings.

After our last meeting in July we went out for lunch at the Bay Horse in Great Broughton. Followed by a break in August.

We start classes again on the 8th of September, our first concert is on the 2nd of September which means we will have to manage without any rehearsals, what's that saying? 'Fail to prepare ? Then prepare to fail?'

However, we couldn't say no to our favourite audience at Nunthorpe Methodist Church. We know they'll appreciate our efforts however many 'hiccups' we have.

Chris, Andy, Elaine, and Suzanne plus our marvellous Coffee and Biscuit team – who shall remain nameless for fear of poaching. [Link to Ukulele group](#)

Walking Tennis – Sheila Patel

Kirkby and Broughton Sports Club

The group is only in its second year, with a hard core of maybe half a dozen potential players each week. The emphasis is on fun, making new friends, and maintaining a level of fitness. We are now part way through a second season, (we started again in April) and plan, weather permitting, to carry on through the summer and into Autumn, or maybe beyond!

Our sessions this year have, for the most part, consisted of a "knock up" trying different exercises we have been learning, followed by games. A conveniently placed bench, or a chair on the court provides r and r for those who may feel the need.

It would be lovely to see some new faces joining our friendly little group and trying out this gentler form of tennis. Come and try (no commitment!). Or, if you are unsure you are welcome to come and watch a session and see if it is for you. Sessions are Friday 10am to 12 noon but there is also a court booked on Wednesdays 10am to 12, with the possibility of an open session at 11am.

If you are interested please contact me for details. And see the group page for further information.

Please contact Sheila through the website [Link to Walking tennis](#)

Yoga 🧘🧘🧘 – Amanda Brown

The group had its last session for the current series on 29th July, and a new series will begin in mid September. If you would like to go on the list for available spaces please let me know, before the end of August. See the website groups page

Extra Bits!

Thankyou to the Long Walk group members for the photographs of the long walks, by kind permission of participants. There are some stunning views. Photos of the group activities are welcome in the Newsletter, but please ensure anyone uncomfortable with this to step out of shot.



May Walk – image Dermot Roddy



Piercebridge
June Walk – image Dave Simpson



July Walk – image Dave Simpson



July Walk – image Dave Simpson

Poster for the Poetry Competition (page 3/4)

Stokesley and District
u3a
Poetry Competition

THEME
Over the Hill

Whether humorous, reflective, nostalgic or inspiring,
poems must be relevant to the theme in order to win a prize.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Poems must be typed
- ✓ Entries must be no longer than 40 lines, excluding material
- ✓ All work submitted must be the entrant's own original work
- ✓ Entries must not have been previously published
- ✓ Entrants must name their poem on the poem itself, as entries will be judged anonymously
- ✓ A separate envelope (if attached) must be attached, including the entrant's name and contact details

POSTAL ADDRESS FOR ENTRIES

Mrs S. Tapper
Jenkinson Avenue
Northhouse
Middlesbrough
TS1 1QY

JUDGING Three serious and experienced judges will judge the entries, and their decision will be final.

Entries are open to all members of Stokesley and District u3a.
Entries must be submitted by post.
Closing date for entries: 27th September 2026.
The winner will be announced at the AGM on 14th October 2026.



July Walk – image Roger Jonathan



July Walk – image Roger Jonathan