

# u3a

learn,  
laugh,  
live

Alnwick

# Welcome Pack



<http://u3asites.org.uk/Alnwick>

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# Introduction

**“ u3a shows the value of communities of interest and learning which are not defined by age, or by past experience, but instead are defined by the experiences still to be explored”.**

Thank you for joining us. Our u3a gives you opportunities to develop your interests, make new friends and have fun. During these uncertain times, demand to be part of the u3a movement is as high as ever, with people looking for new ways to keep connected with each other and keep up their cultural, educational and social activities.

Our amazing members have stepped up and found new and creative ways to keep connected with each other and continue their learning. You will see in this pack – there are many examples of new projects, ideas and shared skills and learning that our members are taking part in.

In this pack you will find what’s available in our u3a including access to interest groups and communication platforms. You will also have access to the national Third Age Matters magazine, to the national online newsletter and various social media sites.

For more information about what we offer, go to our website at

<https://u3asites.org.uk/alnwick/groups>



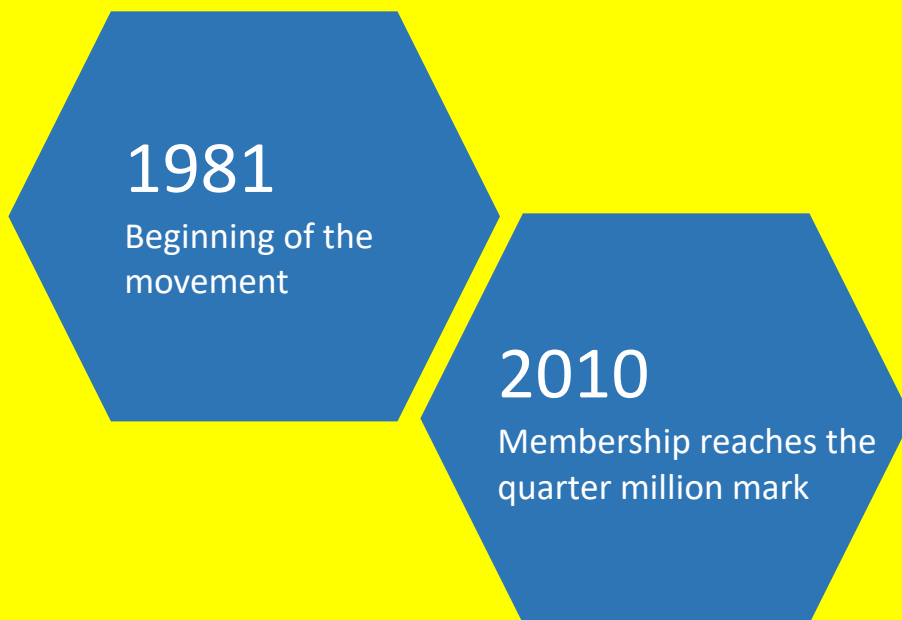
**We have Interest Groups covering subjects such as Archaeology, History, Line Dancing, Mahjong, Poetry, Science, Ukulele and Walking, to name just a few. The choice is wide, and the decision about what to do is made by the members for the members.**



# History

Our founders envisaged a collaborative approach with peers learning from each other. The u3a movement was to be self-funded, with members not working towards qualifications but learning purely for pleasure. There would be no distinction between the learners and the teachers – everyone could take a turn at being both if they wished.

From its beginnings in 1981, the movement grew very quickly and by the early 1990s, a u3a was opening every fortnight. u3as grew in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and in 2008 membership was increasing by 11% every year. 2010 saw our membership hitting the quarter million mark.



At the end of 2016 the u3a movement reached the milestone of 1,000 u3as celebrated by a conference with speakers including Eric Midwinter, one of the founders of the u3a movement.

Today, our movement includes over 400,000 u3a members in more than 1,000 u3as and is continuing to grow every day. Alnwick is one of 51 u3as in the Northumberland Region

# Ethos and Principles

## Lifelong Learning

- Membership of a u3a is open to all people who are no longer seeking full time gainful employment.
- Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.

## Self Help

- Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members.
- No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards.
- There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

## The Mutual Aid Principle

- Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement.
- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- Each u3a is self-funded by its membership.

# Benefits of u3a Membership

The major advantage is enjoying new interests and making great friends in a relaxed environment. In recent research, our members reported amongst other things feeling supported in new communities when they moved house, learning new skills, feeling valued and enjoying life.

If there's enough demand for a certain subject, you can start up an Interest Group yourself. Each Group has its own volunteer leader or coordinator who has a particular interest or expertise in the particular subject. For language classes, most of the Group leaders tend to have specialist knowledge. Sometimes (pre-Covid and hopefully post-Covid), we arrange trips.

Most of our members are retired, but u3as open their membership to any people not in full-time employment, thus becoming more inclusive and widening the age range of the membership. There is general agreement that not only physical but intellectual activity enriches and prolongs life in the later years.

# Alnwick u3a

At the time of writing, Alnwick u3a is 23 years old, having been founded in August 2000, and had around 200 members at the end of August 2023. Details of the current Committee are set out on page 9, followed by an explanation of what we do on page 10.

The schedule of monthly meetings is on page 11, followed by details of our Interest Groups starting on page 12.





# What Do We Do?

Alnwick u3a holds monthly meetings of general interest, organises outings and runs a range of groups. Starting in September 2017, monthly meetings and many group meetings have taken place at St Michael's Church Hall, Bailiffgate, Alnwick. The monthly meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month, from 2pm until 4pm. The current schedule of meetings is set out on the next page.

The groups normally meet at various times and in various venues. They cover many interests and enable members to share their knowledge, skills and expertise in the friendly and informal way that is unique to the u3a. Details of our current groups are given starting on page 12.

It only takes one or two interested people to get a Group going, and the Group leader does not have to be a specialist on the topic. We all learn from one another. If you have an interest that you would like to share with others, or there is some topic our current groups do not cover in which you would be interested, please talk to Anne McMillan, our Groups Coordinator.

Our annual subscription for 2022/23 is £24. This includes a £3.50 capitation fee to the National u3a in return for the services they provide. We ask members to contribute £2 at monthly meetings to help towards the cost of room hire, speakers' expenses and refreshments. This also includes a raffle ticket and there is a prize, appropriate to the season, at each meeting.



# Committee Members 2023/24

<b>Trevor Robinson</b>	Chair (and Newsletter Editor) chair.u3a.alnwick@gmail.com
<b>Carollyn McDonald</b>	Vice Chair
<b>Maureen Sayers</b>	Secretary secretary.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com
<b>George Ellames</b>	Treasurer
<b>Pat Ashton</b>	Membership Secretary membership.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com
<b>Anne McMillan</b>	Groups Coordinator groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com
<b>Kathy Platt</b>	Speaker Secretary
<b>Mary Brazier (co-opted)</b>	Facebook Secretary
<b>Shelley Willis</b>	Member

The Committee members are elected annually at the Annual General Meeting, which is usually held in October. The current Committee members were elected at the AGM held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

The next AGM will take place on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

# Our Interest Groups

Note – All Group details are subject to change - up-to-date details can be found at

<http://u3asites.org.uk/alnwick/groups>

<a href="#">ARCHAEOLOGY</a>	Tuesday p.m. 3rd Tuesday of each month	<a href="#">ARCHITECTURE</a>	Thursday p.m. 4th Thu; some all-day outings
<a href="#">ART APPRECIATION</a>	Friday p.m. 2nd Friday	<a href="#">BOARD GAMES – in abeyance</a>	
<a href="#">BOOK GROUP 1</a>	Tuesday a.m. 2nd Tuesday	<a href="#">BOOK GROUP 2 (Fairfield)</a>	Tuesday p.m. 3rd Tues; early evening
<a href="#">BOOK GROUP 3 (St Michael's)</a>	Monday p.m. 3rd Mon, 2-4pm	<a href="#">Bridge</a>	Friday p.m. 1st & 3rd Fridays, 2-4pm
<a href="#">Cribbage Group</a>	Wednesday a.m. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays	<a href="#">Food</a>	Wednesday a.m. 3rd Wednesday
<a href="#">French</a>	Monday a.m. 2nd & 4th Mon 10-12pm	<a href="#">German</a>	Monday a.m. 1st & 3rd Mon 10-12pm
<a href="#">HERB GROUP</a>	Wednesday p.m. 1st Wed - 4-6pm	<a href="#">HISTORY</a>	Tuesday p.m. 1st Tues
<a href="#">Intermediate Walking Group</a>	Tuesday a.m. 1st and 3rd Tuesdays	<a href="#">LATIN ADVANCED GROUP</a>	Monday a.m. Every 2 weeks
<a href="#">LATIN FOR IMPROVERS</a>	Wednesday a.m. 2nd & 4th Wednesdays	<a href="#">Line Dancing</a>	Monday p.m. Weekly - 12.15 to 1.30pm
<a href="#">Mahjong</a>	Tuesday p.m. 2nd & 4th Tuesday	<a href="#">Painting &amp; Drawing</a>	Friday a.m. Weekly
<a href="#">PHILOSOPHY</a>	Monday p.m. 2nd Mondays. 2:00pm	<a href="#">POETRY</a>	Tuesday a.m. 3rd Tuesday 10:30
<a href="#">POPULAR CLASSICAL MUSIC</a>	Friday p.m. 3rd Friday	<a href="#">Science</a>	Friday p.m. 4th Friday
<a href="#">SHORT WALKS</a>	Thursday a.m. 1st Thur	<a href="#">Social Evening</a>	Wednesday p.m. 2nd Wed; dining in local venue
<a href="#">Spanish</a>	Tuesday a.m. 2nd and 4th Tuesdays	<a href="#">Ukelele</a>	Friday p.m. 2nd and 4th Friday 2:30 p.m.
<a href="#">WALKING</a>	Wednesday a.m. 2nd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays		

## Group Leaders

(contact via [groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:groups.alnwick.u3a@gmail.com) or click on the Bluebird link on the Group's Webpage)

Archaeology	George Ellames, Pat Ashton
Architecture	Peter Carter
Art Appreciation	Sue Bairstow
Book Group 1	Meryl McConnell
Book Group 2 (Fairfield)	Tessa Nichol
Book Group 3	John Godfrey
Bridge	Tom Burroughs
Cribbage	Shelley Willis
Food	Carollyn McDonald
French	Maureen Stephenson
German	Maureen Stephenson
Herbal (Alnwick)	Ann Larvin
History	Colin Gough, Lalik Nasmyth
Intermediate Walking	Julie Hall, Peter Hall
Latin (Advanced)	Dilys Carter
Latin (Improvers)	Dilys Carter
Line Dancing	Maureen Stephenson
Long Walks	Gill Battye, Pat Ashton
Mahjong	Judy Williams
Painting and Drawing	Contact Groups Coordinator
Philosophy	Anne Larvin
Poetry	Anne Graham
Popular Classical Music	Meryl McConnell
Science	Trevor Robinson
Short Walks	Sheila Abercrombie, Judy Williams
Social Evening	Meryl McConnell
Spanish	John Craig
Ukulele	Dilys Carter

**PLEASE NOTE** - if you would like to come along to a group meeting that you do not normally attend, please contact the Group Coordinator. This is to safeguard any groups that are full; it is also for insurance purposes.

# Monthly Meetings in 2024

**APRIL 18th *'Hidden Gems of Northumberland'***

**Speaker:** Alnwick u3a member Richard Booth has combined his interests in hill walking, photography, history, and archaeology since moving to Northumberland. He will illustrate the story of Northumberland's early history through images of historic sites still found in the landscape.

**MAY 16th *'The History of Lindisfarne Castle, Past and Present'***

**Speaker:** Nick Lewis, Collections and House Officer, National Trust, Lindisfarne Castle.

**JUNE 20th *'The Dialects and Music of Northumberland'***

**Speaker:** Musician Kim Bibby-Wilson will talk about aspects of the Northumbrian dialect, illustrated with songs, and recordings of local poets and speakers.

**JULY 18th *'The Life of a Submariner'***

**Speaker:** Craig Weir, retired submariner, will talk about his experience of having been a submariner.

**AUGUST – NO MEETING****SEPTEMBER 19th *'The Buildings of William Newton'***

**Speaker:** Richard Pears, Durham University Librarian, will talk about William Newton, architect of over forty buildings, including Howick Hall and Lemmington Hall.

**OCTOBER 17th (AGM 1st) *'How Emergency Surgery has changed over my lifetime'***

**Speaker:** Alnwick u3a member, George Nasmyth, retired general surgeon.

**NOVEMBER 21st *'The Northumberland Hedgehog Rescue Trust'***

**Speaker:** Jen Stephenson joined the Trust 2 years ago wanting to work with wildlife after retiring from teaching. The Trust was set up over 25 years ago.

**DECEMBER 12th (also Xmas social)**

**Speaker:.**

**Note that the December date is one week earlier than normal, due to hall availability. The Christmas Social will also take place on that day.**

# u3a Network

Alnwick u3a has joined with the three other u3as in the north of Northumberland, Berwick, Wooler and Coquetdale, to form a network. This means that members of our u3a can freely participate in the activities of these u3as.

While each u3a will continue to give preference to their own members, this provides an opportunity to come together to pursue interests that might not make a viable group in any one u3a.

All three of our network partners have websites where you can find details of their groups and activities:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/berwick/home>

<https://u3asites.org.uk/wooler/home>

<https://u3asites.org.uk/coquetdale/welcome>