



Charity Number 1080264

www.whickham.u3asite.uk

WHICKHAM AND DISTRICT u3a SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Learn, Laugh, Live

Whickham and District u3a Mission Statement

Our mission is to raise awareness of Whickham and District u3a, celebrating lifelong learning, friendship and community spirit. We aim to encourage new connections and showcase the varied opportunities available within our u3a.

Hello all members,

Whickham and District u3a Committee and Publicity Team have been working very hard behind the scenes, during the summer months.

After researching the areas of Blaydon, Winlaton and Ryton it was found that if we tapped into these areas we could possibly increase our membership by about 20 members, hopefully more. Just to give you some history. There used to be a Ryton u3a but after COVID it was dissolved because Committee members weren't forthcoming. About 10 -12 years ago there was an inaugural meeting in Blaydon to hopefully start a Blaydon u3a. About 10 people turned up, but no one was willing to take any responsibility, so Blaydon u3a never started.

It has been decided, by Whickham and District u3a Committee to create a Satellite u3a covering the areas of Blaydon, Winlaton and Ryton. A grant of £500 has been given to us by National u3a. The Satellite u3a will be under the umbrella of Whickham and District u3a Committee.

We have secured a venue, Blaydon Library and decided that we will run a monthly coffee morning and a monthly speaker event from October to December 2026. If this 'adventure' takes off then we will continue into 2027. We will hopefully be able to create more Interest Groups around the Blaydon, Winlaton and Ryton areas.

Adverts have been placed in the Tyne Valley Express. The three areas have been flooded with posters and flyers. A front copy of the poster/flyer is below. If you know of any people that live in these three areas please share this information with them.

All members of Whickham and District u3a will be able to attend, through the months of October, November and December 2026 two coffee mornings and two speaker meetings, if they so want and hopefully into 2027.

If people from the three areas join our u3a they will be able to attend any of our Interest Groups, monthly coffee mornings and monthly speaker meetings.

The Committee have also decided to change the bank account. At the moment we use Lloyds Bank, but are in the process of changing signatories to use The Metro Bank, based on the Team Valley Trading Estate. They have been extremely helpful.

Do you have any comments about the above? Please let any of the Committee know.

Cecilia, Chair

u3a is coming to Blaydon, Winlaton and Ryton.

For all those who are no longer in full-time employment

SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES WITH u3a.

**Come along and have a free taster coffee morning at
the first meeting on Tuesday October 13th 10.30 - 12
noon at Blaydon Library.**

Thereafter, monthly coffee mornings will be held at Blaydon Library 10.30
– 12 noon on Tuesday November 10th and Tuesday December 8th.

Also, monthly speaker's meeting will be held at Blaydon Library 2pm-4pm

Wed October 21st - 'Del Boy Remembered' by Ben Haddon

Wed November 18th – 'Cobbled Streets & Penny Sweets' by Yvonne Young

Wed December 16th – 'The Top 100 Geordies' by Anthony Atkinson



Whickham and District u3a includes Blaydon, Winlaton and Ryton. A small charge will be made to cover the costs of speaker and venue hire.

CONTACT: Membership Secretary, Peter Gorringer for more information

phone: 07764 [237457](tel:237457) email: pgorringer158@gmail.com

Facebook: Whickham u3a

Website: www.whickham.u3asite.uk

u3a Learn, Laugh, Live Charity Number 1182934

Up and coming events

Our next main meeting at Sunnyside Club is on **Wednesday 9th September 2026**. The speaker is called **Linda Davidson**. The talk is called the 'History of Comedy'.

This talk traces the history of the public performance of comedy and looks at the ancient context of some of these performances as well as factors that influenced it, e.g. the church. Linda will also look at different comedy genres and profile some well known comedians, with a little bit of biographical detail or an anecdote about their route into comedy. The talk also lends itself to playing a few comedic clips of our favourite comedians from the past.

Monthly Coffee Morning.

Our next coffee morning will be on **Tuesday September 22nd 10.30 - 12 noon**.



PLEASE NOTE. WHICKHAM LIBRARY IS CLOSED FOR THE WHOLE OF SEPTEMBER. THIS COFFEE MORNING WILL BE HELD IN SPOORS MEMORIAL CHURCH HALL, FRONT ST.

Cost £2 includes a coffee /tea and homemade scones and cakes. Please come along, make new friends and enjoy some homemade cakes. **Every u3a member is welcome.**



Behind the Scenes at the Little Theatre, Gateshead.

Have you ever been in the props department, the wardrobe department, in the control room, where the lighting and sound system is coordinated or maybe back stage or even under the stage at the Little Theatre? If not, then this is your chance.

A tour and a talk has been organised to visit the Little Theatre, Gateshead and delve into all the above on **Monday 28th September 10am -12 noon**.

Cost - £3 to contribute to the refreshments....payable on the day.

To reserve a place please contact Jenni Crawford phone: 07799590987 or email: jennicrawford@icloud.com before 21st September.

u3a North East Regional Event Team

Every 6 months the u3a North East Regional Event Team organises a quiz for all members who are in the North of u3a North East Region. (One is also organised for the south of the Region) Members from Whitley Bay, Berwick, Prudhoe and many more come together. Normally 22 teams attend.

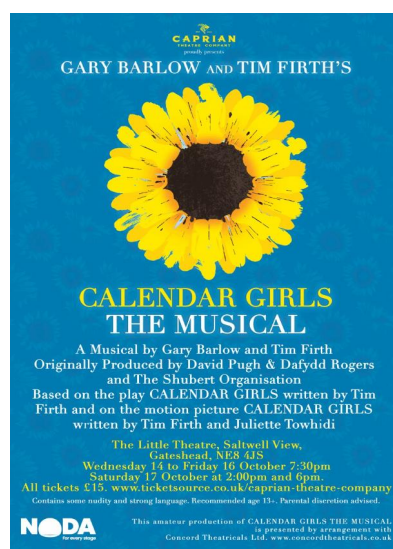
The next Regional Quiz event is on Wednesday October 7th 2026 in Sunnyside Club 1pm - 4pm. This event is free.

So far, I'm able to put together 2 teams of 4 members from Whickham and District u3a.

I need another 3 members to put their name forward so I have a third team.

There will be several rounds of questions including general knowledge, a picture round, music.

If you would like to be a member of a team and/ or help with the refreshments please contact Cecilia: 07881768301 or email cecu3a@gmail.com



Calender Girls – the musical

This production of Calender Girls is being produced by the Caprian Theatre Company and is taking place at the Little Theatre, G'head.

Saturday matinee October 17th at 2pm.

Tickets cost £15 plus £1 booking fee.

If you would like to go please contact Cecilia: 07881768301 or email cecu3a@gmail.com I think this production will be popular. Please let me know before Friday 25th September so I can book tickets.



Willow Weaving Workshop– Christmas Decorations

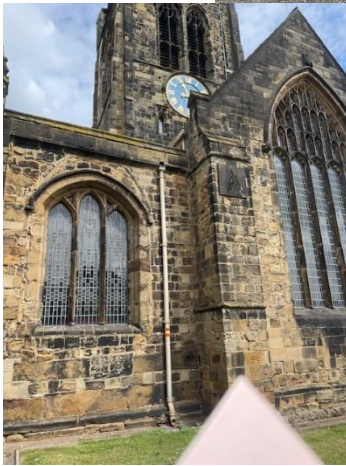
Thursday November 26th 1.30 – 4pm in the back room of Whickham Library. This workshop is being run by Lorraine Griffiths, a member of Cramlington u3a. You are paying only for the cost of the materials. **Cost is £20**

To reserve a place please contact Jenni Crawford phone: 07799590987 or email: jennicrawford@icloud.com



What have we been getting up to?

Coach Trip to Northallerton and Mainsgill Tearooms and Farm



We had very nearly a full coach for this day out. After just over an hour on the coach, we arrived in Northallerton which is a typical Yorkshire market town with a historic high street and an excellent market which runs every Wednesday and Saturday. All Saints Church at the top of the High Street dates back to the 12th century, although there has been a church on the site since Saxon times. Northallerton has a good range of shops including Barkers Department store, which is one of the few department stores in our area to stand the test of time. It reminds me of how Fenwicks used to be before it got so overpriced and trendy. Also Lewis and Cooper which specialises in gourmet food, wine and luxury hampers, as well as supplying more general grocery products. No one would go hungry visiting Northallerton. The Golden Lion on the High Street comes highly recommended for anyone fancying a pub lunch and there is an excellent choice of cafes for lighter meals and snacks. Finally I mustn't forget Bettys which runs a thriving business further down the High Street. One advantage of the Northallerton Bettys is that unlike its counterparts in this part of Yorkshire you rarely have to queue. Maybe folk from North Yorkshire are more prone to thriftiness? It's ok.... I'm allowed to say this because I'm one of them!

Script by Gill Wilcox.

After our visit to Northallerton, we made our way to Mainsgill Farm. Here we found a nice cafe where we enjoyed refreshments. We made our way around the gift shop which had plenty of confectionary, plants, ornaments and an array of fresh foods.

We went exploring outside to meet the "resident's", which included donkeys, goats, and surprisingly camels, who seemed quite content in their surroundings. They were happy to pose for those who were taking pictures of them. To sum the whole day up, this was one of the most enjoyable trips we have had. We all took away many memories of the day with us.

Script by Anne Arnell. Photos supplied by several members.



Past n Present Group



The Past n Present Group invited members to attend a presentation entitled **COAL** in the warm room, Whickham Library. The group had spent about 6 months researching the content of this presentation. Six members of the Group each took a section eg 'the formation of coal, which was presented as a video. The start of coal excavation from the Roman and Medieval times, onwards to the Industrial Revolution. Then the social and community aspects of the coal industry, then the coal industry in the North East particularly concentrating on the Whickham area. Finally, the decline of the coal industry. The PowerPoint presentation ended up with a very moving song and video called 'It's a Working Man I am' by David Alexander. We had many positive comments...brilliant, well presented.

Our next project, which we are starting in September will be about villages and small towns in Northumberland. We always find so much information, but then have to condense it into about 10 minutes, so we can get everyone's findings into a 60 minute presentation...it's definitely not easy.

Everyone helps each other, what one can't do the others can do. Do you fancy joining our group, you would be very welcome. Please contact Cecilia, 'the lead' of the group.



Jim put together a visual presentation of the mines in and around Whickham.



Knit and Natter Group.

The Knit and Natter Group have decided to meet up during the cooler months. They will still meet up in the back room of Whickham Library on the 3rd Thursday of the month 2pm -3.30pm but from October – April (incl)

It's not essential to knit/sew, anyone is welcome to come along for a chat. If you are on your own or free you may find it interesting.

Don't forget all you knitters out there that items eg knee blankets, scarves, hats, jumpers and cardigans for adults, toddlers, babies are gladly received by the Salvation Army. I will be taking them through to Anni Humes, Community Coordinator in early November. The Salvation Army works with the health visitors in the Sunderland Road area. The health visitors know families who are in need of help. (I've just finished this cardigan for a 4 year old) **By Cecilia Coulson**

Wrekenton Recycling Centre



On 12 August, eleven of our members visited the recycling centre at Wrekenton. This facility deals with waste from Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland councils as well as private firms.

The site consists of skips where local residents can dispose of their waste items (like the site at Blaydon) as well as a huge shed where items from bin lorries dump garden waste and waste from our blue recycling bins. General household waste is sent direct to an Energy for Fuel site in Stockton where it is burned, converted into electricity and sold to the national grid. No rubbish goes to landfill.



The majority of items at Wrekenton are recyclable, even soil. Items are sorted by machine according to their predominant type e.g. coat hangers are predominantly wood or plastic so the metal hook is removed and recycled with metals. Mattresses are torn up, the metal

springs removed then shredded. Hard plastics can be shredded, melted down, dyed and made into other things e.g. There is a lovely blue picnic table in the garden and old tyres have been dyed and used as planters.

The shed itself has lorries in and out all day long. They are weighed when they arrive and again when they leave so that statistics can be compiled. They dump their load on the floor and a digger scoops it to one side to make room for the next lorry before the waste is sorted. The cabs of the machines are sealed and some of the lorries have an air conditioning unit attached. The shed also has a constant stream of air freshener blowing to keep the smells at bay. Some of the waste is sent to other companies to be dealt with.



The site is open every day except Christmas Day and is run by a company called Suez. This was an interesting and informative tour. I've learned a few things about recycling:

1. NEVER put batteries, vapes or electrical items (even small ones) in ANY of your bins. They can set fire to the lorries and in 2019 caused one of their buildings to be burned down.
2. If an item is lost it cannot be retrieved once your bin has been collected. The site deals with tons of rubbish each day and it is not sorted by hand!
3. Bin lorries have a metal plate that pushes the rubbish back to make room for more. They also have a weighing machine and once they reach a certain weight must stop collecting, even if they don't look full.
4. Collection of food waste is not planned until about 2030. Meanwhile ideally you should compost your own food waste. Do not put it in the recycling bin.
5. Do not put plastic carrier bags or any soft plastics in your recycling bin.
6. Do not put greasy cartons or cardboard in your recycling bin (e.g. pizza boxes). Put them in your general waste bin.

Our thanks go to our two guides from Suez and Groundwork's for their clear explanations and answering our many questions (and for providing tea and coffee). **By Maggie Hynes**

<u>W & D u3a Groups available:</u>	<u>Group Leader/ Contact Person</u>
Lunch Group	Ian Crawford: metrocrawford@gmail.com /07415277088
Whist	Maureen Ward: 0191 4885055
Carpet Bowls	Marjorie Tait: 0191 4882037 or Moya Forster: 0191 4883020
Indoor Bowls	Marjorie Tait: 0191 4882037 or Moya Foster: 0191 4883020
Walking Group	Jean Thompson: jeanthompson73@btinternet.com /07814750289
Natty Knitters	Sheila Young: 07938712876 sheilayoung51@hotmail.co.uk
Play Reading Group	Anne Arnell: annearnell@btinternet.com/ 07767821931 or Pat Williamson: williamsonpatricia864@gmail.com /07803598062
Pie n Pint Group formerly Men's Group	Arthur Coulson: arthurcoulson@hotmail.co.uk/07760447574
Genealogy	Shirley Fall: shirleyfall53@gmail.com /0191 4887001
Scrabble	Anne Saint: 0191 4884506
Culture	Jenni Crawford: jennicrawford@icloud.com / 07799590987
The Past n Present (History)	Cecilia Coulson: 07881768301 / cecu3a@gmail.com
Creative Writing (Zoom)	Cecilia Coulson: 07881768301 / cecu3a@gmail.com
Strollers	Sheila Young: 07938712876 sheilayoung51@hotmail.co.uk
Fighting Fit with Alex	Jenni Crawford: jennicrawford@icloud.com/ 07799590987



If you would like to attend one of our Committee Meetings or Whickham Events Team meetings to get a flavour of what we do please contact Cecilia. I know everyone wants to make being a member of our u3a a positive experience and to do that we all work as a team.