

South Durham u3a

Registered Charity Number 1207225
Active in **Darlington, Cockerton and surrounding areas**
<http://www.sdurhamu3a.org.uk/>
Friday 7th February 2025

Tuesday 11th February 2025
Carol Tetlow from Doctor to Author

MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIR

I'd like to begin by welcoming more new members to South Durham u3a:

Eveline Wilson
Margaret Rolland
Drucilla Spence

Ann Craig
Thomas Carr
Don McGee

Jane Elliot
Val Innes
Helen Addison

We hope you find plenty of groups and activities to interest you all.

Welcome to February's new look Newsletter – with a new editor. After several years at the helm, I've been relieved of the responsibility and Dot Hullah has taken over from me. Thank you, Dot! Should you wish to contribute anything for future newsletters please use sdu3aeditor@gmail.com as the new email address.

We have been reminded that *Riviera Travel* operate the "Affinity" Charity Scheme with all u3a's across the country. Riviera Travel will donate a percentage of the total basic cost of your holiday as a charitable donation to your u3a. Any holiday booked with Riviera Travel is eligible. Some groups have benefited to the tune of several thousand pounds!

How it works • *Make a booking by contacting Riviera Travel directly, simply mention you want to claim Affinity Commission for South Durham u3a. You will need to give our Charity No 1207225* • *At the end of your holiday, Riviera Travel will pay the commission to the Third Age Trust. After deducting a handling fee, the Third Age Trust will pass the commission on to us. For information on holidays with Riviera Travel go to www.rivieratravel.co.uk.*

Our membership continues to rise with another nine new members in January. This is resulting in increasing attendance at Bowen Road, which is fantastic. But I can please remind everyone that parking at the hall is limited and should be saved for those members who find walking more difficult. Those of you still lucky enough to be able to walk a couple of hundred yards please park on Bates Avenue or Bowen Road and walk up to the Hall.

Finally, just a mention of roadworks on West Auckland Road beginning next week, which could affect some of you travelling to our monthly meeting. Apparently Northern PowerGrid will be excavating to install cables from Bates Avenue to Rotary Way which could cause delays (for the next six months!) and you may wish to find an alternative route.

Looking forward to seeing another bumper turnout for next Tuesday's meeting

Ruth Beckett
southdurhamu3a@gmail.com

Helping Hands

As our friendly welcoming u3a is becoming even more popular, we need more help with running the Monthly Meetings. Setting out of chairs & tables & taking them in again at the end of the meeting is an obvious job. Also, help in the kitchen is always needed. Perhaps carrying drinks for some of our members who are less steady on their feet.

At January's meeting it was appreciated that members turned their hands to helping clear the hall. So, the idea arose of having a group of members who are interested in helping at Monthly Meetings, at the quiz, maybe helping organise outings but do not wish to be on the committee.

You would become our Helping Hands!

If you can volunteer to join such a merry band, we'd be very grateful...

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

Screechers and Suffragettes – Chris Llyod

Chris Lloyd never fails to entertain – and January's talk subtitled 'Darlington and the Campaign for Votes for Women' also educated many of us. Through information from the archives of The Northern Echo, we learned of

- Jane & Elizabeth Procter who ran Polam Hall School and were active in the Suffrage movement in mid-19th century.
- Elizabeth Pease Nichol active in the Anti-Slavery movement who later moved to Edinburgh.
- Sophia Fry of Woodburn who was prominent in the Women's Liberal Federation.
- Clara Curtis Lucas the first female elected Councillor in Darlington (who's picture today hangs outside the Council Chamber in the Town Hall).
- Arthur Henderson, former Mayor of Darlington and MP for Barnard Castle whose pressure on the government was a significant help towards enabling women to vote. He also was a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

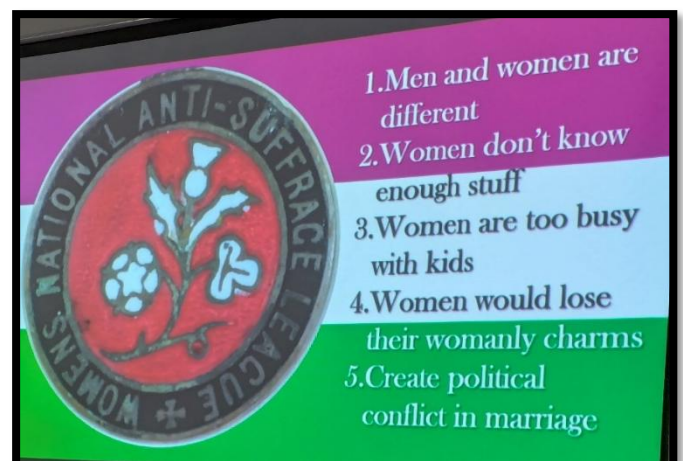
His portrait also hangs outside the Council Chamber next to that of Clara Lucas.

We were also educated into the differences between Suffragettes (more active in their protests and wore white) with Suffragists who veered towards the more peaceful pressure that words could bring to bear and wore black. Of particular note was Gertrude Bell, was very prominent in a male dominated world, who was of the belief that women should not get the vote. Perhaps she agreed with the many men who considered that women's brains weren't big enough to cope with political decisions, perhaps being full of thoughts of cushions and cake!




Chris beautifully wove tales of these people together with more obscure reports from the Echo with perhaps the most alarming being that most of us had grandmothers who probably didn't initially have the vote, and that doesn't seem that long ago!

Kevin Beckett




LATEST NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

COFFEE & CHAT

 Our next get together will be in Binns Cafe from 10.30 to 12.30 on Friday 26th February. Do join our friendly group for a cuppa and a chat and leave your shopping till later. Everyone is welcome.

Pauline Noble

DOT'S JUNGAGLOW CRAFTS


 To begin our crafting for 2025 we revisited one of 2024 crafts. 5D Diamond Painting, although this year's project was producing double sided key rings which was a step up from the coasters we tackled last time.



This year there is a full programme of crafting opportunities, but these are proving very popular and there is a very limited availability.

30 th January	5D Diamond painted keyrings	31 st July	Silicon Casting jewellery
27 th February	Quilling boxes	28 th August	Japanese Bracelet making
27 th March	Easter egg bauble – advanced and beginners	25 th September	Mandella Weaving
24 th April	Peg Jewellery	30 th October	Snow Globes
29 th May	Glass Painting	27 th November	Bead Work Wreaths – tree decorations
26 th June	Loom Band Bracelets	18 th December	Quilted Christmas baubles

CREATIVE WRITING

 Creative writing got off to a great start with our new members getting to grips with their first pieces of homework. 500 words with the title The Village Pub. Exceptional short stories were written covering lots of topics. Each member getting the chance to read out their stories for the rest of the group.

Next Meeting is on March the 5th from 10 until 12 noon at 15 Elton Grove.

Dot Hullah

FRIDAY WALKING GROUP



On Friday 17th January nine of us met up at a car park in the village of Hunwick, a few miles northwest of Bishop Auckland. We walked south on the disused Brandon to Bishop Auckland railway line in bright sunshine until we came to the Newton Cap viaduct. It is now a road bridge, but in the past the railway line would have continued over the bridge and into Bishop Auckland. Instead, we took a path through woods that descended to the banks of the River Wear, and we joined the Weardale Way heading roughly northwards. The Weardale Way took us past the site of Kynren and although performances are not on at the moment, there was some construction activity. The River Wear was full and flowing fast after the snow melted. In fact, we had adjusted the route of the walk because in parts the route was too close to the river. Fortunately, the fields we walked through were not too muddy and the ground was still frozen in places. Passing through a field of sheep we were approached by the friendliest sheep - or maybe they associate humans with food. Further along the walk we came to a stable with some very shaggy Shetland ponies, as well as other horses in the surrounding fields. After rejoining the railway, we walked uphill to the village of Hunwick and the delights of the Quarry Tea House. In their outdoor seating area, we found a series of sheltered benches and tables to enjoy hot drinks and scones and cakes. Thus fortified, we retraced our steps down the railway line to the car park.



Our next walk will be on **Friday 21st February**. We plan to walk around Scorton Lakes and will be led by Wendy. It will be about seven miles long with no significant climbs. As usual we will meet in Linden Avenue (Coniscliffe Road end) for a prompt start at 9 30a.m. Please bring a packed lunch/fruit/drink.



Members should be confident they are fit to participate and wear suitable clothing and footwear. They should carry information to be used in an emergency (ICE cards).

Judith

INTERMEDIATE WALKING GROUP

Monday 20th January



It was a damp and drizzly morning when 12 walkers set off from Morrison's North Road car park towards the river Skerne on Monday 20th January. The path along by the river was icy in places so we had to take care as we walked towards Haughton. We turned towards Salters Lane and crossed over to walk up the lane towards Darlington Golf Club. Turning left along Green Lane, we crossed over Glebe Road to North Road and then down to North Road Cemetery, where there were drifts of early snowdrops and primroses. Walking back along Whessoe Road we arrived at the King's Church café for welcome cups of tea, coffee and cakes and scones before heading back to the car park after. The next walk on 17th February, is a linear walk starting from behind St Andrews church in Haughton. We then walk to Middleton St George, where hopefully we can get a seat at the cafe before walking back. The following walk on Monday 3rd March is from Hurworth to Croft and back. Possibly one stile. Both walks are approximately 5 /5.5 miles. You may wish to bring a drink/ fruit with you and possibly packed lunch for the Hurworth walk.



Please meet for both walks at Cockerton car park at 10am.a very enjoyable 5.3-mile walk. You may wish to bring a drink and a snack. Members should be confident they are fit to participate and wear suitable clothing and footwear. They should also carry information to be used in an emergency (ICE cards)

Susan -Liz - Christine Walker

LOCAL HISTORY



A record turnout of 43 members gathered to hear the follow up to the story of William Armstrong, First Lord of Cragside.

Ruth recapped on his life story and then catalogued what he has left as his legacy – Jesmond Dene, the Swing Bridge (not currently swinging!), the Hancock Museum, University, Lit and Phil to name but a few beneficiaries of his donations. Then there was Cragside, in the care now of the National Trust and Bamburgh Castle where the current Amstrongs live.

Finally, we joined in with ‘The Blaydon Races’ where ‘Armstrong’s Factory’ is named in the second verse – undoubtedly a legacy that will live on and on through the Football Club.

Next meeting on **Tuesday 18th February** at Willow Road Community Centre. Lorna Wilkinson will be talking about the Cockerton Soldiers of WW1

Doors open @ 1.15pm and the talk begins @ 1.45pm. £2 including refreshments and plenty of room for all members! Come and join us.

Jan 21	William Armstrong’s Legacy <i>Ruth Beckett</i>
Feb18	Cockerton Soldiers of WW1 <i>Lorna Wilkinson</i>
March 18	History of Darlington- builders and buildings <i>Dave Hogg</i>
April 15	Tees Pumping Station <i>George Beautyman</i>
May 20	Excavations @ Auckland Castle <i>John Castling</i>
June 17	Looking at Hopetown <i>Ruth Beckett</i>
July 15	Gibside in the Derwent Valley <i>David Butler</i>
August 19	Highlights of Roman County Durham – <i>David Mason – county archaeologist</i>

If you wish to attend **Darlington U3a’s History** group – this is their programme for the year – contact Steve directly to let him to know you’ll be attending from our group.

**Darlington U3A History Group, 2025 - Programme of Wednesday 2pm meetings (doors open at 1.30pm.)
St Thomas Aquinas Church Hall, 249 North Road, Darlington.**

Jan. 29th	Chris Forster	“A county at war- life on the home front 1939-1945”
Feb. 26th	Kathryn Streatfield	“Crofts Crossing” Meet author Kathryn
Mar. 26th	David Reynolds	“William Denton” Born in Darlington in 1823 he was a self-taught geologist, preacher and a promoter of occult practices.
Apr. 30th	David Dean	“History’s greatest clangers”
June. 25th	Carol Dean	“Age of the suffragette”
July 30th	Darren Billingham	“Ringtons” The history, background and development of this iconic local business whose Head Office remains in Newcastle.
Sep 24th	Richard Annis	“A Roman settlement at East Park Sedgfield.” The story of discovery and excavation (partly by the Time Team) of this settlement on the line of Cade’s Road.
Oct 29th.	Jenny Cathcart	“Bletchley Park” Enigma and all that.
Nov 26th	David Butler	“Drunken midwives and Common Strumpets”

Steve Keeney U3A History Group Leader

FAMILY HISTORY



Our next meeting will be held at the Local Studies Centre in Darlington Library at 2.00 pm on Friday 14th February. The library has access to numerous family history records for Darlington and elsewhere. If you have any interest in tracing your ancestors or anyone else, you are welcome to join us but would you please contact me in advance, at the next U3A meeting so that I can advise the library staff of the number attending.

Would you please note that a current library ticket will be required and, if necessary, obtain your free ticket in advance from the library.

Pauline Noble

LUNCHEON GROUP



For January's Lunch Group get together we tried a different venue, Blackwell Golf Club Restaurant. The menu is restricted compared to our other regular eating establishments, but everyone enjoyed their meal. The restaurant is spacious and has a relaxed feel and several members requested a return visit later in the year. **Lunch Group February** - I have just confirmed a booking with the Bay Horse at Middridge for the next get together which will be at 1pm on Friday 28th February. I will miss the main meeting on 11th February, so Marie Graham will take names. We do not need to pre-order our meals. Anyone who misses the meeting can text or email me if they want to attend. I will provide numbers to the Bay Horse a week before we go.

Stella Barnes

NEW MEMBERS (and not so new members) COFFEE MORNING



This will take place the fourth Tuesday of each month- in Café Zest Binns 10.30- 12.00



Our aim is to allow new members to get to know each other in a less busy setting than the monthly Bowen Road meetings. There will be committee members present should you have any questions to ask. We hope that this will help you make new friends and meet with our recently joined members in a relaxed environment. No need to book, just turn up.

Jenny & Brenda

PLAY READING



We met with a full complement of members (8) we opened our copies of 'Gigi' by Colette. Although some of us had started it before way back in November at our last meeting, we began at the beginning again to restore our memories. Two of us had been in the Operatic Society production of 'Gigi' by Lerner and Loewe some years ago, so it was interesting to remember it, if not so well.

Coincidentally I heard the words of that song 'Oh yes, I remember it well' to a different tune on Radio 3 last week but with music by Kurt Weill. Curiosity led me to Google where I discovered that Weill had written his musical for 'Love Life', a vaudeville performance, in 1948 four years after Colette published the novella. Then, Weill asked Alan J Lerner to write the lyrics. Ten years later Lerner used the lyrics and collaborated with Frederick Loewe who produced the music for the film many of us know with Leslie Caron and Maurice Chevalier in the cast. Move forward to 1973 and it successfully hit the Broadway stage. Colette died in 1954 aged 81 so she missed the musical success of her book.

Our next meeting will be at 2 pm on Tuesday 18th February

Muriel Jones

PHILOSOPHY OF YOGA



We had a good attendance this month requiring quite a few additional chairs crammed into our lounge. We generally discussed and demonstrated the effects possible to our breathing through hand positions (Hasta Mudras) and from varying ratios of breath rhythms.

Our next meeting will be Wednesday 19th February at 10:00 as usual

Barry and Pat Garnett

READING GROUP 1



Our choice of book for this month was **A Single Thread** by Tracy Chivalier

This book was the story of Violet, aged 38, set a few years after the end of the 1st World War. She is one of so many 'surplus' women, i.e. those who had lost husbands or fiancés, or who couldn't find a 'suitable' man because of so many deaths during that war.

She was determined to be independent and build a life for herself, earning money to be self-sufficient, so she moved away from her home to nearby Winchester. We meet her fellow lodgers at the boarding house where she lived, and then the 'Broderers', a group of very talented stitchers/embroiderers who meet regularly to sew kneelers, purses, and many other items for Winchester Cathedral, one of their leaders being Miss Pesel. These items can in fact be seen to this day in the Cathedral.

The many intricate stitches they learn to sew are described, including Fylfots, which caused a few arguments as they resemble swastikas, but are found on clothing, masonry etc from ancient times.

We meet the bellringers, and thus the 'love interest', and really understand the problems these women faced, their fights to be paid a fair wage, to have a career, and NOT to be expected to give up all they had fought for and return 'home' to nurse an aging parent.

An enjoyable read with many strands running through it.

Next Meeting discussing "You Are Here" by David Nicholls is on the 12th February at Lorna's

Ann Tomlinson

READING GROUP 2



At our January meeting we discussed Kristen **Perry's** novel "**How to solve your own murder.**" Maybe it was the title that influenced our choice. The tale began when a group of teenagers had their fortunes told, and one was told she would be murdered. The story described how she lived with this prediction and what happened later in her life.

Comments ranged from 'enjoyable,' 'glad I read it,' 'plenty of twists and turns,' 'a confusing number of characters,' 'another novel with shifting timelines,' 'not inclined to finish it,' and 'wouldn't recommend it.' We went on to discuss some of our own experiences of fortune telling, palm reading and psychic tales.

Next meetings

Friday 14th February. We have chosen a detective story by L J Ross titled "**Holy Island.**" It is not on the library group list, but the library has a small number of copies. Meeting to be at Gill's home.

Friday 14th March. Another detective story, this time by Ann Cleeves, entitled "**The Long Call.**" This is not on the library group list either. Meeting at Kate's. - **Judith Bryant**

FRENCH CONVERSATION



We are all learning and would love anyone else who enjoys speaking some French to join us! Please contact Celia if you are interested or would like any further information.

Celia Howarth

TRIPS WITH SOUTH DURHAM U3A – Advanced notice of what's to come

- Wednesday 2nd April [Wentworth Woodhouse](#) near Barnsley
- Wednesday 7th May [Harewood House](#) near Leeds
- Wednesday 11th June [Hovingham Hall](#) the former home of Katherine Worsley Duchess of Kent
- Thursday 3rd July [Harlow Carr Gardens](#), Harrogate
- Monday 11th August [Walking with Alpacas](#) – Leven Bank near Yarm
- Friday November 14th Morning: [Lit & Phil](#) – a guided tour of the largest independent library outside London @ 10.30am
Afternoon: [Victorian Tunnel](#) – tour 1.30–3.30pm
- November 18th 2025 Lees Coaches: Christmas at Castle Howard. Ring Lees Coaches to book seats on 01913780653 - Saying you are South Durham u3a

Carol Boyd

[Kiplin Hall – Wednesday 12th February](#)

We have a trip to **Kiplin Hall** near Richmond on **Wednesday 12 February**. As well as a tour of the house, you will be able to visit the new entrance visitor centre and tearoom. You will then have free time to enjoy the snowdrops. This year marks 400 years of Kiplin Hall, so you may wish to visit the *Still Standing* exhibition about the materials and methods used to build and maintain the hall. Transport will be by car-share, leaving Darlington about 10.30 for a house tour at 11.00am.

I am secretary of the organisation which includes the work of the Listening Post in Darlington.

The Listening Post is a listening and mentoring project that seeks to help young people with low level mental health and wellbeing issues in order to prevent them escalating into something more long lasting. Volunteers are placed within every secondary school in Darlington.

As a charity, we are holding a quiz as per the poster, and if you and any members of your families enjoy a quiz then please contact me on the email shown in the poster or have a word with me at the monthly meeting. I do hope to see some of you at the event. Many thanks.

Penny Moon

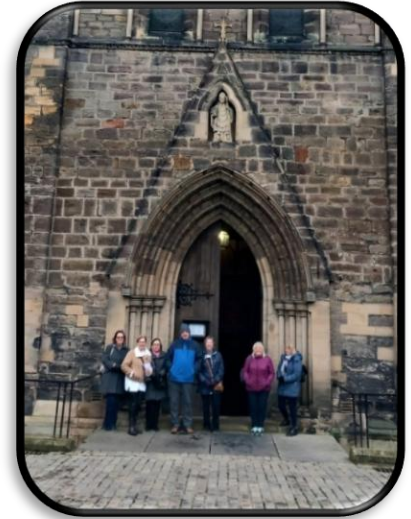


GROUP TRIP TO ST. CUTHBERTS CHURCH DARLINGTON

Visit to The Lady of the North - St. Cuthbert's Church

Our first trip this year took place on 23rd January, when 22 members braced the extreme cold to gather at St. Cuthberts Church to learn of the history, the restoration, and planned developments for this beautiful 12th century Grade 1 listed church known as **'The Jewel in the Crown of Darlington Town Centre'**.

Anne Ducker delivered an interesting and informative insight into the story of Saint Cuthbert's life, from his birth in 635 in Northumbria, to his death on 20th March 687. A Bernician hermit-monk who became bishop of Lindisfarne; his body rested at the Church on its journey to Durham Cathedral, where he is buried in a tomb along with King Oswald's head. The Cathedral is home to the shrine to Saint Cuthbert which is situated behind the quire.



Details of the great restoration masterminded by Sir George Gilbert Scott were described by Joan Gilmore. The restoration took place between 1862 and 1865 and involved the removal of the galleries and ceilings, the opening out of the gable windows in the nave and the rearranging of the pews, as well as the replacing of several stalls which had been destroyed. Amongst the main works were the restoration of the chancel and the insertion of eleven Victorian stained-glass windows.



The transformation of St Cuthberts that will start in June 2025 was explained by John Gilmore.

Plans to improve and change will include:

- Making the church accessible to all
- Replacing the pews
- Adding WCs, meeting room, information area
- Restoration of the organ
- Upgrade the heating and lighting

Our visit culminated in a tour of St. Cuthberts encompassing the pulpit by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the leaning pillars, view of the window of St. Cuthbert holding King Oswald's head, as well as the stained-glass window affectionately known as 'the angel with the big feet', whose history is a cause of controversy.

For further information regarding the parish church of St. Cuthbert, and to find out more about the Future Foundations Project or to get involved visit [St. Cuthbert's Church, Darlington](http://St.Cuthbert's.Church.Darlington)

Helen Swannell



Ode to Black Magic
...the Chocolates of course

For Christmas someone bought me
A big box of Black Magic
But now they've all been eaten.
And I think it's rather tragic!

I think they are delicious
But now I am bereft
I think I eked them out quite well
But now I've got none left

I can't wait for next Christmas,
My heart is all aglow
For my next box.....there's only
300+ days to go!

Kate Brown

Dusk with Dots

The lights of Darlington flash on
They follow the road, lighten the skyline
One minute it is dusk, the next it's dusk with dots
Orange twinkles amongst the twiggy leafless trees
Slate-grey roof shine in the lamplight
Random squares of yellow appear as
Homeowners begin their evening routines

From my hospital eyrie I watch the magic
From drab to star spangled
Lorries offloading pharmaceuticals
Rear ends pulsing yellows, reds and beeping
Ambulances make a flamboyant flashing dash
In and out again

By eight p.m. the park is almost empty
Pools of light reflect and glitter in the rain
Visitors leave, hoping for a quick get-a-way
Happy to be out in the fresher air
Duty visit done and television waiting

Margaret Rule

If you love writing poems or stories, why not send one in to be included in our new look creative corner.

Send your creative gems to the Editor Dot Hullah at sdu3aeditor@gmail.com

MONTHLY MEETING SPEAKERS

Monthly Meeting	Speaker & Title
14th January	Chris Lloyd: <i>Suffragettes</i>
11th February	Carol Tetlow: <i>From Doctor to Author</i>
11th March	Commonwealth War Graves Commission
8th April	Darlington Assistance for Refugees
13th May	John Thorley: Cern and after: The Large Hadron Collider
10th June	Denis Fox: History of Cinema
8th July	Alex Mitchell: VOICE: UK National Innovation Centre for Ageing at Newcastle University
12th August	Aycliffe Beekeepers Association
9th September	I AM ROADSMART Helping to make better drivers and riders through education and upskilling
14th October	Kate Streatfield: Croft's Crossing- her experience of researching and writing a book
11th November	AGM & Stuart Miller – Lee Miller war photographer
9th December	TBC

GROUPS ON OFFER

Bridge – David Dixon	Travellers Rest	2-4pm every other Tuesday from 10th December
Canasta – Sylvia Elliott	Travellers Rest	2pm alternate Thursday of the month. £2 each – includes refreshments.
Coffee & Chat - Pauline Noble	Binns cafe	10.30-12.30am last Wednesday of each month
Creative Writing – Dot Hullah	Leader's home	10-12am first Wednesday of each month
Current Affairs – Gill Turnbull	Members' homes	10am-12 noon on the 3rd Monday of the month
Family History	Members' homes	2nd Friday of each month
French, Advanced Celia Howarth	Above Newcastle Building Society, Market Place	11.15 on 2nd & 4th Monday of each month
Friday Walking Judith Bryant	Park cars in Linden Ave (nearest Coniscliffe Rd end)	9.30am on the 3rd Friday of each month
Intermediate Walking Susan	Cockerton car park	10am on the 1st & 3rd Monday of each month
Italian for beginners Celia Howarth	Above Newcastle Building Society	10-11am on 2nd & 4th Monday of each month
Dots Jungalow Crafts – Dot Hullah	Above Newcastle Building Society, Market Place	10am-12pm Last Thursday of the month
Local History – Ruth Beckett/Linda Chadd	Willow Road Community Centre	1.30pm on the 3rd Tuesday of the month
Luncheon Group - Stella Barnes	Pubs/restaurants	1.00pm on the last Friday of each month
New Members (and old) coffee morning Jenny Hurt	Binns café	10.30-12 on 4th Tuesday of each month
Philosophy of Yoga Barry and Pat Garnett	Members' homes	10am-12 noon on 3rd Wednesday of each month
Play Reading – Muriel Jones	Members' homes	2pm on the 3rd Tuesday of the month
Reading Group 1 – Toni Carr	Members' homes	2nd Wednesday of each month
Reading Group 2 – Judith Bryant.	Members' homes	10.30am on 2nd Friday of each month
Rummikub – Liz Kay	Members' homes	10am-12 noon on the 1st Friday of each month
Scrabble Brenda Ellidge	Travellers Rest Cockerton	2pm on 2nd & 4th Monday of each month