

South Durham u3a

Registered Charity Number 1207225

Active in **Darlington, Cockerton and surrounding areas**

<https://southdurham.u3asite.uk/>

Thursday 6th November 2025

MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIR

Welcome to our new members

Racheal Dixon
Michele Herdman

Derrick Scott
Brian Logan

Next week marks the end of my period as Chair of South Durham u3a. I have enjoyed my time 'in charge' but credit must go to the entire committee who have worked alongside me extremely efficiently. It is a team effort, and my thanks go to all of them.

At next week's AGM we hope to get the official business over quickly so that we can enjoy the talk about a War Photographer, which is extremely well timed on Remembrance Day.

We shall be voting for a new Chair (Dot Hullah has been nominated); a new Vice Chair (Jenny Hurt is nominated) and new committee members (Ann Robinson and Dave Cooke have both put themselves forward).

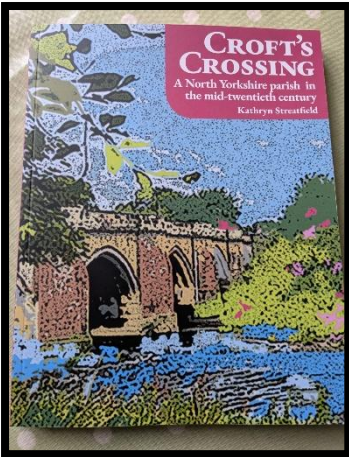
Penny Moon, Sue Clark and Carol Boyd will be remaining on the committee for another year.

Thereafter we have the Christmas Meeting to look forward to on 9th December, which, for the first time is a bookable Christmas Party with food, entertainment, games & prizes!! Soon the year will be over and 2026 arrives. It seems no time since we welcomed in the Millenium, where have the last 26 years gone?

Ruth Beckett

LAST MONTH'S MEETING

This talk is by local author Kathryn Streatfield and is entitled:
Croft's Crossing, an Oral History of the Village Spanning the Years 1930-90.



Kate Streatfield lived in Croft for 20 years and embarked on writing about the village once she retired. She interviewed many elderly local inhabitants which gave her 70 hours of recordings which then needed checking, transcribing and corroborating by further research before being worked into book form. We heard the voice of Ian Dougill talking about a jet aircraft which crashed near the village in 1951 and Oakwood House which became a home for evacuees from Sunderland and Gateshead.



We learned of the 2000 Canadian airmen who were stationed at Croft, from where they took off on their bombing raids in Germany; of Doris Cameron who gave Kate access to her photos of years gone by; of the

Halnaby and Chaytor estates and Halnaby Hall which was demolished after the war.

Kate was a most enthusiastic speaker and clearly captured the interest of her audience as she sold every copy of the books that she had brought with her.

RUTH BECKETT

CHRISTMAS EVENT

There are only three places left for this event which is to be held at Bowen Road Community Centre on Tuesday 9th December from 10am until 2pm

THIS EVENT IS **INSTEAD** OF THE NORMAL MONTHLY MEETING

PLEASE DON'T COME ALONG ON THE 9TH OF DECEMBER IF YOU HAVEN'T BOOKED AND PAID £15 TO CAROL BOYD TO CONFIRM YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THIS EVENT.

If you are not on our list, you will not be allowed to enter the hall on this occasion – sorry.

If you are attending, you will be entertained by a local Ukulele Band and also take part in some fun in-house games.

There will be a yummy buffet from Taylors the Butchers to enjoy.

Doors will open at 10 o'clock sharp so please don't come earlier

LATEST NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

COFFEE & CHAT

The next meeting of the Coffee and Chat Group will be from 10.30 to 12.30 on Wednesday 26th November at Cafe Zest in Binns. Take a break from the shopping and come and join our friendly group. All welcome.

Pauline Noble

DOT'S JUNGAGLOW CRAFTS



This month my crafting ladies were beginning to think festive haha. We tackled miniature snow globes. And bead decorations.



CREATIVE WRITING

This month's focus title was "Kids" for some of the members this proved a challenging topic, but again they rose to the challenge.



Next Meeting is 3rd December from 10 until 12 noon at 15 Elton Grove.

Dot Hullah

FRIDAY WALKING GROUP



Seven walkers set off on an overcast but windless day for a walk from Penshaw Monument. Our first task was to scale the steep hill of the Monument marked as 136 m high on the OS map. Although the stonework is blackened, it is still an impressive monument and the views from the top are rewarding. Sadly, there was quite a lot of litter around the monument. Bev, one of our group, found a carrier bag and began picking up the litter. During the walk she repeatedly filled the bag and dumped what she had collected into a litter bin. Kudos to her.

Our route led us down the back of the hill and along a lane until we set off across fields to meet up with an old railway line and woodland paths leading to the banks of the River Wear. After crossing the Wear at Fatfield, we followed the Heritage Way along the riverbanks stopping at a park with a pond for coffee break. The waterfowl soon realised we had food and approached us, but we moved off without feeding them. Along the way we passed under Victoria Viaduct, no longer in use but it once carried the main London to Edinburgh railway line across the river. We stopped to admire it's elegant outline built in 1838 and named because it was finished on Queen Victoria's coronation day. Again, we crossed the river. At the hamlet of Cox Green we met a man searching for his Border Terrier who had run off. He asked us to look out for his dog Leo and promised the dog would willingly run up to us. As we were setting off after our lunch stop, we met the man again and happily he had been reunited with his super friendly and very cute but mischievous dog.

We continued along the riverbanks until we came to a point where we had a choice of routes. The path followed the riverside in a loop and then ran along the A19 to the village of Offerton, or we could take a green lane with a long slow climb up to the same village. We chose the green lane, and climbed up onto the ridge. The path followed a straight line until we came in sight of Penshaw Monument again and followed a path around the base of the hill to return to the start of the walk. Not far away, the Penshaw Farm Shop and Tea Rooms served us huge slices of various cakes and scones.

Jane Laninga

Next walk: Friday 21 st November: Redcar and Saltburn 7 miles.

Usual meeting point at the end of Linden Avenue for car share, to leave at 9.30 am. Please ensure you have suitable footwear/clothing and carry refreshment.

INTERMEDIATE WALKING GROUP



Intermediate Walk on 20th October

This was a gentle walk along lanes and fields from the George Hotel in Piercebridge. At Manfield we stopped for lunch using the various seating on the village green and admired the handiwork on top of the post-box. A collection of knitted birds.

It was a lovely cold day with surprising little mud and no sign of cows or bulls in the fields despite the notice!



The next walk on 17th November will be a linear walk along the Castle Eden Walkway. Approximately 5 miles

The following walk on 1st December is from Middleton St George and along the Whinnies nature reserve. Approximately 4 miles.

The last walk of the year is from Richmond and up to Easby Abbey and village. Approximately 3/4 miles

All walks could be muddy but mainly on even ground. There is a road climb up to the village of Easby. You may wish to bring a drink/ lunch/ fruit. We will meet at Cockerton car park to leave promptly at 10. 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)

Due to the Christmas social in December, all 3 sign up sheets will only be out at this November's monthly meeting.

It has been suggested that perhaps people may like to lead some walks.

I have therefore booked a meeting room at the **Newcastle Building Society for Monday 8th December at 2pm.** This is so that people who are willing to lead or know of walks, can get together to organise details for next year. You don't need to recci the walks before the meeting but come with ideas and dates you would prefer. Hope to see as many as possible at the meeting.

LOCAL HISTORY



OCTOBER 21 - CAROLINE HARDY ON WOMEN OF THE STOCKTON AND DARLINGTON

RAILWAY Caroline did a nifty job with a great talk based on quite sparse evidence. Before the mid-19th century, legal and social norms conspired to render most women in this country invisible to historians. For example, initial shareholders in the S & D were mainly

men, widows or spinsters as wives had no property of their own - and marriage for women was expected. It was enough to make me run out into Willow Road in suffragette colours brandishing a placard. Another indignity in 1875 was expecting them to sit admiring their men devouring a banquet in Stockton, held to celebrate the railway's 50th anniversary - did they get doggy bags afterwards? The crowning insult was getting lady speakers at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Conference to address the audience from behind a curtain. Couldn't happen these days anywhere in the world, could it...? Despite these obstacles, some pesky women managed to break into the historical records by losing their husbands, being poor and needy or rich and charitable. They became shopkeepers, publicans, hoteliers - even hauliers and engine stokers serving the railway, or they asked for support when husbands and sons died working on it. And who can quantify the economic benefit of giving emotional support to a man in the public eye? My favourite has got to be Elizabeth Pease Nichol who championed many causes including abolitionism (she attended the above conference), anti-vivisectionism, votes for women and Chartism. She was also the major contributor to the new Darlington Mechanics' Institute, 1853. But she then put two fingers up by marrying out of the Quakers, whereupon they paid her to go away. However, fair do's for the Quakers - they were in favour of female education...

LINDA CHADD

Next Local History Meeting on Tuesday 18th November @ Willow Road. Refreshments from 1.15pm, talk begins @ 1.45pm.

Ruth will be inviting you to "Look more closely at Hope Town".

If you wish to attend Darlington u3a's History group their final meeting for the year is on Wednesday 26th November at 2pm. Its David Butler (who spoke to us on Gibside recently) talking about "Drunken midwives and common strumpets".

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.**

Nov 26th	David Butler Former County Archivist	"Drunken midwives and common strumpets" Great title for a great talk by a great speaker.
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Steve Keeney Darlington U3A History Group Leader

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

FRENCH CONVERSATION



We have talked about Mother's Day in France and had some quick speed- dating conversations! We all love to learn from each other and really enjoy trying to improve our French conversation. We would welcome new members to the group! Our sessions are from 11.15-12.15 at the Newcastle Building Society and in the Autumn will run on Mondays:

December 1 and 15.

Please contact me if you have any queries.

READING GROUP 2



A good turn out for our October meeting, when we discussed our book choice *Keeping Mum*, by James Gould-Bourn. The book was recommended by a member, but as usual everyone had different opinions. It tells the story of a single father, Danny, whose wife has died leaving him with an eleven old son, Will, who hasn't spoken since the death of his mother. Doing his best to support Will financially, Danny becomes a street performer, hiring a costume he entertains children in the local park by becoming a dancing panda. An amusing tale with a sentimental touch, lots of silliness but a good result in the end. Thank you to Gill for hosting our Meeting, we will meet on the **14th November** at Judith's, our book choice is *Precipice* by Robert Harris.

Debbie

LUNCHEON GROUP



15 members met at the Bay Horse, Middridge, for our October lunch. It was great to welcome 2 new members & I have since received very positive feedback about the food & the friendship nature of our group. We will definitely return to the Bay Horse several times in 2026.

November Lunch Group - Bannatyne's Hotel 28/11/2025 at 1pm

This is the last Lunch Group of the year and 38 members have signed up & paid for their meals. If any other members would like to join us, you can still do so but you will need to notify me of your menu choices -2 courses or 3 & pay as soon as possible. You can see me at the meeting on 11th November when I will have all the details.

Stella Barnes

SCRABBLE GROUP



This is a fairly new group, and we need some new members. We are a mixed ability group so whatever your level you're sure to fit in. Held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month in The Travellers Rest, in Cockerton

Interested? Contact Brenda Ellidge

PLAY READING



This bunch of amateurs continued with the reading of 'A Bunch of Amateurs' by Ian Hislop and Nick Newman. The amateurs in the play are trying to cope with a fading Hollywood star who has turned up to their rehearsals of 'King Lear' expecting a professional production. Sparks fly. What more can I say? Our next read-through is on Tuesday 18th November at 2pm at Isabel's.

Muriel Jones

READING GROUP 1



The subject of this month's discussion was "Rogue Herries" by Hugh Walpole, a lengthy tome which most members were unable to finish before the meeting. However, myself and one other were captivated by the sheer scale of this historical novel, part of a quartet, which tells of the fortunes of the Herries family, starting in the mid-18th Century at the time of the Jacobite Rebellions.

It appears that the eponymous main character, Francis Herries, well deserves his nickname "Rogue" as he is guilty of many sins: fighting, womanising, even selling his mistress at a country fair, despising his wife and frightening his children, to name but a few. He is a man of strong passions and rapidly changing moods who is driven by obsessions which torture him and upend the lives of his family.

The story is set in what is now the Lake District, amid the valleys and mountains which are stunningly described, and indicate a passion for this place held by the author who lived there for many years.

In fact Hugh Walpole lived a colourful life himself, which included a miserable childhood in various schools including Durham School where he developed his love of literature. Born in 1884, he had an exciting 1st World War being sent to Russia to write propaganda and later serve as a medical aide. He was a prolific writer and between 1909 and his death in 1941, he wrote 36 novels, 5 volumes of short stories, two plays and 3 volumes of memoirs. He toured North America and wrote screenplays for Hollywood, even appearing in an early version of David Copperfield.

His fame, popularity and generosity to struggling authors brought him a knighthood, but for some reason, his work has failed to stand the test of time and most of it is out of print.

As for me, I am a new convert and am already deep into the next volume, "Judith Paris." I'm on page 1,289 on BorrowBox; only 3,143 pages to go!

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 12th November, hosted by Lorna. We will be discussing "The Nightingale" by Kristen Hannah

Toni Carr

ITALIAN CONVERSATION

Our group is always fun and everyone is very supportive! We have learnt how to say some phrases about the weather. The group is continuing in the Autumn, and we will learn how to talk and understand about health and illnesses - often useful on holiday! Our sessions will be from 10.00-11.00 at the Newcastle Building Society on Mondays:

November 3 and 17

December 1 and 15

Celia Howarth

BRIDGE CLUB

Starting up again after their Summer break is the Bridge Club. They meet in the Travellers Rest in Cockerton at 1.30 on the 1st Monday of the month.

This New session begins on the 3rd November at 1.30 in the Travers Rest

FAMILY HISTORY

The Family History Group meeting will be at 2.00 pm on Friday 14th November in the Local Studies Room at the Public Library in Crown Street. If you are interested in tracing your ancestors and wish to join our group, If you do not have a valid library membership card, please contact the library before the meeting to obtain this.

MEMBER INFORMATION

I understand Boots Chemist are now collecting the blister packs medication comes in. So take your packs along to be recycled.

John Dunn one of our members has provided me with a contact for used stamps so I am back up & running. They will eventually go towards Rescuing Hedgehogs.

Groups

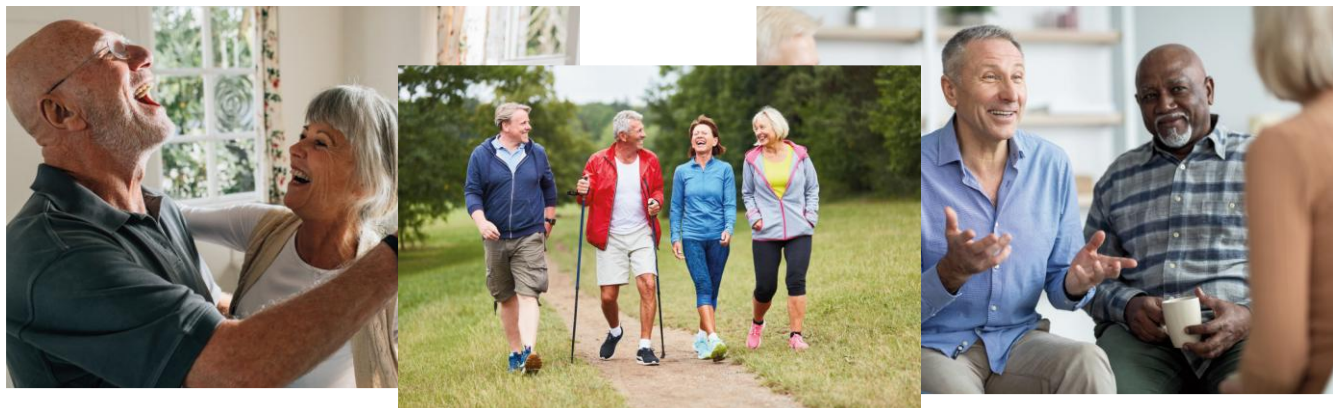
There has been interest from a member who would like to learn to crochet if you can crochet & would like to share your expertise to others please get in touch maybe we could possibly start a Hobbies Group were we gather & do our own thing but also passing on our knowledge to others.

Opportunity for u3a members

Living Well

AGEING WELL

A practical guide to thriving as you age



Eight free weekly sessions open to anyone over 65, designed to help you discover simple steps that can make a real difference to your health and happiness in later life. From moving more, to keeping your mind active and your community close, each week covers a different topic.

Drinks and cake provided.

Sessions throughout 2025 and 2026.

The Woodlands Wellbeing Hub, Woodland Rd, Darlington

In last month's Creative Corner one of the lines in Kate's poem about the Astronaut was lost in translation, I hope this didn't detract from the marvellous entertainment our Creative poets give us every month.

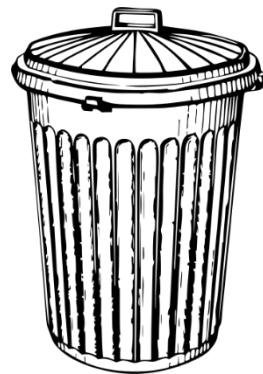
Dot Hullah - Editor

The Snail

He slithers across his garden patch,
He can go on very long hikes
From the rose bush to the dustbin lid
He can go wherever he likes
He takes it somewhat slowly but
He must have strength we lack
Have you ever tried taking a wall
With your house strapped to your back.
Then when he's tired, he doesn't trail
Back home like you and me
He just nips into his handy shell
To make a cup of tea



Kate Brown



ITEMS AND SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

CHRISTMAS FAYRE
NOVEMBER 15TH 10AM - 3PM

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO BUY YOUR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

CRAFT STALLS * BOOK STALL * HAMPER RAFFLE
TOMBOLA * TOYS, DVD & CD STALL * CAKE STALL
HOT & COLD LUNCHES * BRIC-A-BRAC * MUSIC & CHOIR

Good quality donations are always very welcome.
Please bring along to the church on 13th/14th November.
Alternatively if you would like us to collect from you, call us on 01325 469891.

find us on [facebook](#)

www.allsaintsblackwell.org.uk

If you need more information about either of these contact Dot – packages start from £20 per hour

Sarah's
Home Cleaning Services

Packages Available

sarahs_cleaningservices@hotmail.com
07710811560

Groups on Offer

Bridge – David Dixon	Travellers Rest	1.30 -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
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
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
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