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Monthly Meeting

at the Mart

3rd February 2026 at 2:00 pm

The Natural History of the Ploughman's Lunch

Given by Chris Pollock

This will be an informative talk that deals with how we came to develop the essential components (Bread, Beer, Cheese and Butter) as part of the beginnings of farming in Europe and the Near East.

There is a bit of science, quite a lot of history and some concerns about how we in the UK underestimate the importance of food quality.

Chris Pollock is a botanist by training and an agricultural scientist by profession. He worked for forty years on the response of plants and farming systems to external stress, particularly emphasising low temperature.

Over the years, he did less and less with his own hands, and more and more by running research groups and departments and by national and international collaborations. Eventually, he became a full-time science manager and also started advising government through expert committees, particularly in the area of novel agricultural technologies such as GM and precision breeding.

Following his (official) retirement, he has become more interested in the interactions between production agriculture, human health and welfare and the natural environment. He now spends most of his time wrangling grandchildren and devising unsuitable experiments for them to do.

*If you miss the Monthly Meeting you will be able to view the talk
with the video link that will be emailed to all members*

Committee Vacancy - BUSINESS SECRETARY

This post will become vacant this March as our current Business Secretary, Ann Atkinson, is coming to the end of her term of office and we would like to find a member who will continue Ann's excellent work in keeping the administrative elements in fine order.

Responsibilities:

Prepare the agenda, attend and take the minutes at monthly committee meetings and at the AGM.

Be the contact and attend to correspondence relating to the Committee, Region, Third Age Trust (TAT) and Charity Commission, informing committee members and u3a members as appropriate.

Ensure Region, Third Age Trust and Charity Commission are kept up to date with the details of trustees i.e. members of the Committee To distribute appropriate correspondence with all members of Tynedale u3a.

Use Beacon, the online management system for U3a's, to send emails and provide the Third Age Trust quarterly with a spreadsheet of members receiving the Third Age Matters magazine.

This role is **vital** to the running of Tynedale u3a and is one of the three posts required by the TAT in order for us to continue.

If you would like to discuss this post please feel free to contact either Ann or myself:

Ann: tyneu3absec@gmail.com or 07813 487064

Barrie: chairtu3a@gmail.com or 07831 255520

Or just grab either of us at the monthly meeting.

Barrie Mellars, Chair

Tynedale Hospice at Home Survey

The voices of our community mean a great deal to us. As part of our developing strategy to understand our communities more and their care needs, we have compiled an online survey.

We would be grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete our survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZTJQB9N>

The more community members that we hear from, the better we can shape our services to meet those needs and continue to make a positive difference to local families.

Thank you very much to your Committee for allowing us to publicise the survey and we really would welcome your participation.

Cathy Bates
Tynedale Hospice at Home

Tynedale u3a 'EVENTS' 2026/2027.

The next two trips are now fully booked, with 'reserve' lists in case of cancellations:

- 1 Feb 26 double venues in Durham - morning Harrison and Harrison, Organ Makers and tuners, with an afternoon guided tour of the Oriental Museum.
- 2 March 13 the third group visit to Nissan UK Limited in Sunderland. A few more outstanding payments are pending and the waiting list is quite extensive.

The proposed programme for the rest of 2026 and into 2027 is as follows -

Please **don't** contact me yet with your expressions of interest until I have circulated further details of dates and times.

I will circulate the latter via Beacon as soon as I have finalised the details:

- 1 A guided tour of our Egger Plant in Hexham. For those who have never been round it is a fascinating trip.
- 2 An evening tour of 'Marley Cote Walls' Pedigree dairy herd in Slaley. The farm is fully automated and the cows feed, milk, massage and wash themselves helped by robots. Its a great visit especially if you like cows. It will be an evening visit in spring with a pub meal afterwards. More details to follow.
- 3 An autumn trip to the Harrogate Flower Show located at Newby Hall in Yorkshire. Date for the diary is Friday 18 September. For those who have never been the entrance includes access to the wonderful Hall and gardens and the opportunity of a ride on the miniature steam railway.
- 4 A proposed summer visit to Chillingham Castle, the 13th Century home of the Chillingham wild cattle, gardens designed by Capability Brown, a torture chamber, and for the interested to top it all, Britain's most haunted Castle.
- 5 Finally we plan to repeat the very successful garden party at the Racecourse on Wednesday 1 July. More details to follow soon.

Andrew Rigg
Events Secretary.

Annual General Meeting Tuesday 3rd March 2026

The AGM will be held on Tuesday 3rd March at the usual monthly meeting and will be followed by the light relief presentations from Colin Argent and John Dark.

The relevant papers for the AGM will be published in the March 2026 Newsletter.

As advertised on Page 2, the Committee is hoping that a member will put her or his name forward to take on the responsibilities of the very important role of Business Secretary.

A nomination has been received for the post of Newsletter Editor, but this does not preclude other members applying.

Group News and Visits

German Group 2 : A New Group and Members Wanted

Michael, my son now, lives in Berlin, so I travel over there quite a lot. Over Neujahr, I was shivering at the 194 bus stop on my way to the Tierpark and realised what I needed was a u3a Group! So excited was I by this thought that I immediately emailed Steve Rozario, the Groups Liaison Secretary, to enquire...

(What I failed to realise was that Berlin has two zoos: the Zoo and the Tierpark. I got a bus ticket to the Tierpark but an entrance ticket to the Zoo. Unfortunately they are some kilometres apart. The Tierpark has the Pallas Cats, which is what I wanted to see, so having bought my ticket (Grr. What a waste!) I made my way to the furthest region of the park, only to find they'd been up all night watching the fireworks and were still in bed. Or had perhaps been eaten by the adjoining Snow Leopards, (but on the whole I think that unlikely).

Fortunately the Red Panda was up and about and as cute as heck, and the Café was superb.

This trip made me realise I have an excellent German accent but negligible vocabulary. The German 1 group is still repelling boarders. The only answer, then, is to convene my own group: German 2.

Who wants to join me, together with Iain, Judith and Colin? You can email at oswellmc@gmail.com, text 07725917389 (I tend not to answer phone calls though), or use the Tynedale u3a website. The days and times of meetings are not yet set."

Mary Oswald

The **Putting the World Right Groups** have vacancies. The meetings are basically like pub conversations where we share our wisdom and experiences on various topics. The group provides a safe space to share our thoughts and feelings and the only rule is that we treat each other with dignity and respect.

There's no compulsory homework though some of us brush up on a subject where it interests us particularly. The groups are very warm and welcoming with a wide range of topics like *Over-tourism*, *Changing technology/changing lifestyles* and *Freedom*.

For more details visit <https://tynedale.u3asite.uk/groups/>.

Mike Foster

Spanish Conversation Group

Do you enjoy practising your Spanish? Keen to increase your vocabulary? Don't mind making mistakes and having a laugh?



The Spanish Conversation group has space for a couple of new members. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month in members' homes (currently Allendale and Haydon Bridge), chat for a while in Spanish then read, translate and (if time) discuss an article. Interested? Check out the contact details on the Tynedaleu3a website and get in touch for more information.

Sue Charlton - Convenor

Real Ale Appreciation Group

First outing of the year was to Morpeth and an intrepid group of six gentlemen and two ladies set off by train from Hexham and Corbridge on a wet and windy day at midday.

We went to the Electric Wizard (spoons), a good selection of ale, followed by the Tap and Spile (roaring fires) on a damp day. Then off to the Black Bull, only one real ale, according to the landlord due to it being January and not many drinkers. Then heading for the train we went to the Joiners Arms, always an excellent pub with a good selection of ales including Bass, which brought back memories for some of us (not always good). We would have finished at the Office, but did not open till 5pm, note Thursday is cheese night and for a small donation you can have as much cheese and bread as you can eat. ***If you enjoy good company and varied discussions on major topics - this group is for you.***

Our next trip is to Gateshead on the 19th February, leaving Hexham on 12.04 train and 12.07 from Corbridge. Please contact Mike Bewick for details of future trips through the Tynedaleu3a website.

Environment Group



FareShare

Each year, we waste 10.7 million tonnes of food, less than 1% of which is redistributed to people

14% of UK households live with food insecurity

Wasted food causes 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions

In December the Environment Group had an interesting and informative talk by Ruth Jackson Director of Development for FareShare North East. FareShare is the UK's national network of charitable food redistributors aimed at tackling food waste and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups. Ruth began by providing some stark reminders of the enormity of the problem of waste food. We learned about the challenges and complex logistics involved in redistribution on a large scale.

In the North East there are 100 volunteers and staff working across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Durham and Teesside. There is a warehouse, distribution centre in Westerhope, Newcastle and Ruth is keen to recruit volunteers as drivers to support the network. They are also on the lookout for food providers and community groups that are in need.

She has invited the group to do a tour of the warehouse and some of us plan to do this in 2026.

Wendy Dale

Northern Rocks Group

With 20 members gathering for our planning meeting and our New Year meal at Vercelli this month (January), we had lots of fun recalling our field trips throughout 2025 and our favourite visits included:

A personalised tour at The Great North Museum (Hancock Museum) looking specifically at fossils, crystals and gems.

Gelt Gorge and how the Permian-era red sandstone cliffs were carved by the River Gelt, famous for its Roman quarry.

Our underground adventure into Nenthead mines was also a hit. Operated by members of The Nenthead Mines Conservation Society we were well informed about the history and geology of both the mine itself and the area around it.

A visit to the NE coastline is always popular and we returned to Howick to retrace our steps and share with our newer members, the joy of seeing fossils like brachiopods and crinoids and examining the very obvious Whin Sill visible at Cullernose Point.

We also enjoyed exploring the coastline south of the Tyne at Marsden. With so much evidence of coastal erosion and learning about the formation of the Zechstein sea, it's an area we shall be revisiting again in 2026.

As one of our members said:

"There's so much geology out there. Too many places to mention... and so much out there still yet to discover".

Huge thanks must go to our members who volunteer to organise, research and lead these field trips. No-one is obliged to do this but those that do, say they get a lot out of it and helps expand their learning and consolidates understanding.

New members are always made very welcome and we don't take anything too seriously. So, (as described by another member of the group) if you like "a decent walk, with decent company, a decent cafe and some 'rock stuff' as an added bonus," get in touch.

Kate / John



Art Appreciation 1

I retired last September and being interested in learning more about art, I looked for an art appreciation group to join. I saw that the Art Appreciation 1 group were having a presentation on the Scottish Colourists which I am particularly interested in. I then joined the group which has approximately 30 members, some of whom have been attending for many years. We meet on alternate Monday mornings at Hexham Abbey and I have attended sessions on Russian Realism and French Realism.

Each session involves a presentation given by a member of the group followed by small group discussions. For these, we each bring something related to the theme which we then discuss. It is very interesting to see the different pictures that members bring and to talk about them as a group.

Our current programme is included on our website at www.tynedale.u3asite.uk. The link to our page is https://tynedale.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/art-appreciation-1/

There is a very wide range of topics and, as a new member, I am excited to learn more about art that I know very little about, and to expand my knowledge beyond my love of the Scottish Colourists.

Paintings to include:- Samuel John Peploe: Pink Roses, Chinese Vase ([Pink Roses, Chinese Vase by Samuel John Peploe | National Galleries of Scotland](#)) Ilya Repin: The Volga Barge Haulers, 1870-73 State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg ([Ilya Efimovich Repin \(1844-1930\) - Volga Boatmen \(1870-1873\) - Barge Haulers on the Volga - Wikipedia](#))

Carolyn Roberts

SPACE GROUP IN 2026

Think of Galileo, Newton, and Einstein. Have only men contributed to our knowledge of the universe? The Space Group were aware this was not the case so last year we drew up a list of women who have contributed to astronomical discoveries with the intention of members presenting their lives and achievements at our monthly meetings.

We started last November with a presentation by Diane Downie on the life of Caroline Herschel, the sister of William Herschel who discovered the planet Uranus. Caroline had a remarkable career, transitioning from a successful musician to an accomplished astronomer. She discovered numerous comets, was the first woman to receive a salary as a scientist and the first woman in England to hold a government position.

The Space Group kicked off its 2026 season with a presentation by Ian Salkey on the life and times of Jill Tarter, an American astronomer and alien hunter. The Jodie Foster character Dr. Ellie Arroway in the 1997 movie *Contact*, drew on a lot of Jill Tarter's work on the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). We have presentations on 6 more female astronomer's lives lined up for the coming months.

Following up on Ian's presentation we were entertained/bamboozled by a deep dive into exoplanets courtesy of Steve Rozario. We have now identified over 6000 exoplanets and more are coming in every week. As is often the case in our Space Group presentations we were left with more questions than answers, but they provide ideas for future presentations. Talking of which, Colin Argent will no doubt entertain us with 'Origins of the Universe' at our February meeting. Later in the year we plan to explore the 'Dark Universe' and on a gloomy note discuss 'How the Universe might End'. Don't panic - despite a recent downgrade the universe is still estimated to last at least 10^{75} years, (that's a 10 followed by 78 zeros)! We are reassured Space Group will have time to complete its 2026 programme.

Ian Diggory

Your committee

Chair

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chairtu3a@gmail.com

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Membership

629 Members 15 Associates

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

Welcome to Tyndale u3a

Control of this website is held by Tyndale u3a. Tyndale u3a is a group of people who meet regularly to discuss and share their interests and experiences. We are a friendly and welcoming group.



If you are invited to an event, please note:

- Wear your hat
- Wear your coat
- Bring your own water
- Bring your own food
- Bring your own drink
- Bring your own bag

For more information, please contact:

John Dark - 01434 602584

Barrie Mellars - 07831 255520

Ann Atkinson - 07813 487064

Kate Stephenson - 07470 576385

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Judy Wyld - 07876 591183

Marion Petrie - 07876 591183

Jan Welbury - 07876 591183

Tom Grievson - 07876 591183

Ed Turnbull - 07876 591183

Jane Heritage - 07876 591183

Ian Robinson - 07876 591183



A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Raquel MacFarlane
Sharron Livesey
John Rose
Carole Seheult
Phillip Clegg
Liz Greer
Elizabeth Lockey
Val Conway

Chris Blackburn
Judy Wyld
Marion Petrie
Jan Welbury
Tom Grievson
Ed Turnbull
Jane Heritage
Ian Robinson

Next issue of the newsletter

We very much welcome written contributions and photos from groups and individual members.



Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Tim O'Brien, at tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.....

**The February 2026 Newsletter deadline
is 19 February 2026**

Forthcoming Monthly Meetings Topics and Speakers

3rd February 2026

The Natural History of the Ploughman's Lunch
given by Chris Pollock

3rd March 2026 **AGM**

Colin Argent on the Exploits of a Bearded 'Gentleman'
and
John Dark on Lawrence O'Shaughnessy, the Tyneside
Father of Cardiac Surgery and his mysterious sibling

Please join us on the [Tyndale u3a Facebook](#) page to keep up to date with information on events, interesting comments from members and engaging photos.



Follow us on Facebook