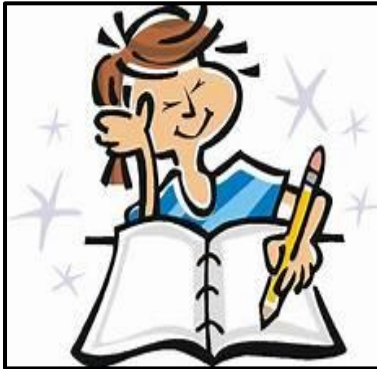


**On behalf of the u3a North
East Region, Northumbria
Creative Writers are
organising:**



**Short Story Competition
and/or
Poetry Competition**

You don't have to be a member of a creative writing group to enter. All u3a members of the u3a North East Region are welcome to submit a short story, of no more than 1,500 words and/or a poem of no more than 16 lines.

on the theme of 'Happiness'

**Your entry must be received by 12 noon on
Friday 11th September 2026.**

The competition is free to enter.

Rules and regulations can be found on the Regional website or by contacting Cecilia Coulson, lead of the Northumbria Creative Writers email: cecu3a@gmail.com

Rules for the short story and poetry competition.

The story/poem

1. It must be in English.
2. It can be fictional or non-fictional.
3. It must not have been published before or submitted to another competition.
4. It must be a maximum of 1,500 words or less (including the title) There is no minimum number of words. Any script over 1,500 words will not be read by the judges. The poem must be no longer than 16 lines long.
5. Your submission for the short story and/or poem must be on the theme of **HAPPINESS**.
6. Give your story and/ or poem a title which will avoid confusion with other entries.

Presenting your story/poem

1. The story and/or poem must be clearly typed, using Ariel font, size 12.
2. The story and/or poem must be sent as an attachment and not in the main body of the email.
3. You must complete your personal details in the main body of the email. Your name, your u3a you attend and your email address must be clearly visible. **Your personal details will be anonymous to the judges.**
4. Your name, u3a or any local identifier MUST NOT appear in your story and/or poem.

Eligibility and Submission.

1. The competition is open to all u3a North East Region members.
2. Entry is free but limited to one story and/or poem per person.
3. **Entries must be received by 12 noon on Friday 11th September 2026.**

You can send your entry in as soon as it is ready. Please ensure you submit your entry in good time and preferably not on the last day.

4. You must submit your entry as an attachment via email to Cecilia Coulson cecu3a@gmail.com
5. Postal entries can not be accepted.

Judging and the prizes.

1. All short story entries will be judged by one of 3 judges. All poem entries will be judged by one of 3 judges.
2. The winner of the short story and/or poem will receive a book token to the value of £30. The highly commended will receive a book token to the value of £10.

4. The winner and highly commended will be eligible to have their stories/ poems published on the Region's website and in the Region's online magazine called The Messenger and if possible a photograph.

5. The winner and two highly commended will be contacted by email re the decisions mid November. **The judges' decision will be final.**

A short synopsis about each judge.

Susan Willis, has been writing for fifteen years and has nine novels and five novellas on Amazon. She started writing foodie romance, progressed to psychological thrillers, and is now writing cosy crime novels. All her books are set in the North East with strong, lovable characters. Susan also writes short stories for Woman's Weekly magazine, having had five published in the last three years. She is well-placed to judge the ins and outs of writing short stories which capture a reader's imagination within the narrow focus of a word count and an effective ending.



Edward Cartner qualified as a teacher of English and Physical Education at Bede College, Durham University and Carnegie College, Leeds, but then served nearly 30 years in the Royal Air Force. He has published eight books in the genres of memoir, anecdotal humour, history and short story. A maritime library in London has published over 90 of Edward's book reviews, and he has led creative writing sessions for the u3a and Northumberland Recovery College. He lives in Alnwick, Northumberland with his wife. They have two married daughters.

Shirley Fall has been an active creative writer for the last five years. She has written poetry for over fifty years, some of which has been published, but mostly she writes for herself and the memories, images or emotions that a poem or short story evokes when read long after it was written. Shirley enjoys encouraging others in their writing and has led a number of writing sessions for both children and adults.

Sarah Telfer has been writing for over 50 years, crafting short stories, poetry and articles. A commission from Northern Stage in 1992 marked her first paid writing work for theatre: Northern Stage's "Women Prefer". After retiring from work, she focused on poetry, culminating in the 2023 collection 'Under My Bed'. She enjoys being a member of three u3a writing groups based in the north east. She lives in Redcar, Cleveland.

David Smith has been writing poetry most of his long life. He has several volumes published. He is a group leader for Stokesley u3a (creative writing) and holds a Masters in Creative Writing. He also enjoys reviewing Arthur Miller Plays in the US which he subsequently submits to the Miller Society journal.

Timothy Webb has been writing most of his adult life. Poetry, flash fiction and short stories make up a generally varied output. Having worked most of his adult life in the City of London he now walks the North East coast from his home in Lynemouth. His work appears in five published volumes from the Lynemouth Writers Group, as well as the Ladygate Scribblers and the Oldham Lyceum Writers from previous residences. Cramlington u3a writing group, expertly guided by Maggie Mitford, is currently a source of inspiration and challenge. He loves reading his work in public and is happy to do so at any organised events. Helping and encouraging fellow wordsmiths is a particular interest.

