

# u3a Todmorden Groups Report

November 2025

## **Alfresco History and Archaeology**

A small group of 5 members made their way to Bradford City Centre and followed the Bradford Heritage Walk, a City of Culture activity. Whilst we started in drizzle, it faired up and we covered the whole itinerary, ending at Little Germany.



Figure 1: Alfresco History and Archaeology - Bradford Heritage

The group's next activity should be better attended: 20 members have booked our guided tour of Rochdale Town Hall on the 19th November.

## **Art Appreciation**

The group met at Dean Clough where we were given an introduction by the exhibitions manager. Plenty to see but in particular the exhibition by Ian Cale, a project exploring abandoned civilian and military sites in the former GDR through photography, painting, drawing and a collection of objects.

Also on show was an exhibition of works celebrating 150 years of the Halifax Art Society, along with the Doug Binder Gallery and a temporary show of photographs. Also worth a mention is "Lest We Forget", an exhibition by Ric Coulson, an ex Marine, using soil from battlefields to create black and white paintings. Our next meeting is on the 4th December when members will present our version of Secret Santa and members are asked to bring along refreshments. Enquiries to [tristan.molloy.tm@gmail.com](mailto:tristan.molloy.tm@gmail.com) or tel: 01706 812890.



Figure 2: Art Appreciation: Dean Clough Exhibition

## Art Club

Art Club does not provide tuition but does give members plenty of mutual support, encouragement and advice as well as the opportunity of exploring their own ideas and projects in a variety of techniques and media from collage to watercolor and water-soluble oils.

From time to time the convenor will suggest a topic by way of inspiration which can often be interpreted widely and freely. Currently many of us are working on “How Green is my Valley”. There is emphasis on the group being an opportunity for the members to be creatively playful and to experiment and to learn from each other.

We meet alternate Wednesdays between 2 and 4pm at Fielden Hall, the next one being on the 26th November.

The Group is looking to recruit new members and anyone interested is very welcome to come along for a trial session to see if it’s right for them. For further details contact Judith Malone on 01706 812890.

## Beginners’ Bridge

There has been a tremendous response to starting a Beginners Bridge group and we are having our inaugural meeting on Tuesday 25th November at 2 pm at the Hare and Hounds on Burnley Road, Todmorden OL14 8EA. We plan to play on the first, third and fourth Tuesday afternoon from 2 pm starting on the 6th January. If you have not signed up for the inaugurals meeting, which will outline how they group will operate, and you wish to find out more then contact the convenor Michael Astrop on

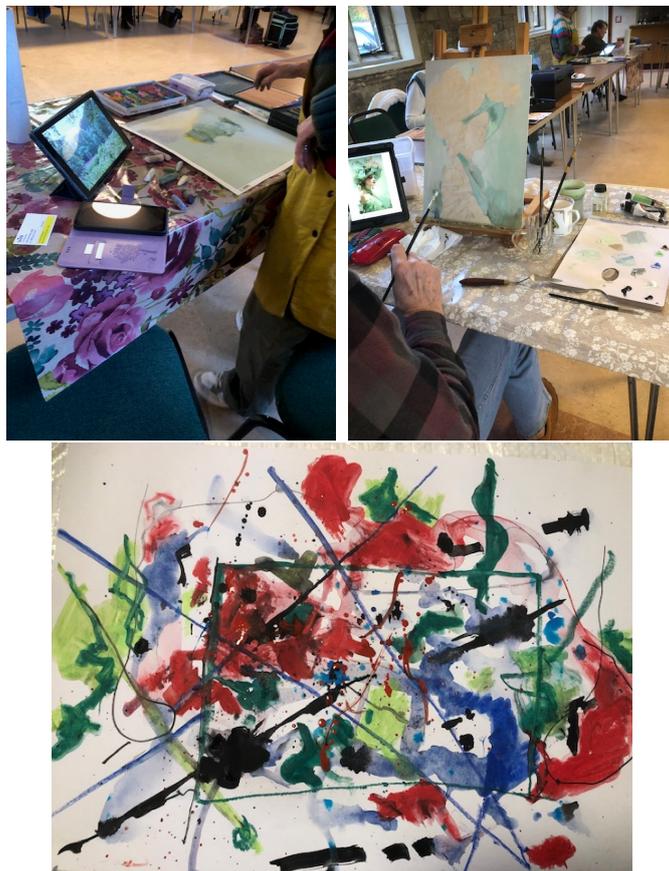


Figure 3: Art Club

[mwastrop@gmail.com](mailto:mwastrop@gmail.com)

## **Board Games**

The Board Games Group met as usual on the second Monday of the month in November, at 2 pm as usual, in the Ridgefoot Community Room. After October's bumper attendance we were at a more normal three tables of three players each, playing Qwirkle, Sequences and Mexican Trains. All our games involve luck as well as thinking, so there's always a chance to win and no-one takes things too seriously. If you're intrigued you could just drop by when we're meeting, or contact the convenor, Jim Botten at [jroyd33@gmail.co](mailto:jroyd33@gmail.co) or telephone on 01422 844987.

## **Book Group**

The group discussed *Our Souls at Night* by Kent Haruf in our November meeting. In a fictional small town in Colorado a lonely, elderly widow calls a widower neighbour and invites him to come and sleep with her at night, to talk. They exchange life stories in bed together. Through their dialogue their tragedies and failures are revealed. They bond further when her grandson comes to stay. The reaction of their adult children



Figure 4: Board Games: Sequences



Figure 5: Board Games: Mexican Trains

to the relationship is negative and in the end she is forced to choose between her grandson and her friend. There is a twist at the end of the book.

This original story of pursuit of happiness in old age was considered believable and very moving. The spare language and use of dialogue with very limited description from the third person narrator was very much praised and appreciated. Some felt the lack of description allowed the reader to react with their own feelings. The group's reaction varied from brilliant to barely worth reading. We agreed the story reflected small town America and ageism in society well, but some thought it too simplistic, unbelievable and lacking in drama. It was suggested that it was a fable.

## Canasta

Another month of enjoyable play – an especially good month for Angela and Susan who managed to achieve a record score of 3,450 in one hand with three red three's for 300 points, three clean canastas at 500 points each, three dirty canastas at 300 each, 100 for “going out” and then a point score of 650 making 3,450. Well done to them.



Figure 6: Canasta: Group; Angela and Susan's winning hand

If you fancy giving Canasta a go please get in touch with Barbara ([barbarawigley@btinternet.co.uk](mailto:barbarawigley@btinternet.co.uk)) for more information and the rules we play by.

Our next meetings will be on Monday 24th November and Tuesday 9th December at the Hare and Hounds 2.15–4.15pm.

## Coffee Club

Seven of us met for our monthly meeting at Honest John's on 3/11/25 and, as usual, discussed a wide variety of topics. Our first priority was to decide whether or not to meet in December and it was unanimously agreed that we would do so.

Over the previous couple of days the train stabbings in Peterborough and the murder in Bacup had given rise to concern over the possible causes for the increase in violent attacks both nationally and locally also how they might be mitigated.

We later moved on to more pleasant items including the Christmas Tractor Run, various U3A activities, childhood memories of the Unitarian Church, holidays on offer

from local coach companies, musical events, plays and films (including two free films) available locally in November.

The meeting ended with six of our number choosing to take lunch in the main restaurant of Honest John. Members of any U3A branch who happen to be in town on Monday 1/12/25, are invited to call into Honest John's at 6 Rochdale Road Todmorden to join us or even just to say 'hello'.

We meet there every month from about 10:30 am until noon and have exclusive use of the private room on the right just after mounting the steps of the building. Drinks are ordered from the room so there is no need for anyone to venture into the bar area. Light snacks are also available to buy.

People can stay for just a few minutes or the whole session and don't even need to have a drink if they do not wish to. As stated earlier some of us also elect to take lunch there after the meeting. Future dates will be published in the monthly Groups Reports.

## **Concert Party**

The Concert Party (Senior Moments) will be rounding off 2025 with a few light hearted songs etc at local Christmas events. We are already working on an updated program for next year. The clog dances are proving to be very well received, and we will be including songs by Petula Clark and Harry Belafonte, amongst others. Feel free to come and meet us. Just ring Gill Baldwin beforehand on 07504 290071 to check where we will be.

## **Craft Club**

On October 17th members were set the challenge of using brown paper to make an item.



Figure 7: Craft Club – collage

Most chose to make and decorate a carrier bag or wrapping paper but a few members investigated making collages. (Fig. 7)



Figure 8: (a) Dorset Buttons; (b) Wool felt hanging

At the following meeting we were introduced to making Dorset Buttons. This was very intricate work needing good eyesight which produced some fabulous items. (Fig. 8a). Yet again for the session on November 14th it was a complete change as we had a return visit from Maxine of Sew Thankful. With her guidance and support various wool felt hanging decorations were made and decorated. (Fig. 8b)

Craft Club only has two sessions remaining in 2025. On November 28th we shall be looking at simple techniques to 'paint' designs for use in for example card making. No painting or drawing experience /skill will be needed for most of these and may even be new to some experienced painters. The final meeting in 2025 on December 12th will be our end of year celebration including food, Secret Santa and learning how to make Diwali candles.

In amongst these sessions the members will be preparing to take part in Todmorden's Kidsfest on December 13th from 12 to 3 in the Town Hall. Ideas will be discussed, materials sourced, lots of cutting out etc done. If you are bringing grandchildren etc to join the expected 200+ other children at this free event do look out for u3a Todmorden's Craft Club and say Hi to us.

If you are interested in possibly joining the Craft Club please contact either Mary Findon, the convenor, or any Craft Club member to find out more and arrange to come along to one of our regular sessions held every second Friday from 10.30 to 1.00 at Fielden Hall.

## **Creative Writing**

Our second meeting on the 23rd of October was well attended, with some members writing to the month's themes. On the topic of embarrassment, we heard about a meeting where the local doctor was being praised by most people present. Someone new to their group mentioned that the doctor's brother wasn't as praiseworthy, citing him being arrested in connection with a stolen car. The new member contributed further, saying this might have led to the GP leaving the area due to his brother's conduct. Little did they know that one of the people in the group was actually married

to the doctors brother. Awkward... In November our themes are 'Spy' and 'Preparing' - with our second meeting being on Thursday 27th. Any new members always welcome.

## **Enjoyment of Wine**

The Group continue to meet online on the evening of the first Saturday in the month and face to face at 1:30pm on the third Friday each month at Tod College. The group is very sociable and prospective new members are always welcome. At each meeting we bring our own wine selected to an agreed theme and usually bought at a local supplier. We share our wines and some information about there origins together with some wide ranging chat.

## **First Tuesday Readers' Group**

We talked about ELMET by Fiona Mozley. A good although predictable read. Good descriptive skills but probably too much bordering on the prosaic and making the reading less fluent. The characters did not engage some of the group and the main character embodied ambiguous male stereotypes.

Our next book is by the 1922 Nobel literature prize winner Knut Hamsun - Hunger.

## **French Improvers**

We are continuing to share our recent activities with the group and taking the opportunity to revise the grammar rules for the past perfect tense. For a few in the group, this is brand new knowledge and essential for talking about what we have been up to, all we have to do now is practise and consolidate. Hopefully the dice games are helping. You tube videos are being used to improve our speaking skills, with the technique of 'Shadowing' being the latest recommended method. Sessions continue to take place on the second and fourth Monday of the month at Todmorden College.

Gill

radfordgill23@gmail.com

## **Gardening**

Garden visits will resume next Spring. Membership is open to all current u3a Todmorden Members. The Group Convenor is Fiona Ryland.

## **Genealogy**

The Genealogy Group held its first meeting in the Local History Room at Todmorden Library on the 28th October when 9 members (with two apologies) met and after

introductions and swapping ideas on what we wanted from the Group we split into small groups and did research using the excellent facilities available. We all left full



Figure 9: The Local History Room at Todmorden Library

of enthusiasm to pursue our own family trees. We decided we would look at how to access War Records at our next meeting as this was a topic mentioned by many. We meet again on Tuesday 25th November but will be meeting in the room at Honest Johns from 10 – 11 for coffee and the chat part of our meeting, after which we will go to the library to continue our research. It was felt that working in pairs helped in the learning process.

There is room for new members – please contact Barbara – [barbarawigley@btinternet.com](mailto:barbarawigley@btinternet.com) if you are interested.

## **Golf for Fun**

We are firmly into the winter period now. Winter greens are in operation. Nevertheless, we still play regularly, weather permitting, at 10 am Mondays and 1.30 pm Tuesdays. Anyone wishing to try us out (for free), please come along half an hour before. Drop me an email to let me know. For all inquiries, please contact the convenor, [John.Allison@3-C.Coop](mailto:John.Allison@3-C.Coop). Our web page is [https://u3atod.org.uk/u3a\\_groups/golf-for-fun/](https://u3atod.org.uk/u3a_groups/golf-for-fun/).

## **Intermediate Walking**

This group will take a winter break and will resume group activity in February 2026

## **Let's Go**

Our next trip is on Tuesday 2nd December when we will be visiting Chester for the Christmas Market. You should have received an email from Christine about this already.

## **Local History**

There was no meeting in November, but we will meet on Monday the 1st December at 10.30 at Tod College. There have been discussions in the interim about the future of the group and this will be explored in more detail with members. The meeting will also look at some member's presentations.

## **Lunch Club**

The November meeting of the Lunch Club took place at an old favourite, the White House at Blackstone Edge. We continue to be impressed by the quality of food and speed of service achieved without preordering which, for a group of twenty one, was no mean feat.

The Christmas lunch will be held on Wednesday 10 December at the Dusty Miller in Mytholmroyd.

## **Mah Jong**

It's been a good month for some lucky players of this remarkable game. We have had a fine score of 31,744 (an All Honours hand), a Unique Wonder, and Brenda had an excellent afternoon achieving her first Red Coral and a little later a fine set of Heavenly Twins.

We have also been excited to welcome some new players. So, Annette Birch, Jennifer Casson-Moss, Tricia Clark and Diane Richardson, it's great to have you join us. May the Winds be with you!

Come and join us. We meet every Wednesday from 14:15 until 16:15 in the Hare and Hounds in Todmorden. Please contact Emily Watnick ([emilywatnick@gmail.com](mailto:emilywatnick@gmail.com)) if you are interested. New members still very welcome.

## **Modern Greek**

Progressing well although a difficult chapter of ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΗΣΤΕ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ. Next session on the 20th November.

## **Online Zoom Talks**

This group will restart on 8th January with a new six-month programme (see below). If you haven't signed up to join the group you can do so through the link below. <https://u3atod.org.uk/sign-up-for-online-zoom-talks-in-2026/>

Date	Talk Title	Speaker	Description
8th January	Empress Matilda - The First Queen England Never Had	Christopher Simmons Chiltern u3a	In the mid-1100s Matilda, daughter of Henry I, was named heir to the English throne. But she was never to become Queen. This talk looks at her claim to the crown and the civil war that it caused.
12th February	Hardcastle Crag: The Reservoir That Never Was	Andrew Tominey Pennine Heritage	Hardcastle Crag a reservoir – never! But it nearly was twice and this talk by Andrew reveals what really happened.
12th March	Katherine Swynford: Myth and Reality	Baz Aveyard Lincoln u3a,	Baz is a direct descendant of Katherine and John of Gaunt and he tells the true story behind their famous relationship.
9th April	One Hit Wonders	Anthony Kay Harrow u3a	Songs that came and went but made an impression on our lives.
14th May	The Science of Sleep	David Tordoff Wrekin u3a	Why do we need to spend a third of our lives sleeping? Why do we dream, snore and yawn? The talk aims to provide some interesting answers to these questions.
11th June	Last of the Old Masters? John Singer Sargent.	Jean Jackson Lichfield u3a	Popularity & greatness don't necessarily go hand in hand: what the public likes is often deemed second-rate by critics. This talk will look at Sargent's life, his work and his legacy. Shows all his famous works and many others.

Figure 10: Online (Zoom) Talks programme

## Pickleball

Pickleball is going really well. We've had to be flexible and change the day sometimes to Wednesday afternoons 2–3pm, when the Sports Centre sometimes arrange other events in the Sports Hall on Tuesday mornings between 10–11am. If you're thinking of coming along to give it a go, ensure you contact the convenor, Andrea Ransom first to get up to date info on the dates. We have a WhatsApp group where we're able to keep in touch to ensure all members are kept informed of any changes.

Convenor: Andrea Ransom (andrea.ransom@btinternet.com)

## Philosophy

The next philosophy meeting will take place at 10.15am at Roomfield Baptist Church on 8th December. The topic to be discussed is Bertrand Russell. An "In our Time" podcast on the BBC is available.

## Photography

The October meet should have been to take photographs in Holmfirth, however it came to light that there were extensive road works in the centre of the village which were causing major traffic problems so we made the decision to cancel the visit.

Whilst we tried to think of an alternative Fiona Ryland mentioned that the Lets Go trip to Liverpool was undersubscribed and as it on the same day as our scheduled visit to Holmfirth we made the decision to join with the Lets Go group on this trip.

Most of our members had not been on a Lets Go Trip so it was interesting to see how it went. All of us that went had a great time taking lots of photographs of both the city and from the river by those who joined the river cruise. Comments at the meeting when we viewed the selection of photographs were that perhaps we should consider joining with the Lets Go Group for some of our practical photography trips in the future.

For our November practical session we were going to go to the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway and Museums, but as no trains were going to be running on the particular day and only one of the museums would be open therefor rearranged our visit location to Jodrell Bank Observatory.

## **Poetry Appreciation**

This group meets monthly on the second Tuesday of the month. For an invitation to join the meeting on Zoom, please contact the convenor, David Connolly at [https://u3atod.org.uk/contact-form/?contact\\_id=90525](https://u3atod.org.uk/contact-form/?contact_id=90525)

## **Practical Art**

During Oct. we took a fairly traditional approach to landscape using a variety of media to showcase the Autumn colours. In our more recent sessions we decided to try something rather different and a little more challenging i.e. sketching figures in very quick poses using a variety of media. Our next challenge in the following session was to place our figure sketches in a simple context such as a park or a classroom. For our last session in Nov. we will be drawing dragonflies and butterflies in a decorative way (a sort of nod to the decorative season). On Dec. 6th we will be having our usual Christmas Lunch, this time at The Ram pub in Cliviger.

## **Psychology**

### **Contentment, Security and the Stoic Mind**

At our November meeting, members of the Psychology Group turned their attention to another fundamental question of wellbeing: *What do we really need to feel secure?* Building on last month's theme of curiosity, the discussion explored the psychology of contentment and security - how these inner states develop, and how they shape our sense of peace in later life.

Drawing on ideas from attachment theory, positive psychology, and Stoic philosophy, members reflected on the difference between external security (wealth, health, social approval) and internal security - a steadier confidence rooted in acceptance and emotional resilience. The group also considered Stoic concepts such as *ataraxia* (tranquillity) and the 'locus of control', exploring how focusing on what lies within our

power can bring calm and perspective even in uncertain times. The conversation was both reflective and uplifting, highlighting how contentment need not mean complacency, but rather a mature balance between curiosity, acceptance, and gratitude.

Looking ahead, our final meeting of the year will take place on Thursday 11th December, when we will hold a relaxed *Free Session* - an informal chance to reflect, share, and get to know one another before the Christmas break.

The Psychology Group meets monthly on the second Thursday from 12 noon to 1:30 pm at Honest John's, Todmorden. Please note that we have now reached full capacity for the group and are unable to accept new members at present.

## **Quiz**

The Quiz Group October meeting took place at Tod Methodists on Thursday October 23. The 14 members present were treated to some excellent questions, set on this occasion by Christine Morton.

The next meeting will as usual be held on the fourth Tuesday of the month (i.e. 27th November) at 10:15am.

## **Science**

The Science Group holds a Zoom meeting each Wednesday opening at 10.00am. At each meeting we have two half hour video lectures, one from each of two series. There is a brief discussion after each lecture. An email including a link to access the meeting is sent to all Science Group members ahead of each meeting. The lectures start at 10:15, and the meeting normally closes at around 11:30. For further information contact Tom Williamson at [tom.w16@outlook.com](mailto:tom.w16@outlook.com)

## **Scrabble**

The Scrabble Group continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Monday of every month, starting at 2 pm downstairs at Central Meths, with added tea and biscuits, all for a mere £2 per head. If you'd like to join us please get in touch with Jim Botten at [jroyd33@gmail.com](mailto:jroyd33@gmail.com) or by telephone on 01422 844987, or just drop in on one of our sessions for a taster. We always have room for more players (of whatever standard).

## **Social History**

The group is going to visit the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester on November 20. The Power Hall has recently been reopened and with the Textile Hall makes a good trip. We will not meet in December as usual so our next meeting in Todmorden will be in January. New members are always welcome.

## **Strollers**

The Strollers Group walk March – October so there are no more walks until next year.

The Group is looking for a new Convenor to organise the group next year as Barbara is stepping down from this role. If you are interested please contact either Barbara at [barbarawigley@btinternet.com](mailto:barbarawigley@btinternet.com) or Helen at [helenstarmer@hotmail.com](mailto:helenstarmer@hotmail.com).

## **Table Tennis and Badminton**

This group meets each Monday afternoon (School term-time only) in the Sports Hall at Todmorden Leisure Centre from 3:00–5:00 pm. The group would welcome additional members playing either game, but particularly table tennis. New members should just turn up ready to play.

## **Walking Cricket**

The group has been having their regular session on Thursday afternoons and getting ready for their next competitive game against Oldham u3a on Wednesday, 26th November. If you fancy a game or just want to try it out, either contact the convenor



Figure 11: Walking Cricket: A Selection of images from our session on the 6th November

Michael Astrop on [mwastrop@gmail.com](mailto:mwastrop@gmail.com) or just turn up at 2 pm at the Todmorden Sports Centre, Ewood Lane on any Thursday except the third one in the month.

## **Walking**

The Walking Group meets on the last Tuesday of each month (except December) and details of each walk are sent out in advance by email to all Group Members and posted in the website calendar.

Our October walk was led by Gavin Bate and Emily Watnick and was one of Chris Goddard's Ted Hughes walks. The route started at the entrance to the car park on Moderna Way. From there, along the canal to Ted Hughes's birthplace in Mytholmroyd, then up through Redacre Wood and Hill House Wood, carrying on to Heights

Road. Up Wicken Hill towards Midgley Moor and the trig point at Sheep Stones Edge, then along the moor to Churn Milk Joan. Then back down to Mytholmroyd, coming out on Midgley Road and returning to Moderna.

The final walk of 2025 will be led by Bill Black on Tuesday 25th November and will be a route from Mytholm to Todmorden on the north side of the Calder Valley; full details on the website calendar.

Convenorship of the group will change at the end of the year from Peter Gibson to Judy Audaer. Until then, however, enquiries about the group, or requests to join, should be addressed to Peter at [toddypg@gmail.com](mailto:toddypg@gmail.com). Membership of the group is open to all current members of U3A Todmorden.

## **World Film**

On Friday 7 November we watched an excellent film directed by a brave and brilliant Saudi Arabian woman. Spontaneous applause at the end of the credits was followed by perceptive and appreciative comments from the floor. We may well show another of her films in 2026.

We have two sessions left this year: 21 November a British film; 5 December a German film. (For copyright reasons we can only circulate the detail of our programme to existing members)

We still have room for new members. £10 is the initial charge for room hire costs; this lasts for a significant number of films depending on group finances.

We usually meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month\* at Roomfield Baptist Church. Doors open at 1.15 pm for a 1.30 prompt start.

\*Nov/Dec dates are different because of end of year festivities