

# u3a Todmorden Groups Report

January 2026

## **Alfresco History and Archaeology**

The group held a planning meeting on the 21st January in Tod College, and produced a programme of visits for the months ahead. As the venues are confirmed, these will appear in the Calendar on the website. To go on any of our trips, read the event details on the website calendar, which you will normally find a reply form to book a place.

## **Art Appreciation**

There was no meeting January as it would have been due on New Years Day. In February we will meet at Cartwright Hall to see the Turner Prize exhibition.

Enquiries to Judith tel: 01796 812890 or Tristan at [tristan.tm@gmail.com](mailto:tristan.tm@gmail.com)

## **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. The current topic is “Distant Lands”. There is an 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 21st January. 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 01706812890.

### **Beginners' Bridge**

The group was planning to have their regular sessions on Tuesday afternoons at the Hare and Hounds public house, unfortunately the first session was cancelled due to the weather so the first session of this new group was on Tuesday 20th January.

If you fancy a game or just want to try it out, either contact the convenor Andrew Bell on [andrew3967@googlemail.com](mailto:andrew3967@googlemail.com) or just turn up at 2 pm at the Hare and Hounds public house,

Burnley Road OL14 8EA on any Tuesday except the second one in the month.

## **Board Games**

The Board Games Group met for the first time in 2026, on the 12th January, with a dozen committed players braving the weather and the unhealthy time of year to enjoy games of Ticket to Ride, Qwirkle and Splendor. We remain wide open to new players, our venue at the Ridgefoot Community Room is capacious and welcoming - with free teas and coffees constantly available. We meet just once a month, on the second Monday, starting at 2 pm, and we are always happy to try new games (or old favourites) that our members bring along. So if you have a game you like to play but no-one to play it with, we may be the solution. Or if you're simply intrigued, you can drop by when we're meeting to see what we're up to, or else contact the convenor, Jim Botten at [jroyd33@gmail.co](mailto:jroyd33@gmail.co) or telephone on 01422 844987.

## **Book Group**

Our first book of the year was *The Architect's Apprentice* by Elif Şafak. The novel recounts the experiences of a young Indian boy who arrives in mid 16th century Istanbul with the gift of a white elephant for the Ottoman Sultan.

The book very much divided the group between those who enjoyed it enormously and others who found it harder to engage with due largely to the extent of arcane detail,

particularly relating to architectural styles and designs.

The 'pros' found the story captivating and felt it vividly captured a vibrant and exotic multinational, multi-lingual world full of contrasts between the riches of the Sultan's palace, the poverty of daily proletarian life, the brutality of war and the treatment of slaves. Also evident were the quest for knowledge and the skills of the gentle, learned royal architect Sinan, who as well as being a character in the novel, is a real historic figure. Many of his buildings remain today in Istanbul and other Turkish cities.

Şafak's extensive research and attention to detail are everywhere present within the story, adding to the enjoyment for some of us, while for others making it a less captivating read.

We appreciated the beauty of the descriptive writing, verging on the poetic at times.

## **Canasta**

Our first meeting of the new year was enjoyed by 13 enthusiastic members and a lively afternoon was had by all. We had a table of 4, (2 against 2) one of 6 (2 teams of 3) and the remaining three members played individual games. Tactics varied depending on which table you were on, making for an interesting afternoon.

If you would like to come along and see what the game of Canasta involves, please get in touch with Barbara at [barawigley@btinternet.com](mailto:barawigley@btinternet.com) for more information and the rules we play by.

Our next meetings will be on Monday 26th January and Tuesday 10th February at the Hare & Hounds 2.15 – 4.15pm.

## **Coffee Club**

Although adverse weather conditions prevented the Convenor and several members of Coffee Club from attending the first meeting of the year it is understood that at least three brave souls were able to meet in comfort at Honest John's on 5/1/2026. It is not known what topics they discussed but, knowing them, they would have been wide ranging and interesting

Members of any U3A branch who happen to be in town on Monday 2/2/26, are invited to call into Honest John's at 6 Rochdale Road Todmorden. We meet there every month from about 1030am 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 and 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. The meeting on 2/3/26 will follow the normal Monday pattern but the ones in April and May will take place on 13/4/26 and 11/5/26.

## **Concert Party - Senior Moments**

Concert Party (Senior Moments) is still on its winter holiday; but will be back at the Fire Station on Tuesday 3rd February at 2pm.

## **Craft Club**

The final event for the members before Christmas was attending Kidsfest at Todmorden Town Hall.. Nine members of the group turned up to help at children who attended to make Christmas items. Lots of Glue, card, sparkly bits. cotton wool, lolly pop sticks etc were used. It was an exhausting but very enjoyable Saturday.

Our first meeting in 2026 saw members catching up with news and investigating recycling ideas for Christmas cards, crackers and wrapping paper.

At next meeting on January 23rd we shall be learning a simple technique for making paper flowers and then developing the technique using other 'materials' and possibly for creating other items.

On February 6th it will be the first of a series of sessions investigating printing which will take place at various times over the next 18 months or so. The first session will cover mono printing and its uses in craft work.

There is current space to accommodate a few more members at our sessions. If you are interested please come along to one of our sessions to meet members and have a look at what we get up to. You can get more information from the Club's convenor or from any Club member.

## **Creative Writing**

Our first meeting of 2026 on the 8th of January was affected by a number of the group being unwell and, probably, because of the freezing conditions. But the meeting was still enjoyable, with some members' take on Resolutions – each of them without any new resolutions actually being made! The second half of the meeting required us to disclose what we couldn't live without – in this case a variety of 'essentials' from the group. Our next meeting will be at 2pm on the 22nd of January at the TLC . Again, any new members will be most welcome.

## **Enjoyment of Wine**

This relatively small, sociable group who enjoy a sip or two of wine and like to learn a little bit more about what and why we like about it in a relaxed way. We continue to meet twice monthly on the first Saturday evening in the month and the third Friday afternoon in the month though these sometimes vary due to members availability. The first meeting each month is online using Zoom which means that nobody has to drive home afterwards. The Friday meetings are face to face at Tod College at 1:30pm when we enjoy a snack lunch with our wine. Each meeting has a theme around which members buy a wine and share our experience. Members are free to buy their wines wherever they like, though we find many good value bottles at Lidl and other local shops. Recent themes have been 'alcohol free wines' and 'Christmas fizz'. In January the face to face meet-

ing is a lunch at a restaurant.

There is scope for new members, if you are interested contact Bob Hayter for more information and an invitation to the online meetings.

### **First Tuesday Readers' Group**

We discussed Ian McEwan's 'What we don't know' and on the whole we enjoyed it although we hated most of the characters.

### **French Improvers**

**FRENCH IMPROVERS** We are starting 2026 with a new approach to our French sessions by following the lead of Géraldine, author of the Website 'Comme une Française'. Her you tube video 'The only way to become fluent in French' claims that traditional French learning is broken. Despite resolutions to spend an hour a week learning verbs and vocabulary, one's good intentions soon fly out of the window! The only way is to adopt a personalized style of learning and use topics in which each person already has an interest. So, we are choosing, Travel, Food, Films and Books as the resources for our sessions. We're going to give it a go, at least. C'est parti! radfordgill23@gmail.com 2nd and 4th Mondays, 1.30pm to 3.30pm, Tod College.

## **Genealogy**

We didn't meet in December as it would have been Christmas Eve!

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 27th January 10.30 at Honest Johns when we will be swopping interesting stories we have uncovered about an ancestor, before moving to the library to do research.

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 1.00 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/).

John Allison

15 January 2026

## **Intermediate Walking**

There has been no walk since the last report. Please see the group's entry on the u3a Tod website for contact details.

## **Let's Go**

The next Let's Go trip will be announced, as usual, to all members.

## **Local History**

The group did not meet in January and our next meeting is on the 2nd February when David Glover is going to give us his talk entitled 'August 1842 - The People versus the Establishment'. The talk is about the Chartist movement and while David's talk is broad in scope, Todmorden, and its enthusiasm for the Chartist movement, does get an honourable mention. The group meets on alternative Months on the first Monday, at the Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub, starting at 10.30. If you're interested in Local History, just come and see what we have to offer.

## **Lunch Club**

After a very enjoyable Christmas lunch which was reported on last month the Lunch Club is taking a break in January. The next lunch will be held towards the end of February so probably too late for the next report. Those on the Lunch Club list will be sent details in due course. Anyone who is interested in joining should contact [denisetyas@me.com](mailto:denisetyas@me.com)

## **Mah Jong**

Well done, to Fiona for an All Honours score of 4608! And I think I heard tell that Martin had a Unique Wonder. Otherwise, our highlights have really been the influx of new players in the last couple of months. This is tremendous, and as far as I know we have not yet reached capacity; so if you fancy trying, as Nicholas Parsons used to assure us of 'Just a Minute', 'this amazing game', please get in touch.

For the ambitious: how about keeping the Red Lantern in mind? A pung or kong of red dragons, a pung or kong of your own wind, and a run of 1-7 plus one tile 1-7 paired in any one suit.

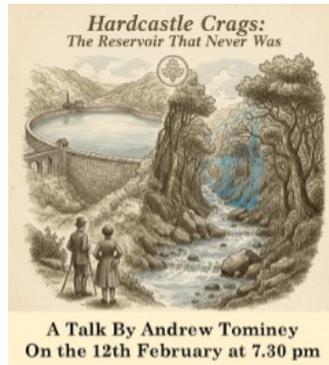
Come and join us. We meet every Wednesday from 14.15 until 16.15 in the Hare and Hounds in Todmorden. Please contact Emily Watnick if you are interested - emilywatnick@gmail.com  
New members still very welcome.

## **Modern Greek**

We had our Christmas meal in January this year. We are progressing through our set text.

## **Online Talks**

On the 8th January the group enjoyed a talk by Chris Simmons on The Empress Matilda. She was the first queen of England that did not come to the throne.



Our next meeting is on the 12th February starting at 7.30 pm when Andrew Tominey of Pennine Heritage will talk to us about 'Hardcastle Crag: The Reservoir That Never Was'. If you wish to attend in the comfort of your own living room just let the convenor, Michael Astrop, know on [mwastrop@gmail.com](mailto:mwastrop@gmail.com).

## **Philosophy**

The next meeting of the philosophy group is at 10.15 am on Monday 15th February at Roomfield Baptist Church Todmorden. The topic for discussion is based on women philosophers.

## **Photography**

The photography group has not met since the last report. See the u3a Tod website for contact details.

## **Poetry Appreciation**

The Poetry Appreciation Group met on Thursday 8th January to consider poems on the theme of NEW. We were

educated, enlightened and entertained by the following.

Bad New Government by Emily Berry

The Year's Midnight by Gillian Clarke

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer by Keats

Flea, Louse by Matthew Francis

The French Revolution as it appeared to its first Enthusiasts by Wordsworth

## **Practical Art**

Our first Practical Art Class of 2026 was on Jan.2nd. Despite the very cold weather and a glitch in the heating at The Fielden Centre, 10 brave souls turned up and we had a really enthusiastic group who seemed ready to start the New Year as creatively as possible. Our subject matter was 'Travel' and class members were encouraged to treat the subject as widely as they wished and to choose whatever medium they liked working with. Our next class is this coming Friday and we have extended the time to complete our work on the theme of 'Travel' or to take it to another level by designing a poster on a similar theme. We have space for some new members and we are currently running some short demos on the use of a variety of media.

Corinne and Wendy (joint convenors)

## **Psychology**

The Psychology Group cancelled our January Meeting because of the icy weather. Next meeting will be February

12th.

## **Quiz**

The group didn't meet in December as the 4th Thursday (our usual meeting day) fell on Christmas day and also the Christmas quiz was part of the Members' meeting the week before. However the next meeting will be held as usual at 10:15 on Thursday 22nd January at 10:15 at Tod Methodist church

## **Science**

Following a change of convenors and discussions within the group about how we want to proceed, we have commenced the new year with a few changes.

We have moved from weekly on-line meetings to two meetings a month from 10.00 am to 11.30 am on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings. These are usually on-line but we will include occasional face-to-face meetings and local visits in the programme.

Our aim is to follow freely available no-cost courses on science and technology which can be studied by members in their own time. We will use the regular meetings to discuss the courses and support each other with the material.

We have started the year by studying an OpenLearn course about floodplain meadows. For those not familiar with OpenLearn, it is an educational site wholly owned by the Open University and is free to use.

In addition to discussing the courses, we will also have occasional talks by group members and guests. We are hoping the new format will be flexible and attractive to a wide range of U3A members. If you would like to know more about the group then please contact the convenors John ([john@readle.org.uk](mailto:john@readle.org.uk)) or Jack ([marktahorner@gmail.com](mailto:marktahorner@gmail.com)).

## **Scrabble**

The Scrabble Group continues to meet on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each 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).

## **Strollers**

The Strollers Group walk March – October so there are no more walks planned at present.

The Group is looking for a new Convenor to organise the group as Barbara is stepping down from this role. Unless someone agrees to do this the Group will be folding.

If you are interested please contact either Barbara at [bararawigley@btinternet.com](mailto:bararawigley@btinternet.com) or Bill Black the Group Coordinator at [groups@uzatod.org.uk](mailto:groups@uzatod.org.uk)

## **Table Tennis and Badminton**

This group meets from 3–5 pm on Monday afternoons, in term-time only. New players, who will be welcomed, can just turn up at Todmorden Sports Centre, and introduce themselves to the convenor, Sandra Lambshead

## **Walking Cricket**

We finished off last year with our Xmas lunch and awards which was held at Todmorden Cricket Club with the following winners -

- Newcomer of the year - Mark Leah
- Bowler of the year - Gill Radford
- Fielder of the year - Mike Hodgson
- Batter of the year - David Burrows
- All-rounder of the year - Roger Barford
- Captains special award - Mark Allen



Winners – Roger Barford, Mark Leah, Gill Radford, Mike Hodgson, Mark Allen & David Burrows

The group has been having their regular session on Thursday afternoons and getting ready for their next competitive games against Oldham Burnley and Wakefield in the pipeline but still awaiting dates from opponents

If you fancy a game or just want to try it out, either contact the convenor Andrew Bell on [andrew3967@googlemail.com](mailto:andrew3967@googlemail.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**

There has not been a Walking group outing since the last report. Group members have been circulated with the details of the January walk on Tuesday 27th.

## **World Cinema**

ast week members enjoyed a 1970's film shown as a homage to the award-winning actress Diane Keaton who died in October 2025 aged 79.

At our next session on Friday 23 Jan. we will be screening another film by the Saudi Arabian woman director whose previous film was much appreciated.

We meet at Roomfield Baptist Church on 2nd/4th Friday of month doors open 13.15 film start 13.30  
New members welcome. Further info on U3A website.