

u3a Todmorden Groups Report

February 2026

New Groups

I'll shortly be sending an email to members about some potential new groups with an easy-to-reply form to signal your interest. Possible new groups include, but need not be limited to, the following suggestions:

- A re-start of the *English Language and Linguistics* group, which had a couple of meetings over a year ago.
- I've had a request to try again to get a group off the ground on the theme of *Pickles and Preserves*.
- I'd like to float the idea of a group focussed on *Artificial Intelligence*. There is a national u3a Subject Advisor for this and a number of u3a groups elsewhere.
- In addition to *Opera Appreciation* and *Concert Party*, there must be room for another group or two based on *musical interests*, considering the success of the recent *Silhouettes* gig.
- I've recently joined the *u3a Sailing Network* with whom I'll be sailing in the *Ionian* in September/October, and wonder if there would be any interest in a local *boating group*.

Please bear in mind the u3a self-help ethos, where groups have to be self-organised and will depend on volunteers to convene meetings and keep in touch with members.

If you have an idea for another new group that isn't featured in the list above, please look at <https://u3atod.org.uk/ideas-for-new-groups/> and jot down your ideas there.

Established Groups

Alfresco History and Archaeology

This group's next visit is to Bolling Hall in Bradford on Sunday 22nd February. Please contact Bill Black (groups@u3atod.org.uk) if you are interested in coming along.

Art Appreciation

Despite a membership of 43 only 8 members made it to the Turner Prize exhibition in Bradford, something northerners rarely get the chance to see. Disappointing for

our convenor who had spent time organising the visit and timed tickets.

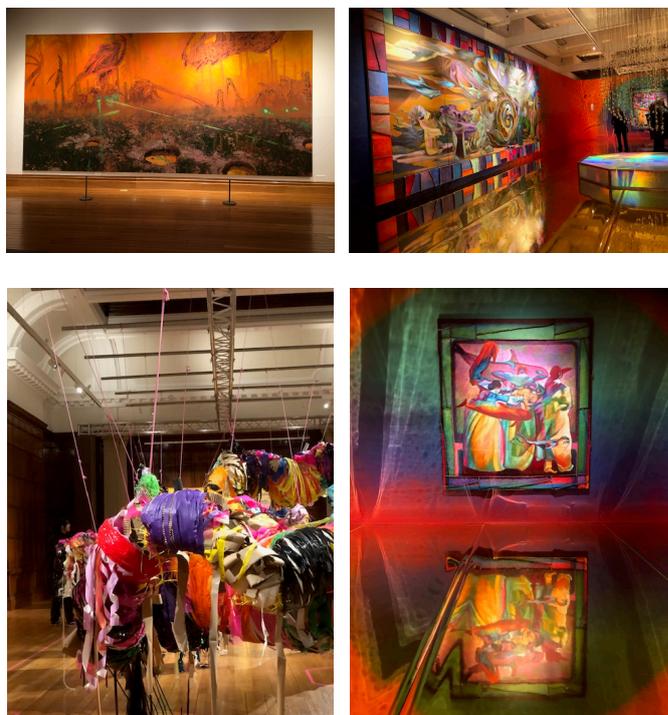


Figure 1: Art Appreciation: Turner Prize exhibition

Those who did attend found a very varied exhibition, all interesting, not everything to everyone's taste. The staff and volunteers were both helpful and knowledgeable.

On the 5th March we will be watching the highly rated film about Tish Martha, a visionary photographer.

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 watersoluble 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 .



Figure 2: Art Club

We meet alternate Wednesdays between 2 and 4pm at Fielden Hall the next one being on the 18th February. 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.

Board Games

The Board Games Group met again on the 9th February in our usual time-slot (2 pm on the second Monday of each month). We welcomed some new members, and saw some games being learned and others played with confidence. Qwirkle, Azul, Ticket to Ride and Splendor - all old favourites - were thoroughly enjoyed at whatever level they were being played. If you have a game you'd 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 or telephone on 01422 844987. There is a possibility that we may be starting up a second monthly session at some point, for those for whom once a month is not enough - or who can't make the present time and place. If you might be interested in taking part in that please let the convenor know.

Book Group

At our February meeting, we discussed *Three Men in a Boat*, by Jerome K. Jerome. Written in 1889, it has been translated into many languages, adapted for TV, radio and film and never been out of print. In 2003 The Guardian listed it among the 100 best works of fiction.

Written originally as a tourist guide, it follows the adventures and follies of three young men (not to mention their fox terrier, Montmorency, a character in his own right) on a boating holiday from the imagined stresses of

their working lives. It combines descriptions of features of the upper reaches of the Thames with many humorous anecdotes. We enjoyed it enormously, considering it very much of its time but also in many ways timeless. The bumbling trio demonstrate their ineptitude in multitudinous different ways, whilst also managing to maintain a baseless confidence in their superior boating skills and, for example, knowledge of how to navigate Hampton Court Maze. We found it relatable and at times hilarious.

It was felt to be stylistically novel for its time, preceding as it did P.G.Wodehouse and others of a similar genre.

Bridge

We have now met for 3 sessions up to now and are averaging around 24 members attending. On Tuesday 17th February we will be holding our fourth session which is going to be a recap for the first three plus the members we be taking part in a mini bridge competition to see what they have learnt and remembered.

If you would like to join the group please drop me a line at - Andrew3967@googlemail.com or why not just come along on Tuesday afternoons to the Hare & Hounds on Burnley Road from 2pm - 4pm we meet every Tuesday in the month except the second Tuesday due to the canasta group using the venue.

Canasta

Numbers were down at our meeting on 26th January when eight of us played two tables of four, but we had a full room on 10th February with 16 of us playing two tables of six and a four.

One of the tables of six involved five beginners but I think they all enjoyed themselves and hopefully they will be joining us again next time.

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

Our next meetings will be on Monday 23rd February and Tuesday 10th March at the Hare and Hounds 2.15 – 4.15pm.

Coffee Club

The national news on Monday 2/2/26 contained some potentially important and depressing items which might well have 'put a damper on' the usual convivial atmosphere of the monthly meeting of Coffee Club so I was rather apprehensive when I arrived at Honest John's that morning.

Thankfully the six members who attended soon allayed my fears and ensured that the meeting followed its usual pattern of discussing a wide range of additional (and

lighter) topics including the film 'Hamnet', various U3A groups, health matters, leisure pursuits, invisible pens etc

Of the many activities scheduled for the area in February the Ritzy Tea and Cabaret caused much hilarity when considering the actual nature of the cabaret and all agreed that the £5 entry fee would be good value as it included afternoon tea, the cabaret and dancing.

Members of any U3A branch who are in town on Monday 2/3/26, 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 meetings in April and May will take place on 13/4/26 & 11/5/26 due to Bank Holidays but June will revert to the usual pattern of the first Monday of the month.

Craft Club

The plans for our sessions in the last month had to be changed at late notice due to illness. However as usual the members all pulled together and the sessions went ahead although not to the expected plan.

At the session on January 26th those members present spent the time looking at plans for the coming year, catching up and working on still to be completed work. It looks as if we shall have a varied programme introducing new ideas and developing others

Our plans for the first of a series of sessions on printing starting on February 6th had to change again due to illness. This has been put on hold for a time. Instead thanks to the speedy action of a group member those present took the opportunity to start working on Easter crafts by making Paper Chicken Containers to hold mini eggs (Figure 3).

Over the last month many of the group members have risen to a challenge from one of the members to knit small, simple teddy bears for use by some local charities. An amazing number have been made and will be distributed over the next weeks. Figure 4 shows a small number of the bears. If any member of u3a Todmorden knows of a charity which might welcome some of these teddies or similar please get on touch with any member of Craft Club or call in at one of our sessions at Fielden Hall to discuss this.

The session on February 20th will return to recycling when empty 'pill pots' will be changed into amusing plant pots or storage. Many of us have collections of 'pill pots'



Figure 3: Craft Club: Easter Egg Chicks



Figure 4: Craft Club: Teddies

so we are looking forward to making something useful from them rather than adding to the plastic waste problem.

For the following session on March 6th we shall be starting a bag making project which will be continued on April 17th.

If you want to find out more about Craft Club please contact the convenor via the u3a Todmorden Website or call in during one of our sessions at Fielden Hall on Ewood Lane in Todmorden.

Creative Writing

Our second January meeting featured contributions about 'Awakening' - these included waking up in a strange place in complete darkness before realising they were actually on holiday, and waking up to find that a new grandchild had arrived safely. The second half activity was to read a poem from well known, and not so well known, writers. Very enjoyable, and worth doing again. Into February, and our first meeting featured both topics chosen for this month; 'Short of time' and 'Flat as a Pancake'. As ever, we appreciate and welcome any pieces of writing from our group, and anyone coming along to give us a try.

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.

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 read *This Other Eden* by Paul Harding. Positive appreciation was unanimous - one slight issue with confusion of fact with fiction.

French Improvers

Our goal to become more fluent in Speaking and Listening to French is off to a good start thanks to Géraldine, la

Française who has become our latest guru on Youtube.

I am not underestimating the scale of the challenge however when there is such a wide range of ability in our current group. We still need to cover the basics for those who are relative beginners as well as giving us all the opportunities to speed up our Listening skills in particular and take advantage of Géraldine's pearls of wisdom. Fortunately we are a group of patient and enthusiastic learners. Bravo à tous!

Amitié, Gill

Mondays 1.30pm to 3.30pm TCCLH. Next meeting is the 23rd February. Contact radfordgill23@gmail.com

Gardening

The Gardening Group is arranging a visit to RHS Bridgewater in March to see the spring bulbs. As spring arrives, we will start arranging visits to each other's gardens.

The Group is open to all u3a members. To join, please contact the Convenor, Fiona Ryland at fio.a.ryland@gmail.com

Genealogy

We had a very interesting morning at Honest Johns last month when we all discussed an aspect of our own family research. These ranged from success in obtaining a father's war records; an ancestor who was committed to Bethlem Hospital (Bedlam) in London, two male relatives having paid £10 (over £1,000 in today's money) to have the woman who was suffering from post natal depression "put away"; the high instance of illegitimate births in a rural village; a family involved in stone quarrying and weaving in Sowerby Bridge; a project to list all the grave stones in Mount Zion church yard at Cornholme; an ancestor transported to Australia for bank note forgery; and a Jewish ancestor who had emigrated here from Amsterdam in 1853. The latter story was very appropriate as we met on what was Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January) and highlighted how the whole family had been lost in the concentration camps, with very few family members surviving. The tailor who had moved to London in 1853 was one of the lucky ones. Last month the part of the meeting at Honest Johns over ran time wise so it became apparent that we need to meet twice a month, at Todmorden library on the 4th Tuesday morning - 10 - 12 noon for research help/advice - This is very much a drop in session when we can offer help and advice on getting started or dealing with dead ends etc.

The second meeting will be on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Honest John's 10.30 - 12 noon for discussion and swapping of information/stories etc.

Our next two meetings will therefore be Tuesday 24th February at Todmorden Library for research etc. 10 - 12

noon and Tuesday 10th March 10.30 – 12 noon at Honest Johns when we will be looking at Marriage and Divorce.

There is room for new members – please contact Barbara – 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. Our web page is https://u3atod.org.uk/u3a_groups/golf-for-fun/.

John Allison, 10th February 2026

Intermediate Walking

This group is not active in the winter months. Please see the group's entry on the u3a Tod website for contact details.

Let's Go

The *Let's Go* team are working on a programme of outings for the rest of 2026. All members will receive details by email when trips are open for booking.

Local History

The first meeting of 2026 on the 2nd February attracted 24 members to listen to David Glover give a talk entitled 'August 1842 - The People versus the Establishment', about the Chartist movement and their objectives. Five out their six demands have been met, but one, annual elections has not been adopted – so far. David also explained what the 'Plug Riots', when strikers removed the boiler plugs from steam engines, were all about.

There is no meeting in March, but the meeting on the 13th of April meeting is a member's session and one of the talks will pick up on the role Todmorden played in the Plug Riots.

Women's History Month Over 40 members have booked seats for the day of inspiring talks about the Women of the Calder Valley on the 10th March at Todmorden Learning Centre and Community Hub (Tod College). Two of the talks will be delivered by Local History members along with two visiting speakers. Seats for the talks may be booked on our u3a web site.



Figure 5: Local History: Chartism

Lunch Club

There was no lunch in January. The February lunch will be held on 24 February at Aya Sophia. Members have been sent details. Anyone wishing to join the Lunch Club list should contact denisetyas@me.com There are currently 60+ members on the list and there's no limit in terms of who can join. Dates and venues vary from month to month. Average attendance is about 20 people.

Mah Jong

The big star of the month has been Barbara. She went Mah Jong with a blistering Mixed Pungs – the hand which cannot feature ANY discards and whose last tile MUST be picked from the wall. A well-earned Double Limit (2000 points) for a hand requiring self-belief and nerves of steel. By comparison, Martin's Unique Wonder, although magnificent, lacks the lamé, sequins and pizzazzy soul of Mixed Pungs.

Our learners have made terrific progress and have the Ordinary Hand well under their belts. Time to bravely try a couple of Special Hands, methinks!

We've had a good number of new members recently, and while they are all most welcome this has put some pressure on capacity. The convenors have therefore decided that:

1. We will not be taking on any further beginner members for now, but will operate a waiting list. We'll try to run the learners' table until the current beginners feel they are settled in;
2. Given restrictions on space and the number of Mah Jong sets we will be limiting the number of players in each session to 20 – ie 5 full tables. We haven't exceeded this number as yet, but if we do it will be "first come first served".

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 - but, as reported above, we are afraid for the moment you will have to be placed on a waiting list.

Modern Greek

Still progressing through our book, ΕΠΙΚΟΛΩΝΗΘΕ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ, studying adverts for restaurants, theatres, music bars etc.

Online Zoom Talks

Philosophy

This group meets in Roomfield Baptist Church on alternate Mondays at 10:15. For contact details, please see the website.

Photography

Our January activities varied from Normal in the we had an après-Christmas Lunch postponed from our normal Pre-Christmas Lunch as it was almost impossible to get all or even most of our members to find a suitable date! We lunched at The Robin Hood and had an excellent lunch and most members thought that the après-Christmas event would be a good idea for next year. The regular meeting where we view images of our monthly topic was viewing the images from our Autumn Challenge - where everyone was given a list of 15 subjects at the beginning of September for which each member had to show 1 image for each subject at our January meeting.



Figure 6: Photography: Multicolour by Fiona Ryland

The subjects varied from something pretty easy - “In the kitchen” and “Multicolour” progressing to quite tricky -

“Sound of Silence” and “Eerie”. There were no rules except that they should be taken between the start of September and the end of December (although there’s always a bit of latitude!!).



Figure 7: Photography: In the Water by Barbara Lansdell

The members were encouraged to use their imagination and use whatever equipment, props and post processing (photoshop etc) as they wished. There were some excellent interpretations with some more to be presented in February.

Pickleball

Todmorden U3A Pickleball Group

We celebrated the First Anniversary of our Pickleball Group on Tuesday 10th February with a lunch out at Honest John’s. It was a chance to chat, spend time together and discover more about each other. Honest John’s really looked after us and we had a very enjoyable couple of hours.

What began with 4 or 5 players playing on one court with an improvised badminton net a year ago has since grown to 24 players, using all 4 courts in the Sports Hall with bespoke pickleball nets. It has proved to be a very successful sport, very friendly and catering for a whole range of ages and abilities.

We are holding more coaching sessions, to further improve our pickleball skills, for members still learning, to more advanced players wanting to hone their killer shots!!

We are unable to accept new members at present, and have a waiting list on the Tod U3A Website, so please, add your details if you’re interested in playing. We’ll be in touch as soon as vacancies become available.

Practical Art

After an enthusiastic start to the year designing Travel Posters, we moved on to a totally different topic - Indigenous Art. For our last session we researched and produced sketches based on a variety of styles of Indigenous Art with examples of Mexican, Maori, Australian, N.American Indian etc.etc. For our coming session on Friday we hope to paint our chosen designs on to stone using acrylic paints and markers. We still have a few places left and would welcome any new members. Corinne Roberts/ Wendy Coates

Psychology

Five of us managed to meet, despite the 'hole in the road'! We talked about the decisions involved in deciding where to live in later life and talked about the experiences of our parents. Several of us had already made a significant move, to somewhere smaller or to be closer to family, though we recognised that not everyone has family. We all admitted to hanging onto belongings, especially books, for reasons of sentiment, but were unrepentant about this!

Next meeting on March 12th, we will talk about Security, from early years to maturity.

Quiz

The quiz group met as usual on the 4th Thursday of the month where members enjoyed some fascinating and thought-provoking questions.

The next meeting will be held at 10:15 on Thursday 26th February at Tod Methodists and we would welcome any Tod u3a members who would like to try their hand (or should that be brain!) at one of our quiz sessions.

Dave Tyas, Quiz Group Convenor

Science

We are settling into our new routine of twice monthly on-line meetings from 10.00 am to 11.30 am on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings of each month.

We have now completed an OpenLearn course entitled "An introduction to floodplain meadows". When the weather improves, we are planning a visit to Brearley Fields Wetlands to follow up on this course. This visit will be followed by a social event.

We have just started our second OpenLearn course on "Particle physics" and are supporting this by viewing some freely available video lectures from CERN on the same topic. The two approaches complement each other. Members can follow either the OpenLearn course, the CERN videos or both depending on their preferences or commitments. All the material is freely available so can be viewed at any time.

If you would like to know more about the group then please contact the convenors John Readle (john@readle.org.uk) or Jack Horner.

Scrabble

The Scrabble Group continues to welcome new members, of whatever standard. We 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 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).

Senior Moments Concert Party

Concert Party (Senior Moments) is back at the Fire Station Community Room for rehearsals this month, on Tuesday afternoons at 2pm.

We will be putting together a revised program to use in performances for local groups including Care Homes and Hospices. Please feel free to come along and meet us.

Social History

The Social History Group met in January to discuss Vera Brittain writings on Buxton. We intend to continue in February concentrating on her efforts to persuade her parents to let her go to Oxford like her brother. We continue to meet at the Methodist church in Todmorden and all are welcome. Future authors to be discussed include ASA Briggs, born in Keighley, and Winston Graham (Poldark), born in Manchester.

Strollers

This group does not yet have a programme of strolls for the coming months. If anyone is interested in reviving this group, please contact the Groups Co-ordinator (Bill Black) at groups@u3atod.org.uk.

Table Tennis and Badminton

This group meets at Todmorden Sports Centre on Mondays from 3 pm till 5 pm. New members are welcome. We used to say 'just turn up', but as the Centre is introducing new access controls from next Monday, please contact the Groups Co-ordinator if you want to join this group. (groups@u3atod.org.uk)

Walking Cricket

The group have been meeting regularly on Thursday afternoon in preparation for the groups up and coming games against the following teams -

Thursday 12th March away to Burnley AND Thursday 26th March home to Oldham

The group are looking to enter a walking cricket league soon plus they will also be taking part in the Headingley walking cricket festival and the York U3A university festival both later in the year.

If you would like to join the group just drop me a line at - andrew3967@googlemail.com or come along to Todmorden sports centre on a Thursday afternoon 2pm - 4pm except the third Thursday of the month due to the U3A monthly meeting.

Walking

Unfortunately our planned January walk coincided with the ravages of Storm Chandra therefore had to be cancelled at short notice.

Our next walk is on Tuesday 24th February and will be led by Anne Wear. It's approximately 5 miles.

Meet at Tod bus station 10.30 am. We will walk up to the train station and follow the path out of the car park, walk through Dobroyd Wood, past the entrance to Dobroyd Castle then down to Gauxholme onto the canal path to Walsden. After passing Gordon Riggs, we go up Ramsden Wood road to the top and bear left to follow the footpath through the old quarry, then up to the top path where there is a nice picnic area near Ramsden Farm for our refreshment break. Continue over Ragby Bridge and up to the farm at the top. Turn right down Inchfield Road then take the footpath on the left to walk through Pasture Side Wood to drop down to Walsden station then back to Tod along the canal again.

I had a great response to my request for offers to lead a walk and am pleased to say we now have a full timetable for the year (attached). If any of you hit a snag with a date you've committed to, please attempt a swap with another member. If that proves problematic, let me know and I'll do my best to arrange alternative cover.

Happy hiking,

World Film

In January we began the year with a homage to Diane Keaton who died in October 2025. This was followed by another interesting film directed by the Saudi Arabian cinéaste Haifaa Al Mansour.

In February we will be screening two more films directed by women, a Moroccan film directed by Maryam Touzani on Friday 13 Feb and a Spanish language film directed by Iciar Bollain on 27 Feb.

As usual films will be shown at Roomfield Church in Todmorden with a 1.30pm start time.