

# u3a Todmorden Groups Report

April 2026

## **New Groups**

### **e-Bike**

We're trying to find a time to meet to plan how this group should operate. Anyone else interested is invited to contact Bill Black, Groups Co-ordinator ([groups@u3atod.org.uk](mailto:groups@u3atod.org.uk)).

### **English Language and Linguistics**

An inaugural meeting for this group was held on the 14th April in Tod College. We had an interesting discussion on the theme of gender in language. We're currently trying to find a regular meeting time that suits as many interested members as possible. Not easy.

### **Music Appreciation**

An inaugural meeting for this group took place in March in Tod College, and a programme of group activities is in preparation.

### **Pickles and Preserves**

An initial meeting has still to be arranged.

## **Established Groups**

### **Alfresco History and Archaeology**

The next outing will be to Ordsal Hall in Salford, at 1:00 pm on Tuesday 28th April. To join this trip, please see the Group page on the u3a Todmorden Web Site, where tickets can be booked online.

### **Art Appreciation**

Dominic Vince gave us an illustrated talk on the work and life of David Bomberg, 1890-1957. As an artist and teacher Dominic pointed out things we may not have seen or understood, in particular Bomberg's extended field of vision, usually managed from a high view point.

Born to a poor family he grew up in the East End of London. He drew at the V & A and John Singer Sergeant saw and was impressed with his drawings which led to him studying under Walter Sickert and then at the Slade. He was an awkward character and had to leave the Slade as he didn't "fit". And much later when he applied for a job there he was refused for the same reason. He continued to be a loner rather than a joiner of art groups. There was one gallery who wanted to buy all his work but he refused. When he did sell a painting he used the money to travel. Over the years visits included Palestine, Toledo and Cyprus where, in 3 weeks, he did 28 paintings. Lord knows how he managed to carry them, travelling by donkey.

Our meetings are in the 1st Thursday of the month, usually at Fielden Hall but our May meeting will be to see the latest exhibition at the Whitaker gallery. We were delighted that new convenors have come forward and the group will continue. Enquiries to Judith tel: 01706 812890 or Linda at lindabrill@gmail.com



Figure 1: Art Appreciation Group

## **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. At one of our March meetings we had the first of a proposed series of short presentations by one of the group on a favourite topic, this one on the use of oil pastels. From time to time the convenor will suggest a topic by way of inspiration which can often be interpreted widely and freely the next one being "Calm". 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 ones being on the 15th and 29th April.

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.

## **Artificial Intelligence**

This group had an initial meeting in late March. Its regular meeting slot will be at 1:00 pm on the second Monday of the month (excluding August) in Tod College. New members will be welcome, and are encouraged to find a BBC TV documentary entitled *The Joy of AI* with Jim Alkalili on iPlayer, and view it before the May session.

## **Board Games**

The Board Games Group continues to meet regularly on the second Monday of each month, starting at 2 pm and convening in the community-room at Ridgefoot. As of our April meeting we will be charging attendees £1 per session to cover the cost of refreshments, and to hopefully build-up a war-chest that can be used in due course to buy or replace



Figure 2: Works by members of Art Club

games. If you think you might want to join in the fun you can always 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.

## **Book Group**

At our April meeting, we discussed *The Sweetness of Water*, Nathan Harris's debut novel written in 2021 when he was 29.

Set in 1863 just after the Emancipation Proclamation that people held as slaves in Confederate States "are and henceforth shall be free".

It centres around a number of central characters including two brothers who are freed slaves; a married couple who own a large area of previously uncultivated land, their son who returns from the war, and two significant friends of the couple. There are many themes in the book including racism, homophobia, the emancipation of slaves and the aftermath the civil war. Most of the characters are very well drawn; the prose is lyrical and full of wonderful turns of phrase.

The author said "the power of fiction is empathy, you put yourself in the shoes of those individuals that you are not and try to wonder what their lives would be like".

We agreed that historical fiction can give insight into the complexity of life, bringing history alive in a way you don't often get in history books.

On the whole the book was enjoyed and very much appreciated by the group.

## **Beginners' Bridge**

We have been continuing our sessions on a Tuesday afternoons 2pm - 4pm at the Hare&Hounds and today Tuesday 7th April we held our first all play session based on what the group have learnt up to now. Our next session is on Tuesday 21st April at the Hare&Hounds 2pm-4pm if

anyone would like to join us.

## **Canasta**

Only one afternoon's playing Canasta this month, although our next meeting will have taken place on Tuesday 14th April (by the time this edition comes out).

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](mailto:barbarawigley@btinternet.com) for more information and the rules we play by.

Our next meetings will be on Monday 27th April and Tuesday 12th May at the Hare & Hounds 2.15 – 4.15pm.

## **Coffee Club**

Paid up members of *any* u3a branch who happen to be in town on the 11th of May (the SECOND Monday of the month, due to the Bank Holiday) are invited to call into Honest John's at 6 Rochdale Road Todmorden where between three and thirteen of us meet once a month at various times between about 10:30am until about noon. Some of us stay for the full time and even for lunch whilst others prefer to just pop in for a few minutes.

We have exclusive use of the private room on the right just after mounting the steps of the building but before entering the bar itself, drinks are ordered from the room so there is no need for anyone to venture into the bar area. The staff accept both cash and card payments.

Eight members attended the club on 13/4/26.

## **Craft Club**

It has been a quiet month as we didn't meet on Good Friday. On March 20th the project was to make a concertina book/card/album. We shall be meeting again on April 17th when the task will be to complete the



Figure 3: Craft group - concertina book

shoulder bags which were started earlier in March. On May 1st we shall be taking a simple technique for making flowers and developing it by using various materials and possibly finding new items that can be made using the technique.

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**

The second Creative Writing group meeting of March featured both of the month's themes – 'March' and 'Spring'. One member produced a poem with the rhyme of the day 'lost every ounce of bounce', comparing past walks and expeditions years ago and these days. Another piece described a 'pancake party' – yes, pancakes are connected with Spring – which went somewhat skewed with various mishaps, and having to ring for an ambulance. Spring cleaning also made an appearance, along with an account of a boyfriend being given his marching orders. Themes for April are: 'Fools' and 'Personalities'

## **Enjoyment of Wine**

This sociable group meet twice a month, online at 7:30pm on the first Saturday in the month and face to face at 1:30pm at Tod College usually on the third Friday in the month. The face to face meeting dates may vary depending on the availability of group members. We enjoy a glass of wine to a theme chosen by group members, discuss how we like our wine (or not) and learn a bit more about wines. This all helps us to choose something we might like when faced by a supermarket shelf loaded with bottles. We recently reviewed orange wines, that is white wine made using prolonged contact between the juice and skins similar to red wines. We were pleasantly surprised with the result and several of the group said they would buy it again. Our next face to face meeting is on Friday 24th April when the theme will be 'German wines' to discuss over lunchtime shared nibbles. At the next online meeting, when nobody has to drive home, on 2nd May we will be tasting 'flowery whites' and looking forward to warmer weather. New members are always welcome, contact Bob Hayter or Michael Astrop for more details.

## **First Tuesday Readers' Group**

In April, members discussed *Butter* by Asako Yuzuki in which an ambitious journalist pursues a story about a woman convicted as a serial killer of men she was alleged to have entrapped with culinary blandishments. The backdrop is an extended picture of the way that roles for women in Japanese society are constrained.

Next month's book is *Embers* by Sándor Márai. We meet at 2pm on the first Tuesday of the month in Hebden Bridge Town Hall.

## **French Improvers**

We continue to do our best to improve our Speaking and Listening skills. This does of course mean we are much more aligned to an In-

intermediate Group than one suitable for novices but we do nevertheless welcome enthusiastic newcomers. We make good use of the plethora of French video clips on youtube and are about to learn 10 current idioms to improve our fluency. Hopefully we will recognise them quickly even if applying them may take a little longer. We try to meet on the 2nd and 4th Mondays in the month. 1.30pm Todmorden College. Amitié Gill Radford radfordgill23@gmail.com

## **Gardening**

The Gardening Group arranged a successful visit to RHS Bridgewater in March to see the spring bulbs. We have now started seeing each other's gardens and doing some plant swaps. The Group is open to all u3a members. To join, please contact the Convenor, Fiona Ryland at fio.a.ryland@gmail.com

## **Genealogy**

The Genealogy Group now meets twice a month on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Honest John's 10.30 – 12 noon for discussion and swapping of information/stories etc and again on the 4th Tuesday of the month at Todmorden Library to carry out research with help from the library Local History Volunteer and fellow members of the Group – we have a lot of experience within the Group and are happy to help beginners get started on the fascinating journey of tracing your Family Tree.

Our topic for discussion this month will be Names – both Surnames and Forenames on Tuesday 14th April 10.30 – 12 noon (After the deadline for this Report) at Honest Johns

The following two meetings will be Tuesday 28th April at Todmorden Library for research etc. 10 – 12 noon and Tuesday 12th May 10.30 – 12 noon at Honest Johns – topic still to be decided upon – group members will be notified by email.

We have room for new members – please contact Barbara – [bararawigley@btinternet.com](mailto:bararawigley@btinternet.com) if you are interested.

## **German**

So far in April we've been honing our oral skills, mostly through the brilliant and much loved Sven on YouTube, reading and translating the works of various writers, from the brothers Grimm to Bert Brecht to the less known postwar Swiss author Peter Bichsel, who specialises in short stories bordering on weird, such as 'There's no such place as America'. The last one we looked at was called 'Erklärung' (Explanation). But the only thing missing from the work- a sort of prose poem - was nothing either calling for or providing any kind of explanation. Translating the piece could be referred to as 'challenging fun', especially with the nigh on uninterpretable title.

On 21 April, when we return from our Easter break, we shall be reading another of Bichsel's stories, Musikdosen, which is at least about music boxes, but arguably it is a piano which dominates the narrative. We'll see what other members think...

## **Golf for Fun**

The new season starts on 1st May. Do join us. We can arrange clubs and tuition.

We 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/).

## **Let's Go**

A group went to Ostwaldtwistle Mills in March for lunch, entertainment and shopping.



Figure 4: Golf Course not so busy



Figure 5: Let's Go to Oswaldtwistle Mills

We had lunch in the Courtyard Restaurant which was delicious, and were entertained as follows:

“The Parisian Louis Devere will charm the ladies with his singing and sincere performance. He performs with unparalleled passion and sincerity and exudes an infectious ‘Joie de vivre’ which sets him apart.”



Figure 6: Lunch at Oswaldtwistle Mills

We then had shopping time which seemed popular as there were lots of bags of goodies on the coach home.

Christine

## **Local History**

The April session of the Local History Group will be taking place on Monday 13th, starting at 10:30 in the Hawkstones Room of Tod College. Alongside the usual discussions our member Barbara Wigley will be walking us through a February 1913 issue of the Todmorden Advertiser, with all that it can reveal about life in the town at the time. As usual we will charge for room-hire at £2 per head plus an extra £1 for optional refreshments. If you're interested feel free to drop by, or contact Jim Botten at [jroyd33@gmail.com](mailto:jroyd33@gmail.com) or by telephone on 01422 844987

## **Lunch Club**

There was no lunch club meeting in March. The next lunch will be held on Tuesday 21 April 12.00pm at the White House, Blackstone Edge. Members have been sent details. Anyone who is not a member but is interested in joining the Lunch Club should contact [denisetyas@me.com](mailto:denisetyas@me.com)

## **Mah Jong**

Some excitements at the tables this month, including all our learners doing steadily and gaining confidence cheerfully under their expert tutors.

Among the old lags, we shared out successes with Sian's excellent afternoon that included an All Honours hand and a Unique Wonder that left her feeling pretty pukka; Anne, too, had a Unique Wonder; and Barbara had the rare privilege of calling Mah Jong on All Winds and Dragons.

Chasing a rare hand is one of the enjoyable features of this game - unless, of course, your main interest is in winning which is what the game itself is properly all about. Sometimes the chase results in a sense of glory, as it did for one player whose Hachi Ban (three pairs of winds or dragons and a run of 1-8 or 2-9, all concealed, of course) gave him great satisfaction.

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](mailto:emilywatnick@gmail.com) - but we are afraid that at the moment you may be placed on a waiting list.

## **Philosophy**

The next re next philosophy meeting will be at 10.15 am at Roomfield Baptist Church, Todmorden. As usual refreshments will be provided. The topic for discussion are the implications of Trigger's broom. The meeting in May will be on the 11th at the same location.

## **Pickleball**

Interest in playing Pickleball is still very strong. We currently have a waiting list, but as players naturally leave, there will become more space for new players.

It's always preferable, but not essential, to have played a racquet sport previously. Pickleball's a mixture of tennis, badminton and table tennis, but the way its played and the rules are different from all of them !!!

Drop me an email if you're interested, using the group entry on the website, and I'll add you to the waiting list.

Andrea

## **Practical Art**

During March we explored using mixed media and in particular collage in the subject of a simple landscape. Most of the group enjoyed it and there were some really interesting pieces of work. This coming Friday the group are painting/ drawing Spring Flowers using whatever medium they choose. We try to vary our activities over as wide a subject and range of media as possible with some sessions concentrating on more traditional approaches and others exploring more radical techniques. Hopefully in this way there is something for everyone to enjoy.

## **Psychology**

Living Well with Memory Change: A Psychological Perspective At our April meeting, members of the Psychology Group explored the subject of Living Well with Memory Change. The discussion took a psychological and reflective approach to the ways memory naturally changes over time and how people can continue to adapt and thrive. We considered how memory is linked not only to practical everyday functioning, but also to identity, confidence, and emotional wellbeing.

Drawing on ideas from psychology, members reflected on how our responses to forgetting can often matter more than forgetting itself.

We discussed the importance of routine, social connection, acceptance, and maintaining a sense of control through small practical strategies. The group also explored the idea that identity is broader than memory alone, and that values, relationships, humour, and resilience remain central to who we are. The session prompted a warm, thoughtful, and sensitive exchange of ideas, showing that memory change need not be viewed only through fear or loss, but also through adaptation, dignity, and continued meaning in later life.

Looking ahead, our next meeting will take place on Thursday 14th May. The Psychology Group meets monthly on the second Thursday from 12 noon to 1:30 pm at Honest John's, Todmorden.

## **Quiz**

16 members enjoyed an excellent taxing and entertaining quiz on Thursday 26th March.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 23rd April at 10:5am in the Lower Room at Tod Methodists.

## **Science**

We have twice monthly on-line meetings from 10.00 am to 11.30 am on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings.

We have just completed two meetings on the topic of "Wind Power". This was based on two excellent presentations by Jerome, supported by a BBC video on wind turbine recycling and parts of an OpenLearn course on renewable energy.

Our next meeting will be a special meeting to review the recent Artemis II NASA mission. This will be supported by a number of videos.

If you would like to know more about the group, then please contact the convenors John Readle ([john@readle.org.uk](mailto:john@readle.org.uk)) or Jack Horner ([mark-tahorner@gmail.com](mailto:mark-tahorner@gmail.com)).

## **Scrabble**

The Scrabble Group met on Easter Monday, with a small but select attendance, with so many folk making the most of the sunshine and their families. We continue 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).

## **Senior Moments Concert Party**

Concert Party (Senior Moments) meets most Tuesday afternoons at 2pm.at the Fire Station Community Room for rehearsals.



We are now in the process of sorting out dates to visit local groups, Care Homes and Hospices. New contacts as well as potential singers and performers always welcome, so please feel free to come along and meet us. This year our program includes songs from films such as Hans Christian Anderson and Calamity Jane ... as well as clog dancing, and selections from The Kinks, Petula Clark etc,

## **Social History**

The group read extracts from ASA Briggs autobiography at our last meeting. We meet on Friday April 17 at 10 15 in Todmorden Methodist church to discuss the autobiography of James Walvin about growing up in Manchester and Oldham. He was born in 1942 and this is the first time we have looked at the post war period. New members are wel-

come.

## **Strollers**

This group needs a new convenor in order to activate a spring and summer programme of strolls.

## **Table Tennis and Badminton**

This group meets in the main sports hall at Todmorden Leisure Centre on Monday afternoons from 3-5pm for the bargain price of £2 per session. New members playing either game are welcome.

## **Walking Cricket**

We have been meeting on Thursday afternoons at TLC from 2pm - 4pm and on Thursday 26th March we hosted our friends from Oldham U3A and in a close game Todmorden won by 16 runs with Oldham scoring 123 and Todmorden scored 139 in reply. Our next session is on Thursday 9th April at TLC 2pm - 4pm and on Thursday 23rd April we will be holding our first outdoor session at Todmorden Cricket Club (weather permitting) and over the coming months the tigers will be taking part in a number of matches.

## **Walking**

Three new members joined ten seasoned u3a trekkers for April's hike. All appeared clear and bright as the Walking Group set off from Todmorden town centre. Our 6-mile route took us up to Langfield Common via the Unitarian church and Shoebroad Lane, learning a little about the Fieldens and Todmorden non-conformism along the way. Once on the top there were no views to enjoy; we were in dense, disorientating cloud, Gaddings and Warland dams looming out of the mist on our approach. Spirits remained high, as we approached the far end of

Warland Reservoir, for our much-needed refreshment break. The sun burnt through in minutes. We enjoyed the best of the day's weather for our picnic and the remainder of our walk – down to Warland and along the canal path to Walsden.

## **World Film**

Our last film this season, to be shown on Friday 27 March, is set in Tuscany. It is a French, Italian, English language film with English subtitles starring Juliette Binoche.

Our final programme this academic year of 6 films to be shown in April/May/June will be sent out to all members very soon.