

# u3a Todmorden Groups Report

May 2026

## **Alfresco History and Archaeology**

In April, 8 members made their way to Ordsal Hall, which originated in the 14th century, and is now surrounded by the modern developments of Salford Quays. Seven of us went by car, and 1 by public transport. We had a very informative guided tour followed by coffee and biscuits. The tour was organised by Sue Hayter.

We don't have an outing planned for May. Our next one will be listed on the Calendar pages of the website and circulated to group members. If you want to receive details or have your own ideas about sites of historic interest that the group could visit, please contact Bill Black using [groups@u3atod.org.uk](mailto:groups@u3atod.org.uk).

## **Art Appreciation**

The Art Appreciation group meet at 2 pm on the first Thursday of every month normally at Fielden Hall. However every quarter the group visit a gallery or artists studio. For our May meeting we visited the Whitaker Museum and Art Gallery in Rawtenstall and, as well as enjoying the delights of the permanent collection, had the opportunity of being introduced to the work on display in the main gallery by the artist herself. The exhibition by Jude Wainwright weaves together a personal narrative with a response to the Museum's collection to create a dreamlike and theatrical spectacle.

At our next meeting on the 4th June some of the group will be doing presentations on their choice of unjustly forgotten women artists. Anyone interested should contact Judith at [judith.a@zen.co.uk](mailto:judith.a@zen.co.uk) or Linda at [lindabrill@gmail.com](mailto:lindabrill@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 watersoluble oils. At one of our April meetings we had one of a series of short presentations by one of the group on a favourite topic, this one on tackling skies. From time to time the convenor will suggest a topic by way of inspiration which can often be interpreted widely and freely the current 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 so topics are often widely interpreted.

We meet alternate Wednesdays between 2 and 4pm at Fielden Hall the next one being on the 27th May. 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.

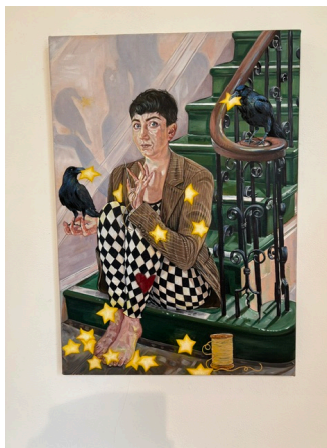


Figure 1: Art Appreciation: Images from visit to Whitaker Museum



Figure 2: Art Club

## Artificial Intelligence

This relatively new group had a well-attended second meeting in May. We meet on the second Monday of the month at 1:00 pm in Tod College. We reviewed Jim Alkalili's eight year-old film *The Joy of AI*, but decided we want to delve deeper into some techniques of AI for the next session, when we will hear about machine learning and the use of training data. The group will be happy to welcome additional members.

## Board Games

The Board Games Group met again on Monday 11th May, in the absence of the main convenors but caringly curated in our absence by Barbara Wigley. The turn-out was low, but the number of different games played even more varied than usual! If you think you'd like to swell our numbers and are curious to find out how we have so much free-form fun, then you can always drop by when we're meeting (on the second Monday of every month, in the community-room in Ridgefoot, starting at 2 pm) 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

In May the Book Group discussed 'Glorious Exploits' by Ferdia Lennon a first-time novel set in the Peloponnesian War of Ancient Greece. The tale is told by the protagonist in contemporary Irish dialect making the story both relatable and very funny. The story focuses on a friendship and the relationships forged with defeated Athenian prisoners of war when the production of a play is devised. Like the play, the novel is a tragedy (on many levels) blended with the humanity of the relationships which develop.

There was some discussion on the power of art to bring people together. In this case Greek tragedy, sometimes seen as elitist was accessible and enjoyed by everyone in its time. There were parallels with current wars, and the book dealt with the dangers of stereotyping 'other' people. Most really enjoyed the humour, offsetting the tragedy, but for some the heartbreak was overwhelming.

## **Beginners' Bridge**

We have been continuing our sessions on a Tuesday afternoon at the Hare & Hounds public house and the group continues to improve and the group continues to enjoy the sessions. Anyone who wants to



Figure 3: The group in action at a Tuesday session

join the group please contact me on [andrew3967@googlemail.com](mailto:andrew3967@googlemail.com).

## **Canasta**

The Canasta Group have met three times since the last Report with all three sessions being well attended, especially the last meeting when 14 members of the Group enjoyed an afternoon playing on three tables.

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 25<sup>th</sup> May (Spring Bank Holiday) and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June at the Hare & Hounds 2.15 – 4.15pm.

## **Coffee Club**

Although only four of us met at Honest John's on 11/5/26 this did not affect the many and varied discussions we had. These included recent and forthcoming local events, RSV vaccination, current and projected holidays, digital switchover, Keir Starmer and U3A invite re Gilbert & Sullivan event

Our next get together will again take place at Honest John's on Monday 1 June and Members of any U3A branch who happen to be in town that day 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 once a month between 1030am – noon & have exclusive use of the private room on the right just after mounting the steps to enter 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. Some of us also elect to take lunch there after the meeting. Future dates will be published in the monthly Groups Reports.

## Craft Club

On April 17th the task was to complete the shoulder bags which were started earlier in March.



Figure 4: Craft Club: shoulder bag and curtain-ring sheep

On May 1st there had to be a last-minute change of plan due to a medical appointment. The project became making sheep and other animals using curtain rings. (Photo)

The session on May 15th (postponed from May 1st) was the challenge to take a simple technique for making flowers and develop it using various materials including papers, foil, fabric, plastic packaging, Mylar (helium balloon material) etc. and possibly finding new items that can be made using the technique. Some of the items produced included air freshener holders, T light holders from plastic wrapping, foil and pinecone flowers for outdoor display, painted canvas T light holders.



Figure 5: Craft Club: response to challenges

We shall be having another change of direction for our meeting on May 29th as we shall be using the Sgraffito techniques to produce images for use in card making etc.

Then on June 10th one of our newer members will be demonstrating making pressed flower cards.

## Creative Writing

We welcomed two new members at our meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May.

The themes of this month are 'May Day' and 'Sharing', but we heard a variation of tales including attending a funeral where the vicar got the name of the deceased wrong, along with the music at the ceremony – the fairly well known song 'Enjoy Yourself – it's later than you think' Another contribution was a version of 'I'm a celebrity get me out here' with some more than slightly dodgy contestants.

Our next meeting will be on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May – possibly in a new room with improved acoustics, fingers crossed.

## 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 and at the

last face to face meeting at Tod College on Friday the 24th April we enjoyed a snack lunch and tried out some German wines.

On the first Saturday in May we met online at 7.30 pm to try out and discuss flowery wines and of course the benefit of these meetings is that nobody has to drive home afterwards.

Our next face to face meeting will be at Tod college on the 22nd May when we will be doing a blind wine tasting. The next online meeting will be on Saturday 6th June at 7.30 pm.

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 room for new members, so if you enjoy a glass of wine contact Bob Hayter for more information and an invitation to the online meetings.

## **English Language and Linguistics**

This new group is having its second meeting at 2:00 pm on the 19th May in Todmorden College. At the first session, we looked at gender in language, starting from gender in syntax, and moving on to semantic gender and the way the usage of gender-denoting expressions is evolving in various language communities. The presentation was written by Liz Swinbank from York u3a, where their English and Linguistics group has been going for a few years. We've not yet confirmed whether the 3rd Tuesday afternoon will be the regular slot for this group, so look for details on the group's web page.

## **First Tuesday Readers' Group**

The group discussed Sandor Marai 'Embers'. There was some beautiful writing but the story turned into a monologue with the main character possibly obsessed with a revenge that did not seem to be really satisfied.

## **French Improvers**

We endeavour to improve our Speaking & Listening skills with as much help as possible from French specialists we find on-line. The latest task has been to use 'chunks' of French recommended by Muriel to improve our fluency. Anything to get us out of the habit of translating our English thoughts into French, a word at a time!

Onwards & upwards.

Gill

Remember that our next session is Monday 8th June, as there is no meeting due to Bank Holiday on 25th May.

## **Gardening**

The Gardening Group Members continue to visit each others' gardens, to admire, swop ideas and plants, and to be generally sociable. The Group is open to all u3a members. To join, please contact the Convenor, Fiona Ryland at [fio.a.ryland@gmail.com](mailto:fio.a.ryland@gmail.com)

## **Genealogy**

The Genealogy Group now meets twice a month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at Honest John's 10.30 – 12 noon for discussion and swapping of information/stories etc and again on the 4<sup>th</sup> 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. We have room for new members – please contact Barbara – [barbarawigley@btinternet.com](mailto:barbarawigley@btinternet.com) if you are interested.

Please note that there will be no meeting on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May at Todmorden Library as this clashes with the Lets Go Trip to Nostell Priory which some of our members are going on.

Our next meeting will therefore be on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 10.30 – 12 noon at Honest Johns when we will be continuing to discuss “Accidents, Incidents and News Reports” we have discovered in our family – our meeting on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May started to look at this but as some members of the Group had had to send their apologies and others had more to discuss it was decided to continue with this topic next month.

We have already heard of farming, mining and road accidents, as well as a death following a fight and another when an ancestor fell from a third story window after a night of heavy drinking. We learnt of the wisdom of having the outside toilet door opening outwards instead of inwards as was the case when one ancestor collapsed and died there, resulting in the family having to take off the roof to access them. And we were surprised to learn that the mother of a soldier injured in the First World War walked 15 miles to catch a train and with help along the way from the authorities arrived in France to visit her son (who did actually survive his injuries) – not something many of us were aware happened.

## German

This month we’ve focused on three activities: reading texts out loud and then translating them (mainly by the unusual Swiss author Peter Bichsel); tackling German grammar by translating English sentences into German, covering often problematic areas such as the passive, modal verbs, the two forms of the subjunctive, how to cope in German with English verbs ending in ‘ing’ - there are no continuous verb structures in German. They use adverbs to the same effect, though. The third activity is improving our aural and oral skills via numerous relevant techniques introduced by native speakers on YouTube. Members’ favourite language coach is called Sven. He’s linguistically powerful, but at the same time he seems to exude relaxation, something’s that goes down well at the Honest John.

This week we’ll be reading and translating a piece by the 1930s Jewish writer Kurt Tucholsky. *Der Mensch* (Human Beings) is a darkly hilarious prose piece. It’s hard enough sometimes to understand humour in one’s own language. It gets much trickier when trying to ‘get it’ in a foreign one. I’m confident, though, that members will succeed and that a good time will be had by all.

Alles Gute

Andy

## Golf for Fun

The new season has begun (1st May). Do join us. We can arrange clubs and tuition.

We play regularly, weather permitting, at 10 am Mondays and 1.50 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

Six of us met in Todmorden to catch the T8 bus up to the Shepherd’s Rest at Lumbutts. From here we followed the gentle uphill climb to Rake End, the Pennine Bridleway down to Bottomley, then the Rochdale Canal to Walsden where we caught the T8 back to Todmorden. A picturesque 3 mile walk in the best of weather.



Figure 6: Golf for Fun

The next IWG walk is on May 19th, group members will have already received information.

## Let's Go

We had a lovely trip to Saltaire on Thursday 28th April on a bright sunny day.

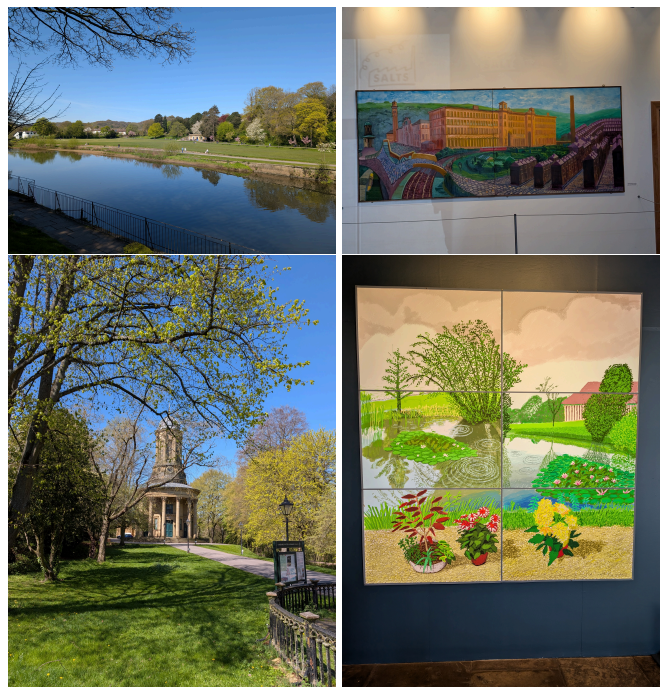


Figure 7: Let's Go to Saltaire

Some of us walked along the canal, and in Roberts Park, as well as visiting the three stories of Salts Mill itself. There were lots of David Hockney paintings along with shops and cafes. Some photos are in Figure ??.

## **Local History**

There was no meeting scheduled for May. On Monday 1st June we are looking forward to a talk from Iain Bowden on '250 Years of Hare Hill House, Littleborough', which will cover the history of the house from the purchase of the land in 1774 until the present day, telling the story of the four generations of the Newall family who lived there, detailing their lives and accomplishments. It will also cover the house's occupation by Littleborough Urban District Council up to the modern day. This talk will be opened to other related groups and will take place in the Stoodley room at Tod College. As usual we will charge for room-hire at £2 per head plus an extra £1 for optional refreshments. If you're interested in joining our group please feel free to drop by, or contact Jim Botten at jroyd33@gmail.com or by telephone on 01422 844987

## **Lunch Club**

The April Lunch Club meeting was held at The White House on the 21st of the month. The next lunch will be at the Ram Inn, Cliviger, on 19 May. Anyone who is interested in receiving further information about the Lunch Club should contact denisetyas@me.com.

## **Mah Jong**

Some starry moments in this session. Fiona achieved the Three Great Scholars (not actually Difficult, but gratifyingly Rare); Brenda was very pleased with her Unique Wonder, and Sian, a week later, came in with two consecutive All Honours hands.

Occasionally, games will go down to the thrilling drama of the last tile in the wall. Alas! more often than not the last tile will not be one that a player who wants 'One For Mah Jong' actually needs. And occasionally all players will be in that position simultaneously. This happened recently when Sian wanted one for All Honours, Ant one for a Unique Wonder and Emily one for All Ones and Nines. We were all able to commiserate with each other.

The Hare and Hounds in Todmorden continue to be welcoming hosts, and we meet there every Wednesday between 2.15 and 4.15. Please contact Emily Watnick - emilywatnick@gmail.com - if you are interested in joining us, but we are afraid that for the moment we will have to place you on a waiting list.

## **Modern Greek**

Modern Greek is now having its summer break. There may be some ad hoc sessions.

## **Online Zoom Talks**

Our speaker in April, Tony Kay, was unwell and so our May speaker, David Tordoff, stepped into the breach and delivered a fascinating talk on the 'Science of Sleep' and a recording is available if anyone wants to see it. That meant that the June speaker, Jean Jackson, has moved to May the 14th and she gave a talk on John Singer Sargent entitled 'Last of the Old Masters?' It is hoped that Tony Kay has recovered his health and will be able to give his talk 'One Hit Wonders' on June the 11th. This will be the last in the current programme. If you are not on the group list and wish to attend the talks contact the organiser, Michael Astrop on mwastrop@gmail.com.



Figure 8: Online Zoom Talks

## Philosophy

The philosophy group met on Monday May 11<sup>th</sup> when existentialism formed the basis of the discussion. The next meeting is scheduled for June 8<sup>th</sup> at 10.15 am at Roomfield Baptist Church when the purpose of philosophy will be discussed.

## Pickleball

Our group continues to thrive. We have a mixture of players of all skill levels, and new players who've joined us recently.

If you enjoy racquet sports and fancy giving pickleball a go, why not get in touch?

## Practical Art

At our last session of Practical Art we got to grips with the rules of Perspective. We made the whole thing a little easier to understand by using cardboard boxes of different heights and sizes and drawing them in lines. We were also helped by printed handouts which enabled us to understand the rules of Perspective.

This coming Friday we hope to put that knowledge into practise by drawing or painting street scenes in a more creative and imaginative way.

## Psychology

### *Memory, Identity and the Fear of Dementia*

At this month's Psychology Group meeting, we had a thoughtful and wide-ranging discussion on Memory, Identity and the Fear of Dementia. Drawing on both professional experience in social and community work and personal family experiences, the session explored how attitudes towards dementia and memory loss have changed over time, how different forms of dementia affect thinking and communication and the psychological impact of ageing, uncertainty, identity, and stigma. The discussion also touched on current research into 'cognitive enrichment' and lifelong learning, suggesting that mental stimulation, learning and social engagement may help support brain health and delay cognitive decline. Alongside the medical and social aspects, the session encouraged reflection on dignity, care, fear, resilience, and the ways individuals and society respond to memory change in later life.

Looking ahead, our next meeting will take place on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June. The Psychology Group meets monthly on the second Thursday from 12 noon to 1:30 pm at Honest John's, Todmorden.

## **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 had a special meeting to review the recent Artemis II NASA Moon mission. This stimulated some interesting discussions on many aspects of the mission, and the longer term aims of the NASA Artemis programme.

Our next meeting will be a trip to Brearley fields as a follow-on from our earlier study of flood plain meadows.

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

## **Scrabble**

The Scrabble Group continues to meet on the first and third Mondays of every month (regardless of Bank Holidays) 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**

Senior Moments Concert Party is a slightly unusual U3A group, which supports the local community by giving acoustic performances of about an hour for care homes, groups, fund raisers etc. and enjoy the opportunity, where possible, to chat with the audience afterwards over a cup of tea.

We are most definitely not a choir, but hark back more to Gang Shows and "end-of-the-pier" entertainment, giving a light-hearted look back to the popular songs and musicals from the 50s, 60s and 70s, and normally include the odd sketch, clog dance, theme tune etc.

Senior Moments started off its 2026 programme last week with visits to the Tod. Knit-and-Natter Group and Rossendale Hospice.

We normally meet on Tuesday afternoons from 2-4pm at the Fire Station Community Room in Todmorden. Anyone who would like to come and find out more about us would be made most welcome.

## **Social History**

We met in April to discuss the James Walvin autobiography. We are continuing in May with chapter about his mother and how she brought the family up. We meet at the Methodist church in Todmorden on May 22, a Friday, at 10 15 am. All are welcome.

## **Strollers**

No news of a new convenor coming forward.

## Table Tennis and Badminton

We meet on Monday afternoons, term time only, at Todmorden Leisure Centre's upstairs sports hall, from 3-5 pm. New members for either activity will be welcome.

## Walking Cricket

The group have now moved outside for our sessions and these are taking place on Thursday afternoons at Todmorden Cricket Club



Figure 9: The group in action at Todmorden Cricket Club.

In the coming months we have games planned against Sandbach / Oldham / Burnley / Wakefield and Epsom plus Ed are taking part in a number of major walking cricket events. Anyone who wants to join the group, please contact me on [andrew3967@googlemail.com](mailto:andrew3967@googlemail.com).

## Walking

For our April Walk we met at the bus station in Todmorden and took the Burnley bus to Cornholme. From there we took a winding path up the hill to briefly join Tower Causeway. We then branched off towards Height Top Farm and crossed the moor to the hamlet of Sourhall. After a short way down Parkin Lane we crossed fields full of sheep and lambs to Stones House and then descended steeply to the bottom of Bacup Rd. walking back to Todmorden via the canal towpath. It was a shame that the sun didn't shine on us especially after the previous lovely weather, but we did manage to find a sheltered spot for lunch on the way down to the bottom of Bacup Road.

## World Film

This 6 film season began with a British film, followed by a Chinese film and then a Spanish film.

Our next film will be a French/German language film. Details of times/dates can be found on the U3A website.