

u3a Todmorden Groups Report

June 2026

Art Appreciation

Seven of our members gave illustrated talks on forgotten women artists, including Lavinia Fontana, Gwen John and Leonora Carrington and covering periods from 1514 to 1949. Their places of birth ranged from Italy, Belgium, Wales, America, England and India. The presentations prompted discussion and was widely enjoyed.

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, 2nd July, 2.00-4.00, when our speaker will be Dr Sarah Williams on “Art Activist Barbie”.

Art Club

Art Club does not provide tuition but does offer 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 water-colour and water soluble oils.

Periodically one of the group might give a short presentation on a favourite topic, mostly recently on tackling skies and, 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 “Deep or in deep”.

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 24th of June. 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

At the third meeting of this group, we reviewed how two AI services (Claude and ChatGPT) handled two tasks: producing a PowerPoint presentation from a Wikipedia article, and developing a travel itinerary. Both results were impressive, but appeared to be resource consuming. We also had a brief look at the inner workings of algorithms that search a graph, as in route-finding. New members will be welcome at our next meeting at our regular slot of 1:00 pm on the second Monday (August excepted) in Tod College.

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. Our latest session saw eight attendees very much enjoying games of Qwirkle

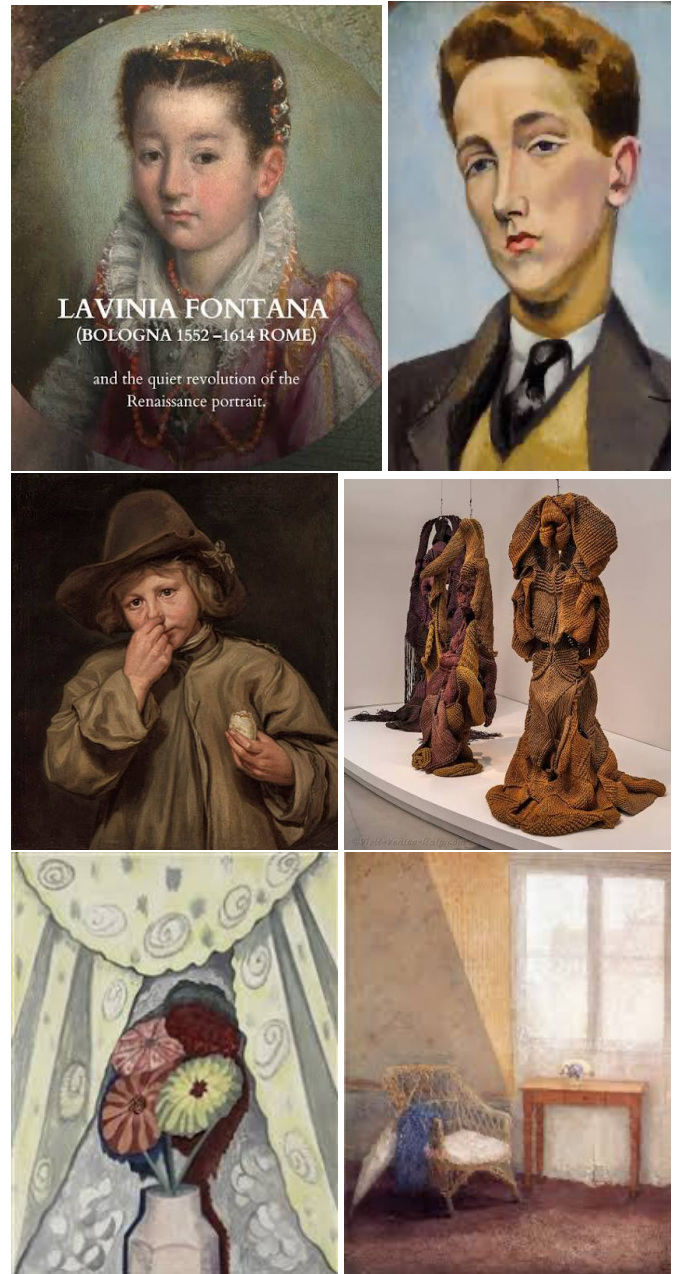


Figure 1: Art Appreciation: forgotten women artists



Figure 2: Art Club

and Splendor, accompanied by free hot drinks and cold biscuits. If you think you might be interested in exercising your brain-cells in different ways of thinking while also having fun, you don't need to know any of the rules to join in, and you can always drop by when we're meeting, or else contact the convenor in advance, Jim Botten at jroyd33@gmail.co or telephone on 01422 844987.

Book Group

In June we discussed *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai. It was a Man Booker Prize winner and her second novel. It covered many themes, including the after-effects of colonialism and partition, tensions between different ethnicities, casts and classes in northern India, and migrant working in New York. All enjoyed the book, the quality of writing and the ambitiousness of the themes covered, opinions differed on the structure and overarching story arc. One observation was that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. The moving and somewhat unresolved conclusion to the story was considered apt.

Beginners' Bridge

We have continued to meet on Tuesday afternoons at the Hare & Hounds 2pm - 4pm and the group continues to move in a forward direction learning new skills as we go.

If anyone wants to come and try bridge please contact me on - andrew3967@googlemail.com

Canasta

Two more sessions playing Canasta this month – welcome to Elaine a new comer to the Group who soon got the hang of the game and was in the lead until the very last game of the afternoon – well done Elaine.

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 22nd June and Tuesday 14th July at the Hare & Hounds 2.00– 4.15pm

Coffee Club

When we met at Honest John's on 1/6/26 we chatted, as usual, on various issues of both general and local interest. Unusually for us we spent very little time on national and international news on that occasion preferring instead to concentrate on more local issues.

At one stage we discussed areas where being older or in less than perfect health could have a detrimental, and possibly isolating, effect on people. Public awareness of most issues had increased and locally several organizations had been created to alleviate some of these.

By coincidence all of us wore spectacles and had, at one time or another, experienced difficulties reading such things as menus when dining out. A useful suggestion was to ask all restaurants / cafes to have available some copies of their menus in large print.

Within our relatively small group we also discovered that there were wide variations in our understanding and competence in the area of mobile telephones and the internet. This resulted in a suggestion that a short local u3a course might be set up to assist in addressing this knowledge gap.

Our next get together will again take place at Honest John's on Monday 6 July 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 – six of us chose to do so at the June meeting. Future dates will be published in the monthly Groups Reports.

Craft Club

On May 29th the Club members explored 'drawing' on scrap- paper board of various types to produce images that could be used in card or box making as well as being framed for display. The topic was met with trepidation by some members who immediately said, "I can't draw". The use of various types of stencil and shapes soon dispelled this worry, and everyone went home with a useful and attractive 'drawing'. To continue to experiment with the craft extra materials were taken home by members including those who 'can't draw'.

When we arrived at Fielden Hall on June 12th for our meeting we were delighted to see that the u3a Todmorden 10th anniversary textile had been hung on the wall. It had been stored in various places since it was taken down from the wall in Central Methodists when u3a's monthly meeting

was relocated to Todmorden College. This included several months in the home of one of u3a's members whilst major building work was carried out at Fielden Hall. Thank you, Barbara. We intend to locate or if necessary, recreate the descriptive sheets that previously accompanied it. Seeing it again reminded us of the friends who are no longer with us having either died, moved away or left u3a.

The session on June 12th produced cards decorated with dried/pressed flowers, leaves etc. Some of the most striking used 'wildflowers'. As usual members found many different ways to use the flowers etc on a range of cards of different sizes, shapes and designs

The topics for our next two sessions will be:

26th June Painting a Mandala for a Window Decoration

10th July Not yet decided. Please check with the convenor.

If you are interested in possibly joining Craft Club, please come along to a session to meet the members, have a coffee/tea and see what we do.



Creative Writing

The Creative Writing Group held another productive and fun filled session on Thursday 11th June, with the themes for June being: - "Flaming" (or Burning) and/or "Democracy"

The pieces read out were mainly on the theme of Flaming and, to name but a few, included questioning the weather, a story of a burning cottage, being flaming mad and a thought provoking piece about climate change and possible problems in the future.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday June 25th at 2.00pm

The group has recently welcomed two new members but if anyone is interested in joining the group please contact us for details.

Barbara Griffiths Co-convenor Creative Writing Group

Enjoyment of Wine

The enjoyment of wine group continues to meet regularly, the first Saturday evening each month online which means nobody has to drive home. On the third Friday monthly the group holds a social meeting in Tod College at 1:30pm. At the last social we enjoyed a blind tasting of 6 very different wines and one alcohol free wine, members taking home the remaining wine. We understand that one, that many of us found too sweet was destined for a trifle. In early June the online meeting tried summer reds, wines lighter in tannin with a bit of acidity brightened our pallets as Michael's short presentation informed us. After flowery whites last month we are now ready to enjoy summer.

The group has places available for new members so why not contact Bob or Michael and join in a meeting, whilst we do sip, we certainly don't bite.

English Language and Linguistics

This new group had its second meeting on the 19th May in Todmorden College. We looked at aspects of written language, mostly but not exclusively English, in relation to changing usage of capital letters. For the next meeting, on the 16th June at 2:00 pm in Tod College, we'll be looking at the origin of language. New members will be welcome.



Figure 3: Craft Club

First Tuesday Readers' Group

The group discussed *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* by Eimar McBride, an award-winning debut novel written from beginning to end in the first person and in ungrammatical sentences that evoked an idea of the language of inner thoughts. The protagonist's life was overshadowed by a brother with special needs who dies towards the end, but also by sexual abuse. Reactions ranged from rapturous appreciation of the writing to extreme dislike of both plot and style.

French Improvers

I would like to share some progress & humour which made me smile recently: on our informal WhatsApp group chat, a couple of the members let me know they would be attending our French session, by putting into practise some of the new phrases we have come across: Paul 'J'ai envie de parler le francais cet apres-midi!' to which Mike responded 'Attend, laisse moi réfléchir.. En fait, je crois que tu as raison Paul'. Trop bien! By jove, I think we are getting there! PS Next session July 13th. Convenor will be in France in 2 weeks time. Radfordgill23@gmail.com

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

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. We have room for new members - please contact Barbara - barbarawigley@btinternet.com if you are interested.

Our meeting on Tuesday 9th June at Honest Johns was a continuation of the May meeting when we discussed "Accidents, Incidents and News Reports" we have discovered in our family - We all had something something newsworthy to report about our ancestors and bemoaned the fact that today's local newspapers don't cover "local news", births, deaths and marriages etc - a sad loss for the genealogists of the future!

Our next meeting will be at Todmorden Library 10 - 12 noon on Tuesday 23rd June followed by the meeting at Honest Johns 10.30 -12.00 noon on Tuesday 14th July when we will be looking at Occupations of our ancestors.

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



Figure 4: 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. Our web page is https://u3atod.org.uk/u3a_groups/golf-for-fun/.

Intermediate Walking

The IWG walk planned for Tuesday June 16th is cancelled as no one is available to lead it. Group members have been informed.

The walk planned for Tuesday July 21st should go ahead and I will send out details to group members in early July.

Let's Go

The trip to Nostell Priory (National Trust) on May 27th was enjoyed by all the members present and thankfully the very hot weather of the previous few days was tempered by a slight breeze which made it more enjoyable.



Figure 5: Nostell Priory and grounds

Many members enjoyed walking around the lake and grounds as well as visiting the house and the wonderful interior. It was also lovely to enjoy lunch in the Courtyard. Our next trip is to Scarborough on June 24th, and there will not be a trip in July. The August trip will be to the Southport Flower Show - or just Southport depending on what people prefer.

Local History

The June session of the Local History Group took place on Monday 1st, and featured a talk by Iain Bowden, a volunteer at Hare Hill House in Littleborough, on the 250-year history of the building and of the interesting family that occupied it for most of that time. Though a little "out of area" for Tod U3A the talk was fascinating and very well-received and will likely have inspired some of us to make a visit in due course. Our next meeting will take place on 3rd August, and will feature another guest-speaker, our very own Alan Fowler, who will be helping us to remember 'The Forgotten Heroes of Todmorden and Bolton'. If you're in-



Figure 6: Nostell Priory interiors

terested in taking part in our group feel free to drop by, or contact Jim Botten at jroyd33@gmail.com or by telephone on 01422 844987

Lunch Club

On 19 May Lunch Club members travelled further afield to the Ram Inn in Cliviger. Under new management we enjoyed some traditional pub food. Anyone interested in receiving further information about the Lunch Club should contact denisetyas@me.com

Mah Jong

Two really good hands this month, and several near misses. So well done John (Mixed Pungs) and Sian (Run, Pung and a Pair).

All our recent beginners are fully fledged and are starting to expand their repertoire of special hands. Please contact Emily Watnick - emilywatnick@gmail.com - if you are interested in joining us, but please note that we are currently oversubscribed and that we will have therefore to place you on a waiting list.

We continue to meet at the Hare and Hounds in Todmorden every Wednesday between 2.15 and 4.15.

Modern Greek

GREEK is closed for the summer but we have a translation session on 21st July.

Online Zoom Talks

On Thursday the 11th June 27 members of the group enjoyed a fascinating talk by Jean Jackson entitled 'What Can AI do For Me'.



Figure 7: Online Zoom Talk: What Can AI do For Me

As well as discussing the pros and cons of the technology Jean was keen to show how it can help those of us with visual, hearing or any physical impairments. If anyone who is not members of the group would like to see the talk do let Michael Astrop (vice.chair@uzatod.org.uk) know and he will send you a link to the recording.

This was the last talk in this series and the autumn/winter programme will start in September.

Philosophy

Our last meeting discussed the nature of philosophy. Our next meeting is at 10.15 am at Roomfield Baptist Church on July 13th when we will be discussing reality. Numbers have increased recently but there is space for more attendees. Refreshments are provided.

Photography

The Photo group has been pretty active in the last couple of months with photo trips to the Avro aircraft museum, April Bank holiday week in Thompson Park Burnley and a visit to the annual Yorkshire Photographic Union exhibition.

During this period a number of members were on holiday so as well as the monthly topics of “Ice”, “Going for a walk) and “Rust and Angle(s)” members brought images from their holiday or day trips to our regular at meetings at Fielden Hall. We held our Annual Exhibition during April in Todmorden Tourist Information Centre where we displayed over 60 mounted images. Each member was given the option to put up to 5 images, these are not subject to selection and are there to show the capabilities of each member of the Group.

Planning is well underway for our Autumn Challenge where the Group are given a list of 15 topics and the challenge is to submit 1 digital image to each topic in our January meeting. Some of the topics are easy, others need some thinking about and the odd one needs a lot of thinking about which is a real challenge.



Figure 8: Photography - images from flower show and aircraft museum

Pickleball

The group is still thriving, we’re all getting fitter and more proficient as time goes by!

A very friendly and sociable group.

Our last session before the school holidays will be Tuesday 14 July, then we will resume Tuesday 8th September.

We meet in the Sports Hall at Tod Sports Centre every Tuesday in term time. 10am to 11am. Paddles and balls provided.

You just need to wear suitable indoor sports shoes and comfortable clothing.

Contact me if you’re interested.

Andrea Ransom, Group Convenor

Practical Art

As we have had a number of new members join our group over the past year, we decided to go back to basics for a couple of classes on simple perspective. Although more of a question of geometry than fine art most of the class took it on board. A video helped plus some hand-outs and the use of some strategically placed plain cardboard boxes to illustrate the main rules of perspective. For our most recent class we returned to a subject which had more scope for self expression and use of a variety of media. The subject ‘A Corner of my Garden’ also felt topical considering the season of the year.

Corinne Roberts and Wendy Coates (joint Convenors).

Psychology

The room at Honest John’s was full capacity yesterday for our meeting on ‘The Nocebo Effect - the Evil Twin of Placebo’. We were looking at extracts from a very recent

book by Helen Pilcher 'This Book May Cause Side Effects; Why Our Minds Are Making us Sick'. This book sets out the many ways, sneaky and otherwise, that our brains can receive negative information which affects our health, sometimes long-term. The Nocebo Effect is difficult to shake off, but we can re-programme ourselves, once we are aware. We all need to stay away from Doctor Google and TikTok!

Sorry, we can not accept any new members for this group.

Quiz

The May quiz group meeting took place as usual on the 4th Thursday of the month (the 28th) with 14 members attending. Barbara set a fascinating quiz with questions based on events in each month in the year.

Science

The group meets online twice a month, from 10:00 am to 11:30 am, on the second and fourth Wednesday mornings.

In recent sessions, we have been exploring Professor Jim Al-Khalili's Secrets of the Brain BBC series, available on iPlayer, along with related topics concerning the human brain, including the use of Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI).

Our next topic will be solar power.

We are planning a visit to the Calderdale Industrial Museum on Saturday 13th June, where we will have the opportunity to see two of their historic steam engines in operation.

For further information about the group, please contact the convenors: John Readle (john@readle.org.uk) or Jack Horner (marktahorner@gmail.com).

Scrabble

Due to "unforeseen circumstances" the Scrabble meeting on the 1st of June had to relocate at short notice, finding a welcoming temporary home at the "Morning Glory" cafe, where quality coffee and good cake then accompanied the usual routines of cheerful word-play. Normal service should be resume for our meeting on the 15th. 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

Senior Moments Concert Party visited Roomfield House on 2nd June, where we were pleased to welcome friends from the Monday exercise class as well as residents.

We will continue with the 2026 programme at Waterside Lodge on 30th June, and are also planning a visit to a "Boogie Bingo" session at Ridgefoot.

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.

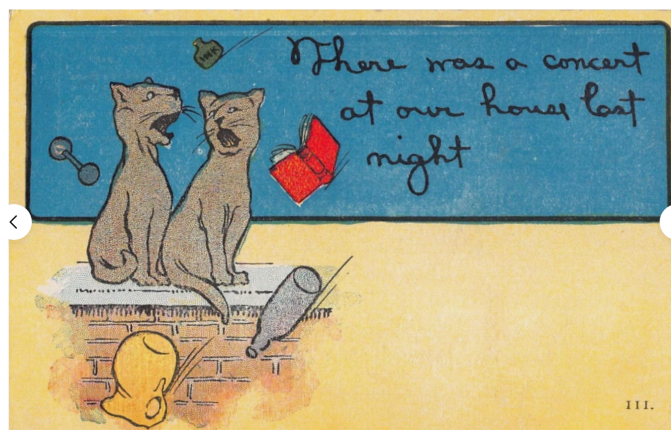


Figure 9: Senior Moments Concert Party

Social History

The group met in May to continue our discussion of the autobiography of James Walvin reading the chapter about his mother who was the main earner after father was diagnosed with TB. We will continue the discussion of this chapter at our next meeting on June 19 at the Todmorden Methodist church at 10 15am. New members welcome.

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 been meeting outdoors at TCC over the past number of weeks and last week we were due to play our first summer game away at Sandbach but the great British weather intervened so we are planning that game for later in the summer, but we are hoping the weather is better as we have a game against Oldham on Wednesday 24th June in Oldham.

Anyone who wants to join the group, please contact me on andrew3967@googlemail.com.

Walking

The group's May walk was around the lower end of Cragg Vale. In spite of the weather, in this case unremitting sunshine and temperatures in the thirties, nine old and new members turned up. Leaving Mytholmroyd, past peacocks and a deer enjoying a buttercup meadow, there was the statutory steep climb out of the valley, then a contour walk along the top of the vertical cliffs of Scout quarry, appreciating the view from the Millenium beacon, and so into Hollin Hey Wood to enjoy a lunch under the trees. Dropping down to cross Cragg brook at Spa/Spaw bridge, the track beside the brook took us back towards the start, the hot dry weather meaning it was far less boggy than normal. We all made it back to Mytholmroyd just in time for a bus for those returning towards Todmorden.

World Film

The last film of our current season, an Italian film, will be shown on Friday 26 June.

After that we break for the summer and will return in September. Dates will be available on the U3A website and the new programme will be circulated to all film group members in advance.