

u3a Todmorden Groups Report

July 2026

Alfresco History and Archaeology

There has not been a trip in the last month. I hope to have one arranged for September.

Art Appreciation History

The Art Appreciation group's July meeting featured ArtActivistBarbie and was presented by Dr Sarah Williamson.



Figure 1: Art Appreciation History: ArtActivistBarbie

We were entertained and educated by Sarah's disruptive and subversive activism with a feast of photographs and behind the scenes stories, as Barbie explores 'good activism' for social justice through gallery and museum art collections. Lively discussion followed and heartfelt thanks for a very entertaining afternoon were extended to Sarah by all.

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 current 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 22nd of July.

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

A small number of us met in July, and reviewed a variety of tasks that we have obtained help with from AI-enabled services. We also looked at 'bigram language models' and Google Books N-Gram Viewer. There will not be a meeting in August, and on September 14th at 1pm in Tod College, we'll be looking at the use of AI to create and amend images.

Beginners' Bridge

We have continued to meet on a Tuesday afternoon at the Hare & Hounds on Burnley Road and the group are improving on a weekly basis.

Any one wishing to join the walking cricket or beginners bridge group, please contact me on my email - andrew3967@googlemail.com.

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. We play a range of "modern" board and card-games, but you don't need to know anything about them in advance in order to enjoy them (with the incentive of free refreshments and no room-hire charge). If you think you might be interested in exercising your brain-cells in different ways of thinking while also having fun, 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.

Canasta

Another two enjoyable sessions this month with three tables of 4 playing on the Monday and two x four and a three on the Tuesday.

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 27th July and Tuesday 11th August at the Hare & Hounds 2.00- 4.15pm.

Coffee Club

Coffee Club did not meet this month due to circumstances beyond the convenor's control.



Figure 2: Craft Club

Craft Club

On June 25th the members spent a relaxing session starting to work on large mandalas which when completed could be attached to a window, glass door or mirror. They were then completed at home.



Figure 3: Craft Club - mandala, wreath

When we arrived for the session on July 10th we were met with a large number of wreaths in various sizes, a variety of materials and styles. In addition, there were two large tables covered with piles of items that could be used to make our own wreaths. After some brief instructions the remainder of the session was spent deciding what to make and gathering the items needed before starting in our chosen design.



Figure 4: Craft Club - wreaths

It will be a return to basics for the session on July 24th. We shall be looking at weaving without a commercial loom. It will be mainly Tapestry weaving (not stitching on canvas which is often called tapestry) but may include other methods of working without a loom as such. This session will be followed later by others on weaving.

Again, on August 7th we shall be learning a new technique which will be developed in a later session. This time it will be canvas work

There is currently space for a few more members to join the group. Members of the group have a wide range of skills and interests but none are experts in all of the things we do or have tried out everything we do. We are all learning all of the time and get support from each other. If you are interested to find out more please come along to meet the group and see what we do. You can just turn up at a session or to possibly get more from the visit let the convenor know of your interest in advance.

Creative Writing

Our last meeting in June was affected by the weather conditions - very hot weather. A far better turnout for the first meeting of July, with the theme of 'Rag and Bone'. There was a piece of writing to describe the feelings of the horse pulling the cart along, and a quiz to test memories of the well known TV series about rag and bone men over sixty years ago. We also enjoyed a piece of writing about where we live, all the way from America, from the grandson of one of our members. We look forward to our second meeting on the 23rd of July and, in the meantime, welcoming any potential new members.

Enjoyment of Wine

This sociable group continue to meet twice monthly, once on the first Saturday in the month online when nobody has to drive home and in person on, usually, the third Friday in the month at Tod College. Members buy choose and buy their own wine to a theme decided amongst the members. We are currently working through the alphabet with wines and regions/countries. It was appropriate on our 4th July

meeting to celebrate American wine. The next meeting will be on Friday 24th July, 1:30pm at Tod College to try wines beginning or from 'B' If you would like to join in please contact Bob or Michael or come along on the day

First Tuesday Readers' Group

Too many of us were away to meet on the first Tuesday of July, so we will postpone our discussion of *The Names* by Florence Knapp until the 4th of August.

NEW Floor Curling

We have been fortunate to obtain a grant from Active Calderdale that has enabled us to buy equipment for Floor Curling, and hope to start this as a group activity in September. We'll be meeting in Todmorden Leisure Centre.

To register your interest, please email Bill Black, Groups Coordinator using groups@u3atod.org.uk

French Improvers

French Improvers have one more session on July 27th before we take our summer break. We meet again on Monday 28th September, at Todmorden College in the Pex Tenement room from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. All current and new members are welcome. We tend to focus on Speaking and Listening skills and Reading too, especially when reading subtitles on the French video clips. However, I do not emphasise Writing skills simply because I do not want to spend hours correcting mistakes! 35 years of doing just that was quite enough. We are a very sociable group and enjoy chatting to each other in French as much as we can, as well as absorbing new approaches to learning.

Amitié

Gill.

Gardening

The Gardening Group Members continue to visit each others' gardens, to admire, swap 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 just once a month on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Honest John's 10.30 – 12 noon when we pick a topic to discuss some aspect of genealogy. We have currently suspended our meetings at Todmorden Library when we did research, due to poor attendance, but are willing to meet up in the library by arrangement to help anyone with any aspect of family tree research they need help with. 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 – barawigley@btinternet.com if you are interested.

Our meeting on Tuesday 14th July at Honest Johns was to look at the Occupations our ancestors had and in particular those occupations which are no longer relevant to modern

living. We had a quiz on occupations sometimes found on old census records and now all know what a Cordwainer did (a shoemaker), a Beaver (made felt for hat making) and who a Caffler was (a rag and bone man). As well as learning about a Sagger Makers Bottom Knocker who famously appeared on the BBC programme *Whats My Line* in the 1950s and early 60s.

Our next meeting at Honest Johns 10.30 -12.00 noon will be on Tuesday 11th August when we will be looking at how we all store our findings – some prefer paper copies, others keep everything on line. Others are amassing information and are looking for the best way of keeping it. We all want to discuss how best to interest the next generation in their ancestors so all our efforts don't go to waste!

Intermediate Walking

The June walk was cancelled. Members have been circulated details of a walk to take place on 21st July.

Let's Go

Let's Go went to Scarborough on June 24th on a bright sunny day and thoroughly enjoyed our day at the seaside. Lunch, ice cream and a stroll on the prom - happy days!

Our next trip is to Southport Flower Show on Friday August 21st.

Linguistics and English Language

In July, we continued on the theme of the origin of human language. We'll be skipping August and meeting on the 15th of September, when the topic will be language varieties that some consider to be languages in their own right, with American English and Shetlandic as examples.

Local History

Our next meeting will take place on 3rd August in the Pex Tenement room at Tod College, starting at 10:30, and will feature a talk by our own Alan Fowler on 'The Forgotten heroes of Todmorden and Bolton', contrasting the lives of two trade union officials, Jack Tout of Todmorden, Labour MP for the Calder Valley in 1929, along with the war-time experiences of Alice Foley of Bolton. There will be a £2 per head charge to cover room-hire, with refreshments available for a further £1, and the talk will be open to the members of our other Todmorden U3A local-history groups (Social History and the Alfresco group). For more information, or if you are interested in joining our research group please contact Jim Botten at jroyd33@gmail.com or by telephone on 01422 844987

Lunch Club

The most recent Lunch Club meeting was a return to an old favourite - the Robin Hood Inn at Pecket Well. Once again we were favoured with good weather so were able to make the most of the drive up there and the beautiful setting as well as enjoying excellent food and good company. Anyone interested in being added to the Lunch Club list should contact denisetyas@me.com

Mah Jong

A quiet month, though Emily achieved a Green Jade (one of those pleasingly rare hands which isn't so much difficult as attainable if you spot the opportunity with your opening tiles – which she did).

Sian claimed – quite fairly – bragging rights for a final hand that was an All Honours one but which scored highly enough for her to trounce the opposition at the final fence.

Two new members have joined us recently, Helen and Nic l'Anson. They are very welcome. They have played before in Hong Kong observing Hong Kong rules which are not significantly different to those we play by. The exception is chiefly in the 50+ Special Hands that we allow whereas in Hong Kong there were only 13. The British Mah Jong Association (BMJA) recognizes 19 for competitive play under BMJA rules. These include two which we do not recognize but which have wonderful names: 'Gathering the Plum Blossom from the Roof' and 'Plucking the Moon from the Bottom of the Sea'. Ah! – the romance of it!

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

This group is taking a summer break at the moment.

MOTO

We are planning to re-launch this group following enquiries from members. Anyone interested, please contact the Groups Co-ordinator, Bill Black, using the email address groups@u3atod.org.uk.

Pickleball

Pickleball has had its last session before the school holidays when the sports hall is not available. We re-start in September.

Poetry Group 2

This new group will be meeting in the Honest John

Practical Art

For our last 2 sessions we have chosen to work around the subject of 'Water'. It is purposely intended to be a broad topic to enable class members to interpret it as they wish. It also gives the opportunity to use a variety of media and not necessarily the obvious one of water-colour. For our last session next Friday before the summer break, we will be sketching out of doors in a class members garden before going for lunch at Riggs.

Psychology

Childhood in the Digital Age At our July meeting, members of the Psychology Group explored the question: Does social



Figure 5: Images from Let's Go trip to Scarborough

media help or harm young minds? Drawing on psychological theories of identity, social comparison and adolescent brain development, the discussion considered how social media influences children's relationships, self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. We reflected on the unique challenges facing today's young people, the role of parents and society, and whether proposed restrictions on social media for under-16s might help protect developing minds. As always, the session prompted a thoughtful exchange of ideas, with members bringing a wide range of personal experiences and perspectives to the discussion. The Psychology Group meets monthly on the second Thursday from 12 noon to 1:30 pm at Honest John's, Todmorden. Please note that we have now reached full capacity for the group and are unable to accept new members at present.

Quiz

The quiz group met as usual on the 4th Thursday of the month and we had a very good turnout for my questions!

The next meeting will again be on the 4th Thursday in July (the 23rd), 10:15 am at Tod Methodists.

Science

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

In the last two meetings, we have been discussing solar power, both solar thermal and solar photovoltaics (PV). Solar PV in particular is becoming one of the world's dominant sources of low carbon electricity and this triggered some very interesting discussion.

For the quieter summer meetings we will be viewing and discussing some iPlayer science documentaries.

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

Scrabble

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. We've recently had a couple of new faces join us but are keen to welcome more. So if you'd like to exercise your word-power in convivial company, 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

Many thanks to Bill Black for setting up a dedicated email address for the group to use for publicity outside the U3A. We can now send out booking forms and posters without giving out our personal information.

In the last couple of weeks we have given an hour's performance at Waterside Lodge and had a great time at the Boogie Bingo at Ridgefoot.

Social History

The group continues to read James Walvin account of growing up in Failsworth next meeting July 17 at Todmorden Methodist church at 10 15 am when we will look at his chapter on education. All are welcome.

Table Tennis and Badminton

Taking a break until September.

The Book Group

July's book 'Small Things Like These' was well received by the group. The story, set in 1980's Ireland, looks at one man's response to finding child abuse at the local convent, inspired by the decades-long scandals of the Magdalene Laundries.

The writer Claire Keegan is well known for her spare, concise writing which embeds the reader in the social fabric of a small community impacted by unemployment, emigration, poverty and the control of the church. As the central character is faced with the dilemma of putting his family and business first or rescuing one young woman from the convent, he reflects on his own impoverished upbringing and life choices.

Group discussion centred on how someone makes a moral choice in the face of authoritarian control of a population, at the jeopardy of family and against the social norms of the time. Many in the group had personal experience of relevant historic family and community secrets and hypocrisy.

Walking Cricket

The walking cricket group took part in the York U3A festival over the 1st - 3rd July. On Thursday 2nd the walking cricket group took part in the walking cricket tournament, having been drawn in the toughest of the two groups (Wakefield/Rotherham and Leeds) the first game was against Wakefield and we suffered a defeat, game two was against Leeds and we won and due to time restrictions we were given a draw against Rotherham. Overall it was a great team effort in difficult conditions (especially the high winds) the the tigers played the event in true U3A spirit and with smiles on their faces from start to finish.

The group will be playing a touring team from Epsom on Wednesday 29th July in Wakefield

Walking

Sixteen of us got a beautiful day for our June walk, setting off from Burnley Road, Todmorden up Stoney Royd Lane. We passed behind Harley Wood, past the old Robinwood Activity Centre, up Knotts Road, past Bluebell Lane and across Bridestones Moor where we had a refreshment stop by the Trig Point. It was 'all downhill from there' through Hole Bottom and into the centre of Tod. It turns out I lied as I'd told the group it was 5.06 miles, but I recorded it on my OS app, and learned afterwards that it said 5.77 miles - oops!

World Cinema

The group is *en vacances* until September.



Figure 6: Walking Cricket group at the u3a Festival.



Figure 7: Walking Group on Bridestones Moor