

u3a Todmorden Groups Report

August 2026

Alfresco History and Archaeology

There have been no trips recently, but we hope to re-start the programme soon.

Art Appreciation History

For our August meeting we visited the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester to see 'Beneath the Great Wave - how two Japanese masters reinvented art' The exhibition features rare traditional Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock prints and paintings by legendary Edo-period artists Katsushika Hokusai and Utagawa Hiroshige. They are displayed alongside key artworks tracing how landscape printing and also the use of the new pigment Prussian Blue revolutionised Japanese art. It was amazing to see Hokusai's



Figure 1: Hokusai's Under the Wave off Kanagawa

iconic Under the Wave off Kanagawa (known globally as The Great Wave) in reality. It's one of the few artworks to have inspired emojis! Here are a few of our other

favourites. We meet or visit an exhibition on the first Thursday afternoon of every month. Upcoming on 3rd September is a film and talk about Velasquez and his contemporaries. If you'd like more information about the group, please contact us:- lindabrill@gmail.com Jennypatterson@blueyonder.co.uk

Artificial Intelligence

On September 14th at 1pm in Tod College, we'll be looking at the use of AI to interpret, create and amend images.

Beginners' Bridge

The Beginners Bridge group continues to thrive with 20 or so members coming to play, giving four to five playing tables. New Bridge skills and plays are shared at the beginning of some sessions, but the emphasis is on playing four to six hands. Members pay a pound for each session and this enables us to buy green baize tops for the tables.

If you fancy a game or just want to try it out, either contact the convenor Andrew Bell on andrew3967@googlemail.com or just turn up at 2 pm at the Hare and Hounds public house, 2 Burnley Road OL14 8EA on any Tuesday except the second one in the month.

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 last session saw eight members braving the heat and the traffic disruption to enjoy games of Qwirkle and Splendor. 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 of these strange games to join in,. 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

It being holiday season numbers have been on the low side for the last two sessions but we still made two tables each time – a four and a three on the Monday and a four and a six on the Tuesday. The table of six had one hand where neither team was able to pick up the discard pile and we exhausted the deck – so the game was “nul and void” with no one scoring!



Figure 2: Art Appreciation: Favourites from Whitworth Art Gallery exhibition



Figure 3: Bridge: New green baize table tops

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 24th August and Tuesday 8th September at the Hare & Hounds 2.00– 4.00 pm.

Coffee Club

Although our July meeting was cancelled due to unexpected circumstances some of our members decided to meet anyway and it was agreed to continue doing so whenever practical so, on 3/8/26, seven members met up at our usual venue of Honest John's

Whilst unable to be present I was delighted to learn that they appear to have had an enjoyable time and found plenty to chat about, in fact stayed longer than usual !. On that occasion only two decided to take lunch which I am sure was as delicious as usual

Our next get together will again take place at Honest John's on Monday 7 September . Members of any U3A branch who happen to be in town that day are invited to call into Honest John's, situated 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.

Creative Writing

The second meeting of July was well attended after we have recently welcomed new people to the group. Our recent themes have been diverse – Rag and Bone, Independence and, for August : 'The Glorious Twelfth' and 'High Days and Holidays'

Recent pieces of writing described setting out on a new career, and getting used to being away from home for the first time, and an account from a young boy helping a rag and bone man, in the horse and cart era.

Our first meeting in August was cancelled after the heat warnings on the 13th, We hope for better conditions and look forward to getting together on the 27th. As ever – potential new members are welcome to come along.

First Tuesday Readers' Group

We read 'The Names' by Florence Knapp. The story was structured around three different timelines depending on a catalyst event - the naming of a child. The naming was not important except for the dynamics of a family with an abusive controlling male partner. The book was well received but maybe not as consistent as it could have been and also events were a bit contrived. On the whole the group enjoyed it.

Floor Curling

We are hoping to be able to start this very soon. An invitation will be sent to all members when the first session is booked.

French Improvers

We are having our summer break. The group reconvenes on 28th September at Tod College 1.30pm to 3.30pm

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

Our meeting on Tuesday 11th August at Honest Johns was to look at the various ways we use to keep our records and information about our ancestors. Some of us preferring to keep paper records, others on line with many of us using a combination of the two. None of us seem to keep our records the same way but hopefully we've all found a way that suits us best.

We had three new members at this meeting, two of whom are new to family tree research so we plan to go to Todmorden Library on the 4th Tuesday of the month 10 – 12 noon on 25th August to help them get started and to do our own research.

The Genealogy Group meets 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. Our next meeting there is on Tuesday 8th September when member Helen has agreed to give us a talk on DNA, which is something many of us want to know more about.

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. Please contact Barbara – barbarawigley@btinternet.com for more information.

Golf for Fun

The 2026 u3a Golf Championship will take place on 24 August, 10 am tee-off. Let me know if you'd like to join (I would need an honest handicap!). A Charities Shield competition will take place sometime in September. 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

On Tuesday the 18th August, nine of us including a guest member from Littleborough u3a travelled to Summit by bus and strolled down the canal towpath to Walsden. We successfully navigated a flooded section where the canal had leaked through a gap in the bank. This was a real novelty after the recent very dry weather. We sampled this year's abundant blackberry crop and had refreshments in Riggs before most of caught the scenic bus back to Todmorden. September's walk is cancelled but there will be a walk in October, the details of which will be forwarded to members in due course.

Let's Go

Let's Go has had a very successful outing to the Southport Flower Show on Friday 21st August, at which, for the first time, we were able to accommodate some members requiring to bring their mobility aids. The next trip will be to Speke Hall

Linguistics and English Language

There was no August session. Our next meeting will be 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

The August session of the Local History Group took taking place on Monday 3rd, and featured a fascinating talk by our own Alan Fowler on two local trade-union heroes

of the mid 20th century, Jack Tout of Todmorden and Alice Foley of Bolton, both of whom enjoyed long and highly successful careers despite lowly beginnings and (especially in Alice's case) considerable obstacles. Our next meeting is on Monday the 5th October when Sue Hayter will be telling us all about her great grandfather John Roberts Widdup his connections to Heptonstall, his political activities and his links to Communism, Henry Hyndman and Burnley.

Lunch Club

Nineteen members of the Lunch Club met at La Vida in Hebden Bridge. It was, as usual, a very social event and, as it was a warm sunny day, we were able to dine in the restaurant's outdoor seating area which, with the addition of palm trees, made it feel quite Mediterranean.

As usual I forgot to take a photo but this where we sat with the doors open. It was good to have the whole area to ourselves.

Mah Jong

Nothing spectacular this month(with one exciting exception), though we have welcomed another beginner, Elaine, and are pleased to report that other recent new members are all settled in and playing a mean hand of mah jong. Well done to them.

There have, however, been a couple of gratifying scores: Brenda's ordinary hand of 4,608 and Maureen's All Honours hand totalling 7,936. But most unusual – and, we think, a first for this group – was Fiona's complete sets of Flowers and Seasons in a hand that was otherwise, apart from a pung of Red Dragons, totally without points. The winning tiles looked like Figure 5.

There was some controversy with the scoring. Our score sheet indicates that you score a double for holding your own season or flower (as usual), and two doubles for a complete set of seasons or flowers.

But does this mean you score three doubles for the set of seasons and three doubles for the set of flowers? Or does it mean you score one double, as usual, for each of your own season and flower and another double for each complete set of seasons and flowers?

The BMJA rule book is, I'm sorry to say, equally ambiguous.

In the event, we decided it would on this occasion be the second of the interpretations above giving a total score of:

Exposed pung of dragons: 4
Complete set of seasons: 16
Complete set of flowers: 16
Subtotal 36



Figure 4: Lunch Club: La Vida, Hebden Bridge



Figure 5: Mah Jong: a winning hand

Add 1 double for dragons, 1 double for own season, 1 double for own flower, 1 double for set of seasons, 1 double for set of flowers.

Grand total: 1,152

If I get around to it, I shall contact the BMJA and ask for a note of disambiguation.

The Hare and Hounds in Todmorden continue to be welcoming hosts, and we meet there every Wednesday between 2.00 and 4.00. 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

We translated a fable about a frog and a cow and this Thursday we'll be translating a short story about a family reunion. In both stories we have a lot of usage of the imperfect simple past (Aorist). So we'll be doing a bit of revision of this as well.

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 taken a break during the school holidays when the sports hall is not available. We re-start on the 8th September.

Poetry Appreciation

The poetry appreciation group met (on zoom) to discuss poems by Carol Ann Duffy, Ted Hughes, Edward Thomas and W.H. Auden. Next meeting, on 10th September will consider poems with the theme of 'colour'.

Poetry For Pleasure

This new group is meeting in the Honest John from 2-4pm on the 4th Thursday of the month.

Psychology

Our meeting on Thursday August 13th was an informal gathering - a good thing as it turns out, in view of the temperatures outside!

The next meeting will be on Thursday September 10th at Honest John's. The session is from 12.00 until 1.30, although we have access to the Lounge from 11.30 onwards for those who wish to order food. Vivienne will be talking to us about R.D Laing, the unorthodox Scottish psychiatrist; you might like to look him up beforehand.

Unfortunately the Group cannot accept any new members at present.

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 covered two topics. Firstly, "Mysterious Origins of Insects" based on an iPlayer documentary of the same name. Secondly, "Lightning" based on two BBC videos. In both cases the videos led to some very interesting discussion and questions.

In our next meeting on Wednesday 26th August we will be looking at Fungi based on a video introduced by Ant Peter.

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

Scrabble

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 or by telephone on 01422 844987, or just drop in on one of our sessions for a taster. We always have room for more players (of whatever standard).

Senior Moments Concert Party

Concert Party (Senior Moments) is a relaxed and friendly group, which 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 after the holiday period. New contacts as well as potential singers and performers always welcome, so please feel free to come along and visit us. Just ring Gill on 07504290071 beforehand to check out where we will be meeting.

We aim to give a light hearted look back to the popular songs and musicals from the 50s, 60s and 70s. Our Current program includes songs from films such as Hans Christian Anderson and Calamity Jane, along with clog-dancing, and selections from The Kinks, Petula Clark etc. We are now also starting to choose some new material for inclusion next year.

Our new email address for publicity is: concert.party@u3atod.org.uk

Social History

We are not meeting in August but will resume in September with the autobiography of Winston Graham .

Table Tennis and Badminton

We will be re-starting at 3-5 pm on Monday, 7th September in the Sports Hall at Todmorden Leisure Centre. That is our regular weekly slot, term-time only. New members are welcome.

The Book Group

Our August book, 'James' by Percival Everett, is both a tribute to, and a deep critique of, Mark Twain's 'Huckleberry Finn'. The story of Huck and Jim is retold by James, the slave who renames himself – just as Samuel Clemens renamed himself Mark Twain. Laced with dark humour, James's account is of a secretly literate man who reveals that the seemingly passive vernacular among black slaves of the early 19th century is a front to conceal their true thoughts, feelings and intelligence. He writes a tale in which the central issue is not – as in Twain – whether Huck Finn turns Jim in as a slave on the run, but how James cannot merely escape but create freedom for himself through the gift of words and writing.

The novel is an unflinching account of the violence and constant fear of slaves' lives, yet stylish in creating a picaresque page-turner as Huck and James head down the Mississippi. Some found the style a little 'tricksy', lessening empathy for the central character by its very cleverness; many found the book profound and absorbing.

Everett uses many fine elements of Twain's plot but also introduces decisive changes, for example moving the action forwards by 20 years to the Civil War so that the possibility of emancipation is imminent. The denouement reveals that Huck – unlike Twain's version – is the biological son of James, but can pass as white. Everett is a prolific novelist but is peaking at an age that makes him eligible for his local u3a!

Walking Cricket

The Tigers have had two complete matches recently a Wakefield on the 29th July against a visiting team from Epsom and at Oldham on the 12th August. Both games were close run events with the Tigers scoring their biggest ever total of runs – 231, against Epsom. But they still lost by 61 runs. There were some impressive performances, in particular Gill Radford's bowling and Paul Johnson's nonchalant one handed six. Epsom commented on the friendliness and great team spirit. Another excellent team performance in every way.



Figure 6: Gill Radford, Roger Barford, Paul Johnson and Ashleigh Cooper Batting against Epsom

The game against Oldham was local derby at their ground at Saddleworth. The Tigers scored 150 but the Oldham built up a score of 210. There was some excellent bowling by the Tigers, the fielding was top drawer and the catching was spectacular. Behind the wickets Roger Barford was at his brilliant best, and if you want a caught and bowled look no further than the one that Ashleigh Cooper took. The Tigers batting was excellent with special mentions are batting Paul Johnson and Janet Leah, who are becoming a very successful pairing. Also Mike O'Hara, Sue Sutcliffe Ashleigh Cooper and Mark Leah performed well with the bat. On the bowling front excellent performances from Mike O'HaraH with Sue Sutcliffe. Oldham did have twelve in the field to our eleven but there were good performances from Andrew Bell, Roger Barford and Janet Leah. Everyone enjoyed an excellent game with the usual element of fun and camaraderie. If you fancy a game or just want to try it out, either contact the convenor Andrew Bell on andrew3967@googlemail.com or just turn up at 2 pm at the Todmorden Sports Centre, Ewood Lane on any Thursday except the third one in the month



Figure 7: The Tigers with the Oldham u3a team before the match



Figure 8: Walking at Shibden Hall

Walking

On 28 July a group of 8 of us did a 5 mile walk around Halifax. We started by walking up the steeply cobbled Magna Via - which until 1741 was the only practical way into Halifax from the East despite its obvious unsuitability for any carriage based traffic. We then walked over the shoulder of Beacon Hill and (having persuaded a number of



Figure 9: Walking at Shibden valley

sleepy cows blocking a gate to move) went up the Shibden valley to Shibden Hall, and the Shibden Mill Inn, before crossing the valley and completing a circuit to return. The weather was fine, and the variety of terrain interesting. No-one died.

World Cinema

The group is *en vacances* until September.