

u3a Todmorden Groups Report

September 2026

Welcome to the September edition. To enquire about any of our groups, whether contact details are given below or not, you can go to the group pages on our website at <https://u3atod.org.uk/groups/>.

Each group should have a link to a contact person, and if you follow that link, a contact form will open, in which you can type a subject heading, a message, and your own contact details. If you don't get through, or you are interested in a group that is not featured below or in the website calendar, please contact me at groups@u3atod.org.uk.

Bill Black, Groups Co-ordinator, u3a Todmorden

Art Appreciation History

For our September meeting our topic was 'Velasquez and his European Contemporaries - A National Portrait Gallery Film (40 mins) and illustrated talk by Linda Brill. The film gave an overview of Velasquez and how his painting developed at the court of Philip 4th of Spain. Linda followed this with a fascinating review of a few of his contemporaries working in Spain, Italy, England and Holland - notably Rembrandt, Zurbaran, Artemesia Gentileschi and Van Dyck and how much all of these artists were influenced by Caravaggio, Rubens and Titian.

We meet or visit an exhibition on the first Thursday afternoon of every month. Upcoming on 1st October we have Peter Davis "Art and Social Commentary", exploring how art connects with the world around us and reflects the time in which it was created.

If you'd like more information about the group, please contact us:-

lindabrill@gmail.com

Jennympatterson@blueyonder.co.uk



Figure 1: Art Appreciation History

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 watercolour 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. 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 30th of September. 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

On September 14th at 1pm in Tod College, we planned to look at the use of AI to interpret, create and amend images. In the event, we spent the greater part of the session discussing AI in the news, especially the claims from AI CEO's that AI could destroy humanity within ten years. We didn't come to any conclusions about this, and should look at claims like these in more detail in a future session.

In the end, we did see Claude succeed in extracting a still from a video clip of dolphins following a boat, but when we asked it to extract some objects from a crowded image and re-render them on a plain background, we ran out of free plan resources.

The AI group will not be meeting in October, so the next session will be the second Monday in November, the 9th at 1:00 pm.

Beginners' Bridge

The group continues to thrive and now we are in September we have started our next lot learning sessions starting with "Weak Two Openings". The group meets on Tuesday afternoons at the Hare & Hounds Burnley Road Todmorden 2pm - 4pm, session cost £1 per person. Anyone who wishes to learn a new skill, please contact me on Andrew Bell - 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, with free hot drinks (and sometimes biscuits) not-quite-literally thrown in. 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 the games in order to start joining in. You can always drop by for a taster when we're meeting, or else contact the convenor in advance, Jim Botten at jroyd33@gmail.co or telephone on 01422 844987.

The Book Group

On the 7th September we discussed the novel *Blurred* by the Transylvanian-German writer Iris Wolff. It tells the story of a boy, Samuel, who grows up behind the Iron Curtain under the brutal Ceausescu regime in Romania. His story is told by seven different people. The group had a lively discussion as opinions differed, with some members enjoying the book more than others. It was generally considered an interesting insight into a place and time we did not know that much about.

Canasta

The end of the summer has seen our numbers swell as we have welcomed back those who have had extended holidays or have returned after a spell of illness etc. Good to see you all. We had 11 players at the end of August and 15 at the early September meeting, making three tables of four and a three!

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 28th September and Tuesday 13th October at the Hare & Hounds 2.00– 4.00 pm.

Coffee Club

Seven of us met at Honest John's on 7/9/26 and, as usual, chatted about a range of topics including Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs), results of the recent election in Germany, the forthcoming Heritage Open Days, U3A Tod activities plus much more of local interest

The CDCs were of particular interest because at least one of our number was unaware of their existence or function. Of those present one had direct experience of the Halifax CDC and was enthusiastic about the benefits to the community at large

Our next get together will again take place at Honest John's on Monday 5/10/26 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'. There is no joining fee.

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



Figure 2: Canasta group

even need to have a drink if they do not wish to. Occasionally some of us also elect to take lunch there after the meeting and this may entail moving from the private room into the bar area

Why not pop in if you are in Todmorden as you will be assured of a warm welcome whether you stay for five minutes or the full session. There is normally someone there from about 1015am to about 1230pm. The November meeting is scheduled for Monday 2/11/26.

Craft Club

We have had a busy time over the summer. Starting on July 24th with an Introduction to Basic Tapestry Weaving. Simple cardboard frames were used to produce small samples which were then used to make book-marks, cards, coasters etc.

August then started with another 'Introduction to...' session this time the topic was working on plastic canvas. A variety of stitches were applied to a range of sizes and shapes of the plastic canvas. The results included place mats, hanging decorations and key rings. This technique was continued on September 4th when the techniques that had been learned were used to make 3D items.

The session on August 21st was a complete change as we returned to using Brusho pigments, this time with bleach to produce pieces that could be used in card production or simply displayed as pieces of art-work.

The upcoming topics are Working with Beads, followed by making a Christmas Cracker and then making a Halloween Pumpkin.

If you are interested by any of these topics and would like to find out more about Craft Club, please contact either the convenor Mary Findon or any Club member. We are always happy to meet possible new members and show them what we do.



Figure 3: Craft Club: Tapestry weaving



Figure 4: Craft Club: Working on plastic canvas



Figure 5: Craft Club: working with Brusho pigments

Creative Writing

Despite the rain, a good turnout for the first Creative Writing meeting on the 10th of September. Most of the contributions were on the theme of 'Washing Line', which included accounts of possible theft and that, years ago, wet laundry would be left on hedges to dry out - along with an account of doing a favour for a neighbour which resulted in some stress. Plus an account of a holiday in Mexico - a cautionary tale of trying some of the local fare on a touring holiday. Our second theme for the month is 'Anniversaries'. New members always welcome, so why not give us a try?

eBike

We have yet to have our first excursion, on Monday 21st September, when we'll meet in Tod College car park, to head towards Littleborough. Contact Bill Black by email: groups@uzatod.org.uk for information.

Enjoyment of Wine

The group started the autumn season continuing the alphabet theme with the letter D. This brought a varied range of wines from Georgian orange wine made to an ancient recipe to wines from large and small vineyards. We were joined by our friendly wine journalist, Jane, from One Foot in the Graes who gave us insights into our wine choices. The next meeting will be at Tod College on Friday 18th September at 1:30 when the theme will be anything with the letter 'E'. This sociable group welcomes new members to try different drinks in a relaxed environment. There are no right and wrong wines only many that we like to try and see if we like them or wouldn't buy them again.

First Tuesday Readers' Group

Tuesday Book club. We read *Unsheltered* by Barbara Kingsolver. On the whole it was well written but a bit too long. Our discussion led to views that the characters were unfairly depicted to progress a (noble?) agenda.

Floor Curling

This new group has got off to a good start. We are currently meeting weekly on Wednesday afternoons at 2-3 pm in Todmorden Sports Centre. If you're in the group and haven't yet taken our survey, please go to our Group page on the u3a Tod web site where you will find a link. We're looking at holding sessions in the Hebden Bridge area at a different time.

French Improvers

We will be restarting sessions after the summer break on Monday 28th September, at 1.30pm in the Pex Tenements Room, TLCCH.

Hope to see you there, fully refreshed & raring to go! Now there's an idiom to research before la rentree! I will be sending out an email shortly with suggestions of what to prepare for Jour J. Let me know if you will be joining us. RSVP 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



Figure 6: Floor Curling - Two points for Red

Genealogy

A few of us met at Todmorden Library on Tuesday 25th August when three new members of the Group were shown how to use the computer there for research and how records could be kept etc. They all went away full of enthusiasm

At our meeting on Tuesday 8th September at Honest Johns Helen who is hoping to join the Group when her calendar permits, gave a fascinating and very informative presentation on DNA and how she had been able to use it to trace an unknown member of her family. Many of us went away hoping to follow her example and to put names to unknown fathers of illegitimate ancestors.

We plan to meet at Todmorden Library 10 – 12 noon on Tuesday 22nd September for more research.

And on Tuesday 13th October at Honest Johns 10 for a 10.30 start – when we will be discussing the places our ancestors have lived, worked and died and how they may have moved round the country or even moved country.

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 new season is well under way. We play regularly, weather permitting, at 10 am Mondays and 1.30 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.

We had our annual fun competition for the U3A Champions Cup on Monday 24 August 2026. Congratulations to all. A real fun day. John took the Cup (again...sorry...those two pars did it!!). Sean matched John's points score and took the U3A Golf Guest trophy. Simon took

the consolation prize of an "Improve Your Golfing" book!!!



Figure 7: Golf: U3A Champions Cup

There will be another fun competition in October - the Charities Shield, tentatively scheduled for 12 October 2026. 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/.

Let's Go

Let's Go trip to Southport Flower Show was a great success, and we got to see the winning garden produced by Southport U3A - see below. The weather was lovely and sunny and there was an amazing amount of things to see and do.

Our next trip is on Friday 18th September to Speke Hall and Liverpool. We will then have a short break to arrange further trips next year, and possibly one in December.



Figure 8: Let's Go: u3a Southport u3a's garden at Southport Flower Show



Figure 9: Let's Go at Southport Flower Show

Linguistics and English Language

At our September meeting, we started looking at language varieties that claim to be languages in their own right. We looked at the historical linguistic environments of present-day England, Scotland, and in more detail, Shetland, and looked at how Scots and Shetlandic (aka Shetlandic) differ from English. Next time will move on to discussing campaigns to promote regional languages, and after that, look at English spoken in other countries.

Local History

There will be no meeting in September, in accordance with our usual rota, but our meeting on the 5th October will feature our own member Sue Hayter, who will be telling us all about her great grandfather, John Roberts Widdup. If you're interested in local history please consider

joining our group. We alternate between talks given by guest-speakers and our members sharing their own research, which is an excellent way to find out not only about our local history but also about the various methods available for researching it, should you have a particular unsatisfied curiosity of your own. Feel free to drop by when we are meeting, or contact Jim Botten at jroyd33@gmail.com or by telephone on 01422 844987.

Mah Jong

If Bake-Off can have its Star Baker, then Mah-Jong can have its Star Player, and our Star Player for this month surely must be Brenda. It's not often we can record, let alone one player can record two Double Limit scores in one month, and Brenda has done that with Mixed Pungs and an Imperial Jade.

In fact, I'm not sure that this group has ever seen someone achieve Imperial Jade before. A first!

Another first was achieved by newcomer Elaine – her first Mah-Jong. Always a great moment for any player!

The hand we all want to see someone able to parade is Civil War. Maybe given recent successes, 2026 will be the year.

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 in playing this exciting game, although we are afraid that for the moment we will have to place you on a waiting list.

Modern Greek

Greek re-commences on 1st October.

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.

Philosophy

The next philosophy meeting is due for 14th September at Roomfield Baptist Church Todmorden at 10.15 am. We will be discussing the topic of freedom. The next meeting is at the same venue and time on October 12th. The topic has not yet been chosen. As usual, refreshments are provided.

Pickleball

It's been good to see everyone and get back to playing Pickleball after the summer holidays.

We started the term with 2 potential new members, who have been made very welcome. If you fancy having a go, drop me a line. You can check out how Pickleball is played via videos on YouTube.

Experience of playing some form of racquet sport will be very useful. Look forward to hearing from you...

Poetry For Pleasure

9 of us met at Honest John's to share a chosen favourite poem, to say what it meant to us and look more closely at the skills of each poet. Selections included 'Sand Piper' by Elizabeth Bishop and 'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost.

Not everyone was able to attend; if everyone comes, our numbers are too many to be comfortable at Honest John's, so we have made the decision to split the group into a Todmorden gathering and a Hebden Bridge contingent. They will both meet on the same day - the fourth

Thursday afternoon of the month, so next time will be September 24th at 2 pm. We'll have the same format - bring your own poem, but please tell Brenda in advance what it is! broyd33@gmail.com or phone 01422 844987.

We would welcome more members, so if you're interested, please get in touch.

Practical Art

For our 1st session back after the summer break we decided to work mainly in black and white using fine line felt tips, old fashioned Quink Ink and dip in pen nibs, sticks, etc. to create a variety of marks to suit our chosen subject matter. We then went on to use the marks in a black and white art work.

Psychology

We met to hear Vivienne talk to us about R.D. Laing, (1927 - 1989) who qualified as a medical doctor before specialising in mental health. He became part of the Anti-Psychiatry movement, who criticised bourgeois society which wanted to impose excessive treatments such as electro convulsive therapy and insulin shock treatment on people suffering mental distress, in order to make those sufferers 'fit' with society.

He became a controversial figure for advocating the use of cannabis and lsd. Whilst working at Kingsley Hall, a London community clinic, he developed a radical approach to the treatment of patients - no locks, no meds - a safe space for people to work through their difficulties. He believed that schizophrenia came about through the internal creation of a false self, the disjunction giving rise to the symptoms.

Society was experiencing great upheaval at this time, so his iconoclastic beliefs were at first welcomed on both sides of the Atlantic. After a time, his personal behaviour became out of control and he fell from grace. Nevertheless, his holistic approach and gentler methods

are, thankfully, still with us today.

Quiz

The August Quiz group meet was held as usual on the fourth Thursday of the month at Tod Methodists where we were treated to an excellent quiz which featured rounds about 'Firsts', 'Seconds', 'Thirds' and so on, which was an unusual approach which gave us a fascinating session.

Next month we will again be meeting in Tod Methodists on the fourth Thursday (September 24th) at 10:15am

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, "Fungi: The Web of Life", which was introduced and the discussion led by Ant Peter. Secondly, "The story of lock gate making" which described the history, technology and future of lock gate manufacture in the UK. In both cases the videos led to some very interesting discussion and questions.

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. 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 aim to give a light hearted look back to the popular songs and musicals from the 50s, 60s and 70s. We have bookings early October at The Overgate Hub in Tod., and Mt Zion Church in Cliviger. 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.

Our Current program includes songs from films such as Hans Christian Anderson and Calamity Jane, along with selections from The Kinks, Petula Clark, plus clog-dancing, etc. We are now also starting to work on songs for inclusion next year from singers such as Joe Brown, Lindisfarne and Herman's Hermits.

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

Social History

The group did not meet in August but resumes again in September 18 at 10 15 am at the Methodist church. All are welcome and we will be discussing the autobiography of Winston Graham.

Table Tennis and Badminton

We meet at 3-5 pm on Monday in the Sports Hall at Todmorden Leisure Centre, term-time only. New members are welcome.

Walking

For our August walk we started in Hebden Bridge and did an almost 5 mile circular walk up 'the Buttress', on to Heptonstall and the moors above the tree line, We had a lovely day with extensive views of the

surrounding landscape and the benefit of Nick's geological knowledge and descriptions of the processes that formed it.

From the highest point we descended to the Calderdale Way above Golden Clough and along the escarpment to Hell Hole Quarry (see picture). The quarry provided an opportunity for an explanation of the rock formations and how they'd been created by the elements over thousands of years - a large fossilised tree trunk in a split rock giving us a very impressive example. From here we continued down through the woods and back into Hebden. Another most enjoyable walk.

Walking Cricket

The group continues to improve week on week and we have had some new additions join the group and with our final outdoor session planned for this week before we move indoors for the winter period. Over the winter period we will be entertaining our friends from Oldham and Leeds u3a's for games home and away.



Figure 10: The Tigers Playing Against a Team from Epsom

The group meets on a Thursday afternoon from 2pm - 4pm at Todmorden Sports Centre, session cost £5 per person. Anyone who wishes to learn a new skill or just come along to join a friendly sociable group, please contact me on Andrew Bell - andrew3967@gmail.com

World Cinema

The World Film group resumed in September with an Icelandic/Ukrainian thriller/comedy. We had a big attendance, and the film was very enjoyable, while also being thought provoking on issues such as the limits of environmental activism.

The Roomfield church hall is an excellent venue and we have added an ad-hoc blackout curtain to further improve the viewing experience. We still encounter the occasional problem with film DVDs having inconsistent subtitling menus, but (as on this occasion) quickly overcame the issue (!)

The group season will continue until the end of November, showing a varied mix of noteworthy films from different countries, and is happy to welcome new members (subject to staying within hall capacity limits)