u3a Todmorden Groups Report

November 2026

Alfresco History and Archaeology

We currently have two places left on our trip to the People's History Museum, which costs £9. Please see the Group page on the u3a website. You can pay online or at the Monthly Meeting.

Art Appreciation

For our November meeting we visited the Dean Clough Art Gallery in Halifax to see the Biennial exhibition celebrating the talented community of over 30 artists based artists based there. The exhibition brings together a diverse range of work including ceramics, painting, photography and prints, offering a snapshot of the creativity that defines the site.

Featured artists include Jeffrey Andrews, Doug Binder, Jo Brown, Natasha Elizabeth Brown, Peter Chapple, Sam Clayton, Ric Coulson, Frank Darnley, Pete Defty, Fiona Edmondson, Josephine Gornall, Jo Gorner and our own Linda Brill.

After lunch in the café, we were met by Jeffrey Andrews who gave us an engaging introduction to the works on display as well as an insight into his own work which currently involves wrapping objects such as musical instruments in canvas, painting them, then working on the unwrapped canvas ....

This exhibition runs until 3rd January 2027 and is definitely worth a visit if you are over in Halifax. You can find information about Dean Clough and what else is on there on their website:- Dean Clough, Halifax: eat, drink, work, shop, experience!

The Art Appreciation Group meets on the first Thursday afternoon of every month. If you'd like more information about the group and would be interested in joining, please contact us:
lindabrill@gmail.com and
Jennympatterson@blueyonder.co.uk

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 25th of November.

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

The group did not meet in November. On December 14th (second Monday at 1pm, Tod College), we'll be following a tutorial on prompting Claude.

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 November session saw us happily playing *Splendor* and *Qwirkle* and an older (but new to us) and simpler version of *Ticket to Ride*. October also saw the very successful launching of our sister-group, playing Board Games at the Dusty Miller in Mytholmroyd on the 4th Monday of each month. 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 any of the games to join us, and you can always drop by when we're meeting, or else contact the convenors.

Book Group

On the 2nd November we discussed the novel, The Tobacconist, by Robert Seethaler. Set in Vienna in 1937, it follows Franz Huchel, a young man who moves to the city to work in a tobacco shop. There he encounters Sigmund Freud. Their unlikely relationship unfolds against the growing menace of Nazi rule.

It was a good turnout, 12 members in total. We had a lively discussion touching on the storyline, the characters, the writer and other books he'd written and the history of Vienna.

Readers had differing opinions. Some enjoyed the storyline and characters while others felt it was less engaging. Most were glad they had read the book.

Beginners' Bridge

The Beginners Bridge group continues to thrive with 16 or so members coming to play regularly, giving four us playing tables. At the moment emphasis is on playing four to eight hands. Ther is no cost, just buy a drink. If you fancy

a game or just want to try it out, either contact the convenor Michael Astrop on mwastrop@gmail.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.

Canasta

Another month and two more enjoyable sessions playing Canasta. 15 of us played on Monday 26th October making up four tables and 13 on Tuesday 10th November also making four tables. The two newest members are continuing to pick up the rules and in fact Mark won on his table of three where we all played as individuals.

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 23rd November (4th Monday) and Tuesday 8th December (2nd Tuesday) at the Hare & Hounds 2.00– 4.00 pm. The 8th December will be our last session before Christmas, although we are meeting up with the Beginners Bridge Group for a Christmas Meal at the Hare & Hounds on Tuesday 15th December.

Coffee Club

Six of us met up at Honest John's on 2/11/26 and, as usual, received excellent service from the staff but chose not to take lunch as most of us had other engagements however still found lots to discuss in the two hours we were there.

In addition to commenting on the recently brokered evacuation in Ukraine, the outbreak of unrest in Europe, the Digital Switchover, Winter Fuel payments, difficulties of playing the Ukulele and various other current topics both local and national we also spoke about some U3A courses/ events.

We unanimously agreed that the Silhouette concert had been a resounding success, the forthcoming music event at the Cricket Club also looked promising. The many & diverse free 'on line' U3A courses also attracted interest and it was hoped the 'Going Gently' workshop would be repeated.

Our next get together will again take place at Honest John's on Monday 7 December. 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. Occassionally some of us also elect to take lunch there after the meeting. Future dates will be published in the monthly Groups Reports.

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. 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. We have recently returned to Waterside Lodge, and our future bookings include the Age Concern Coffee morning on 9th December.

Our current programme has Clog -dancing and a selection of songs from musicals such as Calamity Jane and Hans Christian Anderson, along with songs recorded by The Kinks, Petula Clark, etc.

We are now also working on songs for inclusion next year from singers such as Joe Brown, Lindisfarne and Herman's Hermits.

Creative Writing

An early, and cautionary Christmas tale was first up at our second October meeting, concerning two people old enough to know better than blowing soap bubbles after enjoying perhaps one too many festive drinks. On the theme of the fall, another member described a series of mishaps in the workplace and elsewhere - ouch! In another 'fall' story, a courting couple fell out on a hill walk after harsh words. Into a chilly November for our first meeting of the month with contributions from 'Fun on the Telephone' , which included a tip to deal with unwanted calls and 'He seemed like a nice man' - both of these offerings seemed to say the opposite though.

eBike

The November eBike excursion took an uphill route from Calderside, starting at the junction of Oakville Road and the main A646, near Whiteley Arches, towards Todmorden. The route followed Oakville Road, then Turret Hall Road



Figure 1: 3/4 of the eBike trip at Great Rock

through woodland to Winter's Lane, Marsh Lane, Blackshaw Head, then Davey Lane and Great Rock. From there it was all downhill, almost, through Cross Stone, past the tennis club, onto Stansfield Hall Road and Victoria Road. We took a cafe stop at Mr Beans, before going our separate ways. We

enjoyed bright sunshine most of the way, but felt the cold on returning to the valley bottom. The group is open to additional members.

Enjoyment of Wine

The group still has space for new members who enjoy a glass of wine and would like to know a little more about it. Our ongoing journey through the alphabet of wine continues with 'I' at the November social meeting in Tod College then 'J' online on the evening of Saturday 5th December when nobody has to drive home, being already there! We have members who only come to one type of meeting or the other, whatever suits. The group annual meal will be at Riva Italian restaurant on Friday 18th December. If you want to know more about the group contact Michael or Bob, details on the U3A Tod website or catch us at a meeting.

First Tuesday Readers' Group

We read Gaining Ground by Joan Barfoot. Published in 1978 but a sleeper until recent times. The book was enjoyed and various opinions were formed about the main character.

Floor Curling

This very accessible activity is open to all, and we are looking for new members for the group, which meets on Wednesdays at 2pm in Todmorden Sports Centre.

French Improvers

We are making good progress with the new regime. We are following one of Géraldine Lepere's courses from *Comme une française* website. I'm loving it so far, and I get the impression the members are too.

Come & join us, if you already have some French knowledge, however dormant.
2nd & 4th Mondays at TCCLH, 1.30pm to 3.30pm.
PS. However, this is NOT a beginner's course, sorry!



Figure 2: The new Games Group Mytholmroyd

Games Group Mytholmroyd

The new Games Group got off to a good start, with 17 members enjoying an afternoon of games at the Dusty Miller. Everyone had a fun afternoon, & we look forward to the next meeting on 23rd November.

Gardening

The gardening group has intermittent visits to members' gardens, and other activities in the winter. For contact details, please see the group's page on the website.

Geology

The new Geology Group, convened by Nick Taylor, will be having its first meeting in Todmorden College on the 2nd December from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, and thereafter on the first Wednesday of the month at the same time. To join this group, please go to its page on the website, and use the link to contact the convenor.

Genealogy

We had another interesting discussion at Honest Johns on 10th November when the topic was Causes of Death in our ancestors. We all remarked that many people lived to a good age - dying in their 70s and 80s even in the 1800s, although there was a high number of infant deaths and a few mother's who died after child birth. We also touched on the brutality of wars.

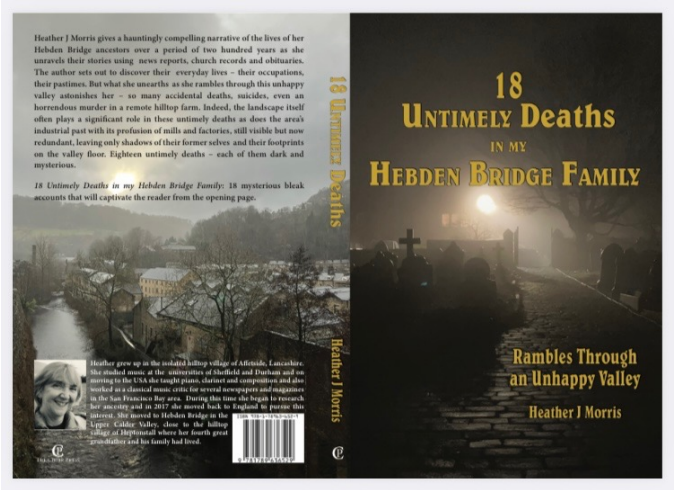


Figure 3: Book by a member of the Genealogy Group

Heather announced that her book "18 Untimely Deaths in my Hebden Bridge Family, Rambles through an Unhappy Valley" is at the publishers and she talked about a young boy having fallen through ice and drowning. Often family stories about accidental deaths were found to be inaccurate but newspaper reports of the time contain very detailed accounts of what actually happened.

We also remarked on the illnesses that were common back in the day that thanks to modern medicine we no longer hear about - particularly Smallpox which was eradicated in 1980s worldwide. The last outbreak in Todmorden being

in 1953 when two people died and 19 others were affected.

The cause being a bale of raw cotton delivered to Mons Mill from America. We also learnt that wool sorters disease was caused by the sorters breathing in the alpaca fibres and they were encouraged to grow long moustaches and to let them droop down over the mouth to avoid inhalation of the harmful particles.

We will be at Todmorden Library 10 – 12 noon on Tuesday 24th November for more research and on Tuesday 8th December at Honest Johns 10 for a 10.30 start – when we will be discussing First Names and how they go in and out of fashion etc.

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.



Figure 4: Golf for Fun: Charity Shield presentation

German

The u3a website is clearly doing an excellent job: we've had a new member - not necessarily signed up yet - joining us for the past five weeks. It's been good to see how welcoming the rest of the Group have been towards them, though by no means surprising.

One of our members came up with a really good idea a couple of weeks ago: analysing an English translation of the Friedrich Schiller poem used by Beethoven in his Choral Symphony - a joyful occasion indeed , both for newcomers and ,oldcomrts...

Next we'll be reading, translating and analysing another short story by Swiss writer Peter Bichsel. One Member described all Bichsel's main characters as 'neuro divergent', the German for which is, of course, almost exactly the same, as expected, just one word - the of vital knowledge one is only likely to gain via Todmorden u3a German Group...

Alles Gute

Andy
07957 722078

Golf for Fun

We are well intto the winter season of waterproofs and winter rules. Nevertheless, we continue to 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.

Our summer season finished with the Charity Shield match. Howard ran away with it with 29 Stableford points, repeating his win of 2025. The nearest rival was Athur on 20 points. (Note that with the Stableford handicap system, the expectation over 9 holes is 18 points, so congratulations to both for beating the odds.) We each donated £10 to a kitty that went to the winner, who donated it jointly to the British Heart Foundation and the Stroke Association.

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 final walk of 2026 for the Intermediate Walking Group will be on Tuesday 17th November, and will be a low level walk from Myrholmroyd. Members will have already received details. The new season starts on Tuesday the 16th February 2027 and members will receive details of this first walk in the early part of the month.

Let's Go

There has been a short break but we are going to Blackpool Christmas market and Illuminations on Thursday 10th December and still have a few places left on the coach.

This trip is also open to our less mobile members who will travel on a separate special minibus. Please contact Christine Richmond for details and to book a place.

We will then take a short break before commencing our trips again in spring 2027.

Linguistics and English Language

Last month we discussed language policies designed to support minority languages, such as Welsh and Gaelic. Next session (Tuesday 17th at 2pm in Tod College), we'll look at the question of how much do you need to know about grammar in order to read and write well? The group is open to new members..

Local History

There is no scheduled meeting in November. Our next meeting will take place at 10:30 on Monday 7th December, and will feature a guest-speaker on a topic yet to be announced. If you're interested in taking part in our group, to learn more about various aspects of our local history or to garner support and advice in pursuit of your own researches (or to share the results) feel free to drop by at one of our sessions at Tod College, or contact Jim Botten at jroyd33@gmail.com or by telephone on 01422 844987.

Lunch Club

The November meeting of the Lunch Club saw a return to The White House at Blackstone Edge. We continue to be amazed at their ability to provide high quality food quickly and without preordering. Anyone interested in joining the Lunch Club should contact denisetyas@me.com.

Mah Jong

We had one bumper week this month when Barbara scored two Unique Wonders in an afternoon and Emily hit the 'rare hands jackpot' with both Three Great Scholars and Red Coral.

Other achievements of note include a Unique Wonder for Fiona and a first for relative newcomer Karen with Heavenly Twins.

Everyone seems to be doing very well, really!

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. We are, however, afraid that for the moment we may have to place you on a waiting list.

Modern Greek

some translation and comprehension. Up to Chapter 13 - Οι φράουλες είναι ακριβες + (The strawberries are expensive).

Philosophy

At our last meeting on 9th November, we discussed the implications of the development of AI. This was a continuation of the theme from the previous meeting in October.

Our next topic will take place on 14th December at 10.15 am at Roomfield Baptist church Todmorden. We will be discussing how it is possible to accommodate culturally diverse communities with reference to presumed misogyny and the effects of varies interpretations of honour. AS usual refreshments will be provided.

Peter

Pickleball

All is going well with Pickleball. We've had a few new players recently, but there's room for a few more.

If you're interested, please email me through U3A and I'll send you more information.

We are a friendly welcoming group, so why not give it a try!!!

Andrea Ransom
Pickleball Convenor

Pickles and Preserves

Three new picklers and preservers met this month to sample rhubarb chutney, courgette chutney and redcurrant jelly at 101 Longfield Road in Todmorden and to enjoy exploring our individual experiences of pickling. We agreed that to take practical instruction with a teacher would require hiring a kitchen for about three hours (or possibly more for chutney) and a load of equipment – a level of organisation we were not prepared to undertake.

Instead we decided to operate as a mutual support group meeting occasionally rather than regularly and, as and when we may wish to do so, inviting other members of the group to assist with making something. So I will be proposing that we meet again on Thursday 21st January at 12.00 to sample whatever we may have had a go at pickling by then. We aren't sure where to meet, and are investigating potential places that might host us.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact the convenor, Anthony Peter, at antpeter51@yahoo.co.uk.

Poetry for Enjoyment (Hebden Bridge)

In October 8 of us met in a blaze of Autumn sunshine to hear each other's choices of poems about Harvest and Plenitude and all things seasonally related. Our next meeting will be at 2 pm on Thursday November 26th in the Greenwood Room at Hebden Bridge Town Hall, when our topic will be Relationships. We will not be meeting in December, but will re-convene in January to look in more detail at the poems of Mary Oliver.

Poetry for Enjoyment (Todmorden)

Three of us (two apologies) met at The Honest John in Tomorden to discuss poems we had selected that were new to us, plus a few randomly chosen by the convenor from online sites by way of augmenting our range. The poets included Ada Limon (a prose poem), Josephine Abbott, Thom Gunn and Alfred Corn.

We would like to find a different place to meet as we are a small number of people and to take out a whole room at The Honest John seems unproductive for them, and perhaps lacks the intimacy that our discussions tend to promote and benefit from.

Members are also asked to think of a less dull name for the group which should produce a lively exchange of views.

Our next meeting will be in the front room at The Honest John on 26th November from 2.00 till 4.00 when we will be looking at the work of Gillian Clarke. Please send two poems by Gillian Clarke to the convenor, Anthony Peter – antpeter51@yahoo.co.uk – by the evening of Sunday 22nd November for the monthly anthology. We will not be meeting in December, but pencil in 28th January for our first meeting in the new year.

Anyone who would like to join us, please contact the convenor at the above email.

Practical Art

We have had a number of new members joining our group over the past few meetings. Wendy and I as joint convenors have been introducing those new members to a variety of in some cases unfamiliar media and techniques and this has been enthusiastically received.

At the same time we have been continuing with our fortnightly topics for our long-standing members. Recently we have been tackling collage with the subject matter 'Birds', our feathered friends lending themselves well for the collage media. Our next class will be on Friday Nov.20th. at 10.30am

at the Fielden Centre when we will be using acrylics to paint autumn colours in the landscape.

The numbers in our group have been increasing and we had 21 members at our last class. Unfortunately this means we don't have the capacity to take any prospective new members at the moment but we are happy to take names to put on a waiting list.

Psychology

On November 12th 8 of us met at Honest John's to hear a talk by Vivienne Crawford. We began the session by thinking about what counted as madness in Shakespeare's time, and looking at the Theory of the Humours, which classified people according to temperament. We still use words connected with the theory, e.g. jovial, phlegmatic, melancholic.

Then we focussed on a few Shakespearean characters to see whether what he showed us about their mental processes is still recognisable and relevant today. Finally, we looked at some couples in Shakespeare's plays from the perspective of Bowles' attachment theory - whether their love-bonding is anxious, avoidant or secure. We ran out of time for a full discussion on this, so will probably return to this next session.

Quiz

The quiz group did not meet in October. The next meeting will be held as usual on the fourth Thursday in November (the 26th) at 10:15am in Tod Methodists.

Science

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

We are a friendly, informal group of members who share a curiosity about the world around us and an interest in science and technology in all their forms. Members are encouraged to suggest topics that interest them. We usually watch high-quality, freely available documentaries and presentations, followed by discussion and debate. We also enjoy occasional talks given by members and invited guest speakers. Currently, there is no additional charge for membership of the group.

During the last twelve months, the group has dipped into a wide variety of topics, including: plate tectonics, ecology, particle physics, artificial intelligence, wind & solar power, how our brain works, the wonders of fungi, space exploration, the world of insects, explaining lightning, canal lock gate technology and whether reality is a hallucination. The group also visited Calderdale Industrial Museum.

Following our recent annual review, in which we looked back at the most popular topics and gathered ideas for the future, we are putting together an exciting programme for the winter season.

At our most recent meeting, we watched the BBC documentary "Asteroids: Spark of Life?", which explored the possibility that asteroid impacts during the Hadean Eon may have helped create conditions favourable for the emergence of primitive life on Earth. The topic generated considerable interest and prompted a lively discussion.

At our next meeting, we will begin the BBC series Origins of Us, presented by Professor Alice Roberts, which examines the fascinating story of human evolution and our journey to becoming modern humans.

New members are always very welcome, and no specialist scientific knowledge is needed - just an enquiring mind and an enthusiasm for learning. Suggestions from new group members for fresh topics that we can focus on are always much appreciated and are acted upon.

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).

Social History

The group met in October and completed Winston Graham's autobiography. We meet again on November 20 and will read extracts from Paul Johnson's autobiography about life in the Pottery's in the 1930s where his father was Principal of an art college. This will be our last meeting of the year as we do not meet in December. We will start in January with a new topic. Our meetings start at the Methodist church at 10 15 am normally the third Friday of the month, all welcome.

Table Tennis and Badminton

We meet on Monday afternoons from 3 till 5 pm, occupying half of the Sports Hall, and this costs just £3 for the two hour session. New members are welcome, but please note, we don't meet in school holidays.

Walking Cricket

With the colder, wetter days upon us we playing our games at the Leisure Centre. We have a practice session on the first Thursday in the month and thereafter our usual two-hour game. We now start at 1 30 pm to 3.30 pm as the night are drawing in. There are some competitive games planned for the New Year and so we are fine tuning our skills, as well as having a fun time. If you fancy a game or just want to try it out, either contact the convenor Michael Astrop on mwastrop@gmail.com or just turn up at 1.30 pm at the Todmorden Sports Centre, Ewood Lane on any Thursday except the third one in the month.

Walking

October's walk was a six mile circular incorporating a monument (Stoodley Pike) and its facsimile (on Halifax Road), woodland, moor, field and canal.... It was an invigorating and extremely enjoyable walk through stunning landscape

accompanied by clear skies and biting winds, sunshine and clouds, a heavy shower and several rainbows.

World Cinema

This month we have shown very different films. A German film which has an interested main female protagonist. Its genre is mixed and all is not as it appears! The other film was Spanish again with some wonderful and eccentric female characters. A mix of comedy and drama. Both directors have different filmic styles especially colour and sound.



Figure 5: Walking group - Stoodley Pike