

u3a

Bridgnorth
& District

learn, laugh, live

Members Together—Newsletter

Summer/Autumn Issue 2024

Message to Members ...



Welcome to our mid-year Newsletter with our Speaker Programme for the remainder of this year and a reminder of our current activity and interest groups. Enjoy the contributions from individual members together with a couple of light-hearted items to bring on a smile!

This month, thirty-eight members have just returned from our first and very successful five day u3a Break. We explored Royal Norfolk on a boat trip on The Broads, Norfolk City and its Cathedral, Sandringham rejuvenated by King Charles III and lastly enjoyed the sea air in the coastal towns of Cromer, Sherringham and Holt. Spending leisure time with fellow u3a members is always a delight as each and every one of us bring different life experiences to the event. Recently, I overheard a new member, and long-time Bridgnorth resident, declare: "I have met so many new people since joining u3a ...

it's been great!" So let's continue to welcome others to come and join us.

Chris Wright Chair '24-25

SPEAKER MEETINGS—PROGRAMME

Members and visiting Non-Members are welcome to hear latest u3a news and enjoy a variety of Guest Speakers. Every 4th Wednesday (excl Dec) in The Community Hall, Severn Street, Low Town, WV15 6BB

1.30pm doors open Prompt start at 2.00pm

£2.00 entry Activity Notices Light Refreshments



Wed 26th June

Natalie Cumming 'The Fiddle'

A true story tracing a precious violin through war torn landscapes



Wed 24th July

Graham Short 'My Life as a Micro Artist'

Explaining how he sculpts within the eye of a needle!



Wed 28th August

Kath Reynolds 'Gymslips & Chalkboards'

An interactive reminiscence of school days.



Wed 25th September

Martin Lloyd 'Passports, Assassins, Traitors & Spies'

A dramatic talk links spies, assassins & traitors thru' their passports!



Wed 23rd October

Andrew Lound 'Rebellious Birmingham'

A look back into Birmingham's history with images, music & video.



Wed 27th November

Andrew Crabtree 'Songs from the West End Shows'

Seasonal Social Get Together with communal entertainment.



From Walking to Talking, Geology to Genealogy, Yachting to Yoga, Current Affairs to Supper Clubs - the choice is endless

u3a.org.uk

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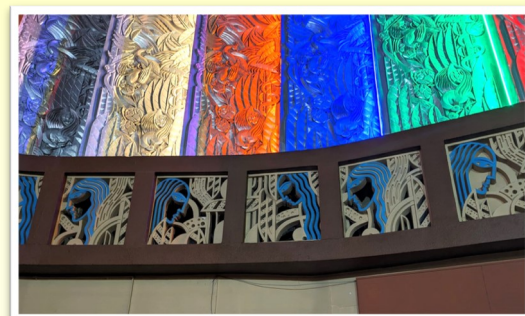
Opened in 1937 with its Art Deco interior ... we are so very lucky to still have the 'Majestic' REEL Cinema here in Bridgnorth. It has three screens and offers a wide variety of films during the daytime and evening, seven days a week!

Our u3a Cinema Group now has 98 members. Each week I receive a full list of the forthcoming films from James the Cinema Manager. I highlight some of the films with a few more details and then email this out to all the group members. Look out in your inbox!

The 'Majestic' offers a varied programme for all ages, but its recent addition of '**Reel Classics**' has proved popular with group members. We have enjoyed 'Brief Encounter', 'Singing in the Rain', 'Lawrence of Arabia', 'Dr Zhivago' ... and there are more classics to come.

Throughout the year, the 'Majestic' offers '**Events Cinema**' streaming live performances from The Royal Opera House and National Theatre. Again, these are very popular with our group members who have recently enjoyed 'Carmen' and The Royal Ballet's 'Swan Lake'.

Recent new releases have had mixed reviews and these include: 'Wicked Little Letters', 'Back to Black' and 'The Fall Guy'. If there is a film that particularly appeals to me, I highlight it in my weekly email with an invitation for members to join me in the Foyer prior to the screening. I look forward to meeting you there very soon!



Jean Swift—Group Leader

Shropshire Network

u3a

Networking: (*noun*)

the action or process of interacting with others

to exchange information and develop professional or social contacts.

Shropshire u3a Network was formed some years ago when several u3as came together to informally share their u3a experiences and to organise joint events such as Study Days.

The Network is now established with its own Constitution and brings together Chairs and other roles, such as Treasurers and Activity Coordinators from u3as within Shropshire to exchange ideas and good practice in a friendly and supportive environment.

Covid Lockdown interrupted but now the Network meets three or four times a year over Zoom because of the travel distances involved. Although each u3a is independently run, we don't want to be isolated from our neighbouring u3as! Bridgnorth u3a plays an active part by 'zooming in' whenever possible and we are always happy to contribute and pick up fresh ideas!

u3a Shropshire Network Members:

Bridgnorth & District; Church Stretton; Ludlow; Market Drayton; Much Wenlock & Broseley; Oswestry; Oswestry Borders; Pontesbury & Rea Valley; Shrewsbury; Wem & District; Wellington; Wolverhampton; Wrekin



BUS PASS—DAY OUT

A group of members who use their bus passes to enjoy free travel and a day out in good company.

Why not join us on the No 436 Bus for the

Shrewsbury Flower Show

Friday 9th August

Meet at the Sainsbury's Bus Stop

Linda Ruston—Group Leader

SUGGESTED INTEREST GROUPS?



TRAVELLERS ...

To date, members of this group have been enlightened by travels and travails in Iceland, Hungary, Uzbekistan and Morocco!

Over the past few months, settling into my lounge over a cup of coffee, we have shared experiences, digital photos and momentos from very interesting travels.

Have you been somewhere very different and would like to share your personal experience?

Please make contact ... we

would love to hear about your travels.



Susan Powell—Group Leader



GAMES TOGETHER ...

Enjoy Playing Games? Nothing in your weekly diary on Monday

afternoons? Why not come along on a Monday afternoon to the Community Hall from 12.45pm.

Mahjong, Canasta, Scrabble, Chess, Backgammon and Rummikub

Tony Pritchard & Jo Hammond—Group Leaders

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP ...



The Photography Group is going from strength to strength with around twenty members.

We have a good time with plenty of laughs and discussion when showing each other's photographs which we do once a month at Tasley Village Hall.

Each month we have a subject or topic to photograph for the next meeting which varies from 'hands', musical instruments', 'people' etc.

The group is very informal, friendly and welcoming with a variety of devices from modern cameras to the latest smartphones and plenty in-between. It is not the camera or the cost of the camera that is important; the thing is to enjoy taking the photographs. Although we may go out together as a group, the photographs are always different even when you have been standing next to each other!

Our last group outing was on 28th May to the Museum at RAF Cosford and we have plans for a future visit to The Hawkstone Follies.

The other challenge we have is to produce a Calendar asking each member of the group to produce one photograph with a deadline of October this year.

These will then be printed for the New Year and hopefully shared with other u3a members.

We also get together to share the knowledge of our cameras, try out new ideas and practise editing on Photoshop Elements.

Keith Ruston—Group Leader





SLEEPY CREATURES?

Bleary eyed this morning, having lost the battle to get back to sleep after a crack of dawn loo trip, I reflected that this seems to be an unwelcome feature of being in the 'third age'.

My dog awoke, gave me a pitying glance from her bed and within 30 seconds was fast asleep again. Why, I wondered, are dogs able to wake and sleep with such ease? So naturally I googled it.

Apparently dogs have to fall asleep quickly to fit in the 9-14 hours they need every day. However, they are also alert sleepers, hence the need for speedy waking - fear of missing out on a walk or a sausage!

The sloth has a reputation for laziness and can sleep for 20 hours of the day. You are also unlikely to encounter a giant armadillo, which sleeps for 18 hours and has been observed falling asleep eating. I assume this is the armadillo version of falling asleep in front of the television. In contrast African elephants only sleep for 2 hours and giraffes can sleep standing up. Dolphins sleep with one half of the brain so they can swim to the surface to breathe (a handy adaptation, avoids drowning while in the land of nod). Another watery creature, the otter, sleeps on the surface wrapped in seaweed. I must admit I missed that detail when I read 'Ring of Bright Water' but I am informed by the world wide web that seaweed does wonders for ageing skin. Maybe it's worth a try, though it could make the bed a bit smelly!

Finally the long sleep - hibernation, not death. I might contemplate the former but am trying to avoid the latter for the time being. Apparently a snail can hibernate for 3 years so I'm off outside to suggest it to the greedy gastropods in my garden.

Heather Yarwood—an insomniac u3a member



QUIZ HOUR ...



At the start of Covid, when many people were feeling cut off from their friends, we decided to make use of Zoom to make contact with each other in various ways.

Zoom was used for Committee Meetings, Speaker Meetings, Language groups and we started a Quiz Group. Each member brought a round of ten questions to our weekly get together on Tuesday mornings. Points were awarded, but no prizes given.

We came out of lockdown and a few stalwart quizzers still continue to meet every Tuesday. Indeed, Derek Farrington who has moved to Yorkshire has maintained his membership of our u3a, so that he can continue to join us every week.

Would you like to join us?

If so, put the kettle on and zoom in for an hour.

Trevor Padget—Group Leader

Our Website has a NEW LOOK!

www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

Put the App Icon onto your Home Screen for convenience at your fingertips!

All the information you need on u3a Activities, Interest Groups and Speakers Meetings regularly updated.



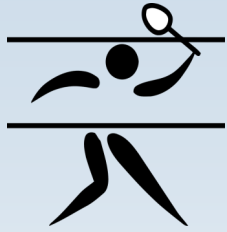
u3a Contact Information ...

E: activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

W: www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

F: Bridgnorth u3a—Members Together

Anyone for Badminton, Table Tennis or Pickleball ?



*During the recent Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022, I was lucky to acquire tickets to see the Badminton. **Woah! Exciting! Fast! Exhausting!** Nothing like the gentle lobbing and inelegant air strokes that I am used to!*

But that's the great thing about badminton. You don't have to be an Olympic Champion to enjoy floating the shuttlecock back and forth and exercising those muscles.



We now have a Badminton AND Table Tennis Group at the Halo Severn Leisure Centre in Highley on Wednesdays from 1.00 to 3.00 pm. We take over the small gym and use half for a badminton/pickleball court and the other half for three full-sized table tennis tables with all equipment supplied.

The Centre has also been lending us the kit to enable playing Pickleball. This is a popular and relatively new game which combines the elements of tennis, table tennis and badminton. It is played using short handle paddles to hit a soft plastic ball across net which is set at a tennis height but on a badminton-sized court. We are having great fun figuring out the rules and improving our play.



Why not come and join us on Wednesday afternoons?

Janet Hardy—Member

Jean Swift—Group Leader

Do you want to learn more about Art ?

The Art Appreciation Group is an engaging and enjoyable Group for any u3a member with an interest in art. You don't need any prior knowledge of art to join this informal group as you will be able to discover many fascinating facts and information about art and a diverse range of artists, some famous such as Renoir (eg The Umbrellas) and others quite obscure.

At each monthly session some members share their research into a particular era, subject, or artist's work and personal life for the Group to consider and discuss.

This frequently provides a compelling and thought-provoking insight into art.

In addition to paintings the Group also consider and reflect on other aspects of art including jewellery such as the ring created by Rene Lalique.

In a recent session we were also provided with an interesting insight into Art Deco architecture as demonstrated by the Hoover building in London:

Art Deco sculpture is another topic recently covered with a trip to our local Art Deco Majestic Cinema. For example,

the artist Chiparus created many Art Deco sculptures with sleek lines and geometric shapes, with particular emphasis on the beauty of the human form.

Textiles are another subject of interest to the Group. For example, William Morris was fascinated by textiles and the techniques required to produce the effects he so admired in historical furnishings.

Anyone is welcome to come along and attend one of our enjoyable and informative sessions so, if it appeals, do come along any third Monday (10.30–12 noon) in the Bridgnorth Library.

Jane Harris—Member

Val Seabright—Group Leader



'To dunk or not to dunk?' ... that is the Question



Who doesn't like to dunk their biscuits? Is it an activity beloved of the old British Empire? For example, they enjoy it in Australia and New Zealand. Or is it that the integrity of British biscuits is better suited to this activity?

u3a members meeting in the **Games Together** and **Bridge Groups** enjoy a brew and a biscuit halfway through their sessions ... so this question is frequently discussed!

Everyone has their own opinion, their own preference, but did you know that the *British Medical Journal* actually published an article on this very topic where each biscuit was tested for nutritional content, absorbency, crunchiness and 'integrity after dunking'?

The study was based on four biscuit types, most commonly found in NHS hospital staffrooms.

According to the research, **oat biscuits** have a relatively low absorbency rate and the highest 'dunk break point' lasting 34.3 seconds in a freshly brewed cup of tea before falling apart! In comparison, **digestive biscuits** last around 28.3 seconds, while **shortbread biscuits** last approx. 31.7 seconds. **Rich tea biscuits** are the quickest to fall into the tea, lasting just 21.3 seconds.

The experts also measured how crunchy the biscuits are before and after dunking by measuring how loud the crunch is with a decibel meter. In this area, the digestive wins out over the oat biscuit as it shows the smallest reduction in 'crunch volume' after absorbing tea. The shortie is last, while the rich tea biscuit is in third place.

But what about Jaffa cakes? (Is it a cake or a biscuit? A lively discussion for another time!) Or boursbons? Or custard creams? Or ginger biscuits? Or chocolate chip cookies? Is there even enough time to assess every biscuit we come across? Do you have a strong opinion? Come along to **Bridge** and let us know! (Information courtesy of *Lifestyle Food and Drink, The Independent*) **Janet Hardy – Bridge Player**

'GREET & MEET'

u3a in Town on 'Market Day'

Have you recently joined u3a?

Do you want to introduce someone to u3a?

Come along to informal coffee time every first Friday in the month.



Tables reserved in the Coffee Area

Drop in and join us!

10.30am to 12 noon

The Crown Inn, off the High Street

Fridays: 5th July : 2nd Aug : 6th Sept

4th Oct : 1st Nov : 6th Dec



Out & About Group

at the Elizabethan Manor House, Acton Scott Hall

We were charmingly welcomed by the present Acton Scotts who entertained us with the history of their home and their diverse ancestors back to 1580.

Front row, and taking pride of place, is Keith Hayward, who is the great great grandson of a former live-in Butler at Acton Scott Hall!

Jenny Green & Tricia Bennett – Group Leaders

LIVING ALONE ...

About nine million people live alone in the UK!

Many, like me, are lucky enough to have family nearby but we cannot expect our relatives to provide our social lives. So what do we do?



I moved into Bridgnorth in 2020 knowing no-one apart from my immediate family. I signed up to Bridgnorth u3a and soon met new people and made a few friends. Then I was approached by our Chair who suggested I could contribute in some way to help keep the 'u3a wheels turning'. So I have been able to support your Treasurer and weekly I give a helping hand to the playing members of the Bridge for Refreshers Group.

Now I have met even more people! I have discovered that the more you get involved in something the more friends you make.

u3a is not unique in encouraging people to get out and do something but it is unique in encouraging members to share their personal interests with others under the umbrella and support of their local u3a committee.

In talking around at our meetings I am constantly amazed at the depth and variety of life experiences enjoyed by our members and these should be shared. We currently have 355 members and twenty activity and interest groups. But why not more? So why not join forces with one or two other members, get out there and make our u3a even more special!

Tony Trathen—u3a Member

CREATIVE WRITING



Although most members of the writing group currently prefer prose to poetry, we tried our hand at Haiku, a form of Japanese

poetry, to create this collaborative piece.

A Haiku is a non-rhyming form of poetry which follows a strict form consisting of just three lines. The first and third lines must contain just five syllables and the middle line just seven. It was a fun warm-up exercise for our June meeting and a first for most of the group.

We hope you recognise some familiar landmarks on this Haiku Tour of Bridgnorth.

Helen Herritty—Group Leader

A town high and low, Ten sets of steps connecting. Historic Bridgnorth	Blue plaques, cobbles, bricks Curve round, chiming tower revealed Hymns, bells, Sunday best
Bridge. Water flows Through town. Sight to see. Visitors and ducks	Historic Bridgnorth Castle ruin, lush gardens, Railways, cliff and steam
By the riverside, A Franciscan Friary In ghostly ruin	Queues above, below Short, steep, reaching scenic high River revealed flows
Narrow and sloping, The Cartway is historic. A tiring steep climb	Once ancient dwellings Deep in sandstone soft Behold aloft, much moss
High Saint Leonard's Church, Despite explosive history Redundant landmark	Hear the whistle blow Steam train puffs into station Heritage railway
Historic Bridgnorth, Victorians built Northgate They replaced the old.	A town high and low, Ten sets of steps connecting. Historic Bridgnorth

Some Dates for your Diary ...

Thursday, 27th June

'u3a Volunteers Together' at Parlors Hall

Thursday, 4th July

Out&About—Butterfly Farm, Stratford

Tuesday, 16th July

Garden Visit—RHS Bridgewater, Manchester

Friday, 9th August

Bus Pass—Day Out—Shrewsbury Flower Show

Thursday, 12th September

Garden Visit—Stockton Bury Gardens

21st - 29th September 2024

u3a (National) Week

Wednesday, 16th October

Out&About—King Richard III, Leicester

Thursday, 7th November

Garden Visit—Batsford Arboretum

SOCIAL

Open Speaker Meetings

Wednesdays (pm) 4th monthly
Community Hall, Low Town
Chair—Chris Wright

'Greet & Meet' In Town

Fridays (am) 1st monthly
The Crown Inn (Coffee Area)
Welcome Host—Chris Wright

VISITS / DAYS OUT

Out & About

Day Trips with organised Guide
Leaders—
Tricia Bennett & Jenny Green

Gardens

Half day Visits to Gardens
Leaders—
Susan Powell & Pamela Oakley

Exploring Churches

Shropshire Churches with Guide
Leader—Tessa Holden

Bus Pass—Day Out

Venturing forth for the day!
Leader—Linda Ruston

GAMES TOGETHER

Games Together ...

Canasta Mahjong
Rummikub Scrabble
Backgammon Chess

Mondays (pm) weekly
Community Hall, Low Town
Leaders—
Tony Pritchard & Jo Hammond

Bridge

Fridays (am) weekly
Tasley Village Hall
Leader—Mary Galloway

Bridge—Refreshers+

Thursdays (pm) weekly
Community Hall, Low Town
Leader—Mary Salter

Cribbage

Tuesdays (pm) (2nd & 4th) The Fosters Arms Leader—Allan Clayton

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Walks—Day

Fridays (1st) (monthly)
6-8 mile day walks
Leaders—
Jane Freshney & Jenny Green

Walks—Medium

Fridays (3rd) (monthly)
4 mile steady walk
Leaders—
John A Smith & Liz Smith

Walks—Strollers

Weds 1st, 3rd & 5th (am)
Maximum 2 miles
Leaders—
Trevor Padget & Ina Roberts

Table Tennis /

Badminton / Pickleball

Weds weekly (ex 4th) (pm)
Highley Halo Leisure Centre
Leader—Jean Swift

LANGUAGES

French Conversation 1 & 2

Weds (am) fortnightly Members Homes Leader: Angela Treble
Fridays (am) fortnightly Giovanni's Café Leader: Janet Hardy

German Conversation

Mondays (am) 2nd fortnightly Members Home Leader—Val Seabright

Spanish—Let's Learn (Zoom)

Thursdays (am) weekly Members Home Leader—Marion Low

INTEREST GROUPS

Art Appreciation

Monday (am) 3rd-monthly
Bridgnorth Library
Leader—Val Seabright

Book Groups 1 & 2

Weds (am) 2nd monthly
Bridgnorth Library
Leader—Graeme Stoner
Weds (am) 3rd monthly
Bridgnorth Library
Leader—Susan King

Cinema Goers—Majestic

Weekly Film List emailed
Join others at REEL Cinema
Leader—Jean Swift

Craft—Copper Craft

Thursdays (am) occasional
Member's Home
Leader—Pamela Sanderson

Creative Writing

Tuesdays (pm) 1st monthly
Bridgnorth Library
Leader—Helen Herritty

IT Support—iPads

Tuesdays (am) occasional
Community Hall, Low Town
Leader—Chris Wright

Photography

Photos Shared Tasley Hall
Weds (pm) 2nd monthly
Photos Out & About
Tues (pm) 4th monthly
Leader—Keith Ruston

Quiz Hour (Zoom)

Tuesdays (am) weekly
Leader—Trevor Padget

Travellers

Thursday (am) occasional
Member's Home
Leader—Susan Powell

