

Message to Members ...



Welcome to our first Newsletter for the New u3a Year.

We have not been idle over the Christmas Break! I am delighted to announce that we have replaced our old Sound System and we are now the proud owners of new Speakers and Microphones ... all ready for our January Speaker Meeting. In addition, we have been working with Bridgnorth Town Council to purchase and install a 50" TV Digital Screen for the smaller Meeting Room providing a much needed facility for groups such as Photography and Travellers..

As always I am looking forward to details of our Day Trips. I am also excited by plans to follow up suggestions for new Groups which can only enhance the range of our existing activities (see back page). So here is my challenge for 2025 ... Start Something New! Learn Something New! Meet Someone New!

With Best Wishes **Chris Wright Chair '24-25**

SPEAKER MEETINGS—PROGRAMME

Every 4th Wednesday (excluding December) u3a members come together to enjoy Guest Speakers on a variety of topics.

Venue: The Community Hall, Severn Street, Low Town, WV15 6BB

1.30pm doors open Prompt start at 2.00pm £2.00 entry

Non-Members Welcome Activity Notices Light Refreshments

Wed 22nd January '25

Chris Harper

'Severn Trent River Rangers'

Informing us on their work improving river health and biodiversity.



Wed 26th February '25

Andy Neal

'West Mercia Search & Rescue'

Volunteer Rescue Team covering land and water across Shropshire and neighbouring counties.



Wed 26th March '25

Jonathan Walton 'Antarctica'

Explorer, scientist and current President of the UK Antarctic Club



Wed 23rd April '25 AGM

Liz Ross (u3a Member)

'60 Degrees North'

An interesting presentation on facts about the Shetland Islands.



Wed 28th May '25

Roger Browne

'The Golden Age of Radio'

A trip down memory lane from an experienced raconteur and musician.



Wed 25th June '25

Shaun Higgins 'Wilfred Owen, Soldier & Poet'



Wed 23rd July '25

Fran Sandham 'Solo Walk across Africa' Coast to Coast



**Our intrepid
Day Walkers**





THEATRE GOERS ...

Our new monthly meeting venue, **The Falcon**, Low Town, proved to be a great meeting place. We had the place to ourselves, free parking, great coffee and biscuits! Next meeting Thursday 16th January.

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival by Nikki Mott



In November we felt very privileged to have a member able to share personal knowledge of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Nikki has been attending this Festival regularly since childhood and she mesmerised us with the Festival logistics followed by her experiences from this year when she attended a wide variety of shows (30 in total!) in very different venues around Edinburgh and with an 'extreme' range of content and quality ... and all in five days! We all learnt a lot but not sure that we have her energy to give it a go!

Malvern Festival Theatre – 'Birdsong'

Sixteen members travelled by Mini Bus on a miserable cold wet day. The agreed feedback was a very professional immersive performance and a good adaptation from the book. The staging was excellent with sound effects that brought home the horrors of WW1. Enjoyed by all and especially by those at their pre-performance Italian lunch!



Majestic Cinema – Live Events

We have not forgotten theatre experiences on our doorstep! Members have also gathered together for the seasonal menu of events including Andre Rieu, Cinderella and The Nutcracker

Looking forward to 2025 ... thirty one members have booked for

Malvern Festival Theatre – 'Just Between Ourselves' by Alan Ayckbourn Sat 22nd March 2025

Plans for Next Year include

Mothers of the Brides – Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

Hannay Stands Fast by John Buchan Theatre on the Steps

The Buddy Holly Story – Musical Malvern Festival Theatre Sat 13th Sept 2025 Matinee

Would you like to get involved with the Theatre Goers Group? Watch out for details.

Group Leaders—Heather Yarwood & Chris Wright

Seasonal Entertainment in the RUGBY CLUB PAVILION



In November we changed our usual monthly venue to the new Rugby Club Pavilion. In spite of the river waters, which fortunately were in retreat, nearly 120 members took part in enjoying West End Musical songs followed by traditional Christmas

Carols. For many it was an introduction to this larger venue with its dramatic view over the flooded rugby pitch! Back to our usual monthly venue, Low Town Community Hall, in January.



A Viewpoint ... My u3a experience as a New Member



I joined, along with my husband, at the 2023 November meeting. Our aim was to meet new people and find some things we could do and enjoy together but also individually.

I have joined two of the Walking Groups, short and medium walks. I have been on some lovely walks this year with both groups and I particularly enjoyed the medium walk at Himley Hall. Despite the early mist it turned into a sunny morning. We walked up to Baggeridge Park where we paused for coffee before

returning alongside the stream to the car park. The weather challenged us with many very muddy walks. On one occasion, a member lost the sole of her boot, but she soldiered on with good humour and assistance from other members. We go walking for the exercise, the open air and the lovely countryside, but probably more important is the camaraderie. Everyone is so friendly walking alongside and chatting with other members. If you're a bit slow, like me, for the medium walks group, they wait for you and no-one ever moans that you're slowing them down.

I'm a member of the Book Group which has encouraged me to read books I would not normally choose, which I have found interesting although not always enjoyable. I very much like to hear everyone else's opinion.

I have recently joined the Badminton Group for a bit of exercise and am trying to regain some of the skills I last used over twenty years ago. I am enjoying it and will continue to keep going.

Together we are both members of the Gardens Group and have been to some beautiful gardens this year. For me the stand out garden was RHS Bridgewater. The layout is really well designed. The Chinese section is particularly interesting even though it's not completely finished, but then what garden ever is?

We are also members of the newly formed Theatre Goers, which is a real success. We have been to a play at the local theatre and several live videocasts of ballet, plays and opera at the local cinema. We were unable to join the theatre trips to Malvern, but there will be new opportunities next year.

Hubby, Bob, is also a member of the Photography Group which he is enjoying greatly. It has been really enjoyable to meet people living locally with similar interests and to make new friends. We tend to lose some of our community links once the children have grown up and now that we are retired. I have found the u3a a good way to rekindle that link and wish I had joined earlier. I am looking forward to the New Year, new friends and new experiences.

Sue Howle—New Member

SUGGESTED ... Interest/Activity Groups for 2025



Walking Tennis



Family History



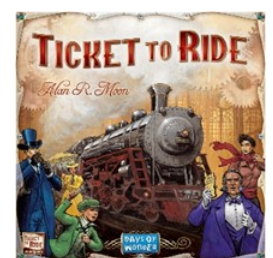
Calligraphy



Discussion Group



Needlecrafters



Modern Board Games



GARDEN VISITS for 2025

Once again, we are delighted with the support given by u3a members to the Garden Group ... as ever-increasing numbers join our outings.

During 2024 our visits included RHS Garden Bridgewater and Batsford Arboretum (by coach) and our local visits (by shared car transport) were to John's Garden, Ashwood Nurseries and Stockton Bury. Four very different gardens offering different aspects for us to enjoy, but always including a tea room for a delicious lunch or scrumptious cake.

We are still to decide which gardens to visit in 2025 but possibilities are two gardens in Gloucestershire. One has a royal connection and the other is famed for its autumn colour. Can you guess which they might be?

Local gardens might include The Citadel at Weston-under-Redcastle, near Shrewsbury or Ruthall Manor at Ditton Priors. If you know of a local garden that may be of interest to our members ... please let us know. Once decided, we will be getting together to fix dates for our 2025 Programme.

We are refreshing our list of interested members ... so please look out for our email asking you to confirm your interest in Garden Visits for the coming year. This will ensure you receive details as each trip is booked.

Group Leaders—Pamela Oakley & Susan Powell



Sewing Manual

(dated 1949)

Prepare yourself mentally for sewing.

Think about what you are going to do. Never approach sewing with a sigh or lackadaisically.

Good results are difficult when indifference dominates.

Never try to sew with a sink full of dirty dishes or beds unmade.

When there are urgent housekeeping chores, do these first so that your mind is free to enjoy your sewing.

When you sew, make yourself as attractive as possible.

Put on a clean dress. Keep a little bag of French chalk near your sewing machine to dust your fingers at intervals.

Have your hair in order, powder and lipstick put on.

If you are constantly fearful that a visitor might drop in or your husband will come home, and you will not look nearly put together, you will not enjoy your sewing.

WINE APPRECIATION ...



This is a new group for u3a in Bridgnorth.

We had our introductory meeting on 31st October in the Bridgnorth

Community Centre where we had twelve budding wine enthusiasts who sampled a range of sparkling wines including Champagne and English sparkling wine.

This was followed by a second get-together on 28th November at Bridgnorth Social Club, also in Low Town, but at a later time of 4.00pm with fifteen members attending and enjoying a selection of sherries, red and white wines.

Both sessions were hugely enjoyable and informative benefiting from the many years experience of the Group Leader, David Sharland, who has worked extensively in the wine sector over many years



We are planning further monthly sessions from January onwards where we will be covering different regions of wine and tasting many different wines.

This is a lively group encouraging discussion. If this is an area of interest ... just get in touch.

activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

David Sharland—Group Leader

French for Fun ...



We are a small group of fairly proficient French speakers, who meet twice a month in a member's home, to discuss various topics of interest. Our main objective is to converse

in French and hopefully to be understood.

We are a self-help group and although we have a leader, we do not follow a teaching pattern.

Our subjects range from discussing the pros and cons of art instead of advertising, the effects of CGI on the acting profession, to our favourite French towns. We are even known to play scrabble from time to time which, although challenging, can be great fun. (We might cheat a little and use the dictionary.)

If you fancy a fun morning with like-minded French speakers, brush off those language skills and give us a try. You might be surprised how much you remember.

Angela Treble—Group Leader



**Short,
Medium
& Day
Walkers**



Breakfast Club ...



A very new social group with about fifteen members meeting monthly exploring different venues. So far, we have met in The Crown Inn and Bridgnorth Garden Centre but Quatt Farm Shop and Apley Café are possible venues.

"Come and join us with time to meet and get to know some fellow u3a members over a hearty (or lighter!) breakfast."

Group Leader—Elaine de Graaff

Walking Groups ...

provide a complete range of walking challenges from a fortnightly gentle leg exercise through to a more challenging day walk. Something for everyone!

Why not give it a try! **Group Leaders—Jane Freshney & Jenny Green, Cliff Bassett & John A Smith, Trevor Padget & Ina Roberts**

Photography Group ...

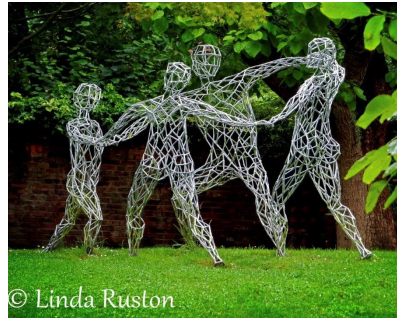


Month by month, over the last year, the Photography Group set themselves the challenge of taking photos for a 2025 Calendar.

Many of the twenty-four members of the Group rose to the challenge and armed with their cameras and smartphones set out to take photos from suggested monthly themes

such as Autumn Gold; Rain, Masonry, Musical Instruments; Festive, Trains and Fireworks. Thank You. Here are two photos from the final selection.

Group Leader– Keith Ruston



EXPLORING CHURCHES ...

Looking ahead to 2025 a possible trip to Shrewsbury Abbey and a couple of ideas for local smaller churches

St John's Church, Doddington

It was built in 1847 by Thomas Botfield, iron master, of Hopton Court as a place of worship for the many local coal miners and quarry workers of Titterstone, Clee Hill in Shropshire.



St Mary, the Virgin, Church, Bromfield.

The church was built as a parish church before the Norman conquest and was described as being "a wealthy minster of royal foundation".

Want to make contact?

e: activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

w: www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

f: [Bridgnorth u3a—Members Together](#)

Spelling Checker

I have a spelling checker

It came with my pea sea

It plainly marques four my revue

Miss steaks eye cannot sea

When eye strike a quay, right a word,

I weight four it to say

Weather eye am wrong oar Wright.

It shows me strait aweigh

As soon as a mist ache is maid

And eye can put the error rite

Its rarely, rarely grate

I've run this poem threw it

I'm shore your pleased two no

Its letter perfect in it's weigh

My chequer tolled me sew

Sauce unknown

IT SUPPORT ...



Would you like a some 1-2-1 help with using your Apple iPhone, Apple iPad or Windows laptop?

Are you considering upgrading to Windows 11 and need some advice?

During the coming months, on alternative Thursday afternoons, in the Low Town Community Hall, three IT experienced u3a members are available for one or two hour support sessions. .

To enable 1-2-1 personal support, making a diary date is essential ... so if this is of interest just email activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk to explain your query and fix a diary date. Cost: £3 or £5 for hall use and coffee/tea/biscuits.

Group Leaders—Liz & Malcolm Ross, Chris Wright



Out & About ...



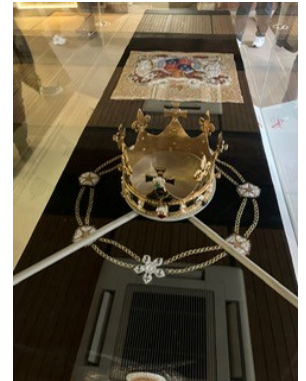
The Out and About Goup have had four very successful and well supported visits this year. Starting with Norbury Junction Canal Cruise, Acton Scott Hall and the Stratford Butterfly Farm.

Our final outing was by coach, to the Richard III Visitors Centre in Leicester. We were able to spend time learning about the medieval period when Richard was alive, and then move upstairs to find out about the amazing investigative work that had been carried out to search for and then identify his body. We were shown the location of his grave (which had been under a car park) and later walked across to see his final resting place and tomb inside the Cathedral.

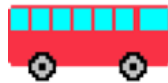
Thank you to all the u3a members who have supported our trips and made suggestions for places to visit in the future.

We will be planning our 2025 outings in January and will let you know dates and venues once they have been booked. Similar to other groups we will be refreshing our list of interested members which has become rather unwieldy.

Group Leaders—Jenny Green & Tricia Bennett



Bus Pass Group - Day Out



*Bridgnorth's local bus service destinations are limited, so in October, the Bridgnorth Community Bus was booked for a trip to the **Ludlow Gin & Whisky Distillery**. A few glasses (small!) of gin mixes were*

imbibed and enjoyed as we listened to the history of gin and the distillery. A good day with a light lunch and early Christmas shopping was a welcome bonus!

Group Leader—Linda Ruston

Speaker Meeting - October



Not all our monthly Speakers come fully armed ... but in October **Andrew Lound** certainly did! We were certainly entertained and informed on the

backdrop to Birmingham's history with his talk entitled '**Rebellious Birmingham**'.

Take a look at the **Speakers Programme**



u3a in Town on 'Market Day'

'GREET & MEET'

Have you recently joined u3a?

Would you like to meet some existing members?

Would you like to bring along a friend?

Time to relax & find out more about u3a.

Tables reserved in the Coffee Area

Pop in — 1st Fridays in the month

The Crown Inn, off the High Street

10.30am to 12 noon

learn,
laugh,
live

ACTIVITY & INTEREST GROUPS ...

INTEREST GROUPS

learn,
laugh,
live

SOCIAL

'Greet & Meet' In Town

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

Breakfast Club

Tuesdays (am) 3rd monthly
Venues vary
Leader—Elaine de Graaff

VISITS / DAYS OUT

Out & About

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

Garden Visits

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

learn,
laugh,
live

Exploring Churches

Shropshire Churches with Guide
Leader—tbc

Bus Pass—Day Out

Venturing forth for the day!
Leader—Linda Ruston

GAMES TOGETHER

Games Together ...

Canasta Mahjong
Rummikub Scrabble
Backgammon Bridge

Bridge

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

learn,
laugh,
live

Mondays (pm) weekly
Community Hall, Low Town
Leader—
Tony Pritchard

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

learn,
laugh,
live

Walks—Medium

Fridays (3rd) (monthly)
4 mile steady walk
Leaders—
Cliff Bassett & John Smith

Walks—Short Local

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

learn,
laugh,
live

LANGUAGES

French Conversation 1 & 2

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

Spanish—Let's Learn (Zoom)

Thursdays (am) weekly Members Home Leader: Marion Low

Art Appreciation

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

Book Groups 1 & 2

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

Cinema Goers—Majestic

Weekly Film List Reminders
Leader—Jean Swift

Creative Writing

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

IT Support—Windows/iPads

Thursdays (pm) 1st & 3rd
Community Hall, Low Town
Leader—Chris Wright

Photography Group

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

Quiz Hour (Zoom)

Tuesdays (am) weekly
Leader—Trevor Padget

Theatre Goers

Thursdays (am) 3rd monthly
The Falcon, Low Town
Leader—Heather Yarwood

Travellers

Thursdays (am) occasional
Community Hall, Low Town
Leader—Susan Powell

Wine Appreciation

Thursdays (pm) 4th
Bridgnorth Social Club
Leader—David Sharland

Start Something New! Learn Something New! Meet Someone New!

