



learn, laugh, live

Members Together—Newsletter

Summer/Autumn Issue 2025



Message to Members ...

This morning I saw a mistle thrush in the garden - such a beautiful sight. In a spiritual context the mistle thrush is often seen as a symbol of voice, expression and finding your true purpose. They encourage individuals to share their stories and talents with the world.

Welcome to our mid-year Newsletter, warm sunshine, blue skies, flora and fauna makes it a wonderful time to rejuvenate the mind. Members have enjoyed lovely days out and about plus a fantastic holiday to the Isle of Wight. There are so many Interest Groups to join and I am delighted to say there are more to come. Sharing life experiences is always a delight and we continue to welcome others to join us. Enjoy your Newsletter.

With my warmest wishes. Elaine de Graaff u3a Chair '25-26

SPEAKER MEETINGS

Every fourth Wednesday (exc Dec) Members come together to socialise, welcome visitors and enjoy a Guest Speaker.

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

Doors open at 1.30pm Prompt start at 2.00pm

Followed by Activity Group Notices and refreshments.

Non-Member New Visitors always welcome

£2.00 entry



Wed 25th June '25

Shaun Higgins 'Wilfred Owen—Soldier & Poet'

Wed 23rd July '25

NB Venue: Castle Hall, West Castle Street

Fran Sandham 'Africa—Solo Walk Coast to Coast'

Wed 27th August '25

Philip Duckworth 'A Career in Antique Furniture'

Wed 24th September '25

Nigel Spencer 'Wildlife Photography from The Falklands'

Wed 22nd October '25

Mike Haynes 'How Supermarkets Trick Us!'

Wed 26th November '25

NB Venue: Bridgnorth Rugby Club Pavilion

Paul Ray 'Magician & Entertainer'

Wed 24th January '26

Liz Ross 'South Korea'



'Out & Abouters' Afternoon Tea at Astbury Hall



'Medium Walkers' Taking a Rest

IT SUPPORT ...

Experienced u3a members are available every Thursday afternoon in the Low Town Community Hall to offer help with using your Microsoft Windows Laptops and/or your Apple iPad/iPhone? For example ... Are you considering upgrading to Windows 11?



Are you thinking about buying a new iPad?
Are you looking for help on setting up Facebook?
Are you struggling with syncing your Calendars?
Are you confident with saving your passwords and security using verification? And lots more



We are offering a **DROP IN HOUR** (btwn 1-2pm) for simple advice and/or time to arrange a longer one/two hour personal session. We are holding our

first **IT WORKSHOP**, open to any u3a member (booking essential) on **Thursday 17th July** (1-3pm) on naming, saving and retrieving **PHOTOGRAPHS**. Is this of interest to you?

We look forward to helping members over the coming months.

Liz & Malcolm Ross—Group Leaders

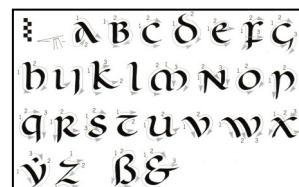


CALLIGRAPHY GROUP ...

The digital age has brought us laptops and smartphones with the consequence of a decline in handwriting. A practice that was once considered an inseparable part of life, is now more often ignored in preference for typing and digital communication. As a result beautiful handwriting has become a rarity.

For the small group of members who have come together to try out this art form, we have discovered that improving our handwriting is going to involve consistent practice and attention to detail.

Firstly we needed to choose and be comfortable with the right pen or pencil, find a writing board and appreciate the need for a good writing position to avoid shoulder and back pain. Something that we are still experimenting with! Then, using a common font such as 'Uncial' we have practised writing (very slowly) focussing on forming each letter correctly onto lined paper to maintain uniformity in size and the spacing of letters. The 'Uncial' font, as illustrated here, originated in the second century and was used on early Christian texts.



One thing for sure ... to get good at this artform is going to need hours of practice ... but as 'third agers' we do have some spare time on our hands!

Chris Wright—Group Leader

SHROPSHIRE DIALECT WORDS (and their meanings)

Her'd (she would)
Fut (foot)
Fit (Feet)
Hadna (had not)
There'd (there would)
Usta (used to)
Turmit (turnip)
Ud (would)
Owd (old)
Umman (woman)
Tay (tea)
Longa (with)

Petty (lavatory up the garden)
Canna (cannot or can't)
Nuncle (uncle)
Punning (banging)
Didna (didn't or did not)
Three parts shot (drunk)
Too much titty
(too much to drink)
Yerrings (herrings)
Where amm'eet
(where are you)
My mon (my lad)
Lotten'em (lot of them)

Dared'na (dared not)
You'n (you will)
Da (don't't)
Couldna (could not)
Outa (out of)
Thee (you)#
Wast (was)
Wum (home)
Bin (are or been)
Binna we (aren't we)
Ess hole
(the lack of the fire)
Chimblins (chilblains)



My Experience in Setting up a Book Group ...

After Covid Lockdown I phoned the then Chair, Trevor Padget, to ask if the Book Group was to restart. I was advised that the previous leader of the group had stepped down and Trevor asked if I would like to set up a new group? It was not quite what I had expected but after thinking about it, I agreed to take on the role.

Chris Wright, then Vice Chair and Activities Coordinator, quickly got the marketing wheels into motion so we could check there was sufficient interest. There was a response and with help on hand the Group was organised and Chris came along to the first few meetings to give me support.

Bridgnorth Library provided our first book '**Little Fires Everywhere**' by **Celeste NG**. I had never heard of the book and neither did I know the author! However, reading a book that I would not normally choose is all part of the fun of a Book Group and I think, like me, most of the group enjoyed the story.

We read a new title each month and cover a good mixture of genres which includes both fiction and non-fiction. You can see the current reading lists on our Website link [Book Groups](#)

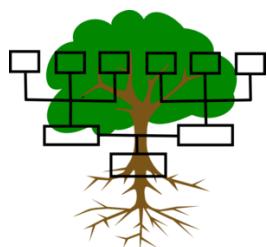
Monthly, each member provides a feedback on the book and gives the book a one to ten score.

This all contributes to some interesting meetings and a healthy level of discussion, which has for me, made the taking on and running of the Book Group most worthwhile. There are plans in hand to start up a third book group. Would you be interested?



Graeme Stoner—Group Leader

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP ... **NEW!**



The first meeting of the new Family History Group was held in The Falcon Hotel on 5th June. The Group Leader is Sue Evans who has spent several years researching her own family history. Over coffee, members exchanged research experiences, which were many and varied. Some surprises had popped up in some members' ancestry – it was easier to keep secrets within the family in those days – no social media!

Some members proved to be Genealogy veterans (in the nicest possible way), some have recently begun researching and some are complete beginners, or have come up against apparently insurmountable obstacles. It doesn't matter, because everyone is happy to share their knowledge and help one another. I'm sure we'll hear some interesting tales in the future – one of my grandfathers was a train robber and a bigamist – now I know why no-one spoke about him!

The next meeting will be in The Falcon Hotel, Low Town Bridgnorth, on Thursday 10th July at 2.00pm.

If you are interested, please come along and join us.

Heather Yarwood—Activity Group Coordinator

SUGGESTED GROUPS ?



Supper Club



Plants & Gardens

Bridgnorth & District u3a

is for those who are no longer in full-time work or busy raising a family.

Now is the time to make the most of life, explore new interests, make new friends and enjoy yourself. Take a look at our website or make contact by email.

www.bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

activities@bridgnorthanddistrictu3a.org.uk

BUS PASS GROUP ...

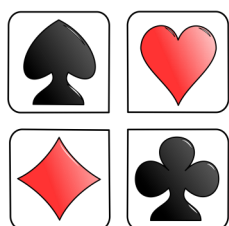


On the 20th May seventeen intrepid 'Bus Pass Day Outers' set out in the Community Minibus for **Berrington Hall** near Leominster. As our local bus routes are limited we sometimes have to be creative about getting to places! We all had a lovely day and the weather was kind to us too. Berrington Hall is a very interesting place to visit with a display of

beautiful clothing and even some that could be tried on. Heather very much enjoyed that bit! We then shared our picnics in the sunshine before boarding the bus home.

Our next outing is to **Moseley Old Hall** on 8th July.

Linda Ruston—Group Leader



BRIDGE GROUP ...

I've been asked to share my experience as a U3A Group Leader. I was recently given an M&S voucher for long service as a u3a Group Leader; for this I thank everyone involved. It was a great surprise, not least because I hadn't realised just how quickly ten years had passed.

I 'fell' into the job when the previous Leader left, and have very much enjoyed the experience. The Bridge Club members have always been a happy group who create a nice mix of challenging play and fun, social interaction. We never take ourselves too seriously! Sadly, over the years our numbers have dwindled, particularly due to the Covid effect, but we carry on regardless.

My position is simplified by the use of the efficient on-line u3a Beacon System for forwarding up-to-date information, and I know there will always be someone to give a helping hand with any problems.

I'd encourage anyone to have a go at leading a new Group – it certainly keeps the brain cells active.

So ... here's to the next 10 years! **Friday mornings 10 to 12 noon in Tasley Village Hall.**

Mary Galloway—Group Leader

BRIDGE for REFRESHERS

Mary, as Group Leader is on hand to introduce and support members into the game of Bridge.

Thursday afternoons 12.45–3.30pm in Low Town Community Hall

Mary Salter—Group Leader



OUT & ABOUT '25 ...

Our first visit this year was at the end of April to **Astbury Hall**. Forty members gathered to enjoy an Afternoon Tea. It was a lovely warm day so many of us started with a drink outside on the Terrace before heading upstairs to the Queen's Room for our delicious meal.

Our second visit was in May to the **Brecon Mountain Railway**. We filled the 53-seater coach completely. In **Abergavenny** we had some time to have coffee or eat an early lunch (and enjoy some retail therapy) before continuing our journey to Pant station where we boarded the steam train. Again, we had lovely weather, so the views were stunning and far-reaching.

By the time you read this Newsletter, 40 more members will have been on our next visit to **Eastnor Castle** in Herefordshire at the foot of the Malvern Hills on the edge of the Cotswolds. Let's hope the weather is as kind again and we all enjoy our day out.



Jenny Green & Tricia Bennett—Group Leaders

GARDEN VISITS '25

Susan and I were delighted with the response from members for our first garden outing in 2025 with over forty of us going to **Preen Manor**, although at one point we didn't think we would make it with road closures



and massive potholes, thankfully we did. Even the weather decided to be on our side, after heavy rain in the morning the sun came out and it was warm and dry to wander around a garden of rooms and very beautiful they were, including a pretty cottage garden, pebble garden, lovely scented roses, a nicely laid out potager and lots of quirky features

and to top it all, amazing views of the wider countryside. We travelled by shared cars for this visit but we are hoping the next three outings will be by coach, with the next one being to **Hidcote Garden and Kiftsgate Garden** on 22nd July. This will be followed by visiting the Dorothy Clive Garden in September and our autumn colour visit this year will be to **Westonbirt Arboretum** at the end of October. Make sure you are on the Gardens Group list of interested members to receive details by email, usually about four weeks before each outing.

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Pamela Oakley & Susan Powell—Group Leaders



My Experience as a Member of the Writers Group ...

Many moons ago when considerably younger and more active, I was a member of a Creative Writing Group. Then, as things do, it came to an end. I was distracted by more mundane concerns – earning a living being one of them!

Then came retirement – and u3a! I noticed there was a Writers Group – I dithered! Would I be able to put pen to paper again, would I be transfixed by the blank page, would the other group members be cleverer than me, more imaginative, more talented?

Then came five small words “you’re welcome to join us” spoken by Helen Herritty our u3a Writers Group Leader. So I joined, I recalled the words of a previous employer “What’s the worst thing that can happen?” Well, I could bore the pants off my fellow, very tolerant, writers, for ten minutes. No doubt that has happened, but the group is forgiving and supportive and I’m hopefully learning from other members’ contributions.

Since joining I have written, amongst others, a piece which had to include the word ‘marmalade’ (yes, I know, Michael Bond got there first), a piece about evacuated children in WW2 and poems, including a limerick. I’ve learned that I can have fun writing a spontaneous piece on a topic set by Helen during the meeting. This month’s ‘homework’ has to begin ‘It’s 2.00am and the phone is ringing’ Feeling inspired?

So, if you fancy ‘having a go’, why not join us? What’s the worst thing that can happen?

Heather Yarwood—Group Member

u3a HOLIDAY '25 – ISLE of WIGHT



WightLink Ferry

Safely back in
Bridgnorth after a very
successful five day
break staying in
Shanklin. A packed
itinerary which included

Lacock Village & Abbey (NT) where Cranford & Emma
were filmed, St Mildred's Church in Whippingham, the
Royal Residence of Osborne House (EH), Mottistone
Gardens (NT), a very knowledgeable Tour Guide whilst
driving around the Island including a lunch stop in



The Strawberry Moon

Fishbourne and a chance to explore the
pretty village of Godshill. Our last two
days included Carisbrooke Castle (EH)
which was stunning and on the journey
home ... Winchester City and the
Cathedral with a shopping bonus!
Evening entertainment included live
music and an introduction to bingo for
some! Others enjoyed walks along the
seashore and explored the clines. Our
feet didn't touch the

ground and we were definitely ready for bed
each evening! A great adventure with fellow
members who want to do it all again next year
... but, of course, a different venue! Here's is a
flavour in photographs and lastly a 'thank you'
to the tour organisers 'Simply Groups'.

Chris Wright—Holiday Coordinator



Outside Winchester Cathedral



Shanklin, Isle of Wight





EXPLORING CHURCHES ...



Forty members visited **St Mary the Virgin Church**, Bromfield in April where Father Justin Parker enthusiastically entertained and informed us on this Church which was built as a parish church before the Norman Conquest. Once a large Priory, briefly converted and occupied

as a private home by a local dignitary. Apart from its present human congregation it is also home to wildlife including protected bats.

We are always delighted by each church that we visit learning interesting facts on its history and afterwards often enjoy a cake and drink at a local hostelry. Look out for dates and details of our next visits.

Chris Wright—Group Leader



Exclusive Offer that can help Bridgnorth u3a

www.u3a.org.uk has partnered with **Riviera Travel** to support local u3as.

When a local u3a member books a holiday directly with Riviera Travel, 10% of the basic cost* will be donated to The Third Age Trust and given to your nominated local u3a (10% of the donation will be retained by the Third Age Trust to contribute to the running costs of the scheme.).

**NB The basic cost excludes travel or accommodation supplements, upgrades, insurance premiums, and any additional expenses*

So ... if a Riviera Holiday is on your horizon please register your u3a membership at booking to trigger this donation to our funds. Full details on this link www.u3a.org.uk—Riviera Travel

'GREET & MEET' in Town

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 — First Fridays in the month

The Crown Inn, off the High Street

10.30am to 12 noon

Fridays: 4th July, 1st August, 5th Sept,
3rd Oct, 7th Nov, 5th Dec 2025 & 2nd Jan 2026

ACTIVITY & INTEREST GROUPS

SOCIAL ...

'Greet & Meet' In Town

Fridays (am) 1st monthly
The Crown Inn (Coffee Area)
Welcome Host—Elaine de Graaff

Breakfast Club **NEW**

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

Day Visits to Gardens
Leaders—
Susan Powell & Pamela Oakley

Exploring Churches

Shropshire Churches with Guide
Leader—Chris Wright

Bus Pass—Day Out

Venturing forth for the day!
Leader—Linda Ruston



GAMES ...

Games Together ...

Canasta Mahjong
Rummikub Scrabble
Backgammon Bridge

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

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) Fosters Arms Leader—Allan Clayton

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ...

Walks—Day

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

Walks—Medium

Fridays (3rd) (monthly)
4 mile steady walk
Leader—
Cliff Bassett



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

LANGUAGES ...

Spanish—Let's Learn (Zoom)

Thursdays (am) weekly Members Home
Leader: Marion Low

French Conversation 1 & 2

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



Art Appreciation

Fire Station Mtg Room
Mon (am) 3rd monthly
Leader—Jane Harris

Book Groups 1 & 2

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

Calligraphy **NEW**

Falcon Hotel
Mon (am) 3rd monthly
Leader—Chris Wright

Cinema Goers

Majestic Cinema
Film List Weekly Emails
Leader—Jean Swift

Creative Writing

Fire Station Mtg Room
Tues (pm) 1st monthly
Leader—Helen Herritty

Family History **NEW**

Falcon Hotel
Thurs (pm) tbc
Leader—Sue Evans

IT Support—Windows/iPads

Community Hall, Low Town
Thurs (pm) weekly
Leader—Liz Ross

Needlecrafters **NEW**

Falcon Hotel
Mon (am) 4th monthly
Leader—Elaine de Graaff

Photography Group

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

Quiz Hour (Zoom)

Tues (am) weekly
Leader—Trevor Padget

Theatre Goers

Falcon Hotel
Thurs (am) 3rd monthly
Leader—Heather Yarwood

Travellers

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

Wine Appreciation

Bridgnorth Social Club
Thurs (pm) 3rd monthly
Leader—David Sharland

