



learn, laugh, live

Members Together—Newsletter

Summer/Autumn Issue 2026

MESSAGE to MEMBERS ...

You will notice that this Newsletter is not introduced by Elaine, our recently elected Chair. Sadly, she has had to step away from day-to-day u3a duties due to family issues which will require her to be away from Bridgnorth for some time.

As Vice Chair, I have stepped into her shoes to keep our u3a going. None of us know what is around the corner and sometimes a need arises to take on unexpected tasks but I am looking forward to taking up this challenge. I love meeting members (and visitors) and having a chat so please feel free to accost me at any time! Only this morning, I was in Bridgnorth to wave the Garden Group off to Biddulph Grange and the Bus Pass Group off for a day at the Black Country Living Museum.

Whilst helping to put this Newsletter together, once again I am struck by the contributions from our volunteer Group Leaders who bring together such a diversity of interest and activity groups for the benefit of all our



Medium Walkers crossing the canal bridge

members. A simple 'thank you' is inadequate. I send a very 'big' thank you to each and every Group Leader together with a very 'special' thank you to Heather Yarwood, our current Activities Coordinator who puts in much personal time to oversee and support all our groups ensuring that they continue to flourish. Please enjoy the variety of items within this Newsletter and your personal u3a membership over the coming summer months. With best wishes.

Linda Ruston—Vice Chair 2026–27



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MEMBERS' OPEN MEETINGS with a GUEST SPEAKER

Every fourth Wednesday (exc Dec) members come together to enjoy a good Speaker on a variety of topics.

Venue: Bridgnorth Community Hall, Severn Street, WV15 6BB

Doors open 1.30pm Prompt start 2.00pm **£2.00 entry**
followed by refreshments and updates on Activities.

Non-Member Visitors new to u3a are always welcome



Chatting with the Speaker



Wednesday 22nd July

Norman Pagett
'Iron Men of Shropshire'



Wednesday 26th August

Gillian Waugh Pead
'Bridgnorth Infirmary—
A Beneficent Undertaking'



Wednesday 23rd September

Kate Innes
'Medieval History in the
Welsh Marshes'



Wednesday 28th October

Shaun Higgins
'Heroes in the Sky'



Wednesday 25th November—Seasonal Gathering

Andy Smith 'Musical Entertainment'

NB Venue: Castle Hall, West Castle Street Entry £4.00

Neighbouring u3a Groups

14 in Shropshire
85 in West Midlands





2026-27 Committee

Our April AGM, welcomed some new members and everyone is looking forward to working together over the coming year. As a mutual aid organisation, every u3a needs volunteers to form an active team working 'behind the scenes' to ensure that the u3a wheels continue to be well oiled for the benefit of the membership. The Committee always seeking members to come along to one of our regular monthly meetings to observe how u3a works. Terms of Office are yearly to a maximum of three years ... so not forever! You may be surprised and inspired to get more involved. There is lots going on and many hands make light work!

Committee ...

Chair	...	(Elaine de Graaff)
Vice Chair	...	Linda Ruston
Treasurer	...	Sue Hannah
Secretary	...	Linda Barton
Membership	...	Janet Hardy
Membership	...	Alan Greenhalgh (shadowing)
Activities	...	Heather Yarwood
Speakers	...	Jane Jasper
Beacon Admin		John Barton
Website Host		Liz Ross
C'tee Member		Ellen Schofield
C'tee Member		(Eimert de Graaff)
Co-opted	...	Sandra Morris

C'tee Support ...

Accounts	Cliff Bassett
A/cs Examiner	Tony Trathen
Newsletter	Chris Wright
Photographer	Keith Ruston
Zoom Licence	Trevor Padget

The Membership Secretary Role

What is actually involved?

In the modern era when membership applications and their accompanying subscriptions go onto a computer system, an administrator, such as the Membership Secretary, needs to be comfortable using our BEACON System ... together with a love of spreadsheets and a slightly obsessive attention to detail – the uniform is optional!



Our BEACON program is an invaluable tool for keeping track of our members. Not only does it store personal details – but NOT, I might add, dates of birth, so your secret is safe! – it allows us to communicate with members securely and efficiently. I can gather essential statistics on recruitment and retention which I share at our monthly committee meetings. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Membership Secretary especially greeting newcomers at the monthly Speaker Meetings. It has been wonderful to encourage tentative visitors to join our throng and introduce them to the incredible variety of activities and groups that we offer.

I still find it staggering that so many people have never heard of u3a until prompted to come along by a friend or neighbour. I, on the other hand, knew it was one of the first things I was going to do when I retired. I am delighted to say that, as I bow out, my mission is complete. I have been banging the drum for four years now about reaching that elusive target of 400 members ... and last week, we got there! Well done everyone. It is your voice and your recommendations that bring new people to us each month. Keep the flag flying!

Janet Hardy M'Ship Sec 2023-27

'MEET & GREET' in Town

Have you recently joined u3a?

Would you like to meet fellow u3a members?

Have you a friend you would like to introduce?

An informal relaxed time to find out more about our u3a

Tables are reserved in the Coffee Area just inside the door.



Pop in and say hello! Every 1st Friday in the month

The Crown Inn, off High Street 10.30am–12 noon

3rd July, 7th Aug, 4th Sept, 2nd Oct, 6th Nov, 4th Dec



CRIBBAGE GROUP ...

A traditional 'pub game' played within a 'pub'. Meeting on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays every month in The Fosters Arms – we are actively seeking new members to join us to enable setting up another playing table. Please get in touch if you enjoy cards in good company. [Allan Clayton—Group Leader](#)



u3a SUPPER CLUB ...

Supper Club is not a fine dining club. We don't dress for dinner! We don't spend a fortune! It's for any u3a member—everyone is welcome.

It's a social occasion, and eating is simply the way we choose to help people to meet. We all know that the best way to unite a family is to sit at a table and have meals together, where both successes and problems can be aired and often solved.

In line with the basic objective of u3a, our Supper Club is a learning experience ... you would be amazed what you discover from other people, the Bridgnorth area and the world in general.

We meet once a month, where the food is good and there is room for us. To date, we have met in The Wheel at Worfield, The Down, The Old Castle, The Royal Oak at Alveley and Blue Ginger. We have tried to stay close to Bridgnorth during the winter evenings as many prefer not to drive in the dark and in bad weather.

Sixty u3a members have signed up for Supper Club but many cannot attend every month. The lowest number we had at a supper was nine and the highest number was twenty-three!

In most cases restaurants need us to preorder if there are more than twelve diners. I send members the menu choices for starters and main courses at least a week in advance with a strict closing date for booking.

*Supper Club is not meant to be a platform for long, serious discussions or for falling out about the state of the world! We leave subjects such as politics for another day. If the evening ends with smiles on everyone's faces you will know that you have made an old man (the co-ordinator) very happy! **Thank you for joining!***



Alan Greenhalgh—Group Leader



WHY DO PEOPLE PLAY BRIDGE ?

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.

Anyone who keeps learning stays young.

The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young." Henry Ford



Each Bridge Game played offers a unique challenge of problems and solutions. Every single deal is different and working on the solution brings enjoyment ... even more so if you find the answer! u3a members playing Bridge at one or more of our groups is growing steadily. Play is available on ... Mondays (Informal Social), Thursdays (Refreshers) and Fridays (Intermediate Regulars). All these groups are friendly and welcoming to any member who plays Bridge, needs a refresher or wishes to learn.

Group Leaders: **Mary Salter (Thursdays)** **Mary Galloway (Fridays)**



HOLIDAY GROUP '26 8th–13th June ...

Chris Wright – Group Coordinator

Durham and the North East — 39 u3a members enjoying 5 days exploring Northumberland



THEATRE GOERS Seats booked for ...

Heather Yarwood – Group Leader

Richard III – Stratford Theatre (June) **Barnum – Hippodrome (Oct)**



GARDEN VISITS Trips arranged to ...

Pamela Oakley & Susan Powell – Group Leaders

Powys Castle NT (July); Ness Botanic Gardens (Sept); National Memorial Arboretum (Nov)



BUS PASS—DAY OUT Trips diarised to ...

Linda Ruston – Group Leader

Bewdley (June); Shrewsbury (July); Dudmaston (August); Hartlebury Castle (Sept—Minibus); Ludlow Distillery (Oct—Minibus); Much Wenlock Fayre (Nov); Bridgnorth Garden Centre (Dec)



Our Website An Appeal to Members ...

The Committee is investigating moving our current website over to a new platform which is called Siteworks (based on Word Press) and is supported by www.u3a.org.uk

I am looking for a member who may want to learn more about how websites work ... or already has some hands on experience ... to share this challenge.

Would this be of interest to you?

Please make contact to find out more.

[Liz Ross—Website Host](#)



ALL THINGS FRENCH ?

Bonjour ... ça va bien ? Ça me fera grand plaisir de vous parler aujourd'hui de notre petit groupe de français. Mais oui, mais oui ... but perhaps I'll do in English instead!

We are a small, eager but relaxed group, meeting twice a month (except July and August) at Giovanni's Cafe in The Cartway. Emilie, the 'patronne', is French and, as well as serving us coffee, likes to take a sneaky interest in the 'sujet du jour', often supplementing the discussion with snippets of advice and information, *en français bien sûr!*

The aim of the group is to try and speak as much as possible in French but the atmosphere is generous and relaxed, encouraging everyone to participate, so we won't pretend that we converse in French for the entire hour. It is as much about gathering knowledge of French topics and situations and about exchanging our experiences.

As Group Leader, I choose the topic for the day, presenting it through a variety of materials and activities. Fact sheets, quizzes, games, sometimes audio clips but these tend to be rather daunting. Yes, the French can talk quickly ... but have you ever considered how fast we can talk too! As much as possible, I like to find topics that have some relevancy to that moment in time. So far this year, we have looked at superstitions on Friday 13th, comparing English ones to French ones; the Winter Olympics; driving offences and penalties (my ouch!) – an amusing and cathartic hour when we all declared our motoring transgressions! In January, the Great British Bird Watch took place so we created a version 'à la française', increasing our vocabulary about birds; and most recently, on 8th May, we pondered why and how this date is recognised in France, followed through with a quiz on flags, beginners' version! New participants are always welcome ... we charge the occasional fee for photocopying ... but otherwise, the cost is a coffee from Emilie.

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WINE APPRECIATION

David Sharland, our Group Leader, hosts our friendly monthly two-hour wine tasting sessions in The Garden Bar, St John Street. David, whose enthusiasm is infectious, has worked in the wine industry for many years and has visited many countries, countless vineyards and sampled wines of all ages and qualities.

David brings five bottles of good wine around a 'theme' for us to sample. He gives us background information on these wines, their country of origin, where vineyards large and small are situated and why varied traditional and modern methods of production, and weather can all affect production.

We are then asked to give each wine our personal rating and to guess the price of each bottle. It is always interesting to hear the variety of comments after each tasting and we have one member (who will remain nameless) who is always 'shocked' at the price declaring 'far too expensive!' Members contribute wine related tales which add to the session and are entertaining!

I think professional wine tasters spit out their wine after tasting! No such finesse for us. We certainly do not spit out our wine, although we have glasses of water and breadsticks provided for optional palette cleansing.

Friendship (and wine) give us happy smiles and we enjoy socialising with u3a friends old and new. Our understanding and knowledge of quality wines is certainly being expanded!

David — Thank you and 'Cheers'!

[Anne Butler—Wine Group Member](#)

THE CONSIDERATE GUEST ?

It is as well to show what a considerate guest you are by waiting until the very last dish is about to be placed on the table, before rushing into the room with a dutiful look and saying ... ***"You MUST let me do something!"***

Successful Advertising — Spreading the news about u3a

The first-time people look at any advertisement ... THEY DON'T EVEN SEE IT!

The second time ... they don't notice it!

The third time ... they are aware that it is there

The fourth time ... they have a vague sense they've seen it somewhere before

The fifth time ... they actually read the advert!

The sixth time ... they thumb their nose at it and react negatively!

The seventh time ... they start to get irritated by it

The eighth time ... they start to think 'there's that advert again'!

The ninth time ... they start to wonder if they are missing out on something

The tenth time ... they ask their friends and neighbours if they've tried it



The eleventh time ... they start to question how all these ads can be afforded

The twelfth time ... they start to think that it must be a good product

The thirteenth time ... they start to feel the product may have value

The fourteenth time ... they remember wanting a product something like this

The fifteenth time ... they start to yearn for it but they can't afford to buy it

The sixteenth time ... they accept the fact that they will buy it sometime in the future

The seventeenth time ... they make a note to buy the product

The eighteenth time ... they curse their lack of money to buy this great product right now

The nineteenth time ... they count their money very carefully

The twentieth time ... THEY BUY IT!

This advice was given by Thomas Smith, a London Businessman in 1855 ... and it still applies today!

How many times has someone said to you ... What is u3a? I've never heard of it!

Let's continue to 'advertise' u3a to one and all – it takes time!



OUT & ABOUT ... Hereford Cathedral & Symonds Yat Boat Trip

(Home of the Chained Library & Mappa Mundi)

On Wednesday 15th April forty six 'Out & Abouters' set off by coach for Hereford Cathedral. On arrival we were divided into two groups, some to have a guided tour around the Cathedral and others to visit the Mappa Mundi and the Chained Library. Later the groups swapped over ... although the lure of the tearoom was too strong for some!

As we left Hereford for Symonds Yat the weather deteriorated and we admired the countryside through rain spattered coach windows. Luckily on arrival the sun shone and we were able to join the boat for our forty minute scenic cruise on the River Wye.



All aboard!

However just as we were returning to the jetty the heavens opened and we were in the centre of a dramatic thunderstorm. Fortunately, the boat owner didn't want to get wet either, so we were all stayed on board until the storm had passed over. It will definitely be a trip to remember – but maybe for the weather rather than for what we saw!

**Jenny Green & Trish Bennett—
Group Leaders**



Time for ice cream!



Chained Library

Coming 2026 Trips: Chester Zoo (September) Pattingham Vineyard (October)



My Experience after joining Bridgnorth u3a ...

Having recently 'signed up' in 2025, no-one is more surprised than myself to find that I am now a Group Leader of not one, but two u3a Groups! My husband and I had moved to Bridgnorth in 2021 and I felt the need to find interests outside of the home, which eventually led me to seek out **u3a**. I was initially interested in one of the Book Groups, but as the waiting list had become very lengthy I was unable to start.

I was invited for a friendly chat over coffee with Heather, the Activities Coordinator to discuss the Book Group when the conversation turned to new Groups that u3a were hoping to start in the near future. One of those was the **FAMILY HISTORY GROUP**. I have been researching my family tree for over twenty years and mentioned this to Heather (just to make conversation you understand!) and I now realise that Heather has fantastic powers of persuasion, without any arm twisting, bribery or blackmail and I have found myself volunteering as leader of this fantastic group. We meet every fourth Thursday of the month and share our experiences, our stories and our stumbling blocks in our trees. We have a wide range of experience, which results in some very interesting conversations. We have about twenty members, some complete novices, who nevertheless have a superb knowledge of history, and we have 'expert' members who can help, support and guide those in need of assistance. Whatever the level of experience, I have found the group to be a warm and friendly mix of people who are interested in the same things as me. It's a lovely feeling.

And the **BOOK GROUP**? I eventually joined the second group, only to find that Sue King, our very capable leader, had decided to step back for personal reasons! I put my name forward to take over the group (I really should stop meeting up with Heather!) and now I lead that group too. Again, one of the friendliest group of people you would ever wish to meet.

Join u3a? I highly recommend it, and you don't have to lead a group unless you want to – just choose the groups that you are interested in and you will not look back.



Sue Evans—Group Leader Family History & Book Group 2

u3a National Initiatives



Push Back Ageism

Push Back Ageism is a multi-layered initiative to change the narrative and challenge preconceptions around age and older adults and what it means to grow older.



Future Lives

Future Lives is a national u3a group which shares information and resources to inspire, influence and inform members about how we can improve our future lives.



Influencing & Social Change

Supporting members, and the movement more broadly, to use our voices and get involved in their communities about issues that matter.

There is a wider u3a world outside Bridgnorth ...

Discover more about these three national initiatives—just click on the links



QUIZ HOUR ...

*Back in the days of Covid lockdowns the u3a Committee was seeking ways to get members doing things together without having to leave their homes. One suggestion was to set up a **Quiz Group** using Zoom and because I held a Zoom Licence, I volunteered to set up the group. Kay Yendole was our first Quiz Master to be succeeded by Sue Jackman.*

We meet regularly every Tuesday morning. Each member is expected to bring ten questions and act as Question Master for their round. They have the discretion to give points (or not!) for close answers and their decision is final; Cedric Lea could be very strict! We obviously have to mark our own answers and as far as I am aware, no-one ever cheats! There are no prizes, just the pleasure of interacting with friends and perhaps doing better than the previous week.

In the early days we had so many members that there was not enough time for everyone to ask their questions, but they would get priority the next week. Numbers have fallen off post-Covid lockdown, but a small core of eight members meet together for an hour or two of quizzing in a friendly atmosphere.

*If you would like to join us ... simply log onto Zoom on a Tuesday morning in time for a 10.30am start. Meeting ID: 834 1960 4032 Passcode: U3A
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83419604032?pwd=QIZOWXJVSZH5dld6Nm1hUmlxMHBVZz09>*

Trevor Padget—Quiz Coordinator



u3a WEEK September 2026

Across the UK, each year during September, u3a Groups promote their learning activities, offered through u3a membership.

Look out for **Bridgnorth & District u3a**
Window Display in Tanners Wine Merchant
11th–25th September
Volunteer u3a Members promoting u3a in
The Crown, High Street
Saturday 5th September



PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

has twenty five members with a core of around fifteen coming along to our fortnightly sessions.

Our meetings are lighthearted with a good laugh thrown in. We are not competitive, as many members are at different stages of their photography development, and we do not have monthly competitions because the same members seem to win every time!



Some members use high end or bridge cameras and others use their mobile phones but it really doesn't matter because what is important is getting a good shot!

What we do have is a great time, with the challenge of a different 'topic' to photograph every month, which is intended to stretch the imagination.

On the 2nd Tuesdays in the month we arrange a visit locally and recently we have photographically explored the Kidderminster Carpet Museum, the Severn Valley Country Park (capturing kingfishers and other birds) and the Poole Hall Fisheries.

For the last two years, we have successfully produced a Calendar for sale to members. We meet monthly (4th Tuesdays) at the Fire Station in Innage Lane, when we show our photographs on their large digital screen.

Help and advice is always available on any photographic subject and if we do not know the answer, it can always be sourced. The important thing is for everyone to enjoy their photography.

Keith Ruston—Group Leader

THE 'PRESENT'

Yesterday is History Tomorrow is a Mystery
Today is a Gift of God
which is why we call it the 'Present'!

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ACTIVITY & INTEREST GROUPS

I appreciate
ART

Art Appreciation 1 & 2

Fire Station Mtg Room
Mon (am & pm) 3rd monthly
Leader—Jane Harris **NEW**

Book Groups 1 & 2 & 3

Bridgnorth Library
Wed (am) 2nd monthly
Leader—Graeme Stoner
Wed (am) 3rd monthly
Leader—Sue Evans
Fri (am) 1st Monthly **NEW**
Leader—Wendy Sharland



Calligraphy

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



Cinema Goers

Majestic Cinema
Film List emailed weekly
Leader—Jean Swift



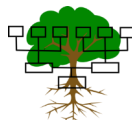
Creative Writers

Fire Station Mtg Room
Tues (pm) 1st monthly
Leader—Ellen Schofield



Environment & Climate

Member's Home
Wed (pm) 2nd monthly
Leader—Liz Ross



Family History

Fire Station Mtg Room
Thurs (am) 3rd monthly
Leader—Sue Evans

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French Conversation 1 & 2

1. Members' Homes
Weds (am) fortnightly
Leader—Angela Treble
2. Giovanni's Café
Fridays (am) fortnightly
Leader—Janet Hardy



Needlecrafters

Bridgnorth Library
Mon (am) 4th monthly
Leader—Elaine de Graaff



Plants & Gardens

Pantry Severn
Thurs (am) 1st monthly
Leader—Ellen Schofield



Photography Group

Sharing—Fire Station
Tues (pm) 2nd monthly
Photos—Out & About
Tues (pm) 4th monthly
Leader—Keith Ruston



SOCIAL ...

'Meet & Greet' in Town

The Crown Inn (Café Area)

Fridays (am) 1st monthly

Welcome Host—Linda Ruston

Breakfast Club

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

Supper Club

Occasional tba
Venues vary
Leader—Alan Greenhalgh

VISITS ... DAY TRIPS

Out & About

Day Trips with Guide
Leaders—
Tricia Bennett & Jenny Green



Garden Visits

Half Day Visits
Leaders—
Pamela Oakley & Susan Powell

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Exploring Churches

Local Churches with Guide
Leader—Chris Wright

Bus Pass (or Mini Bus)—Day Out

Venturing forth for the day!
Leader—Linda Ruston

ACTIVE ...

Walks—Day

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

Walks—Medium

Friday (3rd) (monthly)
4 mile steady walk
Leaders—
Cliff Bassett
& John Barton



Walks—Short

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



Quiz Hour (Zoom)

Tues (am) weekly
Leader—Trevor Padget



Spanish (Zoom)

Thurs (am) weekly
Leader: Marion Low



Theatre Goers

Parlors Hall
Thurs (am) 3rd monthly
Leader—Heather Yarwood



Travellers

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



Wine Appreciation

The Garden Bar, Low Town
Thurs (pm) 3rd monthly
Leader—David Sharland

GAMES ...



Games Together ...

Canasta Mahjong
Rummikub Scrabble
Backgammon Bridge

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

Cribbage

Tuesdays (pm) (1st & 3rd)
The Fosters Arms
Leader—Allan Clayton

Bridge—Players

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

Bridge—Refreshers

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