

This Month's Talk

Monday 20th April 10:30am

Walker Theatre at Theatre Severn

Brian Richards

A shot in the arm – a tale of policing
Shropshire in the last century



Brian will give us an informative and humorous talk about his time as a policeman in Shropshire from his early time as a constable, focussing on the characters he met both police and criminals.

Things have changed today but Brian will tell it as it was.



HIGHLIGHTS

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**If you are not a member of
 Shrewsbury u3a, why not
 join now?
 You won't regret it.**

**Winterbourne House
 and Garden
 u3a Trip 24th June
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Talks at Walker Theatre

Monday 18th May 10:30am

The Walker Theatre

Sarah Gathercole

Secrets and Lies: What Great Masterpieces Say

Monday 15th June 10:30am

The Walker Theatre

John Butterworth

Editing the UK's Fourth Oldest Newspaper

At all talks at the Theatre Severn there will be five seats in the front row that will have a PRIORITY notice on them, these seats are being reserved for those members who have mobility issues and may be unable to use the stairs. The seats will be available on a first come basis

New Members' Social Thursday 23rd April



For a time we have wanted to reinstate a quarterly New Members Social.

It's an opportunity to get together with other new members, myself and Mike Reece our Chairman over a cuppa and biscuits.

We have scheduled a date of Thursday 23rd April. All new members who have joined since 15th November 2025 have been sent an invitation by email.

Full details are on the website at https://shrewsbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/new-members-social/

As refreshments are provided we need to know how many to cater for, if you have not yet responded, please email me at newmembers@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you on the 23rd.

Sue Davies – New Members Secretary.

Crown Green Bowling

The 2026 season will be starting on Wednesday 8th April.

We are kicking off with a free "Taster session" which is open to any u3a members that are interested in giving Crown Green Bowls a try.

Existing members of the group will be there to help you get started on the greens.



If you would like to come along we are at **Old Shrewsbury Bowling Club** at the far end of St Julien Friars car park, meeting at 1.30pm. Please let me know if you are interested so we can ensure we have enough refreshments for everyone.

Hugh Ashworth Hughashworth2000@yahoo.co.uk 07734410691

A Shrewsbury u3a trip to Winterbourne House and Garden, Birmingham on 24th June

Winterbourne House is a hidden gem with unique heritage attraction. It is home to beautiful period rooms and antiques. It is tastefully restored to its Edwardian Arts and Craft splendour. You can move through it, room by room, getting a feel for how the Nettlefold family who built the house lived. You will find exhibits about the family, plus displays on Birmingham's industrial and social history.

Set within seven acres this botanical gardens has over 6,000 plant species from around the world.

Wander along the woodland walk, stroll through the hazelnut tunnel, cross the 1930's Japanese Bridge or simply soak up the tranquillity of this perfectly English Edwardian home.



Tea Room & Shop



There's a cosy tearoom with garden views, selling hot and cold food and a small shop selling plants, gifts, and books.

You may prefer to bring a picnic and sit in the garden.

Leaving Shrewsbury from the Abbey Foregate coach/car park at 9.30 am on Wednesday 24th June. Leaving Winterbourne at 4.30pm.

Cost: **£25. Prompt Payment please.** You can pay me by cash or cheque payable to Shrewsbury u3a. Entrance to the House and Gardens, Tipping, and executive coach travel included in the price. To book, contact me Seeven on 01743 368462 or email trips@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk

Drop-in Session at Palmers Café 24th April

Our popular drop-in afternoons are held at Palmer's Café on Claremont Street, usually on the last Friday of the month. Join us anytime from 2.00pm until 4.00pm in the room upstairs where a lift can transport you in comfort.

This is a good chance to meet other members to chat about everything u3a and there will be Committee members there, and they just love to answer all your questions. All current and potential members are welcome so why not give it a try?

(Future Dates are Fridays 29th May and 26th June)



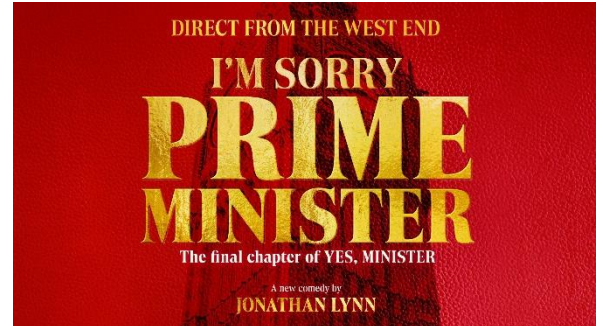
Theatre Trip to Malvern 1st August

Our next venture will be back to Malvern again on Saturday August 1st matinee to see "I'm Sorry Prime Minister"

This highly acclaimed play will tour the provinces after its West End run which is on at the moment.

It is the last shout of the Yes Minister TV series, and so promises to be very amusing.

"The ex-PM is also now master of an Oxford college, but is faced with expulsion from this sinecure by students riled by his affronts against woke orthodoxy. And so, in Jonathan Lynn's elegiac swansong for his well-loved sitcom duo, Hacker calls upon his old consigliere Sir Humphrey to rescue him from trouble one last time."



We have reserved 40 tickets in the stalls at a price of £47, including the coach. As usual we will leave in time to have lunch in Malvern.

If you would like to go, please email me at

gillian.mortimer1@gmail.com Payment will be as usual, by cheque payable to Shrewsbury u3a sent to Gill Mortimer at 279 Crowmere Road SY2 5LF or by BACS 77 27 38. 23493160 Shrewsbury u3a, Theatre Group Account.

As it is likely to be a popular event, seats will be reserved on receipt of payment, so please book as soon as possible.

Gills Mortimer and Trelawney.



NEWS

Group Coordinators Conference in March

We held our annual Group Coordinators conference in March and thank you to all who attended.

We heard Presentations from our Chairman Mike Reece on our five-year strategy, Creating new Groups by Tony Brown, Our Marketing plans, how we look after new members from Sue Davies and finance by Ian Hallworth.

I explained how our new websites work. Last October we replaced the Arda system with two stand-alone systems – SiteWorks and Beacon. These are nationally supported systems used by over 700 u3as. SiteWorks is what the public see, and Beacon is used by everyone for renewing their membership or joining our u3a. Beacon is also used by our Group Coordinators for managing the membership of their respective groups. Any changes made to Beacon have to be replicated in Siteworks – if any Group Coordinators would like to be trained on SiteWorks please get in contact with me.

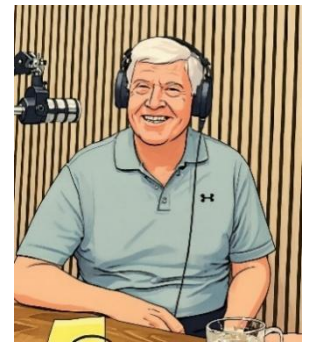
Andy Edwards Groups Administrator

[u3a](#) learn, laugh, live

April 2026

LETTER FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Membership Renewals. The membership renewals period for 2026 is now over. Thanks to our long-suffering Membership Secretary, Ian Tanner, plus those on the Committee who helped him and every member who paid online. For 2027, we will be adopting an all-on-line payment policy. Those who are not able to do it on-line themselves, will be able to attend one of our planned “Renewals Hub sessions,” where Committee members will help them pay on-line, with a credit or debit card, in situ. This will save us the cost of putting cheques and cash into our bank account and reduce the Membership Secretary’s work considerably.



Group Coordinators’ Conference. The Group Coordinators’ conference took place, as scheduled, on 12th March at the Shrewsbury Hive. We had a good attendance and feedback suggested that most Coordinators found it helpful, especially with regard to mastering our new IT system.

YouTube. I am pleased to announce that our Vice Chair, Sue Davies, has started a Shrewsbury u3a YouTube channel. On it you will be able to access a range of Shrewsbury u3a outputs. Just search for “Shrewsbury u3a – YouTube,” to find it. Currently it has some past monthly talks but Sue plans to develop it further in due course. Well done Sue.

Shropshire Network 30th Anniversary – Call for Cakes

Further to the last Newsletter, I have been asked to relay the following:

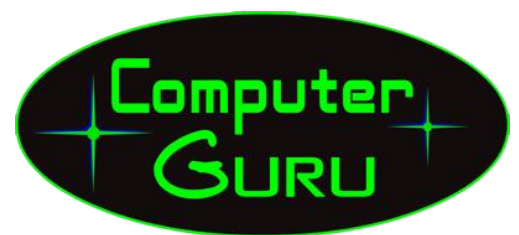
“The Shropshire u3a Network (of which your u3a is a member) has its 30th Anniversary celebrations on **10th June** of this year, and we are asking all of you who have a love of baking (anything from cakes and pastries to sweets/biscuits and tarts - basically anything delicious!) if you could consider baking something for our event. It doesn’t have to be a lot, just some sort of contribution, with a view to having a fun competition (with prize) between contributing u3as. **Please contact Glynis Nicholls, the Network Chair ,at this address wemu3agroups@gmail.com if you are interested in participating. Nothing will be refused and everything will be tasted and eaten with gusto.**”

Shrewsbury u3a Policies

To operate effectively, and legally, we all need to take a responsible and commonsense approach to our participation in u3a activities. All our policies are contained in our Members’ Handbook, which is available on our website. Paper copies are available on request.

From Our Computer Guru

Since we moved to our new website in October, we have tried to make it more usable than our previous version. We list events, upcoming meetings and new on the Information tab recently, is a ‘Help & Support’ page with links to various support articles and webpages. We have even started to add video tutorials. Have a browse around at shrewsbury.u3asite.uk



Best regards Geoff

u3a learn, laugh, live

April 2026

Andrew Fusek Peters – Wildlife Photographer

Anne Cousins

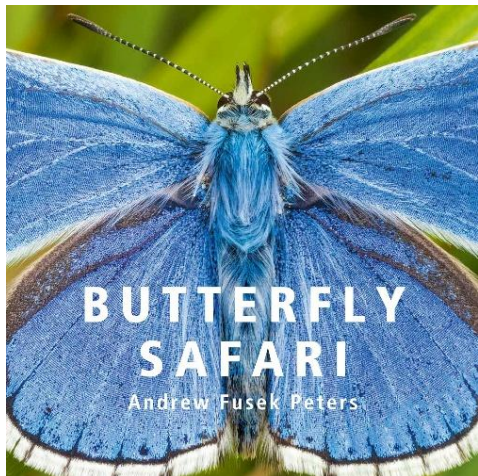
Those of us who attended the March talk by renowned wildlife photographer, Andrew Fusek Peters, had a very special treat in store.

Mr Peters, who lives in South Shropshire, began by showing us photographs of the birds in his own back garden. These stunning shots included greenfinches, siskins, redpolls and even a pair of greenfinches fighting with each other. He then moved on to a selection of photographs of an urban fox family, taken in Clapham, London.

Back in Shropshire, there were photographs of woodpeckers and nuthatches, including a green woodpecker feeding her young, which was taken in Church Stretton cemetery.

There were many close-up photographs of butterflies, including some very rare species, such as the wood white butterfly at Bury Ditches and the silver-studded blue butterfly at Prees Heath. He told us dawn and dusk were excellent times of day in which to take photographs and he liked to combine shots of wildlife with either the sun or the moon, such as his photograph of a marbled white butterfly against a rising moon.

He moved back to birds, with some pictures of waxwings in ornamental trees and then showed us a photograph of a fire crest. Amazingly, he found out that this very rare bird was nesting in a neighbour's garden. There were photographs of swallows in his neighbour's barn, a robin's nest in a hole in a wall, then a kestrel in a tree-stump in Bridgnorth. He shared with us that one way to get close to birds without disturbing them was from a parked car, with the windows wound down! A stationary car appeared to be less threatening to birds than a person on foot.



In his own garden, he set up a special "stage set," using slabs, flowers, and seeds to attract a bank vole. This included some seeds hidden in flowers on a higher level, which meant the vole would need to stand up on its hind legs to reach them, and this created the perfect photograph.

Mr Peters also ventured all over the UK to take photographs of wildlife. For example, he was able to show us photographs of blonde hedgehogs on Alderney, in the Channel Islands and red squirrels on the Isle of Wight. Next year, he will be working on a project to photograph great white egrets.

Many of the photographs, however, were taken in Shropshire. These included a stunning starling murmuration taken at Whixall Moss in 2019 and an otter in a stream near Cardington, which was captured on a camera trap. There were mute swans and cygnets, then swifts in breeding boxes in Lydbury North. Another memorable shot was of a female glow worm, which was taken on the Long Mynd. There were photographs of birds taken in the Shropshire Hills, such as reed buntings, snow buntings, and a golden



plover. Then we saw a great crested grebe and her baby and a cheeky blackbird chick being fed by a mistle thrush, who obviously thought it was one of her own babies!

We enjoyed seeing photographs of the supermoon, wolf moon, and the aurora borealis, all taken somewhere in Shropshire. There was a dramatic photograph of Clun Castle, set against the backdrop of the aurora, for example. On the Stiperstones, Mr Peters had managed to take a photograph of the Milky Way with the aurora borealis.

Towards the end of the presentation, Mr Peters showed us an incredible selection of photographs of birds with their wings outspread, in all the colours of the rainbow. He said



when he first took a photograph

like this, he thought the camera he was using was faulty, but a friend explained to him it was rainbow defraction, i.e. that rainbows are formed when sunlight is bent, reflected, and then dispersed by water droplets, acting as tiny prisms. On the bird's wings, the effect was magical. The most common garden birds looked completely different when photographed in this way. We were shown photographs of bluetits, long-tailed tits, wrens, and goldfinches, as we had never seen them before.



Mr Peters is the most widely used wildlife photographer in the national press, with his work appearing in many different publications, e.g. Amateur Photographer, BBC Wildlife, The Guardian, and The Times. He told us he always tried to put Shropshire on the map with his photographs. He also reminded us that nature is declining across the country, with some bird species, such as the curlew, struggling to survive.

He has written a number of books, including Garden Safari; Butterfly Safari; and Upland, which shows pictures of the wildlife of the Stiperstones and the Long Mynd. More information and examples of his work can be found on his website: fusekphotos.com.

NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER MAY 2026

I am looking for reports that promote your Group and tell us what you have been doing. If you are the coordinator of one of these groups, I would love to hear from you. No prescribed length but around 300 words is good, and a few photos are welcome too – by **25th April** please to editor@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk

- Advanced Spanish Conversation ● Backgammon ●
- Breakfast at Shrewsburys ● Creative Writing 1 ●
- Exploring Mindfulness ● Feminism Discussion ●
- Italian ● Living Sustainably ● Play, Write, Record ●
- Poetry Workshop ● Table Tennis 3 ●

GROUP REPORTS

Computer Club 01

As last year, we've had another busy twelve months for the members of the Computer Club. We continue to meet in the Memorial Hall at Bayston Hill and have covered some interesting topics:

We learnt about passkeys – a big improvement over passwords as they are faster and far more secure because your device proves who you are without ever sharing a secret that could be stolen.

Esims: The tiny little circuit board that you plug into your phone may now not be necessary. The SIM card that you traditionally use can now be replaced by an electronic version. One you download from your mobile provider making it easier to change sims and numbers (and for going abroad).

We learnt about building a computer from its component parts to run Windows 11. For the builder, it was a very rewarding experience. Tip. If you are still using Windows 10, perhaps it's time to upgrade. Windows 10 is no longer supported by Microsoft, so your device will be more liable to security issues.

The big practical project of the year, was dismantling an old laptop – well five of them actually. It's amazing how many small screws there are and how tight everything fits together. Not a bit of space is wasted, very different to the layout in a traditional desktop computer

The Computer Club exists to share knowledge and help those people who are wishing to learn more about their computer/s phones or tablets. A few of the group are keen enthusiasts with a lot of knowledge, but we find that everyone has something to contribute. The second half of our meetings is where we ask questions and share ideas. We bring our laptops/notebooks/tablets to either demonstrate a problem or practically learn a new skill.



Geoff Lane

German Improvers Conversation Group



Christine Conlin.

We're a small group of intermediate/advanced German speakers with twin aims: to speak German throughout our meetings and to have fun doing just that, *Spaß mit Deutsch*. We agree our discussion topics usually a month in advance giving everybody a chance to prepare. Our facilitator is a retired German teacher, so while there's no explicit language teaching, we pick up on grammar and vocabulary points as they come up. Recent topics we've covered include: the reintroduction of German military service, a comparison of the questions in the German and British citizenship tests, the theme of love (around St Valentine's Day) and German-

Turkish relations (after a visit to a Turkish restaurant). With Easter coming up, we greatly enjoyed a German-style egg-painting session. We meet on the second and fourth Wednesday morning of each month in each other's homes. We are currently full but if you'd like to join our waiting list, please contact Christine at christineconlin7@gmail.com

As well as trying to improve our Italian conversation and grammar we explore bits of Italian culture, helped by our "Un Giorno in Italia" book and a range of YouTube videos.

Italy is renowned for its festivals and celebrations, and the month of April has plenty to choose from, starting on **1st April** with **Pesce d'Aprile** (April's Fish) with jokes and pranks.

Easter falls within the month this year. On **Venerdì Santo** (Good Friday) cities host solemn processions. **Pasqua** itself (Easter Sunday) sees the Pope's Easter Mass in St. Peter's Square drawing massive crowds. Florence celebrates with the Scoppio del Carro, where a decorated cart explodes with fireworks in front of the Duomo.

On **Pasquetta** (Little Easter, Easter Monday) Italians traditionally head outdoors for picnics and excursions. Parks, countryside venues, and historic sites fill with families and friends sharing traditional foods. Colomba, which translates to "dove" in Italian, refers to a traditional Italian Easter cake, Colomba Pasquale, shaped like a dove. This sweet bread is typically made with an egg and butter dough, flavored with fragrant orange zest, and studded with candied orange peel or dried fruit.



April 25th, Festa della Liberazione (Liberation Day) is one of Italy's most important holidays. It commemorates Italy's liberation from fascist occupation, a pivotal moment in Italian history. The 25th is also **Festa di San Marco** (Feast of St. Mark), celebrated in Venice in honour of the city's patron saint, St. Mark. There are many more regional celebrations in April, including a three-day **Festa di Carciofo** (artichoke festival) held from April 12th -14th in the coastal town of Ladispoli, just outside of Rome in Lazio, whilst in the towns of Asigliano and Caresana on April 23 (the saint day of San Giorgio) the **Palio dei Buoi** (oxen race)

Naturewatch 2

Enid Pryce-Jones

With very few exceptions the weather on the first Wednesday of the month tends to favour our group's exploration of local sites and nature. We try to go to places where and when there is something special to see, so we have been to a variety of places including Ellesmere (for the heronry), Whixall Moss (for insects, birds, and fungi), Prees Heath (for butterflies and moths) and Cound (for the snowdrops). We thoroughly enjoy our walks and usually manage to find somewhere for coffee or lunch afterwards. The numbers vary from month to month, but we average about ten people – at the moment all ladies. This is not by design, and we would welcome some male members joining us.





This is a great way to exercise in a positive environment – without getting cold or wet! We hold our meetings twice monthly on a Monday afternoon (2.00 – 4.00pm) at Gains Park (Bicton Heath) hall. It's a lovely hall with plenty of free parking right outside, and it's on the S11 bus route. We have been very lucky to have a keen member, Pam Stone, who has plenty of experience and the confidence to show us the steps and provide the music. Pam is not a

teacher, but she is very good and so patient! We do encourage those who are quick learners to help others. We are a very mixed friendly group and aim to limit our membership to 25, as we all need plenty of floor space. Pam aims to regularly show us a new dance, and we spend time going over previously learned favourites. The music is lively and we have a lot of fun trying to remember the steps! Five of our members also now show the group the steps to dances they know and enjoy – so this just proves that dancing can improve your confidence and your memory.

We hire the hall for 2 hours, but members go at their own pace and take a break whenever they wish. There is a small fee to cover the hall hire charge which is collected in advance. The hall is booked in blocks of 6 or 8 meetings, over 3 or 4 months. (We do not meet in July and August). As it is very popular there are currently no vacancies, but if you are interested in joining us, I can add you to the waiting list currently 8 on the list). You do not need any experience (We are called a "Beginner's" group and are not competitive). All you need is the will to persevere – and remember to enjoy yourself!

Here's a photo of some of us in action.

NEW GROUPS REPORTS

Tony Brown

With April now upon us and the advent of Spring perhaps now is the time to try something new, something for which you have been waiting patiently (on a waiting list), or perhaps something rather different. Whilst the pipeline of new ideas has continued unabated some of the previous suggestions are now set to come to fruition including e.g. Advanced Spanish Conversation (additional group), Table Tennis (additional group), and Tai Chi (new activity).

Looking ahead, the featured ideas for April, including further additional groups for popular activities and new suggestions, are as follows. Please read on for details, and to express interest in any of these please contact me (Tony Brown – New Groups Facilitator) at newgroups@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk

Italian – additional group

This is intended for members that already have, or are working towards, a reasonable understanding of the Italian language and are keen to improve their knowledge of the language and culture of Italy. The aim is to cover grammar and the main points of standard spoken and written Italian, to deal with most everyday situations including describing experiences, opinions, plans etc.



Motown, Funk, and Soul – additional group – NEW

Do you enjoy listening to and sharing your most loved Motown, Soul and Funk tunes? This group is intended to provide an opportunity for members to enjoy discussions about musicians and songs, as well as sharing personal anecdotes, memories, knowledge, and personal reactions to music. This is a broad topic with scope to explore different musicians, producers, and the historical context of the music. It is envisaged that discussions will be stimulated by members doing a little research and then sharing what is found. We will focus on viewing YouTube clips on TV of the music chosen by members, expecting to provide a few surprises as well as appreciating some well-loved gems.



Stitching 2 – additional group – NEW



The aim of this additional group is to build on the success of the existing group by providing an opportunity for further Shrewsbury u3a members to join this creative activity and enable them to explore a wide range of textile and yarn-based craft activities including sewing, embroidery, quilting, weaving, knitting, and crochet. It is open to all abilities ranging from beginners to experts, indeed anyone who enjoys being creative with fabric and yarn and is eager to learn from fellow crafters. Members may choose to work on individual or group projects, and individual member-led sessions could also provide 'tasters' of further

activities. There is also an opportunity to focus on different techniques such as dressmaking. The meeting format, frequency and timing, would be finalised by the members, however, experience with the existing group suggest that to meet for 2 hours twice per month, probably at members' homes should work well.

Welsh for Beginners – additional group

Bore da, Braf cwrdd â ti. If you would like to know what this says – and how to say it to others, please think about joining the Welsh for Beginners group. This new group is aimed at absolute beginners and using practice, discussion and conversations will provide you with the opportunity to develop skill in conversational Welsh.



Central Events



We are looking for additional members to join the small band of people already committed to running some Shrewsbury u3a central events. Whilst some effort is necessarily involved, the camaraderie of working in a team should be enjoyable and rewarding.

Shrewsbury u3a Committee Members

Mike Reece	Chairperson		
Sue Davies	Vice-Chairperson		
Russell Game	Secretary		
Ian Hallworth	Treasurer		
Ian Tanner	Membership Secretary		
Sue Davies	New Members Secretary		
Frank Velander	Speaker Organiser		
Tony Brown	New Groups Facilitator		
Patti Cooke	Minutes Secretary		
Andy Edwards	Groups Administrator		
Mike Etchells	IT Admin		
Mike McGarry	Editor	editor@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk	07840 759702
Marketing Officer, Equipment Officer and Local Networks Officer posts are currently vacant			

Study Groups and Activities

If you would like full details of a group, or would like to join, then log on to our website or you can contact the Editor. Details above.

Outdoor and Sports	Hobbies	Languages	Academic
Badminton	Calligraphy	Advanced Spanish Conversation	Anthropology
Crown Green Bowling	Classic and Vintage Vehicles	Ancient Greek	Architecture
Cycling 2	Clock Repairing for Beginners	British Sign Language	Creative Writing
Golf Croquet	Computer Club 01	Deutscher Stammtisch	Creative Writing 2
Indoor Bowling	Computer Club 02	French Conversation 1	Economics
Naturewatch 1	Family History	French Conversation 3	Exploring English Language
Naturewatch 2	Love2Travel	French Improvers	Feminism Discussion Group
Pétanque	Reading 1	German	History 1
Pickleball 2	Reading 2	German Conversation Improvers	History 2
Table Tennis 1	Stitching	Greek Holiday Conversation	History of Science/Invention
Table Tennis 2	Creative Arts	Italian	International Relations & War
Table Tennis 3	Creative Arts	Italiano	Local History 1
Table Tennis 4	Digital Photography	Italian Improvers	Local History 2
Touch Tennis	Drama Games Workshop	Latin	Local History 3
Walking	Early Dance	Parlez Vous Francais	Local History 4
Walkers 1	Folk Music	Welsh for Beginners	Military History
Walkers 2 (Hill Strollers)	Folk Music 2	Welsh Intermediate	Philosophy Group
Walks – Even Shorter	Folk Tunes Workshop	Social and Wellbeing	Political Philosophy
Walks (5th Wed)	Line Dancing	Breakfast at Shrewsbury	Practical Philosophy
Walks Just Walking	Play, Write, Record	Discovering Shropshire Lunch 1	Topical Discussion
Walks Medium 1	Practical Photography	Discovering Shropshire Lunch 2	Cultural
Walks Medium 2	Ukulele	Discovering Shropshire Lunch 3	Art Appreciation
Walks Medium Hilly	Indoor Games	Exploring Mindfulness	Cinema
Walks Short	Backgammon	Have Pass Will Travel	Classical Music Appreciation
	Board Games	Living Sustainably	Jazz Appreciation
	Bridge 1	Lunch Club 2	Looking at Art
	Bridge 3	Lunch Club 3	Modern Art History
	Bridge 4	Lunch on Sunday	Motown, Soul and Funk Music
	Contract Whist	The One Club	Poetry Appreciation
	Cryptic Crosswords	The One Club Group 2	Poetry Workshop
	Mahjong	Sunday Lunch Group 1	Theatre Trips
		Trips	