

This Month's Talk

Monday 18th May 10:30am

Walker Theatre at Theatre Severn

Sarah Gathercole

Secrets and Lies

What Great Masterpieces Say



We welcome Sarah back to The Walker Theatre for another of her wonderful talks about art history.

This time she will be looking at eight masterpieces covering the period 1416– 1911 and showing that every work of art has a story to tell, not just about its creation but how it comes down to us in the 21st century



If you are not a member of Shrewsbury u3a, why not join now? You are guaranteed a great experience.

HIGHLIGHTS

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- Creative Writing •
- Play, Write, Record •
- Breakfast at Shrewsbury •
- Folk Tunes Workshop •

New Groups Page 10

- Walks Short (about 3 Miles) •
 - Italian •
 - Stitching 2 •

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- Beginners Bridge •
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Tea and Cake at Palmers
Tuesday 9th June 2pm
See Chairman's Letter on
Page 4

TALKS AT THEATRE SEVERN

Monday 15th June 10:30am

The Walker Theatre

John Butterworth

Editing the UK's Fourth Oldest Newspaper

The history of the Shrewsbury Chronicle from a former Editor

Monday 20th July 10:30am

The Walker Theatre

Lyn Pendle

Orangutans and Volunteering

Working with animals in a rescue centre in Sarawak

DROP-IN SESSION AT PALMERS CAFÉ FRIDAY 29th MAY

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 26th June and 31st July)



FILMMAKER WANTED



Up to 2019 many of our talks were filmed and these are available to view on our YouTube channel at [Shrewsbury u3a - YouTube](#) The reason it stopped was because we no longer had someone to do it.

We would like to resume the filming and Theatre Severn are happy for us to do this, but the stumbling block remains the same. We need someone to do it.

If anyone has the necessary skills (and equipment) to do this and fancies giving it a go, please contact our Talks Organiser, Frank Velander. speakerorganiser@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk

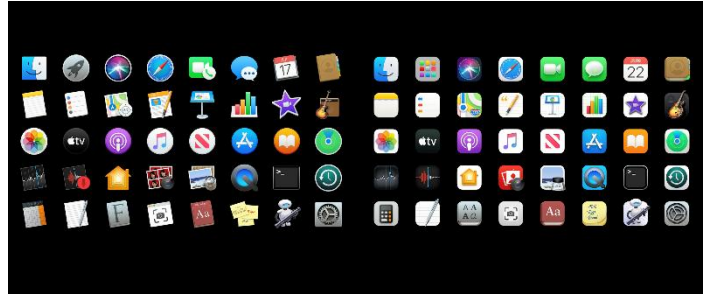
OTHER EVENTS

Our Central Events Committee are now meeting regularly with many ideas in the pipeline. The first will be Tea and Cakes at Palmers on 9th June and other ideas being discussed are quizzes, wine tastings, ceilidhs and group bungee jumps. Well, maybe not the last one. If you have any ideas for other events, please let us know.

From Our Computer Team

Our IT Admin Leader Mike Etchells has decided to stand down, and I know how grateful we all are for the efforts he has put in.

Geoff Lane has now taken over this role though, for some inexplicable reason, does not wish to be on the Committee. Perhaps the quality of the biscuits at Meole Church are not up to his standards! Geoff has been working in the background for some years, and I know that many of you will have been helped by him. Your Editor is certainly one of them.



Geoff has a couple of messages this month:

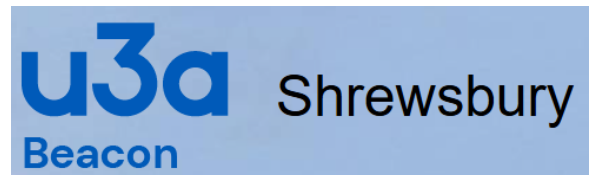
Website Update

We've been busy creating new content for our website. Check out the '[New Groups](#)' page to see the new groups that are coming shortly. Volunteers are always required for Group Coordinators, so perhaps you could help? We now have a live feed to our Facebook page, so you can follow posts on Facebook without leaving our website.

The homepage article "Group of the Month" has so far concentrated on groups with plenty of vacant spaces. If you feel your group warrants the accolade of "Group of the Month" send me an email with reasons why you think your group deserves it. And finally, visual is always good, so if your groups page only contains text and no pictures, then get busy with your camera and send me some photos to add to your page.

Beacon Profiles

If you've recently joined our u3a, please take a moment to create your **Beacon Profile**.



Your profile gives you secure access to your personal record in our Beacon system. You can update your contact details at any time (phone numbers, email address, postal address, etc.) and, importantly for us, when renewal season arrives, you will be able to renew your membership online quickly and easily.

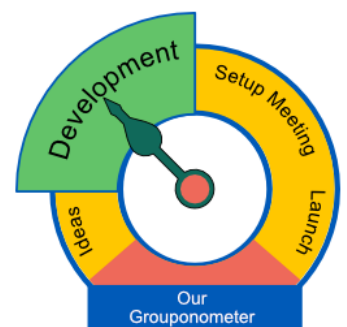
More information is available on the [Membership](#) page of our website, alternatively you can view an online tutorial [here](#) (electronic version only).

Website Improvements

Our new website is continually evolving (*mostly thanks to Geoff – Ed*). Two new things introduced recently are a section where you can see which groups are in the pipeline, and there is a wonderful graphic that shows the stage that development has reached.

You can also now see an alphabetical list of which groups have vacancies – 67 at the time of going to press.

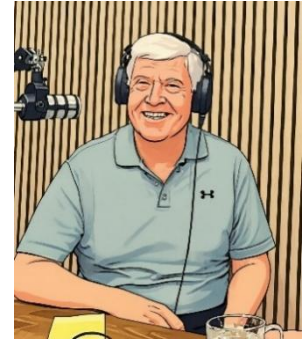
It is well worth a regular visit to the website to see how things are progressing.



LETTER FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

New Members' Welcome Briefing.

On 23 April, over 50 new members attended our first central New Members Welcome Briefing. The aim of this activity was to ensure that new members feel fully integrated to our u3a, have a good view of how we operate and can receive clear answers to any questions they may have. Feedback from attendees was very positive. We intend to hold further similar sessions, every few months, for those joining u3a in future.



Socials

The Central Events Group held their first meeting in early April. There are currently six people who have stepped up to this role. Others would be most welcome. The plan is to hold three, or possibly four, socials in any full year. In the remainder of 2026, we hope to hold three. The first social will be held to determine the appetite of members for such events. The second social is likely to be an afternoon quiz in September.

First Social of 2026

The first social will be a relaxed afternoon event held in the upper floor of Palmers from 2pm to 4pm on Tuesday 9th June. It will be a gathering centred around tea/coffee and cake. It will be simply aimed at providing an opportunity for members to socialize. Tea/coffee/biscuits and a limited amount of cake will be provided. Attendees are requested to bring cake to share with others. Anyone with food intolerances should exercise the requisite caution.

There will be no charge for this event, and it will include a free raffle. In May, I will e mail all members with a request to preregister to attend. **Capacity will be up to 100 people on a first come (to register) first served.**

Membership Renewals

Preparations are in hand for the Online Renewals Hub to run over the 2027 renewals period of Dec to Feb inclusive. Those members who renew online at home will *not* need to visit the hub. It will operate for the benefit of those who are unable to renew online without assistance. The hub will be located at the Abbey Foregate Station Museum where there will be tea and coffee provided free of charge and we have good internet access. More details will be provided nearer the time.



A Shot in the Arm Brian Richards

Report by Rosemary Salter

Brian talked about his time in Shropshire's Police Force in the 1960s and 70s – a time when, in many ways, policing was very different from now.

It was on 13th January 1964 that Constable Richards, fresh out of training, reported to the Police Station on Swan Hill. The Sergeant there, Bob Reeves, was the Dixon of Dock Green of Shrewsbury. An inveterate pipe-smoker, he was not a man to be hurried. A call came in that a man had collapsed on College Hill. "No rush", said the Sergeant, as they progressed slowly to the scene. "If he's going to die, he'll die". Upon reaching the man who was, indeed, lying on the ground, the Sergeant kicked his bum! He told him to get up and go home – and he did! This was Brian's first lesson in practical policing.



A few weeks later, Brian was checking dog licences in Weston Rhyn and found himself at his uncle's house where the licence had apparently expired the previous day. Blood proved thicker than water...

On another occasion, Brian set off on patrol on his bicycle and came across a group of people gathered on the toll bridge. "Look down", they urged him. He looked but could see nothing untoward. "In the Girls' School playing field!" He looked again – and then he saw it – a young couple devoid of every item of clothing, 'going at it like rabbits'. The crowd demanded he do something about it, so down he went, making as much noise as possible, and tapped the man on the shoulder to tell him that they had an audience. "Do you have a driving licence?" he asked, somewhat idiotically. "I didn't know I needed one for this!" the man replied and carried on finishing what he'd started. The poor girl was left starkers. Whenever Brian saw a ginger-haired girl in town after that, he looked the other way.

After two years in Shrewsbury, Brian met his future wife and moved to Shifnal. Here he encountered his first fatal accident. It was a dark Saturday night. A ten-year-old boy crossed the road behind a bus and was struck by a car coming in the opposite direction. He was flung forty feet across the carriageway into a field. Young Constable Richards found this accident very hard to deal with.

He then moved to Wellington where he met two 'characters'. The first, Derek, was suspected of stealing from an electricity meter. Derek freely admitted it, offered Brian a cup of tea and then quite happily got into the Panda car to make a statement at the Police Station. Afterwards, he asked Brian if he would give him a lift home, which he did.

Derek popped up again some time later when Brian was having trouble with getting an agitated Freddie into the Panda. Derek hit him and knocked him out cold, then helped Brian to get him to the Police Station. Afterwards, he asked for a lift home...

On one night shift, Brian was out in a patrol car with his sergeant when he spotted a car parked in a public car park. Now, it was 4.30 am and this seemed odd. So, he questioned the driver through his open window:



- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Was he waiting for someone? | No. |
| Was he on his way to work? | No. |
| Where did he live? | Dawley. |
| What was he doing here then? | On his way to Edinburgh, he was having a rest. |

Suspicious, Brian asked him to get out of the car. The man had on a shirt, tie and waistcoat; on his bottom half, a skirt and high heels. In the boot there was a suitcase and in the suitcase were 150 pairs of (soiled) ladies' panties. Brian arrested the man for theft (he couldn't think of anything else) and took him to the Station. As arresting officer, he was responsible for gathering the evidence, so he shoved all the panties into a cupboard and went home where he had a thorough wash. (The man admitted theft plus the sexual assault of a young girl).

Brian transferred to Dawley where, in July 1975, he'd just returned to the Station at the end of a late shift when he was called out again: a man had a gun and was threatening to kill someone. The suspect was running towards his back gate, and Brian followed him into his garden where the man shot him in the right arm with a rifle. Brian commented wryly that this was not like the Saturday morning matinees in which John Wayne was regularly shot but never seriously injured. Brian was determined not to let the criminal get away, despite being beaten about the head with the barrel of the gun and tried to hit him with his truncheon. He was on the ground and holding on to the man's belt when he heard the rifle being reloaded. Brian dragged himself up and shouted for help. The criminal had shot himself. Both he and Brian were taken to the RSI where the gunman died from his self-inflicted wound.

Brian was off work for several months. He received a letter from 10 Downing Street informing him that he was to be awarded the Queen's Gallantry Medal. So, Brian, his wife and two children went to Buckingham Palace where he was escorted to the Picture Gallery to wait with the other medal recipients. He was too overawed to talk to them. The investiture was carried out by the Queen herself, and Brian was impressed that she knew all about the incident. As soon as the little ceremony was over, someone snatched the medal from Brian and put it in a box. There were no tea and sandwiches, and he found himself outside where a photographer was waiting to charge him a large sum for a souvenir picture. On the way home, he ran out of petrol. The Police Force had declined to pay him a mileage allowance for his trip to receive his bravery medal.



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I was a little short of copy for this issue so have 'borrowed' a few jokes from an Australian u3a website, some of which clearly show that we have a lot in common with our Antipodean cousins!



GROUP REPORTS

Our Supportive Creative Writing Group!

Sue Sharp

Writing can be a lonely pursuit — but it doesn't have to be.

We offer a warm, welcoming space for writers of all levels and aspirations. At our relaxed monthly meetings, we share work and give honest, constructive feedback on a variety of submissions which might encompass short stories, poems, articles, posters, or whatever format fits the monthly prompt.



Recent prompts have included:

- A near-derelict house close to the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct World Heritage Site and the Chirk / Llangollen Canal.
- An unexpected journey
- An item left behind in a hotel or Bed and Breakfast.
- A biography (or autobiography) of a statue
- Incorporating three lines from a book into your own story
- A fairy tale retold with a twist

Regular deadlines and group energy help beat procrastination and writer's block, while sparking fresh ideas and broadening horizons. Discussions stay creative and inclusive — we gently steer clear of politics.

Best of all, we turn solitary writing into a shared, enjoyable experience with like-minded people who truly understand the journey.

If you want to grow your skills, stay motivated, and have more fun with your writing, come and join us! New members are always welcome, numbers permitting.

Play, Write, Record

Steve Darling

Well, after several, "interesting", months of diverse musical direction, and people trying out our group to see if it suited, our Play, Write, Record group has settled to do what it says on the tin.

We are individually bringing ideas to our sessions and then collectively working with those ideas and creating original music. As you would expect with a mix of musical styles and preferences, our "Tunes", are as diverse as the members themselves, which makes for some really interesting compositions and arrangements.



We are all, learning to use our varied computer skills and Cubase our chosen software to good effect, with more and more interesting production ideas bearing fruit in our musical journey.

We are on our way to having a CD's worth of material ready, with just some final polishing and mastering to complete

AND STOP PRESS

Some of the group's work can now be heard on our website. Go to [Play, Write, Record - Shrewsbury](#) and prepare to be entertained.

Ode To 'Breakfast at Shrewsbury'

*Join us for breakfast it's so much fun,
Toast and jam
Or a fruity bun*

*Tea and coffee
Or a hot chocolate treat
It's a jolly good time to meet!*

*French toast, croissants galore
All the specials we love and adore
Bacon and egg or smashed avocados
We are the Breakfast Aficionados!*



Breakfast at Shrewsbury's continues to flourish and is a very successful group. It has been running since 2018, when it was set up by Mike Smith who is still an ardent supporter and advisor. Now in its 8th year the decision to increase the monthly session from one to twice has not limited its appeal.

One of the great advantages of this group is its welcoming attitude to new members – no one has to wait to join! The main criteria is a willingness to share laughter, nonsense and friendship!

Although, the member list is quite long, rarely do we attract more than 18 members at any one Saturday morning. This may sound daunting but our wonderful Shrewsbury Independent Cafes, all welcome us on our regular visits, are pleased to serve us without the need to pre-order and serve us delicious breakfasts. And in this time of financial strain on businesses, I am glad we can support them.

This year we have added two new locations both of which are proving enjoyable and are looking forward to our return.

With Huge Thanks to the following owners and their wonderful staff;

Diane @ Bradley's at the Column

Caroline @ Number 4 Butcher Row

Mark @ Taste of Shrewsbury

Rebecca @ Riverview in the Parade

Lily @ The Exchange Bellstone.

Group Coordinator email/ phone; via Beacon please.

Joel & George @ The Greenhouse, Milk Street,

Matt & Holly @ the Market Hall Café,

Fred @ The Ploughboy Mardo,

Gee & Max @ The Meatball Shack, Whitchurch Road



Do you play an instrument, visited a local pub, heard people playing folk music and thought, "I would like to try that"? Well, that's the aspiration of the u3a Folk Tunes Workshop – to enable people to join in at a pub session playing traditional English session tunes.

We have improvers through to experienced players in attendance, both wanting to play along with others and expand their repertoire to include folk music. This means it is difficult to categorise the session in terms of musical ability, but it could be called a 'slow session'.



In the 'workshop' first half we focus on four new tunes which have been introduced the month before by those attending or by the group coordinator. We play each of these two or three times through before moving on to the next. After a chatty tea break, we open our u3a tune book and play through tunes in alphabetical order picking up from where we left off at the session before. Theoretically, all these tunes should have been through the workshop first half and if we have been practising them regularly, we might actually be able to bash them out quite quickly. In reality, we nearly always continue at a steady pace as people have joined the workshop at different times and have different levels of experience playing the tunes and their instruments. And, there's an awful lot of tunes – trying to learn them off by heart is just not possible. The idea is to keep practising until they gradually soak into the brain ready for the day we go to that aspirational pub session. It's definitely a 'slow session' all the way through!

All the group resources are available online so they can be downloaded to a device or printed off according to preference.

We have just moved to the Meole Brace Peace Memorial Hall, Upper Road, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9EX. This means that we don't have a waiting list and can accept new members for the foreseeable future. We all pay £2.50 to cover hall hire, tea, coffee and a traditional u3a custard cream! We meet on the third Tuesday of the month from 2pm until 4 pm.

If you would like to come along and give it a try, contact Andrew Mills by email andrewlindamills@gmail.com we would love to meet you.

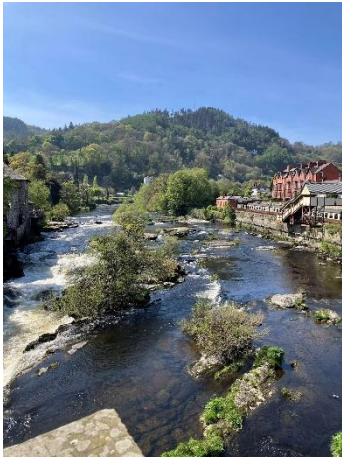
NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER JUNE 2026

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. As long or short as you like, and a few photos are welcome too – by **17th May** please to editor@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk

- Board Games ● Calligraphy ●
- Creative Arts ● Discovering Shropshire Lunch 1 ●
- Exploring the English Language ●
- Greek Holiday Conversation ● History 1 ●
- International Relations and War Studies Post 1945 ●
- Jazz Appreciation ● Walkers 2 (Hill Strollers) ●

OUR GROUPS CERTAINLY GET ABOUT

Here are pictures stolen from our Facebook page showing some of the places our groups visited in April.



Just Walking in Llangollen



**Walkers 1 and 2
In Killarney**



**Our u3a Trip to
Tatton Park**

This month's *new addition* is an additional **Short Walks** group (defined as approximately three miles); whilst both the additional **Italian Group** and second **Stitching Group** remain open for new registrations.

I have received further suggestions including a **Beginners' Bridge Group**, an additional **History Group**, and latterly a **Blues Appreciation Group**. All we need is a draft description of these, and ideally a willingness to be the Group Coordinator (at least initially), and I will be pleased to help bring these to fruition. Therefore, please contact me to discuss what is required.

Please read on for further details, and to express interest in any of these please contact me:

(Tony Brown – New Groups Facilitator) at newgroups@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk

Walks – Short (about 3 miles) - NEW



This additional short walks group aims to offer a leisurely walk twice a month of no more than three miles, limiting hills and stiles as much as possible. Members will do a variety of walks from around town to further afield, generally travelling no more than 30 mins from Shrewsbury. (The existing group has visited Colemere, Habberley, Acton Burnell, Much Wenlock, Lyth Hill, Nescliffe, and several other locations.)

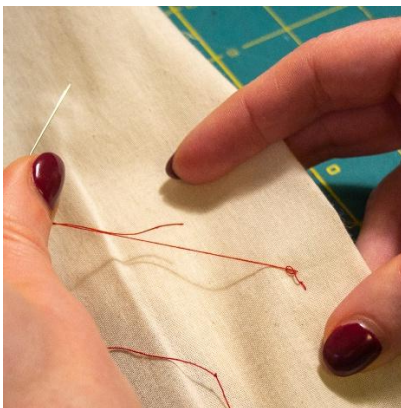
It is envisaged that everyone will take a turn to lead a walk, and that we may sometimes have a short stop for a drink / flask during the walk, and often meet afterwards for a coffee or even food if people want but it gives us a chance to socialise. There is the possibility of the occasional social event on an *ad hoc* basis.

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.



Stitching 2 – additional group



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.

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 Velandar	Speaker Organiser		
Tony Brown	New Groups Facilitator		
Patti Cooke	Minutes Secretary		
Andy Edwards	Groups Administrator		
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
Table Tennis 6	Drama Games Workshop	Latin	Local History 3
Touch Tennis	Early Dance	Parlez Vous Francais	Local History 4
Walking	Folk Music	Welsh for Beginners	Military History
Walkers 1	Folk Music 2	Welsh Intermediate	Philosophy Group
Walkers 2 (Hill Strollers)	Folk Tunes Workshop	Social and Wellbeing	Political Philosophy
Walks – Even Shorter	Line Dancing	Breakfast at Shrewsburys	Practical Philosophy
Walks (5th Wed)	Play, Write, Record	Discovering Shropshire Lunch 1	Topical Discussion
Walks Just Walking	Practical Photography	Discovering Shropshire Lunch 2	Cultural
Walks Medium 1	Ukulele	Discovering Shropshire Lunch 3	Art Appreciation
Walks Medium 2	Indoor Games	Exploring Mindfulness	Cinema
Walks Medium Hilly	Backgammon	Have Pass Will Travel	Classical Music Appreciation
Walks Short	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
		Tai Chi Beginners	
		Trips	