

HIGHLIGHTS

Future Events Page 2**Chairman's Report Page 3****Group Reports Page 12**

- **Touch Tennis 1** • **Walks Short About Three Miles** •
- **Have Pass Will Travel** • **Welsh Intermediate** • **Hilly Walks** •
- **Parlez-vous Francais** • **One Club 2** • **Tai Chi** •

New Groups Page 12

- **Portuguese** • **Urban Sketching** • **Stitching 3** • **History 3** • **Adventurers** •

Last Month's Talk Page 4**Report from the Quiz Page 5**

THIS MONTH'S TALK

Monday 19th October**10:30am Walker Theatre at Theatre Severn****Alison Utting**

Katherine Plymley – a Life on Paper



Alison has stepped in as a late replacement and those of us that were at her previous talk in February about Agnes Hunt will remember how brilliant she was.

Katherine Plymley (1758 – 1829) was a South Shropshire diarist whose journals contain fascinating accounts of her travels, connections

with significant people of the day and her close involvement with the Abolition Movement.

The first part of the talk will involve her life and times, with illustrations and the second half will be performed in character, using Katherine's own words.



**FREE TEA & COFFEE AT
MONTHLY
PALMERS' AFTERNOONS**

**SHREWSBURY u3a CEILDIH
NOVEMBER 14th
WAITING LIST**

TALKS AT THEATRE SEVERN/FOOTBALL CLUB

Monday 16 th November	Main Auditorium	Brian Anderson
South Georgia		
Monday 14 th December	Shrewsbury Town FC	Bill Curnow
The Health Benefits of Singing Performance by Shrewsbury Male Voice Choir		

DROP-IN SESSION AT PALMERS CAFÉ FRIDAY OCTOBER 30th

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 2-4PM in the room upstairs where a lift can transport you.

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. This is an ideal opportunity for members to call in with their tablets for technical help.

All current and potential members are welcome so why not give it a try? (Next month, the date is Friday 27th November).

The big news is that, as from October, **THERE WILL BE FREE TEA AND COFFEE FOR ANYONE WHO ATTENDS**. Hopefully, this will make it all more sociable and inviting and we really want members to come in and talk to us.



CEILIDH SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14th



We announced the ceilidh via an email to all members and all 80 tickets sold within a few days. We do have a waiting list in case of dropouts and, if you want to go on that, you can email the editor at editor@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk.



NEWSLETTER CHANGES – NO MORE GROUP LISTS

There will be some major changes to the Newsletter as we head into 2027, and I will be as interested as everyone else to see what they are and how my successor implements them.

One change starting this month is that the lists of group details are no longer included. I am a bit disappointed about this, and I would like to thank all the Coordinators who have updated this information for me over the last two years.

All this information continues to be shown on the website, and you can contact the Coordinators direct from there to show your interest.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Now that autumn is here, we return to our monthly talks at Theatre Severn. For those who rarely attend, I recommend that you give it a go as the talks are invariably informative and enjoyable. If you arrive at about 10, for a 10:30 talk, it gives you time to meet up with friends or engage with potential new friends. Following the talk, it gives you the opportunity to have a social lunch in town.

Notice to New Members At monthly talks, our New Members' Secretary, usually sits on the left-hand side of the floor when you reach the top of the stairs. She can be approached and engaged by anyone wishing to ask questions or raise issues. In any case, new members will receive a joining pack by e mail and be invited to one of our new members' briefings that are held several times each year. We also run a Palmers' Café drop-in session (see below), usually on the last Friday of each month, for new and potential members to engage with the Committee.

Members' Social Events Our Central Events Group held our second event on Friday 18th September. It was well attended and our Quiz Master, Mike McGarry, provided the participants with most enjoyable entertainment. On your behalf, I thank Mike and the team. The third event this year will be an evening Ceilidh on Saturday 14th November.

Annual General Meeting As previously advised, our 2026 AGM will take place before the monthly talk on Monday 16th November. This Newsletter includes the AGM Supplement that provides more information to add to the notice that I included in my September Chairman's Letter. We issue the Supplement well ahead of the AGM to give members adequate notice of the business to be addressed and to reduce the time that the AGM takes on the day.

Palmers Sessions I am pleased to announce that from October the Palmers drop-in sessions will now include tea and coffee free of charge. Hopefully, this will create a more social atmosphere for those wishing to find out more about our u3a and/or seek specific advice.

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, and Local Networks Officer posts are currently vacant			

Malcolm Saville – The Shropshire Writer Who Never Lived Here

Don Burgess



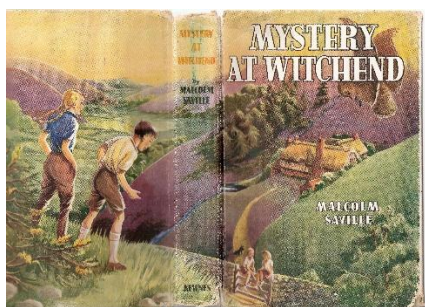
Our Newsletter Editor, Mike McGarry, recently stepped out of his usual role to give a very interesting talk at the Monthly Meeting about Malcolm Saville: a prolific writer, who published ninety books in a period of over forty years. Saville was most well known as a children's writer and was a contemporary of Enid Blyton. He was born in Hastings in Sussex in 1901, but a holiday in Shropshire in 1936 obviously made a big impression on him as the county subsequently featured in many of his books.

At the age of 21, he entered the world of publishing and his first story: *Rosemary for Remembrance* was published in a magazine in 1928. This was a detective story for adults. Malcolm and his wife Dorothy were both keen on Amateur Dramatics and his first published book was called *Amateur Acting and Producing for Beginners* and this appeared in 1937.

He was of the generation that was too young for World War One and too old for World War Two and the early 1940s saw him working in the day and fire watching at night. During this time, he wrote a piece for a gardening magazine called *To Any American Father from an English Father*, about children being evacuated to the USA and Canada. His article was picked up by newspapers around the world and reprinted. But sadly, while the piece was still being published, a ship called *City of Benares* was torpedoed while carrying evacuees from Britain to the USA, resulting in 77 children being lost, and the evacuation scheme was discontinued.



Malcolm Saville's first children's book: *Mystery at Witchend* was published in 1943. The opening line of the book was *They changed trains at Shrewsbury*. This book was serialised in Children's Hour on BBC Radio and the cast included Charles Hawtrey and Harry Fowler. It introduced the original five members of The Lone Pine Club (there would eventually be eight). The book was set in South Shropshire, not far from where Saville's family were evacuated and he sent each chapter to them to look at as he wrote them.



The second Lone Pine book was *Seven White Gates* and was set in the Stiperstones and the mining cableway plays a major part. The third in the series was *The Gay Dolphin Adventure* which was set in Rye in Sussex near to where Saville grew up. Others would see them in different locations, but it was always to Shropshire that they would return.

He was most praised for the "sense of place" in his books. He wanted to get more children into reading and when paperbacks became available, they were able to choose their own books. Many of his books included

maps, some drawn by his brother. So, readers were encouraged to visit the areas for themselves.

Malcolm Saville said that it would be possible to identify the area where each book was set but not the specific buildings. However, the house "Witchend" has subsequently been identified as Priors Holt near Hamperley in South Shropshire. Other Shropshire locations in his books included Clun Castle – and the children would happily cycle there from anywhere in Shropshire. The train used by the children would stop at Conover, Leebotwood, Marshbrook and Church Stretton, the latter being the only one still operating as a station. Other mentions in the books include Bishops Castle, Ludlow, Carding Mill Valley, Offa's Dyke and Hamperley. Shrewsbury only gets fleeting references, such as the railway station and the Midland Red bus

station, though Mike thinks one of the Lone Piners, Petronella (Peter), attended the Priory Girls Grammar School.

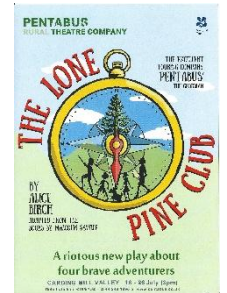
Malcolm Saville also wrote non-fiction books on such diverse topics as the Lifeboat Service and the Coronation. He was never a full-time writer always having other positions during his working life. He was for a time, Associate Editor of *My Garden* magazine, and also joined Newnes Publishers to become the third editor of *Sunny Stories* comic; his predecessors had been Enid Blyton and Marian Crawford (Crawfie), who had been the governess of Princesses. Elizabeth and Margaret.

Two of Saville's books made it to the big screen, *Trouble at Townsend* and *Treasure at the Mill* and another, *The Ambermere Treasure* was serialised in the early days of ITV.

Surprisingly perhaps, he put his home address in most of his books and received 1000's of letters. He replied to every one, often enclosing a signed photograph.

His final Lone Pine story was *Home to Witchend* in 1978, and he died four years later in Hastings.

These days, Malcolm Saville's books are back in print, a number of plays have been produced, including one by Shropshire's own Pentabus Company, there have been a number of books about him, and he has been featured on *Countryfile* on BBC 1 and Claire Balding's *Ramblings* on Radio 4. There is also a thriving Malcolm Saville Society who visit all the places where the books are set.



If you would like information about Malcolm Saville and his work, you can find out more at www.witchend.com.

THE BIG CAKE QUIZ

Report on The Big Cake Quiz Event on 18th September

Sue Davies

Well, that was fun!! We had an excellent cake themed quiz this afternoon. thirteen teams of four players, enjoyed stretching their brains, fuelled by tea/coffee and a delicious selection of cakes that members contributed.

Mike McGarry was the quizmaster, and the location was a hit, being upstairs of Palmer's (there is a lift), central to the town centre and during the afternoon, making it accessible in so many ways.

It was also a delight to see that several teams were made up of individuals, who met on the day. That's what u3a is all about, meeting new people, learning and having fun together.



It was a real team effort, from setting up and taking down the room (chairs and tables), scorers, cake gathers and many generally helping out.



A shout out to the winning team – The Masterminds (positive thinking right there from the Organiser who named them!) with 105 points and coming a very close second, One 2 One with 103 points, just one question in it! Well done everyone for taking part.

We certainly hope to be holding another of these events, as it seems to be enjoyed by everyone. Maybe early in the new year to help lift the winter gloom?

GROUP REPORTS

Touch Tennis 1

Tony Burns

And so, another year has passed, and it's group report time.

We continue to welcome new members, and will continue to do so. We are a friendly bunch who play roughly every other week on a Friday afternoon at the Sports Village for 2 hours.

Touch-Tennis is a shorter form of Lawn Tennis, but is played on a badminton sized court, with a slightly lower net, smaller rackets and sponge balls. Scoring is similar to tennis, but does have a couple of differences. No let-cord for example. If it touches the net and goes over, that is counted. No advantage after deuce. If you

reach deuce then the next point wins the game.

It isn't as strenuous as Lawn Tennis, which suits a lot of people who can't get around the court as well as we used to. We play doubles mostly, but it has been known for a game of singles to break out occasionally.

If you'd like to come and try us out, or even just to come for a look see, then you are very welcome. Please get in touch. First session is free.



There are vacancies in this group

Walks Short About Three Miles

Dave McElvaine

Our short walks group aims to offer a leisurely walk twice a month of no more than 3 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 and it gives us a chance to socialise. There is the possibility of the occasional social event on an ad hoc basis.

We meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month and you can get further information by contacting me **Telephone:** 07852 697355

Email: dave.mcelvaine@gmail.com.

There are vacancies in this group

Our collective Tai Chi groups have been a tremendous success, better than I could have ever imagined. In fact, Tai Chi Beginners is the most visited group page on our website according to the stats.

Tai Chi Beginners is now on its third Group and together with the ongoing Continuers Group, is going strong. Tai Chi is an elegant sequence of gentle moves and is recognised for its health and wellbeing benefits, building leg strength and aiding balance and coordination.



It's been a delight sharing the benefits of Tai Chi with so many members since we started in April.

We have all learnt a lot, not only about Tai Chi and for me about running multiple u3a Groups. As I am due to take on the role of Chair of Shrewsbury u3a in November, we've needed to rethink things, partly because of my time commitments but also, it's not appropriate that I'm a Group Coordinator as well as Chair.



With all this in mind there are changes on the horizon. In the New Year, the Beginners and Continuers will be merging into one single group, whilst still catering to all the different needs of attenders. Meeting fortnightly, the first part of each session will cater to Beginners, focusing on the first 16 moves of the set which is complete in itself.

After a mid-session refreshment break, the second part will be primarily for Continuers as we progress through the 108 move Tai Chi Set. Beginners are welcome the stay and develop their practice, join in for bits of it, sit and watch or leave.

Our focus continues to be on health and wellbeing, in a light-hearted and accessible way. The benefits of Tai Chi practice really show with continued practice rather than dipping in for a bit. This new combined group won't be able to accommodate as many new students as have previously attended, but it's the best option available to us.

Debbie Nicholson will take on the main admin as coordinator and I'm very happy to continue leading the Group in relation to teaching Tai Chi. Also, the more experienced members will assist in class just by taking part and maybe being a 'corner'. We all want someone else to watch as we turn around to another direction. I love doing Tai Chi myself and enjoy practicing within a group.

We split the hall fee between us on a rolling 6 session Block basis, paid for by Bank Transfer. We will of course operate a waiting list that members can easily add themselves to.

This updated Group will be shown on the website shortly.



Have Pass, Will Travel

Carolyn Spencer

We are a friendly group taking advantage of our bus passes to visit various places in, or near, Shropshire at no transport cost. There are usually eight or nine trips a year, arranged on dates to suit the destination.

Recent visits have included Much Wenlock, which has an interesting Museum and an Olympic Trail walk, which several of us undertook; Ellesmere for Heronwatch and a walk along the lakeside; Bridgnorth, which is full of interest; Oswestry, where we took a brief journey on the Cambrian Heritage Railway, to Weston Wharf; and Welshpool for the Longest Yarn 2 Exhibition in the Town Hall.

Trips start from Shrewsbury Bus Station, but members often board the bus at, for example, The Abbey, or Copthorne Road, if there is a stop there which is more convenient for them. We usually all have coffee together on arrival and then, depending on numbers, split up into smaller groups to explore our destination. Members are free to do whatever suits them and as much or as little walking as they wish.

Some members are more familiar than others with our various destinations and we share ideas about things to see and do.

Our remaining trips for 2025 will be in October and November and members will be advised of the dates and destinations, by email, a couple of weeks ahead. **The group is almost full**, but we could accommodate one or two additional members.



Welsh Intermediate Group Report

Carolyn Mahey

We are a small friendly group whose current members have either learnt some welsh by living in Wales or taking Welsh classes. We have evolved from a beginners' group and continue to try to improve our vocabulary and grammar by working through the Cwrs Mynediad and looking at welsh books and periodicals such as Lingo Magazine. We aim to siared cymraeg in the group, although not all of the time!

We currently meet on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at the Street Pastors' office in town,

although we have also had social gatherings at Percy Throwers.

We currently have space for 2 new members and would welcome anyone who can speak tipyn o Gymraeg and wishes to practise and improve their speaking and reading skills.

u3a learn, laugh, live



October 2026

Hilly Walks

Jonathan Mutch

On a sunny spring morning we set off from the start point of our Wednesday Hilly Walk. The first half hour was a steep climb up onto the Long Mynd. On reaching the top, we paused to catch our breath and take in the spectacular views of Shropshire and beyond. The walk levelled out for a while as we were entertained by 2 red kites soaring and swooping above us. Then a further steep incline took us past some wild ponies, happily munching on the spring grass. At around half way, we stopped for a well earned rest and a welcoming hot drink. As we sat in the sunshine, four friends, the "Shadow Walkers" came by. "Haven't seen you for ages" our leader said. "Ah well, we only walk when the sun is shining and it's been a cloudy old spring so far." We spent some time chatting before they headed off uphill, soon to disappear over the crest of a hill.



We now headed downhill, straining our knees and using poles to steady ourselves. At last we saw our cars at the start point which we reached after round 3 hours walking, chatting and enjoying each others' company. Now we were off to one of our favourite pubs for lunch and a long cool drink after our excursions. "It's a pity our friends the "shadow Walkers" couldn't join us, but it's clouded over so I suppose they've gone home".

Our Hilly Walks group meet every 1st and 3rd Wednesdays for a walk of between 5 and 6.5 miles

and 1000 or so feet of ascent, usually within 20 miles of Shrewsbury. We have met at the Meole Brace Park & Ride to car share for many years, but are now looking for an alternative. [We are currently full and have a waiting list.](#)



Parlez-vous Francais

Simon Turk

Our Parlez-vous Francais French conversation group aims to reproduce in the historic town of Shrewsbury the ambience of a French cafe, together with conversation en Francais! We meet on alternate Monday mornings in each others' homes et nous causons en Francais about whatever subjects take our fancy: holidays, family news, the weather, local events, current affairs, books we have been reading. The only rule is that between 10.30 and 12.00 as best we can we speak in French!



The group members have varying levels of proficiency in the French language. Sometimes we try to work out or point out to each other the correct French word, but mainly we try to let conversation flow and follow its natural course. Sometimes we discuss interesting words and even French slang or "argot". Sometimes members bring extracts from books, poems, even recordings of songs, and we read and translate.

If you would like to join us for tea/coffee and biscuits and lively and informal chat (en Francais) you would be most welcome. [We currently have vacancies in the group](#) so do give us a try if this sounds like it might be for you.

We are a group formed in early 2025 as a successor to the One Club which had maxed out on numbers and is for those who find themselves on their own.

We currently have twenty members, six men and fourteen ladies, which is an ideal number when booking restaurants and days out. Any more and it's difficult so we are capped at twenty members.

- We meet weekly in the Armoury for a coffee and chat and to date we have had a day trip on the Llangollen canal, visits to Ironbridge and Bridgnorth by BP (Bus Pass) and meet monthly for a meal in various locations around the town. Our next venue is ten pin bowling.
- We also meet on Monday evenings for a drink in a local taverna.



Our Christmas lunch last year was a great success and so we have rebooked again for this year at the River Bank, next door to the Armoury.

We have had many requests to join us, and I have suggested to the organisers that perhaps a third group could be created to accommodate.

This group currently has a waiting list.



A Convenience of Johns



Bowling in Shrewsbury



Trip to Bridgnorth

A POEM FOR AUTUMN FROM Elisabeth Beckett

AUTUNNO

E arrivato l'autunno
Ed un po' pii freddo
Le foglie sono un po' gialle
Le giornate sono pib corte
Dopo un'estate molto calda
L'uva gid matura e raccolta
Le giornate sono ancora soleggiate
Ci sono bellissimi tramonti e albe



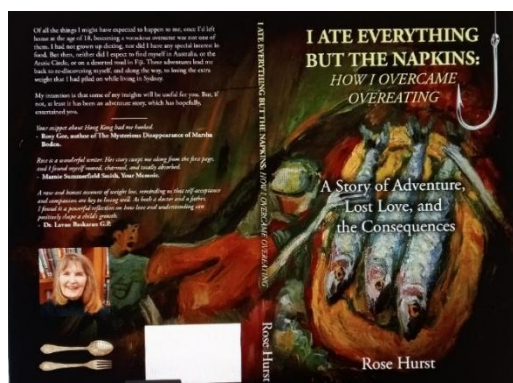
It is always great to hear from you about the things that you are doing. Thanks to Rose and Michael for getting in touch and also to Elisabeth Beckett, from our Italian Improvers group, for her poem on the previous page.

We heard last month that one of our members had published a book and this month we have another one. What a clever bunch you are, And I was unaware that you could track bus services. I will certainly use this from now on.

A Book from Shrewsbury u3a member Rose Hurst

My book is called *I ATE EVERYTHING BUT THE NAPKINS: HOW I OVERCAME OVEREATING*. It is the story of my wild and crazy youth, working in the Canadian Arctic, which led to the heartbreak of losing my first real love, a French Canadian fur trapper. I was so broken-hearted, I flew off to Australia with not much money, no plans and no job or travel insurance. Crazy, or what? Once in Australia, I became terribly homesick and began overeating to compensate. When I got back to Canada, the weight fell away, and that is the story of transformation that all good memoirs are supposed to have.

Here is the image of the book, and of me narrating it as an audiobook.



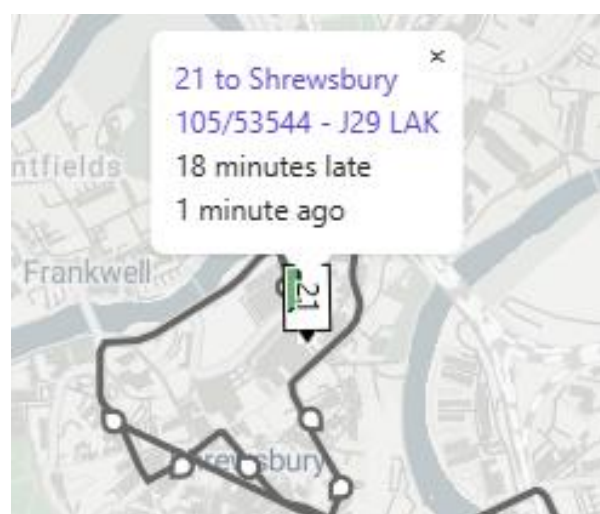
Do you know exactly when your bus will arrive? Michael Wilmot does.

Recently many Shrewsbury bus timetables have been amended – and sadly for some, services reduced. This can make checking when your bus will arrive more significant.

Do you know about the *Bustimes* website?

<https://bustimes.org/> On the website home page, type in any route in the format *Shrewsbury 21* (route number) and you should see immediately the bus timetable. But also, more useful, a second tab labelled “Map (tracking x buses) (x being the number of buses out on the route at the time). With the map selected, click on the symbol of your approaching bus – its current location being shown on the map – and it will tell you whether it is on time or delayed. Here’s an example

It’s reassuring to know the bus is coming – even if it is running late!



After a quiet August, September has been very busy for New Groups and has flown by. **Stitching 2** is ready to become active and a **Stitching 3** is now planned, and **Italiano 2** is well on its way. Start-up meetings for **History 3** and **One Club 3** are scheduled for early October. We have some exciting ideas for more new groups, including **Urban Sketching** and **Portuguese** (see below for more details). Additionally, would there be much interest in starting a Chess group?



If you have an idea for a new group, think about your vision for how it would work and send a draft description of what it would involve to the new groups email (address below). Consider also whether you could become the group co-ordinator, an essential role for each group.

Here are the current proposed new groups seeking more members; if you are interested in joining any of these groups, please contact me (Tony Brown, New Groups Facilitator) at newgroups@shrewsburyu3a.org.uk.

Portuguese – NEW

Portugal is a popular holiday destination. This new group is intended for members who want to learn basic vocabulary, grammar, and common phrases, with a focus on speaking, to develop communication skills and cultural awareness. A textbook will be used to provide structure to the sessions and to serve as a source of information for independent learning. Supplementary materials will also be used for extra practice and to diversify the learning experience.

Urban Sketching – NEW

The group is likely to meet at different venues either in Shrewsbury or locally, published in advance, usually based at a café to provide shelter if needed. Participants of any level or background are invited to sketch a nearby view of their choice or specific feature that may interest them in their chosen medium. They should bring their own materials. No formal teaching is provided, but at the end of the session we meet at the café for the 'throw-down' where we can get inspiration from each other's work.

Stitching 3 – additional group (another!)

This group builds on the success of the existing stitching groups and offers more members the chance to take part in textile and yarn crafts. Activities include sewing, embroidery, quilting, weaving, knitting, and crochet. It is open to all skill levels, from beginners to experienced crafters. Members can work on their own or group projects and sometimes lead sessions to share techniques such as dressmaking.

History 3

Members will take it in turn to present a historical topic of their choice. Topics could cover political, social, economic, or military history from Britain or anywhere in the world. It could be that a member of the group would like to know about a particular topic and someone then volunteers to present that topic. We would meet at a suitable venue where we could accommodate however many people wanted to join.

Adventurers

This group's aims include enjoying some of the more demanding physical and practical activities, challenging comfort zones, and above all meeting and getting to know a bunch of like-minded u3a members in a lively and convivial series of experiences. There are rivers to paddle, mountains to climb, wires to be zipped, tall things to abseil, even seas to be sailed, and always new things to be tried. Could this be you?