

All phone numbers are local, with the prefix 01454, unless otherwise specified

From the Chairman

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter and I wish you all a Happy Easter. I hope your spirits have been raised by the recent beautiful weather and not been dampened too much by the rapid spread of COVID that seems to be all around us.

In the Winter Newsletter, I wrote that I hoped that a more normal way of life would resume in the New Year and suggested the Committee would come up with some plans to get members together again. Unfortunately, the rise and rapid spread of the Omicron variant has rather quashed that idea. It now looks as though we will have to live with COVID regardless of how many people catch it. Most of us will know of friends or family who have, or have had, the virus.

In February, we held our 2021 AGM. It was a struggle to achieve a quorum of 148 members and the meeting only got going after a 20 minute delay – to say we were dragging members off the street was not far from the truth. Once we achieved the requisite numbers, however, the AGM ran smoothly and the finances and reports were approved. I fear everyone is getting tired of Zoom meetings, so we are looking at how we can meet face to face at the next AGM.

I wish to welcome Pat Wells to the Committee as our new Secretary. She replaces Ian Macdonald, who retired after many years as Secretary. Frank Tustin, our Vice Chairman, also retired; his position, which is presently vacant, **must be filled this year if we wish to see our organisation continue.** At the next AGM, I will have served my three years and to have neither Vice Chairman nor Chairman will cause immense difficulties in running our u3a. **We need a volunteer to come forward who is prepared to learn the ropes during the remainder of my time in the role and then take over in the Spring of 2023.**

Barbara Jones, another long serving Committee member will also be leaving us at the next AGM. Barbara, who has been running the Beacon system for many years, will be retiring at the next AGM. All the membership data and Group information is kept on the Beacon system, which is maintained by the National u3a and is fundamental to the administration of our organisation. We need **another volunteer to come forward, who is computer literate, to take over from Barbara!**

At the AGM, a question was raised about the liability of Group Leaders to any problems arising at a venue which they had booked. In the answer we stated that our Public Liability Insurance, provided by the National u3a, covers any such financial claim. Ironically, shortly after the meeting concluded, a claim was lodged against a Group Leader by The Chantry for a broken window that occurred during one of our meetings. This has now been settled without resorting to an insurance claim.

Our plans for an early Leaders Lunch and the first Tea & Coffee morning were dashed by the rise of Omicron. Plans are being put in place for a gathering of Group Leaders but the Leaders Lunch will now revert to the Autumn. We shall attempt to hold a Tea/Coffee morning in the near future and I will circulate more information when it is available.



Trevor Daniels, who was formally elected onto the Committee at the AGM, has been looking into our need for a venue suitable for our larger Groups, our Open Talks and the AGM. As such, he is following the discussions on the possible refurbishment of the Armstrong Hall and also the potential use of either Castle or Marlwood school halls. A member of St Mary's Church PCC has approached Trevor with the suggestion that the Church may be a suitable venue for a larger gathering. The venue, close to Thornbury Castle, can accommodate the numbers we used to see in the Armstrong Hall and the media requirements have been updated. Although parking and toilet requirements are limited, Trevor is in dialogue with the Church over its possible use. We will be discussing the proposals for use of St Mary's Church and other venues at our next committee meeting

In March, we held another New Members meeting in St Mary's Hall. A number of new members joined during the Winter and a total of 32 people attended. They were given a short presentation on Thornbury u3a, and how it operates, and an opportunity to meet the Committee. The membership has shrunk to just over 1500 members, primarily due to the shut down during COVID, and we need to do everything possible to encourage new people to join.

Many of our Groups have now returned to face-to-face meetings and members are enjoying the social interaction this provides. The wearing of face masks has become a personal decision. You can read about how each Group is approaching the return to normality in the following sections of the Newsletter. Our new groups, You On Your Own (YOYO) and Spanish, are doing well, with good support from the membership. YOYO now has over 50 members who enjoy a range of different social activities.

A list of all our current Groups, when they meet, who the Leaders are and their contact details, is given at the end of this Newsletter.

Norman Taylor **418396** chairman@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Current Committee

Thornbury u3a is governed by the Committee which is elected annually from its membership and forms the Charity's Trustees. The current Committee comprises:

Chairman	Norman Taylor	418396	chairman@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Vice Chairman	Vacant		vicechair@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Steve Hughes	887151	treasurer@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Pat Wells	850379	secretary@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Jackie Gitsham	858438	membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Group Co-ordinator	Louise Ingsley	415131	groupcoordinator@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Equipment Co-ordinator & Assistant Webmaster	Mike Farquhar	413055	equipment@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Beacon Administration	Barbara Jones	414547	beacon@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Webmaster	Don Grundell	412896	webmaster@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Health & Safety	Anne Reed	415849	healthandsafety@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Committee Members	Sue James	885452	visits@thornburyu3a.org.uk
	Trevor Daniels	419688	

Assisted by:

Newsletters	Carolyn Purdy	-	newsletter@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Catering Co-ordinator	Sheila Forsythe	-	

From the Treasurer

As mentioned in the Chairman's comments, the Financial Accounts were approved by the members at the AGM held in February. These are now available to view on the Welcome page of our website, along with the Treasurer's Report and a full breakdown of our Groups' income, expenditure and reserves. The first two items have been submitted to the Charity Commission as part of our Annual Return.

A question was raised from the floor about the level of our Reserves, given that these are currently higher than in the past and consequently out of line with our Reserves Policy. I can confirm that the matter was discussed at our last Committee Meeting and an amendment to the Policy agreed. The amendment has been made to the Policy and the Financial Policy can be seen on the website.

Finally, recognising that despite everything, life is still not fully back to normal, just a reminder that if any Groups find themselves facing financial problems, the Committee is still happy to consider assistance to enable activities to continue until circumstances improve. Please get in touch with me if you want to discuss ways in which we can help.

Steve Hughes **887151** treasurer@thornburyu3a.org.uk

From the Membership Secretary

The membership is now just over 1500, thanks mainly to those members who decided to renew this year after not renewing in 2021. We have also had several new members, to whom we offer a very warm welcome.

Jackie Gitsham **858438** membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Open Visits

Plans are afoot for an open visit later in the year – information to follow. If anyone would like to join the Committee and help run a trip or have a suggestion for places to visit, please contact Group Leader.

Sue James **885452** openvisits@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Open Talks

Following the AGM in February, we had a presentation by Sir Steve Webb, the former Minister of State for Pensions in the previous government, covering past and current Pension issues. This was well attended, even though on Zoom, and many questions were raised that Steve tried to answer. He suggested that, if members had any pension queries that he hadn't addressed, they contact him through his email address steve.webb@lcp.uk.com. Steve's presentation slides may be viewed on the thornburyu3a.org.uk website under the "News" heading.

Louise Ingsley (Temp) **415131** talks@thornburyu3a.org.uk

- News from Group Leaders -

The following is the information provided by the Group Leaders. If there is no input, one should contact the Group Leader to determine if the Group is up and running following the Covid outbreak.

Archaeology

We have resumed face to face meetings this year and continue to explore our studies of earlier American cultures, which we are finding really intriguing. Sadly we cannot invite new members at present due to the size of our room.

Jackie Carpenter

294561

archaeology@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Architecture Group

Meetings were resumed in early March with a talk by Stephen Thomas on 'Alternatives to Demolition'. There was a good attendance as we are limited in numbers. A programme of meetings on the first Tuesday in the month has been arranged till the end of 2022 which strikes a balance between celebrating the buildings of the past and thinking about how we should build in the present.

Stephen Thomas was asked to become Leader with Alison Makepeace as Secretary. It was with great relief when Bob Dale offered to become Treasurer. Our thanks to Helen Roberts and Brian Hawkins for the huge contribution they have made to the group in the past. Helen remains on our committee.

Stephen Thomas

architecture@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Art Group - Monday

We're a friendly group of men and women with various abilities and we use many mediums, although most people use watercolour or acrylics. We're all self-taught but are more than willing to help each other with our work. Occasionally we have demonstrators but usually it's a mixture of doing our own thing or someone suggests a theme or a picture for us to base our session on. We meet weekly on a Monday morning at St. Mary's Church Hall from 9.30am to 12.00 noon.

Currently there are no vacancies in the Group but do contact us if you'd like to be added to the waiting list.

Sue Punton

776271

artmonday@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Art Group - Thursday

We meet from 09:15 to 12:15 in St Mary's Church Hall during normal School Term times.

Members of the Group have a range of abilities and pursue their own particular projects using a variety of media with brush, pen or pencil. Members of the Group encourage and help each other and we hope to have occasional demonstrations/workshops in 2022. Tea, coffee and biscuits are included in the fee, which is charged every half term.

We currently have space for a few new members.

Edward Bridges

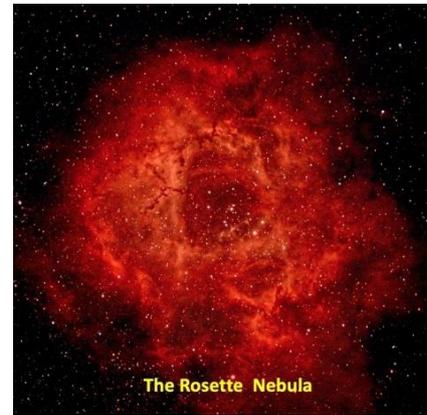
419257

artthursday@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Astronomy Group

The group held its first face to face meeting since early 2020 in March of this year. The attendance was a little below pre-COVID numbers, but still good and the plan at present is to continue in this way. The Zoom meetings of the past two years have been very successful in keeping the group together but are now considered, fingers crossed, to be behind us.

The group's observers – specifically its Astro photographers – have produced some remarkable images of late and one is shown here. It is of The Rosette Nebula, a large astronomical object 5,000 light years distant from earth. The light from this object is so faint that it takes a telescope, a specially adapted camera and hours of exposure and processing to obtain the image. It is a very good piece of work by group member, Bill Beere.



The group will meet for the last time under its present leader, Peter Jackson, in April. From May a new committee has been formed to take the group forward under a new name “Astronomy and Space” to reflect a growing interest of the membership in all things “Space”. The new Chair will be Chris Lee, whose details are below.

Chris Lee

07715 159541

astronomy@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bird Watching Group

This group continues to hold regular monthly outings. We have some new members who are enjoying learning how to recognise the birds we see. We also have some good photographers who are taking splendid pictures. These are particularly helpful when trying to identify distant birds as the magic of modern cameras means the picture can be greatly enlarged. Look at us on the website. Our monthly outings take place on the second Monday of the month. Contact the leader if you fancy joining us.

Cilla Farquhar

413055

birdwatching@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 1

Our venue is The Methodist Hall, Olveston, where we meet every Tuesday morning at 0930. There are approximately 30 members and we often have 5 to 6 Tables. It is a friendly group and we welcome new players, preferably with a partner. If you are lucky you might get a cup of coffee and a biscuit. We look forward to seeing you.

Mary Bignell

07711 025352

bridgegroup1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 2

Our group meets on Tuesday afternoons at 2 pm in the Methodist Hall, Olveston. We play Duplicate Bridge in a very relaxed atmosphere and now have five tables playing regularly. We can now accommodate two or three more players. Our members have varying levels of Bridge experience and new members would be very welcome provided that they have some knowledge of Bridge before joining.

Linda Cooper

414762

bridgegroup2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Book Group 2

We choose both fact and fiction titles for our reading. Generally we alternate fact and fiction which leads to varied and fascinating reading. We do not always agree on the texts we read but this generally leads to stimulating discussions which often lead us into even more intriguing avenues.

Our mixed selection of fact and fiction includes *Flight Behaviour*, *The Sleeping Beauties*, *Small Things Like These*, *Kindred: Neanderthal Life*, *Love, Death & Art*. After moving to bigger premises to enable us to keep our distance, we currently have room for more members. Do come and join us on the first Monday of the month at the downstairs hall, Methodist Church, High Street, Thornbury, from 2.00pm. Please contact the leader beforehand to ensure there are no changes to meeting dates.

Lateral flow tests will be taken before each meeting.

Margaret Pinder

416778

BookGroup2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Canasta

This Group is thriving. Three new people have joined. An enquiry from a man living in Thornbury, Melbourne, who was keen to play Canasta, didn't realise that we were in the UK and had to be disappointed. We play every other Tuesday from 2pm until 4pm; the venue has changed to The Wheatsheaf in Thornbury .

Val Curtis

850981

canasta@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Church Visits 1

At last our Group has managed to restart, and we had an excellent attendance at our first meeting for two years. Anita and I decided to visit local churches this season to enable folk to travel by car should they wish and I am surprised how many notable ones we have within a 25 mile radius.

We are happy to open the Group to new members, as we have sadly lost a few over the past couple of years. Just contact Anita or me.

Sandra Body

415250

churchvisits1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cinema Group

The Group meet at the Tockington Parish Hall on the 1st and 3rd Fridays in each month. The doors open at 1.30 for a 2pm start. The Programme is as follows.

April 1st	Lilies of the Field American comedy drama (1hr 30mins)
April 15th	Pursuit of Happyness American drama (2hrs)
May 6th	The Verdict American Legal drama (2hrs 10mins)
May 20th	Dave American political comedy (1hr 50mins)
June 3rd	No Meeting
June 17th	C'Mon C'Mon American drama (1hr 30mins)
July 8th	Belfast British comedy drama (1hr 30mins)
July 22nd	West Side Story Musical (2hrs 30mins)
August film	Summerland British fantasy drama (1hr 39mins) Date to be decided

Film notes will be available at the hall.

Pam Dawe

614843

cinema@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Computer Group

Throughout lockdown, the group leader has been keeping all members informed, updated and advised by way of a monthly mass email, with members sharing their knowledge (and problems) in response. Our membership has increased slightly over the last year to about 60 and we hope to get back to normal with meetings at the Chantry later this year.

The group leader continues to offer a 'personal visit' service to those in difficulty; he is also working on widening the interests of the group beyond the usual PC definition – to smartphones, tablets, Macs, development systems like Arduino/Raspberry Pi and even analogue computers. Any other aspects of computing that members can suggest as a topic of investigation are also welcome. Who knows, your pet computer interest may kick off a whole new chapter...

To receive the monthly newsletter and updates, include your membership number when you get in touch and I will add your email to the circulation list.

Andy Pearson

416321

computerclub@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Concerts Group

The Group organises visits to afternoon and evening classical concerts in Bristol and Cardiff, travelling by coach from Thornbury with pick-ups en route.

The concert season runs from September to June and we normally book twice a year. There is a choice of seat location and price, and the charge for each concert is the seat price plus the coach cost.

Cardiff concerts re-started in January and we booked two concerts in the Spring season. Unfortunately, the January concert was cancelled due to Welsh Government COVID restrictions. The remaining concert is on 9 June and seats are still available.

We hope that there will be a normal 2022-23 Season at Cardiff and that the programme will be available in early June. If you are interested in joining the Group, please contact the Group Leader.

Phil Holland

413897

concerts@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cribbage

The group is slowly getting back to the numbers before COVID. We still have a number of vacancies so if you are interested in the group contact below.

Pam Pass

600772

cribbage@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cycling

The cycling group continues to meet on 1st and 3rd Tuesday afternoons for shorter rides and 2nd and 4th Thursdays for longer ones. The Thursday rides are typically just in the morning at the moment, but hopefully we can include a lunch stop when COVID settles down (again).

Don Grundell

412896

cycling@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Discussions Group

We in the Discussions Group are continuing to put the world to rights (almost finished!) at The Chantry at 2pm on the second Tuesday of the month. We normally have about a dozen attendees so there is plenty of room for social breathing and for the expression of new ideas. Come and share yours. There's a new topic each month, chosen by the members, and the topics are limitless; since Christmas, we've covered: health & safety, making choices, and assisted dying.

Bob Dale

415345

discussions@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Family History Group

This group has had mixed fortunes since the last newsletter. The resurgence of COVID, followed by Storm Eunice, has really messed us about. However, 30 of us managed to meet in person for March.

Norman Taylor and Rob Anstee gave us short presentations on how to record and present family history in such a way that not only is it preserved for future generations but also stimulates their interest. We are all familiar with the glazed look that comes over peoples' faces when we talk about our ancestors. Finding a way to engage the younger generations' interest can be challenging.

Norman showed us two coffee-table type books he had put together and had printed by a commercial company. One focused on his father's war-time experiences. He had a wealth of material, which included his father's letters home and diaries, as well as his official service records. The other book arose from a very early photograph he found hidden in a drawer. A newspaper cutting, which was being used as padding for the frame, later proved that it dated from 1858. Some of us envied him having so much to draw upon. Norman has also had a straightforward diagrammatic family tree printed.

Rob Anstee had also had books printed. One was designed to be a purely factual aide memoire. He agreed with Norman that focusing on an individual person or property was the best way to create interest. He talked about one particular will which made repeated references to a well. The testator wanted it very clearly understood that all the beneficiaries who occupied his property were to have ready access to the well. It seems amusing to us, used as we are to having water on tap, but 200 years ago it would have been a very different matter.

So, what next for the group? We plan a live research session on 8th April. We are aiming to have 5 or 6 people ready and waiting to help others overcome their brick walls. We are hoping to get external speakers for May and June and then to plan a full programme for September onwards.

Frances Houghton **417048** familyhistory1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Gentle Exercise

Gentle Exercise classes have not taken place this term because of our instructor's illness. However, we hope to restart after Easter on April 28th. We will contact all existing members to confirm that they wish to return, as well as those on the waiting list.

As before, classes will take place at 10am in the Methodist Upper Hall.

Sally Bradford **419651**
Pat Wells **850379** gentleexercise@thornburyu3a.org.uk

French Intermediate & Advanced

The Advanced Group will recommence on Thursday 7 April starting at 2pm, at the leader's house. Although it's likely to be full with previous group members, anyone interested should contact the leader.

The Intermediate group will recommence in April on Thursdays, from 11am to noon, at the leader's house in Alveston. There is room for about 4 new members who wish to refresh their basic French. The session consists of basic grammar exercises, reading and conversation.

Margaret Rowley **413217** frenchintermediate@thornburyu3a.org.uk

French Book Club

French Book Club continued to meet almost throughout the pandemic, either outside in a member's garden or on Zoom, but thankfully we are now meeting indoors. We meet monthly on a Wednesday

German Language Group

This Group is a self-help group of half a dozen or so members meeting fortnightly on Mondays at 3.00pm at Hawkes House. We concentrate on conversation but also read texts from books, newspapers and magazines. Some of us have lived in Germany and others are simply interested learners, so our standard varies a bit.

Since late last year we have been meeting face to face, usually at Hawkes House, with a core of 6 people. However, some are still reluctant to do face to face meetings, either because of the pandemic or underlying (non-COVID) health problems. Everyone has been vaccinated.

Last autumn, a native German speaker joined us who helped us with pronunciation and grammar, and also offered a clearer insight into modern, everyday German.

Please contact the group leader if you are interested in joining us.

Michael Boulton **416416** germanselfhelp@thornburyu3a.org.uk

History Group

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.30am in the Coach Hall of the Chantry, although please note that there will be no meeting in June or August.

This year we have enjoyed talks about the *Bristol Riots*, *American Presidents* and *The Poor in Thornbury*, and we look forward to finding out about Witchcraft and more recent American Presidents and Painters, Actors and Musicians in 18th Century Bath. We look forward to seeing you there.

Alison Makepeace **415019** history1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Indoor Bowls Group

Indoor Bowls has now finished for the summer season but will begin again in September. We have a nice crowd of people with 26 members in total and there are usually from 10 to 14 members, who regularly make up the Wednesday session. Three rinks are booked each week and teams are picked randomly; everyone enjoys the game and the camaraderie that comes with it. I look forward to seeing everyone back in September and maybe some new faces as well.

Veronica Stanley **07947 149639** indoorbowls@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Investment Group 1

This year started with some return to normality, with monthly, face to face meetings at Tockington Methodist Church having resumed in December and continuing into the New Year, as did lunch at the Swan afterwards. Although the Omicron variant was a concern, there was a sentiment amongst members that the markets were beginning to return to some pre-covid normality. Then Russia invaded Ukraine and the stock market went haywire with some big losers but also some big winners. Instead of normality, we were now back to unknowns and uncertainty.

Life in Investment Club 1 is never dull and the debate on world affairs and their impact on share prices never ends. Having had two new members join this year, we are almost up to full capacity but if anyone would really like to join the fun and debate, please contact me.

Bill Peters **07831 239190** investment1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Investment Group 2

We send our congratulations to our friends in Investment Club 1 for retaining the trophy in our annual fantasy shares competition. We presented the trophy at their lunch, to which we were kindly invited,

in January. As I write the financial markets are in a desperately uncertain state. It's at times like these that we remind ourselves that our primary function is to learn about the stock market as much as it's about making money but looking at our portfolio heading south is not too much fun! On a positive note, it's good to be meeting in person again each month.

In February we invited Marion Le Bot, Head of Investor Relations of Future plc, based in Bath, to talk to us via video link. We have a small financial interest in them, and she answered all our questions very comprehensively. We are very grateful that, in the hectic business world, she found time for us.

We will be looking at other similar opportunities within our portfolio during the year.

Graham Ford

07970 294341

investment2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Jazz Appreciation Group

Our meetings continue to be held on the third Monday of the month at 2pm in the Buckingham Room at The Chantry. Please note, however, that the April meeting will be on the 25th, **NOT** the 18th, which is Easter Monday.

At each meeting a presentation is given by a member of the Group. We enjoy jazz of all styles and eras recorded on CDs, DVDs, YouTube downloads, etc. via top quality audio equipment and video display. We are an Open Group so all u3a members are welcome. Now £3.00 per person – inflation! Tea/coffee & biscuits provided, of course, in the interval.

Bob Gray

885290

jazz@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Latin Group

The Latin Group is continuing to meet on Zoom as this fits in with other commitments for many of the group's members. We are continuing to progress through Oxford Latin Book III, which follows the life of the poet Horace. As the group masters increasingly complex grammar, more extracts of Horace's poems are incorporated into the book.

While this group is no longer suitable for beginners, new members who wish to revive previous knowledge of Latin are very welcome. For more information about the group, contact:

Lorna Minshall

411685

latin@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Lunch Group 2

A long established group that meets on the 2nd Wednesday each month, mainly in pubs but it can be anywhere within a reasonable travelling distance of Thornbury.

Individual members select their favourite venues and organise the visit, so that there is a good variety of eateries. We are delighted to be meeting again as normal, after a pandemic gap in 2020/21. Membership is now full, but we keep a small waiting list.

Gill & Quentin Killey

281372

Lunchclub2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Mahjong - Western Group

This is the Western Game of Mah jong. Our group started meeting again last September following a strict risk assessment policy and we still ask members to test for COVID, if possible, before attending sessions. URC imposed a maximum of 12 players in the room where we meet, as part of their COVID risk assessment, until the recent relaxation when we were able to increase to a maximum of 16. Sadly, it means that we are unable to welcome new members for the time being as we already have 18 on our register. However, if you are interested, please contact us as we are happy to start a waiting list and would contact you should a place become available.

We meet weekly on Tuesdays, in United Reformed Church small hall from 2.00 until 4.30pm.

Pat Purssord 501438

Pat Neale 202216

mahjong2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Mixed Craft Group

With individual, socially distanced, sanitized tables, we have found a way in which our members can be happy and confident to meet again and craft. New projects have been started and old ones picked up again, and news and experiences exchanged. Crocheting, knitting, embroidery, lace making, quilting, card making are just some of the crafts done by the group.

If you would like more information or would like to join us, please contact me.

Anne Reed 415849

mixedcrafts@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Music Group

The Music Group meets on the second Friday of the month between September and June. We meet in Alveston Methodist Church at 10.30am, with a coffee break half way through the performance. Alveston Methodist Church is a very comfortable venue with excellent acoustics.

Our programme for the rest of the current season is as follows:

Friday 8th April *Miscellany*, the ladies singing group, gave us a wonderful concert in December 2019. This time they will be dodging Christmas favourites and giving us a selection from their large repertoire instead.

Friday 13th May Marc Elton (violin) and Despina Hornatidou (harpsichord) will entertain us with a morning of baroque music – there may also be one or two contemporary works for this line up.

Friday 10th June Local conductor, organist, pianist and music teacher Nigel Davis will be Jos Gregson's guest as he decides which records he would take with him after being shipwrecked on a Desert Island. We will learn about his very musical life and how he would cope with the solitude of the island.

Annual Lunch Venue to be advised

Jos Gregson 411652

music@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Opera Appreciation Group

Sad news to report first: the Group has lost one of its long term members, Mike Neal, who died recently. Before we acquired our current screen, Mike was in charge of providing a screen for our meetings. He will be greatly missed.

We have resumed monthly meetings after a two month winter break. Originally the break was planned to be just for December but the progress of the Omicron variant led to the cancellation of our January event, the screening of Benjamin Britten's Peter Grimes. However, we were able to postpone Grimes to March and in between show Donizetti's Maria Stuarda in February, a moving portrayal of Mary Stuart's stay and eventual execution in England.

Operas to be screened in the coming months include Gluck's Orfeo ed Euridice (April 26), Puccini's La Rondine (May 24), and Korngold's Die Tote Stadt (June 28).

Our recent audience numbers have been between 25-30, which is encouraging given the continuing presence of COVID and the quite strict protocol that we have tried to follow.

Andrew Borkowski 228584

opera@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Our Living Language Group

This is the group that uses the English language to talk about uses of the English language. We meet on the second Monday of each month at 2pm at St Mary's Church Hall. Meetings are a mix of prepared talks and participation, so everyone feels included – and there's always a good helping of humour incorporated into the programmes. Since Christmas, we've covered: regional words, Valentine's Day sentiments, and zoomorphism (if you know what this is, or are intrigued enough to look it up, then you'll love our group meetings).

Bob Dale

415345

OurLivingLanguage@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Past Civilisations

Unfortunately, owing to on-going health issues, I am unable to commit to reliably leading a new group, even one formed out of the embers of the two previous groups. Should any former members be willing to step in, PLEASE get in touch: I have lots of books and resources available, and we could perhaps share the responsibility? As I no longer have access to the details of past members of Ancient Civilisations and Classical Studies groups via the u3a Beacon website, all communication can in future only be through these Newsletters if I need to call a meeting to gauge interest in starting up this group.

On another note, I very much hope to be fit enough to visit the Stonehenge Exhibition at the British Museum in June. If any potential members of this group would be interested in joining me, please get in touch directly, bearing in mind that this would be as a group of like-minded friends travelling together and NOT covered by any u3a insurance.

Rosie Bailey

419977

baileyfamily@blueyonder.co.uk

Photography Group

After a period of Zoom meetings, the Group has now resumed its meetings at the newly refurbished Coach Hall in the Chantry. The Group meets on the second Wednesday morning of each month from September to June.

Our July meetings consist of a coach trip to a place of interest, which this year is to the National Trust Property at Croombe Park. There are still a few places left on the coach for this trip. Should any u3a member wish to come, please email: mervyn.reed@talktalk.net for further details.

Alan Jones

883912

photography@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Poetry Appreciation Group

Themes for the group meetings are varied but one recent session since our return from lockdowns surprised us all by the range of poetry and poets brought by members. The title was "Poets as Prisoners" – an idea from Ann Birdsall, who was preparing to take an afternoon on this before she sadly became too unwell to continue to lead us. Instead, members were asked to bring poems from prisoners for offences at the time, (e.g. Oscar Wilde), prisoners of war, political prisoners and even poets from years gone by who had spent long periods in asylums (e.g. John Clare 1793-1864).

Two members chose poems by Irina Ratushinskaya, who was born in Odessa in 1954. Her parents were of Russified Polish ex-gentry descent. In 1979 she married the human rights activist, Igor Gerashchenko, and moved with him to Kiev where they soon both received short sentences for demonstrating and lost their jobs. However, in March 1983 after her poems had been declared subversive, Irina, at just 29, was sentenced to 7 years hard labour, to be followed by 5 years of internal exile, including re-education by the KGB. Her health was very poor when she was released. After a few years the couple and their 2 sons were allowed to visit U.S.A. and Britain but eventually returned to Russia.

It was in England that one of our members, Alan Brown, met her at a meeting and poetry reading at "The Watershed" in Bristol organised by "Amnesty International". During a poetry session which took place just before the invasion of Ukraine, we shared poems written by Irina while she was in Butyrki Prison. This and the places where Irina lived are now familiar to us.

Our second surprise was brought by a new member of our group who had met the poet, Robert Lowell, (1917-1977) at Essex University.

Robert, who was born in Boston, Massachusetts, was imprisoned as a conscientious objector in 1944 after refusing to join the armed forces. During his 5 month imprisonment he worked on poems later included in his book "Land of Unlikelihood". His writing on his opposition to war, materialism and greed won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1947. In 1960 he moved to New York and from 1963 taught intermittently at Harvard until his death. In 1970 he moved to England where for the next 6 years he taught 2 semesters at Essex University.

My thanks go to all the members for their commitment to the Group, which is now full. There is, however, a short waiting list.

Meg Adnams **416080** poetryappreciation@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Railway & Transport Group

The Railway & Transport Group is still a going concern and any new Railway/Transport enthusiasts would be welcome to attend.

April 29 My 1960s Trains and Buses, Part 1 – Hull & East Yorkshire
by Martin Green (former National Secretary of the Stephenson Locomotive Society)

May 27 To be arranged.

June 24 Recent activities on the Vale of Berkeley Railway.
To be presented by a member of the V of B Railway.

Dr George B Hargreaves **414243** railandtransport@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Recorders 2 Group

We are all so pleased to be back playing together again. Although playing on Zoom was better than nothing, it was just not the same.

We are enjoying some new music too. Some of it is quite challenging, especially as we haven't played much during the last couple of years.

Kate Phillipson-Masters **411253** recorders2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Science and Technology Group

We are continuing to support technology by meeting virtually on Zoom each month (the last Friday at 10am) so there is plenty of opportunity for newcomers to join in from the comfort of their own homes. No coffee, I'm afraid, but lots of opportunity to socialise as well as listening to first-rate talks by members on a wide variety of scientific and technological subjects. Since Christmas, we've covered: calendars, life expectancy, and 19th century aviation.

Bob Dale **415345** scienceandtech@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Scottish Country Dancing Group

This group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons in the Thornbury Methodist Church Upper Hall From

2pm to 3.45pm (doors open 1.45pm). Most of us are beginners, so we have been learning some steps and figures since starting in January. We have a trained teacher to take us through all the dances.

Everyone takes a lateral flow test before attending and we clean our hands between dances. If you would like to join us for some lively dancing to great tunes, there is still room for some more members and you don't need to bring a partner.

Margaret Pinder **416778** scottishcountrydancing@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Scrabble Group 1

After a two month break, Scrabble 1 resumed on March 7th at the small meeting room at Thornbury United Reformed Church. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 2.35 pm, but dates are sometimes changed due to bank holidays. Contact the group leader for exact dates.

Geraldine Cater **419977** scrabble@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Shakespeare Studies Group

After an absence of two years, the Group felt it was safe enough to meet again on Wednesday 16th February when we enjoyed studying the first half of *Measure for Measure*. We will complete the play in March. The agreed programme until the end of the season is:

April – May All's Well that ends Well

June – July *The Tempest*

Three members have left the Group since the start of the pandemic but we have been fortunate to be able to welcome new members, Maureen, Valerie and Richard, to the Group in their place.

We are fully subscribed at the moment but all enquiries to go on a waiting list are welcome.

Alan Brown **884851** shakespeare@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Spanish Group

This is a new group. We started in October last year and meet fortnightly at the Anchor, Morton. There are 10 regular members and we have a waiting list. We use the BBC course "Talk Spanish," which is based on everyday situations, such as asking the way, shopping, booking a hotel room etc.

In April we are looking forward to a Spanish Tapas Evening at the Anchor, This will be open to the general public but we will be attending as a group and hopefully expanding our Spanish vocabulary.

I have been hugely impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of this great group of people. A sense of humour has proved essential and we really appreciate the fact that Dave and Heather let us use the back bar free of charge.

Ann Ferragut **0117 9502139** spanish@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 1 Group

Our group has now been playing as normal for several months and everyone is glad to be back playing. Unfortunately, we have just had a couple of cases of COVID and those players are currently in quarantine. Visitors are currently not allowed to attend until we can be sure everyone is healthy, fit and free from COVID.

If you are familiar with the game and would like to give us a try please get in contact. All our details are on the u3a website.

Graham Bancroft **07514 086277** tabletennis1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 3 Group

We meet at Thornbury Leisure Centre on Monday mornings from 9am to 11am and currently have some vacancies. We would welcome new members.

Jay Cooper

414762

tabletennis3@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 4 Group

Group 4 is a relaxed, though mildly competitive, group that plays TT at an intermediate level. Generally, we play doubles games on two or three tables each Thursday from 3:00pm to 5:00pm at Thornbury Leisure Centre.

Our membership is currently fully subscribed but we sometimes - particularly during the summer period - have opportunities for casual players and this may lead to full membership depending on our numbers.

Ray Pioli

0117 3706403

tabletennis4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 5 Group

Everyone is thoroughly enjoying being back playing table tennis again. A couple of new members have joined us, so the group is up to capacity which is fantastic.

Pat Light

412260

tabletennis5@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Theatre Group

Our next List 4 will be sent out in May – it includes 4 films for the Autumn.

Pam Dawe

614843

theatreandoperavisits@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Travel & Tourism Group

We meet in the Upper (Wesley) Hall of Thornbury Methodist Church on the second Friday afternoon of the month at 2.30pm. Having introduced members of the new committee in January, we have had some very good talks on Berlin and the Lower Danube, Budapest to Bucharest. We look forward to finding out about “Here, There and Everywhere” in April, followed by “Guernsey” in May and “Ocean Cruising” in June.

We are also looking forward to our first visit of the year to West Yorkshire and thank Audrey Shepherd for organising this. We were very sad to learn of the death of one of our speakers, John Smith, and will miss his kind and helpful support at our meetings as indeed throughout the whole u3a.

Travel safely!

Alison Makepeace

415019

travelandtourism@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Walking Group

This group has over 100 members and we organise 2 walks a month, on the 1st and third Thursdays. So far this year we have held our annual New Year's Blow – where we walk down to Oldbury and have mince pies and stollen. This was followed by our annual walk and AGM meal at Eastwood Park.

We have had many local walks of interest, including one in Wales to Penhow Castle. In late March there is a scenic walk along the Daffodil Route, near Newent, where a host of wild daffodils are on display. For membership queries please contact:

Adrian Jones

417378

walking@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Whist Group

The whist group continues to grow with an average of 24 players per meeting. It's a very jolly group, with much laughter, banter and chatting. We're reaching maximum capacity but new members are always welcome. Contact me first to check details.

Reg King

418962

whist@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 1

Since Autumn 2021, Wine Group 1 has continued to meet bi-monthly on 3rd Fridays at St Mary's Hall to enjoy presentations by members. In recent months we have tasted wines from Western Australia, Eastern Europe and Iberia, and also a seasonal selection of winter wines. Although we managed an outdoor barbecue during the summer months last year, extra wine related activities are only just starting to be suggested as COVID still needs to be taken into account in our planning. Attendance at recent meetings has returned to pre-pandemic levels and it is hoped it will continue. Currently numbers in the group are at capacity and a short waiting list exists for potential members.

Rex Sackett

416940

winegroup1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 2

Our year kicked off with an excellent New Year's meal and tasting at The Hideout, that we followed up with a tasting of Wines of the Vendée. In future months we will have a vertical wine tasting, BBQ evening, garden party and a fish and chip supper with paired tastings.

Although the membership is full at present, there will be a couple of leavers over the next month or two and so new members are welcome.

Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of the month at St Mary's Hall. For membership enquiries please contact:

Nick Howkins

411455

winegroup2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 3

We meet in St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornbury on the first Friday evening of the month at 7.30pm.

We had a very knowledgeable talk from Novel Wines in January and experienced tastings from Georgia to Lebanon, as well as Eastern Europe. More recently, we have found out about Organic Wines and appreciated their finer details and methods of production. We look forward to trying other new wines in the near future and perhaps a visit in the summer as wine businesses return to more normal openings.

Alison Makepeace

415019

winegroup3@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 4

Following on from our successful 'Antiques Road Show – Good, better, best' event on 28th January, Wine Group 4 ("Imbibe with friends") continues to welcome new members.

As we move into a more post-COVID period, our planned events in 2022 include a look at Italian wines and a "Return to the 1970's" wine tasting. We are also planning for Wine Merchant external tastings and local vineyards in the Spring / Summer. If you are interested in joining our growing, merry band, please contact the group leader.

Colin Ballantyne

07802 838241

winegroup4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

YOYO Group

YOYO had its seventh meeting on 9 March and membership has now reached 50. Many of us have made new friends and taken part in lots of activities. The main YOYO meetings have changed to the second Wednesday of the month at Thornbury Methodist Church from 2.15 – 4.30pm. On all other Wednesdays we have a drop-in at Coffee #1 between 2pm and 4pm that is well attended.

There have been many events since we began last September: guided trips to Bristol and participation in the Wassail at Tyntesfield. There's a regular Craft Group and a Sunday Lunch group. Music events have included Sea Shanties, Nailsea Community Orchestra, and UWE choir at St George's. Two groups have booked to see Mama Mia at the Hippodrome in June. There was a walk in Charfield covering the history of the Charfield train crash, and Thornbury Heritage trail walks. Opportunities for lunch and/or coffee breaks are always included.

Everyone most welcome.

Jackie Cadwgan

0750 4633350

yoyo@thornburyu3a.org.uk

- Thornbury u3a Groups -

The following Table provides a Summary of all the current Groups within our Thornbury u3a. It provides the name of **the Group Leader or the person to contact** and when these groups meet. For more details on the Group's activities and how to contact them by email, then please look on our website thornburyu3a.org.uk.

	Group Name	Group Leader or Contact Person	Tel (01454 -)	Frequency	Day/Time
1	Open Talks	Louise Ingsley	415131		
2	Open Visits	Sue James	885452	Various	
3	Archaeology	Jackie Carpenter	294561	Monthly	4 th Tues 2pm
4	Architecture	Steven Thomas	None given	Monthly	1 st Tues 10.30am
5	Art Monday Group	Sue Punton	776271	Weekly	Mon 9.30am
6	Art Thursday Group	Ted Bridges	419257	Weekly	Thurs 9:15am
7	Astronomy	Peter Jackson	418050	Monthly	1 st Mon 10.30am
8	Bird Watching	Cilla Farquhar	413055	Monthly	2 nd Mon 9.30am
9	Book Group 1	Lesley Thomas	613508	Monthly	3 rd Fri am
10	Book Group 2	Margaret Pinder	416778	Monthly	1 st Mon 2pm
11	Bridge 1	Mary Bignell	415131	Weekly	Tues 9:30am
12	Bridge 2	Linda Cooper	414762	Weekly	Tues 2pm
13	Bridge 3	Ian Macdonald	613846	Weekly	Fri 2pm
14	Bridge 4	Jan Winter	612641	Weekly	Tuesday evening
15	Canasta	Val Curtis	850981	Fortnightly	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday 1.30pm
16	Card Making	Sue Kitson	418543	Monthly	1 st Mon, Tues & Thurs 2pm
17	Church Visits 1	Sandra Body	415250	Monthly	3 rd Tues all day
18	Church Visits 2	Janet McBride	416569	Monthly	2 nd Thurs all day
19	Cinema	Pam Dawe	614843	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Fri 1:30pm
20	Computer Club	Andy Pearson	416321	Monthly	
21	Concerts	Phil Holland	413897	Various	
22	Creative Writing	Doug Easthope	07794 705656	Monthly	Last Fri 10am
23	Cribbage	Pam Pass	600772	Fortnightly	2 nd & 4 th Wed 2pm
24	Cycling	Don Grundell	412896	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Tues 2pm
25	Discussions	Bob Dale	415345	Monthly	2 nd Tues 2pm
26	DIY	Alan Pinder	416778	Monthly	3 rd Thurs 2.30pm
27	Family History	Frances Houghton	417048	Monthly	3 rd Fri 10.30am
28	French Book Group	Sue Kessler	414917	Variable	Mon 2pm
29	French Intermediate	Margaret Rowley	413217	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Fri 11am
30	French Slightly Advanced	Margaret Rowley	413218	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Fri 11am
31	French WD40 Group	Alan Payne	418749	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Tues 10am
32	Garden Visits	Lyn Haigh	228637	Mar - Sept	Various
33	Gentle Exercise	Sally Bradford	419651	Weekly	Thurs 10am
34	Geology	Jamie Russell	261649	Monthly	4 th Wed 10am

35	German Self Help	Michael Boulton	416416	Fortnightly	Mon 11am
36	History	Alison Makepeace	415019	Monthly	Weds 10.30am
37	Indoor Bowls	Veronica Stanley	07947 149639	Weekly	Weds 11.45am
38	Investment Club 1	Bill Peters	07947 149639	Monthly	2 nd Weds 10am
39	Investment Club 2	Graham Ford	613164	Monthly	2 nd Tues 2pm
40	Italian	Emma Buckoke	413318	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Thurs 2pm
41	Jazz Appreciation	Bob Gray	885290	Monthly	3 rd Mon 2.30pm
42	Latin	Lorna Minshall	411685	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Fri 2pm
43	Lunch Club 1	Brian Baskerville	416389	Monthly	1 st Weds
44	Lunch Club 2	Gill & Quentin Killey	281372	Monthly	2 nd Weds
45	Lunch Club 3	Gunter Schurrer	07833 634280	Monthly	Tues Monthly
46	Mah Jong - Social	Jane Climpson	228672	Fortnightly	2nd&4th Mon 2.15pm
47	Mah Jong - Western	Pat Pursord	501438	Weekly	Tues 2pm
48	Mixed Craft	Anne Reed	415849	Monthly	2 nd Wed 2pm
49	Music	Jos Gregson	411652	Monthly	2 nd Fri 10.30am
50	Music Visitor	Elizabeth Smith	418695	Monthly	2 nd Fri 10.30am
51	Opera Appreciation Group	Joan Flower	228584	Monthly	4 th Tues 6.45pm
52	Our Living Language	Bob Dale	415345	Monthly	2 nd Mon 2pm
53	Past Civilisations	Rosemary Bailey	419977	Monthly	3rd Wed
54	Photographic	Alan Jones	883912	Monthly	2 nd Weds 10.30am
55	Play Reading	Liz Gazzard	614148	Monthly	2 nd Mon 2pm
56	Poetry Appreciation	Meg Adnams	416080	Monthly	3 rd Mon 2pm
57	Practical Gardening Forum	Nick Roach	618411	Monthly	3 rd Thurs 2pm
58	Railway & Transport	George Hargreaves	414243	Monthly	Last Fri 7.30pm
59	Recorders 1	Mandy Clapp	414749	Weekly	Mon 9.45am
60	Recorders 2	Kate Phillipson- Masters	411253	Weekly	Mon 10.15am
61	Sailing	John Allen	415261	Various	Various
62	Science & Technology	Bob Dale	415345	Bi-monthly	Last Fri 10.30
63	Scottish Country Dancing	Margaret Pinder	416778	Fortnightly	Tue 2:30pm
64	Scrabble 1	Geraldine Cater	419977	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Mon 2pm
65	Scrabble 2	Josie Bloxsidge	01179 692555	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Wed 2pm
66	Shakespeare Studies	Alan Brown	884851	Monthly	3 rd Wed 2pm
67	Short Slow Strolls	Pat Poole	414611	Monthly	Various
68	Spanish	Ann Ferragut	0117 9502139	Fortnightly	Thurs.
69	Table Tennis 1	Graham Bancroft	07514 086277	Weekly	Wed 1.30pm
70	Table Tennis 2	Joan Flower	228584	Weekly	Wed 1:45pm
71	Table Tennis 3	Jay Cooper	414762	Weekly	Mon 9am
72	Table Tennis 4	Ray Pioli	0117 3706403	Weekly	Thurs 3pm

73	Table Tennis 5	Pat Light	412260	Weekly	Fri 10am
74	Theatre Group	Pam Dawe	614843	Various	Various
75	Travel & Tourism	Alison Makepeace	414547	Monthly	2 nd Fri 2pm
76	Walking Group	Adrian Jones	417378	Fortnightly	1 st , 3 rd & 5 th Thurs
77	Whist	Reg King	418962	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Wed 2pm
78	Wine Group 1	Rex Sackett	416940	Bi-Monthly	3 rd Fri 6.30pm
79	Wine Group 2	Peter Burney	417900	Monthly	4 th Thurs 7pm
80	Wine Group 3	Alison Makepeace	415019	Bi-Monthly	1 st Fri 7.30pm
81	Wine Group 4	Colin Ballantyne	07802 838241	Bi-Monthly	Last Friday 7.30pm
82	You On Your Own (YOYO)	Jackie Cadwgan	07504 633350	Monthly	1st Wed 2:15pm