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

From the Chairman

Firstly, please allow me to take this opportunity to thank all of you who attended our AGM on Monday 5th February at St. Mary's Church. I understand that 257 people attended, with a further 9 logins on the church's YouTube channel. As we needed 143 to make a quorum, this was very gratifying. I'd also like to thank those of you who sent kind words about how we are doing.

Others made helpful suggestions, that we will certainly incorporate where we can. At this AGM we said goodbye to three stalwart members of the committee -

Don Grundell, Jackie Gitsham and Louise Ingsley and welcomed three new recruits – Helen Moszoro, Pat Light and Peter Rendell. We had a very successful meeting, thanks to the committee and excellent catering by Sheila and her team.



As I have mentioned before, there is a limit on the time that committee members can serve and be trustees, so there is a regular need for new recruits. Two committee members, who are currently in this position, are now termed 'associate' members of the committee. This is permitted by our constitution. They cannot vote, neither can they be counted as trustees. These two are taking the roles of three officers – Equipment, Health and Safety and Open Visits. Other positions as principal or non-principal officers become vacant at our next AGM (See Steve's comment). If you feel that you might be able to take on any of these jobs, please let me know. You don't even have to be an officer. There is provision for us to co-opt up to 2 temporary members. Do not worry. If you decided to take this on as a sort of 'taster', I am sure that we will find something for you to do! Contact me, in confidence, for more information.

Steve, our Treasurer, mentioned a very interesting point at the AGM. Our subscription is currently £6 p.a. Of this, we pay £4 each to the Third Age Trust, plus £1 each for our Beacon license. This means that of the £6 we only keep £1. How do we manage to do anything? Sadly, one source of income is remaining funds from closed groups. This is not a reliable income (we hope!). However, another source is Gift Aid. If you have signed-up for Gift Aid, you pay your £6, we pay £5 to the TAT, but the government returns the tax that you paid on all of the original £6. This amounts to £1.50, so we actually get £2.50 from each Gift Aided subscription. Therefore, the message is simple. If, and only if, you pay income tax, please sign a Gift Aid Form. If you already have done so, nothing further is needed and thank you very much.

Our next Coffee/Social morning will be held on Saturday 9th March, starting at 10:30 in Porch House, Castle Street. I look forward to seeing you there.

Roger Steer

294371

chairman@thornburyu3a.org.uk

From the Treasurer

For those members who didn't attend the AGM, I am pleased to advise that the Treasurer's Report for the year ended September 2023 was approved unanimously and the Financial Statement has now been posted on our website. This will be forwarded to the Charity Commission as part of our Annual Return in due course.

I mentioned during my Report that under the terms of the Constitution, I will need to stand down as Treasurer at the next AGM so we will be needing a replacement. If anyone feels that this is something they would be prepared to consider, I would be happy to meet up to discuss exactly what is involved. I don't think any aspects of the role could be described as over complicated and much of the record keeping is done using the Beacon system, so please get in touch if you are interested.

Steve Hughes

887151

treasurer@thornburyu3a.org.uk

New Members Welcome Meeting

You are invited to come along to our next Welcome Meeting for all new members on Friday 22 March 2024 from 3:30pm till 4:30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Eastbury Road, Thornbury, BS35 1DR.

There will be a PowerPoint presentation showing a lot of the activities on offer and opportunities to talk to current committee members about any queries or suggestions you may have.

If you have friends who you think might be interested in joining our U3A then please bring them along too. We get a lot of interest from prospective members who come along on spec.

Refreshments will be available after the presentation.

Pat Light

412260

membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Anne and Phil Holland

As many of you know, Anne and Phil are moving shortly to live nearer their daughter and we thought we couldn't let them move without saying a huge "thank-you" for everything they have done for Thornbury u3a over the many years they have been members. With numbers 006 and 007 they were part of the original group who set up Thornbury's u3a in autumn 1997 when Phil became the first Treasurer, prepared the Constitution, was in charge of Membership and organised a Walking Group. Anne started the Cycling group.

Born in Newport and after following a civil engineering degree (Phil) and teaching training (Anne) in London, they married and moved back to South Wales where Phil worked on the construction of Llanwern steelworks. Here they developed their knowledge of classical, folk and jazz music and continued their socialist political support. They moved to Thornbury in 1964 (to work on Oldbury Power Station and later the M5) and built a canal boat between being a Governor of The Castle School, Chairman of the Arts Festival, organiser of Thornbury Folk Club and singing in Thornbury Male Voice Choir. Travel was also important and they have camped and cycled all over the world.

They will also be remembered for their keen support in various groups, especially Science & Technology, the Music Group where Phil has been known to sing folk songs and the Concerts Group which Phil organised with efficient and meticulous detail. Members were able to enjoy many outstanding concerts from St. David's Hall to the newly refurbished Bristol Beacon (Colston Hall). Phil had the demanding work of sorting the bookings, preparing the tickets and letting everyone know the precise arrangements.



In 2018 Anne and Phil kindly cut the ribbon to 'open' our u3a Bench (opposite The Anchor Inn, Thornbury) to celebrate our u3a's 20th Anniversary.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to Anne and Phil for widening our knowledge, companionship and enjoyment of life under the u3a umbrella and we send them our very best wishes for good health and happiness in their new home as they embark on the next step of "retirement." Thank you both for all your interest, help and support in Thornbury u3a and we will miss your energy, enthusiasm and hard work.

In Memoriam

Sadly, we have been informed of the following member who passed away recently.

William Casling

Our condolences go to William's family.

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	Roger Steer	294371	<u>chairman@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Vice Chairman	Paige Warr	201819	<u>vicechair@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Treasurer	Steve Hughes	887151	<u>treasurer@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Secretary	Pat Wells	850379	<u>secretary@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Membership Secretary	Pat Light	412260	<u>membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Group Co-ordinator	Helen Moszoro	528236	<u>groupcoordinator@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Beacon Administration	Steve Wells	850379	<u>beacon@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Webmaster & Newsletter	Peter Rendell	07792 364546	<u>webmaster@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
Committee Members	Sue James	885452	<u>visits@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
	Trevor Daniels	419688	<u>general@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>
<i>Committee Associates:</i>			
Catering Co-ordinator	Sheila Forsythe	419909	
Equipment	Norman Taylor	418396	<u>equipment@thornburyu3a.org.uk</u>

Open Talks

No Talks are planned at the moment due to problems of a suitable venue

- News from Group Leaders -

The following is the information provided by the Group Leaders.

Archaeology Group

We have embarked on a new journey based loosely on the lines “the Rolling English Drunkard made the Rolling English Road”. We have started with England’s oldest path, the Ridgeway, which has many archaeological gems along its route. We have a variety of topics to follow throughout the year. Regretfully we are unable to take any more members at present due to the size of our room.

Jackie Carpenter

294561

archaeology@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Architecture Group



Our 2024 programme of talks is listed on the Thornbury U3A website and we are already well into our schedule. This year, we also have one or two innovative changes in the programme that we are delivering to our members.

In June, Bob Dale – of the Photography Group and also our Architecture Group Treasurer – will give a talk on the art of photographing buildings. This is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate how groups can interact with subjects that may be common to both. We would welcome any suggestions from other groups where a similar cross-over can be arranged for the benefit of both.

Another new initiative will take place in October when we have invited a speaker – Alan Soldat - from West Wilts U3A (based in Trowbridge) to give a talk. This is under the umbrella of the “Speaker Swap” initiative where groups are encouraged to swap speakers. Given the hard work and effort that

goes into preparing a talk, this is a welcome opportunity for all that research to be shared to a wider audience. Doug Fowler has already attended West Wilts U3A Architecture Group on 22nd January when he was warmly welcomed. He gave a talk entitled 'Inside the Mind of an Architect' – which stimulated a great discussion with the group thereafter.

It would be remiss not to reflect briefly on the fun and games we had at our 2023 Christmas Meeting in December when Helen Roberts, Bob Dale and Doug Fowler tested the local knowledge of group members while having fun with architectural topics in the process.

Doug Fowler

07860 345750

architecture@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Art Group - Monday

We are a friendly group who meet weekly on a Monday morning from 9.30am to 12.00 noon at St. Mary's Church Hall to pursue our enjoyment of art. We have a range of abilities and are always happy to encourage and help each other. We use a variety of mediums although most people use watercolours or acrylics. We aim to have one or two workshops and/or demonstrators each term but otherwise 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 are currently full but anyone interested in joining us should contact Sue to be added to our waiting list.

Sue Punton

776271 / 07858 630636

artmonday@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Art Group - Thursday



The Group continues to meet each Thursday morning at 09:15 in St Mary's Church Hall during school term times. We have members of all abilities using various media including acrylic and watercolour paint, pastels, pen and pencil. Members encourage and support each other whilst pursuing their own particular projects. A local artist attends once a term to help to provide individual and group advice and direction. Similarly demonstrations/workshops are provided by a variety of artists each term.

We have space for a couple of new members

Edward Bridges

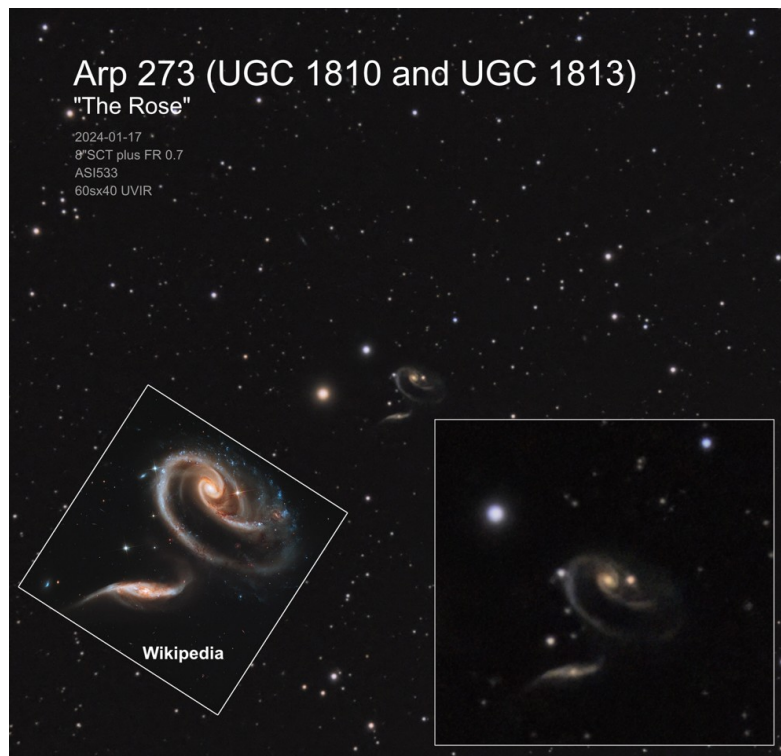
419257

artthursday@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Astronomy and Space Group

The group continues to meet each month for face-to-face monthly meetings at the Chantry. Topics for discussion follow a regular pattern – a section on the latest astronomy and space news over the coming month, followed by a talk on either a Space or an Astronomy topic. These are offered by a few regular contributors, but we are always keen for more discussion ideas.

Recent talks have covered the European Dark Matter space mission “Euclid,” a guest speaker who described how he detects planets around nearby stars from his back garden and the CEO of a local company who plans to make semi-conductors in space and bring these back to Earth.



Meanwhile our astrophotographers (a few hardy enthusiasts) continue to share remarkable imagery from their back gardens despite the awful weather over recent months.

Chris Lee

07715 159541

astronomy@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Badminton Group

The Badminton group is still welcoming more players. We meet at Thornbury Leisure centre on Wednesday mornings 10am till 11:55 pm.

We are a friendly, social group with various standards of players, though we are all having fun while improving and getting fitter. If you have never played badminton before just turn up and give it a try.

Marion Reeve

07759 945388

badminton@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Beginner's Bridge Group

The Beginner's Bridge Group last year. It now has 14 members who are learning how to play under the tutelage of several experienced members of Bridge Group 1. We meet in the Slymbridge Room of the Chantry on a Monday afternoon 2pm till 4pm and we charge £3 per person, including refreshments.

Many of our members have started to learn from scratch, or wished to restart after having played the game many years ago. So we welcome anyone who would like to learn how to play this fascinating, but somewhat complex, game of cards.

Please contact me on the number below or send me an email.

Norman Taylor

418396

beginnersbridge@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bird Watching Group



Mistle Thrush, New Fancy



Grey Heron, Oldbury Power Station

We have travelled near and far to see a wide variety of birds. Locally the banks of the Severn are most interesting especially during the autumn migration. A surprising number of keen bird watchers arrived at the Somerset levels for an early morning start and the promise of bittern and numerous waders.

We have welcomed new comers, and introduced them to good viewing spots. Anyone interested is very welcome to join us.

Cilla Farquhar

413055

birdwatching@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Book Group 1

Book Group 1 reads 'modern novels' written from the early 20th century to the present day. We usually meet on the 3rd Friday of the month in a member's home.

We have recently completed a series of novel associated with workplaces, including *The Circle* by Dave Eggers and *A Far Cry from Kensington* by Muriel Spark. Now we are reading novels strongly featuring specific places. We started with Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (which turned out to be more interesting than some of us remembered) and our March read is *Hawksmoor* by Peter Ackroyd.

New members are welcome, so if you are interested in joining us contact Lesley Thomas.

Lesley Thomas

07398 136518

BookGroup1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 1

Bridge Group 1 play at the Chantry in Castle Street every Tuesday morning at 9:00 am.



We are a friendly group and would welcome new players who are familiar with duplicate bridge. (With a partner would be good but not essential)

Contact Mary Bignell if you are interested.

Mary Bignell

07711 025352

bridgegroup1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 2

Bridge Group 2 meets on Tuesday afternoons at 2 pm in the Methodist Hall, Olveston.

There is a charge of £2 per person for each session and Tea, Coffee and Biscuits are included.

At the moment, our group is fully subscribed, but please direct all enquiries to Linda Cooper.

Linda Cooper

414762

bridgegroup2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 4

Bridge group 4 meets every Tuesday evening at 7.30pm at the Olveston Methodist Hall. We play duplicate bridge - but not too seriously. The aim is to have a sociable friendly evening of bridge as we exercise our brains!

We are a small group and generally have 3-5 tables playing and would be pleased to have new members joining us. Anyone who has a reasonable level of social bridge experience is very welcome. We ask people to come along with a partner, although we can sometimes find partners for people occasionally, if we know in advance. There is no need otherwise to let us know that you are coming, although you are welcome to contact me to ask any questions if you wish.

Slam hands not guaranteed every week - but hopefully an enjoyable evening anyway.

Jan Winter

612641

bridgegroup4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cardmaking

The cardmaking group meets on the 1st Monday Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, of each month. We make 3 cards at each session also enjoying a chat and a cuppa.

Although there are no permanent vacancies at the moment opportunities to come may arise due to sickness or holidays.

If anyone is interested please get in touch and I will put your name on a reserve list.

Sue Kitson

418543

cardmaking@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Computer Group

The computing group continues with its approach of publishing monthly newsletters, via Beacon, to each of its members - there are no regular/monthly meetings. The group has begun to meet on an occasional basis in the upstairs function room in The Swan Inn on Thornbury high street.

The first gathering was on the first Friday of February, on an invitation basis as the capacity of the room is somewhat limited. The next gathering will probably take place on the first Friday of May which will be the last event for the group until September after our customary 3 month 'summer' break.

These gatherings are on an informal basis with no presentations but providing an environment in which members can freely raise any computing issues they have. The newsletter continues on the traditional monthly basis.

Andy Pearson

416321

computerclub@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Concerts Group

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

Two concerts remain in this season, at Bristol Beacon, but we are fully booked for both.

Phil Holland is stepping down as leader and no replacement has come forward. The Group is therefore likely to cease activities. Programmes for next season should be available in June but it is not intended to make any bookings.

If anyone is interested in leading the Group, they should make contact via the Thornbury U3A website.

Phil Holland

413897

concerts@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cycling Group

We continue to go for our rides on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month (weather permitting!). We typically cycle between 30-45 miles, but at a pace where we can chat as we go. We always plan a coffee and lunch stop and the rides are very sociable. Please contact me if you are interested in joining.

Don Grundell

412896

cycling@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Discussions Group

If you weren't one of the twenty who attended the latest Discussions Group meeting, you missed a scorcher. One of our members suggested we try to answer the question: "What are old people for?"

Having quickly dismissed the notion of trying to define "old" numerically, we established that, like all u3a-ers, we weren't actually old – but we knew lots of people who were. Then, as in all other discussions, we spent an hour burrowing down lots of rabbit-holes from the deadly serious to the frivolously imaginative without coming to any definitive answer to the question! But the tea and biscuits were excellent.

Like to join us? All you need is an open and receptive mind and a willingness to share. 2nd Tuesday afternoons at The Chantry.

Bob Dale

415345

discussions@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Family History Group

The family history group has been experimenting with some new ideas this last few months.

We had a quiz based on family history for December's meeting. This was all-out basic facts such as when Civil Registration of births, marriages and deaths began.

In January we tried a "brick walls" sessions based on what Gloucestershire family history society had done. We asked members to present to the others members problems they had encountered in researching their family histories which they hadn't been able to solve. Between us we were able to make at least one suggestion for each person to try, which may enable them to solve their particular problem.

In February Norman Taylor gave a presentation about records not available yet online. He focussed mainly on the Land Tax Assessments of 1771-1832 but touched on the Tithe Apportionment of the 1840's, as well and parish records like Vestry Minutes which recorded the running of a parish. If an ancestor was appointed as a parish overseer or parish clerk the post often passed down the family and one can find several generations acting as parish officers.

Next month John Stennard will give a presentation about an ancestor who flew a Lancaster bomber.

We would welcome more members to our group. Some of our long-standing members have had to resign, mostly due to health issues.

Some members now feel that because so much information is online there is no real need for meetings, but sometimes there is no substitute for being able to pick someone else's brains and have instant feedback! Having someone on hand helping you to navigate a new website or delve into a box of records is much more fun than trawling alone! So if you think you'd like to find out what really happened to great auntie Mabel or 3 times great grandfather who was rumoured to have run off with the barmaid from the local pub, we'd be only too pleased to help you.

Frances Houghton

417048

familyhistory1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

French Group - WD40

The members of the WD 40 French Group continue to meet via Zoom. We base our activities around Rendezvous, which is a professionally produced magazine containing interesting (and sometimes challenging!) articles and grammar exercises. Our efforts continue to be assisted by an experienced French speaker.

The Group currently has a dozen or so members, two of whom share the same Zoom link. Currently we have vacancies for one or two extra members. Given the constraints of Zoom, it would be ideal if they shared the one terminal but even if you would be on your own, don't let that discourage you. If you would like to join us please contact the leader Alan Payne.

Alan Payne

418749

frenchwd40@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Garden Visits Group

We have organised a programme of ten visits between May and September to a variety of venues, some of which are old favourites like Hidcote and Rosemoor and others that are new for GVG.

The programmes will be mailed out in March with one deadline for applying for the first five trips and a later deadline for the next five. We rolled forward the membership from 2023 so existing members do not need to pay a subscription but new members need to pay £2 per person.

The deadline for new members to join is 15th March so anyone interested should contact Rosie Bailey without delay.

Group Leader: Lyn Haigh 228637

Membership: Rosie Bailey 419977

gardenvisits@thornburyu3a.org.uk

gardenvisits.membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Gentle Exercise Group

Our long time instructor Joan has retired after 20 years of keeping us moving. She will be much missed. However we are lucky to have persuaded Sam Hutchinson to take over the classes.

Gentle Exercise involves low impact exercise with some seated work but with no floor work. Sam has also introduced some ballet-style exercises which are challenging us (in a good way!). Gentle Exercise is generally appropriate for those who already have some degree of fitness but we keep it fairly low key. It is not necessary to have done Keep Fit before to enjoy the sessions. We have a short waiting list and potential new members are welcome to “try before you buy” and come for a test session before deciding.

Classes still take place at 10am on Thursdays in the Methodist Upper Hall.

Contact Christine Baker 07752 042088, Rita Goss 417749, or Pat Wells.

Pat Wells 850379

gentleexercise@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Geology Group

The geology group continues to meet on the mornings of the fourth Wednesday in the month at the Chantry.

Geology is a wide ranging subject. We have presentations and discussions on all aspects of the field. We also organise local field trips to areas of geological interest.

Why not join us? Whether you have an interest in landscape, rocks, fossils, volcanoes or are just curious to find out more about the fascinating world of geology, get in touch.

Jamie Russell 261649

geology@thornburyu3a.org.uk

German Language Group

This Group is a self-help group of half a dozen or so members. 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.

We have a core of 7 people, so I think we could probably add a few more members.

We usually meet fortnightly on Mondays at 3.00pm at The White Lion.

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

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. We are pleased to welcome new members and if you would like to be more involved by giving presentations or helping out, please let the Committee know.

Recently we have enjoyed some excellent talks from Tony Cherry on Salmon Fishing in the River Severn and from Liz Davenport on Woodchester Mansion. Spring will see us finding out about the History of Tank Warfare and the Assyrians and include a visit to our local "Dig" at Lower Hazel. An eclectic mix but I am sure each presenter will enthral you with their careful research and detailed information.

We thank our speakers for their time and energy and look forward to seeing you at a future meeting.

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

Indoor Bowls

Indoor Bowls season is nearly coming at an end with just 4 sessions left to go with 20th March '24 being our last until we start up again mid to end of September. It has been a great season and it has been good to have newcomers joining our happy bunch and some have stayed, but some have decided it's not for them. I wish all my fellow players a great summer & sincerely hope the weather plays ball and we have a good one. Stay healthy and I'll see you all again in September.

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

Investment Group 1

For Investment Club 1, January is marked by the results of various competitions when bottles of wine go all over the place to the various winners! It is also when we hold our annual joint lunch with Investment Club 2. This year, it was once again held at the Anchor, Oldbury on Severn, which served us with an excellent meal. Unfortunately for us, the lunch marked the handing over of the 'The Pig' (a small valueless but prized china pig!) to Investment Club 2 who won last year's inter investment club competition by a small margin. We must try harder with our share picks to get it back this year!

We meet on the second Wednesday morning of the month at Tockington Methodist Church with some crossing the road to the Swan Inn where discussion continues over a pleasant lunch! Two more people have recently joined us but could possibly squeeze in another one or two who might like to join the fun and debate. Please contact me for more info or if you would like to sit in on a meeting to see what it's like.

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

Investment Group 2

It was quite a moment when our portfolio of shares, briefly, reached the magical six figures in value. It's dropped back a little at the time of writing but for our members it was very satisfying. Sadly it's not all profit. Picking winners in the stock market is dependent on many factors and not least of those is a bit of luck. We don't tend to over analyse our choices but take a steer from the financial publications and then apply some common sense. That is not necessarily a winning formula but that combined with some learning slots in the form of podcasts etc about aspects of the market, make this a club where we have fun. We even manage to smile when we lose money on a share.. The past year or so has been difficult with the majority of our investments in the UK market. We read the FTSE is undervalued and there are bargains out there. All we have to do is find them.



Our annual fantasy competition with Investment Club 1 was very close but for the first time in 3 years our group just managed to pip them.

The photo shows Bill Woodruffe of Group 1 presenting the prestigious china pig to our Group members Graham Ford, Mike Kendall and Richard Norton at the annual Group dinner. We expect quite a battle to retain it this year.

Graham Ford

07970 294341

investment2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Lunch Group 2

A long-established group that meets on the 2nd Wednesday monthly, mainly in pubs, but 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.

Gill & Quentin Killey

568541

Lunchclub2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Lunch Group 4

I am very pleased to say that Lunch Group 4 held its first meal at The Swan, Tytherington on 18 January and it was very successful with all 9 members attending. Due to a few members preferring to meet on a different day in the month it was decided to change our day to the 1st Thursday in the month from here on. There is still room for more members and maybe the change of day will encourage a few more to join us.

Jackie Gitsham

858438

Lunchclub4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Mahjong Monday Group

We meet on 2nd and 4th Monday afternoons from 2.00 to 4.00 pm at the Gillingstool Baptist Church Rooms.

We play by English Mahjong Association rules. We are a relaxed group, and new players are always welcome, including beginners. Mah Jong is like a Chinese version of Rummy so quite easy to pick up, and the playing tiles are lovely.

Do come and give it a try.

Everyone is welcome, but it would be great if you could let us know beforehand if you would like to come, so that we have an idea of numbers.

Jane Climpson

228672

mahjong@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Mahjong Western Group

What is Mah jong? you may ask, so perhaps a brief explanation might help you decide if this group is for you.

The game of Mah jong is played with a set of decorative tiles. There are three suits (bamboos, circles and characters), winds, dragons, flowers and seasons. The object of the game is to complete an acceptable collection of tiles that make up one of many Mah jong hands. The game is a good balance of luck and skill and there are similarities with card games such as Rummy. Initially there is quite a lot to take in but it is not a difficult game to learn. Unlike, say Bridge, Mah jong is played for one's self so there is no worry about letting a partner down.

We are a friendly group and there is always time to socialise between hands and during the tea break. We have space for about two more players and are happy to teach beginners. We meet weekly on Tuesdays, in United Reformed Church Hall from 2.00 until 4.30pm. and have two 'Bring and Share' socials a year – our Christmas one will be celebrated shortly. If you are interested in finding out more please phone either Pat Purssord (430236) or Jill Pemberton (419165)

Pat Purssord

501438

mahjong2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Mixed Crafts Group

As we go into the new year we have a new venue. From April you can find us in the Christ the King Social Club, in Castle Street, Thornbury. Date and time are the same as before.

New members always welcomed.

Anne Reed

415849

mixedcrafts@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Music Group

Thornbury u3a Music Group meets in Alveston Methodist Church on the second Friday of each month between September and June inclusive at 10.30am. The church is a very comfortable performing space with good acoustics so feel free to come along and join us.



Shiyu Zheng and Andrew Nesler from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama performing at the February 2024 Music Group meeting

Programmes for the rest of the current season are as follows.

- Friday 8th March By way of a big change, the shanty group *Storm Force 10* will put on a range of sea shanties, both traditional and new. Some of the shanties are written by the group.
- Friday 12th April Andrew Borkowski will give us a talk entitled "The Art of Maria Callas" featuring performances by this great singer.
- Friday 10th May *Fingers and Frets*, an orchestra of banjos, guitars and mandolins new to us will show us what these instruments in combination can do, something to look forward to.
- Friday 14th June Our Vice-Chairman *Phil Holland* will be *Jos Gregson's* guest as he decides what records he would like to take with him on a Desert Island and we find out about his musical life, and his well known interest in folk music. We also find out how he would cope with the solitude of the island.

Annual Lunch – Anchor at Oldbury

For any queries contact Jos Gregson (01454411652)

Jos Gregson

411652

music@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Opera Appreciation Group

The Opera Appreciation Group began the year with a screening of Richard Strauss's fascinating opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, with Renée Fleming in the title role. The opera attempts to marry high sentiment with slapstick farce at times and is one of Strauss's finest creations.

In February we screened Donizetti's delightful and hugely enjoyable romantic comedy, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, with Rolando Villazon and Anna Netrebko brilliant in the two main roles.

Our next offering is Verdi's celebrated and iconic *Aida*, to be shown on March 26th.

Andrew Borkowski

01275 848526

opera@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Our Living Language

The Our Living Language group continues to shine a light on the history, usage and meaning of words and phrases that would hardly warrant a glance if we passed them in the street.

Last month our focus was on the weather. For instance, the modern word “cloud” is from Old English “clud” meaning a hill or large rock (which gives us “a clod of earth”) but not before it had gained a second meaning of “shadow”. This month we move to legal words; for instance, why are we asked if we “understand” terms and conditions? It isn’t an intelligence test.

Like to know more about what you read, hear and say? Come and join us, 2nd Monday afternoon at St Mary’s Church Hall.

Bob Dale

415345

ourlivinglanguage@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Photography Group

The Group meets at the Chantry Stewart Room on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, with a 10.30am start.

Highlights for coming meetings include:

March 13th Talk on photographing architecture

April 10th Photographing buildings around Thornbury

May 8th Results of Tom Crowe Challenge

Beginners as well as experienced photographers always welcome.

Alan Jones

883912

photography@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Poetry Appreciation Group

The Poetry Appreciation Group began autumn sessions on "Poetry by Women" which highlighted those who had to pretend they were male authors/poets to achieve publication of their work. These included the Bronte sisters and Dorothy Wordsworth amongst poets from earlier centuries. In November we shared poems written by adults and schoolchildren on "The Problems of the Planet" e.g. climate change. The pre-Christmas meeting was more cheerful with humorous poems accompanied by mince pies! The new year began with poems we chose to bring back our own childhood memories whether happy or sad.

We are fortunate in having knowledgeable members coming forward to enlighten us. John Green introduced us to the life and work of Seamus Heaney, an Ulsterman born on the land his family had farmed on for at least 2 generations. His poems took us through his schooldays and the Troubles and how his fame took him to America before returning to Ireland. We also brought some poetry by other Irish poets. (We will be having a Scottish session in the autumn!)

In March we will be welcoming Sally Carr to tell us about her career as a landscaper/gardener in addition to her published poetry.

We have learnt recently from the press and social media that poetry is having a surge in popularity both here and abroad. Some surgeons across the world, beginning in Portugal, who are also poets, are now using poetry sessions to teach medical students empathy!

This Group is now full with a waiting list but please contact Meg Adnams with any queries.

Meg Adnams

416080

poetryappreciation@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Recorders Group 1

We are still enjoying and practising on a Monday morning. We play music in four parts mostly and are of a standard now that sadly we are not able to accept absolute beginners into the group, although we have recently welcomed a new member who had played before.

Just before Christmas we joined with Group 2 to play carols in the pedestrian precinct...under cover in case of rain! This is an annual event organised by Kate P-M, who is leader of Group 2, and we come armed with clothes pegs in case of high winds.

Group 1 had our 'Christmas' lunch in January as the New year began, and so we continue.

Mandy Clapp

414749

recorders1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Recorders Group 2

The winter term finished with both recorder groups playing Christmas music in the St Mary's Centre. This was enjoyed by Christmas shoppers who joined in singing the carols.

The spring term has started with a group of Galliards and revising some old pieces from previous years.

Kate Phillipson-Masters

411253

recorders2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Science and Technology Group

You might have thought that the intelligence level of u3a-ers was good enough for most purposes; so why are the Science and Technology Group exploring Artificial Intelligence? (Hey, my word processor added that last word without my prompting!) From humble beginnings over 50 years ago, AI has recently – and will continue to – inveigle its way into our lives; our challenge is to harness it to our best advantage. But this is not new; science and technology have been shaping the way we think and act for millennia.

With such a breadth of topics to explore, next month the group might be in outer space or deep within an atom - or asking if there was light in the dark ages. Come and join us, 3rd Wednesday mornings at The Chantry.

Bob Dale

415345

scienceandtechnology@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Shakespeare Studies Group

The Group has enjoyed a full programme of plays over the last 12 months which leaves only Titus Andronicus to complete the plays listed in the First Folio of 1623. The future programme however includes the aforementioned Titus Andronicus and The Taming of The Shrew.

We have a full complement of members (16) so prospective members will be put on our waiting list.

We meet on the third Wednesday of every month in The Vestibule of The Methodist Church, High Street, Thornbury from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

Alan Brown

884851

shakespeare@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Short Slow Rambles Group

We have had some lovely walks over the winter even though the weather has not always been kind to us. I would like to thank all the members who have led walks, it is an enjoyable experience getting out in the countryside chatting with like minded people.



The picture shows members having an enjoyable walk around Alveston led by Hazel and Martyn Smith.

Graham Bancroft

07514 086277

slowshortrambles@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Spanish Group

Actually, we need a new title for this lovely group of people! Over the past 2 plus years they have made such good progress that Intermediate Spanish would be more appropriate.

We have finished the BBC course and moved on to Pasos (Steps), which offers plenty of opportunities to consolidate and extend topics already approached, but in less detail.

For example, ordering food and drink was a familiar, practical situation - now we are able to discuss the benefits of exercise and a healthy diet. That isn't to say that we necessarily adhere to those arguments - after all, we do meet in a pub!

Speaking of which - Sarah and Craig, who have taken over from Dave and Heather, continue to make us very welcome and we are most grateful for that - a recent highlight was our Christmas meal, when healthy eating was certainly not on the menu!

Ann Ferragut

606123

spanish@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 1 Group

Our group continues to enjoy games of competitive table tennis. We are full at the moment, but we have the occasional vacancy for visitors. We cannot, however, take beginners. Full details are available 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, 9am- 11am.

We currently have some vacancies in the group, but unfortunately we cannot take beginners.

Please contact Jay Cooper

Jay Cooper

414762

tabletennis3@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 5 Group

We are a friendly mixed group of intermediate ability players who meet on a Friday morning to play table tennis and have coffee and a chat. We would really welcome a couple of new members, male or female! If you are interested and have just a little experience of playing any type of racket sport, please get in touch. It's good fun!

Pat Light

412260

tabletennis5@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 2.15pm. Here we have had some excellent talks for which we thank our speakers and more recently some presentations about "A Random Slice of England" (unusual destinations from Northumberland to Shropshire) with Trevor Hill and "Top to Bottom of Wales" with Alan Jones. In the future we look forward to "Travels of the UK Coast" with Andy Gillingham, "Cruising the Elbe River" and "Uzbekistan". Such unusual titles make for intriguing viewing, so we look forward to seeing you at our meetings.

Could you lead a future trip, offer to present a talk or quiz or help on the Committee? If so, please see one of the Committee. Travel safely!

Alison Makepeace

415019

travelandtourism@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Ukulele

The Absolute Beginners Ukulele group meet each Thursday afternoon in the Wheatsheaf back room, at 4pm for an hour.

The aim of the group is to be able to confidently play the 10 most frequently occurring chords in time to the music in a fun setting, and are well on their way to achieving that aim.

This course is a term course lasting 12/13 weeks. The next intake will start in mid April running through to the end of July, missing out the two weeks following on from the two May Bank Holidays.

Some comments from the group are "I never knew that" referring to short cut chords, and more importantly, "the pain I was experiencing has all gone in just one session of checking how I play and I am experiencing so much more joy in my playing".

If you would like to join the next intake in late April please email the Group Leader.

Jojo Byron

0747 3070880

ukulele@thornburyu3a.org.uk



Whist Group

The whist group is now at full capacity, and, sadly, we're not able to take on any new players for the time being.

Reg King

418962

whist@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 1

We meet at St. Mary's Church Hall, bimonthly on Fridays 18:30 to 21:30 hours. Average attendance is around 30/35. Our programme sets out to explore all things associated with the world of wine. In addition to our Friday meetings, we arrange occasional visits to local vineyards and associated venues with an interest in the processing of wine.

We are a sociable bunch taking up the ethos of the u3a of education provided by the members for the members. We encourage everyone to present a wine or two within our programme. As you can see below.

19 January	Back to basics: - wine tasting and choosing appropriate wine for the occasion.
15 March	Wines of the USA
17 May	Summer Wines: - members choice
20 June	B – B – Q Thornbury Rugby Club (Thursday)
19 July	Presentation by NOVEL WINES, Bath
20 September	Oaked or not Oaked!!
15 November	LET'S CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS - Members choice

Tony Cockwell

413116

winegroup1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 2



The group has an action packed programme for the year, which kicked off in 2024 with a meal and tasting at The Hideout Lounge. In February we held our 'Champions League Winners' meeting, where we re-visited our 3 best red and white wines from the previous year. Follow on events to include themes such as Wines and their Crisp pairings, 'The Wines of Spartacus', BBQ evening and garden party, etc.

We generally meet at St Mary's Hall, on the 4th Thursday of each month.

At present we have a full membership list (61 members) and a waiting list of 6. If you wish to be added to the waiting list then please feel free to contact Mark Jones.

Mark Jones

07814 224836

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 and enjoy an evening sampling and finding out about 6 wines. At present we have spaces for new members so please contact us for details if you are interested or if you would like to offer a tasting talk.

Recently we have had some fun with "Fish, Fizz and Frascati" and soon we will have an informative talk comparing "Low Alcohol and Regular Wines" – can we keep up with Generation Z? In spring we will be considering Italian wines in more detail and hope to organise a winery visit and meal out locally.

Alison Makepeace

415019

winegroup3@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 4

Wine Group 4 ('Imbibe with friends') continues to welcome new members and has had an exciting end to 2023. We concluded the year with an event on 24th November, where the Committee members presented their own favourite wines with a background story and closed off with a Christmas meal at The Hideout Lounge, Charfield on 13th December.

Following on from our highly successful 2023 season, we commenced 2024 with a member talk on the Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc grape characteristics.

Our selection of topics for 2024 is always expanding but should include an external talk by a Wine Merchant and a member talk on different approaches to wine production.

If you are interested in joining our growing, merry band, please contact the group leader Colin Ballantyne via email.

Colin Ballantyne

07802 838241

winegroup4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

YOYO Group; You On Your Own! Not any more!

YOYO has grown and developed since it's first meeting in September 2021. Friendships have flourished. Twice-weekly Drop-Ins are very popular. We are a friendly group and newcomers will receive a warm welcome.

Our YOYO WhatsApp group enables information sharing, requests for help, invitations to events. Recently, a member spontaneously suggested a visit to Slimbridge on a sunny afternoon. A group shared lifts and went together. Another asked if anyone would like to go to a concert at St George's. Several did. The loan of a wheelchair recently helped a member waiting for a hip operation. Anyone can suggest anything!

For those who are unable to use WhatsApp we try to keep them informed.

Members attend, as and when convenient, any or all of the following:

- Weekly at Coffee #1 – 2pm-4pm on Wednesday afternoons.
- Weekly at Hawkes House -10am-12noon on Saturday mornings (we reserve the long table on the right as you enter).
- Monthly Meetings are held at Thornbury Methodist Church Hall between 2pm and 4pm on the second Wednesday of every month. We have interesting speakers and contributions from members.
- Skittles sessions are currently being held monthly at The Wheatsheaf.

Members receive an email reminder about the monthly meeting and any other YOYO news.

You are very welcome to join us whether or not you are on your own.

Jackie Cadogan

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	Doug Fowler	07860 345750	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 and Space	Chris Lee	07715 159541	Monthly	1 st Mon 10.30am
8	Badminton	Marion Reeve	07759 945388	Weekly	Wed 10am
9	Beginner's Bridge	Norman Taylor	418396	Weekly	Mon 2pm
10	Bird Watching	Cilla Farquhar	413055	Monthly	2 nd Mon 9.30am
11	Book Group 1	Lesley Thomas	613508	Monthly	3 rd Fri am
12	Book Group 2	Margaret Pinder	416778	Monthly	1 st Mon 2pm
13	Bridge 1	Mary Bignell	415131	Weekly	Tues 9:30am
14	Bridge 2	Linda Cooper	414762	Weekly	Tues 2pm
15	Bridge 3	Ian Macdonald	07970 038334	Weekly	Fri 2pm
16	Bridge 4	Jan Winter	612641	Weekly	Tuesday evening
17	Canasta	Steve McMillan	883450	Fortnightly	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday 1.30pm
18	Card Making	Sue Kitson	418543	Monthly	1 st Mon, Tues & Thurs 2pm
19	Church Visits 1	Sandra Body	415250	Monthly	3 rd Tues all day
20	Church Visits 2	Janet McBride	416569	Monthly	2 nd Thurs all day
21	Cinema	Pam Dawe	614843	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Fri 1:30pm
22	Computer Club	Andy Pearson	416321	Monthly	
23	Concerts	Phil Holland	413897	Various	
24	Creative Writing	Doug Easthope	07794 705656	Monthly	Last Fri 10am
25	Cribbage	Pam Pass	600772	Fortnightly	2 nd & 4 th Wed 2pm
26	Cycling	Don Grundell	412896	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Tues 2pm
27	Discussions	Bob Dale	415345	Monthly	2 nd Tues 2pm
28	DIY	Alan Pinder	416778	Monthly	3 rd Thurs 2.30pm
29	Family History	Frances Houghton	417048	Monthly	3 rd Fri 10.30am
30	French Book Group	Jamie Russell	261649	Variable	Mon 2pm
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	Christine Baker	07752 042088	Weekly	Thurs 10am
34	Geology	Jamie Russell	261649	Monthly	4 th Wed 10am
35	German Self Help	Michael Boulton	416416	Fortnightly	Mon 3pm
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	07831 239190	Monthly	2 nd Weds 10am
39	Investment Club 2	Graham Ford	613164	Monthly	2 nd Tues 2pm
40	Latin	Lorna Minshall	411685	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Fri 2pm
41	Lunch Club 2	Gill & Quentin Killey	568541	Monthly	2 nd Weds
42	Lunch Club 3	Gunter Schurrer	07833 634280	Monthly	Tues Monthly
43	Lunch Club 4	Jackie Gitsham	858438	Monthly	1 st Thurs
44	Mah Jong - Monday	Jane Climpson	228672	Fortnightly	2nd&4th Mon 2.15pm
45	Mah Jong - Western	Pat Purssord	430236	Weekly	Tues 2pm
46	Mixed Craft	Anne Reed	415849	Monthly	2 nd Wed 2pm
47	Music	Jos Gregson	411652	Monthly	2 nd Fri 10.30am
48	Music Visitor	Elizabeth Smith	418695	Monthly	2 nd Fri 10.30am
49	Opera Appreciation Group	Andrew Borkowski	01275 848526	Monthly	4 th Tues 6.45pm
50	Our Living Language	Bob Dale	415345	Monthly	2 nd Mon 2pm
51	Photography	Alan Jones	883912	Monthly	2 nd Wed 10.30am
52	Play Reading	Liz Gazzard	614148	Monthly	2 nd Mon 2pm
53	Poetry Appreciation	Meg Adnams	416080	Monthly	3 rd Mon 2pm
54	Practical Gardening Forum	Nick Roach	618411	Monthly	3 rd Thurs 2pm
55	Railway & Transport	George Hargreaves	414243	Monthly	Last Fri 7.30pm
56	Recorders 1	Mandy Clapp	414749	Weekly	Mon 9.45am
57	Recorders 2	Kate Phillipson-Masters	411253	Weekly	Mon 10.15am
58	Science & Technology	Bob Dale	415345	Monthly	3 rd Wed 10.30
59	Scottish Country Dancing	Margaret Pinder	416778	Weekly	1 st & 3 rd Tue 2pm
60	Scrabble	Jackie Gitsham	858438	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Wed 1:45pm
61	Shakespeare Studies	Alan Brown	884851	Monthly	3 rd Wed 2pm
62	Short Slow Rambles	Graham Bancroft	07514 086277	Monthly	Various
63	Spanish	Ann Ferragut	0117 9502139	Fortnightly	Thurs.
64	Table Tennis 1	Graham Bancroft	07514 086277	Weekly	Wed 1.30pm
65	Table Tennis 2	Joan Flower	228584	Weekly	Mon 2pm to 4pm
66	Table Tennis 3	Jay Cooper	414762	Weekly	Mon 9am
67	Table Tennis 4	Ray Pioli	0117 3706403	Weekly	Thurs 3pm
68	Table Tennis 5	Pat Light	412260	Weekly	Fri 10am
69	Theatre Group	Pam Dawe	614843	Various	Various

70	Travel & Tourism	Alison Makepeace	414547	Monthly	2 nd Fri 2pm
71	Ukulele	Jojo Byron	0747 3070880	Weekly	Thurs 4pm to 5pm
72	Walking Group	Nick Howkins	411455	Fortnightly	1 st , 3 rd & 5 th Thurs
73	Whist	Reg King	418962	Fortnightly	1 st & 3 rd Wed 2pm
74	Wine Group 1	Tony Cockwell	413116	Bi-Monthly	3 rd Fri 6.30pm
75	Wine Group 2	Mark Jones	07814 224836	Monthly	4 th Thurs 7pm
76	Wine Group 3	Alison Makepeace	415019	Bi-Monthly	1 st Fri 7.30pm
77	Wine Group 4	Colin Ballantyne	07802 838241	Bi-Monthly	Last Friday 7.30pm
78	You On Your Own (YOYO)	Jackie Cadwgan	07504 633350	Monthly	2nd Wed 2-4pm