



MERTON GUIDE TO ACTIVITIES

October 2020

OUR RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

We have a wide variety of study and activity groups but all of them have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, with many groups sadly unable to continue until the government-imposed Covid-19 restrictions are sufficiently eased. Although a full list of groups is given below, this guide is divided into two sections, those groups which remain active, mainly across the Internet, and those which are in abeyance. Details of meeting days and times for many of the groups have been omitted as meetings can change from week to week in the current situation. For the latest information please contact the Groups Coordinator, David Drummond (groups@mertonu3a.org.uk/020 8542 6240/07791 505 426) or the relevant Section Leader.

FULL LIST OF STUDY AND ACTIVITY GROUPS BY SUBJECT

ACTIVE PURSUITS & GAMES Pages 2 and 5

Section Leader: Carolyn Hartley 020 8542 7572

Active@mertonu3a.org.uk

- Birdwatching – 2 groups
- Bridge – 5 groups
- Canasta – 4 groups
- Cribbage
- Cycling
- Friday Walks
- Gardening
- Golf Buddies
- Loose Enders
- Mah Jong
- Nordic walking
- Qigong
- Racketball
- Scrabble
- Short Walks
- South Westerners Walking Group
- Table Tennis – 2 groups
- Walking Group 4
- Weekenders

CURRENT AFFAIRS & HISTORY Pages 2 and 6

Section Leader: Sue Mullen 020 8540 2401

suemullen@blueyonder.co.uk

- A Year in History
- Current Affairs – 5 groups
- Family History – 3 groups
- General History
- History in Context
- How The Past Has Formed Us
- Law in Action
- Local History
- Railways Appreciation
- Speaking & Debating

LANGUAGES Pages 3 and 6

Section Leader: Elaine Snelgrove 020 8942 2531

Languages@mertonu3a.org.uk

- French – 8 groups
- German - 2 groups
- Italian – 2 groups
- Latin Intermediate
- Welsh Conversation

ARTS & SCIENCE Pages 4 and 6

Section Leader: David Drummond 020 8542 6240

artsandscience@mertonu3a.org.uk

- Art Appreciation
- Book Club - 4 groups
- Cinema
- Cosmology
- Creative Writing – 2 groups
- History of Western Architecture
- History of Stained Glass
- Indian Classical Dance and Music
- Philosophy
- Playreading – 2 groups
- Poetry Appreciation
- Reading Herodotus' Histories
- Popular Science & Technology
- Reading Short Stories
- Theatre
- Understanding Shakespeare

CRAFTS & ART Pages 4 and 6

Section Leader: Sandra Neilson 020 8542 4951

sandraneilson@btinternet.com

- Art and Design
- Creative Textiles and Thread
- Knitting and Crochet
- Painting & Sketching
- Papier-Mâché Sculpture
- Patchwork & Quilting
- Photography
- Tapestry & Embroidery
- Vine to Wine

MUSIC Pages 5 and 7

Section Leader: Don Moore 020 8946 3264

music@mertonu3a.org.uk

- Adventures in Music
- Improve your Singing – 2 groups
- Jazz Appreciation
- Opera Appreciation
- Recorder – 3 groups

Groups still meeting, by section

ACTIVE PURSUITS AND GAMES

BIRDWATCHING 1 and 2

Trips to birdwatching spots in and around London are usually arranged between December and May on alternate Tuesdays. Given the number of trips missed because of lockdown, the group leader is looking into the possibility of outings from October to December, for small groups in compliance with Covid-19 guidance.

CANASTA 1

The group meets occasionally outdoors when numbers and weather permit, mindful of hygiene and social distancing rules.

CYCLING

We meet fortnightly on Monday mornings for a ride along back roads and cycle paths, around 20-30 miles, with sometimes a longer ride. There are always options for people to break their journey at a station. We normally start at the Nelson Medical Centre on the Kingston Road. The group splits into teams of up to 6 riders in order to comply with Covid-19 guidance.

FRIDAY WALKS

Group walks made a restart in October. Two sub-groups have been formed, coordinated by WhatsApp and email.

GOLF BUDDIES

This group is for anyone interested in playing golf but not good enough to play in a club. It meets every third Monday at Horton Park Golf Club, with start times booked in advance.

NORDIC WALKING

Nordic Walking is fun and sociable. It is also a specific fitness technique with the aim of improving physical fitness and wellbeing. It uses poles to add to the benefits of normal walks. Using the poles correctly helps to propel the walker along, so the walker works harder than usual but the support given by the poles makes it feel easier. To get the most out of Nordic Walking, we run introductory courses which teach the correct use of poles, walking technique and posture for which poles are provided. Weekly, alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays, starting 9.30 am in socially distanced groups of up to 6 people, in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines. Mostly on Wimbledon Common, but occasionally further afield.

QIGONG, INTRODUCTION TO

Group sessions for the Introduction to Qigong group restarted in early October, meeting at the Mansel Road Centre, which is Covid-19 secure. The group practises Qigong for health and needs it now more than ever!

SCRABBLE

This group aims to help you enjoy the game, improve your word-power and amaze your friends with your

knowledge of two-letter words. Most members are playing via the Internet Scrabble Club and also meet via Zoom.

SHORT WALKS

Group sessions are about to restart, in socially distanced groups, in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines.

SOUTH WESTERNERS WALKING GROUP

Walks are 5-7 miles, sometimes a little longer, and take place every two weeks, rotating on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (avoiding the Walking Group 4's days), in socially distanced groups, in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines. Walks are reached by public transport, usually by train into Surrey.

WALKING GROUP 4

Group walks have restarted in socially distanced groups, in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines.

The group started in October 2014 and has enjoyed a varied programme of walks along the Thames and other rivers and canals, sections of the London Loop and Capital Ring, parks and commons and many other routes. The walks are between 5 and 7 miles long, include a lunch stop and are all reached by public transport.

WEEKENDERS

The group meets quite regularly for walks, coffees and lunches – indoors (but not while Tier 2 restrictions are in place) and out – although not exclusively at weekends as they tend to be busier.

CURRENT AFFAIRS AND HISTORY

A YEAR IN HISTORY

We choose a year and members prepare a presentation on any topic of their choice relevant to that year, as much latitude as required being allowed for explanations of cause and effect. We typically spend five sessions or more on a chosen year, and presentations average about 40 minutes. Our approach is unsystematic, but not unscholarly, and the variety of presentations is a delight. Monthly 2nd and 4th Tuesdays. 10.00am -12.00 pm, via Zoom.

CURRENT AFFAIRS 2

The group discusses recent events in the news as well as debating issues such as drug legislation, Britain's foreign policy, the Middle East conflict and the BBC. Alternate Mondays via Zoom.

CURRENT AFFAIRS 3

This friendly group discusses a wide range of Current Affairs. For the first part of the meeting members can raise issues that they have noticed in the previous month. The second half concentrates on a special topic which will have been agreed at the previous meeting. We warmly welcome a very broad range of

opinions and views. Third Tuesday afternoon of the month, via Zoom.

CURRENT AFFAIRS 5

During the first half of our meeting we have a general discussion about events and issues in the news. In the second half, discussion focuses on a single topical issue selected by the group at the previous meeting (and on which group members will hopefully do some reading/research). Monthly on the first Monday of each month via Zoom.

CURRENT AFFAIRS 6

Like some of the other groups, we spend the first hour discussing recent events and issues. In the second hour, we will discuss in depth a topic which we will have chosen at the end of the previous meeting. Each member will research the topic using articles in newspapers, magazines and the internet before the next meeting. We meet once a month on a Wednesday, currently via Zoom.

FAMILY HISTORY 1

A self-help group of individuals interested in finding out about their ancestors, taking advantage of the ever-increasing resources available via the internet. The group is currently meeting fortnightly via Zoom.

HOW THE PAST HAS FORMED US

In place of the group's monthly discussions, we have been covering subjects by way of written papers by one of us. These are sent out by e-mail and have led to excellent exchanges and written discussion. Subjects have included The Population of the British Isles, Railways and Human Rights. In addition there are also regular Zoom meetings for those able to take part, mainly as a way of keeping up social contact.

SPEAKING & DEBATING

The group is currently meeting on alternate Tuesday afternoons via Zoom. Contact the group leader Gwyn Redgers (Tel. 0208 785 6910 – email: gwyn@redgers.com) for further information.

LANGUAGES

FRANCE CULTURE

A new group with a Zoom friendly format for members with a good command of French. We will be exploring all aspects of French culture by reading articles, watching short videos and discussing what we find – with the emphasis being on the spoken word. We meet fortnightly on Mondays at 2.30pm, alternating with Parlons Français.

FRENCH ADVANCED CONVERSATION

Currently, meetings are outdoors when numbers and weather permit, otherwise conversations are via email.

FRENCH ADVANCED REVISION 1 and 2

For members with a good knowledge of French. Structured sessions of discussion based on texts from French press or internet, general conversation and revision of key grammar points (e.g. the dreaded subjunctive). Meetings alternate Thursday mornings, via Zoom, coupled with email for exercises and study texts. Outdoor sessions are arranged when numbers and weather permit.

FRENCH CONVERSATION FOR IMPROVERS

A friendly informal group with the aim of improving members' fluency. We start each meeting with a general discussion of individual activities/topical items of interest then discuss prepared questions on a French novel. The group currently meets weekly via Zoom.

PARLONS FRANCAIS!

A group for members who already have a good command of French and would like to use it in discussions on a wide range of topics. The emphasis is on spontaneous conversation, which could be prompted by articles from the French press, short video clips, or by the interests of any of the group members. The group meets weekly, alternately via Zoom or outdoors, in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines, when weather permits.

GERMAN INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED CONVERSATION

We meet fortnightly on Mondays 2.00pm–3.30/4.00pm for lively general conversation, reading and discussing texts from German papers or literature. Weather permitting we meet outside in the garden following all government/U3A guidelines. Later in autumn we will meet using Zoom. Venue near Dundonald Tram Stop.

ITALIAN INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED

A friendly self-help group, some of whose members take it in turns to run the sessions. Each session includes some conversation, reading, listening and grammar. A good basic knowledge of Italian is required. The group is currently meeting on Mondays by Zoom.

ITALIAN UPPER INTERMEDIATE

This group is for those with some knowledge of Italian, without being fluent. After being suspended for several months, group sessions have recently restarted via Zoom.

LATIN INTERMEDIATE

This group is for those with at least a working knowledge of Latin, even if a bit rusty. We revise points of grammar and practise the language in order to enjoy reading and discussing Latin texts in a relaxed atmosphere. We meet on Wednesday mornings via Zoom.

ARTS AND SCIENCE

ART APPRECIATION

Powerpoint presentations are used to illustrate the life and work of an artist, or an art related theme.

Currently, a presentation on an art related theme is circulated by email every week.

BOOK CLUB 1

This group is run by the members with each one in turn suggesting a book for the next meeting. New members very welcome. Meetings are currently held on Skype, monthly on the last Thursday.

BOOK CLUB 2

This book group reads both new and classic novels, meeting monthly on a Wednesday evening via Zoom.

BOOK CLUB 3

Members take it in turn to choose a book and lead the discussion. We welcome a wide variety – fiction and non-fiction. Friendly group. Currently meeting via Zoom.

BOOK CLUB 4

Members take it in turns to choose a book and introduce it. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month, currently via Zoom.

COSMOLOGY

This group is for members interested in Cosmology and Physics. We meet to view, discuss and learn from on-line courses, lectures and videos. Some knowledge of science, especially Physics or Maths would be useful. We meet twice monthly on Tuesdays, via Zoom.

CREATIVE WRITING 1

A friendly group currently meeting on Skype. Assignments are set by group members in turn and we read and discuss what we have written. Third Thursday of every month, 2.00pm - 4.00pm.

CREATIVE WRITING 2

This is a fairly new group, experimenting with formats, styles and genres. It meets monthly on the third Wednesday, via Zoom.

POETRY APPRECIATION

Members of the group choose poems to read and discuss. Currently, the chosen theme or poet is communicated by email and poems and comments are circulated in the same way.

POPULAR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

You don't need to have a background in science to join us, just an enquiring mind. We have discussions on popular and topical science and technology, covering a very wide range of subjects – from how our bodies function to astronomy, and renewable energy sources to how the internet works – anything that interests us. We meet via Zoom and we're very happy for you to join us.

READING SHORT STORIES

The group reads a varied selection of short stories from newly published and established anthologies. Currently, members read the same stories and exchange views by email.

THEATRE

The group currently meets outdoors (if numbers and weather permit) to discuss theatre performances that members may have seen on line or on TV, and also to have a pleasant social time. The group plans to make use of Zoom in due course.

CRAFTS AND ART

ART AND DESIGN

Group sessions of drawing and painting incorporating the formal elements of art and design using water-based paints and mixed media materials. The sessions cover knowledge of colour and of composition in drawing – using line, tone, pattern and perspective. The group is not suitable for absolute beginners and the maximum group size is 14. Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, currently via Zoom.

CREATIVE TEXTILES & THREAD

This group is for people who enjoy doing things with textiles and thread, anything from the very practical to highly decorative work. The emphasis is on gaining new skills and combining them imaginatively. We explore traditional and newer techniques, both academically and practically by visiting exhibitions, museums and galleries (where possible), running workshops to learn or improve our skills (using group members' expertise and online or print resources) and having design sessions which could be anything from colour theory to planning individual or group projects. The group currently keeps in touch by WhatsApp and meets via Zoom.

PATCHWORK & QUILTING

This is a fascinating craft - it lets one's imagination run riot - from little bits and pieces of colourful fabric make a quilt for your own use or to pass on to friends and family. Sewing machine not required in class but some experience of hand sewing is useful. At the moment this Group is in abeyance but we are hoping to resume at Drake House when it reopens and we meet all necessary requirements. Monthly 1st Wednesday 2.00 pm - 4.00 pm Drake House. A small contribution to room hire and photocopying is charged.

VINE TO WINE

Group Leader with own vineyard containing 300 vines in Morden demonstrates vine growing and wine making. Meetings are roughly monthly, depending on activity in the vineyard or winery, and insofar as Covid-19 restrictions allow.

WATERCOLOUR PAINTING

This newly formed group meets fortnightly by South Park Gardens (central Wimbledon) – or in the gardens when weather permits. The group paints from a variety of sources – photos, postcards, book illustrations, still life arrangements or landscape. The group plans to restart in September, outdoors in South Park Gardens as much as possible, provided weather conditions are favourable.

MUSIC

JAZZ APPRECIATION

The group aims to learn about, share music tracks of, and discuss the many facets of jazz that members have discovered on different media. The programme is guided by the U3A National Jazz Co-ordinator, but its development is very much the group's own. The group meets via Zoom, but is finding the process challenging.

Groups in abeyance, by section

ACTIVE PURSUITS AND GAMES

BRIDGE FOR BEGINNERS

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

BRIDGE 1

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

BRIDGE 2

The group currently plays bridge online.

BRIDGE FOR IMPROVERS

The group currently plays bridge online.

BRIDGE, SOCIAL

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

CANASTA 2

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

CANASTA 3

The group meets socially outdoors when numbers and the weather permit but playing games is in abeyance.

CANASTA 4

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

CRIBBAGE

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

GARDENING

The group occasionally meets socially outdoors when numbers and the weather permit but otherwise it is in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

LOOSE ENDERS

The group programme normally includes theatre trips and visits to places of interest. Currently the group is meeting socially outdoors when numbers and the weather permit, about twice a month on a Saturday.

MAH JONG

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

RACKETBALL

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

TABLE TENNIS 1

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 Tier 2 restrictions are eased.

TABLE TENNIS 2

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 Tier 2 restrictions are eased.

CURRENT AFFAIRS AND HISTORY

CURRENT AFFAIRS 1

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

FAMILY HISTORY 2 – SHARING

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

FAMILY HISTORY 3 – RESEARCH

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

GENERAL HISTORY

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

RAILWAYS APPRECIATION

The Railways Appreciation Group is a new group for anyone interested in railways, either mainline or heritage (steam). Monthly meetings will be in central Wimbledon (venue tbc) when Covid-19 restrictions allow. Contact David Mark, 020 8673 1210, davemark1@talktalk.net.

HISTORY IN CONTEXT

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Groups in abeyance, by section

CURRENT AFFAIRS AND HISTORY (continued)

LAW IN ACTION

The group occasionally meets socially outdoors when numbers and the weather permit but otherwise it is in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

LOCAL HISTORY

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

LANGUAGES

EASY FRENCH

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased but the group leader distributes articles in French by email.

FRENCH CAFE CONVERSATION

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 Tier 2 restrictions are eased.

FRANCE ENCORE

Group sessions are in abeyance for health reasons.

GERMAN CONVERSATION

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

WELSH CONVERSATION

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased, although members use email to share any items of interest in relation to the Welsh language or culture.

ARTS AND SCIENCE

CINEMA

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

HISTORY OF WESTERN ARCHITECTURE

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

HISTORY OF STAINED GLASS

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE AND MUSIC

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

PHILOSOPHY

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

PLAYREADING 1

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

PLAYREADING 2

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

READING HERODOTUS' "HISTORIES"

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

UNDERSTANDING SHAKESPEARE

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

CRAFTS AND ART

KNITTING & CROCHET

The group is currently meeting socially by Skype.

PAINTING & SKETCHING

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased but the group has been sharing paintings and drawings by WhatsApp. Additionally, group challenges are set every few weeks.

PAPIER-MACHE SCULPTURE

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased. The members of the group are using Zoom to keep in touch socially.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased but the group continues to share photographs on its Flickr site.

TAPESTRY & EMBROIDERY

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

MUSIC

ADVENTURES IN MUSIC

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

IMPROVE YOUR SINGING (1 and 2)

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

OPERA APPRECIATION

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Groups in abeyance, by section

MUSIC (continued)

RECORDER, INTERMEDIATE

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

RECORDER, ADVANCED ENSEMBLE

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

RECORDER "ALL LEVELS" ENSEMBLE

Group sessions are in abeyance until Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

UKULELE

This new group is waiting to start when Covid-19 restrictions allow.