



MERTON GUIDE TO ACTIVITIES 2016/17

OUR RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

We have many study and activity groups and also organise short courses, monthly talks, visits to places of interest, study days, shared learning projects, summer schools and social events. Members can also participate in activities organised by U3A regionally, nationally and online. Latest details of all groups and other activities are made available to members via our Newsletters and website www.mertonu3a.org.uk

STUDY AND ACTIVITY GROUPS BY SUBJECT

ACTIVE PURSUITS & GAMES pages 3-4

Section Leader: Carolyn Hartley 020 8542 7572

Active@mertonu3a.org.uk

- Armchair Travellers
- Birdwatching
- Bridge – 4 groups
- Canasta – 3 groups
- Chess
- Cribbage
- Cycling
- Gardening
- Golf Buddies
- 'Green' Walks in or near London
- London Walks
- Loose Enders
- Nordic walking
- Qi Gong
- Racketball
- Scrabble
- Table Tennis – 2 groups
- Tennis
- Walking Group 4

CURRENT AFFAIRS & HISTORY pages 4-6

Section Leader: Sue Mullen 020 8540 2401

suemullen@blueyonder.co.uk

- Current Affairs – 5 groups
- Family History – 4 groups
- History in Context
- How The Past Has Formed Us
- A Year in History
- New Frontiers
- Speaking & Debating

LANGUAGES pages 6-7

Section Leader: Elaine Snelgrove 020 8942 2531

Languages@Mertonu3a.org.uk

- French – 8 groups
- German - 2 groups
- Italian – 3 groups
- Latin Intermediate
- Spanish Intermediate
- Welsh Conversation

MUSIC page 7

Section Leader: Charles Barraball 020 8949 0708

Music@Mertonu3a.org.uk

- Jazz Appreciation
- Opera Appreciation
- Recorder Groups – 6 groups

THE ARTS pages 7-8

Section Leader: Charles Barraball 020 8949 0708

Arts@Mertonu3a.org.uk

- Art Appreciation
- Book Club - 2 groups
- Cinema
- Creative Writing - 2 groups
- History of Architecture – 2 groups
- History of Stained Glass
- Indian Classical Dance and Music
- Philosophy
- Playreading
- Poetry Appreciation
- Read, Listen, Watch & Discuss
- Reading Ovid's "Metamorphoses"
- Reading Plato's "Republic"
- Reading Short Stories
- Understanding Shakespeare

CRAFTS & ART page 8-9

Section Leader: Sandra Neilson 020 8542 4951

sandraneilson@btinternet.com

- Adult Colouring Club
- Knit & Natter
- Painting & Sketching - 2 groups
- Papier Mâché Sculpture
- Patchwork & Quilting
- Photography
- Pottery
- Tapestry & Embroidery
- Vine to Wine
- Watercolours

SCIENCE & IT page 9-10

Section Leader: Debbie Chapman

020 8540 9737 Science@Mertonu3a.org.uk

- IT Mutual Help
- Psychoanalytic Theory
- Popular Science & Technology

WHO TO CONTACT

Groups: Groups: To enquire about availability of places, join a waiting list or ask about starting a new group, please contact the relevant **Section Leader** or **Groups Co-ordinator** Charles Barraball 020 8949 0708 Groups@mertonu3a.org.uk

GROUP SCHEDULE

Day	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Cycling France Encore French Conversation Golf Buddies History of Architecture (1) History of Stained Glass Italian Intermediate/Advanced New Frontiers Psychoanalytic Theory Reading Short Stories Tennis Vine to Wine	Adult Colouring Bridge (2) Current Affairs (2) Current Affairs (3) Current Affairs (5) History of Architecture (2) Poetry Appreciation Scrabble Tapestry & Embroidery
Tuesday	A Year in History German Intermediate/Advanced How the Past has Formed Us Nordic Walking Papier Mâché Sculpture Photography Reading Plato's 'Republic' Researching Your Family History Walking Group 4	Canasta 2 Chess Cribbage Current Affairs (4) History in Context IT Mutual Help Painting & Sketching (2) Read, Listen, Watch and Discuss Reading Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' Recorder (all 6 groups, alternating weeks)
Wednesday	Bridge for Beginners Creative Writing (1) Current Affairs (1) Gardening Latin Intermediate Italian Easy Conversation Italian Intermediate Nordic Walking Philosophy Qi Gong Sharing Your Family History Table Tennis (1) Walking Group 4	Canasta 3 Cinema Book Club (2) – evening Family History (1) Patchwork & Quilting Spanish Intermediate Watercolours Welsh conversation
Thursday	Book Club (1) Bridge (1) Easy French French Advanced Conversation French Conversation/Improvers French Revision (1) and (2) Popular Science & Technology Tennis Walking Group 4	Art Appreciation Bridge, Social Canasta 1 Creative Writing (2) Family History (2) German Intermediate Opera Appreciation Painting and Sketching (1) Racketball Speaking and Debating
Friday	Armchair Travellers French Café Conversation 'Green' walks in or near London Knit & Natter London Walks Playreading Pottery Understanding Shakespeare	Jazz Appreciation Table tennis (2)
Saturday	Loose Enders	
N.B. The following meet on various days/evenings of the week (see Newsletter/website or contact group leader for latest details): Indian Classical Dance and Music		

ACTIVE PURSUITS AND GAMES

ARMCHAIR TRAVELLERS

Various speakers visit the group to share their travel experiences, illustrated with slides. Come and be transported to different parts of the world without any airport queues! Tea/coffee prior to meeting. Small fee for room hire.

Alternate Fridays 10.30am – 12.00 noon. Colliers Wood Community Centre 66-72 High Street, Colliers Wood SW19 2BY (near tube station). Adjacent car park. Buses 57, 131 and 219 (Walpole Road stop).

BIRDWATCHING

Trips to birdwatching spots in and around London are arranged between January and June on some Tuesdays. Some walking involved (2-4 miles) and binoculars essential. Details will appear in the November Newsletter.

BRIDGE FOR BEGINNERS

This group provides an introduction to the game. Twice a month on the first and third Wednesdays each month from 10.00 am to 12.30 pm. Lower Morden, Rutland Drive bus stop on routes 80 and 93.

BRIDGE (1)

A mixed ability, 'help each other' group, not for absolute beginners, but improvers are welcome.

Alternate Thursdays 10.00am-12.30pm. Wimbledon. Close to 57, 131 and 163 bus routes. Limited parking.

BRIDGE (2)

Play and improve as part of a friendly, relaxed group. Not suitable for beginners. Standard ACOL used, but with opportunity to practise conventions.

South Wimbledon area. Close to 57,131,219 and 93 bus routes. Alternate Mondays 2.00pm - 4.30pm.

BRIDGE, SOCIAL

Play Contract Bridge in a relaxed atmosphere under no time pressures. Not suitable for beginners. Standard ACOL used but with agreed conventions. Alternate Thursdays 2.00 – 4.30 pm. Central Wimbledon.

CANASTA 1

Weekly Thursdays 2.00pm at group members' homes, rotating by agreement. Always accessible by public transport and parking usually available.

CANASTA 2

Fortnightly on Tuesdays from 2.30pm. Near Morden Park. 93 and 293 bus routes.

CANASTA 3

Fortnightly, Wednesday afternoons, 2.00 pm. Rusty players are encouraged to rediscover the pleasures of playing. Mitcham; buses 127, 201, 270, or 15 mins walk from Tooting rail station.

CHESS

This friendly informal group meets for tea and chess in Wimbledon Village. Some knowledge of chess will be helpful; not suitable for complete beginners. Monthly on the second Tuesday 2.00 – 5.00 pm.

CRIBBAGE

For 2, 3 or 4 players. Complete beginners welcome.

Meet in members' houses twice a month on Tuesdays 2.30-4.30pm.

CYCLING

We meet twice a month, usually on a Monday morning 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 Wimbledon Windmill café or at the Gooseberry Bush café on Kingston Road. New members very welcome.

GARDENING

Members share garden experience, knowledge, cuttings, seedlings etc. Outside visits are arranged in Spring, Summer and Autumn.

Last Wednesday of each month 10.30am - 12.30pm. Lower Morden not far from Beverley roundabout. Nearest bus routes 163, 293, 413, 93.

GOLF BUDDIES

Are you interested in playing golf but not good enough to play in a club? If you would like to have company in your efforts to play a round, do come and join us. We meet Mondays at 10.30 am, currently at Horton Park Golf Club.

'GREEN' WALKS IN OR NEAR LONDON

Walks are generally 4-6 miles in length and taken at about 2 mph, with stops, where appropriate, to note points of interest. The Group Leader tries to vary the walks as much as possible - park, towpath, wood etc. The group is friendly and relaxed but members are expected to attend on a fairly regular basis and to indicate if unable to join a walk so that others are not kept waiting.

Monthly on 2nd Friday. Starting time 10.15am at a tube station. Attendance to be confirmed prior to walk date. No walks in December or January.

LONDON WALKS

This is a small, friendly, relaxed group. Walks will be up to 5 miles in length, taken at 2.5 mph. Lunch and drop off points en route. These are not historical guided tours but exploratory walks taken at a medium pace.

1st & 3rd Friday of the month. Starting time 10.15am at a tube station. Attendance to be confirmed prior to the walk date. No walks in December or January. Walkers are asked to attend regularly.

LOOSE ENDERS

Every few months the group gets together in a member's home and plans our programme, which includes theatre trips and visits to places of interest. We normally include lunch. A shared lunch is organised every 4 months or so. We meet about twice a month, always on Saturday.

NORDIC WALKING

Nordic Walking is fun and sociable. It is also a specific fitness technique with the aim of improving physical fitness and wellbeing. 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. Mostly on Wimbledon Common, but occasionally further afield.

QI GONG, INTRODUCTION TO

Qi Gong can be described as a meditation for the body, or health through movement. It is beneficial for relaxation, fitness and longevity. It is rooted in the principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine and consists of movements which improve posture and balance. It brings many health benefits, including well-being, energy and a strengthening of the immune system. Suitable for people of all ages, of any body shape or fitness level. The main requirements are an open mind and a commitment to do regular practice between sessions. Led by a qualified Qi Gong instructor. Starting late September, weekly, Wednesday, 9.30 am, central Wimbledon.

RACKETBALL

Racketball is THE growing sport being actively taken up by seniors. We are keen to promote it, having found the non-sporty and those who have forgotten they were enjoying the exercise. Racketball is played on a squash court but the racket and ball are similar in size to those used in tennis so the game is slower than squash and is appropriate for all ages and abilities.

We provide coaching sessions and loan of equipment. Court hire £4.00/hr - cost shared by members and is usually around £2 each per hour.

Weekly, Thursdays 3.00 to 4.00 pm (but please check as times may vary). Wimbledon Lakeside Squash Club, Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AG (entrance opposite the All England Lawn Tennis Club). 493 bus.

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.

Alternate Mondays at 2.00pm in Raynes Park.

TABLE TENNIS (1)

This group encourages people of all abilities to enjoy Table Tennis and have fun. There may be a possibility of some coaching in due course. These are not drop-in sessions, so please phone/email if you are interested. Weekly Wednesdays 9.00am - 11.30am. Colliers Wood Community Centre 66-72 High Street, Colliers Wood (short walk from tube station). Adjacent car park. Buses 57, 131 and 219 stop within a 2 minute walk. Charge of £1.00 per session towards room.

TABLE TENNIS (2)

As for Table Tennis (1) above but meets Fridays (but not first Friday of month) 3.00pm - 5.00pm. venue as for Table Tennis (1) above.

TENNIS

Free! Join our tennis group so we can always have someone to play. Every Monday and Thursday, weather permitting, 9.30 am John Innes Gardens, Mostyn Road, Merton Park.

WALKING GROUP 4

This group is for people who don't just love walking, but are also keen to participate in planning and leading walks, ensuring that we have a varied and interesting programme of walks throughout the year. We are walking the parks, commons, canals and rivers of Greater London, exploring the Surrey Hills, North Downs and Thames Valley. Walks are between 5-7 miles and include a lunch stop.

We walk every other week on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday in rotation.

CURRENT AFFAIRS AND HISTORY**CURRENT AFFAIRS (1)**

A discussion group dealing with the background to current affairs. Members will be encouraged to start each meeting with a little basic research before the discussion gets going. We have covered a wide variety of subjects, for example: the Economy, MPs' expenses, Surveillance by the State, Education, the Prison System.

Alternate Wednesdays 10.30am - 12.00 noon. Edge Hill, Wimbledon.

CURRENT AFFAIRS (2)

The group discusses recent events in the news as well as debating issues such as drug legislation, Britain's foreign policy and the Middle East conflict and the BBC. Alternate Mondays 2.30pm - 4.30pm. Wilton Grove.

CURRENT AFFAIRS (3)

Members discuss ongoing and current issues. Sometimes, if a member has a special interest in a subject or has worked in a specific area, we may ask that member to talk about the NHS, education, immigration, but otherwise there is general discussion. The aim is to give each member an opportunity to raise a subject should they wish. Alternate Mondays 2.30pm. Location Merton Park.

CURRENT AFFAIRS (4)

During the first half of our meetings there is a general discussion on the burning issues of the day while the second half concentrates on a particular topic selected at the previous meeting. Special topics have included the Syrian Crisis, Democracy, the Ukraine and Renationalisation of the Railways.

Monthly 2nd and 4th Tuesdays. 2.00 pm. Dundonald Park.

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). We also make occasional group visits to organisations which play an important role in the running of society, such as national and local government, the legal system, the health service, transport, and the financial and commercial sectors.

Monthly on the first Monday of each month in Merton Park. 2.00pm for about two hours.

FAMILY HISTORY (1) - Finding Your Roots

Members undertake individual family history research and need to be computer literate, in order to take advantage of the many on-line resources for family history and computerised sources at centres such as the National Archives at Kew. Monthly on Wednesdays 2.30pm - 4.00pm. Southfields.

FAMILY HISTORY (2)

A self help group of individuals interested in finding out about their ancestors. Whilst it is possible to undertake research without a computer, it is much easier these days if one can get on-line in order to take advantage of the ever increasing resources available via the internet, so computer literacy is almost essential. Some members of the group are in the early stages of research but the group leader and at least one other member of the group have been investigating their own family histories for many years so hopefully can help members avoid some of the pitfalls and dead-ends which we inevitably encounter.

Monthly on Thursday from 2.00-4.00pm, Cannon Hill area, unrestricted parking. 164 bus from Wimbledon/ Morden (St. James Church) or 413 from Morden/ Sutton (Northway or Cherrywood Lane).

SHARING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

An experienced family historian and creative writing teacher is leading a group aimed at those who have already researched their family history but would like support in presenting their discoveries in a style and format that can easily be shared with others and that will interest and engage its readers. Group members are coached towards this within a collaborative learning environment.

First Wednesday of every month, throughout the year. 10.00am - 12.00noon. West Wimbledon, buses 200 & 57. Easy parking.

RESEARCHING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY (BEGINNERS)

This group was started to provide support and advice for those in the early stages of research into family or local history. Following an introductory meeting, a programme was agreed to develop and extend our research skills, based on members' research interests and experience.

Monthly on 2nd Tuesday. 10.15am - 12.15pm. Mansel Road Centre, Mansel Road, Wimbledon (next to Wimbledon High School). 8 minute walk from Wimbledon Station. Meter Parking Mansel Road. There is a small charge for the room hire (shared between group members).

HISTORY IN CONTEXT

This group concentrates on the UK using the monarch as the focus from which to span outwards on 'the life and times' of a particular reign. It is run as a workshop where everyone contributes. We began with the Norman Conquest and this year we are coming to the end with Elizabeth II.

We meet monthly on Tuesday afternoons from 2.00pm with a break for tea and biscuits.

Close to Wimbledon Park tube station.

HOW THE PAST HAS FORMED US

This group will study and discuss how our human lives and society have been shaped by the past. Subjects chosen by the group lead into exploration of the historical impact of any aspect of the natural world, or human culture, and how that past impact affects the way we think and act today.

Monthly Tuesdays 10.30am - 12.30pm at Linden Lodge School, 61 Princes Way, Wimbledon, SW19.

10 minute walk up a steep hill from Southfields Tube station. 39 & 493 buses go almost past the door and there is some free street parking, though increasingly far from the school.

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 5 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 -12.00pm. Raynes Park.

NEW FRONTIERS

This is an opportunity to see some of the more interesting video lectures now offered on the web by leading universities and educational organisations. They are sometimes part of normal coursework, but more often aimed at non-specialists wishing to know more about different things. It is hoped to cover a wide variety of subject areas and to go into some detail, but specialised knowledge is not required to gain enlightenment — even if the going may be difficult at times! The group leader will choose and introduce the initial talks and encourage discussion. Monthly on Monday 10.00am. Near Wimbledon Park Tube. Tea and biscuits.

SPEAKING & DEBATING

Meetings will include developing our speaking skills and confidence, and debates of various types. The scope for variety is endless. The group will be enjoyed both by those wishing to learn the art of effective speaking and by those who enjoy speaking and debating.

Alternate Thursdays 2.00 pm-4.00pm. Colliers Wood Community Centre 66-72 High Street, Colliers Wood SW19 2BY (near tube station) Adjacent car park. Buses 57, 131 and 219 stop within a 2 minute walk. Charge of £1.00 per session towards room hire.

LANGUAGES**EASY FRENCH**

For those with just a little French, maybe from school days, and who want to brush it up, possibly for travel or holidays. A very relaxed and convivial approach, with emphasis on the spoken language.

Alternate Thursdays 10.30am - 12.00noon. West Wimbledon area. Easy parking.

FRANCE ENCORE

For those with at least a basic knowledge of the French language and grammar. The aim is to use short extracts from the French media to foster the ability to participate fluently and intuitively in French conversation covering a range of topics.

Weekly Mondays 10.30am - 12.30pm. 10 minute walk from Southfields station/3 minute walk from 39 & 493 bus stops.

FRENCH CAFE CONVERSATION

A chance to speak French once a month with members from other U3A groups, not just French groups. We meet over a cup of coffee in Debenham's café, central Wimbledon, on the first Friday of each month from 10.30am. Stay for as long or short a time as you wish.

FRENCH ADVANCED CONVERSATION

In a relaxed atmosphere you will be encouraged to speak French and gradually become more confident and fluent, with increasing understanding. Learn how to listen for the general meaning, not translating word for word, so that you can continue to participate in any conversation.

Alternate Thursdays 10.00am - 12.00noon. Border Wimbledon/Kingston. 57 bus stops opposite.

FRENCH CONVERSATION

For those with basic French keen to brush up their skills in convivial conversation, with a nudge in the right direction when a gender is wrong or pronunciation a bit dodgy. We read poetry and books as part of the session. New members are welcome.

Alternate Mondays 10.30am - 12.00noon. Drake House, Wimbledon.

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. New members welcome.

Fortnightly Thursdays 11.00am - 12.30pm. Near Wimbledon Common. Parkside, Wimbledon, 5 minute walk from 93 & 493 bus stops.

FRENCH REVISION (1) & (2)

These two groups are for members who already have some knowledge of French and would like to both revise key points of the language and improve their listening and speaking skills.

Intermediate Revision (1) For members who did French at school, albeit many years ago, and would like to go back to basics. Alternate Thursdays 10.15am - 11.45am. Worple Road Wimbledon.

Advanced Revision (2) For members who already have a good knowledge of basic French grammar but want to extend it. Alternate Thursdays 10.30am - 12.00noon. Various venues.

GERMAN INTERMEDIATE

Conversation, some classical and modern German literature, and games with minimal grammar.

Alternate Thursdays 2.00pm - 4.00pm. Raynes Park area.

GERMAN INTERMEDIATE/ADVANCED CONVERSATION

The intention is to get people to chat to each other in a relaxed atmosphere, with topical themes or members' special interests as starting points. We'll use articles from German media and short stories, translate if necessary, discuss. Grammar can be investigated if required.

Meet fortnightly on Tuesdays, 10.00am - 11.30 am. Halfway between Wimbledon and South Wimbledon stations. Buses 93, 57, 131, 219 stop on Broadway (Wimbledon Theatre stop).

ITALIAN EASY CONVERSATION

For those with some basic knowledge of Italian. Alternate Wednesdays 10.30am - 12.00noon. Raynes Park area.

ITALIAN INTERMEDIATE CONVERSATION

For those with some knowledge of Italian to practise conversation. Facilitated by Paolo, an Italian speaker. Alternate Wednesdays. 10.30am-12.00noon. Near Wimbledon Park tube station.

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. We meet on alternate Mondays, 10.00 am to 12.00noon in Drake House, Central Wimbledon. New members are welcome.

LATIN INTERMEDIATE

The group is embarking on its second year and the standard is GCSE/AS level. A basic knowledge of Latin grammar, albeit rusty, is required. We concentrate on reading and discussing Latin texts for enjoyment. The group is quite large, but we could accommodate 1 or 2 new members.

Meet fortnightly on Wednesdays from 10.30am-12.30pm with an optional catch-up session on the Wednesdays in between for students who feel very rusty. Merton Park (nearest tram stop Merton Park).

SPANISH INTERMEDIATE

Conversation, grammar, listening, reading. Alternate Wednesdays 2.00pm - 4.00pm. West Wimbledon. 57, 131 & 163 buses.

WELSH CONVERSATION

Do you speak Welsh? Are you a learner interested in gaining confidence through conversation or a proficient Welsh speaker interested in keeping your language alive? This group provides an opportunity for members who already have some knowledge of Welsh to converse in the Welsh language through culture and literature.

Alternate Wednesdays. 2.00pm - 4.00pm. West Wimbledon. Bus route: 57, 131.

MUSIC**JAZZ APPRECIATION**

Our group meets in a member's home on the last Friday of each month from 2.30-4.30pm to learn about all the many facets of jazz, through listening to and discussing music tracks we have discovered on different media and can share with other group members. Our programme is guided by the U3A National Jazz Co-ordinator, but its development is very much our own (more details on our U3A webpage).

OPERA APPRECIATION

Sessions are held in a cinema environment, and usually are about 2 hours. Longer operas may cover more than one session. A wide variety of operas are shown on DVDs with subtitles, preceded by an introduction and followed (if time) by a discussion of the piece and its interpretation.

Sessions are on alternate Thursday afternoons, starting at 2.00 pm prompt. The venue is off The Ridgway, near the 200 bus route; limited car parking available.

RECORDER GROUPS:

Merton U3A Recorder Classes range from a descant class for complete beginners to an Ensemble for advanced players (descant, treble, tenor, base). Classes take place on Tuesday afternoons in term time and will recommence on September 20th. There are vacancies in all classes and new pupils should get in touch to discuss which class would be most suitable.

THE ARTS**ART APPRECIATION**

Powerpoint presentations are used to illustrate the life and work of an artist, or an art related theme. Twice a year, six or seven members volunteer to present one or two pictures of their choice, speaking for about 10 minutes each. Charge made for room hire £5 per year per person. Second Thursday of each month except August 2.30 - 3.30pm followed by tea and biscuits. Drake House.

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 held at various members' homes.

Monthly on the last Thursday. 10.30am - 12.30pm.

BOOK CLUB (2)

We read both new and classic novels, and may also take in some non-fiction. We also share some wine and have a good chat about books and everything else. New members are very welcome.

Monthly Wednesday evenings at the houses of group members, most of whom live in the Dundonald area - parking is easy and the tram stop is nearby.

CINEMA

Films chosen by group members, usually with coffee and discussion immediately afterwards.

Monthly on 3rd Wednesday, afternoons only. Wimbledon cinemas.

CREATIVE WRITING (1)

This group chooses a subject for homework on a rota. Writings are then read out at the next meeting. The variety makes for much interesting discussion.

Monthly on Wednesdays 10.30am - 12.00noon. Near the Broadway in Central Wimbledon.

CREATIVE WRITING (2)

Friendly group meeting in central Wimbledon (near South Park Gardens). Assignments are set by group members in turn and we read and discuss what we have written. We also make time for a short fun exercise. Third Thursday of every month, 2.00 - 4.00pm.

HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE (1) & (2)

The group continues to follow a series of lectures centred mainly on the History of Western Architecture. New members are welcome at any time. Sessions start with chat and refreshments.

Near Wimbledon Park Tube station. Monthly on Mondays.

Group (1) 10.00am - 12.00noon.

Group (2) 2.00pm - 4.00pm

HISTORY OF STAINED GLASS

This group traces the history of stained glass in this country from its beginnings through to the present day. It is hoped to organise some visits during the course. The Group started in January and in the autumn term will be studying glass of the Arts and Crafts movement in Scotland & Ireland. In 2016 we shall look at the 15th century and by the end of the year we should have reached the 19th century.

Monthly. Mondays. Talks 10.30am - 12.00noon. Tea/coffee and biscuits from 10.00am. Near Wimbledon Park tube station.

INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE AND MUSIC

If you are interested in Indian culture, dance and music, you may like to join this new group which attends free evening concerts at the Nehru Centre in Green Park.

Travel by Tube and little a bit of walking. We meet at Morden Station 5.00pm and the concerts are at 6.30pm.

PHILOSOPHY

We study the history of ideas and the concepts which underlie our thinking. Members are encouraged to participate and to run discussions.

Alternate Wednesdays 10.30am-12.00noon. Edge Hill, Wimbledon. Parking usually available.

PLAYREADING

Our group reads whole plays at a meeting without rehearsal. Members take it in turns to choose the play, prepare the session, cast the parts to ensure everyone has a good turn at reading.

We borrow playsets from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and we also use local libraries. Thanks to the generosity of Merton U3A, who pay the membership fee, the group is only responsible for the fee for hire at each session, which is usually only £1.50 per person inclusive of postage.

We meet monthly on a Friday from 10.00am. Near Wimbledon Park Tube. Break for tea/coffee and biscuits halfway through.

POETRY APPRECIATION

Members of the group take turns to introduce the poet/topic and everyone chooses poems to read and discuss. We have looked at a varied range of poetry, including the Metaphysical poets, Kipling and Tennyson.

Alternate Mondays 2.00pm - 4.00pm at various venues on or near Ridgway, Wimbledon. Bus 200.

READ, LISTEN, WATCH & DISCUSS

This is a friendly and informal self help group where members enjoy discussing the life and times of a contemporary author through his or her work, a book or essay or poem, etc., giving members ample time to read and select points of discussion. New members very welcome.

Last Tuesday of the month 2.30pm - 4.00pm. Worple Road. Bus 57 & 131.

READING OVID'S 'METAMORPHOSES'

"Metamorphoses" is Ovid's epic account of Greek and Roman myths, presented as a single narrative from the Creation to his own day, and linked by the theme of 'changes of shape'. Sentimental, whimsical, erotic, violent, full of pathos – the stories evoke a wide range of emotions, displaying Ovid's remarkable imagination and wit. We will read the book in David Raeburn's modern verse translation, and some stories in the 1567 translation by Arthur Golding or the adapted versions of Ted Hughes.

2nd Tuesday of each month, 2.00 pm, Raynes Park

READING PLATO'S 'REPUBLIC'

We read and discuss Robin Waterfield's translation of Plato's "Republic" (OUP £7.99). Waterfield interprets a crucial Greek word in its widest sense and regards the book as a treatise on 'morality', not more narrowly 'justice'. "Republic", then, is Plato's wide-ranging attempt to define how an individual can live the good life, and to demonstrate that one gains in happiness by being moral, whether or not being moral brings any other advantages.

3rd Tuesday each month, 10.15 am-12.45 pm, Raynes Park.

READING SHORT STORIES

We will be reading from 'Life', a collection of stories by contemporary writers, selected by Victoria Hislop and described by The Times as 'a collection so good it's essential'. At each meeting a story, selected by a member, is presented, read and discussed.

2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. 10.30am to 12.00noon. Worple Road (near 57 and 131 bus stops), or Raynes Park (2 minutes from station and buses 57, 131, 152, 163 and 200). Parking difficult at both venues.

UNDERSTANDING SHAKESPEARE

In-depth study of Shakespeare plays. Monthly Fridays 10.00am. Worple Road Wimbledon.

CRAFTS AND ART**ADULT COLOURING**

Looking for a fun way to relax? Want to rediscover your love of colouring? Sophisticated colouring books for adults are now all the rage. Those who have joined colouring groups say it combines creativity and calm. Some compare it to meditation. Warning: it can become addictive! An Adult Colouring Group takes place in the Merton Park area, meeting monthly on the second Monday of the month, 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

KNIT & NATTER

Experienced knitter will give guidance and advice — just bring your needles and wool (and pattern)! Any ability welcome, including complete beginners.

Alternate Friday mornings 10.00am - 12.00noon. Raynes Park. (No parking).

PAINTING AND SKETCHING

These groups are aimed at those with any level of experience or ability who share a love of putting pen, pencil, brush or whatever to paper!

Sessions have a focus (e.g. still life) which group members are encouraged to approach from their own perceptions/medium/level of expertise, and the emphasis is on furthering current skills and learning new ones in a mutually supportive environment – and having fun!

Colliers Wood Community Centre 66-72 High Street Colliers Wood SW19 2BY. Adjacent car park, near Colliers Wood Tube station. Buses 57, 131 and 219 stop within a 2 minute walk. Charge of £1.50 per session to cover cost of venue, resources and refreshments.

Group 1: Thursdays 2.00 – 4.00pm

Group 2: Tuesdays 2.00 – 4.00pm

PAPIER MACHE SCULPTURE

Have you ever thought you would like to try sculpture but couldn't bear the thought of using clay? Why not try constructing in papier mâché? It really is fun, and so easy to do. Really therapeutic, with the added advantage of recycling!

Weekly. Tuesdays 10.00am - 12noon at Kingston Hill.

PATCHWORK & QUILTING

(sewing machine not needed but some experience of hand sewing required) Start sewing a quilt or cushion with little bits of fabric in all shapes and colours. The results are fantastic and will get you hooked into a lifetime passion for a fascinating craft. Let your imagination run riot and produce an heirloom! There is a charge of £2 per member, per month, for the room hire and photocopying.

Monthly 1st Wednesday 2.00pm - 4.00pm. Drake House.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Mostly we meet up with our Freedom Passes and cameras and go to one of the many great places in London. Sometimes, particularly in summer, we travel further afield.

We also visit photographic exhibitions. All plans are made and agreed by the group at occasional meetings in Morden. We will make time to share our photographs and discuss any problems. There is no need for expensive equipment; any camera will do.

Alternate Tuesdays, often meeting at 10.00am.

POTTERY

Handbuilding, sculpture, modelling, wheelwork, slipwork moulds, glazing and decorating.

Alternate Fridays 10.00am - 12.00noon. West Wimbledon, Raynes Park area.

TAPESTRY & EMBROIDERY

An individual choice of needlework e.g. crewel or cross-stitch needlepoint in a stimulating and cheerful atmosphere. There is no formal course but group members help each other in solving problems. Regular attendance is expected. Alternate Mondays 2.00pm – 4.00pm. South Wimbledon.

VINE TO WINE

Group Leader with own vineyard containing 300 vines in Morden, will demonstrate vine growing/ cultivation, wine making with appropriate product sampling along the way.

Monthly on the first Monday in each month at 10.00am. Depending on activity in the vineyard or winery additional meetings may be arranged at first Monday meetings.

About 7-8 minutes' walk from Morden tube station, South Merton and Morden South overground railway stations. 163 bus stops almost outside at Maycross Avenue stop. Limited off street parking.

WATERCOLOURS

For those who love painting and would like to improve their skill with watercolours, this is an enjoyable way of spending a couple of hours in a friendly, non-competitive atmosphere learning new techniques and brushing up on the basics. We have several interesting instructional DVDs from which to take ideas during the sessions.

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm in the Merton Park area.

SCIENCE AND IT**IT MUTUAL HELP**

For PC/Windows users, (but possibly straying into Android phones/tablets). Mainly finding our way around Windows or making programs do what we want them to do. Members raise an issue where they have a problem, or would like to do more. If David doesn't know the answer, together we research and find a solution. e.g.

- Understanding and responding to Windows messages
- Understanding what the clipboard does
- Using email and browsing the web
- Getting smarter in Word processing or spreadsheets
- Broadband connection via Wireless router and other ways to connect
- Backup to portable disk drives or the Cloud

Meet alternate Tuesdays 2.15pm - 4.15pm.

Roehampton. Parking unrestricted in afternoon. New members welcome regardless of IT skills (or lack of them).

POPULAR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

You don't need to have a background in science to join us, just an enquiring mind. We meet on Thursdays from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm every four weeks at Colliers Wood Community Centre.

We cover 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 have talks given by visiting speakers and some of our members, discussions covering popular and topical science and technology and we are also planning visits to places and exhibitions of interest.

We are a thriving and welcoming group, and are very happy for you to come and try us out. We share the costs of room hire and refreshments (about £1 a meeting). The Centre is easy to get to on public transport and has full disabled access.

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

A group for those interested in discussing the ideas of Freud, Jung and Winnicott.

Monthly on third Monday 10.30am – 12.15pm
Worplesdon Road, Wimbledon.

*Those who teach shall also learn and those who learn shall also teach –
Peter Laslett*

WHY NOT START AN INTEREST GROUP?

U3As are run entirely for their members by their members on a volunteer basis. Each interest group is therefore facilitated by a volunteer leader or convenor—sometimes two people share the role. Our groups are informal and there are no qualifications or examinations.

Facilitating an group can be fun and rewarding. Some group leaders are knowledgeable in the subject, but in many cases groups can be convened simply by members with an interest in the subject and the willingness to organise a group.

There is still a demand for more Languages, Science, Music, Local History and 'intellectually stimulating' activities. We also plan to start more activities in the Mitcham area.

Section Leaders ensure that vacancies within groups are matched with people waiting to join, and also provide a port of call for existing and potential Group Convenors seeking advice. Support is available for publicity, finding venues, equipment/resources and tips on running a shared learning group or activity. If you have a particular interest and wish to form a group, please contact the appropriate Section Leader or Groups Co-coordinator, Charles Barraball (see contact details on p.1).

Resources: Various types of support are also available from U3A National Office, including a team of Subject Advisers, a range of training workshops, Advice sheets and other publications, and a Resource Centre of audio visual materials that can be borrowed free of charge.

In addition, there's a wealth of free online resources available, including online courses on a wide range of topics. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online modular courses developed by leading universities and organisations around the world. MOOCs can be used as the basis of a short course or to enhance longer-term studies. U3A National Office has set up a dedicated MOOCs website.

Schedules: Ongoing groups generally meet weekly, fortnightly or monthly, and some close for a few weeks over the summer. Short courses, Study Days and Shared Learning Projects can occur at any time of the year. Most activities take place during the day Monday - Friday, but a few take place in the evenings and on weekends.

Venues: Many groups meet in members' houses, but don't let the inability to meet in your own home put you off; there are other options depending on the activity. Groups that require more space meet in other local venues e.g. Colliers Wood Community Centre, Drake House, or some other public space.

Costs: Group facilitators offer their services free of charge, whether it is their expertise or a room in their home or help with administration, and this enables the annual subscription to be kept low. Small contributions may be requested towards expenses such as stationery or venue hire.

OTHER LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Our research indicates that many of our members are very busy in retirement and may struggle with long-term commitments. Therefore, in addition to the longer-term groups, we encourage members to consider short courses and other activities which provide an opportunity for more structured, time-limited learning.

SHORT COURSES:

Groups get together, typically for about 4-8 weeks, to study a particular topic or learn a new skill. Sometimes short courses have led to the formation of longer-term groups.

Examples have included Exploring Memory; Highlights of Modern Astronomy; Nordic walking; Pilates; Tap dancing.

IN OUR TIME:

In Our Time is a programme of time limited activities such as short courses which treats subjects or issues in depth. These have included the EU Referendum, English Law-Leading Cases, Legal Quandaries, The British Constitution, Cosmology and Islam In Our Time.

VISITS:

Group visits to places of interest benefit from group rates on admission costs, and often include a guided tour or talk. Our Visits Organisers lead about 1-2 visits per month to venues that are easily accessible by public transport in and around London. Also look out for visits organised by national office, regional and local networks.

MONTHLY MEETINGS AND TALKS:

Monthly Meetings are held on the second Friday of each month. Doors open at 1.30pm with tea/coffee and biscuits. (Admission charge £1.00). Following short announcements about news and events of interest to members, there is an opportunity to hear a talk, given either by an outside speaker or U3A member, from 2-3pm at Drake House, 44 St George's Road, Wimbledon.

STUDY DAYS:

These comprise a full day of talks or other learning activities, enabling more in-depth coverage of a given theme. Speakers tend to be outside specialists. For reasons of cost-effectiveness, Study Days are usually organised on a national, regional or network basis.

WORKSHOPS:

These are usually full-day events organised by U3A National Office or Regional/Network committees to provide free training to members on specific topics of importance to the effective running of U3As.

SUMMER SCHOOLS:

Involving 3-4 days of talks and other learning activities on various themes, summer schools tend to be residential. Costs are minimized by taking advantage of university or other premises during holiday periods, and speakers are generally U3A members. U3A National Office organises 2 summer schools in Cirencester, plus the Annual Science Seminar in Telford. The South East Region summer school is in Chichester. The London Region 3-day non-residential summer school is in central London.

RESEARCH:

Regarded by U3A as an important method of learning, research can either be conducted entirely by U3A members, or it can involve U3A members collaborating with external organisations – either as research assistants or as research subjects. **Shared Learning Projects** (SLPs) offer members from several U3As an opportunity to collaborate for about 3 months on a research project, usually in partnership with established institutions such as museums, libraries, stately homes, universities, charities etc. The results of the research may include a presentation, publication, database or some other useful output. The U3A national Research Database provides details on all known research projects involving U3A members. Contact our Research Ambassador for further information.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Members are encouraged to participate in the various social activities on offer in order to meet fellow members, broaden their U3A experience, and have a good time.

New Members' Lunch: We urge our new members to attend these sessions so that they can learn how to get the best out of U3A.

Group Convenors' Lunch: An opportunity for our Committee to thank group convenors for their invaluable contribution, and also to provide an opportunity for networking and exchange/development of good ideas.

Summer Party and Christmas Lunch: Merton U3A's main social events of the year

Social Get-Togethers: lunches, dinners, coffee mornings, teas, theatre visits and more -- organised in members' homes or local hostels and other venues throughout the year.

National, regional and local network events: e.g. concerts, quizzes and more.

PS: Volunteering is a good way of getting to know other members and have some fun.

THE U3A STORY

What is the Third Age?

The First Age of learning refers to compulsory learning at school. The Second Age involves learning related to work and family responsibilities. The Third Age refers to retirement and a presumed freedom to pursue learning for pleasure. In fact, there are no hard boundaries and the U3A movement in Britain has no upper or lower age limits, but members are not in full-time paid employment.

French beginnings

In 1968, the French government passed legislation making universities responsible for the delivery of lifelong learning. In 1972, a group of retired people met at a summer school organised at the University of Toulouse. It was so popular, that the university put on further courses during the forthcoming academic year. The first Université du Troisième Age (UTA) was open to anyone who had reached statutory retirement age and was prepared to pay a nominal fee. The concept of the University of the Third Age (U3A) was therefore born.

Learning activities took place in daytime and for five days a week during the academic year. Although lectures were combined with debates, field trips, recreational and physical activities, university staff were responsible for curricula and teaching and maintaining high academic standards, thus justifying the "university" label. The movement quickly gained international recognition, with the French model being adopted within 3 years by Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Spain and Quebec in Canada.

British adaptation

In 1981, the first U3A was established in Cambridge, and quickly spread to other towns, but the British U3As changed to an independent self-help approach, without support from the state or established academic institutions.

Whilst not tied in to any university structure, the name stuck, and the concept was more like the mediaeval universities where people got together in small groups to learn about a shared interest. As expressed by Peter Laslett, a Cambridge academic and one of the co-founders of U3A in Britain, there should be "no distinction between those who teach and those who learn, where as much as possible of the activity is voluntary".

The U3A took off in England after a 5-minute talk on Radio 4's "You and Yours" in 1982 by Eric Midwinter, another co-founder. From that talk he had about 400 letters from people asking how they could join a U3A. His answer was "you'll have to set one up yourself!"

Local U3As in Britain therefore became learning co-operatives of older people, enabling members to learn from each other by sharing their knowledge, skills and experience. Each U3A is run by its own members on an entirely volunteer basis.

There are now nearly 1,000 U3As and over 360,000 members in the UK. Although all local U3As are individual charities and operationally independent, they are members of The Third Age Trust, the umbrella body which represents all British U3As at national and international levels, promotes the Objects and Principles of the U3A Movement, and offers a range of additional activities and services to support local U3As.

Merton U3A was one of the first to be set up, in 1983, and Dianne Norton, who was at that time employed by Age Concern, provided space in her house in Wimbledon for the first UK national office. We now have nearly 900 members. In addition to support from the Third Age Trust, Merton U3A also benefits from membership of networks in the greater London Region, SW London and Surrey.

Global expansion

The U3A has become one of the most successful movements in later-life learning. It has spread across the whole world with groups on every continent, some following the French model of being connected to universities, some following the British model of independent groups, and some taking a mixed approach.

Further reading: U3A national website: www.u3a.org.uk