



MERTON GUIDE TO ACTIVITIES 2019

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

- Birdwatching – 2groups
- Bridge – 4 groups
- Canasta – 3 groups
- Cribbage
- Cycling
- Gardening
- Golf Buddies
- London Walks
- Loose Enders
- Nordic walking
- Qi Gong
- Racketball
- Scrabble
- Short Walks
- South Westerners Walking Group
- 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 – 6 groups
- Family History – 4 groups
- General History
- History in Context
- How The Past Has Formed Us
- Law in Action
- Local History
- New Frontiers
- Speaking & Debating
- A Year in History

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: Don Moore 020 8946 3264

Music@Mertonu3a.org.uk

- Jazz Appreciation
- Opera Appreciation

ARTS & SCIENCE pages 7-8

Section Leader: Jon Sheppard 020 8540 2401

- Art Appreciation
- Book Club - 3 groups
- Cinema
- Cosmology
- Creative Writing
- History of Architecture – 2 groups
- History of Stained Glass
- Indian Classical Dance and Music
- Philosophy
- Playreading
- Poetry Appreciation
- Popular Science & Technology
- Read and Discuss
- Reading Ovid's "Metamorphoses"
- Reading Short Stories
- Theatre
- Understanding Shakespeare

CRAFTS & ART pages 8-9

Section Leader: Sandra Neilson 020 8542 4951

sandraneilson@btinternet.com

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

WHO TO CONTACT

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 Jon Sheppard on 020 8540 2401, Groups@mertonu3a.org.uk

GROUP SCHEDULE

Day	Morning	Afternoon
Monday	Cycling France Encore Golf Buddies History of Architecture (1) History of Stained Glass Italian Intermediate/Advanced New Frontiers Reading Short Stories Tennis Vine to Wine	Bridge (2) Current Affairs (2) Current Affairs (3) Current Affairs (5) History of Architecture (2) Parlons Francais Poetry Appreciation Scrabble Tapestry & Embroidery
Tuesday	A Year in History Birdwatching (Dec to May) (2) German Conversation How the Past has Formed Us Local History Nordic Walking Papier-Mâché Sculpture Photography Researching Your Family History South Westerners Walking Group Walking Group 4	Canasta 2 Cinema Cosmology Cribbage Current Affairs (3) Current Affairs (4) French Revision (2) History in Context Read and Discuss
Wednesday	Bridge for Beginners Current Affairs (1) Gardening Latin Intermediate Italian Easy Conversation Italian Upper Intermediate Nordic Walking Philosophy Qi Gong Sharing Your Family History South Westerners Walking Group Table Tennis (1) Walking Group 4	Art and Design Book Club (2) – evening Creative Textiles and Thread Current Affairs (6) General History Family History (1) Patchwork & Quilting Spanish Intermediate Welsh Conversation
Thursday	Book Club (1) Book Club (3) Bridge (1) Easy French French Advanced Revision (2) French Advanced Conversation French Conversation/Improvers Popular Science & Technology Reading Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' South Westerners Walking Group Tennis Walking Group 4	Art Appreciation Bridge, Social Canasta 1 Creative Writing Family History (2) German Intermediate Opera Appreciation Painting and Sketching Racketball Speaking and Debating
Friday	French Café Conversation London Walks Playreading Understanding Shakespeare	Jazz Appreciation Table tennis (2)
Saturday	Loose Enders Short Walks	Canasta 3
N.B. The following meet on various days/evenings of the week (see Newsletter/website or contact group leader for latest details): Law in Action, Theatre, and Indian Classical Dance & Music		

ACTIVE PURSUITS AND GAMES

BIRDWATCHING (1 and 2)

Trips to birdwatching spots in and around London are arranged between December and May on alternate Tuesdays. Some walking involved (2-7 miles) and binoculars and email essential. Details from leader.

BRIDGE FOR BEGINNERS

This group provides an introduction to the game. Twice a month on the first and third Wednesdays 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

Meets on 1st and 3rd Saturdays each month. Game starts at 2 pm in members' homes, mainly in Morden area, and accessible by public transport, plus parking available.

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 fortnightly on Monday mornings for a ride along back roads and cycle paths, around 25-35 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.

FRIDAY WALKS

We meet on the first and third Friday of each month from February to November at 10.15 at Wimbledon station. The walks are generally of 4 to 5 miles and are designed to be exploratory, not guided historical walks. They are nearly always within the Freedom pass area. The focus of the walks is to take some exercise, to enjoy the social side of walking with others and to discover new places in London.

Members of the group are expected to take turns in choosing and leading the walks. There are lots of suggestions for walks on line and in books available in local libraries.

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 every third Monday at 10.00am, currently at Horton Park Golf Club.

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. 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 9.30am. Mostly on Wimbledon Common, but occasionally further afield.

QIGONG, INTRODUCTION TO

QiGong 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 QiGong instructor. Starting late September, weekly, Wednesday, 9.30am, 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 are 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 4.00pm (but please check as times may vary). Wimbledon Lakeside Squash Club, Church Road, Wimbledon SW19 5AG (entrance opposite Gate 5 of the All England Lawn Tennis Club). 493 bus stops in Church Road. Car parking.

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.

SHORT WALKS

Need to get fitter or just enjoy walking in natural surroundings? Why not join us for a 3-4 mile walk on Wimbledon Common. We now have an established group that meets fortnightly on Saturday mornings (10.00am outside the Windmill Tea Room) for a walk of up to an hour and a half, followed by a get together over refreshments. The Common has a wide variety of routes and scenery on offer, but we may spread our wings a little in 2019, as well as establishing a week day walking group, subject to demand.

SOUTH WESTERNERS WALKING GROUP

Some people know us as Walking Group 5. Our walks are between five and seven miles long. We walk fortnightly, (not in the same week as Walking Group 4) rotating between Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, exploring the open spaces of SW London and Surrey, and sections of the Capital Ring and London Loop. All group members are encouraged to take a turn to suggest and lead a walk.

TABLE TENNIS (1)

This group encourages people of all abilities to enjoy Table Tennis and have fun. 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 is a group for people who love to plan and lead walks as well as enjoying walking through the many and varied locations readily accessible from Merton. Group members take it in turns to lead the walks, singly or jointly, to ensure an interesting mix of walks features in each quarterly programme. The fortnightly walks rotate between Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, giving members the chance to participate despite other regular commitments.

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.

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, Brexit, Education, the Prison System.

Alternate Wednesdays 10.30am - 12.00 noon Merton Hall Road, 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, the Middle East conflict and the BBC. Alternate Mondays 2.30pm - 4.30pm. Wilton Grove.

CURRENT AFFAIRS (3)

This new 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. Third Tuesday afternoon of the month 2.30pm-4.30pm. Springfield Road, off Alexandra Road, Wimbledon

CURRENT AFFAIRS (4)

At present the first half of our meetings is devoted to a general discussion on the burning issues of the day while the second half concentrates on a special topic which will have been agreed at the previous meeting. Recent special topics have included populism, genetic manipulation, China, prison reform and a better understanding of Islam. We also arrange occasional visits which have included County Hall, the House of Commons, the Supreme Court and the Wimbledon Magistrates' Court. We are considering how we can use the media (especially iPlayer) to inform our meetings. We have a vacancy for a new member who must be willing to do some research and to lead the discussion from time to time.

The group meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month. 2.15pm. 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.

CURRENT AFFAIRS (6)

Like some of the other groups, we spend the first hour discussing recent events and issues. In the second hour, we 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 would like one or two more members to join us, ideally able to offer hospitality to the group.

We meet once a month on a Wednesday at 2.30pm in the homes of some members.

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. 10.30am - 12.00noon. Wimbledon/Merton Abbey and occasionally in Mitcham.

RESEARCHING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

This group follows a programme designed to develop and extend the research skills, understanding and knowledge that help family historians have confidence in the integrity of their personal research. Overcoming our research "blocks" is a key focus

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 is run as a workshop with everybody contributing. The group is now embarking on a study of the time of the Romans in Britain.

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 are introduced by members in turn, 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 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 -12.00pm. The group alternates venues in Raynes Park and Merton Park.

GENERAL HISTORY

The format of our meetings can either be a presentation (if a group member wishes to make one) or DVDs on historical and related themes, followed by discussion. We meet on a Wednesday once a month (usually on the last Wednesday, but this can change sometimes!). 2.30-4.30pm. Raynes Park,

LAW IN ACTION

This group meets as a series of short courses on different aspects of law and famous cases. Meets on various days.

LOCAL HISTORY

The group meets third Tuesday of the month usually. Friendly group where one member presents a talk or arranges a visit to a place of historical interest in the surrounding area. We are looking at not only Merton but also Richmond, Sutton, Wandsworth and Kingston. Subject possibilities are suggested, or members may wish to offer their own ideas.

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 £2.00 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. SW20, on 431 bus route, 163, 164 stop nearby. Parking on road possible.

FRANCE ENCORE

For those with a thorough knowledge of 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 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 ADVANCED REVISION (1) & (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. Various venues in central Wimbledon.

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 will be 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.

Meets fortnightly on Mondays in Dundonald area, 2.30 – 4.30pm.

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

Meeting fortnightly on Tuesdays 10.00 – 11.30am. Venue near bus stop Polka Theatre, Wimbledon for buses 57, 131, 129. General conversation, reading and discussing texts from German media or literature. Grammar if and when required. Level intermediate to advanced. No current vacancies.

ITALIAN EASY CONVERSATION

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

ITALIAN UPPER INTERMEDIATE

Designed for those with a good basic knowledge of Italian. The sessions are lively and everyone participates in a varied programme which includes discussion of articles, brief presentations, listening and grammar exercises and occasional use of TV and film. Alternate Wednesdays. 10.15am-12.00noon. Two venues near Merton Park Tram Stop and Nelson Hospital.

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 just off Dundonald Road in Wimbledon, 5 mins from Dundonald Road tram stop. New members welcome.

LATIN INTERMEDIATE

The group has been running successfully for 5 years but we can accommodate newcomers provided they have a basic knowledge of Latin grammar, albeit 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 fortnightly on Wednesdays from 10.30am- 12.30pm with optional catch-up sessions 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. Wimbledon Chase. Bus route: 163, 164, 152, K5.

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.

ARTS AND SCIENCE**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 about-£6 per year per person (Jan-Dec). 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. We also share some wine and have a good chat about books and everything else. New members are very welcome. We meet monthly Wednesday evenings at the houses of group members.

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. Held monthly on third Thursday morning in Raynes Park.

CINEMA

Films chosen by group members, usually with coffee and discussion immediately afterwards. Monthly on 3rd Tuesday, afternoons only. Wimbledon cinemas.

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 on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays 2.30-4.30pm, close to Wimbledon.

CREATIVE WRITING

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. 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

The new course has now reached the Thirteenth Century and will continue through the centuries in the months to come.

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 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

The Philosophy Group meets on alternative Wednesday mornings at Edge Hill (off road parking available). Members do not need to have a philosophical background, but should be interested in the questions which philosophy asks. It is a highly participative group, and members volunteer to introduce subjects for discussion.

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 £3 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, and will be reading Milton this term.

Alternate Mondays 2.00pm - 4.00pm; venue on Ridgway, Wimbledon. Bus 200.

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.

READ AND DISCUSS

This is a friendly and informal group where members enjoy discussing the life and times of an author through his or her work, a literary genre or any other topic relating to books essays or poems, etc. Members have ample time to read and select points of discussion. New Members very welcome. Meets Tuesday afternoons. Wimbledon Chase Bus routes 163 164 152 K5

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.

3rd Thursday of each month, 10.30 am., Raynes Park.

READING SHORT STORIES

We will be reading from Alice Munro's collection 'The Love of a Good Women'. Alice Munro is a Man Booker prize winner and is described as one of the finest short story writers of our time. At each meeting a story selected by a member is presented, read and discussed.

2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. 10.00am to 12.00noon at Richmond Road, Raynes Park. Parking is possible, or the station and buses 57, 131 and 200 are within a few minutes walk.

THEATRE

The aim is to introduce the members to types of theatre and venues they would not normally choose to book for themselves. Members are encouraged to take a turn to plan, book and coordinate an event, on various days of the week, at mainly evening performances. We meet for tea on a Friday at 3.15pm at the Wimbledon Guild café (lovely cakes!) after 2-3 plays for a group discussion.

UNDERSTANDING SHAKESPEARE

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

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 will cover knowledge of colour and of composition in drawing - using line, tone, pattern and perspective. The group is not suitable for absolute beginners and is aimed at those with some previous knowledge of the subject. There will be a nominal charge at the start of the course to cover the cost of venue and refreshments. Max group size 14.

Meetings to be held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 2.00 to 4.00pm. Drake House, Central Wimbledon.

CREATIVE TEXTILES & THREAD

This is a new group of people who enjoy doing things with textiles and thread. This could be anything from the very practical to highly decorative work. The emphasis will be on gaining new skills and combining them imaginatively. We will explore traditional and newer techniques, both academically and practically by

- visiting exhibitions, museums and galleries;
- 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.

Meets 4th Wednesday monthly at 2 pm in members' homes, mainly in Wimbledon/Merton Park area.

PAINTING & SKETCHING

This group is 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! Alternate Thursdays 2.00 – 4.00pm

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 £6 in advance to cover 8 x 2 hour sessions.

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

A friendly group of keen Quilters who enjoy an afternoon of sewing, discussion and the art of patchwork and quilting! Sew a quilt, cushion, picture or table mats 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! Sewing machine is not needed for the class, but experience of hand sewing is required and previous knowledge of Patchwork would be helpful.

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.

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. Second and fourth Mondays of the month, 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.

Short 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.

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 and Memoir Writing.

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 three 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 Project Adviser 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' Introduction Events: 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.

Christmas Lunch: Merton U3A's main social event of the year

Social Get-Togethers: lunches, dinners, coffee mornings, teas, theatre visits and more -- organised in members' homes or local hostelrys 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.

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 a 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-ordinator, Jon Sheppard (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 in 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 at 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.

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