

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

From the Chair – Dan Freeman

Dear Members and all other readers,

I can't quite believe we are already halfway through the year! It's been a very busy one so far for Thornbury u3a.

In March I held my first 'Welcome' meeting for new members, and I hope those who attended found it not only informative but were inspired to sign up to a group. We have also held coffee mornings in both Thornbury and Alveston, where groups have had stalls so you can find out more about what they offer and how to enrol.



I know one person who joined the Beginners' Bridge group and, when I saw her recently, she was full of praise for the group leader and for how welcoming everyone had been.

With over 40 groups — from Architecture to You On Your Own — hopefully there is something for everyone, and we'd love you to come along and see for yourself.

Following a request from a member about setting up a Tai Chi class, we put out a call to gauge interest and were overwhelmed by the response — over 90 replies! Helen, the group co-ordinator, organised four taster sessions and we now have two Tai Chi classes up and running, with plans to add another two.

As promised, we are putting on more free talks for members. Earlier this year we welcomed Quintin Lake — author, photographer and adventurer — who has walked the entire coastline of the UK. On 11th May, Dr Carolyn Morton (former head of Forensic Science at UWE Bristol) delivered another of her hugely popular talks, this time on the subject of Poisons.

Our next talk is on Monday 6th July at 2.00pm: Living with Thalidomide, with speaker Mandy de la Mare. Mandy was one of 460 babies to survive one of the biggest medical disasters in history and is a truly inspirational speaker — her achievements include serving as Chair of the Thalidomide Society. The talk will be held at St Mary's Church; no booking is required and free tea and coffee will be available.

Our next coffee morning is on Saturday 11th July, 10.30–11.30am at Christ the King Hall, Castle Street, Thornbury.

I do hope you are taking full advantage of everything we have to offer.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our committee members who oversee the running of the organisation, and the leaders and committees of our various groups who day in, day out help make Thornbury u3a one of the most vibrant in the country. Please do support them whenever and wherever you can.

Best wishes,

Dan Freeman

chairman@thornburyu3a.org.uk

In Memoriam

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

Linda Hutchings – 11/03/26

Stan Tattersall – 20/03/26

John Bax – 24/04/26

Our sincere condolences go to all their families.

Website manager & newsletter editor – would you like to take on this task?

Website manager & newsletter editor? Would you like to take on this committee member task?

I'm just checking well ahead of the next AGM if any, or how many potential volunteers might wish to take on this committee role?

The website runs on Wordpress with a Siteworks front end, and the newsletter is simply created with a word processor package of your liking and a large amount of copy & paste operations.

If this sounds of interest then let me know. Just send a message to myself:

Peter Rendell - Thornbury u3a webmanager@thornburyu3a.org.uk

FAO the group leader &/or the Newsletter author/s –

The next newsletter deadline will be 21st October 2026 for publication on 8th November

It's still not happening! A gentle reminder – if a group leader - or contact email - or phone number - or venue, etc. changes then Pat Light the Membership secretary should be informed

membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk. If you change your group waiting list status for example then Beacon needs to be updated, as does the website, and newsletter. These details all need to be kept in sync. There is no automatic data linking between any of these systems.

If you are unable to make updates yourself then please let one of the admins know.

beacon@thornburyu3a.org.uk

webmanager@thornburyu3a.org.uk

newsletter@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Peter Rendell - Website manager & Newsletter editor

***** FUTURE EVENTS *****

are shown on the final page of this newsletter

- News from the Group Leaders -

The following articles are information as provided by the Group Leaders.

Architecture Group

Summer 2026 Newsletter - Architecture Group

In February, Helen Roberts gave an insightful talk about Karl Friedrich Schinkel - known as 'The Father of Modern German Architecture'. Schinkel was a Prussian architect, city planner and painter who also designed furniture and stage sets. Schinkel was one of the greatest German architects, a nineteenth century design genius, and a leader in the International Neoclassical and Gothic Revival movements. Helen's informative presentation gave a detailed insight into the works of Schinkel.

In March, Alan Heath gave a presentation about 'Plate Tectonics' which, although not being at the root of Architectural History, was a fascinating explanation about the wonders of our planet and how it has developed over millions of years. Hard to believe that we were once conjoined with the United States of America - a topic that has been in the news for very different reasons lately! Alan's talk demonstrated interesting slides showing how rock formations evolved over time.

The April talk was given by Stephen McNulty - 'The Palace of Knossos and The Citadel at Mycenae'. His personal interest in this era of architecture came to the fore as he had slides of the various locations which he had taken when visiting there with his family. Stephen's knowledge of that era of history came to the fore as he explained how the settlements at Knossos and Mycenae varied in that Knossos was not walled because the inhabitants had no fear of invasion, whereas the Citadel at Mycenae was extensively walled at the time of the Trojan War.

In May, Melanie de la Torre Zamora (a visitor from the 'Energy from Waste Facility' at Javelin Park - near Stonehouse) explained the processes that go on within the large green monster. The building is just off the M5 north (before the Gloucester junction on the motorway). Melanie described in detail how our waste is converted into energy, supplying electricity to over 40,000 homes, thereby engendering a lively discussion within the group when she was answering questions from our members. One member said afterwards that she would no longer view the building with such disdain now that she knows its purpose in more detail!



The Palace at Knossos, Crete



Energy from Waste Facility



Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao

At our June meeting, John Ellis gave a talk on the late Frank Gehry (who died last year) - a very popular architect whose works are often described as 'sculptural' and for very good reason. As usual, John's presentation was carried out with passion for his subject, and he gave the group an in-depth insight into Frank Gehry's life as well as his architectural style. With illustrations from Los Angeles to Bilbao in Spain, Gehry's work showed a fantastic fluidity which is often admired by architects and the public alike. Although suffering with a cold throughout the meeting, John got through his whole presentation with his usual energy - much to the delight of his audience.

Doug Fowler
Architecture Group Leader
3rd June 2026

Doug Fowler

07860 345750

architecture@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Art Group - Monday

We are a friendly group who meet weekly on a Monday morning from 9.30am to 12.00 noon at St. Mary's Church Hall. We have a range of abilities and are always happy to encourage and help each other. Most people use watercolours, acrylics or sketch.

We aim to have a couple of workshops or demonstrations each term otherwise it's a mixture of doing your own thing or someone might suggest a subject or a picture for us to base our session on.

We currently have a couple of vacancies so anyone interested in joining us please contact me via the email address below.

Clive Edwards

artmonday@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Astronomy & Space Group

The group continues to meet on the first Monday of each month for our face-to-face sessions at the Chantry. Doors open at 10:00, with coffee and conversation until 10:30, followed by our main programme running through to 12:00. We aim to clear up and vacate the room by 12:30.

Each meeting follows a familiar pattern: a round-up of the latest astronomy and space news, followed by a talk on either an astronomy or space-related theme. These talks are usually offered by a few regular contributors with occasional guest speakers, and we're always keen to hear new ideas for future discussions.

Last season we marked the 40th anniversary of Bristol's involvement in the Giotto mission to Halley's Comet, and then in a second talk looked at what we now know about the science of comets. Meanwhile closer to Earth, a local resident explained her own journey developing a world-leading business in designing instruments for weather satellites. During next season we continue with our comet theme (this time missions to comets and alien comet encounters), the life story of our Sun and a forthcoming mission to Mercury.



Chris Lee

07715 159541

astronomy@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Badminton Shuttle Fliers

This is a mixed group of players with various levels of ability. We meet at Thornbury Leisure Centre on Monday mornings from 9:30 - 11:30. The group is well established and thriving. As well as playing badminton we manage the occasional social event. We are full at present.

Pat Light

07914 530197

badmintonsf@thornbury3a.org.uk

Bird watching Group

Have you thought about joining us but been put off by not knowing much? Don't worry. We welcome anyone who would like to know more. Just enjoy being out in nature, observing all that is around you and learning what you can see and hear. Our program of outings will tell you roughly what to expect and I always email before hand with more details of the kind of length of visit, facilities available, which birds we hope to see. Read some of the reports on the website to get a flavour of different visits. Looking forward to meeting you. Cilla



1Penduline Tit, Aust nature reserve_2026.01.14

Cilla Farquhar

413055

birdwatching@thornbury3a.org.uk

Book Group 1

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

We are about to finish reading a selection of novels including John Le Carré's *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy*, *Slow Horses* by Mick Heron and *The Secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad. Our next read is *The Human Factor* by Graham Greene and we shall conclude the series with *Spies* by Michael Frayn. We choose novels firstly by agreeing on a theme and then members make suggestions for particular novels. We are a friendly, supportive group: our discussions are serious, but full of humour.

If you'd like to join us, you'd be very welcome; contact Lesley Thomas

Lesley Thomas

07398 136518

BookGroup1@thornbury3a.org.uk

Book Group 2

Book Group 2 chooses both fact and fiction titles for our reading. Generally we alternate fact and fiction which leads to varied and fascinating reading. We do not always agree on the texts we read but this generally leads to stimulating discussions which often lead us into even more intriguing avenues! We also manage a cup of tea or coffee!

We have chosen books up to January 2027. These will start with *Pig* by Helen Browning, followed amongst others by *The Art of Travel* by Alain de Botton, *The Phone Box at the Edge of the World* by Laura Imai Messina and *The Incredible Unlikeliness of Being* by Alice Roberts. If any of this eclectic mix interests you, we have space for a couple more members and you will be welcome to join us.

We meet on the first Monday of every month apart from August in the vestibule at the Methodist Church. So, if you fancy a good read, come and join us on the first Monday of the month in the vestibule, Methodist Church, High Street, Thornbury, from 2.00pm. Please contact the leader to ensure there are no last minute changes to meeting dates before coming along.

For further information please contact the leader Margaret Pinder on 416778 or by email to Book Group 2

Margaret Pinder

416778

bookgroup2@thornbury3a.org.uk

Beginner's Bridge Group

The Beginner's Bridge Group welcome anyone who would like to learn how to play this fascinating game of cards. The Group meet in the Slymbridge Room of the Chantry on a Monday afternoon 2pm till 4pm and we charge £3per person, including refreshments.

New members, who want to started from scratch, or wish to restart after having played the game many years ago, are given individual tuition in the bidding and play until they feel confident to join the others members playing at tables under the supervision and support of an experienced member of Bridge Group 1. These supervisors provide guidance on the best bidding and play of the hands. On occasions we give short presentations on particular Bridge topics.

Please contact me on the number below or send me an email if you wish to learn more.



Norman Taylor

418396

beginnersbridge@thornbury3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 1

Bridge Group 1 meets at The Chantry Castle Street, every Tuesday morning in the Slymbridge Room at 09:15 until 12:15 am. We provide coffee, tea and biscuits.

We are a friendly mixed group that plays Duplicate Bridge. We often get seven tables, so we are almost at capacity.

If you are interested please contact me and I will try to accommodate you, if at all possible.

Mary Bignell

07711 025352

bridgegroup1@thornbury3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 2

Status: Active

Leader: Linda Cooper

Group email: Bridge 2 group

When: Weekly on Tuesday afternoons 2pm

Venue: Olveston Methodist Hall

The Group meets on Tuesday afternoons at 1.45pm for a 2pm start, in the Methodist Hall, Olveston. We could take a few more players, and it is preferred if you can come with a partner. Unfortunately we cannot take beginners, and a basic knowledge of Duplicate Bridge is required. The group consists of players of mixed abilities and you would be made very welcome.

For all enquiries, please contact Linda Cooper by email to link below.

Linda Cooper

414762

bridgegroup2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Bridge Group 4

We are a small and friendly bridge group who meet in the Methodist Hall in Olveston at 7.30 on Tuesday evenings. New members are always welcome, although if you do not have a playing partner please call Jan to see if we can find someone for you to play with. Pairs of experienced players are welcome to just turn up. Don't worry if you are a bit rusty – we are friendly and welcoming!

Jan Winter

612641 or 07979 243526

bridgegroup4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cardmaking Group

I have 3 vacancies in my Thursday afternoon cardmaking group, meeting on the 1st Thursday in each month.

We make 3 cards each month all materials provided and enjoy a cuppa and a chat as well.

If you are interested please contact:

Sue Kitson

418543

cardmaking@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Canasta Group

U3A hold sessions for CANASTA on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at The Wheatsheaf pub in Thornbury from 2pm to 4pm. Members attend a little before to allow a prompt 2 o'clock start. There is no charge for attending and there are currently vacancies for new members. We are a friendly group and all standards of players who are U3A members are welcome.

Steve McMillan

883450

canasta@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Church Visits 1

Hi everyone. Sadly our Group has not been as well supported as I hoped, although there is a stalwart group who nearly always come on our trips. Whilst I am happy to continue organising our visits, we cannot run at a loss so I will be increasing the cost.

We do not have a waiting list any longer, so if anyone would like to 'try us out' do get in touch with me, Sandra Body, on 07464767162 when I will try to include you in our next trip. We are a very friendly group and no previous knowledge is required. We usually try to get someone locally, often the Churchwarden, to tell us about the architecture and place the building plays in today's society - it is not about religion! If we are in places where there are little facilities to get lunch, I usually try to organise a buffet lunch at a local hostelry, but this is optional. We give a donation to each church we visit, so the cost is usually below £20, with lunch on top.

Sandra Body

07464 767162

churchvisits1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Church Visits Group 2

This year we are visiting Abbeys and Monasteries. We have an 8 year rolling programme, and we are in the middle of year 4. We usually venture forth on the 2nd Thursday of the month, March to July, we take a break in August, and finish the year's trips in September and October.

Remaining day trips for this year are

July

- Glastonbury Abbey
- The Tor or the Parish Church

September

- Worcester Abbey Cathedral
- Pershore Abbey

October

- Bath Abbey
- Downside Abbey

If you are interested in old churches and places of worship, in architecture, in stained glass windows, history, an organised day out with time to chat and make friends... well, there's lots of reasons you might want to join us!

Just let me know and I'll add you to our membership list.

Janet McBride

churchvisits2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cinema Group

Last year we ran 20 films which included a wide selection of genre, both feature films and those with educational content. The afternoon begins with tea, coffee and biscuits, which gives you time to choose your seat and to socialise with friends.

The committee of 3 is looking for anyone to join us to help, particularly with the equipment, to cover days when holidays crop up. Please have a chat with us if you should be interested.

Also we are looking for help with refreshments at the beginning of the session.

We will continue to run **at Tockington Parish Hall** on the **1st and 3rd Friday afternoons** of each month except August and 1st Friday in September -- doors open at 1.30 for a 2pm start.

Parking is free!

This is an open group for any members of U3A,

Notes on films can be picked up at Tockington cinema

If you wish to be reminded by email, of films showing, please give your email address to:

Penny Withers at: filmsshowing@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Contact: Pam Dawe for any further information

Pam Dawe

614843

cinema@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Cycling Group

We continue to meet every Thursday. Every other week we arrange a ride of 30 miles plus but on the other weeks we have a morning ride of no more than 20 miles, including a coffee stop. If you enjoy cycling and would like to join a friendly group, why not try our shorter morning rides, new members are welcome.

If you are interested in joining please contact the group leader.

Don Grundell

412896

cycling@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Discussions Group

The Discussions group is the place where you find that there are many diverse views on any aspect of life; views that deserve careful consideration and respect. We usually continue throughout the summer as there are so many ways the world needs putting to right. On July 14th, we will take a light-hearted view at art – why we value it (both monetarily and spiritually). Thereafter, it could be anything – the group suggests and chooses the topic for the following month. Come along and have your two-penn'orth. Second Tuesday 2pm at The Chantry

Bob Dale

415345

discussions@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Family History Group

Francis Houghton, who ran the group for six years, has now left the Group and is moving away from Thornbury to be closer to her family. We must thank Francis for all the hard work she put into the Group over the last six years. I have taken over the leadership role on a temporary basis until another person comes forward to run the Group.

I don't plan to run a monthly meeting on a regular basis. The presenters who I used to call on when I ran the Group originally, either external speakers, or within the Group itself, are no longer there. So, what I am proposing is we hold meeting on an ad hock basis, possibly every 3 months. I know people are interested in how we undertake research, how you can use DNA data and how to get the best out of Database Software such as Family Historian or even producing those "coffee table" books covering Family History that can attract the younger generation's interest. Also, the Group research session we held a couple of months ago was fairly successful and we could include those on a more regularly basis.

To keep everyone involved, I will issue a regular (monthly) email, providing some interesting information that comes my way, or passing on information that others may provide.

Please contact me on the number below or send me an email if you wish to learn more.

Norman Taylor

418396

familyhistory@thornbury3a.org.uk

French Group - WD40

Avez-vous appris le français à l'école? Avez-vous depuis lors des difficultés avec votre français scolaire? Pourquoi ne pas rejoindre d'autres personnes dans la même situation et participer au groupe WD40 (pour les personnes ayant un français rouillé)? Nous nous réunissons en ligne les premier et troisième mardis de chaque mois à 10 heures du matin, pendant deux heures avec une courte pause vers 11 h. Un francophone éprouvé nous accompagne. Nous comptons actuellement une douzaine de membres et pourrions en accueillir deux ou trois de plus.

Pour plus d'informations, veuillez contacter l'animateur, Alan Payne.

Alan Payne

418749

frenchwd40@thornbury3a.org.uk

Garden Visits Group

Our first visit of 2026 was to Bowood House and Gardens. It started with an entertaining talk on the history of the estate after which members were able to explore the house and museum, the newly opened walled garden and extensive grounds including the large lake.

By the time this newsletter is published, we will also have visited Chipping Campden Open Gardens and Bourton House Garden. There are further trips planned over the summer to Bicton Park Gardens, Batsford Arboretum, Croome Court and Sudeley Castle.

Anyone wishing to join the group should email the membership secretary.

Group Leader: Lyn Haigh
Membership: Rosie Bailey

gardenvisits@thornburyu3a.org.uk
gardenvisits.membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Gentle Exercise Group



We call ourselves the Gentle Exercise group and we welcome people of all ages, shapes and sizes who enjoy maintaining our fitness in a friendly and sociable group. At the moment we are an all female group but we also welcome men. Gentle Exercise is whatever you want it to be. You can work really hard (occasionally some of us do), or you can take things more gently, it's up to you and we don't judge you. It involves low impact exercise with some seated work but with no floor work. Our instructor, Sam, has also introduced us to some ballet-style exercises which help us to improve our balance. Gentle Exercise is generally appropriate for those who already have some degree of fitness but we keep it fairly low key. It is not necessary to have done Keep Fit before to enjoy the sessions.

We have recently welcomed a couple of new members but we still have room for a few more people. Potential new members are welcome to "try before you buy" and come for a test session before deciding. As a u3a Group we keep the costs as low as possible, offering really good value for money.

Classes take place from 10am to 11.00am on Thursdays during term time in the Methodist Upper Hall.

Contact:

Pat Wells 01454 850379

Christine Baker 07752 042088

Rita Goss 01454 417749

Pat Wells

850379

gentleexercise@thornburyu3a.org.uk

German Language Group

This Group is a self-help group of half a dozen or so members. We concentrate on conversation but also read texts from books newspapers and magazines. Some of us have lived in Germany & Austria and others are simply interested learners, so our standard varies a bit. We are at the moment reading a 'Krimis' (Detective stories) series of books. Which gives a more modern aspect of the language.

Some members have left the group this year so we are down to a core of 6 members. Thus we can welcome new members if you are interested

We usually meet fortnightly on Mondays at 2.00pm at Hawkes House.

But since we are in the summer months 'the silly season' with not many members available we have decided to suspend our meetings until September.

I would like to step down from leading the group so we are looking for someone to take over the leadership.

So we are looking for, ideally, a retired German teacher or similar to lead the group in a dedicated manner, which would be beneficial for the group.

Please contact the group leader if you are interested.

Michael Boulton

416416

germanselfhelp@thornburyu3a.org.uk

History Group

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 10.30am in the Coach Hall of the Chantry and are pleased to welcome new members.

Recently we have enjoyed some interesting and knowledgeable talks from Jackie Carpenter on Acton Court and Tony Cherry on Thornbury Workhouse. We have also visited Gloucester for a walk covering 2000 years of history and had the opportunity to visit highlights of the Cathedral including a tour of the Crypt or review other interesting places within the city.

We are looking forward to finding out about Intelligence operations in WWII with "Do walls have ears?" with Peter Bryant in July and more about the Dyrham Blathwayts at Whitehall in September with David Gunn.

If you would like to offer a talk or discussion on any historical aspect, please contact the Committee. Also, if you have a historical place you would like to visit, please let us know so that we can begin to plan for next year.

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

Alison Makepeace

415019

history1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Indoor Bowls

The Indoor Bowls will recommence in September'26. There is still a small amount of space for a few more members as 3 lanes are booked each week which means up to 24 people can attend, and so far last season, the highest number attending was 20. New members joining our club do need to have their own bowls shoes and possibly bowls as the Leisure centre do not hire them out anymore, and some knowledge and practice of the game.

I hope everyone is enjoying our summer, although the temperatures are somewhat HOT and I look forward to seeing you all again in September.

Veronica Stanley

07947 149639

indoorbowls@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Investment Club Group 1

Since our last newsletter our investment portfolio has continued to be profitable – and we are recruiting so please get in touch if you would like to join our group (see below).

We meet at 10am on the second Wednesday of the month in Tockington Methodist Hall, followed by lunch in the Swan across the road for those who wish to partake. The joining fee is £250, and the monthly subscription is £50.

The money is invested in a portfolio of shares, so we are dealing with real money. With that in mind our meetings are structured and lively as well as hard-headed when it comes to voting on buying and selling.

You do not need to be a financial expert, just have an interest in investing. To learn a bit more, please send me a text or email and we can arrange a telephone call. If you are still interested after that, the best way forward is for you attend a meeting as an observer and decide whether it is for you.

On a personal note, I find that membership prompts me to keep up with economic and investment-related affairs at home and abroad and provides a thoroughly enjoyable forum for discussing them.

Bill Woodruff

07801 106750

investment1@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Investment Club Group 2

Status: Active and open for new members.
Leader: Terry Bowers Tel: 07412 509830
Group email: Investment Club 2 group

Investment Group 2 meet in The Chantry in Thornbury on the morning of the second Tuesday of each calendar month, the meetings normally last around two hours. The meetings discuss the performance of the club's portfolio with emphasis on possible further investments or sales of existing stock and wider ranging geopolitical issues which may impact stock market performance. The meeting works to a structured agenda with formal minutes issued following the meeting.

In addition to the discussions surrounding the portfolio, there is an education slot where usually, a short video presentation covers wide ranging topical issues surrounding the stock market which helps to expand informative investment knowledge with like minded individuals.

Funds are accumulated, with new members required to pay a one off joining fee followed by a monthly subscription. Members typically contribute either £50 or £100 per month with an upper limit of £200 which builds a personal unitised holding. A report covering the club and each members individual portfolio value is published every month by the Club Treasurer. Members can withdraw in part or whole their investment at any time in accordance with the rules of the club.

The Club is a well established friendly group which currently has two vacancies - potential new members are encouraged to join the group initially as a guest for up to two visits, before determining whether or not to join as a full member.

Contact:

Membership Secretary - John Hescott 07527 452995 or
Club Chairman - Graham Ford 07970 294341.

Terry Bowers

07412 509830

investment2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Lunch Group 4

Lunch Club 4 continues to enjoy lunches in pubs and other venues in and around the Thornbury area. Our membership is now full and I have 2 people on the waiting list.

We have a programme planned for the rest of 2026 and our next lunch will be in The White Hart, Littleton. This is being organised by one of our regular members.

Please contact me if you would like to go onto the Waiting List.

Jackie Gitsham

858438

lg4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Mah Jong - Monday

We meet on 2nd and 4th Monday afternoons from 2.00 to 4.00 pm.

We play by English Mahjong Association rules.

We are a relaxed group, and new players are always welcome, including beginners.

Mah Jong is like a Chinese version of Rummy so quite easy to pick up, and the playing tiles are lovely.

Do come and give it a try. We meet in each others homes. Everyone is welcome, so if you would like to join us please contact us so that we can let you know where the next meeting will be.

Jane Climpson

228872

mahjong@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Mah Jong – (Western Rules) - Tuesday

We are a friendly group of 20 people who meet each week to play the wonderful game of Mah Jong and share a cuppa, cake, biscuits and a chat during the tea break. Some of our players have been playing for far too many years to mention and some have been playing for only a few months. Our members have a vast range of experience and ability.

Mah Jong is a traditional Chinese tile-based game of skill, strategy, and luck, typically played by four players who aim to form a complete hand of sets and pairs. Initially there is quite a lot to take in but it is not a difficult game to learn.

With thanks to u3a Thornbury funding, we now have more sets of Mah Jong so now have space for more players. We always welcome people of any experience and are happy to teach beginners.

We meet at St Mary's Church Hall every Tuesday 2pm – 4:30pm with a break in August.

Please contact Colette Hall 07891 301476 if you are interested in coming along.

Colette Hall

07891 301476

mahjong2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Music Group

The Thornbury u3a Music Group had its last meeting of the season in June and will be resuming in September.

We meet in Alveston Methodist Church at 10.30am on the second Friday of each month between September and June and our aim is to have eight of the ten meetings as live performances. The June meeting is always a Desert Island Discs style event featuring a local musician or member of the local community with musical interests. The Christmas meeting features hot fruit punch and mince pies and members are invited to let the committee have any suggestions they may have for future programmes.

Our programme until Christmas 2026 is as follows:-

Friday 11th September **Roger Browne** will give us an illustrated talk on “The History of Jazz Piano”. Roger is a regular u3a speaker

Friday 9th October **Helen Reid (piano)** and **Jonathan Rees (cello)** will perform for us. They played for us together before and Helen has also given us solo recitals.

Friday 13th November The **Rockhampton Wind Quintet** led by Gareth Williams will introduce us to their new programme.

Friday 11th December **Aaron Holmes (baritone)** and **Nigel Davies (piano)** will perform for our Christmas meeting. As usual fruit punch and mince pies will be served.

Jos Gregson

411652

music@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Opera Appreciation Group

For our 'summer festival' we are immersing ourselves in Wagner's Ring Cycle.

We showed Das Rheingold in June and will follow with

Die Walkure on 21 July, Siegfried on 11 August and Gotterdammerung on 25 August (please excuse the lack of *umlauts*).

Each meeting starts at 4.00pm and includes two intervals in which we serve a light summer supper.

Not exactly Bayreuth but a Thornbury take on *gesamtkunstwerk*.

The cost is £12.50 payable in cash on the day. To book a place please email Rob at crocorob@gmail.com

Next season begins on 22 September with Giordano's Andrea Chenier. A lyrical verismo recreation of the life of the eponymous poet who fell foul of the French Revolution.

The full season's programme will be on our web pages.

Rob Mussell

opera@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Our Living Language Group

We talk about words and phrases: where they come from and how we use them. It's surprising how many nuances there are across the country. On July 13th, we will be looking at the language used in newspaper headlines. We take a break in August, then back in September. Everyone welcome. St Mary's Church Hall 2pm on the second Monday of the month.

Bob Dale

415345

ourlivinglanguage@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Photography Group

The group has about thirty members and meets monthly in the Chantry. Meetings start with tea, coffee and a chat before listening to talks about photography and viewing images. The emphasis is very much on looking at and enjoying members' images. All that is required is an interest in the subject. To take pictures all you need is a phone and you probably already have one of those! Nothing more expensive is required.

Come and meet the group at u3a coffee mornings. The group usually has a table with pictures to browse and enjoy.



'Peak District' by Stan Goodwin

Contacts: Steve Wells 01454-850379 or Mervyn Reed 01454-415849

Steve Wells

850379

photography@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Poetry Group 1

Thornbury U3A Poetry Group One. June 2026.

The late Spring saw us continuing to learn about the changes in poetry towards the end of the 19th century. In 1871 the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War redrew the power map of Europe. The cities were transformed by industry and commerce and it seemed to many people that the arts were being side-lined. Europe's population more than doubled but by 1900 state-sponsored elementary education created mass literacy and saw the circulation of papers and magazines. Some favoured this but not all.

Certain French poets like Beaudelaire, Mallarme, Verlaine and Rimbaud became Symbolists - using symbols to represent the poet in their work. However their common purpose was to break away from previous poetry.

Symbolism did not catch on in England or America although Dylan Thomas used some of the ideas. Others were Edward Lear, Charlotte Mew and Oscar Wilde. We are studying their work at the moment kindly assisted by members who have given their time to research and present this work at our meetings. Earlier in the year we also enjoyed the poetry written by members.

We send our very good wishes to the new Poetry Group Two who have absorbed our previous waiting list and are enjoying themselves and still have a few places. Poetry One continues to be full.

Meg Adnams

416080

poetryappreciation@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Poetry Appreciation Group 2

This is a small group that meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 2.00pm to 4.00pm in the lounge of Alexandra Lodge (Castle Street, Thornbury). Topics discussed are varied and currently include: our favourite poems; what makes something a poem; nature poems; an unfamiliar poet, Charlotte Mew; sonnets, traditional and otherwise; personification in poetry; nostalgia, memory and loss; war poetry; and humorous poetry.

If you are interested in reading and discussing poems and would like to join us, contact Chris.

Tony Bradley and Chris Perry (Group Leaders)

Chris Perry

07710 992752

poetryappreciation2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Recorders Group 2

We continue to play our recorders with music appropriate to the time of the year.

At present we are playing summer pieces such as 'Summer Quartet' and 'Too much cucumber salad'!!

Several of us attended a recital recently given by the Phoenix Recorder Orchestra.

It was good to hear a large group of recorders playing together.

Kate P-M

Kate Phillipson-Masters

411253

recorders2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Rummikub Group

Rummikub is a tile-based strategy game for 2-4 players. It is simple to learn, keeps our brains active, and is fun. Our very friendly group has been running since early this year and is proving very popular. We are mixed ability, and have welcomed a few complete beginners.

We play each Thursday afternoon at the Anchor Inn on Gloucester Road from around 2pm, where the landlords are happy to reserve us up to five tables in exchange for our buying a drink from them. Although we need to restrict membership to 20 due to the tables limit, we have so far have been able to offer places every week to everyone on our waiting list once we know expected member attendee numbers. We have two U3A Rummikub sets, but if members have their own sets, it's great if they bring those along.

If you'd like to join us, please do get in touch.

Chris Everett

Eve Levy

Chris Everett

07749 385481

rummikub@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Science & Technology Group

Even if you don't class yourself as a scientist, there is always plenty to take your interest about how the world works, man's inventions, and the people behind these discoveries. On July 15th we look at the world's ocean currents and how they control, or are controlled by, climate. Just come along to The Chantry from 10am (the talk starts at 10:30). We take a break in August, then the autumn season will include two talks on bird and insect flight.

Bob Dale

415345

scienceandtech@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Scottish Country Dancing Group

The Scottish Country Dancing group meets on first and third Tuesday afternoons in the Coach Hall at the Chantry from 2pm to 3.45pm (doors open 1.45pm). We have been learning steps and figures as well as dances since we started in January 22 and regularly welcome new members (beginners and some with experience). We have members who regularly dance Scottish to take us through our paces. We still have room for some more members and you don't need to bring a partner (or be Scottish!). We have a break in August and will begin meeting again in September on 1st and 15th.

So if you would like to join us for some enjoyable dancing to great tunes, please let me know by emailing Scottish Country Dancing or by calling:

Margaret Pinder

416778

scottishcountrydance@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Scrabble Group

The Scrabble Group is held in The Parlour, Christ the King on Castle Street on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoons from 2:00pm. There is plenty of room for more to join us if you fancy a couple of games of Scrabble. Refreshments are available half way through the afternoon. Please contact me if you are interested in joining us.

Jackie Gitsham

858438

scrabble@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Shakespeare Studies Group

The Group commenced 2026 with the tragedy of CYMBELINE, followed by the great history play RICHARD III. The tragicomedy MEASURE FOR MEASURE was enjoyed and the year will end with the history plays HENRY IV Part 1 and HENRY IV Part 11 being studied.

The group is now able to welcome new members.

We meet on the third Wednesday of every month, excluding July/August, in The Vestibule of The Methodist Church, High Street, Thornbury from 2.0pm to 4.0pm.

Alan Brown

884851

shakespeare@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Short Slow Rambles Group

Our group continues to prosper and we have had several interesting rambles throughout 2026. We have temporarily suspended our walks due to the heatwaves we are enduring.

Contact us via the website or:

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

Spanish Sobremesa Group

Do you speak a little Spanish ?

We would like to meet you.

Ring Rob for a chat on 07540 233 611

Rob Mussell **07540 233611** spanishsobremesa@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 1 Group

Our group continues to enjoy games of competitive table tennis. We are full at the moment, but we have the occasional vacancy for visitors. We cannot, however, take beginners. Full details are available on the u3a website.

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

Table Tennis 3 Group

We meet at Thornbury Leisure Centre on Monday mornings, 9am- 11am.

We do not have any vacancies in the group, at present.

Full details are available on the u3a website.

Jay Cooper **414762** tabletennis3@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 4 Group

Do you want to play Table Tennis with a friendly group and can you give other members a good game?

Table Tennis - Group 4 is a relaxed though mildly competitive group that plays TT at an intermediate level.

Generally, we play doubles games on two or three tables each Thursday from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm (new times from July) at Thornbury Leisure Centre.

Our membership is currently fully subscribed but, if you are interested in joining and can play at a level that will challenge our other members, please get in touch for a taster session and to be placed on the waiting list.

Ray Pioli

tabletennis4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Table Tennis 5 Group

We have been lucky enough to buy a new table tennis with funds from our Thornbury u3a. We've thoroughly enjoyed using it since it arrived a few weeks ago. Many thanks to our committee.



We continue to meet on a Friday morning at Alveston Methodist Church Hall to play table tennis and have coffee and a chat. We are at full capacity currently

Pat Light

07914 530197

tabletennis5@thornburyu3a.org.uk

T'ai Chi – Groups 1 & 2

Two new groups – T'ai Chi 1 and 2 – started in June to run term-time only.

The groups are currently full but your name can go onto a Waiting List should you be interested in joining us.

Please contact me if you are interested, details below.

Jackie Gitsham

858438

tai-chi@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Theatre Group

Theatres we frequent are:

Bath Theatre Royal; Bristol Old Vic; Everyman, Cheltenham; Malvern;
New Theatre and Millennium, Cardiff; Mill at Sonning; Tobacco Factory

We endeavour to book visits once or twice a month

Joining fee for this year is £2.00 per household.

For further details contact:

Pam Dawe

614843

theatreandoperavisits@thornbury3a.org.uk

Walking Group

The *Walking Group* over the last few months have been out experiencing our lovely local countryside. In February many of our members joined in the *Thornbury Walking Festival* which is a new event. Hopefully this will be repeated next year to encourage all people interested in walking in our area. We have also visited Stinchcombe, Almondsbury to the Wave, The Daffodil & Poets walk in Dymock, Frampton on Severn, May Hill, Bristol Bridges, Tortworth Estate, Hambrook & Winterbourne. Our membership currently stands at 79 and we are already half-way through our busy walking schedule for 2026 of both A & B walks, In July our annual summer outing takes place which this year will be to Bath. The Walking Group offer both short & longer walks. These take place on the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month (with an extra walk if there is a 5th Thursday in the month).

Regards
Stephen Grove

New members are most welcome and it's only £2 to join!
Please contact the group leader - Frances Bover – email:

Frances Bover

07793 666972

walking@thornbury3a.org.uk



2 Noel Hardy May Hill A 2.4.26



3 John Stennard B The Wave 5.3.26

Ukelele Group

A new beginners Ukulele course has just started at the Ship Alveston on a Thursday afternoon from 16.00 to 17.00 . There are six new members in their second week ran by Jojo Byron. This is a 10 week course and by the end should able to join the existing group of 12 and perform with them. Mike Simons.

Jojo Byron

07473 070880

ukulele@thornbury3a.org.uk

Whist Group

The whist group continues to thrive, with an average attendance of around 26 players. New players of all abilities are always welcome to our noisy, chatty, happy group.

Reg King

418962

whist@thornbury3a.org.uk

Wine Group 1

We continue with our programme for the year with a great evening in May entitled "EYE CATCHING BOTTLES & LABELS". When 31 of our members were presented with a blind tasting evening. It was considered by the presenters that the wines should be judged only on the contents of the bottle uninfluenced by the marketing ploy.

Wine 1 – Arte de Vivre, 100% Claritte grape from the Languedoc 2023 bottled in a white pottery type bottle. Like the early clay Amphora.

Wine 2 – Chapter & Verse SE Australian Chardonnay 2024 in a flat plastic bottle.

Wine 3 – Baron Amarilla 100% Alberino 2025 Served from an elegant shaped blue glass bottle with a striking white & blue Tuna fish label

Wine 4 – Porta 6 Portuguese Red. 50% Tinta Roriz, 40% Castellano, 10% Turaga Nacional. This had striking caricature of Lisbon streets from a local artist.

Wine 5 – Vina Alberdi Reserva, Rioja Spain 2020 100% tempranillo with a wonderful label full of colourful garden shrubs.

Wine 6 – Arte de Vivre Rouge, Gerard Bertrand Languedoc Roussillon 2021 Grenache/ Syrah/ Mourvèdre. Another pottery bottle.

An unusual evening well received by all the participants and enjoyed by the members who presented the wines.

The year will continue with: -

"ANNUAL B-B-Q" @ Thornbury RFC	02 July
"YOUR MEMORABLE WINES"	17 July
"PRESENTATION FROM MAJESTIC WINES"	18 September
"WOMEN & WINE"	20 November

We are open to new members, so please give me call me to confirm your interest and discuss further. A deep knowledge of wine is not required we are all just willing to learn from each other.

Tony Cockwell

413116

winegroup1@thornbury3a.org.uk

Wine Group 2

Since the Spring newsletter we have continued through our 2026 programme of events, with a return visit in March from wine merchants Vinotopia, with wines from across Italy, followed in April with an excellent cheese and wine evening with a selection of cheeses presented by Liz Godsell from her award-winning artisan cheeses from Godsell's Cheeses in the Cotswolds. May's wine tasting was a very informative affair with wines from 'a trip down the Loire' by our very own Peter Burney. In June we will be making good use of the lovely weather with a 'wine and canapés' garden party, hosted by Diana and Stephen and McNulty.

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

At present we have a full list of members, however, if you are interested in joining the group then please contact:

Mark Jones

07814 224836

winegroup2@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 3

Wine Group 3 meets at 7:30pm (doors open at 7pm) on the first Friday of alternate months from January in St. Mary's Church Hall, Thornbury.

In March we had a presentation from Andy Cole of Vintopia which was very enjoyable. We will be booking them to come again next year.

We had a presentation in May from Claire and Darren Ainsworth on the Wines of New Zealand. A good night was had by all.

Our next meeting will be in the form of a quiz by Ian Macdonald.

Below is our 2026 programme

3 July	Wine Quiz	Ian Macdonald
4 September	Your Favourite Bottle of Wine	6 volunteers to talk about a bottle of wine
6 November	Fish 'n' Fizz	

NB As first Friday in 2027 is actually 1 January we won't be holding a meeting so our first will be in March 27.

We are always looking for new ideas and presenters so if you are interested in wine and would like to share your knowledge we would love to see you. My contact details are shown below.

Jackie Gitsham

858438

winegroup3@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Wine Group 4

Wine Group 4 ('Imbibe with friends') continues to thrive, with an exciting programme of events held already in 2026.

Our selection of topics has included:

- 'It's all Greek to me' wines
- A taste of South Africa
- A return to Woodchester Valley Vineyard

as well as a unique joint event with The Dell Vineyard, Monmouth and The Yard at Number 8, both local businesses well worth supporting.

Our last event was Celebrity wines, where a few surprise guests turned up to promote their wines. Looking forward to 'The battle of the brands' and Iconic train journey wines in the Autumn.

Our membership numbers have grown by over 12% since 2024 so, unfortunately, we have reached our membership capacity for the moment.

If you are interested in joining the waiting list for our group, please contact the group leader Colin Ballantyne via email to Wine Group 4.

Colin Ballantyne

07802 838241

winegroup4@thornburyu3a.org.uk

YOYO Group

YOYO is a way to connect with others who want to share activities, get to know people, and have fun. Come along with ideas - things you would like to do and have may not have done because you'd like others to do it with.

YoYo'ers are a friendly sociable group. Meeting- 2nd Wednesday of every month 2pm at the Methodist Hall Thornbury. £2

There's a pop in coffee get-together at Hawkes House every Saturday 10-12. Regular Skittles 2pm 4th Wednesday Black Horse.

Regular Pickleball at Thornbury LC. A monthly Pub night and a monthly Diners get together.

All spontaneous get togethers are posted on our WhatsApp yoyo group. Possibilities are endless – days out, local pub, cinema, etc.

Monthly Updates are sent out to members via email before the main meeting.

Yoyo'ers have been busy over the winter months, with members getting together attending many of the above activities along with many more.

Including several National Theatre screenings, a very well attended Xmas lunch, art exhibits, local theatre productions, Bristol air raid tour.

YOYO (you on your own) you don't need to be. Everyone welcome.

Contact Yvonne Evans:

Yvonne Evans

07873 336161

yoyo@thornburyu3a.org.uk

Future Events

Coffee morning

Saturday 14th November, 10.30–11.30 at Christ the King Hall, Castle Street, Thornbury.

Members with NO email address will be able to collect the latest newsletter

Welcome meeting for new members

Friday 23rd October 15:30 – 16:30 St Mary’s Church Hall, Eastbury Rd, BS35 1DR

Invitations will be sent to new members nearer the time

The Current Committee

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

Chairman	Dan Freeman	07970 081529	chairman@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Vice Chairman	Chris Bolton	610056	vicechair@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Sue Bilson	07968 561019	treasurer@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Pat Wells	850379	secretary@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Pat Light	412260	membership@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Welfare Co-ordinator	Lorraine Grove	07454 636080	welfare@thornburyu3a.co.uk
Group Co-ordinator	Helen Moszoro	528236	groupcoordinator@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Beacon Administration	Martin Farrimond	07813 604248	beacon@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Website Manager & Newsletter Editor	Peter Rendell	07792 364546	webmanager@thornburyu3a.org.uk newsletter@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Committee Members	Rita Goss	417749	committee@thornburyu3a.org.uk
<i>Associated contacts:</i>			
Associate member	Sue James	885452	visits@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Catering Co-ordinator	Jackie Gitsham	858438	catering@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Equipment	Roger Steer	294371	equipment@thornburyu3a.org.uk
Health & Safety	Pat Light	412260	healthandsafety@thornburyu3a.org.uk