Newsletter
Autumn 2026

Edited by Peter Rendell & Dan Freeman

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

From the Chair – Dan Freeman

Chairs Report

In the blink of an eye, autumn is upon us, along with the early evenings. I hope you all enjoyed the summer, even if it was a little hot at times! For Thornbury u3a, autumn signals the resumption of all our groups, and a hive of activity as they get back into full swing.

In September we organised a buffet lunch for our group leaders to thank them and their teams for all the hard work they do, day in and day out, to make Thornbury u3a so successful. We have over 80 groups to choose from and added to that number early this year when two new Tai Chi groups started as well as Poetry Appreciation 2 and Rummikub.

We have had a couple of further suggestions for possible groups:

- Racquetball, which would be held on the squash courts at the Active Leisure Centre
- Chess, perhaps in a local pub or café

If you think there is an appetite for either of these, please let us know by replying to this email. We will of course be looking for a leader for each group.

Tribute to Paige Warr

In September, Doug Fowler from the Architecture group gave the presentation that Paige Warr, our previous Vice Chair, had prepared but sadly never had the chance to deliver, as he passed away last year. The talk was on Saint Nicholas' Church, Morton, Dorset. Members of Paige's family were invited to attend and really appreciated the talk. They said how much Paige enjoyed the u3a and his involvement in it.

Intergenerational Education

Earlier this year we discussed intergenerational education with Helen Ball, Mayor of Thornbury. The idea came out of the work and support for Thornbury's bid to become a Small Town of Culture.

I am due to meet a headteacher from a local school shortly to discuss this further, so please put your thinking caps on for ideas we could work on together, such as astronomy, gardening, speaking French with language students, or helping with interview training. If we have any teachers or educators who would like to get involved, please let me know.

Although not under the u3a banner, Doug took drone photos of the Two Bridges Academy at each stage of its construction. These have now been professionally printed on canvas and hung along the school corridor. Doug was invited to see them proudly displayed.

Mayor's Awards
This year's theme is the green agenda, and all the details are on the council's website. The Mayor has asked us to bring the awards to the attention of u3a members, for consideration as part of a u3a group or through their involvement in other activities in Thornbury. The purpose of the awards is to promote all that is best in Thornbury.

Film Screening - the National Emergency Briefing
We recently organised a very successful screening of a 50 minute film which was a summary of the briefing hosted by Chris Packham. It has been shown to communities up and down the country, some 1,500 times so far. The original briefing was held in Westminster Central Hall on the climate and nature crisis with top scientists discussing its effects chaired by Professor Mike Berners-Lee. After the film was shown there was a really interesting and informative discussion which was facilitated by Mathew Gitsham who lives locally and has an interest in climate change.

Future Events

Coach Trips to London
We have organised several coach trips to London this year which have unanimously been voted a great success by everyone who went on them. We will look at organising more next year and full details will be emailed out to members in due course

Talks next year
We have 3 talks arranged for next year and again details will be sent out nearer the time.

Coffee Morning
Why not come along to our coffee morning on Saturday 14th November, 10.30–11.30 at Christ the King Hall, Castle Street, Thornbury. Grab a coffee and a biscuit or two and take a look at some of our groups and what they offer. If you have a friend who isn't a member but who would like to find out more about us, then please don't hesitate to bring them along too.

Committee and Getting Involved
I am now approaching the end of my first year in post and the maximum number of years I can put myself forward as Chair is three. Chris Bolton, our Vice Chair, kindly stepped up for a year, so there will be a vacancy for that position at the AGM in February.

We need more people involved in the committee, perhaps not as full members, but coming along to share their knowledge on a particular subject or specialism such as PR, marketing, or education then we would really appreciate your help on an ad hoc basis.

Please do give some serious thought about volunteering either as Vice Chair, as a committee member or on an ad hoc basis. It really is good fun and ensures Thornbury u3a continues as the amazing organisation at the heart of our community. A massive thanks of course goes to everyone who already does!

Learn, Laugh, Live.

Best wishes,

Dan Freeman - Chair, Thornbury u3a chairman@thornburyu3a.org.uk

In Memoriam

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

Sept 2026 – Jane Hinton, Carol Secrett, Sandria Davis, Rod Wells, David Hardy, David Parsons

Oct 2026 – Sue Taylor, Ann Keates, Steve McMillan

Our sincere condolences go to all their families.

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

Would you like to volunteer and take on this committee member role?
My 3 year time restriction serving on the committee as Website manager & newsletter editor will be up at the next AGM in February.
The committee are investigating the possibility of extending this time limit, but that resolution is far from certain. I'm willing & able to serve for longer but need to find a replacement in case a solution isn't found to extending all committee members maximum serving duration.
Whatever happens the annual standing for re-election process is unchanged.

The website runs on Wordpress within a Siteworks framework (training guides are available), and this newsletter is simply created with a word processor package using plenty of copy & paste operations from group leader article submissions.

If this sounds of interest then let me know. Just send a message to myself:
Peter Rendell - Thornbury u3a webmanager@thornburyu3a.org.uk



Two recent photos from our walking and bird watching groups



FAO the group leaders or newsletter article author –

The next newsletter deadline will be 16th February 2027 & publication date 26th February

- News from the Group Leaders -

The following articles are provided by the Group Leaders.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) Group

The group meets to discuss the latest developments in AI and explore subjects of interest. Meetings usually include a review of recent news and a talk. We meet on the second Friday of each month at 10.00 am at The Chantry.

All U3A members are welcome to attend. You certainly do not have to come to every meeting; we operate informally and try to arrange talks that do not assume any prior knowledge. The group is especially keen to welcome anyone willing to give a talk on an AI-related topic.

Over the past six months, our topics have included scams, investing, manufacturing, communication and a practical, hands-on session.

If you are interested in attending our meetings, please join the email list by contacting Mike Tierney via the Thornbury U3A AI group page: https://thornbury.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/ai-artificial-intelligence/ or use the address below. We will keep you informed about our activities and send you links to our repository, where you can find slides from previous meetings.

Mike Tierney **aigroup@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Architecture Group

In July, we had a visit from our West Wilts friends (from Trowbridge) - Alan Soldat and Kevin Eames. Kevin gave us a talk about Charles Edwin Ponting, an Arts and Crafts Architect from Wiltshire. Ponting had it all: craft skills and understanding, a background in local tradition, archaeological expertise, diligence …, and the self-effacing diffidence so typical of the Arts and Crafts movement. This talk was another in the 'Speaker Swap' arrangement we have with the Trowbridge U3A Architecture Group

September - Doug Fowler presented a talk which had been written by Paige Warr, who sadly passed away in September 2025 (when he was scheduled to give his talk about St Nicholas' Church, Moreton in Dorset). Before his untimely death, Paige had completed his research, and his family had presented all his research information to Doug so that he could give the presentation later. It was a lovely tribute to a fine member who is sadly missed.

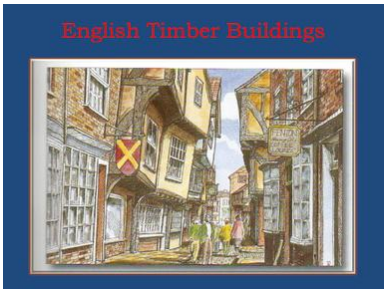
Alan Heath was our October presenter, and he took us through the development of timber buildings from early ages through to the modern use of 'Glulam' beams - which are laminated timber and have the potential for large spans. Alan's talk was well illustrated with drawings and photographs of buildings, many from the Tudor period where there was a device known as 'jettying' - a projection at first floor level, giving additional accommodation on the upper floors.



Pewsham House, Derryhill



St Nicholas Church, Moreton



Timber Buildings illustration

Doug Fowler
Architecture Group Leader
7 October 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**

Art Group - Thursday

The Group continues to meet from 0930 to 1200 in St Mary's Church Hall during normal School Term times. Members of the Group have a range of abilities and pursue their own particular projects using a variety of media with brush, pen or pencil. Members of the friendly group encourage and help each other. In addition we have one or two demonstrations/Workshops each term provided by local artists. Tea, coffee and biscuits are included in the fee which is charged every term.

We currently have space for a few new members.



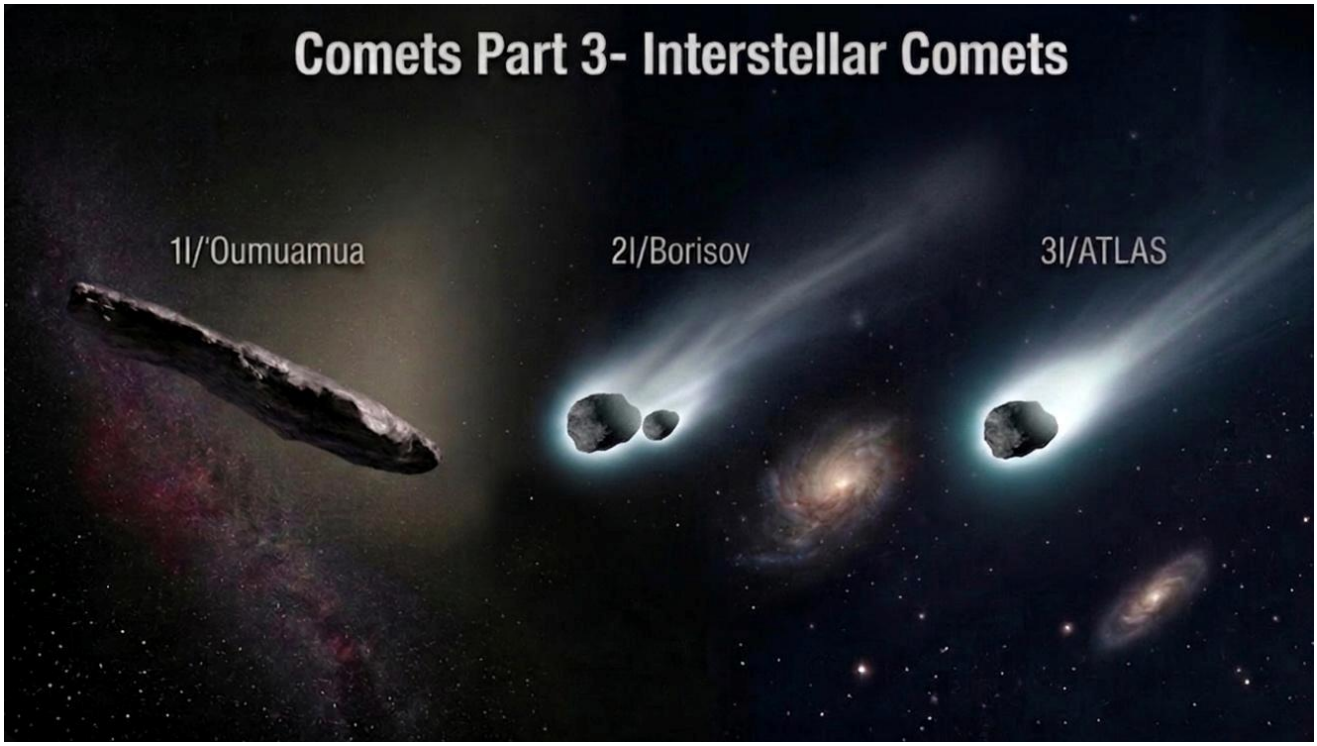
Ted Bridges **artthursday@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

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 concluded our series on comet science, missions to comets, and newly discovered interstellar comets that are deepening our understanding of these objects. We also reviewed the Rubin Telescope's Legacy Survey and continued our series on the history and technology of astronomy, bringing the story up to 2026. During our next season we will discuss the recently launched Nancy Grace Roman Telescope, celebrate Christmas with our Quiz and Mince Pies session (non-technical!) and move into 2027 with a new sequence addressing the life cycle of stars. The new ESA Bepi-Colombo mission will also feature.



Chris Lee **07715 159541** **astronomy@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Book Group 1

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

We have recently completed a series of 'spy' fiction, starting with Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy and including novels by Graham Greene, William Boyd and Michael Frayn. Now we are reading novels written by North American women in the 1990s, including Margaret Atwood and Anne Tyler. We choose novels firstly by agreeing on a theme and then members make suggestions for particular novels.

At the moment the group is full, but if you'd like to be added to the waiting list, contact Lesley Thomas using the contact details below.

Chris Perry (Group Leader)

Lesley Thomas **07398 136518** **bookgroup1@thornburyu3a.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 and are currently choosing our selection for the rest of 2027. In December we are reading *The Phone Box at the Edge of the World* by Laura Imai Messina and in January 27, *The Incredible Unlikeliness of Being* by Alice Roberts. If reading an 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:

Margaret Pinder **416778** **bookgroup2@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Beginner's Bridge Group



The Beginner's Bridge Group has been very successful with our numbers well into the 30's. However we still 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 £2per 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@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Bridge Group 1

We are a friendly group that play Bridge on a Tuesday mornings from 09:15 to 12:15 at The Chantry, Castle Street, Thornbury.

The group is quite popular at the moment, however if you are interested contact me on:

Mary Bignell **07711 025352** **bridgegroup1@thornburyu3a.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**

Church Visits Group 2

Next year is the first of two years when we are visiting churches that show typical Post-Reformation features. We have an 8 year rolling programme, and we will be in year 5 of the cycle in 2027. We usually take a coach to visit the chosen churches 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.

The day trips planned for 2027 are

March: St Lawrence, Didmarton and St Mary, Tetbury

April: St John, Mildenhall and St Nicholas, Hardenhuish

May: All Saints, Selsley and Holy Innocents, Highnam

June: St Peter and St Paul, Blandford Forum and St Mary Charlton Marshall

July: St Mary, Abbey Dore and All Saints, Newland

September: All Saints, Brockhampton and St Catherine, Hoarwithy

October: St Mary, Croscombe and St John, Axbridge

Our first meeting of the year is in February, it's our AGM when we will have a financial report of last year's trips, a presentation of the new year's theme, a meet and chat with tea, coffee and nibbles, and usually a quiz.

The days out are relaxing and informative. We often have a tour arranged at the churches we visit and find lunch in a local town and there's some free time to explore the location. If you enjoy architecture, history, meeting new people, exploring sites of worship, day trips. Visiting new places, stained glass windows, tours of interesting places led by enthusiasts and experts in their field… if any of this strikes your fancy, why not give this group a try! Just contact me

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

£3.00

Programme

November 6th	The Love that Remains	Icelandic comedy drama	1 hr 50 m
November 20th	Radical	Mexican comedy drama	2hrs
December 4th	Arthur the King	American adventure	1hr 50m
December 18th	To be decided		

Film notes are available -- all our films are good!

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

The cycling group meets on Thursdays and alternates longer and short rides, so even if you have not cycled for a while and are thinking of taking it up again, the group is a sociable way to try this. The short rides are no more than 20 miles and also involve a coffee stop!

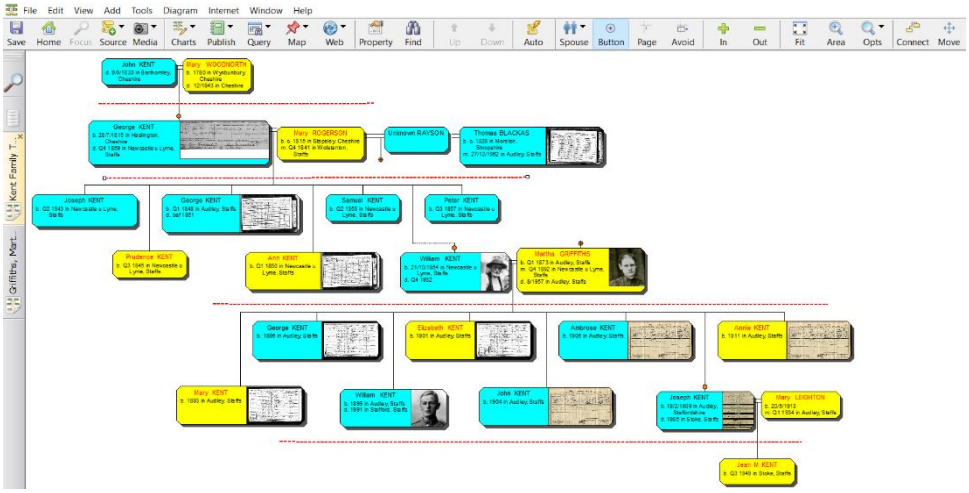
On our recent longer outings we have had enjoyable rides to Bath, Tintern and Sherston. The Greenway from Chepstow to Tintern is a lovely route that includes a long tunnel for added excitement. The Bath ride was the "Two Tunnels" route that includes two! Thanks to all in the group who plan and lead rides.

We have space for more members, so if you if you are already a regular cyclist or a bit rusty you are very welcome to join.

Don Grundell **412896** **cycling@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Family History Group

I have taken over the leadership role on a temporary basis until another person comes forward to run the Group. We held several meetings in the Spring but numbers were not sufficient to hold a Research session in September. I am in discussion with Yate Family History u3a about exchanging speakers.



There will be future monthly meeting but not necessarily on a regular 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@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

French Book Club

We are a small friendly group of people who enjoy reading French books in the original version. We discuss them in English over a cup of tea and biscuits. Usually, we meet on the 4th Wednesday of every month, except in July and August. The meeting date can be changed if it is inconvenient for some members. We meet at my house. We choose a wide variety of books jointly. For example we recently read: “La Louisiane” by Julia Malye, “Les guerriers de l’hiver” by Olivier Norek. We are due to read “Le rêve du jaguar” by Michel Bonnefoy in November, “Les amants du presbytère” by Marie-Bernadette Dupuy in December and “Son odeur après la pluie” by Cédric Sapin-Defour in January 2027. All the books are available on Amazon.



Recent French Book club meeting

If you would like more information, contact Michèle Clayton by phone or email.

Michèle Clayton **07592 061766** **frenchbookclub@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

French Group - WD40

In my recent pieces about the WD40 French Group (for rusty French, geddit?) I have referred to the magazine, *Rendez-vous*, that we use.

In this write-up I thought I'd give you a flavour of some of the recent articles we have read:-

- a "tourist" piece about the flea-markets on the edge of Paris;
- one reporting the views of the population on food safety;
- an article about whether French railways (SNCF) are justified in introducing "adults-only"
  coaches;
- one about the changing methods of making payments in France; and
- I kid you not, an article about contraceptive underpants for men!

Many of the articles are written in modern, colloquial French (not "la plume de ma tante" stuff!) and, quite apart from their value in learning the language, give an insight into what's going on, on the other side of the Channel.

If any of this tempts you to free-up your rusty French with a fortnightly squirt of WD40, please contact the leader, Alan Payne.

Alan Payne **418749** **frenchwd40@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Garden Visits Group

I am very sad to report that the 2026 season of visits was the last for GVG. For various reasons, mainly health, most of the committee members felt unable to continue and it has been agreed that the group should disband.

I should like to thank Hilary, Jessie, Lynn, Rosie, Sheila and Stella for organising the final trips and acknowledge all their predecessors going back to the start of Thornbury U3A in the late 1990s when the group arranged to share cars to visit local gardens. Later, the use of coaches enabled visits to over two hundred gardens, flower shows, festivals and nurseries from west Wales to London and Devon to Staffordshire.

Lyn Haigh **gardenvisits@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Gentle Exercise Group



Keeping (or getting) fit in your 60s, 70s, or 80s can be fun if you do it with a friendly group who exercise together.
At Gentle Exercise we do some standing and some sitting moves (but no floor work) and practice flexibility and improving our balance.
We meet at 10.00 on Thursdays (in term time) upstairs at the Methodist Church Halls.
Come and see what we do and decide whether it's for you.

We also often finish off with a visit to one of Thornbury's many coffee shops

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 2.00 pm 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 November.

At the moment we are looking for someone with more teaching experience to take over the leadership and give a more structured approach to learning the language.
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 very interesting talks from David Gunn about the Blathwayts of Dyrham in Whitehall and the changes made to the War Office and other buildings in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and from Benj Emmerson on the "Mad, Bad Sons of George III or how Victoria became Queen."
In the near future we hope to learn more about "Victorian Filth" and 19th century living conditions from John Stennard and "Jewish Refugees in World War II in Bristol." from Garry Atterton. In the New Year we look forward to finding out more about the "History of Quakerism" from Liz Eddington.
If you would like to offer a talk or discussion on any historical aspect, please contact the Committee.
We thank our speakers for their time researching and presenting these talks.

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

Indoor Bowls

The Indoor Bowls recommenced in September and there has been a very good turnout with quite a few new members wishing to play. This has meant that we are now at capacity and so are unable to take any further members at the moment who wish to do Indoor Bowls.

For any members who wish to learn how to play indoor bowls, the Leisure Centre are doing courses.

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

Lunch Group 2

Lunch group 2 has a few vacancies on its membership list . We enjoy meeting in restaurants, pubs and gastro pubs, farm shops and local cafes ……indeed anywhere we find good food to share!

We meet on the second Wednesday of every month except December, and we each take a turn to organise where the group will go for lunch.
For any further information please contact the leader:

Sheila Forsythe **07495 821491** **lunchclub2@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 1 on the waiting list. I try to include people from the waiting list into the lunches whenever there are spare places.

We have a programme planned for the rest of 2026 and a full programme for 2027. Our Christmas lunch is booked at the Anchor in Oldbury.

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

Jackie Gitsham **858438** **lg4@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 Thornbury u3a we now have more sets of Mah Jong and 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 if you are interested in coming along.

Colette Hall **07891 301476** **mahjong2@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Music Group

The Thornbury u3a Music Group meets on the second Friday of the months from September to June. The June meeting is always a Desert Island Discs style meeting with a local being interviewed about their musical tastes and life. This is followed by the annual Lunch.

The December meeting interval features a hot fruit punch and mince pies.

Meetings take place at Alveston Methodist Church on the corner of Greenhill and Wolfridge Ride, postcode BS35 3RA from 10.30. The church has a grand piano and good acoustics.

Meetings for the next four meetings are as follows:-

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.

2027

Friday 8th January **Nikki Shorland (flute)** and **Natasha Gale (harp)** will be our entertainers for the morning, they come very highly recommended

Friday 12th February A visit from performers from the **Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.** Watch this space to find out which performer or performers they will be sending.!.

For further information contact:

Jos Gregson **411652** **music@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Opera Appreciation Group

Over the summer The Opera Appreciation Group screened Wagner's epic Ring cycle, beginning with Das Rheingold in June and continuing with Die Wallküre in July and Siegfried and Götterdämmerung in August. Regarded by some as the most monumental achievement in music, the Ring cycle was screened in a superb production from Bayreuth, where it was originally staged in 1876, with outstanding performances by British singers, particularly John Tomlinson, Anne Evans and Graham Clark.

The 2026-2027 season commenced in September with Giordano's highly dramatic and stirring Andrea Chénier about the French poet who was executed in 1794 during the French Revolution. The part was predictably brilliantly sung and acted by the great German tenor, Jonas Kaufmann.
Our season continues on Tuesday October 27 at 6.45pm at the Thornbury Methodist Church Hall with a showing of Bizet's ever-popular Carmen, with the sensational Latvian mezzo soprano Elina Garanča in the title role, in a brilliant production from the Metropolitan Opera, New York, with the wonderful Roberto Alagna as her anguished lover.

Admission is £12 (cash) which secures membership for the whole season of nine operas! For further details please contact Rob Mussell;

Andrew Borkowski, Group Leader

Rob Mussell **opera@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Photography Group

The group has about thirty-five members and meets monthly in the Stuart Room 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.



Mountains and glaciers in Svalbard - Roger Steer

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

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

Steve Wells **850379** **photography@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Poetry Appreciation Group 2

We are a small group meeting 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: for example, we have recently considered 'nature poetry,' 'the sonnet', 'an unfamiliar poet (Charlotte Mew)' and looked at poems that use personification. Before Christmas we shall cover 'nostalgia loss and memory', 'war poetry' and, at our December meeting, 'humorous and seasonal poetry'.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Chris Perry

Chris Perry **07710 992752** **poetryappreciation2@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Recorders Group 1

The group is still thriving and meeting, every Monday morning, to practice together and tackle new music. Sadly, I feel that I must retire from being the leader, which I have been since January 2005, and have thoroughly enjoyed. When I began the group was BEGINNERS RECORDERS and happily that does not apply to them today. Nevertheless, there is always room to improve! They are a group of such lovely people, who are intending to continue playing together which makes me very happy, and I wish them well.
U3A will need a contact person for the group and Isobel Lloyd has kindly volunteered.
Her group leader email address is as below.

That is all from me,
Mandy Clapp

The members of Recorder Group 1 met at Mandy Clapp's house for the last time on Monday 28th September as Mandy has decided to retire after leading the group for 22 years!



When she was originally asked about starting a beginners Recorder Group for u3a, she said, "well I used to teach 8 year olds to play, it can't be that different" which is probably true, she still had to keep order amongst the giggling descants!

Lots of players have come and gone since then, some learning to read music and play an instrument for the first time and a couple of members have been in the group since the very beginning.

Thanks to Mandy's patient and relaxed approach it has grown into a friendly and supportive group of 10-12 players, and the members were delighted to present her with a gift voucher and flowers to show their appreciation.

The group will continue to meet at Alveston Methodist Church on Monday mornings. Please see the Groups List for further information.

Isobel Lloyd recorders1@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 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!).

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 RICHARD11. The tragicomedy MEASURE FOR MEASURE was enjoyed and the year ended with the history plays HENRY IV Part 1 and HENRY IV Part 11 being studied. 2027 will see the group commence the year with the tragedy ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

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. Prospective new members welcome.

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 recommenced our walks now that the heatwaves have passed.

Contact us via the website or phone:

Graham Bancroft **07514 086277** **slowshortrambles@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**

T'ai Chi – Groups 1 & 2

T'ai Chi 1 and 2 are currently running very successfully. 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 Theatres;
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@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Ukelele Group

The group have recently welcomed 5 new members from their initial ukulele training and continue to enjoy playing for pleasure, having attended several u3a jam sessions over the past year.

The group will be part of a larger u3a group in concert on Friday 27th November in Stinchcombe Village Hall, 1-3pm, with a theme of Christmas, and mince pies in the refreshments break.

All are welcome.

There have been further enquiries to run another beginners initial training course which would need additional members to run, ideally 6-7 people makes for a better learning experience so if you, or someone you know may wish to learn please contact Jojo, the Group Leader as soon as possible to be included in the next course which may run in January through to March.

Jojo Byron **07473 070880** **ukulele@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Walking Group



Stephen Grove A coaley peak 18.6.26



John Stennard B Horton 3.9.26

The *Walking Group* over the last few months have been out experiencing our lovely local countryside. Between May & October our members have been involved in walking the following areas:
Coaley Peak, Selsey & Woodchester. Hillesley ,Cold Ashton ,Marshfield, Hortham & Almondsbury, Keynsham, Oldbury Court, Soke Park & Snuff Mills, Slimbridge & Old Sodbury.
We've also had our annual Summer Outing this year to Bath offering members 2 walks and time to visit this historic city.
Less walks took place in the summer months this year due to the high temperatures we all endured.
We now look ahead to a series of winter walking of both A & B walks.
With membership currently standing at 79, 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).

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

Frances Bover **07793 666972** **walking@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Whist Group

The U3 A whist group celebrated its 10th anniversary on 21st October. It's inaugural meeting was held at the United Reform Church, with just 11 players. From this initial group, 4 are still playing, namely Ruth Cook, Jean Williams, Valerie Vizard, and Reg King.
Current membership numbers around 50.

Contact me to check on 07368144011.

Reg King **07368 144011** **whist@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

Wine Group 2

Since the Summer newsletter we have continued through our 2026 programme of events. Back in June, we held a 'wine and canapés' evening that was scheduled to be our annual garden party. What high temperatures we had, so high that we actually came indoors to get out of the evening heat – who could have guessed that we would have gone indoors to get away from the English heat, rather than the rain! Thanks very much to the McNulty's for accommodating forty wine lovers within their home. In July the group enjoyed an evening with the theme 'a journey around my palate' – not mine, but the Beck's, and then in August we sampled wines from a 'European grand cruise through the heart of Europe to the Black Sea'. September's theme was a comparison of 'Vieux Monde / Nuevo Mundo' wines. For the remainder of the year, we have our 'Wine Flight' evening in October, hosted by a range of willing volunteers from within the group, and then our annual AGM in November, together with a selection of Swiss wines.

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

At present we have a few spaces available, so 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.

Our next meeting will be Fish 'n' Fizz.

Below is our 2026 programme

6 November	Fish 'n' Fizz	Alison and Dave Makepeace

2027Programme

1 January	NO MEETING	
5 March	Wines with unusual labels/bottles	Jane and Chris Foley
7 May	Lidl vs Aldi	June Corney
2 July	TBC	TBC
3 September	Wine Quiz	TBC
5 November	Wines for Christmas	Andy Cole from Vintopia

The Wine Group meetings are usually led by volunteers from the membership and the year involves an annual quiz night, and favourite wines of the presenters. 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.

We have a few vacancies and a warm welcome for you.
My contact details are shown below.

Jackie Gitsham **858438** **winegroup3@thornburyu3a.org.uk**

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	Loraine 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
Associated contacts:			
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