

Chair's Chat



Dear Member

As I write this the weather seems to have turned autumnal. Looking at photos from the Plum Festival the heatwave feels a long time ago. It was lovely to see so many of you out and about during that weekend - the Crochet group's plum themed bollard toppers brightening up Broad St and High St; the Art Group exhibiting their talent in the Abbey;

members serving in the St Andrew's tea room and helping to litter pick afterwards. Well done everyone.

Like so many places, Pershore thrives on volunteers and we are very grateful to all our Group Leaders who continue to lead so many interesting and varied groups, sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm, which demonstrates the ethos of the u3a: "by the members for the members."

Likewise, all committee members are volunteers who enjoy 'giving back' to our wonderful organisation. **Helen, Sandra and Mary** work behind the scenes on newsletter, social media and web management respectively and your committee - **Daina, Helen, Ian, Ingrid, John, Rosie and myself** - ensure that u3a Pershore and District runs smoothly and effectively.

We are looking forward to our Coffee Morning in St Andrews on **Saturday October 18th**, where there will be a chance to chat over refreshments to prospective new members, current members, Group Leaders and the committee.

We would love to have a few more people join us on the committee before January when some of us will have served four years and cannot continue in that role. Talk to any of us how you can help your u3a to continue. We'd be happy to share the secret!

Best wishes

Sally Whyte

Chair Pershore and District u3a

u3apershorechair@gmail.com



Dates for your diary in October

Fri Oct 3 rd	A Coldplay Candlelight experience	<i>Pershore Abbey</i>	<i>7pm-8pm, 9pm-10pm</i>
	https://www.lumos-experiences.com		
Sat Oct 4 th	Pershore Broad Street Market	<i>Broad Street</i>	<i>9am-2pm</i>
Sat Oct 18 th	Open Coffee Morning	<i>St Andrews Centre</i>	<i>10.30am-12noon</i>
Sat Oct 18 th	Gordon's Gig featuring the u3a Recorder ensemble	<i>Pershore Abbey</i>	<i>7-30 pm</i>
Thu Oct 21 st	Monthly Meeting with a talk and demonstration from bell ringers	<i>Number 8</i>	<i>2pm</i>
Sat Oct 25 th	Philomusica concert	<i>Pershore Abbey</i>	<i>7-30pm</i>
	https://philomusica.org.uk		

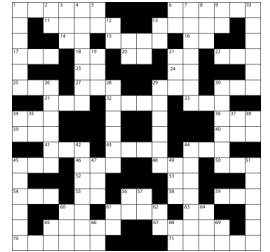
Interest Groups – Latest News from John



Autumn is well and truly with us now, I'm hoping for a few windy days to blow away the leaves from my trees at home so that I don't have to pick them up.

Apart from Croquet, which resumes next May, only the Walking groups may be affected by the weather over the next few months. Otherwise I think that it is business as usual for the rest of our groups.

You may have been to our recent Monthly Meeting at Number 8 where Mark Hartshorne gave us a presentation on **Cryptic Crosswords**. Mark has floated the idea of a new group, led by himself, on compiling crosswords. Early stages yet but do get in touch if you are interested. You would need a laptop or ipad. We are looking for a suitable venue to hold the sessions.



By the way, Mark will have a crossword featured in The Times soon and has been asked to submit another. Congratulations to him.

And a lady who has only recently joined our u3a has volunteered to run a new **Flute** group, available to beginners and improvers. Please get in touch with me if you are interested..



Our next **Day Trip** is to Cardiff on October 20th 2025. The response has been the best ever - it looks like we will be taking two coaches, either two 50+ seaters or one 50+ and a 29 seater. We can accommodate a few more people so let me know quickly if you would like to join us.

Following their much praised exhibition at Pershore Abbey over the Plum Festival weekend, there has been renewed interest in our **Art** group which is now fully subscribed. Would you and/or a friend be interested in setting up another group?

We used to run a **Genealogy** group in the past. I have had a request to try and re-introduce this subject which would have a popular interest for our membership.

Wales News Service

The **MOTO 1** (Members on their own) group are looking for a new leader(s) to take over this popular group after Christmas and **MOTO 2** have room for more in their second Sunday of the month get-togethers.

The **Handbell Ringing** group also has space in their beginners group, meeting weekly on a Tuesday morning.

Why not pop along to our next Coffee Morning at St Andrews Centre from 10.30 to 12 noon on Saturday October 18th for a chat and a catch up? Bring your ideas and suggestions.

Finally, I am still looking for a successor in my Groups' Coordinator role come the AGM in January. There's lots of help available within the committee. (I will stay on with a different role and continue to run the Day Trips group too.)

Just get in touch with me and I will arrange to have a chat regarding the role.

Happy Autumn

John Wright Groups' Coordinator

u3apershorejohn@gmail.com



Sally Stops By



In the very narrow window between being away for half of the month I have been to three groups.

Firstly, on a hot day (remember those?) I went to play **Croquet** at Pershore Sports Club. It is a beautiful and easily accessible sport to play. It was good to meet some newer members – those who clearly had played before and those (like me) who needed some guidance from the very able leader, **Billy**. The group play “Golf Croquet” which allows all players a shot in turn, but the tactics to outplay the opponents were great fun! Thank you to everyone for welcoming me.

Under slightly cooler conditions since my first visit I went back to Wick again to play **Petanque**. This second group of players is led by our stalwart and dedicated Groups Coordinator, **John**. They meet on the first and third Tuesday mornings throughout the year, and it’s fun and challenging at the same time. Why not give it a go?



Finally, I met up with the walking group **Loosenders** for a charming and interesting walk along the river and around Fladbury, led by **Helen M** ending up with refreshments at Clive’s of Crophorne. On what promised to be a very wet day it was lovely to be out in the dry and at times, sun, walking and chatting! Thank you to all and particularly the group leaders

Angela and Robert for their organisation.

Thank you to all the Group Leaders and members for the welcome this month. I hope to catch up with more of you soon.

Sally



SAVE THE DATE

U3a FESTIVAL 2026

After the success of Festival 24, we’re delighted to announce that Festival 26 will be taking place between Wednesday 1 July to Friday 3 July 2026 at the University of York.

u3a member, Margaret Fiddes is part of the team organising the Festival.

She says, “we’re aiming to make this a bigger and better festival with even more members taking part, bringing us their enthusiasm and knowledge to lead workshops, music groups, talks, sports and performances.”

We expect that bookings for accommodation and tickets will be open from late autumn 2025.

festival@u3a.org.uk



September Monthly Meeting:

Inside the Mind of a Cryptic Crossword Compiler

One of our very own members, Mark may be known to us for his crosswords printed in the Vale magazine, but also in the Independent and “u3a matters” magazine. However, quite rightly he was delighted to announce the fact that he has had a puzzle accepted for publication in The Times in the near future. We will of course let everyone know when this will be.

Mark began by stating that this talk wouldn't be a guide on how to solve crosswords, but he would give us an insight into what he is thinking as he is putting crossword clues together.

For those who want guidance into solving, he suggested two YouTube channels to watch live solving.

<https://www.youtube.com/@CrackingTheCryptic> <https://www.youtube.com/@dweebovision>

Mark told us his main aim when setting crosswords is that the solver should succeed - the puzzles can be fiendishly difficult but must be solvable. The golden rule of a cryptic clue writer is “*I need not mean what I say, but I must say what I mean*” to quote a famous early setter, AFRIT. The grids are now generated by computer software but of course originally when crosswords first began to be published in 1923 the grids were filled out manually with a dictionary in hand, which was both time consuming and laborious.

Mark then took us through the steps of devising a clue and showed us a variety of strategies to , illustrating how by using wordplay, abbreviations, synonyms and links we can arrive at the word, with both surface and underlying grammar. In a clue, he said, there will usually be an alternative word or phrase for the whole answer, often at the beginning or the end of the clue, and the rest of the clue gives you ways to reach the answer.

So, using the word **BREAD** as an example.

- Definition = food, wheat product, money / cash
- Definition by example = roll, baguette, loaf
- using BREAD as a verb or other association = to crumb a cutlet, the sitcom

Mark illustrated various cryptic methods with examples as below:

- Charade(broken down and put together)
- **B-READ** : a bachelor (**B**) to study (**READ**) for livelihood (**BREAD**)
- Staple (**BREAD**) two (**B**) books (**READ**) together
- **B-RE-AD** : Second class (**B**) soldiers (**RE**) given promotion (**AD**) and cash (**BREAD**)
- *eg: Second class soldiers given promotion and cash*
- homophones (words in clue as hint: reportedly/ auditor/ heard etc)
- anagrams (words in clue as hint – busy / ordered / batty etc)
- *eg **DEBRA**'s gone off focaccia possibly (**BREAD**)*

Also: container or insertion definitions; hidden clues; multiple definitions; cryptic definitions; &lit/ clue as definition

After giving us such a fascinating glimpse into the various strategies used by a compiler, hopefully those of us who try to solve cryptic crosswords will now have a better insight into how to do so, and for those that don't, it was an entertaining look into the mind of a crossword compiler.

And for all of us the final Two Ronnies 'crossword on the train' sketch was a brilliant way to end - *link to video* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVWdbO6FFfw>

Sally Whyte Speaker Coordinator

u3apershoresally@gmail.com

Upcoming Monthly Meetings @ No.8

OCTOBER MONTHLY MEETING



**WHEN YOU HEAR
CHURCH BELLS
DO YOU THINK:
WHO? HOW? WHY?**

Come along and find out from members of Pershore Abbey team and other local bell ringers

TUESDAY OCTOBER 21st , 2pm

NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

**MORE BEES, IF YOU
PLEASE - TAKE 2**



By popular demand

Come along and find out more about the life and behaviour of bees from returning speaker, **FIONA GIBSON**, horticulturist and bee keeper

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 18th , 2pm

All monthly meetings are held at Number 8, High Street, Pershore, starting at 2 pm

Open to all. Non-members and Cotswold link members are welcome

Sally Whyte

Speaker Coordinator

u3apershoresally@gmail.com



u3a COFFEE MORNING SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18th

St Andrews Centre 10.30 – 12 noon

You are all invited to join us at the coffee morning where there will be members to chat with, news of existing groups, wish lists for future groups and lovely home made cakes and free refreshments.

*If any members are able to make a cake, it would be very much appreciated
You can drop it off on the morning at 10.00am.*

Please let me know by email if you are intending to bring a cake.

Ingrid Fox u3apershoreingrid@gmail.com



Interest Groups Online Groups

Crime Corner

Love your u3a group and wish there were more meetings?

Digital Skills

Your interest doesn't have a group locally?

Got the bug for cryptic crosswords after Mark's talk and want to practise?

For a membership fee of £12 a year, you can join a large selection of interest groups through the national website. Here are just a few of the options available.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/interest-groups-online-groups>

Italian: Practice your Language Skills

More Fun with Maths

Laughter Yoga

Poetry Patch

Modern Pop for Third Ageds

Cryptic Crosswords

Great albums of the 1960s

Bridge - Weekly Online Games

3D Printing at Home

Armchair Archaeology

Talking Art

Wine Appreciation

Extreme Knitting: Radical

Crochet

Canal Boating

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP WATER SAMPLING

Dr Geoff Sallis made a return visit to the group recently, to update us on the Safe Avon project. He has recruited local groups along the length of our local river Avon and trained them to test for water pollutants, which are often caused by sewage overflows. Pershore u3a has been involved in the project for over 18 months and we looked in detail at our data from two test sites on the Avon tributary, Bow Brook.

Graph One looks at Electrical Conductivity (EC), a measure of impurities in the water, which increase EC. The black line indicates safe levels and our tests show that these are often exceeded, particularly in the summer when water levels are low.

Graph Two shows the results for phosphate testing and uses red/amber/green lines to show safe, acceptable and harmful levels. Again, our results show very high readings in spring/summer, and most readings above the harmful level. Sadly, this data is typical of the results seen along the length of the Avon and its tributaries.

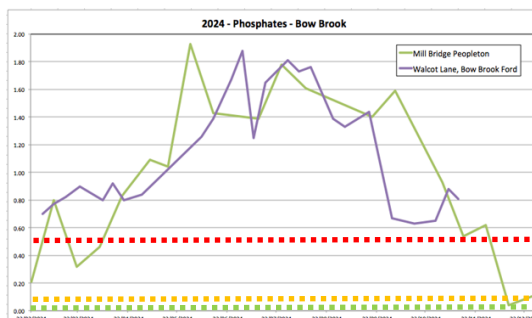
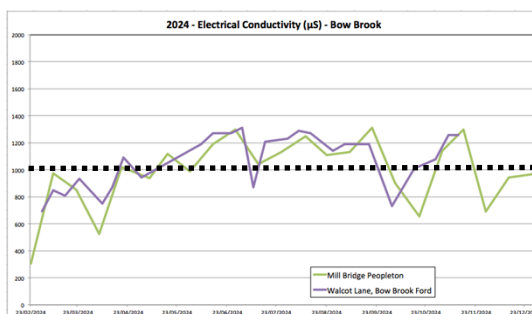
Geoff explained that his data now contains thousands of readings. The data is available publicly on

<https://safeavon.org.uk/> Geoff is working with university students using the data as the basis for their analysis, with the aim of publishing results that can be used to bring pressure on the local water company to improve the state of our waterways. He is also involving politicians, including local councillor Michael Chapman Pincher, and Tewkesbury MP Cameron Thomas.

The Environmental Discussion Group will soon be touring Severn Trent's water treatment plant in Gloucester. Armed with our own local testing results, alongside findings from the Safe Avon Project, we'll have powerful evidence to put to Severn Trent - and ask them tough questions about their business practices.

Jackie Jolley, Environmental Discussion Group Leader

u3apershorejackie@gmail.com



Pershore & District u3a Committee Members and Key Contacts October

Chair	Sally Whyte	u3apershorechair@gmail.com
Vice-Chair	To be filled	
Treasurer	Ian Smith	u3apershoretreasurer@gmail.com
Business Secretary	Helen Barrett	u3apershoresecretary@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Daina Gromadzki	u3apershore@gmail.com
Groups' Coordinator	John Wright	u3apershorejohn@gmail.com
Beacon Administrator	To be filled	
Speaker Coordinator	Sally Whyte	u3apershoresally@gmail.com
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Pershore & District u3a <https://pershore.u3asite.uk/>

Facebook: [Keep Connected – Pershore & District u3a](#) Registered Charity no. 1093328
Please send photographs and any articles for publication in the November 2025 newsletter
to: u3apershorenews24@gmail.com by 20th October

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