

Sully and District u3a Newsletter August 2025



Group News

New Groups progress

Gill Mathias (Groups Administrator)

Mahjong

Will be starting soon

Astronomy

Follow the link on the website under groups, then groups listed alphabetically, for full details

Rummikub

Has already had a meeting, but it's first official meeting will be at the beginning of September

PLEASE NOTE THE EMAIL CONTACT FOR GOUPS IS groups@sullyu3a.co.uk

Current Groups

Please note there is information on all currently active groups on our website [Sully](#)

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Book Club 2

Book Club 2 has released its autumn reading programme:

18 September: Tell Me Everything – Elizabeth Strout

16 October: Palace Walk – Naguib Mahfouz

20 November: There are Three Rivers in The Sky

We buy our own books and aim to follow a mix of long/short and light/serious titles.

We meet at 10.30 on the third Thursday of each month in the Woods Room at the Old School Sully. The charge is £1.00 and coffee and biscuits can be obtained from the Jubilee Hall for another pound.

We'd love to welcome new members. Just drop us a line at bookclub2@sullyu3a.co.uk.

Notes on the books

Elizabeth Strout – Tell Me Everything

It's autumn in Maine, and the town lawyer Bob Burgess has become enmeshed in an unfolding murder investigation, defending a lonely, isolated man accused of killing his mother. He has also fallen into a deep and abiding friendship with the acclaimed writer, Lucy Barton, who lives nearby in a house next to the sea. Together, Lucy and Bob talk about their lives, their hopes and regrets, and what might have been.

Naguib Mahfouz – Palace Walk

A sweeping and evocative portrait of both a family and a country struggling to move toward independence in a society that has resisted change for centuries. Set against the backdrop of Britain's occupation of Egypt immediately after World War I, Palace Walk introduces us to the Al Jawad family.

Elif Shafak – There are Three Rivers in The Sky

There Are Rivers in the Sky is a rich, sweeping novel set between the 19th century and modern times, about love and loss, memory and erasure, hurt and healing, centred around three enchanting characters living on the banks of the River Thames and the River Tigris – their lives all curiously touched by the epic of Gilgamesh.

Website Update for Groups

Our Web Manager, David, has sent out an online Survey Form to all Group Convenors to update each Group's Webpage. He wishes to express his thanks to all those who have responded so far. They have been notified of their Group's update on our website. If you haven't received a Survey Form, please check your SPAM/JUNK mailbox or contact David through our Website [Sully](#) then the CONTACTS page and WEB. Thank you all!
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Speakers Report



Did Jane Austen Actually Say That? By Marion Davies – Report by Norma Johnson

An enthusiastic welcome was given by the Sully u3a to Marion Davies and Lyn Hunter who gave an interesting talk on the Life and Works of Jane Austen. Marion showed photographs and text using a power point presentation at the August meeting. The talk was a joint effort, Marion was the narrator and Lyn read out extracts from Jane Austen’s private letters.

Marion at age 11 ‘fell in love’ with Jane Austen and has had a keen interest in her ever since. Marion is the editor of the Jane Austen Society Newsletter. Lyn is a professional actor who has performed a number of roles, her most recent being Peggy Tucker in *The Tuckers*. Marion talked about Jane Austen and gave an outline of her life in Hampshire and in Bath. She gave examples of books Jane had written and some of her characters and perhaps surprisingly, that Austen gave very brief descriptions of them in her novels. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr Darcy is described as being ‘a wealthy, handsome and proud man’. In the novel *Emma*, Austen describes the character Emma Woodhouse as being ‘handsome, clever and rich’. Wealth was a dominant factor in her fictional characters which was in contrast with her real life financial situation which, at that time, would be described as ‘comfortable’ but certainly not rich.

The talk focused on Jane’s letters to her sister Cassandra. Marion told the audience that Jane never intended to have her letters published as she wouldn’t have wanted her thoughts and opinions to be out in the public domain. Some of her letters were withheld from publication and some letters were distributed to family members so they would have something personal of hers to keep.

Marion talked about the description of Jane Austen and that there were very few paintings of her available. A watercolour portrait of Jane, by artist James Andrews was commissioned in 1869 by Jane's nephew, Rev. James Edward Austen-Leigh to accompany his biography of her. This portrait is based on a sketch by Austen's sister Cassandra and Austen-Leigh's own memories of Jane, and is widely considered to be the closest likeness of her. An engraving of this portrait was later used on the Bank of England £10 note which is quite ironic as money seems to have played a very important feature in her novels. Although a tribute to her work, perhaps Jane might have been happier to appear on the £50 note as it is more in keeping with her financial aspirations!!!

Next month's speaker

The Speaker for the 11th of September is Alan Oliver on the fascinating topic of Red Kites

Membership

Our current membership now stands at 394, having gained 4 new members on the afternoon of 14th August.

Just a reminder, as you are aware most of our communication is via email so if you change your email details, please let me know.

Also please remember to update me with your new address if you move house so I can ensure you receive the u3a matters magazine and any other correspondence.

Message from Membership

The next edition of the u3a Matters magazine is expected soon. If you receive a copy but do not want it, then please let me know and I will remove your name from my list. If you do not receive a copy but decide you want to receive one in the future, then also let me know and I will add you to the list to receive the next edition.

Please put any unwanted magazines in the magazine rack by the front door of the Old School - please don't throw them away.

PLEASE NOTE THE EMAIL CONTACT FOR MEMBERSHIP OR MAGAZINE CHANGES IS membership@sullyu3a.co.uk

Security Reminder

As we are sure you are all aware, there are an awful lot of security threats out there, from hackers, to scammers, to identity thieves, malware and much more. To reduce the opportunity for such unwelcome attention, we have decided to stop publicising our u3a contact email addresses on our website. Instead, we will be utilising a function that is already in place. This means that we encourage contact via the inbuilt forms on the website, which you may already have seen and used.

Don't forget to visit our website to access to these forms and other UpToDate news, just follow:

[Sully](#) (Place cursor over link and press Ctrl + Click to follow the link)

Help improve online public services in Wales: Research opportunity



From Mel Gentle

I'm a user researcher at the Centre for Digital Public Services (CDPS), and we're working on a project to help improve how online public services work for people across Wales - services like applying for something, reporting an issue, or finding local information. We know these services don't always make sense, and we want to change that by listening to real experiences from people across the country.

We're currently inviting people to take part in online research sessions to help us test out example services and tell us what works (and what doesn't). The sessions are one-to-one, take around 45–60 minutes, and participants receive a £20 voucher as a thank you for their time.

Here's the link for anyone interested in signing up: <https://forms.office.com/e/8f4tiVSZJt>

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YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!



Becoming a U3a Committee Member/Trustee

Have you considered becoming a committee member of the u3a but don't know what it's all about? Maybe you have skills that you aren't using and would like to share with others.

Perhaps toyed with the idea of being a volunteer but never got around to it or you think you don't have the confidence to get involved – well perhaps this might make you think again and motivate you to become a member of this very worthwhile charity.

Without volunteers running each branch of the u3a it couldn't exist and without members and convenors there would be no u3a – it is a co-dependent organisation.

The roles within the committee consists of: Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Coordinator, Speaker Co-ordinator, Events Planner, Group Administrator, Room Rent Collector, Website and IT Manager and a Gift Aid Administrator. There are other less defined but still very important roles within the committee that provide help and support when needed. Becoming a trustee of the u3a, The Equality Act of 2010 must be adhered to as well as agreeing to a specified code of conduct from the Charity Commission. Each members' role if accepted onto the board, is for a term of three or more years. The roles are set out by the Charities Commission but can vary from time to time depending on the needs of the u3a. Point to note: you will be known as a trustee should you decide to join the committee.

The committee meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of every month in the Old School Sully, starting at 10.30am and usually end by noon. They coincide with the Speakers' Event in the main hall in the afternoon at 2.00pm. Most of the committee stay on after the meeting and help prepare the hall, setting out chairs and a table in the foyer and putting them away after the event.

The meetings are friendly, and matters are discussed that relate to the success of the u3a and getting the best for its members.

If this is something you might be interested and want to find out more, please speak to Paul Lister, at the October Open Day, who is the current Chairman of the Committee or if you prefer use our website sully.u3a.site.uk

Personal statements from some of the current trustees:

“For me the u3a was about belonging to various groups and sharing interests and ideas with other group members. Like most people, I expect, I never thought of joining the committee in terms of becoming a trustee, even though this is our legal status. Fundamentally as a trustee I want to ensure that everything we do is legal and ethical and we always act in the interest of our members. We meet monthly to discuss and decide the overall activities of the u3a. Including the monthly meeting for all members.”

“I joined the u3a table tennis group over a year ago and the thought of being a trustee never once crossed my mind. I was approached by other trustees about joining the committee and I was invited to sit in on a committee meeting, which I did, and was made to feel very welcome. After the meeting I felt that I could offer my skills to support other trustees carrying out their designated roles and do my best for the members of the Sully u3a.”

“I joined as an excellent way of meeting people after recently moving to the area. The monthly speaker talks are thought provoking and cover topics I may not have ever thought about or know little about, in a social relaxed setting. The individual groups give a chance to learn new skills or practice ones already held. I joined the committee as I believe giving up a couple of hours a month is a small price to pay for groups such a locally based u3a to continue.”

“I initially joined the committee because I felt it is important to help keep these community groups such as Sully u3a running because they provide varied interests and form a much need focal point for the community.”

A Note from the Treasurer

We have been informed by our bank that from 13th November, we will have to pay charges for our day-to-day banking. This is important because we have had free banking till now.

As we all know the personal service from banks has declined significantly in the past ten years. Bank closures are widespread, and more and more customers are being forced into internet banking, and if people want cash from anything other than an ATM they are being pushed towards a post office. Now it is starting to affect charities like ours.

Following my recommendation to the committee, we are asking all our members who can do so to pay their subscription of £10 for 2026 and thereafter via internet banking. This makes sense because it costs you nothing and it costs us nothing. This method is available to everyone who has a bank account. If you are unsure how, please ask a friend or relative to help.

If you are unable or unwilling to use internet banking, please pay your subscription in cash. This also costs you nothing and it will cost us only a small amount. To bank your £10 cash will cost us 7.5pence. We are also able to claim gift aid on cash payments up to a total of £1000.

Banking cheques costs 50 pence for every cheque, and we are only able to claim gift aid from members who have completed a gift aid declaration. Unsurprisingly, we no longer want to receive subscriptions by cheque. If you insist, we will accept this method, but would appreciate your choosing cash instead

We are giving advance notice of this change to enable members to prepare for the new year.

Thank you

John Williams

Passing of a founder member



It is with great sadness that I share the news of the death of Eric Midwinter, one of the visionary co-founders of the u3a movement in the UK.

Eric, alongside Peter Laslett and Michael Young, established u3a in 1982 with the belief that later life should be a time of continued learning, connection, and contribution. Eric's commitment to challenging negative stereotypes of ageing, and to creating spaces for older adults to share skills, knowledge, and friendship, has shaped the lives of hundreds of thousands of u3a members over four decades.

Eric's vision has flourished over the years and we know that his legacy will continue to inspire new generations to embrace lifelong learning and positive ageing.

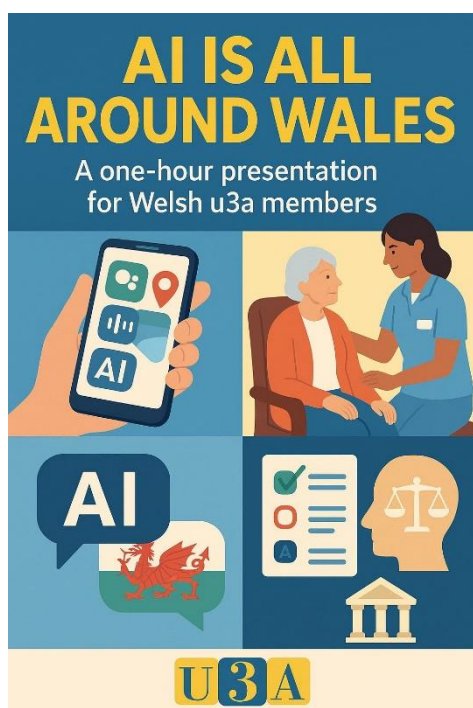
We extend our deepest sympathies to Eric's family and friends at this time.

You can watch a conversation between Eric and Liz Thackray about the movement, recorded in 2022 for our 40th Anniversary, on [our YouTube Channel](#). (Place cursor over link and press Ctrl + Click to follow the link)

Best wishes,

Iain Cassidy
CEO of the Third Age Trust

Invitation to join AI talk



AI is All Around Wales – Join us for a lively one-hour presentation exploring how artificial intelligence is already part of everyday life in Wales. Three speakers will introduce AI on smartphones and in care, explain how it works, and discuss its impact on Welsh society. Suitable for beginners, improvers and experts alike.

Join the Newcastle Emlyn Science Group meeting on September 22nd at 2pm. Zoom link below.

Or come along to the meeting at Coracle Hall, Llechryd.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89908882369?pwd=ZM97gmnpI9tU2BdbZLnZ8YeqbBCdkm.1>
Meeting ID: 899 0888 2369

Passcode: 638261

Support for u3as Upcoming online workshops

The following workshops are open to all u3a members to provide support as volunteers running your u3a. Please share this information with your wider committee and members:

Tuesday 2 September – Keeping it Legal

Thursday 4 September - Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Monday 8 September - Running your u3a - Information for Trustees

Wednesday 1 October – Keeping it Legal

Wednesday 8 October – Running your u3a – Information for Trustees

For further details and information about how to book, or to request a workshop for your own u3a or network, If interested create an account at [u3a - News](#) log in and go to members area, select Support for u3as, the select workshops and training. There you will find details and booking. (Place cursor over link and press Ctrl + Click to follow the link)

That's all for this month folks

Regards,

Paul Lister (Sully u3a Newsletter editor)