



Magnum Borum by Howard Allen

**Annual Report to Annual General Meeting
Friday 12 September 2025**

Committee 2024 - 2025

Chairman:	David Barnett.
Vice-Chair:	Rena Souten.
Membership:	Jenny Bagworth.
Groups:	Rose Cuthbertson.
Treasurer:	Sally Hedges.
Website and IT:	Roy Biggs.
Business Secretary:	Helen Wilberforce.
Committee member:	Michael Burn.
Committee member:	Judi Gibbons.
Committee member:	Andrea Goodall.
Committee member:	Geraint Johnes.
Committee member:	Peter Robertshaw.
Committee member:	Keith Wilberforce.
Co-opted committee member:	Janet Potter.
Co-opted committee member:	Debbie Rogerson.
Co-opted committee member:	Janet Watson.

Email: enquiries@holmevalleyu3a.org.uk

Website: <https://holmevalley.u3asite.uk>

Facebook: for members only: Holme Valley U3A

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/434128977300240>

Holme Valley U3A is a registered charity and part of the Third Age Trust.

Chairman's Report 2024/2025

Another good year, membership is now over 600.

New Groups and new Group leaders have successfully been established and hopefully more still to come during the coming year. The Groups are the backbone of the u3a, so we are always looking for more group ideas and Group Leaders.

I would like to thank all Group Leaders for their dedication and hard work to keep their groups active.

Keeping in touch is important, our Newsletters and ever-growing Facebook Group lets members share details of some national activities and it has now been joined by a Yorkshire and Humber Facebook page accessed via our own page.

Our Friday general meetings have been successful with some great speakers to entertain us.

I would like to thank all our committee members for their hard work and dedication to the success of our u3a.

Do remember that any member can attend a Committee Meeting. Extra help is welcomed and as you all know your current committee will retire at some point and a committee always need new blood to keep it fresh so, please come and join us.

Do remember to look at our website and the national web site to keep up to date with all activities.

Thank you all who have re-joined this year and I hope that your committee will continue to fulfil its responsibilities to you all so we can Learn, Laugh, Live together.

David Barnett

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Friday 13th September 2024.

Held at the Methodist Church, Holmfirth
Members present: 92 with 6 visitors
Chair: David Barnett

Apologies: Andrea Goodall, Geraint Johnes

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, pleased to see such a good turnout and noted fire safety procedures.

Members agreed that they had seen the minutes of the previous meeting, the accounts and the Annual Report.

Chair's Annual Report: The Chair noted that the committee recommends holding the membership fee at £10.00 for another year for existing members.

Members have come forward offering to fill the remaining committee places.

The committee has investigated possible changes to the constitution in order to make committee membership more flexible. This will be put to members at an Extraordinary General meeting prior to one of our monthly meetings next year.

Treasurer's Report: The balance sheet was displayed.

Election of Officers and Committee: The Chair proposed nominees for Officer positions and for the committee, as previously notified to members. Both were accepted en bloc in the hall, with 4 additional electronic votes. The committee now stands at 12 with three potential co-options.

Alan Swann, member of Barnsley and District u3a, who was part of the group supporting the set-up of Holme Valley u3a, then gave a presentation on 'Laughter is the Best Medicine'

From our Groups Co-ordinator

Another busy year has come and gone and the number of groups we have on offer continues to grow – we currently have 48 for you to choose from, so hopefully there is something for everyone. If there is a group that you think you might enjoy but are not sure, you can always go for one session to try it out and then decide whether it is the one for you. You can contact group leaders via the Groups page on the website or, if you do not go online, contact me and I will put you in touch.

Last year I reported that we were about to start groups for Canasta, Russian Reading and Beginners Spanish and I am happy to confirm that they are now well-established.

Since that report we have added Latin for Beginners, Style and Singing for Wellbeing and they would all welcome new members, so why not try a session and see if it is something you would be interested in?

Latin for Beginners has been started by a group of people who thought it would be interesting to learn something new and who are now supporting each other to do so.

Style is a marvellously eclectic group, and you will find details of the wide range of topics they cover in the group leader's report below. I should point out that the Singing for Wellbeing group is exactly that. It is not a choir, and, for that reason, you do not need to be a marvellous singer in order to join, nor do you need to read music. It is led by an experienced singing tutor whose aim is to bring people together to enjoy the experience of singing with other people and to experience the health and well-being benefits that singing brings.

As our membership grows it is important that our menu of groups also grows, so please do let me know if there is a particular topic that would be of interest to you, and I will be happy to try to set up a group to fill *the gap*

Rose Cuthbertson

Reports from Our Groups

Boules

The boules group meets weekly in Honley over the warmer and drier parts of the year. In a congenial atmosphere characterised by friendly competitiveness, members practice such French phrases as "ooh la la" and "bravo". Over the course of the year, we lost our leader and leading light, Jackie Green, who curiously deemed desirable a move to South Yorkshire. Geraint Johnes has stepped in as the new group leader and has undertaken to visit France without delay to learn the rules, study tactics, and enjoy the gastronomy. The group is, er, bijou, and would very much welcome new members.

Geraint Johnes

Spanish

The long-established and more advanced Spanish group continues to explore the depths of Spanish grammar and vocabulary. Several new members have joined and settled in over the last years; new members are always welcome, with the caveat that some previous knowledge is necessary as beginners would find the level too high.

The lessons are held face to face once a fortnight and online in the intervening week. The face-to-face sessions last 1 hour 30 minutes and the online ones 1 hour. There is a listening exercise followed by discussion and more general oral work. Grammar is studied through a textbook.

Bernard Redfern

U3a French Language and Culture

This is a group of 8 people at the moment. We meet in the homes of the members and take it in turns to organise and lead the sessions. This means that we have a very varied programme, using a range of French sources.

This year we have read about, listened to and discussed topics which include the re-opening of Notre-Dame Cathedral, and Notre-Dame through time, various quartiers of Paris, Brasseries Françaises, some festivals celebrated in France, various regions of France and our experiences of them, some French “chansons”, and Valérie André, who died this year. She was a neurosurgeon, aviator, and first female member of the French military to achieve the rank of colonel and brigadier general.

There is also usually some conversation (in French of course!) about what we have been doing recently and any topics of general interest, and occasionally games/quizzes in French.

Andrea Hawes

Garden Group

This year we started with a snowdrop tour at Goldsborough Hall, followed by a talk about bees.

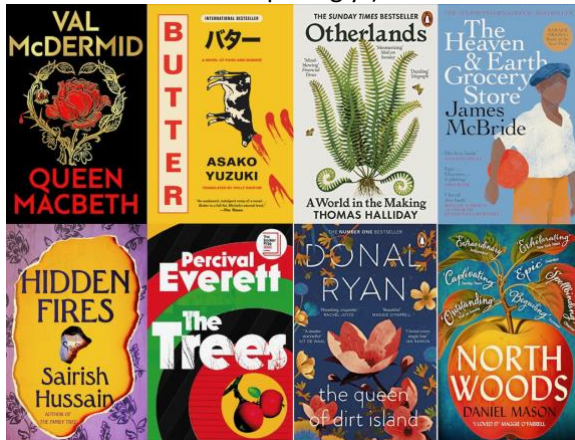
We have been to Newby Hall (laburnum arch), 2 NGS gardens, and the RHS show at Wentworth.

Our next visit is to Kirkwood hospice gardens.

Rosie Norbury

Book group 2

Hello. We've had another enjoyable and entertaining year reading all sorts of books; from crime fiction to the history of life on earth (Not everyone finished that one. Unsurprisingly!) Here are some of them:



There are currently eight people in our group. We meet every first Wednesday in the month at 1.30 pm in the upstairs meeting room at Holmfirth Methodist Church. Everyone has the chance to choose a book, as each month we agree what we'd like to read next. We also talk about other books we have read and any recommendations from telly/radio/film/theatre.

You will probably know all about the health benefits of reading books but, just in case you'd like a reminder, here are some of them:

- strengthens the brain
- increases empathy
- builds vocabulary
- improves mental strength in older adults
- improves sleep
- reduces stress

- may help you live longer (a study in 2017 of 3000+ people over 12 years found that those who read were 23% more likely to live longer than those who didn't)

And if that doesn't convince you, here's Groucho Marx:

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."

So why not come along and join us? You would be very welcome. Or if you want to know more, contact Linda Wilkinson here:
linda.wilkinson@holmevalleyu3a.org.uk

Badminton

The U3a Badminton group is thriving.

We currently have sixteen active members. We play from 1.30 until 3pm on a Monday afternoon at Holmfirth Civic Hall. New members are always welcome.

Jen Allison

Weekend Social Group

My name is Denise Hancock, and I recently became the leader of the weekend social group for singles. I organise meals out once a month for our members. Over the last 3 months we have dined at The Fox House, Holmfirth, The Golden Cock, Farnley Tyas and The White Swan, Kirkburton. We all enjoy getting together to eat and chat over a Sunday roast or whatever else we may have chosen to order. The photos were taken at our most recent meal at The White Swan where we could choose from Thai or English food. Everyone commented on how good the food was. Our next meal will be in September.

Denise Hancock

Days Out Group

Another year, another varied programme of Holme Valley U3A journeys across the UK with the first trip of the period being a three-day excursion down into the garden of England otherwise known as the county of Kent. An area seemingly not well explored by many members a group of well over forty visited no fewer than ten different attractions, ranging from the Chatham Historic Dockyard (of BBC television “Call the Midwife” fame) to the War Tunnels of Dover Castle and historic Canterbury.

Xmas 2024 yet again saw our festive trip running full to capacity on two successive days to meet demand for places. Travelling to foreign territory (over the hills to Lancashire!) a guided coach trip around the outskirts of Manchester city centre proved both fascinating and educational before some free time to explore the city’s Xmas Markets followed by a cruise with full festive lunch around its waterways. Both days were memorable for featuring Manchester’s other claim to fame – its wet weather – but an evening visit to the festive Glow event at RHS Bridgwater proved a pleasant finale.

2025 started with a day trip to the Peak District, surprisingly an area not previously frequented by a Days Out Group trip. Glorious weather enhanced our guided tour of Haddon Hall as it did for our later trip to Bedale in North Yorkshire. This latter trip had however hedged its weather bets by spending the afternoon indoors at the headquarters of Tennants the auctioneers, where a superb lunch preceded a most interesting behind-the-scenes guided tour of its extensive auction operations.

This current year marks our tenth year of running Days Out trips, an anniversary celebrated with a truly special trip in May when over forty members flew over the Irish Sea to spend no less than six days exploring the highlights of Northern Ireland. A new destination for most members it did not disappoint from the splendour of its scenery through its controversial recent history to the genuine welcome afforded by its people. In typical fashion our Group enjoyed an intensive itinerary and yet one which left most participants wishing to see more (perhaps a future

trip?). Our final evening included a celebratory Gala Dinner which introduced some nostalgia in the form of a Quiz covering our ten years.

Alongside the foregoing our sister Trips Abroad Group has not been idle with its own trip taking advantage of this year's glorious weather by heading across the North Sea for a visit to the Keukenhof Gardens, the annual display of bulb flowers in the Netherlands. Many Group members are also now signed up to another big Trip Abroad, this time a full week away next autumn to the up-and-coming destination of the Puglia region (think of Italy's heel of its boot in map terms!).

A common theme running through all these trips is that every year they become harder to arrange (and more expensive to run). Against that background the tireless efforts of both our organising Days Out and Trips Abroad Teams become even more significant and should be applauded by all participants.

Martin Shaw



Style

Our group started earlier this year with a wide-ranging brief. So far, we've tried on spectacle frames and discussed what frames suit various faced shapes, learned about hair and how to deal with thinning tresses, and had a talk about shoes, their materials and aging feet. At our next meeting we will be discussing clothes mountains, clothes waste and how we can recycle unwanted clothing.

We have lots of other subjects we will be including in the next year, and we would welcome new members. This is a group for ALL members.



Rena Souten

Singing for Wellbeing

The Singing for Wellbeing class is a fledgling compared to many other groups – we started in June 2025. The aim is to sing for fun and wellbeing, it's not about getting it right. After a vocal warm up and stretch, we learn by ear and sing 3- or 4-part unaccompanied songs. We have a professional leader who is not a U3A member. We sing a range of songs, some of which will be more familiar than others. We meet at the Methodist Church in Holmfirth on alternate Monday afternoons 1:30 to 3 pm. We pay £5 per session to cover the costs which include the venue. Currently there are about 40 members on the register with an average of about 20 people per session, but more people are always welcome. A first taster session is free.

Jean Murray

Digital Photography

We work to a monthly theme, sharing the photographs online and reviewing them at our meeting the following month. This involves open gentle critique and advice, very often member to member – and yes, the leader is often critiqued! The membership is currently 18, with 11-15 attending each month. The standard of photography steadily improves, and the focus of the group is firmly on the photographs we produce, and not the gear used to make them. This year we have not produced an exhibition, because we were asked to keep our 2024 exhibition on display in the Co-op coffee shop as it fitted the 2025 Arts Festival theme of the “Graveship of Holme”. Currently the group is at capacity with a waiting list.”

Vince Cunningham



The Easy Walking Group

The Easy Walking Group has enjoyed another year of walking come rain or shine. The walks, held on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month, are generally 3-4 miles long, leaders are mindful of levels of difficulty and as far as possible try to avoid stiles, livestock and sharp ascents and descents. We have had a few lovely outings in the Shepley, Denby, Holmfirth and Honley areas, we also like to return to the Trans Pennine trail and Dovestone Reservoir – particularly in unreliable weather conditions. The walks start at 10am and generally conclude close to a tea shop or pub for refreshments and more chat. Our membership currently stands at 37 but a typical group of walkers would number around 12 so there is plenty of scope for more members who will always receive a warm welcome.

I take this opportunity to say a big thank you to Rose Cuthbertson who coordinated the Easy Walking Group for many years. I took over from her in November and quickly realized that her walking shoes are



hard to fill! So, thanks very much Rose for all your hard work and dedication to the group.

Finally, the success of the group is dependent on members volunteering to lead a walk so many thanks to all who have planned and led walks for us to enjoy, and we look forward to exploring new paths together in the coming year.

Jane Chesman

Canasta Group

The Canasta Group, which meets at Wooldale Community Centre on the first and third Wednesday mornings of each month, celebrates its first year in September.

The group started with players of mixed abilities; outright learners to, "Experts". We regularly manage up to three tables of four and would welcome a couple of additional players.

More recently several members of the group have taken to additionally playing socially at each other's houses.



Geoff France

Discussion group

The Monday morning discussion group meets 18 times a year in three terms, usually meeting on the second and fourth Mondays. We try and keep half those meetings for topical discussion which might be generated by the weekend newspapers or something we hear on the radio. Every other discussion has a set topic, giving us the chance to do a little research beforehand. Topics this year have included a timely debate around Assisted Dying and 'should we buy British', a debate influenced by the Trump introduction of tariffs. Not all our topics focus on the political and we have looked at 'what makes us happy'. A discussion on 'our favourite stately homes' brought out a lot of reminiscing. Our next term starts on the 8th of September and there may be space for one or two new members.

Anne Baldwin

Ukelele Group

The Ukulele group meet fortnightly at St John's Church School Upperthong.

We are now in our 11th year, have a membership of 24 and regularly get attendances in the 20's, but due to the restricted space available are not now taking new players.

Many of our members are originals from our first session, some having not played a musical instrument before, and we now have a fairly accomplished group.

We play for 1 hour, 13 songs, often with a new song thrown in, and follow with coffee and cake kindly provided by an enthusiastic group of our ladies.

We played at the Holmfirth Festival of Folk in May with other Ukulele groups from the around the area and were blessed with good weather for the outdoor event in Memorial Park.

We have just completed 2 gigs in July, an Afternoon Tea Event at Netherthong Church, and a return visit to an Open Garden in Flockton, both Charity events and well received.

We have a return booking in November and have been invited to play again at the December U3A Meeting to finish off the year.

John Senior



Tennis Group

There have not been any major changes for the Tennis Group in the last 12 months. The group has over 40 members and continues to play at Holmfirth Tennis Club on Monday and Thursday mornings. As in previous years, a few people have left the group (for various personal reasons), but we have also been delighted to welcome new members, who are quickly absorbed into the group.

Some of current members are 'sleeping' members; although they are still group members they are unable to play at the moment. We hope that they will all feel able to return to tennis soon.

The group plays on Monday and Thursday mornings at Holmfirth Tennis Club between 9am and 12. The Club has three outdoor, all-weather courts. We play pre-arranged one-hour doubles matches (mostly organised using WhatsApp) all year round (weather permitting). Group members opt in when they would like to play.

The levels of fitness, mobility and tennis skill within the group varies considerably, but we include everyone and mix up the pairings and games. It is a friendly group, and we try to organise a 'social' time during the Monday session every few months.

If you would like to join the group, new members are very welcome.

Although we can't immediately absorb new members into our sessions who haven't played for a very long time, or who are completely new to tennis, there are coaches at the Club who are very happy to offer individual/group sessions for either someone wanting to return to tennis or for complete novices. Most of our new members have tried a session or two with a coach and found them fun, helpful and a great boost to confidence. These cost in the region of £15 for a half hour session.

Linda Hollingworth

PS It's official, people who play tennis live longer!

A recently published research study in Denmark has shown that people who play tennis are healthier and on average live 9.7 years longer than if they didn't do any exercise; those who ran had a life expectancy gain of 3.2 years; and those who did gym training, like weights, only had a 1.5-year longer life expectancy. This backs up the findings of an earlier UK research study published in the British medical Journal.

Walking/Coffee Group

We are a small group meeting weekly on a Thursday morning. We walk all year round, adapting our routes to avoid wet and muddy paths.

We end with a coffee somewhere (not compulsory but enjoyable). If the weather is not good, we usually just meet for a coffee and a chat. We are a friendly group and talk as we walk, though not so much up the hills!! As well as keeping us fit, it is very sociable.

Our walks of 3-5 miles in length, generally take us round the Holme and Colne Valleys but occasionally we venture further afield. One of the great joys is discovering new places and paths we have been unaware of despite them being local.

One of our unusual outings was a train ride from Shepley to Denby Dale and a walk back across fields and paths. We always try and do circular walks which have included Penistone, Langsett, Meltham, Newmillerdam, and many more in and around our beautiful valley.

Janice Wood

Theatre Group

Another busy year for the Theatre Group, run by the volunteer Theatre Team, Andrea Goodall, Linda Hollingworth, Roger Lancaster and Pat Whalley.

In line with the growth of numbers joining the Holme Valley u3a, the Theatre Group has also seen an increase in members and in numbers attending productions. In the year 2024/2025 we ran 15 trips taking a total of 463 people to the theatre - an average of 31 people on each trip. This year so far (i.e. April onwards and including future trips already paid for) we have organised 9 trips with a total of 371 people - an average of 41 people per trip.

In 2024/25 just 6 of the 15 trips were by coach, but this year every trip bar one, to Northern Ballet's Jane Eyre, has been by coach. This increase in coach trips is partly due to the increase in numbers and partly that people prefer to travel by coach.

There haven't been many trips using the minibuses because Linda has not recently organised what tend to be less popular trips (such as to Opera, Northern Ballet and some dramas), due to her own personal commitments. Linda fully intends to run more trips in due course, some of which may be by minibus.

Productions attended since the last Annual Report and planned over the coming winter months are as follows:

Oct '24	Art - The Play	Play	Lyceum, Sheffield	16	Andrea	Minibus
Oct '24	Magic Flute	Opera	Leeds Grand	18	Linda	Minibus/car
Nov '24	MB Swan Lake	Ballet	Lowry, Manchester	47	Andrea	Coach
Nov '24	Book of Mormon	Play	Alhambra, Bradford	49	Pat	Coach
Dec '24	Come From Away	Play	Lowry, Manchester	50	Pat	Coach
Jan '25	Chicago	Musical	Lyceum, Sheffield	16	Roger	Minibus
Jan '25	Love Life	Play	Leeds Grand	16	Roger	Minibus
Mar '25	Joseph Techicolour Dreamcoat	Musical	Opera House, Manchester	49	Linda	Coach
Mar '25	Pride & Prejudice - Sort of	Musical	Lowry, Manchester	46	Andrea	Coach
Apr '25	Boys From <u>The Blackstuff</u>	Play	Lowry, Manchester	48	Roger	Coach
Apr '25	Jane Eyre	Ballet	Lyceum, Sheffield	16	Linda	Minibus
Jun '25	Mary Poppins	Musical	Alhambra, Bradford	32	Pat	Coach
Jul '25	Railway Children (1)	Play	Keighley	48	Pat/Linda	Coach
Aug '25	Railway Children (2)	Play	Keighley	47	Pat/Linda	Coach
Aug '25	Moulin Rouge	Musical	Palace, Manchester	50	Andrea	Coach
Sep '25	Midnight Bell	Ballet	Lyceum, Sheffield	30	Pat	Coach
Nov '25	Top Hat	Musical	Opera House, Manchester	51	Andrea	Coach
Dec '25	Singing in the Rain	Musical	Royal Exchange, Manchester		Roger	Coach
Jan '26	Mocking Bird	Play	Lowry, Manchester	49	Roger	Coach
Feb '26	Dear England	Play	Alhambra, Bradford		Andrea	

We are always keen to hear suggestions from members of any productions you feel may be of interest for future trips.

We have noted several trends which may affect our trips over the coming months.

Many theatres are requesting earlier payment for reserved seats, meaning that we may have to request payment sometimes up to 6 months or even more, before the date of a show.

Because of the increase in members, trips are getting filled up a lot sooner, even on a 49-seater coach. Keep an eye on the monthly updates for information about new shows and apply in good time.

We have had our first brush with 'dynamic pricing' at a recent trip to 'Mary Poppins' the prices we were quoted on reserving seats and subsequently paid, was halved for those who purchased tickets in the weeks before the show. This is something we will have to look out for in due course.

In conclusion we have been thrilled to receive messages of thanks from members attending theatre trips over the course of the year, and it is gratifying to know that our efforts are appreciated.

"As always, many thanks for your organization. These trips are a real joy for me."

"My thanks again to all the Theatre team for their hard work, inspiration and shared company during 2024".

"I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to you all for arranging the theatre trips. I have enjoyed going on many of them, and I am grateful for your hard work in enabling me to do so."

Pat Whalley

Craft Group

Another busy year for the Craft Group. With a good regular attendance, we have been able to adequately cover the cost of the Art Room at Holmfirth Tech and in addition buy materials to enable us to undertake new crafts. These have included Silk Painting and Decorative Glass.

We have been very grateful to have the help of 2 u3a members who are not part of the group. Penny Barker came along to show us the skills of

silk painting and Sue Clay came for the second time to show us further wet felting techniques.

Our own members have led several sessions. Sheila Rodgers passed on her experience in floral arrangement by demonstrating the making of an Easter Wreath, followed by an Easter Floral arrangement and Karen Hobson led an excellent session on foiled Glass which members are looking forward to continuing after the summer break.

Members enjoy the social side of our meetings as well as learning new skills and we would welcome new members. We meet at Holmfirth Tech, Basement Art Room on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month from 1.30 – 3.30pm

Pat Whalley

Russian History

I'll be running "An outline of Russian history" again (and, again, by zoom) this year starting in September. Below an image amongst the many which I'll be using in my zoom presentations.

Michael Reader



In a rage, Ivan IV - the Terrible (1533-84) kills his eldest son with his staff (painting by Repin in the 19th century).

Matters Digital

Holme Valley u3a has a website <https://holmevalley.u3asite.uk>
This is the place to go if you want to find out details of our next monthly meeting. Just click on events.

Click on the newsletters page for our latest newsletters and updates.
The committee page gives details of the Committee members and their responsibilities.

Groups: some of the groups have their own page on the website. They include the local history group, digital photography, maths is fun, walking (ambling), walking easy, walking moderate, coffee walkers, tennis, and textile crafts.

Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/434128977300240>

Our Facebook page is only open to paid up members of Holme Valley u3a.

When you apply to join the group you will be asked to accept the Group Rules and provide your membership number.

Rena Souten

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 12 September 2025

Annual General Meeting. Speaker Kevin Byron. What inspires Art?

Friday 10 October 2025

Brian Topping. Tales off a Customs Officer

Friday 14 November 2025

Beverley Haynes. Nepal 2.

Friday 12 December 2025

Christmas Meeting