



Pershore and District U3A An Introduction

What is the U3A?

The U3A is a UK-wide movement which brings together people in their 'third age' to develop their interests and continue their learning in a friendly and informal environment. The third age is defined as that time after you have finished working full-time or raising your family and have time to pursue your interests or just try something new. The U3A has a 'university' of members who draw upon their knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other but there are no qualifications to pass – it is just for pleasure. Learning is its own reward. It's all voluntary, members share their knowledge through Interest Groups where members who have an interest in specific topics come together to learn about that subject, often taught by a member who has specialised knowledge, or through a shared self-learning programme.

There are:

- ❖ *NO Entrance Qualifications*
- ❖ *NO Formal Syllabuses*
- ❖ *NO Exams*
- ❖ *NO Formal Classes*

The U3A movement began in France in 1972. Now there are U3As in many countries throughout the world, with an International Association of U3As. The movement in the UK started in Cambridge in 1981. There are over 1000 local U3As throughout the country with over 400,000 members.

Who are Third Age People?

Third Age people are those who are no longer in full time employment, who want to learn, to help others learn and to enjoy themselves. Retirement brings with it challenges - how do you keep your brain active, develop your interests and make new friendships? Recent research by the Third Age Trust ¹ has shown that membership of the U3A has a positive, and sustainable impact on the wellbeing of retired people in the UK.

Guiding Principle

The unique guiding principle is 'those who learn shall also teach,' a philosophy based on the idea that people who have a lifetime of work behind them can usefully share their knowledge. Members learn from each other through pooling their knowledge, skills and experience. Instead of a teacher, groups have a leader to co-ordinate and guide their efforts. Activities are organised mainly in small groups that meet regularly, often in each other's homes.

Your Local U3A

The Pershore & District U3A is a registered charity that started in 2001 and has steadily grown in size with over 600 members and over 70 interest groups with new ones being created all the time. Each U3A has its own Constitution and programme but also collaborates with other U3As through the local link organisations.

U3A membership is open to retired and semi-retired people who come together to continue their educational, social and creative interests in a friendly and informal environment. With no fixed geographical boundaries our members are drawn from Pershore and its surrounding villages, typically between Worcester to Evesham and Inkberrow to Tewkesbury and occasionally even further afield.

There are two main methods of participation in the U3A:

- ❖ *Monthly meetings open to the entire membership*
- ❖ *Interest Groups*

¹ U3A Publication Learning Not Lonely

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Monthly Meetings

These are usually held on the third Tuesday of the month at Number 8 in the High Street, Pershore starting at 2.00 pm. Open to all members of Pershore U3A and non-members free of charge, it is an ideal opportunity to meet old and new friends. Speakers are invited each month and present on wide range of subjects. Tea/coffee and biscuits are available after the meeting.

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- A history of the River Avon
- Remembering the swinging 60's
- Through the Garden Gate
- We can't let you Broadcast That
- Guide Dogs for the Blind

Interest Groups

Interest groups are the heart of all U3As. Members meet together to pursue common interests. New groups are starting all the time, so if you cannot see the one you are interested in, add it to the wish list to find others who would like to share your interest with you.

Listed below are some of the many Interest Groups categories in Pershore U3A. An up to date list can be found on our website at <http://www.pershoreu3a.org.uk/home>, where more information about the U3A and the Interests Groups can be found.

Arts and Crafts

Discussion

Films/ Theatre

Fitness

Food and Drink

Games

Gardening

History

Languages

Meditation

Photography

Plays

Poetry

Social

Technology

Well being

Writing

Costs for each Interest Group are covered by the members and depend on what costs are incurred e.g. if a hall is rented there will be contributions towards that; if tea/biscuits are offered, members split these costs and obviously, trips out must be paid for. If you are unsure about membership of the U3A, we allow you to attend any of these groups once, to see if you would like to join.

Please contact the Group Co-ordinator if you would like to know more about an Interest Group.

If you have an interest that we do not cover then please let the Group Co-ordinator or any of the committee know – we will try to gather sufficient other members to start a new group. Similarly, when Interest Groups are at capacity, we make every effort to start an additional group when we can find new group leaders.

Member of Pershore U3A can also join an Interest Group from another U3A within the Cotswold Link Association. More information can be found in our Membership Benefits sheet.

Next Steps

If the you think the U3A might be for you, you can join by filling in the application form supplied, or it can be found on our web site. The form should be filled in and sent to the Membership Secretary at the address on the form. Alternatively, if you would like to sample an interest group first, contact the Groups Coordinator to arrange to attend an Interest Group meeting. Finally, please come to our monthly meetings and meet members and committee members and pick up an application form. We look forward to seeing you there.