



Pershore and District U3A An Introduction

What is the U3A?

U3A means 'University of the Third Age'. The word 'university' is used in its original sense of people coming together to share and pursue learning in all its forms. The third age is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased.

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 384,000 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 500 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.

Pershore and District U3A is a thriving and vigorous U3A with over 500 members and around 70 specialist Interest Groups. 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, usually between Worcester to Evesham and Inkberrow to Tewksbury.

There are two main methods of participation in the U3A:

- ✓ *Monthly meetings of the entire membership*
- ✓ *Interest Groups*

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.

¹ U3A Publication Learning Not Lonely

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Speakers are invited each month and present on wide range of subjects. These have included:

- ✓ Forensic Pathology
- ✓ Civil war in Worcestershire
- ✓ Isambard Kingdom Brunel
- ✓ Edward Elgar
- ✓ Remembering not to forget

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 and to find others who would like to share your interest with you.

Listed below are some of the many Interest Groups 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.

Architecture

Art

Badminton

Ballroom Dancing

Bow and Blows

Bridge

Choral Singing

Craft

Creative Writing

Cycling

Dressmaking

Discussion

Etymology

Family History

Film Appreciation

French Language

Gardening

IT

Knit and Natter

Literary Ladies

Local History

Mah Jong

Medieval Churches

Meditation

Music Appreciation

Natural History

Philosophy

Photography

Play Reading

Poetry Appreciation

Psychology

Science and Technology

Scrabble

Skittles

Spanish

Strollers

Sunday Lunch Club

Technology Appreciation

Theatre Visits

Ukulele

Walking

Whist

Wine Tasting

Yoga

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 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.