

**Interest Groups Online**

**Group webpages**

**August 2023**

# Ancient Rome and the Roman World

Why did a very ordinary little town by the Tiber come to dominate most of the known world? Who were the Romans? What was their society like? What part did religion play? This group will study both the Republic and the Roman Empire for the five hundred years up to 27BC and on to the reign of the Emperor Constantine and the rise of Christianity in the fourth century AD and examine those and many other questions and aspects of Roman life.

There is a mix of talks and discussions and members are encouraged to make presentations or give talks on topics of personal interest.

## When

Second Wednesday of the month at 10 am

# Armchair Archaeology

At the start of 2023, the group decided to start chronologically with the earliest evidence for humans in the British Isles, and work our way forwards.

We've just got as far as the British Iron Age by June, with lots of interesting discussions along the way concerning belief ,ethnicity and of course, lots of lovely archaeology.

Join the group and help choose what we will look at as we move into 2024.

## When

Second Wednesday of the month at 10.30 am

## Armchair Travellers

When we go away on holiday, most of us will take photographs of the places we visit and the things that particularly appeal to us. When we get home, we look at them, show them to family and friends. Then what? Those memories then sit in albums somewhere, often forgotten.

Well, Armchair Travellers gives you the opportunity to get them out, to relive those moments and personal experiences again, by sharing them with members of the group.

Members of the group take it in turns to talk about and show photographs of one of the places they have visited, it could be the UK or abroad.

We meet using Zoom and our meetings usually last about an hour.

We need more members to offer talks. So if you could offer to a talk for us, please email me. It might be that we could have two short talks in a session, if anyone didn't want to speak for the full 45-60 mins.

N.B. For copyright reasons, any photograph used in talks must be the presenters own work.

Bring your own refreshments.

## When

Third Wednesday of the month at 3pm

## Arts and Crafts

This group is for members who like making and creating works of craft and art.

Members of the group are invited to share photographs of examples of their work on a Padlet (an explanation will be given to members when they join the group), with a brief explanation of the processes involved in its creation. Members can also share their tips, techniques, inspirations and sources and members of the group can also ask each other about their work.

Group members also carry out research into different artists and share a compilation of the facts they discovered.

## When

Last Wednesday of the month from 3.30 to 4.30 pm

## British Cemeteries

Our British cemeteries and graveyards are a rich source of social, political and family history. Please join us if you would like to learn, share or research more about them. We have discussion topics; presentations within the group to highlight interesting stories; book reviews and perhaps even recommendations for cemetery visits at home and abroad.

### When

First Wednesday of the month at 3pm

## Cercle Français (French)

For intermediate/advanced speakers of French.

An opportunity to chat AS NATURALLY AS POSSIBLE in French.

NOT a class and NO translations.

Members take turns to suggest general topics to stimulate conversation.

Barbara the leader has a lifetime's experience of teaching French and ESOL and is a devoted linguaphile.

### When

10 a.m. first Thursday of the month from September

## Crime Corner

If you enjoy reading classic, with occasional forays into contemporary or modern crime, this is the group for you.

Members participate by suggesting, choosing, reading and discussing a range of books. The books should all be available in local libraries or online.

You can contact group leader **Jane** via the [Beacon Members Portal](#).

## When

First Wednesday of the month from 2 to 4pm

## Cryptic Crosswords

The group solves cryptic crosswords together. It is aimed at advanced beginners and intermediates. We mostly try to solve Guardian Quiptic and Observer Everyman crosswords.

## When

Second and Fourth Wednesday of the month 9.30 to 11.30 am

## Dance Exercise

Look and feel younger! Improve your posture, strength, balance, coordination and movement memory. The content of the sessions is adaptable to suit the needs of the individual members. Participating members need to wear loose clothing and have ample space to move in. As this is a physical activity, members of the group are sent the risk assessment for the activity and the group will be reminded at the beginning of the sessions of potential risks.

We meet via Zoom.

## When

Thursdays from 9 to 10 am

## Early Women Doctors Research

**Early Women Doctors** is a research group, which will try to document the struggles of women to qualify within the United Kingdom, and their fight to gain acceptance from colleagues and patients that they should be treated on equal terms. Experience of group working useful, however a willingness to listen and learn is more important. Any retired members of the medical profession would be most welcome!

## When

Third Thursday of the month from 10 to 11.30 am

## Get more from MS Excel

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This group is ready to start up again.

This is a course for complete beginners which introduces you to the features and functions of Excel 2007 – 2018 & 365 Systems.

The course runs when there are sufficient participants. It needs a minimum of 3 up to a maximum of 8 participants to run.

### When

TBC Time to be agreed to suit new members

## Get more from MS Word

This group is ready to start up again.

**Get more from Microsoft (MS) Word** is for people who have taken a basic course and then learned further by trial and error. But basic courses do not cover the many quicker ways of carrying out actions, nor exactly how some functions work, nor some of the many other useful functions available. This group will revise basics, but look at aspects of how to get more out of these applications and answer issues that users may be finding unhelpful. This is a professional quality course and contains much more than many popular courses on offer. A comprehensive quick-find on-computer manual is provided.

The course will cover the following features of Word 2007 – 2018 and 365.

- Using Keyboard shortcuts.
- New, opening, saving and deleting files
- Editing text. Highlighting methods. Drag and Drop. Cut/copy & Paste.
- Formatting Font parameters, bold, italic, colour, size, font, sub and superscript, underlines, etc.
- Paragraph Formatting. Spacing. Shading, Soft line breaks and page breaks. Format Painter.
- Bullets and numbering. Borders.
- Headers and Footers. Find and Replace.
- Page Setup and printing.
- Tabulation. Types of tab. Setting and resetting.
- Tables. 3 ways. Formatting within tables.
- Inserting Images and manipulating them.
- Mail Merge. Letters, labels, lists. Selective merges.
- Using the Word Drawing Tools.

The course needs a minimum of 3 up to a maximum of 8 participants to run. The course will run when there are enough participants.

The six (6) week course will run weekly on Wednesdays from 2pm for 2¼ hours. There will be a short break during sessions.

### When

Wednesday at 2pm

## Latin Intermediate

So you have mastered 'amo, amas, amat ...' and want to learn more. If you are comfortable with the concept of declensions, cases, conjugations, tenses, voices, and moods – but need to learn more about how to use them, this group is for you. We focus on translating selections from classic Latin poetry and prose, whilst working through the appropriate grammar. Learn to read for yourself the incomparable odes of Horace, Pliny the Younger's first hand description of the eruption of Vesuvius, Virgil's account of the Trojan wars, the speeches of Cicero and more.

Group members learn from each other and personal feedback and assistance can be given via email.

### When

First and third Thursday of the month at 11 am

## Laughter Yoga

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Laughter Yoga is a great way of enhancing health and wellbeing while having fun. Suitable for almost everyone, it is a combination of playful laughter exercises and deep breathing techniques from yoga (pranayama). There are no jokes, no comedy and no humour – and you don't have to be happy, or feel like laughing, when you start.

Laughter yoga is an exercise programme, it's not a comedy. Judith the group leader will give instructions, and participants will join in and may sit or stand as preferred and will need to wear comfortable clothing and have access to some water to drink.

Members participating in group exercise activities do so at their own risk and must take full personal responsibility for the decision to participate. They should be confident that they are fit enough to do so.

Laughter Yoga is aerobic exercise and may not be suitable for everyone. For example, it is contra-indicated for people suffering from, for example, uncontrolled high blood pressure, some forms of heart disease, uncontrolled epilepsy, or severe backache. This list is for guidance only and is not meant to be exhaustive. If in doubt do not try it and consult your trained medical professional for advice. Anyone experiencing discomfort while laughing must discontinue immediately and seek medical help. Please use your common sense: no strain, no new pain.

### When

Fourth Wednesday of the month at 10 am

## More Fun with Maths

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This course assumes that members will not be frightened by some simple use of algebra and equations. Anyone with a good O-level will be OK! We will cover a wide variety of topics, from pure maths e.g. number patterns, the harmonic series, and probability paradoxes.... to more applied topics such as game theory, the geometry of friezes, genetics and probability...

It is for those who are comfortable with the use of letters in equations.

### When

Third Friday of the month from 10 am to 11 am.

## Poetry Patch

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The group is open to anyone who enjoys poetry.

### How the group works:

Taking it in turns, a volunteer member of the group chooses a theme for the next meeting. There is no pressure to do this, but it is good to be involved. That member selects two poems by two different poets on their chosen theme to compare and contrast. They will also do a little bit of research about the poets and the poems.

Two weeks before each meeting the member leading the session tells the Group Leader the theme and their chosen poems/poets. The Group Leader will email other group members telling them the theme and the poems that have been chosen so they can look them up, and think a bit about the poems and the poets in advance of the meeting. Members will also be asked to find other poems either on the same theme, or by the same poets, to read out at the meeting.

The meetings start with the two selected poems and their background information being presented by the member leading the meeting and then there is an open discussion. Following on from that, all the other members read out the poems they have found for appreciation and discussion by the group.

### When

First Tuesday of the month at 11 am

## Popup Poetry

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Still got that 'locked down' feeling? Desperate for something new to think about, and lively minds to share your ideas with?

**Popup Poetry** is like a book group where the required reading is sometimes only 14 lines long! We'll be talking about how the ideas in the poems impact on us, and how the poets achieve that impact.

Once a fortnight members receive, by email, two poems with a related theme and a little background information about each writer. Members also receive suggested questions for the discussion, which will take place over Zoom. Guidance on the use of Zoom is sent out in advance for anybody new to this very easy to use tool.

### When

Second Tuesday of the month at 11 am

## Parliamo l'italiano

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This group is for members who would like to develop their use of Italian. A basic conversational level of Italian is desirable.

The main aim of the group is to enable participants to use the Italian which they have already acquired, to maintain that level and to improve on it through the activities of the group.

Members participate by sharing and exploring areas of interest, expertise, experience and even future plans related to Italy through the medium of the Italian language. Members will be encouraged to make their own suggestions but some examples of themes or topics might include - cities, food, cinema, regions, the Medici, literature etc.. It's open-ended. To support this there will be language input as required.

It is important that members are committed to using Italian, maybe not exclusively but as nearly as possible.

The group meets via Zoom.

Course Leader: *I am a language teacher and a fluent Italian speaker, but I am not a teacher of Italian. As such I am able to provide language support and do have experts on hand to consult in case of need. In the light of this we will all have to nurture our independent learning skills.*

### When

Wednesdays at 4pm for 40 minutes

# Psychology

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**The study of current human behaviour and experience.**

No prior knowledge of psychology is required.

Communications to members are by Bcc email. On a monthly basis, the group leader sends out an email, that will link to one piece of recent research conducted by psychologists, which is of current interest.

Group members are invited to give their opinions on the research findings. Do they agree? Does it coincide with the members' own experiences? The group members enjoy open discussion on a wide range of topics. Recent topics discussed included: Effects of video gaming and online pornography, and PTSD. Future topics for 2023 include the psychology of Collecting and Altruism.

Group members are encouraged to suggest topics and to lead the discussion if they have a particular interest in that area.

## When

First Thursday of the month at 2 pm



# Quiz Zoomers

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The questions will include some easy stuff as well as some tough stuff.

## When

Mondays from 7 to 8 pm

## Group Size & Availability

# Shakespeare – Exploring

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There are many approaches to exploring Shakespeare: Play reading and Discussion; The Sonnets; Elizabethan Times; Contemporary Playwrights, and many more.

I consider Play reading the best introduction, and it's well suited to Zoom meetings but the group also covers other aspects as they wish.

You can enjoy the group at any level, like all u3a activities we learn together in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere.

## When

Second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 2 to 4 pm

# Short Story Reading Group 1

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Thinking of joining a book group but worried a novel a month might be too time-consuming or too expensive? For the cost of one book – "That Glimpse of Truth" – you could enjoy many years of discussion. This book includes diverse genres, numerous styles and 100 different authors from Cervantes, born in 1547, to Adichie, born in 1977.

So, rather than read them chronologically, perhaps we will read them alphabetically by the author to ensure everyone's taste is covered as often as possible – from the old to the new, from the straightforward to the more challenging, from the thriller to the romance.

We meet via Zoom, for 40-60 minutes.

## When

Third Monday of the month at 10 am to 11 am

## Short Story Reading Group 2

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Thinking of joining a book group but worried a novel a month might be too time-consuming or too expensive? For the cost of one book – "That Glimpse of Truth" – you could enjoy many years of discussion. This book includes diverse genres, numerous styles and 100 different authors from Cervantes b. 1547 to Adichie b. 1977; from the old to the new, from the straightforward to the more challenging, from the thriller to the romance. Rather than read them chronologically, each month any member of the group will suggest a story of their choice which they think will be a good read and stimulate a enjoyable discussion.

### When

Third Friday of the month from 10 to 11 am

## What are you reading? 1

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This is a reading group which recognises that tastes in reading material differ. We don't all read the same books or magazines etc. We decide what we want to read. At our meetings, each member of the group talks about what they are or have been reading – fiction, biography, history, textbook, short story, whatever, the quirkier the better. The group meets using Zoom and the sessions generally last 60 minutes. What Are You Reading groups have proved very popular, with 3 of them full and a new fourth one just starting. By sharing details of what they have been reading members discover authors and titles which sound interesting to them and in that way widen their choice of material. But beware – you can end up with a big list of books you want to read.

### When

First Thursday of the month at 10 am