

## U3A NATIONAL RESEARCH DATABASE

The aim is to record any research or enquiry that involves the U3A, whether that's done by the U3A itself or in partnership with an external organisation, as in some SLPs'

The database can help people find out what's going on in other places, identify knowledge gaps and research opportunities, assist those engaged in or planning research and highlight the activities of the U3A.

Find the database at

<http://u3aresearch.org.uk>

It's not easy to find out about what's going on and we rely on members telling us about what they are doing.

**Check to see if your project has been included and if the details are complete and correct.**

Ideally, if you have an item you'd like included, we would like:

- a short **description** of the research
- the **U3A(s)** involved
- external **partner(s)**, if any
- the approximate **date** of the research
- the **name** and **contact details** of the **project leader** (names and email addresses will not be visible to users).
- any **outputs** such as a book, report, database, CD/DVD, sound recording, website, presentation or exhibition and how to find them if they are still available.

Please send any information to [Jo\\_Livingston@hotmail.com](mailto:Jo_Livingston@hotmail.com)  
or use the **Contact page** on the database,  
with as many of the above details as you know,  
so that they can be added.

Thank you for your help.

## EXAMPLES OF ENQUIRY-LED LEARNING IN INTEREST GROUPS

Many local interest groups are carrying out research, they just don't always call it that.

There are dozens of Local History groups studying their local area and often producing books or other publications, as well as scores of WW1 groups researching war memorials, but a lot of other groups that you might not suspect of research are producing some interesting results.

*[numbers in brackets are database references, for more information.]*

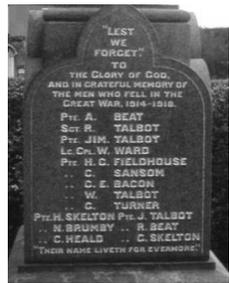
**Family History** – the members take it in turns to look at the background of an ancestor – the kind where you know their name, where and when they lived and what they did and you know you'll never find out more about them personally. But you can find out plenty about the place where they lived, the job they did, maybe find samples of the local dialect..... *[133 Voices of Hickling]*



**Architecture** – a study of buildings in the local area can be quite an eye-opener and may be useful if any of them are later demolished. There may be particular architectural features that are local to that area which makes them especially worth recording.  
*[114 crinkle-crankle walls, Diss 479 Dudley]*

**Armchair Travellers** – not holidays; in this group they look at a different country or area each month and each member investigates a different aspect of it, eg history, landscape, transport, culture, religion..... [724 Bexley]

**Industrial history** – finding out why a place developed in the way it did, relating it to the coming of the railways, the industrial revolution etc. Or is it much older than that, founded where it was easy to ford the river? [431 York, 562 Shiplake]



Involvement with local affairs – the future of a building or an area – in one case a **Philosophy** group looked at ways to become politically active. [436 Market Drayton, 481 Northampton]

Getting behind the names – many U3As have used **WW1 memorials** to investigate the lives of those named on them.

Many groups are involved in **Reminiscence** – this could be within the group eg Life Story, in the community eg in care homes, or of WW2 while there are still people who experienced it [148 Lea Valley, 400 Woking, 446 Salford, 657 Bexley]



There are novel ways of **presenting** what you find – some groups have converted their material into craft, eg embroidery or quilting. [119 Blackwater, 718 Faringdon]



**The Natural World** is a very accessible area to find out more about – groups have looked at local parks, rivers etc or an individual species eg bees, glow worms. Geology is also a popular way of studying the locality. [91 Burnham on Crouch, 475 Dorchester, 585 Alnwick]

**Photography** can be applied to any subject – it may link well with a local history or natural history project, especially where there's any threat to the local environment. [640 Redditch]



**Language** can be a starting point - a Latin group translated all the names on the London Tube map. [457 Stratford-on-Avon]

In all these cases people are finding out about something – they would probably never refer to it as research but if they're discovering something new or putting existing information together in a new way, then that is what they're doing.

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