



Tarporley and District u3a

March 2023 Newsletter

April is the month that really heralds the start of spring – even though, meteorologically speak, spring starts on the first of March. Usually, April also hosts the Easter celebrations where, throughout the world, Christians celebrate to resurrection. As well as the religious ceremonies comes a wealth of cultural traditions.



This time of year is about renewal, optimism and hopefulness for the future.

It is also a great time for purveyors of chocolate eggs!



Bridge Club

This most popular of card games derived from whist which was played extensively in Europe for centuries. In the late 1880's a more complex form called Biritch or Russian Bridge developed and in the early 20th century the rules of contract bridge were created in both the UK and US, where it became increasingly popular.



Though the basics of bridge can be mastered fairly easily there is no doubt that this game, needing skills in memory, tactics, communications and strategy, can keep players absorbed for years. It offers a great way to keep the brain working and, as you need at least 4 people to play, a chance to be with other people.

The u3a Bridge group meet in the School Room behind the Methodist Chapel (opp. the Community Centre) at 2.0pm every Wednesday.

New members are very welcome. If you have never played bridge before we will gladly introduce you to the game. We are a social rather than seriously competitive group and play under the Chicago format using Acol.

The cost is £2.0 per week and members are asked to pay £8 by cheque every month.

Convenor: Brian Clark

Contact No. 01829 732147.

MONTHLY MEETING

Tarporley Community Centre.

Thursday 27th April 2023

Doors open at **9.45 am** for refreshments.

The meeting begins about **10.15 am** with announcements.

The talk starts at **10.30 am**

“Inn and Out at the Top”

Neil Hanson

Landlord of Britain’s Highest Inn, Tan Hill, Yorkshire during the 60’s and 70’s

A humorous look at the quirks and foibles of being a landlord. Neil will introduce us to eccentric characters, bizarre local customs, rats in the attic, close encounters with tight-fisted farmers, magistrates and planners, police raids and the shooting of a certain double-glazing commercial.

Keeping safe on the internet.

At a packed monthly meeting on Thursday March 23rd, PC Andy Kevan gave a fast-moving, humorous and quite chilling talk about the dangers lurking in the digital world. He told us how much of our personal information is in the digital public domain just waiting to be used to defraud us. He pointed out how careless we have become at leaving our data vulnerable and outlined the steps we might take to keep ourselves safe, or at least safer.



Here are some of the sites he said were worthy of looking at to help us help ourselves.

A great site to help you lock your social media setting is

WWW.INTERNETMATTERS.ORG

There is a Social Media section on their page which provides a 'step by step' guide on how set the security setting for each site.

If you receive a suspicious text message forward it to **7726**

If you receive a suspicious email, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk



You can check to see if your data has been lost by checking your email address or phone number at: <https://haveibeenpwned.com>

Protect your online world with good strong passwords. 'Three Random Words' <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/top-tips-for-staying-secure-online/three-random-words>

Use this free password checker to see if your current password is any good! <https://www.security.org/how-secure-is-my-password>

Always report any suspicious activity online particularly if you are concerned with content your child has seen or if someone has been speaking to your child that you do not know.

Further information and support can be found on:

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/>

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

New Groups

Though Tarporley u3a offers a wide variety of interest groups, there may be something that you would like to do, but for which there is, at the moment, nothing formally organised. The Committee would love to hear from you because there may be others who think the same way and, with a bit of organisation, another group can be successfully launched.

Don Igoe is the Committee member who looks after groups so please do contact him with your ideas. don.igoe@hotmail.co.uk

He has recently been looking to start a second "Painting & Drawing for Pleasure" group but needs a few more members to make the group viable. The main aims of the group would be to enjoy exploring different methods of painting and drawing by using a variety of medium such as Water Colours, Pencils, Graphite and Charcoal, Pastels both soft and hard, Coloured Pencils and Watercolour pencils, Pen and Ink Acrylics and Oils. Members can develop their own individual styles and techniques. The group would use each other's skills, experiences and observations.



Staying Safe – a Trip to Safety Central, Lymm

Building on the theme of safety, u3a has organised a visit to the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services Safety Centre where all aspects of safety, in the home, while out and about and on-line, can be examined in their £4.5m indoor village. This purpose-built 'village' offers life-skills sessions for community groups of all ages.

The visit is free but there will be a £10 charge for the coach.



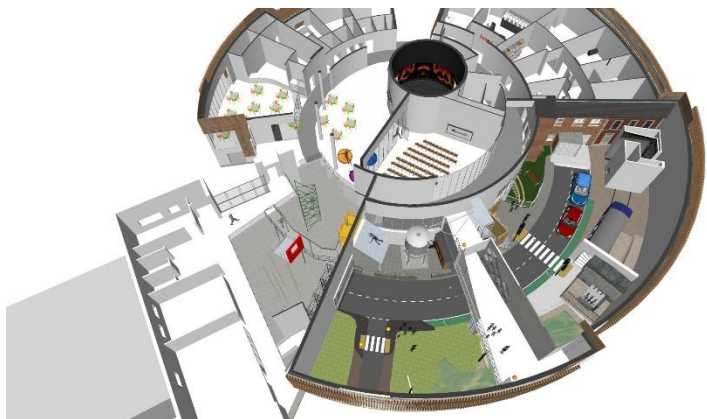
Date – May 17th

Pick-ups – 1.15 pm from Tarporley and 1.30pm from Kelsall

Duration of visit – 2.5 hours.

A list was opened at the March meeting but there are still places available.

Please contact Liz Carter on lizcarter19@btinternet.com if you would like to join the group.



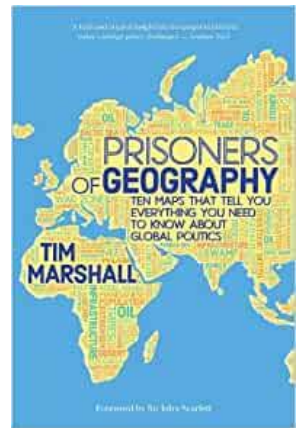
Book Groups

Group 1

In March, the Wednesday book group met to discuss a non-fiction book: *Prisoners of Geography*. It is written by Tim Marshall who is an author and blogger on geo-politics. The main theme of his book is that countries are constrained, or empowered by, their geography. So, for example, China's three main rivers all begin in Tibet, hence the need to ensure their guaranteed flow into China. Russia feels vulnerable to invasion because of the huge, flat European plain to its west and this is compounded by their quest for year-round, warm water ports.

The group agreed that the book was very accessible, and all were enthusiastic about the way that Marshall instructs us without over complicating or being condescending. We felt that, whilst there are sections where he writes in a Euro-centric or Western-biased way, overall, the book was a hit. *Prisoners of Geography* has ten maps throughout which were vital to help our understanding, but the school atlas brought by one of our members was most welcome and provoked even more discussion!

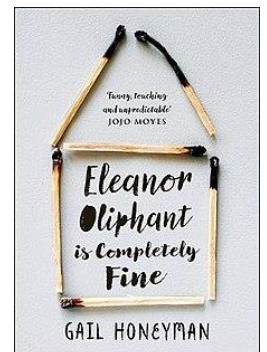
Marshall has written three books: *Prisoners of Geography* (ten maps that tell you everything you need to know about global politics) ; *Divided* (why we are living in an age of walls) ; and *The Power of Geography* (ten maps that reveal the future of the world). His next book, *The Future of Geography* (how power and politics in space will change our world) is released at the end of April 2023.



Book Group 2

This new group is now well established. They had an excellent meeting discussing *The Promise* by Damon Galgut, a novel set over several decades in South Africa. It recounted the efforts of a family to honour, or break, a death bed promise to grant ownership of her home to the family's black housekeeper.

For the next meeting they are reading *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman.



Cheshire Rural Touring Arts

This Arts Council England/Local government supported organisation, one of many throughout the country, brings professional theatre and performers to rural venues. Badly hit by the pandemic, when not only were venues closed, but small scale companies and individual artist struggled to survive, the sector is now regaining momentum and offering a wide range of performances at modest cost throughout Cheshire.

Tarvin Community Centre Saturday 22nd April

Mitch Benn – It's About Time

Doors - 7.00pm Show - 7.30pm

All Tickets £12.00

“The only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once” – Albert Einstein (probably)

Mitch Benn, comedian, songwriter, thinker of deep thought and satirist is back, clock in one hand and guitar in the other, to help you look at time in a whole new way.



He is perhaps best known as the resident comic songwriter on BBC Radio 4’s The Now Show from 1999 to 2016. As a comedian, Mitch has toured extensively in the UK and internationally over the last 20 years.

For ticket go to <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cheshireruraltouringarts/t-dvjgzx>

or from Tarvin Post Office.

If you can’t make the date at Tarvin, then Mitch will also be appearing at Great Budworth and Plumley. Go to www.cheshireruraltouringarts.co.uk for more details of this and coming performances.

A Night at the Flicks

Community based film shows are increasingly popular, particularly among older age groups. Here are some forthcoming shows available to members.

Tarporley Community Centre

April 21st at 7.30 pm

Top Gun Maverick

Tom Cruise revisits his 1986 role as the maverick fighter pilot.

The performance starts at 7.30 pm



Tarvin Community Centre

April 21st

Puss in Boots 3 at 6.00pm

Tickets £3 and £4 from the Post Office or on the door.



“What’s Love Got to do with it?” at 8.00 pm

Tickets £5 from the Post Office or on the door.



Film shows are also available on occasions at the Jesse Hughes Hall in Eaton and in Kelsall. Please go to their respective websites for more information.

Nature Group

It was wild nature that forced the cancellation of the March meeting as snow blanketed the countryside – at least for a while.

The meeting has been postponed until Thursday April 13th and will look at the fascinating variety of Australian Wildlife.



Science Group

Having looked at potential energy sources which are unlikely to affect members' lives soon, the meeting on March 17th looked at a new technical advance that affects us now, every day and will have increasing impact in the future – Artificial Intelligence – A.I.

John Hammond led the first part of the meeting. Simply, A.I. is the use of machine systems to store and process data to solve problems. The core piece of equipment is a computer or smart phone which gives every user a link into vast data stores that have expanded to huge, energy hungry, units. No longer do humans have to consult a book, ask someone else or conduct research to find a solution.



In 1950 Alan Turing published a paper that is regarded as a key contribution to the field of Artificial Intelligence, and the phrase Artificial Intelligence is thought to have been first used in 1956. That same year the first hard drive was created containing 5 megabytes of data. In 1971 the first floppy disc contained 80 kilobytes and the first DVD 4.7 Gigabytes in 1996. In 2020 it was estimated that the total global data cache was **35 Zettabytes**. A Zettabyte is 10 to the power of 21 bytes and if you are having trouble imagining such numbers, so was the Science group!

Table 1: Data Measurement Units

Unit	Abbreviation	Decimal Value	Binary Value	Decimal Size
bit	b	0 or 1	0 or 1	1/8 of a byte
byte	B	8 bits	8 bits	1 byte
kilobyte	KB	1,000 ¹ bytes	1,024 ¹ bytes	1,000 bytes
megabyte	MB	1,000 ² bytes	1,024 ² bytes	1,000,000 bytes
gigabyte	GB	1,000 ³ bytes	1,024 ³ bytes	1,000,000,000 bytes
terabyte	TB	1,000 ⁴ bytes	1,024 ⁴ bytes	1,000,000,000,000 bytes
petabyte	PB	1,000 ⁵ bytes	1,024 ⁵ bytes	1,000,000,000,000,000 bytes
exabyte	EB	1,000 ⁶ bytes	1,024 ⁶ bytes	1,000,000,000,000,000,000 bytes
zettabyte	ZB	1,000 ⁷ bytes	1,024 ⁷ bytes	1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 bytes
yottabyte	YB	1,000 ⁸ bytes	1,024 ⁸ bytes	1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 bytes

Of course, having the data is not enough, it must be found and organised and delivered rapidly. Google is the world's most used engine for searching the world wide web taking 92% of the traffic, though there are others now that have higher standards of privacy, including DuckDuckGo. Qwant, Neeva and Kagi are some newcomers to the field and they offer services without capturing and storing your data. As well as search from a text question, there are now sites that can search for similar images from an image input. There are sites that allow access to free, uncopyrighted images and even one, TinEye, that allows you to find where an individual image is being used by any website, anywhere.

Spiders and crawlers, automatically managed software programmes (bots), trawl the vast data bases of the internet, prompted by language, keywords, spellings and usage, to find answers to questions. If you are wealthy (or have a very accomplished young computer-savvy grandkid) you can manipulate this process to make sure your website comes on the first page of the search (Does anyone go to the third page of results?)

Google's search engine is estimated to have around 90 billion visits a month and approximately 8.5 billion searches a day.



In the final session, Paul Bujac gave a brief introduction to generative AI and he discussed the development of a range of new tools that can be used to produce 'works of art'. Hitting the headlines is a system called ChatGPT which, seeded by a piece of text, can generate essays, poems, pictures, music or even computer code. Paul showed a few examples that he had 'created'. This could be just the tool for answering that homework question. No wonder some educationalists are getting concerned. Some however are getting quite excited by the opportunities.

The group will have a follow-up session to discuss the social implications of such Artificial Intelligence systems, in particular to explore the benefits and dangers.

Forthcoming Trips -

A message from Edward Baskerville

"I have forty seats on hold for **"The Yeoman of the Guard"** at the Buxton Opera House on Saturday 5th August. It is a full day out with an expected departure from Tarporley at 10:00AM, a little earlier from Kelsall. There will be an opportunity for a light lunch at a café of your choice before the matinee performance. After the show I will book at a couple of restaurants for supper before the return home. I have 37 members who have taken up places so I can accommodate a few more and it may be possible to source extra seats at the Opera House. I will probably need to close the booking after our April meeting and I should be grateful to hear asap from any further members who may be interested. Queries please to me at gebaskerville@btopenworld.com



It was very obvious to me from the reaction I received on mentioning the Christmas **Beatles Show Party Lunch** at the Queen Hotel that there is enough interest to justify requesting Greatdays to hold places for our U3A group. The day selected for this event is Tuesday 12th December 2023. The party starts with coffee at 10:30 followed by entertainment, then a three-course lunch and more entertainment with a departure around 3:00PM. We had such fun at the Mamma Mia themed party last December and I feel sure this year's show will be equally successful. There will be a coach arranged from Tarporley to Chester. As soon as I have been able to price this trip an email will go to all members.



I have yet to commit to any further events but a member has drawn my attention to the fact that the musical show **"Hamilton"** opens at The Palace in Manchester in mid November. I believe that that could be of interest to many of our trip goers. I shall attempt to have a proposal available in time for our members' meeting on Thursday 27th April. I am happy to receive any indication of the best day of the week for this and I will do my best to opt for the majority preference.



Capturing the Moment

Some more lovely images from the Digital Photography Group, who have been applying their knowledge of shutter speed, aperture and ISO to their pictures.



Raise your Voices.

Our u3a has a very lively Singing for Fun group as do many other u3a groups. This information has come from the NW Regional Newsletter. Perhaps Tarporley and District voices could add to the chorus in May.

The BIG SING

May 10th 2023 The NW Region would like to invite you to a **Big Sing** at the Quaker Meeting House in School Lane, Liverpool on **May 10th**. This is an all-day event for anyone who enjoys singing, whether or not they belong to a singing group.

It will be led by Fredrik Holm from Lancaster & Morecambe u3a and members of the regional committee. There will be charge of £15 per person to cover room hire, printing costs, refreshments and incidental expenses. Details are being finalised and we expect the information and booking arrangements to be available on the NW website from the middle of March. The last time we held a Big Sing (Pre Covid) booking was fast and furious. There were over 100 people raising their voices together so please make a note of the date and keep an eye on the website for further information.



.....and in conclusion.....

This seems in keeping with some of the other articles!



"My memory is really terrible Mildred, so I changed my password to "incorrect." That way when I log in with the wrong password, the computer will tell me ... "Your password is incorrect"

Just a brief word about the images in the Newsletter. They are sent with the participants agreement but are intended for inclusion in the Newsletter only. Please do not send images of u3a individuals in the Newsletter to other public, digital spaces.

To respond, or contact any Committee member please phone the Secretary, Liz Carter, on 01829 732863 or email Tarporleyu3a@outlook.com

For contributions about your group's activities, please get in touch with the editor at bandshardacre@btinternet.com

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