



Tarporley and District u3a

December 2023 Newsletter

Looking back through my records I see that this edition will be the start of my second year as editor. It has been an interesting and enjoyable journey and I hope that the information I have passed on has been of interest to you all as well. I will continue to try and bring the flavour of all Tarporley and Districts activities to you so that you are able to get the full value out of your membership.

I am off to my daughter's house for Christmas, so this year someone else is doing all the hard work. But being of a 'certain age' I shall start worry about the weather and the traffic and if the house will be OK while I am away. So, if you are planning on spending Christmas curled up in front of your own fire, perhaps you may be the one with the better deal!



Health and Safety Matters

As a charity, Tarporley and District u3a, along with all the other u3a groups, must conform to certain requirements that ensure the activities of the charity are being properly conducted. There has been new guidance published by the Charity Commission on the need for policies that cover Health and Safety as well as Risk Assessments, and the Committee has set up a small sub-group to look at how this can be achieved.

This sub- group will bear in mind that Tarporley and District u3a is an organisation which depends on volunteers who freely give of their time . They also take cognisance of the fact that our members are of a certain age, and it is important that their safety has been properly considered. Getting this balance right will be the prime focus of the group who will present their findings to the Committee in the new year.



MONTHLY MEETINGS

December – NO MEETING

Jan 25th at TARVIN COMMUNITY CENTRE

John Daines – LEO the world's first office computer (and it is British)

Feb 22nd – TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Neil Hanson - Ghostwriter

March 28th – TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Ken Wood – Magnolia and Tales of Genghis Khan

(nb – THIS IS NOT A TYPO!)

April 25th – TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

David Skillen – The Bentley Boys – “The Playboy Racers”

Strollers Walking Group

In spite of many obstacles, such as closed bridges, road works and mud, 18 of the Strollers managed a walk on Friday 10th November. It turned out to be a delightful walk in lovely sunshine in the Anderton Nature Park, close to the Anderton Lift and Marbury Country Park. The walk was along the canal, through open woodland, next to the river Weaver and was, relatively, mud free. We all decided we would repeat the walk in the spring.

14 of us enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Stanley Arms. We would all recommend the Stanley Arms, 2 courses, including a choice of home-made soup - Stilton and Broccoli proved very popular - and a main course, all for £10! We had pre-booked the table but didn't have to pre-order.

The end of the walk and we all look pretty happy!



The report was sent in by Pat Tyson Jones.

ED: There are a number of walking groups that cater for all levels of fitness and will take you out, with like-minded companions, into the glorious local countryside. These walks will have been researched by the leader so participants will be given sufficient information to judge if the expedition is within their capabilities. Total distance, height gained and even, sometimes, the number of stiles, will help walkers take sensible decisions and assure the leader that the walk can be completed safely.

Please go to the website for more details <https://u3asites.org.uk/tarporley/welcome>

Theatre Studies Group

After something of a slow start after the pandemic, the Theatre Studies group is gaining momentum, not to mention 3 new members. In the last couple of months they have been to three productions:

Rules for Living, a lively and ambitious production by the Davenham Players, at their small venue in Davenham

By the Waters of Liverpool, a thoughtful and well-crafted adaptation of the Helen Forrester book of the same name and **The Mousetrap**, the Agatha Christie play now in its 70th year of continuous productions in the West End

These latter two productions were at the Floral Pavilion in New Brighton, a venue which can be accessed easily at the end of the motorway and has free parking nearby.

In a lively meeting recently both the strong points and weaker aspects of each production was discussed, though overall each production had its champions. Perhaps the question that entertained the meeting the most was the longevity of *The Mousetrap*, was it skilfully plotted and timeless or dated and full of unbelievable coincidences!



The group has now four production to see in the future. Two will be booked by the convenor, the gloriously funny Michael Frayn farce, **Noises Off** at Storyhouse and **Murder in the Dark** at New Brighton. They will also see **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time** by Ashton Hayes Theatre Club in Tarvin, and **Vanya**, an NT Live cinema performance at Cheshire Oaks. The booking of tickets for these latter two shows will be done individually but members agreed to contact one another to ensure, where possible, they see the productions with others. To this end they have formally agreed to allow the Convenor to circulate personal contact details to make sharing of dates and cars easier.

If you want to find out more about the Theatre Studies group, do contact the Convenor via the website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/tarporley/welcome>

Spanish

The Spanish group has gone from strength to strength. It relocated to the Swan in September and is being run by a different member at each meeting although there is a convenor to administer e-mails etc. So far they have read and translated articles on gardening, the pros and cons of only children, Franco, and the wolf population in Spain.

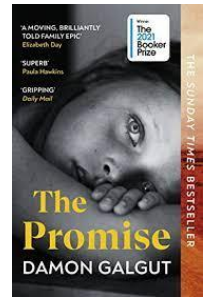
It continues to meet on the first and third Wednesday but at a slightly different time of 2pm to 3.30pm. The two previous convenors had run the group for some years and put in tremendous effort to help support u3a members to learn and develop their Spanish. They deserve many thanks and have earned the appreciation of the group for their leadership.



Book Group 1

The Promise by Damon Galgut

This 2021 Booker prize winner by South African author Damon Galgut prompted a very lively discussion. It is set over four decades from 1986, when Rachel, wife of Manie and mother to Anton, Astrid and Amor, dies. Amor had overheard her father promise her dying mother that he will cede ownership of a cottage on the farm to Salome the maid. As the decades pass and the promise is unfulfilled, Amor leaves her family, returning at 10 yearly intervals to attend funerals of first her father and then sister and brother. At each visit, she stubbornly tries to ensure that the promise is kept.



It was agreed that this was a complex book but not necessarily an enjoyable read. The Swart family members and supporting characters are extreme in their views. They are portrayed as unsympathetic and unpleasant people as they try to navigate and adapt to the political changes that take place around them, and the 'promise' of a better life that these changes might bring. Even at the end, when Salome finally receives the deeds, a threat of eviction hangs over the property. Despite some elements of dark humour, this was not a book to raise a smile, but perhaps to contemplate on the personal and political threads that have created the complex and fascinating country of South Africa.

Book Group 2

"A Rose for Winter" by Laurie Lee was our book group choice for November. This records the reflections of the author on his return to Andalusia in the 1950's, having previously lived there before the Second World War.

We were all impressed with the evocative descriptions of Andalusia, its people and culture. Many of the group had travelled in this area and made interesting contributions to the discussion.

Book Club 2 score : 8/10



Book Club 3 - Murder Mystery

The first meeting of the Murder, Mystery book club will take place on Tuesday, 5th December @ 10am. Our first book is:

Holy Island by L J Ross

The first in the series of books featuring DCI Ryan and set on the lovely island of Lindisfarne.

If you would like to join us, please email Kim Harding on khard364@aol.com

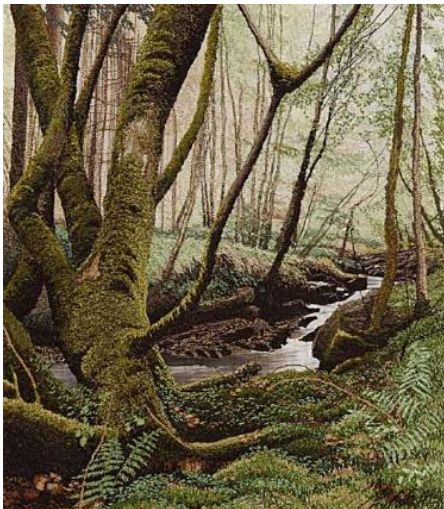


Art Appreciation

The November meeting of the Art Appreciation Group looked at textile art, its history, from the 5th century Pazyrk Carpet (see image – one of the oldest known pieces of weaving in existence) and the 11th century Bayeux Tapestry through to seven contemporary artists working in the field today in the UK. These artists are;

Richard McVetis, who embroiders in minute detail often in monochrome,

Hanny Newton, based in Shropshire who makes goldwork with a contemporary twist,



Alison Holt, now based in Oswestry who paints on silk and then uses free motion machine sewing to complete the work, (see image)

Debbie Smyth an internationally known thread wrap artist,

Valerie Wartelle, based in Yorkshire who makes atmospheric images out of merino wool,

Laura Thomas, based in Wales who is an expert weaver who captures her work in acrylic.

The final work they studied was 'The Red Dress Project', which was an investigation into 'identity' by artist, **Kirsty MacCleod**. From 2009 to 2023, pieces of the Red Dress travelled the globe being continuously added to, reflecting national cultural and individual styles.

Constructed out of 87 pieces of burgundy silk dupion, the garment has been worked on by 380 artists from 51 countries. To find out more about this project click on the link which takes you to a web site where the concept and making of the dress are explained in detail.

<https://reddressembroidery.com/access>



Tarporley Quilting Group.

A report from Anne Price

We are a friendly group with a range of abilities, sharing ideas and helping each other to develop our quilting skills. We meet every 4th Wednesday at 1.30 -3.30 p.m. in the Craven room at the Community centre, working on our own projects or one suggested by a member. Come along and meet us or contact me, Anne Price via the website.

Some of you may have seen our group quilt when we had our U3A Open Day. It seems a long time ago now but in September 2019 we decided that the Quilters Guild Red Manor House Quilt would help us learn new skills and techniques as each month we were sent a new block to make up.



The committee kindly gave us funding to buy the materials and so we got started. But lockdown came along and things slowed down a bit. Nevertheless, in time the quilt grew and we learnt a lot of new skills.

Once the front was completed, we used wadding and backing to make the “sandwich” and the long job of hand quilting began with members seated around the table needles in hand. Margaret finished it off beautifully with the binding and the group quilt was complete, just over 2 years after we started. It was so worthwhile. A big contribution to the centre fund was made through the sale of the quilt.

Margaret and I started our own Red Manor House quilt during lockdown but I have to admit mine is not finished as other projects got in the way. That's what quilting does , it becomes a bit of an obsession. Be warned.

Craft Group

This group of enthusiasts meet once a month on the afternoon Thursday after the monthly Meeting. They get together from 1.00pm until 3.00pm in the Committee Rom at Tarporley Community Centre and would be delighted to welcome new members.



The skills they practice and perfect are many and various. As well as sewing and knitting, they have looked at paper and parchment crafts, quilling, glass and pebble painting, crochet and the traditional Japanese, geometric embroidery style called Shashiko. Sometimes the group concentrate on one activity and at this time of year there is a very seasonal look to their work.



At other meetings individuals bring their own projects to work on and one advantage of this is that members learn from one another and develop new skills.



As well as the satisfaction of creating beautiful things, there is also the pleasure of making items that are practical and useful.

If you would like to find out more about this group, please go to the website <https://u3asites.org.uk/tarporley> and the Group Coordinator will be happy to pass on your details to the Craft Group Convenor.

Nature Group

November's Nature meeting was one of two seasons, Spring and Autumn. John Roberts introduced us to the wildlife, he and Isla had encountered during their recent trip to South Africa. They explored the Garden Route along the Southern coast and, with the odd time out for some wine tasting, they discovered an incredible range of plants, birds, insects, and marine and land animals.



Although we were expecting to see photographs of cheetahs and zebras, it was the novelty of all the other species which impressed.



In the second part of the meeting, we moved back into autumn, revisiting our recent WhatsApp posts, and sharing the magic of this season. The dominant theme was of course the autumn colours. Perhaps, the beeches are brilliant every year, but this season was no exception. We also noted more birds appearing on feeders, many, many skeins of geese flying between feeding and resting grounds, and a wider variety of shore birds.



Science November 2023

The Science Group explores a variety of subjects; often topical subjects reflecting the media headlines. Typical of these subjects is climate change, with the initiatives to reduce consumption of fossil fuels and thus CO₂ emissions. We usually appreciate formal 'PowerPoint' presentations, but this time, we took a more informal approach to discuss climate change.

Our starting point was "Net Zero plus and Cheshire", local initiatives designed to make an impact on both the immediate and global environments. One of our members, who maintains a keen interest in such local projects, outlined some of these Net Zero initiatives. They included:



the potential use of salt cavities to store hydrogen to make electricity when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing,

capturing the waste CO₂ from cement works and storing it away under Morecambe Bay,

manufacturing and distributing hydrogen for industrial use,

manufacturing synthetic aviation fuel.

Such a varied range of projects stimulated a variety of responses. The general feeling was that these were challenging projects, difficult to execute with demanding technologies and ill-defined timescales, uncertain financial cases, increased reliance on foreign economies, and unforeseen problems. No doubt we will continue to review progress.

Website

The Committee is going to revamp the website. The system that has been used in the past as a template for all u3a websites is changing, and Tarporley and District u3a will be using this opportunity to create a more lively and attractive public presence that can be used easily by all members and also attract new ones.

The work will be done by a small sub-group who will report to the Committee in the New Year. If you have any comments about the website, please feel free to contact Paul Bujac on paul.bujac@gmail.com



Welsh National Opera

This information is from Edward Baskerville

I have seats on hold for a **Welsh National Opera event** at **Venue Cymru Llandudno** on **Friday March 15th**. The performance commences at 7:00PM and includes some of the best-known pieces in the operatic world. The evening will feature music regularly heard in popular culture from Britten, Bizet, Humperdinck, Mozart, Mascagni, Offenbach, Puccini and Verdi. Enjoy a wealth of delightful arias, instantly recognisable, to sublime choral and orchestral numbers from great operas.



The coach will **depart from Tarporley at 4:15PM** with a pickup in Kelsall. Unfortunately, there will not be time for a pre-concert supper, though snacks can be obtained. There will be time for a stroll along the front should the weather be clement.

Concert tickets and coach are **£55 per head** for this trip. If interested, please contact Edward on 01829 751967. Cheques as usual, payable please to "Tarporley & District U3A".

May I remind members that once booked refunds following cancellation cannot normally be made. Where a waiting list exists due to overbooked events, it may be possible to offer a cancelled place to another member. In that case a refund request should be submitted to the treasurer.

Ed: Edward has also started looking at getting a trip together to go to see a Gilbert and Sullivan performance in Buxton in August. More information about this will be forthcoming in future Newsletters and at Monthly Meetings.

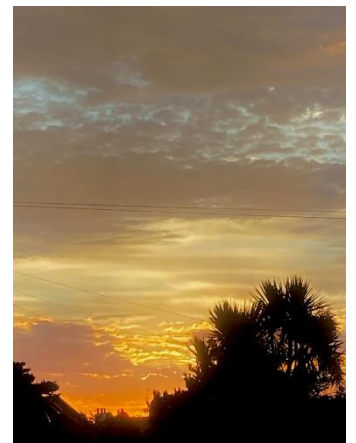
There will now be a waiting list set up for tickets for the musical Edward Scissorhands on Saturday February 24th at Liverpool Empire.

The cost is £75 for the theatre tickets and transport. The Coach leaves Tarpорley at 12 noon and Kelsall at 12.15 pm, returning at approximately 6 pm.

Please contact Raye Hurst to see if you can get a place – email address - rayewirral@aol.com



Digital Photography



ED: Every month I receive a file of beautiful images from the Digital Photography Group, and I have great difficulty in picking my favourites to show you. This month the theme was “weather” and I think you will agree they capture the essence of the subject perfectly.

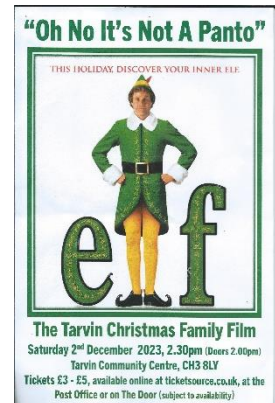
Tarvin Community Centre

Elf – instead of the usual panto!

Saturday December 2nd at 2.30pm

Starring Will Farrell

(Please note there will be no Christmas Market after the film)



.....and finally...

JINGLE BELLS (alternative version)

Jingle bells, jingle bells, Santa's on his way,
Remember why we celebrate and call it Christmas Day,
Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells,
Think good thoughts the while,
Count your blessings once again
And give a happy smile.

Weaving through the crowds, on a busy shopping day,
Hunting presents down, grumbling all the way,
Music in the stores, buzzing in your ears,
Try to watch your budget now –
It could all end in tears.

Now, jingle bells, jingle bells, Santa's on his way.
Write those cards and buy some stamps,
Make sure you can pay,
But, jingle bells, jingle bells, keep a happy smile,
Many more worse off than you -
Give those a thought a while.

When the day is done, feet up on a stool,
 Count your blessings now – that's the golden rule;
 Got your heating on, food enough to eat,
 Christmas time is time to give,
 So give someone a treat.

Yes, jingle bells, jingle bells, Santa's on his way,
 Remember why we celebrate and call it Christmas Day,
 Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells,
 Think good thoughts the while,
 Count your blessings once again
 And give a happy smile,
 Yes, count your blessings once again
 And give a happy smile.

KEB Dec. '23

Just a brief word about any images of members 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 get in touch with the Secretary, Kim Harding by email at Tarporleyu3a@outlook.com

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

For wider information on the activities of Tarporley and District u3a go to

www.u3asites.co.org/tarporley/welcome

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