



## Tarporley and District u3a

### July 2023 Newsletter

We have enjoyed a wonderful few weeks of good weather in this part of the country and have seen our gardens flourish. It has been an exceptional summer for roses with first blooms bigger than usual. Of course, we have been grumbling about the humidity and the difficulty sleeping, but we wouldn't be British if we didn't have a bit of a moan about the weather. We were even blessed with some evening and overnight rain to refresh the gardens, though as I write this, we are anticipating thunderstorms that potentially might be quite damaging for our thirsty plots. If you are going on holiday in the UK this month, I do hope that the good weather holds for you.



**Please note there is no Monthly Meeting in August and no Newsletter.**

#### Membership Renewal

Membership Renewal notices will be going out in the next couple of weeks and the committee has decided that this year's membership will remain at **£15 per annum**.

We are mindful of the rising cost of living, but we do feel that the cost of membership is a fair one considering the opportunities it offers to join so many interest groups and to receive the Third Age Magazine. Do remember that you also have access to the North West Region u3a website, where you will find details of the North West Summer School and also the main u3a UK website, where you will find competitions and lots of other information.

We have also agreed that we will continue not to charge for attending our monthly meetings.

If you have never been to a monthly meeting, do please try to come along, we always have interesting speakers, you can sign up to forthcoming trips and generally find out more about what we have to offer. We would be delighted to see you.



# MONTHLY MEETING

Tarporley Community Centre.

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

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

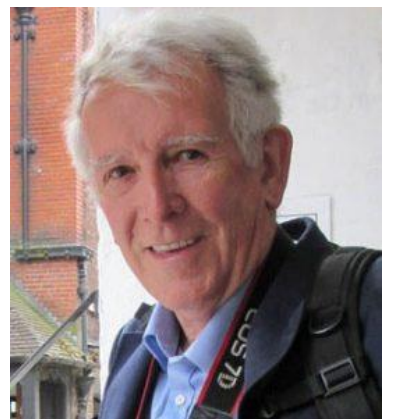
The meeting begins about **10.15 am** with announcements.

The talk starts at **10.30 am**.

## David Cummings

# CHESTER CELEBRATES

**A local historian takes a look at the many events that happen regularly in our wonderful city. Among other festivals, he will look at the Mystery Plays, the Roman Weekend and the Lord Mayor's Procession**



## Art Appreciation

The group was delighted to welcome local textile artist Rachel Davies to their June meeting to see some of her wonderful designs and projects and to hear how, with imagination and creative flair, textiles can bring communities together, illuminate stories and create memories.

Rachel is part of a Tarporley Parish Council initiative to create community arts projects that reflect the rural setting. 1500 origami foxes have been made by Tarporley residents which will be used to create two installations in the village in the autumn.



In Chester, Rachel was commissioned to tell the story of Ellen Aldersay, daughter of a prominent citizen, who fled Chester with her penniless lover, Ralph Jarman, in 1574 to escape an arranged marriage. In his distress, the angry father locked the Pepper Gate of the city. The couple prospered and later returned as a Lord and Lady, to be reconciled with her father. The dress incorporates details of Chester's black and white decorations, and two keys to symbolise the locking of the gates.



Another more personal piece takes flowers painted by Rachel's late grandmother, applied to material and then embellished with delicate embroidery, linking two people, two generations and two skills.

Rachel has also been commissioned to create hats for the Chester Mystery plays using woven 'rag rug' techniques, incorporating old and recycled materials.



Rachel trained as a textile designer and worked in industry before spending 16 years as a lecturer. She now works as a free-lance artist and designer, undertaking commercial and community projects.

The Art Appreciation Group meet on the second Tuesday of each month and explores a wide variety of artistic skills and endeavours. Please contact convenor Audrey Wraith at [j.wraith2012@btinternet.com](mailto:j.wraith2012@btinternet.com) for more details

## Book Group 1

In a change from their usual practice, the Book Group brought examples of their favourite poets and poems to the meeting. Some members adored reading poetry on a regular basis while others rarely gave it a second thought. Some had many poetry books and collections on their shelves to choose from while others struggled to find a slim volume that must be there, somewhere! However, everyone contributed and the group rendition of all the verses of *The Owl and the Pussycat* was an unexpected triumph.



The selection was quite eclectic, but, perhaps not surprisingly, featured established poets first encountered when much younger. Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Walter de la Mare and Tennyson were on the list but so were



more modern poets like Philip Larkin, Adrian Mitchell and Roger McGough. Most were male, though Jenny Joseph and Carol Ann Duffy got a hearing, as did Dorothea Smart, the British-Barbadian poet.

All members agreed that poetry manipulated language to get the most out of every word and that simile and metaphor, rhythm and rhyme, were the engines that allowed so much narrative and emotion to be conveyed in such a small space.



The next book to be discussed will be *Unsheltered* by Barbara Kingsolver.

## Book Group 2

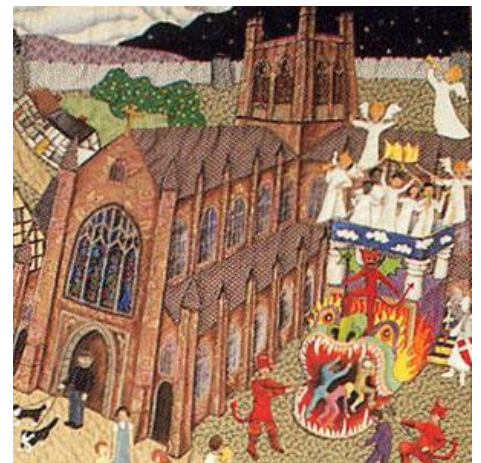
The group looked at the novel, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* by the British-Cypriot writer Christy Lefteri. Published in 2019, it recounts the harrowing journey of two Syrian refugees as they make their way to sanctuary in Europe. While not a true story, it was based on the author's experiences in an Athens refugee centre. It produced lively discussion given the topicality of the subject.



The next book to be discussed will be *The Music Shop* by Rachel Joyce.

## Chester Mystery Play

The Chester Mystery Play is an historic theatrical event presented under professional direction by the people of Chester. Their performance, once every five years, has become a rare and much anticipated highlight of the British arts calendar, attracting people from all over the world. The production is one of the largest community events in the UK featuring hundreds of enthusiasts of all ages among the cast, crew and the support teams working in administration, marketing and front of house. Performances are held in Chester Cathedral and will finish on **July 15<sup>th</sup>**.



Such performances have their origin in the 14<sup>th</sup> century when Chester Guilds participated in street performances to make the story of Christ's life more accessible to the common people. Often rowdy, the Church pushed back against the power of the Guilds and the plays ceased in Chester in 1578. They were revived in 1951.

To find out more about the history of this unique event and to book tickets – they are selling fast – go to [www.chestermysteryplays.com](http://www.chestermysteryplays.com)



## Nature Group

June was another opportunity for the Nature Group to go on a field trip. This time courtesy of our members Cliff and Norma, about 10 of us went to discover the world of moths. Cliff and Norma have a moth trap. This is essentially a large box with a bright light to attract moths at night. The excitement is opening the box in the morning to discover what's flown in. We were not disappointed as you can see from the photographs.



Poplar Hawk Moth



White Ermine Moth



Elephant Hawk Moth

## Science Group

Two topics were up for discussion at the June meeting. Sue Hardacre looked at the educational concept known as STEM, standing for Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics. Originally seen as an integrated approach to get underrepresented groups to study science – girls, minority groups and poorer students – it is now seen as the means to increase opportunities in the science-based industries of the future. However, most of the STEM approach seems to be in the provision of Continuous Professional Development for teachers and on-line teaching resources. While agreeing that greater 'data literacy' will be vital in the future for all of us, Sue also argued that a fully integrated education system needed the arts subjects to provide the communicators, lawyers and philosophers etc. who would interrogate and challenge the science and see that future advances were regulated to ensure the maximum benefits for all.



Pete Broad, a biochemist by training, described the story behind Wegovy, the weight loss drug currently receiving a lot of media coverage. He first explained how the body uses carbohydrates (sugars), fats and proteins to generate energy. Control of blood sugar levels is very important and when this breaks down it can lead to type 2 diabetes which is often associated with obesity. The Danish company, Novo Nordisk introduced a new drug, Ozempic, in 2017 for control of blood glucose in type 2 diabetes. This drug works by mimicking a peptide hormone released by the gut. Patients taking this drug improved their glucose levels and additionally often lost weight. The company performed further trials of this drug at higher doses and showed that it could cause



significant weight loss. They have now received approval to market this drug for weight loss. Interestingly, for weight loss purposes, the company has rebranded the drug as 'Wegovy' and the marketing material differentiates from it Ozempic by stating that it works by a different mechanism (suppressing appetite). Obesity is a serious problem that stresses both individuals and health services, and there is cultural pressure in the west for slim body shape. A lively discussion looked at the causes of obesity and overeating and if drug treatment rather than lifestyle changes was the better approach.

## Theatre Studies Group

The Theatre Studies group has taken a while to get back from the pandemic. Though all theatres were shut, online streaming did allow the group to access some excellent productions and thanks must be offered to Stephen Doubt who trawled the internet to find some great on-line theatrical experiences.

The group has managed to see some local productions recently. **The Verdict** at New Brighton was thought to be quite pedestrian and lack tension (not to mention Paul Newman!) **Pride and Prejudice\*sort of** at Storyhouse was lively, cheerful and hugely inventive but lacked Austen's wit and subtlety. The National Theatre Live production of **Good**, starring David Tennent was an incredibly impressive performance by him and his two supporting actors. The play had resonance in the situation in American politics today and made the audience think hard about important issues.



Another N.I Live production was **Best of Enemies** starring David Harewood and Zachary Quinto as opposing political rivals Gore Vidal and William F Buckley. Set against the excitement of the 1968 American presidential elections, the conflict between them that developed was driven by the smaller national network, ABC, out to grab audience share by whatever means.

Members went to the Royal Exchange Manchester to see a re-interpretation of the Dario Fo 1970's farce *Can't Pay? Won't Pay!*. Now called **No Pay No Way** it highlighted the struggle of ordinary people to manage the rising cost of living – very pertinent! It was a very funny performance imaginatively told - who would have imagined actors entering the scene by helter-skelter.?



While booking local events as individuals, hopefully though not necessarily on the same night, is logically reasonable, it does take away the feeling of a 'joint enterprise' which adds so much to the enjoyment of the visit. The group also needs to factor in the understanding that some members are less confident about driving at night. The cost of transport has also risen quite considerably, adding to the overall cost.

However, the group will continue to identify productions both local and further afield and meet at regular intervals to share their comments and enthusiasm. If any u3a member would like to join, then please contact the convenor on 01829 741962/07946 958831.

## Getting beyond 'Please' and 'Thank You'

Lots of things make a great holiday, the location, the hotel, the weather and the food all make a trip memorable. To be able to understand the language, to read signs and menus and to confidently go shopping can add to the enjoyment. If you can also converse with people in the local language, another layer of pleasure and interest can be gained. U3a has three language groups that can help you.

Thanks to increased demand there are now 2 French language groups. **French Un Group** meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month. They are very fortunate to have two fluent French speakers in the group who share leading the meetings. The usual format is to take some French text, perhaps a news article or a passage from a book and read and translate it. This often brings up points of grammar or colloquialisms which the experts help with. It might sound a bit serious but, in fact, is great fun. What's not hilarious about the rules of agreement of the *passé composé* with a preceding direct object?! They also make use of IT by showing films or listening to French music and trying to understand the words. They often learn about aspects of day-to-day French life with information and anecdotes from members who have lived in France or who travel there often.



**French Deux Group** This group which started in January 2023 meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of the month, 2.30-5.00pm

The group has recently opted to split into two sessions: the first for the more advanced and the second for the beginners. With the more advanced speakers they aim to speak in French as much as possible and members are encouraged to suggest topics for discussion, texts or short stories to read together. For the beginners, they are currently mainly using a BBC textbook; new/used copies of which are readily available online.

This group does not have the benefit of having a native French speaker, so they have to help each other to remember vocabulary. They just hope to carry on learning together in a fun and relaxed environment, make some progress and keep the French that they do have fresh in their minds!

The **Spanish Language Group** is a small friendly one that meet every 1st and 3rd Wednesday. They concentrate on conversational Spanish with a little grammar and use many of the online videos to aid them. This group would be delighted to welcome new members, whatever their language capabilities. Anyone interested or wanting more information can contact either Lynda Lightowler (lyndaandbob@btinternet.com) or Steve Hammond, (steveatutkinton@gmail.com)



The **Italian Language Group** meets in the morning on the first and third Tuesdays. With the advantage of a native Italian speaker, they have developed conversational skills that cover most social situations. They have also gained sufficient knowledge of grammar to both read and write Italian to an intermediate level. However, they would warmly welcome new members but recognise that some basic understanding of the language would be helpful. For more information contact [simon.dunning1@btinternet.com](mailto:simon.dunning1@btinternet.com).



If you return from holiday frustrated by your inability to converse, then please do contact the relevant convenor. If you have a good working knowledge of these three languages and would like to share those skills, you would be made very welcome by the groups. If you have a competence in another language that you would like to share with others, then do contact [don.igoe@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:don.igoe@hotmail.co.uk) and he will assist in setting up a new group. u3a Mandarin or Arabic perhaps!

Please also bear in mind that language groups have a natural limit on numbers so, if you would like to join, then please contact the convenor first to find out the current situation within each group.

Merci, Gracias, Grazie and maybe, one day, XieXie and Shukran!

## Defibrillator Training

Tarporley and District NW Ambulance Service First Responders will be holding training courses (max 1 Hour) on a Saturday mornings throughout July and until September. They will be available between 9.30am until 12.30pm and will be held at Tarporley War Memorial Hospital.

Anyone wishing to take advantage of this offer should book a place by contacting Malcolm Davies on [malgeorge520@gmail.com](mailto:malgeorge520@gmail.com) to book a place.

Many locations and buildings now have a defibrillator in place but knowing how to access them and use them safely and with confidence, ensures that they can do what they are intended to do, save lives.





## New 'Hands-On' Project

At a recent Wellbeing Fair at Tarporley Community Centre, the u3a stall did some great work informing people of the wonderful life-enhancing benefits of the organisation. We were approached by a gentleman who wondered if there might be a place in our organisation for a 'practical workshop' based activity that might appeal to men, though not exclusively so.



The idea behind such a suggestion was prompted by the existence of a recognised national charity Men in Sheds, that helps men 'connect, converse and create'. Meetings are based around a practical theme allowing for connections to be made and for friendships to flourish. The gentleman concerned has a large shed and a vast array of tools and would be willing to host a group of like-minded, 'hands-on' enthusiasts under the u3a banner. In a separate conversation, another person expressed similar views.

Such a u3a group would of course, be open to all members. If you feel that this is something that interests you then please contact [rayewirral@aol.com](mailto:rayewirral@aol.com) so that the Committee can see if there is any momentum for taking this forward.

## Trips – be quick off the mark!

One of the pleasures of u3a membership are the frequent trips undertaken by members. They are arranged to cover a range of geographical locations and cultural events, with coach travel making it easy for members to go to places they might hesitate to attend individually. With an opportunity for a meal often factored into the programme, a great day/evening out is guaranteed.

However, you do have to move quickly. Trips are usually announced at the Monthly Meeting where an opportunity to sign up is available. Details of the trips are also sent out by the organiser to all members as well, and a waiting list is often established. Sometimes a waiting list prompts the organiser to get more tickets and book a larger coach, but it also enables them to have substitutes if, or when, people can't then attend.

There may still one or two places left on the trip to **Wroxeter Roam Vineyard** on Tuesday July 11<sup>th</sup>. The trip includes a tour of the vineyard, a wine tasting and lunch. Do call Raye on 07870 767940 to check the current situation.



Two tickets for the Buxton Gilbert and Sullivan festival on August 5th have become free unexpectedly. This is to see the matinee performance of The Yeoman of the Guard and will cost £44 per head. Call Edward on 01829 751967 if you would like to go.





A trip to the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester has been arranged for November 23<sup>rd</sup> to hear a programme by Beethoven and Rossini with the Halle Orchestra and Choir. Waiting list places are now available for the trip which includes the option of a pre-concert supper, and the cost will be £45 per person. (However, this price applies to the party consisting only of over 60's, which shouldn't be a problem for u3a!)

Again, contact Edward on 01829 751967 for details.

## Film Nights.

**There are no films at Tarvin Community Centre in July and August**

### Tarporley Community Centre

July 21<sup>st</sup> at 7.30pm

**Living** - the story of a strait-laced and very proper civil servant who reassess his life when faced with a devastating diagnosis.

With Bill Nighy

**Ticket £5**



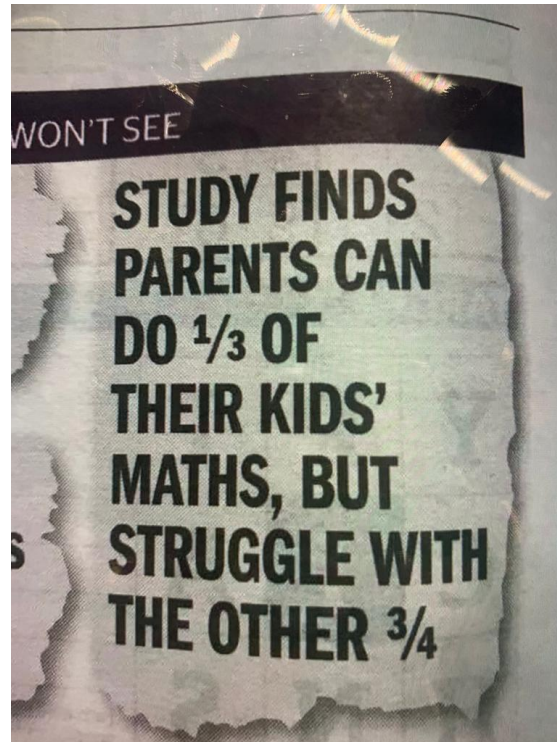
If the thought of sitting in a darkened cinema is less attractive in the summer then take a look at **Moonlight Flicks**, offered in July and August in the grounds of Chester Cathedral by Storyhouse. This year there are also showings at Snugbury's Ice Cream Farm and Claremont Farm on the Wirral



For theatre fans there is the unique experience of the **Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre** where only 2 plays are on offer this year, A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Great Gatsby. Every full price ticket gives access to a free ticket for an under 12-year-old, so perhaps a chance to take the grandchildren. Go to [www.storyhouse.com](http://www.storyhouse.com) for more details.

**.....and finally....**

As one of the issues discussed by the Science Group was the need for Data Literacy, I thought this might be a suitable end note!



**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](mailto:Tarporleyu3a@outlook.com)**

**For contributions about your group's activities, please get in touch with the editor at [bandshardacre@btinternet.com](mailto:bandshardacre@btinternet.com)**

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