



Tarporley and District u3a March 2024 Newsletter

March is the first month of spring – meteorologically speaking – and as I look outside the window as I write this, there are plenty of signs that spring is on its way. The snowdrops are abundant and there are daffodils that have decided that winter is over.



However, for those of you with good memories, February 22nd to March 5th 2018, will ring a bell. This was the time of “The Beast from the East” which gripped us in its icy hand and even popped back on February 17th /18th to remind us that nature is a force that can’t be tamed. If you do think that divine intervention might help keep the snow as “drops” and not “drifts” don’t forget that St David’s Day is on March 1st and St Patrick’s Day on March 17th. If the wind decides to blow again from Siberia, we may need all the help we can get.

Committee News.

The Committee is delighted to announce that the new Membership Secretary is Peter Schofield who has stepped into the gap left by the recent resignation of Anita Langford, who is relocating. Keeping track of our 519 members is quite a task, especially when it comes to renewal time, but Peter brings skill and enthusiasm to the job and the Committee offers him a warm welcome.



As Peter Schofield has moved to a new role, we now urgently need a replacement for him as **Room Booking Secretary** for our 18 interest groups & Committee that use Tarporley Community Centre (TCC). We are fortunate that we get advanced booking privileges & direct access to TCC's booking website, so the role requires that the groups that use TCC have their meeting rooms booked in advance directly on the TCC bookings website. You would need access to & be able to operate an internet connected computer (laptop or desktop). No previous knowledge of Beacon or the TCC system is required as full training & support will be provided. If you would like to know more or would like to volunteer your service, please speak with one of the committee.

Committee meetings are held monthly on the third Wednesday in the month. They are held in the Committee Room of Tarporley Community Centre from 1.30pm until 3.30pm. Any member of u3a is welcome to come along to observe, though not to vote. The next meeting will be on March 20th.

You are more than welcome to view Committee minutes. Please contact the Secretary on tarporleyu3a@outlook.com and she will be delighted to forward you a copy.

MONTHLY MEETING

TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Thursday March 28th 2024

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

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

The talk starts at **10.30 am**.

Ken Wood

Magnolia – and Tales of Genghis Khan

**A photographic journey through the Gobi Desert to the
Flaming Cliffs of Khongoryn Els**

Safety Group Summary of Progress, February 2024

The aim was to develop a Risk Management statement to improve the safety of members and to help event leaders proceed with confidence. This will be achieved by advice and guidance with the absolute minimum of compulsion.

To this end, the committee have accepted the proposals, the main points of which are:

1. **Members Personal Responsibility Policy.**

Members have a responsibility to look after their own safety and that of others and should not undertake any activity that they feel is outside their competence and ability. They should let their activity leader know of any issues which may be relevant.

Implementation

Existing and new members will be informed of this on joining and at renewal. Membership will imply acceptance. Members will be advised to carry contact details such as an 'In Case of Emergency' (ICE) card at all u3a events.

2. **Group Convenor Responsibility Policy**

The Committee requests that group convenors encourage those responsible for a meeting or event to consider the risks and mitigate them where practicable.

Implementation

The u3a Trust's Risk Assessment and other checklists, tailored as necessary, together with a sample Emergency Procedure, will be made available to members on our website and reviewed at least annually. Relevant checklists include those for Day Trips, Holiday Travel, Walk Leader, Home Based and Venue Based Activities

A fuller version will soon be available on the Tarporley and District website.

Book Club 1

The choice this month was *Salt on Your Tongue* by Charlotte Runcie. Subtitled "Women and the Sea", the author writes of her own fascination with the sea and the many myths, legends and facts that intertwine to make our island story. Weaving through the sections is the story of her own first pregnancy, the fears and concerns she had about her future as a mother and the strength she drew from the times she spent by the ocean.

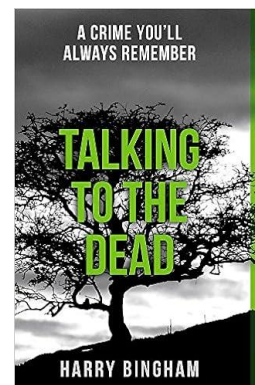
Charlotte Runcie is a poet as well as a newspaper columnist, and she writes with flair and elegance. Her description of the birth of her daughter was vivid and very realistic. Her relationship with her grandmother – wife of the former Archbishop of Canterbury – was beautifully described. She also displayed a knowledge of maritime history showing extensive research into the subject. But a book of connected essays is not the most popular literary form enjoyed by the group, though most enjoyed many parts of it. This is, perhaps, a book to dip in and out of and might have a special resonance for any reader familiar with the Scottish locations described.



Book Club 3 – Murder/Mystery

The book chosen was *Talking to the Dead*, the first in a 6-volume series by Harry Bingham featuring the petite, junior, and very Welsh, Detective Constable Fiona Griffiths.

As well as a murder investigation, conducted in a very conventional way, the reader is confronted by the growing mystery of Fiona herself. We know she has had a breakdown as a teenager and that she has a first in philosophy from Cambridge. There are hints that her father may not be an upstanding citizen. Fiona revels in the routine of police work, yet her intuition connecting disparate facts prompt her to take unconventional steps, actions that become more extreme as the book progresses and more details of her personal and medical history are revealed. Her empathy with the dead, culminating with her night in the mortuary, caused some shock to the readers, but the dramatic ending and the revelations that followed brought the book to a neat, and some would say, very satisfactory conclusion.



As always, views on the book varied, one member had already started the sequel while another had put it to one side with relief. Such is the pleasure of book clubs and the variety of opinions they generate!

For more information about the group, please send a message via the **email** link on the U3A Tarporley website, Book Club – Murder, Mystery page. **Please be sure to mention the group name in your message.**

Art Appreciation

A Report from the convenor.

“We have had a busy few meetings; in December we shared stories about a variety of Christmas baubles and decorations. Spanning from the 1940’s to the present, made of glass, paper, wood, metal and cane, all with fascinating and sometimes moving stories behind them. We played a game of Pin the Smile on Mona Lisa which was great fun and finished off the meeting looking at a range of winter themed artworks.



We had our Late, Late Christmas lunch at the Swan in January and took part in quite a challenging art quiz produced by one of our members.

In February we met with local artist, illustrator, author and producer, Lorna Gibson. Lorna went to school in Tarporley and later spent many seasons at ski resorts drawing and developing animal characters with pencils during the evenings. Later she developed the ideas into self published short stories and then 3D, making small sets out of needle felted scenes. This



all culminated in the creation, animation and the filming of an 11-minute animation that was narrated by Stephen Fry and shown on BBC in December ‘Mr Bear’s Christmas’ which we all watched.





Also in February a number of us visited Sudley House on the outskirts of Liverpool and were lucky enough to have two guided tours; one explaining the history of the house, its furnishing and fittings and one on the fabulous artwork collected by the previous owners of the house. It is now part of Liverpool Museums and is well worth a visit."



Art Workshop Group

An Art Workshop group, newly formed in 2024 has run a series of one day workshops open to all U3A members. The first looked at Expressionism and below are some of the pictures painted by participants.

The next courses are on Acrylics and Charcoal Drawing and other events are planned for the autumn.

The group meet at 1.30-3.30pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month in the Craven Room at Tarporley Community Centre, if you would like to join, there are still some places available so please contact the Group Coordinator via the website. <https://u3asites.org.uk/Tarporley>

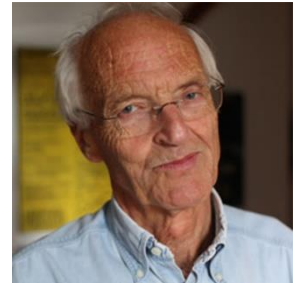


Here is just a small collection of the work completed by the class.



Theatre Studies Group

After rather a long quiet period, the Theatre Studies Group got back into its stride with a visit by 14 members to see the farce *Noises Off* at Chester Storyhouse on Feb 7th. The play was written by Michael Frayn and first performed in 1982. It has been revised and updated a number of times since then and has been performed regularly throughout the world.



Act 1 introduces us to an unprepared and under-rehearsed repertory company preparing their farce 'Nothing On' for opening night. The play has a full complement of the necessities of a farce, opening and closing doors, split-second timing, a scantily dressed ingenue and of course, dropped trousers. However, it seems glaringly unlikely that all will be ready in time for opening night. In Act 2 you see the set from behind and the chaos and ill-feelings that develop while the cast still try to get themselves and the correct props through the right doors at the right time. Act 3 shows the play as performed to a bemused audience at the end of the run, with the play and characters in shambles but the actors, troupers all, trying to carry on.

With witty dialog, superb timing and physical energy galore from the cast it was a delightful way to spend an afternoon, though farce, a dramatic form less common these days, did render a slightly 'out of date' air to the piece.

In the same week, a number of members booked independently to see *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, a production by Ashton Hayes Theatre Club at Tarvin Community Centre. Adapted from the book by Mark Haddon, the play traces the journey made by Christopher Boone, a teenager with autism, as he tries to navigate the complexities of the breakdown of his parent's marriage and the discovery that his mother is not dead, but living in London. With a sparse set and a talented and flexible supporting cast, the piece was carried by an exceptional performance by 16 year old Tom Campbell as the autistic Christopher,



Play Reading Group

WANTED - NEW MEMBERS

PLAY READING

The title says it all. We read plays.

No preparation, voice training or memory test required.

You don't know what you're getting or who you're playing.

You laugh because you're a twenty-year-old or a pet Labrador. You may be playing both.

You've come to have fun so why not give us a try?

When; 2pm - 4pm, 4th Thursday of the month

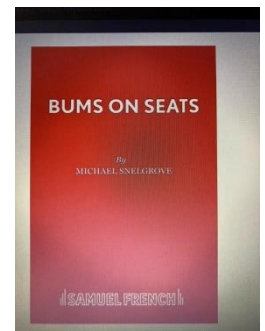
Where; Tarporley Baptist and Methodist Church, School Room

Contact; jan.kenney@hotmail.co.uk

The anecdotal evidence is that this group contains the highest proportion of laughs per group hour in all the interest groups! Here are just two of the plays on the menu –

Bums on Seats by Michael Snelgrove

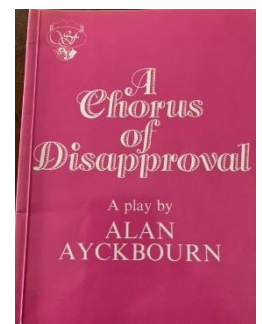
In a tatty provincial theatre, a new play called 'Fecund' is being staged. This uproarious adult comedy introduces everyone involved in a series of hilarious scenes linked by a chorus of usherettes. The stage manager has a blinding hangover, the leading actors range from pretentious to bitter to plainly incompetent, the new marketing assistant used to work for British Rail, the author is lecherous and unscrupulous, and the others are just as outrageous.



A Chorus of Disapproval by Alan Ayckbourn

A diffident widower attempts to escape loneliness by joining the local amateur light operatic society. By accident rather than by design (in fact, by not saying "no" to anything be it a request to obtain confidential information from his company or an offer of illicit sex) he advances from a small part to the lead.

The National Theatre production starred Michael Gambon in the lead – surely there is someone in Tarporley and District u3a to match his performance?



Trips – Check your diaries!

The trip to Llandudno on March 15th is now full, but that has not stopped the indefatigable Edward Baskerville looking forward. He has seats on hold at Venue Cymru for a performance by CIRQUE on **Sunday 27th October**. With an earlier departure time arranged, there will be time for a pre-performance supper.

The show will feature the best of musical theatre showstoppers with amazing circus skills.

More details of the event, plus an opportunity to sign up, will be made at the next monthly meeting and direct by email to members.



If you have any suggestions for future trips, please do contact rayewirral@aol.com who will be delighted to look at your comments. Trips can be structured with attractions and refreshments factored in, or more casual, simply dropping members off in a new place and allowing them to wander at will.

The Strollers go from Strength to Strength

A report from Pat Tyson-Jones

“On February 9th 24 Strollers braved a very inclement weather forecast and set off for a walk from the Red Lion in Little Budworth. Until the last moment there was a question as to whether the walk would go ahead at all, given the forecast and the inevitable mud. The Met Office forecast gave rain in the morning but the XC Weather forecast gave no rain until the afternoon. A decision was made to go with the XC forecast which proved correct and we were spared the rain!



The walk took us through the pretty village of Little Budworth and then, following a track, into the Little Budworth Country Park. It was a lovely walk and very peaceful. Thankfully, there was no engine noise from Oulton Park which had plagued Gwyn and I when we did a recce the previous Friday. We saw lots of snowdrops, and signs of bluebells, which will be delightful later in the year. For those who don't know Little Budworth Country Park, it is a lovely area, very peaceful, with a varied environment ranging from heathland to deciduous woodland. We then wended our way back to the Red Lion where 17 of us enjoyed an excellent lunch with very welcoming staff.

Recently we have been fortunate enough to welcome a number of new members. We always enjoy having new members who rapidly become new friends. However, due to the increasing numbers on walks we are contemplating having two groups on each walk. The same walk, on the same day, but split into two groups. Please contact convenor Pat Tyson-Jones through the website if you would like to find out more.

Ed – With the finer weather on its way, many more members may be thinking about getting out and about and there are different walking groups to suit different levels on physical activity. All walks are checked by the leader beforehand so members will know the distance to be covered, height gained and type of terrain to be expected. There will be an indication of the number of stiles to be climbed or the steepness of inclines to be tackled. This allows everyone to judge if the walk is within their capabilities. It is the responsibility of every walker to arrive suitably equipped, to carry details of an emergency contact and to inform the leader of any health issues they may have that might impinge on their enjoyment of the walk and that of others.

Coffee Group

As well as educating and informing members, u3a also provides various opportunities for people to gather socially. Such groups are especially appreciated by those living alone and by those who have suffered a bereavement and are moving forward to reconnect with people again. Linda Acton, the current convenor, sent this report.

“The principal of the group is that we meet at various locations on the third Wednesday morning of each month.



Rose Farm is a favourite venue to chat and discuss whatever topic is brought up. This isn't a debating forum, so no world-shattering decisions are arrived at. It is only to allow individuals an opportunity to meet and chat about anything members are interested in, or just to listen to others around you. Sometimes it's pleasant just to be out with people who have similar interests to yourself, but there is no pressure to participate if you only want to listen to the conversation.

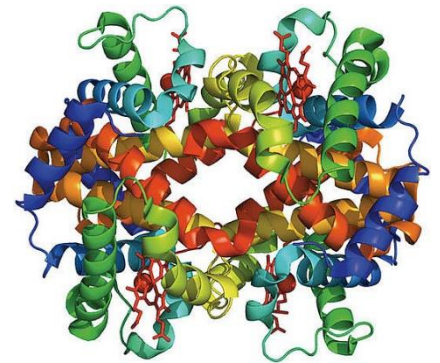
Although the total membership is more than I would want to turn up at any one time, on average the most members that arrive each month is between 6-12 which means that everyone can participate."

Do contact Linda via the website <https://u3asites.org.uk/tarporley> and click on Anyone For Coffee if you would like to know more, you are guaranteed a warm welcome.

Science Group

The meeting on February 16th discussed Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the rapid impact that it is having on society, for offering exceptional benefits and for creating serious societal problems.

Stephen Hammond gave details of a dramatic breakthrough that could have a significant effect on health policy and the treatment of disease. Understanding the cellular architecture of proteins has been at the centre of biological and pharmacological research for many years. Understanding how chains of amino acids form complex structures that control the workings of the human body had taken years of expensive and time-consuming research that had revealed about 170,000 of the estimated 200,000,000 known proteins. In 2018, the company Deep Mind - a UK company originally but now part of Google – created an AI programme that could accurately predict the shape of proteins and then did this for **all** the known proteins. Such data could enable ways to improve the accurate targeting of drugs to cure both common and rare diseases, deal with antibiotic resistance and even produce new proteins to tackle plastic pollution. The future could not seem more positive.



But....

Pete Broad alerted us to some of the dangers of unregulated AI and the potential for serious damage to civil society. AI means more than just super computers able to manage huge amounts of data, it is a system that programmes computers to learn from the connections they make and, at incredible speed, come to conclusions that can outpace the human brain. One of the founders of Deep Mind, Mustapha Suleyman, left the company after its takeover by Google and has written about the ethics of AI in the book **The Coming Wave**. He is concerned that AI can be applied to many other technologies that can then, in the hands of unscrupulous state or commercial 'bad actors', lead to outcomes that would severely challenge society. Such areas could be 'synthetic biology', robots, drones, nanotechnology and quantum computers. He argues that international mechanisms of containment and control are needed without which there might be two possibilities – uncontrolled capitalist expansion of the technologies leading to chaos or very stringent governmental control leading to autocracy.



The UK is taking a leading role in AI regulation, hosting an international AI summit last November, and announcing a government-funded AI Safety Institute shortly afterwards.

Ed – There is now an AI technology that can create realistic videos from instructions entered as text. I saw a suggestion that certain TV soaps could be entirely written and developed by AI very soon without human actors. Will we ever know what is real again?

Digital Photography

This month they have been busy looking at Vehicles/Transport. Here are some of their wonderful photos.



Forthcoming Events

Tarporley Community Centre

An afternoon of music and good fellowship for an excellent cause

Tuesday 12th March at 2.00 pm

The 'Tarporley Ukelele Band' is of course, our own UKE3A



Rotary

Rotary Club of Tarporley and District
 Invites you to an afternoon at
 Tarporley Community Centre
AFTERNOON TEA AND MUSIC
Tuesday 12 March 2024 2.30 pm - 4.30 pm





Afternoon Tea will be served, with foot tapping entertainment from the Tarporley Ukulele Band and our vocalist Sheila Callaghan.
 A friendly afternoon to cheer us all up with a little nostalgia in the mix.
 Everyone welcome.
 There will be a raffle with exciting prizes.

Entrance and Afternoon Tea: £5

All proceeds will go to the Knysna Education Trust in South Africa, sponsoring children from the poorest families to allow them to attend pre-school.

Tarporley Community Centre

TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE AND RECREATION GROUND CIO
(Charitable Incorporated Organisation)

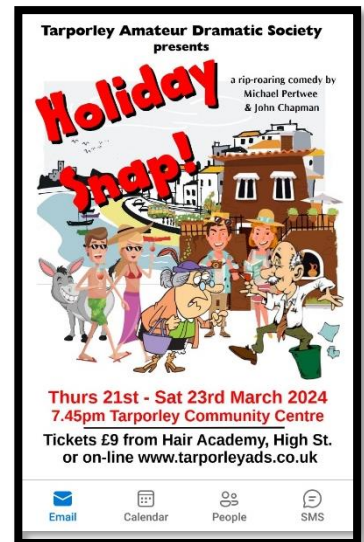
Annual General Meeting

will be held on Monday, 25 March 2024 in the Craven Room at
 Tarporley Community Centre at 7.00pm

Everyone is welcome to attend.

An Excellent evening of comedy and laughter for Tarporley's own dedicated thespians.

March 21st – March 23rd at 7.45 pm



At the time of publication information about the Tarporley Friday Film Night had not been received.

For details go to www.tarporleycc.co.uk

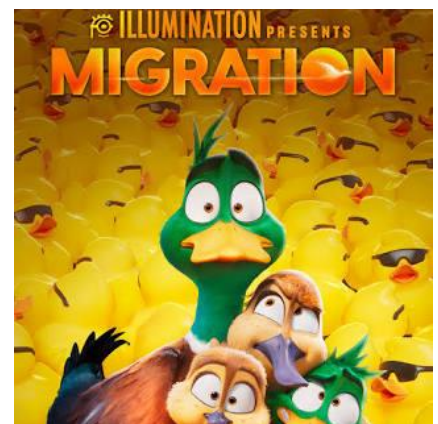
Tarvin Community Centre

Film Night

Friday 22nd March at 6.00pm

Migration

Follow a family of ducks as their holiday trip to Jamaica goes horribly wrong and they end up in New York



Friday 22nd March at 8.00pm

The Holdovers

A comedy set in a New England boarding school when some pupils can't go home for the holidays. Starring Paul Giametti and BAFTA winner Da'Vine Joy Randolph



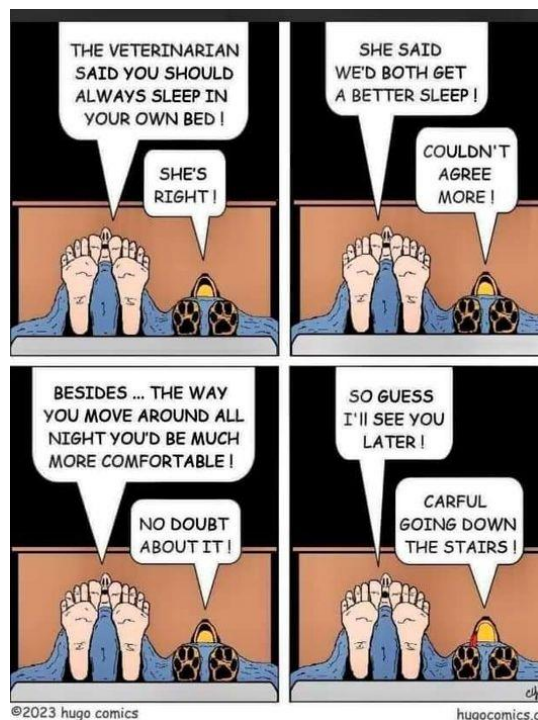
..and finally....

Thanks to the irrepressible Bill Harrison for the following....

Nicknames for Co-workers

Butter knife – not the sharpest tool in the box
 Blister – always appears after the work is done
 Kitkat – always taking a break
 Arthur – does “half a” job
 Motion light – only does work when someone walks past
 E. T. – always wants to go home
 Lantern – not very bright and has to be carried
 Daisy – some days he’s in some days he isn’t
 Deck chair – always collapse under pressure

Couldn’t resist this one – and I don’t even have a dog!



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
[hppts://u3asites.org.uk/tarporley](https://u3asites.org.uk/tarporley)

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