

West Cheshire Rural u3a Newsletter 1/12/2023



The newsletter is now published monthly on the first of the month. Our email address for contributions is WCRu3a@hotmail.com or for membership enquiries contact Dorothy Turpy, our Membership Secretary, at membershipwcru3a@gmail.com

If you have items that we could include in the newsletter, email them to WCRu3a@hotmail.com

Monthly meetings

West Cheshire Rural u3a does not have a monthly meeting in December, but meetings will resume in January.



**West Cheshire Rural u3a
January 18th at 2pm
Barbour Institute, Tattenhall
Speaker: Simon Michael
"My Life in Crime"**



If you'd like to know what it's like to share a bacon sandwich with a convicted murderer in the Old Bailey cells, to wear a 200-year-old horsehair wig, to do battle with corrupt members of the Sweeney and much more, come to hear Simon Michael, former barrister and writer, tell tales from the Bar and talk about writing crime novels and his family history.

Vote of Thanks – Monthly Meeting, can you help?

At the end of the monthly meeting, we give a vote of thanks to the speaker. This is a short "thank you" on behalf of the members and has been given largely by Committee Members. We would like to extend this role to any member who would

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like to be involved. There could be a monthly topic that is of particular interest to you or it may be something you feel inspired by. Please will you speak to Marian if you would like to help with this.

November Monthly Meeting

Who knew that Chez Jules used to be Chester's fire station? That Leche House, this Grade II listed building on Watergate Row (until 2022 this was the home of Sofa Workshop) started as a medieval hall and houses a magnificent fireplace? That when the Grosvenor Bridge was constructed in 1832 it had the longest single-span stone arch in the world? These are just a few of the snippets of information passed on by Stephen Shakeshaft in his inspiring and insightful talk delivered with humour to a rapt and attentive audience.

We had an audience of 60 members plus 2 new members and 2 taster sessions for our November talk. Thank you for continuing to support the talks.

Speaker Schedule

Month	Speaker
February	David Mitchell – Chester Town Crier For Crying Out Loud
March	Chrisine Stockton – The Story of Flamenco

New Members



We welcomed 5 new members to the u3a this month, Robert and Carole McWilliams, Hilton Roberts, Paul Heffer and Richard Turkington.

Emergency Contact Cards

When members attend meetings or interest group activities, we recommend that they carry details of an emergency contact and, as an option, any information medical professionals need to be aware of. To this end we have distributed a small card to carry in your wallet or purse, we hope that we never need to access the information but like an insurance policy it's there should the need arise. If you have

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not had one of these, could you let a member of the committee know and we will get one to you.

u3a Diaries 2024 message from Linda Davenport (Treasurer)

This year we aren't offering u3a diaries for sale due to the reducing demand and increased costs. Last year we sold only 17 to members (out of a pack of 20 - the lowest supply price offered by the u3a Brand Centre, helping us to continue our price to members of just £3.75). We only covered our costs by selling the left-over diaries at a much-reduced price.

This year the price of a diary plus delivery from the Brand Centre has increased by 15% – 18%, so we cannot maintain our £3.75 price to members, neither can we justify buying a pack of 20 in case we cannot sell most of them.

Your committee wants to know what you think about the decision not to offer diaries this year. Speak to any Committee member or email your comments direct to Linda Davenport via the Treasurer button on our website's Contact page (<https://u3asites.org.uk/west-cheshire/contact>). If there is sufficient interest in reinstating the sale of diaries, we will consider this matter again next year.

Note: The u3a Brand Centre does not sell merchandise direct to individual u3a members.



Christmas Tree Festival Malpas

West Cheshire Rural u3a was invited to put a Christmas Tree in the Festival at St Oswald's church in Malpas. Thank you to Pam Redfern for the tree which was decorated in u3a blue and yellow colours, another opportunity to participate in a community event.

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Quiz update

The answer sheet for the **Initial letters** quiz is on the website, plus the new quiz **A Cryptic Festive Quiz**.

Potential new groups

The current Sunday lunch group is primarily for those who are on their own. We have had a suggestion for a Sunday lunch group which would also include couples. The group would meet mid-month.

We have also had interest for two potential new groups: **Beginners Calligraphy**, and **Quilting**, and enough members to start the **Canasta** Group.

Another possible new group is **Learning about Artificial intelligence (AI)**. The u3a have recently appointed a subject adviser for AI. This would be a small group to investigate AI and try to understand what it's all about – where is it being used now?

It would be an interactive group with an objective to learn from each other so will require people to engage and be willing to help with research and shared learning. The goal is not to become AI experts but to get a better understanding of the subject as a result.

If you are interested in any of these groups, please contact Marian Hagan marianainslie@hotmail.com.

Reading Groups

Reading Groups are popular in West Cheshire Rural u3a. We have two groups - Chapter Chats and Pageturners which are now full. If you would like to join a Reading group, don't despair, we can look at starting a new group.

Sunday Lunch Group

In November the group went to Stamford Bridge and for our Christmas meal in December the venue is the Alvanley Arms at Cotebrook.

Poetry Group

The group meets on the first Monday in the month in the Community Room at St. Alban's Church, Tattenhall, at 2pm. Member read their favourite poems which are based on a chosen theme.

The topic for November was Fireworks – Light and Dark. It was an interesting session with lots of similar titles but with some different approaches to the subject. A lot of the poems were chosen by multiple members.

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The poems we read were:

Firework Night – Enid Blyton

Fireworks - Suli Breaks

Fireworks – James Reeves

November – Christine Wheeler

A Silent Vision – Liz Brownlee

Fireworks – Edwin Morgan

Fireworks - Edith Sitwell

Bonfire Night – Paul Butters

Fireworks Amy Lowell

Bonfire David Threadgold

The Light Gatherer – Carol Ann Duffy

The Burning of the Leaves – Lawrence Binyon

November 5th Leonard Clark

Sun and Shadow – Norman Douglas

One Cigarette – Edwin Morgan

5th November - Anon

A selection of poems from Lemn Sissay – A Poem a Day

Leonids over us - Marge Piercy

Bonfire Night – Robert Green

The Night has a Thousand Eyes - Francis William Bourdillon

The theme for our last session of the year in December will be **Snow**.

Short Walk November

The shorter walk on 9th November was led by Keith and Diane. We welcomed back Pat B who has returned to the group after a long break.

This 4.5 mile walk was around Malpas, going down lanes and tracks and some fields, almost mud free, quite an achievement in view of the recent rainfall. At the end we visited the Lion in Malpas for a tasty lunch, thanks everyone, but especially

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to our leaders. Looking forward to many such walks next year.



November Long Walk



The last long walk of the year was led by David and Lynda Bish from the Little Owl pub in Chester. The 6 mile flat walk started in the Countess of Chester country park following the Poppy Trail into Upton. After crossing the A41 we went up Flag Lane and along the public footpath that bisects the zoo. We were lucky enough to see several of their animals including rhinos, camels, and elephants. Emerging at the far end of the track there was a short refreshment break on the canal path, then we walked back to the start via the towpath and country park. Lunch at the pub capped off our day. Thanks to our leaders for organising a lovely day out, even the weather was kind.

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Walking Group Christmas Lunch

The walking group Christmas lunch will take place on the second Thursday of December. There will be a short walk before we sit down to our lunch at the Cheshire Cat.

The Future of the Walking Group

For 2024 the walking group will work slightly different way. Volunteers will still lead each walk – the leader for each walk will do a similar role to what they do now, but with a little added co-ordination activity.

Walk Leaders Responsibilities

If you choose to lead a walk you would be responsible for

- doing the walk recce in advance
- providing the description of the walk to Anne Bayliss (Is it hilly? Are there stiles on the route etc)
- Your email will be included on the invitation which will ask members who want to walk will email you direct stating:
 - Where they will meet, at Alisons or at the start of the walk
 - Do they need a lift from Tattenhall
 - Will they stay for lunch (if that is offered)
- organising a coffee or lunch stop at the end of the walk (optional)
- make sure that there are car shares so that everyone can get to the start of the walk. This has been easy as there are usually more than enough people willing to meet at Alisons and drive.

Cancelling a walk

- If the walk leader cannot do their walk at short notice , we would cancel the walk by email or perhaps a WhatsApp message if it is on the day. (Only one walk was cancelled this year due to adverse weather).
- If the walk leader wants to change their planned walk date, they should try to find someone else to swap with. There will be a list of dates and walk leaders on the website so you can see who is doing which walk each month. If no one can swap with you, then the walk may need to be cancelled.

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Historic Places and Gardens

Despite the rainy weather on October 24th, Rufford Old Hall proved to be an interesting venue. The Tudor Great Hall has a unique carved wooden screen and possibly Shakespeare performed there. The history of the Hall was told to us by a knowledgeable guide, who also pointed out a hidden portrait on one of the beams, signatures scratched on the window glass by Tudor glaziers and sets of armour purchased in the eighteenth century for a mock tournament arranged by a Scottish nobleman. The remainder of the house held interesting artefacts collected by later members of the Hesketh family and samplers embroidered by local school children in the nineteenth century.



Making use of our Network – Ken Wakefield

Network - *Interact with others to exchange information. – A group of interconnected people.*

A few years ago, an invitation from Wallasey u3a to help start a ukulele group was accepted by Ken Wakefield, who was an absolute beginner. Ken visited Wallasey and was given simple but very valuable help and guidance to get him started. As a result of this visit, West Cheshire Rural group was born and is now flourishing with 20 members.

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This November Ken repeated this approach by offering start up help to u3a's in our Network who were interested in starting a ukulele group but did not know how to get going. Members from Northwich and Macclesfield attended an information session in Farndon together with locals who were also beginners.

Those attending were given advice on buying an instrument, tips on how to play and advance quickly, plus where to access music sheets online. We had a very lively and entertaining session, and this was enough information for them to move forward with setting up their own ukulele groups.

We have good knowledge in all our u3a's which is a great source of help to others. So why not share it across our Networks.

Booking a holiday with Riviera Travel could benefit WCRu3a

Riviera Travel operate an "Affinity" Charity Scheme with the Third Age Trust that can benefit all u3as. Riviera Travel will donate 10% of the total basic cost of holidays booked by members as a charitable donation back to the u3a. Any holiday booked by a member with Riviera Travel is eligible.

How it works:

- Make a booking by contacting Riviera Travel directly, simply mention you are a member of u3a and want to claim Affinity Commission for your u3a.
- At the end of your holiday, Riviera Travel make a payment to the Third Age Trust. After deducting a handling fee (10% of the commission sum donated) the Third Age Trust will pass the remaining 90% of the donation on to the relevant u3a.

If booking online, use www.u3ariviera.co.uk. It 'tags' u3a in general to the booking and then the Third Age Trust will check which local u3a is to benefit.

West Cheshire Rural u3a Interest Groups

All Group Leaders can be contacted using the mail icon on the relevant group page on the website

Group	Current Meeting Times	Group leader
Map Reading for Walkers	As advertised	Marjorie Watson

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Group	Current Meeting Times	Group leader
Sunday Lunch Group	First Sunday in the month	Anne Bayliss
Solving Cryptic Crosswords	Alternate Mondays at 2pm in the Barbour	Hilary Scarratt
Poetry	First Monday in the month in St Albans Community Room Tattenhall	Gill Foster
Chapter Chats	Last Tuesday in the month at 8pm	Barbara Garner
Pageturners	The third Friday in the month 11.00am in St Albans Community Roo3m Tattenhall	Linda Davenport
Ukulele	Alternate Wednesdays at 10.30 am in Farndon	Ken Wakefield
Walking	Walking groups schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short walk on 2nd Thursday • Long walk on 4th Thursday • Other groups on ad-hoc basis 	Jill Hughes
Drawing Group	Fortnightly meeting in Hargrave Village Hall	Carolyn Vickers
Dining	Dining Group1 fourth Friday of the Month Dining Group2 second Wednesday of the month	Hazel George Marian Hagan
Mah-jong for Beginners	2nd & 4th Fridays at 10.30am community room St Albans	Linda Davenport & Pauline Bell
Music Appreciation	First Thursday of the month in the community room at St Albans	David Thomson
Historic Places & Gardens	Monthly last Tuesday of the month.	Marian Hagan Jill O'Callaghan
Discussion	Alternate Tuesdays in The Barbour	Steven Prince
Art Appreciation	Various visits during the year	Jean Mumford Vanessa Newman