

West Cheshire Rural u3a Newsletter 1/3/2024



March Monthly Meeting

On March 21st we welcome Christine Stockton to the West Cheshire Rural u3a monthly meeting with a talk about “The Story of Flamenco”. Christine will cover its cultural origins and will demonstrate the various dance styles as they developed over time.



February's Meeting

There were 51 members, 2 new members and three potential new members present at our monthly meeting in February. With his handbell and dressed up in his finery, our speaker, David Mitchell had this audience eating out of his hand as he regaled us with hilarious stories of his experiences as Chester's town crier. Indeed, Chester is the only place in Britain to have retained the tradition of a regular midday proclamation at a fixed place and time (12 noon, Tuesday-Saturday, between May and August). In medieval England the job of the town crier (or bellman) was to inform

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townspeople of the latest news, proclamations, by-laws and any other important information as most folk were illiterate. Proclaiming the news was not their only role. Originally, they patrolled the streets after dark acting as peace-keepers, arresting miscreants and taking them to the stocks for punishment. It was also their job to make sure fires were damped down for the night after the curfew bell. David's talk was articulate, funny, refreshing and highly entertaining and he left many of us aching with laughter.

West Cheshire Rural u3a Speaker Secretaries

I'm sure you will agree with me that we have had some amazing speakers at our monthly meetings. Carole Goodinson does a great write up of the talks so that any potential new members can see what range of speakers we have,

Jill O'Callaghan and Jenny Dart have put together a very varied programme with excellent speakers who have informed and entertained us. The role of speaker secretary can be quite a stressful job, especially on a Thursday when you are on tenterhooks until the speaker arrives.

We know from experience there can always be last minute issues, such as the speaker getting the wrong time or being held up by traffic. Thank you, Jill, and Jenny, for all your hard work and enthusiasm in putting the programme together.



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Speaker Schedule

Month	Speaker
April	Caroline Eames - Forensic Science, Fact or Fiction
May	Stapeley Grange and the Wildlife Centre will give a talk on the work of the centre

New Members

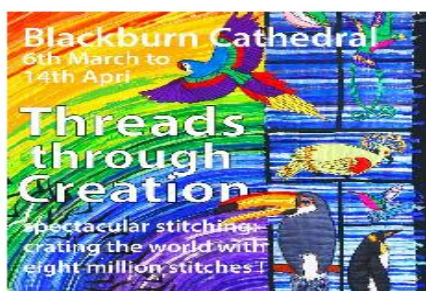
We welcomed two new members at our February meeting, Rajan and Saro Jesudason.

Spectacular textile art at Blackburn Cathedral – creating the world with eight million stitches!

This information has been forwarded by Gill Russell. 'Threads through Creation' is an astonishing textile art exhibition showing at Blackburn Cathedral from 6th March until 14th April. It might be a bit of a journey for some, but it's probably right up their street for many u3a people - a real treat for anyone interested in the applied arts, textile art and sewing. The show is touring twenty cathedrals. We've had a lot of positive feedback from u3a groups all over the country. It consists of twelve beautiful silk panels reimagining the story of creation from the bible. They're huge – nearly 3m high. It's one of the largest textile art projects by a single artist, ever. It took artist Jacqui Parkinson three years - and eight million stitches! You'll find the huge scale, vibrant colours, dramatic and complex designs truly breathtaking. You've never seen anything like it ... www.blackburncathedral.com

Admission free (donations welcome)

www.creation-threads.co.uk



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U3A Membership Renewal 2024/25 and Gift Aid update

Starting from the next financial year, April 2024 -March 2025, our u3a will be participating in the Gift Aid Scheme which allows charities like us to claim 25p for every £1.00 donation we receive.

The good news is that your annual Membership Subscription fee counts as a donation.

*******You must be a UK taxpayer to opt-in to Gift Aid*******

What does this mean for you?

- There's no extra cost to you.
- Taking part in the Gift Aid Scheme is optional – you choose.
- You can opt out of the Gift Aid Scheme at any time.

To opt in – What do I do?

- For your Membership fee to be part of the Gift Aid Scheme, just follow the instructions on your Membership Renewal Invitation 2024/25, and
- Fill in the Gift Aid Declaration Form we will send you – it confirms you are a UK taxpayer.

How much could Gift Aid benefit WCRu3a each year?

- If 100 members sign up, WCRu3a receives £450.00 – equivalent to 25 new members.
- If 150 members sign up, our annual benefit rises to £675.00.

What Happens Next?

You will soon receive your Membership Renewal Invitation 2024/25. This year we have streamlined the service so you'll receive either an invitation to renew online or an invitation to renew by cheque or in cash, dependent on how you chose to pay last year. You can renew in cash at our next Monthly Meeting on the 24th March.

Both Invitations to renew ask you to reply to Dorothy Turpy, our Membership Secretary. Please do this – it forms part of your membership renewal. Please wait till you get the email before you renew.

In your reply, please indicate whether you want to participate in the Gift Aid Scheme. This is your expression of interest – you will be sent a formal Gift Aid Declaration Form at a later date.

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Our first Gift Aid claim will be submitted in April/May 2025. We should receive our payment from HMRC within 4 weeks.

Anyone for Croquet?

Would you like to learn to play Croquet? Tattenhall Croquet Club, located in Tattenhall has lawns that are rated amongst the best in the North West.

The club is offering West Cheshire Rural u3a members an opportunity to learn to play croquet. The plan is for a session on the last Friday in the month from April onwards between 2-4pm.

All equipment and tuition would be provided. Members would need to wear comfortable footwear such as trainers. There would be a small charge of £3 per session.

Contact Marjory Checkley on 01829 770628 for more information.

Tattenhall Bowling Club

Tattenhall Bowling Green is situated behind the Sportsman's Arms with Flacca Court on the other side of the green. Some people have the idea that bowls is for old people, if you watched the World Indoor Bowls Championships you would realise that this is not true. It is sport for all ages.



Tattenhall Bowling Club would like to increase its membership by offering a warm welcome to anyone who has played bowls before or to anyone who has never played but would like to learn a new sport.

The bowling season at Tattenhall extends from the middle of April until the middle of September. We hold social bowling on Saturday afternoon from 2.00pm until 4.00pm when anyone can play whether you are a member or not. Monday evenings from 6.00pm is Club Night.

Club membership is currently £35 per season. If you do not have bowls the club does have some available for you to use.

If you require further information do not hesitate to contact Sharon Bennett 01829 771959 Mobile: 07973190590, or find us on Facebook for further updates

Quiz update

The answers to the '**Before the euro**' quiz are on the website together with the new quiz, **Killer ditloids!**

Jean Hancox

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New Interest Groups

The second **Sunday Dining Group** (to be known as Sunday Dining 2) was launched on 21st January 2024 with a trip to The Egerton Arms in Broxton. Eight members (two couples and four single members) came together for what was a very nice meal and social occasion on a cold and windy Sunday afternoon. Marian has organised the first lunch but is hoping someone will come forward to run the group.

Beginners Calligraphy We are struggling to find somebody to teach the class and a paid tutor would not be feasible with only 4 members having expressed an interest. Do any members have any contacts who might be able to help us get started? If there is any member with these skills and willing to provide tuition, could they contact Marian Hagan

There are some paid Calligraphy workshops taking place in Waverton for anyone interested <https://northwestcalligraphers.org.uk/our-workshops/beginners-improvers-workshop-gothic-cursive-minuscules-with-andrew-cowley-at-waverton>

Quilting an initial meeting has taken place and the new group will meet at Huxley Village Hall.

The Canasta Group This is a newly formed group just getting started. The group meets on alternate Tuesdays at 14.30, initially in the home of Carole Curphey. The first get together was on the 30th January with six people attending. We played several games to remind ourselves of the rules and alternated the players with two people sitting out each time. As we progress, we will start to score as we should. We had a very enjoyable first meeting.

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? We need a couple more people to get this off the ground.

A couple of things on this subject that might interest anyone

- The Royal Institute Christmas Lectures are available on the BBC iPlayer. Just search for ***The Royal Institute Christmas Lectures***.
- There is currently a series on BBC Radio 4 at 4pm on a Monday called The Artificial Human. The series will also be available on BBC Sounds, the radio catch up service.

Poetry Group

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

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There are a lot of Monday Bank Holidays. Rather than move to a different day which can prove difficult both in terms of people being free on a different day and the room being free, we will have fewer meetings for the first half of the year:

4th March	The topic will be Occasions/Celebrations
April	No meeting, Bank holiday
May	No meeting, Bank holiday
3rd June	The topic will be Moods
July	The topic will be Humour/Comedy

The theme for our session in February was Relationships. I'm not sure I expected such an array of relationships in the poems. We read poems about relationships with people, places, animals, and even food.

The poems we read were

- Midnight in the Pantry - Edgar A Guest**
- Polonius' speech to his son Laertes from Hamlet**
- To a Mouse – Robert Burns**
- The Children's Hour – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**
- Dear Mum – Brian Patten**
- The Middle Temple Garden - Letitia Elizabeth Landon**
- If I could tell you – W H Auden**
- Shake Hands – A E Houseman**
- In the Company of Women - Gill O'Neil**
- Valentines Daya Massacre – Brian Bilston**
- An Arundel Tomb - Phillip Larkin**
- John Anderson my Jo – Robert Burns**
- Lady "Rogue" Singleton – Stevie Smith**
- The Pig - Roald Dahl**
- April - Letitia Elizabeth Landon**
- Refugees - Brian Bilston**
- The Mother - Pádraig Pearse**
- Mrs Stein – Bill Dodds**
- The Clothes Line – Marilyn K Walker**
- Old Shep – Red Foley**

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Echoes of Memory - John O'Donohue

This be the Verse – Philip Larkin

If you are seeking – Rumi

Love from Arthur Rainbow – Adam Henry

An Arabian Proverb – A Friend

A Visit from my Mother in Law – Judith Viorst

Sunday Lunch Group

In February we visited the Cheshire Cat. Gill F and Sue M are organising the lunch on March 3rd at Panama Hattys. We need someone to organise the Sunday Lunch on 7th April. Please let Anne know if you could help.

Short Walk February

The five-mile walk was led by Pat and Hilton. We started the circular walk from the Sandstone Pub at Brown Knowle. The eleven walkers bravely battled the elements walking mostly along lanes and woodland paths with only occasional muddy patches. We stopped for a very welcome lunch at the Sandstone Pub. This was our first walk as leaders and we would like to thank everyone for their help and support. With the poor weather, unsurprisingly there are no photos.

February Longer Walk – led by Jill Hughes

Eleven of us set off walking on 22nd February despite the poor forecast it only started as a drizzly morning. Led by Jill H we met in a car park on the edge of Thurstaston Common. Undeterred, we set off up sandstone tracks which resembled small streams in places. At the top of the ridge, we had reasonable views across the Dee and Mersey Estuaries which surprised us. There followed woodland tracks, and more roads than we had planned, it was so wet underfoot that we chose to bypass an extremely wet field. By this time the rain had stopped, and it was dry for the rest of our day. After passing Candy Church we headed for the Wirral Way and a welcome lunch stop at Flissey's coffee shop next to the Thurstaston Visitor Centre, which we can recommend for their prompt service and very good food.



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Suitably refreshed, we walked back to the cars via Station Lane. A walk of around 6 miles in total. We were pleased to welcome Barbara on her first walk with our group. Thanks everyone for the lovely day.

The Walking Group in 2024

The new arrangement for the walks seems to be working well.

A couple of tweaks:

- Could walk leaders make sure they confirm back by email to a member that they have a place on the walk. Just a quick “**thanks, see you on Thursday**” will do
- If you have emailed to say you would like to go and haven’t had a confirmation back, check the reply is not in your junk/spam folder and if not then follow it up with the walk leader. We have all had experience of the black hole somewhere that emails often end up in.

The **walking schedule dates** and walk leaders can be found on the walking group page on the West Cheshire Rural u3a website. We still have some slots available so if you haven’t already signed up and would like to lead a walk, these are the current free dates.

May 23 Longer walk

June 13th Short Walk

August 8th Short Walk

October 24th - Longer walk

November 28th Longer Walk

The fourth Thursday is usually a longer walk. However, if you cannot do one of the free long walk dates, it is ok to do a short walk.

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Please make sure that the walk leader knows if you need a lift and haven't pre-arranged anything and make sure you are at Alison's promptly. We don't want people to be left behind.

If you want to join the walk, please respond to the walk leaders email given in the walk details. If you just hit reply by mistake and respond to Anne, she will forward your email to the walk leader and copy you in so that you can then contact each other.

If you want to do a write up of your walk for this bulletin then email it to Anne. If there are any other things we need to tweak, let us know.

Newsletter Contributions

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

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
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
Page turners	The third Friday in the month 11.00am in St Albans Community Roo3m Tattenhall	Linda Davenport

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Group	Current Meeting Times	Group leader
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 fourth 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
Sunday Dining 2	Third Sunday of the month	Marian Hagan
Canasta	Alternate Tuesdays	Carole Curphy
Quilting	TBC	Donna Eaton