

*Hello again, I hope everyone is well.*

*I am writing this on the eve of our AGM, which marks a year since I became Chairman.*

*2022-2023 was a busy and exciting year with several new groups being launched and our membership rapidly growing.*

*If you have any ideas for further new interest groups, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Jon Attkins who is our Group Coordinator.*

*As we step into another year, three members of the Committee have decided to step down. I would like to thank them for the sterling work they have done whilst on our committee and the support they have given both the u3a and myself.*

*I hope that all our members have a lovely Summer and hoping that we have an even better year going forwards.*

*Sue*

*(From Chairman Sue Wilcock)*

Welcome to the mid-year Newsletter -  
aiming to keep our members in touch with what  
has been going on and what is planned.

Info in newsletter up to date as of June 2023, but is always changing. For the latest details, dates and information, please see our local website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/wigan/home>

## Membership Subscription and Benefits:

We are now a few months into our new subscription year, and into the sixth year of operations for this relatively new u3a branch.

Almost all of last year's members have renewed, and we continue to gain new members too; if not already there then we're very close to crossing the line to have 300 current members signed up to the Wigan group.

Whilst we welcome new joiners to 'try-before-you-buy' by coming along to meetings to see if they enjoy them, it's still important that everyone does formally sign up if wanting to continue. If not, then we can't add you to member email lists to let you know what's happening, or make sure we give priority to the people who are paid up members.

Fees this year were able to be kept at the same level as last year. But what does your £10 membership fee actually pay for? (£6.50 if already a member of another branch but wanted to sign up to Wigan too.)

You'll already be aware of all the events and activities on our own calendar of dates: speakers and members meetings at the Cricket Club, trips and outings, coffee and natter, and occasional social events; along with all the scheduled and ad hoc activity groups to help you find people you share interests with.

The u3a, however, is bigger than just the local group. Part of the subscription fee pays for backup from our parent organisation the 'Third Age Trust'. Some of this is for practical help – providing us with advice, with the IT tools to do administration and publicity, insurance cover for our paid-up members, and much more. But also giving our members opportunities to take part in projects, training sessions or competitions at a national level.

Group leaders might share links here that tie into particular interests, for example current national creative writing and photo competitions – (although nothing to stop you having a go at these regardless of whether you are that group or not). You can share memories for 'all our yesterdays' topics, join in regional singing events, do a free online course or more; they have podcast and blog sections and their own printed magazine (free but you need to pay for delivery, speak to membership secretary if interested).

If you want to know more about these wider u3a activities then the Third Age Trust has their own website too – <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> (or click on the u3a button to link from our own local Wigan website).

All these extra options are already paid for as part of that £10 membership fee, so why not have a browse.

## What's ahead from our Social Committee.

It's been a very busy few months for the team. We wanted to provide members with a full calendar of events during 2023 and into 2024, taking into account what members really enjoy.

After the success of our 2022 Jubilee celebration garden party, which saw over 80 members enjoying an afternoon of entertainment, we wanted to do something similar this year. This was our 'Coronation Picnic' in May, which again was really enjoyable – with entertainment from the Singing Group, lots of red white and blue, and some excellent home-made crowns.



For the rest of the year a variety of further events are lined up - a summer party in July, autumn barn dance in September, Christmas party in December, and then in February a special night with a female singer and a four-piece band – all located at the Cricket Club, 7:30 pm till late. Dates for your diary are provided below.

JULY 28TH 2023	SUMMER PARTY	SOUL SINGER
SEPT 23RD 2023	BARN DANCE	OLD SCHOOL HOUSE BAND
DEC 9TH 2023	CHRISTMAS PARTY	JAMES NORTON SOUND
FEB 10TH 2024	PARTY NIGHT	SINGER AND QUARTET

Tickets for the summer party are already on sale at the Wednesday Cricket club meetings, other event ticket sales will open several weeks before the event date. The Cricket club is a great venue for Wigan u3a events and we have amazing support from Claire and her team.

The social events team work extremely hard behind the scenes to ensure the members experience a great time, we spend extra time planning entertainment, food and the extras that make the event special.

Feedback from the events has always been positive however the social events team values our members and welcomes any feedback to help improve the events in the future.

### The Social Events Team

***Barbara, Glynis, Sally and Sheila***

## Trips and Outings

Barbara and Sandra have now recruited Sue Orrell to join the team, and continue to organise outings to a variety of places.

Earlier in the year, a group 'took off' by coach to Manchester Airport, to visit the iconic but now retired Concorde plane and step into its cockpit, before gathering for a meal close by.

Then another visit to Manchester last week, this time to visit the new 'Sky Garden' planted along the line of the old Castlefield Railway Viaduct, with an option to add in a luxury afternoon tea at the Lowry Hotel



Nothing is planned during the summer months – (after all one of the benefits of being retired is to be able to visit places in quieter months and days). However, a further date is finalised for September 19th, this time again by coach heading into Yorkshire to visit two iconic properties – Shibden Hall and Piece Hall.

With thanks to Barbara and the team for all the hard work make these outings happen, and to people on the trips for taking the photographs to show the rest of us what we missed.

## Speakers and Members Meetings / Coffee & Natter

Our main Wednesday meetings continue throughout the Summer, without breaks.

The June Members meeting on Wed 21<sup>st</sup> will also include the annual AGM - your chance to get a summary of where we stand and to ask questions if you have any. This is expected to be quite brief, and will be followed by the usual quiz and raffle and general socialising. Hoping to see you there.

Upcoming Speakers topics include tales of the birth of British TV from Frank Vignon (July 5<sup>th</sup>), a 'life in the rear mirror' talk by a former chauffeur to the aristocracy, Ron Hutchinson (August 2<sup>nd</sup>) and "A Solo Walk Across Africa" by Fran Sandham (Sept 6<sup>th</sup>). Lots of variety here.

All at the Cricket Club, with a 10:30 am start time. Do come along and get booked onto events and hear all the latest announcements.

Similarly, the Coffee and Natter at the Royal Oak runs through the summer too, so all welcome to come and socialise on Wednesdays with no Cricket Club meetings.



## News from the Interest Groups

These are our regular hobby or activity groups, meeting on a scheduled basis once or twice a month, in some cases weekly, or on a more flexible pattern to work around going to particular places and taking up outside opportunities. With thanks to our leaders for their descriptions of what their groups have been up to recently and what's planned in coming months

### Ancestry

**3rd Thursday of Month**  
**Museum of Wigan Life**  
**10:30 am**

Ancestry is a subject that only appeared in our calendar late in 2022. For advice on where to start in tracing your family tree, then this is the place to come.

Leader: Peter Green

### Book Club

**3rd Monday of Month**  
**Royal Oak, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm**

*"WHEN YOU SELL A MAN A BOOK YOU DON'T SELL JUST TWELVE OUNCES OF PAPER AND INK AND GLUE – YOU SELL HIM A WHOLE NEW LIFE. LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP AND HUMOUR AND SHIPS AT SEA BY NIGHT – THERE'S ALL HEAVEN AND EARTH IN A BOOK, A REAL BOOK." – CHRISTOPHER MORLEY*

The Book club is still going strong with 12 to 14 members.

For this year the members have decided to focus on specific genres of books based on a chosen author, we started in April historical novels until July. From July it will be psychological thrillers. The remaining year has to be decided but no doubt will be interesting.

We start with a chat about what's been going, on what news we all

have then down to business. The meetings are sociable, always lively, each of us respecting each other's views and enjoying each other's company.

The best thing about the book club is you read books you would never have read before, you meet other readers who inspire you, make new friends and it makes you feel well.

Leader: Sheila Wignall

### Cinema Club

**See Events Listings for Info on Selected Showings**

We have recently viewed a number of screenings, at the Empire Cinema, Wigan, including Alleluyah, The Book Club, Whitney Houston and The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry.

The number of films which appeal to members however seem to be far and few between. Additionally, the cost of going to the cinema is becoming an expensive item compared to Netflix, catch up TV and the Empire's own Seniors Club.

If you are aware of any worthwhile screenings approaching, please let us know... it doesn't have to be exclusively at the Empire Cinema, Wigan.

Leader: Stephen Horrocks

### **Crafts Group** **2nd & 4th Fridays in Month** **BookCycle, 10 am**

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The craft group meet twice a month, trying their hand at different skills. Most recently this has featured making flowers from various materials including, aluminium cans, tissue paper and card. Over the next few weeks we will be making greeting cards.



Sorry but no new members at present, as group is at full capacity.

Leader: Sue Orrell

### **Creative Writing** **2nd & 4th Thursday of Month** **Postcode Cafe, 1:30 pm**

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The Wigan u3a writing group continue to meet twice a month.

We all have our individual styles and interests, everything from flash fiction to short stories, poems to memoirs.

Some of us are beginners, still floundering around in a sea of words, whilst others are seasoned wordsmiths – everyone welcome.

If you'd like to share your writing, or just like to come and see what we're about, please get in touch.

Leader: Sally Lang

### **Crown Green Bowling** **Mon/Tue in Summer Months**

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This group was attracting so many members that it has been necessary to divide into Monday and Tuesday groups – so now two chances to join the fun on the greens of the Boars Head Pub.

Leader: Jimmy Wignall

### **Cryptic Crosswords** **2nd & 4th Friday in Month** **Postcode Café, 10 am**

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One of the great things about running this group is seeing how our original 'beginners' have improved their solving skills, and now need trickier puzzles to give more of a challenge.

The Postcode Café continues to host us in our regular corner table, though we may sometimes be a livelier group than expected for doing crosswords – always lots of ideas and opinions flying around, and cheers when someone cracks a particularly clever clue.

Leader: Cath Simpson

### **Cycling** **In Assoc with BeWell Wigan** **Speak to Leader for Info**

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Acting as a link into what the local BeWell cycling team can offer in terms of bike hire and training for those who haven't been on two wheels for some time; or being the leader for some more challenging (but still mainly off road) routes – Ron's shares his enthusiasm for cycling with anyone else who would like to come along.

Leader: Ron Hardy

## **Dining Out See Events List for Dates and Venues**

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What an enjoyable time we are having. The Dining Out organising team was expanded at the beginning of the year to enlist Angela, Barbara, Chris, Jane, Jenny, Nadene and Sue ... what a line up! We have an ever-growing series of events for you.

**Dining Out Meals:** Once a month we have enjoyed a variety of meals at rather special locations. These have included daytime lunches, evening gatherings and a Chinese buffet.

**Breakfast Club:** Meeting monthly we visit different locations for breakfast ... some intimate, some grand. All guarantee a good time.

**Sunday Lunch:** Meeting at varied locations around Wigan and we have even enjoyed a rather special Sunday Carvery with friends.

**A Curry Night:** Usually at our favourite Raj Gate, Orrell. A fine choice of affordable dishes, great service and great company.

**Afternoon Teas:** Always popular and well-supported at a variety of quality locations. Enjoy a future event with us.

**Pie and a Pint:** A bit of a let down this one ... you asked for this but Stephen has spent a lot of time at The Royal Oak alone chatting with the barmaids! This may be phased out.

Most Dining Out events are popular and sell out quickly ... all events are on a first come first served basis. If you are not already on the mailing

list (for regular event notifications) sign up at the next Cricket Club meeting.

Thank you all for participating in our activities.

Leader: Stephen Horrocks

## **French and Spanish Beech Hill Book Cycle 1<sup>st</sup> Friday/Thursday of Month**

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These two different groups are both led by the multilingual Jo, at the Book Cycle venue – giving an informal opportunity to practice your language skills and expand your vocabulary and understanding of the language in a very relaxed way.

Leader: Jo Hunt

## **Gardening 2nd Monday in Month, 10 am Tesco Community Room**

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The Garden group continue to share information on what is and isn't surviving new unpredictable weather conditions, and what possible alternatives exist – picking up the themes from the Chelsea flower show where many show gardens were all about diversity and sustainability.

Different group members have shared their interests in particular types of plants and gardening, and we have also been looking at understanding plant classification.

This group is not currently accepting new members as regrettably at maximum capacity.

Leader: Frances Richards

### **General History Group 2nd Thursday in Month Cricket Club 10:30**

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This new group has proved really popular – covering a different period or person in each session.

The initial run of four meetings will end after July's meeting, but will recommence in October – still at the Cricket Club but with a regular slot of 2nd Thursday in month. To keep the group interactive, Eric has regrettably set a cap of 20 members maximum; the group is currently full and current attendees will get priority going forwards, although others are welcome to contact Eric to be added to a waiting list.

Leader: Eric Curless

### **German Language Speak to Leader for Info**

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Our German group has now said 'Aufwiedersehen' to the Book Cycle venue but continues to meet more informally – building language skills by talking and reading stories, and covering a range of topics.

Leader: Janice Malley

### **Hill Walking Speak to Leader for Info**

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The group continue to follow their schedule of more challenging monthly upland walks, across many different areas - West Pennine Moors, Peak District, Lake District and Lancashire Hills. Please see the website for upcoming destinations, and dates, and speak to Rick for further detail on requirements and meeting arrangements.

Leader: Rick Alston

### **Line Dancing 2nd Monday in Month Hallgate House, 13:00-15:00**

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For a for a couple of hours of dancing and laughter, come and join our monthly sessions.

Leader: Angela Grundy

### **Local Walks 1st and 3rd Friday in Month See Website for Details**

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The walking group continues to be led by Ray, Jimmy, Roger, John and Mike, organising walks on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month and with the possibility of a walk on the fifth Friday when there is one; all are fairly local easy walks, averaging about 5 miles.



We have had some enjoyable and memorable walks lately; Roger has again led the walk up to Anglezarke from Belmont, with far better weather this time, John organised a walk around Pennington Flash which has great potential for further walks in the future and Jimmy has at last managed to do the walk around Heapey reservoir in Chorley which had previously been cancelled due to the weather. My second walk around Carr Mill Dam was blessed with some great walking weather.



Other walks have included 3 Sisters Country Park, Rufford, Sawley and Orrell water park.

If anyone has a favourite walk please contact us, all we need is for you to lead the way.

The group now has over 80 members. Contact us on [walkinggroup@u3awigan.co.uk](mailto:walkinggroup@u3awigan.co.uk)

Leader: Ray Stafford

### **Meet and Fish Speak to Leader for Info**

For any fishing enthusiasts or people who would like an introduction to this, speak to Jimmy. No set schedule or entries on calendar or events list, outings typically happen at short notice.

Leader: Jimmy Wignall

### **Memoir And Novel Writing 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in Month Caffe Rosso, 10:45 – 13:00**

A discussion group for anyone planning either a memoir or a novel is now up and running.

This is a friendly gathering of like-minded people for an informative chat with a lot of encouragement and fun along the way, building towards individual projects. Why not come along and see how you can get involved. You may find you surprise yourself!

We meet in the lodge at Caffe Rosso on Wigan Lane.

Leader: Michael Hunt

### **Music Appreciation 4th Thursday of Month Bookcycle, 13:30 – 15:00**

The latest addition to our range of interest groups, this gives a chance to explore the history of music, composers, instruments and styles of music. No July or August meetings, but back in October

Leader: Ian Darrington

### **Photography 4th Monday in Month Speak to Group Leader**

Over winter and spring, we have been meeting indoors, looking at different aspects of photo composition – ways to make your subject stand out and your image more eye-catching. More recently after a slide show and talk by local photographer Jim Harrison on his specialism of flower photography, we had a practical session doing close-up shots of flowers in a simple natural light studio set up. Now it's a change of season – with trips to different venues and events to check out the photo opportunities these offer.



Several of our group members also compete with other u3as, with entries into the differently themed monthly 'u3a eye' challenges. (<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes/u3a-eye>) and delighted to see our member Elaine Price having her image of 'Birds Bathing' selected in March (above). Hopefully more success to come.

Leader: Cath Simpson

### **Singing for Fun Tuesdays, Weekly Cricket Club, 13:30 – 15:00**

Our singing group was again in fine voice providing entertainment at the Coronation Social Event.



The group continue to meet most Tuesdays, and to have a fun time. The organisers emphasise that you do not have to be a great singer to join, but can expect to improve and to enjoy the experience.

Geoff started the group but will now take a step back, passing the baton over to Jimmy Wignall to keep things rolling on. The group will be meeting until the end of June, but then have a summer break until late August.

Leader: Geoff Brown / Jimmy Wignall

### **Theatre Group See Events List Various Locations**

It started with discounted tickets for selected performances at Wigan Little Theatre, but Jenny has now extended the opportunities on offer to include visits to other theatres for both behind the scenes tours and performances. Recent events were a tour of Bolton's Octagon and a return to Wigan Little Theatre for 'Guys and Dolls'; coming up in July it's off to see 'Titanic the Musical' at the Liverpool Empire.

Keep an eye on the events list for future plans.

Leader: Jenny Swift

### **Ukulele Group 4th Thursday in Month Little Fifteen 14:00 – 16:00**

Ukulele group is going well and we have been boosted by a number of ladies, who seem enthusiastic and are doing very well.

We're always happy to see new members and can promise good training, even if you haven't held one of these lovely little instruments before. We've got good resources, which we have paid for ourselves over the few years that we have been going.

Then if you want to come along and play the Cajon, or even know someone who would like to play this noisy box that's like a drum and can keep us in time then that's good too. Point them in my direction. I'm going to demonstrate how to play it at one of our next meetings.

We meet on in the back room at Little Fifteen, which is a great venue for us. If you're interested in coming along, even if it's just to watch, then do so. Or get in touch with Stephen and he'll send you a Beginner's Pack. He can also lend you a ukulele to practice on until you decide if you would like to buy your own

The people at the Hamlet and Lakeside (Three Sisters) recently did some free printing for us, so I said that we would entertain them in future. Last time we did this we found it very rewarding as we enjoyed it and so did they. Watch this space.

Also looking forward to raising money for Fur Clemt in Sainsburys in December. Elves and collectors needed.

Leader: Stephen Corless

### **Urban Sketching** **2nd and 4th Weds in Month** **Various 10:00 - 12:00**

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You never know where our Urban Sketchers will pop up – it's a different location every session, getting out and about to find good subjects. Get in touch with Sally if you want to know more.

Leader: Sally Duggan

### **Wine Appreciation** **1<sup>st</sup> Tues in Month, 19:30 - 21:00** **St Matthews Cricket Club**

We are a sociable group enjoying an average turnout of around 25 members.

Recent meetings have included tastings of Portuguese, Australian and German wines. Future plans include English, Spanish and French wines. Meetings currently cost £6 per month payable by the previous Members' Meeting.

Leader: Mike Crickett

### **Yoga** **Each Monday, 10:30 - 11.30** **St Andrews Parish Hall**

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The Wigan u3a Yoga group meet every Monday morning (bank holidays excluded) for a one hour session. It's a great way to start the week!

Our tutor, Ali, is a fantastic yogi who caters for all abilities and levels of yoga experience. If you have a mat bring it along, however spares (or chairs) available if needed.

Places are limited, so if you would like to join us, please contact Alan Lang in the first instance.

Leader: Alan Lang.

Several of our groups do have summer breaks, to accommodate members being off on holidays or taking on some extra grandkids-minding at this time of year.

If, therefore, you do see a group listed here that you think you might like to try, then we would always recommend getting in touch with the leader in advance, rather than just turning up. Contact can usually be made via our website by clicking the envelope icon on a particular group page

See <https://u3asites.org.uk/wigan/groups> to access a clickable list of group names.

