

Wirral U3A

March 2016

www.u3asites.org.uk/wirral

Registered Charity No. 1042342



In January the Wirral Road Safety Team visited us at the Williamson to do a workshop on how to stay driving safely for longer. During the session the participants were invited to test their reaction time

Free samples were given including clip on mirrors to help improve vision in their 'blind spot' when driving.

Testing driver reaction time



The morning passed very quickly with lots of opportunities for questions and answers and the event was helped along by our own kitchen assistant serving tea, coffee and cake.

Three members of staff from the team presented the workshop and 14 members of the Wirral U3A attended. Information was provided for the participants in the form of a pack which covered 5 aspects of driving

I hope that we will be able to hold another of these events in the autumn for people who could not sign up for this one.

Diane Adams

Safer driving for longer – Useful contacts

*Driver Assessments. Contact Angela Clarke 0151 336 1069 or secretary@wirraliam.co.uk

*Lifestyle. 0151 606 2010 or www.wirral.gov.uk/invigor8

*Eyesight visit your optician or www.nhs.uk

*Mobility 0800 559 3636 or www.mobility-centres.org.uk

*Public Transport- for free travel training contact Wirral Councils' Road Safety Team - 0151 606 2501.

Group News

Birdwatching – Margaret Elston

We continue to meet a couple of times a month and have added some extra members to our original 5. Up till now we have mostly been spotting wading birds but will be turning our attention to woodland and garden species once the shorebirds have moved off to their breeding grounds. Our visits to New Brighton introduced us to species like Turnstone which prefer rocky beaches as well as more ubiquitous birds like Redshank.

There were just 2 of us on a cold morning on Hoylake prom. Away to the west as a backdrop to Hilbre Island were the snow covered slopes of the Carneddau highlighted by winter sunshine. With a long lens it would have made a stunning photograph. As well as easy to spot species like oystercatcher and curlew there were flocks of Dunlin giving aerial displays and Sanderling running around like clockwork toys.

Classical Recorded Music – Janet Belton

Sadly our leader Chris Igglesden died in December but his wife Denise has very kindly offered to let us have some of his extensive music collection. Chris had led this group for years. At his funeral we heard from those who worked with Chris what a kindly, cultured and modest man he was. The group will continue to function and keep Chris' spirit alive. Our next meeting will be at Janet Belton's home in Moreton on March 3rd.

Janet's Mum bought her a piano for £6 from an old lady who was downsizing into a bungalow. The piano bore the number 39921. From this unique registration Janet discovered it was made by Gors & Kallman of Berlin in 1908. So in 2008 she laid on a 100th birthday party for it! How's that for value for money!



Everyday Science – Mary Green

In our January meeting we looked at soil structure and soil life. Until recently more was known about the heavens above than the ground beneath our feet. Mary used her soil test kit on a sample of her garden soil. It turned out to be neutral – a not unexpected result for a clay soil.

We escaped temporarily from dreary February weather when Mary took us to the Canaries. Did you know there are approximately 300 volcanoes on Lanzaroti? Nearby Fuerteventura bears traces of Ancient Man. Triangular niches have been carved into rock to capture water and one site bears traces of a carving of a human foot.

Maths – David Moore

Derek tested our knowledge of former weights and measures. Many of the original measures were based on body parts - viz the distance between fingertip and elbow etc. After this we moved onto Cryptarithms. Try some of these yourself.

AB +	AA+	AB+	ABC+	BAA+
<u>CB</u>	<u>CC</u>	<u>AB</u>	<u>ABC</u>	BAA
<u>BA</u>	<u>CBB</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>CDDB</u>	BAA
				<u>BAA</u>
				<u>LAAF</u>

If you can solve these with ease perhaps you should consider joining us!

Sunday Lunch – June Kerr

The group continues to meet at the Grove Hotel, Grove Road, Wallasey. Sadly January's meeting was cancelled but the February meal went ahead. This is another group that seems to be gaining some new members.

Strollers – Margaret Elston

For our February outing we went on a Crocus walk. Starting at Eastham Country Park we walked up an old track to the A41 emerging near Allport Road. Crossing over we continued along the main road for about 100 yards till we reached an old carriage drive up to the long demolished mansion Plymyard Towers. Both sides of the drive are planted with bulbs. Many fine trees remain from the original grounds. [*back page for photos*] Refreshments afterwards at the Tap. Our visit coincided with high tide. The Mersey sparkled under spring sunshine.

Walkers – Margaret Elston

7 turned up for Janet Belton's walk from Birkenhead Park over to Bidston windmill and back across the Ladies Golf Course. We tried feeding the park ducks but the pigeons muscled in on the act. Janet even provided us with proper birdfood to scatter – much healthier than chucking chunks of bread into the lakes.

New groups

Philosophy – Brian Gill

Starting a new group is a bit of an adventure when not everyone knows each other and I am certainly new to this U3A. There are so many ways of approaching philosophy that it would be all too easy for us to become lost in a jungle of thoughts.

Philosophy can offer amazing insights and clarity, just where and when we need them so it's a subject worthy of our attention; the means by which we can reach for new and different approaches to life and the way we live it, approaches supported by the wise since the dawn of history .

Consciously or not we all have some sort of philosophy though not always entirely fit for purpose. We may all know someone stuck in a view of life that is safe and predictable but limiting, lacking interest and excitement or maybe despairing, angry, anxious or frustrated.

Good philosophical ideas can open us up to a whole new way of looking at things, taking us beyond the idea of ourselves and society that we thought we knew. We now know that it is opening up new neural pathways in the brain that helps us to ward off mental deterioration.

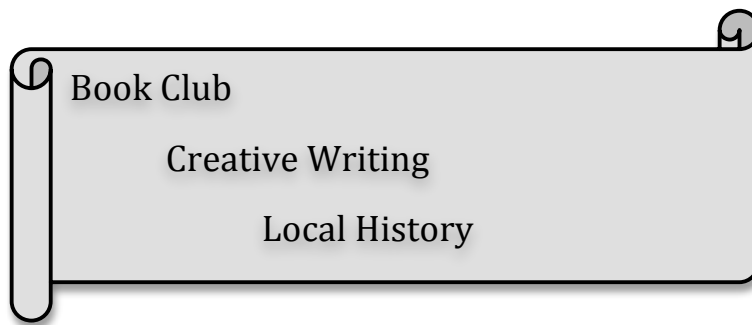
.. we all have some form of philosophy ..

Philosophy can certainly help us to think in a new way but it can also support and endorse attitudes and thought processes that we have already worked hard to acquire. My ideal philosophical group needs to be supportive whilst at the same time asking the vital questions that enable us to move to new areas in ourselves and of course the issues that arise should try to address and reflect the needs of those attending.

An article in the newspaper only today quoted scientific research to assure us that people who keep interested and informed and are prepared to learn new skills are more likely to function well as they age than those who rely on diet and exercise. I have to admit that this notion has been incorporated into my philosophy of life for some time as I fail to find regimes of diet and exercise appealing. It is heart warming, is it not, to think that just by attending interesting talks and groups run by U3A we can 'extend active life'? It is an approach that I am more than happy to endorse and if you should think that coming to the Philosophy Group might help in this or any other respect you would be very welcome to join us.

Meetings 10:30 on the first Wednesday of each month in Oxton.

New groups at the planning stage



Outings

Ballet Sleeping Beauty

What a delight to the senses. Imaginative re-modelling of the story, minimal but effective stage sets and not a tutu in sight. Marvellous. Humorous too. The last ballet I experienced was Giselle, so dated it was unintentionally funny at times. The theatre was not surprisingly almost empty. I would love to see Giselle get a make-over like this. Thanks to Chris Andrews our organiser. See below for some more of Chris' planned theatre trips.

Dates for your diary		
12:30 Thurs 17 March	Birkenhead Priory	£2
Weds pm 20 April	We'll meet again	Floral Pavilion
Weds pm 29 June	Waiting for gateau	Floral Pavilion
TBA	Warhorse	Liverpool Empire @ £30

Wirral Network and Regional news

May 13 Music workshop at Hoylake. All day	June 8 Regional AGM Quaker Meeting House Liverpool
Aug 31-Sept 2 NW Region Summer School Penrith £275 or £240 if booking before May 31	These topics may appeal to members of our Book Club and Science groups <i>Elizabeth Gaskell</i> <i>Science [The universe]</i>

I once stayed at the venue which hosts U3A National Summer School on a privately arranged walking holiday. I drove there, avoiding motorways, finding the site easily on the outskirts of town. Since I had a foot problem and couldn't manage the walks I explored the town. Westonbirt Arboretum and Bourton on

the Water and the Slaughters were short drives away. The site was glorious and used by Saga Tours whilst we were there.

I haven't listed all the courses, just those that seemed relevant to our existing Interest groups. Cost £285 full board.

Summer School – Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester

Aug 8-11	Literature- The Bloomsbury Effect	Mary MacGregor
	Creative Writing Crime and Thrillers	Gilly Beckett Some writing experience needed
	Folk Art Appliqué	Denise Collar Beginners welcome
	France Experience it	Loisette Johnson
Aug 15-18	Maths- making sense of infinity	John Baylis You need a working knowledge of fractions, decimals and basic Algebra
	Making friends with Music	Jack Wood

Puzzle

The answers have connections with measures, numbers and mathematics.

- A= Mathematical snake
- B= Sounds like you've chewed some memory
- C= A titled person
- D= Can you replicate this part of your face?
- E= A shape going on forever
- F= Sounds like golfers' warning call
- G= 144 horribles. Ugh!
- H= Body part horse measurer
- I= Move bit by bit
- J= Sounds like female water carrier
- K= Does he take your temperature?



L= Where mathematicians place their picnics

M= Sounds like a short distance for gauging your usage

N= Sounds like you'd take this fishing

O= Extremely light big cat

P= Sounds like you could eat 2 of this fruit

Q= Don't get cut up over this fraction

R= Controls all by straight lines

S= A difficult shaped carrot to swallow

T= Sounds like a very heavy barrel

U= Sounds like you're measuring rain

V= Cruel shape

W= Sounds like a long delay

X= It's 24th in the sequence

Y= Is it always at the rear?

Z= It's nothing to worry about

And finally ...

The pick of the jokes from our table's Christmas crackers

Q. "What do you call a row of men waiting for a haircut?"

A. A barbercue"

Q. "Why didn't the skeleton go to the Christmas party?"

A. He had no body to go with"

*View from the bird hide at
Eastham Country Park*





Craft- Diane Adams

On Wednesday 16th December a group of ladies assembled at Diane and Derek's house for a bit of Christmas fun and frolics with flowers, glue and ribbons to make a table decoration for themselves. The wire and prickly holly proved to be quite a challenge but we all managed to take home a trophy worthy of our efforts. The workshop was helped along of course by a liberal portion of tea and mince pies.

A good time was had by one and all.

Crocus walk at Plymyard, Eastham



The figures in the distance are the Strollers. They are about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way along the drive.

Stretching from the lodge gates both verges are festooned with crocus the length of the drive.

Quiz answers

Adder : byte : Count : Double chin : eternal triangle : four : gross : hand : inch : jill : Kelvin : log tables : meter : nett : ounce : pair : quarter : ruler : square root : tun : udometer : vicious circle : weight : x : yard : zero

Thanks to contributors Diane Adams and Brian Gill.
Next edition June 2016 Contributions by May 31 please to Editor

