



# WIRRAL U3A



## Chairman's Message at the April AGM

We have had another great year. The speakers have been brilliant and varied. We have a wide selection of interest groups on offer. Our membership is healthy. We currently have 140 members, 19 of them new. Our New Members day was a great success and our accounts are in good shape.

I have enjoyed my year as your chair. It's been my privilege to work with some wonderful people and I have made some wonderful friends. But then that is what U3A is about. I wish to thank Madge and Dorothy for their much appreciated efforts. A big thanks to Janet who has covered for me in my absence.

Welcome to Diane Adams and Christine Gibbon who are joining the committee. The former is joining the Social Committee and the latter is our new groups Co-ordinator. Diane made such a great contribution as a former Chairman.

I wish to give notice that I shall be retiring from office next year so please think hard about joining the committee and getting involved.

*Lin Clough*

After the business part of the meeting we enjoyed some paella; not the real thing but a collection of humorous anecdotes about Spanish life which member Brian Gill had enjoyed for some years.

## Current groups

Contact groups organizer Christine Gibbon for further details

Group	Leader	Meeting times	Location
Astronomy	David Moore	1st Thurs 2 pm	Hoylake
Beginners Mahjong	Sally Ledger	Mon pm	Wallasey
Buddies	Lyn Clough	See Buddies desk outside meeting room for information	
Craft	Diane Adams	2nd & 4th Weds	Upton
Creative Writing	Monica Price	4th Tues	Oxton
French	Janet Belton	10 am alternate Fridays	Moreton
Local History	Betty Nesbitt	3rd Thurs 1 pm	Oxton
Maths for Fun	Derek Adams	3rd Thurs 10 am	Upton
Monday lunch	Arranged by consensus	Meets after U3A meeting ends	Announced on the day
Music Appreciation	Janet Belton	1st Thurs at 10 am	Moreton
Philosophy	Brian Gill	1st Weds	Oxton
Practical Art	I. Roberts	4th Tues at 2 pm	Claughton
Religions of the World	Monica Price & Diane Adams	2nd Tues 10am	Oxton
Science	Mary Green	2nd Fri at 2 pm	Birkenhead
Scrabble	Beryl Keggan	3rd Mon at 2 pm	West Kirby
Sunday lunch	June Kerr	varies	Grove Hotel, Wallasey
Strollers/Walkers	Margaret Elston	Alternate Mon 11am/10am	Meet at start of walk
Topical discussion	Shirley Taylor	2nd Weds at 10 am	West Kirby
Wine Appreciation	Sue Shaw	3rd Weds at 2 pm	Newton village hall.
Bank Holidays and 5 Monday months affect some groups such as Strollers and Walkers as they alternate with the Williamson meetings.			

# Northwest Region news

Northwest Summer School 2018 details below. The venue is once again Newton Rigg Agricultural college on the outskirts of Penrith.

Course	Tutor
Housing, Modernism & Architecture	Clyde Raine
Lake District Minerals	Christine Arkwright
Making friends with Music	Jack Wood
Modern medicine	Gill Baynes
Recorder playing	Marlene Phillips
Ruskin and his legacy	Meg Shaw
Science is for everyone	Bob Roach
Twentieth Century Russia- Tsarism- Communism-then ?	Edward Towne
Wars of 3 Kingdoms and 2 generals.	Brenda Cubbon
What did the Romans ever do for us?	Maggie Simms

## April Deeside/Wirral Network Science Day - Heswall Hall

Of the 11 U3As in our network 6 have science groups and reps from outside the area also attended. Our guest speaker Hannah Renshall took 2 sessions. As part of her job with the Institute of Physics she works through Outreach schemes to popularize physics among young people. One of her tasks is to skill up non-physics specialists teaching physics. Many forms of physics underpin our economy so it is vital to increase the numbers pursuing this subject as a career.

She began with the tale of how on her 1st appearance in the physics lecture hall she was asked "Are you sure you're in the right building? Fashion is in ....." How gratifying for her to graduate with top marks in her year group, just one of 20 girls among 200 lads.

This anecdote led on to her theme of unconscious bias. If you're interested in uncovering your personal unconscious bias check out

[www.tolerance.org/activity/test-yourself-hidden-bias](http://www.tolerance.org/activity/test-yourself-hidden-bias)

It took a while to work through her slides because the audience had plenty to say when we were shown data and asked for opinions. One slide showed a collection of words compiled from asking teachers to provide 10 words to describe boys and 10 for girls.

Perhaps the mental health statistics for males demonstrates that gender stereotyping can be just as damaging for men.

She claimed that in any single sex group there will be a greater range of differences within the group than there is between the 2 sexes. It is false to claim the male brain is better adapted to study science. But apparently females are superior at picking out tiny details as oestrogen influences the eyes. And heart attack symptoms differ between the sexes so female heart attacks sometimes go undiagnosed.

During group discussions we were visited in turn by the National Science Adviser Michael Hollingsworth who belongs to Stockport U3A. Their science group dates back to 2011 and numbers 140 members!

After lunch Hannah spoke about how to introduce people to science working through Holiday clubs, libraries, Social Services. She's collaborated with ex-offenders, travellers, the Royal College of Music, women's groups.

Here's one of their party pieces you can try- pierce an inflated balloon with a stick without bursting it. Apparently the stick should be pushed through the darkest area of the balloon where there is less surface tension. Good luck with that!

## Wirral U3A Group news

Local History :- see pages 6-7 for a report of their February outing

Maths for Fun :- Our leader Derek has been discovering websites with evermore fiendish problems. Can you devise a 4x4 square and place 8 counters inside it with never more than 2 counters in a row. Rows go horizontally, vertically and diagonally. If like me you haven't encountered any geometry for over half a century you'll have to brush up on some basic rules before tackling some of our recent puzzles about rectangles and triangles. You wouldn't believe some of the maths problems that today's pupils are happily taking in their stride.

### Monday Lunchers

We seem to have been dining at the Shrew in Oxtun recently straight after our meetings at the Williamson and other members are welcome to join us. Just linger after the meeting closes and we'll find you.

### Music Appreciation

When our group reached letter H Ian introduced us to a piece by Scottish composer Hamish MacCunn - Land of the Moor and Flood (ok I suppose we should have waited till the Ms. especially as we could have chosen plenty of surnames beginning with H but Classic FM's top 300 Tunes had listed this opus as Number 1). Hamish was rather dishy :- his artist pa-in-law once depicted him as Bonnie Prince Charlie. Hamish wrote

the above mentioned piece whilst still a teenager. What I admired was his ability with interviewers - giving as good as he got. One of our number brought along a German piece- Hexen (witches) so now I understand how the phrase putting a hex on somebody came about. Strangely none of us thought to include anything by Holst.

Things got a bit difficult when we reached the Is but at last I got to play one of my 78s on Janet's gramophone - Burl Ives singing *It takes a worried man to sing a worried song*. I hadn't heard this for years since my music system only copes with 33 and 45 rpm.

Science :- Mary took us abroad once again, this time to Tenerife, home of the highest mountain in Europe. It even has raincloud forest. Farmers have retreated from some of the higher ground so terraces have been abandoned. It can't have been a comfortable place to have lived during its 7-10 million year old history judging by some of the rocks which now rest at 90° angle to their original position. But nature is quick to repair damage. Full size trees flourish on the site of a lava flow 100 years ago. Remains of what must have been terrifying lava bombs litter some areas.

Strollers :- We enjoyed a sunny March morning whilst exploring Tranmere, visiting Mersey and Victoria Parks, having fun on the outdoor gym equipment in the latter. It was even warm enough to sit outside the Rumbling Tum cafe and tuck into refreshments. April took us to Heswall where the footpath encircling Tesco's led us on to Feather Lane, Herbert's lane and past the imposing Farr Hall into Rectory Lane. Then it was back uphill through St Peter's churchyard and the rather steep Dawstone Park. We lunched in yet another unfamiliar bistro. Our walk at the end of May will take us from Christ Church Port Sunlight over to the River Park.

Sunday Lunch :- Meet 12:30 for 1pm at the Grove Hotel, Wallasey on 10th June. Please let organizers June Kerr/Margaret Rogers know if you intend to go.

Walkers :- In April the sun shone as we stormed along the multi-use path from Hoylake station towards West Kirby, turning off part way along to cross the Royal Liverpool Golf Course and make our way down to the shore at Red Rocks. As you can see from our photos on the front cover we'd lost the sun by then. Re-crossing the golf course on a more southerly path we cut through a snicket back onto the multi-use path and retraced our steps to Hoylake where Tea leaf had the pleasure of our custom. We managed this circuit in well under 2 hours.

Our May walk started in the centre of Neston. Despite the recent dry weather we did find muddy patches on Blackey's Lane, a long path leading from the town centre up to the A540. A much drier Wirral Way led us back into town to The Elephant bistro.

# Group news continued

Local History group - leader Betty Nesbitt

In February 7 members of the group visited Liverpool Museum and the church of Our Lady and St Nicholas.

“We had a good and varied day. Starting at St Nicholas we couldn't get anyone to show us round because nobody was available in the afternoons. But we did a good job looking through leaflets and printouts which I'd already downloaded. Of interest was how St Nicholas being the Seamen's Mission was connected with maritime history including the wonderful modern sculptures on display.

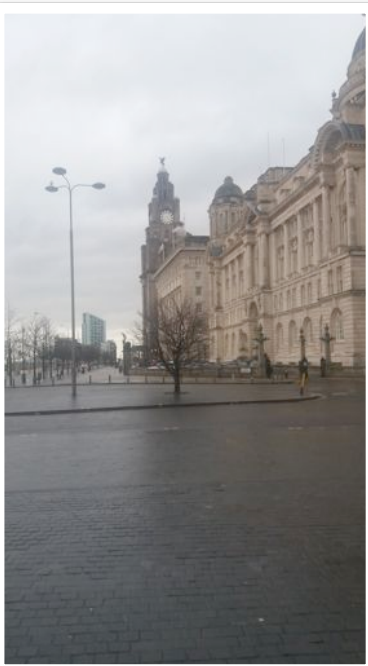
*photo* And like the illuminated manuscript referring to the bell of HMS Liverpool (sunk in the war) its framework created by Cammell Lairds apprentices. A fascinating church especially how it rose from the ashes of the 2nd World war; the church almost entirely destroyed - because of its proximity to the docks it took a real hammering. But here it stands with its history and

memories still there to investigate.

After St Nicholas we walked along the front to Liverpool Museum for lunch, meeting up with my friend Jeff Speakman, assistant curator of Field Archaeology.

Jeff guided us round various exhibits on the ground floor covering periods of Liverpool's history from Ice and Stone Ages to present day. Excavating these pre-history periods also

## FEBRUARY HISTORY GROUP VISIT



indicated how we could track human activities from as much as 8,0000 years ago and still counting on the Wirral with digs going on in Greasby, Irby and other places as well as across the Mersey at Latham and Lunt where I had the privilege to be involved in the dig.

I have sent a message to Jeff thanking him for his amazing explanations about the artifacts and exhibits. I can heartily recommend a further visit to the museum as we only touched the surface. Better still make your own visit and take your friends and family.

Betty            *photos :- Pauline Beecham*

### News from the Social committee

Following the AGM in April there have been some changes to the social committee. Madge Aitkin, Margaret Seville, Jean Woods, Fran Begbie and Val Thorns have all stepped down and I would like to thank them for the work they have done for our U3A. Chris Andrew is remaining on the committee and Dave Buckingham, Elizabeth Harding and I have all agreed to join her. There are only 4 of us now and we would welcome another one or two people who would like to join our happy little band of workers.

The committee has been busy and the following activities are planned.

25th May :- Afternoon tea at the Bluebell Tea Room

8th June :- Murder Inn at the Little Theatre.

11th June :- Terra cotta Warriors at Liverpool Museum

18th October :- Anniversary lunch at the Manor in Greasby

A holiday is being arranged for Spring 2019 for people who might be interested. A preliminary planning meeting will take place for this after our U3A meeting on Monday 4th June. Please let other members know about this planning meeting in case they might be interested in the holiday. This meeting precedes the soup and sandwich lunch arranged at the Williamson that day.

*Diane Adams (chairman of the Social committee)*

### The Science of Fairground Rides

Thrill happens when a large amount of dopamine and adrenaline increase rapidly. Free falling in the dark is alarming and the mind can process what to do in a third of a second. A drop of 5 metres could fill that time span. And that's the science behind creating thrilling experiences at fairgrounds etc. Because fairground owners don't want to spend on any extra inch of steelwork if they can avoid it. And where was this data obtained? From DVLA's test laboratory data on car crashes. Now there's a sobering thought.

# AMAZING WHAT YOU SEE



## The good, the bad, the unexpected retirement outcomes

*Any ideas what function this gadget serves which we found on a stile at Saughall. (Photo top left) I'd climbed over the stile without even noticing it it was there.*

*Thanks to contributors Derek and Diane Adams, Pauline Beecham, Lin Clough and Betty Nesbitt email material for the next edition to editor [m.elston2@live.co.uk](mailto:m.elston2@live.co.uk)*

20000+ retirees answered Legal and General's 3 questions about retirement.

On the positive side of having more leisure time it turned out folk didn't relish the chance to develop their hobbies as much as relishing being able to go back to bed in the mornings with a cuppa.

Nobody missed having to commute.

You can predict the downside for yourselves. However answers concerning unexpected outcomes of retirement included getting through more toilet rolls and realizing one's wardrobe had morphed into beige and cream outfits!

And everybody wondered how they'd ever found time to go to work!