

# u3a Wirral

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

Dear Wirral u3a member,  
Welcome to the November newsletter. The standout feature for me this month is the range of contributors. So, a big 'thank you' from me to those of you who made the effort to write something. I have said before that it is 'our' newsletter not 'my' newsletter – I think it is more interesting to get a range of views and writing styles. I am happy to receive short handwritten pieces which you can give to me at the meeting. It would be nice to have some reports from the groups! Also, contributions for the new section on activities around Wirral or across the Mersey that you think might interest members. In the December edition I'd like to include a reflection on the past year: what were the best bits of the u3a year for you? You can email these to me, or tell me verbally at the next meeting or give me your reflection on a piece of paper. A couple of sentences is fine!

Kind regards

**Joy**

## Chair's Message

Hello Everyone!

How quickly time passes. It seems no time at all since we were going back to the Williamson for the first time this year and now we're up to our last meeting before Christmas. I hope you will wear your Christmas jumper if you have one.

Thank you to all the committee, especially Monica for finding such interesting speakers for us and Dave for the special raffle and his technical wizardry.

We all wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Janet 🌸 🌸 🌸

Best wishes

**Janet, chairperson**

## Upcoming Events Meetings

**12 December**

Christmas Event

Barry Humphreys

**2023**

**9 January**

Queen Victoria

Elizabeth Davey

**23 January**

A Journey through Liverpool past and present

Cledwyn Thomas

## Outings

**3rd February**

September in the Rain

The Little Theatre, Birkenhead

7:30pm

£8.00

An evocation of a lost working-class way of life, with something a little darker below the surface. The play tells the story of a lifetime of holidays with Blackpool at its heart.

## Important Announcement

The good news is that we have returned to the Williamson!

Tea and coffee are served at 10.00am. The speaker starts at 10:45.

Entrance fee is now £2.

**January 2023**

You might read in the local newspaper or hear on local radio that the Williamson will be closed in January. Don't panic! While that might be generally true – they will still be open for our two meetings.

## Buddy System

If you think that you would like to visit a place or see a show, but don't want to go on your own, we can help you find someone who would also like to go. Just give one of the Committee members your name and brief details of the event. We can put it up on the screen at a meeting. Alternatively, you can put the information on the notice board which is located at the back of the meeting room.

## Events

### Anniversary Lunch – a personal view

On 25<sup>th</sup> October, I woke up to a lovely blue sky and no wind which gave me hope for a great day. My friend Norma has a car, so we made our way to the Grange in Hoylake where we met up with other u3a members to enjoy our Anniversary lunch. We were on a table for six. A delicious lunch was served. We started with vegetable soup which was followed by the main course of thinly sliced roast beef, a small Yorkshire pudding, carrots, broccoli, crispy roast potatoes and gravy. The service was swift and the ladies who served were most obliging – horseradish sauce appeared quickly after it was requested. The final course was an excellent cheese board or ice cream. Having eaten, we chatted with the other guests on our table. Norma and Peter discovered a mutual interest in Rugby Football. I must say a big 'thank you' to Chris for all the organising. We came home feeling this had been so lovely eating with friends instead of eating alone.

**Brenda**

## Meetings

### Lord Leverhulme's Chauffeur

The talk was given by someone who was the genuine article! Ron Hutchinson had actually worked for Lord Leverhulme as his chauffeur. He applied for the position after his service in the army. Out of a short list of three he was the successful candidate.

Ron enjoyed his job no doubt helped by Lord Leverhulme being a good employer. In his capacity as chauffeur Ron came into contact with royalty and the aristocracy. He also had some amusing anecdotes about Lord Leverhulme, for example, he always finished off the end of every sentence off by saying "what".

Lord Leverhulme liked a pair of trousers that Ron was wearing so Ron had to take Lord Leverhulme to Marks & Spencer to buy a

## Coffee Break Moment

Here are the answers to last month's puzzles.

Names of places of entertainment  
CINEMA  
THEATRE  
OPERA HOUSE  
CONCERT HALL  
AMUSEMENT ARCADE

### MATHS CHALLENGE

16;  $\frac{3}{4}$  of it;  $\times 7$ ;  $-63$ ;  $\div 3$ ;  $\times$  by itself = **49**

11;  $\times 8$ ; double it;  $-68$ ;  
 $4/9$  of this; triple it = **144**

78;  $\div 13$ ;  $\times 9$ ; triple it;  $-78$ ;  
 $5/6$  of this = **70**

154;  $9/11$  of this; triple it;  
 $-222$ ;  $\div 12$ ;  $\times$  by itself =  
**169**

pair. However, it was also Ron's task to present payment for the trousers which proved to be a slight hassle when he presented the card with Lord Leverhulme's name on it!

Lord Leverhulme had been the Lord Lieutenant for Cheshire for 49 years. After boundary changes Thornton Hough became part of Merseyside so he called himself a scouser.

Sadly, after an illness, Lord Leverhulme died in the year 2000.

John

**Editor's note:** *Wikipedia informs me that Lord Leverhulme is the longest serving Lord Lieutenant in the country. He died without male heirs, so his title ceased to exist. Will this inheritance law change in the future?*

### **Mutiny on the Bounty**

Derek Arnold treated the U3A group to an interesting and informative talk about William Bligh and the 1789 Mutiny on the Bounty. The talk was wide-ranging, both in terms of history and geography and included a synopsis of Bligh's incredible 4000-mile journey in a small boat, after the mutiny.

Derek was keen to dispel some of myths promulgated by the two Hollywood versions of the story, both of which portrayed of Bligh as a sadistic and brutal British Navy officer.

The first Hollywood film about the mutiny was released in 1935 by MGM and starred Charles Laughton as William Bligh and Clark Gable as Fletcher Christian. It was based on the 1932 book by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall. Despite historical inaccuracies, the film was a huge box office success.

The second Hollywood film on the mutiny was an MGM remake of the 1935 film. It was released in 1962 and starred Marlon Brando as Fletcher Christian and Trevor Howard as William Bligh. The film was not a success and perhaps is best known for its production difficulties, some due to Marlon Brando's demanding behaviour.

Hollywood films are somewhat biased against historical British Naval officers, often portraying them as excessively brutal. Derek suggested that the reason for this was an attempt to draw attention away from Alexander Slidell Mackenzie (1803-1848), a United States Navy officer, infamous for his decision to execute three suspected (and young) mutineers aboard a ship under his command, the USS Somers. This incident took place in 1842 and became known as the Somers Mutiny.

A British film "The Bounty" was released in 1984, starring Anthony Hopkin as Bligh and Mel Gibson as Fletcher Christian. The screenplay was based on the book "Captain Bligh and Mr Christian" by Richard Hough. This film gives a far more sympathetic view of Bligh and portrays the friendship which existed between Bligh and Christian before the mutiny. The British film is considered to be the closest to historical events.

Bligh (1754-1817) was ten years older than Christian (1764-1793), yet they had been friends. Both had connections with the Isle of Man and they had sailed together on three previous occasions. Incidentally, Fletcher Christian was only 24 when the mutiny took place.

In 1787 Bligh approached Christian to serve on board the Bounty. Bligh had intended to appoint Christian as the ship's Master, but the Navy Board rejected this request (due to Christian's low seniority) and appointed John Fryer instead. Christian was retained as Master's Mate. However,

halfway through the Bounty's voyage, Bligh appointed Christian as acting lieutenant, thus making him senior to Fryer. (The master is a historical rank for a naval officer trained in and responsible for the navigation of a sailing vessel).

In February 1787, the British government announced a plan to sponsor an expedition to the South Pacific, to collect breadfruit plants for transport to the West Indies, where they would be planted to provide food for slaves on the sugar plantations. Just one small ship, The Bounty, was chosen for the expedition. The vessel was rated only as a cutter, so had no commissioned officers other than Bligh (who was then only a lieutenant) and a relatively small crew. There would be no Royal Marines to provide protection from hostile natives during stops, or to enforce security on board ship.

In preparation for the voyage, the cargo area of the hull was enlarged, thus reducing the area for the crew's accommodation. The crew would have to live in cramped quarters for the duration of a long and difficult voyage.

Bligh set sail in December 1787, intending to reach Tahiti by the shorter westwards route but, after spending a month attempting to round Cape Horn, storms forced him to turn back. Instead, he sailed to the Cape of Good Hope, where he stayed for a while, to allow his exhausted crew to rest and recuperate, and to take on board fresh water and provisions.

The Bounty finally reached Tahiti in October 1788, much later than planned because of the various delays, including having to sail the longer eastwards route. Unfortunately, the ship had missed the breadfruit season, so Bligh and his crew had to wait on Tahiti for five months before the breadfruit cuttings were sufficiently mature to be potted, ready for transport. By day, the crew tended the breadfruit cuttings plants. By night, they enjoyed the hospitality of the friendly islanders. After five months experiencing the relaxed atmosphere of the island, many of the crew were reluctant to return to the harsh realities of life aboard ship or back in England.

The Bounty left Tahiti on 5 April 1789 to begin her voyage to the Caribbean. However, a mutiny took place on 28 April, led by Christian Fletcher. Bligh and 18 loyal crewmen were put aboard the ship's launch, a small boat just 23 feet long. Four other loyal crewmen had to remain on the Bounty as the launch was heavily overloaded. Bligh and his companions were provided with four cutlasses, food and water for about a week, a quadrant and a compass, but no charts or marine chronometer. However, one of the men brought his pocket watch, which was used to measure time (necessary for navigation calculations). Fortunately, Bligh had perfected his navigational skills ten years earlier, under instruction from Captain James Cook, during Cook's third voyage of discovery (1776-1779).

Bligh intended to reach Timor, the nearest European settlement, even though it was 4164 miles northwest of Tofua. Bligh's boat was set adrift near the island of Tofua, so he headed there to obtain supplies, but he and his men were attacked by hostile natives and John Norton, the quartermaster, was killed. They fled from Tofua and headed west, island-hopping where possible. They had to survive on meagre rations, the weather was often stormy, and they were in fear of sinking, due to the boat's heavily laden condition. Bligh succeeded in reaching Timor after an epic 47-day voyage, the only casualty being the crewman killed on Tofua. Three of the men who survived this arduous voyage were so weak that they soon died of sickness, possibly malaria, in the Dutch East Indies port of Batavia (the present-day Indonesian capital of Jakarta), where they waited for transport to Britain. Two more died on the way to England.

Bligh and the 12 surviving members of his crew eventually reached England on 13 March 1790, and the country soon became aware of the Mutiny and the loss of the Bounty.

Meanwhile, back in the South Pacific, Fletcher Christian sailed the Bounty back to Tahiti, where he offloaded 16 of his crew, including the four men who remained loyal to Bligh. Christian married Mauatua (or Maimiti), the daughter of one of the local chiefs. He did not stay long in Tahiti because he knew that Royal Navy ships would soon be looking for him. Christian left Tahiti on the Bounty in September 1789, with eight mutineers, six Tahitian men and eleven Tahitian women. He sailed eastwards, aiming for Pitcairn Island as it was remote and would be difficult to find as its location had been incorrectly plotted on the charts. They arrived at Pitcairn Island in January 1790. Soon after arrival, the mutineers stripped Bounty of everything that was movable and set it on fire, thus stranding them.

Almost nineteen years later, in February 1808, an American seal-hunting ship, the Topaz, visited Pitcairn Island. A double canoe with three young English-speaking men came to greet the ship. The Americans discovered that Pitcairn Island was home to a colony of 35 persons, the widows and offspring of Bounty mutineers and the one surviving mutineer, John Adams. The other eight mutineers (including Fletcher Christian) and the six Tahitian men had died in conflicts or accidents in the preceding 18 years. Fletcher Christian died about 1793. He was survived by his widow Mauatua, and three children (two sons and a daughter).

Derek Arnold skimmed over events after the mutiny in 1789, such as the voyage of HMS Pandora, led by captain Edward Edwards, to capture any surviving mutineers, and the trial of some of the mutineers in England in 1792. He also mentioned Bligh's brief tenure as Governor of New South Wales. As well as Bligh being involved in the first Battle of Copenhagen (1801) in which Lord Nelson famously held his telescope to his blind eye and said "I really do not see the signal!".

To conclude, during Bligh's naval career there were several instances that demonstrated he was actually quite caring and relatively gentle towards his crew. For example, he did his best to ensure that his crew had access to clean water and fresh fruit. Virtually none of his men succumbed to scurvy. Perhaps Bligh lacked people skills when dealing with awkward crew members, but by no means was he the brutal and sadistic man portrayed in the Hollywood films. Indeed, as Derek Arnold said, he was a man much maligned.

**Jo**

## Outings

### **St. Nicholas's Fayre, York**

24 November saw 9 members embark on a 2-hour coach trip to York to enjoy the Christmas Fair which was up and running again after an absence of 2 years (can't think what caused that!). The group dispersed having told that the coach would leave at 4:30pm. Giles and I went to visit the Minister having only seen it from the outside before. We were fortunate to join a guided tour and really enjoyed it. The tour lasted an hour and several interesting features were pointed out by a very knowledgeable guide. I particularly liked the choir screen which separates the choir from the nave. It was constructed in the 15th-century and contains sculptures of the kings of England from William the Conqueror to Henry VI. Each King was rather similarly attired in long gowns - apart from one - King



John who was wearing an above the knee tunic. Clearly the king we learn such negative things about had one redeeming feature: his legs!

After the Minister we went to the Christmas Fair wandering through the narrow streets which had lots of shoppers. Having lived in the Netherlands for nearly 30 years, we have become rather spoiled by visits to German Christmas markets which has a much longer tradition and a greater variety of stalls – so we were not so impressed.



Since it was mid-afternoon and it had started to rain, we decided to head back to the bus. We got soaked in a torrential downpour before taking refuge in a café – arriving back before 4:30 – as had nearly all the passengers – except 2! 20 minutes after the departure time they'd contacted the driver to report that they were lost. We waited over 40 minutes for them but still no show and the driver was given permission to leave. We did

manage to make up some time, but you have to feel sorry for the driver who wouldn't have got back to the garage until after 9pm when he was supposed to clean the bus!

**Joy**

## Group News

### Walking Group



**7 November.** We started outside of what was the very grand Woodside station where Wilfred Owen's father was stationmaster (see photo). We walked along Church St which had been lined with grand houses and stables, passing Water St where, at one time, there was a water mill. The tramline used to run along Church St and the docks came almost to the road. It is still possible to see the walls. We then came to Pilgrim St there used to be a Court House and at end of the road was Carnegie Library. Turning left we went along what was the railway to Monks Ferry and from there we followed the river to Seacombe.

**Sue**

**21 November.** 7 hardy souls met at Hoylake to brave the cold. The weather forecast had predicted rain to start at 12 but no one told the

## Coffee Break Moment

This month's puzzles

Here are 6 **anagrams**.

1 is a musician, 1 is a politician, 1 is a sportsman, 2 are TV personalities and 1 is a businessman.

RARING SORT

AGEING FERAL

DON ARMCHAIRS

BRANCH OR DRAINS

MANURE PLOT

WILL STAIN HOME

Maths is good for you!

60; ÷5; x3; double it; +5; +6; -15; -3/4 of it; square it; -157 =

18; square it; x2; ÷8; +40; -73; -1/4 of it; x9; half of it; half of it =

112; -25; x3; +46; -295; x5; double it; -75; ÷5; triple it =

rain and it started with our walk. We went past Whitegate Animal Sanctuary to Gilroy gardens where we walked round the pond. By this time the rain was quite heavy, so it was decided to retrace our steps. Even the ducks were sheltering from the rain. The animals at the sanctuary were inside their shelters apart from one poor cow who couldn't fit in with the goats so tried hiding behind their shelters. Back at Hoylake Chris went ahead to order some very welcome hot drinks. Still, we got an hour exercise in the open air among pleasant company and felt better for it.

**Sue**

## **Around Wirral and the environs**

### **Liverpool Welsh Choral**

The choir are recruiting for more singers for the coming season. If you would like to join, contact Angela Case at [lwcmembershipsec@gmail.com](mailto:lwcmembershipsec@gmail.com)

See web site [www.lwcu.co.uk](http://www.lwcu.co.uk) for more details of the choir and 2022-2023 season.