

u3a Wirral

[Website] <https://u3asites.org.uk/wirral/home>

Dear Wirral u3a member,
Thank you to everyone who contributed to this month's newsletter. I hope more of you will do so in the future!
See you all on May 22nd I hope.
Kind regards
Joy

Chair's message

Hello Everyone,
Hope you are enjoying this lovely sunny weather, even though they are threatening us that it's going to get colder. The AGM is now behind us and again we say thank you to Derek for his sterling work as treasurer and welcome Giles as he takes over the reins.
Look forward to seeing some of you on the 5th May if not before.
Best wishes
Janet

Meetings

Barrow to Baghdad and back again

April 3
Philip Caine's talk had a different approach to our recent talks. It was a very personal account of his life in the oil industry first as a chef and later providing accommodation for workers. He'd been born and grew up in Barrow where the shipyard was the biggest employer and the most likely destination of all young men of the town. His parents expected that for Philip, but he had other ideas. He wanted to work in the hotel and catering business in which he'd been working in the evenings and at weekends while at school. He did manage to convince his parents that this was his preferred option. This decision shaped the rest of his life. He started working as a chef in various hotels around the country, including Claridges. He then switched to working as chef on North Sea Oil Rigs which involved a 2 week-on/2 week-off rotation work

Upcoming Special Event

5th May

Afternoon Coronation Tea

Popsy's, Hoylake

(Fully booked – although there's a reserve list)

Meetings

Important Announcement

There is no meeting on May 8th.

May 22

New Research into Linguistics
Mary Clinton

Outings/visits

10th May

Poulton Hall, Raby.
£12 per person

24th May

River Dee Boat trip
£15.75

Jun 9th

The Crucible
Gladstone theatre. 7.30pm.
£11

Jun 15th

Towards Zero.
A nail-biting thriller based on Agatha Christie's book.
Little Theatre Birkenhead.
7.30pm. £8

pattern. He didn't like working on the rigs but the good money and work rota kept him there for 17 years. He decided he was getting too old for the rigs and wanted a change.

He then shifted to organising accommodation for ex-pat oil workers which took him to Algeria, Nigeria and Kazakhstan. The latter involved organising his supplies with the help of the KGB and the Russian Mafia. This began to sound like an Ian Fleming novel!

Philip had decided to go into business for himself and borrowed money to build and run a hotel for the oil industry workers. He unfortunately chose a bad moment to get into debt since he got caught out by the ENRON banking collapse and he had to find other ways to pay off his loans. The solution was to go to Baghdad and build accommodation for US Troops. On the one hand, this was a safer option since he was on contract and not using his own resources. On the other hand, it wasn't so safe since he was shot out and experienced mortar fire when he set foot outside of the Green Zone. However, after 7 years he'd paid off his debts and was looking forward to retirement. However, that was put on hold since he'd clearly impressed someone who asked him to set up a similar facility in Dubai. He accepted this challenge – in part because his wife could join him. They stayed there until 2014 when they returned to Barrow to enjoy retirement.

However, Philip got bored with sitting at home, so his wife suggested that he took up writing. He joined a writing group. Surprise, surprise his experiences in the Middle East Oil Industry gave him plenty of material to convert into stories. He couldn't find a publisher for his first book, so being the sort of enterprising guy he is, he set up his own company. He's now the author of several thrillers and gives very entertaining talks including to Wirral u3a. He also generously donated one of his books to our draw.

Joy

{*Editor's addition.* You can find more about our speaker and his books on his website: <https://www.philipcaine.com/>}

Radio Caroline North

17 April

Brian Cullen gave us a very interesting talk with music of the period and interviews with the Disc Jockeys.

Brian was born in Birkenhead and listened to Radio Caroline as a youngster.

He worked freelance for Radio Merseyside and Radio City.

He is currently broadcasting "Radio Caroline Flash Back" which is a 24hr programme on the internet.

In the 60's there were only the BBC Light and Home services until Radio Luxemburg obtained a license to broadcast at night. Ronan O'Reilly was promoting Georgie Fame and took an acetate to Radio Luxemburg because the BBC would not play it, but they

Coffee Corner Moment

March Quiz

I'm sure you didn't have any trouble answering these!

1. How long did the Hundred Years War last?
116 years.
2. The Canary Islands are named after which animal?
Dog.
3. What colour is a purple finch?
Crimson.
4. Which animal is the main source of material for the camel's hairbrush?
Squirrel.
5. Which country celebrates Columbus Day, even though the man never set foot there?
United States.

April Quiz

Each set of words is linked to a single word:

1. Remaining; completed; six balls.
2. Ringlet; canal feature; secure.
3. Ellipse; cricket ground; US Office.

laughed saying they could not play it as they had a waiting list booked for 5 years. As it happens, a Danish Passenger ferry was decommissioned and was taken to Rotterdam. The boat was then taken to Greenall to be refit by Ronan O'Reilly and Radio Caroline was born. Called Caroline after President Kennedy's daughter but at the same time the Fortunes brought out the song "Caroline" and this became their theme tune. Simon Dee and Chris Moore tested the transmissions and when the press arrived, they sailed away to transmit in international waters 4 miles from the coast, anchored off Harwich. Their first record was by the Rolling Stones.

A rival pirate ship broadcast as Radio Atlanta but in July 1962 they merged as Radio Caroline South and Radio Caroline North. Radio Caroline North sailed to the Isle of Man and stayed there for 4 years, through all sorts of weather. DJs who joined included Tony Blackburn, Johnny Walker and Emperor Roscoe. Local lad Mike Ahearn took a bus to London and was interviewed and started the following week.

There were a lot of commercials, and Brian played us some: Weetabix, Vitalis, Vicks cough drops and Findus Frozen peas.

In 1968 the Government set up Marine Legislation to outlaw the ship, so many decided to leave as they did not want to break the law. Ronan decided to keep the ship going but it was never as popular.

They broadcast illegally until 1969 when it was towed away to Holland and eventually decayed. Brian was at pains to reiterate that Radio Caroline still broadcasts on Radio Caroline Flashback. The interviews with the DJs were very interesting and the snippets of 60's music took us back to our youth. Do you remember the 60's? Then perhaps you weren't there!!

Ros

{*Editor's addition.* This is where you can find Radio Caroline Flashback plus a number of other nostalgia music stations: <https://www.radio-uk.co.uk/radio-caroline-flashback>}

Groups

Walking Group

Leasowe lighthouse. April 24

The Walking Group was given a very interesting and informative guided tour of the lighthouse by a guardian of the lighthouse Janet (aka Wirral u3a Chair). Janet has been a guardian for over 20 years. We learned about the restoration of the lighthouse and also about its occupants over the centuries. We had views of some amazing scenery from the top level. We also sat on a replica of King Canute's Chair. It is believed that Leasowe is where his attempts to battle with the tides occurred. The lighthouse is 260 years old this year, so we are looking forward to an anniversary event later in the year.



Stephanie

{*Editor's addition.* This is the link to the Wikipedia entry:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leasowe_Lighthouse}

Visits

Bury Market

A small group of Wirral U3A members took a Timewells coach to Bury Market. There were 45 women and only 5 men on board, plus a lot of shopping trolleys in the luggage hold!

There is a thriving Meat and Fish department in the market with excellent produce and according to Peter {*Editor's addition: someone who knows what he's talking about!*}, being sold at competitive prices.

Bury is famous for its black pudding and pies which, I for one, bought as presents to take home along with a complete summer wardrobe. Just need the weather now!

We were there for about 4.5 hrs which is a long time to wander around. We did not find any of the 3 museums, although we did find a sign advertising the Fusilier Museum and a one celebrating the Battle of Minden (1759).

Chris A

{*Editor's addition: This is the link to the Fusilier Museum*

<https://www.fusiliermuseum.com/>

The 20th Foot (Lancashire Fusiliers), which is now part of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, fought in the Battle of Minden which was part of the 7 Years War between a combined force of German States and the UK against a combined force of French and Saxony electorate troops.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Minden}



Poetry Corner

Keeping with the theme of a poem with a link to the month, April's choice seemed obvious! Suggestions of a May theme are welcome.

Home Thoughts from Abroad

Robert Browning

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England - now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!

Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops - at the bent
spray's edge -
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song
twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
- Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

Around Wirral and the environs

Oxton Secret Gardens

Sunday 14th May

10:00am to 5:00pm.

Chance to visit 18 gardens. There are also refreshments and entertainment (also for children).

Charge £10 on the day, or £8 in advance from: <http://www.theoxtonsociety.co.uk>

{Editor's addition. This is just one of many walks offered by the Society. So do check out the website.}

NW Region News

NW Conference and AGM in Liverpool July 4th.

This event is for anyone. There are discussion groups and a performance by concert pianist Andrew Wilde as well as the AGM. Please see the NW website for more information and the link to the booking form.

The Big Sing

Wednesday 10th May 2023, 10.15 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.

The Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool (short walk from Central Station).

Charge £15 which includes refreshments but not lunch.

Organised by u3a Northwest Region

Led by Fredrik Holm, music specialist from Lancaster and Morecambe u3a and members of the Northwest Regional Team.

Register by May 3rd.

For more details, please see the email circulated by Derek on 23 March.

Smart Devices Research projects.

Laura Pemberton, a PhD student at the Manchester Business School, is seeking participants for research study involving older adults, over the age of 60, who are able to come to the Manchester business school to take part. The research is funded by BT.

The purpose is to look at the preferences older people have of smart home technologies. Participants will be exposed to different kinds of smart home devices and then will complete a questionnaire and an interview.

It will take about an hour a half, and each participant will get tea/coffee and an Amazon voucher as a thank you for their time.

Travel expenses cannot be met, but free parking can be arranged. Timing will be geared to allow free bus pass use.

If interested, enrol via this link <https://tinyurl.com/3vyv637t> where there is more information about the project.

Or email Laura at: laura.pemberton@manchester.ac.uk

NW volunteer 'coffee morning'. June 7th 2023 on Zoom

There are many volunteers in u3a – committees members, events planners, refreshment organisers, 'meeters and greeters' - to name but a few. It's important that we recognise and value their contribution to our wonderful organisation. As part of the National Volunteer Week, we would like to invite members to join an informal Zoom meeting and chat with other people around the region about what goes on in their u3as.

You can register via the NW website.

Trust workshop: Influencing Social Change. June 20th 12:30 – 16:00

Inviting all members from the Northwest to Part 1 Influencing and Social Change Training Part 1: An introduction to Influencing and Social Change (in-person) on Tuesday the 20th of June 12:30-16:00, Quaker Meeting House, Liverpool.

What is it about? Influencing and social change encompasses all the work being done across the u3a to support members, and the movement more broadly, to use our combined voices and get involved in our communities about issues that matter. The interactive training will provide information about the legal aspects and risks of taking action, introduce the diverse ways to create change in our communities, share some u3a examples and provide participants with the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss how they might take action.

This will be an '**An Introduction to Influencing and Social Change**', which will identify effective campaigning strategies and give you the skills to carry them out. This in-person workshop is about using thoughtful, evidence-based approaches to making change happen. This session aims to equip members to take action on issues of importance to them, locally and nationally, beyond the great work done every day in u3as.

Over 60 members have attended this new training initiative, with 82% rating the session as excellent or very good. A previous participant said: "*I found the different issues very interesting and thought provoking*" (Edinburgh 2022)

- **This is the first part of a 2-part session. The second part will run online mid-August (date tbc).**
- **This is an in-person meeting held in Liverpool.**
- **A light buffet lunch will be served.**
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Please book your spot ASAP via the NW region website as places are limited and numbers need to confirm by 22 May. If you have any questions, email events@u3a.org.uk