

# u3a Wirral

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Dear Wirral u3a member,  
It gave a good feeling to see so many regulars back at our meetings in September as well as greeting some new members. This edition of the Newsletter has lots of information about getting out and about in different activities to appeal to a range of interests. I'd like to say thank you to everyone who produced material for the newsletter. This is much appreciated. Keep it up!

Kind regards

**Joy, Newsletter Editor**

## Chair's message

Hello Everyone,

It's been lovely to see so many new members have joined us since the beginning of September and I do hope you enjoy our meetings and bring your friends along. We are always looking to start new groups and this term there are two - a book group, and Sunday afternoon concert group. Please see Ros or myself for details.

On Monday Christine Francis is speaking about 'Strawberry Fields ' and I look forward to seeing you at the Williamson.

Have a good week.

Janet

Best wishes

**Janet**

## Groups

### Message from Groups Co-ordinator

If you think you could lead a group, or if you are just interested in participating, please do not hesitate to contact me (Ros) either at the meetings or an email via Derek.

**Ros**

## Meetings

### October 2nd

Strawberry Fields

Christine Francis

### October 16<sup>th</sup>

Experiences as a Pharmacist

John Donoghue

### October 30<sup>th</sup>

The Mystery of the Marie

Celeste

Derek Arnold

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## Events/Outings/Visits

### Wirral u3a Anniversary Lunch

October 24th (12.30 for 1.00)

The Grange, Meols Drive,  
Hoylake

£18 (members); £21 (guest)

### Narrow Boat Cruise

October 5th

*Please note the change of date and meeting time.*

With wheelchair access.

Full day cruise £14 p.p.

Bring a picnic lunch.

Meet at the Cheshire Cat,  
Christleton, 09:45 am.

Car share may be available.

### St. George's Hall, Liverpool

Thu Oct 12th

Guided tour. £9 p.p.

Meet at 11:00am in front of  
the Hall.

### Liverpool Roman Catholic Cathedral

Thu Nov 2nd

Guided tour. Free but small  
donation of £5 is normal.

Meet at 11:00 am outside the  
main entrance.

## u3a Book Reading Group

If you enjoy reading and would like to try new authors this is your opportunity. The Group will meet at Birkenhead Central Library, Borough Road on the second Thursday of the month at 2.15 pm. Session lasts about an hour. Participation is free.

The first session is on Thursday 12th October.

In readiness for the first meeting a book is available from the desk in the library now - Kiss Carlo by Adriana Trigiani - so that we can talk about it on the 12th. I have collected my copy and can thoroughly recommend it. It is proving to be a good read.

Information naming your next of kin will be needed if you join the group (email). There are no refreshments available in the library, but you are welcome to bring your own.

Parking is available behind Lidl supermarket.

**Janice**

## Coffee Mornings, Williamson Café



Everyone is welcome to meet up for a cup of coffee and a chat in the Café in the Williamson Gallery. We are meeting at 11:00 on the Wednesdays in the weeks we don't have a talk. No need to tell anyone you are coming. Just turn up.

## Theatre Group

### Opera at the Light, New Brighton

Sunday 8th October 2pm

L'Elisir d'Amore

Tickets cost £15.95 per person. You are asked to book your own ticket online. Try to get a seat in Row M where Ros has already reserved a seat. If you have difficulty booking online Ros will help you. So, you can contact her via Derek or speak to her at the meeting.

### Billy Liar, The Gladstone Theatre

Friday 17th November at 7.30 pm.

The cost is £12. If interested, please speak to (or email) Ros.

## Walking Group

Two sides of the Wirral

A very pleasant and gentle first walk of the season was enjoyed by 5 members on 11th September. The air was very fresh after all the days of extreme heat. There was only a smattering of rain after all the threats of thunderstorms. We met at the Sail Loft Cafe West Kirby then walked around the boating lake, past the West Kirby yacht club, and onto Macdona Drive, which leads up to Cubbins

## Coffee Corner Moment Answers to August's puzzles

### What have they in common?

The following three groups of words have a fourth word in common.

1. Team; flank; facet = Side
2. Placard; portent; autograph = sign
3. Powerful sprays; aeroplanes; gang in a musical = Jets

### Famous Opening Lines

Did you recognise which books the opening lines were from?

1. Pride and Prejudice
2. Anna Karenina
3. Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

### September's Puzzles

1.  $60 \div 5$ ;  $\times 3$ ; doubled;  $+5$ ;  $+6$ ;  $-15$ ;  $-\frac{3}{4}$  of it; square it;  $-157 =$
2. 18; square it;  $\times 2$ ;  $\div 8$ ;  $+40$ ;  $-73$ ;  $-\frac{1}{4}$  of it;  $\times 9$ ; half of it; half of it =
3.  $112 - 25$ ;  $\times 3$ ;  $+46$ ;  $-295$ ;  $\times 5$ ; double it;  $-75$ ;  $\div 5$ ; triple it =

### Doublets or Word Ladders

Can you go from the first word to the last in the given number of steps?

1. Lion to Lamb – in 2
2. Nose to Chin – in 5
3. Four to Five – in 6

Here's a worked example of Head to Tail in 6:

Head-Heal-Teal-Tell-Tall-Tail



Green. From there, we accessed the Wirral way for a few miles and came out at the Concourse. We called into "The Help the Aged Cafe" at the Marine Lake Medical Centre for a very reasonably priced coffee and good value meal deal. Whilst there we were entertained by a pianist. So, it was all very enjoyable.

On September 25th, the Monday walking group enjoyed a very pleasant walk from New Brighton to Seacombe. The weather was beautiful, so 5 members started the walk from the Floral Pavilion along the Egremont promenade, passing very many interesting landmarks, which included many pavement arts completed by local

school children. We witnessed several military aircraft flying over New Brighton, apparently doing European Cobra training exercises. We enjoyed the architecture of some beautiful properties along the front, appreciating the lovely views that they obviously have. Arriving at Seacombe after about 1 hour 15 minutes and using our bus passes, we were able to catch a bus back to New Brighton, where we visited Daves' favourite fish and chip cafe, so we enjoyed coffees and a light lunch.



### Stephanie

**Editor's note:** The group meets on the Mondays which fall between the Williamson meetings. There's a WhatsApp group which shares information about the walks. Or speak to Dave at the meetings. We try to include an element for walkers who want a short, relatively easy walk and an element for those who would like to go a bit further. At the end there's often the possibility of a cuppa.

## Meetings

### On the buses

Our new term started with a talk by Steve Joiner. It was an autobiographical reminiscence of why and how he became a bus driver. His grandfather had been a mechanic for a bus company in the Midlands where his love affair with buses began. His father moved to the Wirral in 1960 and Steve left school at 16 starting work in the Liver Building. This was the first of 14 jobs he's had in his lifetime. Other than when he was a bus driver, possibly his second best job was working for the Liverpool Dock Board because he got a free bus pas!

In 1973 he joined what was then called the Crosville Bus Company by asking for a job at the Heswall Bus Station. He first had to work as a conductor and after a year he was allowed to take the driver training course. He qualified in 1974 but had to wait for a place on the drivers' rota. He still remembers his first trip as a driver – it was the F23 from Heswall to Woodside. He entertained us with stories about his passengers, his accidents (fortunately non-serious but seemed to involve being distracted by young women) and meeting his wife. He left Crosville after 14 years with a safety certificate. He maintains it was the best job he ever had.

On a personal note, I was pleasantly surprised by the parallel with my own family history. My dad was a bus conductor/driver for Birkenhead Corporation which is how he met my mother. My grandfather worked for Crosville at the Rock Ferry Depot where Steve transferred to when Crosville stopped operating out of Heswall.

### Joy

### Parks, Promenades and Pleasure Grounds

Our second talk of the term was of a very different tone to our first talk. Elizabeth Davey to a fascinating tour around Wirral's Parks and Open Spaces with lots of fascinating bits of history and lovely photos of our area. We have 300 public parks and open spaces in the two boroughs, as well

as the long distance path – the Wirral Way which is celebrating its Golden Jubilee and is the first designated Country Park. Maintenance, particularly related to mowing, can be controversial. Some parks are maintained by Friends Groups e.g., Meyer Park in Bebington. Some no longer exist, e.g., Eastham Pleasure Gardens. Not all our green spaces with free public access are owned by the Councils. The Woodland Trust owns Storeton Woods in Bebington and the National Trust owns several places such as Horrock Wood and Heswall Fields.

The origins can differ. Sometimes it was a council e.g., the old Wallasey Borough Council bought land along the banks of the Mersey to create the Seacombe Prom. The 1875 Public Health Act empowered councils to use central government loans to buy land for recreation. Central Park in Liscard was one of the first in country built under this scheme. There are several individual initiatives such as Birkenhead Park (Joseph Paxton), Meyer Park (a gift from a philanthropist, Joseph Meyer, who'd retired to Bebington) and Harrison Park (donated to Wallasey Council by two brothers in memory of their parents. Bidston Hill was saved from being developed for housing by funds raised through public subscription.

The entrances to the parks often had very grand keepers lodges many of which still exist.

An interesting, but possibly less recognised, aspect of the development of parks was the growth in industries providing items for use in the park e.g., bandstands and fountains. Parks were used for a variety of activities including listening to music (with Vale Park in New Brighton having Wirral's only remaining Bandstand) and playing sport (Birkenhead Park started with cricket and archery with football, bowls and quoits later. The Cricket Pavilion was built in 1846). Not all the structures have survived. For example, the metal railings from Birkenhead Park were removed during WW2 to make weapons.

**Joy**

## Report

### **The Rhein Gold, The Light Cinema, 24 September**

Are you an opera fan or someone who is not sure if they will like it or think it's too expensive? What ever your response, you might be interested to go to the Royal Opera House streamings from Covent Garden of their new season. Each opera or ballet is usually shown at a cinema twice a week including on Sunday afternoons which is good for those who are not so keen to go out in the dark evenings. For the operas there are English subtitles so you can follow the plot. The cinema also provides a printed summary of the plot, the characters and the performers – so you can familiarise yourself before it starts. The cost of a ticket is much less than going to a live performance – so a good opportunity to 'test the water' to see if you will like it. The Light offers a reduction for seniors. The seats are very comfortable and the sound quality is very good. You can also take a drink into the screen room. So, I certainly recommend giving it a try.

Ros was joined by three Wirral u3a members to watch the first ROH streaming which was the first part of Wagner's Ring Cycle. Interestingly, this was the last part of the cycle he wrote. It sets the scene for what happens in the following three parts. The cast was superb as was the orchestra. Each director interprets the opera in his or her way. A plus of seeing a production in the cinema is that, as in this case, you are treated to an interview with the director and conductor explaining their ideas. Some take home aspects of this production: the set and costumes are less flamboyant than in other productions. Indeed, Erda, the earth goddess, has no costume at all – she is played by a very brave 81-year-old who is on stage for the entire 2 hour 20mins. The family of the Gods is dressed as a wealthy Edwardian family with a lot of the action taking place in picnic. There is an exciting opportunity for a group of children who get to represent the exploited workers in the gold mines and wear some very large and hideous heads.

I certainly recommend joining Ros for the next opera: L'Elisir d'Amore (see above).

**Joy**

## Poetry Corner

Did you spot the use of 'august' in last month's poem? (What august Shades at midnight here convene). It's an adjective rather than a noun! This month's September poem has the month in the title and is about a city landscape rather than a rural theme! I will confess that I had completely forgotten the opening stanza comes from this poem! Wordsworth is a poet, whom I suspect most of us associate with the countryside.

### **Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802**

#### **William Wordsworth**

Earth has not any thing to show more fair:  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty:  
This City now doth, like a garment, wear  
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,  
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;  
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.  
Never did sun more beautifully steep  
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;  
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!  
The river glideth at his own sweet will:  
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;  
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

## Around Wirral and the environs

### **Manchester Metropolitan University – invitation to co-design**

This request came in from Sarah Moriarty at MMU:

u3a shout-out for volunteers to work with Manchester Metropolitan University 2nd year Product Design students on a project based on u3a's agenda on positive ageing and the World Health Organisation's Decade of Healthy Ageing.

If you are interested in working with us, we would like to invite you to work with our students: exploring daily active routines and from this work together to develop designs to encourage, bring joy, support and sustain mobility through daily activity within communities.

I am hoping that we can arrange our first meeting on Thursday 12th October 2023 (2-4pm)

Sarah ([S.Moriarty@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:S.Moriarty@mmu.ac.uk)) (Please contact her if you are interested to help)