

WIRRAL UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NOVEMBER 2015



Anniversary
30th

Wirral U3A

This year Wirral U3A is celebrating 30 years. Since it started the organisation has had an interesting history.

U3A was founded in 1972 by Toulouse University which wanted to look at the teaching of adults not just 18 year old school leavers. This early model was based on learning guided by a university but this was not the model adopted in Britain .

Move forward to 1981 - a brief radio item triggers an avalanche of letters about new ways of learning. Eric Midwinter, Director of the Centre for Policy on Ageing realised the time was ripe to launch U3A in Britain. People were living longer, healthier lives with greater expectations. With Peter Laslet and Michael Young they became founding fathers of U3A.

One might wonder why U3A caught on. Laslet identified 3 life stages. The 1st socialisation, the 2nd work and child rearing and the 3rd beginning after working life ends when adults are free to learn in a non-threatening environment. Learning is self directed with no distinction between teacher and pupil.

U3A appeared on Wirral in 1985 with the 1st preliminary meeting held in an Indonesian restaurant in West Kirby. The 1st AGM took place in the British Legion hall in Moreton with an attendance of 16. Sadly none of these founder members attend our meetings now but a number of past chairmen and other officers are still active members.

In the early days meetings took place in various locations before settling at the Williamson in 1992. From those early days many other branches have opened so some 2,000 folk attend U3As on Wirral.

Guests at our 30th Anniversary lunch included Councillor Pat Hackett, Deputy Mayor with his wife Elaine, Jenny Carley North-West Trustee of the Third Age Trust and chairs of Heswall, Hoylake and Wallasey U3As not forgetting our Speaker Mike Murphy.

Diane Adams



To Nan and her
team for
organising our
Anniversary
celebration

Group News

Racketball

Would any of our members be interested in playing Racketball ?
Chester U3A has about 15 players. We are welcome to join Chester U3A Racketball at Chester Northgate Arena at 2pm every Monday,
We have received an invitation from Dave, Co-ordinator of Chester U3A Racketball Group. See noticeboard for details.

Birdwatching- *leader Margaret Elston*



The group had its inaugural meeting at the RSPB Reserve in Burton village. We saw many typical garden birds enjoying feeders near the reception area and in hedgerows and woodland around the site.
Thanks to the hides overlooking the various pools we got good views of the water fowl. Highlight was a close-up of a harrier.

New members welcome. You can still enjoy watching birds going about their business without being able to put a name to them.
Especially if there's a decent pub or café close by.

Classical Recorded Music- *leader Chris Igglesden*

"Worthless, unplayable, clumsy. Badly written, vulgar and plagiaristic.. Only two or three pages worth preserving." Imagine getting that reaction after you've performed your latest creation to a friend and to your mentor Afterwards the latter offers to perform the piece if there is a re-write. Do you retort *"I shall not alter a single note. I shall publish the work exactly as it is!"* or do you knuckle under to criticism. Fortunately for us the composer chose the first option and one of the finest Piano Concerto's ever written came down to us unaltered. That is what I find so fascinating about attending this U3A group. The composers come alive. You hear about the infighting, How composers go in and out of fashion. How they manage failure as well as success. And the opus in question-Tchaikovsky's 2nd piano concerto.

Everyday Science- leader Mary Green

Did you know Beatrix Potter was not just a famous authoress but a notable mycologist. This was just the first of some surprising facts we came across in our last science meeting. If you thought the cheetah was the fastest creature on the planet you'd be wrong. It is instead a fungi growing on cow pats [*hat thrower fungus*] that projects its spores at 40mph over x1000 its own length. And the world's largest living organism is not the Blue Whale or a tree but a 2,000 year old honey fungus growing in Oregon's Blue Mountains, systematically destroying forests. Meanwhile the oyster mushroom lassos nematode worms. Imagine a nightmare world where a giant version of this could do the same to humans- spreading itself faster than you could outrun it! Thank goodness Mary didn't have one of those on display at the Anniversary party.

Maths group- leader David Moore

I have spent hours trying to solve an ancient Thai puzzle involving re-positioning wooden blocks inside a frame. It was one of the games on display at the Anniversary party. Next time I borrow one of David's brain teasers I'm going to make sure the instructions and answers come with it!

Strollers- leader Margaret Elston

Turn-out was good at the start of the year. A cold wet day in May reduced our numbers to 3 when we walked along Heswall foreshore but we warmed up afterwards in Sheldrakes. The low turn-out continued in June and July for Claremont farm and Port Sunlight village but 9 turned up to walk along the shore at West Kirby. Here you see us on our October walk from Brunswick station to the Albert Dock.



Walkers- leader Margaret Elston

In June just 3 of us caught the train to Shotton then walked back to Neston along the multi-use path over the Dee marshes. For a more local walk over Thurstaston Common numbers swelled to 7. All the walkers seemed to be away during August. Reconvening in September 5 of us walked the permissive paths over Claremont farmland and on into Dibbinsdale. October saw us exploring Wallasey village and the coast finishing up at the Lighthouse pub. We have also enjoyed meals after walks at the Railway Inn Meols and the new café at Benty farm as well as Claremont farm café. Like Napoleon's army we march on our stomachs!

Liverpool Medical Institute 2nd visit

10 turned up for this. We were complimented on the precise timing of our arrival. Some of our party had been to functions here. You can even get married here.

When 4 Liverpool doctors got together in the 1770s to pool their book collections could they have had any inkling of how long their library would last. Due to the high cost of medical texts these days there is no longer an intake of current texts though they do take in up to date journals. But the library is valued by modern students as a peaceful place to study.

The mystery is how on earth did they get the giant table into the council room when there don't seem to be any obvious joins in its construction.

Shock, horror and amazement when we noticed one of the portraits in the lecture theatre below showed a doctor smoking a cigarette.





Guests of honour on the top table with Chair Diane Adams



Councillor Hackett and Elaine cutting the cake



Anniversary Party Wordsearch

Find the quiz answers in the Wordsearch. The answer to Question A begins with A and so up to Y. The quiz is based mostly on what took place before we moved into the gallery where the Anniversary lunch was served.

A – Comedian's troupe of soldiers

B – 1918 Investors lost money thanks to this East End fraudster

C – They started 6 days after us

D – Our very own poet from the valley.

E – She helped cut the Anniversary cake

F – Did his soldiers call him this

G – Mike told us FK was like this in public

H – B had the same forename as our most famous sailor.

I – It's that man again

J – He spoke on our behalf at the Anniversary

K – It's A's leader again slipping on a banana skin

L – City that laughed at that man again.

M – He sent his deputy along on the day

N – What trusty inspiration for our poet

O – An alternative for our poet to write about

P – Mike named a number of these as being very witty rogues

Qu – You're doing it right now

R – Describing B as this 4 legged creature is not a compliment

S – Jenny brought a card for us with all the Trustees names on

T – Our poet wrote about being held in this state.

U – Charlie Chaplin told A to go there

V – What FK was like at home

W – These bonds were valueless thanks to HB

Y – What Anniversary day was really all about

B	Z	E	W	D	A	E	L	V	L	K
Z	O	X	L	R	A	A	D	I	A	A
I	I	T	M	A	I	L	V	O	N	R
U	T	Y	T	N	I	E	E	L	O	N
Q	A	U	E	O	R	N	U	E	I	O
D	R	G	J	P	M	O	E	N	T	T
E	O	K	O	I	Y	L	Y	T	A	R
R	H	O	J	R	A	W	E	A	N	U
F	L	C	H	O	R	L	E	Y	M	S
S	E	R	U	T	A	N	G	I	S	T
S	N	A	I	C	I	T	I	L	O	P

Mental arithmetic

35	$\div 7$	$\times 8$	Double it	+30	Halve it
					-13
?	=	$\div 11$	+4	Triple it	$\div 7$
27	$\frac{2}{3}$ of this	$\frac{1}{3}$ of this	square this	$\frac{1}{12}$ of this	cube it
					quadruple it
?	=	$\frac{1}{6}$ of this	$\frac{4}{5}$ of this	50% of this	$\frac{5}{9}$ of this



Make the world a little friendlier!

Small charity HOST is seeking friendly people who would like to learn more about other countries and cultures and share their home life with adult international students at UK universities. Young adults from many countries would love to have a short homely break and discover the real life of this country.

Visits can be for a day, weekend, or four days at Christmas. Offering a Christmas invitation to someone who would otherwise be alone on a University campus can make a big difference. Invitations are urgently needed from volunteer hosts, no matter their age, or how far they live from a university.

To find out more, or to be put in touch with your local organiser, please visit www.hostuk.org or call 020 7739 6292.

HOST is a small charity, set up in 1987, which promotes international friendship and cultural exchange by arranging for adult international students to spend a short time in a British home. They are constantly looking to welcome friendly people on board who would like to act as volunteer hosts to these students, and who are interested in sharing their culture and customs for a day, weekend, or a few days at Christmas.



Heswall Science day

There were lots of men in the audience for the opening lecture on fracking. The lecturer was an expert on lasers who'd decided to research fracking in order to make informed decisions about the topic. We acquired an incredible amount of data during his exposition but sadly his time ran out before he could deal with the ramifications. The timing was so tight that no speaker could over-run their allotted time.

Three things I gleaned from the next lecture on things that go bang in the night were that most galaxies have a super-massive black hole at their centre, Gamma ray bursts are the biggest explosions in the Universe and our eyes can detect 50 shades of grey.

The next lecture covered ground that was touched upon by our 2nd November speaker when outlining the links between science and art. It concerned the creation of the Dark Matter garden, now in situ outside the Daresbury laboratories.

The final lecturer talked about the human brain and perception. The brain can process information fed into it by individual senses as one entity. The brain develops expectations, internal models which is why it takes 20 years to gear up to full performance. There are dedicated centres for processing information but there are parts where input signals can converge. But brain processing procedures can fool the senses. What we see automatically colours what we hear. The cinema industry relies on this trick. The sound is coming from loudspeakers in the auditorium but we see actors mouths moving and we are fooled into thinking the sound comes from them.

Forthcoming events

Christmas Lunch- Thursday December 10th.

Once again we return to the Hollins Hey Hotel at New Brighton. This time Wallasey U3A are joining in with us. By moving to a weekday we hope to attract more participants. The railway station is very close to the venue. You can watch folk on the platform as you eat your lunch!

Sunday Lunch group

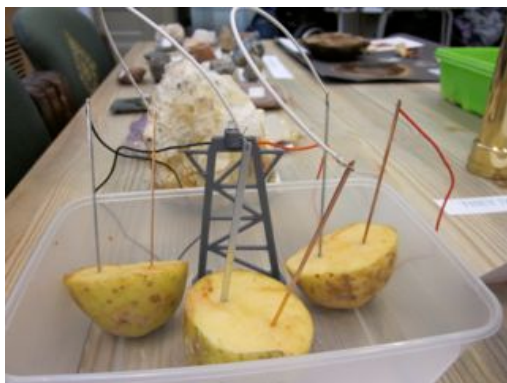
The group has been visiting Grove House Hotel over the past months. Next meeting will be Sunday January 17th at the same venue. Meet 12:30 for 1pm. 2 courses for £16:95.

“Congratulations to Dorothea who won our Anniversary raffle. Her prize is featured on the front cover”

Thanks to contributors Derek and Diane Adams and to Chris Stockton for the photographs centre pages.

Next Edition of the newsletter will be March 2016.

Closing date for submitting material to Editor Margaret Elston will be Friday 5th February



Some of the articles on display at the Anniversary party