



Dear All.

As we won't be meeting this month, on behalf of the Trustees I wish you all a very Merry and Healthy Christmas. I would like to thank all of you for making 2024 a very happy year for Lymm and Thelwall u3a. We seem to have had a busy year when I look back. Apart from all the wonderful things our Interest Groups give us and the superb speakers Christine has arranged for us, we have had numerous social outings and get togethers. Thank you to all those who go that extra mile to ensuring that all things u3a go well. You know who you are.

I am sure that next year will also bring us much joy in our u3a life!

Sue Chair

Emergency General Meeting

We are holding an Emergency General Meeting at the Members' Meeting in January. The Committee have proposed that the Membership fee from April 1st, 2025, to March 31st, 2026, is reduced, due to an excess of reserve funds built up following an increase in members. The National u3a recommend that we hold a reserve of funds to meet at least the next year's financial commitments. As we have a reserve in excess of this it was felt by the Trustees that the fairest way to lower it for the benefit of all members was to make a reduction in the fee. This will not affect our ability to operate in any way.

For this to happen we need to gain the agreement of members at the Emergency Meeting. Hope you can make it.

Members' Meetings - Christine Ballance

*Our Members' Meetings are normally held in Thelwall Parish Hall on the **third Thursday** of the month.*

The February and April Meeting will be held in Grappenhall Community Centre

Visitors are welcome to attend two meetings before joining. The next meeting will be on Thursday 16th January at 10.00 a.m. for a 10.30 a.m. start. Do come along early for a drink and a chat.

Refreshments will be served from 10.00 a.m. until 10.15 a.m.

December

No Meeting

Thursday 16th January

Steve Barrett

Unidentified Flying Objects

Are there any images of UFOs that need an extra-terrestrial explanation? This talk looks at some images that may have more down-to-earth origins.

Thursday 20th February

Malcolm Kinson

Tales from a Toastmaster **The venue for this**

meeting is Grappenhall Community Centre (address below)

Dates for your Diary

Thursday 5th December

Christmas Social

Lymm Village Hall

Friday 6th-Sunday 8th December

Christmas Tree Festival

St. Mary's Church

December

No Members' Meeting

Thursday 16th January

Members' Meeting and E.G.M.

Thelwall Parish Hall

Tuesday 28th January

Lion Salt Works

Thursday 20th February

Members' Meeting

Grappenhall Community Centre

Important Notice

An early warning that February and April's Members' Meetings will be held at Grappenhall Community Centre Bellhouse Lane Grappenhall WA4 2SG

Please check your Emergency contact details if you haven't done so!

Here is the link to the [u3a Members Portal](#) . Just log in to your account and enter the details.

Thanks

Social Any new ideas for even [Lynn](#)

Christmas Santa Social



Thursday 5th December 1.00 p.m.
This social is full. To those members coming please bring a small, wrapped gift valued at no more than £5 as a Christmas present for a Christmas Secret Santa



Christmas Tree Festival

6th -8th December Fri 10.00 a.m.-4.30 p.m.
 Sat..10 .00 a.m.-5.00 p.m. Sun..00 a.m.-4 -00p.m.
 The Christmas Tree festival in St Mary's Church is a lovely occasion, when many groups and organisations come together. Come and see our beautiful tree, created by Catherine.



The Lion Salt Works

Tuesday 28th January at 1.00 p.m.
A Guided Tour and Afternoon Tea This tour is now FULLY BOOKED.
 Payments will be collected shortly

November Speaker by Sue Clarke

Bad weather didn't deter a good turnout for the November Meeting. The subject, Fortified Wines, was a good seasonal choice. We welcomed Jane 'One Foot in the Grapes' Clare who gave a knowledgeable and amusing talk.

Jane is a career journalist who was bitten by the wine bug in France in 2011. She is now a member of the prestigious Circle of Wine Writers, alongside well-known wine buffs such as Oz Clarke and Jancis Robinson. Her wine columns are syndicated to over 25 regional newspapers. She enjoys sharing her love of wines by giving talks and running fun, non-geeky courses.

Jane defined Fortified Wines as those that had a quantity of distilled spirit added to strengthen their alcohol content and change their flavour. She outlined the background and characteristics of several types of Port, Sherry and Madeira. Port is produced in the Douro Valley of Portugal. Familiar types include Tawny, Ruby, and Vintage and lesser-known Rose, White and Colheita. Sherry is from the Sherry Triangle in the Cadiz province of southern Spain. Types including Palomina, Fino, Amontillado, Oloroso, Pedro Xineroda and Palo Contador. The island of Madeira has wines reflecting climate, lighter wines from the north and sweeter, richer from the sunny south. From my experience they all taste better in their interesting, sunny European home environments.

We were largely an audience of converts with some experience of fortified wines evidenced by 'are there any samples?' - the most frequently asked question. Jane peppered her talk with useful tips taking us beyond the old, but not redundant, stereotypical images. Sherry as a gentle before dinner drink or the cheap stuff lurking in the cupboard sloshed into the Christmas Trifle. Port associated with rich food giving 'portly' men gout, and port and lemon a drink for the aunties. Madeira the cake more widespread in our diet than the wine.



Type of food	Effect on the taste of wine	Pairing advice
SALTY	+ Smoother and richer - Less bitter and acidic	Salt can make tannic wines seem softer and more palatable
ACIDIC	+ Fruittier, sweeter and richer - Less bitter and acidic	High-acid food can soften very acidic wines, but take care when pairing with low-acid wines
HIGHLY FLAVOURED	+ Overwhelmed by the food flavours	Pair with wines of similar flavour intensity
FATTY/OILY	- Less acidic	Pair with wines with high levels of acidity to cut through the fat
HOT (CHILLI)	+ More alcohol burn - Less sweet and fruity	Alcohol increases heat from chilli, so pair with lighter alcohol wines with some sweetness
SWEET	+ More bitter and acidic - Less sweet and fruity	Pair with sweeter wines. Take care when pairing with wines with less sugar or with tannins
SAVOURY (UMAMI)	+ More bitter and acidic - Less sweet and fruity	Avoid pairing with wines with high levels of tannins

There was useful advice from a fascinating chart pairing food flavouring with all wines. Things to consider included putting Tawny port into the fridge before serving with after dinner cheese and if you're not keen on cheese have a fig roll. Port and Madeira are good bases for cocktails. Pedro Ximenez, a very sweet sherry, is delicious poured over ice cream while high alcohol wine increases the heat of a chilli. There really is a wine for everything. The talk generated a lot of interest and questions. John Hayward gave the vote of thanks

Lymm Heritage Centre



Thirty-three members gathered at Lymm Heritage Centre for a fascinating talk by Alan Williams, Chair of the centre. With the help of an impressive set of pictures Alan spoke about the Belgian refugees who came to Lymm in the First World War after a million and a half of their compatriots had fled their country. Their base was Oughtrington Hall which still exists within the Lymm High School site. It is a tale which features none other than Henry Ford, the American business magnate and the Elon Musk of his day.

Wreath making

16 members arrived at Smith's nursery in anticipation with rubber gloves at the ready for an afternoon of creativity and fun. The room was prepared for us with workstations for each which included the framework for the wreath, plenty of holly and greenery, secateurs and wire. Sarah welcomed us and



gave us instructions of how to assemble the greenery onto our wreaths and also how to help ourselves to mulled wine or warm Ribena and mince pies and shortbreads! "Yummy!" Once done there was an enormous supply of decorations to decorate the wreaths. This was fun as we watched some go for lovely orange and brown and others the glitzy reds and silver. We finished off with a lovely bow. As you can see from the pictures, we all did "Very well".

Thank you to Christine for organising this.



The Gangs of New York Grosvenor Park, Chester July 2024

Sadly this report was omitted from our August Newsletter.

On 10th July ten of us stepped into the vibrant world of 19th century New York at Storeyhouse's Theatre in the Park in Chester. This gripping tale had each of us on the edge of our seats for 3 hours as we watched the relentless pursuit of power by John Morrissey, an ambitious Irish immigrant navigating a perilous climb to being a respected politician, helped and cajoled by his charming, and clever, American wife.

The tale was not without its drama; fights – which looked and sounded all too real, family feuds, songs, dancing, romance, jealousy and lots of raucous audience participation, gave us all an amazing, unforgettable and fun experience of theatre in the round at its very best!

One of our party is quoted as saying, "I have never seen anything like this before" and Lynn commented, "That was just THE BEST". This did not disappoint as my most 'looked forward to' evening each summer and all ten of us are ready to book for next year's summer production.

Sheila

Groups' Coordinator

groups@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk

We have had a few people who would like to start a Current Affairs discussion group. A meet up will be arranged after Christmas to discuss the way forward. How about a Science Group? A couple of people have expressed an interest in this. If this is for you contact me!! If you have any suggestions for a group, please contact me and don't forget we provide help and advice in setting up and running groups! Muriel.

Groups' Gossip

Badminton

Two Badminton Groups are now in action every Wednesday morning between 9.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. at Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane, Grappenhall. Whilst the 9.00 a.m. Group is full, there are **vacancies** for the second session each week, starting at 10.00 a.m., at which new faces will be very welcome, so please email Geoff Stocker at: gsto2512@aol.com if you want to join this session, noting that you do need to have played Badminton previously.

Games Group

A warm and cosy welcome awaits anyone who would like to try the games group as a one off or with a view to becoming a regular member. Our meeting on 3rd December 1.00 p.m.- 3.00 p.m. in Lymm Village Hall is open to all. It will include a relaxed festive atmosphere with mince pies and (non-alcoholic) mulled wine. You are most welcome to join us, no booking required. £2 fee per session includes refreshments and covers the hire of the village hall.

Genealogy

Lest we forget. At our U3A genealogy group meeting on Tuesday 12th November 2024, we shared stories and memorabilia from our families' experiences of war.

We heard about courage as one group member shared details about her grandfather, who won the Military Cross, an award given to all ranks in recognition of exemplary gallantry during active operations against the enemy on land. She has discovered that he gained a degree in mining engineering in the USA, volunteered to serve as a trench expert during the First World War and did so with outstanding bravery.

We heard about love as one member described the heavily censored war-time letters sent by a soldier from the battlefield to his beloved.

We heard about survival when one member told us about a grandfather who lived through the sinking of the battleship Goliath in the First World War Dardanelles campaign. We heard about a possible connection between a member and the Second World War 617 squadron, 'The Dambusters'.

We heard about the terrible times service people and their families endured, the loss of one of more loved-ones and the after-effects of wars; 'shell shock' (PTSD), gassing and life-changing injury.

We heard so many touching stories during the two hours we were together – too many to mention here but 'We will remember them'. Tim

Bowling

The 2025 U3A Outdoor Crown Green Bowling season will start around the beginning of April next year. Although not a U3A activity, for those interested, indoor bowling sessions are run by High Legh Bowling Club in High Legh Village Hall on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1.30 p.m. to 3.45 p.m. Winter Membership & Session fees are modest.

Music Appreciation

At our meeting in November we were delighted to welcome 5 students from Manchester University Music and Drama department. Hiba, a mezzo soprano, and a string quartet comprising Joe, Anna-Charlotte, Rishi and Ed performed a selection of classical music and songs from



contemporary musicals. We all enjoyed listening to this talented and enthusiastic group of young people.

Poetry Group

In our last meeting of the year, we listened to an excellent presentation by Jan on the poetry of former Poet Laureate Ted Hughes. Once again there were some clever own work creative pieces from members on our chosen subject, this time 'I remember'. We really have a talented bunch!



SketchingOut

Our November venue was St John's Church in High Legh which felt very Christmassy with its Christmas Tree Festival. The next meeting will be on Monday 16th December at Lymm Cross.



Theatre

19 members were tempted by a fun night out at the Garrick Theatre to see the Vicar of Dibley. We soon adapted to the actors playing the characters we all have come to love and who in their turn had us chuckling at the old lines!! The second half built with momentum and climaxed with Alice having her baby in a stable and the classic line, "Jesus, it's a baby!" "No, No, No, No! It should be 'It's a baby, Jesus'."

We went home laughing about the antics and feeling Christmassy already! If anyone sees a play or concert they wish to go to and would like some company let us know!

Walking Groups

Striders

What no rain???? Well, the forecast was for fog but, actually, it wasn't that bad and there were some views but not as extensive as on a sunny day. This was an extended repeat of the first walk we did with Striders increasing it to 9.5 miles. We



started at Marple Ridge, dropped down to the Goyt valley then up onto the ridge at the other side before dropping down to New Mills where we had lunch at the station. We went along the Millennium Walkway and made our way to the canal towpath and back onto the ridge. A lovely walk and excellent company. Next walk: Wednesday 11th December, New Brighton

Strollers

Thirteen intrepid Strollers thoroughly enjoyed a lovely winter walk in Walton. Snow and ice had hardly melted from the previous two days but all



the group were up to the challenge, so we altered the route slightly to avoid an icy footpath then walked from Hill Cliffe car park, up to Fox Covert's lychgate, down what is known as 'The Canyon' then joined the rather muddy & soggy footpath across the back of Walton golf course, enroute back to Fox Covert. A heavy hailstorm halted us for a while in a wooded copse before the undeterred group made its way back uphill to Hill Cliffe Baptist Church to enjoy coffee and home-made cakes at their Friday coffee morning. We all braved the elements without mishap on some slippery ground and felt better for a bracing dose of fresh winter air. A good time was had by a group who were also pleased to be introduced to a great weekly coffee morning venue. Return visits will be made! Sheila

4-6ers

Susan and David led the walk from the Hartford Hotel through the village of Hartford, down Marshall's Arm nature reserve to the River Weaver. We crossed over the river in Northwich before heading back along the opposite bank under the 'Blue Bridge' to the Vale Royal Locks and back to the hotel for Chippy Tuesday, which most of the group took advantage of. The offer did not disappoint!!



Friday Rambles

It is the perfect time of year to be walking through woodland near Grappenhall. The rich, brown-orange carpet contrasted beautifully with the deep green foliage on the trees. Jim led us through Grappenhall village, and we paused to look at the engraving of the cat on St Wilfred's church tower, said to have been a possible inspiration for the Cheshire Cat in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

Ukulele for Fun

We almost had a full house last week with 25 members present! We played new Christmas songs. Some we enjoyed, others were more difficult but you know what they say - 'Practice makes Perfect'.

Wellbeing Birdwatchers

Members turned up in good numbers for this month's two outings. The first was to Martin Mere where there is always much to see. And the kingfisher turned up, to everyone's delight! Neumann's Flash, behind the tip at Northwich, started well with a prolonged view of a Green Woodpecker in the middle distance. On a dull grey morning we could have done with a sighting of the much sought after scarlet tanager to brighten the gloom.!



National Trust: Dunham Massey Community Access Pass

Our Community Pass from Dunham Massey for groups of up to 15 people to visit free without pre-booking (15 to a 30 have to pre-book.) is available for Interest Groups. This is for normal entry. Contact Sue Mitchell chair@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk and I will arrange for you to collect it from me.

Jigsaws

Thank you to all those members who kindly donated their jigsaws. Members are welcome to borrow the jigsaws on display at monthly meetings. Any further donations of 500 or 1000-piece puzzles will be gratefully received.

Committee Contact Details

Chair	Susan Mitchell	chair@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Vice Chair	Marcia Dale	vicechair@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
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Non-Committee:		
Speakers	Christine Ballance	speakers@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Newsletter	Sue Mitchell	newsletter@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk

u3a – Online Learning Events

As well as joining our groups you can subscribe to Interest Groups Online (formerly called Trust u3a). Interest Groups Online is a platform for collaborative learning. It is an online community, bringing people together from across the u3a movement and beyond. There are around 70 different groups that meet online across a wide range of subjects. Groups are interactive and vary depending on the needs of the participants. Find out more on our [Interest Groups Online page](#).

Artificial Intelligence: Present and Future

Friday 6th December 10.00 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.

In this talk I outline what AI is and how it works. I explore the benefits of AI using examples from medicine, education, transport, retail, manufacturing, power generation and climate change mitigation. The impact on future society is briefly explored, together with the need for regulatory control of use of this amazing technology.

Ian Hawker

Dr Ian Hawker is a retired engineer who worked for BT Research near Ipswich. Since retirement he has taken a special interest in Artificial Intelligence and its growing use throughout the market



Exploring the Universe with the James Webb Space Telescope

Wed 4th December 11.00a.m.–12.30 p.m.
**The James Webb Space Telescope's First
Years of Discovery**

The culmination of more than two decades of effort by scientists and engineers across the world, the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST or Webb) launched on Christmas Day 2021 and commenced scientific observations now just over two and a half years ago. In this time Webb's exquisite sensitivity, resolution, and wavelength coverage has enabled astronomers to explore our Universe as never before. We've now peered through clouds of gas and dust to observe stars and planets forming, analysed the atmospheres of alien planets, and discovered galaxies present when the Universe was only a tiny fraction of its age. In this talk I will introduce Webb and outline some of the discoveries it's made so far, along with some of the new mysteries about our Universe that it has revealed.

How to join these events

These online events are free for members.
Use this link below to discover the online
learning events www.u3a.org.uk/events

National u3a News

If you would like to sign up for the National Newsletter or the North West Region Newsletter please use the links below

u3a National newsletter

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter>

North West Region Newsletter

<https://u3asites.org.uk/north-west/page/25318>

Contact Us

Lymm and Thelwall u3a web site:

<https://lymm-thelwall.u3asite.uk/>

Lymm and Thelwall u3a Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/LymmThelwallu3ae>

enquiries@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk

Our Groups If you would like to join any of our groups, groups@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk always contact the Group leader via the group page on the website. Click the icon to email the Group Leader. They will reply to you!!

Activity	Regular Meeting Day	Venue
Art	Friday a.m.	St Mary's Church Hall
Badminton	Wednesday a.m.	Grappenhall Community Centre
Book Club	1 st Thursday a.m.	The Spread Eagle, Lymm
Book Club 2	1 st Wednesday a.m.	The Little Manor, Thelwall
Crown Green Bowling	Monday p.m.	High Legh Bowling Club
Cinema	Occasional Outings	Various
Cycle maintenance	As and when required	
Cycling	2 nd Tuesday and 4 th Thursday	Various, see web site
Flower Arranging	2 nd Friday p.m.	St. Mary's Church Hall
French (Advanced)	2 nd and 4 th Thursday a.m.	The Sanctuary Hub Lymm
French Conversation Advanced	1 st Monday p.m.	The Spread Eagle Lymm
Games Group	1 st Tuesday p.m.	Lymm Village Hall
Genealogy	3 rd Tuesday am	Sanctuary Hub Lymm
German	1 st Monday am	The Spread Eagle, Lymm
I.T. Group	2 nd and 4 th Wednesday a.m.	Lymm Baptist Church
The Lunch Group	3 rd Friday	Contact via website
Mosaic	Friday a.m.	St. Mary's Church Hall
Music Appreciation	2 nd Thursday p.m.	Lymm Youth / Community Centre
Philosophy	2 nd and 4 th Tuesday a.m.	The Spread Eagle, Lymm
Poetry	4 th Thursday	Sanctuary Hub Lymm
Sketching Out	Last Monday of the Month	Various
Stitch 'n' Natter	Wednesday a.m.	The Little Manor, Thelwall
Theatre and Concert	See web site	Various
Ukulele 4 Fun	Tuesday evening	United Reform Church
Walking Strollers	See website	Various
Walking 4-6ers	See Website	Various
Walking Friday Rambles	2 nd Friday	Various
Walking Striders	2 nd Wednesday+	Various
Wellbeing Birdwatching	1 st and 3 rd Friday	Various Locations
Writing Group	1 st Friday	The Spread Eagle

For those members who have no online access this letter can be posted to them.

