

Dear All, At November's Meeting we introduced our new leaflet to the members present. We were very pleased with it as we think it is very smart and reflects well what we do at our u3a. Thank you to all the Publicity team for their efforts producing it. There was a suggestion to form a Fungi Group in October. I am amazed at the speed of its formation. It is now up and running and members have already enjoyed their first meeting. I would like to thank Barbara for her suggestion and agreeing to be Group Coordinator, also Muriel, our Groups' Facilitator, for her work in helping to set it up.



It seems to have been a busy year with new groups formed, many great group meetings, our first coach holiday, socials and lots of excellent talks at Members' Meetings. None of these could have happened without the enthusiasm that exists within our u3a. Thank you to you all for the fun you bring to all we do! Have a very Happy Christmas and a very healthy New Year.

Sue, Chair

Members' Meetings - Christine

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

Visitors are welcome to attend two meetings before joining. The next meeting will be on Thursday 20th November 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 15th January

Brian Topping

Tales of a Customs Officer

Ever wondered what Customs Officers are looking for?? Brian will tell of his many years during the 1970s and 80s as a serving Customs Officer in the former department of HM Customs and Excise, at Heathrow Airport. He will provide an interesting, informative and entertaining journey through the many situations he came across when dealing with passengers travelling through the airport and his involvement in apprehending and investigating smugglers.

February meeting at Grapenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane, Grapenhall.

Thursday 19th February

Neil Shelton

Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics

This talk presents lots of examples of the misuse and misunderstanding of statistics in the media. It also gives some helpful guidance on how to avoid being misled in the future

Membership - Allen There were 101 Members at our last meeting. Membership now stands at 372.

Dates for your Diary Here are some dates for your Diary. Please note them down.

Friday 5th /Saturday 6th /Sunday 7th Dec

Christmas Tree Festival

St Mary's Church, Lymm

Monday 15th December

Christmas Lunch

Lymm Golf Club

Thursday 15th January

Members' Meeting

Thelwall Parish Hall

Tuesday 8th February

February Fun, Valentines Social

Lymm Village Hall

Thursday 19th February

Members' Meeting

Grapenhall Community Club

Christmas Tree Festival Friday 5th –Sunday 7th December



Friday 10.00 a.m.–4.30 p.m. Saturday 10.00 a.m.– 5.00 p.m. Sunday 11.00 a.m.– 4.00 p.m.

The Christmas Tree festival in St Mary's Church is a lovely occasion. Many local groups and organisations come together. Come and see our tree, created by Catherine and Pippa whom I would like to thank for all their hard work and effort. I haven't seen it yet but I am excited about going to admire it and all the other trees. It is a lovely occasion with local groups performing Christmas-themed music as well.



Social

If you have any new ideas for events or would like to organise an outing please contact the [Social Team](#). We welcome suggestions or we are willing to help if there is something you would like to plan. Alternatively, come and join our team!

February Fun Valentine's Social Lymm Village Hall

Tuesday 10th February 1.00 p.m. Cost £17.50

Last few places

Join us for some Valentine's fun at Lymm Village Hall

The afternoon will include an individually packed afternoon tea, entertainment by Paul Thompson, a quiz and a Valentine's Raffle! To secure a place, please express your interest to [Sue](#) asap as this event will be popular.



RAF Burtonwood Heritage Centre

Monday 23rd March

Join us for a fascinating look into the history of RAF Burtonwood. The £7.50 per head will include a Guided Tour and Refreshments and will be a donation to the work of the Heritage Centre. Please apply asap to [Christine](#) Hodgkinson.

As spaces are very limited we will run another trip again if there is a demand for it.



Christmas Wreath Making

18 members had fun at Smith's Nursery making Christmas wreaths. The work stations had been prepared for us and we were given instructions on how to attach the greenery. Then it was like being children in a sweet shop as we chose which decorations we wanted to add to our wreaths, from the vast selection provided for us. All this and the mulled wine and refreshments too! A great afternoon to put us into the Christmas spirit! The results weren't bad either!



November's Speaker by Sue Clarke Life at the Beeb

Our November speaker was John Miller, who had enjoyed an interesting career at the BBC for almost 30 years. Initially John was in London working in radio operations. He soon moved to Manchester, working also in Leeds. This opened up opportunities in the expanding broadcasting output from the north. His career progressed rapidly from television trainee studio manager to a BBC network TV producer based in Manchester.

We learnt the difference between directors and producers. Both blend creative and organisational skills. As a director John took a variety of programmes from conception to completion, on time, within budget and, best of all, going out on location.

He kept us amused with lots of anecdotes and name-dropping. In early 60s radio days he lined up music for Alan (Fluff) Freeman, did sound effects like rattling teacups for Mrs Dale's Diary and on the Archers used ironing boards for sheep's pens and the ever-versatile yogurt pots for lambing. Was this before Blue Peter caught onto them? Later, as that decade started to really swing, there was TOTP with groups miming to their records and a pregnant Marianne Faithfull was filmed from the waist upwards. As his career progressed over the next 2 decades, he covered many types of programmes witnessing fledgling careers of broadcasting and entertainment greats. These included Ester Rantzen, Kirsty Wark, Michael Aspel, Michael Wood, Michael Parkinson, Alan Ayckbourn, David Dimbleby, David Frost, and Sooty to name but a few.

John described in detail a particularly interesting programme he had directed in 1985 called 'Voyage of the Heroes'. Explorer and historian Tim Severin and his modern-day heroes took an expedition to test the historical validity of the legend of Jason and the Argonauts and their quest for the golden fleece. They sailed a replica ship from Greece to Georgia via Turkey with their greatest challenge 18 miles of the turbulent Bosphorus Strait. A job

with a great location and many memorable mishaps and adventures. Tim wrote the book 'The Jason Voyage' and TV footage from 'Voyage of The Heroes' is on You Tube.

The vote of thanks was given by John's ex-colleague Roger Dowling, formerly Chief Engineer at the Manchester Network Production Centre. The talk stimulated a lot of interest with questions including careers advice, holiday insights and, inevitably, the current big press story regarding Trump. Roger gave an insight putting the situation into perspective and leaving us with a final thought concerning the monetary value of the publicly funded BBC to licence holders "less than a cup of coffee a week".



Group Gossip

I have had suggestions for Ancient History and a Solo group for people on their own to meet and share outings. I have already got a number of names for both groups. If either of these interest you or you have any other

ideas for groups please contact me, Muriel, the Groups' Facilitator at groups@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk

Thanks for all the groups' contributions to Group Gossip! Please send next month's contributions to newsletter@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk

Art

We have been very busy exploring a variety of techniques this Autumn. Our current technique is the impasto workshop led by Marg. Earlier Jackie led a very successful workshop on silk painting and Jenn introduced Kinusaiga, a sewing free patchwork craft, originating in Japan to use up all those left over fabric oddments. The art and mosaic groups combined to take part in the Kinusaiga workshop and a marvellous time was had by all.



Badminton

Our two Badminton Groups continue in action every Wednesday morning between 9.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. at Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane, Grappenhall, at a current cost of £2 per session. There are still a few **vacancies** for the second session each week, starting at 10.00 a.m. New faces will be very welcome. Please email [Geoff Stocker](mailto:Geoff.Stocker@grappenhallcc.co.uk) if you would like to join this session, noting that you do need to have played Badminton previously.

Book Club 2

At its November meeting the group discussed 'The Daughter of Time' by Josephine Tey. A bored police inspector confined to bed by a broken leg decides to carry out a historical investigation into whether Richard III was responsible for the deaths of the Princes in the Tower. As a fictionalised mystery story it raised questions about the way we accept traditional versions of history, and narratives in general. The author's pro-Richard agenda is not disguised, but we recognised that the book broke new ground in its time for its accessible approach to historical inquiry.

Crown Green Bowling

The 2025 U3A Outdoor Crown Green Bowling season concluded at the end of September and will recommence in April. Whilst not an official u3a activity, High Legh Bowling Club runs indoor short mat Bowling sessions twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays starting in October. Anyone is welcome to attend these sessions. They are very popular, so time on the mat can be limited. The charge last winter was £2 per session with a Winter Club Membership Fee of £8.

Current Affairs 2

The newly formed "Current Affairs 2" group has now had its 3rd meeting, and this month the 14 members spent 90 minutes talking about China, our relationship with the Chinese from different perspectives, and whether we would consider them a threat to be avoided, or an opportunity to be grasped. We were very fortunate that John, who led the discussion, had spent two years living and working in Shanghai, and also that several of the other members had first-hand experience of the Chinese culture from various standpoints. Perhaps the highpoint of the discussion was when we looked at the attitude of the Chinese to their elderly and were able to compare and contrast that with our own treatment of pensioners in the west. The debate was lively, informative, and always respectful to the different experiences of the contributors. The group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 11.00 a.m at Lymm Village Hall, and we would welcome new members.



Gardening

A number of Gardening Group members met at High Legh Garden Centre for a coffee or breakfast to discuss ideas for the group for next year. There were some great ideas put forward and it looks like we are in for another fabulous time, visiting gardens with some interesting talks already arranged. I would like to thank all the members of the group for making it so enjoyable, although I say it myself, I think we are a lovely lot! We won't be meeting again this year, due to all the festivities, so very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Genealogy

At the November meeting, Shirley welcomed and introduced three new members, taking the group numbers now to a wonderful 25. Tim then gave a two-part presentation; the first part being a One Place Study on Cerne Abbas, Dorset, where his great-grandfather was born and three previous generations of 'Olds' had lived. He led us through the history of this village from prehistoric times to the present including details of the Cerne Giant carved into the hillside above the village, the abbey, the church, local industries and famous people who had lived or are living there, including the retired broadcaster, Kate Adie. The second part of the presentation looked into the lives of some of the 14 'Olds' living in Cerne Abbas when the 1841 census was taken. These lives included a lengthy prison term for assault, a short sentence for stealing turnips, some loose behaviour and the workhouse to riches stories of two brothers surnamed Old. He closed his presentation with his unsuccessful search for the details of the last 'Old' reported to have lived in this village. A great presentation which everyone thoroughly enjoyed.

German

November's German Conversation group meeting was about less well-known places in German speaking countries, which hold special memories for us. We all made notes on each others' interesting destinations, intending to build them into our travel plans! Places featured included Monschau on the German Belgian border – a pretty stopover; Salzburg – Mozart, Sound of Music, beautiful city; Dresden – formerly East Germany, restored to its former glory after WW2; The Harz mountains & Goslar – clock tower with animation & song; Bad DÜ

Philosophy

The Philosophy Group held two well-attended meetings in November. The first was on the topic of Deception and was heavy on psychological research that suggested that humans are predisposed to deceive themselves and others. This seemed to be a ready-made excuse for our failings, rather than a call to overcome them. Alternative, less negative, approaches were suggested by group members and these ideas set up the topic for our next meeting.



This second meeting, on Wellbeing, raised the moral tone and explored the difference between a state of happiness and a state of wellbeing. We looked at the influence of pleasure and pain on both states and how finding meaning in one's life can increase one's wellbeing.

The group then discussed how we could transcend our day-to-day interests and recognise a wider good. After this meeting, seventeen of the group stayed on at the Spread Eagle for a festive lunch, too many of us to squeeze into one photograph unfortunately. Many thanks to Claire and the other staff of the Spread Eagle for their hospitality all year. We will be returning to the Spread for the last meeting of the year, at 10:30 on 9th December, when the topic will be Hunger, a desire that might be challenged over Christmas and New Year.

Music Appreciation

At our last meeting we once again welcomed students from Manchester University. This time it was the pieces by a selection of composers including Eric Whittaker, Charles Villiers Stanford, J.S Bach, Rachmaninov and Allister MacGillivray, a delightful duet from Mozart's The Magic Flute, 'Summertime' by Gershwin, and the haunting 'When I am Laid to Rest' from Dido and Aeneas. We thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon and we hope to welcome them back next year. The next meeting of the Music Appreciation Group will be on Thursday 11th December at 1.45 p.m. at the Youth & Community Centre. Get into the Christmas spirit for a light-hearted Christmas Music Quiz with all your favourite festive music plus a few Christmas pieces that may be new to you. New visitors and prospective members are always welcome – please ring Roger on 07815 601447 to ensure we have enough mince pies to go round!



Singing for Fun

Twenty-two determined songsters – including two brand new to the group – braved the cold and the recently increased parking charges to join us at Lymm Village Hall for our last meeting before Christmas. The programme consisted of favourites from previous meetings, all of which were sung with great enthusiasm and with more than a little aplomb. The group is becoming a veritable singing force. We also included three Christmas songs to put everyone into a festive mood. As usual, Jim provided fascinating information and background to the songs and also taught the group crafty tricks with which to determine whether the person you are speaking to is either a native German speaker or a robot. These are valuable assets to those living in and around Lymm.

A short quiz on 60's and 70's pop music was enthusiastically received (author's note – I think!) and mince pies were available at the interval. A wonderful meeting on which to end the first year of our existence.



Sketching

This month's meeting was held in Warrington Market where members could keep warm and partake of a hot drink in the chilly weather. Next month we will be meeting on Tuesday 16th December, a change of day to avoid a clash with the Christmas Lunch. The venue is the Pickering Arms in Thelwall. 10.15 a.m.



Theatre

We were reminded that Christmas was near when some members went to see 'It's a Wonderful Life'. Some of us have already booked for two evenings at the Garrick, Altrincham in the New Year. 'Kinder Transport' in January and 'Quiz' in February.

Walking Groups

Striders

16 hardy Striders set out on a challenging 8.5 mile walk from Cilcain to climb Moel Famau and walk along the ridge. Some debate took place as to whether we should skirt the Jubilee Tower or climb up to it given the ground conditions but undeterred we climbed up and gingerly walked down the steep slope that followed. True to form the rain started the minute we sat down for lunch and continued for the rest of the walk. A particularly steep descent resulted in 4 members slipping onto their bottoms but, fortunately, there was a soft landing and no one was hurt - other than their pride! In spite of all the challenges we all agreed we had had an excellent day. Next walk is Wednesday 10th December. New Brighton. 9 miles



Strollers

A 3 mile walk was enjoyed by 7 intrepid members in freezing cold weather on 21 November. Numbers were low because the walk was one postponed from the previous week due to a horrendous forecast. The first section from Lymm on the canal bank to Statham was dry and fine but the next section, through narrow paths past Meadow View Fisheries a little tricky due to puddles and wet ground. However, the icy fields were a real picture and camaraderie was fine as members helped others along. It was good to get out despite the very cold day; a bit challenging for Strollers so well done to all.



Friday Rambles

On a very wet morning it was debatable as to whether any ramblers would turn up at Grappenhall Walled Garden. Eighteen did, setting out on a route led by Jim through Grappenhall, Appleton and Lumb Brook. Despite it being a test for our waterproofs it was an enjoyable 5.5 mile walk.

4-6 ers

We had a super walk lead by Tim from Whitegate Church along the River Weaver towards Northwich and back up the other side to the Vale Royal Locks. Tim not only arranged the walk and a delicious meal at The Plough Whitegate, he also managed to arrange the weather to start raining just as we arrived back at our cars! We need walk leaders for January, March and April's 4-6 ers walks, with or without a pub meal if that helps!



Uke 4 Fun

We had an early start to Christmas in November as we began practising carols and Christmas songs in preparation for our first of our Christmas performances. Resplendent in the Uke 4 Fun shirts, a group of 11 played at Brookfield Care Home on Thursday 28th November.

Wellbeing Birdwatching



Members visited the Wildlife & Wetlands Trust at Martin Mere. Among the Winter visitors were the Whooper Swans who had travelled all the way from Iceland. A female Kestrel was seen from three different hides and from the third we saw her catch a Short-tailed Vole. Perching on a gate in front of the hide, she gave us a close-up view of her eating her afternoon tea over five minutes. No need to fly to a safari drive to Burscough!



Fifteen of us visited Dunham Park on the third Friday, a cold, frosty but lovely bright day. The highlight sighting was when Jim (O) and Pete (R) spotted two different birds among 200 Canada Geese. (Thanks for counting, Peter [Mc]. Sure it wasn't 199?). A perfect example to us of not making easy assumptions about a group of birds, but of the rewards of careful observations instead. The unusual birds? Egyptian Geese. Usually seen in pairs, they are now becoming established escapees from ornamental collections.

Wild Things



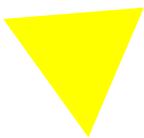
Our Wild Things group met for the first time in November and what a morning we had! Against a backdrop of blue skies and sunshine, our focus this time was fungi. We rooted around in leaf litter, crouched down to examine fallen trunks and ducked into openings under bushes. Our reward was a multitude of fungi in a variety of hues. So welcome, December.



A new month, a new venue, a new focus. I wonder what you will bring?

Writing Group

This fun group decided to spend the November and December meeting studying the language of humour. Much hilarity ensued as we shared our thoughts about humour and how it has changed over the ages. The December task is to write a short piece or find a writer's work that makes them laugh. Either way the December meeting, as always, will be a blast. The December meeting will be followed by a meal at the Spread Eagle.



Committee Contact Details

Chair	Susan Mitchell	chair@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Vice Chair	Marcia Dale	vicechair@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Pauline Holloway	secretary@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Rod King	treasurer@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Membership	Allen Sealby	membership@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Venues	Marcia Dale	venues@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Group Coordinator	Muriel Howarth	groups@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
National and Policies	Jim Owen	jim@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Speakers' Secret	Chris Ballance	speakers@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Publicity Coordinator	Pip Horne	pip@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Committee member	Tim Old	tim@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Committee member	Jill Turbin	jill@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Committee member	Sue Clarke	sueclarke@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
.It support	It team	itsupport@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Safeguarding	Pip Horne	pip@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Newsletter	Sue Mitchell	newsletter@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk
Enquiries		enquiries@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk

u3a – Online Learning Events

As well as joining our groups you can subscribe to Interest Groups Online. 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](#).

Feats of Engineering, with u3a Let's Talk Tech

Wednesday 3rd December 1.00 p.m.–2.30 p.m.

In a video-enabled presentation, John will look at a variety of tunnelling projects, some you might be familiar with, and others that have been hidden from view by their very nature and have not been highlighted in the media to any great extent.

Tunnelling is an incredible feat of engineering that requires overcoming a multitude of amazing challenges, from navigating unpredictable and dangerous geology to managing water pressure and intense heat. The longer and deeper the tunnel, the more complex these risks become, with some projects encountering conditions so extreme that they require new technologies and innovative techniques.



It is worth visiting the events page
www.u3a.org.uk/events

Regularly to see what is available as the events do
get booked up

Amazing Tunnels & Tunnelling AI News: The Role of AI in our Social and Emotional Wellbeing

Friday 19th December 10.00 – 11.30 p.m.

Will Artificial Intelligence help us combat isolation and loneliness? **The Role of AI in our Social and Emotional Wellbeing** In this world where social connection should be easier than ever why is it we have such high levels of isolation, loneliness and distress across all age groups in our population. What can we do about it and how can AI help? What potential significant benefits can AI offer? How can we watch for and manage any unintended consequences? Please join me, Sarah Jones, someone with over 25 years experience supporting people manage isolation and loneliness to explore these questions. Our AI team's objective is to acquaint all 430,000 u3a members with AI. If you feel you have the knowledge (completed our online beginners course or equivalent), are an AI Enthusiast, then please join our ever growing team of AI presenters by contacting Barry (u3a AI Subject Adviser)

How to join these events which are free to members.

Use this link below to discover other-online learning events www.u3a.org.uk/events



u3a
Radio Podcast

The u3a radio podcast showcases the amazing things happening across the movement. It's created by a team of u3a members who all have radio experience and features interviews with members, interest group leaders, Trustees, national volunteers and Subject Advisers.

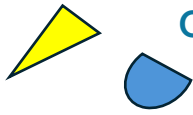
The entire series is available on our YouTube Channel. [Listen now](#)
The podcast is available on the usual podcast platforms including:

[Spotify](#)

[Apple Podcasts](#)

[Podtail](#)

The team is always looking for more stories – [please get in touch](#) via our contact form if you'd like to contribute. Or you can email us on communications@u3a.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 to email the Group Leader. They will reply to you!!

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Regular Meeting Day</i>	<i>Venue</i>
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
Cinema	Occasional Outings	Various
Crown Green Bowling	Monday p.m.	High Legh Bowling Club
Current Affairs	2 nd Thursday lunchtime	The Spread Eagle
Current Affairs 2	3 rd Tuesday a.m.	Lymm Village Hall
Cycle Maintenance	As and when required	
Cycling	2 nd Tuesday and 4 th Thursday-	Various, see website
Flower Arranging	2 nd Friday p.m.	St. Peter'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.	Maple Lodge, Lymm
Gardening	Various Days	Different Locations
Genealogy	3 rd Tuesday a.m.	Sanctuary Hub Lymm
German	1 st Monday a.m.	The Spread Eagle, Lymm
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 lunchtime	Sanctuary Hub Lymm
Singing For Fun	4 th Tuesday p.m.	Lymm Village Hall
Sketching Out	Last Monday of the Month	Various
Stitch 'n' Natter	Wednesday a.m.	The Little Manor, Thelwall
Stitch 'n' Natter 2	Tuesday p.m.	The Spread Eagle
Theatre and Concert	See web site	Various
Table Tennis	Friday a.m.	Lymm Youth and Community Centre
Ukulele 4 Fun	Tuesday evening	United Reform Church
Fruit and Vegetable Growers	Various	Various Locations
Walking Strollers	Various	Various
Walking 4-6ers	Various	Various
Walking Friday Rambles	2 nd Friday	Various
Walking Striders	2 nd Wednesday	Various
Wellbeing Birdwatching	1 st and 3 rd Friday	Various Locations
Wild Things	Various	Various
Writing Group	1 st Friday	The Spread Eagle

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

[Lymm and Thelwall u3a web site](#)

[Lymm and Thelwall u3a Facebook page](#)