

Dear All,

As we come to the end of another great year in Lymm and Thelwall u3a I reflect on the year we have had. Our group has gone from strength to strength with an increase in members and also in the number of interest groups which pleases me greatly. It also delights me to see all the Members who volunteer in many different ways throughout the year to ensure our u3a flourishes. The old adage "The more you put into something, the more you get out of it" certainly holds true with our group.



I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very healthy and happy 2026 and I look forward to all the fun times we will have next 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.**

### **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> 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 Grappenhall Community Centre, Bellhouse Lane, Grappenhall.**

#### **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February Neil Shelton Lies, Damned 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 Membership now stands at 376.

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

Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> January	Members' Meeting	Thelwall Parish Hall
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> February	February Fun, Valentine's Social	Lymm Village Hall
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> February	Members' Meeting	Grappenhall Community Club

## Our Christmas Tree

Many thanks to Catherine and Pip for the amazing Christmas Tree that they created for St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival. I hope you got to see it because it looked superb. Each of our Interest Groups was beautifully represented on the tree as a ceramic star, hand made by Pip and cleverly attached to the stunning structure of the tree that had been cleverly worked by Catherine.  
An outstanding effort !



## 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> March

This tour is now full as space at the Centre is limited.

We will try and arrange a further visit as there has been much demand, There are already a number of names on the waiting list and details will be sent out as and when! [Christine](#)



## Christmas Lunch

76 Members enjoyed Christmas Lunch at Lymm Golf Club. and the warm atmosphere inside was in contrast to the dull, wet scenario outside as standing water and an empty locker room suggested that the course was closed for the day. We enjoyed a wonderful meal including a sumptuous carvery. Thanks must go to the golf club staff for tending to our every need and to Linda Monk for her organisation.





## Group Gossip

A few Members have expressed an interest in forming an Ancient History and a Solo group, the latter for people on their own to meet and share outings. 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](mailto:groups@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk)

Thanks for all the groups' contributions to Group Gossip! Please send next month's contributions to [newsletter @lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk)

### Advanced French

Advanced French had fun at their December meeting. A TED talk in French about the intricacies and oddities of French spelling was very entertaining and was followed by our festive lunch. A few special guests joined us, which made it all the better! (Some former members of the group, one new member and our branch Chair, Sue Mitchell with her husband David,



### Art and Mosaic

2025 draws to a close and a hectic term finishes with coffee and seasonal treats.



Janice set a challenge to do a view from a window, inside looking out or outside looking in.. We all enjoyed it.

Perhaps some of you have new art or mosaic materials for Christmas and would like to devote two hours on a Friday morning to exploring your new materials. We would love you to join us. The first session in January will be on Friday 9th at St Mary's Church Hall by

Lymm Dam car park. Happy New Year one and all from the Art group.



### Badminton

The Badminton group enjoyed a festive meal at La Boheme. Pip challenged us with a Christmas themed quiz with topics ranging from history of Christmas to writing lines for cracker jokes. She diplomatically arranged for us to mark our own answers. There were no losers and a bonus of lovely hand crafted ceramic decorations to take home. Please email Geoff Stocker at: [gsto2512@aol.com](mailto:gsto2512@aol.com) if you would like to join this session, noting that you do need to have played Badminton previously.



### Book Group 2

At our December meeting Book Group 2 discussed 'Christmas Days' by Jeanette Winterson. The 12 short stories which comprise most of the book are designed to be read on each of the 12 days of Christmas and are a lively mixture of fantasy, magic and the supernatural, each with a Christmas theme. We found the stories to be also reflective and poignant, and written with wit and charm, though the ghost stories were not to everyone's taste! As a bonus, there are also 12 seasonal recipes, each one linked to a particular person significant in Jeanette Winterson's life. Several members are looking forward to trying out the recipes!

We followed the discussion with lunch at the Little Manor, which was greatly enjoyed, and a book-based secret Santa.

### Bowling

The 2026 season will commence in April. Whilst not an official u3a activity, High Legh Bowling Club runs indoor short mat Bowling sessions twice a week on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from October to April. Anyone is welcome to attend these sessions which are very popular, so time-on-the-mat can be limited. First session will be Monday 5th January.

## Current Affairs 1

We had a good turnout for our discussion on the monarchy this month. We established early on who amongst us considered themselves to be "Faithfuls" and who were "Traitors". Surprisingly, to me, there were many more supporters of the monarchy than not.

We looked at the past and why it is that the British monarchy survived unlike other countries. We considered the present, where we discussed King Charles' reign so far and the effect of "hangers on" and, finally, the future role of the monarchy.

At the end we concluded that the monarchy is likely to survive but in a much slimmed-down form.

## French Conversation

The main focus each session is conversation – catching up with one another on the last month's activities, a discussion topic, 'show and tell' objects, places we have visited, a quiz, conversation through games and an occasional French speaker. With 12-15 people in attendance there's always a buzz in the room at the Spread Eagle where we meet on the first Monday of the month at 2.00 p.m.

In the December session we got to know a couple of newer members by a fun Q and A session, then everyone participated in an 'agence matrimoniale' game where all assumed an imaginary character and found the partner 'de nos rêves'.

We've had a very enjoyable and successful 2025, with member numbers increasing to the extent we unfortunately have to say we're now closed to new members. However, we are keeping a waiting list and will accommodate those wanting to join as soon as we can.

## Gardening

Happy New Year to our super group. Hoping to arrange a talk, drinks and cakes at Primrose Nursery for late January. More details to follow when confirmed.

**Jigsaws** A big thank you to all those who donated jigsaws last year and who have borrowed and hopefully enjoyed doing them. There is no rush to bring them back and there will be plenty of new jigsaw scenes available in January.



## Genealogy

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December the Genealogy group held its last meeting of 2025, which took the form of a series of activities, a quiz and some nibbles in between. Amongst the games we played were Stand-up Bingo and a Secret Santa/Stealer's Raffle and the quiz required us to choose between four dates for each of 16 historical events. The latter proved very difficult and was well won by Muriel who was presented with the group's 2025 quiz shield (see photo). Our meeting finished with a raffle with three interesting genealogy books as prizes. Thank you to Shirley for her hard work coordinating our meetings throughout the year and for organising a great December meeting – it was great fun.

## German

In German Conversation, we're continuing to discuss our favourite places:

Bad Dürkheim, lovely spa town, surrounded by vineyards and forested hills; Bayreuth (Bavaria), famous for Margravia Opera House (UNESCO listed), Wagner Festival & the villa, Wahnfried, where he lived; Berlin, both before and after the fall of the wall. The Philharmonic Hall, with wonderful acoustics, museum island and the Bundestag building with an impressive glass roof; Munich, with a visit to the Hofbrauhaus, and driving through Germany and Switzerland as a youngster who had just passed their driving test; Chiemsee, east of Munich, the biggest Bavarian lake surrounded by mountains, fond memories of summer holidays visiting relatives and visits to one of mad king Ludwig's castles.

## Music Appreciation

When was the familiar Christmas song 'Let it snow' composed? And what has 'Mad dogs and Englishmen' got to do with Christmas? These were just two of the posers in the Music Appreciation Group's festive musical quiz on 11<sup>th</sup> December. Despite other less devious questions involving such familiar works as the Hallelujah Chorus and Leroy Anderson's Christmas Festival, it has to be reported that the final scores were a little lower than quiz master Roger expected. Surely everyone knows that 'Let it snow' was written during a heatwave in California in 1945 and that 'Mad dogs and Englishmen' was written by Noel (geddit) Coward? But no-one worried about the marks as

the Group members cheerfully enjoyed their mulled wine and mince pies, specially brought along for the occasion by Alistair and Diane. The next meeting is not to be missed: an illustrated talk 'Richard Wagner – the Man and his Music' by u3a member PHILIP MOREY at 1.45 p.m. on 8<sup>th</sup> January. A linguist in French and German, Philip has a deep attachment to the music of Richard Wagner and has made many visits to the Bayreuth Festival with his wife Margaret. He has sung Bass in Manchester Cantata Choir for over ten years and is also a member of Manchester German Church Choir. As usual, the meeting will be in the Youth & Community Centre, and guests and potential new members are always welcome.



### Poetry

The last poetry group meeting of the year was at David and Susan's house. It was a really inspiring session, fuelled by coffee, tea and assorted biscuits and cakes. We heard brilliant, occasionally risqué, contributions from members who each recited their poem entitled, 'She's Stopping'. The next meeting is on Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, back in the Sanctuary Hub at Lymm Library.

### Sketching

Sketching Out members finished their year at the historic Pickering Arms in Thelwall. It was a beautiful morning and there were a number of interesting subjects, both inside and out, not least the former Post Office across the road and the pub itself. Next meeting: Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January, Golden Fleece Pub, Lymm. Inside or out depending on the weather.



### Stitch and Natter 2

Stitch and Natter 2 enjoyed a festive mince pie at their meeting before Christmas. This very friendly new group meets in Spread Eagle in Lymm on Tuesday afternoons and would be delighted to welcome more members in the New Year. Just bring whatever you are working on.

### Theatre

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.

### Table Tennis

The group is well-established now and we are pleased to have welcomed some new members. The group meets each Friday at the Lymm Youth and Community Centre, 10.15 to 11.45. We play doubles to 21, using the "old rules", on 3 tables. All standards are welcome.

### Walking Groups



**Striders** 9 of us set out for a circular 9 mile walk from Wallesey through Bidston Moss and New Brighton, along the banks of the Mersey. Just look at the sunshine on that photo! No rain and the wind blowing in the right direction! We finished the walk with a Christmas drink at the Ferry Inn. The next walk is on 14<sup>th</sup> January and is the 8 mile Meccano walk.

### Friday Rambles and 4-6 ers

The Christmas Walk followed the same route as last year. Twenty-six members ignored the inclement weather and set off from Lymm Dam at ten o'clock. We were joined en route by three others and arrived at Spud Wood where we were met by our Chair, not participating due to a dodgy knee. Mince pies, homemade biscuits and Quality Streets were consumed with vigour.



## Strollers

Five stalwarts of the Strollers Group braved the December weather to do a two and a half mile walk in Grappenhall. After parking at the Ram's Head the walkers walked up to the Walled Garden then followed the woodland path through Parr's Wood finishing back at the Ram's Head where lunch was enjoyed by three of the members.



## Writing Group



The writing group, as always, had a fun time at the Spread Eagle and really enjoyed their Christmas meal there.

The topic for the day was understanding comedy and a lively and amusing discussion was had by all. We certainly laughed at the and with the written submissions. The next topic for January is 'How to start writing your short story et al'. We normally meet on the first Friday of the month but in January 2026 it will be Friday 9<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 a.m. at the Spread.

## Letter from our NW Region Representative on the National Council

May I congratulate your u3a on the publicity it gained in the Warrington Guardian in relation to your u3a's ukulele group visiting the Brookfield Care home. I feel sure it was a joyful occasion for both the residents and the group members.

It was excellent publicity for the u3a movement to gain an article in a local paper.

You may wonder how I was aware of this event. It is because I subscribe to a Google search in relation to u3a news items. Many thanks to all involved.

David Blanchflower

NW Region Council Representative [Regional Reps Newsletter December](#)

Here is a link to the [North West Region Newsletter](#)

### Committee Contact Details

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## 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](#).

### The World's Most Enchanting Archipelagos – Through the Scottish Hebrides

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 3.00 p.m.** Join us and Monty Halls, Brand Ambassador for HX who will guide us on an inspiring voyage of discovery through the Scottish Hebrides. Drawing on his deep knowledge of the region's natural cultural heritage, he will explore the rich and fascinating history behind the foundation of the Commandos, rooted in the very heart of Scotland's west coast. Come and discover with this captivating talk on exploration, marine life and the extraordinary wildlife that inhabits this remarkable landscape.



It is worth visiting the events page

[www.u3a.org.uk/events](http://www.u3a.org.uk/events)

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

### Laughter Yoga with Judith: January Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 10.00 –

**10.45 am Introduction to Laughter Yoga** Scientific research confirms that laughter is good for us and we should all be getting more of it – that it is indeed 'the best medicine'. We are told we need to get more joy into our lives, more friends and fun, and more laughter. The trouble is that many of us would like to laugh more but we don't know where to start. Laughter yoga offers an answer. It combines playful laughter exercises with deep yoga style breathing (pranayama) – and anyone can take part. There are three myths about laughter that we need to be clear about. We think you need a sense of humour to laugh – **you don't**. We think you need a reason to laugh – **you don't**. We think you need to be happy – **you don't**. There are no jokes, comedy or humour in laughter yoga. It's easy to get started, and laughter is infectious. It's also gentle cardio-vascular exercise, and has been described as 'internal jogging'.

*u3a members participating in exercise activities at their own risk.*

**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](http://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.

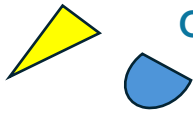
The entire series is available on our YouTube Channel. [Listen now](#)  
The podcast is available on the usual podcast platforms including:

[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](mailto:communications@u3a.org.uk).



**Our Groups** If you would like to join any of our groups, [groups@lymmthelwallu3a.org.uk](mailto: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 <sup>st</sup> Thursday a.m.	The Spread Eagle, Lymm
Book Club 2	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday a.m.	The Little Manor, Thelwall
Cinema	Occasional Outings	Various
Crown Green Bowling	Monday p.m.	High Legh Bowling Club
Current Affairs	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday lunchtime	The Spread Eagle
Current Affairs 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday a.m.	Lymm Village Hall
Cycle Maintenance	As and when required	
Cycling	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday-	Various, see website
Flower Arranging	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday p.m.	St. Peter's Church Hall
French (Advanced)	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday a.m.	The Sanctuary Hub Lymm
French Conversation Advanced	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday p.m.	The Spread Eagle Lymm
Games Group	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday p.m.	Maple Lodge, Lymm
Gardening	Various Days	Different Locations
Genealogy	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday a.m.	Sanctuary Hub Lymm
German	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday a.m.	The Spread Eagle, Lymm
The Lunch Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	Contact via website
Mosaic	Friday a.m.	St. Mary's Church Hall
Music Appreciation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday p.m.	Lymm Youth / Community Centre
Philosophy	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday a.m.	The Spread Eagle, Lymm
Poetry	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday lunchtime	Sanctuary Hub Lymm
Singing For Fun	4 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	Various
Walking Striders	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	Various
Wellbeing Birdwatching	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	Various Locations
Wild Things	Various	Various
Writing Group	1 <sup>st</sup> 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](#)