

March 2026

Registered Charity Number 1182457

Dear All,

Isn't it great that we are now seeing the Spring flowers and blossom? It is rather like our u3a. The number of members is blossoming and new groups are springing up! This month we have Quizzical and MOTO Groups growing and Ancient Civilisations in the seedling stage. Thankyou to those who have helped set them up.

If you are a new member welcome to our Group. For the rest of us it is now time to rejoin for another year of learning, laughter and living!!! Thanks to all of you who help in any way to make our u3a run smoothly each month. You know who you are. There are so many of you.

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 19th March 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 19th March

Andrew Wilde

From early piano lessons to playing on the world stage

Andrew Wilde has won many top prizes in international piano competitions. He has been described as an "absolutely convincing pianist who can draw us into his spell of magic." Andrew will play for us and include anecdotal information about the composers as well as his own musical life, starting from early piano lessons in Liverpool. His performance will be in support of the North West Music Trust, which is involved in helping young people realise their dreams through performance opportunities, attendance at concerts or practical assistance such as accommodation.

Thursday 16th April

Suzan Holder

How my real life inspired my books

Suzan Holder is the author of three romantic comedy books published by HarperCollins. She is also a journalist, TV producer and presenter and a Cheshire Life magazine columnist. Suzan will talk about her career highlights and reveal how some hilarious real-life experiences and exciting adventures have inspired her stories.

Thursday 21st May

Ian White

Stories of traffic accident investigation

The talk will introduce you to the world of Road Traffic Collision Investigation and to some of the systems which can be used by the expert in order to reconstruct a road traffic accident. The presentation will be given based on a reconstruction of a collision which was presented at an International Conference last year entitled 'Reconstruction of a Fatal Collision by using a Suite of Software Programs'.

Membership -Allen: Membership now stands at 386

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

Thursday 19th March

Members' Meeting followed by a Meeting of all the members going to Ayrshire.

Thursday 16th April

Members' Meeting at Grappenhall.

Thursday 21st May

Members' Meeting and AGM

Committee News

Please find below a summary of the February 2026 committee meeting:

- AGM information to be emailed to members on 13th February;
- Committee nominations open until 3rd April and to be handed into committee;
- Charity Commission return completed;
- u3a Public Liability Insurance Policy is on website;
- Website review and coordinator support planned; and
- All mandatory policies completed and on website under 'Useful Information' replacing those which were out-of-date. Now looking at voluntary policies.

Renewing membership

With the new membership year commencing in April, we are pleased to be able to provide a new option for paying your renewal fee. This will be £10 per member for the year. You can pay:

Remotely via the internet

1. Via the u3a website and a credit/debit card on the membership page at

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

2. Via a bank transfer to our account at Lloyds Bank, Lymm & Thelwall U3A, 30-98-93, 68806068. Please enter ZRENEW and your Name and u3a number into the Reference.

At a Members' Meeting, please see the Treasurer. He can

3. Accept a cheque made out to Lymm & Thelwall U3A with ZRENEW and your Name and u3a number written on the back
4. Collect a payment by a credit/debit card via our "Tap to Pay" facility that we will have available at the meeting.

You can make payments for the 2026/27 year from 1st March,

Members' Meeting by Sue Clarke



Over a hundred members enjoyed the talk entitled 'Lies, Damned Lies and Statistics'. Our speaker, Neil Sheldon, had impressive credentials as a Chartered Statistician, former Vice-President of the Royal Statistical Society and both school and university teaching background. His mission is to communicate the importance and correct use of statistics. Neil presented amusing examples of use and misuse of statistics with helpful guidance for avoiding being misled.

We are constantly presented with charts, diagrams, graphs and numerical data. Proper information, understanding and interpretation with an appropriate perspective are essential for more accurate decision making.

Neil explained that 'Average' is probably the most overused and misleading term. For instance, the average man with recommendations for dietary intake, weight targets and blood pressure does not exist. Human characteristics are multi-factorial influenced, both by genes and the environment. Many measurements are safer represented by a range. The average house price is skewed by the very high and very low values; average salaries are misleading for the same reason.

Using Mean, Median and Mode shows variation more clearly. The mean is average i.e. sum of values divided by count, median is the middle value in an ordered dataset and the mode is the value occurring most frequently. The median is used in Government communications. For salary negotiations a union would use the lowest value, while management would quote the higher value to argue already good salary levels.

Collection of data needs unambiguous criteria for sampling, crucial for meaningful results. A redacted BMJ article cited numbers of oesophageal cancer cases including 21 undiagnosed and 22 wrongly diagnosed patients. An airline's statements about planes flying empty is always worrying. Correlation can be a danger when things are claimed to be causative but associative without a correct explanation. A high incidence of storks linked to births is observed in Germany but practically unknown in Greenland. Dietary fat intake linked to incidence of

cardiovascular disease shows higher rates in prosperous countries without considering factors including meat consumption, healthcare and longer life expectancy.

When making decisions we should weigh up Hazard- what might happen, with Risk - how likely it is. Parents responding to a campaign encouraging children to walk or cycle to school showed 5% agreed, while 30% worried about abduction or murder despite a one in a million chance. They overlooked the long-term benefits of exercise. On a lighter note, Lottery tickets sell every week.

Neil left us with an updated title perspective - 'Lies, Damned Lies and Experts (or Lawyers)!' A Q & A followed, and Tim gave the vote of thanks.



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!

Sixty-six members gathered in Lymm Village Hall for the Valentine's Social. Many members wore red and the hall looked amazing with red tablecloths, bunting and decorations. The buffet was provided, for the first time, in individual boxes by Primrose Garden Centre and it was both plentiful and extremely tasty, prompting many appreciative comments. Paul Thompson returned to sing a selection of familiar and new songs on the subject of Love, finishing with Victoria Wood's epic, 'Barry and Freda'. His excellent set went down well judging by the laughter and applause. The theme of Love continued through the Quiz.



We are sailing.....Wednesday 8th July

A City Centre Cruise with Lunch on the waterways of Manchester and Salford.

The cost is £35 and includes a 3 course lunch

For more information and to book a seat please contact [Christine](#)



Group Gossip

A quiz group (Quizzicals) and a group for Members On Their Own (MOTO) have been formed and the latter group has held its first meeting as reported below in Group Gossip. Also, a group covering Ancient History is in the process of being formed. If the MOTO group or the Ancient History group interest you or you have any other ideas for groups, please contact Muriel, the Groups' Facilitator at groups@lymmthelwallu3a.org

For those interested in Quizzicals, please contact Marion, who has kindly sent in the following message: 'Shake off those winter blues and join us for our inaugural quiz on Tuesday 17th March 2026 at The Sanctuary Hub from 2.00 p.m, to 4.00 p.m. We'll be kicking things off with a fun quiz and inviting your ideas on how future sessions should be run. Going forward each month, the quiz will be hosted by a volunteer from the audience - a great way to get involved. Please let me know if you are able to attend [marion](#)



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

Art

A grey, wet month but on the brighter side the evenings are getting lighter. With that in mind our first Friday topic was 'A Season in Collage'. We moved on to 'A Song Title' – Sailing by Rod Stewart' was one choice. (Perhaps looking forward to holiday time). Movement in Impasto has yet to be completed. These are only suggestions for those of us who occasionally lack inspiration or are prepared to try something different.



Badminton

Two Badminton Groups continue in action every Wednesday morning between 9.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. at Centre, Bellhouse Lane, Grappenhall, at a current cost of £10 per month. Whilst the 9.00 a.m. group is full, there are still **vacancies** for the second session each week, starting at 10 .00 a.m., at which new faces will be very welcome. If you would like to join this session, please email Geoff Stocker at: gsto2512@aol.com, noting that you do need to have played Badminton previously.

Grappenhall Community

Book Group 1

In February the Thursday book group members read 'A Little History of Everything' by Tim Coulson. This book explains the history of the universe from the Big Bang to human consciousness and covers physics, chemistry and biology to explore if humanity is inevitable. It is aimed at the non-scientist. We found it to be generally interesting and thought provoking, but heavy going in parts so not a bedtime read. It's worth setting time aside to give it the attention it deserves. The chapters are well laid out and can be read in isolation. The author is an Oxford professor and some of his lectures can be found online and I found them to be interesting and accessible.

Book Group 2

At our February meeting Book Group 2 discussed 'Persuasion' by Jane Austen, partly to honour the 250th anniversary last year of Jane Austen's birth. We discovered fresh insights into what was for several members a familiar book and compared and contrasted the novel with the various film and TV adaptations. We noted Austen's satirical take on aristocracy, and her seeming preference for meritocracy, and the difficulties of romantic communication. Everyone enjoyed the happy ending!

Crown Green Bowling

The 2026 U3A Outdoor Crown Green Bowling season will commence in April at a date to be advised in the next Newsletter.

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. The Winter Club Membership Fee is £8 with a charge of £2 per session, which includes refreshments.

Current Affairs 1

At the February meeting the topic was 'Alternatives to Capitalism' – in part a follow-up to the previous month's discussion on Economic Growth. We looked at some of the theoretical ideas various writers were currently putting forward as well as a number of practical examples from across the world where organisations on a small scale were trying to incorporate ideas where profit and the free market were not the main considerations and sustainability and human values were given a higher priority. Inevitably, translating these ideals into a large-scale new economic order was fraught with problems. A lighter note was struck with the inclusion of a short sketch by Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie on the morality or otherwise of market forces.

French Conversation

In February the group talked about our favourite places in francophone countries. Members presented their town/city, often accompanied by photos, and explained why their place was so special to them. These included Menton on the Cote d'Azur, where a citrus carnival is held in February with exhibits made out of oranges & lemons; Le Guilvinec in Bretagne, a little fishing port that has hardly been changed by time; Tours with its lovely buildings, to Balzac and its proximity to the beautiful castles of the Loire; Paris 7th arrondissement here two members lived next to a perfume shop and one of the oldest cheese makers; Strasbourg where a visit to the European parliament made our member cry because our flag was no longer there.



cathedral and connection

Annual Fête du Citron in Menton, theme in 2014 was Jules Verne's 20000 Leagues Under the Sea

Gardening

On Wednesday 25th February, 17 group members heard a very interesting talk about the Asian Hornet, an invasive species, and learnt about ways we can support endeavours to identify any that visit our gardens, as nests were discovered in Runcorn last year.

For anyone who would like to monitor in their gardens, especially in the months of July–September, there is a recipe that Chris, the speaker, gave us below. The motto of 'See It, Snap It and Send It' applies and anyone wishing to download the 'Asian Hornet Watch App' can report any sightings through that.

Small plastic containers (like those from take-aways) lined with a few medium sized pebbles, put in the garden with liquid from the following recipe, will attract the Asian Hornet. Sightings can be photographed and put on the App. These should not be left out overnight as this would be detrimental to moths.

Recipe (one of the following):

500m dark beer; add 1 tbsp sugar

1 cup blackcurrant cordial (not sugar-free) add 500ml dark beer

500ml water, 3 tbsp sugar add 1 cup cider vinegar or

Equal parts of blackcurrant cordial, white wine; cider vinegar



Chris and his team of volunteers can tell from any photos sent in whether they were the Asian variety and would then visit and destroy nests. Insects should not be killed as they will lead the way to the nest. If this has whet your appetite to find out more please do so as by pulling together we can hopefully stop the progress of the Asian Hornet.

Genealogy

The genealogy group met on the 17th February. As usual the room was packed and lively, with 23 members in attendance. Marcia treated us all to a presentation about her family, the Wallen/Valinski family, from Lithuania and Poland. It was fascinating. They arrived in Britain to live in London at the same time as the Ripper was plying his gruesome trade! The group also discussed the family recipe book we are going to produce, old family recipes loved by all.



German

On a cold February Monday, the German Conversation Group enjoyed snuggling in for a coffee and chat in the Tap Room of the Spread Eagle. We welcomed a new member and all introduced ourselves. As usual, conversation strayed to other topics including where we had all acquired and honed our German speaking skills, how we continue to improve our German and our connections to German-speaking countries. Our main topics of conversation were the German school system, with particular reference to technical education and how it compares to Britain, and changes in the German transport network in recent years.



Mosaic

The mosaic group is working hard, both in attracting new members and in the wide range of projects this friendly group produces. These are just a few examples of their activities during their meeting along with a finished project by Lynne Hopwood.



MOTO

After some discussion about a group name, it was decided to use 'Members on Their Own' taking inspiration from another u3a. This group gives individuals the opportunity to meet up for events with friendly company. New members welcome. Nine members enjoyed their first outing to the Lymm Festival Folk evening, featuring the music of Seamus Og. Photograph with Lymm Festival's Paul Thompson and musician Seamus.



Music Appreciation

Wayne Crumpton joined us in February for a session entitled "The Guitar – How it's Made and How it's Played". Wayne is an expert woodcarver and skilled maker of electric guitars. You can see him with one in the photo. He described how he made the guitars with the help of slides. This was fascinating and gave us so much insight into the complexity of these familiar instruments. He took us through a brief history of the guitar from the lute to the guitars we know today. He told us about the different ways of playing the guitar and the impact of various innovations such as amplification, slides and the tremolo. We sampled the range of the instrument listening to pieces from Vivaldi to Kelly Jo Phelps and Stefan Grossman. Finally, he brought back memories of the 1960's and 70's with Hank B Marvin and Jimi Hendrix. By the end we really appreciated the guitar's development and wonderful range.



Wayne Crumpton

Our next meeting, at Lymm Youth Community Centre, will be on 12th March when music students from the University of Manchester will be performing a selection of music to suit all tastes. The session will open with a jazz sequence presented by the Cosmo Jazz Trio, followed by a string quartet performance of Beethoven's String quartet No 4. Ed Houghton from the trio will also be performing a number of cello solos, and there will also be a medley of music theatre favourites. The Music Appreciation Group always welcomes new members – why not come along as our guest on 12th March and give it a try?

Philosophy

The Philosophy group met in February to discuss two linked ideas, Beauty and Aesthetic Judgment. Both topics prompted contributions and comments from the members, as we explored whether all judgements of beauty or aesthetic value are personal and subjective. If they are, why, and how, do so many people agree about the value of particular works of art or natural landscapes?

The next meeting will consider Aristotle's Ethics and will be on 10th March, 10:30 a.m. in the Function Room of The Spread Eagle.

Poetry Group

Jim began the meeting with an entertaining presentation on William McGonagall, once lampooned as the worst poet in British history. Despite that, his legacy lives on with characters in such classics as the Goon Show, Monty Python and the Muppet Show. The group members then proved that they are not the worst by any means with some excellent poems on 'Gardens'

Singing for Fun

It felt like Spring. The sun shone in a clear(ish) blue sky and the temperature was in the mid-teens. No surprise then that members of the group arrived full of the joys of said season and looking forward to a couple of hours of unbridled singing for fun.

As always, the song list was a selection of genres and periods from the 1950's (before some of the group were born) to 2010's. Some were old favourites (Neil Diamond, The Beatles and The Shirelles), some were iconic classics ("American Pie" and "Good Vibrations") and some were neither ("My Boy Lollipop"). Some were easy

singalongs and a couple ("Good Vibrations" and "Living on a Prayer") were more challenging but were nevertheless sung with skill and spirit.

As usual, fascinating background information about the songs was provided. Neil Diamond wrote "Sweet Caroline" about his wife, who was called Marcia. John Legend included some of his own wedding video in the official video of "All of You". The rights to all Carl Perkins' material are nowadays owned by Paul McCartney. Finally, the Stones iconic "Satisfaction" was knocked off the number one spot by Herman's Hermits singing "I'm Every the Eighth I am". All in all a highly enjoyable session.

Stitch and Natter 2

Stitch and Natters 2, a new group which meets at the Spread Eagle in Lymm on Tuesday afternoons, is settling in very nicely and stitching busily, although there is much nattering! Do come and join us!



Theatre

Eighteen members watched 'Quiz' at the Garrick Theatre. It's the show about the allegedly cheating major in 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire', a quarter of a century ago, would you believe! It was an enjoyable production, with opportunities for audience participation but not the place to be if you've got a bad cough!

Table Tennis

Can you believe that Table Tennis is a dangerous sport? We were pleased to welcome back David and Neil after missing a few weeks due to injuries sustained. Despite the risks, players are keen to return to this friendly, competitive group.

Walking Groups

Strollers

Despite the gloomy weather thirteen enthusiastic strollers set off from The Crown on a two mile walk around Massey Brook. The rain kept off mainly, despite a pessimistic weather forecast. The Crown made us very welcome and set a table aside so we could all sit together. Everybody enjoyed their lunch which featured generous portions.



4-6 ers

It was cold and grey but the setting was stunning as Neil led the group out from the Boat House at Parkgate and along the King Charles III Coastal Path, up on the Wirral. The rectangular route was busy, particularly coming back along the Wirral Way, it being half term. Food and service were excellent in the Boat House afterwards.

Friday Ramblers

Fourteen members met in the car park of Daresbury Church, for a walk led by Elaine. It was a chilly morning but the conversation was warm as we walked through the Cheshire countryside and along the Bridgewater Canal, eating lunch on a couple of stone benches by the canal, across from the Daresbury Campus.



Striders

Frodsham and Helby for Striders. It was rain in the forecast and it didn't disappoint. In fairness the morning was more drizzle but lunchtime's rain definitely diluted the coffee. There was quite a crowd, eighteen of us which included three members who have not walked with us before and someone coming on a taster. Despite the mud—and there was a lot— I don't think we put them off. It was a happy crowd who returned home to reproof their gear for next time!

Wellbeing Birdwatching

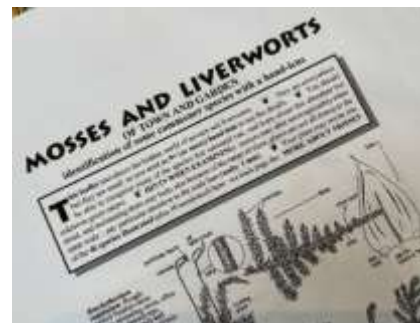
For our latest outing seventeen of us visited a favourite venue, the RSPB's reserve at Burton Mere on the Wirral. After having to defer our trip from a fortnight earlier, we were pleased to have just slightly variable but still rather pleasant weather. This made a great difference for the birds as well as ourselves as the bitter winds of the previous two days meant many birds had hunkered down to shelter. So over and above the more common species, we

managed to see Shovelers, at least one Great White Egret, Herons, a Kestrel, Tufted Ducks, Teal, Lapwings, Shelduck, a female Marsh Harrier and the always elegant Avocets. We had a special treat when an expert pointed out a small wader bobbing about in the distance. None of us would have recognised what turned out to be a rare visitor, a Curlew Sandpiper. Will we still be able recognise one if it should appear again next year? Well, let's avow 'yes' for now! Photos: 1. Pete managed to get very distant photo of the feeding Curlew Sandpiper. 2. Walking through golden reedbeds.



Wild Things

What a fascinating morning the members of the Wild Things group had learning about garden mosses. From drawings to seeing samples under the microscope we came away marvelling at the beauty of these tiny plants.



Writing Group

The Writing group is as always having lots of fun sharing ideas and written pieces . Not every one writes every time but that does not matter as contribution to the group ideas is what matters the most. If you want a genuine laugh and lots of inspiration from a positive, lovely group please come along to the Spread Eagle on the first Friday in the month at 11.00 a.m.

Jigsaws Choose your next puzzles at the Members' Meeting!

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
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[Lymm and Thelwall u3a web site](#)

[Lymm and Thelwall u3a Facebook page](#)



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

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

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](#)

These are a sample of the online event on offer. There are plenty more to choose from. Use this link below to the other online learning events available . www.u3a.org.uk/events



Beyond the beam: what we do with lasers

How beams of light are reshaping science, medicine, and our understanding of the universe.

Thursday 5 March at 10am

Free – online via Zoom



Novel writing with Jenny Newman

This workshop is about becoming a novelist: your sources of inspiration, what skills and techniques to develop and how to sustain your writing practice.

Friday 6 March at 2pm

Free – online via Zoom



Exploring World Faiths: March

An International Women's Day event exploring the role and experiences of women across three different faith traditions.

Monday 9 March at 10am

Free – online via Zoom



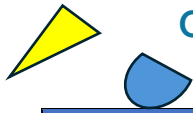
The u3a radio podcast showcases the amazing things happening across the movement. It's created by a team of u3a members who all have radio experience and features interviews with members, interest group leaders, Trustees, national volunteers and Subject Advisers. The entire series is available on our YouTube Channel. [Listen now](#) **The podcast is** available on the usual podcast platforms including:

North West Residential Summer School

Tuesday 11th August – Friday 14th August
Manchester Metropolitan University

Residential and Non Residential. A number of Courses are on offer.
For full details see the [North West region Website](#)





Our Groups If you would like to join any of our groups, always contact the Group Coordinator via the group page on the website to email the Group Coordinator 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 1	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
Fruit and Vegetable Growers	Various	Various Locations
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
MOTO	Various	Various
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
Quizzacals	3 rd Tuesday p.m.	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
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