



Tarporley and District u3a April 2026 Newsletter

Bonjour a tous et a toutes! **(I know I know!** The a should have an accent over it, well over both 'a' s but I don't know how to do it on my keyboard!) We are going to France in April so I have put this in to practise a little. The next newsletter may be coming from France, and if the weather is nice there I will include some photographs for you, with a glass of Rose! (again a missing accent!) I will include some even if it's raining! I shall practise while I am away with my keyboard to see if can type in French, but do not worry! I will not do the newsletter completely in French! My French is not up to it!



I had a lovely Mother's Day. I got a new iPhone from Hektor and Togg, and I am now able send and receive emails after a lot of work, including deleting all my photographs and a great many documents from my old one, then deleting everything from my I cloud and spending over an hour on the phone to sky! And then! the next day I was able to send and receive emails and all my apps transferred!



Kieran bought me, amongst other things, a new pair of silk liners/gloves. The Tuesday before Mother's Day Togg ate one of my gloves! I have included a photo of it! See left. She hasn't chewed anything for at least a year! I really told her off, and then I felt so guilty as she didn't t speak to me for hours and she looked so sad! When I was putting my shoes on, she didn't jump at me or try to pinch my hat! The next time we went for a walk however she was back to jumping on me and pinching my hat!! So, I knew that I had been forgiven! It did mean that I could ask Kieran for a new pair and there was time for them to arrive. So all was well. I am not taking any chances though; I am keeping my new gloves well away from her!

We have had some very mixed weather in March, some beautiful sunny and WARM days but also some quite cold ones. A couple of weeks ago I went out in just a shirt with a gilet and it was just right then then next week I was bundled up again! Last week I took H and T out and I was wearing a few layers under my jacket, a scarf, hat and gloves! On the way home I passed quite a few people in shorts and t-shirts! In March! I pretended I had just got off a plane from the North Pole!

Tuesday and Wednesday (24 and 25 March) were both particularly bleak, with hail stones. The end of March was certainly not lamb like!



This is Togg on the right and Hektor on the left, on one of the lovely sunny days we had



And this is Hektor and Togg on 27 March in between the rain!



I included the above for you Gila and George!

We are now in April which is famous for its April showers, intermittent but still heavy! They are frequent but short lived so April is not the wettest month of the year! Indeed, April is actually one of the driest months. A famous song which I am sure you all remember is



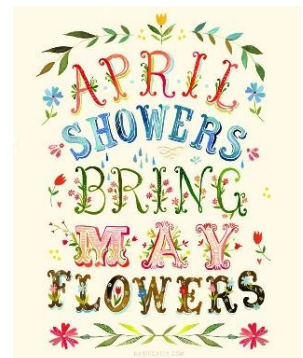
Little April shower from Bambi. It was written by Larry Morey and Frank Churchill, the same songwriting team who composed the songs for Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. The showers did become rather heavy, as you can see below from the little dormouse sheltering.



But don't be too upset if we do have April showers, think of the famous saying

Sweet April showers, do spring May flowers- this phrase originated in 1157, in the form of a short poem written by Thomas Tusser. The poem can be found in the April section of a collection of his writings titled "A Hundred Good Points of Husbandry."

Warm and showery days are what gardeners need and the showers in April are one of the driving forces helping flowers to bloom later on in spring. So, when you wake up on April morning and see the shower don't be too sad, just think of all the good it is doing



This month we **have Easter to** look forward to. It is the most important day in the Christian Calendar and marks the end of Lent. It is a movable feast day, as unlike Christmas the date changes every year. It takes place on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring Equinox, so the date can vary by a month. It is thought that the name Easter is likely named after Eostre, the Anglo-Saxon Goddess of spring dawn and fertility.



We have Easter eggs and the Easter bunny. The Easter bunny became popular during the late 19th Century, largely imported from German folklore, while the Easter hare was a much older Germanic tradition. It was adopted by Victorian Britain alongside the introduction of Easter Eggs and widespread egg hunts

Although the bunnies deliver the eggs in Britain, it is not the same as poor father Christmas who has to travel the world in one night! The bunnies have help! In Switzerland Easter eggs are delivered by a cuckoo and in parts of Germany by a fox!

In Australia the eggs are delivered by the Easter Bilby, a marsupial. Bilbies once occupied 80% of the country but now they only exist in certain parts. So the Australians can eat their eggs knowing that for every bite they take they are helping save a Bilby.



Easter is known around the world for multi-coloured, decorated eggs. But in Greece you will find only red ones. The eggs are used in a game called *tsougrisma*, which means “clinking together” or “clashing,” and tests the eggs’ strength. Players crack the eggs together and the one whose egg remains intact is crowned the victor. From ancient times, the egg has been a symbol of the renewal of life, and the message of the red eggs is victory over death.



Chocolate isn’t much use in the steamy jungles of Papua New Guinea, so Easter trees are part of their celebrations instead.

But instead of sweet treats or colourful decorations, people dress up their trees with tobacco and cigarettes, and use them as places of worship leading up to Easter.

Committee News

People are still welcome to join the committee and if anyone is interested but unsure of what it would entail they can observe a meeting or ask any committee member

MONTHLY MEETING

TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Thursday 23 April 2026

Doors open at **9.45 am** for refreshments.

The meeting begins about **10.15 am** with announcements.

The talk starts at **10.30 am**.

Ray Hoerty

Keeping The Faith

The History of The Royal British Legion

And of Byng's Millions, 2 men, 2 women, a Lancastrian poet and a Canadian Medical Officer. The commemoration of VE Day was last year on 8 May and last year was also the 81st anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. Given that it seems appropriate to learn about the history of the amazing organisation which is the Royal British Legion



I am sorry to miss this talk, as unfortunately I am not able to attend (in France!). I think it will be really interesting. Do go if you can.

Midway Walkers

On Monday 2nd March, the Midway walkers set off from the no-longer-a-Candle Factory at Burwardsley and walked over the Sandstone Ridge, down the slope into Peckforton Village and then on to Beeston Castle, stopping for virtual refreshments at the closed-on-Monday café. The route back was mostly along the Sandstone Trail but diverted onto the lower road to reach The Pheasant more efficiently. The points of interest were the haunted bridge, the view towards Jodrell Bank and the stone elephant carrying a castle at Peckforton. The bonus feature was "Phineas" the giant chainsaw-carved wooden pheasant sculpture located on Pennsylvania Lane. A good proportion of the party then drove the 100m from the Candle Factory to The Pheasant to avoid an unnecessary walk back to the car. That's one thing about the Midways; we know how to avoid a walk.



Digital Photography

The group theme this month was completely open, so members could choose photos from their favourite subjects. We ended up with photos in the categories Nature, Wildlife, Travel, Artistic, Motorsport, Aircraft and Street Photography. A number of photographs were rendered in black and white, especially where texture was more important than tone.

The group also looked at the practicalities of large back-lit photo frames, old-school red-eye removal from flash photography and a world-leading A.I. artist creating futuristic videos and music from simple text and images. We also watched a video on street photographers working in New York, snapping away with compact Leica cameras costing about £7,000 new. Perhaps stick with the phone eh?



Midway Walkers

On Thursday 19th March, the Midway walkers hit the 2nd day of a 2 day heatwave and circled the green pastures of Utkinton. Parking on John Street we descended the Sandstone Trail to Fishers Green, past the Grade I listed building of Utkinton Hall (which James I visited while hunting at Delamere Forest in 1617), across to Rose Farm and along Tirley Lane to Summertrees, then finally descending the Trail back to the start point. The mud had mostly hardened and there were daffodils everywhere, lit up by the sun.



Nature

This month, with a meeting on March 12th, we started to celebrate the arrival of Spring, noting the wildlife, both animals and plants, that are starting to emerge. The glorious display of snowdrops that appeared in mid-January in the woods next to Tarporley roundabout are over but the roundabout and verges are now covered in daffodils, and the countryside trees are just starting to come into leaf. Gardens are also filling with colour and scent, and in the National Trust gardens you'll find Magnolias, Camellias and Daphnes etc.

It's also good to welcome back our native wildlife. We were thrilled to see both frogs and newts in our garden ponds, and a short time later, clumps of frogspawn. Tadpoles soon? We'd like to think that the newts mated but, as the females lay individual eggs on plants underwater, it's difficult to tell. People are noting more bird activity, hedgehogs enjoying evening walks and badgers.

One particularly interesting and rare bird spotted by a couple of our members was a Shore Lark (see picture below). This was seen at Mow Cop in East Cheshire, some way from its winter habitat on the East Coast and its summer breeding at high altitude in Norway and Finland.



Digital World

The group had a lively discussion on 'Our Digital World'. We all recognised that we now live in a world that has changed significantly since our early years. The paper based society, of bills and envelopes through the letter box, is turning into a world of mobile phones and smart devices.



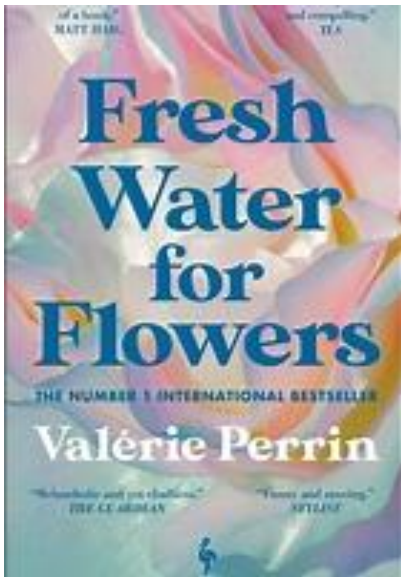
We had a quick review of our digital equipment and how we used it. Although we all had a mobile phone and we all streamed TV, we were more selective about other equipment. For example, it was interesting to note that not everyone had a tablet or PC, a smart watch or smart speaker, or security system, or clever central heating controls. We are still moving forward and learning slowly. Some members sensibly retain old equipment and old ways of working, such as receiving bank statements by

post. However, service providers regrettably don't always wait for us to catch up before updating our systems. Getting wet in the car park might be the least of our problems.

Book Club 1

The book chosen for March was **Fresh Water for Flowers** by the French author Valerie Perrin. It was published in 2018 and achieved excellent sales worldwide in both the original French and numerous translations. A screenwriter and photographer by training, *Fresh Water for Flowers* is her second novel.

The book is a tapestry of stories that interweave over time. The main protagonist is Violette Toussaint, for many years a cemetery keeper in a small Burgundian town. We learn of her unhappy childhood in care, her early, impulsive and ultimately unhappy marriage, the birth and death of her child and her slow progress towards happiness. We find out about the chilling relationship between her husband Phillippe Toussaint and his emotionally cold mother; his laziness, gaming habit and endless philandering, only partly redeemed by his persistent search for the truth about his daughter's death. When Julien Sole arrives at the cemetery trying to find out why his mother wishes to be buried beside a man who is a stranger to him, another complex emotional story is told. The writing is atmospheric, lyrical and sensitive, with many musings on love, loss, grief and memory adding to the complexity.



However, it was this complexity of the narrative that sparked the most discussion. While some aspects of the book were enjoyed and praised, the length and detail of the supporting stories were felt to detract from the central tale of Violette. The changes in the timeline caused problems for some readers who felt that they obfuscated rather than clarified the plot. However, reading different books by widely different authors is the purpose of a book club and the mix of different opinions is what makes for an enjoyable afternoon.

Science Group

The group enjoyed a look at the science of – and the fun of – Bubbles, in a talk given by Mary Burgess.

The most common definition of a bubble is a globule where one substance is contained inside another. The most common form is of a gas enclosed in a liquid.

Bubbles have many positive applications in real life –

- They enliven many drinks
- They are essential in the production of foam
- In food manufacture they are used to regulate texture
- In construction materials, they can be used to make materials lighter
- In medicine, micro bubbles can be directed round the body deliver medicines or target cancer cells.

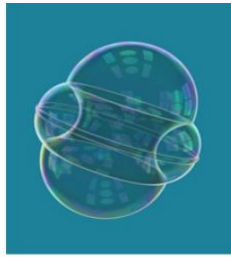


to

The behaviour of bubbles has given rise to specialised mathematical disciplines. One, called topology, studies shapes under conditions of continuous deformation. A textbook brought to the session showed the esoteric nature of the notations, which proved totally impenetrable to most of the group!



A standard double bubble



A nonstandard double bubble

The group went on to look at the most familiar of bubbles, the soap bubble. The subject of surface tension was discussed and how it pulls the soapy layer to enclose air in the least surface area. Hydrophilic and hydrophobic parts of molecules were explained. The layered composition of the surface of the bubble distorts light to give the rainbow colours so commonly enjoyed when bubbles are created. There are double bubbles which show the least area enclosing two separate given volumes.



But this meeting wasn't just about science, it was also about hands-on experience. Mary produced a wealth of materials and soapy solutions that the group could experiment with. Three dimensional frames were created to look at the wonderful variety of colours and shapes that could be created.

It was, as promised, fun!



Other news

1 Angela Wilson, our secretary, has asked if I could please remind everyone to complete the national survey, details of which were sent out on 17th February. It is your opportunity to give your views. It is due by 31st March but it is painless and not at all onerous. You will also be entered into a John Lewis Prize draw! What have you got to lose! Angela has already done it, as have I!

Here is the link to it <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/u3a-me>

2 Also, please see email received about a Northwest Region Workshop

North West Region u3a AI Workshop – 27 April

Dear Colleagues

I hope you are well. We are pleased to invite your u3a members to take part in a special online workshop exploring Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it can support learning, creativity, and u3a activities across the North West Region.

The session will take place on Monday 27 April, from 10:00 to 12:00, via Zoom. It is designed to be friendly, accessible, and suitable for all members—no technical background required. The workshop will cover: - What AI is and how it works in everyday life - Practical demonstrations of AI tools for learning and group activities - Tips for staying safe and avoiding misinformation - Opportunities for questions and discussion

1. We would be grateful if you could circulate this invitation to your members and encourage anyone interested to register.
2. If you need any further information or would like help promoting the session within your u3a, please feel free to get in touch.

David Blanchflower NW Region Council Representative

david.blanchflower@u3a.ork.uk

Tarporley Future Attractions

Tarporley Film Night

The Choral

As WW1 rages on, the Choral society in a small English town is determined to press ahead with new recruits.

They engage a new chorus master, Dr Henry Guthrie, recently returned from a career in Germany.

7pm for a 7.30pm start in Tarporley Community Centre. ADULTS £5, CHILDREN £4 (subject to film rating).



And almost finally, from Hektor and Toggs courtesy uncle, the origin of April fools day .

In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII changed the new year date from April 1st to January 1st. Some people ignored the change and kept celebrating on April 1st. They were called "fools," and this led to the tradition of April Fool's Day.



And of course remember that it is only until 12noon after that

April fool is dead and gone

You're the fool for carrying on!

Almost Almost finally, I wish you all a very happy Easter. And however you celebrate it have a lovely time



But remember Don't eat too much chocolate /too many Easter Eggs!

And finally.....

Just a brief word about any images of members in the Newsletter. They are sent with the participants agreement but are intended for inclusion in the Newsletter only. Please do not send images of u3a individuals in the Newsletter to other public, digital spaces.

To respond, or contact any Committee member, please get in touch with the Secretary, Angela Wilson by email at Tarporleyu3a@outlook.com

For contributions about your group's activities, please get in touch with the editor at Angiegreen1961@sky.com

For wider information on the activities of Tarporley and District u3a go to <https://tarporleyanddistrict.u3asite.uk/>

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