



Tarporley and District u3a June 2026 Newsletter

Hello everyone! I have returned. I was allowed back into the country you will be pleased to hear and so this newsletter is from England once again. And a let's give a big Welcome To June! Wasn't the end of May glorious? We arrived back from France on Sunday 10th May, and it was so cold, I couldn't believe it! I wasn't able to complete the great swap over of clothes. I had to keep my winters out (and use my two hot water bottles!). And then I just went for it! - winter clothes away- summers out and the sun followed so I do believe that this sunny weather is thanks to me!

Exactly, more or less, one year ago in June, I edited my first newsletter. The May one was a joint effort between me and Sue Hardacre. I must apologise to Sue as I got her name wrong in the last newsletter. It is of course Hardacre and not Hardcastle! I blame predictive text! Please back me up!

We are in the month of the longest day. After this the days start, very slowly, to get shorter. Not really noticeable until mid to late August, so nothing to worry about yet. We can enjoy the long days for a while longer



See right - Togg Running in the field. Beeston Castle is to the right, just outside the picture!



Beeston Castle in the Distance,



and cooling down- at 8.30am!



We are also in the month of Father's Day! I shall have to take Hektor and Togg out shopping to get something for Peter. Father's Day in the UK was really imported from the United States. It was mainly inspired by Sonora Smart Dodd from Washington State who wanted to honour her single father. The very first US celebration was held in 1908. The concept was first introduced to the UK by American servicemen stationed here during World War 2. Following the war it really gained traction alongside a general rise in American cultural influences, such as music, fashion and greetings cards. It integrated in to the British calendar through the 1950s and 1960s and officially aligned with the American date, the third Sunday of June.

Historically, many Catholic Countries in Europe celebrate Father's Day on St Josephs day, March 19th, But the UK adopted the American timeline.

So a very happy Father's Day to all Fathers out there. I hope you have a lovely day. Peter will be spoilt by me, Hektor and Togg, as he is every day of the year! No rest for the wicked!

Committee News

At the start of this financial year some substantial regular fees have been paid to the u3a Trust, for the Beacon communication system and for the website licence. Despite these outgoings, the amount in the account is very similar to that recorded at the same time last year, indicating that Tarporley and District u3a is in sound financial health.

Many members enjoy reading the national 'u3a Matters' quarterly magazine which they receive via a tick box on their application form. A small fee per member is also paid to the national office by the local group for this arrangement. Should any member wish to stop receiving the magazine then they can let the Treasurer know at the Monthly Meeting or contact him via the website www.tarporleyanddistrict.u3asite.uk



The Committee co-opted Sue Hardacre who agreed to be responsible for liaison with other local and regional u3a groups. She was delegated to vote on the group's behalf at the NWR Regional conference to be held online on June 23rd. She will also attend the Cluster Meeting at Congleton on June 8th.

It was agreed that Tarporley and District u3a would take out an advertisement in the Tarporley Carnival Brochure and Sue Hardacre agreed to look at running a small stall at the Tarvin Fete on June 13th.

There was a lively discussion about how members might be encouraged to step forward to help run groups and, possibly, stand for the Committee. The voluntary nature of u3a was stressed and the Committee agreed to do all in their personal power to encourage greater involvement.

MONTHLY MEETING

TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Thursday 28 June 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**.

Simon Michael

My Life in Crime Part 2



Simon Michael's career began in the 1980s as an author, continued as a council labourer, a van driver and a gardener and then as a member of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple - the Bar. Simon was a barrister for 37 years working at the Old Bailey and other criminal courts, defending and prosecuting a wide selection of murderers, armed robbers, con artists and other assorted villainy. This is an hour of tales from the Bar, writing crime novels and family history. Many you will remember the first part of his talk which he gave when he attended the meeting in September. It was highly entertaining and this promises to be just as good! I am really looking forward to it!

Interest Groups

Midway Walkers



On Star Wars day, the Midways headed for planet Malpas. The name comes from the Old French for Bad Passage, which sounds like something you get after a dodgy curry. Leaving the central spaceport, we headed towards the Bishop Bennet Way, which is actually a 34 mile bridleway from Beeston Castle to Whitchurch, skirting the Welsh Borders. It is named after William Bennet (born 1746) who mapped the Roman roads between Chester and Whitchurch, and was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries

in 1790 . Our section provided great views from Overton Scar, a striking, red sandstone outcrop. We walked back over Kidnal Hill (more like a bump), across some fields and past St. Oswald's Church to the Lion at Malpas, a swanky watering hole where we refuelled our ships.



On the 21st May, the weather was like a Thai dumpling; a moist start followed by intense heat. The octo-squad started at Helsby Quarry Nature Reserve which is one of the best places in Cheshire to see dinosaurs. Well, the footprints of them. No bones. And they look a bit human apparently, hence the name Chirotherium. But if that's all you have it's worth a visitors' car park. From there we raced up Helsby Hill for the fabulous views of the River Mersey, then down and across to join the Sandstone Trail rising gently through Snidley Moor Wood. A steep descent and then back around Helsby Hill to see if a dinosaur had crushed our cars while we were away. About 5 miles and 1000ft of 'up'.



Nature Group

Woolston Eyes is a large nature reserve and SSSI located just east of Warrington roughly two miles from the town centre. The reserve is owned by the Manchester Ship Canal Co. and managed jointly by local voluntary group Woolston Eyes Conservation Group and the RSPB. The reserve itself is made up of four dredging beds nestled between the river Mersey to the north and the Manchester Ship Canal to the south. The two westernmost beds are accessible to members and comprise large areas of open water bordered by reedbeds, willow scrub and deciduous woodland. There are several hides and a viewing platform affording excellent views for birders and the site is also excellent for insects such as butterflies and dragonflies.

Ten members of the U3A Nature Group met on 7th May for a tour of the two western beds and were fortunate enough to meet up with the site naturalist and recorder Dan Owen who provided expert guidance on what was out-and-about and, crucially, where to see it. One of the beds is well-known for its population of Black-necked Grebes (BNG). Woolston is arguably the most important site for breeding BNGs in the country with the species breeding there since 1986. Dan informed us that he had counted 60 individuals in March and we were treated to the sight of a dozen or so feeding (and scrapping) in plain view of the viewing platform.

A tally was kept of the birds identified mostly by sight but some only by their calls/songs and a total of 39 species was reached - a very good haul. As well as the BNGs, other species of note included Mediterranean Gull, Garganey, Swift and a pair (M&F) of Marsh Harriers.

Our group was duly impressed by the scale of the site and the variety of birds on display. Sadly, the weather was dull and cold so that restricted the butterfly sightings but the sun appeared just before home-time and we sighted Peacock, Orange-tip and Painted Lady. This satisfied the lepidopterists in the group as well as the birders.

Black-necked Grebes (M&F) by John Roberts



Our Nature Group at Woolston Eyes



Digital Photography

Being camera nerd month, the class looked at astrophotography improvised using an Opticron HR.66 bird-spotting fieldscope on a heavy tripod and with underwhelming lunar results. Also the novel HDF (highlight diffusion filter) in the Ricoh GR IV and finally the Kickstarter project 'I'm Back Roll' that gives your ancient analogue film cameras a digital upgrade, for a not inconsiderable price tag.

The group theme this month was all things watery, especially waterfalls and fountains. Waterfalls are run by nature and so they still exist. Fountains are run by cash-strapped councils so they tend not to exist, until you visit other countries where they are extremely popular. Fountain spotters in this country should head to Chatsworth, Alnwick Gardens or World of Wedgwood.



Digital World - Digital Travel

As a follow-on from a previous presentation on Digital Ticketing John O'Reilly presented an overview of his recent experience of international travel, and the support digital devices, with their associated apps, provided. It was from a 2 month journey via Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, USA and Canada, by 'trains, boats and planes', plus the inevitable taxis, buses and metros. It included reference to a previous trip from 2024 to the USA.

When we travel these days we can take with us the obvious credit cards, smart phones, digital cameras, plus perhaps an eReader (Kobo) and tablet, probably leaving the laptop at home (as it is a vacation). All the tickets tend to be 'ticketless', on the airline or railway App (British Airways, Quantas, Air Canada; Avanti West Coast, Via Rail - Canada, Amtrak), or Touch-and-Pay (London Underground; Sydney, San Francisco and Toronto buses and metro). If you take an Uber taxi (Sydney, Toronto), or even a driverless Waymo taxi in San Francisco, the experience is similar to London, except of course the currency is local (AU\$, US\$, CA\$). Luggage tracking is now incorporated into airline apps, so the last known position of your luggage is reported, together with AirTag tracking if you've added them to your suitcases!

Even though UK citizens don't formally need visas for the counties identified above (also true for EU countries), there are eTA (electronic Travel Authorisations) for Australia, New Zealand, USA (ESTA) and Canada, and electronic advanced Customs Declarations for New Zealand and Canada.

Whether, and how, travellers decide to stay 'on-line' is obviously a personal choice, but there are huge numbers of airports, stations, hotels, cafes, visitor centres, attractions etc that provide FREE WiFi, and the options for using local country digital networks include eSIM cards (Airalo, Holafly, Red Bull) or international roaming were outlined.

How to manage digital memory was discussed, which obviously depends on how many photos and videos are taken, plus whether you have spare SD cards, external SSD or Cloud storage for back-up of those precious memories.

And don't forget the chargers, cables, card readers and all the associated gubbins, complicated these days by the fact that each digital device may have a different USB socket (USB-C, μ -USB, lightning) and the power sockets are different in Australia/New Zealand and USA/Canada.

It is the 21st Century, welcome to Digital Travel – it worked near enough seamlessly.



Science

May's Science meeting had a distinctive green feeling.

Andrew Needham introduced us to the efforts that are continuing to improve the quality of our rivers, lakes and seashores. Those of you who watched Channel 4's 'Dirty Business' will be aware of the pollution caused by, among other problems, sewage discharges from water treatment works. One of the problems occurs when heavy rainfall overloads the works and untreated sewage is released. Disappointed by the performance of the Environment Agency, environmental groups such as 'Surfers Against Sewage' have been demanding action. United Utilities operate locally with water works in most of our villages. Andrew noted that all discharges are monitored and recorded, and these data are public and available online.

The main part of the meeting was a presentation by Nick Oates on the changes in the world's use of renewable energies, and in particular the UK progress with green electricity and green vehicles. In the UK the main change over the past few decades has been the move away from fossil fuels, particularly coal, to the developing technologies of solar panels and wind turbines to generate electricity. This transition to renewable electricity has been accompanied with increasing sales of electric vehicles, while sales of petrol cars remain static and sales of diesel cars have plummeted. Electric vehicles now account for around 26% of UK car sales.

There are significant challenges to an economy based on the present renewable energy technologies. One challenge is the need to improve the National Grid which distributes the electricity from the generating units, often in remote places such as offshore wind farms, to the customers mainly in cities. An additional

requirement is providing charging points, at home or away from home, for electric cars. Solar panels and wind turbines only generate electricity when the sun is shining or the wind is blowing. Some other forms of generation or possibly energy storage is required in those dull calm days in winter. For vehicles, current battery technology is adequate for cars, vans, small trucks and even for buses on short, prescribed, predictable journeys, but further development is required for heavier vehicles.

We hope to explore these challenges and their potential solutions in future meetings.

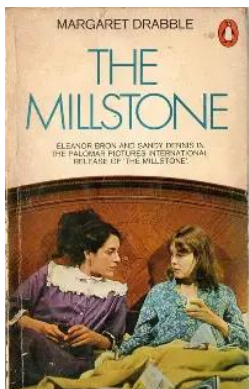


Book Club 1

The book chosen for the month was **The Millstone by Margaret Drabble**. First published in 1965 this was the third novel of a writer who has been publishing regularly since 1963 when she published *The Summer Birdcage* at the age of 24, until her last novel, *The Dark Flood Rises*, published in 2016 aged 77. She has also edited editions of the *Oxford Companion of English Literature* as well as publishing works of non-fiction and literary criticism. She was born into a highly academic family, studied English Literature at Newham College Cambridge and was an actor with the Royal Shakespeare Company before leaving to write full-time.



The Millstone is the story of Rosamund, a Cambridge graduate, completing her PhD while living with limited financial resources in her parent's London flat while they are abroad. She has a group of friends and a lively social life yet is terrified of sex. Her first sexual encounter leaves her pregnant and she chooses to have the baby. The book explores the attitudes of her literary friends, her married sister and society in general to this decision. Very much aware of her privileged position, her growing self-awareness and engagement with the wider world shapes the story. Her instant love for her daughter is a surprise; her daughter's illness a rude shock and the promise of an academic position is the hope of a settled future.



The book evoked a lot of memories for the group of their own younger selves and the society they experienced before the 'Swinging Sixties' really started. Many issues were discussed – the rigid and old-fashioned response of the NHS to both her pregnancy and the child's illness, her unwillingness to tell the child's father of his paternity and the distance that existed between herself and her parents and siblings. The book is beautifully written in a style that showcases Drabble's high academic standards yet is full of acute observations and comic incidents.

Though 60 years old, this book proved that good writing lasts the test of time

Tarporley Future Attractions

Tarporley Film Night – Friday 19th June

Song Sung Blue tells the true story of Milwaukee couple Mike and Claire Sardina, who find love, purpose, and second chances by forming Neil Diamond tribute act Lightning & Thunder. Blending heartfelt drama, humor, and iconic music, it's a celebration of resilience, creativity, and partnership

7pm for 7.30pm start in Tarporley Community Centre

ADULTS £5, CHILDREN £4 (subject to film rating)



Tarporley Together

If you are free the afternoon of 18th June why not go to the Tarporley Together afternoon tea?

It starts at 12.30pm. Some of you may have attended previous events but the dates have changed.



Tarporley Community Centre
Thursday 18th June, 12.30pm



Join us for afternoon tea
Meet up with friends and make new ones

No charge, donations appreciated

EVERYONE WELCOME !

Helpful Link

Mo Waddington sent a link to me as she thought that it may be helpful for members

Her bank gave her this link [About Relay UK | Relay UK](#) to a service that helps with phone calls by putting the conversation on screen (phone or PC). She feels that there may be other members with hearing problems who would find it very helpful.

National u3a newsletter

We know what is happening in our own Tarporley and District u3a but what about the wider picture? Here is a link to the National newsletter where you can get the latest information delivered straight to your inbox. You simply fill in some information to receive it and be kept up to date. You will also receive details of how to benefit from offers, discounts etc

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

Jokes for Father's Day, sent in by Hektor and Togg

Q Why do Dads take an extra pair of socks when they go golfing?

A in case they get a hole in one!

Q When does a joke become a dad joke?

A when it becomes apparent!

Q Why couldn't the bicycle stand up by itself?

A because it was too tired!

Q Why wasn't one father's day present better than the other?

A It was a tie!

Q What did the baby computer say to its dad on father's day?

A Happy father's day Data!

Q What did the grape say to his father on father's day?

A thanks for raisin me right

I took my dad camping for father's day. It was in tents!

My dad used to steal soap, but eventually he came clean.

I got my dad a book about glue . He couldn't put it down!

Almost finally.....

If there is anything you would like included in the newsletter, please let me know, and if I can I will include it. It is a newsletter for you. Also, do please let me know what your group has been doing, for inclusion in the newsletter. You may think that other people won't be interested if they don't go to that particular group, but it is always interesting to see what other groups are doing and it can encourage more members.

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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