



## Tarporley and District u3a July 2026 Newsletter

**Welcome to July!** And the start of the great Summer Holidays! with all schools finishing sometime in July for the holidays! And what a start we are having with yet another heat wave! When I wrote last month's newsletter we were just coming out of a heat wave and here we are again! I am hoping that by the time you receive this the temperature will have cooled down a lot, to early 20s I think would be nice .And believe it or not, I was sitting in a heatwave when I edited last July's newsletter!!



Enjoying a run in the cool grass early am and enjoying a cooling swim later in the evening



And of course in June, we have Wimbledon starting 28<sup>th</sup> June to 12<sup>th</sup> July. I remember watching it over the years and the number of times it was delayed over because of rain! Of course there is now the roof over centre court and I am not sure how much rain we will get this year, we shall see! And with Wimbledon comes strawberries and they really are the nicest at this time of year. Not imported just lovely sweet strawberries. We no longer have our allotment so are having to buy them now, but they really did do well there, they loved it !



'Wimbledon - The British weather is causing ever more contentious line-calls.'



You may or may not recall that in last year's newsletter I told you about St Swithin's day, if it rains on 15th July, St Swithin's day, it will rain for the next 40 days. The story began in the year 971, when the bones of St Swithin, (who had died over a 100 years before) were moved to a special shrine at Winchester Cathedral, and there was a terrible storm that lasted for 40 days . People said that the saint in heaven was weeping because his bones had been moved. I am not sure that I would be that worried about my bones if I were in heaven! However, with the current heatwave I am rather hoping it does rain on 15th! Sorry! Where we go on holiday, St Eulalie en Born, it has been 45 degrees, fingers crossed it has cooled down for when we go back!



Two important things are happening this month. Our wedding anniversary and Peters birthday! More expense as Hektor and Togg bought him a lovely father's day present, (I had to increase their pocket money) and off they went in a taxi to Cheshire Oaks! I don't think I have told you a story

about my second birthday. Many years ago I asked Peter what he would like for his birthday and he said that he wasn't really bothered about his birthday so I said, ok I'll have it! It would be rather nice to have birthday in December and then another in July, a distance from Christmas. But he took it back and has kept it ever since and to this day he has not bought me a birthday present in July!!! So my second birthday was, sadly, very short-lived!





June has finished but I really must share this fabulous photograph that I took on 17<sup>th</sup> June . It is so beautiful! We were driving back from a collection and I saw it! Peter had to slow down so I could take the photograph! Fortunately the lights then turned to Red so I had a little longer to take it. It is a waxing crescent moon and at the top you can see a bright dot - it was larger than that in real life - the bright dot is the planet Venus. It was a beautiful meeting of the moon and Venus. You may have noticed Venus a lot in the month of June as it has been quite visible. Apparently the meeting of the moon, (always a crescent, never a full moon) happens once a month, although some evenings it is brighter than others. This really is digital photography meets astronomy! Andy Barson will be wanting me to join the digital photography group!

# MONTHLY MEETING

## TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Thursday 23 July 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**.

David Cummings

Chester Celebrates

Scenes from the major celebrations in the city, from the Mystery Plays, Easter Passion, Civil War re-enactments, Roman Weekend, Lord Mayor's Procession and Remembrance Sunday. This is sure to be interesting as it is about our nearest city!



## Committee News

As a thank you to the convenors for all the hard work they do throughout the year, the committee took them to Abbey Wood on 9<sup>th</sup> June. As last year, the gardens were very beautiful and the food excellent – sandwiches, sausage rolls, pork pies, scones with jam and cream, lemon drizzle cake and coffee and walnut cake with tea or coffee. As last year the event took place in the conservatory. We were met with drinks on arrival, a choice of alcoholic and non-alcoholic. (I had the non-alcoholic as I was driving!) And there were doggy bags to take home again. We had no rain at all this year.



## Spreading the Word

Committee member Sue Hardacre took information about Tarporley and District u3a to Tarvin Fete on Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup>. While our u3a group is thriving, there is always the need to attract new members who can participate in our activities and, maybe get involved in the running of the organisation.

Sue said “ It is always sobering to find out how little people know about u3a. While it is agreed that University of the Third Age is a title potentially off-putting to people, the abbreviated name often causes confusion. It was a pleasure to talk to so many people of different ages about what we can offer. Details of several potential new members were collected.



Horticulturalists among you might notice that there is a plant on the table, a **Chlorophytum Variegatum**, otherwise known as a **Spider Plant**. At a recent meeting a u3a member used the Spider Plant as a visual metaphor for u3a, a strong centre creating strong off-shoots, independent yet connected. This metaphor works both for the national picture and for individual u3as with their interest groups.

The other thing about a Spider Plant is that they are almost impossible to kill!

## Clustered Together

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup>, Committee member Sue Hardacre attended the SE and Mid-Cheshire Cluster group of u3as in Congleton.

You may well be wondering what on earth a Cluster group is?

As members we sometimes forget that we are part of a very large national organisation. There are over 1000 u3a groups in the United Kingdom and the estimated membership is between 430,000 and 440,000 people. The country is divided into 12 regions and there are 94 groups in the North West, 20 of which are in Cheshire. Groups of local u3as are encouraged to cluster together to share information, exchange ideas to tackle common issues that might arise and to build productive connections. Tarporley and District are in the SE and Mid-Cheshire group, together with



**Alsager, Congleton, Crewe and Nantwich, Northwich, Sandbach, West Cheshire Rural, Holmes Chapel, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Winsford and Middlewich.**

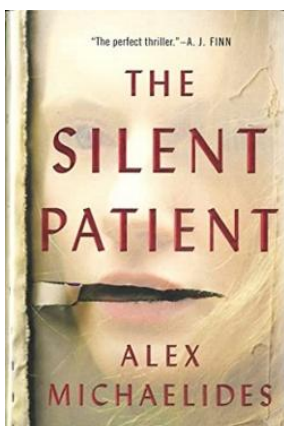
The largest of these groups has 1000+ members while the smallest just over 200, so while similar issues might be experienced, solutions can vary. Meeting other u3a members is always a pleasure. The strength of the organisation is in its membership and the connections made can increase the resilience of both the individual groups and the national organisation.

## Book Club 1

The June choice was **The Silent Patient**, a psychological thriller by Alex Michaelides, a British Cypriot writer. This is his debut novel published in 2019 and it became an instant best-seller, topping the fiction charts on both sides of the Atlantic



There are two voices in the book. The first comes from the journal of Alicia Berenson, convicted of the brutal murder of her husband and who has remained mute since her conviction. With a plea of diminished responsibility accepted, she is held in The Grove, a secure psychiatric facility of rather dubious reputation. The other narrative voice is that of Theo Faber, a psychotherapist who becomes fascinated, indeed obsessed with her case and takes a position at The Grove determined to make her speak and uncover the truth.



Michaelides weaves a tight and spare plot as Theo reaches out to members of Alicia's family to try and establish facts. He reveals that he had suffered a traumatic childhood and that Alicia has also suffered as a child. Both Theo and Alicia are married, intense romantic and sexual relationships that define their self-worth. The shocking truth about the murder and the complex relationship between the two characters is finally revealed – unexpected? Perhaps.

It is fair to say that this was a book that was not universally liked and created many diverse opinions. Some liked the tight plotting and found the pace compulsive, others found it hard to get drawn into the story. One common criticism was that the psychiatric facility and the professional behaviour of Theo was so unrealistic that the revelations felt staged. The group wondered how 'real' should background elements be in a work of fiction or can the plot and characters carry the story forwards regardless of verisimilitude. This is, after all, a thriller, not a textbook.

It is interesting to note that Michaelides had a modest career as a screenwriter before writing the book. There is talk that there is to be a film adaptation and perhaps that was the prime intention of the author when he put pen to paper.

## Midway Walkers

Cleverly picking the one day of rain after a week of an official heatwave, the forecast looked so bad that we abandoned the day at the seaside in Llandudno and headed to the more sheltered foliage of Primrose Hill. Starting at The Boot Inn, we stomped up Little Switzerland and headed for trees. We took a path through Urchin's Kitchen, a glug-hole left behind after the last Ice Age, spreading fluvioglacial deposits across the plains of Cheshire. Hard to believe, especially in a heatwave, that a mere 20,000 years ago during the Devensian Glaciation, we used to be under 1000 feet of ice. How things have changed. The only excitement back to the car park for non-bird spotters was a splodge of bright yellow fungus on a dead tree. But after a flurry of 'Find My Fungus' on the smartphone ( not the NHS app ), it turned out not to be a fungus. We are talking *Fuligo septica*, a species of slime mould in the class Myxomycetes. I prefer the more common names of 'scrambled egg slime' or 'fleur de tan' (bark flower). But my favourite name is the evocative 'dog vomit slime mould', not to be confused with the whiter 'dog sick slime mould'. I wish I was making this up but I'm not. Slime moulds are fascinating lifeforms, being neither plants or animals. Or mushrooms. They lack eyes, ears, and a brain, yet they can move, reason, sense mass remotely, have memory and solve complex mazes in search of food. They are basically aliens living amongst us. In the 9th century, the Chinese scholar Twang Ching-Shih called them 'demon droppings'.

Be careful out in the woods, folks.



## Book Club 2: June 2026

### Mister Pip by Lloyd Jones

The story is set on the island of Bourganville in the North Solomon province of Papua New Guinea during a bloody civil war and is seen through the eyes of Matilda, a young teenager, whose life and homeland have been blighted by it.

Copper ore deposits were discovered on the island creating tension between immigrant workers (the so called 'red skins') and the local 'black' population and developed into a separatist guerilla war. Widespread human rights violations were reported on both sides. Lloyd Jones covered the war as a journalist and learned of the atrocities from a Papuan New Guinea soldier.

The village children listen to, and discuss Great Expectations with Mr Watts – the only white man left in the village and Matilda becomes fascinated with the character of Pip writing his name on the beach in shells. Much to the ire of her religious mother.

Several appearances by 'red skin' soldiers and a misunderstanding over the identity of Pip eventually leads to the destruction of the village and the horrific murders of several villagers including both Mr Watts and Matilda's mother. Matilda escapes during a flood and eventually reconnects with her absent father in Australia. After graduating she travels to New Zealand to learn more about her erstwhile teacher and then on to the UK to study.

She suffers with a severe bout of depression and eventually abandons her dissertation on Dickens to write her autobiography and then (unlike Pip) return to her birthplace.

The book was well received by the club members. They thought it to be a multi-layered evocation of survival. The story described the villagers' fortitude in the face of circumstances beyond their control and individual acts of kindness and bravery. The final chapters appeared a little rushed but did not detract from the whole.

The novel generated much discussion and was given 9/10.

## Art Appreciation

In **May** several members enjoyed a tour of the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight. The expertise, knowledge and enthusiasm of the guide added to the appreciation of the exhibits.

While many of the paintings in the gallery are well known, the depth of interpretation and understanding that can be gained from having a guide is to be highly recommended.

We are lucky to have such an internationally important art collection so close at hand.



The **June** meeting spent time looking at the work of some female artists. For so long it was assumed that male artists were those whose work deserved attention and that the work of women was mainly a pleasant hobby that produced decorative pieces. But a change in culture has forced a re-examination of the work of women artists from all ages and has shown the breadth and scope of women's achievements.

**Rose Hilton 1913 – 2019** A Cornish-based British painter whose artist husband Roger insisted that her domestic responsibilities came first. She worked in secret until shortly before his death in 1975 and then painted prolifically.



**Maggie Hambling b1945** Born in Suffolk, Maggie Hambling showed talent from an early age. She is a talented sculptor as well as a portrait artist. Her paintings of seascapes were the product of intense and lengthy study of the subject, lasting years.

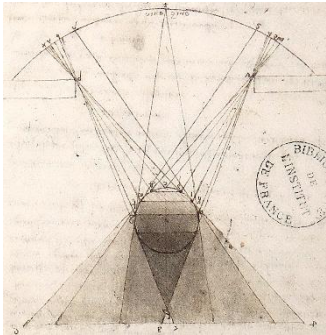
### Science Group

The topic this month was **DIAGRAMS** presented by Mary Burgess and Paul Bujac.

A diagram is a **visual and symbolic representation of information** and has been developed in human culture over centuries. The demands of trade powered the development of recording numbers and from these came the cuneiform script of Mesopotamia.

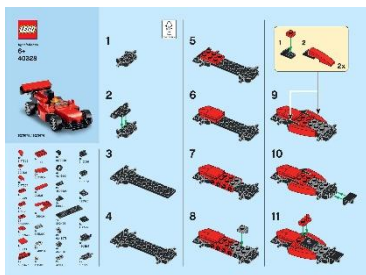
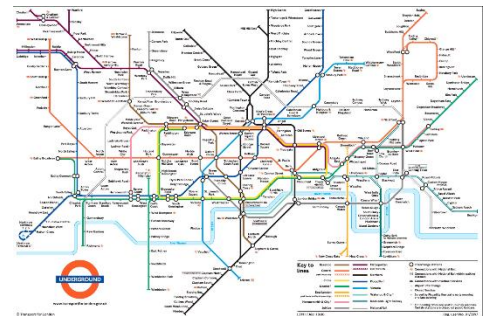


The Egyptians drew complex geometric diagrams to help construct the pyramids, ideas that were taken and developed by both Greeks and Arabs. The Christian Jesse Tree depicting the ancestry of Jesus developed into diagrammatic family trees that helped explained the complex relationships in powerful dynasties.



Da Vinci drew hundreds of diagrams to explain his engineering concepts, some of which could never be built at the time. Land maps, sea charts and astronomical maps helped the world to be opened to trade and conquest.

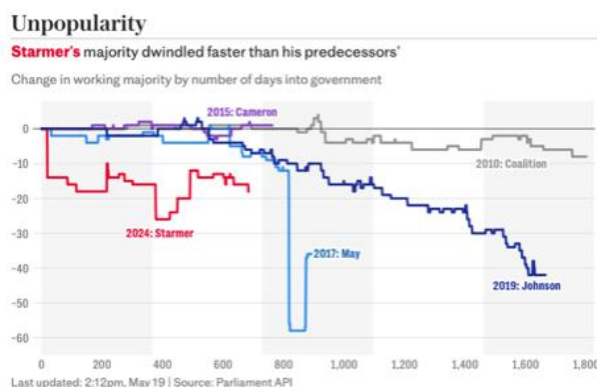
Perhaps the most well-known diagram in current use is the modern map. Ordnance Survey maps create a simplified illustration of the topography of the natural world, while the famous map of the London Underground achieves simplification by ignoring topography.



Line diagrams of engineering and technical processes have a long history in industry, though computer systems may be making them less common. The general public are much more familiar with architectural drawings and house plans. Even the language-free instruction diagrams for Lego can be understood by very young children.

The visual representation of data uses numerous methods to inform with bar charts, line graphs, pie-charts, Venn diagrams and scatter diagrams among some of the most common. Mind maps, and fault trees are a little more specialised.

Just as statistics can mislead, so can diagrams. The correct choice of time scales, colours, clear labelling and the comparison of related issues can be used to clarify or mislead, depending on the intended audience. Care should be taken when complex political issues are reduced to lines on a graph, though they can highlight areas of concern and conflict.



## Nature

The Nature group had an excellent visit in early June, courtesy of Mark and Karen who own the Barracks just outside Bunbury. The name reflects the history of the site as it is believed that Cromwell's troops stabled their cavalry horses here during the siege of Beeston Castle in the Civil War. Mark and Karen wanted to show us the changes they are making to their adjacent fields to bring them back to more traditional farming and to better support Nature. Modern farming practices are based on maximising yield, for example by opening up fields by removing hedges, using heavy machinery, growing monoculture crops, and using fertilisers and biocides. This approach destroys habitats, reduces diversity and damages the wildlife.

Mark and Karen have adopted several approaches. These include restoring hedges, planting hay meadows and pastures with different varieties of grasses and wildflowers to encourage insects and birds, and establishing tree plantations. It was interesting to learn that birds, particularly ground nesting birds, prefer open spaces where they can quickly detect predators. Trees planted within fields are good hiding places for those predators. Even after just a few years, these changes are bearing fruit as the wildlife is re-establishing. Nearly 100 species of birds, including Quail, have been seen.

After an introduction by Mark, we were taken on a guided tour. And weren't we lucky, we had arrived in heavy rain but as we started our walk, the sun came out and frightened off the rain. It was great to walk over the replanted meadows to discover different wild flowers, to meet some very friendly cattle, and, for some very lucky members, to see a Brown Hare. An educational and enjoyable morning

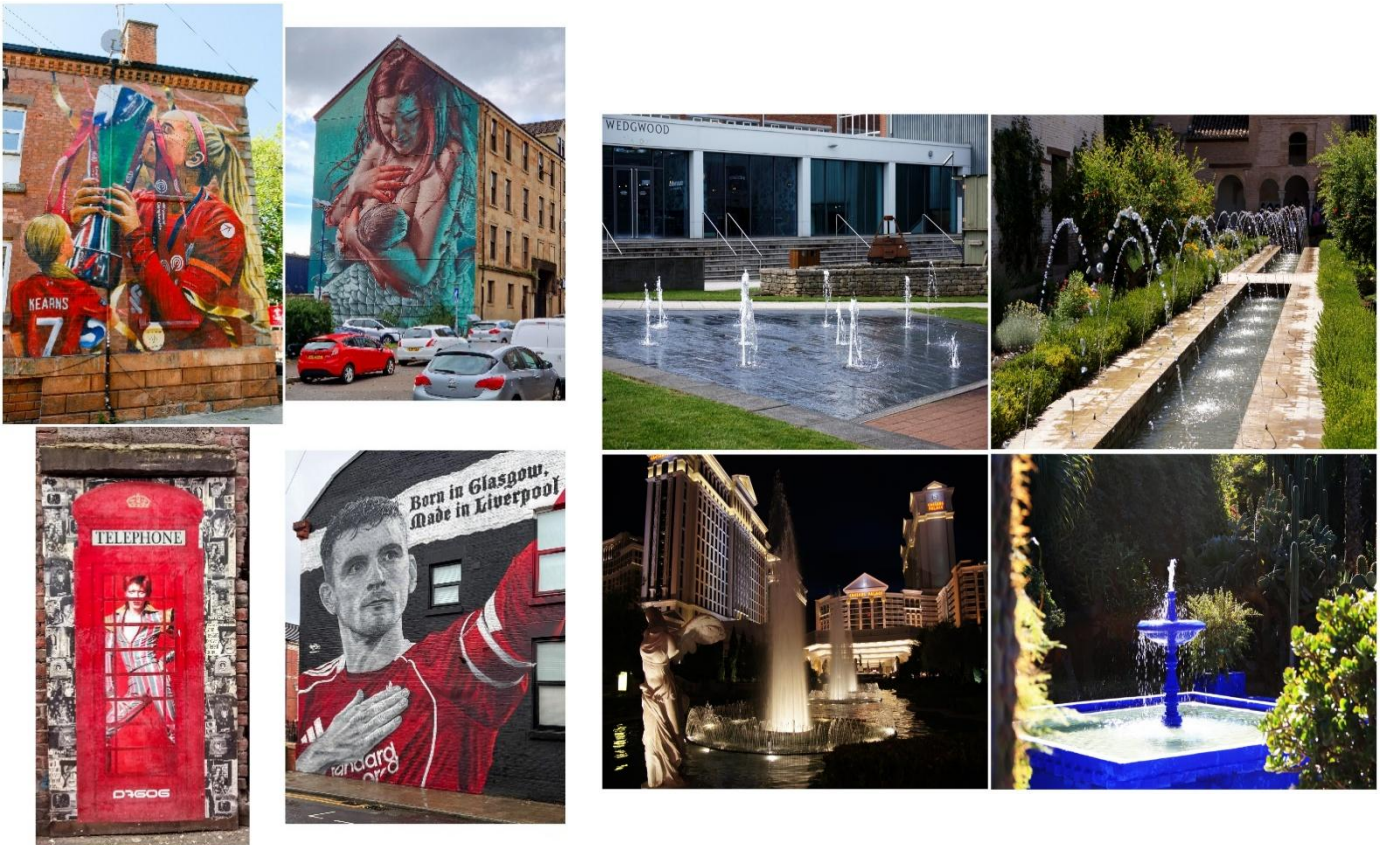


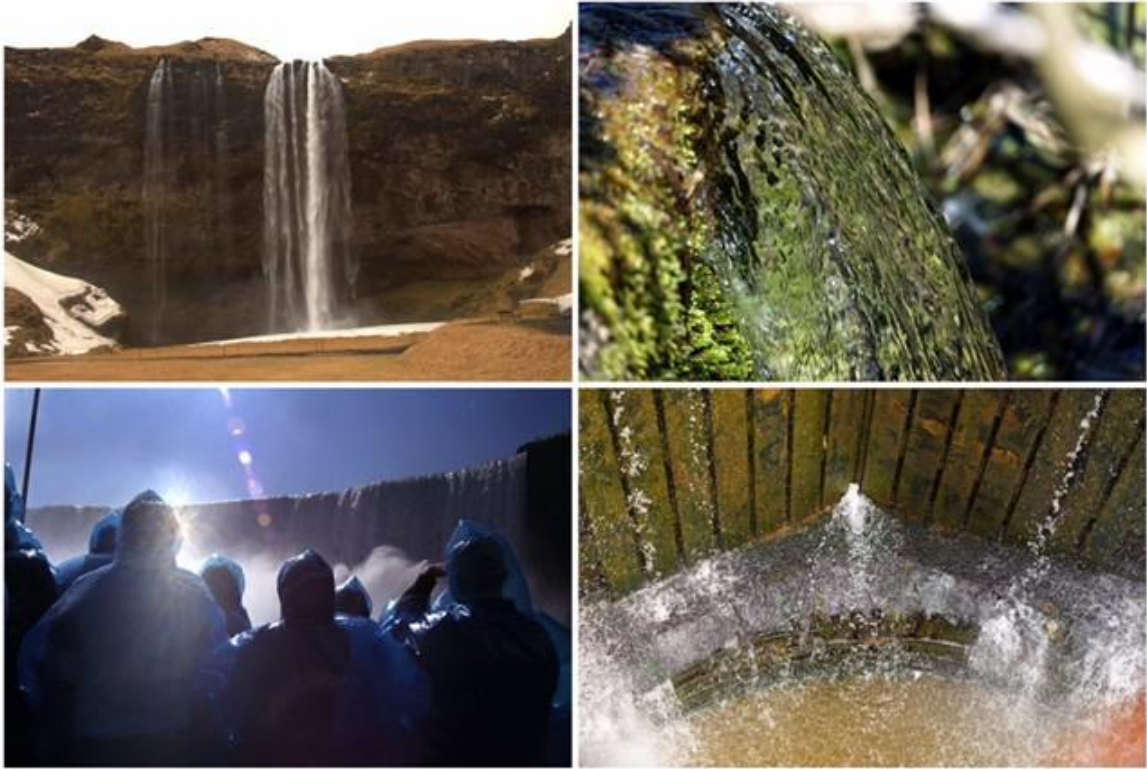
What a beautiful picture painted by Paul with the tiniest of help from AI!

### u3a Digital Photography

Photo class began with a look at the AI photo restoration capabilities of ON1 Photo Raw Max (other apps are available ) which, judging by the videos, seemed remarkably advanced. It could automatically remove dust, scratches, damage and creases from old photos, and even change sepia or black and white photographs into colour. The face restoration abilities were slightly less convincing, with any subtle facial expressions also removed. I would like to see it run on the Mona Lisa. We also looked at structural colour versus pigment colour which earned Gabriel Lippmann a Nobel prize (fans of science look it up).

The group theme this month was graffiti and murals. Whereas I specialised in the seedy back streets of Crewe, other members found beautiful artwork adorning buildings. Before you get too sniffy about unauthorised paint jobs on your pristine brickwork, what would you do if it turned out to be a Banksy? Exactly.





You will see that some of these are featuring water! There was a smallest problem last month which meant that the previous month's photographs were included instead of the water ones. They were just too good to leave out so here they are, and the water will hopefully help to make us all feel a little cooler!

### Visit to Port Sunlight

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, 29 members visited Port Sunlight on the Wirral. Port Sunlight was founded by William Lever, later Lord Lever and then Lord Leverhulme, in 1888. He wanted to build a beautiful and healthy place for the workers from his Soap Factory to live. He was always interested in Architecture and wanted to train as an Architect but his father insisted he went into the family firm. He employed 3 Architects and the village was built in the Art and Crafts style. Today it has over 900 listed buildings and is one the best preserved, still very much occupied, industrial villages. In addition to 3 and 4 bedroomed workers cottages, he built a Church, a men's recreation room, an open air swimming pool, a boating lake, an Art Gallery in memory of his wife, and laid out spacious gardens. Shops were provided, sadly no longer open, and spacious gardens and open spaces.

The trip included either a walking tour or a coach tour, both with a guide. We learnt many interesting facts about Port Sunlight from the very knowledgeable and pleasant guides. The gardens are beautiful and the overall impression is one of space, tranquillity and very attractive buildings. Following the tours the party split up and had free time. Many of us indulged in lunch in one of several cafes and eating places. We later met up in the Lady Lever Art Gallery, which has free entry, although donations are gratefully received.. The main paintings, sculptures and ceramics were collected by Lord Leverhulme on his frequent trips abroad. The collection is amazing and many of the exhibits were created by famous artists, sculptors and ceramic factories.

The weather was very kind to us, only about 3 raindrops in the morning before the sun came out. It was a very pleasant and informative day out before we returned by coach, driven by our very friendly and helpful coach driver, Gordon, to Kelsall and Tarporley.

Unfortunately, although our chair attended the trip he does not appear in the photograph as he was taking it.



## Tarporley Future Attractions

### Tarporley Film Nights

#### The Roses Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July

A satirical black comedy reimagining of The War of the Roses, following Ivy and Theo, a seemingly perfect couple whose marriage unravels when professional fortunes reverse, igniting a domestic cold war. Led by Olivia Colman and Benedict Cumberbatch's sharp chemistry, it blends biting humour with modern relationship commentary.

7pm for a 7.30pm start in Tarporley Community Centre.

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



## Tarporley Carnival – Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July – Tarporley Community Centre Field



Carnival 2026 is on Saturday 11th July on the field behind Tarporley Community Centre. Our theme is "Country and Western" and you won't be disappointed!

The afternoon kicks off at 12.30 when The Parade leaves Burton Square, down the High Street and into Eaton Rd. As in previous years, the High Street will be closed to vehicles from 11.30 until the Parade has ended. On the field we have all sorts of stalls, lots of food, and plenty to drink - beer, cider, prosecco, soft drinks, tea or coffee, just take your choice.

On stage there's a full programme of musical entertainment through the afternoon culminating with Andrea Pattison as Dolly Parton.

Wristbands go on sale at the end of June, just £5 each, under 16's get in free!

**Almost Finally**, some funny one liners sent in by Hektor and Toggs' Friend, Bill. I understand they had to chase him!

1. If at first, you don't succeed, then skydiving's not for you.
2. Wear short sleeves! Support the right to bare arms!
3. How come we never see the headline, "Psychic Wins Lottery"?
4. 42.7 per cent of all statistics are made up on the spot.
5. Atheism is a non-prophet organization.
6. Borrow money from a pessimist; they don't expect it back.
7. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
8. Don't drink and drive. You might hit a bump and spill your drink.
9. Nostalgia: How long's that been around?
10. Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.

**And very nearly finally - just a reminder that there is no monthly meeting or newsletter in August.**

Normal service will resume in September with the monthly meeting taking place on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September, when we welcome **Andrew Emmerson to talk on the History and Role of the Local Magistrate**. Andrew is a sitting Magistrate in Cheshire. His talk is sure to be interesting.

Please send me anything you would like to have included in the newsletter and if I can include it, I will.

**And now 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](mailto:Tarporleyu3a@outlook.com)**

**For contributions about your group's activities, please get in touch with the editor at [Angiegreen1961@sky.com](mailto:Angiegreen1961@sky.com)**

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

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