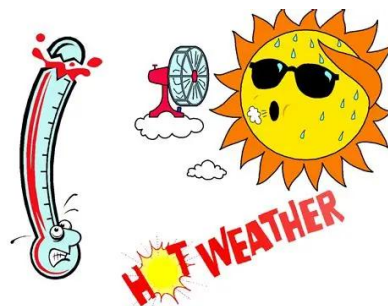


Hello Everyone. Once again this newsletter is being brought to you from France! It has been so hot here.

Too hot really but we have just had to put up with it and thank goodness for it. I hope everyone has had, and is still having a lovely summer. We have had rather a strange one. We are staying just outside St Eulalie en Born, on Lake Biscarrosse, 13 miles from Biscarrosse itself where one of the fires was, and when we first arrived we could smell the smoke. We had to make a detour round Bordeaux as the A63 was closed. The week before, people on the campsite were staying close to their mobiles/tents/caravans, with a bag packed in case they had to be evacuated. The town of Parentis en Born, 8 miles away was evacuated and people were asked not to go to it or pass through it, so as not to hinder the fire engines



Where we are staying, the lake has been closed since 13th July (as a result of blue green algae), so we haven't been able to swim in it at all since we arrived (or do any windsurfing or paddle boarding) and it is forbidden to walk in the forests between 2pm and 8pm!, because of the risk of fire. Also, for a few days the beach in Mimizan was closed because of Portuguese Men of War!



We have taken Hektor and Togg to the beach to the left of Mimizan as dogs are allowed there and they have loved it. Togg was however shocked when the tide came in. She had been happily running from sandbank to sandbank when suddenly they disappeared and there was a great expanse of water! She really stayed to the side of it, and wouldn't go very far in.





We were in a good place for the eclipse. I have attached some photos although they do not really do it justice. We watched it from the beach. We took Hektor and Togg but had to take them home as they really wanted to go into the lake but they couldn't. I have explained to them a million times why, but they still don't understand. It is difficult for them, usually they can go in every day and Togg swims for an hour and only comes out when I drag her out!



It was lovely and peaceful on the beach. People had taken picnics and wine and were just sitting calmly and relaxed, waiting. Everyone that is except Hektor and Togg, who were straining to get into the water the whole time they were there. They had no interest what so ever in the eclipse, even though I told them that there would not be another for years!



We were very lucky too. We went into town, Parentis. on Wednesday afternoon to buy the glasses to watch the eclipse, but every shop had sold out. We didn't even have to ask! There were notices on every shop window and door. So having read the BBC webpage I took a colander and paper down to the beach and a couple who had two pairs of glasses saw me with the colander, took pity on us, gave us a pair for the eclipse. They really made a difference

MONTHLY MEETING

TARPORLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Thursday 24 September 2026

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

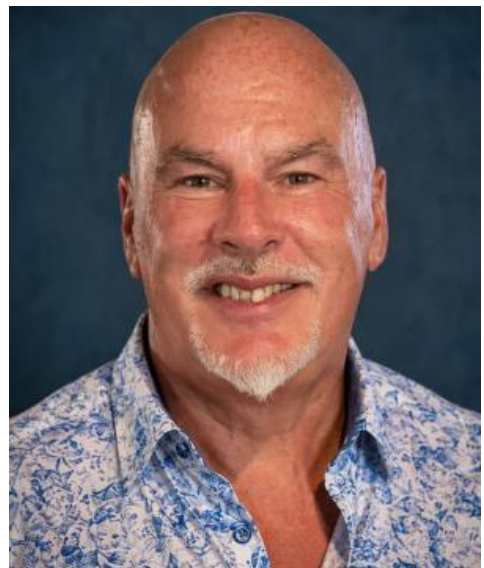
The meeting begins about **10.15 am** with announcements.

The talk starts at **10.30 am**.

Andrew Emmerson

The History and Role of the Local Magistrates Service

Andrew is a sitting magistrate in Cheshire. He talks about the work of a magistrate and what really occurs in the courts every day, with details of the history of the role and how the criminal justice system works and the lessons he has learned from his years as a Justice of the Peace. Andrew's objective is that by the end of his presentation we have a better understanding of the role of our Local Magistrates and have confidence in the fairness of the administration of justice.



Committee News

There was no committee meeting in August but membership was discussed so I have reproduced what Gwyn has prepared, and included it here, so you can read it before you get too tired!

Tarporley and District u3a Membership Renewal

Your membership for 2025-6 ends on 31 August, 2026. If you have not yet renewed your membership but wish to retain it, please do so as soon as possible as we have nearly 600 to process!

How to renew:

BACS (online banking): pay £12 per head to *Tarporley & District U3A*, sort code 55-61-31 (*National Westminster*), account 70575843. Please use a reference comprising your postcode and your membership number(s) -one of which you will find above- so we know who has paid. As an example, use the form of AA99ZZ123, or, if paying for a couple, AA99ZZ123124. If you have used BACS before to pay us, you may find your bank already has our details stored on your account.

Cheque: Send a cheque for £12 per head to our Treasurer, Simon Dunning, at Wood Cottage, Burton Lane, Duddon, Tarporley CW6 0EP. Please make the cheque out to *Tarporley & District U3A* and put your name(s) and membership number(s) (see above) on the back of the cheque.

Cash or card: If you are unable to pay by one of the above methods, payment in cash, cheque or card can be made at the September monthly meeting.

Thanks! Gwyn Jones, Membership Secretary

There was also some discussion about conveners and what the role involves. Some people are afraid to step up as they think that there is a lot of work involved but really there isn't and Pat Tyson-Jones has written this piece below so people can understand exactly what is involved.

The role of a Group Convenor

u3a groups, countrywide, report that they have difficulty in getting members to volunteer to be Group Convenors. Tarporley & District u3a are no exception. Currently, with a membership of almost 600 we have 33 Convenors plus some Co- Convenors. Some members are Convenors for more than one Interest Group. I am also very aware that some people, who are not Convenors, help out with Monthly meetings, trips and by serving on the Committee, in equally vital roles.

Interest Groups are the lifeblood of the u3a movement. Continued learning, trying new things, sharing knowledge and keeping physically and mentally fit, when in retirement, is the whole purpose of the movement. It doesn't need me to stress how vital these are to each and every individual. We urgently need new groups; a number of groups are full and new members often find they have to go on a waiting list.

I think that, very often the role of a Convenor is misunderstood. Convenors are not experts or teachers, they are enablers with an interest, who undertake to organise the group and keep the members informed of the next group meeting. All groups are expected to be self-help groups, sharing knowledge and opinions. The Book Groups are a good example, where each member, in turn, chooses a book to recommend to the group and leads the discussion at the next meeting. Likewise the walking groups where members offer to recce and lead walks. How the group functions should be up to the members. Being an enabler is not onerous or particularly time consuming. For example, if the group uses Tarporley Community Centre, the rooms are booked by the room secretary, currently Peter Schofield. The Convenor only need to let Peter know when a particular room is required. New Convenors are given as much help as they need, such as

being taught how to use the Beacon communication system, to find an appropriate venue and help with safety issues.

On a positive note I can let you know that a Gardening group and a third Book group (the current two are full) are being planned. I would add that the proposed Convenors are already Convenors for other groups!

I am reaching out to all members. Do you have an interest that you would like to share with other members? New members often suggest an interest that, currently, we do not cater for. The sky is the limit, how about an astronomy group, a creative writing group, a new sport or anything else!

Please contact the Secretary if you can offer to start a group

Pat (Tyson-Jones)

Interest Groups Co-ordinator.

Midway Walkers (1)

Parkgate was the port of choice for sailing to Ireland in the 18th century, and perhaps onwards to America, before the Port of Liverpool rose to global importance. If you were to set sail now, you would have to walk for a few miles over the estuary to find a place where your boat could float. It was from here we set off in glorious sunshine to walk along the King Charles III England Coast Path towards Thurstaston, initially passing Heswall Golf Club. As it became hotter, we cut our losses at the sewage works and headed for the Yøt Café for refreshments. We could have sat there under big umbrellas all day, but this being a proper walk, we headed back along the disused Wirral Way railway line to Parkgate city centre. From there we strolled along the quayside to the newly refurbished Boathouse where we quenched our thirst on the glass-surrounded upstairs roof terrace, looking out over the green Sargasso sea of the Dee estuary. The tide was out and the grass was in. A bead of ice-cold condensation rolled down my pint glass of Shandy and into the perspiration on my hand. A perfect end to a 7 mile walk.



Midway Walkers (2)

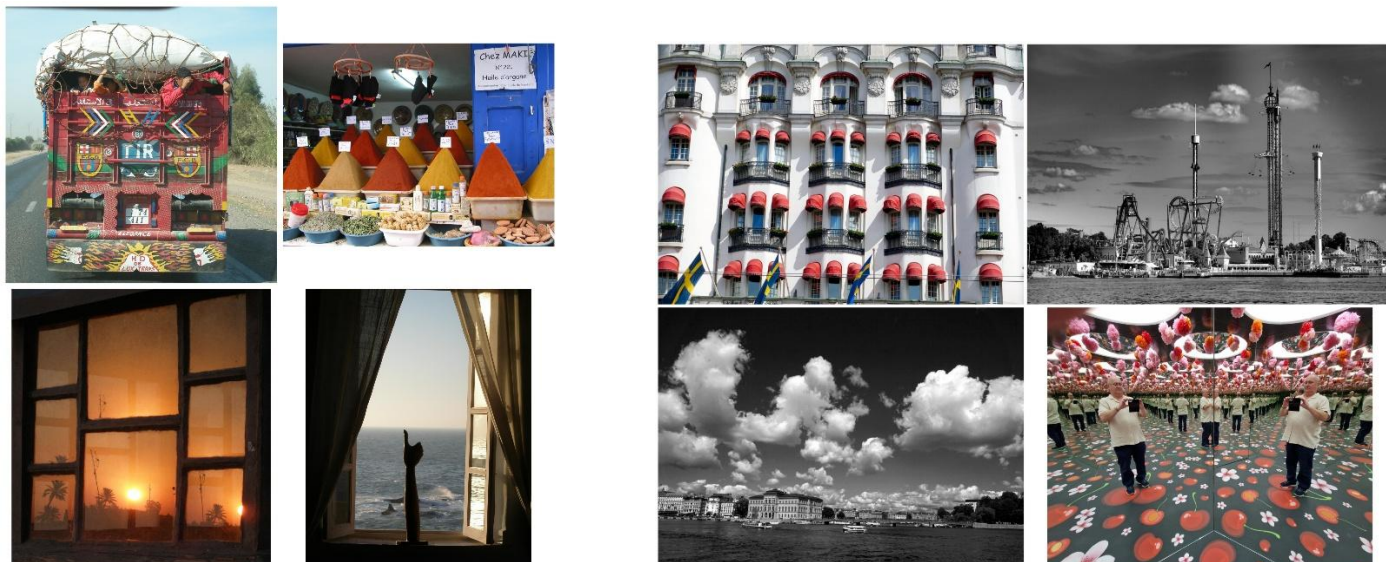
The official heatwave dooming our trip to the Great Orme in Llandudno, with the nearby wildfire adding to the excitement, we headed to the cooler, dappled woodland of Little Budworth. Well attended by 12 heat-resistant Midwayers, we circled the northern boundaries of the country park and Budworth Pool, before seeking emergency refreshments in the Red Lion. Our dynamic walking speed ensured we arrived at the pub as the doors opened.



u3a Digital Photography

Photo class began with the art of time-lapse photography. A small digital camera, about the size of a pocket watch, was used to capture clouds blowing in from the west over Cheshire. AI was then used to convert the still frames into a movie. Many modern cameras have built-in intervalometers to allow you to shoot time-lapse movies directly. We then looked at the photographs of the Hungarian–French photographer Brassai who captured dramatic black and white pictures of Paris, for instance 'Paris by Night' in 1933. It was amazing how foggy the air in Paris was back then, with all the coal fires. But it made photography a dream, turning street lights into ethereal glows. Swings and roundabouts.

The group theme was 'Summer holidays' with some discussion on what changes a 'holiday snap' into fine art. We had photographs from around the world, with the best being strongly evocative of a holiday mood or style. Just a simple sunset taken from a holiday balcony can be worthy of a framed print.



New Interest Groups

Calling all gardeners!



Through conversation it has come to our notice that there are a lot of members who have an interest in gardening. We would, therefore, like to start a Gardening Interest Group. I have volunteered to be the Convenor for the group, to be ably assisted by Jan Linsell and Paul Bujac.

From the start I need to stress that none of us are experts, we will not be teaching gardening. The group needs to be a self help group where all members will contribute to whatever topic we are discussing. We do have some ideas for possible subjects. Occasionally we could get an expert to give us a talk on a particular gardening topic or visit gardens, particularly those open for charities. In the first instance I would like everyone who could be interested in joining to contact me by email. Following the publication of this article I will contact all members via Beacon and, if you are interested, please reply. Once I have been assured that there are enough members interested I will call a meeting in September. We will need to



decide when the group will meet and an appropriate venue. Initially we are planning a monthly meeting.

Best wishes Pat (Tyson-Jones)

Classic Books Group

We already have two thriving book clubs in our u3a, but I am proposing to be the convenor of a third: Classic Books. Why? Because the existing clubs are full, and more members would like to join. Further, there are only two men that I know of in these clubs, and there may be more out there with broad interests. I'm calling it 'Classic' because that will be our theme -Classics: Past, Present and Future. Think Jane Austen, Dickens, Graham Green, Daphne du Maurier, Joseph Heller, John le Carré, Hilary Mantell and also ...who exactly?- You choose!

We will be meeting on the first Friday of the month, starting on October 2. Membership has to be limited to 10. If this of this is of interest, please let me know by either messaging our Group Coordinator via Classic Book Group or, failing that, you can email me at gwynandpat@gmail.com with 'Classic Books' in your subject line.

Gwyn Jones



National and Regional u3a events

Just a reminder that, in addition to our own busy schedule of events, there is a host of activities organised by the North West region and the national u3a which might be of interest to you. Click on the links below to find out details. These links are also shown on the main Welcome page of our website.

You can find out more at the [Third Age Trust](#) and the [North West Region](#) site. There is a [Friends Extra](#) benefits site, [radio podcast](#) and a [trips](#) site.

Your u3a Friend's Newsletter

Each month, the Third Age Trust, who run the u3a, publish a newsletter illustrating many notable u3a activities throughout the country. To read September's edition, please click on [u3a Friends' Newsletter](#)

And Almost Finally Hektor and Togg have sent me some jokes to include in the newsletter, they hope you like them

Where so sheep go for their summer holiday? The Baa-hamas

Where do cows go for summer ? Moo York

What kind of sandals do frogs wear? Open-toad sandals

Why don't fish go on vacation? Because they are always on holiday

What do you call a snowman in July? A puddle

Why do bananas wear sunscreen on the beach ? Because they peel

What does the sun drink out of? Sunglasses

Why did the sun go to school? To get a little brighter

How do snails stay in touch over the summer? They use a shell phone

Why don't crabs ever give to charity? Because they're shellfish

What did the ocean say to the beach? Nothing it just waved

And almost almost finally! It is now less than three months until Christmas! Hektor and Togg specifically asked me to include this as they are starting to get quite excited about it and thought most of you would be too!

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

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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