



Flintshire u3a Newsletter



Fu3a Committee

At the AGM Julie Harvey was elected to the post of Chair and Cath Thomas joined the Committee. Stepping down were Jude Jones, Jon Payne and Peter Mather. Just after the AGM Enid Bibby resigned her post as Groups Liaison.

The new committee from L to R comprises Ian Nicholl, Kerry Feather, Barbara Thomas, Mike Whiteaker, Julie Harvey, Karen Green, Cath Thomas, Joan Maw and Lynne Ingman.



April Open Meeting

Following the AGM a presentation was made by Neville Owens and Hugh Jacks of Blood Bikes Wales. Blood Bikes is a charity providing a completely free courier service to the NHS. Volunteers deliver blood samples, plasma, donated human breast milk, documents and other items all over Wales. The service is funded solely from donations. It operates mainly from 7pm on Friday evening until midnight on Monday morning including bank holidays and even Christmas Day! On June 2nd 2021 Blood Bikes Wales was one of the winners of the Queens Award for Voluntary Services, with special recognition for their work during the COVID19 pandemic! There are two main roles a member can fulfill - a controller or a rider. One contact number is available to NHS Wales to use and these calls will be redirected to whichever controller is on duty. The controller contacts the duty rider in the area and provides the relevant information. Organising a relay of riders is not uncommon as items have to be transported across Blood Bikes regions, for example, samples have been taken from Bodelwyddan Hospital to Great Ormond Street. Riders will normally only

transport items within their designated area. The rider picks up the package and delivers it to the delivery point while keeping in regular contact with the controller. Riders are assessed every three years and receive training on how to handle and store the items they handle in a safe manner. A motor bike was available for Fu3a members to view and sit on. A number of attendees took advantage of this photo opportunity, including your editor. All the bikes have names including a promotional mini bike 'Buster', kitted out just like the real thing. Buster was also brought along. This bike is used to attract children to the Blood Bikes stand when attending fetes and shows. **Martin.**

Social History 2



Well, a year has gone by since we set up Social History 2. With the ongoing success of Social History 1 it was a daunting task to set up a group to accommodate their waiting list and provide as good an experience for our members through our chosen speakers. But we're here, thanks to the support of all our members, especially our volunteer helpers including the Refreshments Crew, the Chairs and Tables Logistics Crew and, of course, the Team - Sue J, Diana, Paul and myself for keeping the show on the road since May '25. We've had talks ranging from '50's Music' to 'Lady Augusta Mostyn', 'A Night in the Snow', very appropriate for our January meeting!, to 'The Welsh in Patagonia' and talks on Flintshire, its places and how

they've changed plus where to visit to soak up some of the county's history. Sue Jones has worked hard securing this range of speakers and their subjects and we look forward to hearing about 'Local Heroes' in July, More about North Wales in September and 'A Musical History of the Music Hall' in October. We do have places so if you're interested in Social History and want to join us we will be at New Brighton Community Centre 10-12 every second Thursday of the month (except August and December). Jackie Martin is the speaker on 9th July, 'Local Heroes - The Lady With The Lamp'. See you there. **Sue Evans.**

Editorial Team: Martin Hampstead and Jo Shone. The newsletter can be viewed on the Fu3a web site and copies will be available at the Open Meetings. Submit articles to newsmem@flintshire-u3a.co.uk by August 1st for inclusion in the September newsletter. The QR code has been added to the top right hand corner to enable members to access our website faster and easier.

Chair's Report

Dear Members,

Since becoming Chair less than two months ago life has been a whirlwind! I have had great support from committee members through meetings for example, with copious amounts of coffee and the odd piece of cake being an important part of those! I have also had much encouragement from Fu3a members and some lovely emails and messages, all gratefully received. Thank you. Since the AGM on the 16th of April there have been 21 new members joining Fu3a and I met many of those and other new members at the recent New Members' Meeting. It was organised by the Events Team and was a very enjoyable afternoon. I look forward to the next one. We now have over 63 groups with lots on offer to our members. We hope, with your enthusiasm and support, to incorporate more as this year progresses. Please come forward with any ideas you have. I am slowly visiting as many groups as I can to meet you all and thank the Group Coordinators for the welcome I have received at each one. Our website, Flintshire.u3asite.uk is a mine of information on groups, events and more, with no password needed to access the site. It is very easy to use but please don't hesitate to ask for any guidance you want from any member of the committee. We will be happy to help. Our priorities as a committee this year are to seek and encourage new members to join Fu3a and to continue to support both new and existing groups and the volunteers who run them. In addition, the Events Team has a varied programme organised for the rest of this year with planning already in progress for 2027. Lesley, our Outings Organiser is as busy as ever with planning the very popular trips and days out for this year and the next. Lots to look forward to. With all good wishes. **Julie, Chair Fu3a.**

Vacancies

Dear Members,

Fu3a is a charity and, as you know, we rely solely on volunteers to run it, covering everything from the Groups, Outings, Special Events to being on the Committee. The system works very well and without members coming forward to volunteer there would be no Flintshire u3a. We currently have vacancies for the following Trustees on the Committee and need your help filling them. We need:

Admin Support - someone willing to take the minutes at committee meetings, type them up and upload to our website, along with other light admin duties. This role is not reliant on being a committee member.

Treasurer - our present Treasurer, Kerry Feather, is sadly leaving us at the end of October. There will be an opportunity to shadow Kerry if someone comes forward before she leaves. Anyone with some experience in this field and who would be willing to take on the role please contact Julie Harvey, Chair, chair@flintshire-u3a.co.uk in the first instance.

I look forward to hearing from anyone who feels that they would be willing to join a very strong, friendly and committed team. Thank you. **Julie, Chair Fu3a.**

Capture The Moment



In these wonderful times of affordable, hand-held technology, it's never been easier for any of us to capture the magic of the moment! Well known to local audiences at his popular "face-to-camera" video talks, u3a member John Butler (JB) always has an ear (and an eye!) ready to record something of the remarkable events and people of everyday North Wales. Much of JB's local-heritage film work is now available for viewing via the National Archives at Aberystwyth, <https://www.peoplescollection.wales/users/2757>

Here's such a moment from the very successful May New-members Afternoon, held at Ewloe Social Club. In a room crackling with chatter, with only a little prompting, our talented member, Ron Plummer (pictured) delivered a one-off poetic gem to JB's, always ready, iPhone!

The poem goes:
Owls only mate in the springtime
This I know to be true
Owls never mate in the winter
Because it's too wet to woo.

Ron's cheerful u3a optimism is typical of the "learn, laugh, live" spirit that underpins our wonderful organisation. This clip from that day from his sparkling repertoire of home-brewed rhymes is sure to hit the spot! Watch it here <https://youtu.be/NA0Y5Y333Tl>

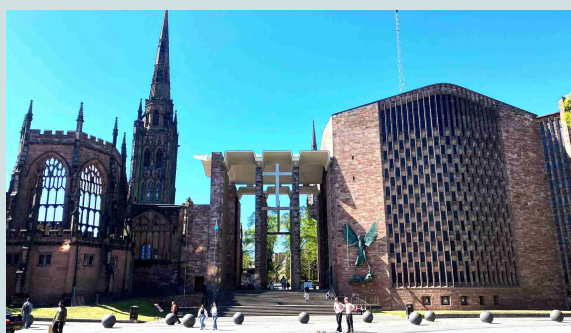
Are you interested in creating a 'life-memory'? Where to start? How to record someone's living-history? What questions to ask? If YOU think this fascinating topic would make a worthy subject for a new u3a group? JB would love to help ...call 07840 884 000.

Dry Kurling Group



The u3a's National Chair, Allan Walmsley, visited the N Wales Network in April and called in to Flintshire's Dry Kurling Group. He was given a warm welcome by the Group Coordinators Jane and Ray Moore and the other members of the group. He was encouraged to have a go along with me, the Network Chair, Karen Green the Chair of Network Link and Julie Harvey Fu3a Chair. He was quite good at it too! Allan said he felt that it was an ideal activity for u3a members and hoped it might take off across the UK. **Hilary Jones, Chair North Wales Network.**

Coach Trip To Coventry



Thanks to Social History 1 members Pat and Dave Kenyon who submitted these photos taken on the Group coach outing to Coventry. They visited the cathedrals and had time to explore further afield.



Holywell History Fair



This photo was taken on Sunday 12th April at the Holywell History Fair held in the local leisure centre. We had a table to promote Fu3a. Old newsletters, with the website address on, were given out for people to find us. Surprisingly a good number of people have not heard of u3a. The Fair is a significant event that celebrates the history of Holywell. The event invites local history groups to participate. Attendees can also engage at an 'Ask an Expert' table, where they can bring in old photographs, or archaeological finds and discuss family mysteries, to receive guidance from knowledgeable experts. This event aims to provide a platform for sharing and learning about local history, family research, and archaeological finds. If you would like to attend, put a note in your diary to check out the next event in 2027. **Joan Maw.**

Diary

Date	Event	Venue
Sat 11 th July 7-10pm	Musical Evening with violinist Philip Chidell. This event is only accessible with a pre-booked and paid for ticket. Tickets are £5 pp.	ESCC

Crafts

When : Fourth Tuesday of the month. 10-12.
Location : St David's Church Hall, Mold.
Coordinators: Elspeth Parry

If you'd love to have a try at a whole range of crafty things then come along and join us! We've had a go at beading, flower-arranging, fabric box-making, canal folk art and blackwork, to name but a few, and have many more new ideas over the coming year. Everyone is welcome, whether a beginner or a skilled crafter.

New Group - Cribbage

When : Fourth Friday of each month. 2-4pm.

Location : Group Coordinators home, Buckley.

Cribbage boards and cards available. Cribbage is a game for 2-4 people, two playing as individuals or four playing in pairs. Interested members should contact Joan Maw or Cath Thomas, email groups@flintshire-u3a.co.uk

Social History 1

The April talk on 'Chester Uncovered' was given by Steven Shakeshaft who is a Chester green badge guide. Steven gave a slideshow of items of interest in the city which even a lot of the residents might miss or may not know the history and also interesting facts that are associated with them. Examples:

- Most of Bridge Street bordered the Roman bathhouse and in the basement of the Bridge Street Cafe can be seen part of the Roman hypocaust. Above the hypocaust are the remains of the mosaic that covered the floor of the baths. 5000 soldiers garrisoned Deva so the Roman buildings tend to be substantial covering a wide area under those we see today.
- The Roman amphitheatre is the largest in the UK. A large part of it is hidden under later buildings that need to be demolished to enable it to be seen in its entirety.
- Old Leche House, which is now an antique shop, has an early 17th century fireplace and scratched into the first floor front window with a diamond ring are the words 'Charming Miss Oldfield 1736'
- The Victorians pinned a coffin to the ruined wall of St John's Church bearing an inscription which means 'Dust To Dust'.
- God's Providence House in Watergate Street is famous for its inscription on the front reading : 'God's providence is mine inheritance'. It is thought this was the only house in Chester to escape the Black Death.
- Thirty horse drawn coaches a day left Chester. King Street was the home of many of the stables which housed the horses used by the coaches. Coaches to London took four days to cover the 198 miles.
- At the time of its completion in 1833, the Grosvenor Bridge was the longest single-span stone arch bridge in the world, a title it held for 30 years. Its design featured a single arch that is 60 feet high and 200 feet wide.



Brian and Steven

Future Talks

Date	Speaker	Subject
July 6th	Celia Drew {member}	The John Summer's Family
August 3rd	Mike Royden	The Siege of Chester
September 7th	Mark Chalinor	The Airbus A380 Story

Outing - Exploring Cheshire's Industrial Heritage

The theme of May's outing was Silk 'n Salt, comprising a morning visit to the Macclesfield Silk Museum followed by an afternoon at The Lion Salt Works.

The charming small town of Macclesfield was shaped by silk. The town had a silk button industry from the middle of the 17th century and became a major silk manufacturing centre from the mid 18th century. The industry developed when the button manufacturer realised there was a sufficient number of wealthy gentlemen in the area to provide a market for fine silk clothing. The interesting museum, housed in the former Art School, tells the story of this and other aspects of life in the town and has a fine collection of the manufacturing machinery. We were also able to see volunteer conservators at work, preserving and cataloguing the hundreds of silk samples which had been left when the Silk Mill closed. The original mill, named Paradise, is just next door and a few members went on the additional more specialised guided tour.

A pleasant 50 minute journey then took us to the Lion Salt Works. This is the last remaining open pan salt works in the U.K. It operated from 1894 before closing its doors in 1986 and is named Lion as it was near the site of the Red Lion Hotel. In the 1950's, 90% of the salt produced was exported to West Africa as the type of salt withstood the high temperatures and very high humidity levels of those areas. During the 20th century, more efficient methods of extracting and refining salt were developed, markets began to decline and the works closed its doors in 1986. The site became dilapidated before receiving a series of grants which have enabled a dedicated team to restore it to what is now a very well presented visitor attraction.

Future Outings in 2026 are:

- 14th July Lytham Hall
- 3rd September Little Moreton Hall and Biddulph Grange
- 28th Sept - 1st Oct Three night break to Cardiff (Organised in conjunction with Arvonja Travel)
- 27th November Festive Outing to Harewood House (Organised in conjunction with Arvonja Travel) **

Booking for outings opens when an email notification goes out to all members, around 6 weeks before the date. No names are taken in advance of this. ** Booking for the Festive Outing will open in September and will be direct with Arvonja Travel. A notice with all the details will be sent out a few days beforehand. **Lesley Roberts.**