u3a WREXHAM WRECSAM

Learn, laugh, live.

Dysgu, chwerthin, byw.

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WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome everyone to our Summer Newsletter and this year, so far, it really has felt like summer. On the down side though it may also have been a tad bit too hot for some of us who aren't sun seekers.

We are grateful to all who have submitted items for this newsletter, after a little persuasion from the chair, but also welcome further items from our members. Our Group Leaders work really hard to keep their groups running successfully and do not always have time to make contributions so it was good to have those from different sources.

Just a reminder that there is no monthly meeting in August so why not come along to our Annual August Treasure Hunt and support our members – Ken and Alison and Alan and Wendy – who have worked really hard to put this show on the road. Once again it is based around Wrexham and I'm assured that it's not taxing and interesting. Full details can be found in this Newsletter.

I'm sure that those of you who attended our Afternoon Tea Dance to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our u3a would like to thank the Committee Members (and others) who have worked so hard to ensure that this event was such a success. These events don't just happen so I would like to add my thanks to Linda Wilson and her team for giving up their time so freely as, without which, there would have been no event.

I would also like to thank Anne Hughes, our membership secretary, and her back room staff for all their time and efforts to ensure that you, our members, were able to battle through our membership renewals for the first time using our new web system. I am sure that many lessons have been learnt and next time it will be plain sailing especially with the purchase of the card reader making the process run more smoothly. Your Committee members do not always receive the credit they deserve but please believe me there is a lot of important work quietly being carried out behind the scenes to ensure the successful continuation of our Wrexham u3a.

Have a great summer and enjoy our latest Newsletter.

Best Wishes

Lynn Jones, Chair

NEWSLETTER ITEMS

If anyone has any contributions for the Autumn Newsletter these will need to be with Anne by 15 September 2026.

ANNUAL TREASURE HUNT

Follow the clues, solve the riddles and explore Wrexham to find the TREASURE

This anticipated annual event is open to teams of 2 to 4 players, who will set off from the Wellbeing Hub at 5 minute intervals equipped with a set of clues to solve. There will be an opportunity for refreshments at the end of the Hunt and prizes will be given out.

Booking: Required before the closing date of Wednesday 12th August .

Please add your name to—2026 Treasure Hunt in Beacon groups.

Alternatively send an email to the group leader.

Cost £5 each person.

Payment is required in advance by:
Debit/Credit Card: at the July Main Meeting
Cheque: at the July Main Meeting (cash will not be accepted)

Bank Transfer: Sort code: 20-25-69 Acc No: 43648257 (please reference with your name)

GROUP OF THE MONTH

LOCAL HISTORY

At Local History Group, we meet on the 1st Monday of the month 9.45 for 10 am at St Margaret's Church Hall. There is lots of space, so do come and join us.

We had a talk in February from John Roberts on "So You Think You Know North Wales". He showed us photos with fascinating facts about hidden churches, buildings and beautiful scenery, most of which many of us had never heard of, but have decided to visit.

March's talk was on Thomas Telford, From Humble Beginnings to one of the Greatest Engineers" by Graham Greasley, where he explained all of Telford's achievements.

April and May were both Bank Holidays, so no talks.

In June Graham Edwards told us of "The Friendly Relationship between the Welsh and Patagonians" where he described how and why the Welsh emigrated there and all about the problems in creating the settlement.

<u>Future talks include</u>

Erddig's Three Victorian Ladies by Jill Burton

Cheshire's Forgotten Salt Makers by Anthony Annekin-Smith

Acton Park The Rise and Fall of an Urban Estate by Alister Williams

The Squatter Settlement of Newtown Mountain by Victor Tyler Jones

REGISTERING ON OUR NEW WEBSITE

We hope you have been able to browse our new Webpage which you can access by searching for Wrexham u3a on your usual search engine eg Google. Once you have done this we have asked you to register yourselves on our Beacon portal. We thank those of you who have already done so but may I please remind you to now log in and check your personal information and remember to fill in your 'emergency contact'.

If you still have not registered, we encourage you to please do so, as this will enable you to:

- Check or change your details
- Apply to join groups through Beacon (not just the website)
- View a calendar of meetings and events especially those produced by Group Leaders, and
- Renew your membership on line in future years which we would like you to do if you possibly can.

If you are still having issues, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Webteam who are ready to give whatever help is needed.

2026 MONTHLY TALKS AT THE MEMORIAL HALL

July 21st — Louise Pickford — North East Wales Search & Rescue
A talk on the work of the North East Wales Search & Rescue service.

August 18th — Treasure Hunt elsewheve

September 15th - TBC

October 20th - Simon McLeave
Simon will talk on his books "The Snowden Murders".

November 17th - Jonathan Gammond - Wrexham Museum
Jonathan will talk on the history of the building of the Wrexham Museum. In the 1960s/70s it was a Police Station.

December 15th - Christmas Dinner
Details to follow.

UPCOMING DAY TRIPS

1st August 2026
Port Sunlight, Wirral and Liverpool
Pick up - Capel y Groes @ 9.30 am

12th September 2026
Ludlow Food Festival
Pick up - Capel y Groes @ 9.30 am

BOOK CORNER

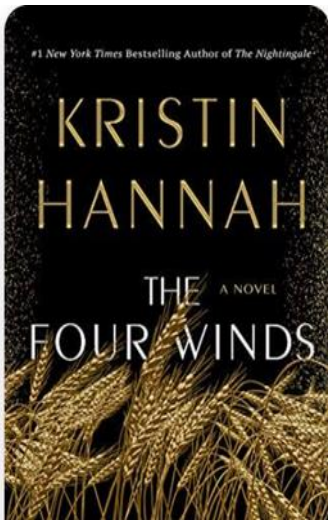


Welcome to our new **Book Corner**!

With four Reading Groups and two Book Chat groups meeting regularly, we thought it would be enjoyable to share some of their favourite reads with everyone. Each newsletter will feature recommendations from one or more of our groups, giving you inspiration for your next book. By happy coincidence, both of this quarter's recommendations are by bestselling author **Kristin Hannah**.

Reading Group 3's Book Recommendation

'The Four Winds' by Kristin Hannah



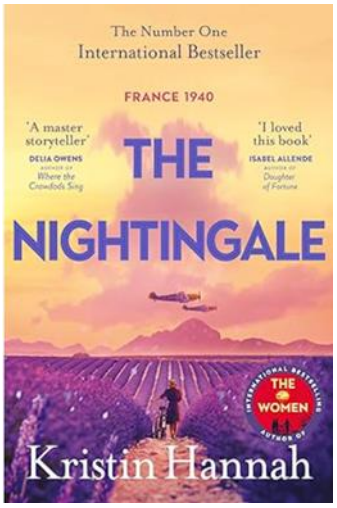
An incredible journey of survival, hope and the strength and resilience of women, set in the American Depression of the 1930's and the Dust Bowl, as they make the decision to leave the land they love and move west in search of a better life.

It is a powerful story that engages right from the start and is based on the reality of what it was really like to try to survive on the Texan farms during that time and how moving to California was not the escape that had been promised but a land of ditch camps in fields, extreme poverty and owners who didn't look after their workers. The depiction of female friendships and the unbreakable bond between mother and daughter is both heartbreaking and inspiring.

Our Reading group gave this book a score of 9 out of 10.

Book Chat 2's Book Recommendation

'The Nightingale' by Kristin Hannah



Set in occupied France during the Second World War, *The Nightingale* tells the unforgettable story of two sisters, one of whom embarks on dangerous paths towards survival, love and freedom. It is a beautiful story that celebrates the resilience and endurance of ordinary women in extraordinary circumstances.

I have read numerous novels by Kristin Hannah and she never disappoints. She has a wonderful ability to immerse the reader in her stories. Her writing transports you inside the events to becoming an 'on-looker' as the story unfolds.

This international bestseller is a book that stays with you long after the final page and is soon being made into a film.

I would definitely recommend this book as it is a compelling read.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Lynn Jones, Chair of Wrexham u3a.

As Chairperson tell us a little about your early life and your working life?

I was born in Chesterfield and have an older brother and sister. I passed the 11+ and after 'A' levels, left to train to be a Business Studies teacher and, later, a degree at Cartrefle College. I met my Wrexham born husband, settled here and have one daughter. I taught for 35 happy and enjoyable years in the Elfed High School in Buckley before retiring early to look after our granddaughter.

What motivated you to volunteer at Caffi Cwtch, the Hospice café and what is the aspect you most enjoy?

After retiring early, I wanted to give something back to the community and Nightingale House Hospice seemed the obvious choice. I have volunteered on the ward for 13 years and for a few years in the Caffi/Kitchen. Volunteering is definitely a two way process. I save the hospice money but I have benefitted from the companionship, friendship and satisfaction of helping the staff, patients, their families and customers.

How and when did you become a Wrexham AFC supporter and what do you think the future holds for the club?

I haven't always been a Wrexham supporter but my husband, a supporter since 1958, took our daughter to her first game in 1992 when Wrexham beat Chesterfield 5-4. She was hooked and the expression—if you can't beat then then join them comes to mind. I did and the rest is history.

Whatever the future holds, you cannot take away the memories of the story so far. We still miss the early days when it was a family club and we knew everyone but do not miss some of the dire football in the National League. We kept the faith, kept our season tickets and are now reaping the rewards.

Do you find time for other hobbies?

I enjoy doing jigsaws, playing ipad games, exercise classes, watching Manchester United on TV with Myra and surprise, surprise eating out!

What might we be surprised to know about you?

I became a blood donor at 18 and at the last count have given 100+ donations.

Tea or Coffee?

Tea as I do not like the taste of coffee (but love coffee and walnut cake).

Cat or dog?

I have two cats who regularly bring me presents—usually alive.

Early bird or night owl?

It varies depending on the nightime antics of my cats.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU (continued)

Summer or Winter?

By default I will have to say Winter as it's the football season.

Any pet hates or phobias?

I don't particularly like unpunctuality.

Favourite meal?

I'm a sweet not savoury person so it will have to be Afternoon Tea.

Most enjoyable holiday destination?

I'm a complete Disney fanatic so obviously Disney World in Florida, a destination that always has something new to see and do and NO it isn't anything like Alton Towers—in fact it couldn't be more different.

Now tell us a secret!

Now that would be telling and it wouldn't be a secret anymore.

Thank you Lynn for a glimpse into your life. As the saying goes — ask a busy person if you want something done.

Now who is next to share their story — and maybe even a secret!

Janet Lewis

MAY MONTHLY MEETING

Natalie Cummings spoke to the U3A about her book 'The Fiddle'

I recently joined the U3A so this was my first time attending the monthly meeting. I was surprised but very encouraged by how many people were already in the hall when I walked in and took a seat near the front.



The heart of this U3A meeting was a moving and memorable talk by Natalie Cummings, who shared the story behind her book 'The Fiddle.' Her presentation blended history, family memory, and the enduring power of music, leaving the room deeply touched. Her book tells the extraordinary story of her family's escape from the Bolsheviks and Nazis and traces the incredible journey of her family's precious fiddle that survived the Russian Revolution and the Holocaust from the early 1900's right up to coming back home to safety and its eventual restoration.



The talk started with a short video presentation showing how the fiddle was restored back in 2018 on an episode of the BBC's The Repair Shop. This programme always covers the back story of the item in for repair, so we got to see and hear a glimpse of the fiddle's history.



Natalie then took her place at the podium and gave an insight as to how she had written down and captured stories shared with her by her Aunt Rosa following her repatriation to England after WW11 ended and prior to her passing. She explained how she knew that this was a story so important it had to be published, and that in writing the book, it would honour the courage of her aunt Rosa who had survived multiple concentration camps.

She read extracts from the book and spoke for about 30 minutes, and I could have carried on listening to her for double that time and more! She spoke so eloquently and with such passion that I felt transported to those dark days and could feel the goosebumps on my arms.

At the end of her reading, Natalie answered questions from several members and signed copies of her book. You can purchase the book on many online outlets and you can watch The Repair shop episode here.

When I stood up to leave, I was amazed to see the number of members who had been in attendance was far greater than I had originally noticed when I arrived. Everyone had been listening so intently during the meeting that I had no idea there were so many people behind me – which is a true testament to how brilliantly Natalie had been speaking. Everyone had been totally silent and listening so intently to her. I spoke to several people as I was making my way to leave and all said that despite the harrowing story, they had thoroughly enjoyed the reading and how they had been totally captivated throughout the session.

(continued on next page)

MAY MONTHLY MEETING (continued)

You can find a short timeline of the fiddle below:

Early 1900s - Abraham Levinsky owns and plays the violin in Russia.

1917–1920 - The Russian Revolution forces Abraham to flee; the violin travels with him and later passes to his sister Rosa.

1930s - Rosa becomes the violin's guardian as antisemitism rises across Europe.

1943–1945 - Rosa is deported to Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and Bergen Belsen; the violin survives the camps with her and helps her stay alive.

1945 - Rosa is liberated and brings the violin to Britain.

2000s - The violin is professionally restored and Natalie Cumming begins documenting the family history.

2010s - The Fiddle is published, sharing the instrument's extraordinary journey.

Present day - The violin has a permanent home at the Yehudi Menuhin School. It is played by young musicians, not locked away — fulfilling Rosa's belief that music should live, not be silenced.

Natalie Cummins has been awarded an MBE for services to Holocaust remembrance and to the Missing People Charity.

She has also previously received an award from the King and Queen for her work with the Holocaust Remembrance.

Helen Hornby

20TH ANNIVERSARY AFTERNOON TEA DANCE

This was held on Tuesday 16 June 2026 at the Memorial Hall, Bod Hyfryd, Wrexham

The afternoon tea party with entertainment started at 2 o'clock. Members were greeted by Ms Anne Hughes, the membership secretary and other members of the committee.

Everyone received an afternoon tea box consisting of four finger sandwiches, a cream cake and a cream scone with strawberry jam. The entertainment started with music, Mary Lou, performed by a six-piece band, Silhouette. The band consisted of two guitarists, a female vocalist, a keyboard player and two excellent violinists. The acoustics in the hall were very good and those who wanted to dance, danced. All really enjoyed the whole ethos of the sounds of the sixties and seventies. I am sure it must have brought back some memories! The Rolling Stones and the Kink's, song, A Dedicated Follower of Fashion, were very popular with the audience.

All the ladies looked good in their casual summer outfits for this merry, musical occasion!

Everyone present was invited to start their afternoon tea after the first forty-five minutes of music and dancing. Coffee and tea stations with hot water had been set up on four tables around the Memorial Hall for Member guests to help themselves when they wanted a hot drink. The tables were arranged with pretty, patterned tablecloths, at the back of the hall and around the three sides of the room. The place looked attractive.

The dancing in front of the stage continued after everyone had eaten.

Everyone present seemed happy and the general mood was good. There must have been 60+ people present at any one time.

This event commemorated 20 successful years of existence of the Wrexham u3a. Another grand day out thanks to the U3A in Wrexham and may we have another similar tea-party next year, please?

A few photos from the event are on the next page.

Anne Douglas.


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TRIP TO YORK



The u3a Festival 26 is the biggest u3a event of the year and took place on the University of York campus between the 1st and 3rd July. The event brought together around 1000 members from across the UK including our small group from Wrexham u3a – David Wilkinson, Annette Lewis, Judith Hughes, Colin Gittins, Wendy Jones and Gareth Jones.

The University of York has a beautiful campus with green spaces and a lake, excellent sports facilities, lecture halls, workshops and a variety of restaurants, cafes and bars – the perfect background for three days of inspiration and learning. Accommodation was offered on a bed and breakfast basis at campus halls of residence blocks but availability was limited and we rented a five bedroomed house local to the campus. We ate at restaurants on the campus and for others who wanted to venture off campus there are a number of hostelries close by in Heslington village.

It was obvious that a huge amount of effort by u3a members had gone into organising the event, carrying out stewarding duties and leading workshops, sporting events, tours, walks and talks. The event had something for everyone with a vast list of activities; the difficulty was choosing what to do in the time available! On offer were:

- Talks on a wide range of subjects
- Hands-on craft and art workshops
- Musical performances
- Fitness workshops
- Sporting events including racquet sports
- Local walks and visits to local attractions e.g. York Minster

The programme continued into the evening and on the first evening we elected to go back to the 70's at a session of Juke Box Jury. Colin Gittins "volunteered" to join the team of four on the judging panel and an excellent evening was had by all. On the second evening we entered our team into the Festival Quiz competing against 26 other teams from all over the UK. When it came down to the wire we were joint first with Stockport u3a but after the tie-break question – Wrexham u3a was the overall winner of the 2026 quiz.

We left York mid afternoon on the Friday having had a thoroughly enjoyable time and now look forward to the next u3a Festival!

Gareth Jones

TRIP TO YORK (continued)

The recent trip to u3a sports festival in York, 1st – 3rd July 2026

Six of us travelled from Wrexham and we arrived in York in 2 cars around midday. We went to several events – pickle ball tennis and table tennis mainly as most of the others were already fully booked or further away from the University. The weather was lovely so some of us walked from our accommodation (about 20 minutes away) to the events. Our home for 3 days was lovely.

The hardest thing was finding your way around the vast complex – well at least for some of us (mentioning no names……. Haha). The food was excellent although I brought cash rather than a card and unfortunately it was all card orientated but luckily Gareth was on hand with his card and I was able to reimburse him afterwards. I will certainly know for next time. Everyone was very friendly and it was nice to hear about their backgrounds and which part of the country they had travelled from.

I can tell you we had a fabulous time – not only in the sporting sense but also taking in talks on historical topics and taking part in a special night of the sixties hit show Juke Box Jury with myself, Colin, as part of the jury. Simon Cowell, eat your heart out, we had the audience in raptures with our comments and quips – great fun. The hardest part was trying to disguise to the audience that we had never heard of the songs chosen in the 70s which was hard when you heard "Blockbuster" by Sweet, "Is this the way to Amarillo" by Tony Christie. But we still got the audience to bop and move their feet to the music and then vote whether it was a hit or a miss. So many people came up and said "Colin, wow that was great" – I felt more like Simon Cowell by the minute. I even did a rendition of Soft Cell's "Say hello, wave goodbye" and I hadn't been drinking – honest! Everyone interacted so well with a laugh and a joke and in this day and age something we all need.

We entered a quiz – where my contribution wasn't too great as there was nothing on postcodes……To conclude, we all spent an enjoyable 3 days in the midst of great company and meeting new people. Would we go again? That gets a resounding YES from all of us.

A final word about Gareth, Wendy's husband and Judith who did the driving through heavy traffic. A huge thank you to them both and a special thank you to Gareth and Wendy - special friends who were great with me. The reason we went was to participate in the sporting events – but the company, well they simply were the X-factor.

Colin Gittins