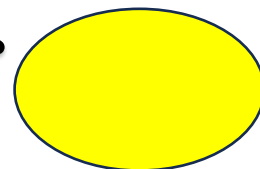


u3aNorthwich Newsletter

JULY 2026

<https://northwich.u3asite.uk>



MONTHLY MEETING – JUNE 2026

‘MY LIFE AT THE MANOR’

This was no story of a well-to-do gentleman living in a fine Manor House, but rather the opposite – that of mining memories from a man brought up in a St. Helens’ 2 up/2 down.

Gary asked what we thought St. Helens was initially famous for and most people thought of glass (Pilkington) or pharmaceuticals (Beecham). In fact, coal was produced 200 years before both. Pilkington chose St. Helens because of the access to power – coal.

On leaving school, Gary became a pit fitter apprentice and eventually a fully fledged fitter. He worked all his life at Sutton Manor Coal Pit, following in his relatives’ footsteps.

Sutton Manor shafts were sunk in 1906 and high-quality coal started being produced in 1910 until its closure in 1992. (When it closed down in 1992, a survey showed that there was - and is -50+ years’ worth of coal left there).

The shafts were 2,400 feet deep – that is 5 Blackpool Towers! And when the miners had travelled down, they had to walk 2-2.5 miles to the coal face. Gary’s great grandfather worked a seam of about 3 feet at the coal face, his grandfather worked a seam of 5 feet, both with picks and shovels, in hot, damp conditions. Gary stated that he had it ‘easy’, working a seam of 12 feet with hydraulics, water, machinery and a conveyor belt.

Gary explained about using his ‘number’ to obtain food in the canteen and goods from the shop (the payment was taken out of his wages), and about tallies – brass and aluminium discs which were exchanged daily at given times. If

there was an explosion in the mine, the miners would not survive and all that may be left would be the brass tallies because brass does not burn. Gary also told us about the lack of toilet facilities and regaled us with some tales of desperation! We learned about ‘snap’ and ‘snap tins’, canaries, Davy lamps, pit head baths, overalls and the Vaseline that miners used to remove the pit dust from eyelashes!

Gary’s presentation included slides and many, many anecdotes. It was interactive, amusing - at times hilarious – but still painted a very vivid picture of the lives and working conditions of miners. This was a talk thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed by all.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is on 15th July at 2pm at Owley Wood Recreation Club, Weaverham, when Andrew Bennet will tell all about ‘Glass Making and Stained Glass’.

Andy Bennett operates **Moulton Glass**, a small family-run stained glass and leadlight business based out of a workshop in Cheshire, near Northwich. He and his daughter, Clare, create handmade copper foil gifts, terrariums, and full-sized lead light windows, in addition to restoring and repairing stained glass.

The business is highly localized to the area, known for both custom commissions and community involvement, such as leading local glass-cutting workshops and volunteering within the village.

CHECK THE WEBSITE

Reports of monthly meetings and information of upcoming events and activity groups can be found on our website - <https://www.northwich.u3asite.uk>

Group news

Singing for pleasure



The Singing for Pleasure group is now meeting monthly, at the Methodist Hall, Hartford. Colin and David have provided the guitar accompaniment.

The next meeting will take place on Saturday 18th July

Photography Group

The group's last meeting was their first practical session and covered portraiture. The members enjoyed this very much and asked to do another session soon. Please see examples of portraits below.

The next meeting will cover landscape photography.





Northwich U3A is a registered charity (number 1113103) Secretary: Wendy Milborrow ✉ wmilborrow@gmail.com ☎ 01606 45601
Membership Secretary: Geoff Wales ✉ two.u3a@gmail.com Please send submissions for the Newsletter to Karen Banks
Please check the website for national and local events. u3a North West activities can be found at www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west

ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP

Please find below the Archaeology Group Programme for July and August 2026

Owley Wood Recreation Club, Weaverham

15 July, *Roman Invasion of Britain*, Carol Allen
19 August, *Rediscovering Roman Northwich: A reappraisal*, Mike Nevell

All members welcome, £2 entrance fee, includes half-time coffee and biscuits. Doors open 10 am, Talk starts at 10.30 am and finishes approx 12.15pm

LATIN GROUP

The Latin Group is looking for a new leader, would you or anyone you know be interested in taking on this role?

The group are currently split into two sub-groups, who meet on alternate Monday afternoons. There is a more advanced group with four members, and a more beginners group with two members.

Should you wish to discuss further please contact group co-ordinators Chris Shiel and/or Krys Kowalska in the first instance.

MESSAGE FROM MID-CHESHIRE TABLE TENNIS LEAGUES RE PING-PONG

Mid Cheshire Table Tennis Club CIC is currently launching a brand-new, dedicated Community Table Tennis Hub at the Winnington Recreation Club in Northwich.

The aim is to create a welcoming, safe, and highly accessible space for the local community. They are particularly keen to introduce daytime social ping pong sessions designed specifically for retirees and older

adults—focusing on fun, fitness, and friendship rather than intense competition. Through Table Tennis England, the plan is to offer structured "Bat & Chat" mornings. These will be gentle, coach-led sessions where all equipment is provided, followed by a chance to relax over tea & biscuits and meet new people.

To give you an idea of how popular and impactful this sport is for retirees, over 80 U3A members from Holmes Chapel U3A actively participate in three separate ping-pong groups every single week. Glyn Nicholls, the group leader there, emphasises the incredible impact these sessions have, noting that everyone loves them and that it's amazing how word got round. My group is around 25 mixed men and women, and we play for around 90 minutes with a break in between. I try to make sure everyone gets a game or two.

If interested, please contact Tony Taylor, MCTTL Development Officer at info@ageingresponsibly.com



NORTHWEST REGION REPRESENTATIVE NEWSLETTER

Please find enclosed with this newsletter, the June edition of the u3a NW Region Council Representatives Newsletter which I hope you find both interesting and informative. It contains information on both regional and national u3a activities.

POSTER FROM HARTFORD CIVIC SOCIETY

Please find below details in relation to the HCS showing of the film IF on 3 August.

- The Grange Theatre
- 3 August 2026 at 2.30pm
- Tickets £5.00
- On sale at Kismet, Greenbank PO, Hartford Dry Cleaners, The Acupuncture Clinic.