



NOVEMBER 2015

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Thursday 19th November is a date you need to put in your diary. It's a social morning meeting and we are hosting our first Open Forum giving you the opportunity to voice your opinion about how your U3A is run, learn about what other members are doing, find out what other opportunities for you are available within the U3A, speak to committee members face to face and influence the future of your U3A.

We think that we are doing a pretty good job because our membership is growing and in the main we get positive feedback about our U3A. But we also know things are not perfect and we value your positive input to help us plan for a long and prosperous future for our U3A. Please be there and as our motto says 'Don't Wait – Participate!'

Colin Burkitt

LUNCH CIRCLE

17th November meet at The Refreshment Rooms, Bedford Road, Rock Ferry, Birkenhead.

Meet at 12.15 pm for 12.30pm

MEETINGS and SPEAKERS

5th November 2015

Colin Simpson - The Williamson Art Gallery

19th November 2015

Open Forum - Please complete questionnaire

SOCIAL OUTINGS

NOW BOOKING

Friday 18th December 2015

Christmas Lunch at Wirral Ladies Golf Club
12.00 noon for 12.30 pm
Payment of balance and menu choices due NOW
FULL

NEW EVENT

Wednesday 27th January 2016

Liverpool Medical Institution Tour
£9-50 (including lunch)
Two tours – Morning and Afternoon

THEATRE NOW BOOKING

Wednesday 17 February 2016

MATTHEW BOURNE’S SLEEPING BEAUTY
Liverpool Empire Matinee Tickets £12-00

THEATRE REMINDERS

Thursday 19th November 2015

LE CORSAIRE English National Ballet
Liverpool Empire 2-30 pm matinee
Collect your tickets and meet at theatre

Full booking details available at meetings please see your social organisers at the back of the hall
OR e-mail barbara@oxtonu3a.co.uk

REMEMBER THE POPPIES?



**They will soon be here in our wonderful city
And I for one can't wait to see them again.**

7th November 2015 – 17th January 2016

St George's Hall

Liverpool



WALKING GROUP

FRIDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2015

We will meet at The Concourse in West Kirby to set off by 10-30 am, if you are coming by car why not avoid West Kirby parking fees and park at Hoylake Station (it's free) then catch the train to West Kirby they run every 15 mins.

One of my favourite walks on The Wirral (yes I know I've taken you there before) but this time we will go the other way round and do a different deviation across the Royal Liverpool Golf Course. Upward we then go to Grange Hill with its magnificent views, across to Caldy Hill then down to Cubbins Green. Approximately 6 miles long it should take us about 3 hours and hopefully there will be no quagmires to wade through, just a couple of bridle paths which may be a bit muddy if the weather is wet beforehand. We should be back at The Dee Hotel (Wetherspoons) for lunch by about 1-30 pm. No refreshments en route so bring your own if you need them.

Please sign up on the sheet at the back of the hall. Contact me on 07811 577121 or sandra.lakin@talktalk.net

FRIDAY 11TH DECEMBER 2015

The Christmas Walk from our home in Claughton, followed by the walking group traditional lunch time festive social. If the weather is suitable I hope we will be able to do a circular walk of about 3 miles to Bidston Hill for some panoramic views. We set off from our house at 10.30am aiming to be back in time for lunch around 12 o'clock. Carol will look after the food and drink arrangements and will be pleased to receive offers of homemade soup, mince pies and gluewein closer to the date.

Colin Burkitt

All network members are invited to a **U3A BARN DANCE**, on *Friday November 20th* from 7.30-11.00pm

The venue is **NESTON CIVIC HALL**. The band is the toe-tapping **TWO LEFT FEET** with caller **Brendan Morrison**

COST £10. LIGHT REFRESHMENTS INCLUDED

TICKETS from Ann Taylor 3274667, a.tayloru3a@btinternet.com

Organised by Neston U3A with the help of Heswall and Neston barn dance groups.

We are sure that this will be a lively sociable evening open to all members of the network and friends.

This year we are limiting the numbers to give more room for dancing so it will be first come first served for tickets.

Transformation and Miracles in Oxtou and Prenton U3A.

As far back as I can remember I have needed transformation and a sense of the miraculous in my life. This was fed by the annual trip to the pantomime each January and regular accounts of biblical miracles at Sunday school, though these were somewhat spoiled by the impossible moral values attached to them. They were also presented as being in a past that was out of reach. The highlight of every pantomime for me was the transformation scene in which what appeared to be a solid scenic representation, faded away in favour of something entirely different, purporting to be in another place and time and with a bit of luck this new scene would include a flying ballet. For months afterwards my teddy, wings attached, would spend most of its time on a string, swinging to and fro whilst suspended from a beam. I knew there was something not quite right about gravity.

Later I was to discover that the ability to defy the confines of space, time, gravity and matter is not just theatrical illusion; it is in fact the way that the universe is constructed. I was right all the time! Nevertheless it was a while before my interest in science brought this to my attention. Meanwhile there was Theatre. My first ever paid job, at seven shillings and sixpence a week, was as assistant, trainee designer and bit-part actor in a weekly repertory company.

An undressed stage is a bleak place to be. The side and back walls are usually of bare brick against which festoons of cable and rope cast unwholesome shadows in the light of a solitary 'working lamp'. The 'fourth wall' looks out into an empty, cold and soulless auditorium. Each Saturday, as soon as the curtain came down on the last performance of the current play and even as people were still leaving the building, the set would be 'struck' and the stage left bare until the following morning when the next production would be mounted. The fact that a great deal of planning and hard work was involved in this process never detracted from the sense of miraculous transformation that this involved.

That space, in a few hours, might become: a room in a Romanoff palace, a stone cottage, a Victorian drawing room, a Dutch garden, an ancient inn, a railway station, the Rialto in Venice, a stately bedroom and so on. We would work and apply ourselves until the illusion was complete and as often as not the first night curtain would go up to rapturous applause. Later, in Spain, I became involved in street theatre. We were a small town/large village of three thousand people but in fiestas the number could treble. The streets in which we performed were, for a whole year, just streets. I walked down them, shopped down them, rode my motorbike down them, showed visitors down them and ate and drank in the bars. They were just streets. But in fiestas they became something else. Galleons have sailed down them, camels, elephants, performing horses, winged beings, space – men, witches, ancient Egyptians, (complete with Nile barge), Nero and his court, have all been there and the list goes on. A visitor from Florida remarked that they could produce nothing there that would match our exuberance and creativity.

But now to Oxton and Prenton U3A. Here, for me, Prospero is still at work. The miracle still goes on. Each time we meet we create an island of magical transformation. A neutral, empty space fills with chairs, books, electronic equipment, information boards and tables at which amazing events are planned and prepared. Speakers take us all over the world and give us ever deeper insight into our own and other communities. We can join study

groups that connect us with energies far beyond our daily lives and rituals. A whole new world of relationships and information can open up.

So what is a miracle? I hope that you will agree that when something is truly and inexplicably produced out of nothing, that is miraculous; or when one energetic dimension imposes upon another dimension so that the latter is totally transformed by that imposition, that is miraculous. So whichever way we look at it, (scientific, religious or cultural) by those definitions the universe is miraculous. WE are miraculous. Wherever we come from or whatever we are, U3A comes together and produces something out of nothing. Our skills and abilities, the way we relate to our lives and the lives of others were 'nothing' before the Big Bang. (If there was one?)

When all the chairs, tables and administrative artefacts have been put away, the doors locked and the last person has left - for somewhere else, there remains the space, passive and neutral, awaiting yet another creative and miraculous explosion in a fortnight's time.

The big questions have yet to be solved: Why is there something instead of nothing? What is consciousness? What is life? What are matter, space, time and gravity? So there is plenty left for us to chew on in our various groups or we can just sit back and enjoy the miracle and mystery of transformation as it unfolds in and around us and especially through Oxton and Prenton U3A.

Brian Gill

Thank you so much Brian for such a thought provoking article, I am so sure that a miracle which transformed my life happened the day I joined Oxton & Prenton U3A. Does anyone have anything they wish to say in response to this article? I would love to hear from you.

SPANISH CONVERSATION

We have had a request from one of our members for a Spanish conversation group, so if there is any member who would be willing to lead such a group then we have members ready and waiting. If you are unsure about leading a group please have a chat with Judy Whaley she will be able to tell you what's required and give you her full support. E mail her at groupsleader@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Furthermore if any of our members have an idea for a new group or would like to start up a new group, again please contact Judy.



**DO YOU LOVE ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES?
WOULD YOU LIKE TO WIN A CASH PRIZE?
COULD YOU SPOT A HIDDEN TREASURE?
WE ARE LOOKING FOR LIVELY PAIRS OF CONTESTANTS
TO TAKE PART!**

**'For What It's Worth' is an EXCITING NEW BBC QUIZ
SHOW!**

**Whether you're friends, colleagues, siblings or
parent and child we want to hear from you!**

**Within the PAIR one person must be an antiques enthusiast
and the other a quizzer answering general knowledge questions.**

To apply visit: <http://tuesdayschild.tv/fwiw/>

For more information please email:

fwiw@tuesdayschild.tv

or call 0203 761 4546

TUESDAY'S CHILD

B B C

Applicants must be 18 years or over and a legal resident in the UK. The closing date for submitting applications is 6th of November 2015. We may extend the closing date at our sole discretion without notice. Terms and Conditions apply.

FIRST AID COURSES

These were so successful in the North West last year that more have been arranged.

U3A members are charged £5. They may take along a friend or relative who is not U3A member - they will be charged £10. They will need your permission to use your membership. Anyone else i.e. the general public will be charged £30

Venue: St John Ambulance. Mather Avenue, Birkenhead CH43 1TS

Date	Time	Course reference	Max people
11 November 2015	10am till 1pm	MSY15G0331	14
14 December 2015	10am till 1pm	MSY15G0332	14

HOW TO BOOK? The courses listed are exclusive to U3A members. To book, members should call the Training Department on 0161 443 0106 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Quote the course reference for the course you wish to attend and give your U3A membership number. Payment will be taken at the time of booking by credit or debit card. Confirmation of booking will be sent to you by email or post.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your annual membership of Oxton & Prenton U3A is now due for renewal.

The cost is £12-00 per person. Because this is always a very busy time for Gwyneth our membership secretary at the desk, could you all please assist her by offering the correct money or make your cheques out in advance to Oxton & Prenton U3A.

Can I remind you all that your membership will cease on 1st January 2016 unless you have paid your renewal.

THURSDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2015

We will be holding an open forum on Thursday 19th November at 10-00 am, please do try to come along and let us know how you feel about Oxton & Prenton U3A and give the committee some feedback.

We will be handing out questionnaires during the meetings prior to that date, for you to complete and return. These questionnaires are entirely anonymous and will be very helpful for our future plans, please complete them and hand in.

For those of you, who would prefer it, there is a copy of the questionnaire on the last page of this newsletter, please feel free to print it out yourself and return by 5th November. Thank you.

COME ALONG AND HAVE YOUR SAY - THIS IS YOUR U3A

The following poem was written by our very own poet laureate, Paul Cullen, and given to two members of our Group who are staunch supporters. They enjoyed it so much that with Paul's permission I share it with you all in the hope that their wish of travelling to Wembley for the play offs next summer is fulfilled.

THE PRENTON ROAR

*Paul Farley's Auntie turned the volume down
To hear the Aintree horses thunder by
I did the same to hear across the town
The Prenton Roar blow westward through the sky
Caught by the sharp east wind above the 'bowl'
Sure indication of a Rover's goal

Alas no more – goals fell away to drought
The roar reduced to just a feeble shout
The end was nigh, the trapdoor opened wide
Engulfing all that history and pride
Great memories of giant-killing games
When Prenton took the scalps of famous names

Ninety four years of membership have gone
Without league status they must struggle on
'Super Whites' and those (who remember) blue
Resurgence, resurrection is your cue
For putting in reverse your swift demise
And winning back The League – elusive prize
Meanwhile, supporters dream of league and cup
Their fervent song 'THE ONLY WAY IS UP'

*Paul Farley, ex Liverpool poet

Paul Cullen

HOST UK

Make the world a little friendlier! Small charity HOST is seeking friendly people who would like to learn more about other countries and cultures and share their home life with adult international students at UK universities. Young adults from many countries would love to have a short homely break and discover the real life of this country.

Meeting students from around the world is hugely fulfilling and satisfying. Watching their pleasure as you introduce them to our ways of living, particularly over Christmas, is extremely rewarding.

Visits can be for a day, weekend, or four days at Christmas. Offering a Christmas invitation to someone who would otherwise be alone on a University campus can make a big difference. Invitations are urgently needed from volunteer hosts, no matter their age, or how far they live from a university. To find out more, or to be put in touch with your local organiser, please visit www.hostuk.org or call 020 7739 6292.

EVERYMAN THEATRE VISIT – 6TH OCTOBER 2015

A large group of Oxton & Prenton U3A members met in the Everyman Cafe for an eagerly awaited visit backstage. We were taken into the theatre where Simon Stephens gave us background details of the massive regeneration of the site which took place between 2011 and 2014. It received a Best Building Award. Looking around we learned that the walls throughout were of reclaimed brick, they were warm looking and should be serviceable. There is an apron stage with raised seating on three sides and a gallery above, not unlike the Emlyn Williams Theatre at Theatre Clwyd. The show running at the moment, to rave reviews, is The Odyssey adapted by award winning poet and playwright Simon Armitage.

We were separated into two groups for the tour, first we went into a large rehearsal room, solely reserved for Youth Theatre work which is a very active group. The courses include Young Actors, Young Writers, Young Directors, and Young Technicians. The facility is used by Theatre in the Community, and Outreach as well as in house groups. We then moved on to the main rehearsal room, then one of the main dressing rooms with its make up mirrors and theatre clothes scattered around. There were three or four dressing rooms but these were not open as they contained the actors' and space to work at a large table and plenty of books to peruse. The Green Room was large, airy and comfortable with facilities for hot drinks and light refreshments, a screen showing the stage was prominent. No excuse for missing one's cue!

We met Jackie of 'wardrobe' she calls herself the department of one. As Wardrobe Mistress she organises and designs costumes which may include medieval armour, millinery etc. If there is a large production such as the Christmas show she has outworkers. They prefer to work from home, it's quieter! There were cutting tables, sewing machines even a large appliance for recycling costumes and shoes for future use. This machine extracted all odours!

Finally, we climbed the steps to the Flies. What a revelation! A number of secure walkways and sturdy handrails for the electricians and stage management to use in the course of their work. Health and Safety must have been around as building took place!

Then down to the bistro in the basement to enjoy the meals we had pre-ordered.

The impression I got was of light and space everywhere. A theatre serving the community. Simon was pleased to hear that most of us had been to performances at the theatre.

Another wonderful Group Tour organised by Barbara Lloyd and her sidekick the other Barbara. From us all a big Thank You.

Joan Parfect

If any of our members or indeed any of our Groups have anything they would like to say, or want to publicise their next meeting all you need to do is email me newsletter@oxtonu3a.co.uk and I will be more than happy to put it into our next newsletter, closing date is usually around 20th of the month.

Can I also say a big 'THANK YOU' to Ann Hillier who undertakes the thankless task of proof reading every monthly newsletter for me, often at short notice. Your efforts are very much appreciated Ann.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Our communications

Do you use our website.....YES / NO

Do you read our newsletter.....YES/NO

Do you read the notices at our meetings.....YES / NO

Do you have any comments about our communications.....__

Thursday Meetings

Do you normally attend speaker meetings.....YES / NO

Do you normally attend our social mornings.....YES / NO

What do you think of the venue.....

What speakers have been the best / worst for you.....

What social mornings have been the best / worst for you.....

Do you have any comments about the Thursday meetings.....

Groups

How many groups do you belong to.....

Do you have any comment about our groups.....

Social events and outings

How many social events have you been to in the last 12 months.....

What types of outings / events do you prefer.....

Any other comments

Please feel free to leave any comments about any items not included above.
