

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2016



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

How many years ago did you pass your driving test? When did you last look at the Highway Code, not the one that you had when you took your test, but the current one which is about four times larger than the one I had for my test? How confident are you on our modern busy roads, especially at night? These were all questions posed by the road safety team at the recent 'Driving Safer' sessions arranged for us by Wirral Council.

Leading on from these sessions the Debating Group have arranged for a debate at the social morning on Thursday 27 October. The proposition to be debated at this meeting is 'The driving licence should be subject to review and renewal on a regular basis throughout the life of the driver'. The debating group will put forward speakers with strong arguments both for and against the proposition and members will be able to make their own points of view to the floor during the debate. We have an independent chairman for this debate to ensure that everyone, whatever their views, has the opportunity to speak.

It's a contentious issue and I am sure that you will all have some strong opinions so please come along, join in and make your voice heard. It promises to be an interesting morning and I for one am determined to make my views known.

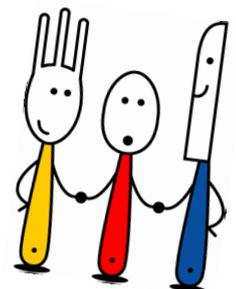
See you all soon.

Colin Burkitt
Chairman

LUNCH CIRCLE

The lunch circle will be meeting on Tuesday 18th October

Our venue is Pesto, Dibbinsdale Road, Bromborough 12-15 for 12-30



MEETINGS and SPEAKERS

13th October 2016 – A Fascinating and Remarkable Woman – Bernadette Hamilton

27th October 2016 – The Debating Group will lead the debate on the following;
'The driving licence should be subject to review and renewal on a regular basis throughout the life of the driver'

SOCIAL OUTINGS

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

REMINDERS

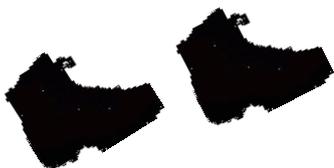
THEATRE

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| Wednesday 5 October 2016 | THE RIVALS
The Playhouse 7-30 pm £14.50
Tickets available for collection |
| Thursday 27 th October 2016 | TWO GENTLEMEN of VERONA (Globe Touring)
Everyman Theatre 7.30pm Tickets £17.00
Tickets available for collection |
| Thursday 1 st December 2016 | THE NUTCRACKER English National Ballet
Liverpool Empire 2.30 pm Tickets £21.50 |

SOCIAL

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| Tuesday 1 November 2016 | The Old Dock Experience
10.30 am – 11.30 am
Free but booking Essential |
| Friday 16 th December 2016 | CHRISTMAS LUNCH
Wirral Ladies Golf Club 12.00 for 12.30 pm
£24-00 per head Deposit £10 on booking |





WALKING GROUP

FRIDAY 21ST OCTOBER

Corinne and Gwyneth will lead this 4 mile walk along paths and through agricultural land through to the former RAF camp. No stiles or hills but may be muddy in places.

Meet at Royden Park car park at 10-30, lunch will be at The Farmer's Arms on the way back. Put your name down on the list at the back of the church hall.

THOUGHTS of AUTUMN

October is a strange month. For the ancient Celts it marked the end of their year, as animals were brought down from the high pastures and made secure for the winter ahead. After four days of 'no-time' at the beginning a November a new year began on a somewhat quiet and restrained note, hopefully supported by a good harvest. We still have the vestigial remains of these customs in the celebrations that accompanied them: Halloween, All Saints and Bonfire Night with its proliferation of fireworks can connect us with times long gone. We like to think that it was the conviction and death of Guy Fawkes that instigated the latter but really he provided the nation with a good, rational, Protestant excuse to hold on to long established rituals that were essentially pagan. At the moment the Pagans seem to be winning as Halloween, with its witches and demons, attracts more attention than all the saints together on the following day. I suppose that knocking on the door of a stranger and telling them that if they don't give you a treat there and then, something nasty will happen to them, better reflects the competitive, capitalist culture in which we find ourselves. The point is of course debatable.

The seasons are always shifting and changing, all too quickly I think, but in October the changes seem particularly marked and emphatic. It is small wonder that our ancestors lit fires and made loud noises. In a time when there was no National Health Service and social services had yet to be thought of, it was essential to ward off evil spirits or, better still, confront them. The darkness of the winter ahead was something to be feared especially when it engendered mischief and malice.

We might like to think that we have put all that behind us but in spite of double-glazing, central heating, supermarkets full of provender and the care of the state, the more mature amongst us may still find the winter months to be a bit of a challenge. Something that our ancestors had that we are largely lacking was the ability to become 'small', to go within themselves and be still, to need less and to know how to wait. They told the old stories and sang the old songs and when they came together enacted the old dramas of death and rebirth to remind themselves that, in the end, adversity can be overcome, darkness vanquished and that life prevails.

Nature has much to teach us in this respect. In winter so much happens below the surface. Many plants, whilst appearing to be dead, are making prodigious efforts below ground. Alas! as human beings we are not always allowed to follow this worthy example. Society demands that we carry on as usual when so much in the psyche is demanding that we turn within. It is not an appropriate time for extravert activities; nature, (the position of the Earth in relation to the Sun,) is against it. We may well get away with 'business as usual' but for those who don't fare so well the depleted immune system will offer little defence against the common cold – or worse!

Winter is a good and necessary time for those who know how to align themselves with its rhythms but before then, in this month of October, we can review the passing summer and store the images and experience its light and energy have given us before letting it go and turning towards the short, dark days of winter. They too have much to teach us.

Brian Gill

For those of you who, like me, weren't able to make it to our first meeting back on 1st September, you will have missed Rod Paddock's recitation of his poem. I have included the poem below, I would love to have heard you recite it Rod, what talented members we have !!

A Trip on t' Canal

Lots of us waiting bi t' car park gate,
All a bit anxious cos t' chara wor late.
There wor sighs o' relief when rahn t' corner it came.
T' driver explained but t' excuses wor lame.

Wi all climbed aboard, not a moment to lose.
Seat belts wor fastened as wi all fahnd ahr pews.
Then wi wor off down t' M53,
Everyone knows what a joy that can be.

Then t' M56 an' t' excitement wor growin'.
Chara wor buzzin', conversation wor flowin'.
Wi wor 'eaded for Manchester, down bi' t' canal
Built bi James Brindley, t' Duke of Bridgewater's pal.

T' miles flew by an' soon wi wor there.
Time for a coffee an' a breath of fresh air.
T' sun it wor shinin' an' jackets wor doffed.
Seats, they wor hard but ice-cream wor soft.

Next wi wor boardin' to sail the 'igh seas.
By gum it wor 'ot. wi could a done wi' a breeze.
Nah "Cast off for'ad. Cast off aft" wor t' cry
An' t' banks o' t' canal wor soon whizzing by.

They served up the grub. It weren't ower much,
Chicken an' gravy an' taties an' such
But cooked very nice it went dahn a treat.
Ah thought to mi sen "Yon's reet up mah street."

Wi saw several docks used to different degrees.
Then wi parked up bi old Salford Quays.
Wi could wander abaht for an hour or so.
Ah did L.S.Lowry, cos it wor free to go.

On t' way back they dished up the pud,
Crumble an' custard. By gum it wor good
An' coffee to follow completed the treat.
Ah should think after that wi wor mostly replete.

Back onto t' coach fo' t' final home strayt.
M'way wor busy. Ah knew wi'd be late
But taking it steady wi managed to get through.
No trouble fo' t' driver, a car jam or two.

Chara pulled up, wi wor back at them gates.
A reet good day aht wi' yer friends an' yer mates.
A rahnd of applause wor well earned bi a few
An' Ah 'ope t' next time Ah'll sit beside you.

GERMAN GROUP

The German group has been running since the early days of the Oxton and Prenton branch of the U3A. At present there are five members of the group. Everyone is very friendly and keen to improve their German. Each member of the group takes it in turn to prepare something for the next meeting. Jutta is the group leader and we meet in her house. We all enjoy the sessions where it is expected that all conversations have to be in German for the duration of the meeting, although this does not happen all of the time. We will all relate what we have done since the previous meeting together with any holidays or other events planned, as well as completing whatever has been prepared. This could take the form of listening to or reading out German texts and translating them. However we don't take it too seriously and there is always plenty of laughter at these meetings.

Ian McCloy

TEA ROTA FOR AUTUMN 2016

13 TH October	Rita Lillie	Barbara Wall	Carol Burkitt
27 TH October	Barbara Baker	Kathy Sullivan	Steve Cottam
10 TH November	Margaret Cullen	Paul Cullen	Pauline Pinnington
24 TH November	Gerry Riley	Barbara Riley	Marion Jackson

Please ring me (Joan Benton) on 608 6226 if you are unable to do a duty

SEPTEMBER'S WALK AROUND WILLASTON

A lovely walk led by Carol, who gave us lots of information regarding the area.

For instance did you know that the Chester High Road was once a toll road as instigated by the Chester, Neston and Woodside Ferry Turnpike Trust and was established by Act of Parliament in 1787. The total toll income in 1834 was £3311 and in 1836 this had risen to £3730 which shows how the establishment of the toll road was encouraging an increase in traffic.



FROM A SUPPLY TEACHER'S NOTEBOOK by Monica Price

I was on supply at St. Jude's Roman Catholic school near Liverpool and I watched the members of 9, a mixed class of 14 year olds, stroll into the classroom for their Religious Education lesson in ones and twos, most of them heading for the back row. I had been warned about this class. They had set fire to their desks in a supply teacher's lesson the day before and they were all on report which meant every teacher had to comment on their behaviour.

"Hiya, Miss." Some of them greeted me politely enough and a stocky boy with black hair handed me a report book. I noticed there was a seating plan and held up the book.

"Find your usual seats, please," I ordered and there was a storm of protest.

"Miss, we can sit where we like today. Sir said we could."

By "Sir" they meant their Head of Year, Terry Williams.

"Sorry but Mr Williams said no such thing," I said. "Come on. I have all your names here and where you should be sitting. "

They grumbled and shoved each other but eventually they found their correct places and I checked this by taking the register and using the plan.

"It's an' orrible lesson this," a boy informed me as I gave out the work sheets. "I don't believe in nothin' so what's it for?"

There were shouts of agreement from some of the others.

"I 'ate it I do. Learnin' about religion won't get me a job."

"It might help." I said. "Employers might see it as a sign of good character."

"It's a Catholic school," the boy with black hair said. "We have to learn about it."

"Don't see why." A blonde girl in the front row was putting on her makeup, a small mirror in one hand.

"Put that away, please," I told her. I began to go through the worksheets which were on Love and Marriage and included Hindu and Muslim arranged marriages as well as Christian.

"Don't agree with parents choosin yer 'usband," Cilla, the blonde girl got out her eye makeup and put it away again when she saw my expression. The others supported her point of view.

"Marriage is supposed to be about love an' that."

"Supposin' you can't stand the guy they've chosen."

"I'd be off I would."

"She'd go whorin' round the town, Miss. She does already," sniggered a boy sitting in the back row.

"Shut up, Benny, yer mong," The pretty dark girl he was addressing made a rude sign at him. She turned to an Asian girl sitting behind her. "'Ave you got an 'usband lined up, Latty?"

Latifa shook her head. "Not yet, Jude, but my sister was married two years ago as you know and she turned down six young men before she made up he mind."

The girls were impressed by this but the boys were not.

"Don't the lads get to choose as well?" Tony was concerned.

"Of course they do. Both boys and girls have to agree," Latifa assured him but he wasn't convinced.

"I saw this film *East is East* and yer should 'ave seen the girls they dredged up for those lads," Benny said. "I'd run away if i was told I'd to wed one of them."

“As Latifa has explained parents do their best to find suitable marriage partners for their sons and daughters but there is still an element of choice,” I told them.

“Miss, they don’t always because there’s this Indian family near us an’ they’re always sendin’ their girls to India to get married. There’s not much choice there is there? My Mum always asks “Which one’s goin’ next!” an’ they don’t like it.”

“An’ there was this girl in our other school an’ she was married off when she was a baby.”

The others were outraged.

“Miss, she’s just made that up. It’s evil that.”

“No-one would do that.” Latifa was shaking her head in disbelief.

“See. You’ve upset Latty now, Becky Wiltshire.”

“I don’t mean the baby got married,” Becky yelled. “ I mean a marriage was arranged when the girl was a baby and she was to marry a lad they picked when she was old enough.”

“That might not be such a bad idea,” Billy, the black haired boy, said thoughtfully.

“Ow do you make that out, Billy Wheeler?”

“My Nan married a Proddie way back an’ her Mam an’ Dad threw her out.”

“That were years back though. It’s not like that now.”

“It is,” Ben chimed in. “Our Vinnie, me cousin, got wed to a Proddie girl last year an her Mam wouldn’t pay for the weddin’ cause she was marrying a Cafflick.” My Mam wouldn’t go, neither but she felt sorry for our Vinnie so she gave ‘im fifty quid to take us all to Macdonalds. I ‘ad a cheeseburger an’ chips,” he added reminiscently. “ We got the weddin’ flowers out of the cemetery.”

This amused the others so much that I thought we’d never get the work done.

“What do you think about church weddings for Christian couples?” I asked “Would you rather have a church or register office wedding?”

“I’m definitely havin’ a church weddin’ an a white one,” declared Cilla to hoots of derision from the class.

“A white one after all you’ve done? It should be grey or black,” he shouted back.

“And you never go near a church,” Billy objected.

“So what? Churches are better for the photies.” Cilla informed him.

“That’s like using the church though.” Billy stuck to his guns.

“You only think like that because you’re goin’ in for a priest,” Kate, who sat next to Cilla, informed him.

“Billy’s right,” the serious looking girl whom I had learned was called Frances, looked round at the class. “Any of you who’s comin’ to our Donna’s weddin’ at Christmas it’s been brought forward to September.”

“Why? Is she ‘avin’ a sprog?” someone asked.

“No, it’s not that. “ Frances turned to the last speaker. “It’s because me Dad’s comin’ out of Parkhurst in July so we’ve got to have it as soon as possible in case he does somethin’ else and goes back in an’ misses it.”

“What is Parkhurst?” asked Latifa.

“Prison – for Big Timers,” Frances replied briefly.

“Me cousin Tommy’s in gaol an’ I might get in if I can ‘cause he’s got one of them Tablets an’ loads of other stuff,” Tony announced.

Further discussion was interrupted by a tall powerfully built man in a dark suit whom I knew to be Terry Williams, the Head of Year Nine. He closed the door behind him quietly and stared at the class who watched him warily.

“Excuse me, Miss, I’d like a word with this class, please,” he said.

“We’ve not done nothing,” Cilla protested.

“If you mean you’ve done no work that wouldn’t surprise me at all,” Terry replied.

“We’ve done good for Miss,” someone called out.

“They have,” I said hastily.

“Good. I’m glad to hear it.” Terry was still regarding them sternly. “I want to remind you all that the ceremony of Confirmation will take place in three weeks’ time. You all had your acceptance forms a month ago and only Billy has returned one. All the other year 9 classes have returned them but not 9 L. I should have expected that I suppose.” He placed a sheaf of papers on my table. “I want these new forms filled in and handed in to miss by the end of the lesson.”

“Sir, what’s Conferwhatsit?” demanded Cilla and received a glare which would have quelled other young people but not Cilla. Terry whispered “See what you can do, Miss” and hurried out.

“What IS Confirwhatsit?” demanded Cilla.

“Confirmation and Sir told us in Assembly,” Billy said.

“Yeah, well, I’ve forgotten. Anyway I’m not doin’ it.” She got out her makeup again, Caught my eye and put it back.

Billy sighed.” When you get christened ---“

“I’ve never been christened,” Cilla announced and the others stared at her in horror.

“Yer must ‘ave or yer’d be one of them ‘eathens.”

“No wonder yer so wicked. The devil’s still in yer.”

“That’s enough,” I interrupted sternly. “Billy has kindly agreed to explain so please let him get on with it.”

I nodded to Billy and he said “When we are christened our godparents promise to bring us up in Christian faith as Roman Catholics. At Confirmation we make the promises for ourselves. “

“Oh. Boring.” Cilla yawned. She turned to the others. “Are yer all gettin’ done?”

“Nah,” Benny shook his head.

“Me neither,” said Becky and most of the others agreed.

“Well, the forms are here if you change your minds” was all I could think to say.

“There’s money in it,” Billy said slyly.

There was a short silence.

“Money?” They all stared at him.

“Yer mean yer get paid for doin’ it?”

“Yes, in a way, well, not officially you don’t but your Nan and your godparents and sometimes the neighbours are so pleased with you they give you money as a reward. Our Jackie got two hundred smackers last year.”

Put me name down.”

“Give us them forms.”

“Cilla, you can’t go in for it. You’ve not been christened.”

“Watch me.” She collected the forms and began to give them out. When she came to Latifa the Asian girl shook her head.

“Can’t Latty go in for it?” Cilla asked.

“I’m afraid not. Sorry, Latifa,” I said.

There was a storm of protest.

“That’s tight that is.”

“Why can’t she?”

“Latifa isn’t a Christian “ I told them and there were cries of horror.

“You could get done, Miss. You said Latty isn’t a Christian.”

“She’ll get no money.”

“I don’t want to go in for it. I’m a Muslim, not a Christian,” shouted Latifa.

“Yer don’t ‘ave to believe in it. I don’t. I’m doin’ it for the dosh.”

“Cilla, either give out the rest of the forms or give them back to me,” I ordered.

“I’ll give them out in case you stop someone else from signin’,” said Cilla huffily.

When Terry came back for the forms he was delighted. “Oh, well done, Miss. A full house except for Latifa and there would certainly be difficulties if she wanted to be confirmed.”

“It wasn’t me,” I told him. “Billy made them an offer they couldn’t refuse.”

“Good for Billy. We’ll make a priest of him yet,” he said as he went away chuckling to himself.

FINALLY

Another year has gone by and it will soon be time to renew your membership, the first morning for doing this will be Thursday 27th October. The cost is £12-00 per person unless you already belong to another U3A in which case it is £8-50.

It is always a very busy time at the front desk so **PLEASE, PLEASE HELP US** by either having your cheques ready, made out to Oxton, Prenton & District U3A, or, by having the correct money, as it is very difficult for us to have sufficient change available.

If you have not renewed your membership by 1st January 2017 you will be removed from our database and will no longer be eligible to attend any groups or monthly meetings.

Thanks to Corinne we now have a Facebook page
Click on the logo for the link

