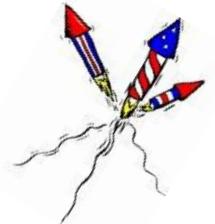


NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2016



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I have done a terrible thing!! Up until a few weeks ago I was determined not to get involved with any form of social media. I vowed that I would never join the 'twits' twittering, or be one of the 'facile' Facebookers. But, I was persuaded by Corinne Whitham, our newest recruit to the committee, that I should stop being a Luddite and join the 21st century.

Corrine had just set up a Facebook page for our U3A and I needed to be able to get to it, and interact with it. It was with trepidation that I signed up to Facebook, uploaded my photo and my profile. My worst fears were confirmed. All sorts of people that I had never heard of wanted to be my friend.

However I soon found out that, unlike real life, if you do not want to communicate with them you can simply delete their name from your page. If only it was that easy to get rid of those annoying people on the telephone who want to sell me a new kitchen, or replacement windows, or fix my computer. After a few days I found that all sorts of people that I do know wanted to get in touch, a few of them I had lost touch with years ago. Facebook has been a revelation for me. I still do not have a clue what I am doing most of the time, but I am learning and the experience has been very satisfying, so thank you Corinne for twisting my arm, and thank you for setting up the Facebook page for our U3A so that our members can access it and contribute to it.

Colin Burkitt
Chairman

*** Access our Facebook page via this link <http://www.facebook.com/oxtonandprentonu3a>

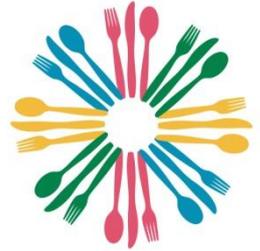
You will need to join Facebook to access our page please ask Corinne or Sandra if you want help to do this

LUNCH CIRCLE

The Lunch Circle will be meeting at The Shippons in Irby

Tuesday 15th November 12-00 for 12-30

Please put your name down on the list at the back of the church hall



MEETINGS and SPEAKERS

10th November – Mike Murphy with his talk entitled ‘ Muck & Money ‘

24th November – Colin Stredder will host a ‘Chocolate Quiz’

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

Thursday 1st December 2016 THE NUTCRACKER English National Ballet
Liverpool Empire 2.30 pm Tickets £21.50
Tickets available for collection now

SOCIAL

Tuesday 1 November 2016 The Old Dock Experience
10.30 am – 11.30 am
Free but booking Essential

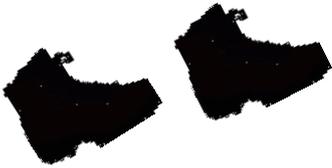
Friday 16th December 2016 CHRISTMAS LUNCH
Wirral Ladies Golf Club 12.00 for 12.30 pm
£24-00 per head Deposit £10 on booking
****There are a few places remaining****



******* IF YOU HAVEN'T PAID YOUR BALANCE YET PLEASE DO SO
AND ALSO PLEASE LET BARBARA KNOW YOUR MENU CHOICES *******

Tuesday 10th January 2017 Heritage Tour at the Royal Court Theatre
2-00 pm start and it lasts 1 ½ hours
£5-00 each and limited spaces so please book early

**PLEASE ALSO REMEMBER THERE WILL BE REPLACEMENT
BUSES BECAUSE OF NO RAIL SERVICES SO PLEASE ALLOW
SUFFICIENT TIME FOR YOUR JOURNEY**



WALKING GROUP

Sandra and Chris will lead this 5 ½ mile walk on Friday 18th November.

In and around Hoylake and West Kirby all on the level, no stiles. NO SHEEP

Lunch around 1-00 pm at The Green Lodge Hoylake. Meet there at 10-30 a.m

WALKING GROUP FEELS A BIT SHEEPISH !

Gwyneth and Corinne kindly volunteered to lead the October walk for the walking group. Before we started Gwyneth warned us that bits of the walk would probably be a bit muddy in places. Gwyneth and Corinne then adorned themselves with one of our stylish high visibility vests each and off we set.

Gwyneth set a cracking pace at the front through the woods and Corinne was our back marker, making sure that nobody headed back to the park café for a bacon buttie and coffee. It was not long before we were out of the woods and into farmland, heading past a fishing lake and stable yard. Beyond were more fields, with some new crops just showing through, there was speculation that it could be rice in a paddy field.

We soon reached the halfway mark and turned the corner into a narrow path between two hedges. We had walked less than a hundred yards up the path when two rather large sheep came hurtling around the corner. It felt like Pamplona on a bad day, with no hiding place from the bulls(sheep)!! A group of U3A walkers was no match for two determined sheep and we were cast aside as they hurtled their way down the path. Fortunately despite some very close encounters neither sheep nor U3A walkers appeared any the worse for wear after the encounter.

From here it was a short hop to the RAF West Kirby memorial and then on to Frankby and the Farmers Arms. The Farmers Arms were all ready for us with two roaring log fires, good food and excellent beer and wine. Once again a very successful and sociable day out in the countryside with friends, thanks to Gwyneth and Corinne.

Next month Sandra and Chris are leading the walk from the Green Lodge in West Kirby, see our website, Facebook page and newsletter for more information.

Colin Burkitt

TEA ROTA FOR AUTUMN 2016

10 TH November	Margaret Cullen	Paul Cullen	Pauline Pinnington
24 TH November	Gerry Riley	Barbara Riley	Marion Jackson

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

BRIAN'S THOUGHTS

November! It is one of those months that people feel that they have to get through somehow: dark, cold, damp and depressing, unless of course you are a member of U3A; then there are all sorts of interest groups, social gatherings and talks to attend, together with the gentle challenge of actually starting a group if there is not one already to your liking. Long before radio and television, this is what our ancestors did. They gathered together to affirm their existence by swapping stories and information. I suspect ghost stories came into it somewhere.

Of course with November comes the issue of Bonfire Night. Many years ago I lived in the town of Lewes in Sussex where the event, universally acclaimed, was celebrated on a scale that involved the whole town. There were various societies, each of which was distinguished by a particular dress code. There were magnificent 'Red Indians' in plumage that had gained in effect with each passing year. There were Mongol Warriors, Zulus and Vikings looking incredibly fierce and swinging huge balls of fire. Everyone carried a flaming torch and these were replaced as soon as they began to burn low. Other societies came in from surrounding districts to swell the throng and the procession, with its bands and out-riders, took some time to make its fiery way down the high street. Each society had its own unique bonfire and firework display. It could be difficult choosing which to attend and at the same time, easy to feel that we had the power to vanquish darkness and to walk fearlessly into the winter with our pagan ancestors following close behind.

Things are very different now. Monica's guide-dog hates and dreads all things that bang. She heaves her large frame onto the sofa at the sound of the first firework, trying in vain to hide herself under the cushions. For many a night on either side of November the fifth we have to wait until well after midnight until all banging has stopped before we dare take her out for 'last orders'. What with her nervous debility in view of all that has gone before, together with the need to find somewhere that smells reassuringly 'right', finding a suitable place and moment in which to relieve herself of both the physiological and psychological tension that has been accumulating over the past hours is not easy. During this time of hope and tension yet another bang will invariably occur. The poor animal will then make a hasty, unfulfilled retreat and we will have to wait another half hour before going through it all again and perhaps yet another after that.

It is always with enormous relief and gratitude that we get to the quieter part of the month and discover that in spite of indications to the contrary, we have all survived. The three cats seem to take this in their collective stride. They have problems of their own to attend to. All are rescued and came to us with 'issues'. Rumpuss was radicalised by Muslims, Tom has a post-traumatic strain disorder and Flossie is a paranoid schizophrenic so it's hard for a pagan festival to compete with that little collection of behaviours.

November is a good month in which to plan ones strategies for Christmas. Mine tend to vary between planning to ignore most of it, to making a few token gestures. Deciding which bits I can reasonably leave out might take as much energy as actually doing the deed later on. I was not encouraged by receiving my first Christmas card in June and all too soon the really organised people will be getting theirs in the post: a strategy specifically designed to make me feel inferior. I suspect I have caught that mode of thinking from our Flossie. November is certainly a good month in which to slow down, if you have not already done so. We really do need the seasons and should do our best to keep in step with them. In this way the auto-immune system has time ahead in which to renew and repair itself. A very wise man once reminded me that a 'stop' light is every bit as important as a 'go'.

Brian Gill

NUMBERS (aka Rod's Brain Teasers)

Can $2=1$? Of course not, but hang on, below is the proof that it does! For those of us who are interested in numbers, I thought an occasional column might be amusing and sometimes get a few of the old brain cells working. For those of you, who aren't, just give us a pat on the head.

Please note that none of this is original.

1. Proof that $2=1$

Let $a=b$

Multiply both sides by a , giving

$$a^2=ab$$

Then add a^2-2ab to both sides

$$a^2+a^2-2ab=ab+a^2-2ab$$

This can be simplified to

$$2(a^2-ab)=(a^2-ab)$$

Finally divide both sides by a^2-ab , and we get

$$2=1$$

Of course there is an error but where is it?

.....

2. $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12345678987654321$

.....

3. The 6174 loop

1. *Select a four-digit number. (Do not use 1111, 2222, etc.)*
2. *Arrange the digits in decreasing order.*
3. *Arrange the digits in increasing order.*
4. *Subtract the smaller number from the larger number.*
5. *Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4 with the result, and so on. What happens?*

Let's try 7173

Arrange the digits in decreasing order. 7731

Arrange the digits in increasing order. 1377

Subtract the smaller number from the larger number. $7731 - 1377 = 6354$

Repeat the process with 6354

$6543 - 3456 = 3087$

$8730 - 0378 = 8352$

$8532 - 2358 = 6174$

$7641 - 1467 = 6174$

$7641 - 1467 = 6174$ (we're in a loop.)

Amazingly, all four-digit numbers (not multiples of 1111) end up in the 6174 loop. No reason has been found for this phenomenon.

.....

4. If the individual digits of any number divisible by 9 are added together, then the end result will be 9 – e.g.

$$9 \times 2 = 18 \rightarrow 1+8 = 9$$

$$9 \times 7504 = 67536 \rightarrow 6+7+5+3+6 = 27 \rightarrow 2+7 = 9$$

$$9 \times 17515476 = 157639284 \rightarrow 1+5+7+6+3+9+2+8+4 = 45 \rightarrow 4+5 = 9$$

Rod Paddock

ASSISTANCE REQUIRED BY NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

We have received the following request from Anna Hodgson, Trainee Clinical Psychologist at Newcastle University, please complete the questionnaire if you are able to or if you want more information please contact her via the e mail address below.

This is an invitation for you to participate in an online questionnaire study researching worry, health and engagement in personally meaningful activities in adults over the age of 60. This project aims to develop our understanding of the relationships between these concepts to improve our knowledge of what keeps people healthy as we age. If you are interested in participating in this study or would like more information please click on the following link

http://nclpsych.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_09i53pfBmMLuiOh

or email the lead researcher, Anna Hodgson, at worry65plus@ncl.ac.uk

The research will be continuing until about January/February 2017 so there is plenty of time for responses.

Over the past few of years Pauline Pinnington and I have tried to maintain the ethos of our reason U3A by keeping in touch with members who we do not see at our meetings for one or another. But as you may have noticed Pauline is now helping The Barbaras on the Social Table and I would like to thank her very much for her help during the last few years. Two heads can be better than one, as we have proved quite often, so I am very pleased to say that Mary Hamilton has agreed to step into Pauline's shoes. Please do tell us if you know of anyone who could benefit from a card or phone call .The only way we can let people know that U3A are thinking of them is by you passing on the information to us when people are ill or need contact. We would feel very sorry to miss such an opportunity just because neither of us knew about it.

Carol Burkitt

Here is another short story from one of our talented creative writing group members:

The Key

Shopping had been hard work. Home at last, an exhausted Olivia dropped her bulging bags onto the living room floor and collapsed in an armchair. She didn't know why it had been so busy. It wasn't a Bank Holiday or any special weekend but the town had been chock-a-block. She had been shopping for her sister Becky's birthday and was pleased with her buys. Having rested for a few minutes Olivia stood up and looked again at the presents as she lifted each one out of a bag and laid it on the table. Yes, she was very pleased.

On hearing Olivia in the living room, Mum came through from the kitchen.

"How did you get on?" enquired Mum "How were the shops?"

"It was very busy. I don't know why." Olivia replied, as she continued taking her buys from the bags.

Meanwhile Mum was taking a look at the presents on the table.

"Becky will be pleased with these."

"Yes, well I'm hoping so. I must say I think I've done OK."

As she lifted the last box Olivia thought she saw something in the bottom of the bag. She looked more closely. There was something. A tiny gold key, "Where on earth has that come from?" she thought out loud.

"What's that you said?" asked Mum.

"There's a tiny gold key in the bottom of the bag" said Olivia slowly

"Let me have a look!" demanded Mum taking the by the handles and pulling it wide open. "Well, there are a few scraps of tinselly stuff. It must have been used for Christmas shopping at some time. Did you not see them? I can't see anything else."

"No." answered Olivia "There was definitely a key." And she stood staring into the empty bag.

"Well, I don't know." sighed Mum "But I must get on. Becky will be back soon and I'm halfway through her birthday cake."

"What, eating it already?" quipped Olivia.

"No, baking it silly." said Mum as she disappeared back into the kitchen.

As soon as Mum was gone Olivia looked into the bag again and there was the key. "I don't understand what's going on here but something's very odd." murmured Olivia to herself. She remembered that there had been the odd bod trying to sell 'Special Offers'. Perhaps one of them had dropped it in the bag but what would have been the point? Anyway she had avoided them, cursing because they partially blocked the pavements.

Olivia picked the key out of the bag. She couldn't take her eyes off it. It was quite heavy for its size. "Surely not real gold." she mused and dropped the key into her pocket.

Olivia packed the presents back into the bags and went upstairs to her bedroom. She wanted to get them wrapped before Becky got home. She locked the door to stop Becky bursting in as she sometimes did. Try as she might to concentrate on the wrapping Olivia couldn't stop thinking about the key. She knew it was still there. She could feel its weight. She slipped her hand into her

pocket and, enclosing the key in her fist, slowly withdrew it. She was almost afraid to open her fingers but open them she did and there it was.

“Just an ordinary little key.” Olivia tried to tell herself. But she knew it wasn't. The fact that it was there at all was a mystery and the way it disappeared when her mother looked in the bag was quite extraordinary. It was all beyond her. Putting thoughts of the key from her mind as best she could, Olivia got on with the wrapping but she had hardly begun when she heard footsteps on the stairs, coming up two at a time. It must be Becky back early. There was a knock on the door.

“Just a minute.” called Olivia

“What're you hiding in there, sis?”

“Never you mind. Actually I do have something to show you.” replied Olivia, hastily shoving the presents into hiding and opening her door. “When I was downstairs unpacking my shopping I found a little gold key in the bottom of a bag, really shiny and quite heavy for its size. I showed Mum, at least I tried to show Mum but when she looked it wasn't there. It just disappeared.”

“Have you got it handy?” asked Becky “Show me.”

“It's in my pocket, well, in my fist. I can feel it.” and Olivia drew her hand from her pocket.

“Come on then, let me see!”

Slowly Olivia opened her fingers but her hand was empty. The key had gone.

“You're having me on.” laughed Becky, “Good story though.”

“No, honestly, it's there.” as indeed it was now that Olivia's hand was back in her pocket. “It's a bit scary. I don't know what's going on.”

“Have you told the boyfriend?” Becky was referring to Mike, Olivia's latest.

“Not yet but I'll ring him. See if he's free for lunch. See whether he can make anything of it” Olivia retreated to her room, fished the phone from her hand bag and hit the speed dial for Mike. He was quick to answer.

“Hi Olivia.”

“Mike, can you meet me for lunch?”

“I'm a bit hard pressed.”

“I've something to tell you.”

“Can't you tell me over the phone?”

“No, well, I've something to show you as well.”

“We're meeting tonight. Can it not wait till then?”

“Well I suppose it could but I'd really much prefer now.”

“Oh, OK, I'll meet you in that coffee place down Broad Street in about an hour. It'll only be for about 15 mins though.”

“See you then.” said Olivia ending the call.

When Olivia arrived Mike was already there sitting with two coffees at a corner table. “I thought at least you could be on time.” he grumbled “I told you how busy I am.”

“I'm sorry.” replied Olivia testily “It's not easy to judge 'about an hour' exactly.”

“Yeah, sorry too. I didn't mean to snap.” responded Mike “Now what's this you wanted to show me?”

“It's very odd but when I got back from shopping this morning I found a small gold coloured key in the bottom of one of the bags.” Olivia related what had happened when she tried to show her Mum and Becky.

“That *is* odd.” agreed Mike, “Show me!”

Olivia reached into her pocket, grasped the key and laid her clasped hand on the table fingers upwards.

“Come on, I haven't got all day.” urged Mike.

Almost reluctantly Olivia opened her hand and, as she expected, it was quite empty.

“I've better things to do than listen to your fairy stories.” Mike said somewhat angrily “It's time I was back at work. See you tonight.” and he marched out leaving Olivia with half a cup of cold coffee and a feeling of despondence.

Olivia stood up ready to go, leaving the coffee and wondering whether she really wanted to see Mike that evening. As she passed the queue at the counter on the way out she felt a tap on her shoulder.

“Hi, Olivia.” it was Mike's elder brother Paul.

“Oh, hi Paul. Sorry, I didn't see you.”

“I thought you looked a bit distracted. I've just seen Mike rushing back to work. You don't fancy another coffee and a chat by any chance do you?”

Olivia knew that Paul had a soft spot for her and after Mike he might have rather more empathy. “Yes, please. Why not? I'd like that. I'm not in a hurry. Cappuccino please.”

The table with the cold coffee was still free and Olivia sat down again. Soon Paul arrived with the fresh coffee and sat opposite, elbows on the table.

“So how are you? Still dating my baby brother I see.” began Paul

“I'm OK. Just had a few words with Mike actually.”

“Shame. He doesn't know when he's well off. Anything you want to share or strictly private?”

“No, I suppose it was nothing really.”

They sat quiet for a few moments then Olivia broke the silence. “Actually there is something.” And she told Paul the tale of the key and how it seemed to be real but then vanished when others looked. “Mike was really brassed off and I must admit I'm starting to feel a bit the same way. It's so frustrating.”

“I believe you.” said Paul suddenly.

“How can you? You haven't asked to see the key or even queried anything about it.” Olivia found Paul's blind acceptance rather patronising and almost as irritating as Mike's disbelief.

“Show me the key now!” invited Paul.

“But you won't see anything. Nobody can see it but me. I'm beginning to wish I'd never found the damned thing.”

“Please.” pressed Paul.

“Oh all right I've nothing to lose - except my marbles.” Olivia gripped the key in her fist once more and once again opened her fingers in what had become rather a routine, expecting the routine result. But no! Incredibly there was the key. Olivia stared in disbelief.

“There you are.” said Paul quietly “Now do you believe that I believe you?”

“I..I..It's not possible.” stammered a shocked Olivia.

“But it is.” insisted Paul, opening his hand revealing to Olivia an identical key.

But that was fifty years ago, just before they married and now fifty years later, very occasionally as they sit by the fire in the evening they hold hands and tell each other the tales of how they found their keys.

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FINALLY

Another year has gone by and it is now time to renew your membership. 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.
