



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2017

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It is January as I write this looking out of my window at the gale force winds, grey skies and pouring rain there does not seem much cause for celebration. But behind those heavy black clouds there are some serious silver linings.

We have much to celebrate this year. Later this year our U3A will celebrate its 10th birthday. Your committee are already working on some ambitious plans for us all to celebrate this milestone in some style. Just watch out for more information over the next few months.

The U3A itself also has much to celebrate, the 1000th U3A group having just opened for business. The organisation has grown rapidly over the last couple of decades showing that there is a need for what we can provide for ourselves given the structure to work within.

So despite the lousy weather and predictions of doom and gloom from the soothsayers in the media I am confident that the future holds great prospects for all of us. So I encourage you all to seize the opportunity and get out there and try something new and make the most of it.

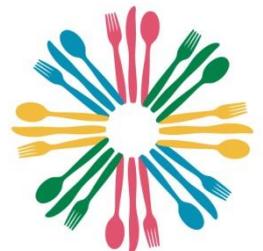
Colin Burkitt
Chairman

LUNCH CIRCLE

The next meeting of the lunch circle will be on 21st February

Caernarvon Castle Oxton

12-00 for 12-30



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

EVENTS

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

REMINDERS:

Thursday 9th February 2017

Please note slight change in schedule !!!

Meet 10-30 a.m 86 bus stop, Elliott St, Liverpool

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Morning Tour of Princes Road Synagogue Liverpool | £7-00 |
| 2. Optional Lunch at Anglican Cathedral | £10-00 |
| 3. Afternoon Tour of Anglican Cathedral | £3-00 |

IMPORTANT !!! To those lunching at The Cathedral payment of £10-00 is now due please

BOOKING CLOSED

EVENTS NOW BOOKING

Thursday 23rd March 2017

Mersey Tunnel Tour (near Pier Head) 2-00 pm to 4-00 pm
Tickets £6-00

NB Trains will be running to James Street by this point

THEATRE

Tuesday 21st March 2017

CYRANO

Liverpool Playhouse 7.30 pm

Collect your tickets and meet at the theatre

BOOKING CLOSED

Thursday 18th May 2017

BILLY ELLIOT – First UK tour

Liverpool Empire at 2-30 pm Tickets £30-00

Wednesday 29th Nov 2017

WARHORSE at Liverpool Empire at 2-30 pm

Tickets £45-50 (best price available)

Secure your ticket with a £20 deposit with balance payable around Easter

MEETINGS and SPEAKERS

Thursday 2nd February Social Morning - Brian Cullen talks about Radio Caroline

Thursday 16th February – John Blease and The Poetry of Wendy Cope

Wendy Cope is perhaps our best known and loved living poet. Her empathy, understanding and insight, particularly in the field of relationships, have added much to the texture and quality of human experience which she is able to view with both humour and depth.

WALKING GROUP

Friday 17th February

Meet at The Red Fox in Thornton Hough at 10-30 am, Pauline and Dave Pinnington will lead this 5 mile flat circular walk. There will be some stiles and, as it is across fields, it may be muddy in places and also there may be cattle in a couple of the fields. Lunch is back at The Red Fox. Sign up at the next meeting.

Thank you Gerry for January's walk, brilliant weather and wonderful views from Riverside Park.



TEA & COFFEE ROTA FEBRUARY & MARCH 2017

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| February 2 nd 2017 | Barbara Baker | Kathy Sullivan | Arlene Hunton |
| February 16 th 2017 | Gwen Burrell | Jean Sheratt | Kate Walton |
| March 2 nd 2017 | Joan Parfect | Lilian Evans | Helen Roberts |
| March 16 th 2017 | Jean Dickie | Maureen Jones | Valerie Noble |
| March 30 th 2017 | Margaret Yeardsley | Ursula Cook | Judith Wylie |

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

When February comes, can Spring be far behind?

Thinking about February brings to mind aphorisms like ‘Its got to get worse before it can get better,’ and ‘It’s always darkest just before the dawn,’ ‘Nasty first and nice after,’ ‘What can’t be cured must be endured;’ and so on. Country people refer to ‘February fill-dyke.’ As previously observed, it is a good time to go on a cruise or book a summer holiday. Or one can just stay home and put up with it. Here in Oxtan and Prenton U3A we do not have to look far for entertainment to see us through the month. The weeks seem to wiz by but if by any chance you are finding time hangs somewhat heavily, the month is gloomy and dark and friends have all escaped to warmer climes, you can always join our U3A committee. That I can promise will reward you with hours of innocent fun and February will seem to be over in no time.

As a psychologist I cannot help but notice that there are people who spend their whole lives in February; permanently damp and cold; conversely there are those for whom the sun is always shining, though I have to confess they can sometimes be a bit irritating. There are clear advantages to be gained from aligning oneself with the seasons rather than being at odds with them. Having said that, it used to seem strange to me that sheep choose to give birth in February; some even earlier. But of course the lambs can snuggle up to their woolly mothers and drink their milk so that in March, when things start to grow again they are ready to take advantage of the whole summer from its very earliest beginnings.

I actually like February. Wild and unpredictable as it can be, it is full of surprises: of the unexpected and often the inconvenient. So we have to adapt and adopt as we look for the first snow drops, the aconites and the hellebores that convince us that, however bad the weather, spring is virtually here. When we first came to live in Oxtan there were certain items in the garden that had no realistic expectations of surviving a really cold spell (and in the end they did not). They told us much about the previous owners. *He* saw the garden as a potential football pitch, bleak and empty, whilst for *her* it was a fairy grotto – quite unrealistic. February, the month when we moved in, was for them the month in which it finally fell apart. February does tend to seek out weaknesses, incompatibilities and vulnerabilities and can be a strain on ones temper but in the end, that which survives is generally stronger, more authentic and better equipped to face the Spring.

Brian Gill

U3A SHORT COURSE - A HISTORY OF CARTOONS

HESWALL HALL

This is a series of 3 x 2 hour lectures to be given by Ian Barclay,

16th February 2017 10.00am – 12noon

2nd March 2017 10.00am – 12noon

16th March 2017 10.00am – 12noon

£10 for the 3 sessions.

The first session deals with Art, Drawing, Cartoon Creation, and the Early History of Cartoons.

The second session covers Modern Day Cartoons and the Influence of Cartoons.

The third session focuses on Commerce & Communication and The Best of The Breed.

For further information or booking please contact Tricia Harrison at ;
tricia.m.harrison@btinternet.com or 334 6085

This course is open to all current U3A Members

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

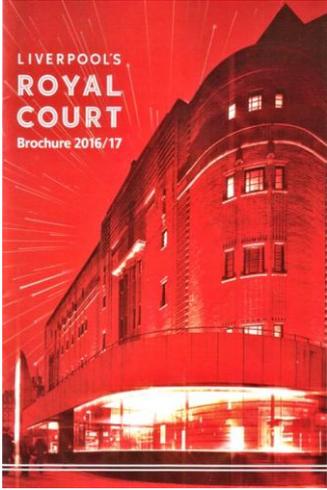
For those of you who read and enjoy our monthly e-mail newsletter, there are quite a few of you to whom I must say “Thank you very much for your continuing kind remarks each month regarding the newsletter” nothing makes me happier than to know someone is enjoying reading it. I was surprised when checking the files on my computer to find that I had actually been editing the Newsletter for the past 6 years. For the first couple of years it was a printed publication which went out about 3 times each year, when printing costs became too much for us we changed to the e mail version which goes out monthly.

I have thoroughly enjoyed this task and learned so much (thank you Ann for giving me the opportunity to grow in the role of Editor) and I owe a huge thank you to everyone who has written an article, everyone who has sent the information and a huge thank you for all the photographs that have been sent for me to use. Without your contributions there would be no newsletter. However I feel that probably the time has come for someone else to take on this role. It is not an arduous task. The use of a computer and knowledge of Microsoft Word or a similar programme and the ability to send e-mails with attachments is all that is needed. You wouldn't even have to be a member of the committee just a member of this Group.

I will still be around to help and advise so if any of you feel you might like to take on the role of Newsletter Editor why not come and have a chat with me ?

Sandra Lakin

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE ROYAL COURT



On Tuesday, 10th January a group of members met at the Royal Court theatre in Liverpool to discover the ins and outs, and ups and downs of this interesting building which is a Grade 11 listed building having been built in the Art Deco style in 1938. There had long been a “theatre” on that site in different forms, the original show area was known as Cooke’s Amphitheatre of Arts, started in 1826, which was open to the elements. As the site developed, buildings were erected and the previous building to this one was completely destroyed by fire.

Our tour guides for the trip were Dave and Andy both of whom know the theatre well. We were told that because of auditions being held on the stage we would not be able to go into the auditorium as much as usual but we would see other parts of the theatre not usually on the tour.

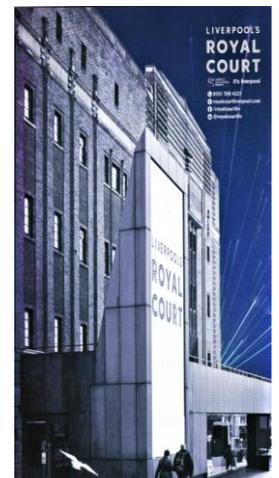
We followed our leader down into the basement to the foyer of the Queen Mary lounge & saw the original Art Deco lights, mirrors, coving and flooring. There are plans for this area to be made into a lounge with bar and seating for use as a small theatre space, as can be found in a number of modern theatres. The theatre when new reflected the grandeur of the transatlantic liners, specifically Queen Mary, on which there was a Royal Court lounge; perhaps the Royal Court theatre was included in the cruise?

The intention during this renovation of the theatre has been to keep and display the original features of the building but on our walk around we were shown where walls had been taken down or moved in order to give more space in the public areas. This has changed the lines of the rooms considerably therefore the interior design has been lost in places and the walls show the brickwork and pipe work which would not have been the case before. One has to say that a great deal of effort & fundraising has gone into the work and is still going on, so praise where it is due as the theatre keeps going as the work continues, no doubt a difficult situation at times.

We crept into the auditorium to hear the acoustics which are very good. We could hear the words spoken during the audition from the very high balcony area. The lighting room at the very top of the theatre was pointed out and the explanation of how floodlights developed was explained outside the auditorium. Did you know that the first floodlights were made from powdered limestone which burns very brightly? The limestone was burnt in the small lighting room with an opening high up in the theatre and the light was focussed down onto the actors on the stage, hence “being in the limelight”! Lighting improved over the ages but has always been a very technically precise operation, and in the first place, quite a hazardous part of theatre life. We also went into the circle for a good view of the auditorium. The Royal Court is well worth seeing partly because of the steepness of the seating which does give a very good view of the stage from every seat in the house.

We were able to go onto the back of the stage very quietly to see the sets and the props table, as the safety curtain was down. There were numerous things all around, even a pair of posh red shoes mid stage, but no doubt all the actors know exactly where everything they need is situated and woe betide anyone who moves them!

From the back of the stage some of us returned to the steep stairs around the old lift shaft and went up again to the props room, the wardrobe, where the talented seamstress works from her own observations of the actors, no pattern, the laundry room, just a washer and tumbler, nothing fancy, then into the area above the stage!! We walked across a bridge to the area



from which the “flats” for the scenery are raised and lowered, quite something as the walkway was not wide, the scenery often heavy, the ropes need managing and to compound it all one of the Royal Court’s ghosts is to be seen up there, not yesterday though !

On our return to the ground floor we were offered coffee or tea in the auditorium which was very welcome after our busy afternoon. Many thanks to our guides Dave, Andy, & Milly for organising our afternoon, and as always, to Barbara Lloyd for yet another interesting & informative trip for Oxtan & Prenton U3A.
Carol Burkitt

North West Region of U3As

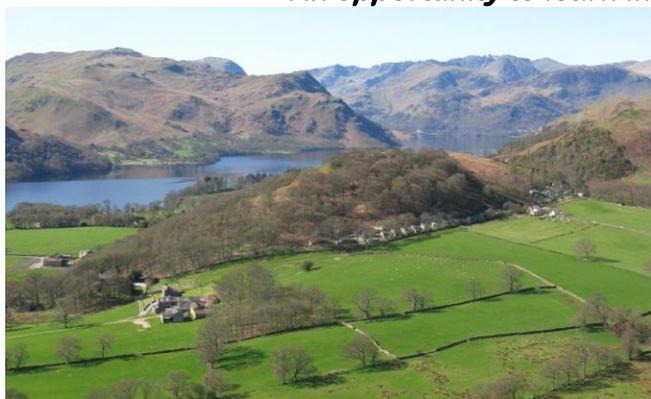
Invite applications for their Residential Summer School

29th August – 1st September 2017

At Newton Rigg College, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0AH



An opportunity to learn in the inspiring setting of the Lake District



Newton Rigg College is located close to J40 of the M6 and less than five minutes’ drive from Penrith Railway Station. The campus, which is just ten minutes from Ullswater, has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access. Food is locally sourced and prepared on the premises. A large room is available for meeting and socialising. There will be entertainment on the second evening and a “Gala Dinner” on the third and final evening

The ten courses on offer include those which have proved popular in previous years and a number of new courses. Course titles are: **About Beauty, Architecture: The ABC of Cities, Digital Digging for Armchair Archaeologists, Geology of Lakeland Landscapes, Painting with Stitches, Medicine in the 21st Century, Recorder Playing, Russian and Soviet Culture, Science is for Everyone, Ukulele for Beginners**



Full Board Residential Delegate; £275 We include a welcome reception, full board for three nights (including dinner on the 1st September), breakfast, morning coffee and lunch on 2nd September.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £155 includes lunches, teas and coffees, (excludes breakfast (£8.00) a 2 course dinner (£16.00) and Thursdays’ Gala Dinner £24.00. **If any of these meals are required they must be booked in advance and would be subject to an additional charge. Alternatively, Accommodation is available at the Travelodge /local B&B’s or Hotels.** Full details of the costs for the school are set out in the Booking Notes.

An Application form, obtained from our Website, must be completed and sent with a deposit cheque for £50.

Any member booking and paying their deposit of £50 no later than 31st May 2017 will attract a discount on the above figures of £35 (Full Board Residential Delegate) and £35 (Non-Residential Day Delegate) Any queries should be directed to Neil Stevenson on 01744 895723 or ndstevenson@hotmail.com

Visiting Santa – a short story

Alan always found Christmastime to be stressful, at least that time just before Christmas, that time when (according to the media) he ought to be looking forward to the joys of the season. For Alan the season was that when presents must be bought, not any old presents but suitable presents. Every year he intended to do all of his shopping well before Christmas, say October, to avoid the crush but he never managed it. In addition, largely because of his advancing years, the sad business of updating the present and Christmas card lists had to be done, 'updating' meaning crossing off those relatives and friends who hadn't survived the year. Though few, the fact that there were any at all was upsetting.

In all of this difficulty and melancholia there was always one super-bright occasion to enjoy with unbounded pleasure - taking his granddaughter Madeleine to see Father Christmas. It was understood throughout the family that this was Alan's job and no-one would dare to suggest otherwise. Indeed Madeleine herself insisted that she would only go with Granddad Alan which, in itself, was very pleasing. Madeleine was now seven years old and had long since abandoned belief in Father Christmas but the annual visit was not to be written off.

At last the day came for the trip to Santa's Grotto. Madeleine always wore her Sunday best (my, that's a phrase from the past) and Alan himself was always smartly dressed. He remembered Madeleine scolding him a while ago because his shoes didn't have a mirror finish.

“Granda, look at your shoes! You must always look your best for Santa.”

“Yes you're right Madeleine. I'll polish them straight away.”

Madeleine might easily have added “...and don't let it happen again.” but she didn't. It was rather reminiscent of an army RSM.

It was early afternoon when they caught the bus into town. Madeleine was full of excitement even though Father Christmas was, well, a fraud. Her excitement was infectious. Alan couldn't keep the smile off his face. This was his favourite time with Madeleine, just the two of them and both in such high spirits. The walk, hands held, from the bus stop to the department store which housed the grotto was almost a trot. Once inside the store they had to stop briefly to admire all the decorations hanging, flashing and glittering from everywhere, then quickly off to the grotto following the signs. Up two escalators and there it was in the middle of the second floor. It was a magnificent edifice, far superior to any other grotto in town, rather more expensive but well worth it. It actually looked as though it might be covered in thick snow with glistening ice, flickering lights and even Santa's sleigh parked up with a magnificent model reindeer, as though ready for the big night. Elves were on hand to help should any be needed and also, no doubt, to keep the more adventurous children in order.

The queue wasn't too long but long enough. Alan suggested to Madeleine that it might be half an hour but an elf told him a more pessimistic three quarters. Neither of them minded the wait. Alan enjoyed chatting to the other parents, and the children, in spite of or maybe because of their disparate ages, just got along so well together. Time passed quickly and when Alan got to the front of the queue Madeleine left the other children to join him, holding his hand tightly. Soon the elf by the door indicated for them to enter the inner sanctum. The perfect rotund, white bearded, red garbed Santa welcomed them so warmly it was as though Madeleine were the only child he'd met. The usual conversation ensued: name, age, what would you like, have you been good etc. It was the same every year and probably with every child but nothing could dull the delight in talking almost in a loud whisper with the man himself. After handing Madeleine a well wrapped present and having a brief word with Alan, it was over and an elf showed them to the tunnel that was the way out. Madeleine skipped along almost beside herself wondering what the present might be: a game, a doll, building blocks had all been presents in the past. Secretly what she would really like

was some sort of construction kit like her father's meccano that he had cherished since he was a boy and had recently shown her.

Before they reached the exit another elf stepped from a doorway into their path.

“Excuse me sir but we've been having some trouble with the tunnel roof and since you are rather tall, would you mind leaving that way?” said the elf pointing to another tunnel that branched off. “You will still come out on Church Street.”

“Not at all.” replied Alan “I hope you get it fixed soon.”

“Thank you sir. I'm sure it will be mended later today.” and with that the elf disappeared back through the door.

They could see that it was quite a short tunnel with a wrought iron gate across it. Alan swung the gate open for Madeleine to go through and he followed.

“Did you feel a funny shivery feeling as we went through the gate, Granda?”

“Yes I did, very strange and shivery.” replied Granda

“Do you think my present might be some Meccano?”

“It might be, Alan. You'll find out on Christmas Day.”

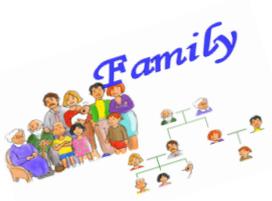
“Can we have a ride on a tram Granda?”

“I think we have time. Would you like a ride on a tram or the overhead railway?”

“Oh yes, let's go on the railway.”

“Just for a short ride. Then we must get back for tea, pikelets and strawberry jam.

© R. Paddock 2017



Lancashire – Merseyside Network

Family History and Liverpool Heritage Study day



Venue: Liverpool Central Library Meeting Room 2 Top Floor
Tuesday 14th March 2017 10.15am – 4.15pm

**Do you want to find out more about your family history?
Would you like to discover more about Liverpool's heritage?**

| | |
|-------|--|
| 10.15 | Registration in Meeting Room 2, Top Floor |
| 10.30 | Group 1: Presentation by Roger Hull, Head Researcher Group 2: Liverpool Heritage Walk including a visit to the Three Graces at the Pier Head. Suitable footwear and bottle of water required. |
| 11.45 | Group 1: Tour of some of the Archive facilities |
| 12.15 | LUNCH |

14. 00 Groups will change over, those having done Heritage Walk will have the presentation in the Library and tour of some of the Archive facilities
16.15 Finish

Cost for the day: £8.00 to cover venue and expert presenters

Application form below or available on Regional website <http://www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west>

Or send SAE to Linda Costello, 26 Croftwood Grove, Whiston L35 3UT

**Application form for
Family History and Liverpool Heritage Study Day
Tuesday 14th March 2017 at 10.15am
Cost £8 to cover room rental and Expert Staff.**

Name

U3A

Home Address

.....

Post Code Telephone

Email

Would you like to raise any particular questions?

.....

.....

.....

This application form is available on the
North West U3A Website <http://u3asites.org.uk/north-west>
or with SAE from Linda Costello (see below)

Please return this form at the earliest opportunity to ;

lindacostello2017@outlook.com or by post to 26 Croftwood Grove, Whiston L35 3UT