

NEWSLETTER **MARCH 2017**

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

We are constantly being bombarded by media reports that the NHS is falling apart at the seams and needs a massive cash injection that the country cannot afford. I suspect that the truth is that the organisation is struggling to cope with increasing demand at a time when money and resources are tight. Nonetheless on an almost daily basis I hear of people in need of medical help who cannot speak highly enough of the service and professionalism of the services in our region.

I do have one solution to help the funding situation. Doctors should provide U3A membership on prescription as a more cost effective means of health improvement. Your U3A offers physical activity in the form of walking, gardening and more general visits which involve exercise. Your mental well being is well served with meditation and psychology. We are always told 'use it or lose it' and there are a host of activities, such as bridge, creative writing and languages that will help stir the old grey matter.

Most important is the social activity that belonging to our U3A brings. Irrespective of which groups you belong to, or which meetings and events you attend, you find yourself amongst like minded people. There is something on offer virtually every day of the week so you should never feel alone and isolated, and if you are unable to get out for some reason our welfare and communications team will keep you in touch.

Colin Burkitt Chairman

LUNCH CIRCLE

The next meeting of the lunch circle will be on March 21st 2017

The Queens Arms, 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

EVENTS NOW BOOKING

Thursday 6th April 2017

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

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

Thursday 20th April 2017

Weaver Hall Museum & Lion Salt Works
Depart Trinity with Palm Grove at 9-30 am
Morning visit to Museum
Lunch in nearby Pub at own expense
Afternoon visit to Salt Works
Home approximately 5-00 pm
Cost of coach and both tours £22-00

THEATRE REMINDERS

Tuesday 21st March 2017

CYRANO
Liverpool Playhouse 7.30 pm
Collect your tickets and meet at the theatre
BOOKING CLOSED

THEATRE NOW BOOKING

Thursday 18th May 2017

BILLY ELLIOT – **First UK tour**
Liverpool Empire at 2-30 pm Tickets £30-00
Booking closing soon

Thursday 29th June 2017

THE RED SHOES (Latest Matthew Bourne Production)
Liverpool Empire at 2-30 pm Tickets £12-00

Wednesday 29th Nov 2017

WARHORSE at Liverpool Empire at 2-30 pm
Tickets £45-50 (best price available)
Booking closing 13th April Full payment MUST be received by then

MEETINGS and SPEAKERS

March 2nd 2017 Social meeting – "A Course for Murder" (Brian Gill) Who dun it ????
Murder, mystery and mayhem but which Committee member is the murderer?

March 16th 2017 Speaker Meeting – Fay Robinson 'Reflections of an Ex-Chorus Girl '

March 30th 2017 Social Meeting – Carol Morris Lewis and The Wirral Holistic Society

WALKING GROUP

FRIDAY 17th MARCH 2017

Colin will lead a circular walk from Lower Heswall of about six miles. We walk from Lower Heswall up through Heswall Dales and along the path to Thurstaston church with great views over the Dee estuary.

We will stop at Thurstaston Visitor centre for toilets and a short break. There are tables and chairs which we can use inside the building if the weather is not good enough to sit outside, but there is no café so bring your own. We return to Lower Heswall via the Wirral Way to our lunch venue (the Black Horse hotel) arriving at about 2pm.

The terrain is varied, footpaths, farm tracks, lanes and a little road walking. There is one hill, with steps up, and some footpaths may be a bit muddy after rain. There is one small stone stile en route.

We meet in Lower Heswall outside the church – opposite the Black Horse Hotel @10-30am

There is parking along the road, outside the shops in Lower Heswall, or in the road which runs up the hill immediately to the side of the pub. **Do not park in the bays outside the church hall as parking here is limited to 2 hours.**

THE PUB HAS ASKED US TO PRE ORDER MEALS - see the sign in sheet for menu and order form.

THORNTON HOUGH WALK FRIDAY 17th February 2017



Many thanks to Dave & Pauline for leading this very enjoyable walk.

Has it arrived?

If you are reading this the likelihood is that you have survived the winter; congratulations! Now I know that March is not necessarily the warmest and sunniest of months but we can at least convince ourselves that the worst is behind us; though statistically it is more likely to snow at Easter than at Christmas! Looking back to the days when we used to plan family picnics at Easter I tend to remember most the cramped interiors of cars in which the view of the sublime countryside was obscured on the inside by massive condensation and on the outside by low clouds bearing rain, sleet and snow. I have a clear memory of daffodils being bowed down under a white blanket.

But looking on the bright side, March is the month of the Vernal Equinox and the days are clearly getting longer, offering us more light than dark from now on. Even way back in February I found myself doing odd jobs in the garden after five in the evening and getting excited about snowdrops. Is it not strange that spring always seems to come as a surprise? At least to me it does; and having seen over eighty of them I really ought to know better. I look for every sign – each opening bud and sprouting bulb. On this score there is every justification for a degree of anxiety. Though it is likely that most of the garden will have survived our relatively warm winters, things will not necessarily have escaped the depredations of ravaging squirrels. They like yellow crocus corms, hyacinth bulbs and apple tree bark, amongst other items and our only hope is to fill them so full with nuts and seeds that there will be no room left in their stomachs for the more choice items. They run a highly successful protection scam. If we do not give them all they demand in the feeders it will be the worse for us. People who look to nature for Edenic paradigms will be presented with some very dubious models. The squirrels were there long before the Mafia.

Squirrels do not bother with begonias so if these adaptable plants survive the winter, and a few always do, we can have them to ourselves. Monty Don assures us that no self respecting gardener would entertain a begonia. He is, of course entitled to his opinion, well supported as it is by various collaborators. That does not prevent him from being wrong – at least in my case. Slugs do not like begonias either and in our garden we have slugs the size of putative anacondas who view all my efforts to grow things as a side-salad. We are also in deep shade. Begonias happily put up with all of this and just keep flowering. The moral of this tale is that we should have the courage to do what works for us regardless of fashion and ‘enlightened’ opinion. One friend assures me that there are other more interesting and worthwhile plants that will grow in shade. Yes indeed there are. You have to send away for them or travel for miles, burning fuel and when you get them home they might, with luck, flower for a month. I can buy begonias at Aldi.

This is not intended to be a gardening column but rather an exhortation to pragmatic realism. I am talking to myself really, reminding myself to have the courage to do what is right for me. One can learn a great deal from a begonia.

Brian Gill

TEA & COFFEE ROTA MARCH 2017

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

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

U3A OUTING THURSDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2017

On a cold, cloudy but dry February morning, a group of U3A members took a bus from Liverpool city centre to Princes Road Synagogue at the city boundary with Toxteth.

After elevenses and the chance to admire the impressive Minton floor tiles in the entrance hall, we were taken into the synagogue itself by our friendly and knowledgeable lady guide who, for the next hour, explained the history of the building.



Opened in 1874 by the members of the Liverpool Old Hebrew Congregation, it is one of three synagogues in the city, along with those in Allerton and Childwall. The grade I listed building is one of only three cast iron framed buildings in Liverpool. The others being the parish churches of Everton and St-Michael's-in-the-Hamlet (both subjects of previous U3A visits). The building was

designed by the Audsley Brothers who trawled the globe for inspiration and eventually produced an eclectic design which is predominately 'Moorish Revival' in style. The interior decorative work is very ornate and is awash with gold leaf and brilliant colours. We were shown the Bimah (reader's desk) and the Ark of the Covenant and Holy of Holies which contain the Ten Commandments and the scroll detailing the laws.



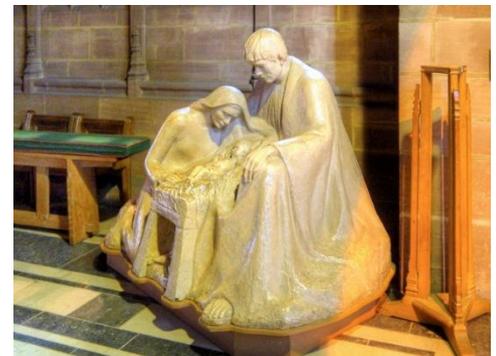
Both men and women sing in the choir and girls as well as boys celebrate their Barmitzvah at the age of 13.

After leaving soon after mid-day it was a short walk to the massive sandstone pile of the Anglican Cathedral in Hope Street and lunch in the refectory there. Suitably fortified we were ready for another guided tour! Our equally friendly and knowledgeable guide (Brian) conducted us round this awe inspiring Grade I listed building which is the fifth largest cathedral in the world, It houses the world's largest working organ with over 10,000 pipes (the organ in New York with over 20,000 pipes keeps failing !)

Designed by Giles Gilbert Scott (of red telephone box fame) who won the competition at a young age, the dimensions of the building are stupendous in length, breadth, and height. The famous tower commands views over the surrounding area and, as Oxton U3A members well know, can be seen from most parts of the Wirral, North Wales and South Lancashire.

The building was constructed between 1904 and 1978 which meant that building work was interrupted by both world wars. Sadly but predictably, many of the skilled masons did not return from WW1 and there is a suitable memorial to them. By 1978 Woolton quarry, which supplied the sandstone, was worked out and it was necessary to look elsewhere to supply the additional stone to finally complete the building.

Memorials to previous Bishops of Liverpool include an unusual sculpture in the shape of a cricket field as a tribute to the late David Shepherd, former England batsman who with Archbishop Derek Worlock of the Metropolitan Cathedral did much to bring the faith communities together.



As the building was quiet with only a scattering of visitors, Brian took the opportunity to venture into normally unexplored corners such as the Chapter House where some official business is done and the Children's Chapel which has a moving sculpture of The Holy Family, inspired by the contours of a Lake District mountain.

As always, our thanks to the Barbaras for organising the day.

Paul Cullen

LATEST NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE

We are pleased to announce that the video recording of our Celebration of 1,000 U3As is now available to view on our YouTube Channel. Click the following link

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7R5A9-CHx0&feature=youtu.be&list=PLsB2t41TNozElxU_rxR31nRAcwOj40ij1

Special offers for U3A Members

U3A Members can now purchase a 3-month National Art Pass for just £10. Visit www.artfund.org/u3a for more information. You have until 20th March 2017 to take advantage of this offer. Additionally, use the discount code U3A2017 for 10% off all services at my-history.co.uk.

The AGM notices have been sent out together with nomination forms, if you haven't received them please contact me, sandra.lakin@talktalk.net



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?

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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