



JULY 2017 NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

As I sit pondering what to write about in this month's newsletter, the news comes on the radio and the announcer tells me that our Wirral Loop Line is now fully open again. At last !!! I have so missed our wonderful railway link with Liverpool, because I live further away from Liverpool than most of you, our buses take forever to get there and most of them finish at 6-00 pm. So our usual frequent trips to Liverpool have become a rarity these past six months. So I intend to make up for that especially if this wonderful weather continues.

It is very true that we become complacent about what we have and only miss it when it's no longer there. As far as I am concerned this is so very true of our U3A, when I look back to the days before I joined Oxton & Prenton U3A, I realise just how much I would miss it.

I am particularly looking forward to our 10th birthday celebrations on Friday October 13th this year, when we can all enjoy a lunchtime Buffet complete with reminiscences of the past ten years, which will be followed by entertainment from Andy Smith, whom I gather is an excellent musician and he will present ' My Life in Music '. The tickets are going very quickly, so don't miss out! Get yours at the earliest opportunity.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Sandra Lakin

Chairman

BRIAN'S MUSINGS

Living With Uncertainty

It's great to feel that there is the whole summer ahead in which to relax and do the occasional odd job, if the weather is fine; a time of leisure and easy conviviality; except that I have yet to learn that it never works out like that. It is a statement of possibilities that exists only in my mind. It seems only minutes ago that we were enjoying spring and then before you know it we come to the summer solstice and then it's down hill all the way from there – from the longest day to the shortest with hardly time to breath. It would not surprise me to hear that shops are already planning their Christmas displays.

Even so the summer comes with advantages. I will genuinely miss our regular U3A meetings but I will not miss the mild state of anxiety that attends checking if the next speaker is still ready and willing to address us and will they be good enough? I tell myself that I will use the extra time and energy saved to work on the speaker list for next year, dedicating myself to the dubious task of locating twelve willing victims who will meet with everyone's approval and not be too expensive.

The scientist and philosopher Harari tells us that gossip is a vital ingredient in maintaining a cohesive society. When it comes to organising speaker lists I couldn't agree more. One really needs to know everything relevant about a prospective speaker. Mercifully there is a group of us who share information, some of which is not particularly flattering. We all want to do the best for our audiences and even more important, survive without being vilified for producing a dud. It is certainly not enough simply to be assured that a speaker is interesting. I have encountered interesting speakers who talk too quickly and run words together, speakers who fail to take adequate advantage of the amplification system (in spite of being told!) and speakers who simply fail to relate to their audience. A good speaker does not necessarily need to have a great deal to say but, even with amplification, they need to be able to project it; to send it out in such a way that the audience feels included rather than suffered, 'got at', irrelevant or even feared. Of course humour helps. I suppose one learns eventually not to engage with subjects that leave no scope for jest. Ancient Greek dramatists actually aimed to send their audiences away traumatised by tragedy. Now-a-days we have the news and popular entertainment to do that.

It is probably not a good idea to imagine that people come to hear a U3A speaker in order to be shocked violently into realising some profound truth about the human condition, though of course I'm sure we all welcome genuine insights, supported by real information, that help us to see things in a truer light. There is clearly a balance to be struck here. As far as the U3A is concerned, even with the 'grape vine', the whole thing is a bit of an adventure. One needs to live a little dangerously in order to create something cohesive out of insecurity, of which there is no shortage at this present time.

Brian Gill

LUNCH CIRCLE

There is no lunch club meeting in July.



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 NOW BOOKING

- Friday 14th July 2017 **‘THE FLOATING GRACE’ – OUR SUMMER CRUISE**
Departs Salthouse Docks at 1-00 pm and ends at 3-30 pm
Cruise through all 8 historic Liverpool Docks aboard Liverpool’s
only floating restaurant, whilst enjoying a 2 course meal.
Food choices now required.
Reserve list only £25
PLEASE BOOK ASAP TO ENSURE THIS CRUISE GOES AHEAD
- Thursday 21st September 2017 **NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM**
Cancelled due to insufficient numbers. Any monies paid will be
refunded.
- Thursday 21st September 2017 **TRANMERE ROVERS VISIT**
Guided tour of the grounds and facilities of Prenton Park with a
history of the club. The tour will be followed with a sandwich
lunch in one of the club’s function rooms. The tour starts at
10.30am and lasts approx. three hours including lunch.
Charge £15

SPECIAL EVENT

- Friday 13th October **10th Birthday Celebration Lunch**
Prenton Golf club
12 .00 for 12.30pm
Smart dress please
Hot and cold buffets
Short reminiscences
After dinner speaker
£20

THEATRE

- Thursday 26th October 2017 **NEW ENGLISH NATIONAL BALLE**
AKRAM KHAN’S GISELLE
Liverpool Empire at 2-00 pm Tickets £11-50
- Wednesday 29th Nov 2017 **WARHORSE at Liverpool Empire at 2-30 pm**
Tickets £45-50 (best price available)
Booking closed

IMPORTANT NOTICE

**No bookings or reservations can be taken without payment.
This is necessary in order to be fair to all our members**

Full booking details available@ meetings. See your social organizers.

MEETINGS and SPEAKERS

- Thursday 22nd June - Group's Showcase
- Thursday 6th July - Poison is a Woman's Weapon - Angela Brabin
- Thursday 20th July - Wirral Street Pastors - Mark Latham
- Thursday 14th September - Grand narratives and... - Mary Clinton
- Thursday 28th September - Hilbre Island - Mike Bird
- Thursday 31st August 2017 - Logo and T.V. Quiz.
- Thursday 12th October - The Seven Deadly Sins - Michael Burgess
- Thursday 9th November - Joyce's War: Insights From a War-time Journal - Rhiannon Evans
- Thursday 23rd November - Behind the Scenes of Cunard's Three Queens' Spectacular - Tony Storey
- Thursday 7th December - The Curious Origins of Our Christmas Traditions – Ken Pye

WALKING GROUP

- Friday July 21st Chris Lakin will lead a walk to HILBRE ISLAND. Due to tides this will be an afternoon walk followed by refreshments at the Dee Hotel around 5pm. Meet at West Kirby Concourse at 2.30pm.



Members of the Walking Group on the June circular walk from Storeton Woods to Thornton Hough and Clatterbridge, before finally ending up at the Travellers Rest Pub for a very welcome lunch.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

- Wednesday July 19th Visit to the Lady Leverhulme Gallery, Port Sunlight. Meet in Museum Foyer at 10.15am. Exhibition of Japanese Prints. Lunch over the road optional.

TEA AND COFFEE ROTA – JULY/NOVEMBER 2017

6 th July 2017	Sue Berry - Margaret Cullen - Paul Cullen
20 JULY	Mary Hamilton - Kathleen Pugh - Judith Wheat
14 SEPTEMBER	Marion Jackson - Barbara Riley - Gerry Riley
28 SEPTEMBER	Judith Wylie - Rosemary Holden - Gwyneth Thomas
12 OCTOBER	Greg Roberts - John Roberts - Aileen Hunton
26 OCTOBER	Gwen Burrell - Jean Sheratt - Dorothy Mathews
9 NOVEMBER	Valerie Edwards - Doreen Alig - Ursula Cook
23 NOVEMBER	Mary Potter - Sandy Anderson - Rod Paddock

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

NEW GROUP FOR BUDDING PLAYERS !!

John Bews from Heswall U3A would like to know if any of our members are interested in Walking Football, Tuesday afternoons at Tranmere Rovers ground. Anyone interested should contact John direct at johnbews@btinternet.com

CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

LOST IN THE FOG

Mist swirling round her, Helen suddenly realised that the fog had become much denser and visibility had reduced to not much further than three or four feet. For a moment she felt panicked, unsure of her position. The fog seemed to have created a surreal world around her where distances were difficult to judge; a world of silence where the only sound she could hear was the brush of her boots on the pavement and her own breath.

The day had been quite clear when she had set out to visit Mary in hospital, where she was recovering from an appendectomy, and it was only when Mary, glancing out of the window, remarked that perhaps she had better make a move as it seemed to be getting foggy outside, that they had noticed how misty it had become. Now as she tried to get her bearings Helen felt somewhat relieved that she had decided to take a bus rather than drive. Shivering a little she pulled her scarf tighter around her neck. She couldn't remember ever having been out in a fog as bad as this; it seemed to be getting thicker by the minute. Her mother had once described the "pea souper" fogs that were common before the clean air act had virtually put an end to them; "so thick you could barely see more than a foot in front of you." her mother had said. Privately Helen

had thought that her mother's memory had blown the story up. Now she was not so sure; maybe it was true!

A foghorn hooted mournfully to her left, quite distant - she could not be far from the river; not at all where she had imagined that she was. There was no sign of traffic of any description and no sound of any, not even a distant hum. The whole world had disappeared from the streets. It was extremely disorientating she discovered, rather like floating through a dream, except that she wasn't dreaming and was beginning to feel uneasy. Edging carefully she moved to where she might find a wall, gasping as she almost walked into a lamp post. The fog was getting thicker. The kerb was invisible and as she gingerly felt her way she realised with trepidation that it was getting darker too.

A muffled sound interrupted her thoughts; every nerve now on high alert she listened intently. Someone was moving towards her, getting nearer with each step. Relief washed over her; another person who might know their whereabouts, was close at hand. Her relief was shortly tempered with fear when a large figure loomed just into sight as the mists momentarily swirled. Suppose she was attacked – she was totally vulnerable here in unfamiliar surroundings with no one to help and nowhere to run to.

Mentally Helen chided herself; this blind panic was not at all like her. She realised suddenly just how tense and scared she had become in this strange, silent and mysterious world of swirling fog. “Get a grip girl, this isn't helping.” She spoke out loud and her voice sounded strange even to herself.

“Is there someone there?” the voice sounded gruff and was followed by a chesty cough. The figure reappeared, nearer now and Helen could see that it was a man of perhaps sixty to seventy years old. Shabbily but warmly dressed in an ancient army style great coat, a woolly blue scarf wrapped around his neck, a matching hat pulled down over his ears and an old pair of boots tied with string, he could have been a tramp except that he looked too well nourished. White tufts of hair poked out of the sides of his hat, his nose shone like a scarlet beacon and twinkling grey eyes peered at her as he reached her side. “Do you have any idea where we are, young lady? I have been walking in ever decreasing circles without meeting a soul to ask.”

Helen's heart sank; it didn't look as though he would be much help. Still she was glad to have some company and he seemed harmless enough. “I came out from St. Margaret's Hospital and must have taken a wrong turn in the fog. That was about half an hour ago and I couldn't have got far in this visibility. The river must be on our left; I heard foghorns from that direction – does any of that help? I came by bus and there's no traffic so I don't know how I'm going to get home. It's quite a way, about four miles which would be fine if I could see anything!”

“You and I appear to have a similar problem young lady, but I always think that two heads are better than one so if you don't mind my company we could try to find our way together. My name is Jack, by the way and I think that perhaps, should we be able to locate the river I might be able to get my bearings. At any rate we should be able to find a cup of hot tea in one of the cafes there, where we might get directions.” he smiled and took her hand leaning rather heavily on it.

This was starting to sound a little more hopeful and Helen felt that probably he was her best option; certainly it was good to have some company. The evening was setting in now and the light was starting to fade. Jack was not too firm on his feet she now realised and gladly offered her arm for him to lean on. “Sounds like a good idea; I could murder a cup of tea. As you said, we need to find somewhere local where we can get directions. I'm Helen by the way.”

Moving cautiously they edged along the wall until a left hand corner loomed, then turned to walk towards where the foghorns were hooting more insistently. It was a very slow progress and the gathering dusk was not helping. A dog howled forlornly in the distance but other than that the eerie silence and mist enveloped them utterly. Eventually after what felt like an hour but was probably only about twenty minutes, Jack spoke, “Do you see a faint light ahead? It's getting quite dark now so all the lights will be going on and we might see our route better.”

The street lights had come on and although they were hazy at least they indicated the road ahead to a limited extent. Jack stopped and listened then turning to her said, "I'm pretty sure that we have reached the embankment; I should be able to recognise something soon. Turning left again they made for what looked like a well lit area and they passed some small shops, all alas seemed pretty empty of shoppers but Jack gave a cry of recognition, "See that sign, "The Black Horse" ? That used to be my local! We should be able to get a hot drink, there's a cafe a few yards further on. Just then a piercing wail broke the silence; it sounded like a child's. Peering through the murk ahead they strained to see where it was coming from but what with the fog and the gathering darkness they could see nothing.

The crying got louder, the child sounded terrified. Helen pulled Jack's arm, "Come on, she can't be far away. She must be lost." He looked at her, an expression she couldn't fathom on his face, and moved forward to join her. A minute later they spotted a hunched figure ahead. The child, a girl of about ten, was sitting on the pavement crying as if her heart would break. At first she didn't spot their approach but as they got nearer she leapt to her feet at first cowering in the darkness, then to Helen's astonishment she suddenly ran to where Jack stood watching her flinging her arms round him.

"Grandpa, I lost Mummy and I can't find her anywhere. I didn't know where I was and everywhere was smoky and I'm very cold. I shouted and shouted but there's nobody around and I'm frightened." Jack held her close for a moment then took her hand.

"You're safe now Daisy; the fog is starting to clear – we have been lost too but I think I can find my way to your house from here." He turned to Helen, "Would you mind coming with me to take Daisy home, her Mummy will be frantic? I'm sure she will give you a cup of tea and help you find a way home; the fog is starting to lift so the buses will be running again soon." With that he started confidently back up the road holding both their hands.

The fog was indeed lifting almost as quickly as it had come down and he led them into a tree lined road lined with semi detached houses fronted by neat gardens. Patting Daisy's head he said, "Remember Grandpa loves you - be good for Mummy.", then turning to Helen, "It has been a pleasure to have met you. I'm afraid I have to leave you now. Thank you for your company and your help. Daisy, tell Mummy that Grandpa said not to worry - all will be well." With that he opened a gate and disappeared into the shadows.

Daisy ran up to the front door and ringing the bell, shouted for her mother to come quickly. The door was opened almost immediately and a young woman, about the same age as Helen threw her arms round the child tears streaming down her face. Daisy was shouting, "Mummy, I saw Grandpa; he brought us home. He said to tell you that everything would be alright!"

Her mother looked at Helen in astonishment, "Please come in and thank you so much for bringing Daisy home. Please tell me what she meant – Grandpa, my father, died three years ago."

Eliane Davie

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR MEMORY EXPERIMENT!

Are you an aged 50 or above?

Are you interested in helping "memory and ageing" research?

Great!!! You may be eligible to participate in a study at Liverpool John Moores University exploring how individual memory strategies predict future cognitive decline.

The procedure lasts approximately 1 hour and it includes some "pencil and paper" and "computer-based" tests to evaluate your cognitive functioning.

All participants are reimbursed for their time with a £10 Tesco or Amazon voucher and free car spaces are available at the campus, if needed!

** Consecutive bookings are available for couples or friends!

Please, contact Deborah Talamonti for further information:

Deborah e mail D.Talamonti@2016.ljmu.ac.uk
telephone 07864945084

CAR PARKING RESTRICTIONS AT THE CHURCH HALL SHOULD SOON BE LIFTED BUT ARE STILL IN PLACE AT THE MOMENT.

Tony Swarbrick has asked me to draw your attention to A FUN MUSICAL EVENING taking place on Friday July 14th at 7.30pm at St.George's United Reformed Church, Thornton Hough, Wirral.

THE WMC CHORALE & THE THORNTON HOUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL JUNIOR CHOIR will present a varied programme of popular songs, both old and new.

Tickets £6 with a glass of wine or juice.

For tickets phone Tony Swarbrick on 0151 378 7872

Concert in aid of the Motor Neurone Disease Association

FINALLY.....The last meeting before our summer break will be on July 20th and the first one after it will be on August 31. There will be NO NEWSLETTER FOR AUGUST.

May I wish you all a very happy and enjoyable Summer Break.

Eliane Davie



