



September 2017 Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

We will be welcoming you all back on 31st August following our summer break and I hope you have all managed to have a holiday and that you are coming back revitalised and refreshed! Have your brains fit and ready because Colin Stredder is going to test you all with his quiz on Logo's and TV. I am afraid I will not be with you as we are taking advantage of the long school holidays to spend some time away with our Grandchildren but we will be back in September.

It is always interesting to go away and explore new places especially new countries but I am sure you all feel much like me that coming back home safely to all that is familiar is the best feeling ever. I hope you all feel the same about returning to our U3A and that you are looking forward to all the new experiences that are open to you within Oxton & Prenton U3A.

Sandra Lakin

Chairman

BRIAN'S MUSINGS

I always look forward to August as a month for which nothing is planned and in which I am free to catch up with myself and just amble from one vague focus to another, rest a lot and even do the occasional odd job. In a normal month, whatever that is, we have seven different groups meeting in our house and then of course there are the ones that we go out to, so a month of reduced activity potentially offers a more leisurely pace. Of course it never works out like that and no doubt you will have seen where it all comes unstuck – I've left people out of the equation; not to mention the zoo: we have a dog and three cats. The problem is that I share this planet with people who have a totally different notion as to how I should be spending August.

I invariably arrive at September with a feeling of lost opportunity but with little time or energy for regret or remorse because, ready or not, a new academic year has begun. At about this time our Celtic ancestors would have been thinking about bringing their animals down from the high pastures and preparing for the winter ahead: a movement reflected today in the numerous long-haul flights returning us from summer grazing in Florida, The Bahamas, India or the Red-Sea coast to face the rigour of our northern latitudes.

Though we are mostly protected from climatic extremes we can nevertheless sense a shift in the energy as the nights begin to draw in and a chill in the air presages the winter to come. I know that the long nights and cold, wet days that lie ahead can be a bit daunting, even if we can afford to turn up the central heating, but just as nature adapts to the prevailing climatic conditions, so too can we. Indeed we need to, as the days ahead bring with them the opportunity to ruminate and reflect; 'not expecting Ithaca (home) to give us riches. Ithaca has given us the lovely journey;' (as lines from Homer's Odyssey wisely advise). I know that I have wasted energy in the past waiting for a cosmological Amanda Holden to press the X Factor button that activates a golden shower (the blessing of Zeus) so that I know, without doubt, that my skills and talents have finally been recognised and the future will be one of eternal summer. For most of us it doesn't work out like that.

However our U3A gives us plenty of opportunities to follow Homer's advice. In our psychology and philosophy groups all human experience and behaviour comes under review, our own included if we are up for it, and certainly we can try to understand the comportment of any who have an influence on, in and through our lives. We humans are not always as bad as many fear. Without doubt our psyche is amazingly explorative and creative and has never failed to discover some, at least of our considerable potential. I am sure that there is plenty more yet to come.

Brian Gill

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who supported the concert at St. George's Church ,Thornton Hough on July 24th, either by buying tickets or making donations.

£1,300 was raised to support people living with Motor Neurone Disease.

Thank you - Tony Swarbrick

LUNCH CIRCLE

Dates to December are as follows: All are to meet at 12 noon to sit at 12.30

Tuesday September 19th 2017 The Queens Arms, Oxton

Tuesday October 17th 2017 The Carnarvon Castle, Bidston Rd.

Tuesday November 21st 2017 The Shippons, Irby

There is no lunch Circle meeting in December as we have the Christmas Dinner



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



U3A MEMBERS ENJOY LUNCH ABOARD

***JULY 14TH 2017 A CRUISE ROUND
THE LIVERPOOL DOCKS.***

SUMMER CRUISE

On Friday July 14th fifty of us made our way by car, boat, train or bus to Salthouse Dock for our summer trip around the docks aboard "The Floating Grace".

Peter, our Captain and the owner, welcomed us aboard after the Life Jacket Drill and personally handed each of us a complimentary glass of "bubbly" – a nice surprise!

Once we set off, Peter began giving us a very interesting and informative commentary on the docks, surrounding buildings and history etc.; his knowledge is amazing. There are seven docks in all and the only way to see them is from the water. The "Floating Grace" has large windows the length of the boat, so a good view was had by all in the sunshine. These docks are a credit to the men who designed and built them all those years ago.

As we sailed we enjoyed a hot two course meal and made good use of the on board bar! I feel that there was a great atmosphere on board, while one member was heard to remark, "I think this is the best cruise we have been on!" A day out enjoyed by all.

Peter is a great host and his staff worked hard to look after us, while his wife, Carol, saw us safely on board. A special mention goes to Adam, one of the crew, who, when Peter heard that Ann was unfortunately delayed, was sent to guide her safely to the boat. Much appreciated.

If I may end on a personal note; I have known Peter and his family since he was a schoolboy of six or seven. It is so good to see him doing so well; his fleet of boats growing each year. It takes a lot of hard work and Carol is behind him every step of the way.

On behalf of all of us may I express our sincere thanks to Barbara for once again planning a wonderful day, plus the sunshine. We realise how much hard work and time it takes.

Thanks Barbara.

Margaret Mulville

EVENTS NOW BOOKING

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.

SOCIAL OUTINGS

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Thursday 21 September

Cancelled due to insufficient interest

Reimbursements available either by refund

Or offsetting against new events

TOUR OF TRANMERE ROVERS

Thursday 21 September

10.30 am start – will last approx 3 hours

Including time for a sandwich lunch

Cost (including lunch) £15

Booking must close shortly

SPECIAL EVENT

10th Birthday Celebration Lunch

Prenton Golf club

Friday 13 October 12.00 noon for 12.30pm

Smart dress please

Hot & Cold Buffet

Short reminiscences followed by ‘Andy Smith’

Who will present his highly recommended after dinner talk

“My life in Music”

Cost **£20.00**

DATE FOR YOUR DIAIRIES

This year’s Christmas lunch is on

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER

12.00 noon for 12.30 pm

Venue: The Arthur J Gallagher Platinum lounge

@ Tranmere Rovers

Full details available shortly when booking will open

THEATRE

THE TIN DRUM

Based on the epic novel by Gunter Grass

Liverpool EVERYMAN

Wednesday 4 OCTOBER @ 7.30pm

Tickets £21.50

Booking closing 31 August

BOOKING CLOSED &

Tickets available for collection for the following Theatre events

CILLA

Liverpool Empire

Wednesday 13 September @ 2.30 pm

GISELLE

Liverpool Empire

Thursday 26 October @ 2.00pm

WARHORSE

Liverpool Empire

Wednesday 29 November

@ 2.30 pm

MEETINGS and SPEAKERS 2017

Thursday 31st August Colin Stredder T.V and Logo Quiz

Thursday 14th September Grand narratives and... - Mary Clinton

Thursday 28th September Hilbre Island - Mike Bird

Thursday 31st August - Logo and T.V. Quiz

Thursday 12th October - The Seven Deadly Sins - Michael Burges
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

Creative Writing Group

The Music Room

Wanting to spend a few days in the Lakes I had booked myself into The White Hart in Portinscale, once a very grand though somewhat rambling manor house. After stuffing myself with an enormous dinner and several pints of good ale I lay in bed unable to sleep. While trying to think of nothing, I found myself thinking what I might do tomorrow. Plans rather depended on the weather. The forecast had been quite good but in the Lakes you can never be sure. It was while pondering the options that I thought I heard a piano. Yes, there it was. Perhaps it was a guest playing a CD though it was rather late. The piece was one of my favourites, Beethoven's Emperor though arranged for piano alone, an achievement in itself. Then I heard a chord that didn't sound quite right. It must be someone playing. Wondering who was giving the recital, I reasoned that the piano must be in a public room and decided to investigate. The corridors were unfamiliar so it was a little while before I was standing by the 'piano' room. It didn't have a number or a notice on the door so I knocked and quietly opened it. The light from the open door was enough to reveal an upright piano and stool in the middle of an otherwise sparsely furnished room. The piano keys were moving but there was no-one playing. "Ah" I thought "It's an old pianola." but there had been that doubtful chord and anyway a pianola is worked by pedals. I felt the hair on my neck prickle. As I watched, a myriad of twinkling lights appeared by the stool, slowly coalescing into the form of a young woman dressed in period style playing. I froze, not daring to breathe. She looked across at me and smiled. I felt a little easier though I don't know why. She beckoned me. She wanted me to turn her music. I can read music but how could I touch it? She continued playing while I took an old wooden chair and sat beside her. As she came to the end of the page I reached forward but my hand was still several inches away when the page turned for itself. I found myself relaxing. The young woman didn't mean me any harm and her playing was intoxicating. I didn't want it to stop but was aware that the end of the concerto was approaching. My thoughts briefly turned from the music; what, if anything, would happen at the end of the piece? The piano lid smashed down on her fingers. She let out a silent scream. The whole scene became that myriad of twinkling lights and disappeared. I was left shocked and stunned in an empty room. I sat for some time thinking of the glorious music and the dreadful way it had ended. It was unbelievable. The whole episode from beginning to end was unbelievable. Eventually I stood up, put the chair back against the wall and wandered back to my room. I was in a daze. Back in bed I now knew without doubt, whatever the weather, what I would be doing tomorrow. I was restless thinking how I might possibly discover anything about the pianist but having resolved to speak first to the proprietor I fell into a fitful sleep. I woke early and immediately began mulling over the events of the night before. Was it all a dream? I don't think so. I remember quite clearly everything that I did from coming to bed, to reading, to hearing the music. Was it a ghost? I don't believe in ghosts but I was at a loss to think of anything else. I showered, dressed and went down for breakfast. No full English for me today, I settled for cereal and coffee and left the table within fifteen minutes of sitting down. I asked at reception for the owner. "That'll be Mrs. Wright." And the girl rang her office. "She'll be here in a

few minutes. If you would like to sit and wait there are some newspapers over there.” I'd hardly sat down when Mrs. Wright appeared and we introduced ourselves. “I was wondering if you had a piano here.” I asked. “I'm afraid not.” answered Mrs. Wright. “Do you play? There is a room we still call the 'Music Room' from when this place was a house but it's empty.” “Oh, I was just curious. Actually there is another thing. Can you tell me who owned The White Hart when it was a house?” “Certainly, it was a family called Harrison. They still live in the area. If you're interested it's a pale pink house on the left a few miles towards Braithwaite. You can't miss it” I thanked Mrs. Wright and went to my car. She was right. It was hardly any distance at all. Parking outside, I quickly rehearsed my reason for calling, walked to the front door and rang the bell. The door was answered almost immediately. “Good morning. Mr. Harrison?” I asked. “Yes, and what can I do for you?” “My name is Baker.” I lied. “Your name was kindly given by Mrs. Wright at The White Hart. I'm writing little biographies on local prominent families and wondered whether you might be interested in being included.” “That's interesting. Come in for a chat and you can tell me more.” I was over the first hurdle. We sat in a sumptuously furnished lounge. It was obvious that the Harrisons were still quite well off. “Now what's all this about?” Mr. Harrison started. “I'm not sure you could describe us as a prominent family any more but we have quite a history locally.” “That's exactly the sort of thing I'm looking for.” “Well, where should I begin? At the beginning I suppose.” Mr Harrison rambled on for some time telling me of every family event since the Civil War while I pretended to take copious notes. When he came to the Victorian period he paused then continued. “There was a tragedy in 1863 when the family was still living at what is now the inn. The eldest daughter, Helen, was an excellent pianist, quite up to concert standard. She was amusing herself playing various Beethoven pieces and she had a close male friend sat by her to turn the music. Her husband, a jealous man, stormed into the room, assumed wrongly she was having an affair with her friend and slammed the lid down onto her fingers breaking some of them. Though they healed she was never able to play to that same high standard again. She never really recovered and alas took her own life.”

Rod Paddock

WALKING GROUP

The first walk of the season will be led by our Chairman, Sandra on Friday September 15th – it will be the Little Neston Circular.

Meet at the Harp Inn Neston at 10.30A.M. (Take the B5136 Liverpool Rd. off the A540 Chester High Rd. to Little Neston, then at the roundabout take the 3rd exit; Marshlands Rd. to the Quayside. Park outside the pub.)

The walk is approximately 5 miles and after a short stretch along the Wirral Way will be along tracks, paths and fields with slight inclines and no stiles. It is a very pretty walk with views across the marshes. If there has been recent rain it could be muddy.

Walk now full.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Visit to Tate Modern LIVERPOOL

September 20th 2017 Meet at 10.40 for 11 a.m. "Portraying a Nation Exhibition"

Curator led. Cost of tour £5 p.p.
Cost of tickets £8 (concession)
£5 Art Friend Pass
Free to Tate members

This tour is limited to 20 so please let Bernadette Hamilton know of your interest ASAP

TEA AND COFFEE ROTA – JULY/NOVEMBER 2017

- 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

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR MEMORY EXPERIMENT!

Are you an aged 50 or above?
Are you interested in helping "memory and ageing" research?

