



March Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Greetings fellow U3A members! With the month of March come the vernal equinox and a whole new shift in the rhythm of the year. Things that have lain dormant through the winter can really begin to grow now. Of course not everything survives the winter months and there are several different ways in which winter can express itself. There are economic winters in which assets and investments become frozen; there are physiological winters in which we can catch cold – or worse! And there are psychological winters in which the seasonal chill reaches our thoughts and emotions. Such winters do not necessarily depend on the literal seasons, as we well know, though nature can provide us with some excellent strategies for surviving them. One of my favourites is to lie low and wait for things to pass and for the healing process to work in its own way and time but sometimes urgent action and intervention are required and this brings us to issues that concern our own U3A, which, in common with U3As in general, is having its own winter to contend with.

During the covid pandemic we made the decision to go into a state of semi-hibernation in which some groups, including our committee, continued to function via zoom meetings but all general meetings were suspended. We now have an AGM ahead; traditionally towards the end of April. For health reasons I will not be able to continue as Chair, especially if we eventually start to have actual, physical meetings again and the same applies to Sandra, who, for personal reasons, will not be able to act as secretary once our meetings are no longer virtual. Finding replacements without actually meeting is going to be problematic, which is why I am sharing our concerns with you all now rather than wait until after the next committee meeting.

If the Oxton and Prenton U3A is to continue we will need a new Chair and a new Secretary. We need to give this some serious thought as without these two vital functions a U3A cannot function and would have to close down. This possibility has already been suggested, if only on a temporary basis. If we cannot meet in reality, for what would members be paying when they renew their membership? And without a literal desk, how would we collect the money? How can we ensure that someone equal to this considerable task would come forward to carry it out?

All these issues will be discussed at length at our March committee meeting so I am jumping the gun somewhat by mentioning them now but really they are issues that we all need to be thinking about and on the outcome of which I personally would welcome our collective thought. Normally it is the task of the committee to deal with such issues but when there is a very real chance that there will not be an adequate committee to fulfil the task, we all need to give the matter our serious attention.

If we are to survive the lockdown conditions and have any sort of future as a U3A, what sort of future do we envisage? And how can we make it happen?

Brian Gill –

St. Patrick's Day March 17th

The patron saint of Ireland, St. Patrick, was born into Roman Britain in the late 4th century. Aged sixteen he was kidnapped and taken to Ireland as a slave but managed to escape. He returned to Ireland circa 432 to convert the Irish to Christianity. He died on March 17th in 461 having established monasteries, churches and schools in Ireland. Legends suggest that he used the shamrock to explain the holy Trinity and also that he drove snakes from the country.



I attended Upton Hall Convent, in the days when it was run by nuns and took Boarders as well as day girls. Many of the nuns were Irish, as were a fair percentage of the boarders (of which I was one), so St. Patrick's was an important day in the calendar with plenty of shamrock about!

After morning mass we would sit down with great merriment, to a breakfast of boiled eggs with shells of emerald green, while at tea time each table would sport a large sponge cake iced in the colours of the Irish flag with a phrase written in Irish Gaelic. There was a small prize for the table that could decipher the phrase first, which of course depended on whether the table had an Irish occupant!

One year we celebrated St George's Day on April 23rd at school (usually occurring during the Easter holidays). Of course we English girls were delighted when, on sitting for breakfast we discovered that our eggs had bright red shells while the cake for tea was iced in red white and blue! The writing, which naturally we could all decipher, simply read, "Happy St. George's Day".

To any Irish members among you may I wish you all a very happy St. Patrick's Day!

Ed.

Not to forget our Welsh members who celebrate St. David's Day on March 1st. Have a great day! Dydd Gwyl Dewi Hapus!



The patron saint of Wales, St. David, was born in 500 to his mother St. Non. According to legend he was born on a Pembrokeshire cliff top during a fierce storm and the spot is marked by the ruins of Non's Chapel, a nearby holy well said to have healing powers. He was the grandson of the King of Ceredigion, Ceredig ap Cunedda.

He was consecrated as a bishop in Jerusalem during a pilgrimage and travelled throughout Wales as a missionary. During his life he founded twelve monasteries including Glastonbury, also one at Minevia, (St. David's) which he made his seat. He died on March 1st 589 and at his shrine at Glyn Rhosyn a spring of water is said to have been the site of eighty miracles.

Eliane Davie – Ed.

Update – News re. The Williamson Gallery

Stuart Kelly - *The Williamson and Priory Friends*



Just to let everyone know the Council's policy committee has agreed to remove the budget saving for the Williamson which means the Williamson will not be closed.

They have however included 'efficiencies' linked to the Williamson totalling £90,000. We are not sure what this refers to, whether there is a staff vacancy they are not going to fill and/or changes to opening hours? We will find out before this is ratified on March 1st at full council.

Well done to the 13,000 people who signed the petition to support the Williamson and Priory.

BRIDGE GROUPS

Tony Swarbrick would like anyone interested in joining on-line Zoom groups for Bridge during this time to e-mail him at: groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk this works quite well and started up during lockdown; Tony will explain and advise on how to go about it.



BOOK GROUP

Monica Price is still running her book group on line



ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Bernadette has recommended checking out the National Gallery where there is a choice of virtual programmes and some interesting talks about a selection of paintings and painters to be found on line.

nationalgallery.org.uk/events/courses



WORK BY PAULINE HORNER DURING LOCKDOWN



'Umbrellas' was done in collage. You can see the pattern of some of the wallpapers I used initially and then painted various layers of colour over them. **'The Wave at Fastnet'** was painted in acrylics, inspired by Japanese prints of waves but I researched Fastnet lighthouse - you used to always hear Fastnet in the shipping forecast when I was a child.



Pauline Horner

LINDA KINNEAR 'S LOCKDOWN WALKS



Thought I'd share one of my local walks in our beautiful Wirral peninsula.
New Brighton; so many hidden gems!
The Victoria Quarter's open-air street art gallery is well worth a visit; each time I visit there is a new one to see; no Banksy yet!
The Black Pearl pirates have been busy at the top left corner of Vale Park, always lots to see next to the fab Lodge house, what dedication!
Also Magazine Lane is worth a wander round, such an amazing abundance of architectural design from a bygone age.
The walk along the promenade is one I never get tired of.
This year's very "strange" time has reawakened my love and enjoyment of our amazing area; finding so many places to walk and enjoy.

Linda Kinnear

Cormorants in the Park February 2021



Courtroom Humour Courtesy of the Internet



Q: "The truth of the matter is that you were not an unbiased, objective witness, isn't it? You too were shot in the fracas."
"No, sir. I was shot midway between the fracas and the naval."

.Q: This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all?

A: Yes.

Q: And in what ways does it affect your memory?

A: I forget.

Q: You forget. Can you give us an example of something that you've forgotten?

Q: How old is your son, the one living with you?

A: Thirty-eight or thirty-five, I can't remember which.

Q: How long has he lived with you?

A: Forty-five years.

Q: What was the first thing your husband said to you when he woke up that morning?

A: He said, "Where am I, Cathy?"

Q: And why did that upset you?

A: My name is Susan.

Now doctor, isn't it true that when a person dies in his sleep, he doesn't know about it until the next morning?

Q: The youngest son, the twenty-year old, how old is he?

Q: Were you present when your picture was taken?

Q: So the date of conception (of the baby) was August 8th?

A: Yes.

Q: And what were you doing at that time?

Q: She had three children, right?

A: Yes.

Q: How many were boys?

A: None.

Q: Were there any girls?

Q: How was your first marriage terminated?

A: By death.

Q: And by whose death was it terminated?

Q: Can you describe the individual?

A: He was about medium height and had a beard.

Q: Was this a male, or a female?

Q: Doctor, how many autopsies have you performed on dead people?

A: All my autopsies are performed on dead people.

Q: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

A: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

Q: And Mr Dennington was dead at the time?

A: No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy.

***Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?**

A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing?

A: No.

Q: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting on my desk, in a jar.

Q: But could the patient have still been alive, never the less?

A: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practising law somewhere.

Sent in by Pauline Horner

www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events Regional Web site:



Registered Charity number 1159091

AND FINALLY.....

At last we can see a way out of this lockdown, evolving slowly but surely, starting with the return of the children on March 8th; I'm sure many parents and children will be delighted about that! They have all had a particularly difficult twelve months and we wish them a much better year ahead.

By now I expect that most of you will have had at least the first vaccine; the roll-out has certainly been amazing and by early summer we should all have had our second. At long last we can look forward to being able to meet our friends again and enjoy many of the pastimes which have been out of reach for so many dreary months! By

the time we have our next AGM in April the way ahead should have become clearer, as we see how well the vaccines are doing their job on slowing the spread of Covid. As our Chairman Brian has pointed out, we will need to replace some of our Committee members at this meeting so we would like you all to give some thought as to whether you would be interested in taking on any of the positions in time to let us know in advance. If we would like our U3A to continue it is essential.

By the summer hopefully we should be living a more normal life and I'm sure you all can't wait to see friends and relations freely again. In the meantime we can look towards the Spring ahead.

Eliane Davie - Editor





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