



May Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Hello to all members,

My name is Alan Harding and I shall be your new Chairman. I am embarking on something that I have never done before; doing so in order that our Oxton, Prenton & District U3A continues. I believe in our U3A. I believe we are a very unique group of people with a wonderful sense of friendship and camaraderie of which I am very proud to be part of.

Do not expect from me the same professionalism as that of our previous Chairman Brian Gill, but with your help I shall do my very best.

I think I should also take this opportunity to welcome our new Secretary, Elizabeth, who just happens to be my wife. It will be the very first time a husband and wife have served together on the Oxton & Prenton U3A committee. To have husband and wife as Chairman and Secretary is possibly unique to many U3A's.

Together we are taking on these appointments with more than a little trepidation, but we feel that the U3A is so important to us all.

With your help Elizabeth and I hope to succeed for you.

Kind Regards,

Alan Harding

Alan Harding – Chairman

April 29th Oxton & Prenton U3A ANNUAL AGM



Our Zoom AGM was well attended and went smoothly. The Committee thanked Brian Gill our outgoing Chairman for all the work he has done regarding our U3A and hoped that he will continue to take an active part in an advisory capacity. We wished him improved health. We also thanked Sandra Lakin, one of our longest standing members, who stepped in to replace Marese as secretary and is now resigning for health reasons. She has been a tower of strength with her computer competence and general ability and we hope that she will still be on hand to offer advice. Sandra is a popular member and we all wish her well.

The two positions have been filled by husband and wife team Alan and Elizabeth Harding, who we welcome and look forward to working with. The new Committee is:

- Chairman - Alan Harding
- Treasurer - Ken Jackson
- Business Secretary - Elizabeth Harding
- Membership Secretary - Gwyneth Williams
- Groups Co-ordinator - Tony Swarbrick
- Speaker Secretary - Colin Stredder
- Newsletter Editor - Eliane Davie

Deputy Groups' Co-ordinator- Eve Felton

We hope to reopen our fortnightly meetings in September; you will be kept informed. Many of the groups which meet in someone's house might like to meet before that, when regulations permit; probably in June or July. This will depend on individual Group leaders who will contact members.

The Committee would like to thank members for the robust response to requests for their votes relating to the AGM. This was essential for the continuation of the Group.

At last we can start to plan for a gradual return to normal activities and can look forward to seeing each other in September.

If anyone would like to organise and outing as a 'one off' or take over as Events Secretary in September, please let a Committee member know. Two people working together might work well. We are also looking for a Social Secretary to organise activities once a month for meetings when we don't have a speaker.



Brian's Musings

The cold nights and fine, sunny days have slowed down the advent of spring and prolonged its amazing unfolding in a way that has added considerably to my own personal enjoyment of the event. There is a lesson in this somewhere – something to do with not having what we want all at once and in a rush. The unusual amount of sunlight has certainly shown the phenomenon of spring to its best advantage – another lesson! If things go more slowly and we are able to put aside our impatience and adjust ourselves to the pace, there is a chance that we might see (and understand) more.

All this ‘speaks to my condition’. The idea of a slower more withdrawn and more perceptive life is very appealing. Unfortunately I am not always allowed to get away with it. So many people, with Covid in mind, consider themselves to be within our protective bubble that it might well be safer to place oneself on the outside. Even so I manage to find time to sit and do nothing for an hour or two most days, and given that doing nothing is what I am best at, I am ‘well suited’. Such an attitude comes with a warning however: the less we do the less we want to do and I find myself becoming increasingly withdrawn. I think that health and age have something to do with this too.

I comfort myself with the fact that traditionally it is no bad thing to gradually let go and allow others to run the world on my behalf as one get older. I have been interfering for long enough, and though there is plenty of folly out there, beyond our patio door, there is also a great deal of wisdom and insight available for any who feel inclined to connect with it.

Spring is essentially a time of hope, even though we know that it will inevitably give way to less promising seasons. It does at least demonstrate the undeniable fact that the creation, for all its destructive violence, has the ineluctable power to renew itself and since we are assured that we are in a growing and expanding universe, we can, for the next few million years at least, align ourselves, both physically psychologically and spiritually with that fact.

We just need to take the broader view; and slowing down can help us to do just that.

Brian Gill

News from Joan Parfect

For those who may not have heard, Joan suffered a nasty fall during lockdown and ended up in hospital with a broken pelvis. Not long after returning home having recovered from this very painful fracture, she fell at home and broke her thumb and collar bone and is back in hospital again.

I spoke to her last weekend and she is now waiting to have some help put in place to allow her to return home. She asked me to thank all those who sent her cards; because of course it was not possible to visit her due to Covid



regulations. Joan hopes to be home again shortly and I know that her friends will want to keep in touch. If you have her mobile number you will be able to text her – being Joan, she is indomitable as ever but will, I'm sure, appreciate a phone call.

Pauline's Art Work has kept her busy during Lockdown



On Monday 19th April six of us took advantage of the new Covid regulations to meet in the open air at Harrison Drive. It was great to have company again whilst sketching in the sunshine. Two went towards the Derby Pool pub, two decided to sketch some boats and two of us chose the view out to the windmills in the sea.

Pauline Horner.

An Unusual New Lockdown Hobby



Val Noble here: I just noticed at the end that you ask about new hobbies! I thought I'd tell you about mine!

I joined the Happy Chilly Dippers on Face book in September 2020. This is a wonderful group of people of all ages who dip/swim daily in the sea at the Gunsite, Leasowe Bay.

I grew up in Peterhead in North East Scotland and have always loved being near the sea. Since moving here in 2013, I have only rarely ventured into the water - where to leave my car keys safely while dipping, were always an obstacle! Until I discovered the Dippers!

We dip an hour or so before high tide, when tide times align with daylight hours, which are most days. I try to go two or three times a week and have done so right through this winter. I don't wear a wetsuit, just swimsuit, swim gloves, swim socks, thermal swim hat and a luminous pink tow float.

The benefits of cold water immersion are much in the news at the moment and Open Water Swimming has really taken off in these strange times. All I can say is that I'm addicted and have been since my first dip! It's always different and exciting! Wonderful, whether wild and windy, glassy, misty and calm, sunny, drizzling, pouring, hailing or even snowing! I have experienced them all. When we had the really cold snap, there was ice at the water's edge!

I have learned a lot about how to do this safely and have met some lovely like-minded people! The family think I'm bonkers, but it's so exhilarating, I recommend it to everyone!

There are usually upwards of twenty Dippers on any day, often many more and at the weekends hundreds. We get changed, socially distanced, on the beach and, with so many people around, I don't worry about my car key!



Here in the distance are The Dippers enjoying their swim. The two on the left are taken in summer but the one on the right is taken in much rougher weather as we can see! I wonder whether anyone noticed that the windmills appear in Pauline's sketch (above) too.

Ed.

BOOK GROUPS

Monica Price is still running her book group on line.

Judith Whaley will be contacting her Book Group shortly regarding the resumption of meetings soon.



ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Bernadette has recommended some interesting talks about a selection of paintings and painters to be found on line.

nationalgallery.org.uk/events/courses

Bernadette will be contacting her group soon with a view to planning some outings to galleries during the summer; probably July when she hopes to be completely recovered from the fall that left her with a broken wrist and shoulder. We wish her a speedy recovery.



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. He will soon be contacting all group leaders to plan the reopening of groups.



WALKING GROUP

Gerry Riley will be contacting members of the Walking Group soon regarding restarting group walks during the summer. At present up to sixteen are able to walk together following Covid rules but after May 17th we should be able to eat as well. He would like to find out how many are interested.



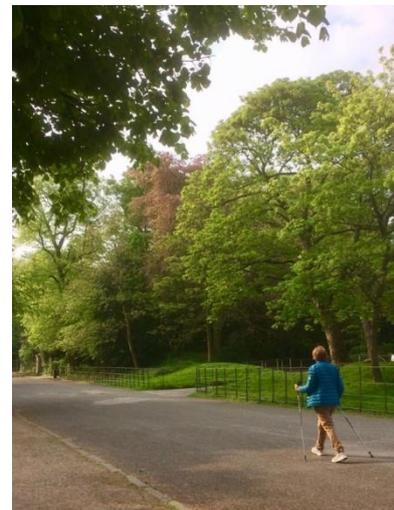
Psychology, Philosophy and Meditation Groups

Brian Gill regrets that he will be unable to continue leading these groups at the moment due to health problems. However he intends to remain involved with U3A so we hope to see him soon.

A TALE OF SWANS IN BIRKENHEAD PARK Pictures by Corinne



We watched the progress of the swans and their cygnets throughout 2020 and now it looks as though we'll be able to watch their new family in 2021.



Two pictures one year apart.

Members have been walking every day in Birkenhead Park since the start of the first lockdown in March 2020. Originally, because so many people were using the park and social distancing was difficult, they walked between 8am and 9am, but now things seem to have eased they meet at 9am - a slightly more civilised time! If anyone wants to join they would be most welcome.

Corinne Whitham

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



AND FINALLY.....

At long last the end of Lockdown appears to be in sight and we can start to make plans for the return to a more normal life. It has certainly been something we will always remember and hope never to repeat. By September we should be able to restart our fortnightly meetings and in the meantime some of the smaller groups will be thinking of ways to get together earlier, as the lockdown allows.

The Committee were delighted with your response to requests for votes etc. – I think that many of us are anxious to see our friends again; I know I am! I would also like to thank those who have contributed to newsletter news, please keep it up.

I took the picture below when out for a walk and thought that you would recognise the building. Enjoy the spring weather in the meantime.

All best wishes,

Eliane Davie - Editor



