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September Newsletter



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Well!! It would appear to be happening, providing there are no last minute changes. 10:00 A.M. 16th September 2021 doors to our U3A will be opening. Just when "U turn" was becoming part of my Psyche. In order to open safely and in consideration of all others we will observe social distancing where necessary and wear masks. Sanitiser will be on hand at the entrance.

Unusual antidotes may be of interest.

Jonas Salk (1914-1995) American virologist:

He decided not to patent his 1955 Polio Vaccine, so that it would be affordable for millions of people who could not afford it. As a result he lost an estimated \$7 billion.

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) Author.

Despite being dead for over a year, the famous author saved a baby's life in 1977.

Her novel "The Pale Horse" described Thallium poisoning so well that a Nurse that had been reading the novel was able to diagnose a sick 1 year old child who had Doctors baffled. The baby was immediately tested and they found traces of thallium. The Doctors changed treatment and her life was saved by the old murder mystery.

Dr Banting (1891-1941) and Dr Best (1899-1978) Scientists:

In 1922 at the University of Toronto, Scientists went to a Hospital Ward with children who were comatose and dying from Diabetic Keto-acidosis. The scientists went from bed to bed and injected the children with the new purified extract-insulin. As they began to inject the last comatose child, the first child injected began to awaken. One by one, all of the children awoke from their diabetic comas. A room of death and gloom became a place of joy and hope.

Just a little humour:

A friend of mine feared that his wife wasn't hearing as well as she used to and perhaps a hearing aid might be in order. Not being sure how to approach her he asked for my advice. I suggested that in order to get some idea of her problem and the extent of her loss, he should stand about 30 feet away from her and in a normal conversational voice see if she hears you. If not go a little closer say 25 foot and repeat the process and so on until she responds.

That evening his wife was in the kitchen cooking dinner.

He says to himself I'm about 30 feet away let's see what happens.

Then in a normal voice he asks "Sue what is for dinner?"

No response.

So he moves closer to the kitchen, about 25 feet from his wife.

He repeats "Sue what is for dinner?"

Still no response.

Next he moves into the dining room about 20 feet away from his wife.

And asks, "Dearest what is for dinner?"

Still no response.

So he walks to the kitchen door, about 10 feet away "Sue what is for dinner?"

Again no response.

So he walks up right behind her "Sue what is for dinner?"

For God sake Joe, for the FIFTH time CHICKEN.

Just a Thought.

I have seen better days,

But I have also seen worse.

I don't have everything that I want,

But I do have all that I need.

I woke up with some aches and pains,

But I woke up.

My life may not be perfect,

But I am blessed.

Alan Harding - Chairman

September 16th return to Trinity & Palm Grove Church for first meeting after lockdown!

The Committee are really looking forward to welcoming our members back to U3A and are sure that everyone will be happy to meet friends again and to resume their various interests. At the moment, due to Covid, we have to limit attendance at the meetings to 70 so that we are not too crowded. We are not able to serve tea and coffee and ask that you wear masks inside, use the hand gel provided and respect each others' space. It would be helpful if you could all have £1 in cash (for hall rental). Members of Committee will greet you at the door and guide you to a seat to avoid crowding.

As you will see, we have been busy trying to organise future activities and feel that with your patience and support we will soon be able to adapt to the situation. ED.

LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN



Social Meetings

30th September 2021

COLIN'S QUIZ.

28th October 2021

DVD: The RMS Windsor Castle. (This is a documentary about the ship and sailing to South Africa.)

25th November 2021

DVD: The secrets, the dreams and the romance of the Wirral.

6th January 2022

DVD: Reflections of Liverpool and Wirral. 1900 to 2000.

3rd February 2022
3rd March 2022

DVD: Merseyside at war 1939-1945.
COLIN'S QUIZ.

SPEAKERS SO FAR FOR THE SEASON 2021-22

14th October 2021	Brian Anderson.	Images from the Edge.
11th November 2021	Gavin Chappell.	Wirral Smugglers.
9th December 2021	Philip Caine.	Barrow to Baghdad and back again.
14th April 2022	Jean Finley.	Nursery Rhymes.
12th May 2022	John Michael Corfe.	The China Farm Story.
9th June 2022	Keith Warrender.	Dunham Massey Ship Canal.

I will have the rest sorted out.

Colin Stredder

Interest Groups - an Update from Tony Swarbrick, Group Leader September 2021



As things slowly begin to improve following Covid and Lockdown I write to update members about the various Interest Groups within Oxton & Prenton U3A. A number

of groups lost their leaders before Covid struck and were already inactive – Gardening, Craft, Film, Photography etc.

Sadly a number more will not restart after Covid unless new leaders can be found:-

Meditation, Psychology and Philosophy: Due to ill health Brian Gill is no longer able to lead the first two of these groups. I take this opportunity to thank Brian for his work with the groups. John Sell has decided not to restart the **Philosophy Group**, due to loss of venue and some members, after not meeting for eighteen months. He would support a new group starting.

Play Reading: Similarly June Wilson is no longer able to lead this group and I thank her, too, for all she has done.

Rummikub: Joan Parfect started this a new group shortly before Covid struck, but is unable to continue to run the group. Joan is, though, still active with the Bridge Group – see below.

Local History: Pauline Pinnington took over as **temporary** leader about 2 years ago and now wishes to step down. Pauline is willing to support a new leader if anyone is willing to take this on, but if no-one comes forward the group will fold!!

Amateur Astronomy: Was already “in limbo” before the pandemic, and Judith Wylie does not want to continue with this. Paul Cullen who was co-leader of the group has indicated that he would be able to continue in a limited way – see below.

Walking: As Gerry Riley may not be returning to U3A, the walking Group needs a new leader. This is a large group; hopefully one of the members will be willing to step in – even if only on a temporary basis!

Debating: Likewise, if Gerry does not return to U3A this group will fold unless a new group leader comes forward.

Poetry: Martin Hesketh
In abeyance for time being

Scrabble: Dorothy Pettard
Suspended for time being.

If you are interested in taking over as leader of any of the groups above or starting a new group with similar aims / interests please e-mail Tony at the address shown below.

groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Walking Group: Tony Swarbrick has agreed to lead the group (unless someone else steps forward) until Christmas, after which it will close if no leader is found. It is a very popular group so hopefully an offer will be forthcoming.

Eliane Davie and Judith Wylie are leading a walk around Parkgate on September 23rd and Tony will contact members of the group regarding this. It will be approx. 5+1/2miles or, in the event of inclement weather, 3 +1/2 miles in length. Further information will be e-mailed to walkers in due course.

The following groups have resumed or are about to resume activities:-

A Book and a Glass of Wine: Judith Whaley
Meet on last Thursday of month. We have already had a “Garden Meeting” and plan another at end of August, no meeting in September, but resuming in October. The group is full at the moment, but vacancies may occur if all do not return.



Art Appreciation: Bernadette Hamilton will be resuming group activities shortly as she recovers from her accident. She has arranged some gallery visits and has contacted members of her group with details of the first one on September 15th.



Amateur Astronomy: Paul Cullen
Paul has offered to keep members informed of significant astronomic events to watch for.



Bridge: Tony Swarbrick, Joan Parfect
bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk
Meetings will resume on 22nd September in “The Cabin” at Trinity. Meetings on 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays each month 10.30am to 12. We meet to play friendly relaxed bridge, Joan and myself are on hand to offer advice to less experienced players and from time to time offer “teaching” sessions for people new to the game. New members welcome.



Book Club: Mary O’Neill
Mary will contact members shortly to make arrangements for restarting.



Creative Writing: Monica Price
Anyone interested should get in touch with Monica, please.



Lunch Circle: Colin Stredder
Will resume later in the year, Colin will contact members.



Music Appreciation: Paul Cullen
Meetings will restart on 6th October in the Session Room at Trinity. Meetings held on the 1st Wednesday of each month, 2pm – 4pm. Bring a disc – new members welcome!



New Book Group: Monica Price. This Group has continued to operate via Zoom during lockdown





Boules: Maureen Oldham

Anyone interested in joining this new group to play Boules at Ashton Park, West



Kirby please contact Maureen.

groupcordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Tony Swarbrick

Pauline Horner spent an enjoyable break in the Lake District recently and here shares some of her thoughts and photographs. I think you will find them interesting.

On 20th April 1847 the railway came to the heart of the Lake District. The station was in the tiny village of Birthwaite, a mile and a half from Windermere, but the railway company decided to call the station after the lake. The village soon adopted the name of the station and, as time went by, it has merged with the older lakeside town of **Bowness-on-Windermere**, though the two have quite separate centres.



The railway link made access to the Lakes so much easier. However, once there, visitors still had to resort to horses and carriages to get around.

At one time the area around the Lakes was regarded as an unattractive wilderness and certainly not a place for tourists. However, the Picturesque Movement in art which began in the 18th century opened up new ideas about the area. The attraction of the Lakes to the Victorians was further encouraged by the works of Turner and Wordsworth, as well as the writings of John Ruskin.

Turner was a keen traveller, seeking inspiration for his paintings. He first visited the Lake District in 1797, and by the early 1800s he was a regular visitor to Cockermouth Castle, where the 3rd Earl of Egremont lived. Turner painted a great number of scenes from the Lake District. These included Derwentwater as seen from Friar's Crag, Coniston Water, Buttermere, and Ullswater.



This is my own copy of Turner's Lodore Falls, painted for a final art exam many years ago.

The poems of William Wordsworth, many of them written at Dove Cottage near Grasmere, inspired some Victorians to make the journey to the Lakes, even before the railway made it easier.

Thomas West published a guidebook to the Lakes in 1778 and this encouraged some tourism. People were struggling to complete the 'Grand Tour' around the Continent due to the French Revolution

and Napoleonic wars, so following West's guidebooks the Lakes became the fashionable destination for wealthy tourists. They set out armed with their guidebook and sketch pad, to 'view' the landscape.

Photo of Claife Viewing station



Claife Viewing Station coloured glass



*Using the coloured glass at Claife
Claife Viewing Claife*



viewing Station, which

looks like a miniature castle on the edge of Windermere, was built in the 1790s and later expanded by the Victorians who put coloured glass in some of the windows.

This helped to recreate a view of the lake and the surrounding landscape under different seasonal conditions. Yellow created a summer landscape, orange an autumn one, light green for spring, and dark blue for moonlight. Nowadays it is owned by the National Trust who renovated it recently and have put sample sheets of coloured glass for visitors to view the landscape.

viewing hut interior



of

Viewing Hut at Rydal Hall



interior window



The Victorians were not the first generation to appreciate nature for its beauty. Earlier interest in natural beauty is shown by the tiny Viewing Hut in Rydal Hall. This simple slate viewing hut dates from 1698. Built on the edge of a ravine right next to a waterfall, the hut is only accessible via a long, twisting path through the Hall's gardens. It's too small to live in, just a single room with a front door, a window and a bench. During the 19th Century the Victorians smartened it up with wood panelling on the walls and a large window for viewing.

William Wordsworth included the view in his rather long poem 'An evening walk' in 1793

*"...a small cascade
Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade
Beyond, along the vista of the brook
Where antique roots its bustling path o'erlook
The eye reposes on a secret bridge
Half grey, half shagg'd with ivy to its ridge."*

Many wealthy Victorian families from Liverpool and the cotton towns built summer or weekend retreats in the Lakes. Several of these houses were in the Arts and Crafts style and have survived on the shores of Windermere to this day.



Blackwell House

Blackwell House, which is open to the public, was originally built in 1900 as a rural holiday retreat for the Manchester brewery owner Sir Edward Holt (1849 – 1928), his wife Elizabeth and their five children. The house was designed by English architect Mackay Hugh Baillie Scott

(1865 – 1945). This beautiful house has its original arts and craft furniture and fittings and a magnificent view across Windermere



Wray Castle



Wray Castle is a National Trust Gothic Revival castle on the shores of Windermere with an abundance of turrets and towers. However, sadly, the interior is bare and empty of period furniture. It is a great centre for children's activities nowadays. It was built in 1840 for Dr James Dawson, a retired Liverpool surgeon, using his wife's inheritance from a gin fortune. Apparently, she took one look at the house when it was finished and refused to live in it. The Dawsons didn't have any children, so it seems amazing that this was in effect a retirement home for two people.

William Wordsworth, on the other hand, said Wray Castle 'added a dignified feature to the interesting scenery in the midst of which it stands'.

Later in 1882, the castle was rented for three months in the summer by the family of the 16-year-old Beatrix Potter. Quite a holiday cottage for a couple and their two children!

Young Beatrix Potter

Pauline Horner



The Williamson Art Gallery and Museum

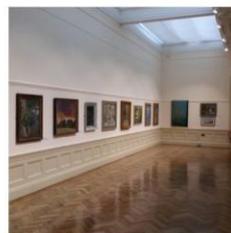
The Williamson is currently open Wednesday to Saturday 12- 5pm.

If you haven't had a chance to go in since it reopened it is well worth a visit and you may notice some changes!

- The newly installed lighting shows the gallery at its best, gleamingly clean and polished.
- Currently on display are some absolute gems from the permanent collection, some of which have been hidden away for far too long. The Della Robbia collection looks magnificent and the selection of prints in the cafe might bring back memories for some of you - they are part of a school art initiative from the 1950s.
- The Polyphon has been restored and new music discs purchased - you can "buy" a penny at the front desk to hear it play, it's just magical!
- The cafe has re-opened with limited menu, but it always has some delicious cakes! If the weather is kind you can sit out in the Green Gallery Garden with your refreshments- The Williamson and Priory Friends have been busy bringing it back to life after the lockdown.
- Oxtan Books is still trading in the foyer and you will find the gallery shop (with some new and exciting stock) on your left as you enter.
- Plans are underway for the whole building to reopen for temporary exhibitions in the future, but until that happens - the Wirral Open Studios Tour on Saturday 11th September and Sunday 12th September will have some artists exhibiting at the gallery, and a small but perfectly formed Oxtan Art Fair is planned for Sunday 7th November.
- There have been some staff changes, many of you will have been used to being greeted by Stuart or Graham on the front desk, but they have both taken a well earned retirement. So expect to see new faces when you visit.

We are so lucky to have such a wonderful resource on our doorstep - I hope you can take time to enjoy a visit.

Corinne Whitham



With thanks to
Corinne
Whitham ED.



Brian's Musings

Of one thing I am absolutely certain and that is that nothing is absolutely certain. Well of course there are the natural laws like gravity, magnetism, thermodynamics and so on but once one adds human behaviour into the mix, conditioned by fear, ignorance, the urge to create and the will to power, anything can happen.

It seems that the more we try to set up systems, for whatever motive, be it socio-political, theological or humanitarian, the more stability and order seem to elude us. We seem as a race to have either an inbuilt resistance to being told what to do (especially if it is for our own good) or a longing to appoint someone with power and authority to save us from the consequences of our individual and collective stupidity; all they need is a loud, convincing voice.

There are degrees of instability of course, a modicum of which seems to be essential for creative living but when confronted by conditions that seem to be overwhelmingly chaotic and potentially destructive, what can we do? An individual, group or nation may be too lacking in vital energy or motivation to muster the resources required to ensure survival in extreme conditions. Uncertainty and ignorance, obfuscated by the lack of wisdom that inevitably accompanies our inability to learn from experience, can easily lead to disaster. One can feel very lonely and isolated. Individuals and large groups alike can become subject to depression and worse.

We tend to look for solutions in terms of cultural 'certainties' to which we have long subscribed, even though they will very likely have played an important part in the current crisis. Established bodies do this constantly and are surprised that nothing ever changes. But all is not lost. If we look at the great wealth of human experience, faithfully recorded and handed down to us through the vehicle of dreams, myths and legends we find that the wisdom and even the means with which to meet our potential destruction are to be found once we begin to understand and interpret their language. After all, the problems that confront us have hardly changed with time. Are we not primarily concerned with nutrition, reproduction and security?

With this in mind I find the story of The Ark particularly relevant and helpful. I may have referred to it before but its ability to continue yielding support never seems to fail. It occurs in several cultures, one of the most ancient reaching us from Ancient Sumeria. As the flood is metaphorical, metaphysical and psychological, whether or not it actually happened does not affect the power of the basic message. The point is that the protagonists are overwhelmed by events ; (insert here any set of circumstances with which you feel unable to cope and for which there seems to be no viable solution) When it comes to nations a flood of ineptitude, ignorance and stupidity usually works quite well but at an individual level everything is much more personal.

In a totally flooded world we lose all points of reference and therefore, all sense of direction. If the story is well told the problem is compounded by there being no means of propulsion (a sail) and no rudder with which to steer. In fact they are explicitly forbidden by 'God'. Why? It seems that the protagonists are deliberately condemned to suffer total disorientation. Why? Well it transpires that the way in which they and their friends had been living their lives was seriously at fault; trying to mend it, given the cultural values that they subscribed to, was just not going to work. There was nothing for it but to scrap it all and start again. I doubt that in this case God was being unduly vindictive. Left alone with our cultural inadequacies and given enough time we are well capable of destroying ourselves. The instruction manuals are there but the really good ones never speak of the competition, exploitation, domination and fear by which the flood is generated.

I had a dream once in which my car was out of control and all over the road. I try to honour and respect my subconscious self so, in spite of the great danger I was in, I decided to sit back and let the car decide where to go. What followed was totally beyond anything I could have imagined and set the pattern of my life for years to follow.

We are very much at the mercy of forces and factors over which we have little or no absolute control. Though we cannot know for certain whether they are benign or destructive the fact remains, that we are living in an expanding and therefore creative universe. Scientifically we do not know what life and consciousness are nor even what energy is or how it arises. There are no real and effective landmarks by which we can safely navigate. Having a smart phone hardly counts when floating on a sea of ignorance.

Should we feel driven to create our own ark may I suggest that we need to take enough humility and patience to see us through the voyage. We will have plenty of time to connect with the silence and stillness through which the great currents of creation flow.

Brian Gill

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AND FINALLY.....

Lots of news this time to think about after such a long break! We are really looking forward to welcoming you back and hearing all your stories about your versions of lockdown. It has been a difficult time for everyone; for some more difficult than for others.

Many of you have found new hobbies, while others have become more familiar with Zoom meetings with friends and families. The joy of actually being able to meet again properly has been a relief to many, though we have appreciated the technology that has enabled us to at least speak to and get sight of our nearest and dearest!

I hope that the information in this newsletter regarding Groups and Covid precautions will be useful to you. The first meeting will be a social one to reacquaint ourselves with friends and to find out how your groups will be operating. Gradually we should be able to return to a full programme as outings etc. become easier.

If you have questions, do ask one of the Committee who will try to answer queries and if you have any ideas for groups, again please speak to a member of Committee.

I would like to welcome you back to our U3A on behalf of the Committee; we have missed you all.

Eliane Davie - Editor



