



October Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Our first U3A meeting since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic and I feel a great deal of relief. Before the meeting I felt apprehension, anxiety and excitement in equal amounts. I think perhaps we all did. In the circumstances I believe our meeting was a great success and we must congratulate ourselves on the responsible way in which we conducted it.

Being able to meet up with each other once again, the smiles, the laughter, and the debate were so uplifting. The warmth and the kindness of everyone never cease to amaze me. It was also pleasing to welcome new members and prospective new members. Many thanks to everyone responsible for the very necessary recruitment drive. Looking ahead I think we must all be positive, stay safe, healthy and look forward to our next meeting on the 30th September for the quiz.

The word UP:

The two letter word UP in the English language has more meanings than any other 2 letter word. It is listed in the dictionary as an (adv), (prep), (adj), (noun) or (verb).

It is easy to understand UP, meaning towards the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning why do we wake UP? At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP and why are committee members UP for election? Why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report?

We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and do UP the old car.

At other times, this little word has really special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite and think UP excuses. To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing. A drain must be opened UP because it is blocked UP. We open UP a shop in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem pretty mixed UP about UP!

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk sized dictionary it takes UP almost 25% of the page and can add UP to about 30 definitions.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out, we say it is clearing up. When it does not rain for a while, things dry UP.
One could go on and on, but I will wrap it UP for now... my time is UP.

Did you know?

The ancient Chinese used Natural Gas for lighting as early as 500BC using Bamboo pipelines to transport it for miles.

The term "third world country" has nothing to do with poverty. It simply refers to countries after WW2 that did not align with either the Western US Aligned Coalition or the Soviet Bloc.

Wishing you all good health.

Alan Harding - Chairman

Brian's Musings



It looks as though we are going to have to cope with various deprivations for some time yet. I gather that people are not yet able to fly to their destination of choice without prohibitive inconvenience and that some are having to do without milk-shakes and that innocent children will be deprived of their preferred toys in the not-so-festive season that lies ahead. Where will it all end?

With the advantage of age one cannot help but see events from a perspective somewhat at variance with that advocated by our national newspapers. I cannot help but be reminded of a time when we spent many of our nights in air-raid shelters and food was rationed for a period of ten years. The daily news was concerned with ships sunk, 'planes shot down, trenches and major installations blown up and cities bombed. Later, as we began to recover from all this and I was beginning to work towards a professional life in the theatre, it all had to be put aside in favour of two years National Service, from which my theatrical career never fully recovered. There were no zoom meetings or internet tutorials. The break was total.

It came as an enormous relief, eventually, to discover that after centuries of fighting for territorial gains and the acquisition of wealth, accompanied by massive losses of life and costly defence strategies, those in power decided that it might be better, more convenient and economical, to share our resources rather than fight over them. Having tried shopping in countries in which one had to queue for an hour in order to be served in a shop in which the shelves were totally empty and devoid of any evidence of produce, I am all too aware of the fragility of national economies. They are subject to conditions beyond our control and also beyond our capacity to imagine and therefore plan. When our vision is set on unrealistic aims and objectives we seldom pause for long enough to fully account for the negative. Human ignorance and stupidity are two factors against which it is virtually impossible to protect one self, particularly if they are ones own.

However, standing for three-quarters of an hour in temperatures below minus eighteen degrees outside a picture gallery can stimulate a lively interest in the art

work once one gains admission – to say nothing of the warmth. There are positive aspects to deprivation that one cannot afford to dismiss lightly at this present time; and though it is painful to say this: I know that I have gained more in wisdom and understanding from the losses than from the gains.

Meanwhile, in my own personal life I am becoming increasingly aware that it is my own sense of who and what I am, what I should and shouldn't have and how I should and shouldn't be treated, that creates many of the problems. With a scaled down sense of self, with all its attendant hopes, fears and expectations, I discover that I actually have enough with which to meet each day as it comes and that what I do have is worthy of far more attention than I actually give it. There is little point in looking to external factors to provide me with a sense of wellbeing if I fail to appreciate what is already there.

When I do venture out I am constantly amazed by the wealth of stimulation and sensory enrichment that can be gained from two slices of toast and a mug of tea in proximity to my fellow human beings. What an enormously varied and rewarding study and indeed, entertainment we provide for each other!

Brian Gill

DATES TO NOTE

Social Meetings

30th September 2021

COLIN'S QUIZ has been cancelled and in place of it we have a speaker, Chris Kenny, formerly Chief Fire Officer in Lancashire.



28th October 2021

DVD: The RMS Windsor Castle. 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

DVD: Merseyside at war 1939-1945.

3rd March 2022

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 soon!

Colin Stredder

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. **Tony Sullivan has offered to lead a new Discussion Group; see next page.**

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.



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

Walking Group:

The October walk will be led by Sandra Lakin on October 29th. Meet at the Wheatsheaf Inn, Neston Rd., Ness for a 10.30am start. The walk will be around 5 miles long and could be a little muddy depending on the weather. Orders for food to be booked in advance. Numbers are limited to 20 walkers and further information will be given nearer the time. Please contact Tony, Group Co-ordinator to reserve a place.

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

The next event for the Group is on Wednesday October 20th and is a visit to the Walker Gallery to view an Exhibition of Sickert. She suggests meeting for coffee at around 10am followed by the Exhibition at 11am and will be in touch with group members soon with further information.



On Wednesday November 17th the Group will visit the Lady Lever Gallery to view an exhibition: Sublime Symmetry – De Morgan Ceramics.

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 be 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. She will shortly be contacting group members for details of her restart.

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:

Anyone interested in joining this group this group, to play Boules at Ashton Park, West Kirby, please contact Maureen Oldham.



Tony Sullivan has offered to lead a New Group, “**Discussion Group**” this replaces the **Debating Group** led by Gerry Riley prior to Covid!

Tony will host this group from his home in Upton – day and time to be decided. Those interested should e-mail me at the address below.

groupcordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Tony S. Swarbrick

Committee Vacancy

We are still looking for another Committee Member to plan Social meetings once a month and help take part in the general running of our U3A. Colin Stredder has taken over the booking of the main Speaker Meetings. Anyone interested in taking this on should contact a Committee Member at the next meeting.

Christmas Lunch

We are hoping to have our usual Christmas Lunch this year, something that was not possible because of Covid last Christmas. Barbara Winstanley has been making preliminary enquiries and all things being equal we hope to have it at the Prenton Golf Club on December 9th; 12 noon for 12.30 dining. Subject to price and confirmation, we will give you further news in the near future. The club has been a popular Choice in the past, so fingers crossed!

ED.

VISIT TO THE TATE GALLERY ON SEPTEMBER 15TH

On September 15th a happy band of the Art Appreciation Group joined Bernadette to view the Lucian Freud Exhibition. Because of Covid there was no official talk to avoid crowding but there were plenty of written notes around the paintings to explain the changes in style over the years and to give us a brief biography of Freud's life and career.

He enjoyed a long and on the whole, successful career as an artist of exceptional ability, albeit a controversial one. Most, though not all of his work features portraits of people, including himself, his mother, his wife and friends; many are painted nude. Born in 1922 he was working through into the 21st century. His attention to detail in his work is notable; he was interested in portraying ageing and inner trauma in his subjects resulting in many of them looking unhappy! A large painting depicting foliage is remarkable in its detail and balance of colour.

His private life also was controversial; he sired several children by assorted women and did much of his work in a very bare studio, where he painted himself working, (in the buff!) Many of his paintings are in oils, his mastery of which is unquestionable. It was so good to be able to meet again after the last eighteen months; many thanks to Bernadette for organising the visit.

Some of the Art Appreciation Group standing in front of a self portrait of Lucian Freud.

Eliane Davie



Circular walk starting and finishing at The Old Quay Parkgate – September 23rd



The Walking Group enjoyed their first walk since lockdown, a circular walk around the Parkgate area. We all agreed that it felt great to be back enjoying a normal activity with friends and the weather was kind to us. Judith Wylie and Eliane Davie led the walk which started at the Old Quay, along the Parade then further along the coastal path to turn off into the golf course, where the top photo was taken. As you can see there were some lovely views along the way as we continued along country lanes and part of the Wirral Way to loop back to the Old Quay from the opposite direction; about five miles in all. We finished with lunch at the pub, looking forward to the next walk!



Dale Cook R.I.P.



It is with sadness that we inform you of the recent death of Dale Cook who had been a member of our U3A group for some time. His funeral took place on September 21st and I am sure that you will join in offering our condolences to Ursula, his wife for over fifty years, for her great loss.

We think too of the families of Kevin Nelson, Corinne Batstone and Josie Barlow, who have all died recently and extend our condolences to them.

Letter from Steve Peacock – U3A Member, Geologist and Walker

I thought your Walking group might be interested in knowing about a new book now available - **"Geology for Walkers"**.

Written by a geologist, walker and fellow u3a member, it is constructed as a 'companion for the scientifically curious' - rather than as a textbook - and aimed at the outdoor enthusiast / hobby geologist interested in learning more about, and developing a deeper appreciation for, the geological story around them.

[Link to the Amazon bookstore page.](#)

Attached is a "Dive Inside" which will give a good feel for the book's style, scope and content - and can be freely shared.

Best Regards,

Steve

COVID NOTES

Please wear face masks during the meeting.

Hand sanitisers are available on entering.

Please do not gather in large groups.

If a queue develops, please keep a safe distance apart.

Thanks but please do not stack chairs after the meeting as they have to be sanitised before being put away.

AND FINALLY.....

It was great to see so many of you at our opening meeting after such a long gap during lockdown. I think that we all enjoyed seeing friends again and the feeling that some sort of normality is returning.

As you can see, some of the groups have already restarted and others such as Music and Creative Writing are due to come back in October. Tony Sullivan has offered to lead a new discussion group if enough people show interest.

Christmas Lunch also looks like a real possibility this year (don't know about the turkey though!)

I would like to thank those who, with their snippets of news and photos of walks, swims and artwork gave me some smiles during lockdown and also meant that there was something to pass on to you, our members. Please keep up the good work and continue to send me anything that could be of interest that I can include.

Best Wishes to you All.

Eliane Davie - Editor



