



January Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

On the ninth December we held our U3A Christmas Luncheon at the Prenton Golf Club and a very enjoyable occasion it proved to be. Excellent food, excellent service and excellent company and the conversation flowed. It was so good to see so many happy smiling faces. For just that period of time normality was almost restored and it felt good.

I would like to take this opportunity of thanking Barbara Winstanley for organising the event, including the Christmas Crackers and Raffle. She really did us proud.

I do not know what the future may hold for us, but I should like to believe that we can continue with our meetings and having our Speakers in the foreseeable future. Circumstances being what they are with the new Covid variant Omicron, time will tell.

CHRISTMAS AT SEA - by Robert Louis Stevenson.

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And the cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lea.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But t'was only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We trembled, every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature, we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard;
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the Coast Guard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.



The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vowed we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

Sailors of a bygone age sailing during the festive season, perhaps heading for Liverpool with their precious cargo.

A Little Geography

The smallest island with country status is Pitcairn in Polynesia, at just 4.53 sq Km (1.75 sq miles)

The first city to reach a population of 1 million people was Rome, Italy in 133 B.C. There is a city named Rome on every continent.

Thank you for your continued support of our U3A. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of myself and the committee of wishing you,

A Happy and above all, a Safe New Year.

Alan Harding - Chairman

Brian's Musings

Just to create an interesting sense of perspective, it might be worth remembering that Christmas, which many will have thankfully put behind them by now, does not end until Candlemas on the second day of February; I know someone who takes their decorations down on Boxing Day and many are only too keen to put the old year well behind them, but in reality life does not work quite like that. Many will have made their New Year resolutions and be looking forward to a new start, in an attempt to escape the consequences of established and negative events in the year just past.

January traditionally looks both ways. It is a good time for reflection and, more than ever, there is plenty upon which we might profitably reflect at this time. In a culture given to making worthy resolutions each January, can we honestly say that our collective wisdom has demonstrably increased in consequence? The struggle for power, influence and shared identity, however well intended, only leads to greater strife; resolutions arising from such can only repeat the mistakes of the past.

Ancient teachings, endorsed by modern psychology, assure us that, should we want our lives to change then it is we who must first change from within ourselves. There are many who are only too happy to embrace this injunction and, often with compliant psychological help. They immediately set about acquiring a bigger and better self. Those who follow this path are destined to experience unsatisfactory outcomes. The ego, though necessary, generally speaking has only a very limited

vision and poor understanding and worse still, virtually no knowledge of how the subconscious functions.

History reveals that where true wisdom prevails, it is usually supported by a profound understanding of the relatedness of everything. The exploitation and isolationism that arises when groups and individuals seek to promote themselves at the expense of the whole can only lead to conflict. Clearly we have not yet evolved to the point where we can be collectively aware at this level, though many individuals well understand the necessity. Our whole way of living, from the moment we are born, endorses competition and distinction under the aegis of narrow, collective norms. There are of course ways of Being that are creatively interactive and endorse the exploration of life and consciousness on the planet, without causing others to suffer in the process but we have yet to value them sufficiently to incorporate them into the way in which we organise ourselves.

The stresses that our present culture imposes on us are unendurable for the less able and the more sensitive amongst us, many of whom turn to drink or drugs or simply opt out of a system that does not and cannot support them either adequately or at all. Some will make a premature exit. The play Twelfth Night, appropriate for this time of year, reveals insight into our condition: Malvolio is trying hard to play the system but fails to take into account the disruptive power of the subconscious, represented by Sir Toby and friends. He finds himself over-ruled and imprisoned 'in a dark room and bound'. Interestingly the supreme authority in the house lies in female hands. Olivia reprimands Sir Toby for his lax and drunken behaviour. In Shakespeare's day she was in fact a man, playing a woman who is in love with a man, playing a woman, playing a man, cast in a low status role. She has rejected the attentions of the high status Count. All this is important when considering the main theme. The author is seeking balance and harmony in a dualistic world.

Shakespeare, as ever, is concerned with motives and outcomes. He can be relied upon to place the wisdom of the plot where one least expects to find it. Why would Sir Toby throw away his gift of life, consciousness and high status by being perpetually intoxicated? Well, in truth, the system, as it stands, does not work for anyone, whatever their status. And as Sir Toby himself observes, in a moment of drunken clarity

'Tis all one.'

Brian Gill

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

Remember to bring correct change for the £1 at the door – this goes towards the hire of the hall and refreshments.

All outstanding subs need to be paid by the end of this month - please pay by cheque!



Social Meetings 2021-22

January 6 th 2022 1900 to	DVD Reflections of Liverpool and Wirral from 2000
February 2 nd 2022	DVD Merseyside at War 1939-1945
March 3 rd 2022	Colin's Quiz
March 31 st 2022	George Stevenson, retired MP and MEP, will give a light and entertaining talk about his experiences.



Speakers (so far) 2022

20 th January 2022	Hilbre Bird Observatory	John Elliot
17 th February 2022	Birkenhead Tramways	Rob Jones
17 th March 2022	Behind the Scenes on TV Theatre	Fiona Martin
14 th April 2022	Jean Finley.	Nursery Rhymes
12 th May 2022	John Michael Corfe.	The China Farm Story
9 th June 2022	Keith Warrender.	Dunham Massey Ship Canal.
7 th July 2022	Philip Caine	Barrow to Bagdad

WALKING GROUP

Christmas walk on December 17th ended at Tony's house where we enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies in his garden. The weather was really mild !



November Walk – Crosby Coast

Due to appalling stormy weather on the day this walk was postponed.

I hope to do the walk sometime in the New Year.

Christmas Walk – Moreton Coast

On Friday 17th December a group of eleven had a very enjoyable walk along the Moreton Coast to Meols.

The weather was unseasonably warm and calm, the tide was in and the view across the estuary was superb.

We returned to Moreton via quiet lanes and footpaths, making a small detour to Sing Carols outside Sandra and Chris’s House.

The walk ended at Tony’s house where we were treated to Homemade Mince Pies (Thanks to Judith), Mulled Wine and Nibbles.

Donations were invited for Motor Neurone Disease Association and a staggering £123 was raised. THANK YOU.

January Walk – Liverpool “The 3 Parks” - An Old favourite of the Group

Hopefully Ken Jackson and Tony Sullivan will be leading this walk in January – more details will be emailed to walking group members.

New Walking Group Leader.

When we re-started the group after lockdown I agreed to lead the group on a temporary basis until the New Year until a long term leader came forward!

No new leader has as yet volunteered!!! I will continue arranging walks until Easter, but cannot promise to take on this role long term!!

If the group is to survive I need members of the group to come forward to arrange and lead walks. Please contact me if you are prepared to do this.

Thanks to all who have supported the group in 2021. We all look forward to some interesting walks in 2022.

Tony Swarbrick

ART APPRECIATION GROUP December 8th





Members of the Art Appreciation Group met this month at the Williamson Gallery for coffee followed by a stroll round the gallery. It being so near to Christmas, coffee turned into a very cheery meeting and we almost forgot the purpose of our visit! Ed.

BRIGITTE JURACK

Brigitte Jurack explores our relationship with animals and their inner lives. Her recent work considers issues around environmental adaptability by focussing on some of the scavengers with whom we share long cultural entanglements, such as crows, foxes and monkeys.

Aesop's Fables have long fascinated Jurack in her artistic practice through their articulation of hybrid identities and the animal within. At a time when we can no longer deny the devastating effect of human activity on our environment, the ethical dimension of this *animal turn* and the urgency needed to change takes centre stage. For this solo show, Jurack presents a series of new works in ceramics, watercolour, drawing and film, and "*the focus on foxes, crows and monkeys is a reflection on the edges of society, on the clever scavengers who eke a living from the in-between spaces and leftovers from the rest of life*" (Colin M. Simpson, Williamson Art Gallery). A new colour monograph published by Williamson Art Gallery and Manchester School of Art will be available, with essays by Colin Simpson, Lauren Velvick and Dr Danielle Child.

"These works were begun pre-Covid, with the intricate watercolours and drawings all created within the stillness and silence of lockdowns spent in Alternator Studio and Project space, a converted bakery in Birkenhead and my studio and place of making since 2013." – Brigitte Jurack

Saturday 13th November 2021 – 30th January 2022 Brigitte Jurack Exhibition



Brigitte Jurack (Düsseldorf, 1962) studied at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Glasgow School of Art and Chelsea College of Art, London. She looks at the world as it is and tries to make sense of it; her process can be described as picking up what is already out there. Jurack has exhibited at IMMA (Ireland), European Ceramic Work Centre (Netherlands) and World Water Conference (Japan). She was the 1993 Henry Moore Sculpture Fellow, 2014 Liverpool Art Prize nominee and was selected for the 2019 Korean International Ceramic Biennial. See www.brigittejurack.de

GROUP NEWS

Local History:

There will be no meetings of the Group during December or January

Debating:

Tony Sullivan has offered to lead a new Discussion Group.

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.

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

A Book and a Glass of Wine:

Meet on last Thursday of month. The group is full at the moment, but vacancies may occur if all do not return.

Amateur Astronomy

Paul Cullen Judith Whaley:

Paul will inform members of what events to watch out 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, 10.30a.m. 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 Bridge.

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
Next lunch: January 18th, 1pm at The Shippons, Irby

Music Appreciation: Paul Cullen
Next meeting January 5th 2022
the Session Room 2-4pm.



New Book **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.



groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk *Tony 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

Our Christmas lunch at the Prenton Golf Club was a very successful gathering. As usual at this venue the food was good, the service was excellent and there is plenty of space for comfort. Everyone seemed to be having a good time and thanks are due to Barbara Winstanley who organised it all for us, even to buying and wrapping presents for the draw. Quite an onerous task especially given recent limitations with Covid!

Below are a few photos with apologies for not having space for more -



Pauline's Horner's Christmas Visit to Lapland

One of our members enjoyed a Christmas visit to Lapland with family and took some remarkable photos which I think that you might enjoy; her granddaughter certainly loved the experience! Pauline also produced some sketches one of which I have included.





AND ANOTHER SELECTION OF PARK BEAUTIES FROM CORINNE



Book Exchange



We will be re-starting the Book exchange at Thursday meetings shortly. Please help us to “clear the decks” of our stock of books - It would be helpful if you could take 2/3 books each and donate these to your local charity shop.

Please note this is an EXCHANGE not a way to get rid of large quantities of unwanted books!!

Please donate no more than 2 books at a time, unless taking away a similar amount.

Please only donate books in Good Clean Condition.

Art Appreciation Group

The next meeting will take place at the TWPG church in the Session Room on the third Wednesday of the month, 19th. Bernadette will email group members with details in advance.

KEEP YOURSELVES AND OTHERS SAFE

Please continue to wear face coverings during our meetings.

Hand Sanitising gel is available on entry

Do not gather in large groups

If a queue develops please keep at a safe distance.

Thank you, but please do not stack the chairs at the end of the meeting they have to be sanitised before stacking away

www.u3asites.org.uk/north



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and finally,

I hope that you all spent an enjoyable Christmas and that you enjoy the Newsletter; as always please send anything in the way of experiences or suggestions that you feel members would find interesting.

*On behalf of our Committee I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Newsletter during the last year and wish you all a **VERY***

**Happy
New Year!**

Eliane Davie - Editor