



November Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Autumn is very close, nights drawing in and getting darker. It was an ideal time for our coach trip to the Blackpool Lights. A precursor to this was a first class Fish & Chip dinner at Papas Restaurant. This was all very well organised by Tony Swarbrick.



In 1974, whilst we were living in West Pennard near Glastonbury, our local Parish Magazine published "The Watermill". I found it soul searching and rather special. I hope you will too.

THE WATERMILL

Listen to the watermill through the live-long day:
How the clicking of the wheel wears the hours away.
Languidly the autumn wind stirs the Greenwood leaves;
From the field the reapers sing, binding up their sheaves.
And the proverb haunts my mind as a spell is cast:
The mill cannot grind with the water that is past.

Autumn winds revive no more, leaves that once are shed,
And the sickle cannot reap corn once gathered;
And the ruffled stream flows on, tranquil, deep and still;
Never gliding back again to the watermill.
Truly speaks the proverb old, with a meaning vast,
The mill cannot grind with the water that is past.

Take the lesson to thy self, loving heart and true,
Golden years are fleeting by, youth us passing too.
Learn to make the most of life, lose no happy day,
Time will never bring thee back chances swept away.
Leave no tender word unsaid, love while love shall last:
The mill cannot grind with the water that is past.

Work! While yet the daylight shines man of strength and will,
Never does the streamlet glide useless to the mill.
Wait not till tomorrow's sun beams upon thy way;
All that thou can call thine own, lies in thy today.

Power and intellect and health, may not always last:
The mill cannot grind with water that is past.

Oh! The wasted hours of life that have drifted by,
Oh! The good that might have been, lost without a sigh;
Love that we might once have saved by a single word;
Thoughts conceived but never penned, perishing unheard.
Take the proverb to the heart, take and hold it fast:
The mill cannot grind with the water that is past.

By:
Bishop Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

Alan Harding – Chairman

BRIAN'S MUSINGS



Apparently religions the world over are in decline as people, influenced by scientific materialism and the Coca-Cola culture, question outdated theological dogmas and creeds. But reductionist, dualistic science can offer us little or no refuge if we are looking to solid matter and hard facts for support. That leaves us with money, which Yuval Noah Harari reminds us, is a highly volatile abstraction, having no more than the value that we ourselves attach to it. Market forces and unstable governments can change everything in the blink of an eye.

In the fullness of summer, the loss of meaning and identity that are the consequence of the above are less noticeable; distractions are more readily available, but with winter upon us we need a few certainties to see us through the long, dark, cold nights and short, bleak days. Lights certainly help in this respect. The candlelit deaths-heads of Halloween demonstrate a fearless confrontation with the forces of annihilation and on Bonfire-Night the enemy, whatever we conceive that to be, is vanquished in multiple fires and our triumph is celebrated with pyrotechnical displays. From then on it is lights and more lights, all the way to the Winter Solstice and beyond, culminating with Candlemas on the second day of February, when a house, three doors down from us, takes down its Christmas Tree, signifying the proper end of Christmas. Those who took their trees down earlier were somewhat premature and perhaps should not have been so eager to put them up so soon in the first place.

All of these festivals and the orgy of retail opportunities that attend them, are of course profoundly religious in origin, though now-a-days few of their participants set foot inside a church or even believe in God. One way or another the great myth of death and rebirth will prevail. Humanity without meaning is untenable and meaning without a 'transpersonal' dimension, lacks power. We must have our Gods and demons. History and current experience amply demonstrate that The 'State' makes an inadequate substitute for divinity. Still we need causes; something beyond the confines and limitations of the mundane self through which to channel our

intellectual and emotional energies. Such a need can make us extremely vulnerable to predation. Bewildered and directionless we can invite the attention of the rapacious and unscrupulous amongst us, especially via the internet. The fact that elderly people are particularly susceptible is well documented. It seems we are not protected by our age and good intentions.

All is not lost. The more enlightened amongst us, at every level, understand, all too well, that every system has within it the seeds of its own demise. Science, in its determination to anchor life, consciousness and being in the matter from which it is assumed to have arisen, has to admit that matter, as generally understood, does not exist. Energy there most certainly is but what it is and how it arises in a zero-point field, from which it is endlessly renewed, is a total mystery and how that field communicates within itself, regardless of time and space, is more mysterious still. It seems that the film Star Wars was right after all. The Force is very much with us. This also vindicates some, if not all, of our religious beliefs, though not necessarily the dogma and morality that comes with them.

The scientific evidence that we live in a joined-up universe is irrefutable. Will the world's leaders catch up in time to save humanity and the planetary systems on which we depend? The signs are not good. The 'wellbeing of the whole' unfortunately, is not a notion that wins votes. We have a propensity to self-destruct and all material forms must disintegrate with time. Even so, there are scientists who assert that our primary reason for existing is not to pass on our genes in a scramble to perpetuate humanity, as previously thought but rather to use consciousness of ourselves as a means of reaching beyond what we already know, thereby augmenting our understanding of human existence - wherever that may take us. We have not really begun to study the relationship between matter, energy, consciousness and being.

May The Force indeed be with us and while we are about it: Let there be Light!

Brian Gill

N.B. All membership fees should be in at the meeting on Oct.26th. Cheques for £15 made payable to Oxton & Prenton U3A please or correct cash. (No change given.)

Tea and Coffee Rota, October to 8th December 2022

27th October

Barbara Baker

Kathy Sullivan



10th November Ann Greenhalgh
Norma Finlayson

24th November Gwyn Thomas
Mary Hamilton

8th December Barbara Riley
Marion Jackson



Speakers (so far) 2022 - 23

10th November 2022: Barry Humphreys, presenting, 'What's on the telly?'



8th December 2022: History of Ness Gardens.

2023

19th January 2023: Ray O'Brien: 'A Magical Mystery Tour.'

16th February 2023: Joanna Williams: 'The Great Miss Lydia Becker; a Suffragette, Scientist and a Trailblazer!'

16th March 2023: Roger Devonside: 'Devil Wing Walker'

13th April 2023: David Hearn: 'Wirral Peninsula'

11th May 2023: Rob Dolphin: 'Friends of Flaybrick'

8th June 2023: Pauline Roberts: Travel, holidays

Lunch Group Dates

Colin Shredder

2022.

15th November 2022 Shippons, 8A Thingwall Road, IRBY. CH613UA.

20th December 2022 Toby Inn, Arrowe Park Road, WIRRAL. CH495LW.

2023



17th January 2023 Caernarvon Castle, BIRKENHEAD. CH43 2JZ.
 21st February 2023 Travellers Rest, 169 Mount Road. Bebington.
 21st March 2023 The Basset Hound, 107 Barnston Road, Thingwall.CH61 1AS
 18th April 2023 The Kings Arm, Kings Lane, Bebington. CH63 8NR.Pest
 16th May 2023 Pesto, 50 Dibbinsdale Road, Bromborough. CH63 0HJ.
 20th June 2023 Three Stags, Church Road, Bebington. CH63 3EA.
 18th July 2023 AFTERNOON TEA. Venue to be arranged.

2022-23 Social meetings

October 27th: DVD: The Mersey Tunnel.
 November 24th Colin's Quiz
 December 22nd DVD: Reflections of Liverpool and Wirral.

2023

January 5th Colin's Quiz
 February 2nd DVD: Wirral Memories – 1960s and 70s.
 March 2nd Colin's Quiz
 March 30th DVD: Cammell Laird's Old Ships and Hard Ships.
 April 27th Colin's Quiz
 May 25th DVD: Liners and Launches.



Colin Stredder



Group News

A Book and a Glass of Wine: Judith Whaley



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 Wylie
 Paul will inform members when an interesting event is due.



Bridge: Tony Swarbrick, Joan Parfect bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Meetings will be in "The Cabin" at Trinity and are held on 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays each month, 10.30a.m. to 12.30. The next meeting is on the 9th November. 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. New members are always welcome.



Book Club: Mary O'Neill

Meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 2pm. Mary has room for one or two more members; anyone interested should contact Tony Swarbrick our Group Co-ordinator.



Lunch Circle: Colin Stredder

The next Lunch Circle meeting will be at 12.45 for lunch at 1pm, on Tuesday 15th November at The Shippons, 8a Thingwall Rd. Irby.



Music Appreciation: Paul Cullen

The next meeting will be on 2nd November at Paul's house. Bring some music you like along. 1st Wednesday of the month 2-4pm.



Walking Group: See below.

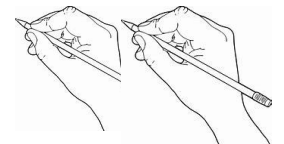
Art Group Bernadette Hamilton

The October Group Meeting will be at the Tate Gallery to view JMW Turner with Lamin Fofana's 'Dark Waters' Exhibition. On Wednesday November 16th at 10.15am.



Drawing: new group! Pauline Horner

The next meeting is on November 4th in the Cabin from 10am to 12. This Group meets in the Cabin on the first Friday of the month. A popular



new Group which has made an enthusiastic start! (see below)

Play Reading: new group! Eliane Davie

The Group meets at Eliane's house on the second Tuesdays of the month at 10am- 12.30pm. The next meeting will be on November 8th when we will conclude Noel Coward's 'Present Laughter' and move on to look at 'Arsenic and Old Lace' by Joseph Kesselring.



New group: Craft Group ! Joan Benton Joan has started her new Craft Group. It takes place on the last Monday of each month at her home. New members welcome; those interested should email Tony at: groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk



New Group: Nordic Walking, Corinne Whitham

Meets every week at 10am Tuesdays at the Visitor Centre in Birkenhead Park. If you can't come every week simply come when available, as often or as little as suits. Open to all, why not give it a try? A pair of poles is essential, standard walking ones will do to start. Lightweight walking shoes or trainers are best. Expect to walk for one hour at a smart pace.



Art Appreciation Dates for Autumn 2022 Bernadette Hamilton

Wednesday November 16th A visit to the Tate Gallery, Liverpool to view: JMW Turner with Lamin Fofana's 'Dark Waters' Exhibition.

Rembrandt

On Wednesday October 19th Bernadette gave a most interesting presentation on Rembrandt in the Session Room, with relevant slides to illustrate.

Born in Leiden, Holland in 1606, he showed early talent as a painter during the Golden Age of Dutch paintings. His full name was: Rembrandt Harmenszoon von Rijn. He studied with Pieter Lestman in Amsterdam and in 1624 set up a studio in Leiden. He became friends with Hendrik Von Uylenburgh, an art dealer in 1633 and a year later married Hendrik's niece, Saskia. It was a love match and many of his future paintings were portraits of her or included her.

His early work was mainly portraits, commissioned as he became known. He was fond of using costume to dress his subjects in for paintings, especially in historical scenes. His portraits, many of which were self portraits, were noted for the realism they brought to the subjects; he aimed always to paint from the inside out so that the facial expressions showed the inner 'soul' of his subjects rather than flattering them. His most famous paintings included: 'The Night Watch' 1642, now in the Rijks Museum, 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' 1669, Danae, 1636 and some of his self portraits. The light contrasts are always interesting in his work and he liked to experiment with front lighting.

Rembrandt and Saskia had a son, Titus, who also features in a number of his paintings. Sadly Saskia died at a young age in 1642, leaving Rembrandt bereft. Later when he resumed work he became interested in engraving and produced a large body of work, printmaking. He became involved with Geertje Dirckx, who cared for his son, Titus and who later sued him for breach of promise. In 1649 he engaged Hendrickje Stoffels as housekeeper who became his common law wife. She bore him a child and they remained together until her death in 1663.

Sadly, although he was considered a great painter and made a great deal of money during his life, he mismanaged his finances having an extravagant lifestyle and investing in large collections. In 1656 he was made bankrupt but left an invaluable inheritance in his work.

Our thanks again to Bernadette who brings these painters to life for us! Ed.



Blackpool Lights

A merry group of our U3A members boarded the bus for Blackpool outside TWPG on October 20th. The day was grey with a threat of rain but it held off for us and we set off in good time and in good spirits. We were quite a large group; over thirty and all happy to be back on a U3A outing after so long. Tony even gave us a recitation of “Albert and the Lion” for good measure – there’s a pub in Blackpool with that name!

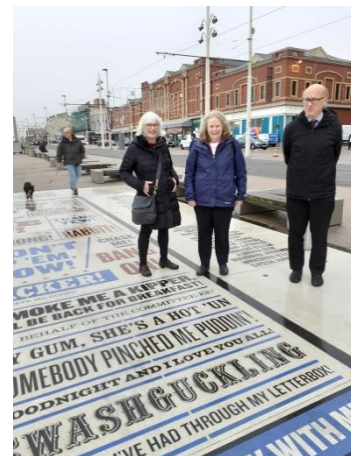
Arriving in Blackpool circa 2.30pm, we had plenty of time to wander round in small groups before meeting for fish and chips at Papa’s restaurant on the Front at 4.30. Tony wisely gave us maps so that we couldn’t get lost (always a worry for an organiser), and off we went. The rain held off and the day was mild, so we were lucky.

The fish was delicious and enormous; my chips could have fed four and sadly I had to leave half. It was a very jolly party who walked back along the Prom to board the bus to view the Lights! They were colourful and as I remembered from years ago, when I took firstly my sons and later grandchildren, to see them. Afterwards our lovely driver headed for home and we all agreed the day had been most enjoyable. Thank you Tony for all the work you put in to organise the outing – twice! We finally made it. Ed.



Blackpool Tower

Huge Square featuring all the comedy entertainers who have appeared in Blackpool over the years and some of their gags.



New Craft Group in Action – led by Joan Benton

Joan’s new Group seen here happily working on October 24th at her home. Anyone else interested in joining the group should contact Tony Swarbrick at: groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk





Books and Jigsaws



Thank you everyone for thinning down the books and jigsaw collections; they are at a much more manageable number now and we can return to bringing in books and jigsaws for exchange again. In the interest of not getting stock in excess of storage space again, please keep to only bringing the number of books that you take – it seems to work really well!

Friendly Ear

If you know of any member who is sick, in hospital or in need of a friendly chat please let Mary Hamilton or Dot Matthews know. They will contact them to see whether they need help and send cards (where applicable)

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Barbara Winstanley has organised the Christmas Dinner this year which is booked for December 15th at the Prenton Golf Club. Bookings and a menu is available. Barbara has been organising these meals very successfully for some years now and we are grateful to her for offering to do so again. The cost this year has unfortunately risen to £31 but as this seems to be the going rate now, the Committee decided to go ahead with the booking as we feel most people will still want to come.

Cheques only, for £31, made out to: Oxton & Prenton U3A please. Our thanks to Barbara for all the work she puts in on organising this popular occasion.

Walking Group

The October walk – Wednesday 26th



This walk will be led by Gwyneth Williams and Barbara Winstanley on October 26th.

We will meet at the Old Baths Car Park where we leave the cars to start walking at 10.30am. The walk goes along the seaboard walk to Gayton Cottage where we turn off to meet the Wirral Way and walk back towards the Old Quay where we take lunch. After our meal we will walk back along the Parade to collect our cars. Distance is approx. 5 miles.

November Walk led by Steve Cottam

DATE : Friday 25th November to be confirmed..
Where: Old Roan to Maghull
Time: 10.15 to start walking at 10.30 train details to be confirmed.
Leader: Steve Cottam
Lunch: Mogul at Maghull
Directions: Meet at Old Roan Station at 10.15
Walk Details: Approx 5 miles.



Please sign up for this walk on the list by the notices. More detail at the next meeting.

Spirit of Christmas Bookings now closed – speak to Gwyneth in case of any cancellations.

NEW DRAWING GROUP

On 7th October the new Drawing Group met for the second time.

We considered tone in pictures and had a look at two facsimiles of John Constable's sketch books. He kept his small sketch books in his pocket during the summer months and randomly sketched people, animals and landscapes. He then used his sketches when painting in his studio during the winter.

After a few drawing exercises, everyone settled down to draw a picture of their own choosing. There was a lovely calm atmosphere interspersed with occasional conversation and of course coffee and biscuits.

The photo shows everyone concentrating. Kathy is not hiding behind a screen! This screen is around her still-life composition which is under a strong light to bring out the shadows for her drawing.

We meet in the Cabin which is light and spacious – always room for more U3A members. Why not come along any first Friday of the month at 10am and see what we are up to!

Pauline Horner



And finally

It is beginning to feel as though things are getting back to normal in our U3A; groups are increasing as is the membership and we enjoyed our first outing for some time when over thirty of us went to see Blackpool Lights. It is good to see more of us coming to the fortnightly meetings again. If anyone would like to start another Group and lead it, please let the Committee know. Also if anyone would like to organise an outing, perhaps with a friend, please let us know.

Gwyneth will be collecting membership fees at the meeting on October 27th; anyone who has not paid after this day will be taken off the membership list. Fees are £15 payable by cheque or correct cash.

Please let me know if there is anything you would like me to include in the newsletter; it is always good to get feedback.

**Eliane Davie -
Editor**

