



March 2024 Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The Future of Oxton and Prenton U3A

As has been shared with you all over the last few months we are in need of volunteers to step up and help with the many and varied tasks which keep our branch of the U3A going. We have been able to keep our vibrant, interesting and friendly group together for over 14 years by adhering to the fundamental ethos of the U3A which is to provide ourselves with an interesting and educational experience during our retirement.

Our heartfelt thanks must go to the members who have stepped up in the past - running groups, organising trips and visits, providing refreshments, booking speakers, publicising our activities and welcoming new members. However it is not possible for those members to continue indefinitely - some of them are founding members who have given their support and energy for a long time, some (like the committee members) are not permitted by our constitution to continue beyond a certain time.

So, we are looking for our newer (possibly younger!) members to bring their help, enthusiasm and experience to enable our U3A to continue to thrive. Certain roles are necessary for us to comply with the rules of our membership of The Third Age Trust (the parent group for the U3A) others simply make our U3A the one we want to be part of!

Currently we need a Membership Secretary - this is a Third Age Trust requirement and would preferably also be a committee member.

Additional roles to strengthen our U3A would be 1) Webmaster to maintain our website and keep us and our activities available to current and prospective members, 2) Technical support for meetings to ensure that all our members have the best experience possible, 3) Someone to maintain committee members emails, 4) Someone to coordinate our social meetings.

Let's remember the reason we all joined the U3A and why we want it to continue!

Alan Harding – Chairman.

Welcome to this March newsletter - we leave a very short month behind - but we managed to fit so much in! Speakers and visits to mention and some photos if you didn't get an opportunity to get out yourselves, and a Group Page with a new appearance. Also, exciting news regarding future visits to places of interest - always welcome as we move through the year, and the Committee have asked me to include details of a campaign to count single plastic usage - so you'll find that nearer the end.

Editor - Kathy Binns

Ken Pye - 'Curious & Amazing Tales of Merseyside'

Ken's talk started with stories including Edmund Lear's and his connections to Lord Derby and Knowsley Hall. Petrified forests and footprints on Crosby shore to a Fiji Island castaway, William Lockerby, who went on to own property in Fairfield. It included Crank Caverns and leprechaun hunting. With numerous images on display many were entertained by Ken's light hearted, wide ranging, and unusual presentation.



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Mary Clinton - A.I. and Linguistics Research

Although not exactly the talk our speaker wanted to give us, Mary's talk was a real education or should I say an education about reality? She started by asking us 'What is real?' We were shown photographs on screen of a very stylish Pope Francis wearing a large, white puffer jacket and video of President Nixon announcing the loss of astronauts on the moon. Both seemed realistic to us and had been viral hits on the internet - but both were untrue - 'fake news' items generated by AI (artificial intelligence). She then went on to talk about AI and linguistics.

We heard about AI learning the rules and patterns of human language by analysing a vast amount of data often sourced online. This enables the machines using this AI software to comprehend and imitate natural language and meaning that we use everyday. A machine can then use these human voices in its own output appearing indistinguishable from reality.



Mary's talk ended with a lively Q&A session. No doubt there are many benefits to be had - medical screening is more accurate when done by machine - it leaves out human error and risk and can run 24/7. It has cost benefits and we get better, faster customer service from businesses but also their potential profits increase. In the US 'deep fakes' could weaken democracy where an election is due for the most powerful person in the world. Should we trust AI which after all is a form of software that can be bought and sold by companies, individuals, governments? There was lots to think about.

Georgian Merchant town house visit

Simon and Sue, the owners of a refurbished grade II listed townhouse in the Georgian Quarter of Liverpool offered members the chance to see around the house originally built in 1829. It was split into bedsits when the couple purchased it 20 years ago and is now a beautifully restored Georgian family home complete with views of both cathedrals. Along with help of tradesmen and friends over the years the house has been transformed with beautifully decorated and furnished rooms, along with 4 bathrooms complete with Italian marble, while the cellar is still a work in progress with bedrooms, ensuites, lounge, kitchen, and wine cellar planned. We were made very welcome in their house and ate Sue's amazing home baked cakes and brownies, with the money raised going to the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Thanks to Richard and Poppy for arranging the visits.



Speakers January – March 2024

- 14th March - **Su Thomson - 'Victorian Millinery & Prostitution'**
- 11th April – **Gillian & Peter Bolt – 'Thomas Brassey – Railway Builder Extraordinaire'**
- 9th May – **Richard Mawdsley - Update of the development of Wirral Water's major regeneration project – 'Left Bank of the Mersey'.**

6th June – **Chris & Barbara Kay - The National Waterways Museum – a passage through time.**

4th July – **David Hearn - The great Liverpool Sculptor – George Herbert Tyson Smith**

Pamela Southall

TEA AND COFFEE ROTA FROM FEBRUARY TO 28th MARCH 2024

Please contact Joan Benton on 0151 608 6226 if you would like to change your duty date.

29 th February 2024	Hilary Robinson Maureen Oldham
14 th March 2024	Marian Jackson Barbara Riley
28 th March 2024	Greig Roberts John Roberts

A welcome awaits any new volunteers wishing to join the refreshments rota. We have a very good willing team and I hope there are still more members who would like to participate. It is not an arduous task and it is a great way of getting to know other members. Please ring me on 0151 608 6226.

Joan Benton – Team leader

Lunch Group

19 th March 2024:	The Basset Hound
16 th April 2024:	Hickory's Smoke House
21 st May 2024:	The Ship Hotel
18 th June 2024:	The Irby Mill
16 th July 2024:	An Afternoon Tea (to be arranged)

Colin Stredder



Lunch group at The Arrowe Park Hotel



Group News

- Art Appreciation Bernadette Hamilton art@oxtonu3a.co.uk
3rd Wednesday each month 10.15am to 12pm. Cabin at TWPG or field trip
- Bridge Tony Swarbrick bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk
2nd and 3rd Wednesday each month 10.15am to 12.30pm. Cabin at TWPG
- Book Club Mary O'Neill
2nd Tuesday each month 10am to 12pm. Oxton
- Book and a Glass of Wine Judith Whaley
Last Thursday each month 7.30pm to 9pm. Oxton
- Book Group 2024 Joyce Woosley book2@oxtonu3a.co.uk
3rd Thursday each month (unless general meeting) 10.30am to 12pm. Wallasey
- Coach Trips and Outings Will Edwards trips@oxtonu3a.co.uk
By Arrangement – Check Notices and Newsletter
- Craft Joan Benton craft@oxtonu3a.co.uk
4th Friday each month 2pm to 4pm. Prenton
- Drawing Pauline Horner drawing@oxtonu3a.co.uk
1st Friday each month 10am to 12pm. Cabin at TWPG
- Lunch Circle Colin Stredder lunch@oxtonu3a.co.uk
3rd Tuesday each month 12.45pm for 1pm. Various see Notices and Newsletter
- Nordic Walking Corinne Whitham
Every Tuesday 10am to 11am. Birkenhead Park
- Play Reading Eliane Davie playreading@oxtonu3a.co.uk
2nd Tuesday each month 10am to 12pm Oxton
- Rummikub Tony Swarbrick rummikub@oxtonu3a.co.uk
2nd and 3rd Wednesday each Month 10.15am to 12.30pm. Cabin at TWPG
- Walking Group Ken Jackson walks@oxtonu3a.co.uk
Usually last week of month on Friday, though day may vary.

Contact Group Leaders using email above or groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

If you wish to start a New Group, please contact groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

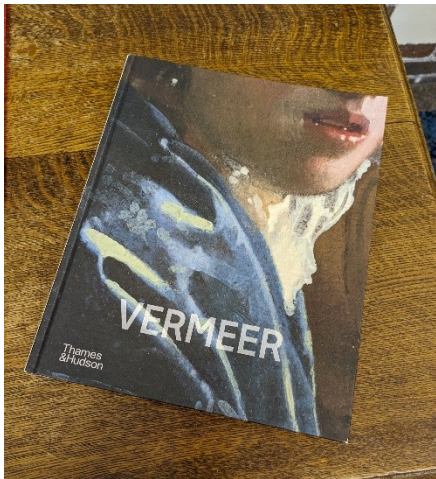
Note for Team Leaders

Could Team Leaders please let Tony have notice of changes by lunchtime on the Friday before a meeting, in order to give him time to do the PowerPoint. Thank you.

Art Appreciation.

Vermeer – presented by Bernadette Hamilton

Most of us are familiar with the novel and film about Vermeer's painting – The Girl with the Pearl Earring, and that's where Bernadette began her talk to 25 of us present for her recent Art Appreciation group. We heard about the mystery surrounding him and his surviving paintings, less than 40 of which survived. They range from his portrayal of a simple milkmaid at work, to the luxury and splendour of rich notables in their houses. His paintings are famous for their lighting, this being from windows to the left. His themes regularly included depictions of love - with his subjects reading letters or sitting with musical instruments, usually wearing the same rich fabrics and furs. Bernadette also talked about the paintings portrayed on walls in the backgrounds and the furniture in the foreground. It was interesting listening to others present when Bernadette as always welcomed comments. Many thanks are due to our speaker for giving us this very informative and enjoyable meeting.



Coach Trips

Will Edwards has volunteered to arrange Coach Trips from time to time. Thanks Wil!

To register your interest for all these trips mentioned below please sign the sheets in meetings or contact Wil by email trips@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Llandudno

First trip will be to Llandudno. With a Stopover at Tweed Mill for Morning Coffee.

Date to be arranged. A weekday in June. Cost approx £15

Sign up now to indicate interest – you are not committed we are just checking there will be sufficient interest to make a trip viable.

Twelfth Night

Shakespeare North Playhouse

June 7th – 29th, 2024

Twelfth Night with actor Les Dennis as Malvolio

Not a traditional Elizabethan production

“a brilliantly bold production with music”

Ticket prices:-

Lower Gallery -£36.00 (£32.40 with group discount)

Upper Gallery - £26.00 (£23.40 with group discount)

Free public transport with a bus pass.

We can arrange a coach from Trinity for Matinee Performance if we have 35 people £10 per head.

RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park

Thursday 18th July to Sunday 21st July

Date to be arranged

A 3rd Outing arranged by Wil

Tickets – Group Rate £29

Coach £12 - £15 depending on Numbers

Books and Jigsaws

Thank you to those who help in the management of this resource; we have returned to bringing in books and jigsaws for exchange again. There seems to be plenty of variety and lots to interest readers. 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.



Committee Members

- Chairman: Alan Harding
- Secretary: Carole Lapping
- Business Secretary: Treasurer: Margaret Cullen
- Groups Co-ordinator: Tony Swarbrick
- Speaker Secretary: Pamela Southall
- Eliane Davie: Leader of Play Reading Group
- Ken Jackson; Leader of Walking Group

Care of members

If you know of any member who is unwell, in hospital or in need of a friendly call or card please let Mary Hamilton or Dot Matthews know.

marycare@oxtonu3a.co.uk

dotcare@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Email appeal

From: Julia Bell <julia@everydayplastic.org>

Subject: ~~The Big Plastic Count~~ / ~~U3A~~: Join the UK's biggest investigation into plastic waste

Hi there

Just to introduce myself, I'm Julia and I work at an organisation called Everyday Plastic. We run campaigns to raise awareness about the single-use plastic problem, and aim to inspire people to reduce their own plastic consumption.

This March, we're teaming up with Greenpeace UK to run [The Big Plastic Count](#), the UK's largest investigation into household plastic waste. Our goal is to highlight the urgency and scale of the plastic problem, and empower individuals to play a part in helping solve the plastic crisis.

The Big Plastic Count brief is really simple: count your plastic waste for one week (from 11-17 March) and submit your results to us online. This will automatically generate your personalised household plastic footprint and will help us to reveal how much plastic we are throwing away as a nation, and what really happens to it afterwards. We'll use the results to convince UK ministers to lead the way at [global talks that could finally phase out plastic pollution for good](#).

Over 60,000 people across the UK have already signed up, but the more people we have taking part, the more powerful our collective voice will become.

We would love for the members of the Oxton Prenton & District U3A to join us on our mission, and would be extremely grateful if you would be willing to help us achieve that by sharing on the registration link with your group members: thebigplasticcount.com/U3A

We also have additional information especially for [community groups](#), as well as images and graphics to share with your wider network and community (e.g. on social media or in an email newsletter). You can download those at the following link: [TBPC assets](#)

If you have any questions, or would like more info, please do get in touch and I'll be happy to help you.

Thanks for your support. Let's get counting!

Best wishes,
Julia

Julia Bell (she / her)
Project Manager | Everyday Plastic

EVERYDAY PLASTIC

Email // julia@everydayplastic.org

Follow // [@everydayplastic](#) | [@PlasticEveryday](#)

Website // everydayplastic.org



And finally.....

It was a great relief to me when it became apparent that members had received my first newsletter. Thanks to everyone who congratulated me on editing that issue and many thanks to Steve Cottam for proofreading, Corinne Whitham for photographs and Eileen Slater for additional material.

Roll on longer days and shorter nights. As we bid goodbye to the dull days and long nights of winter and head to the coming season - hopefully the weather will lift our spirits. Let's continue to stay active and stay engaged, share experiences, and cultivate our community.

Kathy

