



## May 2024 Newsletter

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### AGM MEETING RESULTS

Alan Harding came to the end of his term as Chair and Eliane Davie stood down as Vice Chair. Thanks to both of them for their hard work and commitment during difficult times. Thanks to those members who carry on their duties and welcome to Carole Lapping who was voted in as Secretary, Corinne Whitham as Chair, and Ann Gilchrist who becomes Membership Secretary.

The committee is now made up as follows

Treasurer: Margaret Cullen

Speaker Secretary: Pam Southall

Groups Coordinator: Tony Swarbrick

Secretary: Carole Lapping.

Membership Secretary: Ann Gilchrist (not pictured)

Ken Jackson

Chair: Corinne Whitham

Alan Harding will, as is customary, continue to attend meetings in an advisory capacity.



**It was a well-attended AGM and after the refreshments and chatting we settled down to hear how we were doing. Margaret, our treasurer gave a summary of accounts and Alan gave the Chairman's report. The position of Membership Secretary was filled when Ann Gilchrist came forward. All great news. Problems regarding the IT system were discussed and the decision was made to recruit and train a group of members to become our IT specialists, and also to use funds to purchase new hardware. Members came forward to volunteer for these roles and it was agreed that the first step will be to seek advice on an appropriate replacement laptop. Positive comments were made about the trips that are in the pipeline. So, we finished the AGM on a very upbeat note.**

**Remember if you would like to give anything back to our U3A, it is easy to get involved - simply approach one of the committee.**

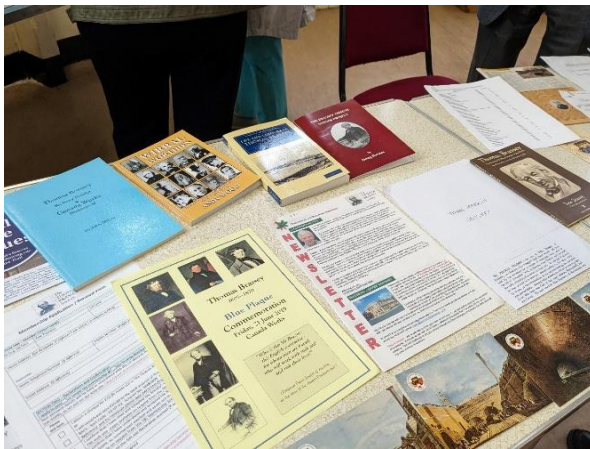
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## **Thomas Brassey Railway Builder Extraordinaire**

**David Casement, a member of The Thomas Brassey Society, gave a fascinating talk about Thomas Brassey, and proved me wrong in thinking that this was a subject I wouldn't find interesting! A surveyor and railway engineering contractor, born in Buerton in 1805, Brassey was descended from a Cheshire landowning family. At age 16, he became apprentice to William Lawton helping to survey the Shrewsbury to Holyhead road (now the A5). He must have impressed his master because at 21 he became a partner**



in the firm of "Lawton and Brassey" and moved to Birkenhead where their business was established. From managing Storeton Hill quarries and building the Saughall Massie bridge locally - he went on to build numerous bridges, viaducts, stations, sewers, docks systems and locomotives. His list of works beyond Britain is extremely impressive and includes the Grand Trunk Railway in Canada, a railway to assist the movement of troops in the Crimean War, and most of the network in France. Employing 85,000 men, he was described as empathetic, kind, modest, honest and honourable - he paid his navvies a fair wage and was admired and respected by his workforce.



By the time he died in 1870 he had built a quarter of British railways and 5% of the world's railways (leaving behind a substantial fortune) enabling the global expansion of railways and infrastructure, shaping transportation across continents – a truly great Victorian.

A huge thank you to David for reminding us all what an amazing man Thomas Brassey was. He achieved so much, lived locally and yet so few of us knew him. Good luck to the Society's fundraising efforts for a statue of Brassey to be erected at Chester Station as a testament to his remarkable contributions.



## Living in Panama 1963-72 Joyce Woosley

Along with her methodist minister husband David, and their children, Joyce lived in Panama for 9 years and her talk described their life living and working in Central America when it was far from the tourist destination it has become. Because of its' strategic importance, the U.S. had control of the Canal Zone – extending for 5 miles on each side along the 50 miles of canal connecting the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean. The U.S. had formidable military installations there. Residents in the Republic couldn't use the shops, libraries, cinema, or hairdressers in the Canal Zone. As a result of which much resentment was felt towards them.



Joyce covered everything from politics (the anti-U.S. and then anti-government riots), to living in such hot and rainy weather - pouring kerosene around table legs to keep the bugs at bay and having heated wardrobes to keep clothes dry. She spoke of travelling by canoe and raising her family in sometimes dangerous surroundings, and the surprising pros and cons of having bilingual children. Her description of Panama as being 'vibrant and fascinating' was matched by the photographs and local goods Joyce sent round the audience - giving us the opportunity to examine the handicrafts and workmanship of the Panamanian peoples.

Joyce's background as a teacher stood her in good stead for starting off this season of social meeting talks and she



received warm applause for taking the time to talk about this subject in such an interesting way.



## Speakers April – July 2024

- 9<sup>th</sup> May – **Richard Mawdsley** - Update of the development of Wirral Waters’ major regeneration
- 6<sup>th</sup> June – **Chris & Barbara Kay** - The National Waterways Museum – a passage through time.
- 4<sup>th</sup> July – **David Hearn** - The great Liverpool Sculptor – George Herbert Tyson Smith

**Pamela Southall**

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## SOCIAL MEETINGS’ PROGRAMME MARCH – JULY 2024

- May 23rd**     **Helen Renner** will speak about: “Coming from the Gold Coast to Liverpool in 1948”
- June 20<sup>th</sup>**     **Bill Nock** will speak about: “My Time as a Mayor”
- July 18th**     **Monica Ellis** will speak about: “Living in Tenerife for 18 years”

**Eliane Davie**

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## TEA AND COFFEE ROTA FROM April to July 2024

We have a very good willing team and I hope there are still more members who would like to participate. It's not arduous and it is a good way of getting to know other members. Please ring me on 0151 608 6226

Joan Benton - Team Leader

9 May 2024	Ellen Wilson Dorothy Mathews
23 May 2024	Gwyneth Williams Gwyn Thomas
6 June 2024	Barbara Baker Kathy Sullivan
20 June 2024	Eileen Slater Norah Murray
4 July 2024	Brenda George Mary Hamilton

## Nordic Walking

**A callout for MEN.**

**Each Tuesday at 10.00 a.m. approximately twelve of us women and one man walk speedily (well it feels that way to me) around Birkenhead Park for an hour. We manage to get round both halves of the park – it's just under three miles. We meet at the information centre and we finish at the café for coffee and a chat. That isn't compulsory!**

**However, following a request from our lone male walker, we are recruiting for more men to take part. It's free to join in and it isn't a race and if you need to borrow a pair of poles for your first week – it is possible – ask in advance. The latest podcast in the 'Just One Thing' series on Radio 4**

**<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p09by3yy> explains the benefits. You will soon pick up the rhythm of Nordic Walking and it's better than hitting the gym or munching on kale - so come along and enjoy the benefits of outdoor exercise in the beautiful surroundings of the park .....and make David happy. Women are welcome too!**



## Lunch group at The Refreshment Rooms



## Lunch Group Dates

<b>21<sup>st</sup> May 2024:</b>	<b>Toby Carvery Landican</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> June 2024:</b>	<b>The Irby Mill</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> July 2024:</b>	<b>An Afternoon Tea (to be arranged)</b>

**12.45 for 1.00pm.**

**Sign-up sheet on table or contact Colin.**

**Colin Stredder**

## Book Group 2024

**16<sup>th</sup> May** This is Going to Hurt - by Adam Kay. The Home Reader section of WBC libraries is able to supply copies.

## Walking Group



The group enjoyed a walk along the Fisherman's Path in Freshfield. The weather was great for walking and we went through both sand dunes and woodland where we spotted a heron but no squirrels. The walk was led by Corinne and Gwyneth and lunch was at 'The Freshfield' pub.

Thursday 25 July – Llandudno. We will be joining the U3A coach trip to Llandudno for our July trip. Details will be available nearer the time, in the meantime remember to book your seat on the coach.

## Play Reading

**Important. Please note the date change.**

2nd Tuesday monthly usually - but a change for the May meeting to 7<sup>th</sup> May.

Held at Eliane Davie's house, with room for one more member.



## Bridge Group

2nd & 3rd Wednesday monthly in Cabin at TWPG

10.15am until 12.30pm

Next Meetings 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May

Relaxed Friendly Play

New Players always welcome

Novice or experienced. Contact:- [bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk) - or just turn up

## Rummikub

2nd & 3rd Wednesday monthly in Cabin at TWPG 10.15am until 12.30pm

Next Meetings 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May

A fun game for 2-4 players. New players welcome.

## Drawing

3<sup>rd</sup> May - sketching in the church grounds.

7<sup>th</sup> June – meet at Lady Lever Gallery. If it's wet, in the cafe

5<sup>th</sup> July – Birkenhead Park, meet at the Visitor Centre.

Contact Pauline Horner.

## Craft Group

Please note the change of date of meeting. Now the meeting is on the LAST Monday of each month.

## Art Appreciation

### Velazquez by Bernadette Hamilton

Venus in on her way



As part of the celebrations for the 200th anniversary of the National Gallery's foundation, 12 of the nation's most iconic and well-loved paintings are being lent to 12 venues across the UK. 12 simultaneous exhibitions are opening on the same day – 10 May 2024 – at 12 museums and galleries with The Walker Art Gallery displaying 'The Rokeby Venus' by Velazquez. Bernadette talked about Velazquez in a very enjoyable, and well attended meeting of the Art Appreciation Group. She discussed various periods of his work, with examples on display on the large screen but also with high quality copies in books she had brought along for us to examine. Her talk was with particular interest in his painting of the Spanish royal family, the masterpiece, 'Las Meninas'. Bernadette is planning a group visit for us to see 'Venus' at the Walker and I'm sure we will

enjoy it all the more with our newly gained knowledge of the artist.

## Summer Trips

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](mailto:trips@oxtonu3a.co.uk)

### Llandudno

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July (Note July - NOT June)

Coach trip to Llandudno. With a Stopover at Tweed Mill for Morning Coffee.

Cost approx £15 payable at meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024

### Twelfth Night

Matinee - Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Shakespeare North Playhouse

Twelfth Night with actor Les Dennis as Malvolio

Coach ticket £10 to be paid 9<sup>th</sup> May

### RHS Flower Show, Tatton Park

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Groups 20-49 discounted to £28.85

Groups 50+ discounted to £24.85

There is an 85p service charge per ticket

Coach ticket – Approx £15 to be collected 6<sup>th</sup> June

### Coach tickets

Coach fee - Llandudno trip approx. £15.00 per head to be collected 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Coach fee - Shakespeare North approx. £10.00 per head to be collected 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Coach fee - RHS Tatton approx. £15 per head to be collected 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024

## **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.**

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## **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.**



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## **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.**

**Please give some info – a different type of card is required for someone who has a broken leg to someone who has had a major heart attack!**

**Also, a bit of information for sympathy cards is helpful.**

[marycare@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:marycare@oxtonu3a.co.uk)

[dotcare@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:dotcare@oxtonu3a.co.uk)

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## **From Gill Russell U3A NW Regional chair**

### **Dates for your diary:**

**Saturday 15th June - Big Sing in Liverpool. For U3A members only.**

**2nd July - NW Conference and AGM with entertainment by Fool's Gold.**

**13<sup>th</sup> - 16th August - NW Summer School. Booking is now available. Details are on the NW website.**

<https://u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events>



*And finally.....*

Thanks to everyone who helped with this edition of the newsletter, to Steve Cottam for proofreading, Tony for information regarding groups and Corinne Whitham for photographs.

16<sup>th</sup> May is International Living Together in Peace Day  
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/living-in-peace-day> which aims to promote peace, tolerance, inclusion and understanding, well worth thinking about in troubled times.

As always let's continue to stay active and stay engaged, share experiences, and cultivate our community

*Kathy*

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