



July 2024 Newsletter

Chair's Message

Hello everyone. I've been reflecting on my activities over the last month and it's made me realise what an excellent decision I made just over ten years ago when I joined Oxton and Prenton U3A. I have made such good friends and had some amazing experiences over the years – and the last month seems to encapsulate it all!

We had yet another excellent speaker session with The National Waterways Museum, I hadn't been since the children were little but I'm definitely inspired to go again. Our Social Meetings are going from strength to strength, I don't know about you, but I find members stories and experiences absolutely fascinating – and yet another reason to be glad to be here. Halfway through June I had my birthday, which honestly felt like a multiple day celebration as I went off to see Twelfth Night with just the loveliest group of people only two days before my big day! The work with the committee continues as does our strengthening links with the North West Region (lots of meetings!!). I could share more but my point is that my life is fuller and more enjoyable because of Oxton and Prenton U3A.

In October Tony Swarbrick, our extremely hardworking Groups Coordinator, will be hosting the Social Meeting to give a platform to our Group leaders and to hopefully establish one or two new groups. But this will also be a "Bring a Friend" event where we encourage members to bring a friend as a guest to find out more about us. Kathy Binns, our Newsletter editor, has updated last year's leaflet so that you can have copies to help you spread the word. We welcomed a number of new members last year with a similar activity and they seem to be glad that they joined!

In national terms we are a relatively small U3A – just over 140 members at the last count (in the North West region alone there many groups with about 800 members and more than one group with well over 1,000 members). I'm happy that we should remain a smaller but, hopefully, friendlier U3A – personally I like that we know each other by sight if not by name. But at the same time, we do want to encourage new members to have the positive experience that we have, to make friends as we have done and to continue the work of the U3A.

Next year will be our 15th Anniversary so let's make sure we have something to celebrate.

Corinne Whitham – Chair

The National Waterways Museum – Chris & Barbara Kay

A passage through time.



Always known as the Boat Museum in our house, I am now in a position to put my family right on the correct name – it is The National Waterways Museum operated by the Canals and River Trust. Chris and Barbara Kay are two of their volunteers and visited us to give an informative talk on the subject.

Chris started by talking about the industrial revolution and how the search for profit changed the methods of transportation. Originally moved by horse drawn cart, bulk goods such as coal could be shifted faster and cheaper by canal barges – and this drove the canal mania in the 1790's. We learned about the development of the network in the north west until it was eventually overtaken by railways, and then the running down of the system until it became derelict at Ellesmere Port.

Barbara gave us more of the social history describing how pretty the interior of the barges were and how families moved onto the barges to save money from rent. This also provided extra labour in the form of the wives and children who had to work alongside the men. She described how her outfit suited the lifestyle, the bonnet for working in sun and rain, the skirt for mobility, and the belt for carrying tools. A very hard life for women. By some accounts the husbands were very rough characters but the wives were too!

Chris finished by describing how restoration of the site began once funding was found, and how the site now features historic boats, artefacts, displays and buildings with Barbara telling us about the museum's plans for the summer – including different activity days involving yarn and chocolate and art. So much more than a boat museum!

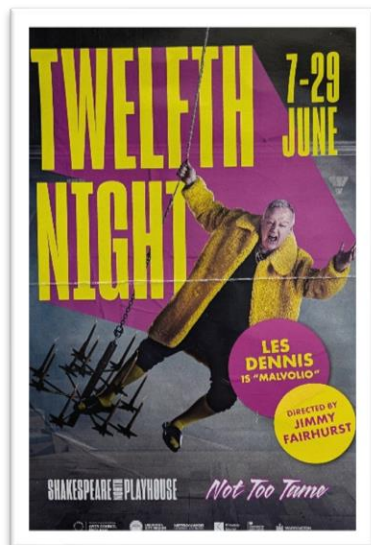
Speaker July 2024

4th July –

David Hearn – The great Liverpool Sculptor –
George Herbert Tyson Smith

Theatre Trip.

Twelfth Night



Wil had warned us to check what was on offer before we signed up. For a start it had Les Dennis, a veteran TV presenter and early exiter from Strictly! It also had an injection of live music with singing, dancing, and rapping. This was not like the Shakespeare you enjoyed/suffered at school. But 21 of us decided to try it – booking tickets to Shakespeare North Playhouse to see 'Twelfth Night' – a comedy of mistaken identities and love.

What we got was an ad-libbing, rabble-rousing, audience-engaging bold production – Les as tour manager Malvolio with the Count and Countess as rock stars, with their crew backstage at a music festival, their entourage complete with drunken hangers-on and a St

John Ambulance volunteer. And Les was great!

Thanks to Wil for organizing a great outing – most of us struggle with a digital ticket on our phones – Wil had twenty-one of them!

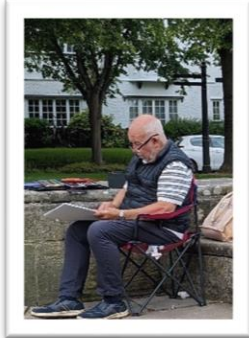
Walking Group

Bidston

At Bidston Station the walking group met to explore Moreton shore led by Barbara Riley. Once gathered, an ideal spot was found for the obligatory headcount and photo before we were led across the footbridge to the quiet roadway leading to Bidston Golf Club. We followed The Wirral Circular Trail which runs across the course before turning left alongside the river Birket. At Leasowe Lighthouse there was time to regroup and discuss the history of the building, which, we were reliably informed, is the U.K.'s oldest brick-built lighthouse, before we set off again. Walking along the coast we soon reached Meols Parade with the sky a glorious blue and a gentle breeze blowing. Along here, we had a chance to thank Barbara for arranging this outing, the first of the year with such perfect walking conditions, before some of us headed inland to Meols and lunch at The Railway and others went further along the prom to the outdoor art gallery on the way to the Community Centre at Hoylake. A stroll to the station before hopping on a train to return us to our starting point made for a very convenient end to a thoroughly enjoyable day.



Drawing Group.



experience doing art outside in lovely surroundings. After an hour of overcast weather, we had a quick display of our work then headed into the museum café. Our next meeting is at Birkenhead Park.

Lady Lever Gallery

Now that summer is here it means we can enjoy drawing outside for a change, and so at Pauline's suggestion a few of us met at the Lady Lever Gallery. Most of Port Sunlight's houses were hidden by trees in leaf – but the rose gardens and the war memorial were good subjects. Dog walkers, gardeners, and groups of schoolchildren were all curious – but didn't come too close. It's a great



Art Appreciation



At the start of this presentation, we were given a postcard of one of Bridget Riley's stripe paintings to pass around the room. Pauline Horner (on presentation duties today) had wanted us to experience the effects of Bridget's vibrant art as if we were in front of a real painting rather than looking at images on a screen. We heard how Bridget's art was slow to evolve and her use of colour, tone and shape was influenced by Cezanne, Van Gogh, Picasso, Kandinsky, Mondrian and Seurat. We saw examples of work from each artist and could see how their ideas helped Bridget innovate and develop what came to be known as "Op Art", short for optical art, a style of visual art that uses optical illusions. From her black and white paintings to her use of vivid palettes and from square and dots, to curves and lines and diagonals – her paintings have had a huge influence on culture. I particularly enjoyed hearing about a British female artist who has inspired a new artistic movement and contributed so much to contemporary art. Now aged 93, she is still producing art which is in great demand with exhibitions around the world with her work reaching record prices. The illustrations I've used are my photos taken during visits to her exhibitions – but still they are not doing her justice.

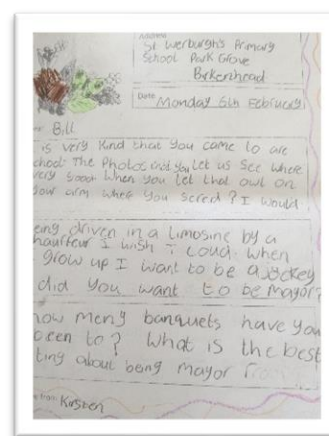
Bridget Riley and Illusion



“What it’s like to be Mayor.”

Bill Nock

One of our newer members, Bill Nock, gave a very interesting talk about his time as Mayor of Birkenhead. We heard how it was twenty years ago that Bill became Mayor, but his position was lacking in power, and the town hall was lacking in silverware – unlike some others. He served for 13 months with his daughter serving as Mayoress, during which time he raised the great amount of £25,000 for his favoured charities. He told us of the numerous voluntary groups he got to meet and some of his best memories are of the school visits – when he obviously made a great impression on children.



Unlike most of us Bill had the ability to eat numerous formal dinners including double digit Christmas meals and still managed to keep the weight off. Mind you he was carrying a 3lb gold chain on his shoulders. He was a keen cyclist (both indoor and around Wirral) and rambler, whilst also managing to canoe for miles and abseil off the Town Hall. I’m sure with the general election coming up there’s a few politicians we’d pay to do that! Thanks to Bill for talking to us and showing us his memorabilia from that time.

Summer Trips

LLANDUDNO TRIP

THURSDAY, 25th JULY, 2024

Payment for the coach due at the U3A meeting on 4th July, 2024.

The cost of the coach will be determined by numbers. This is a popular outing.

Contact Wil by email

trips@oxtonu3a.co.uk

SPEAKER MEETINGS September 2024 – April 2025

- 19th September - [The Settlement of the Welsh Colony in Patagonia](#)
Clare Dudman
- 17th October - [Hedgehog Awareness](#)
Greer Lacey - Jackson's Animal Rescue
- 14th November - [DNA \(the information inside your cells\)](#)
Peter Cobley
- 12th December - [Heswall Ukelele Christmas Performance](#)
- 16th January - [An Embroiderers Tale](#)
Tina Saunders - Needles & Sparkles
- 13th February - [Neston & Parkgate: their links to the slave trade in the mid-18th century](#)
Anthony Annakin- Smith
- 13th March - [A History of Wirral Hospitals](#)
Gavin Hunter
- 10th April - [Jessie Gavin- Gentleman Jack of Oxton](#)
Rowena Beighton-Dykes
[Pamela Southall](#)

Proposed outing

Christmas Concert December 2024

Philharmonic Orchestra with Choir and Children's Choir

Details at next meeting.

SOCIAL MEETINGS

July 18th Helen Renner will talk about: "Coming from the Gold Coast as a young teenager in 1948"

Eliane Davie

Tea and Coffee Rota

4 July Brenda George and Mary Hamilton

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

GROUP NEWS

Nordic Walking

A few wet days in June haven't dampened our spirits too much and we always enjoy our coffee afterwards. Come and join Corinne's Nordic Walking Group on Tuesday at 10.00 am at Birkenhead Park visitor centre.

Craft Group

The meeting is on the last Monday of the month 2.00 – 4.00. At Joan Benton's house.

Lunch Circle Dates

16th July 2024: An Afternoon Tea –to be arranged

Sign-up sheet on table or contact Colin.

lunch@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Book Group 2024

Meets on Thursday following the first U3A meeting in the month at 10.30. – 12.00.
Two more readers would be welcomed into this book club which meets in Wallasey at Joyce Woosley's house. The Home Reader section of WBC Libraries can supply copies.

11th July

This month's book – "This Boy" by Alan Johnson

Walking Group

June

Friday 28th June, start at Cottage Loaf 10.30 pm 5 miles 2.5 hours
Led by Ken. Meet at the Cottage Loaf – a short walk on the Common, then mainly footpaths and fields around Irby. No stiles or undulations but may be muddy after rain.

July

Thursday 25th July – We will be joining the U3A coach trip to Llandudno. Led by Tony. 6.5 – 7 miles from the Coach Park. It involves a strenuous climb but worth it for the views. Alternatively, a tram can be taken half way or all the way. Possible visit to Copper Mines near the halfway station. Walk off the Orme via Happy Valley.

Play Reading

2nd Tuesday monthly usually. Held at Eliane Davie's house, with room for one more member.

July 9th at 10.30am – 12.30 Continuing with Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream".

Contact: <mailto:playreading@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Bridge Group and Rummikub

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

Next Meetings 10th and 17th July

Bridge – Novice or experienced. Relaxed Friendly Play. New Players always welcome

Contact:- <mailto:bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk> – or just turn up

Rummikub is held at the same time. A fun game for 2-4 players. New players welcome.

Contact:- <mailto:bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Drawing

Meets on the first Friday of each month in the Cabin unless otherwise announced.
10.00 – 12.00
5th July – Birkenhead Park, meet at the Visitor Centre.
New members are always welcome.
Contact: Pauline Horner.

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.

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.



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

dotcare@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Bring a Friend Day 4th October

Following the success of our Meeting at the end of August last year we are planning to arrange a similar meeting this year when the various active Interest Groups provide information for members

Group members will be on hand to give information and talk about the activities of the group

All members are asked to bring a Friend who may be interested in joining our U3A

If you are able to place a poster advertising this meeting in a local shop or Community Space, please ask for one at the next meeting.

Please help me to develop the Interest Groups available at Oxton U3A by letting me have your thoughts and if possible, by volunteering to setup a New Group.

Tony Swarbrick

groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

And finally.....

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

The newsletters are added to our local u3a website so if you want to show someone what sort of things we offer – direct them to <https://oxtonu3a.co.uk/>

Kathy

