



October 2024

Newsletter

Chair's Message

Hello everyone!

We are now into our new "school year "and it has been lovely seeing you all again. We are now using official u3a templates for our PowerPoint presentations at the Thursday meetings – thank you to those of you who commented favourably on the design, layout and legibility. Carole our Secretary spent a lot of time over the Summer break preparing them. (Also thank you to those who didn't comment on my failure to get the slide changes right – your patience and understanding is much appreciated!)

The Committee is now looking at adopting a new system for communicating with you all and managing some of the tasks we undertake on your behalf. It is called Beacon; it has been developed by and for the u3a and currently more than 600 u3as across the U.K. are using it. We have heard good reports that it makes life easier for committees, makes many of the essential tasks less onerous and I'm hoping that our adoption of the system will encourage more of you to consider stepping up and taking on a role on the committee. I will keep you updated on our progress.

Many of our long-term members will recall that, for a while, we were able receive a u3a magazine, in fact if you've been a member as long (or longer!) as I have you might remember that we had an article included in the magazine about our anniversary celebrations. I have received a complimentary copy of the newly refreshed u3a magazine and the committee has been looking at a way for our members to sign up for it. It gives a lot of information about what other u3as are doing as well as articles of interest to us all – and hopefully we can contribute again with an article or two about Oxton and Prenton u3a. We may be one of the smaller u3as but we are, of course, one of the best!

Our meeting on 3rd October is an opportunity for us to 'bring a friend' and I hope that it brings new members, but don't forget that this is a year-round opportunity. We welcome guests to our Thursday meetings so that they can have a look at what we do and then sign up. If you're enjoying Oxton and Prenton U3a then it's likely your friends will too!

As I get used to being your Chair, I look forward to seeing you at our Thursday meetings and having the opportunity to talk to you about our u3a – what you want but also what you have to give.

Corinne

The Settlement of the Welsh Colony in Patagonia. Clare Dudman



Merseyside, and Birkenhead in particular, has strong Welsh connections and many of our members were particularly interested when Clare Dudman, the author of 'A Place of Meadows and Tall Trees', a story about the migration and settlement of Welsh people in Patagonia, arrived to give a talk based on the research she had done for her book.

We heard how in the 19th century many in Wales believed that their Welsh culture and language was under threat and disillusioned with this prospect, some sought to settle in other distant countries free from domination. Michael D Jones, a Welsh nationalist and preacher proposed Patagonia, being offered by Argentina, as ideal for this 'little Wales beyond Wales'. Lewis Jones did the first visit to investigate the suitability and on his return with a favourable report he went on to embellish the area's suitability.

The initial group of 153 settlers, sailed from Liverpool in 1865 aboard the tea-clipper *Mimosa*. Unfortunately, on arrival they found that Patagonia was not the land they had been expecting. In reality it was a barren and inhospitable windswept place with no trees, very little food and water. They were able to reach the Chubut valley where the first permanent settlement of Rawson was established. Here, the colony suffered badly in the early years – the sparse rainfall led to crop failures and when rainfall arrived and the river flooded – it washed away the first houses and the crops. The native Tehuelche people helped the migrants to survive the early food shortages.

The use of irrigation saved the settlers and eventually they could produce wheat which won gold medals internationally. Schools and newspapers were started and a railway was built. With more Welsh arriving and a growing population, they were able to expand to new settlements where towns such as Gaiman, Trevelin and Trelew were founded.

Many people in modern day Patagonia are of Welsh heritage and thousands are Welsh speakers, making a thriving Welsh community. Recently the British Council instigated the Welsh Language Project to promote and develop the Welsh language. Every year teachers from Wales are dispatched to Patagonia to ensure that the purity of the 'language of heaven' is kept.

At the end of Clare's talk, Jutta, one of the founding members of Oxton and Prenton u3a, explained how when she was at a girls' school in Buenos Aires, she had met fellow boarders who were Welsh speakers having travelled thousands of miles from Patagonia!

Art Appreciation

The Atkinson in Southport

Bernadette's Art Appreciation Group members were lucky enough to have brilliant sunshine for their trip to visit to The Atkinson, on Lord Street. It is Southport's home for music, theatre, art, literature and history.

Apart from the weather we enjoyed so much there - it was a cultural pic'n'mix! From paintings that found inspiration in personal relationships and communal bonds in 'The Ties that Bind' exhibition to Edwardian Impressionists and artists from Augustus John, Walter Sickert, J.S. Lowry, to Tracey Emin and Linda Stein - there was something for everyone. And for something completely different - who doesn't enjoy a cartoon from Bill Tidy!

After viewing the galleries, we found the museum displaying the Egyptology and local history collections, and, for a bit of hands-on fun (as you can see in the photo), the dressing up box. We didn't manage to see it all but this is a great place to explore and definitely merits another visit.





Nordic Walking Birkenhead Park

Two consecutive Tuesdays in September.
The rain didn't stop us.



Monthly Walking Group

Hoylake

On 27th September a large group met at the Green Lodge for a 4 mile walk around Hoylake led by Judith Wylie and Eliane Davie. The walk took us down Stanley Road to Red Rocks and a right turn along the beach to the bottom of Kings Gap where we joined the prom. It was cool and dry and as breezy as we would expect near the sea. We were windblown but we thoroughly appreciated this coastal walk with the ever-changing sea and skies. Next stop was the RNLI station where we saw the memorial to local lifeboatmen, before we took time to admire the murals in the Parade Gardens, then along to Roman Road and returning through Hoylake to Queen's Park, finishing back at the pub for lunch.



SPEAKER MEETINGS September 2024 – April 2025

17th Oct.	Hedgehog Awareness.	Greer Lacey – Jackson's Animal Rescue
14th Nov.	DNA (the information inside your cells).	Peter Cobley
12th Dec.	Heswall Ukelele Christmas Performance.	
16th Jan.	An Embroiderers Tale.	Tina Saunders – Needles & Sparkles
13th Feb.	Neston & Parkgate: links to the slave trade.	A. Annakin– Smith
13th Mar.	A History of Wirral Hospitals.	Gavin Hunter
10th Apr.	Jessie Gavin– Gentleman Jack of Oxton.	Rowena Beighton–Dykes
8th May.	The Olympic Games – A View from the Athlete Village.	D. Mottram
5th Jun.	Creation of a Garden.	Michael Corfe
3rd Jul.	Elvis – That's the Way it Was	Barry Humphreys

[Pamela Southall](#)

Tea and Coffee Rota

5 Sept – 14 November 2024

3 October	Julia Turner Gwyn Thomas
17 October	Greig Roberts John Roberts
31 October	Hilary Robinson Maureen Oldham
14 November	Barbara Riley Marian Jackson

I would love to hear from anyone who would like to be added to the list of volunteers. Please contact me on 0151 608 6226.

[Joan Benton – Team Leader](#)

GROUP NEWS

Please help me to develop the Interest Groups available at Oxton u3a by letting me have your thoughts and if possible, by volunteering to set up a New Group.

Tony Swarbrick

groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Proposed New Group – Cryptic Crossword Solving

This is a group has grown to 7 members at the moment who enjoy the challenge and fun of solving cryptic clues. If you would like to join the group, sign the sheet on the table at meetings, or contact GroupCoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

If there is sufficient Interest we need a volunteer to Host/Lead the group – Could this, be YOU?

Art Appreciation

Held in the Sessions room in TWPG on 3rd Wednesday in month 10.15–12.00
Contact Bernadette – <mailto:art@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Nordic Walking

Come and join Corinne's Nordic Walking Group every Tuesday at 10.00 am at Birkenhead Park visitor centre. We walk for an hour then have refreshments at the café.

Book Group 2024

Meets at 10.30. – 12.00. in Wallasey at Joyce Woosley's house on Thursday following the first u3a meeting in the month.

Next meeting is on 10th October. Book: 'To Kill a Mockingbird'
The Home Reader section of WBC Libraries can supply copies.

Contact Joyce: <mailto:book2@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Book Group

Meets in Oxton at Val Edward's house on the second Tuesday in the month. Full at the moment. Reading 'The Women' by Kristin Hannah. Contact: book1@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Play Reading

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

Next meeting will be on 8th October

10.00am – 12.30

Play: 'Talking Heads'.

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

Bridge Group and Rummikub

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

Next Meeting 9th October

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>

Craft Group

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

Contact: craft@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Walking Group

Usually 3rd Friday in month. <mailto:walks@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Drawing

Temporarily suspended. Meets on the first Friday of each month in the Cabin unless otherwise announced. 10.00 – 12.00 If anyone is willing take over the leadership and keep the group going, would they please contact Tony Swarbrick.

Lunch Circle

Colin Stredder is not able to continue this popular activity, so we are looking for someone else to take it on.

If you might be interested, please contact Tony Swarbrick our Group Coordinator.

GroupCoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Christmas Lunch

12.00 for lunch at 12.30 on Thursday 5th December

Tranmere Rovers Football Club Prenton Road West, Birkenhead. CH42 9PY

We are lucky to have Barbara organise our Christmas lunch at Tranmere Rovers. She has managed to negotiate a price of £34 for three courses with coffee or tea with mince pies and the service charge included. The menu is available at meetings and she is taking payment in cash or by cheque for the full amount. Once payment has been made you can choose your seat from the seating plan.

This year we are asking for donations of suitable items for the raffle prizes.

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 3rd October

Group members will be on hand to give information and talk about our activities

All members are asked to bring a Friend who may be interested in joining our u3a.

From walking to talking, from crosswords to cross country, we can all learn, laugh and live with the u3a.

And finally.....

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

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

It was great to be back and see u3a friends again after the summer break. But with the start of the first meeting we all got into teams and were pitted against each other for a quiz. Congratulations to the winners – we were right behind you! Now we know we need to polish up our knowledge of winter sports, geographical features, and the naming of tinned meats.

Kathy