



# January Newsletter

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

The New Year is upon us! It seems somewhat facile to wish you a 'happy' one as things stand at the moment. There is so much that is difficult and unresolved, effecting the entire country and at every level. The words of T S Elliot come to mind; 'Be still and wait without hope...' cautioning us against hoping for the 'wrong thing'. The Quakers are not afraid to ask that the 'right, good thing' might be a reasonable request. One can see the point of both.

Happiness depends entirely upon what 'haps'. I think that we can do better. We surely need careful thought and wise management, seasoned by empathy, compassion and understanding. Whatever the New Year brings it will need all of these and more.

Having said that, I cannot ignore the fact that we are currently in a season that would normally be celebrated with a considerable helping of magic, fantasy and transformation and I see no reason why this year should be any different from any other in this respect. It is a scientific fact, as any Big Bang theorist will tell you that everything comes out of nothing. Several billion galaxies, each containing several billion stars, around which orbit planets on which there exist beings that have both life and the consciousness of life, all come, we are told, from nothing. That is certainly transformative and by any definition, the ability to produce something from nothing is magic. Apparently it happens all the time at the sub-atomic level.

Our ancestors have long acknowledged this and have incorporated skilfully coded messages into the myths, legends and fairy-tales that we refer to just when the year is at its darkest. They knew in their wisdom that it was from the dark and seemingly

annihilating womb of creation that new life eternally springs. Yes, we do seem to be in a time of dissolution and disintegration at the moment and so many are suffering, but the creative ability of the universe to constantly give birth to itself is an assured fact and we are part of it. The wicked fairy, King Rat, Abenaza, Herod, Carabose and Rothbart all have a part to play and however much we hiss and boo they are necessary. There can be no 'happy ever after' for those who have not earned the right to it by a testing journey.

**Brian Gill - Chairman**

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### **Cancelled Coach Trips.**

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There are still one or two people who have not yet sent me their bank details to claim refund of deposits paid for the cancelled coach trips to Bowness and Blackpool. If this is you, please contact me ([groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk)) .

Let me know which trips you booked and what payment was made, together with your bank details.

I will then arrange a refund by bank transfer.

Thanks Tony.

#### **Message to Group Leaders.**

**I had no responses to my message in last Newsletter which I duplicate below.**

Most Groups have been in hibernation since April due to you know what!!

Some, however, have managed to keep going in a limited way using technology, or social distanced meetings.

I would like to update all members via the next Newsletter with information about groups.

If your group is still operating, please let me have details for circulation.

If you have not been operating, could you consider restarting in a limited way using Zoom or other technology.

Help and advice will be available to setup – just ask.

Although there is light at the end of the tunnel with the advent of vaccination, it may be some time yet before we can restart normal meetings.

Please keep me informed of any plans you have to restart your Group.

Thanks, Tony

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

Tony Swarbrick – Group Co-ordinator

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Irene Nelson has asked me to pass on her thanks for your support after the sad loss of her dear husband, Kevin, to Covid.

“I would like to thank those members who sent me cards and messages of sympathy at this very sad and difficult time. They were very much appreciated.



Many thanks, Irene Nelson”

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## Elaine Mercer has been busy during lockdown!

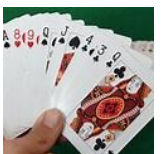
Elaine wrote to say that she enjoys the newsletter and loves Pauline’s artwork. She has spent the lockdown year shopping for Age UK and punctuating key moments with posters on public display. Some that she designed appear here!



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## BRIDGE GROUPS

Tony Swarbrick would like anyone interested in joining on-line Zoom groups for Bridge during this time to e-mail him at: [groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk) this works quite well and started up during lockdown; Tony will explain and advise on how to go about it.



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## BOOK GROUP

Monica Price is still running her book group on line.



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## ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Bernadette has recommended checking out the National Gallery where there is a choice of virtual programmes and some interesting talks about a selection of paintings and painters to be found on line.

[nationalgallery.org.uk/events/courses](http://nationalgallery.org.uk/events/courses)



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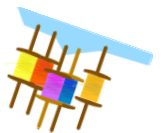
## JOAN BENTON HAS BEEN CREATIVE DURING LOCKDOWN



Joan has been organising our U3A coffee and tea teams for some years now and also runs a craft group. She sent me these photos of some of her beautiful needlework which I am delighted to pass on to members. Ed.

'I am sending some photographs of how I have spent some of my time. My sewing has been a lifeline, although I am looking forward to the interaction with my groups when we can meet up again.

I hope you have a peaceful Christmas and I look forward to seeing you again.'



Joan Benton



## Intrepid Corinne and friends, Judith and Val



Whatever the weather Judith Wheat and Val Edwards are in Birkenhead Park feeding the Birds! The aim is not to miss a day throughout the pandemic.

**Corinne also adds a note regarding the Williamson which will concern many of you!**

Hi Eliane,

I'm not sure exactly when you will be sending out the newsletter but an item about the threatened closure of The Williamson Art Gallery would, I think, be of interest to our members. Not all (not many?) of our members use social media and may be unaware of the council consultation on budget cuts unless they have been sent Wirral View.

The closing date for the consultation is 22nd January 2021 - so not much time at all to garner support!

Any chance you can share this via the newsletter?

I just started the petition "Keep the Williamson Art Gallery Open." and wanted to see if you could help by adding your name.

My goal is to reach 1,000 signatures and I need more support. You can read more and sign the petition here:

<http://chnng.it/PkgbFPYC>

Many Thanks

Corinne Whitham



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[www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events) Regional Web site:



## *AND FINALLY.....*

Who would have imagined a year ago that 2020 could have become such an international disaster with Covid affecting every aspect of our lives. It will certainly be a year that nobody will forget for all sorts of reasons, some of them the saddest where loved ones have been lost.

Today though, as I write, the news of the Oxford vaccine becoming available should lift our spirits as it will make the distribution much quicker and promises an end to the nightmare that has appeared insurmountable.

So I wish you all a happy New Year in the knowledge that at some point in 2021 we should be able to meet again and enjoy our valued friends and families in ways that we have all missed through the pandemic.

Please keep in touch and let me know any news which you would like to share.

My very best wishes for a happier 2021!

Eliane Davie - Editor





