



May 2025 Newsletter

Chair's Message

Hello Everyone,

I must first take this opportunity to thank all the members who attended our AGM on Thursday 24th April, your contribution to the discussion and your warm support for me and the committee is much appreciated. We have all worked hard this year on your behalf, not least our Business Secretary, Carole Lapping, who keeps the wheels turning and makes sure that we conduct our business properly. The AGM could not have happened without her and the work she did preparing the documents.

On the day, many of you stepped up to help with the organisation of the meeting and I am very gratified that Oxton and Prenton u3a is actively supporting the ethos of the u3a movement by being so proactive! The committee can only do so much, it is up to you, the members to make things happen.



Part of the day was an opportunity to share ideas for the future of our u3a – possible groups and activities. And you didn't let me down! How would we fancy a trip to the Everyman Rock n Roll Pantomime? What about a singing group? How can we make the Art Group work? What do we want as a Christmas celebration? How about a group

discussing finance and economics? And these are only a few that I personally got to hear about – I'm sure there were more. Please keep thinking and let the committee know about your ideas. Margaret Wycherley, our Group Coordinator, intends conducting a survey about interest groups but if you already have an idea, please let her know.

So, I now contemplate my second year as Chair of Oxton and Prenton u3a. The first year was, frankly, a bit of a rollercoaster but I'm hoping that with the support of the new committee things will settle and I might start enjoying myself a bit more. I appreciate the honour of being voted in as your Chair and will continue to do my best to ensure that your membership of Oxton and Prenton u3a is a positive and rewarding experience.

Thank you again for your support.

Corinne



The AGM buffet was well received.

u3a NW Newsletter. Prizewinning photograph

Paul King the editor of the North West Region newsletter got in touch to tell Corinne that this photograph is the winning entry in their recent competition! It will be published in the u3a NW newsletter and go on the North West Region website.

Karen Little took this one of Joan Beedles, Corinne, Miriam Onwuemene and Joan Benton, walking in Birkenhead Park in last year's Autumn sunshine, so she will get the prize, but it is also excellent publicity for our u3a.



Jessie Gavin, Gentleman Jack of Oxton. Rowena Beighton-Dykes



The original subject of Rowena's research was the history of some Oxton properties – but she became intrigued when she discovered in a Gore's directory, Jessie Gavin, described as an artist living at 'Denehurst'. It was Gavin's story we heard at our latest meeting.

Born in Beresford Road in 1876 Jessie lived locally until she began studying in London at the Slade School of Art in 1900. She became a friend of Eileen Gray before they moved to Paris together to further their studies.

Jessie went on to be a successful artist and illustrator, moving in avant garde circles and regularly exhibiting in Paris, Liverpool and Birkenhead. She also completed 27 illustrations of authors for 'A History of Storytelling' by Arthur Ransome published in 1909.

But, a more scandalous story of Jessie's life was coming to light – she seldom used her full name on her work and was often misgendered in reviews, whilst her dress preferences included men's clothing. She cross-dressed in corduroys and a Norfolk jacket on evenings out, and had pretended to be her own male cousin. In 1915 she had a 'lavender marriage' when she married Rene Raoul Duval, the widow of her friend 'Georgie' Urquhart. Gavin did not take his name, but she was being called Jackie or Jack around this time, and she continued to live and work in Paris.

Photos of Gavin have proved difficult to find. Eventually a 1934 photo from the Tate Collection showed that she was named as 'Jack' on the reverse. At some point she returned to her family home where she died in May 1939, before being buried at Flaybrick.

Mixing amongst the artists of the period, she lived on her own terms, but is little-known today although her art was described at the time as being 'exceptionally clever' Pictures are still turning up at the Williamson and she is finally being acknowledged with her work now included in collections of 'Women's Works'.

Rowena's story of research and detective work into Jessie Gavin gave us a glimpse into the unconventional life of Oxton's own 'Gentleman Jack'.

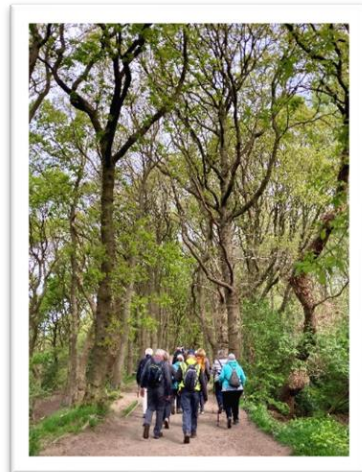
The speaker told us she would love to hear from anyone with additional information.

Ed.

West Kirby and Storeton

Monthly walking group

The monthly walking group enjoyed two walks this month – one coastal and the other countryside. The walk postponed from March started at the Concourse in West Kirby and went along the Wirral Way up to Cubbin's Green where we enjoyed a break at the picnic tables and admired the view. Then back along Macdona Drive and around Marine Lake before going our separate ways for refreshments. Later this month the countryside walk set off from the Traveller's Rest pub before walking through Storeton Woods to the Lever Causeway and on to public footpaths across fields and stiles before returning uphill back to our starting point. Both walks were very enjoyable with great routes, good company and ideal weather.



Art Appreciation

Bernadette gave a presentation on Giotto who was a painter and architect in Italy during the late Middle Ages.

His masterwork is the decoration of the Scrovegni Chapel, in Padua, also known as the Arena Chapel, which was completed around 1305. The work depicts the Lives of the Virgin and of Christ. It is regarded as one of the supreme masterpieces of the Early Renaissance. Giotto took bold steps in his work using foreshortening and having characters face inwards, and it is

his realistic depiction of the human face that sets his work apart from that of his contemporaries.

I wasn't able to attend this meeting but I was told that Bernadette's presentation was 'brilliant' and 'full of research'. One member in particular said seeing the Arena Chapel frescoes brought back wonderful memories of her own visit to Padua several years ago. Ed.

April Lunch Club photos



FORTHCOMING EXCURSIONS

Bodnant Gardens – Thursday 15th May

At our next meeting on the 8th May, I will be taking payment for the coach – at £16 per head. This is a small increase due to a slight fall in numbers. Thank you to the members who have signed up for this trip.

Wil – <mailto:trips@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Chirk Castle and Shrewsbury – Thursday 26 June

Coach approx. £17.00 Castle entrance £10.00

National Trust members – free entrance.

Tea and Coffee Rota

8 May	Ellen Wilson Dorothy Matthews
22 May	Hilary Robinson Maureen Oldham
5 June	Greig Roberts John Roberts
19 June	Hazel Stoll Eileen Slater

Would you like to help out and get to know more members? Please contact Joan on 0151 608 6226 or 07568563329

Joan Benton

GROUP NEWS

New Group – Economics

From Gerry Riley

Following my presentation "Where Does Our Money Come From" at our U3A meeting on 28th November last year, I would like to set up a new group covering this subject and possibly some wider economic issues.

I currently have 6 people who have expressed interest. I propose to host the group at my home with up to 8 people but if I have more interest, then I would look at a more suitable venue like the cabin at TWPG.

If you have not already done so, and are interested, intrigued, want to learn more or just want to debate the topic, then please contact me by emailing me at economics@oxtonu3a.co.uk specifying your name, mobile number and email address.

Art Appreciation – Held in the Session room in TWPG. 3rd Wednesday each month. 10am for 10.15 start. Also Gallery visits. Contact Bernadette – <mailto:art@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Natter and Read

Meets at 10.30. – 12.00. in Wallasey at Joyce Woosley's home near Wallasey Town Hall on Thursday following the first u3a meeting in the month. Spaces available. All books provided by the Library Service.

Next month's meeting: 22nd May Contact Joyce: <mailto:book2@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Book Group 1

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

Craft Group

The meeting is on the last Monday of the month. Meetings 28th April and 26th May. 2.00 – 4.00. At Joan Benton's house. Full at the moment, but names can be added to a reserve list. Contact: craft@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Lunch Group

Our lunch group hosted by Joan Benton is held monthly at the Refreshment Rooms. Numbers are limited so watch out at TWPG meetings for the sign up sheet. It is held on the third Wednesday in the month at 12:45 for 1:00pm

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. All year round.

Play Reading

2nd Tuesday monthly usually. Held at Eliane Davie's house. Full at the moment. Reading 'We'll Always have Paris' by Jill Hyem 10.00am – 12.30. Next meeting: 13th May

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

Bridge Group and Rummikub

Bill Nock is the leader with Tony on hand to teach bridge to new members. Meets in the cabin at TWPG fortnightly from Wed. 30th April at 10.00am

Walking Group

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

Information and Sign-up sheet available in meetings.

WANTED

We desperately need a new trolley to transport our speaker from the cupboard to the front of the hall. If anyone has a trolley of a similar size that they would be happy to donate – please get in touch with Corinne via email chair@oxtonu3a.co.uk Many thanks.

SPEAKER MEETINGS – July 2025

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

Care of members

If you know of any member who is unwell, in hospital or in need of a 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.

mary@oxtonu3a.co.uk

dot@oxtonu3a.co.uk

And finally...

Thanks to Steve Cottam for proofreading and to Corinne for photographs. Thanks also to Linda and Val for additional comments. If you have photos, reports, or comments regarding groups you lead or ones you have attended, or anything connected to our u3a, please send them to me for inclusion.

newsletter@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Kathy