



# September

# Newsletter

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

What a very interesting and well attended meeting we had on the 21st July, our last before the summer break. The presentation given by Tony Swarbrick was both enlightening and very well presented. The most encouraging thing was the input and enthusiasm shown by all who attended.

With your help we must maintain the momentum and incorporate many of the ideas suggested. We all know that many stalwarts of the committee are reaching the end of their tenure and as such we would be very happy to welcome new members on to the committee.

### Episode 2 of the Vikings

#### HEATHENS

The surviving textual sources for the period all come from outside Scandinavia, but some fairly consistent patterns emerge. In the late 8th and 9th Centuries Irish, English and Frankish chronicles generally refer to the Scandinavian aggressors as "Heathens" and this, rather than any ethnic identity, seems to have been what struck the victims of these attacks as significant.

The 793 raid on Lindisfarne, often said to herald the "Viking Age", is described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle thus: "The Ravages of Heathen Men miserably destroyed God's Church on Lindisfarne with plunder and slaughter". In the following year the Annals of Ulster recorded "The devastation of all the islands of Britain by the gentiles".

The previous two or three Centuries had witnessed what seemed to be the unstoppable growth of Christendom, both east and west. This had been interpreted as part of God's plan and its apparent reversal caused consternation among the ecclesiastical writers who have provided us with the record. As Alcuin of York wrote: "Never before has such terror appeared in Britain as we have now suffered from

a Pagan people, nor was it thought that such an inroad from the sea could be made".

From the surviving evidence from Britain and Ireland it is, at first, quite hard to distinguish opportunistic raiding, (to which the term "Viking" might have been applied by contemporaries,) from political action.

The attack on Lindisfarne is often presented as an opportunistic raid, but in fact the force that executed it remained in Northumbria over the winter and was defeated in a pitched battle the following year, some of their ships having been destroyed in a storm.

The Carolingian sources clearly distinguished diplomatic and military interaction between the Franks and the Danish Kings from seaborne raids, over which the latter had little or no control. The Royal Frankish Annals record Charlemagne establishing a fleet and coastal defences against Pirates in 800, for example. By the later 9th Century most of the recorded action in the British Isles seems to be political and led by Kings looking to conquer territory.

The decades around 900, see polities established by Scandinavian dynasties in Britain and Normandy and the adoption of Christianity, by the leaders at least. Contemporary sources cease to describe the attackers as "heathens" and tend to name leaders and refer to armies by their place of residence, whether that be East Anglia or Dublin.

In about 903, shortly after the contested start of Edward the Elder's reign, for example, the chronicle tells us that his cousin and rival, Aethelwold, induced the Army among the East Angles to break the peace and "they harried over all Mercia until they crossed the Thames". Eventually they were pursued home and their King Eohric was killed. East Anglia was, at this date, part of Danelaw. This group's forebears had come to Britain from Scandinavia in 865 and they had been settled in East Anglia for more than 20 years, so it is likely that Eohric and most of his warriors had been born and brought up in England as Christians.

The "Viking" dynasty that ruled Dublin and contested rule of Northumbria with the descendants of Alfred in the 10th Century were descended from men who had left Scandinavia in the middle of the 9th century. On the Maternal side most of them probably had local ancestors. They had very little in common in behaviour, genetics or belief systems with the raiders of the 790's. Indeed one of their greatest Kings, Olaf Cuaran, who had at times been King in Northumbria as well as Dublin, retired to the Monastery of Iona in 980. At least one of his granddaughters was a Nun.

## Final Episode in the next Newsletter.

### Did You Know?

Siberia contains more than 25% of the world's forests.

"NEWSPAPER" means North, East, West, South, Past, And Present, Event Report.

The names of all the continents end with the same letter they started with.

**Alan Harding - Chairman**

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## BRIAN'S MUSINGS

As I write, wildfires rage. They are the product of a climate too hot to safely support human life. Roads and railways can no longer accommodate the vehicles for which they were intended and our reserves of water are under threat, just when we need plenty of cooling drinks.

Yet I know a number of kind and well-meaning people, either personally or indirectly, who are happily availing themselves of long-haul flights to Mexico, thereby ensuring that our excessive carbon footprint, which we are assured is the cause of these disasters, is not only maintained but actively increased.

We are not the only life-form on the planet given to destroying the habitat that sustains it but interestingly we are probably the only one that, while knowing that it is destroying itself, continues to do so.

On a personal level I have to admit to indulging in behaviours that are detrimental to my health so I am in no position to be critical, though I do try to limit my activities to those that are not unduly detrimental to my fellow human beings – not easy!

During the Black Death we are told that people danced in the streets, determined to enjoy their few remaining hours of healthy life. Our current rush to the nearest airport might well be unconsciously motivated by a similar psychology, though there is a difference. The plague came with certain inevitability, whereas now, science, on which we faithfully depend in so many other areas, assures us that the change in climate is largely of our own making and that we are therefore in a position to do something about it.

As a psychologist I am very interested in this urge to self-destruct. We frequently make choices, either planned or on the spur of the moment, that can have no positive outcome and adhere to them, even when their negative effect is assured. This destructive behaviour can be acted out for us by people in positions of authority. We see them indulging in attitudes that will inevitably bring about their downfall, often taking many others with them. They seem to be quite incapable of moderating a mode of being that is deeply rooted in our collective psyche. We are therefore destined to keep repeating it. The ego, we are told, works inevitably towards its own isolation and destruction.

Fortunately there is a solution to this dilemma, though it is one that few would be prepared to adopt. The ego has to be modified. Rather than assuming ownership of the vehicle over which it has taken total control, its influence needs to become secondary to the vehicle's true owner. But who might that be? Who or what is the truly authentic self? This is clearly not the place to embark on the dissertation that a worthy answer to the question demands. But we can begin by recognising that the ego is a construct – a sense of identity assembled from a number of different sources. It is a very questionable phenomenon with its own relationship to truth and reality, as our leaders clearly demonstrate.

A more authentic sense of self asks inconvenient questions like: why am I here? What is it all about? Who or what am I? Why is there something rather than nothing? Do we have meaning, function and purpose and if so, to what end? It will not be satisfied with easy, glib and dismissive answers. It dedicates itself to visions of

harmony and understanding and the application of empathy. Meanwhile the ego dances in the streets while the bodies pile up.

**Brian Gill**

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## **Blackpool Lights**

Members going on the trip to see the Blackpool Lights on October 20th, meet in the car park at TWPG at 1pm to board the coach. We should arrive at Blackpool circa 3pm in plenty of time to have a walk round and get fish and chips before seeing the lights. We should return to base circa 9.30pm.

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## **VISIT TO 'RON'S PLACE'**

A Guided Visit has been arranged for U3A members on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September to view 'Ron's Place' in Oxton. Claire, Barbara Riley's daughter will take groups round; one at 9.45am, the next at 10.45am. Barbara Riley will contact those who have signed up with details. There are still a few places available. If you are interested please put contact details on the list by the Notice Board at the September 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting.

. A small donation of £4 each is suggested

Maximum 15 per Tour  
[groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk)



**Tony Swarbrick**

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## **TEA AND COFFEE ROTA 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 TO 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022**

1<sup>ST</sup> September

Grieg Roberts

John Roberts

15 <sup>th</sup> September	Joyce Roberts Jean Skillicorn Beryl Davies
29 <sup>th</sup> September	Hilary Robinson Maureen Oldham
13 <sup>th</sup> October	Brenda George Sue Berry Poppy Lewis
27 <sup>th</sup> October	Barbara Baker Kathy Sullivan
10 <sup>th</sup> November	Ann Greenhalgh Norma Finlayson
24 <sup>th</sup> November	Gwyn Thomas Mary Hamilton
8 <sup>th</sup> December	Barbara Riley Marion Jackson

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## **Art Appreciation Group Led by Bernadette Hamilton**

On July 20<sup>th</sup> Bernadette gave the Group a presentation on the works and life of Raphael, a great Renaissance painter in the Session Room. She is a wonderfully informative teacher with an enthusiasm for her subject that shines through; always great to listen to.

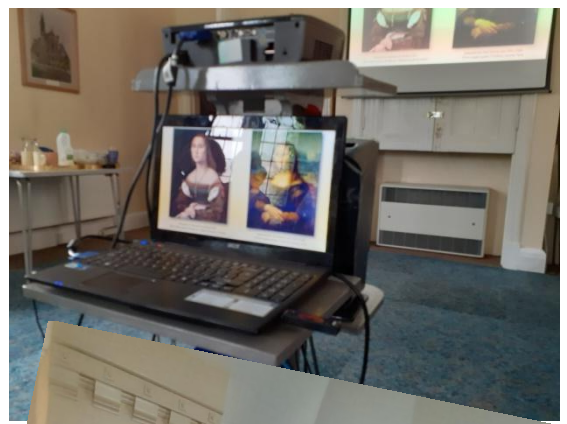
Raphael was born in Urbino in 1483 and died at a fairly young age in 1520. He was something of a prodigy who began painting at a young age and inherited his father's workshop when he was orphaned at 11 years of age. Following on the other great



artists of the time, Michael Angelo and Leonardo Da Vinci, he studied their work and tried many of their techniques, sometimes to their annoyance.

We all felt that his portraits showed very real people unlike many of the period; the skin looked natural and he himself appeared in several, some in portrait form and others amongst groups of people. Faces had character; the eyes, particularly in one, looked quite piercing! He also had a strong interest in architecture from an early age, which was apparent in some of his group paintings where people were backed by intricate buildings and arches. As was usual at the period, many of his works had religious themes.

His preparatory drawings, in which he tried out bits of his final large works, showed a master of his craft - true genius. Thank you so much Bernadette for sharing your knowledge and enthusiasm with us; we do appreciate the work you put in for us.



**Members of  
the Art Appreciation Group**

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**Speakers (so far) 2022**

15<sup>th</sup> September: Defences of the Mersey presented by David Hearne



**Colin Stredder**

## Lunch Group Dates

2022.

- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 The Wellington, 10 The Village, BEBINGTON. CH63 7PW.  
18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 Pesto, 50 Dibbinsdale Road, BROMBOROUGH. CH630HJ.  
15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 Shippons, 8A Thingwall Road, IRBY. CH613UA.  
20<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Toby Inn, Arrowe Park Road, WIRRAL. CH495LW.

2023

- 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 Caernarvon Castle, BIRKENHEAD. CH43 2JZ.  
21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 Travellers Rest, 169 Mount Road. Bebington.  
21<sup>st</sup> March 2023 The Basset Hound, 107 Barnston Road, THINGWALL. CH61 1AS.  
18<sup>th</sup> April 2023 The Kings Arm, Kings Lane, BEBINGTON. CH63 8NR. Pest  
16<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Pesto, 50 Dibbinsdale Road, BROMBOROUGH. CH63 0HJ.  
20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 Three Stags, Church Road, BEBINGTON. CH63 3EA.  
18<sup>th</sup> July 2023. AFTERNOON TEA. Venue to be arranged.

**Colin Stredder**

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## Meetings 2022 Social

September 1<sup>st</sup> Ken Jackson has prepared a Quiz for this meeting!

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## GROUP NEWS

**A Book and a Glass of Wine: Judith Whaley**



Meet on last Thursday of month. The group is full at the moment, but vacancies may occur if all do not return.

## Amateur Astronomy

**Paul Cullen, Judith Wylie**



Paul will inform members of what events to watch out for.

**Bridge: Tony Swarbrick, Joan Parfect** [bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk)

Meetings will be in "The Cabin" at Trinity. Meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays each month, 10.30a.m. to 12.30. The next meeting is on the 14<sup>th</sup> September. We meet to play friendly relaxed bridge, Joan and myself are on hand to offer advice to less experienced players and from time to time offer "teaching" sessions for people new to Bridge. New members are always welcome.



**Book Club: Mary O'Neill**

Meetings take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 2pm. Mary has room for one or two more members; anyone interested should contact Tony Swarbrick our Group Co-ordinator.



**Lunch Circle: Colin Stredder**

The next Lunch Circle meeting will be 12.45 for lunch at 1pm. On Tuesday September 20<sup>th</sup> at The Wellington, 10 The Village, Bebington. CH63 7PW



**Music Appreciation:**

**Paul Cullen**

There will be no meetings in July and August – return in September



**.Walking Group: See below.**



**Rummikub: new group Joan Parfect**

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 10.15 - 12 noon in the Cabin. There is a charge of £2 pp to cover room rental and coffee.



**Art Group Bernadette Hamilton**

The September Group Meeting will be in the Sessions Room at Trinity & Palm Grove Church on Wednesday September 21<sup>st</sup> at 10am. Pauline Horner will be giving us a talk on Ford Maddox Brown.



**Sketching: new group! Pauline Horner**

The first meeting is on September 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Cabin from 10am to 12.

This Group will meet in the Cabin on the first Friday of the month.





**Play Reading: new group! Eliane Davie** The Group will meet at Eliane's house on the second Tuesdays of the month at 10am- 12.30pm, starting with our first meeting on September 13<sup>th</sup>.



**New group: Craft Group ! Joan Benton**

Joan will shortly be starting a new Craft Group and would be interested to hear from anyone considering joining a friendly group. Further information and dates will be available at the next meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

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### CHRISTMAS DINNER

Barbara Winstanley is organising the Christmas Dinner this year which is booked for December 15<sup>th</sup> at the Prenton Golf Club. Bookings will be taken soon and a menu will be available. Barbara has been organising these meals very successfully for some years now and we are grateful to her for offering to do so again. The cost this year has unfortunately risen to £31 but as this seems to be the going rate now, the Committee has decided to go ahead with the booking as we feel most people will still want to come.



Bookings are now closed and payments due on september 1<sup>st</sup>. Cheques for £31 made out to: Oxton & Prenton U3A please.

Our thanks to Babara for all the work she puts in on organising this popular occasion.

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### BLACKPOOL OUTING

Tony Swarbrick organised the trip to Blackpool to see the lights; it will take place on Octoer 20<sup>th</sup>. Meet at TWPG car park for departure at 1.30pm. We should arrive at Blackpool in plenty of time for a walk around and a fish and chip supper before getting back into the coach to view the lights. Expect to return to the church circa 9.30pm. Anyone who hasn't yet paid should have the money or cheque ready at the next meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup>.



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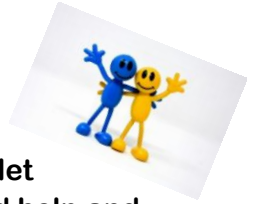
### Books and Jigsaws



Thank you everyone for thinning down the books and jigsaw collections; they are at a much more manageable number now and we can return to bringing in books and jigsaws for exchange again. 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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### Friendly Ear



If you know of any member who is sick, in hospital or in need of a friendly chat please let Mary Hamilton or Dot Matthews know. They will contact them to see whether they need help and send cards (where applicable)

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### Committee News

As we are still short of Committee Members, Brian Jones, who is new to this branch though not to U3A, has agreed to be co-opted onto Committee to help with re-energising our Group. We intend to start a recruitment drive for new members drawn from the recently retired. Please spread the word among anyone you know who is recently retired and looking for friendship and activity and who you think might enjoy getting involved.

Membership Fees are due at the end of October. The membership fee will be increased to £15, which includes £4per head payable to 3rd Age Trust (Head Office). This is the first increase for several years and compares favourably to other local U3As. New members will pay the new fee but this covers the remainder of the current year and the 2022/23 year.

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### Walking Group



The next walk will be on September 22nd and will be led by Margaret Cullen. It will begin Eccleston Ferry, Chester. The details will be available at the next meeting. New members welcome; sign in on the list by the notice board.

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### On June 30th,



Ken led a merry group on a walk which commenced at Port Sunlight and ended at the Merebrook Pub in Bromborough where we enjoyed lunch. The weather was kind to us and it was great to walk in an area unfamiliar to many of us and mainly away from roads.





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**JULY WALK (on July 28<sup>th</sup>)** The walk was a little over 4 miles, starting with a walk down to the Visitor Centre on the Thurstaston headland where there are toilets and a Bird Hide. We continued down steps to the beach turning left to walk to beyond the cliffs where we turned inland, walking towards the Wirral Way which we joined for a short stretch, before turning inland again to walk on pathways alongside fields, until reaching The Dungeon. Here there is a steep but short climb through woodland then onwards through country towards the village of Thurstaston where we emerged by the church. A short walk from there took us back to The Barn Grove where we enjoyed a sociable lunch.

The walk was led by Judith Wylie and Eliane Davie.



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**‘Thurstaston - Forget – me –not’ by Judith Wylie**

On the track back to Thurstaston village but before St.Bartholomew's Church, we spotted some wild flowers in a field. Going into the field it was seen to be two long wide strips of beautiful, colourful wild flowers forming an L shape. The view was down over the gently sloping field to the Dee estuary. It was delightful. Some men with a tractor and large stones were diagonally opposite us and saw us in the field standing looking at the scene. One of the men began waving at us; it was not clear whether in welcome or irritation. When he reached us, it was clearly in welcome! He kindly explained what it was that he and his son were developing; the land was part of Church Farm of which he was the owner.

This field and others were to become part of the FORGET ME NOT FIELDS Natural Burial Ground. Whatever your beliefs it was both spiritually and physically beautiful. It was understood to be just the start of what was to include not only the wild flowers but also a stone circle, a barn and access for cars. There would not be any head stones but plots and places for names in slate. No notes were taken of so there may be a change in detail from memory. However the basis is there for a lovely resting place.



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### **Williamson Art Gallery – August 18th**

The group enjoyed their visit to the Williamson Art Gallery, starting off with a coffee and chat in the cafe! There was much to see; three different exhibitions.

An amazing collection of Ladybird Books together with many of the original illustrations with information about the artists involved. Particularly wonderful for children with plenty of 'hands on' material for them. The books started from the originals which were larger, then ranging through the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60, 70s and 80s – it really is a huge collection which reminded us all of some from our own childhoods and others from ones we had read to our own children and grandchildren. Starting with early reading learners and covering a multitude of subjects: bible stories, famous inventors, stories about animals, aeroplanes, machinery, how to make things; they ranged through enough subjects to keep their young readers interested through most of their early childhood.

Another display, which I intend to revisit, was about the old Argyle Theatre which sadly got destroyed with a bomb during World War 2. This was a really fascinating piece of Birkenhead (and theatre) history. Again there was a really interesting collection of the old billboards featuring many of the big stars of the day and a large photograph of the stage of the theatre in its heyday. A very early movie camera, with lots of historical notes, was on show as were letters, old tickets and other memorabilia.

Another Exhibition featured some ceramic work which was also worthy of notice; again well worth a



visit. I understand that the Exhibitions are there until early September and the venue opens from, 10.30am on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturday mornings. Ed.



Argyle Theatre Exhibition

Left: One of the of the ceramic groups



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## Art Group Programme - Autumn

**Wednesday September 21<sup>st</sup>** A presentation from Pauline Horner on Ford Maddox Brown. In the Session room at TPG at 10.15am.

**Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup>.** A presentation on Rembrandt by Bernadette Hamilton in the Session Room at TPG at 10.15am

**Wednesday November 16<sup>th</sup>** A visit to the Tate Gallery, Liverpool to view: JMW Turner with Lamin Fofana's 'Dark Waters' Exhibition.

**Bernadette Hamilton**



## *And finally.....*

What a lot to report this month! Three new Groups due to start, a couple of outings already and more in the pipeline, Bernadette has a great programme for the Art Appreciation Group and Colin, in spite of having been unwell, has managed to produce a year's programme for the Lunch Group. The Committee has started to circulate posters to recruit new members to try to get our membership up to where it was before Covid and are taking heed of some of your suggestions.

Ken has worked out a quiz for the September 1<sup>st</sup> meeting and there will be further news regarding Speakers etc. at that meeting. The list for these has still to be finalised but we should have most of it ready shortly.

I hope that you have had an enjoyable summer and enjoyed the pleasant weather. We seem to be lucky on the Wirral not to get the extremes of heat or snow. Please don't forget to let me know if you have any unusual holidays or experiences to share with our readers.

Your October Newsletter will arrive a little late as I will be away for the last two weeks of September and don't get home until the 1<sup>st</sup> October. I would appreciate if you could let me have any news to be included as early as possible.

With best wishes to you all,



**Eliane Davie - Editor**



