



January Newsletter 2023

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Well! It is upon us one again, described by many as the most wonderful time of the year. Perhaps that is true and I certainly subscribe to it, at a time when it's possible to spend it with family and friends. But oh! How the time goes so much faster with each passing year.

I remember back when I was so much younger than today, the two weeks before the Magical Christmas Day seemed to take forever to pass and how the excitement built up within that time. Perhaps we should take some time to reflect on those whom are less fortunate and how we could help where possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish every one of you a Very Happy Festive Season and a Happy New Year.

Continued: Words that are their own opposites.

TRIM as a verb predates the noun, but it can also mean either adding or taking away. Arising from the Old English word meaning "*To make firm or strong; to settle, arrange*",

TRIM can mean "*to prepare, make ready*". Depending on who and what was being readied, it could mean either of two contradictory things; "*to decorate something with ribbons, laces, or the like to give it a finished appearance*" OR "*to cut off the outgrowths or irregularities of*" and the context doesn't always make it clear whether you are trimming the tree with tinsel or are or using a chain saw.

CLEAVE can be cleaved into two homographs, words with different origins that end up spelled the same. Cleave, meaning "*to cling to or adhere*", comes from an Old English word that took the forms CLEOFIAN, CLIFIAN, or CLIFAN. CLEEVE with the contrary meaning "*to split or sever (something)*" - as you might do with a cleaver - comes from a different Old English word, CLEOFAN. The past participle has taken various forms: CLOVEN, which survives in the phrase "Cloven Hoof", "CLEFT", as in "Cleft Palate" or "Cleaved".

RESIGN works as a contronym in writing. This time we have homographs, but not homophones. Resign, meaning "*to quit*", is spelled the same as resign, meaning "*to sign up again*", but it is pronounced differently.

Hope this is of interest.

Alan Harding – Chairman



BRIAN'S MUSINGS



'Tis the season of pantomime. If you do not have grandchildren or the ones you do have are too grown up and sophisticated for such things then it is unlikely that you will bear witness to such a phenomenon; which is a pity. They come to us richly laden with meaning and significance, hope and reassurance at a time of year when things can seem a little bleak; this year more than most. Of course the sheer vulgarity and common availability of 'Panto' can be a bit disconcerting but as they currently stand and also in accordance with their venerable ancestry, they were intended to reach the people – all the people. We have to bear in mind that it is only very recently that 'The People' became in any sense, educated let alone capable of paying for entertainment with anything more than the minimum of small change.

Ancient Italian culture responded to this by evolving the Comedia del Arte – a street theatre with a repertoire of stock stories and characters which became popular across Europe and found a welcome home here, where we had already evolved a theatre of the people of our own in the form of Mummers Plays and Mystery Plays. These were usually performed in inn yards and market squares. It was the inn yards that gave us the shape of our early theatres.

What all these forms of presentation had in common were their stories which were commonly concerned with hope and regeneration and especially at a time of year when life was frequently held in the balance. The Thames used to freeze over sufficiently to be able to light fires on it. There was no central heating and no health service and no sanitation. It was economically expedient to die early. But life, for as long as we have it, has its own imperatives firmly locked into the human psyche and, one way or another is determined to be heard. With this in mind it is easy to see where the sexual content of pantomime comes from and with the forces of annihilation ever present in the harsh winters the conflict between dark and light, good and evil had tangible representation in daily lives. Enter the good fairy. There remained the hope of alleviation and the certainty of regeneration – one only had to look at nature for that, though crops could also be destroyed before coming to fruition. An extra - dimensional influence was essential. Characters could be brought back to life and healed, protagonists given miraculous powers to make all good and right and ensure the continuation of a viable life. All this, pantomime can offer and it seems to me that we have seldom needed it more.

Collectively of course, we no longer believe in death, rebirth and transformation. There was a time when it seemed that we had the power to 'prolong active life' in a paradise of our own making. It now appears, as we destroy the very planet on which we live, that we were mistaken. The pantomime is at large on the streets in our regulatory systems and in our homes. Heroes are being slain. According to the ancient traditions, when all seems lost and total annihilation seems inevitable, when we are sufficiently humiliated by the destructive power of our own stupidity, the conditions might be fulfilled in which we are ready to receive the promptings of another dimension.

This pantomime reassures us. We may feel far too educated to believe in all that stuff now but one day we will. The language, formulation and imagery may be

different but it is very unlikely that we will throw off thousands of years of ancient wisdom just because we currently think ourselves to be too smart for it.

We need our pantomimes more than ever.

Brian Gill

TEA AND COFFEE ROTA OCTOBER TO 8TH DECEMBER 2022

Please contact Joan Benton on 0151 608 6226 if you would like to change your duty date.

5 th January	Eileen Slater
	Joan Beedles
19 th January	Dot Mathews
	Ellen Wilson
2 nd February	Lorraine Malyj
	Wendy Devonald
16 th February	Will Edwards
	Judith Wylie
2 nd March	Poppy Lewis
	Sue Berry
16 th March	Hilary Robinson
	Maureen Oldham
30 th March	Barbara Baker
	Kathy Sullivan
13 th April	Joyce Roberts
	Jean Skillicorn
	Beryl Davies

(so far) Speakers 2023

19th January 2023: Ray O'Brien: 'A Magical Mystery Tour.'

16th February 2023: Joanna Williams: 'The Great Miss Lydia Becker; a Suffragette, Scientist and a Trailblazer!'

16th March 2023: Roger Devonside: 'Devil Wing Walker'

13th April 2023: David Hearn: 'Wirral Peninsula'

11th May 2023: Rob Dolphin: 'Friends of Flaybrick'

8th June 2023: Pauline Roberts: Travel, holidays

Lunch Group Dates Colin Shredder

2023

17th January 2023 Caernarvon Castle, BIRKENHEAD. CH43 2JZ.

21st February 2023 Travellers Rest, 169 Mount Road. Bebington.

21st March 2023 The Basset Hound, 107 Barnston Road, Thingwall. CH61 1AS

18th April 2023 The Kings Arm, Kings Lane, Bebington. CH63 8NR. Pest

16th May 2023 Pesto, 50 Dibbinsdale Road, Bromborough. CH63 0HJ.

20th June 2023 Three Stags, Church Road, Bebington. CH63 3EA.

18th July 2023 AFTERNOON TEA. Venue to be arranged.



2023 Social meetings

2023

January 5th Colin's Quiz

February 2nd DVD: Wirral Memories – 1960s and 70s.

March 2nd Colin's Quiz

March 30th DVD: Cammell Laird's Old Ships and Hard Ships.

April 27th Colin's Quiz

May 25th DVD: Liners and Launches.

Colin Stredder



Group News

A Book and a Glass of Wine: Judith Whaley

Meet on last Thursday of month. The group is full at the moment.



Amateur Astronomy Paul Cullen, Judith Wylie

Paul will inform members when an interesting event is due.



Bridge: Tony Swarbrick bridge@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Meetings will be in "The Cabin" at Trinity and are held on 2nd and 3rd Wednesdays each month, 10.15am to 12.30. **There is no meeting on January 11th**
The next meetings are on January 18th and 25th. We meet to play friendly relaxed bridge and new members are always welcome.



"You will note that Joan's name no longer appears as Group Leader for Bridge.

Joan together with Lillian ran the Bridge Group for many years and introduced a number of new players to the game.

Joan now feels that she has "done her bit" and wishes to take more of a back seat.

She still attends the Bridge Group and prepares interesting hands for us to play as well as helping and guiding less experienced players, so she will not be escaping any time soon.

Thanks, Joan, for all you have done and are still doing for the group. You will be a difficult act to follow!!!" Tony Swarbrick.

Book Club: Mary O'Neill

Meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 2pm. The next meeting is on January 10th. Mary has room for one or two more members; anyone interested should contact Tony Swarbrick our Group Co-ordinator.



Lunch Circle: Colin Stredder

The Lunch Circle meets on the 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 12.45 for 1pm lunch. The next meeting is on January 17th at the Caernarvon Castle, Oxtou.



Music Appreciation: Paul Cullen

The next meeting will be on January 2nd at Paul's house. Bring some music you like along. Meetings are now on the 1st Monday of the month 2-4pm.



Walking Group:

The next walk will be on January, Friday 27th.

[See below for the details.](#)

Art Group Bernadette Hamilton

The next Meeting will be at TWPG in the Sessions Room on Wednesday January 18th 2023 at 10am when Pauline Horner will do a presentation on Breughel.



Drawing: Pauline Horner

The next meeting is on January 6th in the Cabin from 10am to 12.



Play Reading: Eliane Davie

The Group meets at Eliane's house on the second Tuesdays of the month at 10am- 12.30pm. The next meeting is on January 10th when we will be reading "A Murder is Announced" by Agatha Christie, adapted for the stage by Leslie Darbon.

Craft Group! Joan Benton Joan has started her new Craft Group. It takes place on the 4th Monday of each month at her home. Next meeting is on the 23rd January. New members welcome; those interested should email Tony at: groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk



Nordic Walking, Corinne Whitham

Meets every week at 10am Tuesdays at the Visitor Centre in Birkenhead Park. If you can't come every week simply come when available, as often or as little as suits. Open to all, why not give it a try? A pair of poles is essential, standard walking ones will do to start. Lightweight walking shoes or trainers are best. Expect to walk for one hour at a smart pace.



Scrabble: Joan Parfect

The group is now full.

CHRISTMAS DINNER 2022





As always our Christmas Dinner organised was a really enjoyable occasion and well attended. Barbara Winstanley organised the event as usual, as well as the draw prizes which she wraps so beautifully that it's a shame to open them. Sadly this year Barbara was unable to attend herself due to a heavy cold and Gwyneth kindly stood in for her. Our thanks to both Barbara and Gwyneth for their hard work.

Walking Group (January)

- Date: Friday 27th January 2023
- Where: Liverpool Three Parks
- Meet: Outside ticket barrier at Liverpool Central Station
- Time: 10.15am to start walking at 10.30
- Leader: Ken Jackson
- Lunch: Britannia Inn, Aigburth
- Distance: 5-6 miles approx.??
- Sign up: Forms are by the Notice Board or e-mail:
groupcoordinator@oxtonu3a.co.uk



More information available at the next meeting.

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!



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)

Membership Fees

Membership fees were due at the end of October; if there are any still outstanding we would be grateful if you could remit them ASAP to Gwyneth. Cheques for £15 should be made out to: Oxton & Prenton U3A. Thank you.

Our next meeting is on January 5th when we have Colin’s popular Quiz.

The following one will be on January 19th when Ray O’Brien will be our speaker for “A Magical Mystery Tour”

And finally



Eliane Davie - Editor

