



December 2025

Chair's Message

Hello Everyone

It seems a while since our last Newsletter, but I'm sure that you understand that our editor was on a much-deserved break at the end of October. On both a personal and "professional" level I am glad that she had a good time – but sincerely glad that she's back for our final Newsletter for 2025!

You can see from the pictures and articles in this month's newsletter, October and November have been busy months for our u3a and I am pleased to report that we have also welcomed some new members. I hope that they are made to feel as welcome by you all as I was when I first joined – I've been a member now for 12 years so you obviously didn't do a bad job!

We seem to be moving very quickly into the festive season and as you know, this year we are trying a new way of celebrating Christmas. We are offering a buffet meal at our last meeting on December 18th. We are new to this and I hope that you understand we are learning every step of the way so your views on the success (or otherwise) of the event will be much appreciated. However, the first issue we have faced is the restriction on numbers for the hire of the hall at TWPG. This has meant that we have gone from worrying that not enough people would be interested to make it viable – to reaching the maximum number for the hall and having to disappoint some of our members. Please accept my sincere apologies if you had wanted to attend and were unable to as we had reached the maximum number. This is a Health and Safety issue and beyond our control. If celebrating this way seems to be the way to go then we will have to look early at arrangements for next year and plan accordingly.

With the festive season comes the cold weather, there has been a distinct chill in the air recently and I, for one, have decided it's "big coat" weather. I hope you are all keeping safe, well and warm.

Although our official year ends with our AGM in April, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has stepped up and volunteered this year to continue making Oxton and Prenton u3a a group to be proud of – we wouldn't be here without you. Member involvement is at the heart of the u3a and everyone is expected to do what they can to make it a success – so whatever you think you can offer – if you haven't done so already – please let me, or a member of the committee, know.

My thanks also to all of you for your support and kindness for both me and the committee this year, it is much appreciated.

Kind Regards

Corinne

Bogs, Baths & Basins

David Eveleigh



David, with over forty years of experience in heritage conservation, delivered a fascinating and often humorous talk on the history of domestic sanitary arrangements. He began with a light-hearted “squeamish content” warning before charting the evolution of facilities from the primitive privy to the modern bathroom.

Early sanitation devices such as cesspits and urban dung heaps were discussed, alongside references to commodes and chamber pots found in probate documents. Drawing on diaries, contemporary records, and his own remarkable collection of images, David illustrated the story with patents of inventions, a Hogarth engraving, and even architect’s plans for a Boghouse.

The serious side of his talk highlighted the challenges faced by the poor as industrialization drove populations into crowded cities. Outbreaks of cholera became common, prompting the Public Health Act of 1848, which required every home to have a water supply and a privy. The creation of Medical Officer and Borough Engineer roles paved the way for integrated sewerage systems, improved water supplies, and the gradual evolution of the “loo” into the bathrooms we know today.

One attendee summed it up perfectly: the talk was “interesting, informative, and amusing.” And as the speaker himself noted, we all left with a clearer understanding of what the term *lavatory* truly means. Kathy

Wirral Food Bank

Richard Roberts



A huge thank you to all our members for their kind donations to the Wirral Food Bank. Richard Roberts gave an illuminating talk on the history and work of both the Trussell Trust and the Wirral Food Bank. Any further donations are warmly welcomed and can be passed on. Please see the certificate on the next page Corinne

[Donate money | Wirral Foodbank](#)



Art Appreciation

October: Conservation on View



Thanks to Bernadette, members enjoyed a rare opportunity to witness conservation in action during a visit to the Lady Lever Art Gallery. The Lord Leverhulme Charitable Trust has funded the restoration of four Spanish altarpiece panels dating from the early 1400s, and visitors were able to watch David Crombie, Lead Conservator of Paintings at National Museums Liverpool, carefully cleaning and conserving them for future generations. David explained that the panels were originally part of an altarpiece dedicated to St Ursula. Other sections are

scattered across major galleries in Europe and the United States, including the Prado in Madrid. He described the detective-like nature of conservation, showing how X-rays and photographs reveal hidden details invisible to the naked eye.

Once the work is complete, the panels will return to display in Room 25, which has already been restored with improved lighting.

The visit offered a fascinating glimpse into the painstaking care that ensures historic masterpieces continue to inspire audiences for centuries to come.

November: Caravaggio – “Mad, Bad and Dangerous to know”

Bernadette’s talk on Caravaggio, provocatively titled “*Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know*”, drew a large and attentive audience. Although the phrase was originally coined to describe Lord Byron, we discovered how aptly it captures the turbulent life and art of Caravaggio.



Active in Rome during the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Caravaggio revolutionized painting with his uncompromising realism. His works reveal both the physical and emotional depths of the human condition, often through raw and violent imagery. With his dramatic use of chiaroscuro—bright shafts of light cutting through deep shadow—he created scenes of extraordinary intensity.

Bernadette guided us through several of his masterpieces, beginning with *Bacchus* and *The Cardsharps*, before moving to his powerful religious canvasses.

Known for his volatile temperament. He was forced to flee Rome, he continued to paint in Naples, Malta, and Sicily, producing remarkable works even in exile. His dramatic story ended abruptly in 1610, when he died on his journey back to Rome.

Kathy

Next meeting – Wednesday 17th December: Session Room TWPG.

"Season's Greetings" – Christmas Cards showing great works of art
Talk by Bernadette Hamilton

Walking Group

The group enjoyed a circular walk around Arrowe Park with pleasant weather.

December walk:

Chester mini walk including the Christmas Market.

Meet outside Chester Station on Friday 12th December

11.00 a.m, 2.5 miles, 1.5 hours

Then on to the market and lunch.



Travel Pass Outing to The Ormskirk Heritage Trail



On Thursday 13th November, seventeen of us set off in lovely warm sunshine for our first group outing, following the Heritage Trail in Ormskirk. The day began with a little drama when train cancellations left us wondering if we should abandon the planned trip and head to Southport, but at last the Ormskirk train arrived and our adventure began.

From the station we paused to view the so-called “Banksy” mural before heading to the bustling market. Ormskirk has held a Market Charter since 1286, and today its Thursday and Saturday stalls offer everything from artisan breads and cheeses to clothing and haberdashery.

Along the trail we explored twelve sites of historic interest, including the 19th-century Clock Tower, the Old Town Hall, and Court No. 5, once home to families living in a single room. We admired the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, unique in having both a tower and steeple at the same end, and learned about Joseph Brandreth’s 18th-century Dispensary, which provided medicines for the poor. Other stops included the Old Police Station, the former Girls’ and Infants’ School, a Georgian townhouse, and coaching inns such as Buck l’ Th’ Vine and the Ship Inn. Each building told its own story, though some now sadly verge on dereliction.

After completing the circuit, we went our own way for lunch before heading to the market for a final browse before catching the train home. It was a memorable and enjoyable first outing for the Bus Pass Group.

Thanks to everyone who supported this first outing of the group.

Next month we’ll visit the World of Glass in St Helens. There will likely be no outing in January, but a few treats are already planned for later in the year.

Tony



November Lunch with Joan



The group enjoyed another lunch date at The Refreshment Rooms. This group is very popular and if you sign up and are unable to attend, PLEASE let Joan know. We have other members who would like a place and the gaps today could have easily been filled. There will be no lunch group in December.

Nordic Walking



The Nordic Walking group enjoying November sunshine in Birkenhead Park.

Tea and Coffee Rota

4 December 2025

Hilary Robinson
Maureen Oldham

18 December 2025

Greig Roberts
John Roberts

8 January 2026

Mary Hamilton
Eileen Slater

22 January 2026

Barbara Baker
Kathy Sullivan

5 February 2026

Karen Little
Norah Murray

19 February 2026

Marion Jackson
Barbara Riley

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

Speaker Meetings

Arranged by Pam Southall

| | | |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 4 th Dec | The 1903 Daniel Adamson Steamship | Society member |
| 15 th Jan | More Wallpaper, Vicar? | Rowena Beighton-Dykes |
| 12 th Feb | History & Work of the RNLI | Brian Jordan |
| 12 th Mar | Special Investigation inside the Brighton Bombing | Barry Cave |
| 9 th Apr | Solo Walk across Africa | Fran Sandham |
| 7 th May | Peru in the Footsteps of the Incas | Dr. David Mottram |
| 4 th Jun | The Liverpool Tobacco Industry 1642-2007 | Robert S. Jones |
| 2 nd Jul | 'Operation Fish' - the rush to save Britain's Gold from the Nazis | Bernard Nevin |

GROUPS

Art Appreciation – Held in the Session room in TWPG. 3rd Wednesday each month. 10am for 10.15 start. Also, Gallery visits. Next meeting 17th December.

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 are provided by the Library Service. Next meeting 11th Dec.

Contact Joyce: <mailto:book2@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 signup sheet. It is held on the third Wednesday in the month at 12:45 for 1:00pm. Restart in January.

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.

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 on Wed. at 10.00am.

Walking Group

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

Information and Sign-up sheet available in meetings. Next walk: Chester

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

Meets on the last Monday of the month. 2.00 – 4.00. At Joan Benton's house. Full at the moment, but names can be added to a reserve list. Restarts in January.

Contact: craft@oxtonu3a.co.uk

Play Reading

2nd Tuesday monthly usually. Meeting: 10.00am – 12.30. Held at Eliane Davie's house. Full at the moment.

9th Dec Portrait of a Murder – Robert Bloomfield.

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

Care of members

Mary Hamilton and Dot Matthews are no longer able to take responsibility for sending out cards to members in need of care and compassion. I am not sure when they started but I cannot remember a time when they weren't – so it's been a while. I'm sure all our thanks go to them both for taking on this role on our behalf. *Corinne*

Going forward Eve Felton has agreed to be the point of contact so if you know of any member in need of a kind word please contact

committeemember@oxtonu3a.co.uk

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.

Thursday 18th December

Christmas Buffet

Soft drinks, tea and coffee provided but BYOB if you wish.

Raffle prizes – donations welcome (as last year)

Thursday 18th December is our last meeting before Christmas, we are intending to serve home-made mince pies with tea and coffee. There will be a short Christmas themed quiz followed by carol singing led by Steve Cottam. Everyone is welcome to attend but only those who have signed up and paid will be able to stay on for the buffet at the end of the meeting.

Thanks to Steve Cottam for doing such a great job of proofreading, and to Corinne and Karen Little for photographs. 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.

<mailto:newsletter@oxtonu3a.co.uk>

Kathy