



JULY NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

It's nearly time for our summer break at the Oxton & Prenton U3A. It seems no time at all that I was wishing everyone a Merry Christmas but here we are. The longest day has passed and we are now enjoying the height of our summer.

As you know we take a few weeks off over the summer holiday period. A well earned break for all your committee members, group leaders and other helpers who work so hard throughout the year to make our U3A the success that it is! Whatever you are doing through this holiday break I hope that the weather treats you well and look forward to seeing you all, refreshed and ready to start a new season, on our return in September.

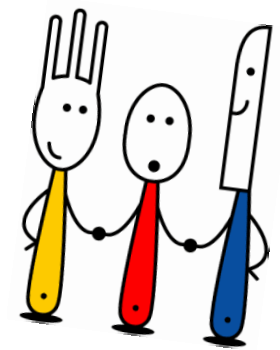
Colin Burkitt Chairman

LUNCH CIRCLE

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 19th July 2016

The Shippons, Thingwall Road, Irby. CH61 3UA

12-15 for 12-30



MEETINGS and SPEAKERS

Thursday 7th July 2016 – New Brighton, Ferries, Fun Fairs, Turrets & Towers – Ken Pye

Thursday 21st July 2016 - Brain of Oxton 2016 Quiz

(I am advised that you should turn up with your brains in full working order on 21st July and be very particular who you sit with! Apparently this quiz will be played in teams so you need to sit with a team with the broadest knowledge as they will have the advantage.)

***** Thursday 21st July will also be our last meeting before we have a summer break during August, we then return on September 1st. For those of you going on the annual summer cruise on 22nd July, 2016 please don't forget your coach will depart TWPG at 9-15

am PROMPT !!!! *****

SOCIAL OUTINGS

Full booking details available at meetings, please see your social organisers at the back of the hall OR e-mail barbara@oxtonu3a.co.uk

REMINDERS

Friday 22nd July 2016

Cruise to Salford Quays
Coach departs 9-15 am
Coffee break on arrival at nearby hotel
Cruise from 12-00 noon to 4-00 pm
Free time at Salford Quays part way through
Leave for home at 4-00 pm arrive home approx 5-15



EVENTS - NOW BOOKING

Wednesday 20th July 2016

Francis Bacon Exhibition (with History of Art Group)
Tate Gallery Liverpool at 11-00 am
Cost to be advised



Thursday 8th September 2016

Safer Driving for Longer
Free session provided by Wirral Council
Session Room TWPG 9-30 a.m or 11-15 a.m
BOOKING ESSENTIAL



Monday 19th September 2016

Guided Tour of Albert Dock
Albert Dock Heritage Project
Free but BOOKING ESSENTIAL



DATE FOR YOUR DIARIES !!!!

Friday 16th December 2016

Christmas Lunch
Wirral Ladies Golf Club 12.00 for 12.30 pm
Cost to be advised, booking opening later in year.
KEEP THIS DATE FREE



THEATRE

Thursday 27th October 2016

Two Gentlemen of Verona (Globe Touring)
Everymen Theatre 7-30 pm Tickets £17-00

TICKETS READY FOR COLLECTION

Monday 11th July 2017

Merchant of Venice at Playhouse Theatre



WALKING GROUP

Friday 15th July 10-30 am

Chris Lakin will be leading this walk to Hilbre Island we will meet at

The Concourse in West Kirby at 10-30 am

The distance is around 2 miles each way and come prepared to get your feet wet as often the sands do not dry out and many pools are left behind.

Put your name down on list at back of church hall



THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION

Who is this?

Answers on a postcard or an email

Prize for the first correct entry

TEA ROTA FOR THE NEXT 5 MEETINGS

7 th July 2016	Joan Parfect	Lillian Evans	Helen Roberts
21 st July 2016	Bernadette Hamilton	Eliane Davie	Rowan Bligh
1 st September 2016	Sylvia Hunt	Dot Matthews	Eve Felton
15 th September 2016	Sue Porter	Margaret Yeardsley	Doreen Alig
29 th September 2016	Val Edwards	Rod Paddock	Joy Thompson

Please ring me (Joan Benton) on 608 6226 if you are unable to do a duty

Our very own 'Thought for the Month'

It is high summer and we are well into the season of mass migration. The flow of people and luggage through airports up and down the country, together with the increasing number of empty seats at our various U3A gatherings endorses the fact that many of us are elsewhere, responding to this annual migratory urge. "Will you be going anywhere exciting?" I was asked by someone who had just returned from an exotic location. "Well, yes," was my reply. "With a bit of luck I might get up into Oxton for a pot of tea and some cake." Quite seriously such an occasion would furnish me with all the excitement I need or indeed, feel able to cope with; and anyway, anything further afield would be complicated by the presence of three cats and a dog.

A shepherd friend in Spain tried to interest me in buying his flock of sheep. As much as I was tempted by this new career option I was forced to remind us both that getting sheep back and forth twice a year on an Iberia flight between Valencia and Heathrow would cost me more than the animals were worth. We were not in the EU then and flights were more expensive.

Also, as a student of the psychological significance of dreams, myths and legends I am mindful of the story of the children who went on a quest for the blue bird. After horrendous privations they arrived back home empty handed only to realise that the pigeon they had in their back yard was in fact blue and always had been. They had simply failed to recognise it as such.

Compared to some people I have hardly travelled at all but I have been to Siberia and Samarkand and drunk champagne by the light of a midnight sun, and spent enough time living out of the country to have learned that home is not so much a place as a profound realisation of an inner reality. Once one develops the capacity to feel at home anywhere, on the whole it is cheaper and less bothersome to remain where one is and discover the amazing value inherent in the mundane.

Even so, I think that perhaps one has to travel a bit first in order to come home to oneself eventually.

Brian Gill

The Boy Who Was Small

James was small and he did not like being small, he did not like it one bit! He was six years old and he lived with his mum and dad and his baby sister who was two years old. His parents were ok considering they were grown- ups, but unfortunately they were both teachers. You might wonder why this was a problem, well it was simply that they seemed to know everything. There was nothing that he knew that they didn't already know. Well there was something that they didn't know and that was what it was like to be small. He was convinced that they were born as adults because he could not imagine them ever being small children.

James was a happy child most of the time, he liked school and he liked his home with the little garden that they had where he could play all sorts of games creating magic dens and castles where he fought off the baddies and fire eating dragons. Well most of the time, until his parents called him in to do something boring like eat a meal or have a bath. That as far as he was

concerned was another problem; they did not appear to understand that living outdoors in his garden was far preferable to sitting at the dinner table. Dad has explained to him the importance of eating his dinner, 'Come on James you know you have to eat up your dinner to grow into a big strong boy'. Well little did they know as it wasn't working. James remained small, the smallest boy in his class in fact. As his mum was also a teacher you would have thought she would have noticed this but not so!

There were two other people who were important to James, his Nana and his Granddad. Now they lived a long way away and whenever they went to visit them they had to travel for most of the day and always stayed for several nights. James was ok with this as he had his own bed in a little bedroom, at least he didn't have to share with his sister, and gosh his mates would laugh if they thought he was sharing a room with a girl. Lot of good things happened when he stayed at his grandparents as they had loads of toys that were different to the ones he had at home and they had a large paved area outside their house so he could run about and play. The house next door was a bit strange as the garden was very very overgrown; in fact it was so overgrown that nobody could walk about in it. He asked his dad about this and he said, 'oh it's a jungle in there' full of all sorts of wild animals and foxes '. James' ears picked up, 'a jungle?' Now this sounded interesting. His Dad explained that his people next door were a bit odd and had nailed up the gate to the garden and people could not get in. It was quite wild in there. This sounded very exciting and James decided to ask his Nana about it. She explained that all his father had told him was right but added that there was a hole in the hedge between the garden next door and the drive. The man next door had said it would be alright if anybody wanted to go in and collect the fruit which was growing there. The problem was, the hole in the hedge was very small. Now James knew his Mum and Dad were very tall and his granddad was small because he was in a wheelchair after an accident, so none of them could go through the hole in the hedge. Just then, as Nana was making a cup of tea his Dad came in the kitchen and stood next to her, gosh James had never noticed before but his Nana was small, very small. I wonder why he had not noticed this before now. Interesting possibilities were coming into his head particularly in relation to the mention of a jungle and wilderness.

'Nana, are you very busy?' James asked that because his Nana was one of those people who were always busy.

'Well, sort of but what is it you want?'

James took a deep breath and then jumped in with his question.

'Will you take me through the hole in the fence into the garden next door?'

His Nana turned round and said that of course she would take him in but he would need to get ready first. He was so excited. He ran off to his Mum and asked her to put on his really old clothes and then help him to find his wellingtons. His Nana explained that he would need these as there might be some snakes in the undergrowth next door. Snakes, wow, this was getting better all the time. He was not sure what the undergrowth was but it sounded good and he could hardly wait.

A few minutes later his Nana appeared wearing a collection of funny old clothes and wait for it, a pair of wellingtons. He did not know that old people had wellingtons as well as children. Off they went through the hole in the fence. Nana was carrying a pair of secateurs which she needed to cut their way through the undergrowth; they were very sharp and did the job. 'Keep close James and look out for holes in the ground and be careful because there is a well in here somewhere and we don't want you falling down that do we?' James could hardly control his excitement, he was also a little bit scared at the thought of snakes and foxes and goodness knows what else they might come across.

They had only been in the garden a few minutes when James saw something move near his foot, it was green and shiny and rather than walking it gave a gigantic hop. He was sure it must be a frog or toad. Before he could tell his nana what he had seen it was gone. It made a strange noise and for all the world it sounded as though it was speaking to him.

‘Give it give it’ it said. Give what James wondered? Life really was a mystery to him sometimes. James and his Nana continued through the undergrowth at a fairly slow pace as the ground was uneven and he was busy looking out for the well that he had been warned about. Suddenly there was a rustling in the bushes just ahead of where they were walking. There was a sudden swishing noise and a fox cub ran across in front of them and out through the hedge that was the boundary to the garden. James stood stock still he had never seen a wild animal so closely before and was lost for words. He was about to tell his Nana when she announced that it was time to go back now as dinner had to be cooked, more boring adult stuff and just when things were getting interesting.

They returned home through the hole in the fence and as he rushed off to find his parents he decided to keep cool about what they had seen today after all there was a good chance his Nana would take him in there again. Later on as he was being tucked up in bed he thought about the day and decided that being small was not so bad and had some advantages.

Diane Adams

ARLEY GARDENS



On 7th June, the gardening group and members of Oxton & Prenton U3A visited Arley House and Gardens, organised by Barbara Lloyd.

Following a tour of the stately home dating back to 1469, we took advantage of the fine weather to enjoy the mixture of modern and classical garden designs

These included herbaceous borders, topiary and a walled garden. We also enjoyed the food and drinks on offer in The Gardener's Kitchen, and a good day was had by all.

Gwen Burrell

..... a couple of our lovely members who went the extra mile and co-ordinated their outfits for a day in the sun at Arley Hall'.



and Carol admiring one of the sculptures



More lovely photographs taken at Arley House



An Ancient Couple's Wonderful Short Adventure

Early on the 6th May we arrived at Lime Street Station to travel to London. Liverpool F.Club had played a match the night before, a match that had finished much later than expected; many fans missed their train back to the great metropolis and had spent the night 'on the town'! We had to join a long queue to get on to the train, surprised that so many young and old, mainly men and boys, were in the queue, scarves and backpacks making it more than obvious which team they had supported the night before.

Where were all the women supporters, I asked myself; then a polite voice came over the loud speaker that as the match had finished late, our train would be delayed. A strange reason for delaying the train, I thought, but then, who am I to question such important matters. On several occasions, the message was repeated very politely with apologies from the train manager, yet again explaining to us the reason for the delay.

Not much good to Martin and myself who had to catch the Euro Star train at St. Pancras. Our sons had arranged a treat for us, a visit to Brussels. As most of you know, Martin loves his armchair and it was with difficulty that we prised him out of it to travel abroad, as a matter of fact, even for him to go anywhere only some miles away from home is not an easy undertaking!

Having finally, and late, arrived at Euston, we hot footed it to St. Pancras, no difficulty for me as I grew up in a capital city, so was very practised in avoiding other pedestrians and risking crossing roads when lights are red! In my younger days, in another life, it was avoiding cars, buses and trams, of course.

It was so easy to go through customs and passport control, unlike airports, then onto the very comfortable seats on the Euro Star train. An amazing, quick journey but I was sad to see, when arriving at the French end of the tunnel, high fences, not just one, but three parallel ones built along the length of the railway track, extending for miles and miles.

Brussels is an amazing city, vibrant and lively. The heart of the old city is most exciting, the architecture, 'the Grand Place', particularly the C11th Romanesque Eglise St.Nicholas, a cool and welcoming haven, a spiritual oasis. I, as always, revelled in hearing so many languages spoken around us.

In the early evening Terence and Judy Whaley came to collect us from our hotel, on the way to their flat we stopped to admire a very unusual house, Ciamberlani House designed by the architect Paul Hankar, its interesting façade painted in swirling art deco style. The Whaley's flat, on the top floor of a converted convent, is modern and well planned, where every corner and wall has been utilized to the utmost, an art in itself. I could happily live there if given the opportunity but Terence told me that I would have to join a queue, was I prepared to do so? Oh, yes!

The views out of the windows were engaging, many of the Brussels landmarks could be seen clearly, obviously described in detail to us. They and their three sons had lived in Brussels for thirty or more years, all speak perfect French. An excellent drink or two before we went to a small Italian restaurant near their home, the food was good and conversation flowed; much later we took a taxi back to our hotel, perhaps a drink or two too many, so who cares when in such good company, but what a start to our short holiday.

We walked all day on Saturday, starting with the 'Place du Petit Sablon'



with its own Park laid out in 1890; although only a small 'Place' it is an absolute delight to visit and relax in. It was decorated with historically significant statuary; each post of the wrought-iron fence around the park is topped with the bronze figure of a man portraying a trade guild. The large raised, sculptured statues in the centre of this beautiful park, full of seasonal spring flowers, is a tribute to the Counts Egmont and Hornes, who were beheaded in the 'Grand Place' in 1568 following their protests against the Spanish rule. Beethoven's music came immediately to my mind and, metaphorically speaking, to my ears too.



There were so many more amazing buildings to see, blue skies and strong sunshine glistening on the gold painted statues standing majestically over important landmarks. An architect's delight, Martin was in his own heaven; naturally, what else could I be delighted with but finding an Italian ice cream shop, a lemon and pistachio ice cream in a cone, I took my time enjoying it right in the middle of the 'Place Royale'. A lunch of soup and bread, oh, what bread, worth going back to sample the many, many varieties that are on offer. After a short rest at our comfortable, very modern hotel, we went to the Musee Horta, designed by the architect Victor Horta who, after the completion of the building works, lived there. His studio is still in the process of being restored but should give another insight into his life.

Every detail, from doors to windows, to door handles, to staircases and so much more, was designed by him in the Art Deco style, a flowing style that I have always loved and admired and had been much influenced by in my art school days. The only complaint that I would have is that there were too many people there that same afternoon, also visiting the House, a house that I could cheerfully live in provided I had plenty of servants and help, whilst I lounged in one of the small rooms, dreaming of days gone by, wishing for such luxury and most importantly, excellent design.

The next morning we were on the march again, this time to the Magritte Museum, three floors of his work, but time did not allow us to go on to the Musee des Instruments de Musique or to the Musees Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique where we were hoping to see some of Rik Wourters paintings and sculptures. Terence had given our Art Group a most interesting talk on this artist, I would have loved to see the original paintings and sculptures at the Museum. Perhaps the Art Group could organise a day or two days' trip over to Brussels. It is so easy to travel on the Euro Star and fast too.



An epic break for us; we arrived back safe and sound after three days, revived and ready to travel again, at least I am ready, I don't think it will be too difficult now to encourage Martin to leave his arm chair to embark on another adventure.

What a city break, our thanks to Terence and Judy for meeting and taking us out on the first evening. It made the holiday doubly enjoyable. A very, very big thanks you also to our family; it is one of the first times that I thought, 'well..... perhaps it is not such a bad thing to have reached the ripe old age of eighty. It was a wonderful birthday present.

Jutta
