

NEWSLETTER

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I was talking to my brother and his wife in America over Xmas and the New Year period and I couldn't help but marvel on how wonderfully easy it is to communicate with all our families and friends in this technological age. Whether you Skype, Text, What's App or Message it's all done without leaving your chair and by just pressing a few keys or touching and swiping your mobile screen.

Knowledge is also there at our fingertips. If you Google Oxton U3A behold up pops our website URL which is www.oxtonu3a.co.uk click on that link and you will be able to find whatever you need to know about our U3A, thanks to Terence who is our webmaster and maintains our website.

Thanks to Eliane who edits our Newsletter each month you all receive interesting relevant information about monthly events in our U3A but if you need to delve further then go to our website. Along the top of the page if you click on the yellow and blue logo of U3A you will be taken to the website of our National Office which is an absolute mine of information. Or click on 'Link' at the top of the page and you will find links to all the other U3A's in our Network and also many other local links. All this information is only a click away, isn't it wonderful? I think so.

Sandra Lakin
Chairman

BRIAN'S MUSINGS

February can easily become the month of despair as the winter seems to wear on and refuses to give way to something more amenable. Of course we know that the spring is coming but for those of us who have seen a great many springs one can begin to wonder if it is worth the wait, when a dubious spring and summer only bring us back to yet another winter. In our part of the world nothing is ever certain; weather patterns shift and change and the effort and energy required to adapt can be tiring. And so it is that the month of February can create for us the ideal conditions in which to discover the wisdom of uncertainty.



For all our ingenuity and adaptability as a race it is easy to overlook the fact that it is our vulnerability to change and uncertainty that has so often driven us to seek out new and innovative solutions, that and the fact that we seem motivated by curiosity itself to go beyond what we know and by creativity to explore new relationships. Should we be of an age in which venturing forth into inclement weather is not an attractive proposition, or indeed venturing forth at all, we need not be prevented from ever newer and more adventurous essays into the unknown in order to express our creativity and curiosity. Inner space is just as infinite as outer, and with perhaps even more possibilities.

It occurred to me over the festive period that we have recently left behind us, that with our addiction to light, we are in real danger of forgetting to celebrate the dark - the 'zero-point-field' which is the very womb of creation. Our ancient ancestors with the festival of Imbolc, on the second of February, knew of the importance of honouring the dark but now-a-days we tend only to value increasing levels of light in our lives. At the end of February we are approaching the spring equinox when a preponderance of darkness finally gives way to one of light and yes, with the autumn we will yet again turn towards winter darkness. These moments of change, when one energy gives way to another, bring with them a special potential. Our ancestors would have told us that at these times two distinct and normally separate dimensions, overlap and coincide. Now we might prefer to say that the tension generated by energy shifts generates stress and leave it at that. For those who like the idea of moving between different dimensions and discovering new possibilities and who are prepared to accept that there might be wisdom to be gained in uncertainty – welcome to inner space!

LUNCH CIRCLE

Dates to note for 2018 MEET AT 12.15 FOR 12.30

Tuesday February 20 th	Toby Carvery Pub
Tuesday March 20 th	Carnarvon Castle Pub, Oxton.
Tuesday April 17 th	Presto (Dibbinsdale)
Tuesday May 15 th	The Shippons Pub, Irby.
Tuesday June 19 th	The Refreshment Rooms



Colin Stredder

SOCIAL OUTINGS

EVENTS

Tour of Liverpool Medical Institution
114 Mount Pleasant – Opposite Metropolitan Cathedral
Wednesday 28 February 2018

FULL

Morning tour meet 10.40am for 11.00 am tour

Followed by lunch @ noon

Afternoon tour – meet for lunch @ 12.00 noon

Tour to follow lunch 1.15 pm to 2.15 pm



WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2018

Guided visit to Liverpool Mosque

Meet at city centre bus stop ELLIOT STREET Stop GA

@ 10.20am

Tour 11.00 am to 12.00 noon

Essential information on dress code – see notice boards

Cost £3.50



PLUS

Optional afternoon guided tour of Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

Cost (to include Lutyens crypt) £5.50

Tour 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm followed by visit to Crypt



THEATRE

NOW BOOKING

LIVERPOOL PLAYHOUSE

Tuesday 13 MARCH 7.00 pm

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

(following critically acclaimed premiere at Globe Theatre)

Tickets £13 **Booking MUST close 15 February 2018**



LIVERPOOL PLAYHOUSE

Tuesday 27 MARCH 7.30 pm

HARD TIMES

(A Northern Broadsides production)

Tickets £12



*Absolutely no apologies for offering 2 productions in one month
I want to see both – please come with me!!*

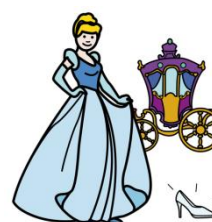
Tickets available for collection

Matthew Bourne's CINDERELLA

Liverpool Empire 2.30 pm

Thursday 12 April 2018

Booking closed



BOOKING OPENS MID FEBRUARY

AN OFFICER & A GENTLEMAN – The Musical

World Premiere prior to London

LIVERPOOL EMPIRE

Wednesday 23 MAY 2018 @ 2.30 pm

Tickets £33.50 (Rear stalls – centre)



IMPORTANT NOTICE

No bookings or reservations can be taken without payment

This is necessary in order to be fair to all our members

PLEASE try to book events BEFORE the START of meetings

Payment at end of meetings MUST be either cheque or correct cash only

Full booking details available @ meetings - see your social organizers

Western Approach H.Q. Outing on Thursday 25.1.18



PEOPLE OF OXTON

Portrait Photography Project by James Deegan

I am a local photographer currently producing a series of portraits of people who live, work, or regularly visit the Oxtan area of Birkenhead. The portraits would all be taken in different Oxtan locations, such as the home, place of work or favourite spot etc. These are called environmental portraits, where the photographs give the viewer an insight into the subject's life and surroundings.

The portraits are intended to show the rich variety of life in this particular part of the Wirral; a place that to me, as a local, has always had the feel of a small village within the broader Wirral area. I am approaching local businesses as well as people who simply have an interesting look or a great story to tell.

Typically, because of the natural approach I am taking, the photo shoots would take up to 10-30 minutes. The aim is to be as natural and unobtrusive as possible, although these are formal portraits with the subject fully aware of the presence of the camera and not documentary pictures of people at work.

I am aiming to shoot all the portraits over the next few months and I am flexible with times, day or evening. Anyone willing to take part would give their time for free, but would receive a copy of their best images for their own use, and maybe even some free publicity where appropriate!

The ultimate aim for 'People of Oxtan' is to mount a public exhibition of the work in the local area. I hope also to produce a book or pamphlet with the images accompanied by text including information, quotes and stories from the people in the pictures. I am sure this would be of great interest, particularly in the local area itself.

I would love to hear from anyone interested in getting involved in this project so I can arrange a convenient slot for me to visit, explain further and take some images. Also if anyone can pass on my contact details to anyone else you think might like to take part, be it friends or fellow employees who fit the criteria, I would be most grateful. My contact details are – jamesdeegan10@gmail.com or 07930 985 442.

Please also visit my website www.deeganphotography.com and the James Deegan Photography page on Facebook to see examples of my work.

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MEETINGS and SPEAKERS 2018

2018

Thursday 1st February

The Policeman's Lot is a Digital One. – Bill Jonstone

Thursday 1st March

Confessions of a Registrar – Carole Codd

Thursday 29th March

Now There's a Funny Thing.. – Brian Lloyd

Thursday 26th April

Grand Narratives and How We Live. – Mary Clinton

Thursday 24th May

Joyce Grenfell. – Jean Finney

Thursday 21st June

Thomas Edgerton and the Earls of Derby – Bernard Dennis



Thursday 19 th July	Behind the Scenes in Theatre and TV. – Fiona Martine
Thursday 13 th September	The Cultural Significance of the Belly Dance – Fatma
Thursday 11 th October	Ephemera – Glynn Parry
Thursday 8 th November	The Christmas Tree: where Culture, Science and Magic Meet.
Thursday 6 th December	Faith, Fun and Fellowship – Michael Burgess

Creative Writing Group

A CHRISTMAS STORY



Mr and Mrs Thomas lived in Primrose Avenue; they had lived there for a long time, over 40 years in fact and were the first occupants in their house. It was a substantial semi-detached with a generous sized garden with an old shed at the bottom end of the garden in the corner. This is where I live. I used to live in the hall in the middle of all the family activity but a few years ago when the hall was re-decorated somebody decided I should be put outside in the shed. So here I am. I used to belong to Mrs Thomas, known as Ma. She would ride me around the place picking up bits of shopping and going out on all manner of errands. The family didn't have a car of course, but then very few people did in the post war years. Mr Thomas, known as Pa used to get the bus at the end of the road to the factory where he worked until his retirement. Me, who am I? Why, I am a bicycle. When new I had a shiny black frame with white tips on the mudguards and a lovely wicker basket on the front. I am a ladies bike in the style which is sometimes described as a 'sit up and beg'.

Since being relegated to the shed I had fallen into a state of disrepair. Rusty with flat tyres, a crack in my saddle, a chain which was in a fixed position because the grease had dried out and a bell that was so rusty I doubt it would ever work again. I was covered in a thick layer of dust and this winter a family of mice had decided to take up residence in my front basket. I was not pleased about this, however I must admit it was rather nice to have some company because it was lonely living in the shed, particularly in the winter. The summer was not too bad as Pa would open up the shed, take out some gardening tools and set to in the garden. There was a power source in the shed so Pa would put the radio on and we would both spend a few hours listening to music and catching up on current affairs and the news. I do like to know what is going on in the world as I like to consider myself a well-informed bicycle. Pa liked being in the garden and would often stand and talk to Bob from next door. They talked for ages and one day Ma came out of the house with two fold up chairs which she set up and then invited Bob to come round and have a cup of tea. He came round and so started a pattern which continued for quite a few years. Now I was very lucky as just in front of the shed there was a small paved area which was just large enough to take the two folding chairs and a tray of tea and biscuits. I said I was lucky because they were sitting so close to the shed that I could hear every word. I was able to listen as they shared ideas, hopes, fears and concerns. I felt as though I was part of the family again. Then, there was no sign of Bob or Pa. What had happened, what was going on? I soon found out.

One afternoon the door opened and Pa reached in and took out one of the folding chairs, putting it carefully on the paved area. What was he wearing? When working in the garden Pa usually wore an old pair of cords and a droopy woollen jumper with a hole in the elbow, but today he had a suit on with shirt and tie. He sat down heavily onto the chair and let out a deep sigh. Just then Ma came down the garden with a cup of tea in her hand,

'I thought I might find you here.' she said as she passed the tea to Pa.

'To be honest love I just had to get away from all those people and the forced bonhomie. I don't like funerals; I just want to sit here and think about Bob, I will really miss him.

'I know you will Pa so just you sit here quietly as long as you like.'

Ma went back to the wake and Pa sat in the garden. Things were never quite the same after Bob died. Oh Pa still did the garden but he seemed to have lost interest somehow. As for me, I was back where I started with very little going on and no real contact with the outside world. Life was very boring and time dragged by very slowly. The days became shorter and the weather cooler and then cold. The frost could be seen on the window sills and then icicles formed on the gutter just within my view, yes, winter was here. Boring, boring, boring. I suppose I spent quite a lot of my time sleeping and the door never opened. I would probably not see anybody until spring. However the shed was not a quiet place. Spiders, mice (which I have already mentioned), birds scratching around looking for food and even the odd cat sniffing around the door. There was plenty of animal life but it was people I missed. One evening not long after dark there was a sound outside, I could hear voices and the sound of footsteps crunching on the frozen grass. This was a bit worrying, was the shed being burgled? No there was no need to worry because I recognised Pa's voice. The door opened and two men stepped into the shed, Pa putting the light on. It was a dim light but after being in the dark it seemed quite bright to me.

'I say Dad that's a good idea having a light in here'

'Yes son, I put it in when I ran an electric cable out here a few years ago, you know, after I bought the new electric drill'

Son? Dad? It took me a few moments to realise that this tall young man was John, yes the same one that I remember running around the house in his short grey school trousers, tossing his cap onto my handlebars and sliding down the banister when nobody was looking. Here he was in my shed with Pa and talking about me. They were discussing somebody called Susan and how I might be 'done up in time to be given to her for Christmas'. How exciting. Things were really looking up.

'Well son if you think you can sort her out (that's me), you can have her, it's not like Ma will ever ride her again. With that Pa gave me a rather over-familiar pat on the saddle. John said he would need to sort out getting me back to his house where he had a workshop that was just waiting for me. He would arrange for Tommy, his mate, to pick me up the following evening after work. After all there was no time to waste as Christmas was only eight weeks away. The shed was locked up and the dark returned, but could I sleep? Certainly not as I was far too excited and I suppose a bit apprehensive.

The following evening Tommy and John arrived to take me off to the workshop. I was lifted up, carried off and taken to the open backed truck. The next part of the journey was not too good as I was wrapped up in a dusty smelly old grey blanket and bounced along the road; how my frame ached! We arrived at John's house and after he checked that the coast was clear I was carried into the workshop. Now this really was a posh workshop. The room was well lit by an overhead fluorescent light and tools were fitted into special holders all along one wall. I was propped up and inspected in detail. I then saw John checking the tins of paint to see if he had what was required. He said to Tommy that he would definitely need to buy two new wheels as the frames had buckled so new tyres alone would not be enough. After the inspection I saw the dreaded grey blanket heading in my direction and then suddenly it was thrown over me, 'Yuck'.

'Just in case Susan comes in.' John explained to Tommy.

Well lights out, and here I was trying to get some sleep in my new very different and strange surroundings. The long and dreary winter was now looking quite different and it was only a few weeks to Christmas.

The following evening John came into the workshop carrying a cup of coffee. He switched the radio on lifted off my blanket cover and started pottering about on the shelves. Suddenly I felt a sharp scratching on my frame, what was it? Then there was another and another, ouch! What was he doing? Just then he spoke and said,

‘Sorry about this old girl but I do need to rub down your frame before giving you a new coat of paint’. That explained it, no gain without pain!!!! This was not a very pleasant procedure at all but it was over quite quickly and then I was being gently wiped down with clean cloth.

‘Well that’s all for tonight old girl, see you tomorrow.’

And so the restoration work continued. The best part of the process took place the following evening with stroke after stroke of delicious paint, thick and creamy it felt like a brand new skin. Two coats of paint, new wheels and my basket and saddle polished up like new. How smart I must look, better in fact than I had done for years. After my chain was oiled I felt as though I could go for miles and miles. As Christmas drew nearer when John had finished his handi-work, he came into the shed one night with his wife and proudly removed the grey blanked, standing back to admire his work. Well darling you really have done the old girl proud! I cannot wait until Christmas morning.

Some days later the shed door opened, it was still the middle of the night and John was approaching me in a bit of a creepy fashion, I notice a sweet smell in the air and realised he had probably been drinking ‘Father Christmas’s sherry. Come on then here we go. I was being wheeled along the path and in through the back door and then, ‘Oops steady on John’, he was a bit wobbly going up the stairs. Now it needs to be mentioned at this point, information I had overheard about Susan; she was apparently a bit of a ‘madam’. Although still quite young she had decided that there was no Father Christmas but chose to play safe and not admit it just in case she received no presents. She decided to stay awake all night and watch what happened. As John crept into her room all that was visible above the bedclothes was a little nose and two eyes barely opened, certainly not enough for anybody to notice, particularly if they had been on the sherry! I noticed of course. After the bicycle had been left at the end of her bed leaning against the bedpost and the door closed Susan opened her eyes wide,

“Oh dear!” the bike was so big it could not possibly be for her, Father Christmas must have made a mistake. She eventually dropped off to sleep to be wakened a few hours later by her brother. They looked over the bike together and ran to tell Mum and Dad that Father Christmas had made a mistake. Her Dad insisted that he never did that sort of thing and she had better get dressed so they could go outside to try it out. By now I was beside myself with excitement, as it was so long since anybody had taken me out - but I was ready. As we all tramped out into the street Susan asked where the bicycle was going to be kept. There was no reply from John. She climbed up onto the saddle and John held on while she tried to peddle away and after a few wobbles she was off and the wind was brushing past me, just like it used to. Wonderful! I thought my happiness was complete until I heard Susan ask again where I was going to be kept and John replied,

‘In the hall of course where she belongs.’ Truly a Christmas surprise.

Diane Adams

WALKING GROUP



Friday 16th February (WEST KIRBY AND CALDY) I will lead a circular walk of approximately 5 miles. There are a couple of hills and



some of the paths may be muddy after rain. If the weather is good we should get some great views across the Dee Estuary and along the coastline towards Llandudno.

Meet outside West Kirby Concourse (next to the station) at 1030 – lunch in the Dee Hotel (Weatherspoons) at 1pm.

Sign up for this walk as usual at the next Thursday meeting.

Friday 16th March – Gerry has volunteered to lead a walk, details to follow.

Friday 20th April – Tony has agreed to lead a walk, details to follow

Colin Burkitt

Email: carol.colin@talktalk.net

Landline: 0151 651 2947

Mobile: Colin – 0743 4284666 Carol – 0757

Dates to look out for:

Friday March 16th

Friday April 20th



Our January walk in Liverpool



ART APPRECIATION GROUP

**Dates for U3A history of art meetings.
All meetings in Trinity Session room start at 10.15a.m. unless otherwise stated:**

2018

Wednesday February 21st MEET AT TATE GALLERY 10.45a.m. for curator led exhibition of JOHN PIPER'S art.

Wednesday March 21st in Session room THE GHENT ALTARPIECE Terence Whaley

Wednesday April 18th in Session room To be advised

Wednesday May 16th MEET AT TATE GALLERY 10.45a.m. KEN'S SHOW: exploring the unseen. Celebrating the 30th Anniversary Special Exhibition of the gallery's Collection.

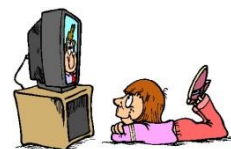


TEA AND COFFEE ROTA -2018



February 1st 2018 - Chris Lakin, Margaret Cullen and Paul Cullen
February 15th 2018 - Jill McCloy, Ian McCloy and Brenda George
March 1st 2018 - Jean Dickie, Maureen Jones and Bernadette Hamilton
March 15th 2018 - Lilian Evans, Joan Parfect and Helen Roberts
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We received the following e-mail from Sally Ainsworth who would like anyone interested in the project to contact her .



I work for a television company called Shiver Productions and we are developing a new television programme for a major broadcaster.

We are looking for fun and outgoing grandparents who may be interested in our project and we were hoping you might be able to spread the word amongst your members to see if any of them might be interested in hearing more. The U3A has already sent this out for us but it seems it hasn't reached everyone so we are doing one final push to try and get the message out to the Nation!

We are looking for grandparents who have 3 or more adult (18+) grandchildren who they would like to spend more time with.

Many grandparents reportedly only see their grandchildren on average twice a year, it's not surprising the two generations often know little about each other's lives. In the programme, grandparents will spend one-on-one time with their multiple grandchildren in an attempt to get to know them better and see if they can offer any help.

Along the way they will learn about the pressures their grandchildren face, the lifestyle choices they make, their hopes for the future and what, if anything, is standing in their way of achieving them.

Filming for the programme will not take place until next year, this is the initial casting stage and we are only hoping to speak to people over the phone.

I was hoping you could share the attached flyer amongst your members to see if anyone might be interested in getting in touch with us. We're hoping to hear from people ASAP.

I can be contacted here or on 0207 157 4588.

Many thanks in advance.

Kind regards,

Sally

Sally Ainsworth | Casting Producer | Shiver | ITV Studios
16th Floor, ITV Upper Ground | London | SE1 9LT | Tel: +44 (0) 207 157 4588

johnbews@btinternet.

A new TV programme is looking for Grandparents who want to spend more quality time with their Grandchildren

Are you a Grandparent?

Do you have **three or more** Grandchildren aged **over 18?**

Do you wish you saw them more often?
Would you like to help them out?

If so, a new Documentary would like to hear from you!

If you are interested please email us on shivercasting@shiver.tv
OR CALL US ON: 0207 157 4588

Please get in touch as soon as possible!



LETTER FROM HEAD OFFICE WHICH COULD BE OF INTEREST

The latest newsletter has gone out direct to the 'opt in' list of U3A members. It is packed full of news from U3As, news from the Trust, including upcoming events and new subject advisers and much more.

You can view it [here](#) if you have not already signed up yourself.
Your members can view all back copies and sign up to receive it direct on our website <https://u3a.org.uk/about/newsletter> and also by clicking on the link below.

U3A EMAIL NEWSLETTER

[Click here to add your name to the U3A email newsletter list, or visit \[u3a.org.uk/email\]\(https://u3a.org.uk/email\)](#)

Best wishes,
From the National Office team.

AND FINALLY.....

I would love to hear from Group Leaders regarding the various activities under way in our U3A. If you would like to share any items please e-mail them to me at the address below before the twentieth of February and I will try to include them in the next newsletter.

Eliane Davie Editor e-mail

elianedavie@hotmail.co.uk

