



# April Newsletter

## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I must admit that this is a very sad moment for me as I write my last Chairman's Message for our Newsletter. Although it was probably my least favourite task as your Chairman, none the less I have thoroughly enjoyed my role and feel very sorry that I am leaving a year earlier than the normal three year period. Most of you are aware that I am fighting a very serious illness which has taken me away for treatment often on a Thursday morning. I really feel that Oxton U3A is worthy of a Chairman that can give their all rather than a part time Chairman. So at our AGM in April you will be electing a new Chairman.

I fully intend to continue as a member and hopefully will see you all at some Thursday morning meetings. But I would like to say a big 'Thank You' to everyone for your care and support during the past two years and I am sure you will support your new Chairman.

My only disappointment is that it seems most members are still very reluctant to volunteer their services to the Committee, and yet again as we move towards our AGM we are struggling to recruit willing volunteers. Later in this Newsletter you will see that Brian has written a very interesting article regarding this problem; hopefully it will give you all food for thought when you have read it.

So, I wish you all the very best for the future as I look forward to being an 'ordinary member' once more.

**Sandra Lakin**  
Chairman

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## BRIAN'S MUSING

The month of April brings with it, not only the beginning of new astrological, fiscal and ecclesiastical years but with our Annual General Meeting on 25th April we see the start of a new year in the life of the Oxton and Prenton University of the Third Age. So what!? (one might be forgiven for asking); the answer depends very much on ones point of view. For those of us trying to 'keep the show on the road', the A.G.M. can be a matter of life and death. U3As can and do fail, even when they have a thriving and abundant membership. Like any living organism they are composed of a number of vital and disparate functions, each responsible for its own aspect of the energy flow that is the life and vitality of the whole being. Ideally each organ needs to be functioning effectively and efficiently and where U3As are concerned this can generate a degree of tension, given that – with each A.G.M - an organ transplant or two might become necessary as organs ,currently in use and perfectly serviceable, reach their expiry date. Some organs (the Chairman for example) are not allowed to function



beyond a brief life-span of three years, whilst others can be re-elected and granted an extension; and then of course there is natural wastage as people move on or , for various reasons, cannot continue in their current role.

This strategy of constant change is intended to ensure a flow of energies and ideas that prevent the stagnation and ossification of the whole organism but I am profoundly thankful that I do not have to replace any of my own vital organs after only three years use; even if some of them are getting a little tired. U3As, in common with the N.H.S, suffer from the problem of there being a scarcity of organ donors. Should we consider an 'opt-out clause' when people apply for membership, which, if not signed, assumes that every member will be willing to serve on the committee as and when needed should the life of the whole organism be in danger?

Once on the committee one tends to have a vested interest in and concern for, each of one's fellow committee members. Even with a membership of some one hundred and seventy souls replacements are not as easy to come by as one might suppose when most are not too concerned with the logistical implications of running a U3A, unless or until there is cause for complaint. On the other hand, and changing the analogy somewhat, running a U3A is a bit like looking after an exotic animal: you never quite know what it is you've got and consequently how to care for it. But it nevertheless brings with it a sense of privilege and the honour of shared responsibility. No matter what our previous life experience might have been, one is unlikely to have been involved in running a U3A previously so it is all a bit of an adventure and this, we are assured, prevents the build-up of neuronal plaque. (Dementia) Each U3A has a life of its own and is therefore unique.

The same can be said of the committees that run them. One can certainly feel vulnerable whenever there is a change of membership but given that we all share in the common aim of wanting it to thrive, we soon seem to develop a sense of familial conviviality and support and even if the general membership is not particularly aware of our efforts on their behalf I think that we can all acknowledge that U3As in general have an indisputable, intrinsic value, the very life and texture of which we all help to sustain and augment, simply by the very fact of being a member.

Of course one can always do a little more: one can attend an A.G.M. and help re-elect existing members, vote in new ones and even offer oneself as a member of the committee. It is all very worthwhile, and knowing that, brings its own many and varied rewards.

**Brian Gill**

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## **LUNCH GROUP**

### **Dates to note for 2019 MEET AT 12.45 for 1pm**

<b>April 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>The Toby Carvery</b>
<b>May 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>The Pesto (Dibbinsdale)</b>
<b>June 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>The Travellers' Rest</b>
<b>July 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Peel Hey – afternoon tea Please note time: 2.30 pm</b>



**COLIN STREDDER**



The lunch group enjoying a convivial meal at the Shippons on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

Photos by Corinne Whitham



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## TEA AND COFFEE ROTA If you cannot do a duty, please ring me, JOAN BENTON, ON 608 6226

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Joyce Roberts

Jean Skillicorn

Beryl Davies

**11<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

Margaret Cullen

Paul Cullen

Will Edwards

**25<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

Jean Dickie

Helen Roberts

Joan Parfect

**9<sup>th</sup> May**

Sue Porter

Ruth Trace

Sue Phillips



I would like to call on more members to volunteer to help serve tea and coffee at our meetings. It is a really good way of getting to know other members and is not onerous. I would probably call on you to do this duty only twice a year and the more volunteers we get the less there is to do.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

**Joan Benton: tel. 608 6226**

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## SOCIAL OUTINGS

### EVENTS

#### 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 organisers**



**COACH COSTS** are dependent on numbers travelling so it may be necessary to adjust prices slightly from time to time.

### EVENTS

**THURSDAY 30 MAY 2019**

**WEST TOWER TOUR of Royal Liver Building**

**£15**

**70 Minute guided tour climbing from 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Floors**

**Involves quite a number of steps (approx 124)**

**71 of these steps are narrow spiral stone staircase.**

**Classed as 'strenuous' – more information available**

**On social desk**

**Booking will close in April**



## THEATRE

#### Reminder

**Matthew Bourne's re-imagined version of his iconic Swan Lake**

**Thursday 11 April 2019 @ 2.30 pm**

**Liverpool Empire**

***Meet at Theatre***



**Recent Theatre bookings – *collect Tickets***

#### PLAYHOUSE

##### HEART OF DARKNESS

**A retelling of this classic – includes digital technology**

**THURSDAY 2 MAY @ 5.30pm**

**Booking closed**



#### **NEW – BOOKING FROM APRIL ADVANCE NOTICE**

**Summer outing 2019**

**Erddig – widely acclaimed as one of Britain's finest historic houses**

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June**

**Cost: Entrance free to National Trust members/ £11.50 adult group rate**

**Coach £10 pp**

**Departing from Trinity with Palm Grove 9.30 am**

**Should arrive home approx 5.30pm**



**Theatre – BOOKING FROM APRIL**

**SWEENEY TODD – Everyman - Tuesday 14 May @ 7.30pm**

**Cost £22**

**Available to book at two April meetings ONLY**





**LES MISERABLES**  
**EMPIRE Theatre Tuesday 15 OCTOBER @ 7.30pm**  
**£39 Circle seats**  
**(best medium priced seats for an expensive show)**  
**May withdraw if insufficient interest**



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## **MEETINGS and SPEAKERS 2019**

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March**

**British Humour: 18<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries - Michael Murphy.** It is so easy to take humour for granted when really it can afford us amazing insights into the way we function. This talk offers an interesting development from our previous speaker.



**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April**

**The Canal Dukes - Bernard Dennis.** Our canals are currently taking on a new lease of life. Their early development supported the industrial revolution and changed our history; thanks to those who had the money, influence and insight to develop them. We can rely on Bernard Dennis to be his usual insightful and informative self.

**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May**

**Witches and Superstitions: their effect on modern culture - Jean Finney.** We might like to think that in an age of scientific rationalism we are free from the effects of demonology. Not so! Jean Finney has entertained us on two previous occasions and is returning in response to popular demand.

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June**

**Confessions of a Probation Officer - Ray O'Brien.** We know that whatever Ray O'Brien shares with us will be a subject of great mirth. His talks are always a rare treat.

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July**

**Major Predators of Liverpool Bay - Matthew Clough.** Matthew Clough will be sharing with us aspects of the work that he knows and values. He may well reveal aspects of which we might not be aware when we survey or even enter the waters of Liverpool Bay.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September**

**Through the Eye of a Magician - Peter Turner.** Peter Turner comes to us supported by a wealth of professional experience. He might possibly challenge the way in which we see things.

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October**

**Viking and Saxon History on Merseyside - Diana Goodier.** Diana Goodier, a devoted historian, will make her talk particularly relevant to The Wirral and promises to dress for the occasion.

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November**

**English Village Life in the Middle Ages - Stuart Elliot.** Stuart Elliot has the ability to bring to life ways of living and being that seem to be lost in time. He comes to us highly recommended and offers an interesting continuation and development from the previous speaker.

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

**Hollywood Drama Queens - Rina Tullinger.** And now for something completely different! Having chatted with the speaker on the phone I am sure that all who hear her will enjoy her originality and dynamism as she addresses this fascinating subject.

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## ***NOTES OF ACTIVITIES AT NON- SPEAKER MEETINGS***



Thursday April 11<sup>th</sup>

Colin Stredder will give a Quiz.

Thursday May 9<sup>th</sup>

Tony Storey will talk about the Liver Building.

Thursday June 6<sup>th</sup>

Wallasey U3A's The Replay (via Brian)

Thursday July 4<sup>th</sup>

Colin is doing a dance anagram – on dance.

***Colin Stredder***

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## **WALKING GROUP**



### **U3A Walk on Friday 15th March 2019.**



On Friday 15 March Gerry Riley led a 6.5 mile walk from Ormskirk Station in an area known as the war horse walks. There is a load of history in this area including 215,300 horses were brought into Lathom through Liverpool from as far away as Argentina and 210,800 were shipped to France for active service. The walk was mainly across fields and brought us to a lovely spot called Lathom

Park



LATHOM PARK CHAPEL ST JOHN THE DIVINE



In April 1500 a Chantry was founded in Lathom Park. A Chantry was a place where Masses were recited at an altar for the wellbeing of the founder during his lifetime. Where a Chantry formed a separate Chapel, as at Lathom, there were often Almshouses or a hospital attached. In this was housed and cared for a number of poor men or bedesmen to whom the Chantry Priest was Chaplain. The chapel has lovely windows and carvings, the screen came from the dissolution of Burscough Priory under Henry V111 and is scarred with what are said to be bullet holes made by Roundhead muskets during the English Civil War. Our group photographs were taken in the well tendered gardens.

On Saturday 16 March I read the following article in the Daily Telegraph. " Britain's only listed war grave of a First World War horse is to be restored after developers planning to build on the land decided to make it the focal point of a new housing estate. Blackie an officer's horse saw action in the battle of Ypres and the Somme. The 20 year old rider, Lieutenant Wall, was killed in action, but

Blackie survived despite being seriously injured with shrapnel wounds. The horse was brought back to Britain by the mother of Lt.Wall. It spent its final days in a horse sanctuary. Years later the horse's grave came under threat but was saved by Historic England who gave it a place in Halewood. Knowsley council has released plans showing how the grave will be incorporated in a meadow with a memorial."

We all had a very enjoyable walk which culminated in afternoon tea at the Nell Gwynne Tea Rooms in Ormskirk.

David Pinnington

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## **NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE TON & PRENTON DISTRICT U3A**

To All Members

In accordance with section 14 of our constitution I hereby give notice that the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Oxton, Prenton & District U3A will take place at the Church Hall, Palm Grove with Trinity Church, Alton Road, Oxton at **10-30am on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019.**

Fully paid up Members are invited to submit proposed and seconded Agenda items to the Secretary, Jean Mawdsley, by **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019.**

I am resigning from the post of Chair due to health reasons. Jean Mawdsley has come to the end of her term of office as Secretary. Ken Jackson has come to the end of his term of office as Treasurer but as such he can be re-elected for a second term of office and has indicated his agreement to do so and therefore will be applying for re-election. This means that at the AGM we will need to appoint a Chair, a Secretary, two vice chairs

Nominations for election to any post on the committee are open to any fully paid up member of our U3A. Prospective candidates must be proposed and seconded with the completed nomination form sent to the Secretary, Jean Mawdsley, by **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2019.**

If you wish to discuss any aspect of committee membership in advance please feel free to contact me. E mail [chairman@oxtonu3a.co.uk](mailto:chairman@oxtonu3a.co.uk)

Sandra Lakin (Chairman)

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## Watercolour Day Course

**Taught by Jane Beech B.A. (Hons) Cert. Ed**

**The Parade, Hoylake Community Centre,  
31 Hoyle Road CH47 3AG**

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April from 10.00am – 3.00pm**



**Never painted flowers before or looking to try new techniques?  
Then this day course is for you.**

**How to paint flowers in Watercolour using masking fluid.  
Instruction and demonstrations given throughout the day**

**The course costs £45 and includes materials.**

**For Enquiries and Bookings**

**Telephone: 0151 339 3435 or 079481 59493**

**E-Mail: beechnut45@googlemail.com**

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## Visit to Liverpool Empire



The Liverpool Empire opened in 1860. Originally called the Prince of Wales Theatre and Opera House, it was about three quarters the size that it is today. Later it became The Alexandra Theatre and Opera House and in 1895, having been bought by Moss Empires for £30,000, it became the Empire Theatre.

Originally lit by gas lamps, electricity was installed in the 1900s. During the 1920s Moss Empires decided it wasn't big enough or grand enough, so they pulled it down replacing it with the theatre that stands today. Opened in March 1925, the Liverpool Empire is one of the largest 2 tier theatres in the country, having a seating capacity of 2,381. The next major refurbishment was in 1998 which got us the theatre we have today. The most significant change was the extension to the stage by 20ft. Without this it would have been impossible to stage any of the big musical productions that we are so fortunate to have now.

We were lucky enough on our visit to be able to go back stage while they were beginning to set up for the evening performance; testing lighting and sound.....mind blowing! As it is a touring theatre each show brings its own equipment including scenery, lighting and sound effects, all of which are set up by the visiting company.

A really enjoyable and interesting visit! Thank you Barbara for organising it. I know how much effort goes into arranging these trips. It's a pity more people don't feel able to write a short article for the newsletter after these outings so that other views are shared.

*Pauline Pinnington*



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## ART APPRECIATION GROUP

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

**Here is our programme to April 2019**



**April! 17th –**

**Leonardo Drawings Exhibition (Walker Art Gallery)**

**Please make a note in your diaries**  
**Bernadette Hamilton**

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**Of interest to those going to the Summer School in Cumbria this year.**



Mrs Davina Edwards, who came to Summer School last year, has said she will organise a minibus this year. Her address is 11, Smallwood Mews, Heswall. Wirral. CH60 6TE Tel. 0151 342 5241. Although she now lives in Heswall, she is still a member of Bromborough U3A. She said she'd be grateful if you could mention the minibus and give her contact details to U3A officers and members on your mailing list in Wirral, Cheshire, Chester or Liverpool.

**Sandra Lakin    Chairman**

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## MUSIC GROUP

**Paul Cullen's brother will be entertaining the group with the A to Z of Sixties Music at the next meeting on Wednesday April 3<sup>rd</sup>. All are welcome.**



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## Photos from Sri Lanka



This baby crocodile will be returned to wild as soon as it is large enough.

A water monitor-----





A one day old preservation

A local free range lizard



turtle at a hatchery.



Fishermen bringing in their catch.

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*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)*

## **AND FINALLY -----**

**Spring has arrived with the promise of better weather ahead and once again, another newsletter. A lovely optimistic time of year in England when the land seems to burst into life again and the countryside looks so fresh.**

**Do let me have any snippets of news that you think might interest members and they will go into the next newsletter. In the meantime may I wish everyone a happy Easter.**

**Eliane Davie -**

**Editor**

