



July Newsletter

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Is there really light at the end of the tunnel? I for one certainly hope so. We hope to resume our U3A Thursday morning meetings on the 16th September providing it is safe to do so, but as we know things can change very quickly in this current environment. Be assured we shall keep you informed.

Now for something totally different. I came across some facts that I hope you may find interesting:

The Amazon produces more than 20% of the world's oxygen supply, but with current deforestation, I wonder for how much longer.

The Amazon River pushes so much water into the Atlantic Ocean that for more than 100 miles out to sea from the mouth of the river you can take fresh water.

Antarctica is the only land on our planet that is not owned by any country. It is covered by 90% of the world's ice. This ice also represents 70% of the world's fresh water. As strange as it sounds, however, Antarctica is essentially a desert; the average annual precipitation is about 50 mm (2 inches). It is the driest place on Earth, with an absolute humidity lower than the Gobi Desert.

Brazil got its name from the nut, not the other way around.

There are more Irish living in New York City than in Dublin.

More Italians living in New York City than in Rome.

More Jews living in New York city than in Tel Aviv.

Which goes to show that not everyone is fortunate enough to live on the Wirral!

On a lighter note:

An elderly Gentleman was telling his neighbour, "I just bought a new hearing aid, and it cost £3000.00 but it is state of the art...it is perfect."

"Really?" answered the neighbour "what kind is it?" The elderly Gentleman replied, "twelve thirty"

Arthur, an 82 year old man went to the Doctor for his Physical. A few days later, the

Doctor saw Arthur walking down the street with a gorgeous young woman on his arm. A couple of days later the Doctor spoke to Arthur and said “You are really doing great aren’t you?” Arthur replied “ Just doing what you said Doctor: “Get a hot Mamma and be cheerful”. The Doctor said I didn’t say that... I said “You’ve got a heart murmur be careful.”

And finally:

‘Do not regret growing older, it is a privilege denied to many.’

Alan Harding – Chairman

Brian’s Musings



Sorry to have been a bit out of touch lately. I feel sure that most of us have been through times when conditions, circumstances and situations become so potentially overwhelming that one can only address the issues that are essential to survival, whilst ignoring those that are not. That is how it has been for me here for several months now and it is likely to continue so for a while longer. I avoid the computer for weeks at a time and my mobile phone remains un-charged.

In the midst of all the disorder I manage to find moments of stillness and inner space and these are an essential refuge. It seems that the whole of humanity is in a time of challenging uncertainty in so many ways and on so many different levels so in this respect my personal life is no different from the general collective disquiet. To be in a constant state of anxiety, for whatever reason, can only add to the general confusion. It would appear that mental and emotional states can be just as infectious, or even more so, as any physiological disease and so, just as I am trying not to be infected by whatever virus my fellow human beings might be carrying nor to infect them in return, I also seek to isolate myself from the two-way transmission of negative, psychological states, whilst at the same time hoping to maintain a state of empathy and understanding.

The above, whilst being easy to write, is not so easily achieved. To create inner-space and tranquillity one must find a way of relating to the ‘thousand-and-one’ anxious and manipulative thoughts concerning both our personal and collective past, present and future lives. Such activities at least give us something to do or better still, something to un-do. I have no doubt that the greatest gift that we can share with our fellow human beings at the moment is that of tranquillity and inner peace. Only from such a state can we begin to see what our most creative and beneficial options truly are.

Solutions born of fear and anxiety can only lead eventually to more of the conditions that we are trying to resolve. And so, as and when I can, I sit quietly in the yard and

look at the sky and try to get beyond all thoughts and emotions, the origins of which lie in, fear, doubt, uncertainty and anxieties arising from personal and collective ignorance and mal-function. Beyond all that is a place in which the conflicts arising from our dualistic misfortunes are resolved. To be there must surely be one of the most needful priorities of this present time.

LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN

Our book Group – *A book and a Glass of Wine* met on a warm sunny day at the end of May for lunch in the garden. We had lots to celebrate – all of us safe and well and fully vaccinated. It was Gill's birthday so we drank Prosecco and shared lockdown stories and discussed our favourite books and television programmes. We missed those who couldn't be with us and we know that Rosemary, who has moved to Scotland, was with us in spirit.



We plan to meet at the end of June to talk about a book appropriate for our times - *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles.

Judith Whaley



The Lute in Later Life



Like so many of us, I had piano lessons as a child, and played the recorder – very badly – in school. Later on, in my early forties, I began to learn the clarinet. It happened that we were having a house built at the time, by a company that was (unknown to us) in the process of going bankrupt. Dealing with that provided more than enough excitement, and the clarinet lessons were abandoned.

A few months ago, I decided to try an instrument I have always liked – the lute. So as soon as non-essential shops opened in April, we went to the Early Music Shop in Saltaire and bought a seven course renaissance lute. It is a beautiful instrument and has a lovely tone, even in the hands of a complete beginner.

Lutes are all handmade and are not cheap, but the purchase price included a year's membership of the Lute Society, through whom I found a teacher in Chester. And so it begins...

Learning in later life is the underlying principle of the U3A, and learning to play an instrument certainly exercises your brain – and I find it unexpectedly relaxing, as I have to concentrate completely on what I am doing as I (try to) play. And trying something new in your seventies is an expression of hope, which is something we all need at the moment.

Terence Whaley



Members of our U3A enjoy lunch at the Refreshment Rooms Official.

Mary, Valerie Edwards, Elizabeth Clinton,

Corinne Whitham, Claire Rees Roberts

Corinne returns to the Lady Leverhulme Gallery



The Williamson Art Gallery Reopens



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The experience of having to stay indoors has been an unfamiliar experience for most of us in 2020 and 2021.

The opportunity to get outside has become very important and has boosted appreciation of parks, countryside, and beaches. It has also fed into the British obsession with weather, in all its variety.

The development of British watercolour painting was partly led by art suppliers selling watercolour paints in an easily transported form. The arrival of ready-made tube oil paints in the mid-1800s made it easier for other artists to work outside of the studio. *En plein air* (open air) painting became more common, especially with artists who trained in France, many of whom moved to Cornwall for the seductive light and relative isolation. **The Great Outdoors** shows works from the Williamson collections which have been made in this tradition.

Whether it is sport, agricultural toil or simply the opportunity to sit, alone or in company, fresh air and open space have taken on great significance in all our lives. Long may it continue.

The Williamson will be open from **Wednesday 9th June** with the limited hours of **Wednesday-Saturday 12pm-5pm**. Exhibitions at Williamson Art Gallery & Museum are always free to enter. Further visiting & accessibility information can be found on line.



Congratulations to Val Edwards who celebrated her 80th Birthday with friends on June 22nd



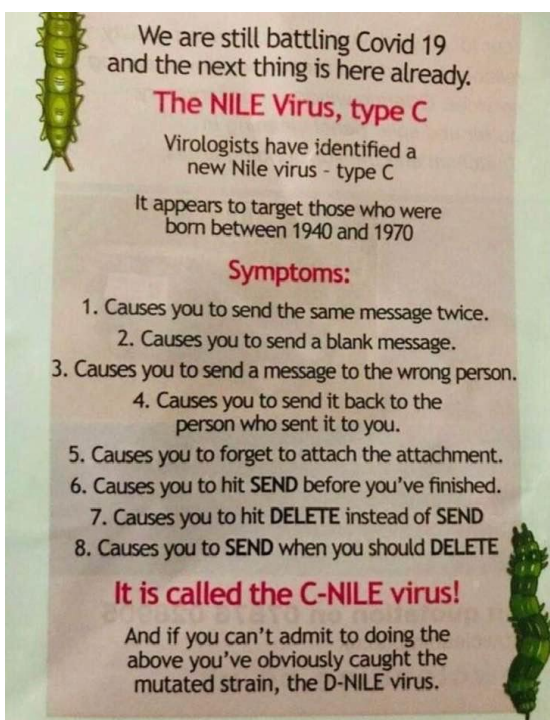
at Thornton Hall Country Club and Spa



Linda Kinnear Posted two Photos on Facebook

Some of us might recognise this virus!

Vale Park, Wallasey



Pauline Horner continues to produce some excellent artwork during Covid



Pauline is interested in several local art groups and has displayed some of her paintings recently in a Southport Gallery. (See below)



WALKING GROUP

Gerry Riley will be contacting members of the Walking Group soon regarding restarting group walks during the summer. At present up to sixteen are able to walk together following Covid rules but after July 19th we should be able to eat as well. He would like to find out how many are interested with a view to organising one later in July and/or August. We could always take a picnic!



Member, Maureen Oldham writes:

“I have been playing boules/pétanque with Hoylake u3a on a Monday afternoon. Heswall play on a Thursday afternoon. The pitch is at Ashton Park, West Kirby. I wondered if any of our members would like to form a club on a different day. We would have to approach friends of Ashton Park to book a slot. Could you please ask Eliane if she could add it to the next newsletter?



Thanks, Maureen Oldham”

Anyone wishing to express interest in the above should e-mail to the newsletter address with contact details and it will be passed on to Maureen. Ed.

The Light Cinema is open again!

I visited the cinema last week for the first time in ages. The film was ‘The Father’ starring Anthony Hopkins and the subject, dementia, was a sad one. However the way it was handled and the excellence of the acting by the talented cast made it well worth seeing.

Covid rules were well adhered to and I do hope that people will support the Light which also screens live shows on occasion, which are exceptional value. It would be a great loss if it were to be forced to close due to the losses caused by Covid.

Ed.

www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events Regional Web site



Registered Charity number 1159091

AND FINALLY.....

I think that we can all feel restriction s loosening very quickly now; it has been such a relief to return to a more normal life recently. There is no newsletter during our summer break so the next time you hear from me will be in the September newsletter when I will bring you all the latest news in time for our reopening.

In the meantime should anything urgent crop up we will of course let you know. As always, may I ask you to send me any news you may have for the newsletter and may I wish you an enjoyable holiday whether away or at home.

My Best Wishes to you all,

Eliane Davie - Editor



