

Aughton  
and Ormskirk

# u3a Magazine



Volume 22~ No 1  
January 2025



Charity No 1105255

# The Chair's winter report



HELLO everyone, and Happy New Year!

Welcome to the first **A&OU3a** magazine of 2025, and thank you to editor Bill Evans and the Communications team for putting it together. As you browse through it, you'll find lots of information, including reports and photos of past events, and also details of events scheduled to take place this year, in addition to our many regular group meetings. All this takes a huge amount of organisation and hard work, and grateful thanks are due to all our Group Leaders for their dedication.

Maybe the New Year is a good opportunity to start something new? And if you can't find what you're looking for,

perhaps you could consider starting a group yourself? We're always open to suggestions and there is plenty of support ~ just have a word with anyone on the Management Committee.

You can keep up with all the latest news by visiting our website [aou3a.u3asite.uk](http://aou3a.u3asite.uk), reading our monthly enews (*sent to your email address*), visiting Horizons (*every Thursday, 9.30-11.00am at HQ*) and watching the regularly updated slideshow at Horizons and online at [aou3a.u3asite.uk/horizons-slideshow/](http://aou3a.u3asite.uk/horizons-slideshow/)

Very best wishes

**PAMELA BALL**

*Chair, Aughton & Ormskirk u3a*

## From your Editor

MEMBERS may notice that this January issue of our magazine is down to 20 pages from its usual 24.

The run up to Christmas and 'Twixmas' (*what an awful word*), is often quiet for a lot of groups ~ despite the panic buying for presents, etc. Our Christmas Lunch is probably all that happens until second or third week of

January. I can always rely on the MTG and Drama groups for their autumn productions, but we need more people on our 'Publicity' committee? If your group hasn't been covered for some time ~ or even 'ever', then please email me in this New Year. I would love to give every group a chance to appear in our magazine.



**BILL EVANS**

**On Monday I went to the doctor's, with a terrible pain in my hip. I'd had it for over a fortnight; it wasn't half giving me gyp.**

**On Tuesday I went to the dentist, with a terrible pain in my teeth. There was no doubt, it had to come out, the experience left me quite weak.**

**On Wednesday I went for some blood tests, I'd only an hour to wait. The parking isn't bad either as long as you're there at half eight.**

**On Thursday I went to the chemist ~ large bags of meds to collect. Coming home I tripped over my laces, you can guess what happened next.**

**On Friday I went to the 'Walk In' (or 'Hobble In' as it's now known) My foot is in plaster, it's not a disaster; from now on I'm staying at home!**



*from  
Pam  
Ball*

● Cover photo: not quite a u3a wedding ~ they are only acting (I think)! ~ see page 6

# A sailing story from Walter

IN 2000 I decided to buy a new Bavaria 34 sailboat which I named 'Diamond Days' after a John Denver song.

After three years sailing around the Bristol Channel, west coast of Wales and Southern Ireland my wife and I decided to head to the Mediterranean and Red Sea area.

In April 2003 we left Cardiff on the morning tide and had a pleasant sail to a nice anchorage next to Ilfracombe called Watermouth Cove.

The next day we made an early start, again with the help of the tide, and as there was no wind, started to motor along the North Devon coast.

After a while my wife spotted something thrashing about in the sea so we headed towards it to investigate.

As we got near to it my engine suddenly stopped. The thrashing was being caused by a large seal caught in a very big abandoned fishing net and this net had now wrapped itself

around my engine and keel so the seal and my boat were now being taken by the tide along the north Devon coast.

We were now in a bit of trouble so I put out a radio call for some assistance. The call was answered by the Swansea Coastguard who called out the Ilfracombe lifeboat. The lifeboat quickly arrived and proceeded to cut the seal free from the net.

While this was happening I was listening to the Coastguard talking to the Cox of the lifeboat on the radio, and in a very Welsh accent the coastguard

said: "Tell me Cox, is the seal distressed?"

The Cox said: "No, but the skipper of the yacht is not too happy".

After waving the seal goodbye and a tow into Ilfracombe by the lifeboat for a propellor repair, in a few days we were off again on the next stage of our journey.

**WALTER PHILLIPS**  
(Cycling and Scrabble)



# 'Goings On'...in the Garden

## Money for nothing, and your Mint for free . . .

*(with apologies to Dire Straits)*

OK it's January, not much going on at all you might think - but below ground, under piles of fallen leaves, roots of snowdrop and daffodil bulbs will be well established, ready for new shoots to appear in a few weeks' time. Some camellias are in flower, and in my garden there are primroses too. In the compost bin, those little red worms are hard at work, converting your garden waste into lovely (*free!*) compost which you can use to improve your soil.

Lots to look forward to, we just have to wait. In the meantime, here's a little idea you might like to try to increase your mint supply!

**PAMELA BALL**



*Original Mint plant from supermarket*



*Snip off pieces, remove bottom leaves and place cuttings in water*



*After a week or so in water*



*After 2 weeks in water*

**Works well with Basil too!**



*Plant up in compost*



West Lancs Healthy Weight



# Walk This Weigh

8 Week Courses  
Local Community Venues  
Free Of Charge

## Topics include:

- Fats
- Sugars
- Goal Setting
- Food Labelling
- Why Diets Don't Work
- Portion Control
- Benefits of Physical Activity
- Blood Pressure Checks



Small groups / Face to face delivery  
Informal sessions and a friendly welcome awaits!

For more information/bookings, please contact:

Tel: 01695 583276

Email: [activewestlancs@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:activewestlancs@westlancs.gov.uk)

Web: [www.westlancs.gov.uk/leisure](http://www.westlancs.gov.uk/leisure)



## THEATRE VISITS

12th February: Empire:  
**CHICAGO**

26th Feb: Royal Court  
**PEACEFUL HOUR**, about young love in Kirkby.

If anyone would like to go to any of these shows than please see **JUDY KIRKHAM** at the Theatre Desk at Horizons or email [judykirkham43@gmail.com](mailto:judykirkham43@gmail.com). We have top theatres in our region, so come and try an evening with us whether or not you've been on a u3a Theatre Visit before. Hope to see you soon!

## RECORDER GROUP

IF you have played the recorder and would like to try it again do consider joining us. At present we have 18 members who play a variety of instruments from descant at the top of the range all the way down to bass. We have a few instruments you could borrow to test out your skills.



Contact **SUE WATKINSON** on **01695 422 423** to discuss it or pop in to one of our rehearsals at the Scout & Guide HQ at 2.00pm on 2nd or 4th Fridays of most months. Our recent 'gig' at Eventide Care Home, Birkdale was a success. An appreciative audience joined in with old folk songs and Christmas numbers.

# Once Upon a Time . . .



MY friend and I attended the u3a Musical Theatre production of 'Once Upon a Time...the Next Adventure' recently at the Civic Hall, Ormskirk. It was nice sitting at tables.

It was a good story that was played out by the various characters. Plenty of songs that the audience all knew.

The choreography was good, and the cast must have worked really hard to learn all the various dances.

Costumes were lovely . . . bright and colourful. Some cast members had some very quick changes! I can imagine how hectic it must have been in the wings!

Well done to all involved in the show, whether cast or involved backstage, front of house or the production team.

An enjoyable night out. We will look forward to the next one, which is on the 11th and 12th April.

**RUTH GRANT**



# ... the Next Adventure



# Film Appreciation Group

January 2025 to July 2025. HQ @ 1.45pm



27th January:

## OUT OF AFRICA



The film, winner of seven academy awards, follows the true life story of Karen Blixen, who moves from Denmark to Kenya to run a coffee plantation with her problematic husband.

24th February:

## THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING

The film stars Eddie Redmayne as Stephen Hawking, the renowned scientist. Following an earth-shattering diagnosis, Hawking embarks on his most ambitious scientific work in the time he has left.



24th March:

## THE BLACK VELVET GOWN



Riah Millican, a widow with three children, takes a job as a housekeeper to a reclusive former teacher. He makes her a gift of a black velvet gown and educates her children.

Subsequently she realises that all is not as it seemed originally and life becomes very difficult.

28th April:

## ENCHANTED APRIL

Four women from very different backgrounds, decide to escape for a while from their trapped lives and rent a villa in



Portofino, Italy, for a month. Their lives are transformed by the beauty of the place and experiences they couldn't have envisaged.

26th May:

## TESTAMENT OF YOUTH



This is a story of love, war and remembrance based on the First World War memoir by Vera Brittain. It is a powerful and passionate journey from youthful hopes and dreams to the edge of despair and back again. It is a film about young love and the futility of war.

23rd June:

## THE WAR BRIDE

With the men away at war Lily falls in love and marries Charlie, a handsome Canadian soldier. He is shipped off to the front and she is left at home realising that she is pregnant. She receives correspondence from the Canadian Embassy inviting her to go to live with her in-laws in Canada. She accepts the invitation but life there is not how she imagined it.



28th July:

## AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

In this poignant love story Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr meet on a cruise and fall in love. However, they are both engaged to someone else. They agree to meet six months later at the Empire State Building to see if they still feel the same but misfortune gets in their way and their future takes an uncertain turn. Who knows what will happen!



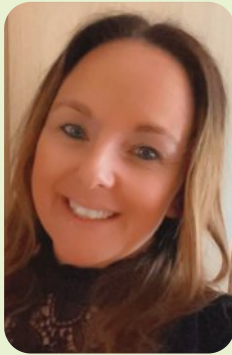
# An amazing Advent

ON Wednesday, 4th December last, our **u3a** choir held their annual 'Advent Celebration' at Christ Church.

A great collection of carols and readings was enjoyed by a fairly good congregation.

We had profuse apologies from the church for not turning on their brand new heating system ~ it did warm up later; just as we were all leaving!

They were waiting for a new vicar and a new



Ministry Centre manager, so it was understandable ~ nobody thought of the poor **u3a** singers.

Soloists **ALISON WRIGHT** (*left*) and **POLLY DOUGLAS** (*right*) gave us terrific performances of 'In The Bleak



Midwinter' and the 'Magnificat'.

Christ Church complimented us for supporting the Ormskirk Food Bank with items left at the back of the church after the service, plus donations of money. **BILL EVANS**



# Fun with Photography →

THE Digital Photography group was one of the first groups formed soon after the birth of Aughton and Ormskirk u3a in 2003.

Formed by members who were keen amateur photographers, the aim was to share knowledge of photography and the digital arts for the enjoyment of the photographer, their friends and relatives.

As time goes by, technology has meant that the way we can take photographs has evolved from simple point and shoot cameras to all singing Digital Cameras to Smart Phones and Tablets which are all capable of taking excellent photographs.

It has always been an accepted part of photography to manipulate images, first of all in the dark room from around the 1850s to the sophisticated software that has become available since the advent of computers.

How images are shown and shared has also evolved from actual photographs that we looked at after taking a film to the chemist, to sharing with people via email or many other options which are readily available.

## ***'The Camera never lies' ~ does it?***

Look what we can do with images.

The three images at the top of column two could not be taken as one shot.

They were stitched together on the computer and a frame was added to achieve the panoramic shot at the top of page 11.

## ***Page 11: Are the buildings sloping?***

This effect happens the closer you are to buildings when the photograph is taken. To get the building looking natural, straighten them in the computer.

## ***Page 11: turn four not very interesting pictures into one novelty image***

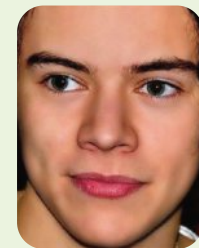
Also we often see pictures in the press



that make the subject look too good to be true. **This image makes the complexion look perfect whereas reality shows something different.**

It is understandable that a person who often appears in the press would always like to look their best, but is the editing of images cheating or is it merely making for a more

# The camera never lies?



You can have lots of fun taking pictures, and even if they do not turn out perfectly, there is more fun to be had in making them look different, and perhaps more presentable, in the computer.

The Digital Photography group is always happy to give advice on how to take photographs and how to edit them, so why not come to a meeting to learn more of this fascinating pastime.

**ALAN STARKIE**

agreeable look of a particular picture and how far should it go?

It is perhaps acceptable for a small amount of sympathetic editing which still leaves the subject with a natural look.

● See page 17 for your Editor's effort

# 'not quite' The Three Musketeers

THANK you to everyone who came to see our pantomime, (*not quite*) The Three Musketeers. Despite the best efforts of the evil Baron and his henchmen the Princess was rescued and the Kingdom of Malodeurs was saved, mainly as a result of the actions of Basil the magic pigeon who 'carried' notes backwards and forwards.

The villagers worked their trickery by putting sleeping pills in the cooking pot (*sometimes after they fell on the floor!*) and the Baron and his men ended up in jail. The Musketeers who turned out to be from the English catering corps, were taught how to fence by the hero D'Artagnan, though one of the team did think they were going to paint a fence rather than learn how to fight with swords!

There was a moment in their enthusiasm when D'Artagnan did manage to fence with a stage microphone! Queen Stacey was thrilled

that all turned out well and everyone lived happily ever after. The narrator is still looking for a part, though she does sing a good song.

The cast were supported by an excellent team of directors (*play and music*), stage managers, lighting and sound experts, scenery builders and a very patient prompt.

The group thoroughly enjoyed taking part and are now starting preparations for our next production on Thursday May 22nd, Friday May 23rd and Saturday May 24th 2025.

If anyone would like to join the group you would be made most welcome ~ come along on a Wednesday afternoon at Scout HQ (2.15pm-4.15pm) and at Aughton Village Hall each Friday afternoon (2.00-4.00pm), alternatively contact Les Rippon on 07799 411244 or [les.rippon@sky.com](mailto:les.rippon@sky.com). **LES RIPPON**

● *Below: the cast and backstage crew*





Above (l to r):  
**Nicky Rippon:**  
*D'Artagnan*  
**Maureen Bridge:**  
*Aramis*  
**Ruth Grant:**  
*Athos*  
**Deirdre Slater:**  
*Porthos*

Left:  
**Megan Tomlinson**  
 and  
**Les Rippon** as  
*The Baron's*  
*Henchmen*

Right:  
**Kate Sumner** is a  
*poor villager*  
 in the Stocks



# First Aid courses

THESE half-day courses are proving to be extremely popular, and more dates will be available later in the year. One member commented recently:

“It was a really enjoyable and informative course. Many thanks for organising it, what a good idea for as many of the u3a members to have first aid skills, it will help to keep us all safe!”

If you would like your name added to the waiting list, please email [cbair@aou3a.uk](mailto:cbair@aou3a.uk)



# Horizons Police visits

NEIGHBOURHOOD **SERGEANT RACHAEL JACKSON** has offered to be our Guest at Horizons every 6-8 weeks from now on.

Rachael was warmly welcomed by members at her last two visits, and always has lots of information to share. Keep an eye on enews, our u3a website, Horizons Notices and Slideshow for dates.

Also look out for Neighbourhood Officer **TRACY McKENNA**, who will be popping in to Horizons from time to time.

# Speaker Meetings

Scout & Guide HQ, Thursdays,  
**11.00am** (*following Horizons*)

13th February: **Roger Browne**  
**THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK**

13th March: **Sheila Leonard**  
Daniel Adamson Preservation Society  
**RESTORATION OF THE DANNY**  
(*Steam tugboat*)

10th April: **George Sephton**  
**THE VOICE OF ANFIELD**

8th May: **John Winter**  
**CUNARD YANKS**

10th July: **Liz Marsland**  
**COMMONWEALTH  
WAR GRAVES COMMISSION**

9th October: **Sue Beacon**  
National Gardens Scheme  
**VISIT A GARDEN NEAR YOU**

13th November: **Pete Turner**  
**SLEIGHT OF MIND**

**SHIRLEY KIRBY** (Speaker Secretary)

## Thank you Pamela

We have a new Speaker Secretary in 2025 ~ Shirley Kirby. Many thanks to Shirley for taking over this important role! Our outgoing Secretary is Pam Ball, now the u3a Chair. Pam has treated us to six past years of excellent Speakers on a wide variety of topics. She has also devised the Speaker Programme for 2025. So a huge vote of thanks and much appreciation is due to Pam for all her efforts over these years!!

# Creative Writing

## Homonyms

### Story Time at the Social

MEMBERS of the Creative Writing Group received a warm welcome at the Sunday Social in October. In addition to hearing some of their stories and poems, members of the audience were asked to come up with some homonyms ~ words that sound the same but have different meanings.

The pairs of words were distributed randomly amongst the Creative Writing Group and the following month's writing challenge was set – a very short story, to include one of the words in the first sentence and the other one in the last. Here are three of those stories, **with homonyms in bold (violet)**:

#### Connections by Sarah Greenwood

“**Where** was this picture taken Ma?”

My mother squinted at the black and white photograph I was holding and thought for a while.

“Where?” she repeated.

“Well, that’s Father,” I prompted, pointing at the young man on the left. “That’s you in the middle. And is that uncle Bob?”

Ma looked at me enquiringly. “Uncle Bob?”

I sighed, fighting hard to keep my voice level. “Your little brother?”

“Oh yes,” she smiled, “that was when we...” her voice tailed off as she gazed over my shoulder. Suddenly, she remembered: “That’s my favourite dress you know. Can I **wear** it today?”

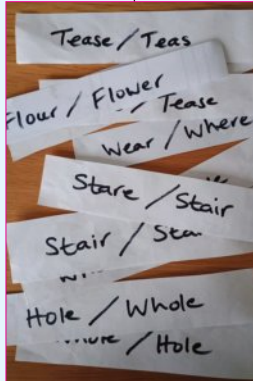
### Kemble Summer Fête

by Joan Potter

Straining to reach the **flour** shelf, agitated by being late, Betty toppled over. Unable to get up, she was soon shivering. Tears cut rivulets down her floury face. No fête for her, no defending her title in the scone competition, no village gossip.

Mrs Guinness arrived first, accompanied by the Vicar. She soon had Betty in bed with a cup of tea while Mr Green went to explain the situation.

Later, snuggling down with a hot water bottle, Betty was happy again; she was unhurt, her friends had rallied round – and she had won first prize for her **flower** arrangement.



#### When is a **Hole** a **Whole** by Mike McKenna

The hamlet of Scawton (population 81) had been devoid of excitement since Robert the Bruce’s hordes invaded England and laid waste to the place in the 14th century. All that changed on 30th June 1961.

Margery Atkinson was walking her dog Brutus along Sandy Lane when suddenly the inexplicable happened. A huge Sinkhole opened, four metres in circumference and terrifyingly deep. Margery and Brutus were instantly swallowed.

The tragedy was observed by ten year old Jenny Wyatt. Although shocked, she raised a hue and cry. Soon the **whole** village was pushing and shoving to peer into the abyss. Population 80

# Local History Make Christmas Puddings

LOCAL History's last meeting of the year was 'Stir up Tuesday' which meant we were late for preparing Christmas puddings.

Traditionally 'Stir up Sunday' was the last Sunday before Advent (*in 2024 it was 24th November*)

We enjoyed our afternoon of history and fun, finishing with not one, not two, but three Christmas puddings made earlier.

The winners of the pudding raffle were **Colin Russ, Linda Cheeseborough** and **Pat Yates**.

**MARGARET GIBBON**



## Non-u3a activities

### ORMSKIRK AND AUGHTON BRIDGE CLUB

The Ormskirk & Aughton Bridge Club is a small club that meets at Aughton Village Hall on Tuesday evenings, 7.30pm-10.00pm. We play Duplicate Bridge and would welcome new members with some knowledge of the game. The cost is £3.00 per session. You are welcome to come along for a couple of sessions before deciding whether to join the club (£2.00 annual membership subscription).

For any additional information please contact Sandra Hickey (*Secretary*)

email: [sandrandtony12@gmail.com](mailto:sandrandtony12@gmail.com) or telephone: 01695 423444.

### TOWN GREEN TENNIS CLUB

Town Green Tennis Club offers all Aughton & Ormskirk u3a members a reduced annual membership fee. For further information please email Julian Falk at [chairmantgtc@gmail.com](mailto:chairmantgtc@gmail.com)

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### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Your magazine editor is reasonably proficient at Adobe Photoshop

*~ see my effort below*

*Just coloured the hair slightly and added a little bit of grey beard!*



Editor - before



Editor - after

## Always room for a few jokes



I met my friend. I asked him:

"How's the business doing?"

He answered: "We are looking for a new treasurer."

I said: "But I thought you got a new treasurer last week!"

He replied: "That's the one we are looking for."

Checked into a wee B&B in Blackpool the other day and the landlady asked if I had a good memory for faces. I said "Yes, why?" She said: "Good, 'cos there's no mirror in the bathroom."

My wife said we need a chat about my immature behaviour.

Like that's going to happen during conker season.

I failed my art exam. They asked for the name of an early impressionist. I put Mike Yarwood.

If my wife makes alphabetti spaghetti for tea again, we'll be having words.

I really enjoyed the Golf Society awards tonight. I won the trophy for the longest drive . . . I live the furthest away.

I got injured playing hide-and-seek. The doctor sent me to an ICU.

To save on electricity I decided to wire together the electric blanket and the electric toaster. The trouble is that I keep popping out of the bed.

I asked my wife what she would like for Christmas. She said "nothing would give me greater pleasure than a diamond necklace". So I got her nothing!

My grandson wanted a train set for Christmas. Couldn't find one anywhere, so I got him a replacement bus service.

# Christmas Lunch 2024

THIS year's venue was Aughton Village Hall. Tables were all set up with named places spaced appropriately for comfort.

Members were greeted with glasses of sherry or non alcoholic alternatives with friendliness from Social Committee members and shown to their relevant tables. Time was given for chatter and laughter and gaiety soon encompassed the room.

**Mike Rimmer** officially welcomed everyone on behalf of this hard working Committee and **Mia Faza** said Grace.

Martins the caterers then very tastefully and quickly served the first

course of delicious soup. This was followed after a reasonable interval with a full turkey dinner or a vegetarian alternative. As usual the meal was outstanding. Afterwards, at an appropriate time Christmas puddings came to enhance the final course but no, that was not the end as mince pies were an added extra for those with room still in their stomachs. People leaned back in their chairs to then listen and or dance to 'Rollercoaster', who, thinking we were all looking much younger, entertained this time with 90s music.

A thoroughly pleasant afternoon was therefore spent amid friends old and new and huge thanks must go to Martins for the quality of the food and the Social Committee who once again surpassed themselves.

Thank you for all your hard work in creating such an enjoyable afternoon.

**JUDY INGMAN**

*on behalf, I believe, of everyone there*

● *Left: Alan and Sylvia Houghton enjoying the event. Bottom: Is Paul Andrews asking for more wine again? Who was dancing in those pink party pumps? Neither Una Atherley nor Mia Faza can work it out!*



# ~ enjoyed by everybody!



● *A great time had by all.*



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## Magazine Distribution

*You can access the latest magazine in a number of ways*

- *Read it online by accessing it via the Magazine page of our u3a website*
- *Come along to Horizons and pick up a printed Magazine*
- *Ask a friend or a member of a Group you attend to pick one up for you.*
- *You can even read the previous seven versions online.*

