

Aughton
and Ormskirk

u3a Magazine

Charity No 1105255

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A NEW GROUP

QI GONG

More information on page 3



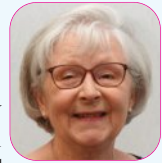
The Chair

HELLO everyone, and welcome to the Spring edition of our magazine. At long last the dark days of Winter are behind us and Spring has well and truly sprung! The blossom is out, and beautifully described by **Zan Winch** on page 7. Many of you will have been busy sowing seeds, lifting and dividing perennials and taking cuttings, so if you have any to spare, why not bring them along to our Spring Plant Swap (*during Horizons at HQ*) on 7th May?

We are very lucky to have a great many hardworking, committed and resourceful Group Leaders in our midst. One such person is Margaret Gibbon, who has been leading the very popular Local History Group for 17 years. Margaret has decided to step down, and you can read about her remarkable contribution to our u3a on pages 21-22. We are so very grateful for everything Margaret has done during this time and she will indeed be a hard act to follow. I'm very pleased to say that Ann Hedges has volunteered to take on this role (*thank you Ann!*), and indeed is busy arranging speakers, so please watch out for news of developments.

Also moving on is Aerobics tutor **Nicky Garforth**, whose involvement with our u3a also goes back many years. We are sorry to see Nicky go, but offer her grateful thanks for everything she has done for our u3a (*see photo on page 10*).

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday 11th June at 11.00am



in Christ Church Ministry Centre. This is an important event and ideally, we would like someone from each of our groups present, so if possible please try to make sure that your group is represented. This year, for the first time, we are introducing a system of proxy voting, which will run alongside traditional 'in person' voting. This means that, even if you are unable to attend in person, you can still cast your vote. Proxy votes will also count towards the quorum of 100 members, making it less likely that we will need to reconvene the meeting, as happened last year.

Over the next few weeks you will receive the Notice of AGM. Nominations to the Management Committee and any proposed Resolutions must be returned to the Secretary by 21st May. The full AGM Agenda will then be sent to members along with details of how to vote by proxy, whether by post or online.

Finally, a huge thank you to all our Group Leaders, Committee members and volunteers, who between them make sure our wonderful u3a keeps running smoothly. We always welcome offers of help and new ideas. Just speak to any of our Committee members (*wonderfully illustrated on Pages 22 and 23 thanks to Bill Soens, Alan Nolan, Bill Evans and ChatGPT!*), who will be more than happy to listen.

PAMELA BALL, *Chair*

Aughton & Ormskirk u3a

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, 11th June, 11.00am

Christ Church Ministry Centre, Long Lane, Aughton L39 5AS

A NEW GROUP ... QI GONG

What is Qi Gong?

WE have had a thriving u3a Qi Gong class since September 2024.

Over twenty enthusiastic members come together weekly to practise Qi Gong under the excellent and supportive leadership of **Sharon Wetherby**.

Sharon talks us through each movement, ensuring that our lessons are inclusive and enjoyable for everybody. We always finish with a short, calming meditation.

We all agree that our Thursday afternoon classes leave us feeling relaxed and refreshed, like an afternoon at a spa but with much less stress on the wallet!

The Qi Gong classes have certainly sparked an interest and we have had a waiting list for several months, so, as they say, 'by popular demand' an additional class has now started. Qi Gong is a calm and meditative form of exercise and coordinated breathing.

Its roots are in Chinese medicine and philosophy and it helps with balance, promotes well being, and is suitable for

all levels of fitness and ability.

Come and learn more in a relaxed and supportive environment.

We meet on Thursdays 4.15 to 5.15pm at Aughton Village Hall . . . and started on 9th April.

The Class is £4.00 for the first lesson; thereafter payable in six week blocks.

Please contact **PAM COLLIER** or **JANE FRANCIS** via u3a website to add your name to the list.



Recorder group at High Wray

OUR Recorder Group, some 15 strong, entertained the residents and staff in High Wray Care Home, Formby Lane, Aughton at the end of February. We were in the Glass Lounge, a large and airy room with a huge plate glass window overlooking farm land to the rear.

It would have been a wonderful view on a fine day but, sadly, it was grey and drizzly, unlike the music, which was cheerful, uplifting and of infinite variety. We like to play old music, the songs and dances of the Tudor era, but audiences also like familiar melodies, so we included a range of folk songs and some older popular songs among which *Nellie the Elephant* and *Home on the Range*

featured. Some of the audience joined in too! Two of our members read amusing poems to give the players a break. A tear-jerking story of *The Lion and Albert* and the ever popular wisdom of *You are old, Father William*, were those selected.

The audience included our Founding Chairman, Alex McMinn, who came downstairs especially to hear the Recorders. It was wonderful to be able to play in his honour as, without his inspiration and hard graft in the early years of this century, our u3a would not be as successful as it is today.

Thanks too to Fiona, the Activities Manager and all the staff, who welcomed us so warmly.

SUE WATKINSON



Film Appreciation Group



April to September 2026 @ HQ - 2.00pm

Fourth Monday of each month

25th May:

MRS BROWN

In 1846 Queen Victoria is still living in seclusion, mourning the death of her husband, Prince Albert. John Brown, a former servant of the late prince, is employed to help the queen who is suffering from public criticism. But soon his unorthodox ways and disdain for royal protocol initially make the situation even worse. Starring Judi Dench and Billy Connolly, this is a true love story.



22nd June:

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

This is a stylish and thrilling mystery based on the best-selling novel by Agatha Christie. Everyone is a suspect when a murder is committed on a lavish train ride. A brilliant detective must race against time to solve the puzzle before the killer strikes again. Starring Judy Dench and Johnny Depp.



27th July:

THE BIG WEDDING

This is a romantic comedy about a family trying to survive a weekend wedding celebration. Long divorced couple, Don and Ellie



Griffin, are forced to play the happy couple at their adopted son's wedding after his ultra-conservative mother decides to attend. Starring Robert de Niro, Katherine Heigl and Diane Keaton among others.

24th August:

ZORBA THE GREEK

Oscar winner Anthony Quinn plays the lovable rogue with an insatiable lust for life. When a shy Englishman, Basil, lands on the island of Crete, seeking his fortune, Zorba sets out to teach him how to enjoy life. Through it all Basil learns that there is only one way to deal with life's triumphs and tragedies – never stop dancing!

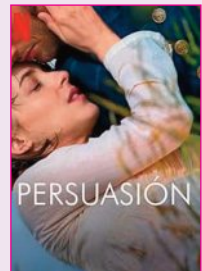


28th September:

PERSUASION

Based on a novel by Jane Austen, Anne has spent over seven years regretting being persuaded to reject the young Captain Wentworth's proposal.

He had no money which wasn't acceptable. Now he has returned from sea, having made his fortune. They have to find out if their love still survives and whether they can take up where they left off so long ago.



Golf Group Assessment

THE 2025 season proved to be another highly enjoyable and successful year for the Golf Group, helped along by some exceptionally kind weather and, as always, the enthusiasm and commitment of our members. Attendance throughout the year remained strong, with only one or two fixtures affected by adverse conditions.

Our Away Days once again provided memorable highlights. Although organising them proved slightly more challenging this year, the effort was well rewarded, with excellent participation and plenty of positive feedback from those who attended. These days continue to be an important part of the group's social calendar, combining competitive golf with great camaraderie.

A new addition to the programme, the Aintree Competition held on the last Friday of each month, quickly established itself as a firm favourite. The competition format was warmly received, attracting good numbers and adding a fresh dimension to our regular schedule.

We rounded off the year in fine style with our End-of-Year Bingo, Bango, Bongo competition. With 18 players taking part, the day was filled with

laughter, friendly rivalry, and the usual degree of good-natured confusion that makes BBB such an entertaining finale to the season.

Our handicap system, loosely based on the World Handicap System, once again proved both fair and effective. It ensured that every member, regardless of ability, had a genuine opportunity to compete and succeed, provided they played to the best of their ability. This was reflected in the results, with each competition producing a different winner — a testament to the balance and inclusivity of the format.

All competition winners have had their names engraved on the trophy shields, securing their place in the Golf Group's history for years to come.

Looking ahead, the programme of events for 2026 has now been finalised and is available on the U3A Golf Group page. We look forward to another year of competitive golf, good humour, and continued friendship on and off the course.

DON WARBURTON

● You can see more photos and our 2026 programme of events at our Golf Group page at https://aou3a.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/golf/



Hanami

Plum Beautiful

THE Japanese not only have multiple words for blossom itself, and types and stages of it , but a whole vocabulary dedicated to the culture of ‘Hanami’- or the tradition of blossom viewing.

In the North of England, there is less structure to our enjoyment of trees bursting into flower, but this is not to say that our pleasure is less acute or appreciated.

A tree I discovered in Winter last year in a local park seemed at first unremarkable, resembling a woody, tangled shrub, but with a thick, dark trunk, gnarled and bent, its branches twisted in their efforts to reach the light. I thought it possibly Blackthorn.

By mid February it had exploded into flower, a veritable ‘Hanagasumi’ (*in Japan, a flower curtain or haze*)- clouds of delicate white blossoms, dancing about, yet hanging tightly on despite a sometimes glacial East wind. The display just got better and better, adding extra enjoyment to our daily walk and on sunnier days we could detect a sweet, fruity scent.

Even the gradual loss of its petals and flowers was beautiful - confetti-like they tumbled gently to the ground, wafted by the breeze and would attach to woolly hats and dog coats.

By early June, this ever surprising tree started to set fruit. A lot of it. Cascades of small, oval rosy- yellow plums began to adorn the branches, becoming more



golden as the weeks went on. My plant recognition app told me these were Mirabelles and the tree was a wild cherry plum. A taste test revealed a delicate and delightful honey sweetness, so I gathered a small harvest, since there was plenty left for the blackbirds and thrushes to feast on.

Further research told me that at one time Mirabelle plums (*originally from the Balkans, and known as ‘Myrobalan’*) were used medicinally or for dyeing cotton. Present day recipe suggestions from online chefs ranged from Clafoutis to Jam, to ‘tarte aux

Mirabelles’.

I opted to split, stone and stew them- no sugar needed- and I added a generous, fragrant spoonful to my breakfast yoghurt for the next week.

All types of blossom are symbolic and meaningful in Japanese literature, Art and culture.

The flowers of the plum tree; ‘Ume’ in Japan, represent resilience, hope and renewal, because they bloom during the cold winter. They promise sweetness, and delights to enjoy in the future.

My discovery of a small tree in a park showed me all of that, and more.

Enjoy your own Blossom time.

Happy Hanami!

SUZANNE WINCH





The used postage stamp club

WELL hello everyone and once again THANK YOU for all your efforts in putting used stamps in the magazine rack at H.Q. Not just any old stamps but world wide stamps all neatly cut with the required space round each stamp. (*About a quarter of an inch or so*).

Either you all have lots of pen pals or you are running some kind of undercover organisation, if so I don't want to know. If you do have a pen pal I would be interested to learn about how you became friends. If you email usedstamps@aou3a.uk they will pass your message on to me. So gold stars all round to every member, well done and a big thank you from me and Age Concern who are always grateful for the support.

MEGAN TOMLINSON

MNEMONICS

Any idea what they are?

1. Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain.
2. My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Noodles
3. Dash In A Real Rush Help Or Else Accident
4. Every Good Boy Deserves Fame
5. HOMES

See page 19 for answers

SPRING PLANT SWAP

Thursday 7th May, at HQ
9.30-11.00am, during Horizons

Bring along your surplus seedlings, rooted cuttings, spare houseplants etc, and swap them for something else.

Please make sure everything is clean and clearly labelled.

See Pam Ball or Colin Russ at Horizons for more info, or email chair@aou3a.uk

A&Ou3a ART & CRAFT SHOWCASE

Saturday 24th October,
10.00am-4.00 pm
at Aughton Village Hall

Save the Date!

Come along and see the wonderful work produced by our talented members of Textiles, Painting, Card Making, Arty Crafty and Digital Photography groups, and watch as they demonstrate their skills.

Then enjoy a cup of tea, coffee or a soft drink and homemade cake, whilst listening to music provided by some of our music groups.

PUZZLE PAGE

Puzzle 1

Below are clues to four different 4-letter words. Place the four answers in the grid, to read both across and down.

	1	2	3	4
1				
2				
3				
4				

Cryptic Clues

1. Since it got noticed, starts to point the way.
2. Sounds like I'll be at a location surrounded by water.
3. Stuck? This is likely to be to blame.
4. One editor contains desire.

Puzzle 2

	1	2	3	4	5
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Cryptic Clues

1. Most ungrateful, hiding what bee did.
2. It's ironic that this singing voice sounds like a note.
3. Confused unite to undo knot.

4. The answer is sound.
5. Colour when depressed and cowardly mix.

Puzzle 3

At the bus depot:

The bus to Leeds departed from bay 6.
 The bus to Preston departed from bay 10.
 The bus to Liverpool departed from bay 20.
 From what bay did the bus to Manchester depart?

Puzzle 4

In January, the aerobics tutor fee was half as much again as the fee of the Spanish tutor, whose fee was half of that of the Italian tutor. If the total of the fees was £225, what was the fee of each tutor?

Puzzle 5

Remove two letters from each clue and then re-arrange the remaining letters to give the name of a UK city.

1. Ravioli Pole
2. Down Since
3. The Cab
4. Chase New Lot
5. Store Pain



Puzzle 6

What is the next shape in this sequence?



Shade the appropriate squares

Answers on
Page 19



Thank you . . . Nicky Garforth!

● Nicky Garforth started taking the Aerobics Lite classes in the summer of 2010 and has been involved with u3a ever since. She dipped in and out of Zumba Gold when other tutors were unable to attend and all the time she was running her own fitness business at various locations in the area. Friendly,

encouraging and mindful of the age and fitness levels of her group, she has created routines to suit them all.

The group will stay together under **Joanne Robinson** but wanted to say a big thank you to Nicky for the care she has taken of their fitness over the years.

SUE WATKINSON



Forthcoming Events

SUMMER SOCIAL

A Barn Dance is to be held at Aughton Village Hall on Friday, 26th June with dancing to the musicians 'Change of Key, with caller Clare Park'. Hot and cold buffet supplied. Tickets available from Horizons soon at £20.00

QUIZ NIGHT

This year's quiz night will be open to all Aughton and Ormskirk u3a members. It will take place on Friday, 9th October at our HQ. We hope to have a Lancashire themed evening. More details to follow.

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

This year's Christmas Social will be held on Friday, 4th December at Aughton Village Hall. Further details to follow.

GINGERBREAD FESTIVAL

Ormskirk is holding a Gingerbread Festival again on the 12th July. We are looking for any member who can lend us a gazebo for the day which could be used as a stall.

Also we would like volunteers to come forward to help on the day and assist by manning the stall. Please contact the Social Desk at Horizons.

Textile Group make dozens of Sunflowers

KNITTERS and crocheters from our Textiles group joined forces with other yarn experts in the community to create sunflowers for this wonderful display outside the Civic Hall for the Pleasure Folk's production of Calendar Girls. Crafters from across the region produced hundreds of flowers in a variety of sizes and styles for maximum impact. They were attached to a netting and cascaded from an upper window.

It's not the only challenge our Textiles group has risen to in recent weeks. Easter brought an opportunity for a group task to get creative with egg holders (*see photo below*).



● *See the photograph in full view on our back cover*



Ageing well ...

BEAT THE YEARS

ABOUT 18 months ago, after being very unwell with Polymyalgia Rheumatica (PMR) and weighing in at over 17 stone, I decided to get fit! I gave up drinking alcohol and smoking, lost 6 stone on a calorie deficit diet, started exercising 5\6 times a week, (two of these were with a Personal Trainer (PT) and my personal best at the moment is a dead lift of 61kg. I was on seven forms of medication; now take none, and have never felt better in my life.

Here are four key points, which have been my focus and could be the start of a new, or improved you!

STRENGTH

Muscle is your pension plan

As we get older, things naturally become more challenging; however there are some, for example, being able to lift shopping, climb the stairs and get up off the floor, which we need to make sure we are fit enough to be able to do.

Not everyone will want to go to a PT, or join a gym and we are all at varying levels of fitness, so what you do will depend on your circumstances.

The key however, is progression. Start small, but be consistent.

Simple at-home exercises (*chair*

squats, wall push-ups, light dumbbells, resistance bands) can be a great way to begin your journey. See how quickly you begin to feel stronger and take it from there.

DIET

Think nourishment - not restriction

I lost weight supported by a calorie deficit diet and installed a free app (*Cronometer*) to start



planning my new eating regime. You may just want to start eating a bit healthier, or you may want to lose some weight.

The importance of Protein, as we age, for muscle maintenance, is evidenced everywhere. So look at how you can increase how much protein you eat on a daily basis.

What about colour on your plate? Is a third of it vegetables? I am so proud of the contents of my shopping trolley now. I want everybody to look at it half full of fruit and veg.

Try to include a variety of micro-nutrients (vitamins and minerals).

Increase the fibre you eat and over time feel your gut health improve.

Portion awareness without calorie obsession. This, I am afraid to say was my downfall. I literally didn't realise how many calories I was eating. Now I eat less, my tummy feels so much happier and the weight came off too.

living better

Food is part of your social and emotional being and your diet needs to be enjoyable and sustainable. I cannot tell you how many diets I have tried over the years . . . I think the cabbage and ice cream one was probably the most ridiculous.

The 80/20 approach works for me. I eat mostly good choices (80%) and have occasional treats (20%). I look forward to my chocolate protein pudding and treat bars every night.

HYDRATION

Often overlooked . . .

Thirst signals weaken with age and as we get older, being dehydrated can in fact have a huge effect on our general health.

Signs of mild dehydration can be fatigue, headaches and brain fog.



It also impacts on our joints, digestion, and energy. I used to hate water. I preferred Gin and Tonic! However, drinking more water is the one thing, which I think has improved my general health....and I have never had such lovely, regular poos....sorry TMI!!

Simple habits to develop, could be a glass of water by your side when sitting, water available in the car and get yourself a trusty water bottle. Mine goes everywhere with me and I've even bought one for my 93 year old Dad.

ATTITUDE

Its only a thought away

The myth that, 'it's too late to start' is something that you need to turn around. If I can do it at 65....so can you. Make it, 'now is the time to start.'

Can you have an identity shift and ask yourself . . . Am I someone who looks after my health? I wasn't, but I certainly do now.



If you have youngsters in your family, do you want to keep up with them. This was massive for me. I have two very lively grandsons, who used to completely exhaust me. Now, I think I keep up pretty well.

Remember to celebrate small wins. See this as adapting, not weakening. Remember...

'Ageing is inevitable.

Decline is negotiable.'

In this article I have not gone into great depth, as its purpose is to whet your appetite and get you thinking.

If you are interested in more details...give feedback!

ANN HEDGES

Ann Hedges is a new member of our u3a Communications Committee.

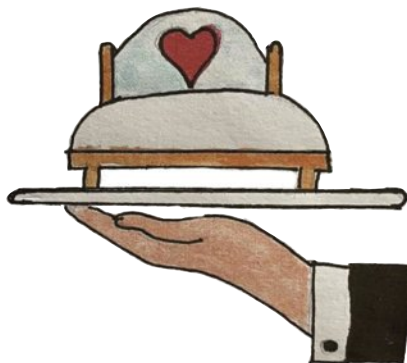
A very brave and interesting first article, much to be admired. BILL EVANS, Editor

Aughton & Ormskirk u3a

DRAMA GROUP

present

WHO'S IN BED WITH THE BUTLER



by Michael Parker

**Thursday 21st, Friday 22nd and
Saturday 23rd May at 7.00pm**

Aughton Village Hall

Tickets £14 each, including Hotpot Supper

THE Drama group are currently having great fun rehearsing for our May production of 'Who's in bed with the Butler?', an hilarious comedy written by Michael Parker.

There's lots of humour set against a background of uncertainty and intrigue. Just who is

having an affair with whom in an English country house?

Who, if anyone, will be the new incumbent of the Manor?

Many thanks to everyone who supports our productions. It is much appreciated by all group members.



LES RIPPON

Another First Aid course

Get your name down quickly



IN November last year, one of our members was visiting the Ministry Centre when he suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed. He was revived by two members of MC staff, who, thanks to earlier First Aid training, were able to administer CPR and use the defibrillator for 20 minutes prior to the arrival of the ambulance crew.

Our member lived to tell the tale, thanks to the speedy response of MC staff. Would you have known what to do? If not, please consider attending our next First Aid course on Saturday 9th May, 9.00am-12 noon at Aughton Village Hall. You will learn how to perform CPR and use a defibrillator, amongst other life saving techniques.

It's fun and it's free to u3a members! What are you waiting for? Email chair@aou3a.uk or speak to Pam Ball at Horizons.

At our most recent First Aid course on 7th March, twenty A&Ou3a members

learned how to perform CPR, under the expert guidance of tutor Rachel Burrows.

Comments included:

Rachel's presentation based on common sense and encouragement taught us so much in such a short time and we feel was so valuable a learning experience.

We would highly recommend other u3a members to enrol on the course and be given confidence to administer CPR and use a defibrillator and epi pen!

This is just to say how much Ian and I enjoyed the first aid course this morning. As Rachel said, we hope we will never have to use it but hopefully we will be in a much better position to help someone now than we would have been before. We found Rachel's way of teaching really good too, and it's a shame we couldn't carry on for a bit longer.





GREEN THINGS

Spotlight on 'Old Bags'

YES, most of us have them, both the ones under our eyes and the plastic ones lurking at the back of a kitchen drawer. With a trip to Harley Street and a few thousand pounds you can sort out the former but what about the latter?

Most supermarkets will take clean soft plastics and (*supposedly*) recycle them but maybe we could get a bit more life out of them first. Small cellophane bags or bread bags are useful for keeping things fresh, if they are clean. If they haven't contained anything other than vegetables or similar then I wash them, let them dry inside out and store for further use.

When you buy salad or vegetables that don't have their own container you can

use your clean bag. I am told that if you use a carrier bag to store bread it will stay fresh longer, especially if you place a stick of celery in with it. (*This is news to me and I haven't tried it.*)

For the more adventurous and those who can knit or crochet then I have seen some fabulous shopping bags made from plastic bags cut into strips and knitted or crocheted. As a plus they will be weatherproof too. If you have a go, please send us a photo.

You could also make your own produce bags instead of using the ones provided by the supermarket, just as long as the material is fine so it's easy to see what's in it and the weight of it won't affect the cost of your items. They don't even need to fasten, just an open bag will work fine.

And to avoid getting to the till and finding you've left your shopping bags in the car, you could have a cotton one made out of an old curtain. It will fold up small to keep in your pocket or handbag and can be washed whenever needed.

If you'd like one, ask Megan or Liz (07809 421 960) and we'll do our best to supply one (*while stocks last!*).

MEGAN (& LIZ)



SPEAKER MEETINGS

for remainder of 2026

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

14th May

Roger Browne, Jazz Player

...returning to entertain us and fill the room with his amazing talent on the piano, singing and stories telling of 'Anything Goes'. I hope you can join us as Roger is so entertaining.

9th July

Vivienne Parry, OBE, Writer, Broadcaster and Scientist

...will talk and enlighten us about Genomics, and how genes are expressed, focusing on the structure, function and inheritance of an organism's genome such as health and disease. This should be a very interesting and informative meeting and may answer a few questions and doubts we have.

Vivienne is an outstanding speaker who, 10 years ago, came to tell us about 'The Genome Revolution - The Future of Diagnosis and Personalised Treatment' as part of her involvement with The 100,000 Human Genome Project and her government remit to inform non-scientific audiences.

13th August

Eddie Humphreys, Police Chief Instructor

...will talk about 'Operation Super Grass' and the planning and work behind the surveillance to apprehend the



criminals. An insight about policing today and how they have to undergo continuous changes and adapt to the criminal activities of this present day.

10th September

Membership renewal, no speakers

8th October

Pete Turner, Magician

... will entertain us with another of his amazing lectures 'Curiosity Killed the Cat'. Pete never fails to keep his audience spellbound with his talent to intrigue and challenge.

12th November

David Hearn, Historian

Appropriately, as we are entering the Christmas period, David will enlighten us with 'Christmas Traditions in Britain and around the World' and bring back old memories and some new traditions from home and abroad and get us in the Christmas mood or panic . . . it's come around so quickly, where has this year gone?

Would you like a personal reminder of forthcoming Speaker Meetings direct to your inbox? Just email me at speakerteam@aou3a.uk with your request and I will do the rest.

SHIRLEY KIRBY

'Long' Walkers at Crank Caverns



● *The Long Walkers, led by David Moore, went from Rainford to Crank Caverns. David was joined by Linda Griffiths, Karen Leyland, Gail Hickson, Bryan Pready, Mike Brady, Pam Howard and Jackie & Eddie Sims. Photo by Barbara Carter.*

Unwanted Art or Craft Materials

YOUR Editor received a request from the **Oak Creative Group** in Ormskirk, who promote 'local creativity and community'.

They have established an 'art bank' in Ormskirk to distribute surplus donated art materials to local community groups and schools.

They ask whether any of our groups have surplus or unwanted art or craft materials they could donate.

If so, please telephone: Derek on **07545 764983**



What is the Art Bank?
A community stock of art materials for makers, groups, and local projects.
Free to access. Open to everyone.



How It Works

- Borrow materials for workshops, events, and creative sessions
- Donate unused supplies to support local creativity
- Grow a shared resource for Ormskirk's artists & community groups



Why It Matters

- Reduce waste and increase access to creative tools.
- Support grassroots projects and pop-up exhibitions.
- Build pride in Ormskirk's creative community



Get Involved
Build with us. Create with us. Share with us.
Whether you're an artist, teacher, student, or curious maker — the Art Bank is yours to use.



Contact & Info
Text: **07545764983** The OAK Creative group



A few jokes for Spring!

How do you confuse a Scottish doctor?
Tell him you have knee problems!

Another Scottish joke: I went into a cake shop in Edinburgh, and as I was looking at the display the assistant said: 'Apple tart or a Meringue?'

I replied: 'No, you're right. I'll have the Apple tart!'

'You need to do more chores around the house.'

'Can we change the subject?'

'OK. More chores around the house need to be done by you.'

Just bought an Elvis record on eBay titled wooden leg. I asked the seller should it not be wooden heart. He said yes, but this is a pirate copy.

My wife complains that I never take her anywhere expensive – so I've just taken her to get some petrol.

I have a meeting at the bank later and if all goes well I will be out of debt. I'm so excited I can barely put on my ski mask.

I said to her: 'Every time you correct me about my grammar I love you a little bit fewer.'

Boy George's pet lizard has bitten three people this week. He says he needs a 'calmer chameleon'.

'How was your blind date?' 'Terrible! He showed up in a 1932 Rolls-Royce.'

'What's so terrible about that?'

He was the original owner.'

If toast always lands butter-side down and cats always land on their feet, what happens if you strap toast to the back of a cat and drop it?

My mate asked me 'what do you think of voluntary work?'

I said 'I wouldn't do that if you paid me'

Mnemonics answers

1. **Colours of the rainbow:** Red Orange Yellow Green Blue Indigo Violet
2. **Order of the Planets:** Mercury Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn Uranus Neptune
3. **How to spell:** Diarrhoea
4. **Treble Clef:** E G B D F
5. **Great Lakes:** Huron, Ontario, Michigan, Erie, Superior

Degsy's Puzzle Answers



Puzzle 1

Sign, Isle, Glue, Need.

Puzzle 2

Stung, Tenor, Untie, Noise, Green.

Puzzle 3

The bay for each town is number of consonants times number of vowels in town name.

Manchester is

7 consonant x 3 vowels = bay 21

Puzzle 4

Aerobics £75. Spanish £50, Italian £100.

Puzzle 5

1. Remove A and I, giving Liverpool.
2. Remove C and E, giving Swindon.
3. Remove C and E, giving Bath.
4. Remove H and O, giving Newcastle.
5. Remove A and E, giving Preston.

Puzzle 6

Rotate previous shape 90 degrees clockwise and remove bottom right square.



LOOKING BACK at

WE have changed the format of our Looking Back series of articles to give the spotlight to a popular group that has attracted over 6,000 individual attendances over the last 17 years (a very rough guess). As Margaret Gibbon retires from leading the Local History Group, we look back at its 23 year history and ask where to next?

THE Local History Group is one of our very first groups. By 2003 it was in full swing and, under two quite different leaders, it remained a popular and interesting activity for many members.

Local Historian **Audrey Coney** was the first leader, planning local walks and visits in the warmer months, coming inside HQ for talks and discussions in the winter. **Doreen McGiveron** joined in and worked with the North West Sound Archive team, based at Clitheroe Castle, to record conversations with local farmers



Town Crier celebrates Lancashire Day

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talk about ‘Lancashire Privvies’ and worked up.

Margaret always tried to please a cross-section of the membership by varying the topics she chose but claims that she doesn’t have a favourite.

It wasn’t all light-hearted either. Disasters, wars and personal tragedies came under the spotlight. The Mexico lifeboat disaster off the coast at Southport; the centenary of WW1 with a talk about nursing history (*a subject of special personal relevance*), a visit to Lathom Re-mount where war horses were trained, and an acknowledgement of the sacrifices made by so many people; the history of slavery – a shocking period in Liverpool’s history and the story of the Lusitania. In a review of

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 Rans, Linda Cheesborough and Pat Yates.

MARGARET GIBBON



Christmas Puddings ‘Stir up Tuesday’

Vol 22 - No 1

LOCAL HISTORY

Crime in Court, a prisoner was tried, convicted and sentenced to death. Two visits were made to Ormskirk Magistrate's Court on Derby Street, not long before the building closed.

Margaret loved to include characterisation in her meetings, as evidenced by the appearances of a Mill Girl and the Gingerbread Lady. Coal mining, comedians, clog or Morris dancing, all were grist to the mill of Local History. Refreshments were often themed to relate to the topic.

The 'Our Day Out' events were especially popular with members: five visits to the Ribble Valley and three to Houghton Tower plus the Leeds/Liverpool canal were among many others. There were trips to Manchester, Leyland, Preston, the Fylde Coast, Liverpool. Wherever history lurked, Margaret was there with her group. Mystery trips will have to remain just that, only those who travelled with Margaret knew the destinations.

A day visit to the Wirral saw several members climb to the top of Leasowe lighthouse!

Local History on the beach



Local History meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 2.15 in our HQ

Group leader Margaret Gibbon about to set up for the day on Lytham beach!

THE Local History group continued a seaside theme at their April meeting. Margaret arrived well prepared with a deck chair and table. She kept to the theme on a visit to the Fylde Coast which included Lytham Hall and the Windmill!



On the Beach

Vol 21 - No 3

Those who brought memorabilia to share, those who have helped in practical ways. I hope you take away happy memories, recall the things we have done and share them with others.'

Then there was the trip to Lancaster Castle, the setting for the trials of the so-called Lancashire Witches. The group donned hard hats to descend the Well tower, where prisoners were held in appalling conditions.

Margaret's last meeting was on 7th April. She hopes that another member will be inspired to take on the group in their own way. She says thank you to everyone who has helped in whatever way. 'I appreciate you coming along, all of you.

Change is inevitable. Is there anyone reading this who could reimagine Local History and bring pleasure to so many of our members?

Technical support is available in the form of Bill Soens and Margaret's helping hand is stretched out to you.

SUE WATKINSON

Aughton and Ormskirk
U3A
 Magazine
 Vol. 15, No. 3
 September to December 2017
His Honour chairs our U3A
 Read Margaret Kitchen's interview on page 3
 ... and 'The appointment of our President' on page 5.
 * We have been invited that some of our members have our book case over the road with the Local History Group at Lancaster Castle.
 See Jane Wright's short review on page 9.

Lancaster Castle Are we locked in or being let out

Vol 15 - No 13

STOP PRESS

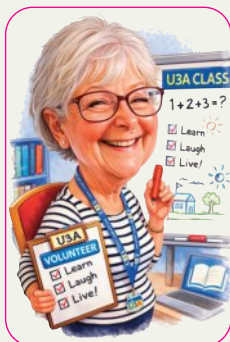
'THE NEXT CHAPTER BEGINS
IN LOCAL HISTORY'

A day before going to print
Ann Hedges has volunteered
to take over as leader

Your u3a Committees

AI is new to most of us . . . these two pages show a sample of what can be achieved. AI creates cartoon images from photographs through a process that involves advanced machine learning algorithms, particularly those in the field of deep learning. The technology often relies on convolutional neural networks (CNNs), which are designed to process and interpret visual data effectively. When a photograph is input into the AI system, the CNN analyses the image's features, such as edges, colours, textures, and shapes.

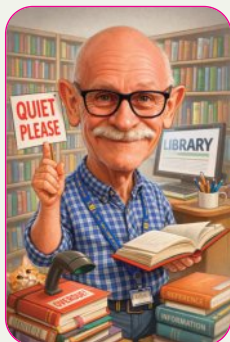
The AI identifies the key elements of the photo, distinguishing between objects like faces, backgrounds, and finer details. It then applies stylisation techniques, transforming realistic textures into simplified, exaggerated forms typical of cartoon art. This includes bold outlines, flat colour shading, and minimalistic detail representation. Some AI models are trained on large datasets of



Pam Ball - Chair



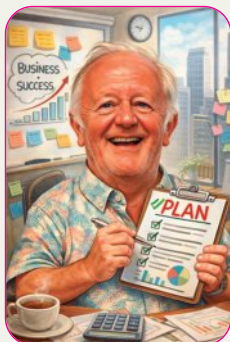
Deirdre Slater



John Tomlinson



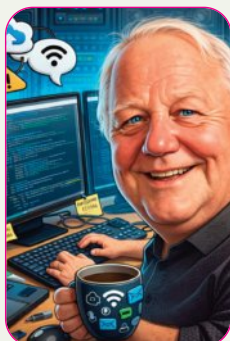
Liz Dixon



Ian Grant



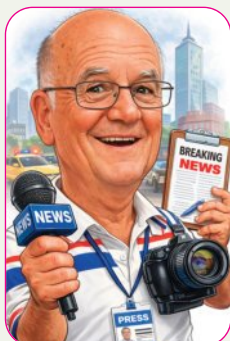
Alan Nolan



Paul Andrews



Shirley Kirby



Derrick Fewings

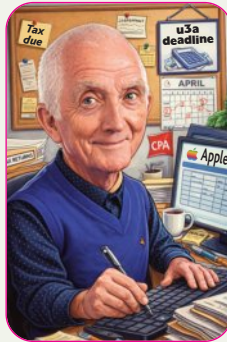


Mia Faza

created in AI format

cartoon and real images, allowing them to learn the artistic styles and apply them appropriately. Additionally, AI incorporates generative adversarial networks (GANs) to enhance the stylisation. GANs consist of two networks: one generates the cartoon image, while the other evaluates its quality, refining the output iteratively. This dynamic enables the AI to produce visually appealing, high-quality cartoon images that retain the essence of the original photograph while adopting a playful, artistic flair.

Written by
BILL EVANS, Editor
with lots of help
from ChatGPT 😊



Bill Evans



Ann Hedges



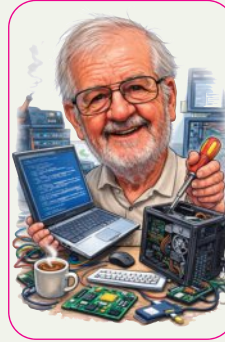
Bill Soens



Sheila Kierans



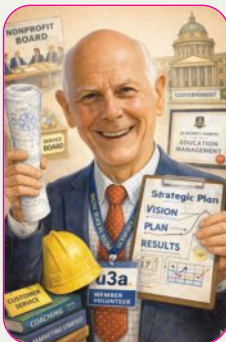
Ann Roberts



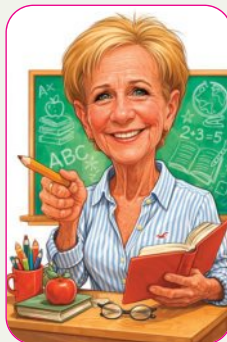
Mike Rimmer



Maureen Bumphrey



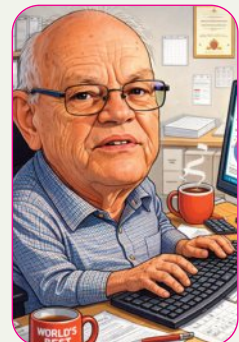
David Blanchflower



Kathy Rutherford



Joyce Nolan



Willem Wiechers



the CIVIC

GARY BARLOW AND TIM
CALENDER
THE MUSICAL

