

Volume 23 Issue 3
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u3a
Aughton & Ormskirk

Magazine



From the Chair

Hello everyone, and welcome to the Autumn edition of your A&Ou3a magazine. You will probably be aware that our dear friend, colleague and Editor for many years, Bill Evans, sadly passed away some months ago. We miss him greatly and will never forget his unique contribution to A&Ou3a.

Happily, two of our Communications Committee members, Liz Dixon and Ann Hedges, have come forward and offered to edit the magazine, and what a great job they have done. In the following pages you will find lots of information about forthcoming events, including our annual Quiz Night, Speaker Meetings, Art and Craft Showcase and our very popular First Aid courses, as well as advice on staying fit and healthy, gardening tips and much more besides.

If you are a new member reading our magazine for the first time, welcome to our u3a! We have over 70 different interest groups and leaders are readily contactable via our website. Remember that the u3a is run by its members and for its members, so if you feel you have time and skills to offer, do please get in touch. Our weekly coffee morning, Horizons (9.30 – 11 am at Scout HQ adjacent to Christ Church, Long Lane), is a good place to start - here you can chat to other members over a cuppa and invariably there will be members of our Management Committee there too.

Having spent my working life in education, September for me is a time for new beginnings, and perhaps it will be for you too. So even if you have been a member for a while, maybe now is the time to think about trying something new. You can email or phone me (details on page 31) or pop into Horizons any Thursday morning.

Pam

Pam Ball, Chair.



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Digital Photography Group day out at Dunham Massey
photo by Bill Soens



Bill Evans

It is with great sadness that we say goodbye to our editor. For many years, Bill wove his magic through our publications, giving them a professionalism that was the envy of other local groups. He was a true gentleman, always cheerful and always willing to spend time helping the team to make everything as good as it could be. It has been a delight to work alongside him and he will be missed by all of us. Sleep well, old friend.

Communications Team

Your new magazine editors are Ann Hedges (right) and Liz Dixon (left) who will do their best to maintain the high standards set by Bill.



Ann is a retired headteacher who joined the u3a a few years ago. Now, she is the Musical Director for the choir, is part of the Communications Team and has recently had her arm twisted and is the Leader of the History Group. Her new role as the co-editor of the magazine, in her words, has been an extremely challenging learning curve but, although she doesn't like to admit it, she has secretly enjoyed it. Working with Liz has gone very well, considering they are both control freaks and also both have OCD!!!!

Liz joined u3a specifically for the Textiles Group but quickly started joining in with other activities that were on offer. She is currently a member of Creative Writing, Textiles, Table Tennis and Pilates. She recently handed over the role of Membership Secretary to Caroline so she could try a new challenge - Communications. She is a serial 'dabbler' and likes to try anything new. She was first to put her name down for the short BSL course starting in the new year and is always on the lookout for something different to try.

Digital Photography

DUNHAM MASSEY TRIP

Over the years Jenny Jobe, of the Digital Photography Group, has undertaken excellent organisational work for the annual day trips. She stepped down to let Jean McCabe follow in her footsteps for the 2026 visit – this time to the Cheshire National Trust property of Dunham Massey.

Dunham Massey enjoys a combination of a stately home, excellent gardens and a large deer park with more than a hundred animals who roam free, sometimes mingling with the visitors.

Some thirty-three u3a members, from a number of a different groups, turned up at the Four Lane Ends Mission in Bickerstaffe for the coach to pull away at 9.30 a.m. sharp. The weather was perfect - perhaps a little too warm for some - so many ice-creams were consumed! Photos by the hundred were clicked off and all seemed very pleased with the outing.

A particular highlight of the trip was a viewing of a Rembrandt self-portrait painting in the house. This was on loan for a limited period of time and we were fortunate to see it.

We arrived back at a civilised time – worn out but happy!

Article by Bill Soens
Pictures by Alan Nolan



Who's in Bed with The Butler?

Drama Production Review

The drama group once again delivered a wonderful evening of entertainment to a sold-out audience on all nights. It was directed by Kate Sumner, whose vision as to how it should be performed was "spot on". The main characters were all excellently portrayed by the various members of the cast.

Special mention for John Tomlinson who must, by the last performance, have been "black and blue" after all of his unfortunate accidents. Perhaps his wig deserves a mention too, as it also "slipped" in a few laughs!



I think the audience was very envious of Clifton, the butler, who was very popular with all the bimbos, sorry, the various ladies in the play. Each of them taking him off to the bedrooms in the mansion for a little bit of fun and frolic! It brought back too many memories of the past! Poor Clifton looked more and more dishevelled and exhausted each time he reappeared – clothes in disarray, Les Rippon played the part of Clifton brilliantly. The scenery was excellent. It is amazing what can be done on a small stage at the Village Hall. It looked very impressive indeed. Well done to all the backstage people who created the set, as well as Kevin Bridge on lights/sounds, which added to the atmosphere. The fireplace looked absolutely brilliant.

The audience thoroughly enjoyed the show, lots and lots of laughter, plus an excellent hot pot supper. Roll on the next production by this very talented group later on this year. It will be a hard act to follow, but the ladies and Les will need time to recover from their active exploits.

Ian and Ruth Grant



Cast and Crew

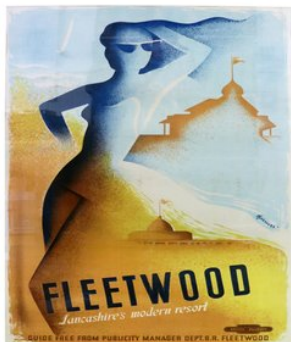


From left: John Tomlinson, Jim Higgins, Megan Tomlinson, Kate Sumner, Diane Higgins, Kevin Bridge, Maureen Bridge, Tony Abbott, Les Rippon, Pat Boylett, Lorraine Akins, Stuart Alyson, Nicky Rippon, Deirdre Slater.

LOCAL HISTORY

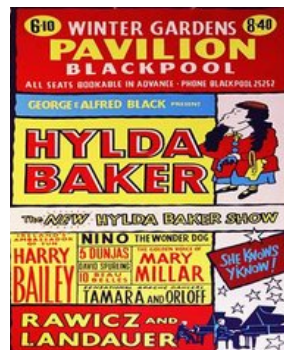
The art of objects for remembering

The Local History Group met as usual on the first Tuesday in July and were enthralled by their visiting speaker. Heather Davis from the Lancashire County Museum Service came to talk to us about some of the amazing items in the collections of museums across Lancashire. The talk was called 'Lancashire in 50 Objects'.



Fleetwood promotional poster

Heather has worked for Lancashire's museums for over 30 years and it was a great opportunity to learn about a number of the 1.3 million objects that are held in Lancashire's collections. Some of the objects she talked about are on display in the museums, but a number had been included in her project Lancashire in 50 Objects bringing collections into libraries.



Comedy Greats Hylda Baker

The items ranged from tiny flint tools created over 7000 years ago by early Lancastrians to elegant posters promoting the resort of Fleetwood. She also highlighted the important place Lancashire had in English history with links to Shakespeare's Play Twelfth Night and documents from Lancashire Archives describing the Gunpowder Plot written by those who were there on the 5th Nov. Lancashire contributions to food and comedy were included and we saw the 'oldest fish & chip range in the world - probably.'



The oldest fish and chip range



Conservator preparing item

In the second part of the session Ray Waterhouse came and told us about his family and the story behind a video, which had been created by his father showing various views of Ormskirk. Everyone enjoyed listening to Ray's personal recollections and had a good talk about the video.

If you would like to know more about the Local History Group, contact Ann Hedges via the website or just come along to a meeting.

Meet your new Management Committee members....



Jane Ellison I joined u3a about 10 years ago following my retirement from the NHS.

I have previously served on the Management Committee for three years and chaired the Group Support and Learning Committee for several years. I am still an active member of Group Support, liaising with Group Leaders and keeping group information up to date. I am also a group leader of a Pilates group and lead the Horizons Welcome Desk team.

Caroline Donaldson When I retired in 2021 (having been an industrial chemist then moving into manufacturing supply chain) I moved from Cheshire to Aughton. I knew I wanted to keep learning, and to make friends in my new area, so joining the u3a was ideal. The first group I joined was the Textile group and I've been one the leaders for the past three years. I now also attend the Birding group. In 2024 I was asked to join the Membership team so I've had a long apprenticeship for the role of Membership Secretary!



Alison Higham I moved to Aughton when I was six with my parents and four sisters. I went to Christ Church school (where the Ministry Centre is now). Brownies and Guides was at the scout hut where I now enjoy many u3a activities (it feels slightly wrong to be with the Wine Tasting Group where I used to jump over toadstools and earn badges with Brownies). I enjoyed a 46 year career in the NHS but I'm now thankfully fully retired. My two children have only recently flown the nest so this is my time now. I love the u3a (I'm a member of four u3as now!) and what a friendly social group this is. I'm your first port of call for welfare-related issues.

Choir

SELL OUT SUMMER CONCERT A REAL CROWD PLEASER

On a perfect Friday evening at Aughton Village Hall, friends, family and u3a members gathered for our summer concert. For Musical Director, Ann Hedges, this was the first concert she had led from the start, way back in January. She certainly put her own stamp on it, instructing and encouraging us and occasionally using her 'head teacher' voice to get us up to performance standard.



On the night we raised our voices and wowed the audience with 'Let the River Run', a real show stopper, the very poignant 'Sunrise, Sunset' and the near apoplectic 'Can't Stop the Beat' from Hairspray.



Barrie Dawson read a comic monologue 'The Battle of Hastings'. Some may have thought the broad Lancashire accent was put on for effect but no, he is from Bolton, he just talks like that. Claire Sherman read a Pam Ayres poem about people worshipping at St Tesco on a Sunday, accompanied by a slide showing the first church to be converted to a Tesco Express.



Ann Hedges sang 'Something Stupid' with her 93 year old Dad, Albert, and both had tears in their eyes at the end. Our other special Guest, Heidi Henders, brought the house down with 'As Long as He Needs Me'.

We decided that for this concert we should smarten up a bit and look like a 'proper' choir so we adopted a black and white dress code. We love it! What do you think?

What can I say about our choir? We meet every Wednesday morning, that's a big commitment to make, but it is genuinely one of the highlights of our week. It's very sociable, there is a lot of chat and laughter. There is real friendship in our choir that is quietly supportive in times of need and celebrates good news with great gusto. At the same time we welcome new comers (especially if they are altos) with open arms. Rehearsals are always fun and the time flies.

We enjoyed every minute of our concert and for those who were there we hope you did too.

Written by Ann Henders



Spotlight on.....

Eco Town - Lancashire's Recycling Plant

We joined a regional u3a outing to Eco Town in Leyland. It's the site that deals with every Lancashire resident's waste and it proved to be fascinating. There are approximately 1.6 million of us in Lancashire so it's no wonder the site is huge. What we hadn't expected was to see such sophisticated equipment. At one point we watched as lasers identified different types of plastic on a conveyor belt and tossed them off the belt into the appropriate receptacle with a blast of air – remarkable!

Such sophistication comes at a financial cost but, thankfully, their statistics show that those of us in West Lancs are good eggs when it comes to sorting our waste into its various recycling categories, making it easier to sell on to third parties.

Not everything is sold. Food waste, the newest category to be dealt with, is turned into fertiliser for local farmers to collect plus bio fuel that helps provide energy for the recycling plant.

How's it going with the food waste bins? We asked some of our members and this is what they said:



Megan & Liz

GAMING GLORY by Ann Hedges

Our Games Group meets twice a month, on the second and fourth Thursdays at 2.00 till 4.00pm.

This group has a variety of activities such as Backgammon, Cribbage and Scrabble. It's an amalgamation of several smaller groups and this merger, thanks to Group Leader, Paul, has allowed each of the games to keep running. There are 12 members, some of whom joined unable to play, but they are now raring to compete.



The seed for the group was planted, would you believe during COVID, when Paul and Dave, who live on Houseboats (Butty Boats, as I learned) in Rufford, used to play table tennis on a make shift table in the car park. From here they researched and found online our u3a table tennis group, which they joined and from there the games group was born.

Paul told me that one of the boards in use has quite a history and is 51 years old. He used to go to sea and the board has travelled around the world with him, so be very careful if you use that board!

I chatted to Mike and Sally who recently joined. They had been playing Backgammon at home for years, but were beginning to know each other's every move, so Sally said it was lovely to come to play with different people and be challenged again.

They are a friendly group who, in their words, do more chatting than playing. One member said that it's very easy nowadays to play these games online, but there is nothing like the social side of playing face to face.



Interestingly, Dave used to be a French and German teacher. Even more interestingly, Sally wants to learn Dutch, because her son is marrying a girl from Belgium....so here is a thought, let's start a u3a Dutch group. We maybe just need someone who can speak the language first!!

The group have considered entering competitions and are looking to develop more outings where they go out together socially.

So come on guys....why not join them? A super, friendly group, who are actively seeking new members. You don't need to be an experienced player, just bring a smile!

Membership Renewal

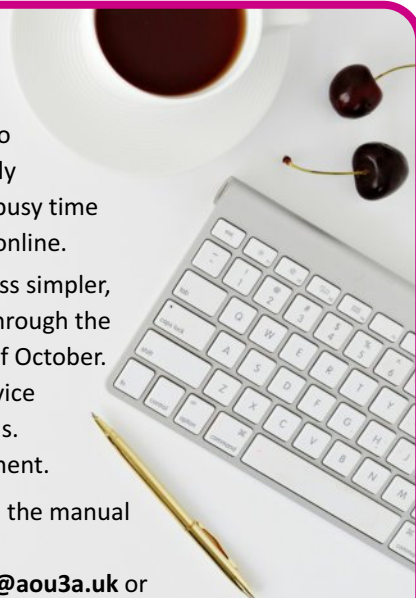
Thank you, if you were one of the 45% of members who renewed online during the last renewal period. It greatly reduces the pressure on the membership team at this busy time and we'd like to encourage anyone who can, to renew online.

Recent improvements to Beacon have made this process simpler, plus the Web Team has kindly offered to help people through the online process during Horizons sessions until the end of October.

A computer is available but you will need to bring a device (phone or tablet) that enables you to access your emails. You'll also need a debit or credit card to make the payment.

The membership team will be at Horizons to undertake the manual renewals, as normal from 1st October.

If you need any help, drop us an email to membership@aou3a.uk or pop into Horizons.



'u3a Matters'

The National Magazine

Sign up to receive **u3a Matters**, the national u3a magazine, delivered direct to your home address.

u3a Matters magazine is published 5 times a year and posted direct to members' homes in an environmentally friendly paper wrapper. It is packed with stories about members and u3a activities, plus celebrity interviews and features on technology, recipes, travel, competitions, and a lively and popular letters section. It also has details of discounted holidays.

To sign up to receive the magazine visit the Membership desk at Horizons any Thursday morning. The cost of the magazine is currently £4 for the 5 issues which includes postage to your home address. Sign up by the end of the year to receive all 5 copies next year. Cash only please.

(It is a different magazine from this free internal Aughton & Ormskirk magazine.)

POETRY PERFECTION by Ann Hedges

The poetry group meet on the first Monday of every month between 2.00 and 4.00pm at the Scout & Guide HQ. They have refreshments and are rather partial to Kit Kats!

Irene has been group leader for three years and is also one of our champion group leaders as she is also group leader for our tap dancers. Poetry has around 10 members and they really look forward to their sessions.



Between them, the group comes up with themes, which may include a particular poet or a wider topic, such as family, love or loss, which have been recent choices. Today's theme was poems by Yeats which had been chosen by members who took turns at reading them out.

I spoke to Chris, who is an ex English teacher, but told me she constantly learns new things from the sessions. Pat, Eila and Lorraine also have backgrounds in education, but say this is not a necessary requirement to join the group. Pat herself has written several poems and has had work published.



The group however does not write poetry; they are more of a poetry appreciation group and one of the joys of the group is the discussions they have about a chosen poem and the different perspectives they find they have of it. They believe poetry is out in the world and belongs to everyone. They like to bring their own experience to a poem and share their views, ideas and thoughts.

Interested?.....pop in and say hello. I am sure you will be made to feel very welcome.



Stronger for Longer

Many people believe strength is only for gym enthusiasts. In reality, strength is what helps us maintain our independence as we age. It helps with our balance, our mobility, and our ability to carry shopping, lift grandchildren etc. It also supports our mental wellbeing – if we can *do* things, we *feel* better.



In April's magazine (available on the website) I talked about my fitness journey and told you that it's never too late to start. To prove this point, I'm very proud to tell you about my dad. Many of you will know Albert Hedges as he has been a member of our u3a for many years and is a regular at several groups and social meetings. And, at the grand old age of 93, he is now going to my Personal Trainer (Alex) once a week! He may not be lifting heavy weights, but she is working on his balance and general strength.....and he is loving it.



We naturally lose muscle as we age, but research shows we can build strength well into our 80s and 90s. This is an extremely encouraging message, because many of us will assume decline is inevitable but it's not. Small changes can give you big gains. So what now? Assess where you are and have an idea of where you would like to get to. Build slowly on it.

Whatever you decide to do, aim to be doing more each day, week, month. Don't be beaten by aches and pains. There is obviously a level of medical responsibility here, but getting fitter and stronger could actually help your issues. I used to suffer regularly with a bad back and I also have a bit of a dodgy hip, but well into my fitness journey and I feel like I have been given a new back and my hip is improving due to strengthening exercises. Try to be consistent and not too intense, because although you need a good level of challenge in whatever you are doing, if it's not doable....you will give up! It's never too late to benefit.....look at my 93 year old Dad!

For those with limited ability

Sit-to-stand from a chair - Instead of doing this just when you need to, try to do it 3 or 5 then 10 times a day.

Standing on one leg - I do it copious times throughout the day. When cleaning my teeth, when washing some dishes at the sink, when standing at the worktop, sometimes (and this is really sad!) when standing in a queue at the check out.

Gentle resistance-band exercises - These are miracle workers, although I would like to strangle my trainer with them sometimes. You can get them in different levels of difficulty and you can google all sorts of gentle exercises you can do with them.

For those who are more active

Walking - I don't need to tell anyone the value of walking and as we retire it's something that is wonderful to spend more time doing.

Pilates/Yoga - This is a fantastic way to develop your strength, particularly your core. It is also amazing for balance. Nowadays you don't need to join a gym to do these classes, as they are readily available in lots of places (including our u3a!).

Swimming - This is a brilliant all round exercise. It develops strength, flexibility and lung capacity. It is also a great tool for people who have areas of their body that they want to develop after illness, accident or surgery.

Gardening - I don't know about anybody else, but a good hour's gardening is nothing but exhausting. When you think about it, consider how many different types of movement you use. Plus, you have the advantage of spending time with nature.

For those wanting more challenge

Join a gym - If you are able to and have the financial capacity, I cannot encourage you enough to join a gym. I used to think they were full of Lycra clad posers, but how wrong I was! On the whole there is a wide age range of people all at very different levels. I have had so much encouragement from members at my gym and I cannot fault the support of the instructors and trainers which is pretty standard across all gyms. I've also made many new friends.... an added bonus.

Get a Personal Trainer - This was the absolute making of me. You tend to find these wonderful individuals are very passionate about their job and also if you are lucky like me, they really know their stuff. Alex has taught me so much more than getting fit and developing muscle. She has contributed massively to my diet, the supplements I take, the water I drink and the hours I go to bed.

Weight training - This may sound very daunting but lifting weights has a massive benefit to developing muscle and strength. As with everything, you start small and increase as your body gets used to it, fitter and stronger. This doesn't need to be done in a gym, or with a PT, it can be at home using various types of hand held weights.

Small changes, big gains.....so what do you do now?

Set yourself a challenge

This month, choose one activity that will help maintain or improve your strength. It might be ten chair rises each morning, joining a new exercise class, carrying your own shopping, trying those resistance bands gathering dust in the cupboard, or even joining a gym.

Whatever it is....your future self will thank you.

Ann Hedges

First Aid Courses

Do you know what to do if someone collapses? Can you perform CPR and use a defibrillator? Our First Aid course could save a life! It's fun and free to u3a members.

The next two courses:

Saturday 3rd October

Saturday 14th November

9 am – 12 noon at Aughton Village Hall

Members who have attended before but would like a refresher are also welcome.

Email Pam Ball chair@aou3a.uk or speak to her at Horizons.



British Sign Language

Short Course

Would you like to be able to communicate with people who are deaf or hard of hearing? We are offering a short course where you can learn some basic finger spelling, how to introduce yourself, family members, weather, transport, food & drink etc. Tracey from Deaf West Lancs will run the course on Wednesdays for six weeks at Aughton Village Hall from 6th January, 2.00-3.15pm. The cost is £37 per person and spaces are limited. Contact Carole Campbell via the website if you would like to sign up.



Recruitment of Treasurer

Our Constitution limits the time that a member can serve on our Management Committee and hold one of the formally recognised roles (chair, secretary, treasurer). In the next year or so, we will need to appoint a new treasurer to replace Derrick Fewings.

Formal accounting qualifications are not required. On the understanding that you would not need to commit to the role until entirely comfortable, would you be willing to work alongside Derrick, to gain an understanding of our established financial processes and reports? Assistant treasurers can be appointed, to share the workload and to provide support on an ongoing basis. To discuss this opportunity with Derrick, please email treasurer@aou3a.uk.

Short Mat Bowls

Scarisbrick Village Hall

Short Mat Bowls will be resuming Friday 2nd October and Monday 5th October 1.30 pm till 3.30 pm, ending Friday 18th December and Monday 21st December. Cost is £24 per 12 week session. u3a members are welcome to come and try a couple of taster sessions. No bowls equipment is required but remember sensible footwear (no flip flops). If you would like further information contact Eddie Davidson via the website or just turn up to a session at Scarisbrick Village Hall, Smithy Lane, Scarisbrick.



JENNY'S BELLES

On a very hot Thursday afternoon in July, I went to visit a lovely group of ladies, who had come for their weekly belly dancing session. This is held from 12.00 till 1.00pm in the Scout & Guide HQ.

It's been running for over 10 years now and the joint leaders Irene, Fran and Gina are obviously very proud of their group.



They call themselves Jenny's Belles after the founder of the group, Jenny Rawcliffe, who tragically lost her battle with cancer some years past. Jenny is also remembered for putting her professional nursing hat on when the defibrillator was needed for someone elsewhere in the building and from this experience, the First Aid courses were born.

There are nine members of the group with ages ranging from 60 to 90 and they all obviously have a ball. The social side of the group is very important to them and they are regularly 'ladies who lunch', meeting up for Christmas, birthday celebrations and basically any other excuse to get together.

They start the session with a warm up, followed by a new or continuing routine. When asked who creates the dance routines, they said they work as a team so it is a group effort.

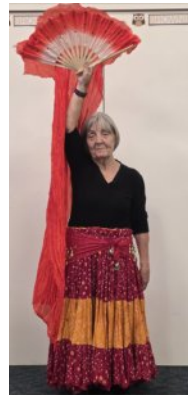
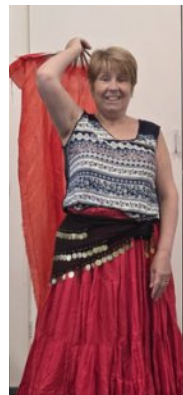
A mixture of Egyptian, Persian and Fusion music is used and musical choice has a big impact on the end product.

It also sounds as if there is a lot of chatting and laughing.

I heard wonderful stories about mishaps such as Meryl's earring getting stuck in her veil, heavily moulting boas and arm swings that need very careful choreography.

If you are interested in trying out the group, I am sure you will be welcomed with open arms and flying boas, but more likely will gain some very valuable new friends. Oh, and I have been told to make sure I add that comfortable attire is recommended for the sessions and there is no requirement to flash your belly!

Ann Hedges



Aughton & Ormskirk u3a
DRAMA GROUP
Present



THE INACCURATE CONCEPTION

By
Richard Ahsam & Geoff Saunders

Thursday 26th, Friday 27th & Saturday 28th
November 2026.

7.00 p.m. Aughton Village Hall

Tickets £15. each including Hotpot supper

Tickets are available from Horizons or by phoning
07787 543210 or 07799 411244

Dates for Your Diary

Quiz Night

Friday 9th October

7.00 for 7.30

HQ

This year's quiz is open to teams of six A&O u3a members, as usual, but teams don't necessarily need to represent a group. The cost is £11 including a supper of hotpot and apple pie (please advise dietary requirements when booking). See Mike or Paul at Horizons for tickets.

Wine Tasting

Friday 16th October

7.00 for 7.30

HQ

Wine tasting takes place on the third Friday of the month. The cost is £12 and all members are welcome. Places can be booked with Mike or Iain at Horizons or via the website.

Art & Craft Showcase

Saturday 24th October

10.00-4.00

Aughton Village Hall

This is an opportunity to see a display of our u3a's various art and craft groups' creations and listen to some background music from our musical groups. Members and non members welcome. See poster on back page for details.

Drama Production

26th, 27th, 28th November

7.00 start

Aughton Village Hall

Don't miss the Drama Group's next production:

The Inaccurate Conception by Richard Ahsam & Geoff Saunders
Tickets £15 including hotpot supper, available at Horizons or by phoning 07787 543210 or 07799 411244.

PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME IS 7pm

Advent Celebration

Thursday 3rd December

11.00

Christ Church

Join the Choir for an advent celebration. There will be songs by the choir, traditional carols for all to sing and festive readings.

Christmas Social

Friday 4th December

time

Aughton Village Hall

Further details will be available nearer the time.

Gardening

By Sue Watkinson

Hello, I am your new Gardening Editor. I came to gardening in my later years, first of necessity but now because growing plants and being outside has become a real therapy.

My intention is to winkle out the gardeners among you and to share ideas, facts and tales about gardening.

Please contact me on gardening@aou3a.uk. I'd love to hear from you.



Have you been despairing over your garden this year? I have too, but am trying to be objective and make some decisions about future summers. I'm noting which plants survived or even thrived in the dry heat and which succumbed in the early weeks or needed excessive watering. To understand why some plants cope and others don't, I asked Peter Gateley, familiar in our u3a as a horticultural guru to those who attend Sunday Socials, to explain the science of it all. Here's what he said:



Imagine that you're a leafy plant evolved and adapted, over many millennia, to grow happily in a mild and moist oceanic climate. But when some so-and-so massively turns up the heat and switches off the water supply, it's bound to be a shock. What can you do when the intense heat causes the breathing pores in your leaves (stomata) to open right up to combat the heat, in doing so breathing much-needed moisture out of your system? Well, you replace it with moisture drawn from the soil via your roots. However, the soil has been baked bone-dry by a combination of the intense sunshine and lack of rain, so your leaves wilt in the heat and lose much of their photosynthesising effectiveness.

Bad news!

It's no wonder that your system starts to close down, shedding developing fruit or flower buds and, eventually, leaves too, in a bid to retain as much moisture as possible. In our gardens these heatwaves result in shorter flowering seasons, crops like lettuce and radish bolting early and even trees and shrubs shedding many of their leaves in an unseasonably 'false autumn'. To add to the problems, the sunshine itself causes leaf scorch, damaging the leaves of more sensitive plants and reducing their effectiveness.

Which plants in your garden are worst affected? The RHS is actively recording effects of the prolonged drought and to build a local picture you could share your experiences and let us know what you would save with a dwindling supply of water. **Pete, the gardener.**

My next contributor is Colin Russ. You will find Colin at many u3a events, usually helping behind the scenes. He takes front stage at the bi-annual Plant Swap, where members exchange crops, cuttings, seedlings, etc. He is also treasurer of the South Lancashire group of the Alpine Garden Society (AGS) in the north west and had an exhibition stand at the recent Southport Flower Show.

Going for (Large?) Gold!!



Together with our Secretary, Chairman and other Committee members we have to plan and build the AGS stand for the Southport Flower Show.

At the end of the preceding Flower Show we always ask..... "Shall we do it again next year? It takes so much time and effort." Of course the answer is always a resounding "yes".

Why do we do it? Meeting the public to discuss alpinism and almost every other type of plant is the first reason. Chatting with other enthusiastic gardeners and members of the public is a joy. Everyone, almost without exception, is having a good time and enjoying a day out.

Secondly, it is a source of income and publicity for our Society. Plant sales make us around £300 over the four days and the prize money for the stand ranges from £150 for a Bronze medal up to £250 for a Large Gold – hence the title of this article! As you can see from the photos we 'only' received a Gold Medal this year. We really are extremely happy with this.

The AGS does much work in conservation, one of which is working alongside the RSPB, United Utilities, and Natural England on a large project in Haweswater. The aim of the project is to restore native alpine plants to the fells around Haweswater reservoir in an area the size of 42 football pitches.

So, I'm writing this article on the last day of Southport Flower Show 2026. We've just asked each other the question..."Shall we do it again next year?". As usual the answer was yes!

Here's to SFS 2027.



Colin Russ

Film Appreciation



The next few films to be shown by the Film Appreciation Group are:

28th September - Persuasion

All start at 2pm at HQ and the cost is £2.

26th October - PS I Love You

There is a short intermission half way through the film for tea/coffee and biscuits and a short discussion after each film for those who wish to stay. Come along and sample our new, improved sound system. When available, we will show subtitles to assist those with hearing problems.

23rd November - The Big Wedding

25th January - Intermezzo

Puzzles From Derrick Fewings

1. Our Drama group is considering scripts for its next production. The cost of the script varies, as you can see below, left. Can you work out the cost of each of the scripts on the right?

- | | |
|--|--|
| • When in Exeter, it won't rain....£92 | • Perhaps even I need help.....£? |
| • If I've told you once.....£5 | • It works, Eve. Never in doubt.....£? |
| • The Forth reeks of Haggis.....£3 | • If our lonely boy returns.....£? |
| • Done with reed basket.....£13 | |



2. Word Search

Another of my wordsearch puzzles for you to have a bash at. First read the paragraph, as penned by me. If I go too far difficulty-wise, seek help. Each soak up early details. A lot, use techniques. A certain number of them lock themselves away and borrow a number of books. Now I feel I lack focus. So, I'll stop lumbering on. The challenge? Spot the fifteen trees hidden in this paragraph. Problem? Once darkness descends, admit defeat.

Answers on page 29.



A Bit of a Laugh

Thank you to Albert Hedges for our comedy page

Sing Along

A friend of mine went on a world tour which turned into a medical disaster.
Here's how he described it..... (Must be sung in the style of Tony Bennett!)

*They swapped my heart in San Francisco,
They changed a hip in Singapore.
I had an appendectomy in Southern Germany,
And in Bengal, they took my gall (stones and all)
A brand new kidney was found in Sydney,
And in Paree, they changed a knee.
And if I don't get back soon to England....
There won't be that much left of me!*



Jokes Corner

The marriage got off to a bad start when the vicar said, "You may kiss the bride," and she said.... "Not now I've got a headache."

Doctor to wife.... "I don't like the way your husband looks." Wife replies.... "Neither do I, but he is good with the kids."

Tom said to Tim.... "I'm really pleased with my new hearing aid." Tim replied, "Oh good what kind is it?" Tom said "It's half past five."

A 6 year old playing the Innkeeper somewhat ruined the Nativity play, because when Joseph asked for a room, he said.... "Yeah that's fine come in!"

What do you get if you put a canary into a food blender.... A shredded tweet.

He's so old, that when he orders a 3 minute boiled egg, they ask for the money up front.

SISTERS

A Short Story by Sue Watkinson

'Cup of tea, Margery?' Lillian's voice was sharp.

'Not just now dear.'

'You used to drink tea all the time. In fact, you drank far too much tea.'

'If you say so, dear.' Margery put another piece in the jigsaw puzzle.

'In fact, I would say it contributed significantly to your blood pressure. I did mention it several times, I'm sure you remember.'



Her sister sighed gently. 'And you might recall Lillian, had you been listening, that I always drank de-caff tea, coffee too. That kind GP recommended it.' 'Poppy cock.' Lillian was determined to have her say, 'You just didn't take enough exercise. Now I played netball and went walking in the Dales until, well, until quite recently.'

'And look at the state of your knees now, Lil, you can't walk as well as I can.'

'But I'm not in a care home, am I. I've still got my independence.'

'This isn't a prison dear. No, I think it's like living in a nice hotel with room service and company.'

'Company from a collection of doddery old creatures who haven't a conversation to offer. That woman you were talking with when I arrived. Josie, I think you called her. She's so common.'

'Oh Lillian, don't be judgmental. I think you would find her a kind hearted, intelligent old lady. She's spent all her working life nursing in the East End. She's here to be nearer her daughters so they don't worry about her. I call that considerate. And she's younger than me!'

'I'm being considerate to my children, and grandchildren too. I'm not spending their inheritance on extortionate fees, I'm keeping my savings intact for them.'

'But Lily, they all have good jobs now. I'm sure they'd value you just as much if you had nothing to leave them.' Lillian smiled, a sad little smile.

'No one calls me Lily now, only you Margey.'

There was a gentle tap on the door. 'Hello Mum, and Auntie Lillian too! How nice to see you.'

'James, darling, I hadn't expected you. I sent a message to explain I already had a visitor. Lillian's come over for the afternoon.'

'I know Mum, but tomorrow we'll be collecting Lisa for the Christmas holiday. I know she'll be round to visit as soon as she can.'

'Will you be seeing much of your grandchildren over the holiday, Lily?'

Margery knew what the answer would be, but a little devil in her wanted to hear it again. James tried to keep his face straight.

‘Not this year, I thought I’d told you. There, you are getting forgetful. The whole family’s off to the sun for three weeks with Christmas on the beach in Oz.

‘Oh yes, I remember. Had you heard about that James?’

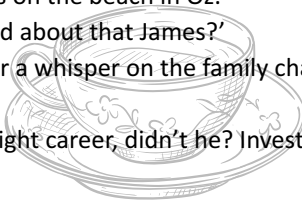
James cleared his throat. ‘I did hear a whisper on the family chat. Peter must have had a good bonus this year.’

Lilian fought back. ‘He picked the right career, didn’t he? Investment banking pays well. A damn sight better than teaching.’

James smiled. ‘But he’ll probably be burned out in a few years and then what? Retirement to a vineyard in rural France?’

‘Oh dear. That would make it difficult for him to visit. Perhaps you could come and live here with me?’

Lilian had nothing more to say.



Barn Dance

We had another enjoyable Barn Dance earlier this year with plenty of dancing and, of course, an excellent hot and cold buffet.



ARTY CRAFTY

I visited the Arty Crafty group in August and they were so deep in concentration they didn't notice me come into the room. I was lucky to have visited during a jewellery workshop which was being led by Jackie.

All of the group were in the process of working with, what looked to me, extremely small and fiddly bits and creating their own bracelets. Jackie had brought all her own resources to share with the group.

They did give themselves a break for a well-deserved brew and biscuit and assured me that when they are not concentrating so hard, they enjoy a good bit of banter.

There is obviously a real skill-sharing strategy, which makes this group work really well and I was surprised to hear all the different activities the group has undertaken.

Between them they have organised:

- Drawn thread work
- Collaging
- Hooking work
- Crocheting
- Dried flower arrangements
- Lino cutting
- Clay modelling
- Gelli printing
- Card making
- Knitting

The group meet on the first Wednesday of every month and currently have around 14 members. More are welcome! Contact Irene via the website for more details.

This is surely a group for those of you out there who like to dabble with arts and crafts and even may have a particular skill to share.

Ann Hedges



THE USED POSTAGE STAMP CLUB

Hello fellow members, and thank you all for your contributions, from a single stamp to a sack full, every one makes a difference. I thought you might like to know more about the journey your donated stamps make when they leave H.Q.

Our contributions are weighed by the charity and sold on by the kilo to various places. Any high value stamps are sorted by the purchasers and sold to collectors possibly at auction. Stamps of less value are sold on to crafters or artists for various projects and also to paper manufacturers to produce vintage printed paper. So if you see any wrapping paper or similar printed with postage stamps some of them could have been yours.

Age Concern probably get from £10 to £20 per kilo depending on the stamps and this is used to fund their services and research projects.

There are other charities out there who take stamps but these are mainly by posting the stamps to them, so in our case the postage would probably be more expensive than the stamps. I hope, however, that you are all fine with stamps going to Age Concern as this doesn't involve anything other than a short walk.

Thanks you all again and keep on stamping.

Megan Tomlinson



Puzzle Answers

- 1. The characters of the price are hidden in the title of the play.
 - Perhaps even I need help.....£79
 - It works, Eve. Never in doubt.....£27
 - If our lonely boy returns.....£41
- 2. The trees are: ash, fir, aspen, fig, peach, oak, pear, lotus, acer, hemlock, rowan, lilac, plum, lemon, cedar.

NO MORE
PHILHARMONIC VISITS?

We need a NEW LEADER to arrange tickets and transport to the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool once a month during the season.

Think you could do it? Have a word with Pam Ball or Ian Grant at Horizons or email either of them on chair@aou3a.uk or groups@aou3a.uk.

Speaker Meetings

Scout & Guide HQ, Thursdays, 11am (following Horizons)

Thursday 8th October

**Pete Turner, Magician /
Mind Games**

‘Curiosity Killed the Cat’

Pete is a low-key magician, not loud, not in your face and makes sure his personality doesn't overshadow his audience. It won't be a magic show, more a glimpse behind the magician's door to hidden secrets that will make you open your eyes in the world of magic. There will be a few tricks performed and exposed for you to try with your family and friends and plenty of fascinating magic information.

Get into the Christmas spirit with tales of Christmas traditions in Britain and around the world. Do you know in which city people go to church on roller skates on Christmas Day? Or why you wear red underwear in Spain at New Year? Come along and discover fascinating facts for the festive season.

Thursday 12th November

David Hearn, Historian

**“Christmas Traditions in Britain
and Around the World”**

Thursday 11th February

**Roger Hussey, Police Fraud
Safety Officer**

‘Fraud Prevention’

Fraud is when a person lies to you, or ‘scams’ you to gain your personal information and take your money. Roger will enlighten us on up-to-date fraudsters’ activities so we can be aware of what to look out for, how to protect ourselves and where to report incidents. We hope you can join us to get the latest knowledge on this topic.

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

Shirley Kirby



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