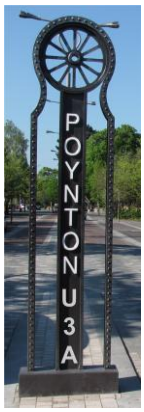



# Poynton u3a News

***poyntonu3a.org.uk*** ***Issue 47-2*** ***4th Jul 2025***

## Poynton u3a Update

### General Meetings

The next General Meeting is on Tuesday 15th July when *Jo Rodman* will be describing the work of *Just-Ice*. Apparently, there will be small tubs of ice cream for sale at £3 each.

Following that, there is a meeting on Tuesday 19th August when *Philip Lawrence* will be informing us about *Scam Awareness*.

### Needlecraft Group

I would like to see if there is sufficient interest amongst members to restart the Needlecraft Group, which we did have until a couple of years ago. I envisage this would include sewing, knitting, crochet, and any general crafts, but that would be up to the members of the group to decide. If you are interested, then please email me at groups@poyntonu3a.org.uk. I can then arrange for us to meet and we will take it from there.

**Nigel Burin**

### Digital Version of u3a Matters

The Third Age Trust have moved on from their barely accessible Screenreader version of *u3a Matters* to a digital version. There is a 'taster' version on the main u3a website – www.u3a.org.uk/news/u3a-matters. Select *Magazine Taster* on the page. Note that this is only a partial version of the most recent paper edition and is predictably a very large file.

## Members' Contributions

### A Fishwife's Tale.

Molly wheeled her barrow of fresh fish through the city and like any fishwife who needed to sell the live fish as fast as possible, she shouted as loudly as she could.

Her language was often foul-mouthed and lewd, to attract the attention of the crowd, who were all waiting to buy the fish at a good price. If not sold quickly enough, the Cockles and Mussels would begin to lose their freshness and would soon perish.

Molly was the daughter of a fisherman called Paddy Malone. She was nineteen, his eldest child and was expected to sell the fish as soon as a catch was brought ashore. She would wheel her wheelbarrow and collect the fish very early in the morning to keep it as fresh as possible. Then push the barrow through the streets of the city of Dublin. If Molly sold all the fish, her father gave her a share of the money which she would often spend in the local tavern. It was where she met some of the other local fishmongers, mostly women, and if they were married or not were all called 'Fishwives'.

When they all got together the drinks would flow and the atmosphere became loud and raucous. They made the most of the money in the good times when the fish was plentiful. On other days, it was too rough at sea for the fishermen to go out in their fishing boats. That didn't mean that Molly didn't have to work. She was often seen on the beach collecting sand-worms, limpets and small crabs, which were used for bait.

There were other times in Molly's life when things were difficult, the fish were not biting or the nets split and the fishermen lost all their catch. No fish, no money. In Dublin there were many sailors from different parts of the world, who came ashore from ships moored in Dublin Harbour. They visited the city looking for a good time and Molly would turn to prostitution to make up for the lean times.

Going out in all weathers to sell the fish, as well as her other ventures took their toll on Molly's health. And one day she caught a fever. It is said in the famous song that no-one could save her and she died young. In the local folk-lore of the time, it is claimed she died on 13th June 1699.

In Suffolk St, in Dublin, there is a statue in bronze of Molly Malone with her wheelbarrow filled with baskets of fish. She is dressed in a revealing 17th century dress, hinting at her job as a part-time prostitute. The statue is also known locally as 'The Tart with the Cart' and was erected in 1988.

Everyone who walks past her touches her for luck. There are areas on the statue where the bronze has been polished clean. Many tourists have touched it over the years, mostly her hand and her curvaceous breasts, to some a disrespectful act.

It is said that after Molly Malone died her ghost walked the streets of Dublin, pushing her wheelbarrow full of seafood. As the song goes, 'Now her ghost wheels her barrow, through the streets broad and narrow, crying "Cockles and mussels, alive, alive, oh"!'

**Susan J Pyett.**

**New Zealand Gardens - Part 2**

*Hamilton Botanical Gardens, Waikato*

Hamilton is a large town roughly one and a half hours' drive south of Auckland. Its Botanical Garden is rated as one of the top three places to visit in New Zealand. It does not disappoint! There are gardens to please everybody. In total there are eighteen 'enclosed' gardens featuring different countries, cultures and times. These include:

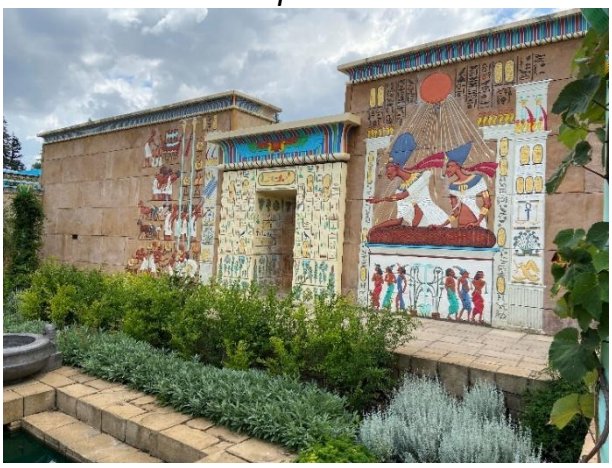
An English flower garden, Ancient Egyptian garden, Parapara (Maori) garden, which displays pre-European gardening techniques, Surrealist garden, Chinese Scholars' garden, Indian, Tudor and an Italian Renaissance garden. Funding has recently been granted to develop a Medieval garden.

Apart from these formal gardens there are open spaces in which to wander. On the outskirts are rose gardens, camellia and rhododendron avenues. The whole area is built alongside the Waikato River with riverside walks into the city.

*The Italian Renaissance Garden*

*The Parapara Garden*

*The Tudor Garden*



*The Egyptian Garden*

*Quarry Gardens, Whangarei*

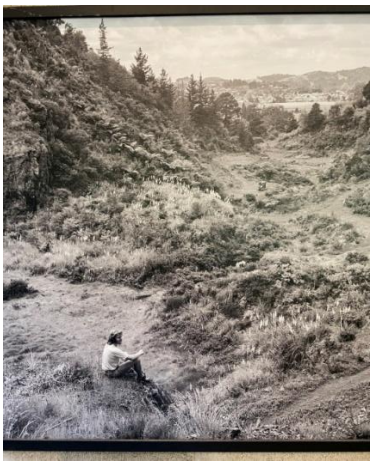
These gardens are unusual. They are north of Auckland in the region known as Northland. When quarrying ceased in the early nineties, volunteers helped local garden enthusiasts to clear the quarry of wild vegetation with a view to create a public garden. They were supported by the local council, who own the site, and many sponsors. In this region there are no frosts so the planting is subtropical, very lush, green with vibrant colours.

The quarry in which they lie was formed by the upheaval of greywacke rock and was used mainly for crushing into aggregate for road laying. The quarry is north facing and benefits from warm, humid summers and mild, wet winters. This sheltered area supports a variety of conditions for native and exotic subtropical and arid plants from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas and Australia.

There are several naturally formed waterways through the gardens one of which was dammed to form a lake. In dry summers water from the lake is used to irrigate the thirsty subtropical plants.

Several old quarry structures and machines were left behind after industrial operations ceased in 1974. These were removed as they were considered unsafe for a public place. But some remain as a celebration of the gardens' industrial heritage. Over time the lush planting has grown around them softening their harsh lines. One structure is regularly used as a wedding venue!

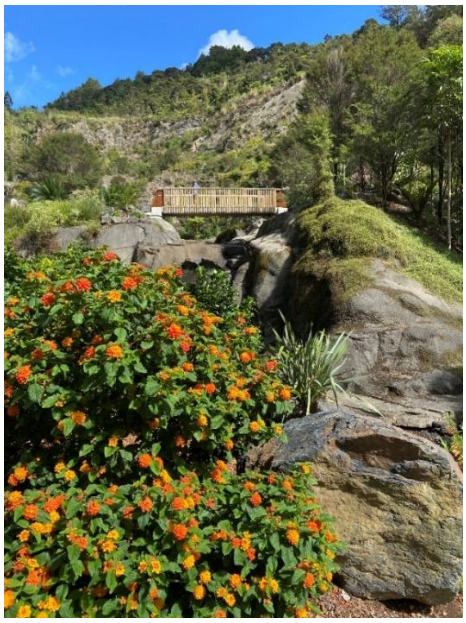
Back in February 2022, two days before we arrived for a visit, Cyclone Gabrielle struck the area causing major damage to the gardens. A huge landslip destroyed the once spectacular cacti and arid plant area burying it under five metres of mud. Thanks to a massive effort by staff and volunteers the gardens re-opened after a closure of one month. Hundreds of truckloads of mud were removed and trenches dug to take runoff. Since then, many plants have been planted to stabilise the area and most areas are fully open again to the public while work continues to minimise further landslips.



*The garden before work began, early 1990's*

*The garden in 2025*

*The landslip*



*The gardens 2025*

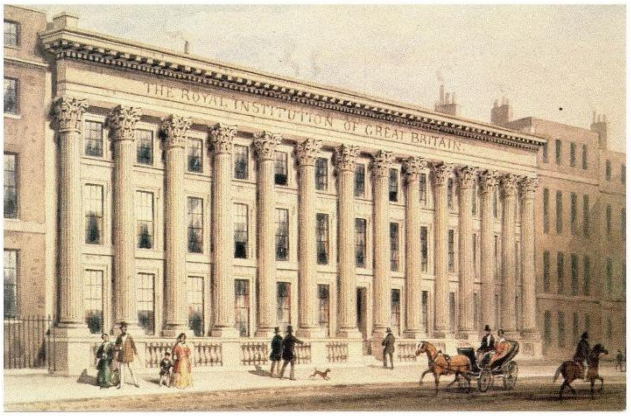
*The wedding venue*

**Kate Marsham**

**The Royal Institution - Part 1**

The Royal Institution was founded as the result of a proposal by Sir Benjamin Thompson (Count Rumford) for the "formation by Subscription, in the Metropolis of the British Empire, of a Public Institution for diffusing the Knowledge and facilitating the general Introduction of useful Mechanical Inventions and Improvements, and for the teaching by courses of Philosophical Lectures and Experiments, the application of Science to the Common Purposes of Life".

Rumford's proposal led to a meeting on 7th March 1799 at the Soho Square house of Joseph Banks, then president of the Royal Society, a similar but much older learned society. A follow-up meeting on 9th March saw the first meeting of the managers of the Institution. In June of that year, the society elected George Finch, 9th Earl of Winchilsea, as its first president, and in July it purchased 21 Albemarle Street, Mayfair, the building that has served as its home ever since.




*The Royal Institution building on Albemarle Street, London, c. 1838. Painting by Thomas Hosmer Shepherd (1793-1864)*

Renovations began immediately on the building to provide appropriate meeting, office, and laboratory space for the Institution's mission.

The steep-sided main lecture hall that has become the building's most publicly visible feature was completed in 1800, the same year that the institution received its royal charter from George III. The lecture hall was put to use immediately with the first lecture being given there in March 1800.

**Humphry Davy**

Humphry Davy was born in Penzance in 1778. After being grammar school educated, he became an apothecary's apprentice and then worked at a medical research facility in Bristol where he investigated the medical powers of gases (produced experimentally or artificially). In 1799, he experimented with nitrous oxide and was astonished at how it made him laugh. He nicknamed it "laughing gas" and wrote about its potential as an anaesthetic to relieve pain during surgery. The papers he published based on the work with gases established his scientific reputation

He was hired as an assistant lecturer in chemistry at the Royal Institution in 1801. There he was a great success, with his lectures soon becoming a draw for fashionable London society. He was made the main lecturer in 1802 replacing Thomas Garnett who was the initial appointee. Davy was appointed Professor of Chemistry later in 1802.

During his time at the Royal Institution, he is remembered for using electricity to isolate several elements for the first time and subsequently for discovering the elemental nature of chlorine and iodine.

In the early 1800s, Humphry Davy had what were then the most powerful electrical batteries in the world at the Royal Institution and, with these, he was able to demonstrate a form of electric lighting.

Throughout his career, Davy was a prolific poet although little of his work was published.

In 1812, Davy was knighted, left the Royal Institution and married Jane Apreece, a wealthy heiress.

He toured the Continent between 1813 and 1815 (taking Michael Faraday along as his assistant) and on his return to England invented a form of the miners' safety lamp. In the 1820s he advised the Admiralty on protection of ship's bottoms and worked on improving optical glass.

In 1818, Davy was created a baronet, which was the first such honour conferred on a man of science in Britain. A year later, he was made President of the Royal Society but was not a success and, after resigning due to ill health, he again toured the Continent, dying in Geneva in 1829.

**Discovery of elements**

Batteries today come in many different shapes and sizes but they are all based on the scientific development of Italian chemist Alessandro Volta.

Volta created the first battery, a Voltaic pile, in 1799. Humphry Davy and Michael Faraday visited Volta in Italy in 1814 and were given the Voltaic pile pictured.

Davy built his own batteries at the Royal Institution. His experiments with them resulted in several important discoveries including the isolation and discovery of 9 chemical elements.

Davy used a Voltaic pile to split molten salts and thus identify new elements. We now call this technique *electrolysis*. Davy discovered potassium in 1807, deriving it from caustic potash, and isolated sodium in the same year by passing an electric current through molten sodium hydroxide.

On 30th June 1808, Davy reported to the Royal Society that he had successfully isolated four new metals which he named barium, calcium, strontium and magnium (later changed to magnesium). The observations gathered from these experiments also led to Davy isolating boron in 1809.

Davy performed a number of experiments aimed to isolate the metal aluminium and is credited as the person who named the element.

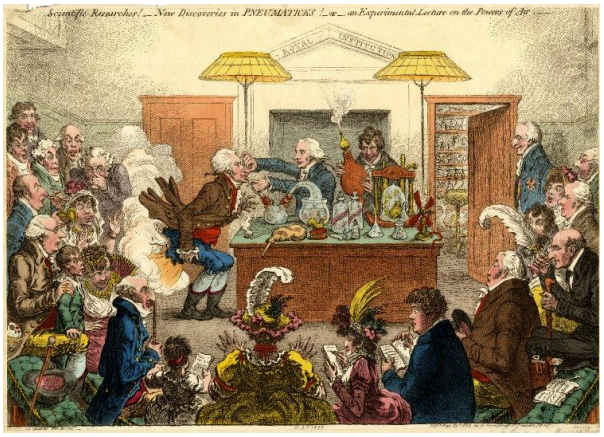
Chlorine was discovered in 1774 by Swedish chemist Carl Wilhelm Scheele, who mistakenly thought it contained oxygen. Davy showed that the acid of Scheele's substance contained no oxygen. In 1810, chlorine was given its current name by Humphry Davy, who insisted that chlorine was in fact an element.

In a similar fashion, during a visit to France in 1813, Davy identified iodine as an element and not a substance containing oxygen as had been supposed. (This was a somewhat strange visit because at the time England was at war with France. Napolean even awarded Davy a medal recognising his achievements in electrochemistry although the two men never met.)

**Women's scientific education**

Davy, like many of his enlightenment contemporaries, supported female education and women's involvement in scientific pursuits, even proposing that women be admitted to evening events at the Royal Society. Davy acquired a large female following around London. In a satirical cartoon by Gillray, nearly half of the attendees pictured are female. His support of women caused Davy to be subjected to considerable gossip and innuendo, and to be criticised as unmanly.

In 1810, the Royal Institution became a public institution and membership organisation, welcoming both male and female members.



*An 1802 satirical cartoon by James Gillray showing a Royal Institution lecture on pneumatics, with Davy holding the bellows and Count Rumford looking on at the extreme right. Dr Thomas Garnett is the lecturer, holding the victim's nose.*

**Derek Gatenby**

***Contributions to the Newsletter***

*The timing and length of the newsletter is dependent to a large extent on the contributions submitted by our members. If you would like to write an article or provide some pictures, send your contribution to* news@poyntonu3a.org.uk

## Things to Do

Sudoku No 61

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | | | | 1 | | 3 | |
| | | 8 | 2 | | | | 5 | |
| 1 | | 5 | | | | | 8 | |
| | | | | | 3 | 6 | | |
| 7 | | | 4 | | | 5 | | |
| | | 6 | 5 | 4 | | | 1 | |
| 8 | 1 | | | 7 | | 4 | | |
| 3 | | | | | 2 | | | |

Fill the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9

Below is the solution to No 60

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| 3 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 8 |
| 6 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 7 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| 1 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 3 |
| 2 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 7 |
| 4 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 2 |
| 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 4 |
| 9 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 1 |

More quiz questions from Hooha.

1. If cows are bovine, what are sheep?
2. What is the original meaning of the word “jaeger”?
3. How tall is the Eiffel Tower? 1250 feet, 1060 feet or 980 feet?
4. "The death of one man is a tragedy. The death of millions is a" what?
5. Which members of the Travelling Wilburys are still alive?

Below are the answers to the questions in the previous edition.

1. When Gyles Brandreth was an MP, where was his constituency?
   *Chester*
2. What's the first word in the Bible?
   *In (the beginning was the word...)*
3. Who wrote 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face'?
   *Ewan McColl*
4. Native American impersonator wrestler, Billy Two-Rivers, is the father of which famous fashion designer?
   *Wayne Hemmingway*
5. Who was the first person buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey?
   *Geoffrey Chaucer*