

FROM THE CHAIR

At the April meeting we changed the format and had no outside speaker.

The Singing Group entertained us with a delightful programme arranged by Tony and Margaret Glynn.

This was followed by excellent talks given by three of our members.

- Jean Drinkwater: The difference Kit, her guide dog, has made to her life.
- John Carroll: Air Travel in the Sixties before the age of the Jumbo Jet.
- Pat Christopher: The World War One exhibition organised by the Family History Group which was on display in the stage area. The hardworking members of this group had put a great deal of effort into collecting memorabilia, letters and photographs and mounting them onto display boards. We hope that they will be able to bring the exhibition to another meeting so that more people can see it.

Many members came to me and said how much they had enjoyed the afternoon. Anyone who did not attend certainly missed a treat. I hope that there will be some more members who will volunteer to give talks at a future meeting

Margaret McDermott

FROM THE EDITOR

This is your newsletter so please help me to make it interesting to read. Items for the newsletter from members are always welcome so if you have any suggestions for content or articles of interest to U3A members please contact me at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

The next edition of the newsletter will be the July edition. Please can you get your contributions to me by Friday 26 June?

NEW GROUPS

I have received suggestions for two new groups:

Card Making

Two members who have a great deal of experience of this are willing to lead a group.

Musicals

A member who has a large collection of DVDs of musicals is willing to show these in her own home. The format would be similar to the opera group: a complete performance with a break for tea/coffee at some suitable point.

Both these groups will meet in High Lane. Numbers for both groups will be limited, so anyone who is interested in either group should contact me as soon as possible.

WE NEED MORE GROUPS. If you have an idea for a group, please come and discuss it with me. I would be delighted to hear from you.

Meg Humphries

IN THIS ISSUE:

Chair's message	Crown Green Bowling
New groups	Dining
Forthcoming events	Churches and Pubs
Charity Valuation days	Family History
U3A Photography competition	Gardening
IT Corner - online games	German
Manchester Whitworth Gallery	History
The Over 50s election?	Holidays and visits
Group reports	Mah-jong
Backgammon	Music Appreciation
Ballet Appreciation	Opera Appreciation
Cinema	Photography
Craft and Needlework	Reading
	Singing
	Strollers
	Walking
	Whist

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OUR U3A ACTIVITIES

13 May	Monthly meeting: Mystery Shopping by Keith Vigurs
10 June	Monthly meeting: Wonders of Wood by Ray Ashton
17 June	Theatre group. Noises off. Octagon Theatre, Bolton. Last date for booking May meeting
8 July	Monthly meeting: TV Quizzes Behind the scenes by Glenys Hopkins

FORTHCOMING HOLIDAYS AND VISITS

Contact: Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith

31 May – 5 June	PERTSHIRE By Coach. Approx £400. Possible visits to Scone Palace, Discovery Point, Glamis Castle, Dundee Botanical Gardens, Angus Folk Museum, Blair Castle. Balance due at the April meeting
18 June	Guide Dogs Training Centre Coach from Village Hall at 9:30
27 July	Chester Balance at May meeting
16-20 Aug	STRATFORD By coach. £350. Warwick Castle, Shakespeare Experience, Cotswolds, Althorp House, Coventry Cathedral. Balance at May meeting
6-10 Sept	IRELAND Flight from Manchester to Cork. Approx £460. Cobh Heritage Centre, Bantry House, Ring of Beara, Mizen Head, Garinish Island, Cork Gaol. Balance at June meeting.
10-23 Oct	Cruise 2 night hotel stay in Istanbul followed by cruise to Kusadasi, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Athens etc.

U3A NORTH WEST REGION ACTIVITIES

4 June	North West Regional Annual Conference and AGM – Crewe Arms Hotel
1-4 Sept	U3A NORTH WEST REGION SUMMER SCHOOL. Newton Rigg College, Penrith. Cost Full Board Residential Delegate £300. Day delegate £150 Booking closes 31 May

U3A NATIONAL EVENTS

13-16 July	Summer School. Harper Adams University, Shropshire. Subjects include Art appreciation, cinema history, France, maths, philosophy, theatre, writing fiction.
------------	---

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Now-11 Nov	Recreation of Stamford Hospital in Dunham Massey Hall.
1 May - 27 Sept	Picturing Venice. Lady Lever gallery.
5 May	Globe Theatre Julius Caesar. Stockport Plaza
14 May	Man and superman. NT Live. Various venues
14 -16 May	La Boheme. Buxton Opera House
18 May	Theatre Tour. Stockport Plaza. 11am
19-23 May	The History Boys. Buxton Opera House
19 May	Pirates of Penance. ENO. Stockport Plaza/Cineworld
20-30 May	Dirty Rotten Scoundrels. Manchester Opera House
31 May	Table top sale. Village Hall.
3 June- 25 July	Wicked. Lowry Theatre
9 June	London Road. NTLive. Stockport Plaza/Didsbury Cineworld
10 June	La Boheme. Stockport Cineworld
16-20 June	Woman in Black. Buxton Opera House
1 July	Carmen. ENO. Stockport Cineworld
4 July	Organ coffee morning. Stockport Plaza

TV AUCTIONEER TO HOST CHARITY VALUATION DAYS FOR FRANCIS HOUSE

TV auctioneer and antiques expert Charles Hanson, a regular on the BBC's The Antiques Road Trip, Cash in the Attic and Bargain Hunt, will be taking part in a series of special Valuation Days in support of Francis House.

Charles presided over the auction at the hospice gala ball in December and after visiting the hospice earlier this year offered to bring his team of experts to Wilmslow to help the children's hospice further.

The Next Hansons Auctioneers and Valuers Charity Valuation Day will be held on Thursday 21 May from 11am till 3pm. The venue is the Coach & Four, 69/71 Alderley Road, Wilmslow. Other dates later this year are 18 June, 16 July, 20 August, 17 Sept, 15 Oct and 19 November.

The public and supporters are asked to bring along their treasured antiques, rare toys, books, glass, jewellery, silver and collectables. Although the valuations are free of charge, a donation is requested with all the money raised going to Francis House.

For more information contact the fundraising team on 0161 443 2200 or visit <http://www.franchishouse.org.uk/latest-news/visit-from-tv-auctioneer/>

U3A PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION 2015

This year's theme is Britain's wildlife. The closing date of the competition is 31 August 2015. The competition will be judged by Amateur Photographer Magazine.

The winning photographer will receive a year's subscription to Amateur Photographer magazine and a gift token. Three runners-up will also receive gift tokens. The photographs will be featured on the website and announced in the November issue of Third Age Matters. Full rules are on the U3A website at <http://www.u3a.org.uk/latest-news/417-photography-competition-2015.html>

IT CORNER

In this edition we are looking at games you can play on your tablet computer or smartphone. All you need to do is download the app to your device and you're ready to start playing. You can search for apps using the Search button in PlayStore or AppStore.



Scrabble online

There are many versions of Scrabble that you can play against your friends; you can also challenge other players using the app. Popular Scrabble apps include:

- Words with Friends – attractive screen layout and easy to use.
- ScrabbleFree – the 'official' Scrabble app.

Words With Friends is my favourite Scrabble app. If anyone would like to try this out please email the editor and challenge me to a game! This could be the start of our first virtual group.



Bridge online

There are many online bridge offerings; most offer different systems and games against computers or real players. Some are free and some have a small registration cost. Look for those that can be installed and played on iPad and Android tablets. Some popular ones are:

- Bridgebase <http://www.bridgebase.com>
- Bridgeclub <http://www.bridgeclublive.com/>
- FunBridge <http://www.funbridge.com>
- Bridge4free <http://www.bridge4free.com/>

There is a huge range of other online puzzle type games including card games, chess, backgammon, mahjong, crosswords, Sudoku etc etc.

Browse your app store – you'll be amazed at what's there.

MANCHESTER WHITWORTH GALLERY

The Whitworth Art Gallery has now reopened after its £15 million renovation. The building is now double its former size and has seen a five-fold increase in visitors since it was reopened. The Gallery has recently been named North West Building of the Year by the Royal Institute of British Architects.



<http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk>

Highlights include the galleries housing exhibitions by Cornelia Parker and Cai Guo-Qiang, open corridors, work spaces, the reopened Victoria Grand Hall and the 'cafe in the trees'.

Current exhibitions include Watercolours, The 1960s, Johnnie Shand Kydd and contemporary acquisitions.

<http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/currentexhibitions/>

THE OVER-50S HAVE THE REAL VOTING AND SPENDING POWER — SO WHY ARE WE SO OBSESSED WITH YOUTH?

Stefano Hatfield, The Independent

Which group of people nearly always vote in general elections? In which demographic group has nearly half switched party allegiance during their voting lives? Among whom do 34 per cent say they are currently undecided between the parties?

It is of course the same demographic that already controls 79 per cent of disposable wealth in the UK, that will constitute 50 per cent of the population by the year 2020, and by the way is having more fun than the rest of you put together: step forward the 50+ generation, the age group that Government and big business forgot

In a political environment which is focused on giving 16 year-olds the vote, and in a business climate where marketers continue to be obsessed with targeting "millennials" or 16-34 year-olds, the age group with the real voting and spending power continues to be inexplicably ignored. The 50+ Project, a new survey undertaken by Research Now for the 50+ lifestyle brand High50, has revealed that people over 50 form the wealthiest, happiest, most spendthrift and politically engaged of all age groups. Perhaps it's not a surprise that 52 per cent of them feel that Britain should stay in the EU, or that 49 per cent believe a quota on immigration should be introduced, but nearly a third (27 per cent) feel immigration should be stopped altogether! There is mileage from UKIP here a-plenty. Not least because so many say they are floating voters, who have actually become more politically engaged since the last election and are actually more politically engaged than they ever have been in life. And, as 85 per cent claim they always or nearly always vote, and the turnout at the last three general elections is between 60 per cent and 65 per cent, that means a hell of a lot of young people are not voting.

So, what is going on here? Why is both Government and business ignoring the most active voting and spending of age groups? It cannot surely be because only six per cent of the UK ad industry is aged over 50? It can't be that in the digital switching economy, advertisers cling on to the outmoded notion that you attract a consumer young and you have them for lunch? Or, when the likes of Elle Macpherson, Sandra Bullock, Johnny Depp and Brad Pitt are currently 50, you need to market to older people by making them feel younger?

Or is it? The obsession with youth pervades all areas of society, and flies in the face of the empirical evidence and all demographic trends. It cannot, and surely will not persist, particularly in advance of what will surely come to be seen as the 50+ election.

You can read the full article at <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-over50s-have-the-real-voting-and-spending-power--so-why-are-we-so-obsessed-with-youth-9809851.html>

GROUP REPORTS

BACKGAMMON



The backgammon group is alive and kicking and would welcome new members. Backgammon is a great game, faster and less intense than chess, but much more involved than Ludo!

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month at 2 pm in the afternoon, at the Royal Oak pub in High Lane. There will be no backgammon on 8 May so the next meeting will be on 20 May.

If anyone is interested, please contact me.

Ron Barrow

BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 1 AND 2

March Meeting

Prog 1: At this meeting by popular request we all enjoyed a DVD played at our very first meeting in 2011, featuring the group's favourite male dancer Mikhail Barishnikov's. The "A-Z of Ballet" this title was my first attempt as a Group Leader and thankfully the group fell in love with this brilliant dancer, it also gave the newcomers a chance to see this excellent ballet, the highlights most definitely being "The Sinatra Suite" and "Push Comes to Shove".

Prog 2: In this programme we continued the "Baryshnikov" theme with a documentary from the "South Bank Show" featuring three male dancers; "Mikhail Baryshnikov", "Carlos Acosta" and "Rudolf Nureyev" three of the greatest male dancers of our time, it was a very informative documentary enjoyed by all.

April Meeting

Prog 1: "Nureyev and Friends" Part 1 (Sky Arts 2):- This is a tribute to "Nureyev" consisting of various famous PDD's such as; "La Sylphide", "Manon" La Bayadere", "Raymonda" and many more, danced by the cream of the crop from Ballet Companies around the world. We look forward to seeing Part 2 soon.

Prog 2: "Who Cares" featuring the George Gershwin Songbook, danced by the "Holland National Ballet". This ballet and the songs brought back lots of youthful memories to us all such as; "Who Cares" "Embrace Me", "The Man I Love", "Stairway to Paradise", "Strike up the Band", "I Got Rhythm" 'S Wonderful, and a few others we couldn't bring to mind. May be the Wednesday Group will remember the last few.

Sheila Hall

BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 3 AND 4

25th March / 2nd April: We saw the Royal Ballet in a recent performance (2012) of Kenneth Macmillan's Romeo and Juliet. This was very beautifully danced to Prokofiev's score by principal dancers Federico Bonelli and Lauren Cuthbertson.

22nd April / 7th May: The theme was "British Choreographers Today."

David Bintley is Artistic Director of the Birmingham Royal Ballet and has choreographed many works for them and for other companies world-wide. We watched the Birmingham Royal Ballet performing Hobson's Choice. This is a very entertaining work, set around Hobson's Boot Shop in Salford. It includes dances by a Salvation Army band, and some clog dancing.

We then had a look at choreographers Liam Scarlett and Christopher Wheeldon. We saw each of them in rehearsal, followed by some short extracts of their work. The last short piece was Wheeldon's striking New Beginnings, performed at sunrise on the roof of a skyscraper in Manhattan. (57 floors up). You can watch this on YouTube at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zMCxmdkcRY>



For our next meeting, we will stay with the British theme and see Sir Frederick Ashton's Sylvia.

Meg Humphries

CHURCHES AND PUBS

St Wilfrid's C of E Church, Standish

In April, we had the great pleasure of visiting St Wilfrid's C of E Church in Standish, near Wigan. On arrival, we were greeted by Joe Beardsley, who gave us a very detailed and informative talk on the history, architecture and artefacts of the church. A fascinating place of worship.



A church had stood on this spot since 1205, but in 1582 was rebuilt in sandstone and millstone grit, (some 30 years after the Reformation] by a Roman Catholic family, for the use of the Church of England to serve 11 parishes, hence its large size. The Standish family were promised the use of the side chapel to hear mass, away from the main congregation.

Today C of E, Methodist and RC churches pray together at interdenominational services at St. Wilfrids, owing to the advent of the Christian Unity Movement. How times have changed.

At the time of the 1580's rebuilding, the existing tower and spire was retained, but in 1814 the spire was badly damaged by lightning and in 1822 blew down, and was replaced by the present tower of 130 feet, surmounted by a weather vane in the form of the Standish family crest. The fine roof of this church makes it a grade 1 listed building. It consists of a beautiful oak timbered ceiling with moulded principals dividing the ceiling into bays with moulded diagonal ribs. There is a central nave leading to a richly carved oak screen and pulpit at the chancel steps. Beautiful stained glass windows adorn the sides and the sanctuary.

All in all this is a very impressive church with a fascinating history, along with interesting features, too many to mention here and is well worth a visit. Following our visit we had a superb meal at The Owl Inn in Standish, in a very pleasant rural setting.

Another fine church and example of our heritage, Paul. Many thanks for organising such a great day to remember!

Monica Martin

CINEMA CLUB

We had a record number of members at the showing of Second Best Marigold Hotel last month. The film proved so popular that it ran for several weeks. This month's film is Woman In Gold which we will be seeing on 22 April. The next film will be Far From The Madding Crowd on 6 May.

It's a great night out at Marple's own private cinema, The Regent. The top price ticket is only £5.50. Come and join us

Sheila Harrop

CRAFT AND NEEDLEWORK GROUP

The group met in March when we enjoyed a very tasty lunch, this time at the Romany Restaurant at Brookside. We were sad to hear that it will be closing at the end of June. We next meet on Thursday, 14th of May.

Marlene Brooks

CROWN GREEN BOWLING

Members really enjoyed our Annual Luncheon which was held at the Alma Lodge at the end of March. Players were encouraged to bring along their spouses so we had a really good crowd. The Alma Lodge looked after us very well, and everyone enjoyed their meal and a social afternoon in the warmth and comfort of the Hotel's Dining room. Thanks to Roy and Barbara Tomlinson for organising this one. Tuesday and Thursday groups continue as before.

Margaret Evans

CURRENT AFFAIRS

This group restarted on April 22nd. All the previous members returned and three new ones joined the group.

As the Election dominates the media currently it formed the main topic and a very lively discussion ensued. Of course there were some diametrically

opposed views! We were agreed that all the parties were trying to outdo each other with statistics promising to spend billions here and billions there so much so that many people are tending to switch off. Will all these spending promises be kept or will amnesia set in?

We discussed electoral reform since although the smaller parties have a lot of support spread across the country they stand little chance of being elected (except perhaps the Scottish National Party!) At least the leaders of the Greens, UKIP and Plaid Cymru have had a higher profile this time and have been allocated more TV time. Some members were adamant that the first past the post system is preferable to any proportional representation or coalition. There was a suggestion that voting should be compulsory as in Australia with a box on the ballot paper to indicate that you did not wish to vote for any of the candidates.

The group had a number of ideas for funding the NHS. Many would be prepared to pay more tax provided that it could be guaranteed to go directly to the NHS. Lottery funding was suggested and perhaps a call out charge for an ambulance. No one had any idea of how to deter those who use A&E unnecessarily. Should the NHS not be taken out of politics and an all party committee set up to administer it?

I was very surprised at the lack of sympathy for the plight of the migrants who were drowned trying to cross the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy and Malta. One said that many of them were very well dressed and wondered how they could afford the payment to the traffickers. The majority are fleeing chaos in Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, the Gambia, Senegal etc. Apparently ten million Syrians have fled and according to reports the UK has accepted around 150. Is the EU obliged to help these people and what can Europe realistically do? There is to be a meeting of EU leaders the day after this meeting; perhaps they will come up with a solution to this dire situation. No doubt they will do plenty of talking but the problem is beyond the resources of a few countries in Southern Europe.

The next subject was fracking. One member stated that it had been going on for years in the south of England and said there was a lot of scaremongering about the subject. The technology involved was

proven and sufficient safeguards can be put in place. After all power is essential for modern life. Imagine doing without the washing machine, the vacuum cleaner, TV, computers etc. However one member said she would prefer to go back to candles and carpet beaters rather than see the countryside desecrated.

Do those people who travel to Syria to support Isis have a right to go? Should we use scarce resources to try to stop them? In the case of families with young children we thought that perhaps because the children are British Citizen the parents are not allowed to take them out of the country. A similar situation to that of the child who was taken from a hospital in the UK for treatment abroad.

There was a brief discussion about the sacking of Jeremy Clarkson. Some thought his programme was very entertaining and earned the BBC huge revenue; others had never watched it. However members felt that he had assaulted a colleague and deserved his fate.

Margaret McDermott

DINING

In April, the Dining Group went to the Legh Arms in Prestbury The appointed day arrived bright and sunny and despite road works (as usual) thirty three members made it to the Grade 2 listed inn and restaurant.

The dining room, which we had to ourselves was a very welcoming sight. The glasses and silverware sparkled against the white linen as the sun streamed in through the windows. The food was excellent; we had a varied selection of starters, mains and desserts followed by tea or coffee with the ham shank, chosen by seventeen of us, being the most popular.

We left the restaurant happy and very full; our waistbands a good deal tighter than when we arrived.

Our next venture will be in June; names will be taken at the May meeting.

Jeannette Bell
Dorothy Neillands

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP



At the April meeting we displayed our findings about our WW1 relatives. We had been working on it for some time and had discovered some amazing stories among our members. Fifteen people contributed to the display, not all from the family history group and I would like to thank them all. The majority had been awarded the three standard medals; the British war medal, the victory medal and the 1914-15 star but in addition to that we had two military medals; one Belgian Croix de Guerre and one French Croix de Guerre with Star all awarded for gallantry in battle.

We also displayed postcards, war diary extracts and letters from the front including a very moving last letter home.

The memorabilia brought along were also interesting to see. Ann Houghton brought along her grandfather's mess kit of knife, fork plate and cup and also a 'death penny' which would have been given to his next of kin after the war. Roger Drinkwater brought an impressive framed collection of his great uncle's war medals, photos, badge and other items. The most incredible coincidence was that Jackie Beresford had taken a photograph of her relative's name on the Menin gate and the name below it was Ann Houghton's grandfather, both in the Lancashire fusiliers.

We were fascinated by the stories we uncovered and appreciated the positive comments we received from the members who viewed the display.

We are arranging to show the display again in High Lane church later in the year and also again for our U3A. If you have anything which would add to the display please get in touch with us because I am sure there are untold WW1 stories out there.

Summer meeting dates are:

- 23rd April House 7th May School
- 21st May House 11th June School
- 25th June House

We would like to recruit more members to our group, with or without experience. We are as interested in the social history of our ancestors as we are in getting as far back as possible. Please contact us if you are interested.

Pat Christopher

GARDENING

March meeting

Warm sunshine greeted our group of nine at Janet's house. Fortified by coffees/teas/biscuits we explored the four levels of the garden, which were full of interest. Seasonal crocus, iris, daffodils and hellebores gave splashes of colour, and prominent sculptures drew the eye. Signs of fox and badger activity could be seen in places, not uncommon in this area. Many unusual shrubs and trees were dotted around as the garden descended towards Torkington Brook with a backdrop of tall Poplars and lesser trees. We envied the lovely situation but found it difficult to give useful advice on linking the levels together without the use of steps. The group exchanged a few cuttings and admired a display of hellebore and camelia flowers

April meeting

Our group of seven members was amazed by the "hidden gem" of Walkden gardens, near Sale Moor. Harry Walkden's 1949 bequest of seven acres of former plant nursery to the people of Sale has been developed by Trafford council into an imaginative garden of 18 individual sections, or rooms, separated by beech hedges. The design was originally influenced by Hidcote gardens and required much determination by local people; and still does, now with the help of the friends of Walkden gardens, to maintain and improve it.

The trademark circular dovecote building was transported brick by brick from Sale Old Hall, and re-erected.



Notable features in this beautiful and varied garden, called "the maze" by locals, were the 70 foot wisteria arch, a tranquil Japanese garden, the herbaceous walk, fuchsia garden, conifer garden and the beech circle. Although early in the year, there was plenty to see, particularly the many magnolias and a splendid selection of double camellias. Unusual shrubs and evergreen plants caught our eye, even if we could not identify them all. It was easy to get pleasantly lost and lose one's bearings in the array of different "rooms", and we were amazed that such a lovely place was still free, in this day and age! Our visit was nicely rounded off by tasty meals in nearby Sale water park.

Next visit – Wednesday 20 May to Stonycroft cottage garden and nursery.

Walter Mason

GERMAN GROUP



The German Group continues to meet on most Fridays. We have just started our summer season in the conservatory which will give us the opportunity to discuss the wildlife on the canal seen at first hand. Recently we have had accounts of holidays taken by members to Spain, India, Anglesey, Dorset and Torquay and were brought tourist leaflets in German, extolling the virtues of a holiday in Dorset.

We have been happy to welcome back Cliff after his serious illness and would like to congratulate Barry's mother on her 100th birthday. It's nice to know there are people even older than members of High Lane U3A!

Marlene Brooks

HISTORY GROUP

At the April meeting, each member of the group was asked to select any year of their choosing, prior to 1938, and prepare a five minute talk on important or interesting events of that year. The following years were chosen:- 1876, 1894, 1930, 1789, 1914, 1916, 1865, 1905, 1888 and 1934.

Some of the important events were Victoria becoming Empress, Istanbul becoming Constantinople, first telephone line from England to Australia, opening of the Manchester Ship Canal, William Booth founded the Salvation Army, invention of Neoprene and the first US glider flight.

The next meeting is on the 27 May; the topic will be The Clans of the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland presented by Derek Jones.

Pam Curley

HOLIDAYS AND VISITS GROUP

A group of 30 members enjoyed a guided tour of the Royal Exchange Theatre on 14 April, when we were taken back stage to see the work, and learn some of the secrets of behind the scenes. Of particular interest was the costume department which not only makes clothes of every period, but also props such as a parrot which was under construction. Many costumes are made for each new play, either by altering previous garments or starting from scratch, as well as borrowing or exchanging with other theatres as required. Every costume is washed after each performance!!! Quite a chore! Sometimes a play requires two or three identical garments of differing degrees of cleanliness to create a realistic appearance if a character is involved in a fight, journey or is involved in a scene such as Anna Karenina's 'mud bath.' Padded corsets are also used to alter the shape of an actor if they are too slim for a role.

The make up department was intriguing too as they ingeniously make wigs, noses of many shapes and sizes and especially gory was the description of artificial blood carried in a pouch strapped to an actor's body which is squeezed to made the 'blood' spurt as appropriate!!!!

After a most interesting and informative morning we enjoyed an excellent lunch at a nearby Chinese restaurant. The general consensus was, 'A thoroughly enjoyable day out.'

Margaret Meekley

MAH-JONG GROUP

On Wednesday 18 March members of both groups visited Chinatown. We explored the Chinese Arts and Crafts Shop and then visited a Chinese Supermarket before enjoying an all you can eat buffet lunch. We rounded off the day with a visit to Manchester Art Gallery. We hope to repeat this trip in the future as the feedback from those who went has been very positive.



The Saturday Group continues to meet fortnightly in Marple and is progressing well with visitors from the Tuesday Group joining in occasionally. The Tuesday Group is now established in its new home at Marple SCA Hall, where we have our own room and lockable storage facilities. We now have the capacity to welcome new members to this group and have recently had three new people join. Some of the Saturday Group also join occasionally. This is encouraged as the groups were set up so as to enable movement between them.

We meet fortnightly and anyone interested in joining should speak to me. I will arrange an introductory meeting as soon as there is sufficient demand.

Lisa Czyniewska

MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP

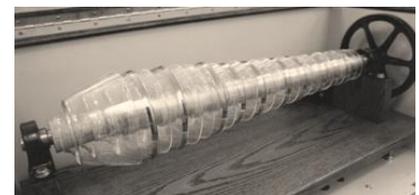
We met last Monday 20 April at the Church hall. We listened to two contrasting chamber music works, both written during wartime: Beethoven's 'Archduke' trio and Shostakovitch's piano quintet.

Anyone interested in music is very welcome to come along on the third Monday of each month at St. Thomas's church, from 10am until 12 noon, or you can contact me for more information.

Sue Dintinger

OPERA APPRECIATION GROUP

Our March meeting began with a short introduction to the glass armonica. This is an instrument which works in the same way as a damped finger moving round the rim of a glass to produce a note.



We then watched the Metropolitan Opera in a performance of Lucia di Lammermoor by Donizetti. The story of a young girl forced into marriage who goes mad and kills her husband has the most famous "mad scene" in opera. Originally, Donizetti intended to use the glass armonica in the mad scene, but in the end a flute was used. This production used both instruments to produce an ethereal sound. There was some superb singing, particularly by Anna Netrebko in the title role.

At our April, we lightened the mood a little and watched The Barber of Seville by Rossini. We saw an old production from Glyndebourne, recorded in 1982. I don't think that this performance has yet been equalled.

For our next meeting I plan to show Andrea Chenier by Giordano - another tragedy set during the French Revolution.

Meg Humphries

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The subject for the March meeting was “crowds. We had a varied set of pictures, along with some discussion whether crowds could only be people, or could be interpreted more generally.

The result was 1st. “Changing of Guard at Prague Castle” (Walter Mason); 2nd equals “Tallin Market” (Chris Gibson) and “Line Out Drama at Cardiff Arms” (Brian Beck). Two days later, Brian captured clear shots of the partial eclipse.



In April we welcomed Bob Barlow to our group, and hope he enjoyed our meeting. This month’s competition “Manchester” had a variety of subjects, but mostly photographed in the city centre. The result was 1st – Walter Mason “Selfridges at Christmas”; 2nd Chris Gibson “Manchester Town Hall”; 3rd Walter Mason “Triangle – former Corn Exchange”.



Fred presented a DVD on portrait taking, which gave us some useful tips on obtaining good pictures.

Next meeting –Thursday 21 May; the competition subject is “Movement”

Walter Mason

READING GROUP

There was no group meeting for April, though we still read *The Madonnas of Leningrad*, which we will discuss on second Wednesday morning of May.

Our next book is *The Citadel* by Kate Mosse

Sue Dintinger

SINGING GROUP

At the monthly meeting on 8 April the singing group performed a varied 40 minute programme.



Some old favourites such as Jerusalem, Over the Rainbow and O Waly Waly were included and then contrasted with Thank you for the Music by Abba and Simon and Garfunkel’s 59th Bridge Street Song and Bridge Over Troubled Water. Angels Through the Night, an arrangement using All Through the Night and All Night, All Day and an American Spiritual, My Lord, What a Morning, were also enjoyed by the audience.

Three new pieces were performed; I am a Small Part of the World, a modern folk piece and two songs from Music for Special Occasions. Amazing Grace was sung and the programme concluded with an abridged version of the Hallelujah Chorus.

After the singing, our Chair thanked the group for the performance and praised the choice of programme. Group Leaders, Margaret and Tony were presented with gifts as a ‘thank you’ for all their hard work and organisation. Thanks are also due to June for the continuity and Margaret for the photographs.

Pam Wood

STROLLERS GROUP

We continue to meet at High Lane Village Hall on the last Monday of each month at 9.45am. Any member is welcome to join us. We walk for about one to one and a half hours usually local walks and mostly on flat ground although it can be a little muddy at times so appropriate footwear and clothing are essential.

June Gibbs

WALKING GROUP

March walk



23 members came to Castleton for Sam and Irene’s walk. It was warm and bright as we walked past Mill Bridge on the lane heading for Hollins Cross. The route narrowed in places, but gave wide views of the so-called Great Ridge. We had a welcome breather before starting up the narrow climb on the former “coffin” route – but all made it to the ridge! A breather and coffee stop, and time to admire the scenery – rather misty, with fitful sun peeping through the thin cloud, before we continued on the ridge, with a deceptive downhill stretch, just before a short steepish climb up Back Tor with its impressive shale cliff face.

Then it was onwards to Lose Hill 1563 ft, the last hill on the Great Ridge, and a lunch stop with panoramic views, although menacing dark clouds were around. Old folklore tells of a famous battle between here and Win Hill. But more recent history has Lose Hill also called Ward’s Piece, as it was purchased by Sheffield Ramblers, in memory of their founder George Herbert Bridges Ward, and later given to the National Trust as its first piece of land in the Peak District. A passing hiker aware of the story led us to the memorial plaque, tucked away in a quiet corner. The clouds turned to warm sunshine as we descended past Crimea Farm and Lose Hill Youth Hostel, and back to the car park.

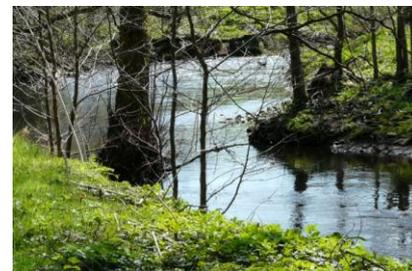


Many thanks to Irene and Sam for interrupting their caravan holiday and giving us a super walk.

April walk



On the second Tuesday of April, John and Barbara McCartney led 13 walkers on a leisurely walk between Furness Vale and Buxworth. It was scenic, quiet countryside, formerly a hive of railway and industrial activity, now with only tantalising reminders of vast railway sidings, mines, and past hectic canal barge activity. John was a mine(!) of information on how it used to look.



The early cool breeze gradually changed to hot sunshine as we relaxed over a drink and sandwiches at the Navigation. Then, following the attractive canal and river scenery to Peathill, we threaded our way past modern industrial scale activity, as large scale machines prepared to lay huge waste pipes along the Goyt river valley. After a friendly chat with the yellow jacketed workmen we were soon back to Gowhole and our cars. Thanks to John and Barbara for their very pleasant walk.

Next walks – Tuesday 12 May – Mike Moran – Hare Hill to Alderley Edge and return.

Walter Mason

WHIST GROUP

We meet in St. Thomas' Church Hall High Lane on the third Wednesday of each month except August when there is no meeting. The start time is 2pm and we finish at about 4pm. There is a small charge of £2 per person which includes tea/coffee and biscuits.

We are a very friendly group and new members would be most welcome.

June Gibbs