

**FROM THE CHAIR**

We had an interesting change of plan In July. The speaker who was booked for the July meeting who was to talk to us about TV Quizzes was unable to come. I contacted Arighi Bianchi and Nick and Paul, father and son, agreed to come at very short notice. They gave us a very entertaining talk about the history of their firm which started when Antonio Bianchi arrived in Macclesfield from his home in a silk weaving town in Italy 160 years ago. They brought some interesting old photographs one of which showed one of their vans parked outside the Houses of Parliament. Should they sack the driver for not being where he should have been to make a delivery or reward him for the free publicity he had engendered for the firm? They decided to give him a pay rise!

Those members who attended the meeting were given a goodie bag containing a packet of fudge, a jar of marmalade, a shopping bag and a beautiful booklet on the history of the firm. And the Bianchis did not charge a fee for their talk!!

Margaret McDermott

**U3A FAMILY HISTORY DISPLAY**

In conjunction with St Thomas’s Church, High Lane.

We have been invited to stage our display of WW1 relatives at St Thomas’s Church on Wednesday 7th October at 10.30am, during their monthly coffee morning. Your support for this event would be greatly appreciated. There will be refreshments and a raffle with proceeds going jointly to the Church Building Fund and The Parkinson’s Society.

Pat Christopher

**ADVANCE NOTICE**

The Walking Group will have its 2016 away break for two nights in Keswick, 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. Enquiries and further details from Walter Mason.



See page 5 for details of this visit.

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**FROM THE EDITOR**

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](mailto:newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk) The next edition of the newsletter will be the November edition. Please can you get your contributions to me by 31 October?

**Please also contact me if you are interested in helping to edit and produce the newsletter.**

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

The August meeting was a fascinating journey into the past along the 'big ditch' which was the Manchester Ship canal. Judith Atkinson led us from Manchester to Liverpool via a series of slides carefully preserved from the days of the construction.

### Digging the Big Ditch

The construction of the Manchester Ship Canal was a huge undertaking. The cutting of such a significant waterway required the removal of millions of tons of soil and rock. Various machines were employed to speed up the process. However the majority of the work was still done by manpower alone.

The contractor employed by the Manchester Ship Canal Company to carry out the work was Thomas Walker. He believed in making the best of new technology to help his men. He also had a reputation for being a good employer, caring about his men's physical and spiritual well being.

This is the introduction to [Digging the Big Ditch](#). View the complete [story contents](#).



If you missed the talk many of the slides can be seen on the Digging the Big Ditch website at <http://www.canalarchive.org.uk/stories/pages.php?eum=TE125&pnum=0&maxp=6>

## U3A NETWORKS

High Lane U3A has been a member of the Pennine Link network of U3As for some years. We are now also a member of the Greater Manchester Network of U3As. Belonging to networks extends the range of events and activities we can offer to our members. Representatives of the individual U3As meet to discuss topics of common interest and to plan and arrange joint events. There are two Network events happening in October at which High Lane members are welcome.

### Greater Manchester Network Storytelling and Groups workshop

This workshop will focus on Storytelling, Creative Writing, Family History and Local History. The workshop is on Monday 5 October 2015 at Cross Street Chapel, Cross St, Manchester M2 1NL. The event starts at 11 am and runs until 4pm with a break for lunch. Tickets cost £5. Go to <http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=750&page=50114> for further details and to obtain an application form.

### BBC ANTIQUES ROADSHOW

Is visiting Lyme Park on Thursday, 10 September. Open from 9:30am. Details at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/4BFprkgsJpvxsdCTwDFQIJ/attending-a-roadshow-and-faqs>

## Pennine Link Classical Music Recital

The Recital will be given by Andrew Wilde, the celebrated pianist. The event is organised by Marple U3A and supported by the North West Music Trust.

The Recital is on Wednesday, 7 October 2015 at High Lane Village Hall. Doors open at 1:30pm for a prompt start at 2 pm. Tickets cost £3. To obtain tickets, please apply to the Treasurer ([treasurer@marpleu3a.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@marpleu3a.org.uk)) or the secretary ([secretary@marpleu3a.org.uk](mailto:secretary@marpleu3a.org.uk)). The closing date for tickets is 7 September.

## SCOTTISH DANCING

Bramhall U3A has a well-established Scottish dancing group. In addition to the fortnightly sessions for dancers (beginning on 11th September 2015) there are some Come and Try It sessions for complete beginners in October. This will give new dancers an opportunity to learn in a relaxed environment. The sessions are open to High Lane U3A members.

Sessions take place on Fridays at St Michaels Church Hall between 1:30 to 3:00pm on the 2nd, 16th, and 30th of October. The only things you will need are a pair of flat comfortable shoes. These sessions will cost £7.50 for all three sessions payable in advance.

If you are interested please send your email address to [scottishdancegroup@gmail.com](mailto:scottishdancegroup@gmail.com) and they will contact you in September.

## VILLAGE HALL TABLE TOP SALE

The next table Top sale at the Village Hall is on Sunday 27th September from 11.30am to 1.30pm Tables £8 £10 on the day. Come and grab a bargain. Refreshments available. Contact Dorothy Graham

## STRATFORD HOLIDAY AUGUST 2015

We arrived at Warwick Castle in glorious sunshine en-route to Stratford on Sunday 16th. There were lots of activities being enjoyed by all ages, with jousting, falconry, and of course the beautiful castle to explore. Chris and I finished our time there in the Rose Garden where we found other group members. It was so tranquil after the hurly burly outside.

Monday morning was spent at Shakespeare's birthplace. We watched an introductory film and then wandered into the house through the lovely gardens. Two actors in full period costume, one carrying a lute, entertained us in the gardens once we had seen the house. We were to spend an enjoyable and informative time both inside and out. The actors were very good, enthusiastic and knowledgeable.



As it was another lovely sunny day Chris and I had decided to stay in Stratford for the afternoon to allow time to walk along the river and visit Holy Trinity Church to see Shakespeare's Grave. This meant we did not travel with the group to Althorp House but all who went said how good it was, with fabulous paintings by famous artists and Diana's Memorial on the island in the centre of a lake.

Wednesday Malcolm, our driver, transported us through Cotswold Villages. We stopped at Stow-in-the-Wold in the morning for coffee and walking down the road, came across what is known to be the oldest Inn in England. Formerly known as the Royalist/Eagle and Child, now named The Porch House, parts of the building dating back to 947AD.



Later we went to Batsford for a display at the Cotswold Falconry Centre and on to Bourton-on-the-Water. It is such a pretty village and we

managed to find a small bakery down one of the side streets with a quiet outside café area to have Afternoon Tea.

Wednesday we spent in the Stratford Area at Mary Arden's Farm and Anne Hathaway's Cottage. Two buildings steeped in history and brought to life by excellent guides and actors playing parts. We were shown how to make potage in Mary Arden's kitchen, saw pins made and the goose-girl going about her daily business.

Anne Hathaway's Cottage is so beautiful. We were informed that it was only a small single story building when Anne lived there but was extended by her brother, who inherited it, but it is thought Shakespeare's money probably paid for the extension. Added in Victorian times the gardens were beautiful and so well maintained.

We arrived back in plenty of time for some of us to enjoy an early dinner and then walk down to the RSC Memorial theatre for the performance of Othello. (see separate report).

How quickly the time had gone and here we were having our breakfast on the last day. We left Stratford to visit Coventry for an extensive tour of the old and new Cathedrals linked by Basil Spence's design which after the bombing on the night of 14/15 November 1940 left only the spire and shell. This was linked to the new Cathedral by a Saint's window linking the old with the new as a sign of Unity and Peace.



Our last visit to was Leicester Cathedral where we were to see the final resting place of Richard III, his tomb and motto which translates to 'Loyalty Binds Me'

Enough time left for those who wished to go around the Richard III exhibition, shop or find somewhere to relax and eat before leaving. We arrived back in High Lane shortly after 7.30pm. Many thanks to Sue, for organising such a varied and interesting visit, and thanks to all in the group for your company.

Irene Taylor

## WEA COURSES

Please come and join Disley WEA at the Ring O' Bells Friends Meeting House in Disley this autumn for interesting new classes and Saturday Special Events.

- Literature: Monday afternoons with Andrea Carr, 11 weeks starting September 28th with a free extra taster class on September 21st, 2pm to 4pm.
- Philosophy : - "Being Reasonable'. Tuesday afternoons with Harriet Grimsditch, 11 weeks beginning 22 September - 1pm to 3pm.
- Art History : - 'An Introduction to Modern Art – 1870 to 1939', with Ian Irvine. Thursday afternoons, 11 weeks starting September 24th, 1:45 to 3:45pm.

## Day schools

- Alexander Technique Day School with Jane Osgood, Saturday October 3rd 10am to 4pm, Fee £25 including tea and coffee but not lunch.
- 'Hard Times: The Working Man's Struggle for the Vote', Day School with Allan Stevenson, Saturday October 24th 11am to 3pm, Fee £15 including tea, coffee and lunch.
- 'Turkey from Stone Age to Bronze Age: 11000 to 2000 BC' Day School with Michael Tunnicliffe, Saturday November 14th, 11am to 3pm, Fee £15 including tea, coffee and lunch.

Courses cost £68.20. You can enrol for classes but not day schools at the WEA website

<http://www.wea.org.uk/courses>

For information about booking for day schools or any other queries, please contact Rosemary Broadhurst on 01625 877 255

## MOOCS

### (MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSES)

MOOCs are a rapidly expanding phenomenon in education with many hundreds if not thousands of courses now available from organizations including top universities in the USA and UK.



In the UK, a consortium of universities led by the Open University

has created FutureLearn as a brand for its MOOCs. The MOOC courses available cover a wide variety of topics; language and culture, business and management, science, maths and technology, health and psychology, creative arts and media, teaching and studying. Courses present an in-depth coverage of the topic and there is something to appeal to anyone looking to increase their knowledge of a particular topic.

## Studying a MOOC

I recently followed 'Why do we Age?, the Molecular mechanisms of Ageing'. It was provided by the University of Groningen in the Netherlands where there is the European Institute for the Biology of Ageing and ran over six weeks.

Some interesting facts emerged. Average life expectancy has almost doubled in the last century. Organisms can have their life expectancy extended without interfering with their genes. Ageing processes start at the cellular level.

Questions such as, are diseases part of the ageing process? What are the biological factors which define longevity? What do we know about neurodegenerative disorders? were all discussed.

One aspect over which we have no control was, do genetics play a role in ageing? We can only blame our parents.

Pam Wood

Some U3As have started MOOC groups where members study their courses and get together to discuss their experiences and talk about what they have learned. If you would be interested in such a group in High Lane U3A please talk to the Groups organiser, Meg Humphries, or contact the editor.

You can find out more at [www.futurelearn.com](http://www.futurelearn.com)

## U3A DIARIES FOR 2016

U3A diaries for 2016 are still available. The cost is £2 which includes postage.

If you would like to order one give your name and payment to Pam Curley at the September meeting.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**OUR U3A ACTIVITIES**

9 Sept	Monthly meeting . The Red Wolves of Ethiopia. Talk by Polly Pickering.
12 Sept	Cinema Club. 45 Years
7 Oct	Family History display. St Thomas Church 10:30am
14 Oct	Monthly meeting. Miracle in Manchester: John Barbirolli and the Halle. Talk by Geoff Scargill.
30 Oct	Curry and Social evening at the Village Hall.
11 Nov	Monthly meeting. J B Priestley. Talk by Derek Slater.
9 Dec	Christmas meeting. Members only. Admission by ticket.
12 Dec	Theatre group. The Royal exchange presents Into the Woods by Stephen Sondheim. Royal Exchange. Last date for booking is 30 September. £25.50 ticket only. No coach.

**FORTHCOMING HOLIDAYS AND VISITS**

Contact: Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith

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. Final details after August meeting
17 Sept	Stepping Hill Hospital. Talk about hip and knee replacement. 7 pm. See poster on the front page
22 Sept	PEOPLE'S MUSEUM MANCHESTER £3.50 at July meeting. Followed by optional lunch at Rylands Library
10-23 Oct	Cruise 2 night hotel stay in Istanbul and cruise to Kusadasi, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Athens etc.
23-24 Oct	SOUTHWELL.
4 Dec	TATTON HALL Lunch and tour of the Hall. £34 at Sept meeting

**We are currently planning holidays and visits for 2016. Possible holidays in 2016 include Suffolk May, Baltic Cruise June, Cornwall July and Berlin September.**

**U3A NORTH WEST REGION ACTIVITIES**

20 Sept	Family History conference. Palace Hotel, Buxton. Cost £20.
8 Oct	Science Day at Heswall Hall. Gas, Galaxies and Gut Reactions.
9 Oct	Energy Day. Rheged, Penrith Come and hear up to date information about how we might meet our energy needs without compromising the future of the planet. The content will not be highly technical.
3 Nov	Study day. Living well in later life - "Learn, Laugh, Live". Dukes Theatre, Lancaster.

Details of these events are on the Northwest region U3A page at

<http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=421&page=3>

**LOCAL HAPPENINGS**

Now-11 Nov	Recreation of Stamford Hospital in Dunham Massey Hall.
3 Sept	Beaux Stratagem. NT Live. Various venues
10 Sept	BBC Antiques Road Show at Lyme park. From 9:30am
15-19 Sept	Handbagged. Lowry Theatre
17 Sept	La Traviata. Buxton Opera House
23-26 Sept	Swan Lake. Lowry Theatre
23-26 Sept	Orpheus in the Underworld. Lowry Theatre
24 Sept	Coriolanus. NTLive. Various venues
27 Sept	Table Top Sale. Village Hall.
6-10 Oct	The Importance of Being Ernest (West End production w Nigel Havers and Martin Jarvis). Lowry Theatre.
8 Oct	The Importance of Being Ernest (with David Suchet). NTLive. Various venues.
9/15 Oct	Hamlet. NTLive. Various venues
31 Oct	Kiss Me Kate. Stockport Plaza Plaza. Stockport Amateur Operatic Society
31 Oct	Pirates of Penzance. Buxton Opera House
2-7 Nov	The Mousetrap. Buxton Opera House

## GROUP REPORTS

### BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 1 AND 2

#### July Meeting

Prog 1:

We enjoyed a great documentary about “Maya Plisetskaya” “Maya” was the Principal Ballerina at the Bolshoi and endured a very hard time during the “Cold War” period. She is most famous for dancing “The Dying Swan” music by “Saint-Saens” which was first danced by “Anna Pavlova” in 1910. This superb ballet piece should not be confused with “Swan Lake”

Prog 2:

By way of a change we enjoyed a “Mixed Bag” compiled from YouTube as follows:-

- “Symphony in “C” – “Rhapsody in Blue”-
- “Anthony Dowell and Darcy Bussell discuss “Swan Lake”
- “Cuban Triplets aged 13” (short clip)

We did see the full documentary 2 years ago; it was good to see how much these young boys have developed their ballet dancing skills. We shall keep our eye on them.

#### August Meeting

Prog 1:

Documentary:- “Agony and Ecstasy” “The Nutcracker” This was the last of three ballets produced by “English National Ballet”. The other two, namely “Swan Lake” and “Romeo Juliet”, we watched earlier in the year.

Prog 2:

“The Concert” – “Paris Opera Ballet” choreographer “Jerome Robbins”. This is a very entertaining quirky little ballet with a touch of comedy and superbly danced, and we all enjoyed this unusual ballet.

Prog 3: “Western Symphony” “New York City Ballet”

Just one of Balanchine’s outstanding short ballets, based on a “Hoe Down”. Great music and very lively dancing. Hoe Downs were very popular in the 1980’s and not a tutu in sight; just boots and cowboy hats and great music.

Sheila Hall

### BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 3 AND 4

22nd July /6th August: We continued our short season of American Ballet with a performance of Balanchine’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream. Based on the Shakespeare play, this very colourful production was danced by The Pacific Northwest Ballet to glorious music by Mendelssohn.

Recent attendance has been rather patchy, and as it is the holiday season, I cancelled the August performances.

We will continue in September with a look at the work of Jerome Robbins and the New York City Ballet.

Meg Humphries

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### CARD MAKING GROUP

The card making group had its very first card making meeting at St Thomas's Church hall on Thursday 6 August, and a thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all. We made two cards each - one built around designs cut out using metal dies put through a die cutting machine, and the other a pyramid shaped card made from scratch using various cutting and measuring implements - although we ran out of time to decorate them fully, as you can see from the photo.



We all learnt new skills

- from how to use a guillotine to how mats and layers can enhance the professional look of a card. Dot and I learnt we are rubbish at managing time!

Further meetings will take place on the first Thursday of the month. Because of the amount of preparation required for each meeting we can only accommodate around 10 people, so we have a few spare spaces. Speak to Dot Green or me at the next U3A meeting if you are interested. The current cost is £4 per meeting, but to make sure we can pay for the room and refreshments, we may need to review this shortly.

The next meeting is on 3 September and we are making ..... Christmas cards!

Christine Fox

## CHURCHES AND PUBS

### July visit

On a glorious sunny day we set off from High Lane for the church of St Andrew at Slaidburn situated in the upper Hodder valley in the Trough of Bowland. We were met outside the church by the vicar, George Darby (very entertaining) and James who is a lecturer at Liverpool university. After a brief introduction to the church we all moved inside, glad to get out of the very hot sun.

The tower is said to be the oldest part of the church dating from 1200. The Saxon church rebuilt by the



Normans was rebuilt again in 1450 by the Hammerton family. The font is Norman from 1230 and the cover is made of oak and is from the 17th century. The original font was removed and replaced by a more modern font in 1801 but the Bishop Langley of Ripon ordered the old font to be reinstated but not before it was cleaned and smoothed over (a bit too much) and the Norman decoration was lost. The three-decker pulpit is made of oak and it was installed in 1740. The three tiers are made up of a pulpit, lectern and the seat of the parish clerk. The clerk led the congregations responses.

In 1634 a craftsman called Francis Grundy built a chancel screen. In 1889 repairs were made to the church and the walls were rendered with the present plaster. One or two of the paintings were past repairing and were removed or covered up. The church has two dog whips and a dog whipper was used to control churchgoers dogs if the dogs fought in church. Relatives of the prime minister, Robert Peel are buried in the churchyard.

After a very enjoyable morning we all went to the 'Hark to Bounty' pub for an excellent lunch.

There will be no meetings in August or September. The next trip is to Checkley in Staffordshire.

Paul Kenneth

## CRAFT AND NEEDLEWORK

During the summer meetings future projects have been discussed, which include some members creating hats for Smoothie bottles which will contribute to the funds of Age Concern.

We also have plans to make items of clothing for charitable organisations after November when we will once again be selling items at our pre-Christmas sale and organising a raffle for our charity of the year, which has yet to be decided.

Our next meeting is on the 17th September at Amy Summers' house and our October meeting will be on the 29th September.

Marlene Brookes

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## CURRENT AFFAIRS

### July meeting

The first item was about the 10% increase in MP's pay, and the group split 25% against and 75% for. Reasons given were that MPs do a difficult job, and it is seven years since their last rise in salary.

The next item was about ISIS - can it be stopped? Several questions and suggestions were put forward, and the group was very divided and no solutions or conclusions were reached. It was agreed that oil is a factor in the lack of action.

The group then went on to discuss "What's good about being British?" and stability, history, the Monarchy, and the Health Service and Education were suggestions, in spite of the cuts. There were few negative comments, and not surprisingly the discussion went on to include immigration.

On a more light-hearted note, "What's good about growing old?" Was the next topic. There were some negative comments; poor health, lack of money. - and some positive; more freedom, fewer pressures and plenty of opportunities for activities such as the U3A programme. But we all agreed that it does depend on having good health, and living conditions.

The discussion became more serious when WW2 years were compared to today, followed by the effect of Margaret Thatcher's role as PM, and then the rise in the living wage from 7.50 per hour to 9 per hour. Some members were very knowledgeable about the figures! The benefits system was discussed.....is it too generous? Who will pay the increase?

Other discussion topics included the Queen's Nazi salute (the general consensus was that no harm had been done, it just sold newspapers!), followed by the Guardian report on increase in house prices. We wondered why Britain is such a home-owning nation, when most of Europe isn't. Opinion was divided. Next was "Parking Fees.....should the High Street offer free parking to aid shopkeepers?" The following topics were about BBC funding, then "Austerity Cuts" which led to some heated discussion, and finally "Is the Labour Party a spent force in British Politics?"

Mavis Dean

At the August meeting the group discussed a variety of topics including the use of computers in school, the relevance of high earnings as a measure of success in life, the apparent popularity of Jeremy Corbin, our renewed relations with Iran and the perennial favourite, immigration, which instigated the most heated exchanges. The general consensus was that genuine refugees from war and tyranny should be welcomed but there was less support for economic migrants. It was pointed out that up to now, contrary to what newspaper headlines indicate, that the United Kingdom was second only to Hungary in the European Union in accepting the fewest immigrants from the Middle East this year, with the vast majority going to Germany and Sweden.

The apparent popularity of Jeremy Corbin in the Labour Party leadership contest is probably related to his conviction politics compared to the bland utterances of his opponents, but none would be accepted with any enthusiasm by the majority in the group, even those with left wing leanings. Regarding improved relations with Iran, it was felt by the majority that "Jaw jaw was better than war war" and that a desire for wealth and material possessions might just possibly be an indication of low self esteem.

Marlene Brookes

## DINING GROUP

In October the Dining group opted for an evening meal and our choice of venue was Peruga formerly Woodheys on the Glossop Road.

Peruga is famously positioned high on a ridge above the Etherow valley and two sides of the restaurant are windows enabling diners to gaze at stunning panoramic views over the valley and beyond. The three course meal was equally as good as the view and just as attractive, it almost seemed a shame to cut into it but we did and clean plates were sent back to the kitchen. We finished the evening with tea or coffee and we all went home after a very enjoyable evening.

Our next lunch will be in October and anyone who would like to join us is welcome to add their names to the list.

Jeanette Bell  
Dorothy Neillands

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## FAMILY HISTORY

From September 2015 we will be changing our format to monthly house meetings. These will be held at Andrew Lane at the usual time of 4.30-6.30pm. The meetings will consist of discussions on a range of family history related topics, expanding our knowledge of social history through the generations. We will also be able to help members with internet research using free and subscription web sites.

Forthcoming Meeting Dates:

10th September  
15th October  
19th November  
17th December

New members are always welcome.  
Please contact Sue Harlin or Pat Christopher.

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## GARDENING

### July

Five members drove to Chatsworth on a gorgeous summer's day (St. Swithins Day!). We had a super time, including two coffee/cake stops in the refurbished Stable block quadrangle.

First we viewed one of their gardeners taking geranium (pelargonium) cuttings, admiring his skill at inserting surprisingly small shoots into soggy compost-filled Jiffy bags. Shortening of the leaves, a dip in rooting powder, and that was it!



Next we had a free guided tour of the gardens, which proved very informative and enjoyable. Although most of us had visited Chatsworth in the past, there is always plenty to see - and next year the addition of the award winning Chelsea garden to be displayed.

Among this year's floral highlights were giant cowslips, inulas, and eremurus, but really, at Chatsworth, flowers take second fiddle to statues, fountains, the striking large avenues, and the gorgeous views; which we all thoroughly enjoyed.

### High Lane Cream Tea Visit

There were 9 at the visit to 21 Scafell Close, High Lane (opened the previous weekend under the NGS yellow garden scheme). An interesting garden, quite narrow in places, with different styles running seamlessly one into another. Plenty of colour especially in the themed annual sections each with their individual colour, a large pond area, and some healthy looking vegetables to arouse our admiration. A number of striking flowers caught our eye, especially two beautiful dahlias, a patch of pondside houtenya, a lovely pink lacecap hydrangea, and several attractive clumps of phlox. On the other hand, perhaps there were too many self-seeded evening primroses, and the garden didn't quite gel as a unified scheme. But overall we enjoyed the garden, the personal visit, and particularly having a relaxing cream tea as a group.

### August

A group of 8 went to the "Garden on our Doorstep" – Lyme Hall, for a quiet wander round. It was anything but quiet, as Gruffalo-hunters from miles around were there in force! Fortunately, once inside, we soon left the crowds and were able to see the main attractions of the gardens in relative peace.

The Dutch garden was very colourful – surprisingly, it looked better from a distance than near to, as the whole pattern could be better appreciated. The walk round the lake never disappoints, even if we did find a Gruffalo on the way! Then to the rose garden which, though small, was at its best, and gave off a heavy scent as the bright weather started to cloud over.

Then we were up and down the steps to the herbaceous garden, which was looking magnificent as the gold and red lower section contrasted with the blue and pink higher section beyond the intersection. In this part of the gardens there were few Gruffalo hunters to disturb our enjoyment. But it was thirsty work, so soon we headed for cuppas or more, almost surprised that we had enjoyed our near neighbour garden so much!

Next visit – September 16th    Wentworth Castle Gardens

Walter Mason

## MARPLE BRIDGE AND MELLOR U3A GARDENING

A trip to Preston in July showed just what can be done to make a fabulous garden as members were given a guided tour round RHS Tatton Show exhibitor Jackie Iddons' modestly-sized plot. Each part of the garden could easily be translated into even the smallest patch at home with plants of every sort, big and small closely planted making for an artists palette of colour all set off to perfection by shrubs and greenery, and pans of alpines and succulents awaiting discovery round each corner. Jackie's sculptor husband had added his stamp to the garden with stunning sculpture pieces. Almost a garden in itself,



the “sales” area has meant that some horticultural gems have found their way to the gardens of Marple.

A short coach ride then brought us to Dutton Hall to admire a Heritage Rose collection. Totally different in nature from the previous garden, masses of roses were set round a lovely stone manor house. A misty drizzle had descended on us, but far from dampening our spirits it served to spread the perfume of the plants to make a pleasant end to an interesting day.

The Horticultural Show for members in August meant prizes for members with green fingers with some handsome single blooms and tiny posies on display. The vegetable section was somewhat under-represented but nonetheless it all made for a busy and enjoyable morning.

September 9th is the last outing of the year, so NO MEETING on that date.

October 14th sees a welcome return of David Tideswell with his talk “Garden Birds in Autumn and Winter”

Meetings are held at Marple Methodist Church, 2nd Wednesday of the month, 9.45 a.m. £2 including tea/coffee.

Jean Parrish

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## HISTORY GROUP

### July meeting

Due to the high level of coverage on the centenary of WW1 last year, Terry thought it would be interesting to look at other events of that year. The Suffragette movement was very active in the early part of 1914, at which time it became very militant: eight churches and the Home Secretary's house damaged with explosives, paintings slashed and protesters fighting with the police.

Prior to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, relations with Germany appeared very cordial, trade was good and the German Ambassador had been given an honorary degree at Oxford University. The much more troubling situation for the British Government at the time was the independence

movement in Ireland. However, at the outbreak of war the Suffragettes called a truce and of course everyone's attention was focussed on the events in Europe. Also, in 1914, the Empress of India sank in the St Lawrence with a loss of over 1,000 lives; Shackleton set off to the Antarctic for the second time; life expectancy for men was 49 and for women 53 and out of every 9 men due for conscription to the army, only 3 were deemed fit. Had Princip not assassinated Franz Ferdinand it is difficult to imagine how very different everything would have been.

The topic for the August meeting was King Canute. Shirley Boore gave a very informative talk about King Canute. Most of us probably know the legend that he tried to prevent the tide from coming in, but we cannot tell whether the incident actually occurred. However, what we do know is that at the age of 18, Canute accompanied his father, King Sweyn of Denmark, on an invasion of England. They soon overran the country, raping and pillaging on the way, but on Sweyn's death the following year, Canute, harried by the English had to retire. In 1015 he returned and after a series of battles defeated Edmund Ironside and was acknowledged King of England, as well as Denmark and Norway. His rule is said to have been just and wise. He died in 1035 and is buried at Winchester.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 30th September, 7.30pm at Sheila Harrop's and the topic will be the Indian Mutiny presented by Pam Curley.

Pam Curley

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## OPERA APPRECIATION

The group completed its first year with a spectacular performance of Aida, from the New York Metropolitan Opera. Recorded in 1988, the performance featured Placido Domingo at his best, together with some stunning singing from the soprano and mezzo-soprano.

After a break during August, we meet on September 15th, when I intend to show La Boheme.

Meg Humphries

## PHOTOGRAPHY

The topic for our August competition was Sport photography. The winners were 1st Walter (Racing yachts in Porto harbour), 2nd Walter (Runners on Hollins Cross), 3rd Diane (Roger Federer).



Afterwards Diane showed some of the photography tutorials available on YouTube; we viewed a talk on lighting, and how it affected landscape and portrait photography. Then we puzzled on how to photograph science for the next meeting!

Walter Mason

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## SHAKESPEARE GROUP

### Visit to Stratford 12/13 August 2015

Twenty members made the journey to Stratford-upon-Avon to see two of Shakespeare's most famous plays at the iconic RSC theatre. Those who had not been before found the atmosphere in the theatre more intimate than expected, the layout being virtually "in the round".

### OTHELLO

The great tragedy did not disappoint and our seats were very close to the stage. You could hear a pin drop during the whole 3 hour performance with Hugh Quarshie as the Moor and Lucien Msamati as Iago giving spell-binding performances ably backed up by the rest of the cast. We came out at the end of the evening feeling emotionally drained!

### THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

The set was transformed for the matinee performance the following day of the rather lighter story of the Court Case between Antonio and Shylock. This time we were in the Upper Circle which gave a different perspective. Some of us did not care too much for the portrayal of Antonio by Jamie Ballard but Patsy Ferran's Portia was terrific. Dress was modern.

In between performances there was opportunity to look around Stratford. Plenty of interest including the fine Holy Trinity Church where the great man and some of his family are buried. The weather was fine during our stay so there was plenty of activity on and around the River Avon. Some of us dined at the rather nice RSC Rooftop Terrace restaurant overlooking the river.

Although only a relatively brief visit, everyone seemed to enjoy our two days in Stratford, so we may well repeat in the future.

Steve Reynolds

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## SINGING GROUP

### Dystlegh Grange



On August 6th the singing group entertained the residents of Dystlegh Grange with a programme of songs which we have been practising for the last few months.

We began with the Albrecht and Althouse 'I am a Small Part of the World' followed by 'Day by Day'. We continued with two songs from Simon and Garfunkel, '59th Bridge Street Song' and 'Bridge over Troubled Water' and then an American Spiritual, 'My Lord What a Morning'. Abba is usually a popular choice and we sang 'Mamma Mia!', 'Super-Trouper' and 'Money, Money, Money'. The English Melody, 'O Waly Waly' was followed by the Alexander L'Estrange arrangement of 'Amazing Grace'. We concluded the concert with Elgar's 'Ave Maria' and an arrangement of 'Jerusalem'.

A warm vote of thanks was given by one of the residents and we shared afternoon tea.

Many thanks are due to Tony and Margaret for all their hard work, June for the continuity announcements and the staff at Dystlegh Grange for their hospitality.

Pam Wood

## STROLLERS GROUP

We meet at 9.45am at High Lane Village Hall on the last Monday of each month. Usually easy local walks lasting about one to one and a half hours. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear and bring your bus pass in case we travel further afield.

June Gibbs

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## WALKING GROUP

### July

David Burke led 12 keen walkers on a circular route around Ford, near Chapel-en-le-Frith. The 6–7 mile walk had more ups and downs than most, perhaps totalling 1500 feet of ascent. There was dampness on the ground, and dark clouds which never precipitated, and in the later stages welcome glimpses of sunshine.

The area has a long history of 750 years or so, and we passed Ford, Slack and Bowden Halls, and then an ancient Quaker burial ground by the Chestnut Centre. Later we saw Gowburn Tunnel end (or beginning!) on the Sheffield rail line, and crossed various tributaries of Black Brook, before ascending to the ancient Roych Clough bridleway.

We knew we had been in a walk, but we had kept dry and seen lots, and felt fitter for it as we thanked David for his fascinating walk.

### August

#### TUESDAY WALK

Jeff Mortimer led eight on a fascinating walk round Daisy Nook Country Park and up to Hartshead Pike. It explored an area not covered in previous walks, and was an eye-opener in the way that former heavily industrialised neighbourhoods could become naturalised and attractive again, in this case with sympathetic help from Tameside. The Daisy Nook valley was particularly wooded and attractive, with beech woods and landscaped former canal paths.

The walk itself was longish, perhaps 8 or 8½ miles, and some of the paths were under-used or obstructed, but much of the going was easy on former tow paths and rail routes. We nearly found ourselves as extras on a future Channel 4 television programme (Wonders of Britain??), as a super drone

circled the 926 foot Pike and photographed it (and us?). We found a fascinating hedge side mosaic made by proud local residents, and we wondered at the scope and might of the former local industries. So there was plenty to thank Jeff for, even if the walk was longer than most.

#### WEDNESDAY WALK

Like Daisy Nook, Carrbrook (near Stalybridge) and also in Tameside, was unrecognisable from its former life as a gloomy but thriving mill village. The 15 of us, led by Merlyn, circumnavigated nearby Harridge Hill, gloriously covered in purple heather and giving varied views over the Tame Valley, Manchester, the Cheshire and Lancashire plains, and the nearby Brushes and Swineshaw reservoirs.

Throughout the 5 mile walk Merlyn gave us plenty of well-researched facts and stories. We followed a reputed Roman Road, and we saw searchlight emplacements used in WW2, sites of firing ranges, and the location of former North Britain Farm, once the mecca for Sunday afternoon walks from Stalybridge, and renowned for their teas and cakes.

All in all a thoroughly enjoyable walk on a mostly bright but breezy day, even though colour-blind yours truly couldn't appreciate the heather colour quite as much as the others!



Next walks – September 30<sup>th</sup>, Cuddington 5 ½ miles led by Louanne; October, Edale, 4 miles led by Ruth and Dave

Walter Mason

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## WHIST GROUP

Whist starts again on Wednesday September 16th. Start time 2pm until about 4pm. All members are welcome. Venue St. Thomas Church Hall. There is a small charge of £2 per person to include tea/coffee.

We are still looking for new members for this group, please give your support and have an enjoyable afternoon with us.

June Gibbs