

HIGH LANE U3A NEWSLETTER

www.highlaneu3a.org.uk

Editor

Jean Drinkwater

January 2009

- e mail: drinkwaters@ntlworld.com



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL HIGH LANE U3A MEMBERS

Please note the following dates, and topics for High Lane U3A meetings for the next six months.

January 14th	Nan Ironside	The Dating Game
February 11th	AGM*	
March 11th	David Taylor	Wildlife on The Farm
April 8th	Tony Taylor	Crown Prosecution Service
May 8th	Tony Bonson	Macclesfield Canal
June 10th	Ann Metcalf	Wizard, White Ladies and Worms

***At the Annual General Meeting on the 11th February membership renewal forms and subscriptions of £6 will be due, a cheque or the correct money is requested please.**

The Pennine Link group is to have a Seminar Morning on Wednesday 8th April 2009 at Rose Hill School, Marple. There will be three or four speakers on the subject of "Health & Wellbeing". All welcome.

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The Royal Institute University of the Third Age lecture will take place on Tuesday the 31st March at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albermarle Street, London W1. Meeting at 1.30 for 2.00 p.m. start, finishing at approximately 5.00 p.m. Details available on the notice board or on the U3A website www.u3a.org.uk. Some members have attended this lecture in previous years. Members will be expected to make their own arrangements for obtaining tickets and travel.



Web Site News.

Would anyone interested in learning about our web site and how to create your own, please contact Frank Catterall or Peter Kress at the January Monthly Meeting on the 14th.

It is proposed that we run 4 sessions at the Computer Club on Tuesdays in February starting at 4.30pm. Only Basic computing skills required.

The venue is Brookside Primary School, High Lane (behind the Tennis Club).

Would all contributions for inclusion into the High Lane U3A web site be sent directly to PeterKress004@aol.com until further notice, thank you. We wish Richard Clarke a restful and speedy recovery.

Would all Group Leaders please update their Group's 'Programme of Events' for their website Pages so we can continue to encourage new Membership. Please send to the email above.

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HERITAGE GROUP 2009



MARCH/APRIL

Sorry, we have not yet been able to fix a trip but hope one will be arranged very shortly.

FRIDAY 22nd MAY

RENISHAW HALL AND GARDENS, Derbyshire

(Family Residence of the Sitwell Family since the early 17th Century)

Approximate Cost: £22.50

(includes coach and guided tour of ground floor of Hall)

WEDNESDAY 15th JULY

DINORWIG POWER STATION "THE ELECTRIC MOUNTAIN" Llanberis, N. Wales

(and free time in Betws-y-Coed)

Approximate Cost: £18.50

(includes coach and tour inside mountain)

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Please note that a deposit of £5.00 per person per trip is required at the time of booking. (This is non-refundable, unless it is necessary for the Heritage Group to cancel the trip).

Heritage Group Report

Visit to Stockport Art Gallery – Anne Frank Exhibition



We began our visit to the Gallery by watching a video outlining the parallel events of the Frank family, the onset of the persecution of the Jews, and the outbreak of the Second World War. The family left Germany to live in Holland in the hope of a more secure life, but the occupation of that country led to the need to hide for their own safety. We saw views of the house in Amsterdam and the Upper Annexe where they hid until their arrest and deportation. This house is now the Anne Frank Museum.

We then viewed the photographic exhibition. Otto Frank was a keen amateur photographer and always had his precious Leica close at hand. He took over 400 photographs of his daughters, Anne and Margot, his single theme to document their lives. Like every father he chose moments and events that he found amusing, moving or significant enough to record for their future. Otto was the only survivor from the group of eight people who hid for two years in the Secret Annexe. The life and times of his daughters captured by their father provides a most poignant record of a happy normal family life before the shadow of Nazism fell upon them all.

Pat Pinkney

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NEW SERVICE FOR MEMBERS - RECYCLE THOSE OLD FILMS!

From January you will be able to exchange those viewed films/DVDs/videos free at the monthly meetings. Simply bring along your offering & exchange it for something new or even something you've always wanted to see again.

Like for like exchange i.e. swap a video for a video or DVD for a DVD.

We will happily keep a WANTED log for members to ask for particular films.

Anyone got the BBC suffragette history series “Shoulder to Shoulder”? I've been hunting that for years.

To get us started we would be very grateful for any donations – especially those lovely new films you enjoyed over Christmas!

Marjorie & Lindsey

German group

14 of us enjoyed an excellent pre-Christmas meal at the Wycliffe Hotel at the end of November. We had our last meeting on the 12th December with Gluhwein, Stollen and mince pies accompanied by music and a Christmas story. Members of the group will be informed by phone or email of our next meeting in January.

Table Tennis

The Group is still meeting every alternate Tuesday morning (10am 'til Noon) at the Woodside Tennis Club, High Lane. The schedule for the first three months of 2009 will be 6th January, 20th January, 3rd February, 17th February, 3rd March, 17th March and 31st March. Our present attendance levels vary between 6 and 15 and, as we now have two tables, waiting times are short. Our abilities are very mixed and we would be very pleased to welcome new members, even though you may not have played since your youth; it soon comes back.

December Walk Report

20 members set out on a beautiful morning for a 4 mile walk round Mellor led by Steve Reynolds. A steady uphill path gave extensive views of the surrounding hills to reach Mellor Hall. Having skirted the courtyard and gardens, a slightly tricky scramble down a fairly steep grassy slope took us to Mill Brow. After a short coffee stop, the route passed Blackberry Hall, with its privies, the second stately home.

The leading group passed through 2 farmyards, and along Knowle Lane, up the "50" steps to Tarden, and back past fishing ponds to the Devonshire Arms. Meanwhile, after a misunderstanding, the second group took a different path from the 2 farmyards, swung round to Mellor Church, and back.

The pleasant Christmassy atmosphere at the pub soon revived the walkers, and everyone agreed that both routes had been excellent, with deserved praise for Steve. Then there was a presentation to Walter for his work during the year, after which we all settled down to a very satisfying lunch.

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DISCUSSION GROUP

On the 26th Nov 08 the group discussed the subject of Christmas: Past, Present and Future. Christmas Past brought reminiscences of those Christmases that could be remembered, fondly and accurately of course.

Christmas Present has not yet arrived, nor have the presents.

Christmas future was the most problematical. Peel back the commercialism, the merchandising, the gloss and glitter and you will find a Christian festival supported by long tradition. But some misguided, sensitive people in our society believe that because we now live in a multicultural society, the essential religious aspect of Christmas should be played down, soft key, otherwise some group or groups may be upset. Which of course, if carried to extremes, could result in Christmas becoming an unimportant part of our society, i.e. no Christmas Future. We discussed this and decided that it is highly improbable.

Jim Mc Dermott

Philosophy Group

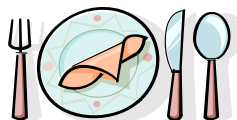
The group met on 24 Nov and the subject was Existentialism. Existentialism is a Philosophical Movement of the 19 and 20 Centuries. Because of the diversity of positions associated with Existentialism e.g. there are atheistic and Christian Existentialists, a precise definition is difficult. However, it suggests one major theme; a stress on individual existence and consequently, on subjectivity, individuality and choice. We then addressed one of the oldest distinctions in philosophy--that of the difference between *existence* and *essence*. To say that something *exists* is simply to point to the fact *that it is*. Man is a self-reflecting animal in that he alone has the ability to objectify himself, to stand apart from himself, as it were, and to consider the kind of being he is, and what he is to do and become. We then looked at Pascal, Kierkegaard and Heidegger and the positions they adopted on Existentialism. Existentialists see life in terms of paradoxes: the human self, combining mind and body, is itself a contradiction. On a much lighter note we discussed Existential times in one's life e.g. to get married, to have children, to change jobs, etc. all life changing decisions are Existentialist decisions. The group agreed that Existentialism certainly put a different slant to life.

The last meeting before the Christmas break was on 8 Dec. Continuing on the theme of Existentialism we examined the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre--French---1905--1980.

The group had some knowledge of Sartre--some flattering and some not so flattering. Sartre gave the term *existentialism* general currency by using it for his own philosophy---that human life requires a rational basis but the attempt is a 'futile' passion. In common with all Existentialists he emphasises freedom and responsibility. Sartre states that Existence precedes Essence. Existence--that it is. Essence---what it is. Existence is explained by looking at a raw piece of metal--it exists. However, if the metal is changed into a pound coin we have given it an Essence. Sartre refers to the non-human beings as *being-in-itself* and human beings as *being-for-itself*. The difference is that the being-for-itself is free to choose its essence. The central point is that as we are free to choose ONE is responsible for the person that ONE IS. Bad Faith, Sartre explained is where a person acts and then blames the action on some outside authority. We concluded with Sartre's explanation of the sex act. Sexual desire is, 'double reciprocal incarnation' a form of mutual awareness which Sartre takes to be at the heart of sexual experience. He elaborates, 'I make myself flesh in order to impel the Other to realize for herself and for me her own flesh. My caress causes my flesh to be born for me insofar as it is for the Other flesh causing her to be born as flesh.' The group's reaction was, 'So what? He is only stating the obvious.' The next meeting is on 12 Jan. when we will explore A POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE.

Liam Canavan

Dining Group



The next venue for the Dining Group is “The Menzies Pinewood Hotel” and will take place on Thursday 12th February 2009 at 12.30 p.m. The price for a three course meal plus coffee will be £12.95, a deposit of £5.00 will be taken at the January meeting.

Travel Group



Trip to Prague from 2nd to 4th December 2008

The city of Prague is more than 1100 years old when several Czech states combined to become a Christian state within the European influence. Its position was at the meeting of trade routes crossing the river. The first castle was at Vysehrad which is the site of the old castle and the Church of St Peter and Paul and now the National Cemetery with Memorials to Alfons Mucha and Raphael Kubelik and the graves of the composers Dvorak and Smetana. The church was originally founded between 1070 and 1080. Due to its position money flowed into Prague and since the 12th C has been the seat of kings. In the early 14th Century it was the second largest city in Europe after Rome. In 1355 Charles IV was crowned Roman Emperor and the city became the capital of the Holy Roman Empire. His sponsorship of the arts and artisans resulted in a city full of examples of architecture and artifacts, some of which are still to be seen. During the period of the Austro-Hungarian Empire there were several periods when Prague was the capital with the consequential growth of its influence. So, at 9.00am on 3rd December we congregated outside the Crystal Palace Hotel to meet our guides for the morning's walking tour of the city. They finally arrived at 10 due to an accident holding up the traffic. Weather; - 2° C and bright sunshine. The walk took us into Charles Square where we saw the first trams and passed the New Town Hall (late 14th C mid 15th C) the tower of which is a good reference point to find our way back. We continued on to Wenceslas Square where we saw the first Christmas market and the bank with the interior like a palace. From Wenceslas Square we went to the Old Town Square via the Municipal House. This was built over the period 1906-1912 to provide a cultural centre for the Czech speaking members of the population. This was a no-expense spared project in the Art Nouveau style containing a 2000 seat concert hall. The architects employed the talents of the Czech artistic fraternity throughout. Next to the Hall and attached to it is the Powder Tower which was part of the old (15th C) fortifications. We entered the Old Town Square (1232) by the Clock tower built to display the Astronomical Clock (1490). On leaving the square our next and final stop was the Charles Bridge. This bridge was built by Charles IV, it was started on 13 July 1357 and completed at the start of the 15th C and has 16 arches. There are gate towers at either end and in 1704-1711 the railings were decorated by 31 statues of saints by which it is easily recognized. On the conclusion of the tour we were left to our own resources before our evening visit to a folk evening by coach. This was a very enjoyable evening with music and a meal. The menu was local and the music from a family group playing for the majority of the time Czech national music which is based on gypsy music, changing to some current tunes at the end of the evening.

Day 2. 9.00am

Our guide was on time and we went to sample the tram system to visit the castle and St Vitus's Cathedral. Tickets have to be bought at specific kiosks before you get on (26 crowns for 75 minutes). Having crossed the River Vltava the tram took us to the path to the Castle where we got off to see the statue of the German mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). Kepler is known for discovering the three laws of planetary motion. St Vitus's Cathedral was started in 1344 and

continued until the end of the 14th C. when it was locked up until 1861 when building restarted and was completed in 1929. Opposite the eastern end of the Cathedral is the Basilica of St George which was first built in 920 but was burnt during the siege of 1142. Building was finally finished in 1722 when the gothic chapel to St John was added. The Basilica has a single aisle in the Romanesque style as opposed to the three aisles in the gothic style of the Cathedral. In the square before the Basilica there is a statue of St George slaying the Dragon. The castle is now a mixture of buildings devoted to administration, museums, religion, concert venues and residential including the President's palace. Next to the Basilica there is a palace for noble widows in straightened circumstances founded by the Empress Marie Theresa. On conclusion of the tour once again on our own, two of us had lunch, attended a concert, and visited the museum in the Lobkowitz Palace. In the evening we took a river cruise to see the river at night but it was so cold that most of us stayed inside and ate.

FINAL DAY IN PRAGUE

The return flight to Manchester was not until 22.40 which left virtually a full day for everyone to choose their own activity. Some visited the U Flecku brewery, which was established in the sixteenth century; other members of the group opted for a guided tour of the synagogues in the Josefov Jewish quarter. Another group went to the Mucha Museum which exhibits work of the famous czech artist and continued to the Municipal House, a wonderful Art Nouveau building; others went by tram to Prague Zoo.

Prague Zoo

On a fine sunny morning four of our group visited Prague Zoo. The zoo was founded in 1931 to advance the study of zoology, protect wildlife and to educate the public. Today the zoo houses over 4,500 animals and has 1.3million visitors a year. It was for many years the biggest breeder of the Przewalski Horses which were on the verge of extinction. In 2002 the zoo was badly damaged by the floods which affected the whole of the Czech Republic and reconstruction is still ongoing. It is a small zoo but there is a feeling of spaciousness about the place and it is listed as one of the top ten zoos in Europe.

There are animals from every corner of the earth to see and we spent the whole day viewing them, I have to say that they all looked very healthy and well cared for. However the highlight of our visit to the zoo were the Gorillas, a magnificent male with his harem and offspring, the babies and their mothers kept us amused for ages. They behave just like humans, the babies getting bored with their toys and pestering poor old mum to play with them, she would occasionally give the older baby a clip round the head for misbehaving. The babies were still being breast fed and after feeding from mum would cuddle up to her and go to sleep, we enjoyed them so much that we paid a second visit before returning to our hotel to await the coach which would transport us to the airport for our flight home.

Chris Gibson, June Gibbs and Margaret McDermott

Family History Group

The first meeting of the Family History Group will take place on Thursday 15th January 2009 at Brookside Primary School, High Lane (behind the Tennis Club) at 4.00 p.m.

Needlework Group

We had a very successful sale of Christmas cards in November, raising £55 for our funds, which we shall no doubt spend when we visit the needlecraft exhibition at the beginning of February. We enjoyed a tasty and inexpensive Christmas dinner at the Dog and Partridge on 11th December before taking our Christmas and New year break. We shall next meet up in February.

Marlene Brookes

HAPPY NEW YEAR'S TO YOU

A new year is beginning to peak through
softly beautiful and different like new falling snow,
each day unique and shaped just for you.
Your life adding something as each day does grow.
My wish for your new year is beauty
and softness with surprises thrown in for delight.
Love for each day bringing happiness to you,
making your life a scene of sparkle and shining sunlight.

Anon

The deadline for material for the March 2009 newsletter is

Friday 27th February