

HIGH LANE U3A NEWSLETTER

www.highlaneu3a.org.uk

Editor

e mail: newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk



November 2010

High Lane U3A Speakers and Future Events 2011

JAN 12	RON CLARE	"40 YEARS IN TV"
JAN 19	(ANNIVERSARY LUNCH)	
FEB 9	AGM	
MAR 9	OPEN DAY	
APR 13	ERIC JENNINGS	"ON THE FIDDLE"
MAY 11	MIKE CLARKE	"HISTORY OF CHOCOLATE"
JUN 8	GORDON GREENWOOD	"AMERICAN CIVIL WAR"
JUL 13	BARBARA DAVIES	"BEEHIVE POWER"
AUG 10	U3A CHOIR + U3A MEMBERS	"A HOME GROWN AFFAIR"
SEP 14	DAVID FRITH	"A WALK ALONG THE RIVER DOVE"
OCT 12	ROLAND ANTONELLI	"ROMANCE OF BARREL ORGAN"
NOV 9	CHRISTINE HAMILTON	"A HISTORY OF STAINED GLASS"
DEC 14	CHRISTMAS PARTY	

Trip to Norwich



Thursday – Setting Off for Norfolk

48 High Lane U3A members set off on a damp Thursday morning for the holiday to Norfolk. After leaving the Derbyshire Hills behind we travelled through Nottinghamshire and into the flat counties of Lincolnshire and Norfolk. The 5 hour journey was broken with a stop at the **Thursford Museum** where we were entertained. Some of us rode on the Horses Carousel and the Gondola Carousel, others were entertained by jiving to the fairground organs and last of all an organ concert. A tiring but good day was had by all ending with an excellent evening meal at the Holiday Inn.

Friday –Norwich Castle and Norwich Cathedral

1066 and all that William the Conqueror built Norwich Castle soon after his victory in 1066 as a very definite statement that he had won and was here in England to stay. The castle was built as a large square keep, now clad in white stone – not what we expected for a 1066 castle. It was built as a royal palace and administrative HQ for the city, which was the second largest after London, then after 400 hundred years it became a jail and in the 1930's it was turned into a museum. Inside the numerous galleries there were interactive exhibitions on Queen Boudica and the Iceni, the Anglo-Saxon and Viking period, wildlife and nature and art displays and the chance to explore the Keep itself. We could have spent all day there: perhaps riding a chariot to chase off Roman soldiers, listening to a Iceni granny tell her story to children. Plenty of the group were found attempting to repair a stain glass window, trying their hand at thirteenth century graffiti (officially) and weaving a woollen scarf to keep the cold out when living in a draughty hut. It was supposedly geared for children but that morning we all shed years and wished that we had been given the opportunity to learn in such a fun way. At least two members of the group understood the principal of load bearing arches and buttresses after successfully building their own castle wall – what every woman should know. In the basement we could experience being a prisoner during some very inhospitable times with a straw mattress, bowl and mug for the meagre meal of the day and The Bucket. As the prison became overcrowded transportation started and we learnt of the crimes and the length of the sentences given to petty criminals.

A short ride away was the Cathedral - building commenced 50 years after 1066 and, in Cathedral building terms, was completed in a comparative short time. It is a most magnificent building built from stone imported from Caen with a long Nave and through the choir stalls to the high altar. It has over two hundred bosses on the stone ceiling, which was replaced after a fire destroyed the wooden ceiling quite early on in its history. The bosses start with illustrations from the Old Testament through to the New Testament and we were shown a couple of photographs – one of the Ark and another of Samson sleeping whilst his hair was cut. – the colour and detail were superb and a good pair of binoculars would have been a great help! The carving on the stone pillars and wooden choir stalls was wonderful and, again, we could have

spent much longer soaking up the history and architecture of this building. One feature quite unique to Norwich Cathedral is a very large copper font given by Cadbury's (the chocolate manufacturer) which was used to melt the chocolate for Rolos – even though it is now filled with water it did conjure up visions of babies being dipped in chocolate.

Saturday – Steam Train and The Broads

One of the highlights of the weekend was a trip to the market town of Aylsham where we boarded the Bure Valley Steam Train to take us to Wroxham. We passed through some fantastic scenery.

At Wroxham you could either stroll for about 10 minutes or stay on the coach to join the river boat for the most fantastic 1 1/2 hour cruise. The beautiful lakeside properties we passed were out of this world.

Last, but by no means least, we had a fantastic commentator giving us just enough of the wildlife and points of interest to make the time most pleasurable. The day was mostly overcast but it didn't spoil our enjoyment. We had lunch at Wroxham Barns after which we had free time to visit the craft studios and retail outlets with local produce for sale.

Sunday - Sandringham

We were ready at the gates of Sandringham as the gardens opened at 10.30am on the Sunday. Blue skies enhanced the colour of the foliage round the lake and a light breeze ruffled the branches of the splendid tree specimens. In its heyday at the end of the 19thC 100 gardeners were employed in the grounds and walled garden. Today just 8 people mow the lawns, clip the yews and tend the few flower beds. The formal beds were ploughed up during WW II and never replanted.

Sandringham Hall and 7,000 acres were bought for the future Edward VII in 1862 and he brought his new bride there in 1863. By 1870 the Hall had been taken down and Sandringham House built for his growing family. In the entrance hall is a weighing scale such as jockeys use. Guests were weighed on arrival and again when leaving. It was a point of honour that the guests were sent home weighing more than when they arrived. Although the house is very much a home of the Queen and her family with object d'art, photos and memorabilia everywhere the presence of Queen Alexandra who lived there from 1863 to her death in 1925 is still felt. The estate endeavours to be self sufficient. The needs of the land come first and refurbishment inside takes place as and when money is available.

The well presented museum houses, amongst other things, cars and shooting brakes owned by the royal family through the years, items from overseas and explanatory boards of how the house has evolved. Tiles and Arts and Crafts movement objects from the dairy where Queen Alexandra and her daughters made cheese and butter were on display, as were products from the training school she set up for young people. Shades of the Prince of Wales Trust.

After lunch in the museum gardens and a visit to the unique church, seen on TV at Christmas, the wonderful visit to Sandringham ended.

Monday – Coming Home

Leaving the Holiday Inn with its good food, warm swimming pool, and very helpful staff, we set off for **Stamford** en-route home. A compact mainly Georgian town with an interesting town trail. One day of travel, by stage coach, from London to Stamford brought prosperity to the town with coaching inns, stabling and related trades. The town became the East Midland's transportation hub with merchants and lawyers building the fine houses seen today. After lunch at one of the many eating establishments we left for home and the Derbyshire hills.

Our thanks to the organizers for an enjoyable trip, particularly to Ruth Smith, who managed to keep smiling throughout.

Contributions above came from Ruth Smith; Judith Ridgway; Jacqueline & Andre Lister; and Susan Clark.

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German Group



Our numbers have been somewhat depleted of late, partly because of autumn holidays. Recent topics have included the rescue of the Chilean miners and tips to combat memory loss. We hope to organise our Christmas meal in the next few weeks.

Marlene Brookes

Needlework Group



At the November general meeting we will be having a sale of handmade Christmas cards and holding a raffle of items made by members of the group with the proceeds going to Alzheimer's and Heart charities. Last year we made over £100 from the raffle and we hope to do similarly well this year. We thank you in anticipation of your support.

Marlene Brookes

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Churches & Pubs

St John the Baptist, Tideswell



This month took us to the town of Tideswell, which calls itself the 'Cathedral of the Peak'. The tower undoubtedly dominates this small town. The nearer we approach, the smaller the town seems and the larger the church. The first impression is of decorated grandeur especially the curvilinear tracery of the south transept. The tower has a heavy base, undistinguished belfry and, as if to compensate, massive polygonal turrets and pinnacles forming the crown.

We were met by our guide for the morning, Dennis, who turned out to be excellent. He explained that the interior came close to justifying the cathedral epithet. Nave, crossing, transepts and chancel are the 14th century at its most ambitious, flirting with Continental flamboyance before settling back into English Perpendicular. This is a church of generous proportions. The chancel was rebuilt in the late 14th century and although the side windows still have Decorated tracery with quatrefoils, they have the square heads of the Perpendicular period. The church's glory is its woodwork, which dates from all periods. There are medieval misericords in the north transept and, elsewhere, Victorian and 20th-century carvings of the highest quality. The chancel contains Victorian stalls by Tooley of Bury St Edmunds, the ends carved with saints performing deeds associated with their legends. This tradition was continued in the 20th century, with work by local craftsmen named Advent and William Huntstone. They contributed stalls, bench-ends and an organ case of astonishing virtuosity. Their bench-ends include representations of baptism, ordination, confirmation and visiting the sick. Complex tableaux are executed with none of the stagy piety of much modern religious work.

Tideswell is rich in monuments, some more successful than others. In the centre of the chancel is a tomb chest with a brass on top, a rare portrayal in this form of the Holy Trinity. A skeleton lurks beneath. The east end has four large statues, installed in the 1950s. They were not carved by the Huntstones, more is the pity.

After an enjoyable morning we all headed four miles up the road to the lovely village of Foolow and into the Bulls Head for an excellent lunch. As it was a bright and sunny day, after lunch most of us wandered round the village to the duck pond and then into the little church of St Hughs.

Paul Kenneth

St. Boniface – Bunbury



Villages like Bunbury rate a bit low on the excitement index: it was big news when the postman fell off his bicycle.

But it takes only a scratch below the lush meadows of this sleepy Cheshire village to reveal a history cratered with bombs, bullets and derring-do. Our party strolled around St Boniface's close to where, a mere 70 years ago, a German bomber unloaded a massive land mine that livened things up a bit in the church graveyard.

Conspiracy theorists like to think the Boche were trying to obliterate Hazel Grove's notorious traffic jams – bad ever since the invention of the wheel – but drifted a bit off-target and decided to get rid of the evidence before scarpering back across the channel.

Even so, they wrecked the roof and blew out 27 windows, an event not unwelcome to one or two perverse locals who muttered that at least Hitler had let the light into what was a dark church.

The blast left Sir Hugh de Calveley shaken but not stirred. The seven-foot tall warrior, sleeping soundly in his tomb in the chancel, had slashed and burned his way to glory on foreign battlefields before returning to his home village to re-build St Boniface's in the 14th century, so he was used to the odd bump in the night.

Another tomb commemorates Sir George Beeston who, aged a mere 88, set sail in the Dreadnought to scupper the Spanish armada and then lived with his memories of glory until he died, at 102.

Wreckers have taken their toll on old St Boniface down the centuries. Normans chasing down bolshie Saxons probably burnt the original 8th century wooden church, Reformation zealots obliterated wall paintings designed to instruct illiterate peasants in Bible teachings and any pictures they missed were chipped away in the Victorian mania for church restoration. In between times, the place was set on fire by Royalists in the 17th century.

But enough about alarums and excursions. As we entered St Boniface on a rare, brilliantly sunny day that floodlighted its soaring beauty, it became obvious the churchwardens Walter Done and Barbara Croley, the vicar, Rev Rick Gates and parishioners had lavished oodles of TLC on this place.

After a nice cup of tea and biscuits, and to the background strains of the organ, Walter took us through its life story up to the present, justifiably proud of the 70 adults and 20 to 25 children who regularly attend Sunday services. Apparently, you have to turn up early on Christmas day to get a seat at all.

The challenge facing the guardians is how to adapt a grade one listed building to the needs of modern society. As the biggest assembly space in the village, it hosts concerts and wedding receptions as well as Sunday school and youth groups but must never lose sight of its core purpose – to continue bringing the Christian message to all as it has done continuously for more than 1,000 years.

It is vibrant church organisations like St Boniface's that have so attracted politicians intent on replacing broken Britain with the Big Society. Whitehall poundstretchers might also learn from the phenomenal fund-raising efforts of this tiny village's Christians in recent years – £80,000 on re-modelled entrance rooms and toilet, £16,000 to level the floor, £17,000 on a new organ console and all this on top of annual running costs claimed to hit £100,000.

It was a short walk to the Dysart Arms for lunch, available from an extensive menu. The descent of 28 hungry churchgoers seemed to clog up the system for a bit and we waited and waited at two long tables. But just as I feared an outbreak of cannibalism, the kitchen doors burst open. They hadn't forgotten us after all!

An interesting day out, well organised by Paul Kenneth Mega Productions for High Lane U3A.

Tony Holt

Reading Group Report



A Moment of Silence also known as Bellfield Hall by Anna Dean

The action takes place in 1805 and Dido Kent, the heroine, is the unmarried relation who is considered to be "on the shelf" at nearly thirty. She is called upon to support her niece when her engagement is abruptly and mysteriously broken off and there is a murder to solve as well.

This tries to be "Jane Austin meets Miss Marple" but the majority in the group were not impressed with either the style of writing or the content. However it is an innocuous and easy read which did not really warrant one member's description of odious!

It will come as no surprise that the group voted not to recommend this book to friends

Louanne Collins

Discussion Group



On the 29th Sept 2010 Amy Summers introduced a change of format and instead of discussing a single subject we talked about what had happened in the period between 1920 and 1950 which has had an effect on society as a whole, whether for good or bad. Obviously this gave us a very wide choice because it included the Great Depression, World War 2 and the post war period. It was also a time of great inventions and innovations. These included Captain Birdseye's frozen foods, Radar (which was claimed by the Americans, the Germans and the English), the Jet engine, (which brought cheap flights for all), Television, the N.H.S., the Welfare State, mass production with better transport opportunities for all and of course Computers. There were many other innovations especially in the field of medicine.

Most of these brought great benefits but there were also some downsides such as pollution, rubbishy brain numbing T.V., all the bad things that come with computers, massive debt to pay for the war and repay the U.S. for what they sold to us during WW2 etc. It is a period which could be discussed for much longer than we gave it but it was extremely interesting. We may revisit it.

J. McDermott.

Walking Group Reports



Despite gloomy reports of rain and blustery weather, sixteen hardy members gathered at the village hall, before heading off for the 5 mile walk around Grappenhall. Parking at the Parr Arms, we went down a cobbled street, past St Wilfrid's Church and the old village stocks, and walked along Canal Bank to Australia Lane, treading on damsons on the way. Local knowledge is that Australia Lane is so called because this is where emigrants used to embark on the first stage of their journey to the antipodes.

We walked for some distance through fields along a narrow track, which was bordered by a very old hedge – the knowledgeable among us reckoned it was at least two or three hundred years old – containing, amongst others, hawthorn, crab-apple, elderberry and holly. Behind the hedge was a very deep ditch, reputedly that which gave Grappenhall its name, for it means quiet place by a ditch or drain. After a while we passed through a kissing gate onto rough pasture land bordered on the right by woods. We passed a number of badger setts, picking the last of the blackberries on the way, before coming on to a tarmac road for a short distance where we stopped in a lay-by for coffee. Those of us that didn't bring our own took advantage of the 'buttie wagon' in the lay-by.

Our break over, we continued through fields bordered by oak trees and hedges, past Grappenhall Hall which had once been the home of the Greenall brewing family, but which is now a boys' school. Going through another kissing gate, we entered Grappenhall wood, which was planted to commemorate the millennium. It's amazing how quickly the trees have grown in those ten years. Leaving the wood, we came back onto Canal Bank alongside the Bridgewater Canal, and headed back to the Parr Arms for a very welcome and enjoyable pub lunch.

Next to the Parr Arms is St Wilfrid's Church, which dates back to the 16th century, although some of the relics it contains go back even further to Saxon times. The church itself is very interesting and apparently there is a carving of a cat which is said to have been Lewis Carroll's inspiration for the Cheshire Cat of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland". Unfortunately, time wasn't available for us to see the inside of the church, but it could be well worth a visit, perhaps one that could be of interest to the Pubs and Churches group.

Walking Group Reports (Cont)

October 2010

Merlyn and Joyce Young led 14 members on ~6 mile walk around Lindow Common, Bridle Paths, Morley and Quarry Bank Mill Styal. We set off at 10.15 from Lindow Common car park for a day in glorious autumn sunshine crossing Lindow Common towards Black Lake. This area, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is a Lowland Wet Heathland rich in flora and fauna is managed under Cheshire County Council to promote this habitat. Soon we reached Black Lake whose name comes from the Welsh (Celtic) LLYN DDU whence the name Lindow originates. We crossed Racecourse Road a former Gipsy Race track and entered the crisscross tree lined bridal paths surrounding the area on Lindow Moss famous for Lindow Pete the Iron Age man discovered in 1983 during peat extraction.

The group were treated to the next surprise of Ross Mere a lake which formed as result of sand excavation and is now leased by Prince Albert fishing club. This area appeared serene with autumn gold reflections from the surrounding woodland and cattle grazing at the water's edge. We made our way across fields and roadways to Morley Green for a coffee stop and a short visit to Cheshire Smoke House. The walk then followed a short busy minor road before entering a muddy farm track leading to our lunch stop at Styal Mill. Leisurely lunch was taken on the meadow overlooking the River Bollin with time for brief sightseeing. We returned following the River Bollin and old Track ways back to the car park.

Everyone agreed that the weather, history and beautiful scenery made it an enjoyable day thanks to Merlyn & Joyce.

THE FLYING DUTCHMAN CRUISE



After last years' successful cruise to the Western Mediterranean , several people told us that this year's cruise to the Adriatic would be too late in the year and it would be cold in the Mediterranean by the end of October also the schedule was criticised as involving too many sea days. The number of sea days was a real issue as it turned out but temperature was to prove the least of our problems. A spectacular series of port visits were arranged: Malaga, Zakynthos, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Venice, Malta and finally Cadiz. There was a naval theme throughout provided by Nick Slope of the Nelson Society, as we were to pass Cape Trafalgar on Trafalgar Day and we were all invited to drink to the "Immortal Memory". His talks whetted our appetite for the various destinations: such was the plan!

The Bay of Biscay was crossed without incident and in the early hours of day 3 we passed the Pillars of Hercules in to the Med. Noises were heard in the corridor and at 7a.m. "This is the captain speaking, we are missing a crew member, we have reversed course to return to the place where he was last seen. Spanish search and rescue resources are co-operating. This will affect the activities planned for today. I will make a further announcement with details later." Malaga was cancelled, the missing crew member was found hiding in an air conditioning duct and after frantic efforts we were found a berth in Palermo which is a bit like exchanging Brighton for Southend - well after 4 days at sea any land was better than none. With three good stops at the attractive islands of Zakynthos and Corfu, and the old city of Dubrovnic which is the jewel of the Adriatic, trouble was far from our thoughts.

We were recommended to get up early for the entry to Venice as it is classed as one of the great arrivals. As it turned out it was a wet, grey, dark and windy morning which resulted in an early arrival in the semi-dark. "Is that water I can see in St Marks square?" asked the Port lecturer, it sure looked like it and so it proved to be. Venice was awash with rain and high tide. Then to add further to our woes when it was time to leave the wind had increased to such a level that the authorities closed the port! We eventually got away about 4 hours late- not too bad.

Malta is dripping with history: Greek, Roman, Knights of St John, the great siege of 1565, then there was the George Cross heroism of the whole island in 1942. As we approached its 16th century fortifications stood out in the bright morning sunshine- what a landfall and what an Island. The disappointment of Venice was burnt away in the morning sun, and an exhausting days sightseeing, only slightly marred by a sharp shower, followed. Then off across the Med. again and towards Cadiz. The port from which the Combined Fleets of France and Spain set sail to do battle with Nelson at Trafalgar in 1805, and before that there was Drake in 1587 who singed the king of Spain's beard before the Armada sailed in its attempt to conquer us in 1588.

We were on the home leg relaxing in the warm sunshine with almost everyone looking forward to Cadiz. The Officer of the Watch did his usual midday update on position speed etc, but finished with the ominous words "the captain will speak to you in 15 minutes"

By now on this cruise we had learned that when the captain wants to speak to you, you know that it is not going to be good news.

"This is your captain speaking, we have a problem!!! There is a big storm brewing in the Atlantic, and it's coming our way, 30 – 40 ft waves and winds up to storm force¹² are predicted. I propose to abandon our visit to Cadiz and try to out run the worst of the storm and put in at Le Havre. I will brief you all at 1500 in the Palladium Theatre"

Oh! bother, is there anything more that can go wrong, yes but let's not dwell on that. At full speed we scuttle around Cape St Vincent, up the length of Portugal, past Corunna and with pressure dropping fast we struck out confidently across the Bay of Biscay. A rough evening ensued as we cleared Spain and the evening meal was skipped by many as we flew northward like the Flying Dutchman of old seeking a port. Those with the stomach for entertainment were royally entertained by a young Welsh singer, who made up for the patronising, not so funny comic of the previous night. The morning brought calmer seas as we rounded Ushant and we derived some shelter from France. Then about 5 a.m. on the penultimate day of our cruise we slipped quietly in to Le Havre. Some shore trips were organized; those to Rouen and Honfleur were particularly successful in lifting the gloom that descended when Cadiz was cancelled. All that remained was to pack our cases, and depart northwards with our bodies still rocking and rolling.

An epic cruise but despite the troubles and disappointments it was successful. The onboard entertainment was excellent "The Headliners" song and dance group were exhausting to watch and had everyone downing their coffee in one gulp and dashing to the theatre to secure a seat. A very big thank you to Margaret for organising it even though it wasn't quite what you were expecting. Also thanks to June Gibbs for arranging the coach, and for every one for being such good company.

Noel Christopher

Dining Group



43 Members of the Dining Group ventured as far as The Red Lion in High Lane for lunch last month. Once again we found that not all restaurants find it easy to cater for larger groups of people. The food was for some of our diners; excellent, for others, a bit *nouveau cuisine*, (novel combinations of foods in small quantities, and elegant displays highlighting details of texture and colour). One problem was that some had ordered two courses and others three courses; this meant that the people who had not ordered starters were waiting for their main courses. Hence some felt there was a slowness of service; others were quite happy having a leisurely dining experience and enjoying the company of their fellow diners.

Because of our experiences we have decided, that in future, we will only book for a maximum of 35 people at the restaurants we frequent and we will all have either two or three courses and not a mixture of the two. Our next meal will be at L'Ecole, on Wednesday the 1st December. Due to the popularity of this venue the 35 places have already been taken. However are planning our next outing, which will be in February, to The Bridge Hotel in Prestbury, more details at the next meeting.

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### **A few quotes for you found by the editor :-**

Years ago I thought old age would be dreadful, because I should not be able to do things I would want to do. Now I find there is nothing I want to do. ~ *Nancy Astor*

People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out. But in the darkness, beauty is seen only if there is light within. ~ *Anon*

What lies behind you and ahead of you is not as important as what lies within you

"If you take all the experience and judgment of men over fifty out of the world, there wouldn't be enough left to run it." *Henry Ford*

Enjoy Christmas and remember to please let me have contributions for the next newsletter by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.