

GROUP REPORTS

AGM 10 February 2016

ART GROUP

This last year another great success. We are in our fifth year now who would believe it. People have gone and people have come, We still have about 20 every week and it is so much fun, The art is OK as well. We are having a visiting artist in February and we have promised you another Art Show as well. at the May 11th. meeting. Hoping to have an exhibition locally as well after this show, will keep you informed. Do come and join us even if you painted years ago at school ! They asked me to keep this report short hope this will do. Remember this is a very social group as well doing painting & drawing, don't be shy, come and join us. You won't be lonely.

Brian Chadwick

BACKGAMMON GROUP

The backgammon group is still staggering along and I still manage to get a game. Numbers are very low, however, and in an attempt to engender more interest I have asked that the group be publicised via the Pennine Link, I believe this is in hand.

I am also in the process of writing an article for the newsletter, explaining generally how to play the game. I am presently trying to "lose" 600 words from what is currently a 1000 word thesis, also I just hope the diagrams in it will operate in whatever computer software we use!

Ron Barrow

BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 1 & 2

The Ballet Appreciation Groups 1&2 has continued to meet throughout 2015 on the first Friday and third Wednesday of the month respectively and is now in its 5th year. The attendance although small (8/9 members for each meeting) has remained constant making it difficult for those on the waiting list to join the group on a permanent basis. The meetings take place in my home, so the size of each group is limited; however a number of new members have been accommodated by moving the furniture around.

We are still enjoying Ballets and Ballet Documentaries, both old and new and I am constantly adding to the collection with new material.

The following is a sample of some of the performances we have enjoyed:

"La Chauve-Souris" ("De Fledermaus")

"A-Z of Ballet"

"Coppelia"

"Sinatra Suite" (Based on the music of Frank Sinatra)

Symphony in 'C'

"Don Quixote"

"A Simple Man" (Based on J.S. Lowry's "Match Stick Men")

"Giselle"

“Bolshoi Class Concert 2011 (Documentary showing the progression of students from junior boys & girls up to senior ladies & men

The High Lane and Poynton groups continue to collaborate with regard to the ballet material shown, which works very well. Anyone within the U3A can read our ballet programmes in each issue of the News Letter and can contact Meg or I for more information, our details can be found on the Group Leaders List.

Sheila Hall

BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 3&4.

10 members.

The groups meet in Poynton from 2-4 pm. on the third Wednesday of each month, or there is a repeat performance on the first Thursday of the following month.

The groups are run independently from groups 1&2, run by Sheila Hall, though Sheila and I exchange ideas and materials. We watch an informative and entertaining mix of documentaries, short pieces and full-length ballets.

Over the last twelve months, topics covered have included:

- The Kirov and Bolshoi Ballets
- Modern British choreographers
- American choreographers George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins.

We have seen nine full length ballets. The most popular of these were The Royal Ballet’s Romeo and Juliet, and The Birmingham Royal Ballet’s Hobson’s Choice.

We ended the year with a performance of David Bintley’s production of Cinderella, performed by the Birmingham Royal Ballet.

Topics planned for 2016 include:

- The Royal Ballet The Winter’s Tale
 Mayerling
- Paris Opera Ballet Notre Dame de Paris
 La Petite Danseuse de Degas
- La Scala Ballet Raymonda
- Australian Ballet The Merry Widow

The groups were formed in 2012 and so far we have had no repetition.

I may start to show some of the more popular ballets again, but different versions to the ones already seen, so Swan Lake, Giselle etc, may be shown later in the year.

Four members have left the group this year, so I do have a few places available.

I always try to accommodate anybody who expresses an interest.

Meg Humphries

THURSDAY BRIDGE GROUP

The last year has been one of steady progression and the group currently has 36 players.

The average monthly turnout has varied from 21 to 27 players. From January to May we were seeing 23 to 27 and for the rest of the year 21-25.

We have continued our bridge lunches and have tried starting in the morning, having lunch and continuing with bridge, finishing with prize-giving at 4 o'clock. We have one in June and one at Christmas.

I would like to thank all those who have helped to keep the group alive, in particular the catering staff and the three pairs of members who have taken over the running of the Thursday afternoons on a three week cycle.

We play at Woodside tennis club starting at 1:30pm. We play rubber, Chicago and duplicate bridge.

Chris Gibson

BRIDGE CLUB 3

Bridge Club Three meets at Hazel Grove Bowling and Tennis Club every Wednesday morning between 9.30 and 12.00.

The cost is £1.50 per week.

We play Duplicate Bridge and Chicago on alternate weeks. The idea behind this is that prizes are distributed more evenly, so that the more experienced players do not necessarily win every week. There is also a random prize in the week we play Chicago, so everyone has an equal chance of winning something.

All members have some experience of playing bridge and no lessons are given, which would make it an unsuitable club for absolute beginners. We are a very friendly group and members help with duplicate scoring and with the setting out and tidying up of the room.

We have a party each Christmas where each member brings a dish to the buffet table.

At the moment the club is thriving and is over subscribed.

However, if anyone would be interested in joining us in the future, they are welcome to submit their name to the waiting list.

CARD MAKING GROUP

1. This is a relatively new group, having had our first meeting in August 2015.
2. We meet monthly on the first Thursday of the month in St Thomas' Church Hall from 1.30 until 3.30/4pm.
3. We make two cards at each meeting.
4. Cards are designed to use really simple yet effective paper-crafting techniques and we try to explore at least one new or different technique each month.
5. Members range from experienced card makers to beginners and we all help each other with the techniques and are often surprised by the stunning cards we can produce using basic tools and products: photos in the Newsletter do not do them justice.
6. The Group enjoys getting together to share ideas and learn new techniques, but also to take away with us two cards with which we are pleased and proud to send to family and friends.
7. We use good quality materials, which can be expensive, so we have recently agreed to pay £7 per meeting to cover the cost of the hall, refreshments, materials and also to help purchase equipment for use by the group.
8. There is space for more people and if you want to know more or join us for a taster session, Dot and I will be around after the meeting.

Christine Fox and Dot Green

CHURCHES AND PUBS

2015 was the eighth year that the Churches and Pubs has been running. We had a total of six visits which took us to Standish (Wigan), Brailsford (Derbyshire), Slaidburn (Lancashire), Checkley (Staffordshire), Acton (Cheshire) and Taddington (Derbyshire). Once again the guides at the churches were excellent with their information on the Churches for us. Each trip averaged forty members and sixty-four people attended at least one visit. The group has visited over fifty different churches and pubs over the eight years. Once again I would like to thank the members who wrote the reports for each visit for the Newsletter and website and also for helping with transport.

Paul Kenneth

CROWN GREEN BOWLING

Both Tuesday and Thursday Groups are continuing to be supported by a regular group between 8 - 14 members. The games take place on Tuesday and Thursday mornings throughout the year commencing at 10am and finishing at 12 noon. This includes the all important refreshment break at 11.00am. Obviously we have been rained off many times this winter, but hope that in the next few weeks we will be seeing some dryer weather.

Our Annual Pairs competition took place in October last year and the trophy was won by Barbara Tomlinson and Ed Rowbottom with Lynn Jones and Geoff Snowdon coming a very close second. It was a really enjoyable day and involved players from both groups. This event was then followed by lunch at the Fiveways Hotel.

We are looking forward to the coming season of bowling and also planning a repeat of last year's Spring Social Meal. This will take place sometime in late March or early April: this again will

involve both groups and as before partners/spouses of members are always invited. Judith Ridgway is fixing up the date and venue. Details of this will be announced later.

A reminder to players that it will also be time to renew their Bowling Passes as from the end of March 2016. This is requested by the Stockport Local authority and it is required that all our U3A players hold a current Pass. Passes will be available for purchase at Marple and Hazel Grove libraries at the end of March. These passes are £25 and enable holders to play on any Local Authority green in Stockport for a full year.

This year we can welcome a few more members to join us as we are not as full as we have been in the past, and invite any U3A members to join us if they feel like having a go at this very sociable and pleasant exercise.

Margaret Evans

DANCING - BEGINNERS' BALLROOM AND LATIN

We have held dance lessons here from the time this U3A was started. There are four different classes. Of these four, my partner, Danny, and I are completely responsible for two of these, Beginners' Ballroom and Beginner's Latin.

Because of the way things have changed, Danny and I have felt it is time to review the situation and possibly bring in some changes. We are still thinking of the best way of doing this. We will give you more news when we have finished thinking.

Some Other Points :-

- 1 - you do need to come with a partner
- 2 - Danny and I are both qualified dance teachers (UKA).

Kath Taylor

BALLROOM/LATIN DANCING IMPROVERS

This thriving group started in September 2014, with the more experienced dancers from the previous ballroom and latin classes. Open to Pennine Link members, it is organised by Joan Charman (Marple), with Sam Chappell and Walter Mason providing the music, and new steps instructed by Danny Bell assisted by Kath Taylor. We try valiantly to learn new steps faster than we forget old ones!

DINING GROUP

The Dining Group continues to be popular with our U3A members and our outings are well supported.

We meet for lunch every two months and last year we visited six venues, five of which were new to members. There is an average attendance of 30-35 diners joining us, the exception being the Christmas meal at the Legh Arms, when 41 members attended.

We are, of course, always open to suggestions for future venues to visit and will also be planning to book an evening meal in the summer.

Jeanette Bell and Dorothy Neillands

FAMILY HISTORY

We hold regular house meetings, usually on the third Thursday of the month. Our focus has changed over the years, we have away from pure internet research on when our ancestors lived, but we still have the facility and are very willing to help new members get started with this. We were pleased with our WW1 display and would really like a few more contributions to this before 2018! Apart from that we are spending more time looking at social issues such as our ancestors in workhouses, criminals in the family, wills and probate records and newspaper archives.

Between us we have a range of knowledge and would welcome new members to share it with. We love problem solving, especially when they are other people's problems. We don't know all the answers but are always willing to help.

Pat Christopher

GARDENING

The gardening group had another full year of events, including house meetings, garden visits, and a New Year meal at Platform One. Highlights were visits, to Hopton Hall near Carsington, a fine snowdrop garden, to the lovely setting of Chatsworth Gardens, escorted by one of their knowledgeable garden guides, to the Monet-like Stoneyford Cottage Garden near Delamere, and especially to the hidden miniature gem Walkden Gardens in Sale Moor – free and fascinating, with almost 30 individual mini-gardens including a Japanese garden and a long wisteria arch.

In 2015, we have coped with one or two additional members, and we had several meetings in members' gardens, and a private visit to a yellow garden scheme garden, to contrast with the outside trips.

OPERA APPRECIATION

17 members.

During the last year, the group has nearly doubled in size, and I now run each opera twice – either on the second or fourth Tuesday afternoon of each month. This is a new arrangement, in response to demand, and it may be subject to change. We meet at my house in Poynton. At each session we watch a complete opera, so the sessions usually last between 2 and 3 hours, plus an interval. (I have longer operas waiting in the wings).

This year we have seen eight Italian operas, by six different composers. We have also seen Romeo and Juliet (French) and The Magic Flute (German).

Plans for 2016 include:

- an introduction to counter tenors with Rodelinda by Handel
- more Italian operas: Otello, Cavalleria Rusticana, Pagliacci
- French opera: Faust, Hamlet
- German opera: The Merry Widow.

I have many more operas to show, and though places are strictly limited, I will try to accommodate anyone who is interested.

Meg Humphries.

PHOTOGRAPHY

This group is tiny but enthusiastically competitive. Our house meetings, with a mini-competition on various selected topics, continue to stretch our imaginations and photographic skills. We had a photoshoot at Etherow, and continue to see lovely pictures taken by our members, some from exotic holiday locations! We have been refreshed by two newcomers, but there continues to be scope for one or two reasonably experienced photographers to augment the group.

SHAKESPEARE GROUP

The Group meets monthly on a Monday morning from 9.30 until 12. We started 3 years ago and so far have read 15 of Shakespeare's 37 plays. It usually takes 2 sessions to complete a play.

Currently there are 15 members in the Group although we average about 12 per session. We try and balance what we read so that we cover the History plays, the Comedies, the Tragedies and the Roman plays in turn.

In addition, we visit Live screenings of the different plays and have also had a Group visit to Stratford upon Avon to attend RSC performances.

Steve Reynolds December 2015

SINGING

Our next concert will be approximately a forty minute slot at the U3A meeting on the 11th May, when we will have an opportunity to present our musical selection.

At present we have 13 sopranos, of whom two have not been with us this year due to illness, although nine are available for the concert in May. We have ten altos, seven of whom are available for the May concert. We have three tenors and two will be available in May and six basses, all of whom are available in May. We are working hard to produce an enjoyable programme.

Our weekly subscriptions are still £2 and we have sufficient money to pay for room hire and to buy music.

Future concerts are planned but not yet confirmed.

Anthony and Margaret Glynn

STROLLERS

The Strollers Group meet once a month on the last Monday in the month. We meet at 9.45am in the car park by the Village Hall. Numbers vary from 6-12. The walk lasts between 1.5 and 2 hours. It is a gentle walk with few stiles and hills, usually around the High Lane area. Sometimes going a little further afield using our Bus Passes. Twice a year in the summer and at Christmas, we end the walk having lunch together.

June Gibbs and Jean Goldsmith

TABLE TENNIS: BRABYNS PARK, MARPLE

Another successful year of weekly sporting activities strongly supported by a group of sociably integrated members.

The sustained membership of over 30 allows us to maintain the weekly admission at £1.50 for the two hour sessions and the attendance levels remains at 18 to 27 depending on seasonal influences.

Most expenditure is on room hire charges, refreshments and equipment replacements ie balls, nets and first aid requirements. Any excess funds are used to finance free sessions and match lunches subject to availability.

The level of play is competent and aggressive and that's only the ladies; but it is gratifying to see people of our age group running around like teenagers.

Brian Burke

TABLE TENNIS GROUP - TUESDAY

The Tuesday morning table tennis group meets every week from 10am until noon at Woodside Tennis Club in High Lane. We have room for a few new members, who will need more enthusiasm than skill. We have two tables, bats are provided, and everyone usually plays around five or six games, with a break for tea and biscuits. Finally, the cost is £2 per week.

Mike and Sandra Moran

THEATRE MATINEE CLUB

We have made 8 trips this year starting with the Birmingham Royal Ballet which reached its usual high standards with 'Coppelia'.

We then visited Oldham Colosseum which was a big disappointment regarding the theatre which had been closed for supposed refurbishment, however, I could not see any improvement just the same lack of facilities as before. The Arts Centre was much better.

We went to 3 plays, one at Theatr Clwyd, another at the Bolton Octagon and one at the Theatre by the Lake in Keswick.

Stockport Operatic put on 'Kiss Me Kate' at the Plaza and was thoroughly enjoyable.

'Into the Woods' at the Royal Exchange had a mixed response, love it or hate it, there didn't seem to be a happy medium.

The highlight of the year was definitely 'The Girls' at the Lowry. For those who failed to book you missed a treat.

Later this month we go to the Carver to see 'Busybody' and in April 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' at the Lowry.

Whilst on my feet, is there anyone willing to join our small committee to represent High Lane. Whilst Pam is willing to help on the desk at monthly meetings, she does not want to be on the committee. I would welcome some support for High lane when it comes to choice of trips. My colleagues do tend to be rather highbrow at times and not everybody wants to go a long way.

Looking forward to your company at future events

Pat Whinnerah

TRAVEL GROUP - Previously known as Holidays and Visits

The Travel Group has a small committee, namely Pat Gorie, Margaret McDermott, Margaret Meekley, Ruth Smith and we aim to organise holidays or day visits to places of historical, cultural or general interest by coach, air or local transport

April - Using our bus passes a group had a superb behind the scenes tour of the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester. After the tour a lunch nearby at a Chinese restaurant.

May - A large group had a 6 day holiday based in Blairgowrie, Scotland. Castles were visited and a very interesting day on Captain Scott's ship the Discovery.

June - A very successful day to the Guide Dog Centre with an excellent lunch at Olympus fish and chip restaurant, complete with grand piano.

July - By popular demand a second visit to Chester to board the canal boat for a luncheon cruise.

August - A five day holiday based in Stratford to experience where 'the bard' lived and experience Othello, as well as visiting Coventry and Leicester Cathedrals.

September - A second Irish holiday flying from Manchester. Based in Cork, visiting Muchcross and Bantry Houses, Cork Heritage Centre and Missen Head.

Mid-October - A day visit to Southwell Apple Festival. The village and Minster were adorned with Bramley apples. After lunch the group went to Southwell Workhouse.

Late October - A fly cruise from Istanbul visiting the Greek Islands and Croatia.

December - A day at Tatton Hall dress for Christmas with a theme of carols, old and new in all the downstairs rooms, after which was a Christmas dinner: a superb day out.

We, as a committee, try our best to arrange comprehensive visits and holidays with various types of heritage sites in our programme. Would anyone like to join our committee, please come to the Travel Table and make yourself known.

For 2016 visits or holidays, please see us at the table, it is also in the Newsletter and on our website.

WALKING

The walking group had another good year, with reasonable attendances, intriguing walks including several on new ground, and a friendly atmosphere, ending on a high with 31 at our Christmas walk/lunch well organised by Sam and Irene. This year the away break was for 3 nights and in early May. The Holiday Fellowship Guesthouse in Church Stretton, Shropshire is ideal for walkers, and adjoined interesting walking country, although cold winds in Long Mynd and occasional heavy showers on the "Three Peaks of Shropshire" tested our walkers. Steve Reynolds organised the break with help from David Burke on walks, including a stroll round Attingham. Good food, an exciting table-tennis tournament, a local quiz, and the chance to visit the lovely Powis Castle gardens, made for a very good break. Later in the year, a group of 10 enjoyed a 4 night break in Sedbergh, between the Howgills and Yorkshire Dales, with very good accommodation but variable weather. Limited knowledge of the local paths was a slight handicap, in this quiet but beautiful area.

Generally in 2015 we were lucky with the weather whilst walking, but overnight rain did sometimes leave a legacy of heavy ground especially towards Christmas. In 2016, there will be more healthy and enjoyable walking, and the prospect of an exciting Summer break in Keswick, hopefully well recovered from recent floods by then.