

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the August 2022 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Another bumper edition with reports and photographs of recent u3a activities. It's good to see there is lots happening this summer. Thanks to all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions.

Most members now receive the newsletter by email or read it on the website. We know that not all members can do this so there will be a few printed copies available at the monthly meeting for members without web access or email. This edition of the newsletter is accompanied by the National Office bitesize newsletter for July.

This is your newsletter. Please feel free to share some of your news, your interests, items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members, places you have visited, books you have read, films you have seen; your stories, anecdotes, photographs, recipes, limericks, jokes; the list is endless. I've said this a few times now - we'd love to hear from some of our new members. Why not share your experiences with our members.

The next issue will be September 2022 so please send your contributions to me by 30 August at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

GROUP LEADER'S MEETING

On Friday 22nd July we had an afternoon tea to which all the group leaders were invited along with the tea ladies. This was a big thanks to everyone who has kept our u3a going these last few years. Normally we have the afternoon tea every year but due to Covid this has not been possible.

A big thank you to everyone who turned up; an enjoyable time was had by all. Thanks also to the Committee who provided the excellent refreshments.

Paul Kenneth
Chairman

FROM THE CHAIR

21st year Anniversary Lunch

This month we celebrated 21 years in existence with a meal at the Deanwater Hotel in Woodford, attended by nearly seventy members. Our guest at the meal was Edwina Currie, ex local member of Parliament

A really enjoyable meal was had, excellently served by the staff from the hotel. After the meal, Edwina Currie spoke about some of her experiences as a member of Parliament. Edwina declined a fee but asked for donations for Blythe House in Chapel en le Frith. A cheque was sent to Edwina for £200 which she has forwarded to Blythe House. During the following week Sue had a reply from Edwina and also a text from Blythe House saying a big thank you for the money raised.

A big thank you goes to Sue Harlin, Andre Lister and Eric Harlin for organising a very enjoyable meal. These things take a lot of time to do. Well done. You can find the photographs on page 4

A few years ago, we put on a Murder Mystery evening which went down very well – so we are organising another murder mystery featuring an 'all star' cast on Friday, 21st October. Food will be served during the evening, before the announcement of who committed the murder. Tickets will be on sale shortly and the evening will include food in the ticket price.

New Groups

We are hoping to start three new groups and are putting feelers out to see if there are interested parties. Please let me know if you are interested in any of these.

1. Walking Cricket. There is already a subject advisor for this interest group. You can read more at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/latest-news/u3a-member-mac-brings-walking-cricket-to-bradford-and-todmorden>
2. Line Dancing
3. Solo – this is for people on their own who would like to meet up and go out for a meal or drink or walk or just to meet up for a coffee and chat. So many people are on their own and hopefully it is a way to bring people together.

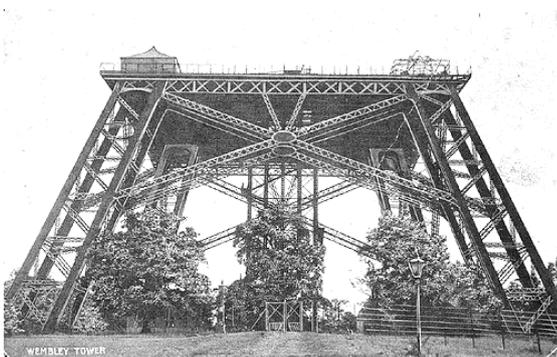
Ideas for new groups are always welcome – especially if you can help in getting the group set up and running.

Paul Kenneth

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our speaker for July was Geoff Scargill who gave a talk entitled "The Last Laugh of The Railway King", Edward William Watkins. Watkins was a British Member of Parliament and Railway Entrepreneur. He was an ambitious visionary who became chairman of nine railway companies and presided over large-scale railway engineering projects, yet today, is virtually forgotten. "Nimble Ned" the Railway King was one of Victorian Britain's best-known characters.

Born in Salford in 1819, he led campaigns in Manchester to create the first public parks "for the people". With Richard Cobden, he kept alive the anti-corn law campaign, transformed Grimsby which became the biggest fishing port in the world, and created a new holiday resort of Cleethorpes. He rescued The Grand Trunk Railway in Canada from bankruptcy and changed it into the longest railway in the world, the Atlantic/Pacific Railroad Link. He built the Great Central Railway from Manchester into London.



He also built an Eiffel Tower that became Wembley Stadium but was not completed; this became known as "Watkins Folly".

In 1880 he started a Channel Tunnel – but after two miles our government feared a French invasion, so it was halted.

He suffered from self-doubt and depression. The "Last Laugh" for him came in 1979 when a 1861 painting hung on the walls of "Rose Hill", his former home in Northenden, was realised to be a masterpiece called "The Icebergs" by Frederic Edwin Church. It was sold after restoration by Sotheby's in New York for \$2.5 million, the most ever paid at auction for an American painting. Today it is in The Dallas Museum of Art, Texas. Watkins died in 1901.



Our speaker for August will be Rod Devereux whose talk is entitled My Life in Special Branch.

André Lister

21st ANNIVERSARY LUNCH PHOTOGRAPHS





Thanks to Walter for the photographs.

u3a Science network anniversary meeting 26 July

This all-day event presented three very interesting presentations of 45 minutes followed by questions.

John Marriage, Lyme Regis u3a
Mike Perry, Tring u3a
Leigh Edwards, Exeter u3a

Blowing Hot and Cold in the 1980s
The Carbon Imperative
Human colonisation of Space

Look out for the next meeting in October.

HAZEL GROVE HAPPENINGS

It's been a busy July in Hazel Grove. Early in the month, the annual fair once again came to Torkington Park. The middle of the month saw Hazel Grove Carnival, the first since lockdown. This was one of the very hot days but was extremely well attended with many stalls and entertainers including a bagpipe band!



Later in the month, on a hot sunny day in the Secret garden in Torkington Park, Hazel Grove Band gave their annual concert. It makes for a lovely venue. Shame there are not other events there. Mind you, some years have been wet, so they do need their protective tents.

Walter Mason

Flower Festival

Hazel Grove Methodist Church has a history of successful flower festivals. This year was 50 years since the present church building was constructed, so was the perfect anniversary occasion for yet another – with a theme also linked to the Christian year. As well as the flower arrangements by Barbara Ellison and her helpers, the church had other interesting displays, a programme of background music, and a well-stocked coffee lounge.

My wife Freda was one of the helpers. Roger and Jean Drinkwater, and Glenda Miller were there during my visit. I'm sure others from u3a came too. It was pleasing to see that the helpers included ladies from every other Hazel Grove church, and some other local churches besides. But there were some hard-working men around too!



Photos give an idea of the skill and ingenuity of the arrangers. I'm sure the event was a success, and it won't be too long before another festival is organised.



Walter Mason

2022 ANNIVERSARY ROBOT CHALLENGE

Might we have any members interested in this?

As part of its 40th Anniversary celebrations, Gloucester u3a is planning to run a Robot Challenge along the lines as the one held in 2019 by Cannock Chase u3a. They are calling for Expressions of Interest from any u3as who wish to enter a robot to compete in a small number of challenges. More details at <https://u3asites.org.uk/u3asciencenetwork/events>

GROUP NEWS

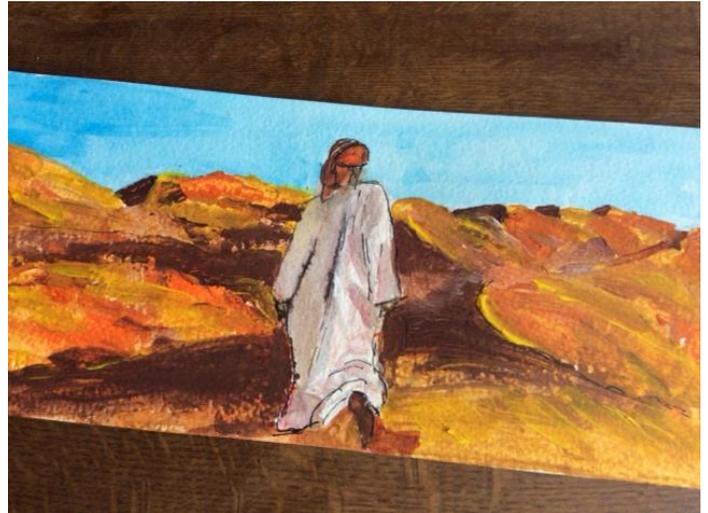
ART

It is now a year since I joined the U3A Art Group on Thursday afternoons in the Village Hall. Looking back at some of my work, I can see progress. One picture I painted was of a scene along a canal, with the cyclist riding along the canal path - but I could see the angle of the wheels suggested he was about to ride straight into the water! So the next picture was of a couple of cyclists riding through long grass on mountain bikes. Finally, I tried to capture a scene from the French Tour de France, with many cyclists. After that, no more cycles and cyclists!



Then I moved from water colours to acrylic paints and painted a series concentrating on trees. I even tried using palette knives instead of brushes. The palette knives seemed right for painting sand dunes.

We will not be meeting in August, so any new budding artists might like to join our group from September 8th. Everyone goes at their own pace, so don't worry if you are a complete beginner. It is fun and the group is friendly.



Joan Rose

CRIME FICTION READING

Our second book for this group was No Further Questions by Gillian McAllister.

(You'd trust your sister with your life, but should you? The compulsive thriller from the Sunday Times bestselling author. This was the comment from Amazon Kindle. However our group were split about whether or not we agreed with this comment. Half the group felt it was a good read, but half did not.

At the start of the discussion the question was asked about whether or not this novel was a suitable choice for a 'Crime Book Group' because we were uncertain whether or not a crime had been committed! When we had a break for refreshments discussions became much more nuanced. The author is a solicitor and a member enjoyed the novel because of the accuracy of proceedings, with whom I agreed as it appealed as I had wanted to be a barrister but went in a different direction. We delved into more nuances of the impact such a 'crime/events' would have on the people involved and who should carry the greater responsibility.

I personally like to read at least two books by an author so I purchased her latest 'Wrong Place Wrong Time' and, wow, was I impressed. It is a new (2022) novel and so different. I thought Ms McAllister might have been on a novel writing course. Outstanding

We are now reading The Beekeeper's Apprentice introducing Mary Russell and Sherlock Holmes by an American author, Laurie King. This is the first in a series featuring them.

Sue Roworth

GARDENING

Gardening visits in July were to Pam and Ruth. Both gardens on the smaller size, but well packed with interesting flowers, and in Ruth's garden vegetables too.



Walter Mason

Email addresses for group leaders

Many group leaders already use these. This is useful as the group address can be given in the newsletter and linked to your group web page so your personal email address is not divulged. If you haven't got one for your group, contact Jeff Mortimer, webmaster@highlaneu3a.org.uk

CURRENT AFFAIRS

The news being dominated by the machinations of the Conservative Party left few other items to discuss. Who will be the new Prime Minister, what should be at the top of his/her to do list? We thought Penny Mordaunt would be a good choice from the four remaining candidates or Rishi Sunak. Unfortunately, two hours after our meeting we heard that she had been voted out. We agreed that the most important problems to be tackled are inflation and the cost of living. Measures to reduce global warming and to improve public transport in rural areas should also be on the agenda. One member of the group asked what we thought was Boris Johnson's biggest downfall. The consensus was that he would be remembered as the most dishonest, corrupt and disgraced Prime Minister of all time.

Apparently, University courses in Arts and Humanities are being drastically reduced in the hope that there will be more graduates in Science, Technology and Engineering. The closure of so many technical high schools has also led to fewer students being interested in those subjects. A much more highly skilled workforce is required in this country if we are to compete with the likes of Germany and Scandinavia. It was thought that separate universities for the Arts would prevent a future decline in these subjects.

There is frequently mention of transgender issues in the Press. Sex is assigned at birth and is associated with chromosomes and anatomy and cannot be changed. Problems arise with changing rooms, toilets and sport with those people who have decided that they have changed gender.

Are there so many cases and should they be allowed to self identify? Self identification is not yet allowed by law.

Traditionally tennis at Wimbledon was not played on Sunday (unless matches were delayed because of rain in the previous week) Is this a good thing? Most of us said that since Sunday has no longer been a day of rest for many years it was not really important.

Local people in popular tourist areas such as Wales and the Lake District have been priced out of the housing market because of houses being bought as holiday homes. In one area of Wales a housing development is being built where buyers have to agree that they will live in the house for at least four years to prevent them being bought as an investment and then left empty for the rest of the year when not being used for holidays. We thought that this is a good idea to help local people remain in their own area.

Margaret McDermott

TRAVEL

RHINE CRUISE August 9th–16th
Departure from Manchester Airport now 8:45 (to Zurich)
Return from Dusseldorf at 18:35
We should receive final details within the next 10 days.



IRELAND September 4th–8th
Departure from Manchester Airport to Cork 8:30. Return from Cork 21:50

LINCOLN October 14th–16th
Half board at Holiday Inn Lincoln. Approx. £360 including entrance fees.
Balance required at August meeting.

BOLSOVER CASTLE August 27th
Medieval Jousting event. £29
Final payment at August meeting.

SAMLESBURY HALL December 9th
Coach, tour of the hall and 3 course Christmas lunch. £46
Final payment at September meeting.

Margaret McDermott

QUIZZING

This month, the quiz was set by Mavis – and it wasn't easy. There were lots of interesting bits of knowledge – if only we could remember them.

We had a section of Firsts – here are some for you to try. Answers are on page 19.

1. First monarch to live in Buckingham Palace
2. First person to produce motion film
3. First Beatles album
4. First woman to win a Nobel prize
5. First Football League champions and FA Cup Winners (in 1888–1889)
6. First Disney film to win an Oscar

New quizzers are welcome. Please get in touch

Diane Saxon

MEMOIRS

The aim of the group is to write about our early lives in the hope that it will be of interest to subsequent generations. We usually have a theme. Last month it was our first day at school or early school days for those of us who couldn't actually remember day one.

Several people made friends for life on the first day, others were pretty unhappy. One member brought along a little token gift she received as a reward for not crying for several days. Stewart treated us to one of his poems about an unfortunate little girl who had nits. A lively conversation followed which was mainly about getting the cane or avoiding a blackboard rubber being thrown by an irate teacher!! How things have changed. Nowadays there are nurseries and pre-school sessions to ease little ones in. We just got handed in at the door and hoped for the best for what was often a steep learning curve in more ways than one!!

The meetings are great fun. They are held in the village hall on the first Tuesday of the month at 2.00 pm.

If you are interested, please contact me.

Sheila Harrop

READING

The book choice for July was *The Woman in the Photograph* by Stephanie Butland. The story is told through several photographs taken at important moments in the history of women's struggle for equality. Intertwined there is the story of various characters and their struggles with relationships.

The book had mixed reviews which always provides for plenty of lively discussion.

We would welcome at least a couple more members so if you love reading you are very welcome to join us. We meet on the first Monday of each month at 2pm.

Please contact me if you are interested in joining us.

The next meeting is on Monday August 8th when we will be discussing *White Tiger* by Aravind Adiga.

Kath Wareham

PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Staircases. Winning photographs were:

1st. Somerset house – Diane – 6 votes

Joint 2nd

MOD Whitehall – Diane, Rope core – Derek and Silver – Derek. All with 3 votes each



Thanks for all your efforts

Well done everybody. The topic for next month is 'Numbers and Letters'.
Why not come and join us?

Jeff Robinson

WALKING

Walk 27/7/2022

This was the first time since lockdown that we tried a return to the old format of optionally meeting up at High Lane Village Hall car park or at the start of the walk. In the event only 3 departed from the Village Hall, with the remainder of our 21 strong party meeting at the rendezvous in Taddington.



After a brief introduction, we set off in the pleasant sunshine down a small ginnel bordered with flowers and headed over a field to the church of St Michaels and all Angels. The church was open so we entered to examine the various features such as the stone carved font, the organ, stained glass window and the unusual carved tree stump embedded with nails. Founded in the 12th century but dating mostly from the early 14th century, the church has an elegant four bay arcade and tall chancel lighted by flat headed windows. There is evidence of an earlier church.

Although extensively restored in 1891, St Michael still contains a rare stone lectern, a stone font dating from the 13th century and a fine brass to Richard Blackwall, his wife and children, which is dated 1505. There is an early wall painting on the west wall, a rare stone lectern in the chancel and a medieval mass dial on the external south wall. In the churchyard we also noted the Norman Cross.

We then continued through the village up to High Well (the existence of which was probably the main reason for the village being here at all). From High Well we made our way east out of the village and across the A6, taking the path up to end of High Dale and then bearing right to the little hamlet of Brushfield, then over several fields before

stopping for a refreshment break and an opportunity to take in the views of the Wye valley, Fin Cop hill and Monsal Head in the distance. We continued along the old drovers track to the Headstone Viaduct and Tunnel below Monsal Head.

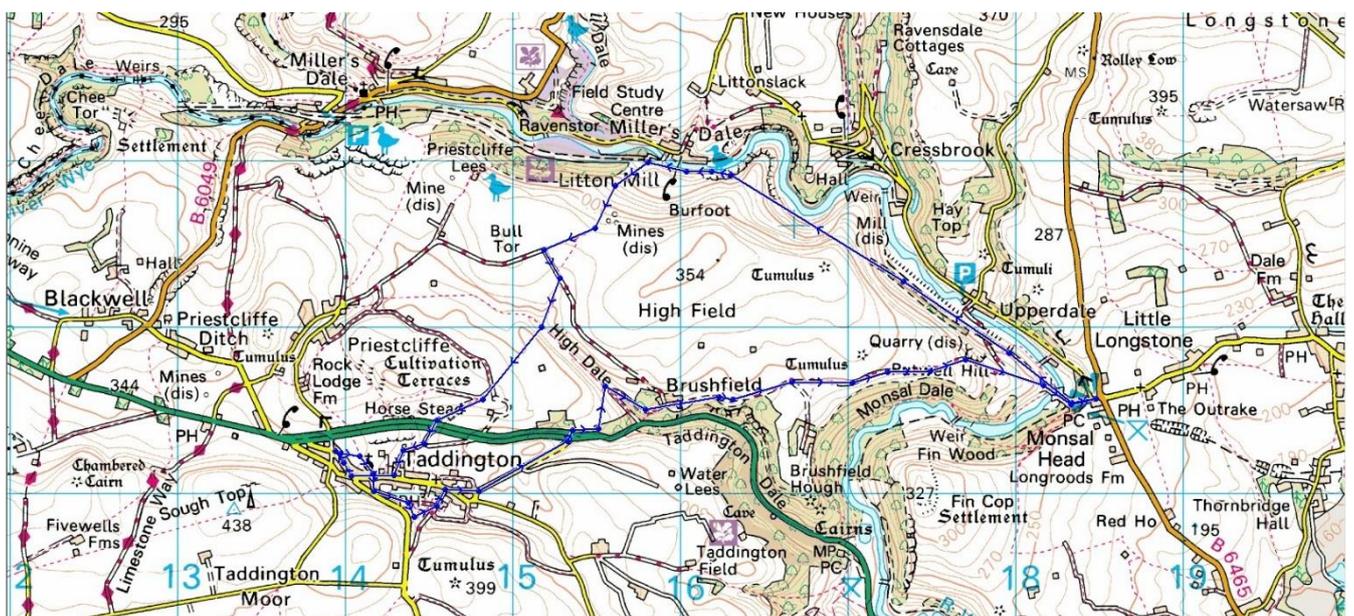
Lunch was taken here, with some preferring to stay on the viaduct, whilst others braved the climb up to the Monsal Head Hotel to sample the fare on offer in the Longstone Bar and the ice cream van.



After lunch we regrouped on the viaduct and took the Monsal Trail path via the old Monsal Dale station site, Cressbrook tunnel (including some details regarding the history of Cressbrook Mill and the village), Litton tunnel (including some details regarding the history of the Mill and the hamlet).

Just beyond Litton Mill we took some steps up the left-hand side of the overbridge leading up the hill through Priestcliffe Lees nature trail. At this point, as it was getting a bit late to take in the Priestcliffe Cultivation we decided to head straight on back to Taddington via the top end of High Dale, unfortunately this did entail a rather steep climb, but from then on it was a fairly level walk though fields back to our cars.

Although it was still warm the sky had clouded over by the end of the walk, but the weather had, at least remained fine throughout. Total distance 7.15 miles.



Rick Hedley

u3a survey

Published 5 July 2022

A recent survey asked u3a members what their crowning moments had been since giving up full time work – and the answers demonstrated that there's a wealth of opportunities and experiences to explore in later life.

37% of respondents have become involved with a charity, 21% have started learning a new language and 19% have travelled off the beaten track. Members shared stories of sailing a tall ship across the Atlantic to cycling 1,000 miles for a cancer charity. Others have gained PhDs, written novels, learned Italian and campaigned for causes close to their hearts – and all since leaving full-time work.

The survey – carried out to mark the charity's 40th anniversary – also revealed what motivates members. Over 80% of respondents want to help others, 78% are driven by connecting with people, and 70% are motivated by learning new things.

Sam Mauger, chief executive of u3a, says: "Through interest groups as diverse as kayaking and climate change, the u3a increases people's quality of life by boosting confidence, enabling a sense of purpose and feeling valued. Our 430,000 members are vibrant, active, full of energy and have so much to offer. They are the lived experience of the major benefits of being active and creative."

u3a on the buses and trains

Published : 05 July 2022

A shared learning project between u3a and Transport for London (TfL) has been nominated for a top award. More than 50 u3a members from across the UK have been working with TfL's Corporate Archives to develop and deliver the Revealing the Past Minutes Transcription and Indexing Project. The project is in the running for the Record Keeping Project of the Year Award.

The challenge was to transcribe, index and catalogue minute books covering the early years of the Underground Electric Companies, so that the contents can be made available to the public for interest and research.

Volunteers got involved in recording, collating and developing a number of interesting topics arising from the transcriptions. These range from the pay and conditions of staff, the dubious career histories of highly paid directors, female employment, WW1, strikes and influenza. There are also detailed information about technical and planning issues and operations arising from the development of the underground lines.

Healthy Minds: Free NHS mindfulness drop-in sessions – STOCKPORT

Mindfulness is about learning to pay calm and steady attention to our present moment. The aim is to be more alive to what we're experiencing; able to savour the pleasant aspects of our experiences and be less 'pushed around' by unpleasant ones. It can reduce stress and anxiety, help prevent relapse of depression, and benefit people affected by chronic pain. It can also increase wellbeing, happiness, immune function (how well you fight off illnesses) and help you feel calmer and more attentive.

NHS runs Mindfulness open access 'Drop In' provided for all patients of Stockport GPs.

1st August (today!) and every first Monday of the month (second Monday, when there's a bank holiday). Time 12:50 for 1pm start lasts 90 minutes.

Venue Heaton's Resource Centre (Sycamore Room) Heaton's Close, off Balmoral Drive, off Thornfield Road, Heaton Moor SK4 3LD.

What to expect:

Your questions answered and a couple of short (5 minute) practices, neither compulsory – you can sit quietly. Practices will involve sitting on a chair or standing and closely observing things you are experiencing such as breathing or body sensations. The exercises are gentle; you'll not be asked to do anything you find uncomfortable. The group is open to anybody, from complete beginners to those already practicing mindfulness.

No need to book, just turn up!

For more information, phone 0161 716 5640 or visit www.bemindful.co.uk or www.freemindfulness.org

A new 8-week course is planned for September/October when there are sufficient people.

u3a garden at Southport Flower Show

Southport u3a is creating a Show Garden at Southport Flower Show with the title "u3a 40th Anniversary". It is the aim to include many aspects of the diverse nature of our u3a, which has nearly 100 groups, as features in the design.

Southport Flower Show runs from 18–21 August 2022. There is a special discount for u3a members, who will be able to get tickets for £18, compared to the gate price of £27, using the promotional code, 'u3a' when buying tickets on the website.

POETRY CORNER

Thanks to Stewart Clay for this. He wonders how many of our readers have been hooked on the recently launched online word games Wordle and Quordle, as he and some of his friends have. It can be very frustrating, as the attached short poem is intended to indicate.

Wordleing and Quordleing

*Obsessed by Word puzzles of late, that's me
Desperate to solve one, on guess two or three
I need inspiration before retiring to my bed
Or face losing once more, to my old friend Fred*



*Wordles and Quordles infiltrate my slumbers
I may give up on words and resort to numbers
Breakfast consists of five to seven letter words
Then I discover the answer, is bloody absurd*

*Defeated by a long extinct mammal or obscure plant
Or some Japanese dish provoking yet another rant
The American game Quordle spells labour with no U
That's it, I finally lose it, and soon the air turns blue*

*My wife says she fears it may all be affecting my mind
"Try something less taxing" says she, trying to be kind
I said that a man of my intellect, needs mental stimulation
So she got me a Jumbo Word Search, Pensioner's edition*

AND FINALLY

What's blue and not very heavy? Light blue
How much do dumplings weigh? Wonton
Statistically, 6 out of 7 dwarfs are not Happy.
Bought some 'rocket salad' yesterday but it went off before I could eat it!
Why can't you trust an atom? Because they make up everything.
Why was six afraid of seven? Because seven eight nine.
At which school did Sherlock Holmes get so smart? Elementary.
Two men walk into a bar. You'd think at least one of them would have ducked.
What do you call a guy who's had too much to drink? A cab.
How many paranoid people does it take to change a light bulb? Who wants to know?

Quiz answers

- 1 Queen Victoria
- 2 Eadweard Muybridge
- 3 Please, Please me
- 4 Marie Curie
- 5 Preston North End
- 6 Pinocchio