

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

August 2023



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the August 2023 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions. This month's cover picture shows Paul welcoming members to the annual lunch. I was spoilt for choice for the picture this month as it's been a busy month for our u3a.

In this edition, as well as reports from our groups, we have reports on the recent annual lunch, the July monthly meeting, the group leaders' get-together, the music evening hosted by our u3a Choir and the travel group trip to Carlisle. We finish with some information about u3a National Office events.

This is your newsletter. I am very grateful to the groups who regularly contribute towards the newsletter but am aware that there are some groups who we don't hear from very often. I would be pleased to receive more items. I would also be happy to hear from individual members – please feel free to share some of your news, your interests, or items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members. This could be places you have visited, books you have read, films you have seen; your stories, anecdotes, photographs, recipes, poems, limericks, jokes; the list is endless.

Also attached to the email is the National Office bitesize newsletter for July. You can read the full newsletter [here](#). This has reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country. In the newsletter you can read about the first ever UK-wide u3a festival which will be taking place 17–19 July 2024 at the University of York, listed as an opportunity to bring members together to share the joy of u3a membership. There is also an article on u3as who have set up a walking cricket group. This was created by a member of Barnsley u3a and has been promoted on *The One Show*. Maybe some of you saw it? Would some of our u3a members be interested in doing this? If you are, please email or speak to a committee member.

Have you seen the u3a video 'Do something brilliant today'? You can find this on the national u3a page www.u3a.org.uk. There are lots of ideas for interest groups here. You can also access the u3a radio podcasts from this page. There is a new one every month.

The next issue of our newsletter will be September 2023 so please send your contributions to me by 30th August 2023 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

FROM THE CHAIR

We must be doing something right. For the last few meetings, we have had quite a few new members. At the last meeting our speaker was a lady who did dry stone walling.

So far this year a variety of different things has kept us busy. There has been the Murder Mystery evening, cheese and wine evening and the annual lunch. All very well attended. The holiday group is planning for next year, details in the newsletter. Churches and Pubs and the Dining out group are both well attended and the Christmas party in December is at an advanced stage.

I hope everyone is enjoying summer and looking forward to the next meeting in August.

Paul

MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the July meeting was Sally Hodgson who lives on a farm located between Charlesworth and Hayfield. As well as farming she teaches and is an experienced dry stone waller. She won a travel scholarship to India to learn her craft and since then has travelled extensively working on various projects and sharing her skills.

This talk focussed on her Scottish Adventures. Over the years she has visited many of the remote Scottish islands, discovering and photographing the unusual stone edifices which abound. They include Mousa Broch which is an intriguing stone tower which is an example of clever design built without machinery. There are also stone igloo structures covered in grass and stone encircled areas where kale and spinach would be grown to ward off scurvy. Stone was used due to the lack of trees in these isolated islands. She also photographed the wild life including, puffins, Shetland ponies, gannets and seaweed eating sheep. The talk was very well received and there were lots of questions.



The next meeting is Wednesday 8th August when the speaker is Lesley Davies whose talk is entitled An insight into the song writing process.

Kath Wareham

ANNUAL LUNCH

It was a lovely day as we entered Hazel Grove Golf Club a really beautiful venue as we looked out over the green golf course and beyond. After refreshing drinks in the lounge area, we took our seats at tables which were beautifully presented and all thoroughly enjoyed a well-cooked three course meal followed by coffee, whilst tackling the fascinating quiz that had been provided by the Quiz group for each table. Who knew there were so many famous people from Stockport and its surrounds, and the pictures of local landmarks had us all testing our memories! You can see more photos on our website.



The speaker, Jill Trumble, was from Stockport Heritage Trust. The Trust was originally formed to save the unique fifteenth century Staircase House from demolition and has run a Heritage Centre in St. Mary's Parish Church on the Market Place since 1999. They also lead guided walks around Stockport's historic sites and in partnership with Stockport Council have sought grants for new blue plaques to be provided and have had input not only into conservation but into Stockport's planning for the future.



I am sure by the end of the afternoon after our quiz and talk we all felt more enlightened about our local area. Our thanks go to Paul (not only for introducing the event but his services as the lift man!) and to Barbara and Dorothy for their hard work in providing us with the venue for our Annual Lunch which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Pam Cooke

MUSIC EVENING

Last Friday evening, I took my place in the audience of around 100 people from u3a and the local community to listen to the u3a choir accompanied by Margaret on the new Yamaha electric piano.



We were treated to a varied repertoire of songs finishing with a resounding rendition of Thank you for the music.

The choir presented Julie and Margaret with beautiful flower arrangements and the appreciative audience raised some £500 for the new piano.

A great evening of music and camaraderie.

Diane Saxon

GROUP LEADERS' MEETING

July also saw the annual get-together for group leaders and committee. Thanks to all who attended.



BRIDGE

Would you like some extra practice?

Just before lockdown you may remember we ran a series of sessions where we played some set hands on a specific topic then played as normal but with someone to ask if we were unsure what to bid or lead. I know some members would like to have something similar again. We can arrange this if we have enough willing to join.

Please let me know if you are interested in taking part in these sessions or have any questions.

Diane Saxon

GROUP NEWS



ART

After many years of talking about it and cancellation due to COVID the Art Group managed an outing to Patchings Art Festival in Newark. We booked the Disley Community minibus and led by Brian we set off in the rain on Friday 14th July. Luckily all the events were in marquees so we managed to stay dry.

We were able to watch demonstrations by well known artists and view their artwork plus purchase art materials and craft work from a huge selection many at discounted prices. There was also a male voice choir to entertain us.

Unfortunately due to the weather we didn't take many photos!



Madeleine Hennessy

CHURCHES AND PUBS

Our upcoming visits are:

August Mellor Church. Fully booked.

October St. Edmunds. Castleton With Gill and Dave Edmonson
Names will be taken at the August meeting.

Thanks

Paul Kenneth

MEMOIRS

As our last meeting was held on the 4th July, Barbara had organised an entertainment for us. We had the stars and stripes on display and two light-hearted quizzes about the USA. These proved to be a lot of fun.

After the tea break, we heard a variety of reminiscences from members. Some concerned school days and teachers we remembered for various reasons. There were two on working life and one on the decline of local shops. Another dealt with how gender roles have changed in our lifetime. Some touching mementos from the Lockdown were passed round.

A suggestion that we had a break in August wasn't given house room!

Sheila Harrop

GERMAN

We continue to meet most Fridays with slightly fewer numbers because of holidays. Last Friday we met sadly at St. Thomas's to say goodbye to Ron Baker, a longstanding member of the group who will be sorely missed. We hope soon to start on a new book, this time dealing with life in East Germany before and after the fall of the wall.

Marlene Brookes

CRIME FICTION READING



Marlow Murder Mystery Club

Never claiming to be anything other than a very 'easy' read, 'Marlow Murder Club by Robert Thorogood' brought the usual variety of comments. As might be expected by anyone familiar with the 'Death in Paradise' TV series which was created by Thorogood, the plot was fanciful. Three elderly ladies getting involved in suspicious deaths and outwitting the police to solving the murders is far-fetched to say the least, with one part where shredded paper believed to contain relevant information is stolen from the solicitor's office and pieced back together having to be taken with a very large pinch of salt.

There were positive comments to make despite some not being over enthusiastic. The final reveal of who had committed the murders came together well with the mystery of a locked room in the home of the main character leaving questions to be answered, though not about the murders. One person liked the book enough to want to find out more and promptly obtained the next book in the series. She refused to reveal what she discovered!!

All in all, an author the group as a whole would probably prefer not to repeat.

Our book for July is *The Blackbird* by Will Shaw. A prolific writer, this is the first book in his DS Alexandra Cupidi series.

Christine Barber

READING

Our July book was *MISS AUSTEN* by Gill Hornby, in which the main protagonist is not Jane, but her sister, Cassandra. It is set in the 1840s, long after Jane's death and sets out to explain why Cassandra felt impelled to retrieve and destroy Jane's letters to relatives to protect her reputation. Apparently, she could be quite moody and was subject to depression. We are introduced to members of the wider Austen family and find out what happened to them. It is written skilfully in the style of Jane Austen and was enjoyed by most members of the group.

Our book for August is a complete contrast, *MUSIC AND SILENCE* by Rose Tremain.

Marlene Brookes

GARDENING

The group had two events this month.

First, a visit to Pam's garden. Quite small but attractively laid out and colourful.

Second, a longer trip to Abbeywood, near Delamere.

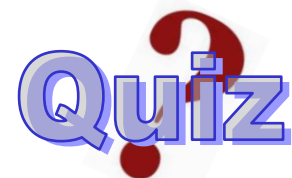
Always a lovely garden to see, with tropical area, white garden, ornamental pond, herbaceous beds, and long prairie features inspired by Dutch designer Piet Oudorf – plus popular tea rooms!

Walter Mason



QUIZZING

Our quiz for July contained questions on UK geography – where we decided we should know more than we did – plus questions on current affairs, science and nature and lots of potluck general knowledge questions.



Some for you to try ...

1. Which Irish city was nicknamed Linenopolis?
2. Where is the Walker gallery?
3. What is the largest national park in England?
4. Where would you find the Worm's Head promontory?
5. Where is the Isle of Tiree?

This group is quite small and could do with some new members. Meetings are very sociable and fun; we enjoy learning new things and we are not competitive. We normally meet on the morning of the fourth Thursday of the month. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining us.

Diane Saxon

PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Alcoholic drinks.

1st Pump it up – Ken 7 votes

Joint 2nd Wine with a view – Jeff 5 votes and Let's stay in – Diane 5 votes



Thanks everybody.

Our next competition is Old Vehicles.

Please contact me if you would like to join us. All you need is a camera or a phone that will take pictures.

Jeff Robinson

HISTORY

We had three more presentations on people of interest.

An unusual beginning! We were treated to a rendition of "Alma" the comic song from Tom Lehrer. The lady in question was Alma Mahler Werfel. Famous for her beauty and charm she was a leading society hostess and muse and, in some cases, wife to many artistic luminaries. She lived from 1879 to 1964 but was unable to achieve her dream to become a composer. She did manage to write some songs of which only 17 remain.

By contrast Averil Mansfield (an unfamiliar name to most of us) did achieve her aim in life. She became the U K s first female professor of surgery in 1972. In 1993 she was made a professor of vascular surgery at St Mary's Hospital. She was given the C B E by the late Queen in 1999. Though retired for many years she still works hard for medical charities.

Our last presentation was about King Christian 4th of Denmark. He ruled Denmark and Norway and the surrounding areas from 1588 until 1648. He is remembered as one of the most energetic and proactive Danish kings and initiated many projects in new building and of reforms. He also engaged in numerous campaigns and wars which almost bankrupted the nation. He figures in the book " Music and Silence" by Rose Tremain.

Sheila Harrop

TRAVEL

17th June 2024 Littlecote Manor, Wiltshire, a Warner's hotel
4 nights/5 days. A deposit of £50 is due at the August meeting.



Historic Grade I listed Tudor manor built in the mid-1500s with extensive grounds which contain an ornate Roman mosaic floor and settlement remains. Further details will be available at the meeting.

What happens when you wear a watch on a plane? Time flies.
I tried to sue the airline for misplacing my luggage. I lost my case.
Running to the boarding gate is my favourite workout.
I WRITE ALL MY JOKES IN CAPITALS. THIS ONE WAS WRITTEN IN PARIS.
I've finally told my suitcases there will be no holiday this year. Now I'm dealing with the emotional baggage.
Never fly on Peter Pan Airways. They neverland.

Travel Group visit to Carlisle 23 to 26 June

The first stop on our journey to Carlisle was Brockholes which is a wetland and woodland nature reserve. It is a fascinating place, home to rare bird species and wildlife. We were pleased to stretch our legs and use the facilities and have our elevenses. Travelling on to Alston we found ourselves in the region of the North Pennines, travelling over the Hartside Pass. Quite a scary ride, definitely not for the faint-hearted. We appreciated the skill of our driver, Greg. Alston lays claim to be the highest market settlement in England.

Our destination was the railway station, home to the South Tynedale preserved 2 ft narrow gauge heritage railway. We had a warm welcome from the volunteers there and enjoyed the scenic ride to Slaggyford. From there we journeyed on to Carlisle and the County Hotel.



Wordsworth's House

On Saturday morning we drove down to Cockermouth to visit the imposing Georgian house where Wordsworth spent his early life. It was due to be demolished in the 1940s, but the people of Cockermouth raised the funds to buy it and handed it over to the National Trust to save for the nation. As you walk around the house you gain an impression of what it was like for a growing family of the time. As well as the family rooms there were the workrooms where the clerical work was carried out and visitors are given the opportunity of trying to write with a quill pen. The nursery was particularly interesting with a range of toys of the time. Most impressive was a beautifully turned baby-walker. The grandest rooms were the dining and drawing rooms where the Wordsworths would entertain their guests with food prepared by the hardworking servants in the large kitchen below.

The furnishing of the house is not original but great efforts have been made to recreate the house as it was in the late 18th century. William's father was able to live in such a grand house as he was working as agent to Sir James Crowther, a powerful landowner and politician. William and his siblings were orphaned when their father died in 1783, having already lost their mother at 31 and had to leave the house to be brought up by relatives. The garden and the adjoining meadows and river gave William the experience of the beauties of nature which would influence him for the rest of his life.

Marlene Brookes

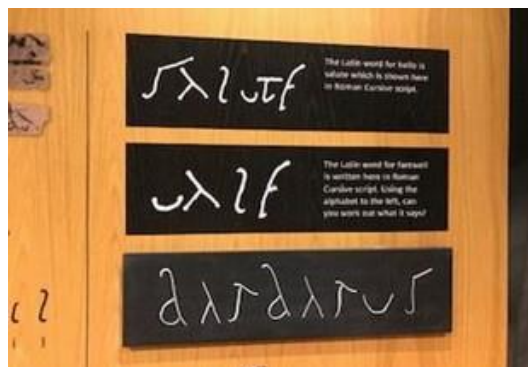
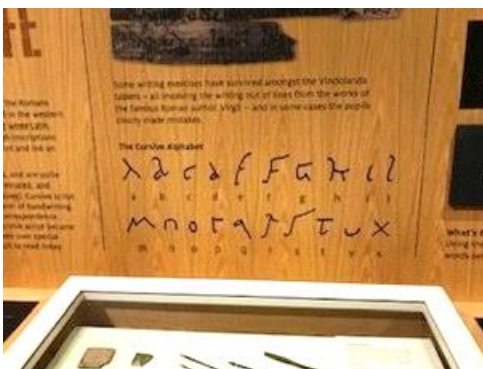
After our visit to Cockermouth, we travelled to Siloth on the Cumbrian coast, passing a motorcycle rally enroute. A sunny breezy day welcomed us there and after a picnic lunch or ice cream from the van some of us embraced the sea air with a walk along the prom.

The Roman Army Museum and Vindolanda

We set off on a very pleasant morning looking forward to our step back into history to the life of the Romans. Upon entering the Museum building we were all handed a pair of 3D glasses which I must admit I had used on previous occasions and felt sceptical doubting whether they would enhance our experience. We passed well-dressed roman soldiers showing their brightly coloured costumes of the day, very recognisable from our school history books. This was interspersed with very interesting archaeological finds and as we approached the corridor to a small theatre we all put on our 3D glasses expectantly. We were intrigued as we watched a Roman eagle soar above the recreated roman sites below putting in perspective the life of the Romans and that of the everyday soldiers as they patrolled Hadrian’s Wall a tedious task as they scanned the horizons for the oncoming Scots. It was a real insight into the length and location of Hadrian’s Wall, roman life in general and a good overview of the archaeological site that is Vindolanda, or as Greg the coach driver amusingly called it Vindaloo!



There were many more fascinating exhibits and I found myself standing in front of a sample of ancient Latin working out the password of the day and was delighted to resolve the puzzle by studying the forms of letters which you could see were adapted into what is our alphabet today.



Travelling along the straight roman roads we entered Vindolanda and saw before us a vast archaeological site and having seen the film previously could easily envisage them living in the extensive space very advanced compared to other standards of the day, the baths, drainage, granaries etc that they introduced and enhanced the future of Britain.



The largest building we noticed was the tavern – of course they had to keep all those bored Roman soldiers happy. Having enjoyed our step back in history and looking forward to lunch we headed off towards the café. This we felt on this site was the only downside (literally) as it was located right at the base of a very steep incline and a number of our party were unable to attempt the slope. We managed by purchasing lunch for those that were not able to traverse the steep hill, but it might have been better if there had been a café at the beginning of the site or located the coffee shop in a more accessible location.

All in all, we had thoroughly enjoyed our morning going back in time, but it was best foot forward after lunch to our next location as the coach set off towards the beautiful Hexham Abbey.

Pam Cooke

Hexham Abbey

The group was welcomed into the Abbey to be met by two tour volunteers, who divided us into two groups before we were taken on tour.

Saint (As he became) Wilfrid was so inspired by a visit to Rome that he returned to Northumbria determined to build stone churches like the ones he had seen on the Continent. A few miles down the river, at Corbridge, were the remains of a major Roman fort and town, and Wilfrid's church was probably built entirely from stones taken from this site, early recycling! The Anglo-Saxon crypt is virtually unchanged in 1,300 years and is the only part of the Abbey that remains today of this early church. (A number of the group ventured down the steep uneven steps into the crypt). A tombstone of a Roman Soldier (no name) has been placed in the Abbey. Also, a stone chair called the Frith Stool. Having absorbed 'most' of the information from our guides we boarded the coach back to Carlisle.

Solway Aviation Museum

Our last visit of the weekend was to the Aviation Museum at Carlisle Airport which was originally a World War 2 RAF base for training and repair. There were many RAF airfields in the Solway and North Lakes for this purpose and also to defend the munition factories in Carlisle and Annan from the Luftwaffe.

The displays inside the museum are extensive and include aircraft engines, profiles of the men of the Dambusters squadron on the 80th anniversary of the raid, operations room reconstruction and a room devoted to RAF Spadeadam which was the rocket launch facility for the Blue Streak nuclear missiles. The air raid shelter which had been used on the airfield brought back memories of the Anderson shelter which was put in a hole dug in the



lawn in our back garden when I was a child in the war. Outside there is an interesting collection of over 20 aircraft from the 50's and 60's, the highlight of which is the Avro Vulcan bomber. They are British apart from the American Phantom.



We were able to go into the cockpit of the Vulcan via the crew access under the belly of the aircraft in small groups with a guide. It was also possible to go into the cockpit of the Canberra bomber which made you realise just how small it is. Amongst those on display are the Gloster Meteor (the first RAF jet fighter), Lightning, Jaguar and the sole

surviving Sikorsky built Whirlwind helicopter. The more unusual Percival Sea Prince radar training aircraft and Fairy Gannet with its twin propellers, one behind the other, submarine hunter. The Museum is normally closed on Monday so thank you to the staff and volunteers, who opened especially for us, gave us a warm welcome and were very helpful.

Ron Holt

WALKING

U3A walk 26/07/2023 : Castleton, Cave Dale and Winnats Pass

On this sunny pleasant end of July day, seven walkers enjoyed this 4.25-mile Peak District walk, steeped in history, mystery and suspense. Castleton was established in the eleventh century, after the Norman conquest. The Royal Forrest of the Peak and valuable lead mining interests were presided over by the King's bailiff, William de Peveril, from his bastion above Peak Cavern. Castleton is located on the interface between the White and Dark Peak Districts.

We left Castleton via Cave Dale, which has eight caves, on a steady climb up a rough path which led to improved grassland walking terrain, towards the top of the Dale. Interestingly, Cave Dale has been the source artifacts from the Stone Age and Bronze Age. Looking back down Cave Dale we were rewarded with an excellent view of the remains of Peveril Castle hiding behind trees on the skyline.



After the climb and restrictions of Cave Dale our route flattened and open countryside provided far reaching 360-degree views of Mam Tor and beyond. Here the contrast between the limestone of the White Peak and the gritstone of the Dark Peak was clearly evident.

Our careful descent down Winnats Pass enabled us to appreciate the grandeur of the canyon. Winnats Pass, which translates as "gate where the wind rushes", must have been a trans-Pennine corridor deep into history.



Our onward route along Long Cliff led to the Goosehill area of Castleton where we visited the entrance to the mighty Peak Cavern with the spectacular vertical limestone cliff faces supporting Peveril Castle above. William de Peveril picked a good spot for his stronghold.

We rewarded ourselves with a well-earned Bradwell's ice cream before leaving Castleton as the rain clouds started to gather!

David Burke

NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR JULY

Some talks you might want to book. These are normally very well supported. All are free via Zoom. Click here for details and to book a place.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

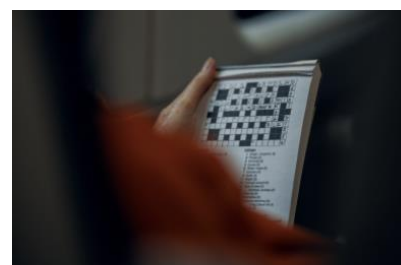
- 9 August Science network 10.30am – 3.30pm
- 10 August Expedition cruising: the Aleutian islands
- 17 August Mindfulness
- 25 August Staying safe online

Cryptic crosswords for beginners

This six-session course will teach you how to solve cryptic crosswords. It starts with the simplest ideas and easiest types of clues, and gradually builds to the more advanced aspects of clue solving. At the end of the course, you will understand how cryptic clues work, be able to solve clues at an intermediate level of difficulty and know how to develop your skills further. This is a stimulating course that can lead you to an enjoyable new pastime.

There will be a small amount of recommended home study between sessions.

You will need a Laptop, iPad or tablet computer and a Broadband connection plus a copy of the course book 'Learn How to Solve Cryptic Crosswords: A Course for Beginners' available from the Bookstore at Lulu – allow up to 12 working days for order fulfilment. You can download the first chapter in the book here: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/subjects/cryptic-crosswords>. Scroll down to the bottom of the page and it's the last PDF.



Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners: 6 Session Course

Join Henry Howarth, u3a Subject Adviser for Cryptic Crosswords, for a 6-session course on cryptic crosswords

Every Wed at 10am from 6 Sept
(booking closes 18 Aug)
Free – online via zoom