

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

February 2024



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the February 2024 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions. The cover photo this month shows the Handbell ringers hard at work during their splendid concert at the January monthly meeting.

January has been an eventful month weatherwise; we have had snow, wind, days of rain; one storm after another. However, our monthly meeting with the handbell ringers was a positive note.

In this edition, we have news of our forthcoming social events as well as group events and news. On page 5, you can find out about the Art exhibition, a new group that's starting this month and a book stall for us to exchange books we have finished reading. and a new walking group.



This is your newsletter. 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, limericks, jokes; the list is endless. We are pleased to have several new members this month. We welcome you to our u3a and look forward to meeting you at our meetings and interest groups. Your contributions to the newsletter will be very welcome.

Regarding National u3a activities, the National Office bitesize newsletter for January accompanies the newsletter. You can read the full edition [here](#).

The next issue of the newsletter will be March 2024 so please send your contributions to me by 27th February 2024 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

FROM THE CHAIR

Please remember that if you have a cough or a cold, please do not go to the monthly meeting or go to any group meetings.

AGM time again, on February 14th. Membership is due for renewal this month. The membership fee for 2024 is £8, or £11.50 if you also wish to order the Third Age Magazine. Can you please make sure your membership form is filled in as it saves a lot of time when paying for your renewal at the meeting.

I hope as many of you can make the AGM as possible. Your committee has been busy planning activities for the coming year. In April, we have a beetle drive – see the next page for information about this. The Annual Lunch is in July and later in the year, we are planning a quiz evening and an Irish music evening. The holiday group has two or three holidays planned as well. Any other ideas would be more than welcome. Just speak to any of the committee members.

Can we please ask that all group leaders check the High Lane U3a website and make sure their group information is up to date. Some of the information on the "what we do page" is out of date. If you get in touch with the webmaster, Jeff Mortimer at webmaster@highlaneu3a.org.uk He will put the alterations on for you. If anyone knows if any groups have folded please let us know.

Paul Kenneth

GROUP LEADERS

Please would group leaders prepare a report on last year's activities for the AGM. If you cannot attend, please ask someone in your group to read the report or send a copy to Lynn Arnold. You might want to place all or part of your AGM report on the group's page for the benefit of prospective members.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

You can renew your membership at the AGM. If you are unable to get to the meeting the renewal form is available on the website. Please complete all sections carefully and make sure your email address is correct and able to be read. Send the completed form with your cheque to the membership secretary.

MONTHLY MEETINGS



At the January monthly meeting we were entertained by The Phoenix Handbell Ringers, one of our u3a groups. Seven ringers played a variety of tunes including Life Let us Cherish by Mozart, An English Country Garden and All through the Night which was dedicated to Sheila Harrop.

The music was interspersed with interesting facts about handbell ringing. We discovered that hand bell ringing came about so that tower bell ringers could practice on smaller bells.

We were shown all the different sizes of bells from very small to huge and were surprised by their weight and value. The sets we saw had a very interesting history and started their life in St George's Hyde when the ringers were all men. The afternoon concluded with Jingle Bells, a winter piece, with everyone singing.

The next meeting is the AGM on 14th February.

Kath Wareham



February is a busy month. As well as the AGM, the Art group will be holding an Exhibition on Saturday 24th February, 10.00 to 4.00 and would appreciate your support.

We have a new group to tell you about, an easier walking group which, as yet, does not have a name. The walks will be no more than 4 miles, for those who cannot walk 5 miles plus. This will not be a stroller walk but at an average pace for the group. Sometimes transport will be required, or bus passes.

The first walk will be approx. 3 miles on Saturday 10 February. Meet at High Lane Village Hall Car Park at 09.30 am. Please contact me for more details. Any ideas for a name of the group? The March walk will be announced later, as it may be the 3rd week of March.

Ruth Smith

And in March, we are proposing to set up a second-hand bookstall at the March monthly meeting. If you have any books which you no longer wish to keep and are willing to donate, please bring them to the Wednesday meeting.

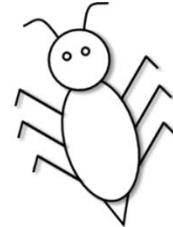
PROGRAMME FOR 2024

The full programme of meetings for this year is below

DATE	SPEAKER	TITLE
10 th Jan	Kate Heller	Hand Bell Ringing
14 th Feb	AGM	
13 th Mar	John Hooley	Royal Yachts
10 th April	Caroline Melliar-Smith	Camera Rolling
8 th May	Kevin and Joy Siddall	The DNA of British Musicals
12 th June	Keith Warrender	Underground Manchester
10 th July	David Seddon	Romanticism
14 th Aug	Nicholas Minshull	Legal Power of Attorney
11 th Sept	John Wallace	Ten Thousand Years of Bling (Alderley Edge)
9 th October	Maria Grimsley	Born in a Trunk
13 th Nov	Kim Wright	Children's Air Ambulance
11 th Dec	Roger Browne	Entertainer

Meetings start at 2pm. Doors open 1.30pm. Admission £2

BEETLE DRIVE



Are you ready for a fun night out? If so, we have one lined up for you.

On April 12 we are having a Beetle Drive. I am sure many of you will remember playing this at some time but if not, it is very simple. The idea is you have to draw a beetle and you do this by throwing a dice and getting the correct number eg 6 for a body 5 for a head etc. It is very sociable and a good laugh as the race to get that missing leg or tail draws closer.

This is a game where, although you will be playing with someone else, you are playing for yourself so there will be PRIZES. You can come in a group, or you can come as a couple or you can come on your own, because you will be sitting at tables of four and you will move around the room.



Barbara and I hope you will join us at the Village Hall on April 12. The doors will be open at 6.30pm for 7pm.

Tickets will be on sale at the February meeting for £8 which includes a light supper with tea and coffee.

Dorothy Neillands
Barbara Kenneth

GROUP NEWS

ART

The Art group enjoyed a Watercolour workshop with Ali Hargreaves, local artist and teacher on Thursday 18th January. She demonstrated lots of techniques which we practised before painting an exciting and textured seascape. You can see the originals at the exhibition. We hope to see you there.



Madeleine

BALLROOM DANCING

Ballroom dancing has continued into 2024, with first Walter and second Kate and Ian running the first two sessions. Our second session was enlivened by a birthday celebration, and a refresher of the Bluebird Waltz sequence dance – which I must admit is a particular favourite of mine.

The next session, on 2nd February will be hosted by Chris and Jackie.

Walter Mason

CRIME FICTION READING



Our December book was *The Snowdonia Killings*, the first DI Ruth Hunter book by Simon McCleave. He is a prolific writer, and this series alone extends to some 15 books, all set in or around North Wales. This writer was new to us all and as usual, views were mixed. Some of us had gone on to read more in the series, others felt the book was OK, but they wouldn't read any more. We thought the book probably accurately represented some of the police attitudes of the time. Both the major detectives had their issues and there was perhaps too much attention given to these in the book.

Our book for this month is *The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler, the first to feature the detective, Philip Marlowe. Talking about this and the two films that have been made from this book led us to quite a long discussion of films that we enjoyed and would recommend. There may be potential here for a film discussion group? Anyone interested please get in touch.

Our next meeting is 16th February 2024. Please contact me if you would like more details of this group.

Diane Saxon

TRIVIAL PURSUIT

We continue to meet every 6 weeks and have an enjoyable social evening. We are not very competitive, and the teams rotate so we do not have a super team winning every time.

Jean

CURRENT AFFAIRS

At our January meeting we discussed:

Is it a good idea to keep changing ministers! Especially Health Ministers. Victoria Atkins is at present Health Minister. Atkins is the latest in a long line of no less than six different health secretaries in the last five years and just like the rest has no experience or expertise in the field she now enters.

The current secretary of defence is Grant Shapps. Since 2019, he has served as Transport Secretary, Home Secretary, Business Secretary and Energy Security Secretary. The group thought it wrong and illogical for the government to keep changing ministers and that they should have at least some appropriate experience.

Use of social media – we talked about people looking at their phones when out for a meal or at a party. We wondered why they spent so much time looking at their phones and asked do they prefer that to having a conversation with the people they are with. None of us knew for sure what the attraction was but thought it must be more interesting and polite to put the phone away and have a proper conversation face to face with the people you're out with.

January blues – why do we get more depressed in January than any other month. We talked about short days and long dark nights, price increases, price of petrol, food banks, the war in the Ukrainian and Gaza. Do you need a degree to be a nurse and should it be left to teachers to teach the children how to clean their teeth.

We couldn't get through the meeting without mentioning the post office and the people that have been so badly treated. We felt for them, thought compensation should be paid quickly and discussed who should pay for the tragic mistakes and why it took a TV program to shame the government into acting.

We ended the meeting on a lighter note and thought all in all and as a group we should be thankful for what we have. We missed a few people who couldn't attend but It was a good and interesting meeting with nice tea and cakes.

Betty Smith

GARDENING

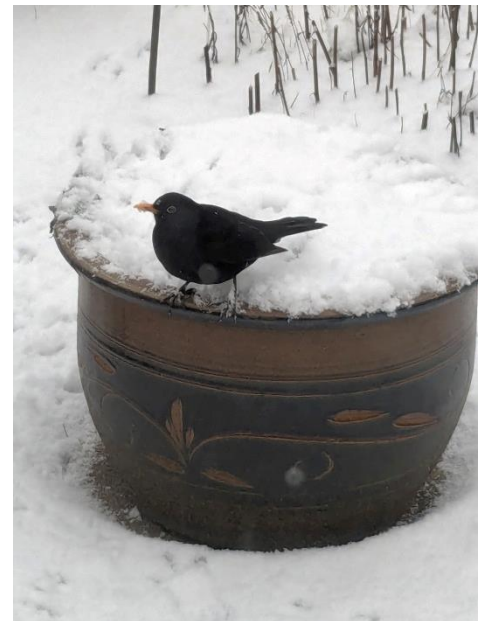
Gardens can look quite nice in Winter when snow highlights small shrubs and uncut herbaceous plants. And recent warmth has tempted snowdrops and various shrubs into bloom.



So, our thoughts are turning towards a programme of meetings in 2024. It is likely to contain visits to each other's gardens, which members always enjoy, and visits to a number of public gardens including a couple opening up for our group.

Various members have made suggestions, and hopefully these can be made into an enjoyable programme for this year.

Walter Mason



PHOTOGRAPHY

Hello everybody, my name is Ken Jackson, and I have just taken over the photography group from Jeff Robinson.

At the moment the group has only four members and I would like to see it grow. While numbers are low, we have been getting together occasionally, mainly for a social chat. At our last meeting we devised the programme for 2024.

The requirements for the group are just to submit three pictures a month, which I will then share online via email. Each member then votes for their particular favourite three photos (not your own), and the pictures that get the most votes are declared in positions 1, 2 and 3. No prizes, just the boasting rights.

No fancy equipment is required. Most pictures lately have been taken with smart phones. All we ask is that they are in accordance with the monthly subject and are in focus. So, why not dig out that digital camera and get snapping. My email is photographygroupleader@highlaneu3a.org.uk, or I will be at the AGM if you have any interest in joining us.

This year's subjects for the competitions are listed below.

February	.....Still Life
March	.....Animals
April	.....Easter
May	.....Ornamental Architecture
June	.....Bicycles
July	.....Landscape
August	.....Dereliction
September	.....Churches/Churchyards
October	....Portrait
November	....Multi coloured
December	...Chocolate.

I look forward to meeting any members who are keen to take part.
Best regards

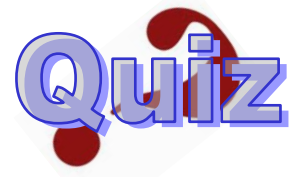
Ken

For our first competition of the year, we were asked to submit three of our favourite photos. The results were:

- 1st Chrome hill Jeff 9 votes
- 2nd Cold feet Ken 5 votes
- 3rd Venice Diane 3 votes.



QUIZZING



Quiz group members met on their usual date of the fourth Thursday in January. This month we had some rounds where all the answers started with the same letter, some acronyms, some connections, and we finished with an 'In the news' round.

Here are some for you to try?

1. Where would you find the Prada museum
2. Name of the galaxy we inhabit
3. Cocktail made from whisky, sweet vermouth and bitters

What connects

1. Emperor, Rockhopper, chinstrap
2. Dragon Pig Snake
3. Napoleon Snowball Squealer

What are?

1. BMI
2. WFH
3. GCHQ

Fancy challenging yourself with us? New quizzers are very welcome. More members would be useful to help us build our teams. Meetings always have a relaxed and sociable environment. You can be assured of a friendly welcome.

Please contact me if you would like to join this group or would like more information.

Diane Saxon

TRAVEL

HEREFORD visit 19 - 22 April. Balance due FEBRUARY AGM meeting.

LLANDINDRODWELLS April 19th-22nd BALANCE at FEBRUARY meeting

LITTLECOTE June 17th-21st BALANCE at MARCH meeting.

IRELAND July/August Details at FEBRUARY meeting.

RIVER CRUISE WHEN and WHERE, dependent on interest.



WALKING

Woodley / River Tame Valley / Haughton Dale Country Park / Peak Forest Canal.

Our January 6-mile walk attracted 25 members to explore this often forgotten region which was a former industrial powerhouse and has now been reclaimed by the natural world.



In Haughton Dale Nature Reserve we enjoyed ancient woodland trails, scenic meadows and riverside paths along the River Tame. We stopped for coffee at Gibraltar Bridge which provided a convenient seat and two of our group, Merlyn and Louanne, were lucky enough to spot a Kingfisher.

We finally left the River Tame on the North side of Hyde to follow the Peak Forest Canal on the home leg of our walk. The canal basin in Hyde gave a glimpse of past industrial achievement and quality construction – the transshipment warehouses still look remarkably solid and fit for purpose as they would have done 200 years ago.

Many in our group had not visited this area before and were pleasantly surprised by the attractive natural area, albeit surrounded by dense populated development but fortunately unseen when in the valley.

A fascinating walk on a fine bright day on the last day in January, hopefully our luck will hold for future walks packed with mystery, suspense and adventure!

David Burke

National u3a Office: Looking back on the u3a highlights of 2023

Information and a video of the highlights of 2023 can be found [here](#).



The u3a movement's highlights from 2023

There is also a third video in the Learn Something Brilliant Today series. Marion, a member of Stapleford u3a, shares how joining u3a led to her rediscovering her love of painting. You can watch this [here](#)

National Office Learning Events for the New Year

Some highlights you might want to book. Remember they can fill up quickly.

- 6 Feb Flight Inspirations' Aviation Network Meeting: Apollo Missions 11 and 13
This meeting of the u3a Aviation Network will look at the significance of Apollo missions 11 and 13.
- 6 Feb Housing options in later life: The role of retirement housing
- 7 Feb Mindfulness and Meditation Series. First of six sessions
- 14 Feb Safe bind, safe find': locks and keys
- 15 Feb Cryptic Crosswords in Context
- 23 Feb David Hockney and the Theatre
- 27 Feb Science Network Event
Join our Science Network meeting to hear talks on Pathogenics and Botany
- 29 Feb More Number Fun with Dr Knott

There are many other events. All are free via Zoom. Click here for details and to book a place. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

ONLINE SAFETY

How Safe Is Your Password?

Time it would take a computer to crack a password with the following parameters

	Lowercase letters only	At least one uppercase letter	At least one uppercase letter +number	At least one uppercase letter +number+symbol
1	Instantly	Instantly	-	-
2	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	-
3	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly
4	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly
5	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly
6	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly
7	Instantly	Instantly	1 min	6 min
8	Instantly	22 min	1 hrs	8 hrs
9	2 min	19 hrs	3 days	3 wks
10	1 hrs	1 mths	7 mths	5 yrs
11	1 day	5 yrs	41 yrs	400 yrs
12	3 wks	300 yrs	2,000 yrs	34,000 yrs

Source: Security.org

Tips from AgeUK to keep safe online

1. Keep your passwords strong. Setting up strong passwords is one of the simplest, most effective things you can do to stay safe when you're on the internet.
2. Install security software on your computer. Anti-virus software will look for and remove viruses before they can infect your computer. Anti-spyware software prevents unwanted adverts from popping up and stops programs tracking your activities or scanning your computer for private data, such as credit card numbers or bank details.
3. Protect your tablet and your mobile phone.
4. Protect your wireless network so that people living nearby can't access it.
5. Keep your device updated.

See the Age UK site for more information and advice.

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/work-learning/technology-internet/internet-security/>