

## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the July 2022 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Another bumper edition with interesting reports of the popular recent visit to Kent. We also have details of the u3a anniversary quilt which was unveiled recently at the Whitworth gallery.

[Casting for the Murder play is now complete. Many thanks Steve. The murder will take place on Friday, October 21<sup>st</sup> – we do hope you will support this event. Please put the date in your diary.](#)

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 June.

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.

The next issue will be August 2022 so please send your contributions to me by 30 June at [newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk)

Diane Saxon

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## GROUP LEADER'S MEETING

Before lockdown this was an annual event when we could say thank you to our wonderful group leaders without whom u3a would not exist. The picture is much more positive this year so the Committee would like to invite all group leaders to join us on Friday, 22 July at 3pm for strawberries and hopefully cake. Please let the Secretary know if you will be attending.



## MESSAGE FROM TREASURER TO GROUP LEADERS

Covid has had a very positive effect on my computer gaming ability as i have now had chance to immerse myself in Football Manager 22 on Microsoft Windows. Even Paul the Chairman would be proud as in this fictitious gaming world I am in charge of Stockport County.

Alas, sadly, this must now be put on one side as this is a swift reminder to any group leaders who charge a fee that they have to report their financial details to me at the end of every quarter. We are now at the end of June and the second quarter so financial reports are now due.

If you have any problems at all with your group's finances, please do not hesitate to contact me by phone or email.

Les  
Treasurer  
Fictitious Manager of Stockport County

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## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our speaker for June was George Pilkington, who deputised for our scheduled speaker at very short notice. George is passionate and knowledgeable about wildlife on our doorsteps, if not closer to home. His talk was entitled "Wildlife Gardening". He talked us through the transformation of his own suburban garden to a sanctuary for creatures such as hedgehogs and birds. He has always gardened organically and recommended plants which attract bees, for which he has designed a special box. The talk was illustrated with slides and the usual witty anecdotes and was much enjoyed.

For those members who wish to know more, he has a website [www.nurturing-nature.co.uk](http://www.nurturing-nature.co.uk)

Our speaker for on July13th will be Geoff Scargill whose talk is entitled "Last Laugh of the Railway King". Sounds intriguing and it is!!

Sheila Harrop

**Volunteers are needed** to help set up the large hall for monthly meetings and to clear things away afterwards. If you can help, please get in touch with Paul or see him at the meeting.

## **GROUP NEWS**

### **BALLROOM DANCING**

In our summer schedule of monthly dancing, our June dance covered all the ballroom and Latin tunes, and even Argentine tango and the Platinum Waltz were featured. A little birthday prosecco enhanced the afternoon.

Walter Mason

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### **CHURCHES AND PUBS**

The July meeting is to Goostrey.

The November meeting is to Sutton church near Macclesfield.

If you are interested, please email or telephone me and bring a £5 deposit to the next meeting.

Paul Kenneth

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### **CINEMA**

This month's hit film has been Tom Cruise reprising his role as maverick from the original Top Gun film. The new film, Top Gun Maverick, is what you would expect. Lots of Cruise and lots of planes and a pretty predictable story – but it is wonderfully entertaining and a great way to spend an afternoon. Catch it while you can.

Diane Saxon

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### **KURLING**

There will be a Kurling session after the July meeting. As we have two sets of stones we can accommodate more people. If you are interested, please email or telephone me.

Paul Kenneth

**GARDENING**

Early in June the group visited Val, whose garden had plenty of interesting large shrubs and trees, and a fascinating rockery and water feature to enjoy.

A fortnight later, Deirdre's organised trip to a NGS garden in Adlington proved to be a real winner. Several lovely gardens in one, with lots to see, and an impressive cream tea to boot. Well worth the visit.

Later still in the month, Deirdre invited group members to see her fine rose collection.



Walter Mason

## CRIME FICTION READING



Our first book was A Silent Death by Peter May. As we would expect, there were mixed feelings about the book. There was a small majority who liked it. We agreed that the ending was very powerful although quite sad. One of our members found the style a bit annoying and another was worried about what happened to one character's dog.

We are now reading The Good Sister by Gillian McAllister.

The group meets in High Lane on the second Friday of the month. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact me for details.

Diane Saxon

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## TRAVEL

RHINE CRUISE August 9th-16th  
Further information at July meeting.  
Departure from Manchester Airport is currently 6am.



IRELAND September 4th-8th  
Balance required at or before July meeting

LINCOLN October 14th-16th  
Half board at Holiday Inn Lincoln. Approx. £360 including entrance fees.

## DAY VISITS

LIVERPOOL July 20th.  
CANCELLED. Insufficient support.

BOLSOVER CASTLE  
Medieval Jousting Event. Approx. £28

SAMLESBURY HALL December 9th.  
Historic House in Lancashire.  
Coach, tour of the hall. 3 course Christmas lunch. £46.  
Payment at July meeting.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Hobbies

Winning photographs were:

Joint 1st. With 8 votes.

Bird Watching – Jeff and Another unfinished project! – Diane



3rd. With 4 votes. Global notes – Derek.



Thanks for all your efforts

Well done everybody.

The topic for next month is 'Staircases'.

Why not come and join us?

Jeff Robinson

## KENT HOLIDAY JUNE 2022 REPORTS

**32 members of our u3a travelled to Maidstone, Kent for the annual travel group holiday of 5 nights/6 days. Here are the reports from our members.**

### CHATHAM DOCKYARD MONDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AM

I remember as a child that Chatham Dockyards had played a big role in our naval history but I think we were all totally unprepared for the vastness of the area, situated adjacent to the River Medway, that confronted us as we stepped off the coach on a beautiful June morning.

As we descended the slope into the maritime museum it gave us such an insight into what a wonderful nation we had been in the "age of sail" building mighty ships that had mastered the world's oceans, there were fascinating models to view and we couldn't resist touching the columns of mighty oak that had been part of our maritime vessels, so tactile and still standing. The music from the film "Pirates of the Caribbean" met our ears as we viewed panoramic scenes of the sailing ships of yesteryear.

We sat in the sunny courtyard drinking coffee before setting off for the war memorial, a very moving beautiful sculpture dedicated to all our fallen servicemen which was the meeting place for our "Call the Midwife" Tour which had been mostly filmed within the Dockyard area. We passed the lifeboats section, displaying many historic boats, a large black cold war submarine HMS Ocelot, HMS Cavalier a second world war destroyer and HMS Gannet a really imposing Victorian sloop.



As we gathered we were surrounded by a pack of very excitable pirates, "Ahoy me hearties" was the cry as they all chatted and the enthusiasm from this pack of school children obviously enjoying their history day out was infectious as we faced a rather stern matronly "midwife" who was to be our tour guide around the dockyard giving us an insight into the filming locations of the programme.

It was interesting to envisage how they had utilised all parts of the dockyard, HMS Cavalier used in many scenes on board ship, the buildings were the tenements of supposed East End Poplar, even chalking the walls to imitate the children's games and stringing washing between the buildings to bring the 1950s/60s scenes to life. We were taken inside a building to view props used in the filming which evoked memories of the era, the group were heard to say "we had that china" and "that Silver Cross pram looks familiar"!

After a very enlightening tour we all headed back to the Mess Deck for lunch, which we really didn't need after such a hearty breakfast at the hotel, but everyone agreed they were some of the nicest sandwiches we had eaten in a long time! All in all, thank you Sue, our trip to Chatham Dockyard was well worth the visit reminding us in a poignant way what an outstanding shipbuilding nation we had been and hopefully would preserve this heritage for all to come.

Pam Cooke

#### **ROCHESTER MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE PM**

We spent a couple of hours in beautiful Rochester to relax and recuperate after a busy morning. Sitting in the sunshine enjoying ice cold drinks were the order of the day.

Sue Harlin



#### **CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AM**

On a hot Tuesday morning we set off for our visit to Canterbury Cathedral. The walk from the coach took us along a lovely shady path beside a river, through streets to a cobbled road and square with our first view of the Cathedral with its three big towers. The twin towers were built in the Perpendicular style from 1377 to 1405. The largest tower called the Bell Harry Tower is one of the largest in the country was built in 1498. There is a fourth tower which is much smaller and next to a Monastery which was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century by Prior Wilbert to supply water for the washing and cleaning of the monks from a cistern built in the upper part of the tower.

The original building dates from AD 597 when missionaries from Rome converted the King of Kent to Christianity. Augustin, leader of the mission was consecrated Archbishop and his official (cathedra) seat was established in Canterbury and has been the seat of the Archbishops ever since. The original building was sacked by the Danes in 1011 and then burned down in 1067. It was rebuilt by Archbishop Lanfranc and later the Quire was reconstructed by St Anselm which was later destroyed by fire.

Complete rebuilding began by William of Sens but when he was badly injured by a fall, the work was taken over by William the Englishman and remains to this day. The Cathedral has always been a place of pilgrimage but the death of Thomas á Becket on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1164 brought people from all over the country and beyond.

Thomas and the King were friends and the King made Thomas Chancellor. Later he persuaded him to become Archbishop. In time they fell out over taxes and laws and Thomas was murdered by four knights, who believed they were carrying out the Kings wishes. Thomas was very popular with the people who flocked to the Cathedral to honour him. His remains have had a chequered history which can be seen in various parts of the Cathedral.

The Cathedral is very large and beautiful, with the biggest crypt in the world. We were taken around by a very knowledgeable guide who pointed out many points of interest but we did not have time to digest everything seen. One thing that stays in my mind was that parts of the building are Romanesque, Norman, Gothic or Renaissance. So much to see and wonder about. Our walk back to the coach in the mid-day heat along the shady path was a blessing.

Janet Vockings

### **THE KENT BATTLE OF BRITAIN MUSEUM TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE PM**

In the morning we travelled to Hawkinge, near to Folkestone where the museum is situated on part of the old RAF airfield which was part of the first line World War 2 air defence of Britain during August and September 1940 now known as 'The Battle of Britain'.

This museum is housed in buildings which still bear the scars of the war and contain an extensive collection of



memorabilia associated with the battle ranging from replica and original aircraft, some of which were built for the 1969 Battle of Britain film together with both British and German uniforms, letters and other personal items from the aircrew who took part. Among the items on show were many personal annotated snap shots taken at the time, one which was very poignant as it depicted five pilots alongside a Hurricane fighter which concluded with the note that two hours later two of them had been killed.

It was an extremely interesting museum that claims to have the world's largest Battle of Britain of artifacts which I can well believe and, as such, it is a fitting tribute to Churchill's prophetic words – "Never before in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few".

Trevor Kinvig

### **LEEDS CASTLE WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AM**

Leeds castle is justly famous for its beautiful and impressive setting, surrounded as it is by an extensive moat and immaculate gardens. The castle is built on three islands, surrounded by the moat. Unfortunately, for history lovers, there is not much left of earlier buildings, the present castle dating mainly from 19th century. However, we were each given a booklet about the castle, which was helpful but which we had to return on leaving!

The castle does have some interesting history though. Queen Eleanor, of crosses' fame, bought and 'modernised' it in 1298; Henry VIII presented it to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, who lived there until her fall from grace. The last owner was Lady Baillie and it is her influence that dominates at present and is felt throughout the castle in 1930's displays, furniture and settings.

On to Whitstable to enjoy the sunshine, some walked down to the beach whilst others walked along the seafront to the ice cream van. Those who were thirsty disappeared into the nearby pub!

After a busy morning it was bliss to sit overlooking the bay at Whitstable.



Sue Dintinger

### **HAZLITT THEATRE, MAIDSTONE. WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

On Wednesday evening we enjoyed a visit to the Theatre at Maidstone to experience a performance entitled 'The Neil Diamond Story' presented by Bob Dury and his small band of musicians. He treated us to a selection of songs highlighting Neil's rise to fame.

It was a lively evening and the songs were a nostalgic reminder of the past containing some very poignant lyrics. The audience entered into the spirit of the evening dancing in the aisles and singing along with Bob and his daughter who added to some of the vocals. The evening was brought to a close with Neil's signature tune 'Sweet Caroline' which resulted in the band receiving a well-deserved standing ovation.

Muriel Joslin

**THE KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> AM**

On Thursday morning we visited Tenterden on the Kent and East Sussex Railway. This is a preserved steam railway original built in 1900 which runs over 11 miles along the Rother river valley through the rolling countryside of central Kent giving beautiful unspoilt views which are not constricted by main roads and buildings as experienced travelling by motor coach.

In particular, the railway has made every effort to cater for passengers with special needs with a specially converted open carriage named 'Petros' which enabled wheelchair users to sit by the large vista windows as required and an enlarged toilet to aid accessibility. Some of our members were able to make use of these facilities.

The train took us from there to the current end of the line at Bodiam where we could see the castle not far away across the fields. During the half hour journey passengers were able to observe the local views and wild life. Snacks and soft drinks were available from a mobile vending trolley. These were most welcome as the morning was very warm.

At Bodiam the locomotive, a large Great Western Prairie tank engine, ran around the train ready for the return journey. When we got back to Tenterden there was a lot to see including a museum of artifacts from the 120-year history of the line, however most of our members took advantage of lunch in their excellent restaurant.

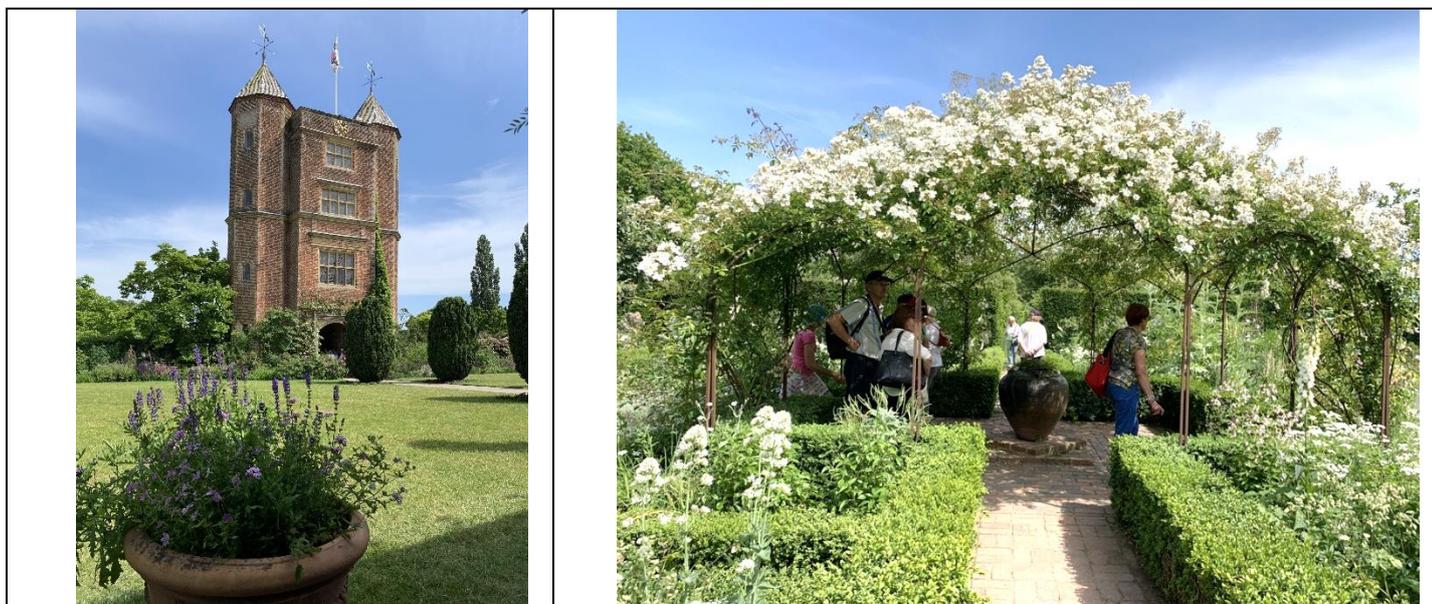
Eric Harlin

**SISSINGHURST CASTLE GARDENS THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE PM**

Fascinating gardens in a beautiful setting at the edge of the Downs with views of the Weald. Purple/deep pink borders greet you in front of mellow brick/stone walls. The Tower stands majestically in the middle and paths, some edged with hedging or trees, link all the garden "rooms".



The famous White Garden was a sensual delight enhanced with sweet peas and the Cottage Garden was a riot of colour – all inside the hedging which makes the “rooms”. The Orchard is a wild flower meadow and nearby is the Herb Garden and Thyme lawn. Delvos, the Arid Garden was surprisingly colourful with its plants nestling among honey coloured stones and gravel.



All this was the vision of Vita Sackville–West and her husband Harold Nicholson in the 1930’s, and their imagination gives plenty to think about in our own modest plots.

Val Crowther

**CHARTWELL FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE AM**

The final visit of our holiday was to Chartwell House, the Churchill family home from 1924. A stroll around the stunning gardens was a joy. The rose and perennial flowers were in full bloom – a riot of colour wherever you looked. (My favourites were the Winston Churchill roses – 4 bushes of golden roses).



The house overlooked the Weald of Kent and around every twist and turn were wonderful views. We also had time to tour the house and many interesting rooms adorned with some of Winston Churchill’s artwork.

The visit was a fitting end to our well organised week in Kent. Sincere thanks Sue.

Betty Upham

**WALKING**

**Danebridge, Lud's Church and Gradbach  
29/06/2022**

Eighteen walkers enjoyed our visit to the Dane valley region, on a day when the weather improved on the forecast and provided good bright warm conditions. Our exposure to mystery, intrigue and suspense started out from Danebridge, on a picturesque path which led to enchanting woodland before breaking out into open farmland and provided our first glimpse of Hanging Rock, a massive rectangular block of gritstone jutting out from the ridge. A steady climb led to a high-level vantage point with commanding 365-degree views across the Cheshire plain, plus Derbyshire and Staffordshire uplands. Our onward path passed through early fruiting Winberry bushes on our way to Castle Rocks where we stopped for a coffee break.



A short stroll through woodland led to Lud's Church. This deep dark chasm was created by a massive landslip above the river Dane in post glacial times. It is at least 200 ft long and 60 ft deep. It is a strange and mysterious place, draped with ferns and mosses. According to tradition, it was a secret meeting place for the Lollards. Six hundred years ago these people were persecuted for their religious beliefs. The chasm may be named after Walter de Lud Ank, who was captured here after a secret meeting. The medieval poem "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight" was thought to have been inspired by Lud's Church. Legend has associated many famous people to the site including Robin Hood and his Merry men. Of course, eighteen intrepid HL u3a walkers are now added to the august list!



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Our onward route through ancient woodland known as Back Forest led to a clearing where we had a picnic lunch. We then started on a steady decent thought woodland to Back Brook, a tributary of the Dane river. A footbridge enabled easy passage to Gradbach Mill where a well-earned sit down and ice cream was taken. The tranquil hamlet of Gradbach was formerly a hive of industry, with flax and then silk spinning at the Mill, constructed in 1730.

We then followed the official Dane Valley Way which tracks the Dane through attractive forest and open farmland back to Danebridge. We enjoyed our 7-mile trek, the events and discoveries along the way, coupled with the mystery, intrigue and suspense, it will not be easily forgotten!

David Burke

### **Post lockdown hotel life**

We were idly strolling around the Mercure Hotel, Maidstone, opening doors to see what was inside. Several notices headed "HMCTS" (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service) caught our attention. There were several locked doors off the open space we had entered. Then we were joined by one of the hotel receptionists asking if we were OK. Slightly embarrassed, we explained that we were exploring parts of the hotel we hadn't seen and wondered what this area was used for. One by one he unlocked the doors. He explained that they were official court rooms with desks for a judge, jury and other officers. A large TV screen filled one corner of the room, and on this the prisoner could be viewed in a "virtual" court hearing. A coat of arms was fixed to the wall, and this had to be blessed by a Church of England minister before the room could be used as a courtroom. They were known as "pop-up courts". Occasionally a prisoner would be allowed in the courtroom in person, but no murderers or other serious offenders. - "we have to protect the hotel guests"!

In the same vein there was a shutter (usually closed) which separated the courtrooms from the main hotel, and security guards were in attendance when hearings were taking place. All the HMCRT officials entered through a back door, so no hotel guests were aware of what was happening - unless you are nosey, like us!

Apparently most large hotels in the UK have leased some of their conference rooms for this Government service. There is a backlog of six years of court cases to be heard in Kent, made worse because of the Covid pandemic. It is hoped they will be cleared by 2024.

Mavis Dean

## POETRY CORNER

Thanks to Stewart Clay for this poem.

### Temples and Mere Mortals

*What gives the younger generations – the idea they can insist  
On advising we the older generation – on how we should exist  
Endless recommendations – on what we should and shouldn't eat  
Nothing too rich or too fatty – and none of that deadly red meat*

*It's almost as bad as becoming – forced fed vegetarians  
We're happy staying as we are – grumpy septuagenarians  
It also took little thought – and for much the same reasons  
To decide we have no wish – to become born again vegans*

*The young run half and full Marathons – the aim being to get fitter  
But to us a Marathon is a chocolate bar – now renamed a Snicker  
We study the finer points of beer and wine – with total dedication  
Whilst they spend hours practising – their Yoga and Meditation*

*They worship their bodies – as if two Temples, his and hers  
Whilst we mere mortals are just shadows – of what we all once were  
How on earth have we survived – for these seven decades plus?  
To them it's a minor miracle – but nothing of the kind to us*

*Frankly their lifestyles and diets – are really not our concern  
We're all too long in the tooth – to crave new lessons to learn  
So having given all their advice – our careful consideration  
We've agreed to continue enjoying – all things in moderation*

## u3a anniversary quilt

A quilt to celebrate 40 years of the u3a movement has been unveiled at the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester. The quilt – created from the winning 40 blocks submitted from u3as across the UK – reflects the skills, experience and contribution of u3a members.

2022 marks 40 years for the u3a movement with its nearly 400,000 members showcasing what it means to have a positive and fulfilling later life.

Trustee for the NW Neil Stevenson who unveiled the quilt said, “It was a privilege to unveil the finished quilt in a ceremony at the Whitworth Gallery. Around 70 people turned up for the unveiling and listen to talks on quilting including from members who contributed, from a professional quilter and experts from the Whitworth gallery.



“The quilt is beautiful and is testimony to the talent, skills and energy of all the members. Thank you to them and to the Whitworth for hosting this event. “We are looking forward to the next 40 years of learning, activity, connection and fun in the u3a movement”

The quilt will now travel to Oxford where it will be displayed at the Witney Blanket Hall from 10 August.

## AND FINALLY ....

### Miscellaneous facts about JULY

Named after Julius Caesar

Birthstone ruby

Firs atomic bomb Fatboy detonated 1945

Neil Armstrong landed on the moon 1969

First successful flight from France to England 1909

USA independence declared from British monarchy 1776

First international phone call 1881

Euston station, the first London station opened 1837

Live Aid 1985

Equal voting rights for women in the UK 1928