

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

July 2023



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the July 2023 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions.

In this edition, Sue tells us about a holiday for 2024. We have a report of the June monthly meeting hosted by the Memoirs, a review of the BBC Any Questions session at the Village Hall, reports of group activities plus information about u3a National Office events and competitions. I have raided the archives for the cover image this month, which is a look back some ten years to some of the walking group enjoying a peaceful lunch break by the Derwent. Maybe some of the current group will remember this walk?

Arrangements are being finalised for the annual lunch at Hazel Grove golf club on Friday 7 July. The annual group leaders meeting is also later this month, and we look forward to getting together.

Other things happening locally include St Thomas' Church Knit a tree project which you can read about later in the newsletter, plus a repeat performance of the murder mystery play we presented in March, which is open to all users of the Village Hall. This is an afternoon event on Friday August 18th, starting at 2.30pm prompt and includes a cream tea. Admission by ticket. Numbers are limited. Contact Linda Morton if you would like a ticket.

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, poems, limericks, jokes; the list is endless.

Also attached to the email is the National Office bitesize newsletter for June. You can read the full newsletter [here](#). This has reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country. It also contains information about discounts available with Airbnb and Riviera Travel. The lead image is this beautiful photograph submitted to the u3a Found in Nature programme.

The next issue of our newsletter will be July 2023 so please send your contributions to me by 29th July 2023 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon



MONTHLY MEETING



The June monthly meeting took us on a nostalgic journey "Down Memory Lane". Several members from the Memoirs group shared with us extracts from their personal memories. They get inspiration from suggested topics such as holidays or historic events and from listening to each other.

Mavis Dean told us about her wartime childhood in Manchester. Marlene Brookes remembered her early school days. Linda Heathcote brought along her teddy bear and told us about their life together! Barbara Speake read a poem about the first day she let her young son go to Manchester alone with a friend. This happened to be the day of the Manchester bombing which was a very traumatic experience. Sheila told us about all the nicknames she had been called starting with Gingernut and Carrot top and ending with Granny She which is her favourite. Finally, Stuart Clay read three of his own poems. The one called Wishing and Hoping included his boyhood dream for Man City to win all three football trophies. Wishes can come true!

Sheila Harrop, the group leader, told us how the group had started and has flourished over the last 45 meetings. Barbara Speake, who was the inspiration for the group showed us her impressive, published memoirs *The House on Mozart Street*. They reminded us that our memoirs can be a wonderful legacy for our families.

The group is currently full, but Sheila suggested that if anyone was interested there could be a possibility of settling up a second group.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 12th July when Sally Hodgson will talk about Scottish Adventures.

Kath Wareham

ANY QUESTIONS?

On Friday May 5th the BBC Radio 4 programme Any Questions? was broadcast live at 8pm from High Lane Village Hall. There were approximately 140 in the audience including 23 of our U3A members.

The presenter was Alex Forsyth who is a BBC political correspondent.

The panel consisted of:

Tim Farron the Liberal Democrat MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale.

Richard Holden Conservative MP for Northwest Durham, Minister for Transport responsible for roads and buses.

Lucy Powell Labour MP for Manchester Central, Shadow Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Seb Payne Director of the centre-right think tank Onward.

The audience was asked to submit questions and the ones chosen were:

Qu. 1 If Rishi Sunak called you up after the programme what advice would you give him?

Qu. 2 What are Labour's policies to run the country?

Qu. 3 Do we still have the right to protest in the UK?

Qu. 4 Should we embrace AI or be concerned about its future development?

Unfortunately, politicians are too long winded in their answers which reduced the number of questions that could be asked.

If you would like to listen to the programme it is broadcast on BBC Sounds.

Margaret McDermott

GROUP NEWS

ART



The Art group continues to greet new members and we recently welcomed Brian and Jo to the group. Our numbers are now around 20 on a regular basis and we all use different styles and subjects which makes our coffee time viewings very interesting.

Recently a few people have been painting a very well-known building and I thought you might enjoy this Mondrian style interpretation by Chris Fontaine.

Can you guess the building?

Madeleine Hennessy



BALLROOM DANCING

Chris selected the music and dances for the June dance, playing some charming tunes and giving us some simple instruction in Samba, Pasadoble and Argentine Tango. Amongst his sequence dances a White City Waltz to a rock and roll tune was surprisingly pleasant.

Wine and strawberry scones for the leader's birthday helped make for a really nice afternoon.

Walter Mason

GROUP LEADERS' MEETING

The Committee would like to invite all group leaders to join us on Friday, 28 July at 3pm for strawberries and hopefully cake. Please let the Secretary, Lynn Arnold, know if you will be attending.

CRIME FICTION READING



The book chosen for the group to read in May was “A Rising Man” by Abir Mukherjee. The seven members present at the meeting enjoyed the story which is set in Calcutta in 1919. Although firmly falling into the crime fiction genre the background history of the rise of Indian nationalism, of the people’s dissatisfaction with the ways of the “White Raj” and the references to actual historical incidents was found to be particularly interesting.

The story begins with the murder of a high-ranking government official who it seems was a “fixer” for numerous, some dubious, wealthy businessmen and others, whose body was found in an insalubrious part of the city. Designated to solve the case is the newly arrived from England Captain Sam Wyndham, assisted by his Harrow / Oxbridge educated Sergeant “Surrender Not” (Surendranath) Banerjee. There are twists and turns throughout, another killing, a James Bond moment, some thoroughly unpleasant characters including members of a more sinister government agency intent on keeping all information to themselves and a hint of romance in the shape of a beautiful Anglo-Indian young woman.

For the reader, through Sam, the sights, sounds, smells, heat and colours of Calcutta and Bengal come to life as does the feeling of relief when the monsoon finally arrives. We learn something of Sam’s early life in England, the time spent in the Metropolitan Police in London and the horrors of his three years in the trenches in WW1. He doesn’t always play by the rules and has ambiguous feelings about the “White Raj” of which he is a member. We all thought “Surrender Not” a great addition to the cast of characters in this fascinating and interesting book.

Our book for June is “The Marlow Murder Club” by Robert Thorogood, one of the creators of the TV series “Death in Paradise” and its spin off “Beyond Paradise”. The Marlow Murder Club books are being turned into a TV series starring Samantha Bond.

Nancy Colclough

CURRENT AFFAIRS

June 21st

A small group of us met at Margaret McDermott's house to discuss a variety of subjects such as

1. Should prime ministers who have resigned be allowed to have an honours list? Most of the group agreed that they shouldn't, and we also went on to discuss whether we really wanted a House of Lords too!
2. Should we turn completely to natural sources of energy? We agreed that Kier Starmer is right in planning this and that a lot of the houses now have solar panels, but windfarms do need planning. Tidal power could also be harnessed more than it is, because we have the advantage of being an island. We discussed whether unemployment in the oil and gas industries could be a problem.
3. We had lots of ideas as to why Boris is so still so popular with Tory members! He's controversial, a colourful character, not boring, and he's flamboyant – but does he know he's lying?

During our tea break, we discussed a review of the play. "Dear England" which is being performed at the National Theatre in London. It's a story of the England football team with Joseph Fiennes playing the manager. It tells of how Gareth Southgate and Harry Kane have survived through all the numerous changes that have taken place in our country and government over the time they have been in office. We think it would be an interesting watch.

4. We went on to discuss a common topic, immigration. Populations on the move. Something has to be done but can we stop it? One member said you can't blame them, they're coming for a better life. But the consensus was that the government should process immigrants more quickly and let them work. We all agreed it's an insoluble problem.
5. How do grandparents of today differ from our parents? Many views on this, but we all agreed that we've been very fortunate in the time period which we have lived through. The final topic was.....
6. Is it right that someone working as a waitress in a café earns less money and she would if get she was unemployed? Again, many views were voiced.

The discussions included very little disagreement this month, and some laughter as usual, with tea, coffee and cake courtesy of Margaret.

Mavis Dean

GARDENING

A new programme has been prepared for the summer months, starting with visits to two members' gardens which were well attended. Visits to public gardens and a group visit to a yellow NGS scheme garden are planned for later in the summer.

Just two pictures are selected from the June visits - Peony "Bowl of Beauty" and one of Deirdre's lovely roses.



Walter Mason

GERMAN

We continue to meet each Friday. Our last meeting was at Susan Sheasby's house in Romiley where we helped her celebrate her birthday before she left us to visit old friends in Bavaria. We have reached the last sad chapter of our German novel and are seeking a suitable replacement in the next few weeks.

Sadly we have lost two former members in the last few weeks, Geoff Rawson, who attended for a short time but enjoyed coming to our annual Christmas lunches with his wife, Karin, and Ron Baker who was a stalwart member for many years, not only fluent in German but also in Welsh. We shall miss them both.

Marlene Brookes

HISTORY

Members were asked to think of a character in History who they would like to bring back to life and meet face to face. First up was Richard III. Was he really the ruthless villain in the Shakespeare play? Did he organise the murder of the princes in the Tower? Has history treated him unkindly.

The next subject was Margaret Beaufort. Not such a well-known person. She was a formidable lady who devoted her considerable energy to securing the throne of England for her son Henry and thus founding the Tudor dynasty. She was a skilled politician and advisor to her grandson, Henry VIII. She was a powerful force to be reckoned with at a time when women had few rights. A fascinating person to meet but maybe not easy company?!!

A very different lady was the final choice. Born Amy Lyon in Neston, Cheshire she came to London at the age of 12. She was soon noticed in Covent Garden and became a model and muse for famous artists such as George Romney and Sir Joshua Reynolds. Her face truly was her fortune. We know her as Emma, Lady Hamilton.

It was a varied and fascinating meeting with plenty of time for comment and discussion. We look forward to a similar session in July.

Sheila Harrop

MEMOIRS

As usual, members had various memories of the past to share. Early days pre-school and starting work led to quite dangerous and exciting events such as looping the loop in a vintage bi-plane and being evacuated as an emergency from a foreign country on the brink of civil war. Reactions in the USA to the Vietnam war in the form of student protests followed and back home the short life and sad death of Princess Diana. We were well entertained with verses from Stewart and Bryan, who once escorted a low loader containing "What looked like half a submarine" through Manchester to Salford on a police issue bicycle which was far too big for him.

We found common ground in our reactions to our first taste of a banana after the war!!! A most entertaining afternoon.

Sheila Harrop

LINE DANCING

Last year when a Line Dance group was suggested 28 people put their name down as interested, we found a venue and a teacher and at our first session in September 2022 twenty people turned up. We all had a good laugh as we turned left when we should have turned right or forgot which foot we should be kicking.

I am aware that once a month is not ideal and some ladies could not manage our given day, illness, holidays. and bowling slowly diminished our numbers.

At our session in May only two ladies arrived, one came with me, and the second lady was a new member who had phoned me the week before for details. Not disheartened we danced the afternoon away.

As June would be our last meeting until September I decided to cancel and call it a day.

Thank you to everyone who supported the group, I am sorry it did not work out, maybe something better will happen.

Dorothy Neillands

READING

Our book choice for June was THE LIE by Helen Dunmore, a very moving story of a soldier returning from WW1 who takes refuge on the land of a sick old lady whom he buries on her own land (at her request) taking up residence in her home.

The lie is the pretence that she is away visiting relatives. He lives off the land and is able to sell some of its produce while renewing acquaintance with the sister of his best friend who was killed in the conflict, but inevitably he is found out with tragic consequences.

On July 3rd we will be discussing MISS AUSTEN by Gill Hornby.

Marlene Brookes

PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Indoor games.

1st Board meeting – 7 votes Ken

2nd Stop thief – 6 votes Jeff

Joint 3rd. Games mix up and Ten pin bowling with 5 votes each – Diane



Thanks everybody.

Our next competition is Alcoholic drink. Please contact me if you would like to join us.

Jeff Robinson

TRAVEL



IRELAND August 20-24th. Balance due at JULY meeting.

SUDELEY HOUSE and LIVERPOOL July 29th.
Coach from Village Hall. Payment at JULY meeting.

Margaret McDermott

TRAVEL GROUP HOLIDAY 2024



LITTLECOTE MANOR, WILTSHIRE, A WARNER'S HOTEL

17TH JUNE 2024 4 NIGHTS/5 DAYS

Details and interest list available at July meeting.

Thinking about going on a Riviera Travel holiday?

Did you know that when you book a holiday with Riviera Travel, you can claim Affinity Commission for your u3a - which donates 10% of the total basic cost of holidays booked by members back to your u3a. When booking, you should mention you are a member of u3a and want to claim Affinity Commission for your u3a. At the end of your holiday, Riviera Travel make a payment to the Third Age Trust. After deducting a handling fee, the Third Age Trust will pass the donation on to the relevant u3a.

WALKING

u3a Walk 28th June 2023. Ashford-in-the-Water to Magpie Mine and Sheldon.

In spite of the threat of showers and the possibility of heavier rain later, 19 hardy u3a walkers set off from the sheepwash bridge in the pretty village of Ashford-in-the-Water in Derbyshire.

After crossing the busy A6, we climbed steadily on a well-made path with vistas which improved continuously as we headed towards the antenna overlooking Ashford. Reaching the top of the hill after an ascent of around 350 feet, we stopped awhile for coffee on a grassy knoll. After a short section walking on a quiet road past an ash tree plantation, we followed a farm track on to the plateau on which the Magpie Lead Mine is situated.

Magpie Mine was the last working lead mine in Derbyshire and is acclaimed as the best-preserved 19th century lead mine in Britain. Some of the mine workings dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries. Although it is not possible to go explore any of the underground workings, we were able to explore the many interesting examples of industrial archaeology which may be seen on the site, such as the Cornish Engine House (1869) and its adjacent circular chimney (originally 1840), the 728ft deep Main Shaft, head gear and cage, winding drum, the Powder House (1840), the Shuttlebark engine shaft (1760) and the Agents House and Smithy (1840).

After lunch at the Magpie Mine site, we set off across several fields towards the village of Sheldon nearby. Having observed the approach of some dark rain clouds we donned our wet weather gear and having walked through Sheldon we adjourned to the Cock & Pullet pub for refreshments, and to let the rain pass by!



It was originally planned to drop down to the water outflow (sough) from which the Magpie Mine workings still pour some 4 to 6 million gallons of water daily into the river Wye; however, in view of the possibility of more rain to come it was decided to descend more directly back to our starting point at Ashford-in-the-Water.



The total distance walked was about 4 miles.

Rick Hedley

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>

6 July	Richborough Roman fort
12 July	Cryptic crosswords
18 July	Van Gogh
20 July	Philosophy and travel
25 July	US military aviation in E Anglia
27 July	Maths workshop

SCIENCE NETWORK

And a look ahead. The next Science network meeting is Wednesday August 9th from 10.30 - 3.30pm. This takes place on Zoom and you can register here

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/science-network-event-tickets-664586304527?aff=oddtcreator>

There are three talks during the day.

An introduction to Quasars - David Youll

After a long career in IT, David now spends his spare time in doing research to broaden his interest in galaxies and quasars (he has a PhD in Astronomy from Imperial College). His latest project has been aided in no small part by the huge body of observational data gathered by the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, embracing millions of galaxies and over 700,000 quasars. As we'll hear today, quasars are truly fascinating objects with many unusual and unique characteristics, but David also hopes this presentation will demonstrate what can be achieved by amateur astronomers in their own homes using publicly available data.

CRISPR Genome Editing Tool - David Tordoff

One of the great scientific advances in recent years has been in the field of genome editing, particularly that relating to the human genome. The tools being developed and used have the potential to cure genetic diseases and maybe to fundamentally change our idea of our own humanity I will look at the timeframe of discoveries and developments date in this field, the principal technologies being used and the ethical issues as to their potential deployment.

Without going into the science in too great a depth I trust that what I show you will give you much to ponder and to follow up if it holds your interest.

Please wash your hands it can save lives - the history of the battle to get hand washing as a routine in hospitals - Mike Trevethick

Remember hands (wash), face(mask) and space (2m) in Covid? This session focusses on the role of Ignaz Semmelweis who was one of the main driving forces to prove hand washing saved lives in hospitals. But he was ridiculed and only years later did people start to believe him. Even today though we are not always good at washing our hands as we shall see in this talk.

Anyone know any jokes about sodium? Na.

Why shouldn't you take atoms seriously? Because they make up everything.

Did you hear oxygen went on a date with potassium? It went OK.

How do astronomers organize a party? They planet.

Have you heard that entropy isn't what it used to be?

There are only bad science jokes left. All the good ones argon.

It's the KNITIVITY!

At the time of writing there are 207 days until Christmas!

The 'Knit and Stitches' in High Lane have embarked on their most challenging project so far – to knit a CHRISTMAS TREE! Their aim is to finish it in time for the **Christmas Tree Festival** that we hope to hold at **St Thomas' Church at the end of November.**

We want this to be a community event with lots of people joining in to create a 'Christmas Tree Extravaganza!'

The Challenge:

- Knit 1,500 leaves in any shade of green. The pattern could not be simpler – plain knit or garter stitch to create a rectangle 5.5 x 12 inches long. (Pattern at the end)
- The leaves will be turned into blankets after Christmas and given to charities. If you haven't knitted for years it will all come flooding back and our feedback is that people find it relaxing and satisfying
- Our Knit and Stitch group meets most Saturdays in the church hall between 2 and 4 pm. However if you prefer to knit at home that's fine, we're happy to collect and deliver wool if that helps

We're inviting **everyone in High Lane** to be part of this project. It would also be great to get some leaves from friends and family far away. So if you know anyone from Australia to Ambleside or indeed anywhere it would be great to get them involved too!

If everyone knitted one 'leaf' it would help to make this challenge a more realistic possibility!

Donation of wool in any colour of green would be gratefully accepted

Leaf Pattern:

- Use no 8UK or 4mm needles and DK wool
- Cast on 30 stitches in any shade of green
- Any wool can be used but may need to adjust stitches to make work approximately 5 1/2 inches wide
- Knit 12 inches in garter stitch
- Then cast off, finished work should measure 5 1/2 inches by 12 inches approximately

Contact Alison on 07897489792 for more information or help with wool or needles

