

## FROM THE CHAIR

Here we are half way through 2015 already! Where does the time go?

We have managed to start one or two extra groups this year and we can always support anyone who wishes to set up a new one. Please contact our Groups Coordinator, Meg Humphries, if you have any ideas. However two of our long-running groups, Music Appreciation and Family History, are beginning to lose members and need some new blood if they are to remain viable.

We will be holding the Annual Group Leader's Meeting on July 17th. Would Group Leaders please inform Pam Curley if they intend coming if you have not already done so. Our Group Leaders give their time freely for your benefit and deserve our grateful thanks.

The members of the Craft and Needlework Group have been hard at work knitting over thirty beanie hats for cadets from the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to take to Nepal to distribute to the children who suffered in the devastating earthquake.

Sue Harlin and Shirley Boore have offered to take on the role of Almoner for our U3A. If you know of any member who is ill or been bereaved please let them know so that they can send a card or flowers or help in any other way. It is important that members know that we care about them but Sue and Shirley need your help in keeping them informed.

Margaret McDermott

## FROM THE EDITOR

This is your newsletter so please help me to make it interesting to read. Items for the newsletter from members are always welcome so if you have any suggestions for content or articles of interest to U3A members please contact me at [newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk)

**The next edition of the newsletter will be the September edition. Please can you get your contributions to me by Friday 28 August?**

## NEW GROUPS

### Musicals

The group opened on 25th June, with a performance of West Side Story. Because numbers are strictly limited, the group is already over-subscribed and there is a waiting list. However, places may become available due to cancellations, so you should enquire if interested.

### Card Making

The group has had an initial meeting to discuss arrangements. Regular meetings will start once suitable accommodation has been found.

### Bird Watching

Several people have expressed an interest, but the group needs a leader. Perhaps two or more people could run the group between them? Please note: an expert ornithologist is not needed, so could you help to run the group?

**WE ALWAYS NEED MORE GROUPS. If you have an idea for a group, please come and discuss it with me. I would be delighted to hear from you.**

**Meg Humphries**

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Chair's message	<b>Group reports</b>
New groups	Ballet Appreciation
Monthly meetings	Churches and Pubs
Bridge Lunch	Craft and Needlework
First Aid training for Group Leaders	Current Affairs
Blairgowrie visit	Gardening
Walking group away break	German
Forthcoming events	History
U3A Diaries	Opera Appreciation
Allotment open day	Philosophy
Airport Bypass update	Photography
AgeUK Pension advice	Shakespeare
U3A Extreme Sports	Singing
Tradespersons	Strollers
	Walking
	Whist

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

At the May meeting Keith Vigurs gave an entertaining talk about his exploits over 20 years as a mystery shopper. His contracts spanned an amazing range of organisations including supermarkets, shops, travel agents, banks and building societies, trains and restaurants. He gave us many amusing anecdotes and I'm sure many in the audience were envious of what sounded like a fun job.

The June meeting was a journey into wood in all shapes, sizes and types. Ray Ashton shared his lifelong passion for working in wood with us accompanied by samples of different woods.

## BRIDGE LUNCH

The Improvers Bridge Group enjoyed their Summer Party on Thursday June 18th at the Davenport Golf Club. We had a good lunch in the dining room with views of the course. As usual the bridge was kept party style. We played progressive Chicago which means circulating and changing partners.

The event was organised by June Ogden who had put in a lot of hard work. She was presented with a well deserved bouquet of flowers.



Sheila Harrop

## FIRST AID TRAINING FOR GROUP LEADERS

On Monday 15th June, eleven of our Group Leaders attended a short (two-hour) training session on First Aid. Doreen Scotte, one of our members who has been a First Aid instructor with the Red Cross for many years, kindly provided the session. The afternoon was most informative and enjoyable.

Thank you, Doreen, for sharing your expertise and for clarifying some of my own half-baked ideas. Hopefully, we won't need to use our newly acquired knowledge.

Margaret McDermott

## SCOTLAND HOLIDAY – MAY/JUNE 2015

Travelling north to Scotland the group called in to Brockholes, sadly as a second visit, again the weather was inclement. Lunch stop in Moffat and then onward to Blairgowrie, Perthshire.

### Monday – Scone Palace

From Picts, Scots, Jacobites, Mary (Queen of Scots) et al to the Murray family whose home it is today. Scone Palace; many treasures are within. The Stone of Scone has it all from



"Hostilities to History" as the promotional video claims. Also the fight to abolish slavery and the story of "Belle" are part of that history.

### Tuesday

This was the start of a memorable day visiting Glamis Castle, the home of the Queen Mother before her marriage. The Earls of Strathmore have lived at Glamis since 1372 in unbroken succession and today it is still a family home. It has spiralling towers, breath-taking beauty, splendid interiors and many, many stairs to the various floors. On the day of our visit they were trialing a buggy train round the grounds and so some of the group were on the first trip. After lunch the Group visited the childhood home of J M Barrie – author of Peter Pan. A small cottage with two weaving rooms on the ground floor and the family with four children lived in the two rooms above. Certainly compact living.

### Wednesday

Blair Castle started life as a Regency style house – over the years turrets were built on, then taken off then returned giving a splendid "Fairy Castle" appearance. The entrance hall of the castle displays a very large collection of weaponry, the castle has its own army. Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Victoria have stayed in the castle. Dukes 1 to 14 of Athol have owned the castle. The 4th Duke decided to plant Larch trees. He had hundreds of seeds. The seeds were shot out of a cannon and have been growing to this day!

#### Thursday - the voyage of Discovery

As the Group boarded the Discovery, our guide Ian Brown looked like a man of many sea voyages and his knowledge of the vessel and sea craft assisted in making the visit that more enjoyable.

Discovery was a three masted vessel with steam engine support, which was commissioned jointly by the Royal Society and the Royal Geographical Society as a research ship and was designed specifically for Antarctic exploration at a cost of £51,000 (£4.1 million at today's costs). A floating laboratory equipped to meet the demands of scientific crew who were elite in their respective fields of scientific research which included meteorology, geology, zoology, magnetism, geographical and oceanic exploration.

Under the command of Robert Falcon Scott a member of the Royal Navy, the Discovery sailed from the Isle of Wight on 6th August 1901 and after nearly two years marooned in the frozen Antarctic seas it returned to Portsmouth on 10th September 1904. Ironically the rescue ship the Terra Nova which participated in freeing the icebound Discovery was the same vessel commanded by Captain Scott on his subsequent visit to the Antarctic which resulted in his tragic death. The Discovery is currently moored in the Tay Estuary at Dundee close to where she was constructed. The ship is richly supported by a museum which graphically illustrates the hardships the crew members were required to endure with the technology that was available in the early 1900s.



Our last visit of the day was to Dundee Botanical Gardens for lunch and after a brief but very interesting introductory talk we were let loose to explore the Garden and well stocked greenhouse and allowed to "walk on the grass!".

#### Friday

Homeward bound. Visiting Gretna Green for lunch and a look round the Tourist Shops – hearing the "bagpipes" and boarding the coach with our coach driver Malcolm to cross back into England.

Ruth Smith

#### **WALKING AWAY BREAK IN SHROPSHIRE FRIDAY 1ST MAY – MONDAY 4TH MAY 2015**



#### Day 1

We started our weekend adventure by meeting at Attingham Hall Park near Shrewsbury in pleasant sunshine. This is a 4,000 acre National Trust property which was bequeathed to the nation by the late Lord Berwick. Most of us chose to take a 4-5 mile walk, led by David Burke, through lovely woodland, stopping for lunch at a clearing near a monument where the ashes of the late Lord Berwick were buried. Afterwards we visited the walled garden and some of us had a look around Attingham Hall itself.



We then made our way to the Long Mynd Hotel in Church Stretton. After booking into our rooms, our group of 33 attended a welcome presentation by the manageress followed by a drinks reception and the evening meal.

## Day 2

After breakfast, most of the party set off from the hotel for a five mile walk led by Steve Reynolds. After climbing a grassy slope and traversing a wood, we soon found ourselves slowly ascending along a well-defined path in the Carding Mill Valley. After about a mile, we entered Lightspout hollow. This was quite steep and rocky in places and it led us up to the Lightspout waterfall. Here we stopped for coffee. This revived us sufficiently to ascend a rocky "staircase" that took us above the waterfall. Further ascending led us to the "Shropshire Way" path at 1550 feet (near the summit of Long Mynd), from which we descended back against a cold wind into Carding Mill Valley.



We stopped for lunch at the intersection with Lightspout Hollow and then continued our descent. We decided to have a drink at the tearooms at the Chalet Pavilion, which was a good thing as quite a heavy shower of rain went through while we were inside. We then returned to the hotel to do our own thing until meeting for dinner.

After dinner, a table tennis mixed doubles competition took place, having been arranged by Merlyn Young. During the event, Steve Reynolds was given a thank you presentation for organising the break, along with David Burke, who had given assistance.

## Day 3

Steve and Dave led us on a longer but less gruelling walk on the other side of Church Stretton. We started by descending into Church Stretton, crossing the A49, and turning along the old Watling Street. As the early mist changed to warm sun, we followed what appeared to be a sunken track, which had water flowing through it, before climbing up the valley between Helmeth Hill and Caer Caradoc Hill. Turning south through a wood we steadily ascended along a bridle track to Hope Bowdler Hill. We stopped for coffee half way along this track and were pleased to hear the

first cuckoo call of the year. We diverted to ascend to the summit of Willstone Hill, and then backtracked to ascend two of the three peaks of Hope Bowdler Hill (1388 feet). We sheltered from the wind under a rocky outcrop for lunch and then followed the steeply descending ridge.



We stopped for a group photograph near another rocky outcrop and at that moment the heavens opened with a mighty downpour. Fortunately, this was short lived and soon passed through, and we continued our grassy descent, with a fine view of the Carding Valley ahead. Crossing flat fields we then retraced our steps through Church Stretton, and returned to the hotel to complete the 6 mile walk. After dinner Steve and Dave organised a quiz to quietly tax our brains until bedtime.

After breakfast the following day, we said our goodbyes and set off for home, although some of us spent the day exploring the many interesting venues in the area, with Powis Castle favoured by several of the party.



Jeff Mortimer

Photos by Brian Beardwood and Jeff Mortimer

## U3A 2016 DIARIES

The U3A diary for 2016 is now available. This year the diary has a green leather look cover. The cost is £2 which includes postage.

If you would like to order one give your name and payment to Pam Curley at the July meeting.

## HIGH LANE ALLOTMENT OPEN DAY

This year's allotment open day is on 25 July from 10 am - 2 pm. The allotment site will be open to the public and the village hall will be open with refreshments, a produce stall, a cake stall, raffle, and games for the children.

Linda Morton

## AIRPORT BYPASS UPDATES

Construction of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road commenced in March 2015 and will last for approximately two and a half years. The road is expected to be open in late 2017. The construction will include:

- 10km of new single and dual carriageway;
- Substantial ecological mitigation works (Great Crested Newts, Bats, Badgers);
- 1.2 million m<sup>3</sup> of earthworks which will be balanced on site (therefore no fill material needs to be imported onto the site or any surplus material exported from site);
- 4 rail structures;
- 7 other bridges;
- 6 substantial retaining walls.

Work is currently taking place to relocate great crested newts sites at Hazel Grove, Poynton, Bramhall and Woodford as well as setting up work at various sites. You can find information about what is happening in each local area from [http://www.semmms.info/a6marr\\_construction/a6marr\\_local\\_area\\_updates/](http://www.semmms.info/a6marr_construction/a6marr_local_area_updates/)

## PENSIONS ADVICE

Changes to pension rules are creating new opportunities for scams says AgeUK. Be cautious of anyone approaching you with advice on how to invest your pension.

From April 2015, people over 55 have greater freedom in how they can access their pension pots. If they have a defined contribution pension, they are no longer restricted to simply buying an annuity. Instead, they can withdraw some or all their money as a lump sum.

There are criminals who will try to take advantage of these new options by tricking people into cashing in their pension and handing over their money for them to invest.

Pension scams are serious: you could lose some, if not all, your pension savings, or end up with a large tax bill (there can be high charges if you withdraw your pension savings early).

What to do if you're targeted by a pension scam

If you think you've been scammed or that someone has tried to scam you, report it to Action Fraud. You can report the scam online or by calling 0300 123 2040.

The Department of Work and Pensions has a service that allows anyone over the age of 55 to receive a personalised statement of their state pension benefits. The service also offers free advice about options available. This can be by telephone or face to face. More details at [www.pensionwise.gov.uk](http://www.pensionwise.gov.uk).

## U3A EXTREME SPORTS

Have a look at what they've been getting up to in Portsmouth U3A. <http://www.maturetimes.co.uk/u3a-extreme-events-challenge/>

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## OUR U3A ACTIVITIES

8 July	<b>Monthly meeting: change of programme.</b> The planned talk on TV Quizzes by Glenys Hopkins will not take place. The revised programme is yet to be confirmed.
12 August	Theatre group. Fallen Angels by Noel Coward. Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
12 August	Monthly meeting: Building The Big Ditch by Glenn Atkinson.
30 October	Curry and Social evening at the Village Hall.
12 Dec	Theatre group. The Royal exchange presents:- Into the Woods by Stephen Sondheim. Royal Exchange. Last date for booking is 30 September. £25.50 ticket only. No coach.

## FORTHCOMING HOLIDAYS AND VISITS

Contact: Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith

14 July	Stepping Hill Hospital. Tour of new kitchens and food tasting. 7pm
27 July	Chester
16-20 Aug	STRATFORD By coach. £350. Warwick Castle, Shakespeare Experience, Cotswolds, Althorp House, Coventry Cathedral. Final details after August meeting
6-10 Sept	IRELAND Flight from Manchester to Cork. Approx £460. Cobh Heritage Centre, Bantry House, Ring of Beara, Mizen Head, Garinish Island, Cork Gaol. Final details after August meeting
17 Sept	Stepping Hill Hospital. Talk about hip and knee replacement. 7 pm
22 Sept	PEOPLE'S MUSEUM MANCHESTER £3.50 at July meeting. Followed by optional lunch at Rylands Library
10-23 Oct	Cruise 2 night hotel stay in Istanbul followed by cruise to Kusadasi, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Athens etc.
23-24 Oct	SOUTHWELL. Balance at August meeting

4 Dec	TATTON HALL Lunch and tour of the Hall. £34 at Sept meeting
-------	---

## U3A NORTH WEST REGION ACTIVITIES

1-4 Sept	U3A NORTH WEST REGION SUMMER SCHOOL. Newton Rigg College, Penrith. Cost Full Board Residential Delegate £300. Day delegate £150 Booking closes 31 May
20 Sept	Family History conference. Palace Hotel, Buxton. Cost £20.

## U3A NATIONAL EVENTS

13-16 July	Summer School. Harper Adams University, Shropshire. Subjects include Art appreciation, cinema history, France, maths, philosophy, theatre, writing fiction.
10-13 August	Science seminar. Harper Adams University. Cost £250(residential).
12-13 August	Gilbert & Sullivan Festival. Harrogate.

## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Now-11 Nov	Recreation of Stamford Hospital in Dunham Massey Hall.
1 May - 27 Sept	Picturing Venice. Lady Lever gallery.
1 July	Carmen. ENO. Stockport Plaza
7 July	Comedy of Errors. Stockport Plaza
10-26 July	Buxton Festival.
21 July	Andre Rieu. Stockport Plaza
22 July	Merchant of Venice. RSC Live. Various venues
3 September	Beaux Stratagem. NT Live. Various venues
24 Sept	Coriolanus. NTLive. Various venues
5 October	The Importance of Being Ernest (with David Suchet). NTLive. Various venues.
9 Oct	Hamlet. NTLive. Various venues
31 Oct	Kiss Me Kate. Stockport Plaza Plaza. Stockport Amateur Operatic Society

## GROUP REPORTS

### BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 1 AND 2

#### May Meeting:-

Our May meeting included both contemporary and classical ballet, ranging from the chaotic and sensuous, to the innocence and delight of a classic story performed by students, with a documentary about one of the great dames of the ballet world.

Prog 1: "Divergence" - Superbly danced by members of the Australian Ballet, with music by George Bizet (L'Arlesienne Suites No.1 & 2). This ballet is described on its cover as adrenalin-charged, sensuous, serene and chaotic.

Prog 2: "Coppelia" - This is a delightful production danced by the Students of the "Paris Opera Ballet". The artistry of these young ballet students was excellent, the scenery and costumes brought this ballet to life. These dancers will have moved on to more senior roles and new Ballet Companies.

Prog 3: "In Conversation with Monica Mason" - After an extraordinary career at Covent Garden spanning over 50 years, Dame Monica Mason steps down as Artistic Director of "The Royal Ballet" this summer. In this documentary she joined Alan Titchmarsh and shared her memories as a dancer, teacher and administrator.

#### June Meeting:

Our June meeting was a mixed bag of ballet based on unusual subjects, with a documentary of the daily workouts for students.

Prog 1: "White Lodge" Royal Ballet School - The documentary follows the daily workouts performed by the students during their progress towards becoming fully fledged ballet dancers. The training is hard work but these students are devoted to their work. The school also provides an educational programme covering many subjects which are attended by the students on a daily basis during their stay.

Prog 2: "Checkmate"- RBC -This is a ballet I first saw in 1987 at the Palace Theatre and until recently have been unable to find a copy to show. This version I found by chance on Youtube which is the original

1987 production. It is an unusual ballet, choreographed by Ninette de Valois and music by Arthur Bliss. Checkmate brings to life a dramatic stylized war of lust, trickery and betrayal, the stage becomes a chess board and the dancers portray all the chess pieces. The Black Queen brings her full force to the game which of course is "Checkmate" The dancing was superb but the plot was hard to follow if you are not familiar with chess.

Prog 3: "Ballet Rambert"- This contemporary ballet, with choreography by Christopher Bruce, is performed to a Medley of eight tunes by the Rolling Stones. It is unusual but very enjoyable, with quite a few laughs and brilliant dancing.

Sheila Hall

---

### BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 3 AND 4

#### 27th May /4th June:

We saw Sir Frederick Ashton's ballet Sylvia, performed by the Royal Ballet in 2005, with Darcey Bussell in the title role. The story, featuring shepherds, nymphs, gods and woodland creatures, is set to glorious music by Delibes. This was followed by two contrasting short pieces, also choreographed by Ashton.

#### 24th June /2nd July:

This was the first of three sessions on Ballet in America. It featured the choreography of George Balanchine, who was known as the father of American ballet. We saw four contrasting examples of his work:

- Square Dance. Joins the traditions of American folk dance with classical ballet.
- Prodigal Son. A strange but moving performance to music by Stravinsky.
- Le Palais de Cristal. Danced by the Paris Opera Ballet to Bizet's Symphony in C.
- Western Symphony. A very lively piece celebrating the old American West.

At our next meeting, we will see Balanchine's A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Meg Humphries

## CHURCHES AND PUBS

July 3rd All Saints church Brailsford.

On a good sunny day we set off for Brailsford and All Saints. The church is down a narrow lane with open fields on either side. Upon



arriving at the church the church bells were ringing. The bell tower holds six bells. The vicar, Fiona Crocker, offered us a drink of tea or coffee as she gave us a brief introduction to the church. She then introduced us to Ray Jones one of the church wardens and local undertaker. He then gave us a very interesting talk on the history of the church.

All Saints is one of the churches in the Domesday book that was apportioned between more than one village. It is divided between Brailsford and Ednaston and dates back to the 12th century. The original building could have been built on the border between the lands of the two local Saxon lords. Legend has it that a notable family in Brailsford village wanted a church to be built near their house but the villagers kept moving all the stone, which had been delivered, to a site in between the two villages. So that is where it was built.

In the grounds there is an old stable, which has been converted into a toilet. The minister would put his horse into the stable during the service. The mounting steps for the horse are still in place by the main gate. Also outside are the remains of a Saxon cross. By the church door is a yew tree thought to be over 1000 years old.

Inside, many of the pew ends are beautifully carved and represent biblical scenes. The font is octagonal and in the perpendicular style and within the lower part of the base is a Tudor rose.

After an enjoyable visit we then drove back into Brailsford village and had an excellent carvery lunch at the Rose and Crown pub.

Paul Kenneth

## CRAFT AND NEEDLEWORK GROUP

After a few unproductive months, we were spurred on to be creative when Margaret McDermott suggested we support an initiative of The Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Mothers' Union Christian Care for Families (Diocese of Chester) to knit beanie hats and wrist warmers for children in Nepal. Cadets from the Cheshire Service will be travelling to Nepal in November of this year where they will help build a school for children living high up in the mountains. They will take the hats and wrist warmers with them and distribute them to the children they meet. We all had spare wool which has now been put to a good purpose. The pictures show some of the group with the fruits of their labours.



Marlene Brookes

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

The topics up for discussion in the Current Affairs group at this meeting were many and varied; here are just some of the topics covered.

(1) Was it right to ask the Nobel prize winner to resign after making what were considered to be sexist comments at a lecture?: the group agreed unanimously that he should not have resigned.

(2) The group then considered whether 16 and 17 year olds should be allowed to join the army whilst at the same time not being allowed to vote: the majority of the group agreed that they should be allowed both to vote and join the army.

(3) The migrant issue which has erupted again in France was discussed but there was, of course, no obvious solution.

(4) Fiscal autonomy for Scotland was rejected by the group on the grounds that you would potentially have to give it to Wales, Northern Ireland and possibly parts of England.

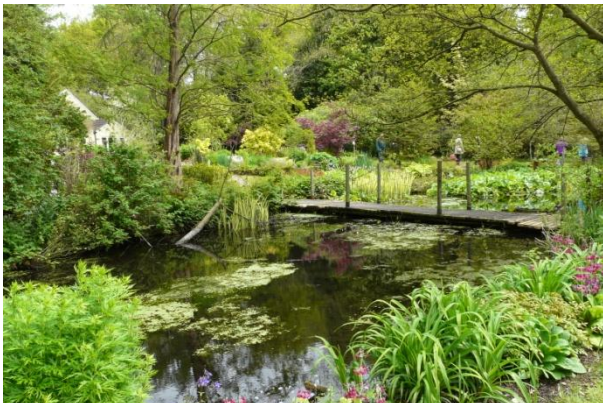
(5) The consensus of the group on other topics was that the tax payer should pay the £150m to repair Buckingham Palace and (6) although we would like Greece to leave the EU all the group thought that overall it would not be a good thing.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 22nd July 2015 at 2.15pm.

Pam Curley

## GARDENING

### MAY 2015 GARDEN VISIT TO STONYFORD COTTAGE



Early rain had cleared as we arrived at Stonyford Cottage Gardens and Nursery, near Delamere. All agreed it was a very pleasant visit to a Monet style green and watery poolside garden. Paths wandered around, islands were linked by smooth bridges over the pools, choice plants caught our gaze – candelabra primulas, trilliums, geums, perennial geraniums, and comfrees in particular. Interesting trees formed a backdrop – from “wedding cake” dogwoods, and delicate acers, to young specimen metasequoias. Later, after a homemade lunch in the warm tearooms, the sun brightened our second walk round the garden, and tempted us to buy from the many good quality plants in the nursery area.

All in all, a very good visit to a garden, which seemed new to most.

### June meeting

Unwelcome heavy drizzle greeted eleven garden group members for Walter’s strawberries and cream afternoon. Happily, the rain stopped long enough for a tour round the garden, with oriental poppies, candelabra primroses and iris sibirica particularly catching the eye. A striking clump of off-white camassio was admired, but less so when its tendency to spread vigorously was disclosed. A common problem, as plants often grow, either too quickly, or not quickly enough!



The rains restarted eventually, but by then the strawberries were ready, and the rest of the afternoon passed by happily. We did note that the August 5th visit to a High Lane garden was dependent on getting a minimum number, so an early indication of who could attend or not is needed. Next visit is to Chatsworth on July 15.

Walter Mason

### MARPLE BRIDGE AND MELLOR U3A GARDENING

Our May meeting brought the welcome return of Kate Perry of Lomax nurseries, giving us the lowdown on just how tubs and hanging baskets should be planted to give a spectacular display throughout the summer - plenty of plants and plenty of water should be the mantra!

Our speaker in June, Jan Greenland (the herb lady) had also been invited back by audience request after her visit to us last year. This time we “travelled” through the centuries seeing pictures of iceman and bogmen, dwellings and artifacts all with the theme of herbs medicinal, edible and poisonous! Jan’s gentle humour kept the audience well-entertained as she gave us a fascinating glimpse of life long past.

There will be no meeting on July 8th as an outing has been arranged. The August meeting is the group members’ horticultural show. We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of every month (except on outing days) at Marple Methodist church, Church lane, Marple. 9.45 a.m. £2 per meeting.

Jean Parrish

## GERMAN GROUP

We continue to meet on Fridays when we hear interesting experiences from group members and learn very up-to-date vocabulary from our reading of crime and human interest stories.

June 26th was a change from our usual schedule as we had a social evening with food to welcome Hans-Guenter and Adelheid Heeren from Burladingen in Baden-Wuerttemberg, a couple who regularly visit Marple and who are well known to several members of the group. We also invited two new members of High Lane U3A, Geoff and Karin Rawson who will shortly be joining us on Friday mornings. Karin is from Sylt, an island in the North Sea quite close to Denmark and we look forward to having a native German speaker in the group. The chefs in the German group surpassed themselves with the range of food provided and we had a very enjoyable evening.



Marlene Brookes

## HISTORY GROUP

At the May meeting Derek Jones gave a very interesting power point presentation on The Highlands and Islands of Western Scotland. The presentation defined very clearly the area to which was being referred and started as far back as the 7th century BC when the British Isles was overrun by Celtic tribes. It covered the time of the occupation of Britain by the Romans and the building of Hadrian's Wall to keep out the marauding Scots and then how the Scottish families or clans, became indigenous to particular areas of the western Highland and Islands.

At the June meeting we watched a recent TV programme on Richard III. Historically, he has always been portrayed as a very unpleasant character and was believed to have been responsible for the murder of the two princes in the tower. However, as more research has been undertaken, many doubts have arisen as to whether he really was as bad as the Shakespeare play would have us believe. This programme put forth a number of other possibilities as to who may have been responsible for the murder of the princes, given the politics of the time, and it came up with some very believable alternatives: it certainly led to a good discussion following the programme.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 15th July and the topic is 'What Else Happened in 1914' presented by Terry Browne.

Pam Curley

## OPERA APPRECIATION GROUP

At our May meeting, we saw Placido Domingo in the title role in the Royal Opera's 1985 production of Andrea Chenier. With music by Giordano, this is a tragic tale set during the French Revolution. The hero is sent to the guillotine because he is an aristocratic poet, and the heroine changes places with another prisoner so that she can die with him.

In June, we watched the 2006 production of Mozart's Cosi fan Tutte from Glyndebourne. Directed by Nick Hytner, both the singing and acting were excellent.

At our next meeting, I intend to show Aida – back to the tragic endings!

This will complete the first year of the opera group. We have seen a mixture of styles and languages: 10 Italian, 1 French and 1 English. There are plenty more to show. I haven't even started on Handel or Wagner.

Note. To avoid clashes with other groups, this group now meets once per month on the 4th Tuesday afternoon.

Meg Humphries

## PHILOSOPHY GROUP

At the May meeting we discussed the Philosophy of Meaning starting with an excerpt from Alice through the Looking Glass where Alice and an argumentative egg have an exchange about the meaning of words.



*And only one for birthday presents, you know. There's glory for you!*

*'I don't know what you mean by "glory",' Alice said.*

*Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. 'Of course you don't -- till I tell you. I meant "there's a nice knock-down argument for you!"'*

*'But "glory" doesn't mean "a nice knock-down argument",' Alice objected.*

*'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean - - neither more nor less.'*

*'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'*

*'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master -- that's all.'*

The June meeting was a discussion on the topic 'What's wrong with Democracy'. We found plenty that was wrong but solutions were much harder to find. Many of our ideas are presented in this essay from the Economist

<http://www.economist.com/news/essays/21596796-democracy-was-most-successful-political-idea-20th-century-why-has-it-run-into-trouble-and-what-can-be-done>

The topic for the July meeting is Equality. Another very big topic!

Diane Saxon

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Robert Barlow had a cracking start in our May monthly competition "Movement", by coming 1st (Child in large ball on swimming pool) , and 2nd Equals (children walking along beach). The other success was by Chris Gibson with 2nd Equals (fairground scene) and 4th (little girl). Some technically clever pictures of moving objects "froze" the object too much to suggest movement. We had an interesting discussion, on why a slanting skyline appeared to convey a sense of motion.



### June meeting

Because of holidays and poor weather, our photoshoot in Etherow Country Park had few attendees, and our competition on "Close-Ups" had fewer entries than usual. The result was 1st. Diane Saxon – dandelion clock. 2nd. Fred Goodyear – wasp on convolvulus flower. 3rd Diane Saxon – tomato.



Our next meeting is on July 16 at Chris Gibson's house. The subject of our competition is "Shopping".

Walter Mason

## SHAKESPEARE GROUP

We finished reading Othello last Monday and now look forward to seeing and hearing the real thing at Stratford in August. There will be no meetings in July or August so the next meeting dates are as follows (All Mondays): Sept. 7, Oct 5, Nov.9 and Dec.7. We will start with ALLS WELL THAT ENDS WELL in Sept. I will circulate the synopsis by the end of August

Steve Reynolds

## SINGING GROUP

The singing group is practising intensively for a concert at Dystlegh Grange on 11 August.

We are preparing a varied programme including a set of three Abba pieces, two by Simon and Garfunkel, Ave Maria by Elgar and an arrangement of Amazing Grace. Waly Waly is one of our favourites and we are adding Day by Day and My Lord, What a Morning. A new song, which we are working on, is The Seal Lullaby. We are also singing the piece which the U3A meeting enjoyed, I am a Small Part of the World and we conclude with Jerusalem.

Everyone is working hard to achieve the improved standard that we, as a choir, have set for ourselves.

Pam Wood

## STROLLERS GROUP

We continue to meet at High Lane Village Hall on the last Monday of each month at 9.45am. Any member is welcome to join us. We walk for about one to one and a half hours usually local walks and mostly on flat ground although it can be a little muddy at times so appropriate footwear and clothing are essential.

June Gibbs

## WALKING GROUP

May walk



A flat and easy five mile walk in the surrounds of Sale Water Park was the choice of Steve Reynolds, and 13 members joined him to discover a very pleasant area

of woodland paths, raised riverside dikes, and fascinating lakes and wetland. There was more too, as we ventured around attractive Chorlton Green, with interesting shops worth a longer look on another day – but there was walking to be done!

Coffee stop over, we strode on along Hawthorn Lane past Stretford Cemetery, and towards Cut Hole Bridge; where comfortable benches on the Bridgewater Canal were ideal for our packed lunches – a floating mass of Water Hawthorn catching our eyes. After, we skirted Broad Ees Dole Nature Reserve, straining our eyes at the bird hide – was that a Ring Necked Duck in the distance? Yellow flag iris and last year's "bulrush" stems were easier to identify.

Further on, intrepid youths dared each other to venture into the murky and risky waters of the River Mersey. But we couldn't wait to see the result, as we returned over Jackson's Bridge, and en masse rushed for cups of tea at the Mersey Valley Visitor Centre. It had been a lovely walk, and we thanked Steve and Ann for it.

June walk



Walter celebrated his second day as an octogenarian, by leading nine walkers on mostly familiar ground near Hayfield. Starting from Bowdon Bridge car park, we walked up Kinder Road, along the stream, climbed the steep cobbled pathway by the dam, and followed the path above the reservoir to a coffee stop partly up William Clough.



A sharp left hand turn took us on the panoramic route to the shooting cabin, and there continued towards Carr Meadow. At the high point, we turned down a wide track (using "right to roam") passing a grouse butt and descending gently through the heather and wimberry (bilberry) to an early lunch stop at a pleasant sun trap. A curlew flew around, but only one grouse was heard.



We crossed a stream on stepping stones and ambled through the Park Hall Woods, now a NT nature reserve, but formerly famous for its outdoor swimming pool. Across the A624 we joined a footpath once a stiled field path by badger setts, now a graded path with easy gates and no signs of badgers. A short distance along a lane, a minor road, and another graded path which followed the River Sett (the calico trail) to a general shop - selling ice creams! Meryl took over to take us past the cricket ground to new children's play area and soon we were back at Bowdon Bridge.

It had been a lovely day for walking, with pleasant sun and just a slight breeze, so everyone seemed to enjoy the 6 miles or so walk.

Walter Mason

---

## WHIST GROUP

The Whist group will meet again on Wednesday 15th July at 2pm in St. Thomas Church Hall. We are a friendly group, there is a £2 charge per person and this includes tea/coffee and biscuit. There will be no meeting in August as we are on our summer break.

June Gibbs

## TRADESPERSONS

In response to requests, the list of recommended tradespersons has been reprinted in the printed edition and the version of the newsletter sent out to members.