

**u3a** High Lane

# Newsletter

June 2023



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## FROM THE EDITOR

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

In this edition, we have a report of the Walking group holiday in Coniston illustrated with some eye-catching photographs, the May monthly meeting and the recent cheese and wine evening. The cover image shows members enjoying the wine evening. We also have reports of group activities and information about u3a National Office events and competitions.

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.

The National Office bitesize newsletter is no longer in PDF format so I cannot send it out with our newsletter as I have previously. You can read the May newsletter [here](#). This has reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country.

The next issue of our newsletter will be July 2023 so please send your contributions to me by 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at [newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk)

Diane Saxon

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## ANNUAL LUNCH 2023

This year's annual lunch is on Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> July Friday at Hazel Grove Golf Club. Our three-course lunch offers a choice of tempting dishes. We will be joined by our guest speaker, Jill Trumble from Stockport Heritage Trust. The cost is £30 which includes tea or coffee and gratuities.

You can get your tickets for the lunch at the June meeting or by contacting André directly.

## CHEESE AND WINE EVENING

Last Friday we held an excellent evening of wine tasting with a bit of cheese.

In the past we have done the presentation ourselves but this time we had a specialist from Waitrose, Jules, to present the wines. She was given a budget and the choice was left to her. For those not there the choice of wines she picked was excellent and very well enjoyed.



Everyone was greeted with a glass of fizz, Waitrose Cava Brut–Castillo Perelada.

This was followed by three different types of white wine.

1st, Waitrose Loved and Found–Loin De L'Oeil.

2nd, Villa Antinori Bianco Toscana.

3rd, Elephant in the room–Prodigious Pinot Gris.

These were followed by three different types of red wine.

1st, Waitrose Loved and Found–Albarossa.

2nd, Elephant in the room–Pinot Noir.

3rd, PepperBox–Shiraz.

Some of these wines were new to Waitrose and from the comments passed were enjoyed by all. The wines were complemented with many different types of cheese biscuits and eight different types of cheeses. As there was very little left in wine and cheese the choices must have been good.

A big vote of thanks for Barbara's choice of cheeses, and thanks to all who helped at the end of the evening to wash up the eighty odd glasses plus other bits and pieces.

Paul Kenneth

## MONTHLY MEETING

Suffragettes and Scones was the subject of the talk given by Sue Holden at the May meeting. She touched on the history of the emancipation of women over the last century. The main focus of her talk was how strong pioneering women have brought about change and are still doing so today. She looked at the lives of three modern ennobled women; Dame Tanni Grey Thompson, Dame Karen Brady and Dame Helen Newlove.

As she spoke, she created a beautiful flower arrangement consisting of white hydrangeas and yellow roses to represent these ladies and their achievements. She added purple statice to remember the original suffragettes and green foliage for the men who have supported the cause. These are the colours of the suffragette movement and stand for purity, hope, loyalty and dignity. The yellow was for joy and friendship. Sue donated this arrangement, and it was raffled at the end of the meeting.

The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 14th June. It is entitled Down Memory Lane and is hosted by the memoirs group.

Kath Wareham

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## u3a MAGAZINE

The magazine has recently been made available online in text form so it is accessible for screenreaders. Editions up to Spring 2023 are available [here](#).

For those who subscribe to the printed version – which has lots of photos of course, the June edition will be with you soon.

The Third Age Matters magazine is published five times a year and posted direct to members' homes. Each edition contains stories about u3a members and activities, plus celebrity interviews and features on topics such as technology, recipes, travel, competitions. If you would like to subscribe the cost is just £3.50 for the next five editions. Please contact the Membership Secretary to subscribe.



# GROUP NEWS

## ART



We have had a couple of new members join us over the last few weeks.

Mike Morton has asked the group to paint a picture of the memorial hall. This will be our June challenge. We will take our photos of the hall over the next week and then paint it in our own style. Mike will judge this at the end of June.

We have booked our trip to the Patchings festival in July.

If you would like to join our art group please contact Brian Chadwick. We meet every Thursday afternoon at the memorial hall at 1.30 – 4 pm

Valerie Brown

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## CANASTA

The canasta group continues to be popular. Please come and join us for an evening of fun and good company.

Pauline Wright

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## GARDENING

After some problems earlier in the year, the gardening group has restarted with Walter Mason back in charge on an interim basis, and an updated programme perhaps more suitable for the group. Watch this space!

Walter Mason



## CRIME FICTION READING



### Careless Love by Peter Robinson – a DCI Banks novel

This novel was liked by the majority of the group being considered to be an enjoyable read though as usual there were some members for whom the novel was given a poor score with one comment of 'awful' and another 'not as good as Rebus but still a good read'.

It was very different to last month's novel and catered to different tastes. There was a debate about the inclusion of descriptions of music and its relevance to the story, some felt it helped build the character while others skimmed over it. The descriptions of the countryside were popular and for one member the names of pubs brought back memories of places visited.

The whole group seemed united that Stephen Tompkinson was not their image of Banks rather that actor John Sim might have been more suitable. The novel had the return of a villain from a decade ago which is an indication of the number of the 27 novels in this series, of which this is number 25 and not considered the best. For me personally the fact that one central character's situation was unresolved (book 27 has the answer) was very frustrating and for others whether or not one death was murder or not.

Our next meeting is 9th June and the novel, another diverse choice, 'A Rising Man' by Abir Mukherjee.

Sue Rowarth

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### Dragon Boat Festival at Salford Quays 17-18 June

Salford Quays has been holding a Dragon boat race since 2012. As well as the races there are the traditional dragon and lion dances and music.

The Dragon Boat Festival is a traditional Chinese holiday which falls on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. In 2023, the Dragon Boat Festival falls on June 22. Many believe that Dragon Boat Festival is celebrated to commemorate the death of Qu Yuan, a famous Chinese poet, and minister known for his patriotism and contributions to classical poetry, who eventually became a national hero. Sticky rice dumplings, zongzi (粽子/dzong-dzuh/) are the traditional Dragon Boat Festival food.



## HISTORY

Brian Taylor spoke about traditional dance in Ireland.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Ireland was basically an impoverished agrarian society with families renting a strip of land from the mainly English landowners which they cultivated for their own needs. There was little time for leisure but there were itinerant musicians who played the fiddle to accompany dances. These events were held out of doors in churchyards or at crossroads.

Following the potato famine in the 1840s the population dropped by two and a half million. The traditional way of life could no longer continue, and eventually arable farming was introduced. With the Industrial Revolution more musical instruments were available such as the concertina and the melodeon which were cheap to buy and easy to play. Of particular interest were the pipes, similar to bagpipes, but these were held at the side of the body and the elbows used to pump air into them. Dances became more frequent, and more musicians and dancing masters found employment. The dances themselves came from the continent and were largely based on the quadrille. We would associate them with square dancing.

Brian illustrated his talk with music and extracts from his books.

Sheila Harrop

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## TRAVEL

IRELAND August 20–24<sup>th</sup>. Balance due at JULY meeting

RIVER CRUISE October 4–11<sup>th</sup>. Balance due no later than JUNE meeting



## DAY TRIPS

These have not been popular this year. The trips to Jodrell Bank and Port Sunlight have had to be cancelled because of lack of support.

Saturday JULY 29<sup>th</sup>. SUDELEY HOUSE and LIVERPOOL

This will be the last day trip we are organising this year.  
Contact Margaret McDermott, Ruth Smith or Sue Harlin.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Headgear.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Celebrating the coronation – Diane 8 votes
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Horses for courses – Ken 5 votes
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tiffers sale – Ken 4 votes.



Thanks everybody great photographs. I would like to welcome Mike as a new member to our group. Thank you for submitting entries at short notice. Apologies to Bryan. His email with three entries somehow didn't arrive and I only found out when it was too late.

Our next competition is Indoor games. Please contact me if you would like to join us.

Jeff Robinson



## WALKING

### Walking Group Holiday 5 – 8 May 2023. Coniston. Lake District

Eighteen people attended this 4-day walking holiday to the Lake District seeking our usual blend of mystery, suspense and adventure! We stayed at Monk Coniston Hall which is situated at the Northern end of Coniston Water and just over one mile from Coniston village.

Monk Coniston Hall, a Gothic-style property dates from the 1770's, in 1836 it was purchased by a wealthy Leeds industrialist who hugely extended and improved the property. He entertained eminent friends such as Thomas Carlyle, Adam Sedgewick, Alfred Tennyson, John Ruskin and Lewis Carrol.

Beatrix Potter purchased the entire estate in 1930 to save it from development and bequeathed the property to the National Trust and is now leased to HF Holidays. The grounds include extensive gardens, an arboretum – some trees planted in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a walled kitchen garden. One of the very large trees has a deep cavity at its base which is said to have inspired Lewis Carrol when writing Alice in Wonderland!

### MONK CONISTON



Friday 5<sup>th</sup> May: Arnside Knott, Morecombe Bay

On our journey to Coniston, we stopped at Arnside for a 4-mile coastal wall. We met at the National Trust car park on Arnside Knott, which is a wildlife-rich coastal landscape of grassland, woodland and rugged limestone pavement and provides spectacular views over Morecambe Bay and beyond.



After climbing to a panoramic viewing point, we descended through pleasant woodland to sea-level and enjoyed a picnic lunch on a pebbled beach. At the end of the coastal section of the walk we stopped at a cafe where refreshments were taken, in pleasant sunshine, the dry weather had improved as the day progressed. After a short uphill climb we returned to our vehicles to continued our onward journey to Coniston.

After checking-in to our accommodation, Monk Coniston Hall, we enjoyed a welcoming cream tea which set the tone for our stay, the friendly hardworking staff provided excellent service throughout.

### ARNSIDE KNOTT



Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May: Tarn Hows, Cumbrian Way, High Oxen Fell, Holme Fell, Yewdale, Brown Crag Farm

A dry, bright, sunny day enhanced our 7.5-mile circular walk, starting directly from Monk Coniston we passed through very pleasant woodland on a steady rising incline to Tarn Hows, one of the Lake Districts picturesque gems. After a coffee stop at a viewing point above the Tarn, we proceeded northward on the Cumbrian Way to High Oxen Fell followed by old Quarries reclaimed by nature, which provided us with a pleasant picnic lunch spot, we then followed the river along the flanks of Holme Fell, Yew Band, Raven Crag, Calf Crag to Shepards Bridge. Across flat fields through Yewdale onward to Boon Crag Farm and back to Monk Coniston.

After dinner, on this Coronation day, our evening entertainment included Royal Quiz, aided and abetted by our all-inclusive drinks package!

## TARN HOWS



Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May: Coniston, Wild Cat Island Cruise/Ferry, Coniston Water, Sunny Bank, Coniston Shore.

Another bright sunny day starting direct from house on a pleasant walk to Coniston jetty to catch the ferry to Sunny Bank, situated at the South end of Coniston Water, to join the picturesque shore-side path back to Coniston village and then the home stretch back to Monk Coniston. On the way back to Monk Coniston we happened upon 3 black Herdwick lambs on the wrong side of a gate, they found it easy to escape from the field but clueless at getting back! After a bit of a performance and a couple of rugby tackles, we managed to reunite them with their anxious mothers.

It's worth a mention, whilst in Coniston village on the way back, we all had a welcome sit down and our athletic superman member, Rick Hedley, decided to have an impromptu go at The Old Man of Coniston, knowing the weather window for some of us to attempt a quick ascent the next day, was not going to be feasible with bad weather and a low cloud base. Rick made it to the top and back in a remarkable 3 hours!

After dinner entertainment included a "Coronation" wildflower seed sowing session and an international mountain slide show.



## CONISTON WATER



Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May: Little Langdale and Cathedral Quarry  
Alas, our luck with the weather changed to full on wet! Everyone did their own thing and the few that had intended an attempt on The Old Man of Coniston settled for a shorter walk to Little Langdale to visit Cathedral Quarry, a legacy from the slate industry, it is a massive hole in the ground that has to be seen to be believed!

## CATHEDRAL QUARRY





To summarise, our friendly group had a fantastic 4-days away, blessed with great weather for walking (except Monday). We saw and did many things, it felt that we had been away much longer than the time we had, all etched within our minds, coupled with our usual blend of mystery, suspense and adventure!

David Burke

### **Walking Group Report for 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

On a perfectly sunny morning 18 walkers set off for Ashford in the Water in the White Peak district. We met at the "sheep wash bridge" a scheduled monument on the river Wye. The 12<sup>th</sup> century village of Ashford grew up at the fording point of the river where ash trees grew and hence the name which is mentioned in the Domesday Book.

The first part of the walk was through the village, then passing the old waterpower Corn Mill dated from 1086. We followed the river as it meandered through lush meadows looking at the hillside above until we came to "Ashford Lake" where we had our coffee stop. The river had been changed just past here with dams, embankments mill ponds and weirs for powering the cotton mill below.

Next stage we reached Lumford Mill a former cotton mill built by Richard Arkwright in 1777 and managed by his son Richard Arkwright junior. Merlyn gave a detailed mill history and further told of the industrial history of Ashford, woollen mills, corn mill, lead mining, lime kills, Black Marble mines and water powered mill for finishing the marble, comb mills old grand Halls and now it's mostly tourists.



We left the river behind at the end of the Lumford cottages and headed upwards past Holme Hall a large stone-built hall from 1627 which is grade 1 listed. Behind the hall we saw old stone working equipment possibly associated with Holme Hall "chert" quarry and mine just ahead. The wide grassy path climbed very steadily up past the many fields covered in an abundance of grass, buttercups and many wildflowers identified by some of walkers on a google picture App.



A leisurely picnic lunch was taken near the top of this path amid glorious views to Hassop, Curbar Edge, and Calver and nearby Great Longstone.

Refreshed we continued downhill passing fields of many cows with their young calves also enjoying the new pasture and sunshine. Shortly joining the Monsal trail for about 15 mins before leaving for our route through the Churchdale Estate back to Ashford in the Water. This estate, land, lodge, farm and grand hall date from 1550 built for Henry Neville the earl of Westmoreland and subsequently purchased by the Duke of Devonshire.

Arriving back at exactly 3pm as predicted the grouped thanked Merlyn and Joyce for a great walk.

Merlyn and Joyce Young



## NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR JUNE

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>

5 June	Driving tips to save money and the planet – from IAM Roadsmart
8 June	Expedition cruising
14 June	Family history: Parish registers
16 June	Leo the world's first business computer
22 June	Van Gogh
26 June	Adapting to climate change

### Codebreakers of Bletchley Park

This very interesting presentation was given by Leigh Edwards from East Devon u3a. He talked about the establishment of Station X at Bletchley Park in 1938 when the threat of war was escalating. The mansion was the home of the family of the financier and Liberal MP, Sir Samuel Herbert Leon until 1937. Station X was not actually in the mansion house but was housed in a number of sheds and huts in the grounds. They had very few machines at the start, but some 6,000 messages needed to be processed every day. We learnt a lot about the Enigma and Lorenz ciphers and the machines that were built to decode messages using these ciphers, and the need for the machines to be continually developed and updated to keep up as more advanced ciphers were used. We also learnt about the amazing work that was done by the people who designed and built these complex machines. It wasn't until 1944 that we had the first Colossus computer which greatly speeded up the decoding of messages.



It is thought that the operation at Bletchley Park shortened the war by at least two years so saved many millions of lives. After the war, operations were taken into GCHQ although Churchill ordered the destruction of all the machines. The restoration of Bletchley started in the early 90s and it is now open to the public. The separate National Museum of Computing is also on the site.

Diane Saxon

## u3a Poetry Competition

There were over 600 entries to the competition. 'Home' by Ikley and District u3a member Jo was picked as the winning poem. It explores the climate crisis and judges were impressed by the beautiful writing, strong message and powerful final line. Sidmouth u3a member Philip came in second place with his poem, 'A Clamour of Rooks' whilst Sandbach u3a member Kathryn finished third with 'A Letter from Kharkiv'. This is the winning poem.

### Home

When I walked to get the Saturday paper I found  
a nest blown out of the hedge by last night's gale  
lying there small but undamaged on the path.  
The paper had a Cop 27 special. On the front page  
was the earth seen from space with its cloud wisps  
circling soft white over the blue of its roundness.  
The nest so circular too, wispy sheep's wool woven  
into the complexity of its making, swirling round it,  
and smoothing that cup for eggs just two inches wide.  
Last chance the caption for the earth picture. How come  
its most evolved creatures are so destructive, so blind  
to the balance, the delicate circularity of its systems?  
We of the fiddling fingers, clever opposable thumbs,  
who, given the hundreds of items for a goldfinches' nest,  
and a hundred years, could no more have constructed  
this circular cradle than we could spin straw into gold.

The top ten poems can be read on the u3a learning pages.

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## u3a 2023 Short Story Competition

The u3a national short story competition is still open for entries. The theme for this year's competition is: 'Decision(s)'.

Your story must be your own, individual, original work, in English, a maximum of 1500 words, and not submitted anywhere else. The form to upload your entry is available here [u3a - Short Story Competition 2023](#). Entries need to be submitted via the online form to be accepted. The deadline for submission is 12 noon on Monday 26 June 2023.

Happy writing!



## BRIDGE CORNER

Margaret McDermott found this snippet in the Sunday Times editorial section 14 May 2023. Unfortunately, the editorial didn't give the title or author of the book! If anyone can find it, please let the Editor know. Our u3a has three bridge groups. While our play is perhaps not as cut-throat as suggested here, we enjoy our more relaxed bridge sessions and would welcome new players. Please contact the group leaders for more information.

### New tricks

Bridge has a trick up its sleeve. As we report today, the game that is seen as the preserve of elderly middle England – all sips of sherry, coffee evenings and twin sets and pearls – is bidding for the youth market. Young women especially are being drawn to it, and a new novel is seeking to do for bridge what *The Queen's Gambit* did for chess.

We suspect it will succeed. Because bridge has never really been the serene pastime its image would suggest. Beneath

the drawing-room courtesy, every rubber is a vicious, Darwinian struggle for supremacy – intellectual rather than physical, but no less passionate and compelling for that. It is boxing for the bourgeoisie.

This fine game would lose nothing by expanding its appeal. We look forward to diamond-themed streetwear, club-themed nightclubs and grand slams on TikTok. And if existing devotees grumble about the arrivistes – well, that's ruff.

### Hints for opening leads

(adapted from Paul Mendelson, *The right way to play bridge*)

#### Against a suit contract

1. Top of a sequence – this tells partner you have at least the next card in the sequence
2. Partner's suit if they have bid
3. A low card to show an honour in the suit. A high card shows no strength in the suit.
4. Passive leads can be useful and won't lose you a trick. Lead the middle card. Middle up down (MUD)

Things to avoid

1. Leading away from an Ace. Find another suit.
2. Leading an unsupported Ace. This just enables declarer to get rid of small cards. Save the ace to catch one of his honours.
3. Leading from a doubleton that contains an honour. If you have to lead from a doubleton, lead the higher of the two cards. This will tell your partner you are out of that suit.
4. Leading a singleton trump – this gives away too much information and might spoil partner's trump holding.

#### Against a no-trump contract

1. Top of a sequence of at least three cards containing at least one honour
2. 4th highest from your longest and strongest suit

Note – You can lead away from an Ace.

## And finally ....

Thanks to Pam Nelson who found this in a Church magazine. Can you read it?

### The phenomenal power of the human mind

I cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid!

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it deosn't mttar inwaht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoatnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat ltteer be in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Amzanig huh?

Yaeh, and I awlyas thought slpeling was ipmorantt.

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## One-liners

"I'd like to start with the chimney jokes – I've got a stack of them. The first one is on the house." – Tim Vine

I'm friends with 25 letters of the alphabet. I don't know why.

Where are average things manufactured? The satisfactory.

I was wondering, why does a frisbee appear larger the closer it gets? Then it hit me.

Just received a card full of rice. It's from Uncle Ben.

I didn't know my dad was a construction site thief, but when I got home all the signs were there.

"Exit signs? They're on the way out!" – Tim Vine

Why can't you explain puns to kleptomaniacs? They always take things literally.

A man tells his doctor, "Help me. I'm addicted to Twitter!" The doctor replies, "Sorry, I'm not following you."

"Years ago I used to supply Filofaxes for the mafia. I was involved in very organised crime." – Milton Jones

"I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day, but I couldn't find any." – Tommy Cooper

I waited and stayed up all night and tried to figure out where the sun was. Then it dawned on me.