

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

March 2026



Inside this month

From the Editor

From the Chair

AGM

u3a Survey

u3aMatters magazine

Group activities

Northwest regional Summer School

u3a National events

St David's Day

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the March 2026 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions. The cover photo this time shows members and friends enjoying the recent very successful Art exhibition organised by the Art group. I hope you managed to attend.

In this edition, we have a report of the recent Travel group holiday to Potters resort plus reports of other group activities and some good news about churches and pubs. The Northwest summer school takes place at Manchester Metropolitan University in August; there is more detail about this on page 17. There is also a good range of national online learning events this month, many of which look very interesting. A selection of these is listed on page 18.

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.

Most of our members have already renewed their membership and we look forward to seeing you at our social events and group activities over the year. We are pleased to have several new members again this month. We welcome you to our u3a and look forward to meeting you at our meetings and interest groups. Your contributions to the newsletter will be very welcome.

This edition of the newsletter is accompanied by the updated Groups contact list for 2026. This contains contact details for the Committee and interest group leaders plus the programme of monthly meetings. **Please keep this safe as it is only issued once per year.**

Also attached to the email is the National Office bitesize newsletter for February. You can read the full newsletter [here](#). This has reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country.

The next issue of our newsletter will be April 2026 so please send your contributions to me by 30th March 2026 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

FROM THE CHAIR

March already.

Thanks to everyone who came to the AGM. It was very well attended. Can I just remind everyone that your membership is due for renewal for 2026/2027. If you haven't renewed, then you are not covered by our insurance if anything should happen at one of our events you are attending. For those of you at the AGM, thank you for voting the committee to carry on. The only change in the committee was André who stood down due to ill health, and we welcomed a new committee member Mike Counsell. I would just like to thank André for all his hard work he has put in over the years, and I am sure Mike will be a big asset to the committee.

There are a few things planned for this year including the annual lunch, a quiz and a couple of holidays along with other ideas.

Please don't forget if you have not renewed your membership it needs to be done. Thanks to everyone who has renewed.

Paul (Chair)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM took place on Wednesday 11th February and it was well attended. Paul gave his report on the events of the previous year, followed by the usual entertaining financial update from Les. There followed reports from all the group leaders either in person or by proxy.

The officers remain the same for the next year. Sadly, André Lister has decided to resign from the committee, and, in his absence, he was thanked for his hard work and commitment over many years. We are pleased to welcome Mike Counsell to the committee.

It was agreed that all the committee members could be proposed and seconded by the members present at the meeting. This would remove the necessity of each individual member having to procure their own proposer and seconder.

Sue Harlin, our almoner, sadly reported several deaths in the last few weeks. She stressed that communication with her was imperative if sympathy cards or support was needed. The meeting closed at approximately 3.15.

Kath Wareham

u3a SURVEY 2026

u3a and me: Belonging, learning and getting involved

The Third Age Trust is inviting u3a members to take part in a national u3a survey that explores what u3a means to them and how being part of u3a has impacted their lives. This survey is open to **all u3a members** so please take a moment to complete the survey. It is a great opportunity for members to share their experiences and support their u3a to thrive into the future. The feedback will be used to grow membership, demonstrate the impact of u3a and raise our profile.

You can sign into the survey on the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/u3a-me>

To thank members for their time, they will be entered in a John Lewis £100 prize draw. The survey closes on 31 March.

Thank you for your support.

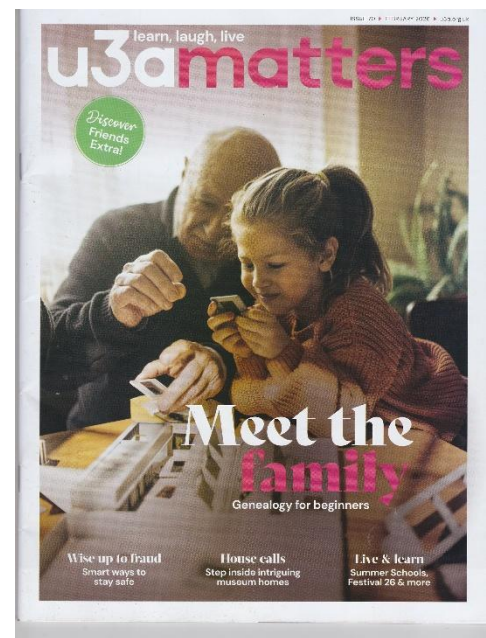
Gill Russell and David Blanchflower

u3a Council Representatives NW Region

u3amatters magazine

Subscribers to the magazine will recently have received the February edition. There is an article about starting to research your family tree – something that members of Sue's Family History group are already doing. There are also articles on avoiding fraud, some recipes, holiday and travel insurance offers, information about national u3a activities, messages from the Chair, plus reports of u3a activities across the country. In the Puzzles section, there are crosswords, hints for bridge players, sudoku and maths puzzles.

At £4 for the next five editions, posted to your door, this is pretty good value. If you would like to subscribe, please contact the membership secretary via membershipsecretary@highlaneu3a.org.uk



There is also a shortened online version available on the [u3a website here](#).

GROUP NEWS

ART

The Annual Art Group Exhibition took place on 14th February and was once again well attended. Thank you to everyone who came to support us.



There was some fabulous artwork on display and it's always a surprise for the group to see everyone else's work finished and framed as we don't always see the finished pieces. Although we treat it as a celebration of our work, we do hope to make some sales and this year about 15 paintings were sold.

We use the funds we raise to pay for visiting Artists which I've highlighted in previous newsletters but in February we had a demonstration (rather than a workshop) by Rob Wilson from Whaley Bridge. He uses multimedia to create abstract scenes of local places. We were all very impressed and enjoyed just sitting back and watching for a change.



Madeleine Hennessy

CHURCHES AND PUBS

The first visit for Churches and Pubs will be the first Wednesday in June. Names will be taken at the April meeting.

Paul

GARDENING

Spring is about to start, so the gardening group will be meeting soon to discuss a 2026 programme. Meanwhile a few pictures of February Garden flowers, to show how plants are already starting up.



Also, Torkington Park has a good display of snowdrops, that most people miss.

Walter Mason

CURRENT AFFAIRS

At the February meeting we discussed several topics.

The first topic was about Andrew Mountbatten and what the news is saying about him.

1. We talked about his privileged position and background that helped him gain the role of Special Representative for International Trade and Investment in the UK.
2. World news coverage when he was arrested for suspicion of misconduct in public office. Did we think there was too much coverage?
3. Would he be treated like everyone else when he was being questioned?
4. Was he really the late queen's favourite?
5. Removing his royal titles and the possibility of removing any succession to the throne.
6. The link to Epstein, the files and had the abused girls been forgotten about?

We moved on to talk about the environment and dumping rubbish.

Then Russia

1. Is Russia the United Kingdom's greatest enemy?
2. Reporters in Russia and are they watched closely and is it dangerous for them?
3. Are we moving closer to the EU because of Russia and defence?
4. Can Europe survive without America if we had to?

NHS

Is the NHS operating under great pressure and not providing the service it should?
The NHS app and mistakes. Doctors at our local surgery not always available.

Briefly

Manchester United and Jim Radcliffe's comments on immigration.
The A6 and the usual congestion.

An interesting and pleasant afternoon with tea and cakes.

Betty Smith

CRIME FICTION READING

Our book for February was *Next in Line* by Jeffrey Archer. This book is the fifth in his William Warwick series. The action is in London in 1988.

There are three intertwining themes in the book. The first develops an ongoing plot in the Warwick series related to the exploits of Miles Faulkner, a dodgy art-dealer/collector who continually tries to incriminate Warwick, and Faulkner's even more dodgy lawyer, Booth-Watson. Faulkner is currently being held in Belmarsh prison. Faulkner's estranged wife Christine is never far from the action, determined to get her share of the spoils.

In the second theme MI6 is concerned about corruption in the Royal Protection Command and DCI Warwick's team is charged with investigating. This is the era when Diana, Princess of Wales, was regularly hounded by the paparazzi. One of DCI Warwick's team is given a key role as Diana's close protection officer.

A third plot relates to a Libyan terrorist coincidentally being held in Belmarsh prison. Diana enters a liaison with a Saudi businessman whom Ross considers suspicious, justified when Diana is invited to stay on his yacht and becomes a hostage of the terrorist organisation. Faulkner learns about the terrorist plan, and, with some remission of his sentence, warns Warwick that a major incident is planned. A subsequent lightning rescue mission succeeds in freeing the princess and her companion.

This book was mostly favourably received. All agreed it is an easy read and that Archer is a good storyteller. Some thought that the plots running alongside each other throughout the book was a bit distracting and perhaps too much.

Our book for March is *On Beulah Height* by Reginald Hill, published in 1998, the sixteenth in the long running series of Dalziel and Pascoe books, some of which were televised by the BBC. As well as the Dalziel and Pascoe series, Hill also wrote many stand-alone novels.

We have space for a few more members. Our normal meeting time is 10.30am on the second Friday of the month. We discuss our book of the month then break for coffee and cake and a chat while we select a new book to read from suggestions made by members of the group.

Please do get in touch if you are interested in joining us.

Diane Saxon

HISTORY

This month's presentation was given by the undersigned and focussed on the short life of pioneer aviator, Amelia Earhart, who was born in Atchison City, Kansas, USA; in 1897. She made her first flight in 1920, in Long Beach, Los Angeles – it cost US\$10 – about \$150 today. The experience changed her life, and she resolved to devote her life to flying. She immediately booked a course of lessons, which cost her \$1,000! She bought a yellow biplane in mid-1921, which she nicknamed 'The Canary'. She also bought the leather flying jacket, which was to become synonymous with her later photos. A little over a year later, on October 22, 1922, she flew to 14,000 feet, a world record for a female pilot. This was even before she acquired her pilot's licence on May 16th, 1923 – the 16th female pilot in the USA. However, the depression and family problems caused Amelia to quit flying and sell the Canary.



She moved with her mother to Boston but retained her interest in flying. In May 1932, Amelia made a solo flight aiming for Paris to emulate Charles Lindbergh's 1927 flight; unfortunately, bad weather meant that she ended in a farmer's field, in Northern Ireland – but she had become the first woman to fly a plane across the Atlantic Ocean. In 1935, Amelia became the first person to fly from Honolulu to USA (Oakland), Los Angeles to Mexico City and Mexico City to New York. In total, between 1930 and 1935, Amelia set seven women's speed and distance records. She also married her publicist, George P. Putnam, with the couple moving to Los Angeles, where Amelia started planning for her most ambitious venture – a round-the-world-flight! She purchased a twin-engined Lockheed Elektra, heavily modified with extra fuel tanks and radio equipment and departed on June 1st, 1937, heading for Puerto Rico. They took off from New Guinea on July 2nd for Howland Island – a near 2,500 mile flight to the island, only a mile and a quarter long. A U.S. Coast Guard cutter was stationed near the island to provide voice and radio direction finding communications, but contact was lost with the aircraft. An hour after the last contact, and with the aircraft's fuel calculated at a low level, the cutter started to search around Howland Island, joined by detachments from the U.S. Navy. The search was called off on July 19th, with no trace of the plane or its occupants. So ended the short but intensive life of Amelia Earhart. However, interest in her exploits remains high today, through books, films and TV programmes. Hardly a year passes before a new theory on her disappearance is advanced and a new search made – as yet, to no avail!

Do you have an interest in history? If so, why not come along to the group. If you have some particular interest, you will be welcome to make a presentation!

Barry Taylor

MEMOIRS

Meeting 3rd February 2026

We welcomed another member this session.

We had stories of various jobs that one member had. Helping / running the Village Hall playgroup, helping at Lyme, then doing an RSA typing and bookkeeping course which resulted in a job at the finance department at Stepping Hill Hospital for 13 years.

A husband who was not at home for Christmas 1983 and 1984 due to his work commitments abroad. In 1983 and 1984 he was working on a project in Saudi Arabia for a new hospital which was to be built in Buraidah. We were shown photos of the project which looked very modern. Christmas was not recognised or celebrated and was historically banned in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Annual New Year's Eve parties. The husband making a black forest gateau one year and then they had fancy dress parties and another year they had a quiz, Guess the adverts. All very entertaining regarding the types of fancy dress.

A story of life at Swansea University where the German department was in stables. The renowned professor would not allow his students to take notes, but he had great charisma. He organised a cultural exchange and the lady was able to survive on £5 a week.

We laughed a lot at the poem written by a male member who had organised his own funeral. His choice of songs to be played was hilarious.

Lastly there were extracts from a cruise diary. Highlights were Venice and Albania.

Next meeting is Tuesday 3rd March at 2pm in the small hall.

Quote for the month

A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles. — Tim Cahill

Barbara Kenneth

PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Weird and wonderful.

1st ... Cosy resting place ...8 points, Barbara

2nd ... jointly shared with 7 points each ... One eyed Buddha ...Mark

Beach Debris ... Ken

Gaudi Chimneys ... Mark

Fancy trishaw ... Ken

3rd ...Dots everywhere ... 5 points ... Diane

Well done all. We have a selection of the (copyright free) winning photographs here.



Next month's topic is UMBRELLAS. Entries by MARCH 12th please.

The rest of the topics for this year, in monthly order are, BRIDGES, GRAFFITI, PLACES OF WORSHIP, SHADOWS, BOATS, STOCKPORT, AUTUMN, ANIMALS, CELEBRATIONS. So, when you are out and about, have these in mind and snap away when you see something topical.

Ken Jackson



QUIZZING

It was my turn to set the quiz this month. We had rounds of associations, numbers, answers beginning with M, Arts and books, USA, Music, Science followed by Music, General Knowledge, and much more.

Here are a few for you to try:

1. Which planet is orbited by Phobos and Deimos?
2. How many MPs are in the Commons?
3. What do Americans mean by Hood and Trunk?
4. Where is Eel Pie island?
5. Who sang about 'ice cream castles in the air'?
6. Who has taken over from Prue Lief on Bake off

Know the answers? Fancy challenging yourself with us? New quizzers are very welcome. More members would be useful to help us build our teams. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. Meetings always have a relaxed and sociable environment. You can be assured of a friendly welcome.

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

Diane Saxon

READING

The Boy at the Top of the Mountain by John Boyne published in 2015

This book's theme is about influencing young people. The story is set in the early 1930s where a little boy, Pierrot, lives in Paris, his father is German and his mother French. When Pierrot is orphaned, he initially is sent to an orphanage but then an aunt decides to take him in, but the aunt is the housekeeper at the Berghof which is Hitler's retreat in Austria and he becomes impressed with power and control. Pierrot is so impressed with Hitler that he thinks Hitler can do no wrong the consequences of which are tragic.

Pam Curley

TRAVEL



May 3 rd	High Clere Castle (Downton Abbey) 3 nights at Orida Hotel Newbury. BALANCE at MARCH meeting.
May 15 th	Day trip to Well Dressing and visit to Bakewell
June 29 th	Cumbria and Lake District. 4 nights at Damson Dene Hotel Bowness. BALANCE at MARCH/APRIL meeting.
July 17 th	Cruise from Liverpool. 8 nights Ireland and Scotland. Fred Olsen Bolette. Cabins still available
August 31 st	Warners, Cricket St. Thomas

Margaret McDermott

TRAVEL GROUP VISIT TO POTTERS FIVE LAKES, COLCHESTER

New to our travel group holidays, in January 2026, whilst in the depths of winter and cold wet weather we decided to try a holiday with a difference. Ellen Smiths, the tour operator, suggested we try Potter’s Five Lakes, an all-inclusive resort in Colchester, Essex. This proved to be an excellent choice, despite inclement weather, we had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

MONDAY 26TH January

Our coach departed Alderdale Drive at 9.30am with 20 members of our u3a and took the short journey to New Mills where we picked up six members of New Mills u3a. We proceeded on the journey to Colchester stopping twice for coffee and luncheon breaks.

TUESDAY 27TH JANUARY MORNING

A wet Tuesday morning was not a promising start to our visit to Maldon but, for those prepared to brave the rain, Maldon offered plenty of interest. Situated on the Blackwater Estuary and surrounded by saltmarsh, mudflats and nature reserves, Maldon is famous worldwide for its salt and its oysters. Driver Richard dropped us off on the High Street and, resisting the temptation of the coffee shops, we set off downhill heading for Hythe Quay. Unfortunately, on arrival, the tide was out so there was lots of mud around but the two red sailed Thames barges – Centaur and Pudge, were both moored there.

A walk along the riverside brought us to a row of beach huts and the fine statue of Bryhtnoth, heroic defender against the invading Vikings in 991 AD.



Maldon boasts two outstanding Churches- St Mary the Virgin (the Fisherman's Church) and on the High Street, All Saints with its unique triangular tower. Joseph Billio was a zealous Minister and noted for his powerful sermons, hence the term "Going like Billio". Somewhere in the vaults of All Saints lie the remains of Edward Bright who, when he died in 1750, was reputedly the "Fattest Man in the World", weighing over 40 stone. Lots of other interesting buildings, mainly Georgian, along the High Street but sadly our time in Maldon was coming to an end as Richard was waiting with the coach to take us back to Potters.

Steve Reynolds

We had free time in the afternoon to familiarise ourselves with the resort. Some of us had forty winks!!

WEDNESDAY 28TH JANUARY MORNING

In a half day visit to Colchester we were able to take advantage of the half price entry fee to the Castle, the largest Norman Keep in Europe. It was built in the 11th Century on the foundations of the Roman Temple of Claudius. Today it houses many archaeological collections covering over 2,000 years of history. There were also interactive displays including a visit to the prison cells in the Castle Dungeons showing ghostly, atmospheric videos of the harsh conditions and treatment of prisoners during the English Civil War and also during the 17th Century witch trials.

My visit coincided with that of a group of very enthusiastic school children who were visiting the Mythical Creatures Exhibition learning about the folklore and legends of Medieval time. After a most enjoyable and educational visit it was time to return to the hotel for lunch.

Ann Daniels

AFTERNOON

We took the short journey to the village of Tiptree famous for its jam making company. The family run business, Wilkin and Son, utilises the village name to brand their iconic products. At their small, well laid out museum, we learned about the origins of the jam making process and industry. Wilkins were the first company to produce jam made from their own strawberries (Little Scarlet), a 1lb jar costing 7½d in 1866.



Resisting the delights of the tearoom, very popular with local people, we walked to the inevitable shop selling their jams and preserves. After making our purchases we took the short journey back to our hotel to relax, some making for one of the lounges to order afternoon tea or something stronger, making the most of our all inclusive package, before our evening meal and excellent entertainment.

Sue Harlin

THURSDAY 29TH JANUARY

Today we stayed in and around our holiday resort. We could do as much or as little as we fancied. There were varied activities throughout the day, here is a taste of one day's programme. Starting at 10am archery, air rifle shooting, nature walk, yoga, quizzes, bingo, dance class, shuffleboard competition, backstage tour of the theatre, Scalextric trial competition, sand art crafts, singing class and snooker competition. There was something for everyone, I nearly forgot the swimming pool, leisure centre and gym all included for our use.

The sports hall was huge, I counted at least four snooker tables, four pool tables, 10 dart boards, two indoor bowls lanes, table tennis, tennis, badminton, curling, three shuffleboard tables, a dance studio and Scalextric layout, even a corner of the hall where there was a selection of 'silly games'.

We certainly had plenty to do in between breakfast, lunch and evening meals, there was also a late-night buffet for those who were a little peckish!! The food was excellent; a good variety of first-class fresh food served with a choice of wine at our lunch and evening meals.



A young chap trying to teach old dogs new tricks!!!!

FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY

After breakfast we set off on our long journey home stopping briefly at Cambridge services and on to the town of Alfreton for our lunch stop. We arrived home late afternoon after a brilliant few days, the weather hadn't been kind to us but January in England our expectations hadn't been high. The countryside in Essex was waterlogged I think they had more rain than Manchester!!

I hope you all enjoyed seeing an overview of our holiday.

Sue Harlin

SHORT WALKS

High Lane U3A Short Walks Group – 21 February 2026

What a surprise the group of 14 folk had as we set off from Dobbies Car Park on a dull morning, first finding the giant ladybird made of bottle tops and plastic chocolate boxes and secondly sunshine.

From Dobbies Car Park a short walk along the main road took us to Chadkirk Country Estate as we walked by the stream there was a faint light in the sky. A brief stop at Chadkirk Chapel and an uphill road walk took us to and along the canal from there a turn off through woods which was lit by, yes, sunlight.

Down many steps out of the wood to our 'snack stop' (group photo). Crossing over the Goyt river via the blue bridge onto a tarmac lane (no mud!) then turning off right, through woodland, steps again, which took the group through a kissing gate across a field, over a stile (easy) and back to Dobbies Car Park.

The under 4-mile walk was led by Agnes – THANK YOU for a great winter walk.

Ruth Smith



WALKING

25/02/2026 Marple - Marple Locks - Aqueduct - Chadkirk - Peak Forest Canal

With more than a hint of spring in the air a group of 24 walkers set off from All Saints' Church in Marple for a 6-mile walk. Following tracks alongside the Peak Forest Canal and noticing evidence of Samuel Oldknow's influence in the area we reached the aqueduct and viaduct in Marple.



Continuing along the canal side we walked over the tunnel, and further along the canal until we reached the woods through which we descended to Chadkirk Chapel. Plenty of seats made it a most satisfactory lunch stop but then a volunteer opened the chapel for us, provided drinks and gave us a most interesting and enthusiastic talk about the history of the area, including St Chad.



Passing St Chad's Well we then climbed back up to the canal and followed the flight of 16 locks back to the church -and the pub!

A very enjoyable day - enhanced by the weather.

Shelagh Stokes

NORTH WEST REGION SUMMER SCHOOL August 2026

North West Region of U3As



Registered Charity No: 1159091

invite applications for the 2026 Summer School

Residential Summer School Tues 11th August – Friday 14th August At Manchester Metropolitan University, M15 6GX

The Metropolitan University is located in the centre of Manchester and less than 20 minutes' walk from Oxford Road Railway Station. The campus has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access. There will be a quiz on the first evening and a "Gala Dinner" on the third and final evening. Speakers will also attend on the second and third evening.

Full Board Residential Delegate: £430. (+£15 car parking charge if applicable;) We include full board for 3 nights, including dinner on 11th August, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 12th August, breakfast, lunch and gala dinner on 13th August, and breakfast on 14th August. Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215 (+£15 car parking charge if applicable) includes lunches, teas and coffees, excludes breakfast daily and dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday but does include the gala dinner on 13th August. Accommodation is available nearby in the Manchester city centre.

An Application form (**available online at north west region.u3asite.uk**) must be completed by post or email, Payment can be either by bank transfer (North West Region of U3A's, Lloyds Bank sort code 30-90-16, account 00197002 quoting name and post code) or by cheque (payable to North West Region of U3A's)

£100 DEPOSIT (£50 non residents) PAYABLE UPON APPLICATION; BALANCE BY 11 MAY 2026

queries should be directed to Alan Hough or Neill Stewart at

alanhough1949@gmail.com; neillstewart.uk@icloud.com

Post to 8 Salwick Close, Wigan, Gtr Manchester. WN3 6RE

The 8 courses on offer are:-

Archaeology Explorers

Making sense of everyday Mathematics

An Introduction to Geology

Photography - Beyond the Snapshot

Art challenges - the history of colour

The UK and USA Political Scenes

Operatunity – opera appreciation

Intermediary Ukulele

Full course synopses available separately (and on north west site).

National Office Learning Events for March

There is a particularly good range of topics this month – and some are already showing as nearly full. This is a just a selection. I advise booking without delay if there are some one you wish to attend.

- 3 Mar The new space race
- 5 Mar Beyond the beam: what we do with lasers
- 6 Mar Novel writing with Jenny Newman
- 10 Mar Spring-clean your vitality with qigong
- 11 Mar The evolution of AI and our changing world
- 11 Mar Empress Matilda: the first queen England never had
- 20 Mar The Truth in Ten: the climate crisis and some solutions
- 24 Mar The cancer research revolution and reasons for optimism

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

WHO WAS ST DAVID?

March 1st is St David 's day. Not a lot is known for sure about St David. From medieval writings, it is thought he was born around 500AD in in Cardiganshire. He was a monk and teacher and founded many monasteries in Wales and wider. He was a vegetarian and it is said he lived on leeks and water!

He was made an archbishop in Jerusalem and on returning to Wales, established the St David's religious community in Pembrokeshire. He was also said to have performed miracles including levitating himself so he could be seen while preaching. St David's day celebrates his death in 589AD.

Each year there are parades in Cardiff and other towns in Wales, people dress in traditional costumes and wear daffodils and leeks.

Disneyland Paris has a St. David's Welsh Weekend. Mickey and Minnie dress in Welsh costumes and visitors can enjoy music, performances, and a fireworks show.

