

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

March 2023



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the March 2023 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Thanks to all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions. The cover photo this time displays some of the work on show at the recent very successful Art exhibition organised by the Art group. I hope you managed to attend.

We have a number of reports of group activities and some good news about churches and pubs plus information about forthcoming holidays and visits.

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. 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. 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 2023 so please send your contributions to me by 31st March 2023 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your membership renewal was due in February. So far, a quite a few existing members haven't renewed their membership. If you have not yet renewed, there is a renewal form available on the website [here](#).

The membership fee for 2023 is £8 or £11.50 if you also wish to order the Third Age Magazine which is posted to you. The magazine fee covers the next five editions. Full of articles and items in interest – and very good value.

FROM THE CHAIR

Our last meeting was the AGM. A big thanks to all who attended and all group leaders who submitted a report. It was a good turnout. All committee members agreed to stay on which was just as well because we did not have any new nominations. We are always looking for help with different aspects, new groups, helping and organizing different functions. Anyone interested just speak to a committee member.

I would also like to say, on behalf of the committee, a big thank you to Walter who has stepped down from running the gardening group. I am not sure how many years he has been doing it, but it is a long time. Thanks Walter. The u3a cannot run without people like Walter or Brian from table tennis. Thanks again to you both.

We have the murder mystery to look forward to in a couple of weeks. This will start promptly to fit in with supper. There is also a cheese and wine evening on the 26th of May in the village hall. A glass of fizz on arrival and then three whites and three reds to taste plus plenty of cheese and biscuits. It will be presented by an expert wine presenter. An evening not to be missed. The tickets will be on sale at the MARCH meeting. Price £15. We are also planning an annual lunch. More updates next month.

Thanks again to everyone who attended the AGM.

Paul Kenneth
Chair



MURDER MYSTERY EVENING

The event takes place at the Village Hall on Friday, 10th March, starting at 7pm. Please arrive for 6.45 so we can make a prompt start. The play action takes place in an amateur dramatics theatre, where one of the characters meets a sticky end. You will be tasked with solving the mystery and identifying the person or persons who committed the evil deed.

We have very few tickets left. To get yours, please contact André.

BE CAREFUL WITH EMAIL

There are a few strange emails floating around in our u3a community. I have seen some with a subject saying something like 'you will want to see these pics'. These are spam and may contain dangerous links. The usual advice applies. If you get an email that looks odd, even if it appears to come from someone you know, just delete it without opening any links.

Message from the Village Hall Management Committee

Two incidents occurred recently which have caused concern.

A key was lost, fortunately found in the park and returned, but it had a tag attached with all the hall security codes on. PLEASE, if you hold a key, make sure there is no reference to the hall and no codes attached.

The second, potentially more serious incident was caused by two people exiting the Hall let two lads in to use the toilets but went on their way without seeing the lads out. This resulted in the lads being locked in the hall where they broke a window in the gents' toilets trying to get out, even though there was a list of emergency phone numbers on the noticeboard. Fortunately, the Chairman called at the hall to switch off lights and was shocked to find these two lads in the lobby area saying they were locked in. This has been reported to the Police as the broken window is regarded as criminal damage. The window has been replaced.

Ideally the public are not allowed in the building unless it's a public event, but it is appreciated that there will be exceptions.

PLEASE If you feel obliged to allow uninvited people in to use the toilets, make sure you see them off the premises yourself or alert another person to do this.

These measures are important for the safety of the hall and its users so PLEASE look after the hall and yourselves.

Thank you.

Mike Morton
Chairman

FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 8th March

Our speaker is James Ellson whose topic is "Living Sustainably is it really possible". On his retirement James and his wife bought a small holding in Hayfield with an orchard and bees and practised "The Good Life". He is an experienced speaker and author.

Wednesday 12th April 12

Our speaker is Barry Daykin whose talk is entitled "From Food Rationing to Les Mis" Barry has been a professional musician since 1954 with experience in military bands through to playing for musicals in the West End musicals in the West End.

GROUP NEWS

ART



We held our art exhibition on Saturday 25th February. Members of the group all displayed a number of art works, some of which were for sale. We served teas and cakes and held a raffle. It was extremely well attended, and we sold quite a lot of our art. We raised a total of just over £450



We had a lot of helping hands on the day, both at the door promoting our raffle and also in the cafe which was very busy serving lots of homemade cakes which went down very well with our visitors. Thank you to all who attended and a huge thank you to all who helped on the day.

Valerie Brown

CHURCHES AND PUBS

Churches and Pubs Lives On! We are pleased to tell you that we have volunteers who have stepped forward to help run the group. There are four dates for the visits.

June 7 th	Rodger and Jean Drinkwater.
August 2 nd	Dorothy Neillands and Sandy Maclean
October 4 th	David and Gill Edmonson.
December 6 th	Ron Holt and Pam Cooke

The format is the same except when you put you name down can you please pay for the meal? As there are different people doing the trips it will be easier for them.

The first visit on June 7th can be booked at the March meeting. By then we will have the name of the Church and Pub.

Please support these trips as well as you have supported Barbara and me over the last ten plus years. It will keep the group going.

Paul and Barbara Kenneth

HISTORY

Sheila gave a talk on the plague of London 1665. Her source was "The Journal of the Plague Year". In this book, widely attributed to be the first novel in the English Language, Daniel de Foe used contemporary documents to chart the events of that dreadful year. New details emerged and there were incidents of kindness but also of trickery, to name but a few.

In the lively discussion which followed, comparisons were drawn with our own experiences in the recent pandemic.

For our March meeting we have two topics: The history of Whaley Bridge and the Temperance movement.

Sheila Harrop

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Topics discussed: Nicola Bulley, Shamima Begum, NI Protocol, BBC Chairman, Russian participation in the 2024 Olympic games.

We all thought that Nicola Bulley's family had been treated appallingly by the Press and media. Her personal details should never have been put in the public domain. The village of St Michael's on Wyre was invaded by amateur sleuths and there were several conspiracy theories. Even after she was found her family was apparently contacted by Sky News and ITV for comment.

Why would three teenage girls arrange to fly to Turkey and then on to Syria? Yet another group influenced by social media or just looking for adventure? In 2019 her British citizenship was revoked by Sajid Javid, the then Home Secretary. She made a court appeal to have this restored in February 2023 but the judge rejected it on the ground that she could be a danger to this country so she must remain in a camp in Syria. There is a theory however that she could cause more harm in the camp than in the UK. We were unanimous in thinking that the judge's verdict should be respected but she has the right of another appeal.

Will there ever be an end to the problems of the Northern Ireland protocol? This seems to be an insurmountable problem since this country left the EU leaving a land border between the two parts of the island of Ireland. There have been many meetings between the UK and the EU to try and find a solution. A compromise is needed by both sides but unfortunately the hard-line DUP and the ERG in Westminster do not seem willing to do that. One of our group thought the best solution was to have a united country, Ireland and N Ireland as it was before 1921.

We next discussed the post of Richard Sharp, the Chairman of the BBC. Should he resign because of his involvement in arranging a loan for Boris Johnson. Most of us thought not but that in future this position should not be political appointment and that the BBC must always be impartial. We all thought that the present output of programmes is of a very high standard and worth paying for.

Our last item was to discuss whether Russia should be allowed to compete in the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. Apparently about thirty-five countries think they should be banned, and we all thought so too.

We always have a lively discussion, agree to disagree but never come to blows! We have room for one or two more people to join us for an enjoyable and entertaining afternoon.

Margaret McDermott

CRIME FICTION READING



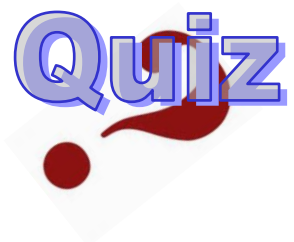
Our book for February was *The Unexpected Inheritance of Inspector Chopra* by Vaseem Khan. Senior detective Ashwin Chopra is retiring from the Mumbai police force. On his retirement day he is alerted to a suspicious death of a young boy and Chopra doesn't understand why his colleagues don't seem interested in solving the murder. He also receives an unexpected gift, as the title purports – a baby elephant. The elephant, Ganesh, somewhat unbelievably, becomes his assistant in solving the case and continues to work with Chopra in the later books in the series. The series is known as the Baby Ganesh Agency investigations and includes *The Perplexing Theft of the Jewel in the Crown*, *The Strange Disappearance of a Bollywood Star*, *Murder at the Grand Raj Palace*, *Bad Day at the Vulture Club*.

As usual, there was a mixed response to the book – but no-one really disliked it. All agreed it was an easy read and liked the background information about life in India. The descriptions of life in Mumbai were much as we imagined it to be. The unravelling of the murder got quite complicated and involved some shady aspects of the Mumbai crime scene. Many of us thought we might read another from the series, but not straight away. Several members commented about the style being similar to that of the *First Ladies Detective Agency* series by Scottish writer, Alexander McCall Smith.

The next meeting of the group is on Friday 17th March when we shall be discussing *I'll keep you safe* by Peter May. This will be the second Peter May book we have read. It is one of his stand-alone books and, according to the blurb, interweaves the fashion world of Paris and the beauty of the Isle of Lewis in the search for the killer.

Diane Saxon

QUIZZING



Our quiz for February was set by Mavis. We had questions on rivers, motorways, art, food, some cryptic clues to local areas plus general knowledge and a set of 'quirky questions' – on which we uniformly scored very badly.

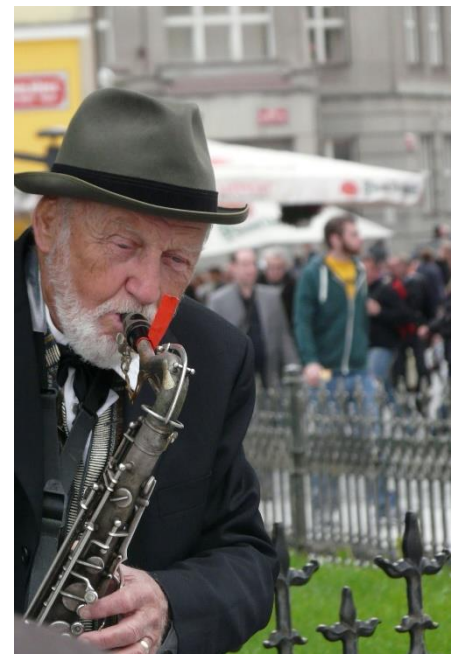
We have welcomed some new members over the last few months but have room for a couple more. We normally meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. Please get in touch if you would like to join this group.

Diane Saxon

PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Musical instruments.

Joint 1st In action and Clarinet keys – Diane
Joint 2nd One-man band and Sax man – Walter



The topic for this month is Insects. Why not have a go?

Please get in touch if you would like more details of this group.

Jeff Robinson

READING

The reading group met on Monday 6th February and the book under discussion was *The Promise* by Damon Galgut which was the Booker Prize winner in 2021. This novel tells the story of the demise of a white South African family over four decades against the background of apartheid and its aftermath. In the opening section Manie the father promises to give his black servant her house and the land it occupies, but this promise is never carried out until it is almost too late. The novel is also an allegory for the broken promises made to black South Africans at the dawn of the country's non-racial democracy in 1994.

Almost everyone enjoyed the novel although most of the characters were certainly not likeable. We had a very lively discussion.

One of our members made South African rusks as described in the book which were well received.

Our next meeting is on Monday March 6th when we will be sharing our favourite biographies and autobiographies.

Kathleen Wareham

TRAVEL

HOLIDAYS

NIDD HALL 10-14th April. Meeting with Sue on Wednesday 8th March.

CARLISLE 23-26th June. County Hotel. Balance due at the April meeting.

DAY TRIPS

JODRELL BANK & KNUTSFORD HERITAGE CENTRE 22nd April. £28.

PORT SUNLIGHT & LADY LEVER ART GALLERY 17th June. £28.

July 28th Sudley House and Liverpool

Information at Wednesday meetings. Contact Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith.



WALKING

Chadkirk, Midshires Way to Woodbank Park and return via the Alan Newton Way

Alan Newton is the first person born and bred in Stockport to ever win an Olympic medal.

Born in 1931 he took part in the 1952 games, 4000 metre Cycling Team Pursuit and won Bronze Medal for GB.

The 55 national cycle route spur into Stockport is named in his honour and he opened it in 2016.

He was also invited to open the new bridge across the Goyt which forms a further part of the Connect2 project developed by Stockport Council and Sustrans

Thirty of us met at Chadkirk Country Estate Car Park for a roughly 6 mile walk. We began along a very short stretch of road from the car park to Stockport Hydro, the first community owned hydroelectric project in Stockport. We arrived at the site just as someone arrived to undertake routine maintenance and by happy chance one of our number, Steve Reynolds, has connections with the project. We were all duly invited for a guided tour of the facility.

Progressing along the Alan Newton Way we soon reached the bridge over the river Goyt and crossed to the start of the Midshires Way. Our next landmark was Offerton Cricket Club grounds where we should have continued to follow along the river. Unfortunately neglect and recent rain has rendered this section of the Way treacherous and unsafe for more than a mile. This wooded area is criss-crossed by numerous paths, one of which we used to ascend to Woodlands Park on the edge of Offerton. Here we took advantage of sheltered seating for a short coffee break.

We descended through the woods into Woodbank Park at Woodbank Hall. The hall was built in 1812 by Thomas Harrison in Greek revival style for a local cotton manufacturer Peter Marsland. It is in very poor state of repair and appears to have been abandoned by Stockport Council.



On leaving the hall we walked on the connecting path into Vernon Park. This park was built by Stockport Corporation on land donated by George John Warren (Lord Vernon). Work was given to the many unemployed mill workers of the time, and it became known as Pinch Belly Park due to their hunger. A pleasant, sunken garden by Vernon Hall provided



an ideal spot for lunch. Suitably refreshed we descended to the river and crossed the new bridge onto the Alan Newton Way. Skirting around the impressively large electricity substation serving Stockport we had a short gentle ascent up to Bredbury Hall. The manor of Bredbury is mentioned in the Domesday book, but Bredbury Hall was only built around 1570. Over time it was neglected and eventually became a farmhouse. It is now a well-known hotel and country club.

We continued along the Alan Newton Way, passing through Middle Farm, to Goyt Hall. This hall was built for one Randle Davenport, also around 1570. Altered and rebuilt c.1860 by R. Horsfield it is now a working farm and Grade II Listed Building. A further level stretch of well-maintained path and we re-joined our outward route back to the starting point at Chadkirk.

Ron Rennell

National Office Learning Events for March

Some talks you might want to book. Remember they can fill up quickly.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 6 Mar | Brain, pain and anaesthetics |
| 9 Mar | Genealogy |
| 9 Mar | Holman Hunt's 'For the love of a woman' |
| 10 March | Climate change |
| 13-27 March | Yoga (3 sessions) |
| 17 March | Life on the Edge: the dawn of quantum biology |
| 23 March | The Joe Lyons story |
| 24 March | The future of Ageing |
| 3 April | A day in the life if your spinal cord |

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>

North West Region of U3As



Registered Charity No: 1159091

invite applications for the 2023 Summer School

**Residential Summer School Tues 15th August – Friday 18th August
At University of Cumbria, Fusehill St Campus, Carlisle, CA1 2HH**

An opportunity to learn in the inspiring setting of historical Carlisle



The Fusehill St campus is located in the centre of Carlisle and less than 15 minutes' walk from Carlisle Railway Station. The campus has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access. A large room is available for meeting and socialising. There will be a quiz on the first evening and a "Gala Dinner" on the third and final evening.

Full Board Residential Delegate: £355. (+£10 car parking charge if applicable; +£15 field trip surcharge for archaeology, and female artists courses) We include full board for 3 nights, including dinner on 15th August, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 16th August, breakfast, lunch and gala dinner on 17th August, and breakfast on 18th August. Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £190 (+parking and field trip surcharge if applicable) includes lunches, teas and coffees, excludes breakfast daily and dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday but does include the gala dinner on 17th August. Accommodation is available nearby in the Carlisle city centre.

An Application form 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)

DO NOT SEND PAYMENT UNTIL YOUR APPLICATION IS CONFIRMED (SEE BOOKING NOTE 8)

queries should be directed to Alan Hough on 07544 359125 or

alanhough1949@gmail.com

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

The 7 courses on offer are:-

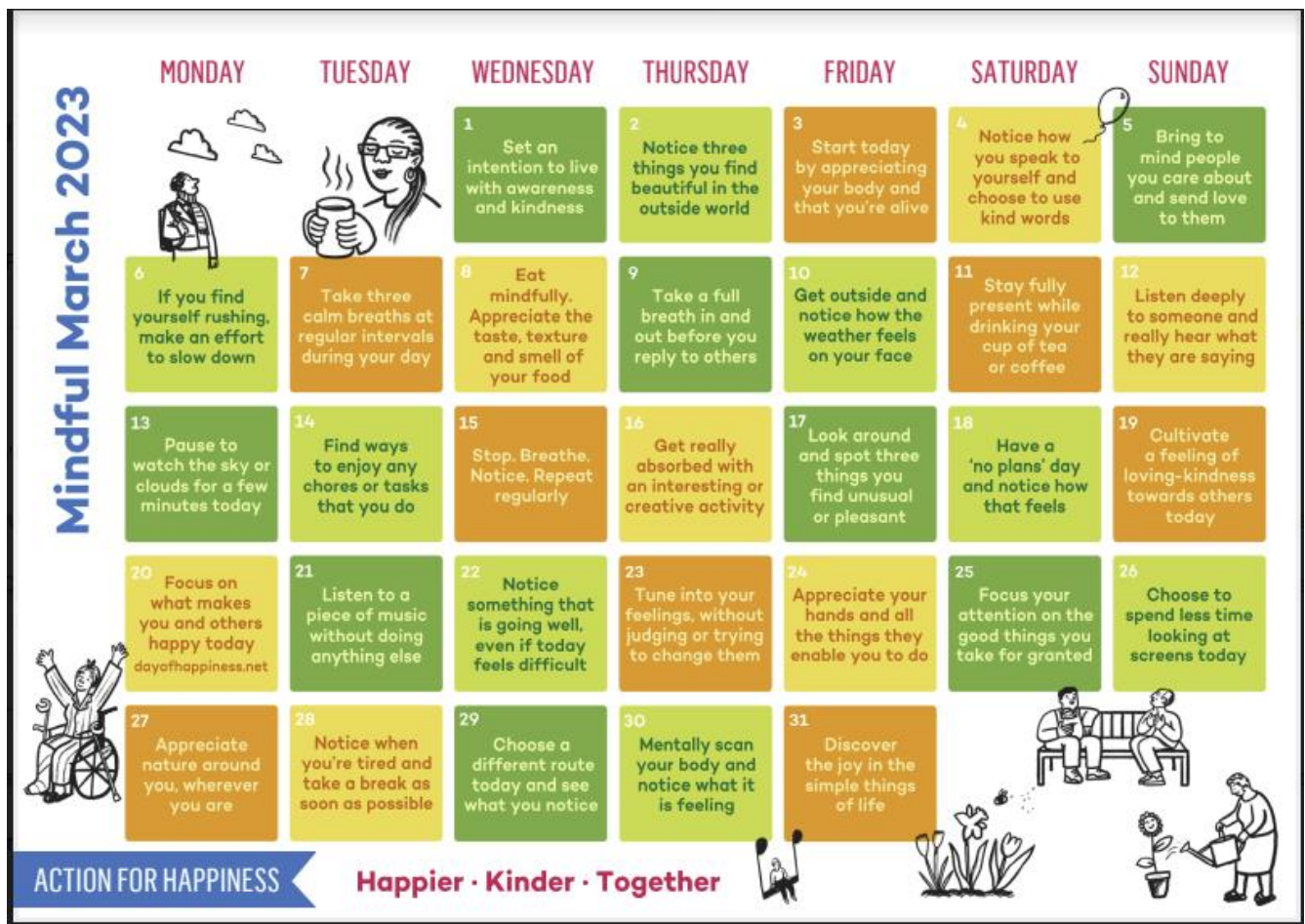
Archaeology: "Landscapes and archaeology -unpicking the layers of the past"; **Art Challenges:** "The changing seasons"; **Literature:** "What the 20th century did to the novel"; **Art:** "Female artists"; **Architecture:** "From Shelter to the Shard, 2000 years of British architecture"; **Knitting:** "Cables and lace" and "Japanese Encounter"

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

[Happier Kinder Together](#) | [Action for Happiness](#)

Action for Happiness brings people together and provides practical resources. We help each other learn evidence-based skills for happier living, feel a sense of belonging and commit to personal action to create more happiness, for ourselves and others.

This is their Calendar for March. Thanks to Sue Rowarth for sharing this with us.



BRAIN CLUTTER?

A review of memory studies published in February 2023 in the journal Trends in Cognitive Science suggests that rather than having 'memory loss' older brains might have so much more information and too many associations between all this information. The research reports that, compared to young adults, healthy older adults (defined in the paper as 60 to 85 years old) process and store too much information, most likely because of greater difficulty in suppressing irrelevant information, described as 'reduced cognitive control'. They suggest that we appear to forget things because we cannot find the memories in our cluttered brains. Quiz group members will be pleased to hear this but, unfortunately, the paper doesn't have a solution!

THE STOCKPORT WURLITZER

This magnificent organ pictured on page 8 is considered to be the finest in the UK. Originally in the Paramount cinema in Manchester then the Free Trade Hall it arrived in Stockport in 1997 when the Free Trade Hall closed. Although produced and marketed in the United States, Wurlitzers owe their original heritage to Robert Hope-Jones (1859–1914) a Cheshire musician who is considered to be the inventor of the theatre organ in the early 20th century. He had the idea that a pipe organ should be able to imitate the instruments of an orchestra.



The Stockport organ is one of only 16 of its type, and was the only one exported to the UK.

The Lancashire Theatre Organ Trust (LTOT) managed the move from the Free Trade Hall and the re-assembly in the very tight space in the rear balcony of the ballroom in the Town Hall. The sounds come from the balcony at the back of the ballroom, the organ being connected to the pipes at the rear via the heating ducts. There is an interesting display of information about the organ on the balcony and you can see some of the innards of the impressive machine. The largest pipes are over 16 feet tall.

The organ continues to be supported and maintained by LTOT who organise regular concerts and events, both at the Town Hall and at their centre in Manchester. The organ recently played a starring role in Stockport Symphony Orchestra's concert featuring the Organ symphony by Saint-Saens.

STOCKPORT SUPPORT FOR DIGITAL SKILLS

These sessions are taking place at various libraries across the town. Digital Support volunteers are available to offer support and guidance to help you get the most of your time online or assist with your own device. This support includes general PC use, setting up an email account, navigating the internet and using Stockport Libraries online resources. Our nearest locations are Hazel Grove library and Marple library. Marple Library is offering sessions on Tuesdays at 10am or 3.30pm. Hazel Grove is Friday 10.30am. There is no need to book, you can just turn up.

There are other digital sessions on different topics – including follow-up sessions, community sessions, a money session and web development. These take place at various sites – see the [web site](#) for details.

BRIDGE CORNER

Signalling to partner

Do you and your partner have a signalling system? This can be really helpful in letting your partner know what suit you want them to play. There are many systems but a simple system is easy to understand and use. One such simple but effective system is known as DODDs or sometimes Odds.

Discarding an odd card means that you have something in that suit and so would like your partner to lead that suit when they have a chance. An even card says you have nothing in that suit. As simple as that!

For example, when discarding on a diamond lead, the 3♥ asks for a heart, the 2♥ tells partner you don't want hearts.

If you don't have an odd card to discard, you can discard an even one from another suit. A high even card asks for the higher of the two other suits; a low even card asks for the lower of the other two suits.

AND FINALLY ...

Although there is a forecast of some possible sleet/snow for next week, spring is perhaps around the corner. The clocks go forward on 26 March – why not earlier we might ask? Gardens suffered in the cold spell of the winter and many of us have lost some well-loved plants, but gardens are beginning to show some colour at last.

From **Poor Robin** by William Wordsworth

Now when the primrose makes a splendid show,
And lilies face the March-winds in full blow,
And humbler growths as moved with one desire,
Put on, to welcome spring, their best attire,
Poor Robin is yet flowerless; but how gay,
With his red stalks upon this sunny day!

