

Newsletter

May 2024



Easter as pictured
by the Photography
group

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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to another bumper edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. My thanks to all the group leaders and contributors; I couldn't do it without you. In this edition, we have reports on our group activities, information about forthcoming events and holidays plus information about national initiatives and some NorthWest u3a regional events. For the cover photo this month, we have a collage of some of the entries from the Photography group's April competition that I couldn't fit on the photography group page.

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. We welcome some new members to our u3a this month and look forward to meeting you at our meetings and interest groups. Your contributions to the newsletter will be very welcome. Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition. I couldn't do it without you.

Attached to the email is the National Office bitesize newsletter for April. 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 June 2024 so please send your contributions to me by 28th May 2024 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the April meeting was Caroline Melliar-Smith whose talk was entitled Camera Rolling.

She told us about wanting to be an actor but instead became a teacher and a social worker. It was not until she was retired that she realised her early ambition. After taking advice from a casting director and learning camera techniques she had a wonderful career in the movies. She told us of many amusing incidents working with the stars.

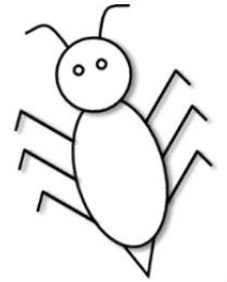
She demonstrated how a scene in a film would be shot using Paul and Lynn as the actors! This was a fascinating talk by a talented speaker and was enjoyed by everyone.

The next meeting is Wednesday May 8th, and the subject is The DNA of British Musicals.

Kath Wareham

Beetle drive

36 members joined the Beetle drive on 12 April. There was much manic shaking of dice and cries of 'at last' for those who had had to wait before shaking a six to get started. We got quite competitive at times, and the eventual winner was Pauline Wright. Congratulations, Pauline.



It was a very sociable evening and enjoyed by all. Thanks to Dorothy for organising the event.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual lunch

The annual lunch this year is on July 19th at Hazel Grove Golf Club. We are pleased to welcome Mervyn Saunders to speak to us. Mervyn is Chair of his local u3a and has a lifelong interest in entertainment in its broadest sense. His talk is entitled "A Brief History of Entertainment".

The menu this year is

Tomato and Basil Soup

Ham Hock Terrine with a Red Onion Marmalade

Home-made Chicken Liver pâté

Roast Chicken with Peppercorn Sauce

Pan Roasted Salmon with Lemon Dill Sauce (£2.50 supplement)

Rast beef and Yorkshire pudding

All served with fresh seasonal vegetables and potatoes

Sticky Toffee Pudding with Custard

Lemon Tart

Cheesecake with coulis

Tickets will be available at the May meeting. Cost is £30 for 3 courses and coffee/tea and includes a gratuity.

Pub Quiz night

Hosted by the Quiz group. The date is Friday, 9 August, 7pm start. Teams of up to six people. We will have a number of different rounds with a break for a ploughmans. Tickets are just £6 for the evening's entertainment and will be on sale at the June meeting.

GROUP NEWS

ART

Some of you will remember seeing the group's various portraits of our group member Joan Rose, at the Art Exhibition. Joan was away in Tenerife when we painted them and was thrilled to see them herself. This inspired her to paint this lovely portrait of her husband Leon enjoying a sangria while on that holiday. Leon recently celebrated his 90th birthday so I thought it would be great to share his

portrait with you and wish him Many Happy Returns 🎂 🎉 🥂



Madeleine Hennessy

CANASTA

We are a friendly group meeting at the Royal Oak at 7pm every Tuesday. More people are attending as the nights get lighter. Even if you have never played, come along and we will show you how.

Pauline Wright

CHURCHES AND PUBS

Wednesday 5th June St George's New Mills.
Bookings taken at May and June u3a meetings.

Wednesday 7th August. St. Mary's Disley.

Wednesday 2nd October. St. James Taxal.

Wednesday 4th December. To be confirmed.

If you require any further information on the group, just ask or send me an e-mail.

Paul Kenneth

CRIME FICTION READING



At the Crime Fiction Book Group meeting on Friday 12 April, we discussed *The Rising Tide* by Ann Cleeves. Fifty years since the time in which the book is set, a newly graduated teacher brought seven students who had just entered her sixth form for a bonding session on Holy Island. Most of the original student group have returned every five years since to celebrate their friendship and also remember the one who died at their first reunion. When one of the group is found hanged at the 50 year anniversary reunion Vera Stanhope is brought in to investigate. Vera reveals long-hidden secrets and encounters two further murders along the way including that of her young detective, Holly.

The group members score each book out of 10 and this book achieved the highest combined score since the group was formed in June 2022. There was general agreement that the storyline was absorbing to the end, and they enjoyed the atmospheric description of the Island, in particular description of the access to the Island by the causeway that can only be driven across at low tide.

One member remarked that *The Rising Tide* is not the best in Vera series, which is a high accolade for Ann Cleeves as an author.

The group will next meet on Friday 17 May when we will review *A Deeper Sleep* by Dana Stabenow.

Betty Mackman

DINING

In April the Dining Club chose a new venue for lunch, *The Aviator* in Woodford. It was a popular choice as some members who had already visited it had recommended it and others were keen to try somewhere new.

The Aviator is a modern building, very light and airy with a pleasant and welcoming atmosphere. As we were a party of 32, we were allocated the function room which was lovely as it allowed us to chatter and laugh without restriction as there were no other diners to disturb.

We enjoyed a three-course lunch; the most popular choices being prawn cocktail, sea bass and that old favourite, apple crumble with lashings of delicious custard or cream. Three hours later, after a good lunch and pleasant company we all went home.

Dorothy Gerrard and Dorothy Neillands

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Topics discussed at meeting on 17th April

Bank Closures

The number of banks closing have halved from where they were 10 years ago. Banks argue that a lot of customers are doing their banking online therefore there isn't the need for branches to stay open. There are still people that do not use a computer or have a smart phone so they will have to travel outside of their area to visit a bank. We in High Lane are fortunate to have a Post Office where we can get cash when needed. There was news from Barclays Bank to say there was going to be a new banking hub in Bramhall Village open 9 to 5 Monday to Friday. Hubs seem to be the future of banking.

SWISS PENSIONERS

Lady pensioners in Switzerland took their government to the ECHR to protest about the way the government was not doing enough about climate change and won their case. One woman said we are not supposed to just sit at home and knit, so some protests are successful.

SMOKING BAN

The government wants to stop people from smoking by raising the legal age limit for buying cigarettes. The recent bill is to ban people born after 1st January 2009 from buying tobacco. We were all in agreement with this decision.

RWANDA

We were wondering if flights taking asylum seekers to Rwanda will ever happen. Reports say that on a visit by Suella Braverman to view housing for immigrants would not now be available as it had been sold off. A lot of money seems to have been wasted on this venture.

HIGH COURT DECISION

A court case brought by a pupil over playground prayer. The judge ruled the policy did not interfere with the pupils' religious freedoms because she had chosen the school knowing its strict regime. It is a multi-faith, multi-cultural secular school.

CALL TO BAN SMACKING IN ENGLAND

UK doctors call for a nationwide ban on smacking children.

WILL WE EVER SEE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

We all wanted to see peace in the Middle East with security for Israel and legitimate rights for the Palestinians. Hopefully peace will come to both sides in the future.

EASTER HONOURS LIST

We are having another honours list, as well the New Years honours and the King's official birthday list.

UKRAINE

Should we help the Ukrainians with their air defences. The UK plans to give vital equipment with weapons and ammunition to Kyiv.

Angela Knight

GARDENING

The gardening group had two visits in April.

We started the year with a visit to Walkden Gardens in Sale Moor. Although a drizzly day, the 20 varied sections of this free garden still showed how the different shades of green could be so attractive and evocative. Fresh new Japanese Maple leaves, Camellia flowers, powerful sweet-scented Daphne, and the ancient circular Dovecote, were amongst the highlights in this easy to find, yet little known garden. It is always well worth a visit.

Our second visit, to Deirdre's garden saw 14 of us admiring her tulips and enjoying her homemade cakes. Her collection of roses was coming on apace and promising a lovely show in June, when we have visited her garden before.

In May we visit an NGS garden in Lymm, and also yours truly, as I frantically try to remove fast growing weeds from the soggy soil before the visit!



Walter Mason

MEMOIRS

February meeting

We had our meeting on the 6th of February and Barbara Kenneth has taken over admin responsibilities. Barbara Speake is co-leading the group. We had a minutes' silence to honour the memory of Sheila Harrop who led us for the past five years and we shared some memories of her. We want to continue the group and have decided to admit 2 or 3 new members, now that we are meeting in a different venue.

We had a few readings. Lynda amused us with her first flying experience at the age of 28, but that was topped by Bryan's first experience of flying at the age of 60. Margaret reminisced about Christmas as a child and the treat of Father Christmas's grotto at Lewis's in Manchester. Stewart had three more poems for us. As always there was good discussion and much nostalgia. Another excellent session, our 51st to date.

Barbara Kenneth and Barbara Speake

March meeting

We had a very entertaining meeting on 5th March, and we welcomed a new member.

- There were memories about life in New Zealand, keeping cows and sheep and Māori traditions.
- A harrowing tale of life in Iran and having to flee the country.
- There were several stories about flying experiences, including a balloon flight, which were all very amusing.
- There was a trip to Austria, which wasn't by plane, and to date the lady in question now in her eighties still hasn't been on an aircraft.
- Our ex-policeman had us in fits of laughter about an encounter with Bernard Manning who had mistaken him for someone else, and a story about a man with a lisp.
- There was an account of stone cleaning restoration in a church which went horribly wrong.
- Memories of working at Swizzels on the till as a young girl and having to wipe the floor with a very smelly mop which she had to clean before using. The job didn't last long, and the lady went on to far better things.
- Finally a story about people who were inspirational during school years.

It was a very interesting and hilarious meeting.

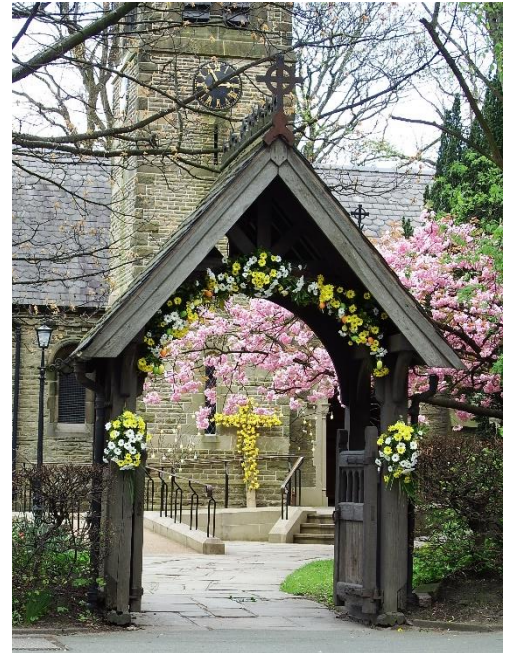
Barbara Kenneth

PHOTOGRAPHY

The photography group continues with a monthly themed competition. If anyone would like to join the group, they would be most welcome. Contact me, Ken Jackson, via the U3A site and I will include you in the emails sent out.

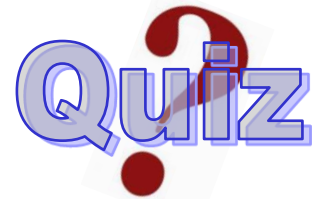
April's competition theme was EASTER. There was a clear winner, this photograph of St Thomas church taken by Jeff. Several photos tied for second and third places but too many to show here. You can see some of these in the collage on the cover of this newsletter.

Ken Jackson



QUIZZING

Our quiz for April was set by Diane. Questions were in various categories, including radio and TV quiz shows, UK geography, inventions, music, general knowledge and an 'In the news' round.



This month's sample questions.

1. Why has Stockport County been in the news recently?
2. What is the name of the new park lining the bus and train station in Stockport?
3. How many parliamentary constituencies are there in Stockport? And what are they?
4. What is the title of Liz Truss's book?

We normally meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. The next meeting is 23rd May. Please get in touch if you would like to join us.

Diane Saxon

TRIVIAL PURSUITS

The group continues to meet every six weeks on Saturday evening. A fun time is had by all. New members always welcome. It's good to exercise our brains once in a while.

Jean Barrow

SHORT WALKS

February walk – Local from High Lane Village Hall. Walking between Macc. Canal and Middlewood Way. 24 Folk came on the walk.

March walk – Inclement weather – Local Walk to Middlewood Station, back onto the Macc Canal to Windlehurst Hall and onto Andre Lane. 9 Folk made it.

April walk (pictured). A sunny breezy day. Ron Rennel took us by Poynton Pool, notices about saving the trees. Onto Lady Incline, Towers Road and back to Anglesey Drive.

The May Walk will be on Saturday 18 May. Meet at High Lane Village Hall Car Park at 09.15 hrs or 09.45 in Etherow Country Park Car Park. 3–4 miles, no stiles.

Ruth Smith



TRAVEL

LITTLECOTE June 17th–21st.

Payment for excursions due at May meeting. Please meet in the large hall for further information at the end of the May meeting.



RIVER CRUISE River Rhone, Burgundy and Provence October 3–10th.

Balance due at May meeting.

IRELAND August 26th–30th.

Balance due at June meeting,

JUDITH MARY July 12th.

2 hour boat trip with afternoon tea. £21

Payment at May meeting.

WALKING

Walk 24 April: Grindleford / Bole Hill / Surprise / Padley Gorge

Eight intrepid walkers arrived at the start of this walk, keen to stretch their legs in this beautiful part of the Peak District. Fortunately, the weather provided us with a dry if somewhat cool day, making ideal walking conditions.



Starting from Grindleford Station, the route took us past or through a number of historic sites. Firstly, Totley Tunnel. The Hope Valley Line connecting Sheffield and Manchester, was one of the last main lines built by the Midland Railway and involved two major tunnels – Totley at the east end and Cowburn at the west end of the Hope Valley.

Totley tunnel is 3.5 miles long, and when completed in 1893, was the second-longest railway tunnel in the UK. Work began in 1888, but the route crossed land owned by the Duke of Rutland; he decreed that no more than one ventilation shaft should be sunk through his land and that work should cease from August to October, during the grouse shooting season! During construction some 166t of gelignite were used. The headings finally meet in 1892 and passenger services commenced in 1894.

Then on to Padley Mill. Originally established in the medieval period, Padley Mill played a vital role in the local economy as a centre for grain milling, the Burbage Brook providing the power. It was later converted to a sawmill, then a wire drawing mill, and is now a private residence.

Further along the road / track we came to the ruins of Padley Hall/Manor, and Padley Chapel. During his reign, William the Conqueror donated Padley estate to a supporter, who then built the original Norman hall. Centuries later, it had become a clandestine meeting place for Catholics. In 1588 it was raided, and two Catholic priests were discovered hiding within the walls. Two weeks later they were found guilty of high treason and were hanged, drawn and quartered in Derby. Their corpses were displayed on poles on St. Mary's Bridge. They became known as the 'Padley Martyrs'. Eventually the Hall fell into disrepair and was abandoned. Mostly now just foundations, we were able to walk around these and get some impression of what a grand house this once was.

Padley Chapel is the only complete structure still standing; it was the former gatehouse and was used as a farm building following the closure of the Hall. In 1933 it was converted into a Catholic chapel in honour of the martyrs. A pilgrimage to Padley Chapel began in 1892 in honour of the executed martyrs and it still takes place in July each year from nearby Grindleford Railway Station. There is an aspiration to create a pilgrim walk between Padley and St Mary's Bridge in Derby.



Our next section of the walk was one of the more strenuous. We ascended the 1:3 incline where stone from the Bole Hill quarry was exported to build Howden and Derwent dams further up the Derwent Valley. As trucks loaded with stone were individually lowered, the pulley system raised an empty truck up from the bottom. At the top of the incline, we viewed the remaining stone structure that originally housed the winding wheel. Judging from a photograph this wheel must have been some 10m diameter!



The walk continued through a cutting where dressed stone was brought from the marshalling area to the winding wheel by locomotives; the rails now long gone. Eventually, we arrived at the quarry face. Operated between 1902 - 1910, the quarry was some 1,200 yards long and produced over 1.25 million tons of stone, the large blocks weighing between 20 to 30 tons each. At the time, the whole area was covered in railway lines with many cranes and locomotives operating. Now the rails and the plant are gone, and the area has returned to nature, peaceful and covered with silver birch trees. Production at the quarry ceased in December 1910 and after the plant had been removed, Bole Hill closed in September 1914. In 1947 it was gifted to the National Trust.



Exiting the quarry, we walked past scores of discarded millstones. These were produced in volume as early as the 13th century by quarries in this area, but later were displaced by cheaper foreign imports. It appears the remaining stock was discarded, and the process abandoned.

Next on the walk was a climb, crossing the A6187 at Surprise and up to the highest point at Over Owler Tor, with superb views over Derwent and Hope Valleys and the hills beyond in one direction, and Higger Tor and Carl Wark hill fort in the other.

Following a welcomed lunch stop under Mother Cap rock, we crossed back over the A6187 and headed down to Padley Gorge, with views of the cascading Burbage Brook. A brief visit was made to the Powder Store where explosives for the quarry used to be kept, and then to a valve chamber where the huge pipelines from the Derwent reservoirs enter the Burbage Syphon, crossing under Burbage Brook on their way down the Derwent Valley to supply water to Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.

The walk ended back at Grindleford Station where some of the group were refreshed by tea in the cafe!

Peter Wareham



NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS

These are a selection of the **May events**. All are free on Zoom. There are usually hundreds of members listening to the talks.

3 May Osteoporosis and Bone Health. The work of the Royal Osteoporosis Society

7 May 110 Years of Aviation History in Hertfordshire, 1913 – 2023

10 May AI Chatbots: a Beginners' guide

13 May Exploring World Faiths: Religious Mysticism

14 May Turner's Timeless Treasures

17 May The Story of the Workhouse – Welfare in England Before 1948

21 May Understanding Online Safety: Expert Tips for You and Others

31 May Rob Eastaway Talk – Much Ado About Numbers (numbers and Shakespeare!)

Click here for details and to book a place. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

The Blood – Brain Barrier (u3a Online Learning Events)

Bob Pullen of Prudhoe u3a

Around 300 people listened to another excellent talk from Bob who is spent his working life researching problems with the brain particularly the causes of dementia.

Normally blood – tissue exchanges take place exclusively in capillaries. The solutes in the blood like oxygen diffuse through the walls of the capillaries as do essential vitamins and minerals which provide everything that the tissue needs. The tissues use these and create waste products – mostly carbon dioxide. Waste products diffuse back into the capillaries and are removed from the blood via the veins. The brain however is different. The capillaries go into the brain but there is no exchange of solutes because brain cells wrap themselves around all the capillaries which makes them virtually impermeable except for oxygen which is a gas and can pass through the barrier. So, the brain is isolated and protected. Eating a meal raises the levels of sodium, potassium and chlorides in the blood the blood brain barrier stops fluctuation in these chemicals in the brain that would otherwise kill you. It also stops bacteria and viruses crossing the barrier.

To get essential chemicals in and waste products out there are transporters in the brain cells which are specific for each chemical the brain needs. The brain has a number of ‘gatekeepers’ that will switch the transporters on and off. So even though the blood concentrations may vary, the concentrations in the brain are kept constant. However, there is a drawback in that it also creates a very effective barrier for drugs and there’s an awful lot of work going on to engineer drugs to make them acceptable to the transporters so they can go through the barrier and act on the brain.

Next month Bob will talk about Brain, Pain and Anaesthetics, which I’m sure will be as fascinating as this talk has been.

Mark Saxon

BIG SING 2024



NorthWest u3a is once organising the Big Sing. The date is 15 June, and the venue is The Quaker Meeting House, School Lane, Liverpool. The day runs from 10am to around 4pm. The cost is £15 including refreshments but not lunch.

You can [register here](#).

Or for more details see the [NorthWest u3a website](#).

u3a Festival '24

The u3a movement is holding its first ever Festival in 2024, 18 – 20 July, where members will be running a wide variety of activities – talks, sporting events, musical entertainment and workshops which will make this u3a national festival something to remember.



Message from Sam Mauger, CEO of the Third Age Trust

Festival tickets are now available. We are so pleased to be able to release the tickets for u3a Festival '24 taking place in York this July. Our packed programme will have something for everyone – all being led by u3a members. You can see our taster programme, and the ticket booking link, on the u3a website.

Please do read the notes below before you make your booking, as it includes key information on how to select the right ticket for you.

Booking notes

- On Eventbrite, please read the booking options right the way through before you book – you will be given the option to book for one, two, three or all days.
- If you are only coming on Friday 19 July, you have a choice of 2 ticket options. Option 1 is to book between 9am and 6pm for daytime visitors, and option 2 is to book for the day and the evening, from 9am to about 11pm. Please only choose the option for the time you will be there.
- Please only book for the days you plan to attend. In order to make tickets available for as many members as possible, we would appreciate it if you would only book for the days you will be at the festival.
- Tickets for the individual sessions will be released soon to members who have bought a ticket for the Festival. This will take a little time, but we will be in touch.

[Click here for the Booking link for u3a Festival 24](#)



u3a Friends is a new initiative to bring together stories and interests from across the u3a movement; to use our collective voice to change lives and to share exclusive member offers with our exclusive Friends Extra benefits program. All of these come together under the banner of u3a Friends.

Sam Maugher, CEO of the Third Age Trust has recorded a video about the Friends initiative. You can watch this [here](#).

What does u3a friends offer?

The scheme includes

- Regular and special issues of the online national u3a Friends Newsletter, filled with news from u3as across the country, plus fantastic offers and services.
- Information about nationwide u3a events and national initiatives.
- Access to learning opportunities via Interest Groups Online for a low fee.
- Exclusive access to our u3a Friends Extra benefits program, featuring discounts, offers, and additional services across a range of areas:
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Shopping savings on major brands and retail discounts
 - Travel and holidays
 - Leisure offers, like family days out, trips to the cinema and theatre
 - Insurance offers on car, travel and medical insurance
 - Access to financial advice and a legal helpline.

There will be more details on u3a Friends Extra in the April u3a Friends newsletter, coming later this month. Signing up to the newsletter means you are up to date and in touch with all that's happening across the movement as it happens.

You can sign up on the webpage [here](#).

North West Region of U3As



Registered Charity No: 1159091

invite applications for the 2024 Summer School

**Residential Summer School Tues 13th August – Friday 16th 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; £420. (+£10 car parking charge if applicable; +£25 field trips (2 off) surcharge for archaeology, and £15 field trip surcharge for British artists courses) We include full board for 3 nights, including dinner on 13th August, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 14th August, breakfast, lunch and gala dinner on 15th August, and breakfast on 16th August. Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £210 (+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 15th August. Accommodation is available nearby in the Carlisle city centre.

An Application form (available online at north west site) 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: "Archaeological sites in Cumbria"; Art Challenges: "Working in the style of..."; Literature: "North by North west"; Art: "British artists: Hogarth to Hockney"; Genealogy; Ukulele for Improvers and Japanese Encounter.

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