

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the November edition, the twentieth, of the monthly High Lane U3A newsletter. We have good news re groups restarting and Covid booster jabs but less good news as the number of cases remains higher than just about anywhere else in the world.

Highlights of this edition are the report of the recent Travel group trip to Ireland and our programme of speakers for 2022. There are interesting subjects on the list. Hopefully we will not be forced to cancel these meetings as happened over the last 18 months. We also have reviews of local theatre productions, poems and limericks. We end with the usual sprinkling of light-hearted items.

The newsletter is being sent out by email and will also be on the website. The next issue will be December 2021 so please send your contributions to me before the end of November via newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk This edition is accompanied by the October newsletter from the u3a National Office.

Diane Saxon

u3a new draft strategy – Your views

u3a is embarking on an ambitious consultation with members to shape its strategy and direction for the future. Launched on International Day of Older Persons (Oct 1) nearly 450,000 u3a members across the UK will be asked to share their thoughts and ideas on what will be the priorities for the movement in the coming years.



"We are in the early stages of developing a strategy to guide the future work and priorities of the movement" said Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust which supports the u3a movement. "u3a members are vibrant and energetic people who want to make a contribution. This is an opportunity for us to put their voices at the heart of creating a relevant and bold strategy – created by the members for the members."

Have your say about the u3a movement! Your responses will be anonymous and the findings of the consultation process will be reviewed by the end of the year with firm proposals being developed early next year. This short survey seeks your views on four initial aims which you can access at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/vision#future>

Please note these are DRAFT aims and reflect early thinking. You may not agree with these aims. You may have ideas for additional or substitute aims. Or you may think these are exactly what is needed. Whatever your thoughts, we look forward to hearing them. We encourage you to focus your feedback on the sentiment of the aims, and not the specific wording.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

October

The October meeting was a presentation from the charity "Blood Bikes." This was really illuminating and interesting. Many of us had no knowledge of their work. Teams of motor cyclists ferry urgent supplies to hospitals often through the night. The husband-and-wife team dealt with this sensitive subject with good humour and tact. There was also an interesting video. The audience responded very warmly.

November

The speaker for November is Canon Michael Burgess, who was recommended to me by the people from "Churches and Pubs" for his humour and outgoing personality. His talk, entitled "For Better for Worse" is on Wednesday 10 November at 2.00 p.m.

December

The Christmas meeting this year is on 8 December. There will be some musical entertainment, a quiz, and some light refreshments. You will need a ticket to attend; the cost this year is £1. Tickets are limited. You can get a ticket at the November meeting or by contacting Andre Lister.

PROGRAMME FOR 2022

The programme for monthly meetings in 2022 is

12 January	John Wallace	Over Paid and Over Here (GIs in the UK)
9 February	AGM	
9 March	Roger Browne	King's Tiger Rag (Roger plays piano with Manchester Jazz)
13 April	Sharon Evans	Children's Air Ambulance
11 May	Caroline Melliar-Smith	Family Secrets
8 June	Mike Storr	Masters of Mirth
13 July	Geoff Scargill	Last Laugh of the Railway King (Early comedians e. g. Stanley Holloway)
10 August	Rod Devereux	My Life in Special Branch
14 September	Jim Williams	Life and Times of Casanova
12 October	Allan Shalks	My very interesting life in Theatre, Television and Radio
10 November	Julie Sutton	Our u3a choir
7 December	Christmas Party	

The Covid advice for group meetings is still the same. We expect all those who attend face to face meetings to be, at least, double vaccinated or to have had a recent negative Covid test. We ask you to follow all relevant public health advice, eg wearing of face masks in enclosed indoor spaces.

As has been the case for some time, any member who is feeling ill, displaying Covid symptoms, has received a positive test result in the past 10 days or has been instructed to isolate must not participate in u3a meetings, trips and events. Any member who subsequently tests positive (within 7 days of attending) is asked to advise their group convenor(s) or meeting organisers so that all other attendees may be informed.

There is detailed advice for members and group leaders at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/advice/running-your-u3a-covid-and-beyond/england-activities-advice>

u3a – Creative Writing Competition 2021 winners

The search is over – we are proud to present the finalists for the u3a Creative Writing Competition 2021, held in partnership with Bloomsbury. These entries were chosen from a total of 382 entries.

We are delighted to announce the overall winner as Lynne Carroll, from Crediton u3a in the South West region with her story “The Road to Lille”. Second place goes to Jane Morgan from Peterborough u3a in the East of England with her story “A cup of tea and a kind word”. Third place was awarded to Karen McCreedy from Bognor Regis u3a in the South East with “Trial and Error”.

All of the finalists receive a copy of the [Writers’ and Artists’ Yearbook](#), edited by Alysoun Owen and published by Bloomsbury.

Their stories, alongside all finalists, are available to read below.



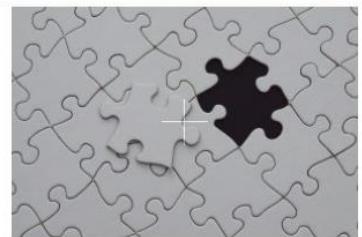
The Road to Lille

by Lynne Carroll, Crediton u3a



A Cup of Tea and a Kind Word

by Jane Morgan, Peterborough u3a



Trial and Error

by Karen McCreedy, Bognor Regis u3a

You can read the stories at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/201-learning/1186-creative-writing-competition-2021-winners>

GROUP REPORTS

GARDENING

The gardening group wound down for the winter with a successful plant swap day. Rudbeckia and Michaelmas Daisies have continued to flourish during the month, and reports suggest that the new Bridgewater Garden is still looking well, as some recent pictures demonstrate. We will probably restart next year with a group meal, but meanwhile are some of our October pictures.



Walter Mason

GERMAN

The German Group has met most Fridays since the start of September but the group has been very much smaller than before lockdown, between 4 and 7 members. We've had a lot to talk about and a lot of time to make up. As usual the first half of the meeting is made up of general conversation about what has been happening in our lives but after coffee we are now reading a book, copies of which I acquired very cheaply on ebay – DAMALS WAR ES FRIEDRICH, the story of two boys growing up during the Third Reich (one Jewish and one Christian) which is going down very well.

Marlene Brookes

HISTORY

The History Group reconvened for our October meeting at which our member, Irene Merson, gave a most interesting talk on the life and influence of Martin Luther.

He was born in Eisleben, in Saxony in 1483. He studied law and gained a degree, which he gave up, choosing to become a monk. A visit to Rome triggered a distaste for the practices of the Roman Catholic Church, in particular their pre-occupation with gaining money from the sale of indulgences. He felt that the Bible itself should be the source of Religious Knowledge and that man should be able to approach God directly. All in all, he named 95 Theses which he presented to the "Diet of Worms", (no evidence they were nailed to the door.)

For the rest of his life he proved a thorn in the side of the Papal authorities, refusing to recant. He was excommunicated from the church and became an outlaw. He printed many leaflets which circulated rapidly in Europe and became a key influence in the Renaissance. From his brave actions the Lutheran Church was established and the word Protestant was first coined. He found time to Translate the Bible into German, get married and to write "Away in a Manger". He died in 1546

Sheila Harrop

BALLROOM DANCING

Ballroom Dancing is enjoying its renaissance, as members gradually return. It is taking time for us to recall half forgotten steps and routines, but that will come – especially with a new couple to spur us on – and with different music and approach from Ian and Kate on the alternate dance days.

Walter Mason

PHOTOGRAPHY

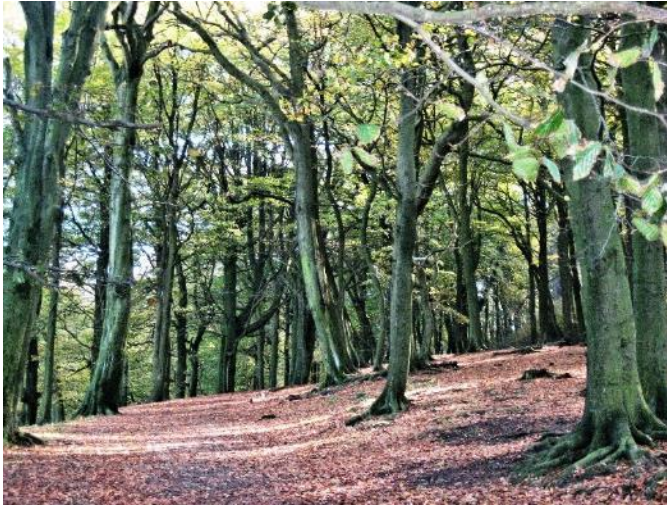
This month's subject was 'Tree Trunks. This was a convincing win for Derek with 'Trunk Road', taken in Montecatini Alto, Tuscany on a u3a holiday some years ago now.



Second was this close up of a trunk spotted in Hazel Grove from Diane.



Joint thirds were two more from Diane, Walter's 'Trunkless trunk' and another from Derek titled '4 or 5 trunks'



Well done everybody, an excellent show. The subject for next month's project is 'Keys'. This may be more tricky!

Jeff Robinson

QUIZ

Quiz group is planning its first face to face meeting of the year! We are looking forward to meeting up again. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. Please contact me if you would like to join this group.

See page 13 for this month's mini quiz.

Diane Saxon

READING

This group meets on the first Monday of the month at various locations. Our book for October was LIES OF SILENCE by Brian Moore, a novel set in Belfast during the Troubles of the early 1990s, a thriller involving the manager of a hotel who unwillingly is forced to aid and abet the bombing of his own hotel. This led to a lively discussion on the dilemma facing the main character and whether his motivation was totally honourable. This was an extremely well written and thought-provoking book.

We next meet on 1st November when we will be discussing HAMNET by Maggie O'Farrell which tells the story of Shakespeare's family in Stratford and the death of his only son, Hamnet, of the plague.

Marlene Brookes

SHAKESPEARE

The Group has continued to meet during the covid period via Zoom but with reduced numbers as not all members are comfortable with the technology. We meet once a fortnight and, for the time being, are continuing via Zoom. We will decide in the New Year whether to resume house meetings.

We are currently reading King Lear and the next meeting is Monday 1 November starting at 9.45. Any member is very welcome to join us, if you are interested please contact me via email and I will give you the codes for the next meeting.

Steve Reynolds

TRAVEL

IRELAND 22nd – 26th SEPTEMBER

Armed with our NHS Covid Pass and Irish Government Locator Form we landed at Dublin Airport. No one asked to see them! We boarded our coach and drove to the Irish National Stud – our second visit. Breeders send mares from around the world to be mated with the stallions in the season from February to June. The fee for the best stallion, Invincible Spirit, is €80000. He is 23 years old and covers about 100 mares per year so enormous amounts of money are involved. We were shown the horses' catwalk in front of their centrally heated stables.

Our guide explained that the criteria looked for were "handsome looks, walking like a model and having a backside like a cook" After their days of racing and breeding are over the stallions live like kings in their own paddock. We saw some of these Living Legends with names Beef or Salmon, Kicking King and Hurricane Fly enjoying their wonderful retirement.

We then had a long drive to the Downhill Hotel Ballina where we were given a very warm welcome by the owner. The rooms were large and comfortable; the food excellent (superb Irish roast beef!) One evening was Quiz night, very similar questions to those in our Quiz group – photographs to recognise and the dreaded Dingbats. Ballina has several claims to fame. Mary Robinson, the first female President of Ireland, and Joe Biden's great-great grandfather were born there and Jack Charlton lived there when he was the Manager of the Irish National Football team.

The following day we visited the Eagles Flying Research Centre run since 1999 by German zoologist Lothar Muschketat. He gave a most interesting commentary while we watched huge eagles, vultures and owls flying overhead.



Some people were brave enough to allow them to land on their arm. Afterwards we were able to stroke rabbits and mice, feed a racoon and hold a fox.



In the afternoon we continued to Sligo Folk Park set in the grounds of the restored Millview House built in the 1850s. The cottages, shops and school illustrated rural life in the 19th century.

We were very impressed with the cleanliness of Ireland and the well-kept gardens in the small towns and villages we passed through. The County Gaelic Football Teams enjoyed strong support with many flags flying from the houses – red and green for County Mayo, black and white for Sligo.

The visit to Enniskillen Castle and Castle Coole meant crossing the border with the UK. Some people got quite excited and thought we might need passports! But there is no border! The only way we were aware that we were in the UK was because the edge of road markings changed from yellow to white and the road signs were in miles instead of kilometres.

Castle Coole was built in the 18th century with no expense spared for the Earl of Belmore MP for County Tyrone. It had magnificent state rooms with beautiful ceilings and Regency furnishings. One of the most interesting parts was the underground servants' area in the basement of the house. They accessed the house by a tunnel so that they and tradesmen arrived and left unseen. There was no above ground service door.



Our final visit was to medieval Galway which was European City of Culture in 2020. The coach driver took us along the coast road with views of Galway Bay and the Aran Islands. We had time for a stroll around the city and to visit the Saturday market with its array of interesting stalls from food to crafts and local art. In the afternoon we had arranged a boat trip on Lough Corrib and were treated to a display of Irish dancing by two of the staff and a demonstration of Irish coffee making.

One of the group asked that we drive along the Wild Atlantic Way on our return to Ballina. This is one of the world's longest coastal routes for 1600 miles from Donegal to Kinsale in County Cork. We passed through the beautiful mountain scenery of Connemara National Park.

Saying Goodbye to Ballina on our last day we had a very long drive to Dublin. Before returning to the airport our driver, Maurice, took us on a city tour and told us a lot of its history. He entertained us throughout the holiday with many tales of Ireland, not all of which we believed!!



Thanks to Pat Gorie and Evelyn and Ged Wilson for the photographs.

Margaret McDermott

WALKING Wednesday 27/10/2021**The Torrs gorge at New Mills**

Twenty u3a members attended this easy 4-mile walk led by David Burke. We started from the Hague Bar carpark and joined the Midshires Way and followed the river Goyt upstream to the spectacular Torrs Gorge at New Mills, where we enjoyed an early coffee stop and admired the grandeur and scale of the area. (if you've not been there, it's well worth a visit).



The millennium bridge provides easy access to the wonders of the Torrs gorge with its wealth of industrial archaeology, the spectacular Union Bridge completed in 1884, the confluence of the rivers Sett and Goyt, the Hydro-electric Archimedes screw generator and plenty more evidence of the important of the power generating area in former times.

We were impressed by the quality of the stonework, particularly the various bridges and the impressive stone block railway embankment adjacent to Millennium bridge.



We progressed further upstream along the Goyt and passed under the magnificent curved multi-span railway viaduct constructed in 1902 by Midland Railway to provide the express link between Manchester and London.



On reaching Bankend we crossed the river Goyt and entered Goytside Meadows Nature Reserve and climbed up to the Peak Forest Canal walking towards Disley, passing the site previously occupied by Victoria Mill. This mill was built in 1860 and when closed in 1985, it was the last cotton spinning mill working in Newtown. There was a disastrous fire here 1986. Our walk followed the canal towpath towards Disley where we turned right into Bury miwick, dropping down to the Goyt floodplain and back to Hague Bar carpark. The weather remained bright and dry throughout the walk, contrary to the forecast and we all were pleased to be out and about again!

David Burke

QUIZ

Something a bit different this month. The last letter of a correct answer is the first letter of the next answer. Answers on page 17.

1. What is the correct name for the gas that is commonly known as laughing gas?
2. Who has appeared in films playing Danny Fisher, Glenn Tyler and Lucky Jackson?
3. Sometimes called the Crimean conference what is the more common name for the meeting of Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin in 1945?
4. According to Herman Melville, the author of Moby Dick, what was the name of the captain of the whaling ship Pequod?
5. Which city hosted the 1992 Summer Olympic games?

THEATRE

Relatively speaking

Another local theatre company has reopened after their enforced darkness for the last 20 months – Chads Theatre in Cheadle Hulme. Another of my usual haunts. They've been busy during lockdown with a revamped front of house space, new roof and a new ventilation system to help keep everyone Covid safe.



Their first post lockdown production was a comedy– Alan Ayckbourn's *Relatively Speaking*. A very funny play verging on farce with mistaken identity and misunderstandings aplenty. There were only two sets. The first, a small flat where we meet two of the characters (a young couple) and a garden in Bucks where we meet the other two (an older married couple). It is in the garden where they all come together to much amusement for the audience and consternation and bewilderment for the characters.

It was written and set in the late 60's and the clothes and setting took me back to my teenage years. Mini dresses for the young lady and crimplene and pinnies for the older one.

A good opening effort on the part of Chads cast and crew and I'm looking forward to their next production – Patrick Hamilton's *Gaslight*– although not such a light-hearted subject as this one.

Chris Edmunds

Educating Rita

The Garrick's latest offering was *Educating Rita* written by Willy Russell in 1980. The play tracks the journey of Rita, a Liverpool hairdresser, as she learns to think for herself through the vehicle of a Literature course with the Open University and her dialogue with Frank, the OU tutor. The play is a two hander and the actors are on stage the whole time. Both actors were impressive in their roles. A good evening's entertainment.



You may have seen the 1983 film starring Michael Caine as Frank and Julie Walters as Rita. If not, I would highly recommend it.

Diane Saxon

POETRY CORNER

Thanks to Stewart Clay for a new poem.

Love Knows No Frontiers

*Love is blind wrote the Bard - Love torments us, wounds and scars
Love's echoes they can haunt us - Love enthralls and then beguiles
Love knows no frontiers - Love knows no limits nor no bounds
Love sounds no grand fanfare - Love hums only dulcet sounds*

*Lovers promise undying love - and swear ne'er the two shall part
But then the other's Love dies - and leaves one more broken heart
So many couples believe theirs - to be true Love beyond compare
Until one Lover says "It's over" - and they "No longer care"*

*Love can glide like an eagle - swooping through clear blue skies
Or sink as if a lead weight - neath a whirlpool of sad plaintive cries
Love can feel symphonic - sending hopes soaring steep and high
But those same hopes can drift out of reach - borne on a violin's sighs*

*They say Cupid's fabled arrow - can strike when it's least expected
But it never brings a pain in the heart - as in that of a Lover rejected
Many true Love stories end - in much heartache and great sorrow
But star crossed Lovers still dream - of a perfect shared tomorrow*

*The Lovestruck seem to need Love - as they need God's air to breathe
They all yearn for that special one - one who swears they'll never leave
But if they take Love for granted - leaving soft Loving words unsaid
They could find themselves alone - in a cold and Loveless, lonely bed*

*So many romantic words penned - for Love songs and for sonnets
Yet Love still remains an enigma - to both songwriters and poets
A maddening, baffling enigma - which has no cunning code to break
Love just appears as a dizzying maze - with no obvious path to take*

*Love is blind wrote the Bard - Love torments us, wounds and scars
Love's echoes they can haunt us - Love enthralls and then beguiles
Love knows no frontiers - Love knows no limits nor no bounds
Love sounds no grand fanfare - Love hums only dulcet sounds*

Walter has been busy writing limericks again this month. Here are just two of those he sent me.

A young fellow from Handforth – Dean
Was fearful he'd ruptured his spleen
Ghostly nurses abound
Deathly heads all around.
But all's well. 'Twas just Halloween.

There was an old rogue down in Dorking
Who, attractive young women kept
stalking.
He met his comeuppance,
Caught red-handed by good chance.
Behind bars now. Can never go walking.

November

No sun – no moon!
No morn – no noon –
No dawn – no dusk – no proper time of day –
No sky – no earthly view –
No distance looking blue –
No road – no street – no 't'other side the way' –
No end to any Row –
No indications where the Crescents go –
No top to any steeple –
No recognitions of familiar people –
No courtesies for showing 'em –
No knowing 'em –
No travelling at all – no locomotion,
No inkling of the way – no notion –
'No go' – by land or ocean –
No mail – no post –
No news from any foreign coast –
No Park – no Ring – no afternoon gentility –
No company – no nobility –
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member –
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds, –
November!

Thomas Hood 1844

The language of bridge

Doreen Scotte received this from a friend but it has proved difficult to find the source.

Take-out double	another name for double dating?
Penalty double	A drinking game?
Sacrificing	giving up – but what?
Signalling	if only drivers could learn how to do this
Game-try	A good effort? Like England's football perhaps?
Weak Twos	Something to do with weak hands?

Doreen also found this recipe. A new slant on the traditional cake! There are various versions on the web; this one is from https://funnyshit.com.au/xmas_cake.html

CHRISTMAS CAKE RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of water
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup of brown sugar
- lemon juice
- 4 large eggs
- nuts
- 2 cups of dried fruit
- 1 bottle Johnnie Walker

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sample the Johnnie Walker to check quality.
2. Take a large bowl, check the whisky again. To be sure it is the highest quality, pour one level cup and drink.
3. Repeat.
4. Turn on the electric mixer. Beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl.
5. Add one teaspoon of sugar. Beat again.
6. Make sure the whisky is still OK. Try another cup.
7. Turn off the mixer.
8. Break 2 leggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit.
9. Mix on the turner.
10. If the fried druit gets stuck in the beaterers pry it loose with a drewscriver.
11. Sample the whisky to check for tonsistency.
12. Next, sift two cups of salt. Or something. Who giveshz a shit.
13. Check the whisky. Now sift the lemon juice and strain your nuts.
14. Add one table.
15. Add a spoon of sugar, or something. Whatever you can find.
16. Greash the oven and piss in the fridge.
17. Turn the cake tin 350 defrees.
18. Don't forget to beat off the turner.
19. Throw the bowl through the f**king window.
20. Check the whisky again and go to bed.

Quiz answers

1. Nitrous oxide
2. Elvis Presley
3. Yalta
4. Ahab
5. Barcelona