

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

November 2023



Inside this month

From the Editor

Dates for your diary

Monthly meeting

Programme of meetings for 2024

Group activities

Table tennis

Marple Bridge and Mellor open gardening group

National u3a events

How our thinking skills change as we age and what we can do about it

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the November 2023 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. In this edition, we see that several groups have lost members recently and would welcome new members. Some of these groups have been running for quite a while and it would be a shame to lose them. If you are interested in joining a group, please contact the group leader. You can do this via the website or their contact details are on the group contacts sheet. We also have a report from the Travel group who share the experience of their recent river cruise. The cover photo this month shows some of the group resting on the sun deck as the boat cruises down the river. The cover image from last month's edition prompted Walter to write about the pictured walk. You can read this on the next page.

We also have information from Sue Ward about the Marple Bridge and Mellor U3A Open Gardening Group. High Lane u3a members are invited to attend their meetings and can be assured of a warm welcome.

Paul reminds us about two events coming up in the next couple of months and we have repeated the programme for next year for your information. The newsletter is accompanied by the National Office bitesize newsletter for October You can read the full October newsletter [here](#). This includes news from u3as across the country, a look ahead to the first u3a Festival in July next year and an introduction to the new subject advisor for AI.

As ever, I would like to thank all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions. Please keep them coming. I am always pleased to hear from individual members as well as well groups – please feel free to share some of your news, your interests, or items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members. This could be places you have visited, books you have read, films you have seen; your stories, anecdotes, photographs, recipes, poems, limericks, jokes; the list is endless.

The next issue of our newsletter will be December 2023 so please send your contributions to me by 27 November 2023 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

Halloween originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. In the eighth century, Pope Gregory III designated November 1 as a day to honour the saints. The evening before was known as All Hallows Eve, and later Halloween. Over time, Halloween evolved into a day of activities like trick-or-treating, carving lanterns, donning costumes, and eating treats. (www.history.com)



The walk picture featured in last month's newsletter was actually taken on 18th December 2013. It was on a walk led by Steve Reynolds in the Lower Mellor area, which finished at the Royal Oak, Mellor where we had lunch – in spite of the picture by the Hare and Hounds, which was earlier in the walk.

At least 10 of the 18 on the walk have been out occasionally on walks this year – David Burke, Louanne and Peter Collins, David Lloyd, Walter Mason (I was the photographer), Jeff Mortimer, Steve and Ann Reynolds, Ron and Marjorie Rennell – but only 3 were on the last two 2023 walks – David Burke, Jeff Mortimer and myself.

It is fair to say that many of us do find walking rather harder than we used to! But also true is that almost all former walkers do have an enduring affection and nostalgia for the group and wish their legs and bodies would still enable them to keep walking.

Walter Mason

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The **Christmas Party** this year is on December 13th. The event will include an excellent buffet and a musical entertainer. Tickets are on sale at the November meeting, priced at £12. This will be the last chance to buy your ticket.

Doors open 1.30pm. Prompt start 2pm.
Members only. **ADMISSION BY TICKET.**

And **DON'T FORGET.**

There are just a few tickets left for our **Music evening** with Anthony John Clarke on November 17th in the Village Hall. Belfast born, Anthony John Clarke is recognised as one of the top singer-songwriters on the acoustic/folk scene. He has 12 albums and 3 singles to his name. He has played at folk clubs and festivals all over the UK and beyond, including Australia, USA and Europe.

Price £20 includes hot supper / Lasagne and Apple pie and cream.
ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY.

Paul Kenneth

MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the October meeting was Dean Mottershead who is an Estate Planner at Harratts Legal Services. His talk was entitled Have you got the right Will? or Do you have a Will at all? Notwithstanding that the subject of dying can be a difficult subject he lightened the atmosphere by relating a few light-hearted and amusing facts about himself. We had to decide which were real and which were fantasy! Did he really run 10 marathons! He was impressed that everyone present had a will but wanted us to be sure that they were valid and up to date. He gave us information about Will trusts, Lasting Power of Attorney and Inheritance Tax. Also, how to make the right provisions for care if needed. Having the correct documents is key. There followed a lively Q and A session. Dean provided the cake for the refreshments, and it was greatly appreciated.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 8th November when the subject is Hearing dogs for deaf people.

Kath Wareham

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FOR 2024

DATE	SPEAKER	TITLE
10 th Jan	Kate Heller	Hand Bell Ringing
14 th Feb	AGM	
13 th Mar	John Hooley	Royal Yachts
10 th April	Caroline Melliar-Smith	Camera Rolling
8 th May	Kevin and Joy Siddall	The DNA of British Musicals
12 th June	Keith Warrender	Underground Manchester
10 th July	David Seddon	Romanticism
14 th Aug	Nicholas Minshull	Legal Power of Attorney
11 th Sept	John Wallace	Ten Thousand Years of Bling (Alderley Edge)
9 th October	Maria Grimsley	Born in a Trunk
13 th Nov	Kim Wright	Children's Air Ambulance
11 th Dec	Roger Browne	Entertainer

Once again, thanks to Sheila for coming up with what looks like a varied and interesting programme.

GROUP NEWS

BRABYNS PARK TABLE TENNIS

We play each Tuesday starting promptly at 1:00pm finishing at 3:00pm

We are looking for new members. We cater for all abilities; we are a very friendly bunch. If you are unsure, try a free taster session. Any questions don't hesitate to contact me.

Keith Seddon



MARPLE BRIDGE AND MELLOR u3a OPEN GARDENING GROUP

We are an OPEN gardening group, and ALL U3A members are welcome. I am programme coordinator for Marple Bridge and Mellor U3A Open Gardening Group. We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in Marple Methodist Church Hall. Our meetings are a mix of speakers, and outings to Gardens in the Northwest Region. For the monthly meetings with a speaker, we each pay £3 towards the cost of the speaker and the meeting room. Our outings are priced individually depending on numbers, and the cost of coach hire and entry to the venue.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 8th November 2023. We have Bob Worsley – A partnership with the Alpine Garden Society, coming to give a presentation on the story of cyclamen, hepatica, and snowdrops. Bob will have plants for sale after his talk. These will be mainly cyclamen due to the lateness of the season. Our group meets for coffee at 09.45, the presentation follows this at 10.00, and usually lasts 45 minutes to 1 hour. I do hope some High Lane u3a members can join us. They can be assured of a warm welcome.

I have attached next year's programme, and it is my hope that it can be published in your newsletters in the future.

Sue Ward

CHURCHES AND PUBS

October visit to St. Edmund's Church, Castleton.



On entering the church, we were greeted with tea, coffee and biscuits. A good way to start the day. Linda then introduced herself and gave a very interesting talk on the Church. She was helped by Angela and the organist John.

St. Edmund 's Church was originally called the Church of Peak Castle. The village of Castleton grew from the base of the hill within a protective earthwork called the Town Ditch. The Church was built on a mound within this enclosure. The Church dates to around the last decade of the 11th century or the first decade of the 12th century.

St. Edmund was the patron saint of England, before St. George. Edmund became King of East Anglia in AD855. Along with King Alfred he fought against Viking and Norse invaders. Edmund was captured in AD870, and he was beheaded when he refused to renounce his Christian faith.

The finest feature of the Church is the Norman arch between the nave and the chancel, made more impressive by its well-preserved chevron carving. The nave roof is decorated with 18th century bosses bearing the portcullis symbol of the Duchy of Lancaster. Two other interesting things were the Norman font at the west end of the chancel and the medieval, 14th century figure of a saint in the window nearest the arch. Last but not least are the 17th century box pews, bearing the names of families who sat there. On the end of each pew there are the pew lamps- 19th century oil lamps, converted to electricity in 1964.

After having an interesting look around inside the church, we then went outside where Angela took us around the grounds of the church. The oldest gravestone in the grounds dates from 1571.

Upon departing the church, we crossed the road to the George pub where we were served an excellent two course meal. Food and service was excellent.

A big thanks to Dave and Gill for organising the trip.

Paul Kenneth

6th December Bowden church and the Jolly Thresher.
A deposit is required to book your place.

CANASTA

Canasta numbers fluctuate a lot at this time of year with us being an evening event, but we are right here in High Lane. No need to know the game, just turn up at the Royal Oak on a Tuesday night at 7pm for a couple of hours of fun and good company. Any questions, just get in touch.

Pauline Wright

CRIME FICTION READING



Our book for October was the Monogram Murders by Sophie Hannah. This is the first book in Hannah's series of Hercule Poirot books, continuation novels featuring characters created by Agatha Christie. In this book, Poirot's sidekick is not the usual Captain Hastings but a hapless Scotland Yard detective, Edward Catchpole. Their relationship seemed a bit strained, quite unlike that with Hastings. They were called to the luxurious Bloxham Hotel to investigate the murders of two women and one man, all in separate rooms. Each body had a monogrammed cufflink in their mouth. The author accurately depicts the mannerisms of Poirot but the plot is complex and the denouement rather extended. Some of the group found it hard going and too long.

Our book for November is Black Dog by Stephen Booth. This is the first book in his Cooper and Fry series set in the Peak District. The book won the 2001 Barry Award for the Best British Crime Novel.

Diane Saxon

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Six of us discussed the pros and cons of the following issues.

1 Will the government give the go ahead for the construction of the HS2 railway from Birmingham to Manchester or will the HS2 terminate at Birmingham? General agreement was – no, the HS2 will finish at Birmingham and the benefits and opportunities that might have resulted to the north of England will not be realised.

2. There is a desire in England to reduce the maximum speed limit from 30 mph to 20 mph in built up areas. It is noted throughout Wales in built up areas 20 mph is the limit. We were split on this issue; some of us said in built up areas 30 mph was OK others said 20 mph should be the limit, benefits would be less exhaust pollution fewer accidents and lower fuel consumption.

3. Pollution of our streams, rivers and seashores from raw untreated sewerage. Who should pay to clean this up – the general public in increased water bills, the water company's shareholders, local authorities who? Answer UK taxpayers will pay and water company directors will continue to receive their salaries and the water company shareholders will continue to receive their dividend payments in full. There are now several independent water companies in the UK. This should be replaced with a National Water Authority.

4. Knife Crime and Knife Attacks – these are now at an alarming height within the male youth – how can we redress this and deal with teenage crime? Answer – Put more focus on our youth – more time and resource put into deprived areas and the youth in these areas. More police 'on the beat' tasked with cutting crime in the bud.

5 Should chemist shops be permitted to prescribe medical treatment and drugs? Answer – Yes and reduce the load on doctors. In Spain and France it is common practice.

6. Is the reputation of a hospital more important than the welfare of the patient? No! the welfare of the patient is paramount.

Trevor Kinvig

GERMAN

We continue to meet most Fridays and always find something to chat about in the 2 hours, often accounts of recent travels. We recently enjoyed some marzipan, the speciality of Lubeck, brought back by one of our members. Numbers are a bit sparser this year so we would welcome any new members, but they would need to have a good working knowledge of German. We have now managed to acquire enough second hand copies of the new book we plan to study this year.

Marlene Brookes

MEMOIRS

I don't know if you have ever tried compiling your "Desert Island Discs" but it's very difficult. No sooner do you think you have finished than you remember the lovely tracks you left out. Nonetheless, we enjoyed the exercise and many of the choices struck a chord (no pun intended).

Stewart had even penned a poem with song titles from Buddy Holly. Trevor had been forced to vacate a war zone in a tearing hurry and Bryan had arrested a burglar, only to have to ask him to direct him to the Police Station. Other reminiscences included Internet Dating and holiday jobs.

As usual, there was much nostalgia and good humour in the room.

Sheila Harrop

HISTORY

James Stanley, 7th Earl of Derby

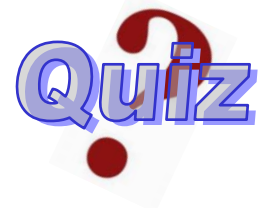
The subject of our September meeting was James Stanley, 7th Earl of Derby who lived from 1607 – 1661. He was an English nobleman, politician and supporter of the Royalist cause in the English Civil War. Our speaker, Ben Alexander, took up his story in the years after the war, when Cromwell ruled the country. Derby, who was Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, returned from the Isle of Man to join Charles, the future Charles II who was challenging Cromwell and laying claim to the English throne. From Scotland, the troops marched south, closely followed by Cromwell's men. The armies fought at Worcester which ended in defeat for the Royalists. Derby led the King away to his friends resulting in the famous escape when Charles hid in the 'Royal Oak'. Derby was in retreat and surrendered, found guilty of treason and beheaded in 1661 in Bolton.

Ben's talk was well illustrated with contemporary documents including personal letters to his wife and children which brought the sad story to life; a brief moment in history.

Pam Curley

QUIZZING

We were a small group this month but we all enjoyed Janet's challenging quiz.



What is aloo?

Who is the patent saint of animals?

Which European capital has the most canals?

Which port is the largest in Europe?

What is measured on the Fujita scale?

Which berry is a hybrid of the blackberry and raspberry?

We have lost some members recently and really would welcome some new members. The meetings are very sociable, and we have nice cakes.

Please contact me for details.

Diane Saxon

PHOTOGRAPHY

1st Witch way should I go – Jeff 6 votes

Joint 2nd with 4 votes each

Crying out for someone to buy me – Jeff

Treats – Diane

Selection dilemma – Walter



The subject for October is **Museums**. If you fancy having a go, please get in touch. Advanced technical skills are not necessary. All you need is a camera or a phone that will take pictures.

Jeff Robinson

READING

We continue to have lively discussions on the first Monday in each month on the books the group has chosen for the period up to April. In October we discussed BROOKLYN by Colm Toibin which was made into a successful film a few years ago. It tells the story of a young Irish girl sent to America in the 50s to improve her employment prospects. She does well, gets a good job and falls in love with and marries a young Italian. She returns to Ireland on the death of her sister and is then torn between her life in the USA and a possible alternative life back home.

Most members enjoyed the book and felt it painted a very convincing picture of the life of the Irish community in Brooklyn and small-town life in Ireland but some felt it was perhaps a little too simplistic.

Marlene Brookes

TRAVEL

RIVER CRUISE ON THE RHINE/MOSELLE

On October 4th our group of twelve, including one from Southport U3A, left Manchester Airport for the flight to Dusseldorf. We were surprised to be checked in without having to queue. Apparently, Wednesday is a very good day to travel. On arrival we were taken by coach to Cologne where we boarded the Geoffrey Chaucer. Inscribed above the doorway were quotes from Chaucer's work: Time and Tide Wait for No Man and She Was as Fair as the Rose in May etc.



COCHEM

The following day after passing through several locks we arrived at Cochem dominated by the 15th century Reichsburg castle. There were two options to get to the town – either climb 52 steps or walk up a very steep slope! It is a picturesque town with many half-timbered buildings and cobbled streets first settled by the Celts and Romans. We were able to join one of the groups on a walking tour which ended in the marketplace just in time to hear the Glockenspiel bells playing. Following dinner on the ship we were entertained by a local folk group singing many amusing drinking songs. Lots of clapping and joining in the chorus.



TRIER

On Friday we travelled by coach to Trier, supposed to be the oldest town in Germany and capital of the Roman province of Gallia Belgica. It is also the birthplace of Karl Marx who is buried in Highgate Cemetery in London. A huge statue of him, funded by the Chinese Government, was erected in one of the squares in 2018. Another walking tour was arranged but most of us opted for the Noddy train from the Porta Nigra one of the best-preserved Roman buildings. There was a running commentary on the train in German, Dutch and English. It was quite a bone-shaking ride, but we saw much more of Trier than we could have done by walking. One of our group did go on the walking tour and learned about a pilgrimage hotel with three floors but only accessed by ladder on the first floor which was pulled up at night for security. Trier is one of three major pilgrimage centres together with Rome and Santiago. Before returning to the ship, we visited one of the many cafes for coffee and apple cake.

BERNKASTEL

The next day we visited the delightful town of Bernkastel. When we first stepped ashore everything was quiet so we were able to wander at leisure through the cobbled streets. By 10 am. the town came alive when the shops opened, and local people came to enjoy their weekend. Our excellent guide told us about the town's history which is inseparable from wine, the main variety being Riesling. The town was frequently flooded, and we were shown marks on the buildings indicating the height of the water. There were many inviting coffee shops with displays of wonderful cakes: almond slices, walnut and raspberry cake to name but a few. Several of us ordered these but they were so large, too much for one person, and really needed to be shared.

Around every bend in the Moselle valley the steep sides were covered in vineyards. The grape harvest was not yet ready, but we could see a few people up on the hillsides starting to pick the grapes. The guide told us that it is a labour-intensive industry as no one has yet invented a machine for such steep slopes. Many of us sampled the Riesling wine in the ship's restaurant.

KOBLENZ and BOPPARD

Koblenz is where the Moselle joins the Rhine and takes place at the headland Deutches Eck where there is huge horseback statue of the first German Emperor Wilhelm I.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, as are many places in the Rhineland, Boppard is one of the most attractive villages with its narrow cobbled streets and half-timbered houses. It has the best preserved Roman town walls in Germany. The magnificent St. Severus church has a most imposing high altar in reddish brown stone reaching from floor to ceiling.

One of our group is a very early riser and so met many of the crew most of whom are Eastern European. She chatted to the night receptionist Riko and to Sladibor Zeljkovic, the Restaurant Manager and managed to learn a little Serbian. We were quite surprised that one of the waitresses was from Belfast, a primary teacher who had taken a year off to do something different and was returning to school in January. Breakfast, lunch and dinner had a variety of well-balanced nutritious options which were in contrast to the bland diet that many people had in lockdown. The service from all staff was exemplary, always cheerful and smiling.



We spent Monday morning sitting on the top deck cruising through the Rhine Gorge which is one of the most dangerous sections of the river to navigate because it is so

narrow. The famous Lorelei is a steep slate rock which legends say lured sailors to their death by the sound of a maiden singing. A poem written by Heinrich Heine tells the story. An actual statue was erected nearby in 1983. The Rhine has been a transport link between northern and southern Europe for thousands of years and is evident today in the number of large barges we passed. On both sides of the valley there were numerous castles, most in ruins, but several very well preserved, particularly Marksburg which some of us remembered from our visit last year.

RUDESHEIM

In the afternoon we arrived in Rudesheim, thought by many of us to be the most interesting place we visited. It was celebrating the first wine of the season which apparently contains a lot of unfermented yeast. After a relatively short walk from the ship we arrived at the Drosselgasse a steep narrow 15th century cobbled street full of wine bars, wine gardens and unusual souvenir shops. A few of us were tempted to try the Rudesheimer Kaffee. The waiter came to the table to make it in special cups. First sugar lumps, then Asbach brandy which he set alight, coffee and a huge dollop of whipped cream and chocolate flakes on top. Delicious!!

COLOGNE

This was our last stop. The ship was moored a long way from the city so shuttle buses were used to get to the centre. Founded in 38 BC. by a Germanic tribe it became a Roman settlement in 50 AD. The cathedral is the largest Gothic structure in the world. Started in 1248 it took six hundred years to complete and houses the Shrine of the Three Kings. The sun shone through the magnificent stained glass reflecting the colours on the internal walls. Nearby is the old town with tree-lined squares and excellent shops. After sampling the German Kolsch beer one of our group discovered that the cafe had once been the canteen of the West German Radio and Television Service and that there is still a studio there.

In the evening a representative from the Cologne Chocolate Museum came on board to tell us about the history of chocolate making. It developed from the cocoa bean grown by the Mayans and Aztecs to the present day and eventually brought to Europe. We particularly enjoyed the Lindt truffles from the samples she brought for us to taste.

Throughout the week the weather was fine and sunny with a temperature of about 23 degrees. After a pleasant hour's flight from Dusseldorf and just as we were about to land the pilot informed that it was raining in Manchester.

Contributions from Pam Cooke, Kath Gooding, Ron Holt, Bill and Lynn Joslin and Doreen Potts.

Margaret McDermott

WALKING

Hayfield, Sett Valley Trail, Lantern Pike, Blackshaw Farm, Little Hayfield, Park Hall Wood, Middle Moor, Hayfield.

On a surprisingly sunny late October walk, led by Ian Hope and Jeff Robinson, nineteen walkers enjoyed a 6-mile challenging circular walk starting from The Royal Hotel carpark in Hayfield. Conditions on the day were glorious! Sunshine throughout with very little breeze and clear horizon searching views. A day to remember!

The route had a few short ups and downs in keeping with the undulating character of the area – beautiful landscape – moorland heather – spectacular scenery. An inspiration to lift our spirits at this time of year.



David Burke

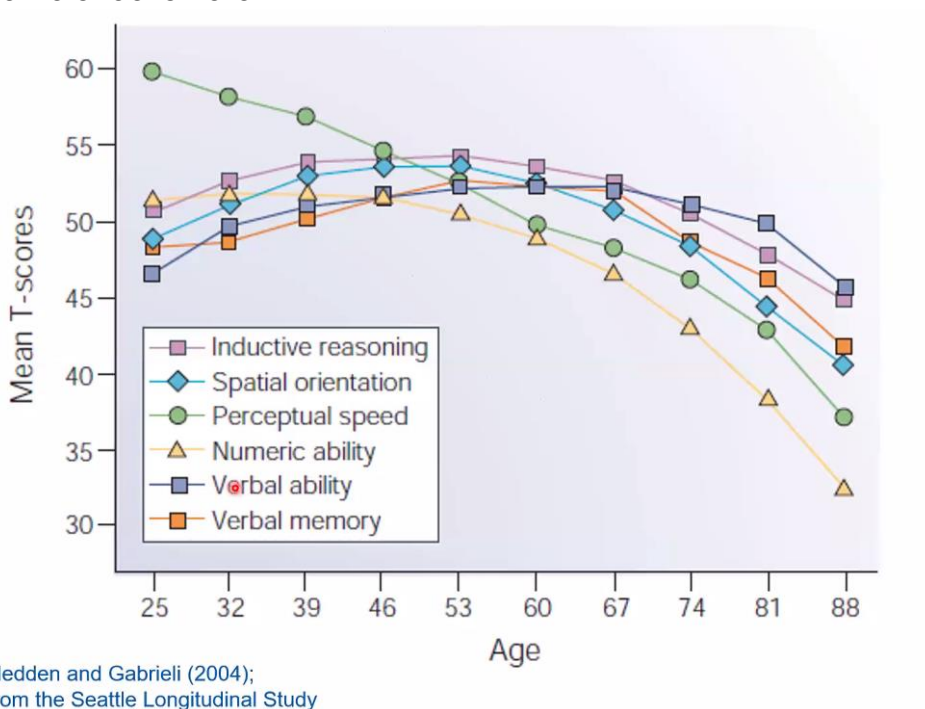
NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER

Some talks you might want to book. These are normally very well supported. All are free via Zoom. Click here for details and to book a place.
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

- 10 Nov The curious history of labyrinths & mazes
- 14 Nov Maths games
- 15 Nov Family history
- 29 Nov Staying safe online

I attended one of the talks in October delivered by Professor Alan Gow of Heriot-Watt University. His fascinating talk was entitled How our thinking skills change as we age and what we can do about it. His research team has set up 'The Ageing Lab' and is running a research project looking at a range of activities as potential interventions for cognitive ageing. <http://www.healthyageing.hw.ac.uk/about.html>

The chart below illustrates how various cognitive skills decline with age. There may be some shocks here!



Professor Gow stated that the speed of thinking starts to decline in our 20s and this is closely related to our remembering abilities. However, all is not lost – their research suggests that the ways cognitive skills change are mainly determined by lifestyle not by genes.

Diane Saxon