

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

September 2023



Inside this month

From the Editor
Monthly meeting
Coffee morning
u3a week
Autumn music evening
Group activities
Travel group Liverpool
Ireland holiday
National u3a events
Interest Groups online

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the September 2023 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. This really is a bumper issue – the largest issue to date I think! As well as reports from our groups we have reports of two recent travel group activities: a day in Liverpool and a day-by-day account of this year's Ireland adventure. As ever, I would like to thank all the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions. It's good to hear from the Table tennis group about their recent competition, congratulations to Kate and Dale. As we have lots of photos from the recent trips, I have again delved into the archives for this month's cover photo which shows a smiling group in London in 2009. Please do tell us if you were there.

Also attached to the email is the National Office bitesize newsletter for August. You can read the full newsletter [here](#). This has reports of varied activities taking place in u3as across the country plus information about the first Interest Groups Online Fair – you can read more about IGO on page 22 of the newsletter.

This is your newsletter. 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 October 2023 so please send your contributions to me by 27 September 2023 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

COFFEE MORNING – u3a WEEK

As part of u3a week, we have organised a coffee morning on Friday 22 September at the Village Hall from 10:30am until Midday. This is for all our u3a members and anyone who is interested in joining the u3a. Please spread the word.

Tea coffee, cakes and biscuits. All welcome.

u3a Week is an annual event to showcase the activity, learning and fun which takes place across the movement every day. It is a celebration of positive ageing, highlighting our members' lived experience. In 2023, u3a Week is 16 – 24 September.

AUTUMN MUSIC EVENING

An evening with Anthony John Clarke

Village Hall, Friday November 17th.

Belfast born, he 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.



He provides entertainment of the highest quality singing very witty and humorous songs and telling funny stories. We are very lucky to get him as he has many bookings for this year and well into next year.

The evening will include a choice of hot pot, lasagne or vegetarian option supper followed by apple pie and cream. You can bring your own drinks and glasses.

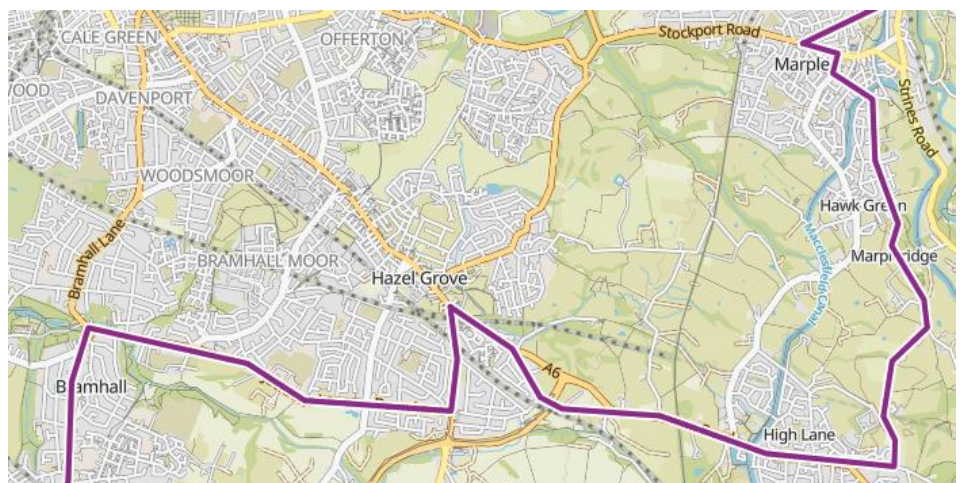
Cost is £20. Tickets will be on sale at the September meeting.

Paul Kenneth

TOUR OF BRITAIN CYCLE RACE Sunday 3rd September

The first stage of this year's race covers Altrincham to Manchester – just 163km. They will be travelling from Bramhall to Hazel Grove then turning right at the Rising Sun and riding through High Lane then on to Marple.

The timings are
12:28pm Bramhall
12:33pm Rising Sun Hazel Grove
12:40pm High Lane
12:48pm Marple



MONTHLY MEETING

We were fortunate that Rod Devereux was able to deputise for us at short notice when the booked speaker was indisposed. Rod had enjoyed a varied career in the police service, starting work in Moss Side. He worked his way through various departments including drugs and vice, progressing to diplomatic, CID and Royal duties.



Some of his experiences were quite harrowing, for example, the break in at a mortuary which resulted in the arrest of a young man. Others were funny such as the stake out monitoring a very busy brothel keeper where the team ran out of paper and resorted to writing on the wallpaper in the derelict house they were hiding in. Rod had to attend the court hearing with three rolls of wallpaper under his arm!! It was a most interesting and entertaining session.

The speaker on September 13th is Nigel Linge whose talk is entitled "When the Lines go dead - Preparing for the PSTN switch off."

Sheila Harrop

A few words about PSTN

PSTN stands for public switched telephone network – the copper phone network that has delivered our analogue landline phone services for decades. The plan is for it to be switched off at the end of 2025 and for all landline services to be offered digitally. We will still be able to have a landline but the technology that powers it will be different. The landline will use the internet to make calls, rather than old copper network.

It is expected that most reasonably modern phones will work with the new technology, and we will have the same telephone number. For those without a broadband connection at home, your supplier will install one. Both BT and Virgin have committed to not charging customers any extra for landline-only broadband connections.

Other devices which use the phone network may need to be replaced. Nigel will be able to give us more details at the meeting.

GROUP NEWS

CHURCHES AND PUBS

St Thomas Church Mellor hosted our August visit. At the top of a hill where people had lived in the Middle Stone Age, 10,000 years ago, and where there was a hill Fort in the Iron Age, stands the church built probably in the late 13th century, with spectacular views which can even be as far as Wales!

Reverend Andrew Tawn had only been the vicar for three weeks when he welcomed us and informed us of all he had learnt about his new living which included: The wooden, octagonal pulpit is possibly the OLDEST IN THE WORLD! The font is one of the oldest in the country and pictured round it is an animal eating its tail! This is said to mean eternal life. The hand stitched kneelers are very beautiful and its worth a visit to the church for anyone interested in this skill.

Mellor was once a thriving mill town and the church had had a gallery and could hold a congregation of 684. Today the church is a busy place with a choir of 20 including children and teenagers and there are 3 organists! Visiting organists give concerts and details can be found on the church website.

After looking round the church, the Iron Age ditch and the Round House, we dined in the nearby Devonshire Arms which just managed to seat 33 of us in one room where we were able to chat with U3A friends.

Thank goodness for cars so Mellor locals don't have to walk up the hill to church, especially on winter days!

Our upcoming visits are:

October with Gill and Dave. St. Edmund 's Castleton.

If you haven't paid or ordered your food please do so at the September meeting. This visit is now full but there is a reserve list if you wish to put your name down.

December with Pam and Ron. Hale.

Booking at October and November u3a meetings.

Dorothy Neillands

CURRENT AFFAIRS

We met in August just after the Lionesses had defeated the Matildas. Unfortunately, this success was not repeated in the final of the Women's World Cup.

It has been suggested by some members of the Government that the UK should leave the European Court of Human Rights which would put us together with Russia and Belarus the only two European countries who are not members. Would we really want that? However, we thought this was unlikely to happen whatever government is in power.

The closure of large numbers of train station ticket offices has been announced. This is yet another example of gradually reducing our contact with other people.

Others are banks closing local branches, self-checkouts in supermarkets, youth clubs—all cost cutting exercises. A lady on the checkout in Sainsbury's said she knew of several older people coming in to buy just a few items so that they could talk to a person. Will we eventually only be able to communicate with machines?

Just when we've reached a certain age and think we've seen it all along comes Mr. Trump. Would it make life interesting if he were to be re-elected as US President? Most of us thought that it would be a disaster and cannot understand why, in such a large country, there does seem to be an alternative for his party.

We discussed global warming— wild fires burning out of control, temperatures rising beyond endurance, ice caps melting. Should we really grumble about UK weather?

The Government has apparently allocated £250m funding for £5,000 NHS hospital beds. Where are the doctors and nurses going to come from as there currently seems to be a large shortage of staff. Perhaps if they were paid more there would not be so many emigrating to countries such as Australia.

One of Rishi Sunak's five pledges was to stop the boats. We did not think he would be successful as only bad weather in the Channel seems to reduce the numbers. The barge moored off the Dorset coast to house asylum seekers has encountered a lot of problems— the latest being contaminated water. It was hoped that this would be a cheaper solution than using hotels. What do France and Germany do with immigrants as their numbers are higher than ours?

There will be no meeting in September. The next one will be at 10:30 on October 3rd.

Pat Gorie

CINEMA

Oppenheimer

Christopher Nolan's epic film about Robert Oppenheimer, a brilliant theoretical physicist who became Director of the Manhattan Project's Los Alamos Laboratory during WW2, is gripping and devastating. It tracks Oppenheimer's path towards the creation of the atomic bomb and his subsequent feelings about its use.

I found it to be a 'slow burner' in the first half hour when it was setting the scene. It is not an easy film to watch as it is densely packed with information packed dialogue. However, this is helped by the brilliant cinematography. From long distant views of the New Mexico scenery to the close-up facials on Cillian Murphy playing Oppenheimer. Nolan switches between storylines and time zones with the use of black and white scenes and colour very effectively. Cillian Murphy is compelling throughout the film showing Oppenheimer's conflicting emotions. His obsession with solving the problem occupies him fully and he is left tragically compromised and committed to creating a weapon of mass destruction but having no say in how it will be used. The cinematographic use of displaying his thoughts in visual displays is brilliantly done, especially after the August 1945 bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, when the full effects of the damage to human life and its long-term effects show his inner suffering.

His early relationship with Jean Tatlock (Florence Pugh) when based at Berkeley in the 1930s comes back to haunt him later. She was a medical student who was a member of the Communist Party, as was his brother. This relationship continued after his marriage. until Tatlock's suicide in 1944. Emily Blunt plays his wife Kitty and shows her qualities as an actress in later scenes in 1953 during highly publicised hearings of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). Oppenheimer is accused of having Communist sympathies at the height of US anti-communist McCarthyism.

His previous involvement with Tatlock and Oppenheimer's push to regulate nuclear weapons after WW2 along with his opposition to the hydrogen bomb are used against him by Lewis Strauss, head of the AEC (Robert Downey Jr) who succeeds in having his security clearance revoked. This back-fired on Strauss who was seen by many as a villain. with the hearings taking the form of an inquisition.

All in all, I found the film 'Food for Thought' showing a brilliant scientist who was a complicated and conflicted man. Well worth viewing.

Irene Taylor

CANASTA

Our membership has increased lately, but new members are always welcome. If you want to learn how to play, just turn up for our Tuesday evening sessions at 7pm in the Royal Oak, High Lane. Very friendly group

Pauline

MEMOIRS

We held our meeting on the August 1st and were treated to a variety of memories. Paul reminisced about his time as a delivery driver and how he loved the job and soon learned the tricks of the trade.

Marlene spoke of her uncles, who did not feature as much in her childhood as her aunts but nevertheless had left her with happy memories.

Bryan went back to his early years in the police and as usual had many funny tales of unconventional policemen and of regular members of the general public who called in at all hours of the day and night. Such behaviour would not be tolerated today needless to say.

Avril had brought along a lovely album which she and her husband had compiled for her father on his 90th birthday. It contained his life story and photos and pencil sketches, which were much enjoyed.

Lynda finished her account of her school days with tributes to her teachers. Domestic Science lessons presented problems at times notably when transporting a beef stew home on the train!!

Sheila remembered the Sabbath Days of the past and regretted subsequent changes. Brian read an excerpt which was related to his business which many of us had used back in the day.

As always there was much nostalgia, and the readings prompted a lively discussion and other anecdotes.

Sheila Harrop

CRIME FICTION READING



The title of the book chosen for the group to read during July was “The Birdwatcher” by William Shaw. Nine members attended the meeting on August 11th. We all enjoyed the engrossing story and as a result one or two of us had already read the second book in the series.

The story is set in the Dungeness area of Kent, a remote and lonely place with few people but teeming with wildlife and birds all living under the brooding presence of the Nuclear Power Station. When a body is discovered locally Police Sergeant William South, neighbourhood officer and the birdwatcher of the title, very reluctantly joins the murder enquiry team lead by Detective Sergeant Alexandra Cupidi who has recently moved to the area after previously working with the Metropolitan Police in London. The pair arrive together at the crime scene and William is dismayed to learn the victim is his neighbour Bob Raynor, a good friend and fellow birdwatcher. It is a particularly violent murder, and Bob’s home has also been ransacked. The police were informed of the killing by a mysterious woman claiming to be the victim’s sister on a visit to her brother and who is also very reluctant to become involved in the enquiry. We learn that Alexandra Cupidi has come to the area accompanied by her troubled and troublesome 15-year-old daughter, Zoe. During the investigation a tentative friendship begins to develop between William, Alexandra and Zoe who becomes interested in birdwatching after she accompanies him on expeditions.

Throughout the narrative there are flashbacks to William’s childhood spent in Belfast during the Troubles telling of the fear in people’s lives, of gang warfare, of torture and violent killings and finally the murder of William’s father, an abusive and vicious man, who may have been involved in the killing of rival gang members. After this William’s mother decides it’s time she and William move to England. As the main story progresses, we meet a variety of characters: – local councillors, fishermen, drug dealers and people living on the fringes of society. There are more killings and although there seems to be more than one potential reason for the murder of William’s friend when we finally learned of the real motive it came as a complete surprise to most of us. The murderer is finally tracked down in a denouement which is both frightening and bloody for those involved. The story ends with the disclosure of who actually killed William’s father. We all found William himself to be an interesting, likeable, character who engaged our sympathies in what was considered to be a thought provoking “good read”.

The choice of title for August is “One Corpse Too Many” by Ellis Peters, the second book in the Cadfael series.

Nancy Colclough

DINING

in August the Dining Group visited Miller and Carter in Heaton Moor. This hotel was originally The Rudyard and was a Toby Carvery. It has had a complete make over and is now a very stylish establishment with good food (they specialise in steaks) and very pleasant staff.

Our party of twenty-six were seated in a self-contained area and enjoyed an excellent two course meal for £14.50. Two of our party opted for the 30-day aged rump steak for an extra £3 and said they were cooked perfectly.

We had a special surprise as it happened to be one of our ladies' birthdays. Pat Gorie celebrated her birthday with a special Happy Birthday ice cream. We all joined in and sang Happy Birthday. A happy end to a very enjoyable afternoon.

Dorothy Gerrard
Dorothy Neillands



READING

The subject of our August meeting was MUSIC AND SILENCE by Rose Tremain which provoked a very lively discussion, with most people enjoying the book but a few dissenting voices found it self-indulgent with too many subplots. It tells the story of a young English lute player at the court of King Christian IV of Denmark and his experiences as the favourite musician of the king. The plot is extremely complicated, but we meet some amazing characters, especially the women, and get some insight into the life at the Danish Court. It made a refreshing change from the Tudors and made us realise the importance of other countries at the beginning of the 17th century. Too often we think that we were the top dogs but Denmark, at that time, was extremely powerful and ruled over Norway, Iceland, Greenland and parts of Sweden.

At our next meeting on Monday, 4th September, we shall be discussing non-fiction books that we have found very influential.

Marlene Brookes

FAMILY HISTORY

Due to holidays, health problems or other commitments only a few members gathered for the meeting on July 24th which proved to be an interesting, informative and entertaining session which continued long after the usual 4:00 pm finish. Its theme was the names of jobs held by our ancestors. Sue, who leads the group, started things off by providing a list of strangely named jobs of which cordwainer proved to be one of the most mystifying. We learned a cordwainer is a shoemaker making high quality shoes using Cordovan leather a corruption of which gave rise to the name of the job.

After this we looked at our own ancestors and found the jobs they had held ranged from Lord Mayor of London in 1582 during the reign of Elizabeth 1st to hawkers and many agricultural labourers nearer to our own time. In between there were farmers, publicans, policemen, teachers, bakers, a number of shoemakers, shop keepers, mill worker, joiners, framework knitters, railway workers and a 19c school caretaker.

There were a couple of particular interest:-

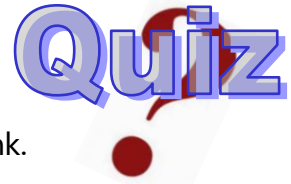
A great uncle born in 1886 who, after being awarded a B.Sc. at Manchester University then spending time as a science teacher, became a metallurgist and a world authority on iron and steel production. He travelled to China, America, France and Germany to give advice to the iron and steel industries in those countries. He was awarded the CBE in the 1947 honours list and the Bessemer Medal in 1952. In a national newspaper obituary he was referred to as the "gentle genius"

A member of the group's French godmother, who was born in 1909 and educated at the Sorbonne, became involved in providing welfare for evacuees from the French/ German borders, also helping victims of the Vichy regime. During WW2 she visited the Gurs concentration camp in southern France where she distributed bedding for the women and their babies and was eventually allowed to live within the camp. Afterwards she became a director within The World Council of Churches and in 1988 she was recognised as "Righteous among the Nations" on the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial.

After this Sue produced a quiz which was informative and good fun. We found we could answer some of the questions, but others had us completely stumped. Thanks, Sue, for a very enjoyable afternoon.

Nancy Colclough

QUIZZING



Our August quiz was set by Val. We had a challenging mix of questions, covering history, geography, numbers and food and drink.

Some for you to try:

1. Where was Florence Nightingale born?
2. Where does Biltong come from?
3. Who is the longest serving British Prime Minister?
4. What is the name for a group of flamingos?
5. What does HB stand for on a pencil?

We are a small group and welcome new members. Please contact me for details.

Diane Saxon

GARDENING

1. VISIT TO SOUTHLANDS, STRETFORD

This garden is one of the most impressive we have visited. 132 yards long, but only 8 yards wide, this lovely garden is arranged in several sections: all crammed full with plants and flowers, many in containers and pots. It has won awards, and it was easy to see why.

The garden is in "Lancashire", just yards from the M60, but therefore not featured in the Cheshire Gardens open for charity. Our group came away with many appreciative comments.





2. VISIT TO LYNN'S GARDEN

Just below the old road from Disley to Whaley Bridge, Lynn's garden has views to Bleaklow and Kinderscout, yet is also reasonably sheltered. Several sitting out areas and shelters are dotted through the garden, with winding paths and nooks and crannies. Plenty to see, and no doubt lots of gardening work for Lynn. It was also a fascinating garden for us to see and enjoy – especially some colourful feature blooms.



Walter Mason

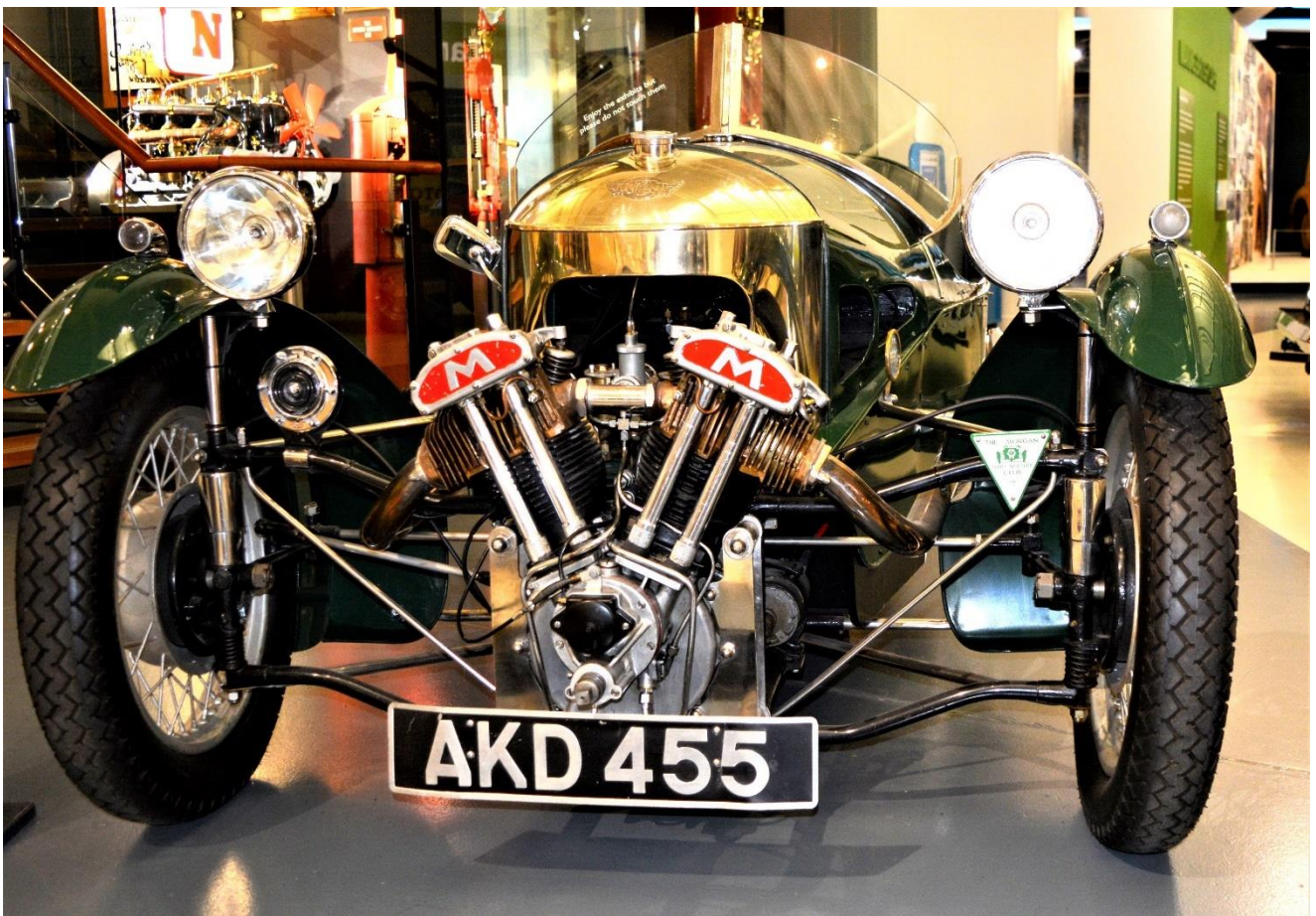
PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was Old vehicles.

1st Morgan magnificence 6 votes Ken

2nd Good grilling 5 votes Ken

3rd Waiting for passengers 4 votes Jeff



Well done everybody.

This month, we also had a photoshoot in High Lane. Unfortunately, it was dull and showery so not the best light for taking pictures. We plan to share and discuss these at our meeting in September.

Our next competition is Neon lights.

This group has lost some members recently and would welcome some new members. Please contact me if you would like to join us. Advanced technical skills are not necessary. All you need is a camera or a phone that will take pictures.

Jeff Robinson

TABLE TENNIS

PROUDLY sporting their gold medals, Kate Heller and Dale Spencer celebrate victory in the first individual championships staged by the table tennis group.

Two full-size tables are in use at Woodside Tennis Club off Brookside Lane where group members meet every Tuesday at 10 am for two hours of doubles and singles.

New players of all abilities can be assured of a friendly welcome – in fact, tea break time has been described by one member as the best collective psychiatrist’s couch in the area as everybody shoots the breeze!

Anthony Holt



TRAVEL



BROWSHOLME HALL December 8th
Coach from High Lane Christmas lunch Tour of the Hall
Approx. £50 depending on numbers.
Payment at September meeting.

RIVER CRUISE October 4th – 8th
Information at September meeting.

LLANDINDROD WELLS April 19th – 22nd, 2024
Metropole Hotel £349 + entrance fees
Single supplement £75
£60 Deposit required at September meeting

TRAVEL GROUP VISITS FOR AUGUST

Sudley House Day Visit

Eighteen folk boarded the coach to take us to Sudley House and Liverpool on an unpredictable weatherwise Saturday. The group was met at the door of Sudley House (Liverpool City Council owned) and invited to walk around. The volunteer staff were about the house and very informative.

George Holt 1825 – 1896 was the owner of a steam ship company in Liverpool and with the wealth he attained had the house built. The house had many of the original purchased paintings one 'caught the eye' called Love's Palace (oil on canvas 1891 – 1893) by J M Strudwick with an inscription on the frame "Let come what may for that a grim fate decides. Love rules the day and love enthroned abides." Also, a ceramic collection from the Chinese k'ang-Hsi period and the Ch'ing dynasty. Upstairs a dolls house with very detailed furniture. A model of a screw steamer ship called Verdi, built by Workman, Clark & Co. in Belfast, graced a downstairs room. The garden sadly neglected as in its heyday had gardeners.

From Sudley House, we were taken to near the Liver building drop off point with a band warming up for the Pride march. Folk went their separate ways. A look round the Albert Dock and a boat ride round the dock (some ferried across the Mersey), and others looked in the Liverpool Maritime Museum.





All seemed to enjoy our day visit. The Travel Committee hopes to take groups on one day visits in 2024. Please support us.

Ruth Smith

IRELAND

After a very short flight our group of twelve landed in Dublin to be met by the coach driver Martin Fagan. A half hour's drive brought us to the Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre. Sunshine all the way! The first thing we saw were seventeenth century cannon in the stable yard- they provided seats for some while waiting for the tour to begin. We were greeted by a very enthusiastic guide who told us about the history of the battle.

The Battle of the Boyne in July 1690 was between the deposed Catholic James II and his Protestant son-in-law William III of Orange. James was trying to reclaim the throne of England but was defeated and fled to France. William had a much bigger army with soldiers from Denmark and the Netherlands. Interestingly there were Catholics and Protestants on both sides. The Orange Order was founded in 1795 and the victory of King Billy is



celebrated today in many towns in Northern Ireland. A lot of standing was involved in this tour, so we were grateful for seating in the cinema showing a film of an enactment of the battle and for much needed refreshment in the cafe.

We then drove to the Annebrook House Hotel for our four-night stay. The hotel is centrally located and built around an original Georgian house. It includes apartments, several occupied by Ukrainians paid for by the Irish Government. The bedrooms were large and well appointed. We had our evening meal in Berty's Bar. Limited menu, but very large portions!

The following day we went to Strokestown Park in County Roscommon. The contrast between the National Famine Museum and the Palladian Georgian house is enormous. The Great Irish Famine of the 1840s is considered to be the greatest social disaster that occurred in nineteenth century Europe. It devastated the island of Ireland and over two million people either died or emigrated. Land was sub-divided and then sublet into smaller and smaller portions. Eventually small plots were let to landless labourers who survived entirely on a diet of potatoes, so it was a disaster when the blight arrived. In 1847 there was a newspaper report that deaths by famine were so prevalent that whole families who retired for the night were corpses in the morning. The beginning of the call for Irish independence began at this time. After failing to pay rent many men women and children walked over one hundred miles from Roscommon to Dublin to board ship to Liverpool. By 1851, 29% of Liverpool's population was estimated to be Irish and even influenced the Liverpool accent. Many of the group were sad and emotional after visiting the museum.

The contrasting Palladian house was owned by the Mahon family the last of whom died in 1982. The difference between the parallel lifestyles of landlords, tenants and cottiers was well illustrated here. One of our group was impressed by the owner building a tunnel in front of the house to avoid passing servants 'spoiling the view". The kitchen was quite unusual in that it had a gallery from which the lady of the house sent down notes to the cook and housekeeper. Obviously, the lower orders were too inferior to be spoken to.



On Tuesday we went to Derryglad Heritage Centre. The owner was originally a welder and has spent 40 years collecting memorabilia. He made us very welcome and is obviously very proud of his amazing collection which ranged from anything to everything. He even had an old-fashioned wind-up gramophone which played vinyl records that we could listen to.

One room is equipped as a dairy with milk churns and a milking machine, another as an old schoolroom. In the afternoon we returned to Athlone for a peaceful cruise on the River Shannon and Lough Ree.

Our next visit was to Belvedere House near Mullingar. We had booked a tour of the house, but it is currently closed for conservation work. Instead, we sat in the sunshine in the courtyard and were entertained by a very amusing guide, Samantha, who had a wonderful sense of humour while she told us tales of the dysfunctional family who once lived there. The house was built by Robert Rochfort, known as the "Wicked Earl", because of his dissolute and wicked nature. He accused his brother Arthur of having an affair with his wife whom he then incarcerated for 30 years in another house and had his brother imprisoned. He was also jealous of another brother George who owned a larger house nearby and had a wall built representing a ruined abbey to hide the view. This is known as the Jealous Wall and is the largest folly in Ireland. The house passed down through various members of the family and eventually ended up being owned by Charles Howard Bury in 1912. He was an adventurer and mountaineer who is supposed to have found the footsteps of the Abominable Snowman or Yeti on an Everest expedition. The house is surrounded by a fabulous walled garden and magical fairy garden with some amazing statues. The estate is now owned by Westmeath County Council.



On the way to our next venue the coach driver Martin pointed out other places of interest- Fore Abbey, Tullnally Castle and near his hometown of Castlepollard one of the infamous mother and baby homes for fallen women managed by the nuns of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary. It was a grey, depressing building. The women had to work in the laundry and gardens and there many babies buried on the site. The home closed in 1971.

We continued to the town of Granard to visit the Knights and Conquest Museum which records the history of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland. A very enthusiastic guide showed us replicas of chainmail, helmets, swords and crossbows. In 1171 Henry II of England was encouraged by Pope Adrian IV to take over Ireland and bring the Irish Church in line with Roman standards. The museum which opened last year has very well-presented interactive displays and was financed by the local community. The tour ended in a replica of Kitty Kearnan's Drawing Room. She was a resident of Granard and fiancé of Michael Collins the Irish Revolutionary Leader who was killed in 1922.

On our last day we visited the Irish Whiskey Museum in Dublin. A very knowledgeable guide told us about the history of Iris Whiskey from early beginnings as a type of cottage industry to the world-famous distilleries of today. It was called uisca beatha which means water of life and is one of the oldest distilled spirits in Europe with roots back to monks who brought the art from Europe in the 1200s. Irish Whiskey is distilled three times, Scottish Whisky twice. In early days it was produced illegally but in 1660 a tax was put on it, the start of Customs and Excise, but there many illegal stills until the nineteenth century. Bushmills became the first licensed distillery and Jamesons is the bestselling Irish Whiskey. At the end of the tour, we were given a taste of three different types.



Afterwards we had free time in Dublin before returning to the coach to go to the airport. Some went to one of the cathedrals but after discovering the entrance fee was €10.50 went to the Castle instead, some went shopping, some looked for Molly Malone and others went to Temple Bar to listen to Irish Folk Music. This holiday certainly lived up to the u3a slogan Laugh and Learn.

Compiled with contributions from Jacqui Chester, Beryl Hatton, Sandy MacLean, Diana Moore, Irene Podolanski, Doreen Potts, Betty Smith, Janet Vockings, Eve and Ged Wilson, Margaret McDermott.

Poem inspired by our Ireland holiday.

Janet liked to walk alone
John preferred the food at home
Beryl had trouble with her feet
Sandy the veggie ate fish but not meat
Doreen who's Irish could be our translator
Ged took photos to send to us later
Di, Eve and Betty had all been before
For Jacqui and Irene new things were in store
Thanks to Margaret who kept us in order
We're all now experts in things south of the border.

Sandy MacLean

WALKING

U3A walk 30/08/2023: Pym Chair, Cats Tor, Shining Tor, Shooter's Clough, Errwood Hall, Foxlow Edge.

On this changeable but pleasant end of August day, fourteen walkers enjoyed this 5-mile Peak District walk, steeped in history, mystery, and suspense. Mystery – because low cloud surrounded us as we left Pym Chair carpark following the path to Cats



Tor. The strong breeze opened and closed views of the distant horizon, giving us glimpses of the fantastic panoramas to come as the low cloud disappeared on the persistent breeze.

On reaching Shining Tor we stopped for coffee – enjoyed a welcome rest and ever improving visibility. The 360-degree impressive landscape was there to behold.



Our onward route towards the Goyt Valley was highlighted with sunny spells and very clear distant views. Shooters Clough provided a change of landscape leaving the moorland and heather behind, replaced with ancient woodland in the steep sided valley.

The ruins of Castedge Farmhouse provided an idea sunny spot for a picnic lunch, with good seating on the rubble remains. This pretty spot lay below the small hill housing Errwood Hall Burial Ground.

Our final climb up Foxlow Edge led to St. Joseph's Shrine before joining The Street leading to Pym Chair carpark, and a well-earned sit down!

David Burke



BRIDGE

We have had a fair amount of interest in some supervised play sessions where we can practice and try things out with some revision of techniques. A few more members are needed to make this viable so please would anyone else who is interested get in touch with me.

Diane Saxon

NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

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>

14 September	Platonic activities: maths activities day for all
10 September	Climate modelling
19 September	Future lives in Wales
20 September	Trees, woods, climate and nature – what’s all the fuss about?
21 September	Bolder – How to Age Better, and Feel Better About Ageing
22 September	History of the British Secret Intelligence Services
27 September	The Scottish Colourists, 1900 – 1930
28 September	Hidden Histories: Tales of Cycling, Invention and Rebellion

u3a podcasts: Would you like to interview members from across the u3a movement?

The u3a radio podcast team is looking for a new reporter. We are looking for someone with interviewing experience, the ability to edit audio and an enthusiasm to tell stories from across the u3a membership.

If you would like to find out more, please email communications@u3a.org.uk.

INTEREST GROUPS ONLINE (IGO)



IGO is an online community of learners, who meet mostly via Zoom. From October, membership is just £6 for 6 months and you will have access to over 75 different groups across a wide range of topics; visit [the interest groups online groups page to browse all groups](#). You can join IGO as a complementary service to your local in-person u3a membership or as a standalone membership.

The first ever Interest Groups Online Fair will be taking place from Monday 2 to Friday 6 October. The IGO Fair is an opportunity to try out u3a's online learning community for free! Each taster session will last around 45 minutes to 1 hour. Booking will be available from September.

Monday 2 October	10am 11.30am 3pm	Early women doctors Film studies Nordic Noir
Tuesday 3 October	10am 11.30am 3pm	Exploring classical music Writing workshop Concise talks
Wednesday 4 October	10am 11.30am 3pm	Laughter yoga Journeys into space Modern pop for third-agers
Thursday 5 October	10am 11.30am 3pm	Science in the news Railways Quotations quiz
Friday 6 October	10am 11.30am 3pm	British cemeteries Climate change Intermediate recorders