

FROM THE CHAIR

Both Sue Harlin and I would like to thank those members who have sent cards and wished us well while both of us have had major health problems.

Perhaps some of you may have seen an item in the Radio Times about the U3A. The average membership fee across the country is around £15 so we must thank our Treasurers for being such good managers and keeping our fee at £5 for yet another year.

400 members have now renewed their membership for 2016 and reminders have been sent to those who have not yet done so.

We welcome two new committee members, Barbara Kenneth and Andre Lister and hope they will enjoy their time with us.

Margaret McDermott



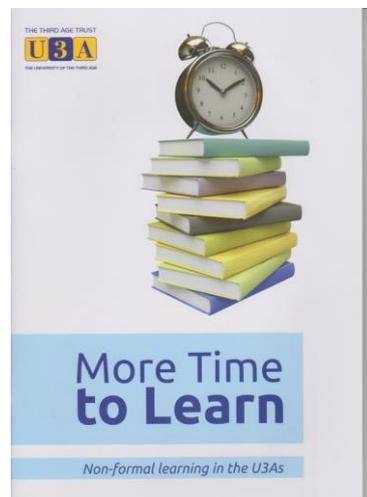
Atmospheric winter shot of the Roman lakes bridge. Thanks to Walter for the photograph.

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GROUP LEADERS/COORDINATORS - PLEASE NOTE
Pam and I have assembled your reports from the AGM into a document which is now on the website.

There are some useful documents for group coordinators on the website including the new handbook More Time to Learn. You can download a copy of this for your use. To find these documents, click on the Group Leaders link at the bottom right of the Group page.



FROM THE EDITOR

Items for the newsletter from members are always welcome so if you have any suggestions for content or articles of interest to U3A members please contact me at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

The next edition of the newsletter will be the May 2016 edition. Please can you get your contributions to me by 29 April?

MONTHLY MEETINGS

JANUARY MEETING

Keith Vigurs gave a talk entitled the Big Ditch in which he told us about his work in renovating the Bugsworth canal basin.



He told us about his work as a volunteer and guide for the Bugsworth Basin Heritage Trust. The Trust always needs new volunteers to help with the restoration, development and maintenance of Bugsworth Basin, and with the establishment of a museum. See the website for details of what the Trust does and how you can help.

<http://www.bugsworthbasin.org/pages/home.html>

AGM

The AGM was, as usual, very well attended with over 150 members present. Unfortunately both the Chair and Vice Chair were unable to be present due to illness so the meeting was chaired by Diane Saxon. The Secretary, Pam Curley, read the minutes of the previous meeting which were accepted as a true record of the meeting. This was followed by reports from the Chair and the Treasurer and the Election of Officers for 2016. The minutes of the meeting are available on the website.

We then enjoyed some entertaining reports from the Group Leaders. These reports are also on the website if you missed the meeting.

The other important aspect of this meeting was renewing your membership. If you have not yet done so there is a membership form and instructions on the website.

VILLAGE HALL TABLE TOP SALE

The next table top sale is on Sunday 20th March Set up 11am. Sale 12 noon –2pm. Tables £8 or £10 on the day.

Contact Dorothy Graham

BEING A MEMBER OF A U3A GROUP IS GOOD FOR YOU

A longitudinal six year study in the UK published in the British Medical Journal Feb 2016.

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/2/e010164.full>

The study was carried out by a group of Australian scientists. They studied 424 people over a period of six years after they retired. They found that being a member of a club or a church group may extend your life in retirement; they go as far as to suggest that maintaining social links in old age might be as or more important for health than keeping fit.

The researchers found that the more social groups people belonged to after they stop working, the lower their risk of an early death. Even better, they reported that people who joined new clubs were even less likely to die early.

Another benefit of your U3A. Excellent value for £5. Is there a group you would like that we don't have? Perhaps you could start a new group for us? It is not an onerous task being a group coordinator and the work can be shared by a number of members of the group. Have a word with our Groups' coordinator, Meg Humphries.

U3A MAGAZINE: THIRD AGE MATTERS



It's not too late to order your copies of the U3A magazine. This is published five times each year and contains articles and features of interest to U3A members, plus news and information from U3A head office and U3As across the country. The magazine will be delivered to your home for £2.50 (for all five editions). Give your name and the money to the Membership Secretary.

SELF PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED

Call me old-fashioned. I like a book - a paper book - I do not mean a paperback book, to hold, to caress, to smell the paper, to inhale the ink, to feel the texture, to consult - turning backwards or forwards to a certain page, or to flick through, to check an index or bibliography, to make notes in the margin, or underscore, to discard in exasperation on the settee or bed, to show to my grandchild as something which used to be mine or her mummy's or daddy's when they were little. I like the tactility. I like the solidity. I like other people's bookcases, and libraries and bookshops and old manuscripts in glass cases in museums.



Why, then, would I want to read or download a book on-line? And why would I want my readers to read on-line? And yet this is exactly what millions of switched-on kids and adults are doing these days. And that, of course, has huge ramifications for a writer, such as myself, who hasn't made it big-time.

It is hard enough to find a publisher, but even harder to find an agent. Because the older one is, and I assume those of you who are reading this are all of a certain age, the more difficult it is.

Why? Because the art of writing is big business, and an agent expects you to turn out a best-seller every 18 months for the next thirty years. Unless you are a celebrity, or have connections - we know it under another term: nepotism - this leaves only the option of self-publishing, of which I must state I heartily disapprove.

I was lucky that my first novel "Miss", written under a former married name, was accepted for publication by Pegasus (Vanguard Press) in 2002. I was living abroad at the time and could not assist in its promotion or marketing. In my absence, and without my agreement, it was remaindered.

The second one was declined by them, as I was evidently not financially viable, but later accepted by a publishing house in Oxford which subsequently went into liquidation. It has never found a publisher.

One day on my computer there appeared an uninvited pop-up. It directed me to Chipmunka Publishing. I am grateful to say that they published my poetry collection Home Truths, subtitled A Poetic Narrative of an Adult Gap Year, and my novel The Pigeon Room with a strap-line of Three sisters, two lovers and a baby.

It is the story of forbidden loves set against a background of the conflict of the Middle East, 1995, pre-Rabin's assassination and portraying, I believe, a balanced evaluation of the political and religious climate there. It is told through the dual perspectives of two sisters: Evie, the elder one, is a teacher on holiday and a tourist in Jerusalem, and the younger one, Simone, is in a psychiatric hospital. The eponymous pigeon room is Evie's refuge from her sister's madness, and will later become Simone's sanctuary from her hospital incarceration.

Chipmunka publishes paperbacks on demand. My fourth novel The Othello Syndrome will not be going to them. As the business has expanded, so has the director's bank balance and ego and now they seek a contribution from prospective writers. This I do not buy into. Call me old-fashioned. And solvent.

Hannah Hutchinson

LEARN SOMETHING NEW IN 2016

The choice of subjects we can study for free online is amazing and ever expanding. FutureLearn has many new courses starting in March including:

- England in the time of Richard III
 - Irish history 1912-1923
 - Renewable energy
 - RAF in the Cold War
 - Science of medicines
 - Dementia
 - Genealogy
 - 3D printing body parts
 - Reading literature in the digital age
- And many many more!

You will need to register for the course(s) by clicking the Join link on the relevant web page.
<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OUR U3A ACTIVITIES

7 March	High Lane U3A 15 th Anniversary Lunch
9 March	Herbaceous Perennials and all-year colour. A talk by Sue Beesley.
13 April	Life as a BBC Reporter. A talk by Kevin Fitzpatrick
11 May	Open meeting. Talks, choir and exhibitions.

FORTHCOMING HOLIDAYS AND VISITS

Contact: Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith

15 March	St. Asaph and Tweedmill. £15 approx. Coach leaves Village Hall at 9:15am
5 April	Elizabeth Gaskell House. £4 Payment at February meeting.
12-17 May	Suffolk. Holiday Inn Ipswich Balance at February meeting.
12-17 June	Edinburgh. Best Western Kings Manor Hotel £540 sharing Single Supplement £125 Includes entrance fees to Holyrood, Scottish Parliament, Rosslyn Chapel, Edinburgh Castle. Deposit at March meeting.
31 July-13 August	Baltic Cruise from Southampton on Celebrity Eclipse. Inside cabin Approx. £1100. Contact Margaret McDermott or Pat Gorie
30 Aug-3 Sept	IRELAND. Flight from Manchester to Belfast. 4 nights HB at Jackson's Hotel Ballybofey. Approx. £475; single supplement £65. Includes entrance fees to Glenveagh Nat. Park, Donegal, Malin Head, Derry, Bushmills Whisky Distillery, Giant's Causeway, etc Deposit £50 at March meeting Cheque to Greatdays Holidays Ltd.

NATIONAL U3A EVENTS

17 March	U3A Explores Science at the Ri. £20. Book online at www.u3a.org.uk
21 July Manchester	PLANNING AHEAD: MORE TIME TO LEARN, LAUGH AND LEARN. Interactive whole day workshop aimed at committee members and prospective committee members. More details at www.u3a.org.uk
30 Aug - 2 Sep	NW Regional Summer School. Newton Rigg Agricultural College near Penrith. Details and booking arrangements - The NW Regional website: www.u3sites.org.uk/north-west . Any queries contact David Joseph 07831473157

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

2-5 March	Romeo and Juliet. Lowry Theatre
3 March	Hangmen. NT Live. Various venues
5 March	BBC Philharmonic. Pictures At An Exhibition. Bridgewater Hall
5 March	Famous Last Works. Stockport Symphony Orchestra. Stockport Town Hall.
7-12 March	King Charles III starring Robert Powell. Manchester Opera House.
9-19 March	Cosi Fan Tuttte. RCNM
12 March	Seasonal Guided Walk
12 March	Dogs in the Garden. Lyme Park
16 March	Walk the walls. Lyme Park
17 March	Giselle. Buxton Opera House
18 March	Sleeping Beauty. Buxton Opera House
19 March	Swan Lake . Buxton Opera House
19 March	Hazel Grove orchestra. Wesley St Church hall.
20 March	Carmen. Buxton Opera House
20 March	English Romanticism. Buxton Opera House
20 March	Village Hall table top sale
23 March	Hangmen. NT Live. Plaza
24 March	Toccata! Jonathan Scott Lunchtime Organ Series. Bridgewater Hall
24 March	Reservoir Walk. Lyme Park
25 March	Easter Egg hunt. Lyme Park
27 March	MacBeth. Buxton Opera House
9 April	Seasonal Guided Walk. Lyme Park

GROUP REPORTS

BACKGAMMON

Things are looking up in the Backgammon group; attendance increased by 50% at the last meeting. Instead of me plus one other, there were two others, so I played two games instead of one! Let's hope it continues.

Should anyone fancy a game please get in touch with me.

Ron Barrow

BALLET APPRECIATION GROUPS 3 AND 4

27th January/4th February: We saw the Royal Ballet performing a new ballet: The Winter's Tale, choreographed in 2014 by Christopher Wheeldon. Based on the Shakespeare play of the same name, it gave a very accurate version of the original play, with a spine-chilling depiction of a man becoming insane with jealousy.

24th February/3rd March: We watched a production of Raymonda from La Scala, Milan. The performance was a reconstruction of the original ballet, which was lost during the 1917 Russian Revolution. It was a very colourful performance, set to Glazunov's tuneful music, but had a silly story (as do most ballets) and was rather bland.

At the next meeting I intend to show the National Ballet of Cuba dancing Don Quixote.

Meg Humphries

CARDMAKING

It was quite a relief at our January meeting to leave Christmas behind for another year and turn our attention to more Spring-like designs for birthday and new baby cards.

The birthday card was made from a series of die cuts, pre-cut by Dot using her die cutting machine.

Our job was to assemble the die cuts in the right order - not quite as easy as it sounds, but by supporting each other and with Dot keeping an eye on us, we all got there.



The new baby card introduced a new technique to some of the group - paper piecing. This involves "colouring" an image by applying cut out pieces of different coloured papers. For those of us not artistic enough to use paints or inks to colour, it is an easy and effective way of colouring an image. Both the elephant and the word "Baby" are paper pieced, and the mats and layers were pre-prepared using dies and a die cutting machine.

It was nice to see the group's confidence building to such an extent that they felt able to tweak the original cards. Chris coloured the elephant using only pink and grey papers, didn't use the "Baby" sentiment, so had a really pretty birthday card for a young girl fond of elephants and the colour pink.

Sandra left the Happy Birthday sentiment off her birthday card, making it into a perfect wedding card for friends.

At our February meeting we learnt another new technique- quilling - brought to us by Carole. I think it's fair to say some of us took to this skill a little better than others! Quilling involves twirling long strips of paper into a variety of shapes which can then be built into a picture. And finally, the second of our February cards was another based around die cutting - this one designed by Nan for one of those occasions where finding the right words can be difficult.

We are a small but friendly group and range in levels of experience from beginner to experienced. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at 1.30pm at St Thomas' Church Hall in High Lane. Anyone wishing to join us - even if just for a taster session to see if this craft might be for you - please contact me by email: CardMakingLeader@highlaneu3a.org.uk and we'd be very happy to welcome you to our next meeting.

Christine Fox
Dot Green

CHURCHES AND PUBS

This is a report that the editor missed from the last edition. This year's visits start in April with a visit to All Saints, Daresbury Cheshire.

St. Michael and All Angels Taddington Derbyshire.



For the last Churches and Pubs for 2015 we travelled the short distance to Taddington village in Derbyshire. We were met by the church warden Alwyn Kirkwood who introduced us to Ray Slack who was to give the talk on the church. He was very entertaining.

St. Michael and All Angles was built in the 14th century and has been described as one of the best proportioned and prettiest churches in the Peak District. The spire and tower of the church date from the 14th century and the main building is 14th to early 15th century. The Norman Cross in the churchyard could mark the site of an earlier church and there are also remains of a 7th century Celtic Cross in the churchyard. The cross shaft is decorated with an unusual chevron-based pattern. It was once used to support a sink in the wall of a nearby pub. The church was extensively restored in 1891 and contains a rare stone lectern and a stone font dating from the 13th century.

It is thought that the stone bearing the brasses was formerly part of an alter or table tomb. The alabaster slab now in the porch is a memorial to one of the Blackwall family. The family was a well known one of many centuries in the neighbouring village served by Taddington Church.

At the back of the nave the rough hewn gritstone font in the north aisle could be 13th century. It's history appears on the wall alongside and together with the smaller bowl in the porch may have belonged to earlier churches on the site.

After an enjoyable talk on the church we enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Church Inn at Chelmorton about three miles from Taddington. Anybody looking for an excellent meal this is the place to go.

Paul Kenneth

CINEMA

January and February have been quiet, with just one outing. We went to see "Brooklyn" on January 20th. This was a beautiful film about an Irish girl who emigrates to United States. I was delighted when it won the Bafta for best British film of 2015. It will also be screened at Stockport Plaza on Friday 8th May at 11.00am and 7.30 pm

At the time of writing our next film is "Dads Army". It's showing at 5.30pm on March 2nd which gives us an opportunity to have a meal afterwards. This should be a really good event.

If you would like more information about the club consult the web site. New members are always welcome

Sheila Harrop

CRAFT AND NEEDLEWORK

We continue to meet monthly although our numbers have been somewhat depleted. Both Margaret and Sonia have had hospital stays in recent weeks.

We are working on a variety of projects including making twiddle muffs for sufferers of dementia and also making hats and jumpers for Knitting for Peace.



Marlene Brookes

CURRENT AFFAIRS

At the January meeting we discussed a number of topics including

- The junior doctors dispute. Who do you trust Jeremy Hunt or the BMA?
- Oil prices have come down significantly over recent months yet there's no change in our energy bills. Are we paying too much for our energy. What can be done about it?
- Examining primary school children in the 'three Rs' puts pressure on young children causing health problems. Are literacy and numeracy skills more important than the well being of 7/8yr old.
- Why not just reduce the amount of sugar in foods that have a high sugar content instead of putting a 'sugar tax' on them.
- Christmas is over, January is here and spring is some way off. Its long dark nights sort grey days, incessant rain with floods and snow and ice is on the way. Does all this get you down? Do you suffer from SAD - seasonal affective disorder?

Trevor Kinvig

DINING

In February our lunch was at Platform One in Romiley. They offer a three course lunch for £7.95 and they added tea or coffee for us. It isn't rocket science to conclude that for that price and the menu available we were not getting "Fine Dining"; however the food is well cooked and very tasty and the staff work hard and are very pleasant. Unfortunately there was a problem with our ordered apple pies; I offer my apologies to the members who were upset or disappointed with this lunch. I hope you will still join us for our next lunch in April.

I end with a little joke a member relayed to us over lunch, hope you find it as funny as we did.

A cat dies and finds himself in front of St Peter at the pearly gates. "well cat "says St peter "have you been a good cat " "oh yes sir I have been very good" "are you sure "from St Peter "absolutely " replies cat "I have done everything I was asked to do, I have been very very good", "very well , you may enter. Now is there anything you would like to make your stay better?" "Oh I would love a nice big ,soft cushion that I could curl up on and relax" says cat. "Done, go to the store room and take your pick"

A few days later a group of mice arrive, "Well mice" says St Peter "have you been good mice" "oh yes, we have been really good mice" "are you sure" "oh yes we have been really good mice and done everything we should do". "very well "says St Peter "you may enter. Now is there anything you would like to make your stay more enjoyable" "well " replied the mice "we have always wanted roller skates" "done" says St Peter, "go to the store room and collect your skates".

A few days later St Peter is walking around when he comes across cat curled up on his big cushion. "hello cat" he says "how are you getting along ?" "oh very well" replies cat "my cushion is perfect it's so soft and warm and cosy and the meals on wheels are fantastic"

Jeanette Bell
Dorothy Neillands

GARDENING

14 members of the group enjoyed a relaxing winter meal at Platform One, organised by Carol.

Walter Mason

GERMAN

We are still going strong every Friday, using a variety of materials. Recent subjects have included curing blindness in the Philippines and art insurance fraud but most of our time is spent on discussing items of interest from our own lives and experiences.



We are sad to have lost a member of the group who has been with us since we started in 2001. Lesley Edwards has decided to move south permanently. She will be missed from this group and also from the Craft and Needlework group.

Marlene Brookes

HISTORY

How German is the Queen? - this topic was presented by Marlene Brookes.

This was a fascinating look at the family history of our present monarchy in respect of their German ancestry. Much of the German element came as a result of the inter-marrying between the British and German aristocracy, particularly with the Saxe Coburgs, which means that Prince Charles is probably more German than the Queen because of Prince Philip. Ultimately, it was decided that the Queen is slightly under 50% German.

At the February meeting Terry Browne presented a very interesting talk on Ernest Shackleton whose naval career had started in 1890 when he joined the merchant navy and sailed on square riggers around Cape Horn. This style of life was especially gruelling, but it obviously gave him the desire to put himself through even more years of even worse conditions in his three attempts to reach the South Pole.



Shackleton's first expedition to the South Pole was as a member of one of Scott's voyages in the Discovery in 1901 and they did not get on. Following this expedition, Shackleton led three of his own, and on his last journey was taken ill and died of a heart attack at the age of 47. He had a very charismatic personality and although it appeared that his expeditions lacked considerable planning, nevertheless, many of the men continued to be part of his team.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 16th March 2016, 7.30pm when Terry will be showing us the CD of his trip to Antarctica last year.

Pam Curley

MAH-JONGG

Numbers are good and both groups are enjoying developing new skills.

Any members wishing to start learning Mah-jongg should contact me as soon as possible as I am ready to take a few new players.



Lisa Czyniewska

CHINESE NEW YEAR

The Chinese celebrated New Year on 8 February. The Chinese zodiac calendar is divided into 12 blocks, each of which spans one year instead of one month as in the western zodiac calendar. This year is the year of the monkey; the ninth animal in the cycle. The calendar works on a 12 year cycle so the year of the monkey will come round again in 2028.



People born in the year of the monkey are believed to be energetic, versatile, bright, mischievous, quick-witted, sociable and self-assured. Weaknesses of those born in the year of the monkey include being cunning, selfish, arrogant and jealous.

OPERA APPRECIATION

26th January: We saw the Royal Opera in an excellent production from 2003 of Mozart's opera The Magic Flute.

9th February/23rd February: We were introduced to Baroque Opera with a performance from the New York Metropolitan Opera of Rodelinda by Handel. The cast included two exceptional counter-tenors, singing roles originally written for castrati. The whole cast sang and acted superbly.

At our next meeting I intend to show a French opera – Gounoud's Faust.

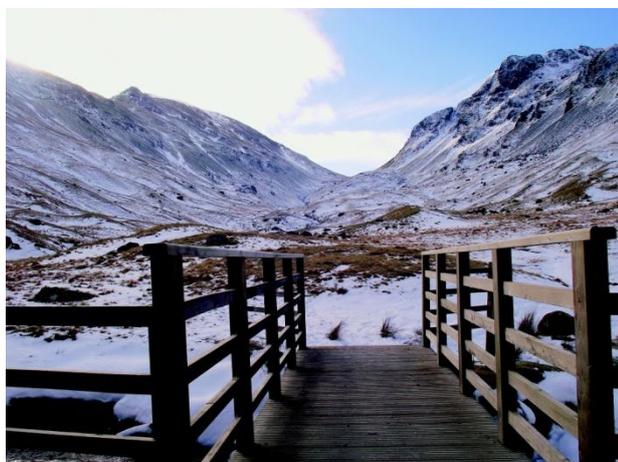
Meg Humphries

PHOTOGRAPHY



The result of January’s competition “Markets” was - Joint 1st Walter (Christmas market Brazenose Street, Manchester) and Diane (Stockport Market in late afternoon January sun); 3rd Walter (Christmas market Exchange Square, Manchester). We discussed the fascinating photo-opportunities in markets, and the photo-challenges they posed.

The topic for the February meeting was “Snow and Ice”. A varied selection of snow and ice pictures made the choice of winners difficult. Jeff won with his first attempt at our competition. The results were – 1. Jeff – snow in Grizedale; 2. Fred – Frozen Poynton pool with Canada goose; 3. Diane – garden shrubs in snow.



Meanwhile Pam is moving house, so will sadly be leaving us. Our next meeting will be at Jeff’s house. The topic is Art.

Walter Mason

QUIZ GROUP

This is a new group and has met twice so far. We are taking it in turns to devise a quiz; members from into teams and try and answer the questions. The quiz from our first meeting is on our web page.

http://www.highlaneu3a.org.uk/d2_whatwedo/Quizzes/quiz.html

The meetings are challenging and sociable. Please get in touch if you are interested in this group.

Diane Saxon

READING

We read Alone in Berlin last month. It provoked quite a lengthy and interesting discussion. Many found it depressing but Marlene and I found it more thoughtful. An air of great tension pervaded the whole book, increasing the further through the book one read.

This month's book is Skios by Michael Frayn. This will be a change; it is supposed to be a comedy!

Sue Dintinger

WALKING

January Tuesday walk

The 13 who joined David Burke found much damp ground after recent rains, although only one short stretch was slippery. From Hague Bar we followed the swollen Goyt, then attractive woodland on a former tip, before enjoying the airy Millennium bridge. A heron was undeterred by the rushing water, while weirs made impressive waterfalls.

The hydraulic power was going to waste, as the much-vaunted Archimedean screw generator was out of action, as it also was on our last visit. Devoid of summer leaf camouflage the Torrs displayed many signs of its industrial past – a real dilemma – should its industrial relics be preserved for ever , or should the gorge be allowed to revert to a unique natural state?

The rest of the walk was more straightforward, as we passed the Llama farm, ambled by the canal, saw more signs of past industry opposite Swizzels Matlow, then descended Buryimiwick and skirted the watery floodplain meadows back to our cars. David’s walk had been wet underfoot but very pleasant, and we thanked him as we went separate ways, some to tasty meals at the Sportsman’s Rest.



January late Wednesday Walk

14 joined Steve's walk with a difference.

An exciting exploration of Marple All Saints bell tower was for starters, then the discovery of a decorative mine cover, before we enjoyed an extended bacon barmcake breakfast break, to revive us for the second half.

In between, we found one or two new footpaths to refresh the Peak Forest Canal, Strines and Roman Bridge round walk. It was a little muddy in places, but the rain held off, and the scenery made for a very pleasant walk. Thanks to Steve.

Walter Mason

