

HIGH LANE U3A NEWSLETTER

www.highlaneu3a.org.uk

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September 2008



A message from our Chairman about a New Service



You can now have the complete Newsletter emailed to you, normally before it is issued at the monthly meeting.
If you wish to chose this option and not receive a printed copy of the Newsletter, please send an email to both Peter Kresss and Margaret McDermott asking to join the email Newsletter service.
Joining the service will reduce our photocopying costs and ease the administrative tasks in issuing the Newsletter to all our members.

webmaster@highlaneu3a.org.uk membershipsecretary@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Speakers' Corner



A reminder that in September we welcome back Brian Hallworth who continues down "Forget-me-not-Lane"
In October Ann Signol will be talking about Chinese medicine.



Churches and Pubs group

2nd June 2008

Peter Harrington gives the following report on the visit to St.Oswald's Church Malpas with lunch at the Cholmondeley Arms, Cholmondeley.

On a brilliantly sunny morning the group gathered in the village hall car park and set off to meet our church guide, June Hargreaves.

We were invited to sit in the pews and June gave a brief history of this grade one listed church which stands on the highest point of the town. It is dedicated to St Oswald, King of Northumbria and martyr, who was killed in battle in 642. Originally built in the second half of the 14th century, it was remodelled in the late 15th century. This was done to bring the church into line with newer developments of architecture and fashion but, more importantly to provide large windows for stained glass. The work involved the removal of roofs, sidewalls to sill level, and an overall increase in height plus the addition of the south east porch, which, incidentally, has an interesting sun dial over its entrance.

Some of the features referred to within the church were the font, with its 1627 octagonal oak cover. This was at one point lost but fortunately found again in the Rector's laundry room during the 1880's. A magnificent oak chest covered in elaborate ironwork circa 12th century. (This pre dates the church). The nave ceiling, one of the glories of the church, is carved into panels and has a number of angels and bosses along its length and breadth. The south aisle ceiling is less imposing but is beautifully carved. Hatchments hang above the arches of the nave and these were common in the 17th to 19th centuries. June, who has a serious interest in heraldry, was able to explain in detail the importance and background to these historical items. Briefly, they are painted canvases or wooden boards, square or diamond shaped, with coats of arms stating the ancestry, descendants and dependents of the deceased. The hatchment was placed on or carried before a coffin and after the funeral they were hung at the home of the deceased for a period of 6-12 months. After this time they were taken to be hung in the church. The group has come across misericords before, when visiting another church, and on this occasion saw a fine example of a mermaid holding a mirror. By way of explanation, the clergy and monks who were not allowed to sit through long services, used misericords on which to rest their bottoms. They are a small shelf on the underside of a choir stall and are revealed once the choir stall is tipped in to the non-sitting position, the underside of the shelf is carved. The original stained glass has perished except for a fragment in the south aisle window. Presently, the stained glass is late 19th and 20th century. Flemish roundels and panels (16th and 17th century) can be found in two windows of the church.

Finally, we were told of the connection and association of the Cholmondeley and Brereton families to St Oswalds. One example of their generosity is when Richard Cholmondeley, in 1488, left a gift of money to assist in the re-modelling of the church and Sir Randal Brereton, in 1508, gave the tenor bell.

After this introductory talk we were split into two groups each having the opportunity of a guided tour, around the church.

Our guide accepted an invitation to lunch and the group made its way to the Cholmondeley Arms. Previously used as a village school up until 1982 and converted to a pub in 1988. If you had known this on approaching the pub you would have said, 'Of course it used to be a school house'. Situated adjacent to Cholmondeley Castle and gardens, what could be better than a pub lunch, into the castle for the afternoon with a morning visit to St Oswald's Church. If you take up this suggestion you will enjoy it, we did.

-ooOoo-

The following information provided by Chris Gibson

During a recent examination of the U3A head office website I came across the following information that could benefit any member who is on the point of buying a new computer or updating to a modern one. Head office has negotiated discounts on both hardware and software as outlined below:

Computer Hardware

DATEK SOLUTIONS: U3A have forged a relationship with Datek Solutions which has given us access to the HP Renew Programme. The programme covers HP laptops, desktops and printers which are sourced from factory excess, cancelled orders and stock rotation. They are all backed by the original manufacturer's warranty and are available at extremely competitive rates. Datek can also supply other branded makes as well as monitors and laptop bags. Head Office have been very happy with the service received and have arranged for you to be able to buy hardware through them at the same discounted rates as are offered to Head Office.

IN LIMITED STOCK NOW!!!

Computer Software

The Trust can get software with an educational discount, so check with The National Office before purchasing upgrades or programmes.

To find out more contact Head Office; Tel. no: 020 8466 6193

E-mail;website@u3a.org.uk

For more information on U3A offers and information join the Members Area.



Visit to Harewood House

On a bright, sunny morning our coach of 31 with a good complement of merry widows set off for Harewood House beyond the Pennine barrier in Yorkshire. After a welcome break at the Hartshead services we arrived at our destination in time for lunch and the members of the party went their different ways to discover the delights of the House and gardens.

The House, built by Edwin Lascelles, Earl of Harewood and completed in 1771 to the design of John Carr, a local Yorkshire architect, with interiors by Robert Adam, furnishings by Thomas Chippendale and the parkland laid out by Capability Brown, welcomed us with open arms.

Over the years the Lascelles family had acquired artifacts from China and India through their investments in the East India Company. The current exhibition of Chinese art from 18th century to the present day includes 20 rolls of Chinese wallpaper which had been lost for at least 150 years when discovered in a workshop in 1988. Following restoration it was re-hung in the East bedroom.

Throughout the life of the House changes have taken place, rooms have been used for various purposes as fashions changed but long term conservation projects have restored many to their original condition. In particular the State bedroom with the spectacular State bed has been restored with the help of £200,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to its former glory. It has only been slept in twice, once by Emperor Nicholas of Russia.

Below stairs areas of interest include the old kitchen with an unusual high vaulted ceiling and the servant's hall. The kitchen, modernised in the 1840s is full of highly polished copper utensils (whose job is that?) and a large black range. The Servants Hall now contains many artifacts that were used both in the House and outside on the estate. Some of which are awaiting identification. Record books from the past are on show including a Day Book that shows the day-to-day working of the House. There is also the record of expenditure of the entire furnishings of the House by Thomas Chippendale, open at the expenditure on the State Bedroom which included £2.00 for down pillows. A video showing how one of the marquetry restoration techniques are carried out can be viewed.

The terrace in front of the House overlooks the parterre garden and the long border. This border extends beyond either end of the house and is full of interest with magnificent deep red clematis at its centre flanked by roses, sweet peas, dahlias and anything else you can imagine. The parterre is of box hedges in-filled with bedding geraniums and blue salvias which are continuously weeded by volunteers. The view from the terrace encompasses the lake beyond and I was fortunate to see a red kite circling over the fields. The presence of these birds is due to a programme of introduction into Yorkshire by the RSPB and the estate.

The bird garden contains over 100 different species from all over the world and an active conservation programme is underway in conjunction with various national and international organisations. It was of particular interest to see the crested crane and blue starling last seen in East Africa.

Unfortunately the coach left with much left to see and another visit is certainly warranted.

Chris Gibson

NEEDLEWORK GROUP



The needlework group will next meet on 11th September. By then we should have picked up some ideas and bought some materials at the Stitch and Creative Craft Show at G-Mex which we will have attended on the 29th August. Let's hope we will have been inspired to start on some new projects for Christmas.

-ooOoo-

GERMAN GROUP

After our summer break we should now have resumed our meetings on a Friday morning. Six members of High Lane U3A and others from Cheadle Hulme took part in the exchange trip to Forchheim where once again we had a wonderful trip and experienced the generous hospitality of our German hosts. A full account with pictures can be seen on the website.

We finished off the summer 'term' at the Devonshire Arms in Mellor where we enjoyed a very tasty meal in very good company.

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Discussion Group – Report by Jim McDermott

On July 30th the subject of the NHS was introduced by Jim Summers. The group discussed its organisation, financing, history and its future. Is it inevitable that parts or all of the NHS will be privatised? Why is it that in spite of vast amounts of cash being injected, we are told that no improvements can be seen? Should the financial arrangements of the NHS be more transparent? Who decides which case is more deserving than any other? Is the NHS a handy whipping-boy for the press? Can we believe all the horror stories in the media? It is also a very handy political football. Is the perception worse than the reality? And why are we told that it is the envy of the world but every other country's health service is better? Does the pharmaceutical industry have far too much influence on the NHS? Why is NICE always portrayed (wrongly) as being cruel and unfeeling? The group managed to discuss all of the above and more. A lot of ideas were exchanged and opinions expressed.

On the 27th Aug Pam Curley introduced the topic of discrimination. Everybody discriminates in one form or another i.e. makes choices, some of which can be classed as trivial and harmless but others can be misinterpreted as being prejudicial, deliberately hurtful and injurious to others; but it is inescapable that we will all discriminate and will justify our doing so. It is only when it becomes personal and affects other people that it becomes known by a variety of other names e.g. 'racist', 'ageist', 'sexist', 'homophobic' etc. all guaranteed to cause resentment and hurt to other peoples feelings. We discussed various examples of discrimination from the apparently harmless to the downright malicious.

PHILOSOPHY GROUP REPORTS

The Philosophy group held its first meeting in the High Lane library on Monday 21 July at 1400 hours. 12 people attended and we agreed to meet fortnightly. After a brief introduction to the origins and aims of philosophy we addressed the topic for discussion entitled 'The Dilemma'. Four profiles were provided of people who were going to die unless they received the pill that would save their lives. However, only one person could receive the pill and each member of the group had to make a choice and take into consideration Bentham's maxim, the greatest happiness for the greatest number. A lively exchange took place as each member sought to convince the others to agree with the choice put forward. At the end of the discussion the members agreed that the meeting was informative and entertaining. Patricia Pinkney agreed to be the group's treasurer.

The group met in the high lane library on Monday 4th August at 14.00 hours. The topic was 'rights and what constitutes a person entitled to these rights'. We agreed that people had rights which could be classed as natural rights through to legal rights. On looking at the world--past and present--we agreed that might was more exercised than right. We summed up the USA's attitude towards Iraq as 'we will give you democracy even if it kills you'. As was to be expected the debate on what constitutes a person entitled to the rights, became for some members, a personal issue--even though philosophers should be objectively rational--and the debate became somewhat heated. In the end we agreed to differ and the conclusion was that philosophy certainly made one question beliefs that in the past had been taken for granted. The subject for our next meeting is 'freedom.'

The group held a meeting on Monday 18 August. We recapped on the topic of the previous meeting and spent some trying to find an acceptable definition of what constitutes a person. The debate was lively and we agreed that the definition would be so complex and convoluted that we left it and moved to the subject of freedom. Having examined the 'common sense' view of free will we then moved on to discuss the determinists view that all our actions were controlled and determined by the laws of nature. In accepting this view then Jones, a confessed serial killer, would be freed on the grounds that he had not acted using his free will and therefore not responsible for his actions. Fortunately we rejected this view. However we did accept that our genes, upbringing and social forces played some part in shaping our character and thus our choice of actions. We agreed that if free will was to be demonstrated we needed options, but, we found that multiple options was more likely to make us somewhat unhappy. As we closed we agreed that at the next meeting we would pursue further the various topics that come under the heading of freedom.

Liam Canavan

Philately Group



The third meeting of the Philately Group was held on 12 August at my house in Hazel Grove. Although small, the Group has settled down very well, with lots of discussion about various stamps in everyone's albums. Also encouraging is the number of 'swaps' taking place as members find gaps in their collections, which they are eager to fill.

The next meeting has been arranged for Tuesday 16th September at my house as usual. Anyone wishing to become new members of the group please contact me.

Brian Farquhar

Theatre Group by June Gibbs



I recently went to the Theatre by the Lake with the Theatre Group to see "Lady in the Van" a play by Alan Bennett.

We travelled by coach to Keswick and there was sufficient time to have lunch and a walk by the lake or round the town, the weather was kind to us, it did not rain until it was time to go into the theatre. The play opened with what appeared to be Alan Bennett narrating the story. It was humorous and sometimes a very sad story of an eccentric old lady (with no teeth) who somehow managed to live in a van in appalling conditions in the authors garden for many years. There are a series of visits from social workers, doctors, and an ambulance driver. The old lady's life begins to unfold slowly after her death. She is buried and laid to rest but not for long - up she pops out of the hole in the floor! It was an excellent production, very enjoyable with brilliant acting and well worth the long journey. It is well worth seeing if you get the opportunity. The theatre is situated at the side of the lake in lovely surroundings and there is a cafe for lunch or light refreshments, or you can take a picnic as I and a few others did.

WALKING GROUP GO TO GRASMERE SEEKING INSPIRATION AND EXERCISE IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

We wandered lonely as a crowd, a group from High Lane USA
When all at once we spied a.... pub and low and behold it was selling beer and grub

The thirsty walkers raced down the hill at breakneck speed
To take their fill of beer and chips and therefore satisfy their longing need
For nourishment and rest at this most welcome establishment

And so dear friends read on.....

Our weekend started at Elterwater with a five mile walk via Skelwith Force and then Colwith Force ("May the force be with you" was quipped quite frequently – such culture) There was

lots of water thundering down, the weather was perfect for walking and the jackets stayed firmly inside the rucksack. After the absolute necessity of checking that the beer at the Britannia Inn was safe to drink and also conducting a health and safety check on the chips and saltshaker we moved on to the Glenthorne Guest House in Grasmere. After the early morning start and filled with fresh air and good food there was not much activity in the lounge that evening just armchair aerobics i.e. lifting glass to lips and managing to swallow the elixir of youth.

The next day...

Our hearts felt young but our legs oh so old but still we obeyed and did as we were told

To meet at ten and yet again seek out the fell, the tarn and the open road

Today's challenge was the COFFIN TRAIL to Ambleside. After breakfast (and prayers) we headed for the village and graveyard with the Wordsworth graves and on past Dove Cottage where Mr W had lived for many years. The route was described as "gently undulating over rocky outcrops, starting with a long steady ascent." Ask the walkers what that really means!! All we can say is that, thank goodness, we were not carrying a coffin, just our rucksacks. A number of theories were expressed on how it might be possible to ditch the body in the dense undergrowth and pop a few rocks in the coffin before reaching Grasmere and would anyone notice? Answers of no more than 100 words please to www.com/walking (Note: www. stands for our new website: Walter Wainwright Wordsworth/) At noon the group divided – not due to any literary fall out - but more a survival measure. A small, but elite quartet decided to use their bus passes, thereby reducing path erosion, and head for Bowness to check that the lake was still there as indicated on the map and then use water power to reach Ambleside – as always aware of their carbon footprint – however they did return carrying PLASTIC BAGS!! The next energy efficient group headed back along the lake path thereby reducing carbon monoxide emissions caused by heavy breathing but on arrival back at the hotel they were found to be consuming CALORIES.

The final group of fitties followed our young Mr. Walter **UP** to the top of Loughrigg. The enthusiastic mountain goats headed for the trig point at over 1000 feet and I understand the views were fantastic. However remember you can always enjoy this experience by paying 30p for the excellent postcard. Four of the maidens were most wise and choose the mid level route back across the fell and fields, all very civilised and they even managed a most refreshing cup of tea, in a china cup and by the lake.

After the evening meal followed by good homespun entertainment provided by our members around the old pianoforte, as per the style of the original Mr. W, it was time for bed

And then we wandered off to bed to disrobe, relax and give the pillow to our head

To rest our bodies, collapse in a heap but remember to set the alarm before you go to sleep

The next morning the sky was blue and so the USA set out to find if it was true

That following their leader always consulting his map
could help them discover the joy of the hills

And more especially help their health by taking deep breaths and so ditch all those pills

So our final shorter walk on Tuesday morning was a team building exercise of encouragement to achieve yet more height as we walked out of Grasmere and along the terrace paths and back through the woods before wending our separate ways back home.

And so to finish with a final tribute to Mr Wordsworth

We clambered up hills and descended the vale, perhaps we had arrived a little too late

Had someone forgotten to shut the gate but nowhere could we find that golden host

Surely the sheep had not mistaken them for toast

But still we enjoyed our escape to the hills and for that we must hasten

To thank, most sincerely, our leader Mr. Walter Mason

Judith Ridgway (with apologies to William Wordsworth)

WALK REPORTS

JUNE 2008



Brian and Alison took 14 of us on an interesting walk in the Taxal, Windgather, Fernilee area. The walk climbed up to the beautifully situated St. James Church in Taxal, and past the former Chimes of Taxal restaurant (remember it?) which is now a private house, before finding a lovely concession path ascending Taxal Edge and further to Windgather Rocks. A descent through the fringes of the Goyt forest, still devastated in places from past storms, led to the tracks leading round to Fernilee dam. Then it was an easy descent past Fernilee, with clusters of Fragrant Orchids and an occasional Ragged Robin in the damp meadows by the river Goyt, until a last short climb through Shallcross Wood led to our cars. Very mixed weather had kept us on our toes, but the clear views and fresh countryside gave us a worthwhile walk, hillier than most, but a good warm-up for those going on the Grasmere weekend.
Many thanks, Brian and Alison.

July 2008 Walk Report

A leaden sky and occasional drizzle greeted the 16 walkers, who boarded the 199 bus to Doveholes. Doveholes is not the prettiest village, but a climb past the grey houses surprised our group with close views of the sharp ridges of Lady How and Castle Naze, and a panorama across to Chapel-en-le Frith, Kinder and Rushup.

After a coffee stop, Walter led us down past the modernised buildings of Ridge Farm, and through the beech trees to Chapel-en-le-Frith station. (Walter's grandfather had

been stationmaster there circa 1910 to 1930, and the family lived in the Station House, now a restaurant).

After sandwiches, now in warm sunshine, we followed railway paths to Combs, to link up with the waterside path round Combs reservoir. 3 walkers headed for the nearby bus stop, but the other 13 continued up to Tunstead farm onto a little used field path to Cadster House and farm (Brian Allerton's mother was born here in 1909). Then it was down to the Whaley Bridge outskirts and the bus home. By common consent, an attractive 7 ½ mile walk on new countryside, and the use of bus passes a useful tool for the future.

August 2008 Walk Report

Recent heavy rains had left Grindleford paths excessively muddy, so Don Heap switched the August walk to firmer terrain locally. Don led 10 of us past Disley St. Mary's, up the gradual climb of Green Lane (not so green these days!), with sweeping views over Kinder and Lyme. Thick grey clouds kept dry as we followed Mudhurst Lane, had a coffee stop, and did the steeper climb to Bowstonegate.

Then it was downhill to Knightslow Wood, with glimpses of familiar Red Deer and surprisingly light-coloured Sika (?) Deer, on opposite sides. After a pleasant sandwich stop by the lake, Don took us through the Arboretum (new to several), with a few Autumn leaves beginning to show, down the Elmerhurst trail, and back to our cars at Disley station. All 10 enjoyed Don's walk, very suitable for the a day with the misty air obscuring the distant views.

Future walks –

October – Louanne Collins - Ashford in the Water

November – Ruth and Dave Smith – shorter walk from Castleton - pub lunch

Walter Mason

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In the last Newsletter a poem by Leo Marks was included. Mike Humphris has kindly written to let us know how it came to be written.

Leo Marks was a member of the French Section of SOE (Special Operations Executive) from 1942 to 1945 specialising in the preparation and development of simple codes. To avoid the inherent risk of paper based codes, which might fall into the hands of the enemy, relatively simple and easy to remember poems were written for the exclusive use of individual British agents operating secretly in occupied France. A further advantage being that as each agent had only their own poem, those who received such messages could be sure of their provenance.

The poem "The life that I have is all that I have..." was written in 1943 for use by Violette Szabo so that she could send messages back to London from her base in occupied France. Violette Szabo's career as a British agent ended with capture and she was eventually murdered by the Nazis in Ravensbruck concentration camp just before the war ended. Her story is immortalised in the film "Carve Her Name With

Pride". (Which was based on the book of the same name by R.J. Minney, which I read when in my teens – Ed)

Leo Marks was an unlikely recruit into the SOE, working for his father in the family bookshop, Marks & Co. until examples of his home made codes came to the attention of SOE. His wartime biography "Between Silk and Cyanide", published by Harper Collins, shows the valuable contribution to eventual victory rendered by Leo Marks and others working clandestinely against the Nazi enemy.

Years later Marks & Co bookshop was itself immortalised in Helene Hanff's book "84 Charing Cross Road".

One or two people have sent me poems – either one that means something to them or one they have written themselves, below are two that have been submitted. Ed

AUTUMN---A VIEW
I am looking downwards to the sky
Where white and black clouds twist and tumble
Trees outlined with trunks and branches stretching downwards
To the shining sun
Birds are flying downside up
A flock grows with silver wings
Loudly sweep down to the branches
Mingling with the flaming vapour trail of a jet plane
Cows and sheep contently graze with legs skywards
In this topsy-turvy world
Where am I?

Looking into the Peak Forest Canal.

by Liam Canavan (Member of High Lane U3A)

SPACE EATING (*A cautionary tale*)

I took this tab of L.S.D., my friend said it was good for me.
It took a while to take effect but when it did, as you'd expect,
I got this real fantastic feeling, sent me right up through the ceiling.
Where, up in the air, I found I liked it better than the ground.
I had a butty in my hand and ate it just the way I'd planned.
That butty took a bit of beating; I guess that's what you'd call space eating!

When I got back inside my head, my manic friend, who'd waited said,
He'd had three tabs, been round the moon and planned to land on Mars quite soon.
Once there he whimpered, screamed then yelled, two Martian devils firmly held
And strove by diabolic arts, to doff his cherished, vital parts.
Up Gandalf raced on Shadowfax and forced those rascals to relax
Their grip and gave my pal a ride to 'Middle Earth'. He could have died!

This tale may seem to beg debate about my buddy's mental state.
It's said his Dad was long bemused before he drowned himself in booze
And Granddad Bates, his Mother's Dad, was quite 'March-Hare-ish' if not mad.

But folks who act as 'right as rain' can sadly prove to be insane
So, since what was bequeathed to me by mental genealogy is not quite clear,
I'll give-up 'trips' - and stick to land-based beer and chips.

AAGLYNN (A member of High Lane U3A)

THE DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER IS
FRIDAY THE 31ST OCTOBER 2008