

HIGH LANE U3A NEWSLETTER

www.highlaneu3a.org.uk

Editor

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November 2008



Annual Lunch

Wednesday 21st January 09
Marple Golf Club 12.30 for 1.00

Tickets on sale at the November & December meetings **£17.00**
including prize ticket draw
Limited numbers

Choose from:

Broccoli and Stilton Soup
Fanned Melon with Fresh Fruit and Coulis
Pate a la Maison

Topside of Beef and Yorkshire Pudding
Chicken Zingara with Subtle Chilli Sauce

(Pan Fried Chicken with fresh peppers, onions, mushrooms and a garlic herb butter sauce
with a hint of sweet Thai chilli)

Prime Salmon in Lobster Prawn Sauce

Pear and Almond Liqueur Bakewell
Mango and Apple Strudel
Drunken Sherry Trifle

Coffee/Tea and Mints
Heritage Group



Ireland September 25th to 29th 2008

It's come at last! We set off in high spirits. The sun was trying to shine; all was well with our world.

After a brief stop at Chester Motorway Services, we bowled up the motorway, over the Menai Bridge into Llanfair P.G. There, wonder of wonders, we found ourselves in an Aladdin's cave of bargains at the James Pringle Weavers Centre. A quick lunch was followed by an hour's delightful browsing.

In next to no time we reached the port of Holyhead. During the hour we queued to board the Stena ferry there were few signs of activity (Hello, Marie Celeste!). Then all at once vehicles appeared cars and gigantic European lorries. The ferry was a hydrofoil, the sea as calm as the proverbial millpond and the sun shone on Ireland as we approached. Outside Dun Laoghaire the sighting of a flotilla of about sixty yachts, in full sail, was a bonus.

Our regrettably slow progress to Bray through the outskirts of Dublin in the rush hour gave us time to appreciate the beauty of the Georgian houses and the quaintness of the old cottages.

This is going to be a memorable trip!

Refreshed after a good night's sleep and a full Irish breakfast (no oysters or Guinness in sight), we set off for a guided tour of Dublin Castle. The present day 18th century Georgian castle, built on the site of a 12th century medieval fortress, is an impressive building now used mainly for state functions. It contains grand staircases and elegant public reception rooms with magnificent Waterford crystal chandeliers, Donegal hand-woven carpets, ornate moulded cornices and intricate painted ceilings. The "Special Needs" of women were catered for in the furnishings with wider Chippendale chairs to accommodate their dresses, and "petticoat mirrors" placed strategically below side tables so that ladies could ensure that they were not considered to be "loose women" by showing their petticoats in public! The throne room was used by visiting Kings and Queens and for the inauguration of Viceroys. We were fascinated to learn that the green, white and orange Irish flag represents the Nationalist and Unionists, with the white in the centre representing peace between them. This is a building on a grand scale with a real 'Wow' factor.

In the afternoon we were left to our own devices! Many enthuse about the Book of Kells - a wonderful copy of the gospels with magnificent illustrated pages, some enjoyed open-topped bus tours in the sunshine, others explored churches and cathedrals, keen genealogists took the opportunity to trace family history, whilst a few visited the Georgian House Museum. A truly memorable day.

On a bright sunny morning we travelled south-westwards to Kilkenny, the ancient medieval capital of Ireland. Kilkenny is of great architectural interest with its medieval "slips" or alleys, a fine Tudor merchant's house and elegant Georgian facades. The High Street is dominated by the 18th century "Tholsel" (City Hall) with its distinctive clock tower. As a brewery city, Kilkenny boasts about eighty pubs, one being Kyteler's Inn, a coaching inn named after Dame Alice Kyteler a local 14th century witch.

The highlight of the visit was an excellent guided tour of the castle. The predominant

family were the Butlers, whose power and wealth stemmed from Royal privilege with the appointment as Chief Butler of Ireland in 1185, which brought in taxes from wine. The family inhabited the castle until the 1930s after which it remained empty until the 1960s when it was "sold" to a government-backed restoration trust for £50. It has been faithfully restored to reflect the exuberant spirit of the Victorian age. The library and Chinese bedroom are particularly fine, but the high-spot for me was the long gallery with its hammer-beam roof displaying hand-painted pre-Raphaelite images and scenes inspired by the Book of Kells. There was just time to visit the Design Craft Centre and excellent restaurant in the restored stables and peep into Butler House with its tranquil garden, before heading back to Bray after another enjoyable and interesting day.

On the next day we visited the village of Avoca which was the setting for the BBC series Ballykissangel. We watched a demonstration of hand weaving at the Avoca Handweavers, which is the oldest mill in Ireland being in operation since 1723. In the afternoon our destination was Wicklow founded by the Vikings around 870AD. We had an excellent tour of Wicklow Gaol, built in 1702 when conditions were appalling. We visited various cells and areas which depicted the horrors of prison life through the ages of its existence until it finally closed after the Civil War in 1924. Over 50 000 Irish people were transported to Australia during this time.

The last day of our holiday dawned, another sunny day. The first stop was Powerscourt Gardens, at the foot of the Great Sugar Loaf Mountain, which has one of the greatest collections of ornamental trees and flowers. Since it was built in 1173 the house has changed ownership several times and unfortunately was destroyed by fire in November 1974 although it has been partially rebuilt. After lunch we moved on into Dublin to visit the Jameson Distillery - a must if you visit Ireland!! The distillery was founded in 1780 being one of the finest whiskey distilleries in the world. In 1971 whiskey production moved out of Dublin and part of the remaining building has been restored with displays set out as a working distillery. Our guide chose eight of our party as tasters. They were to taste three samples - Jameson's 12 year old whiskey, Johnny Walker Black Label and American Jack Daniels and to say which they preferred. Seven of the volunteers chose Jameson as the smoothest and the remaining volunteer chose Johnny Walker. (Jameson is distilled three times, Johnny Walker twice and Jack Daniels once)

It was soon time to board our coach for the last part of our journey in Ireland, to Dun Laoghaire for the ferry to Holyhead. The crossing was quite smooth and it was not until we arrived in Stockport that we encountered rain so disembarking from the coach was a very wet affair!

Thank you, Margaret, for another superb holiday.

June Griffiths; Margaret Meekley; Loanne Collins; Pat Thorne; Edna Bentley

GERMAN GROUP (Marlene Brooks)

We continue to meet every Friday at 9.30. We shall be having our pre-Christmas lunch at the Wycliffe Hotel on Friday, 28th November at 12.30. Our last meeting before Christmas will be on 12th December. The Christmas break is likely to be extended this year, but I shall inform everyone by phone or email when we can start up again.

NEEDLEWORK GROUP (Marlene Brooks)



The group has been busy, making Christmas cards which will be on sale at the November meeting, together with one of June's teddy bears. They will be quite reasonably priced to cover the cost of materials. We hope to go out for lunch before Christmas but that has yet to be arranged.

--ooOoo--

DISCUSSION GROUP



At the meeting on the 15th October 08, the group discussed the merits or otherwise of the Right to Buy Act. This was presented by Margaret McDermott. One of the Thatcher government's more popular acts, it provided some people with a major step onto the property ladder. Unfortunately it also had some harmful consequences, amongst which were the cessation of new council house provision and a slow down in the maintenance of existing stock.

It was suggested that a great help towards solving the housing shortage would be a renewal of council house building after modifying the Right to Buy Act, but avoiding those large sprawling estates by building small groups of houses. There is also the possibility that it would help to bring down the current prices of houses. It was a very wide ranging discussion, considering economic and social issues.

Jim McDermott

HERITAGE GROUP

VISIT TO STOCKPORT ART GALLERY TUESDAY 25th NOVEMBER

TO VIEW THE ANNE FRANK EXHIBITION

followed by

A VISIT TO THE HAT MUSEUM TO LOOK AT RELATED MATERIALS

COST: £3.00 (includes tea/coffee and cake)

Please meet at the Art Gallery at 12.50 pm

Would you please let us know if you wish to be included on this visit.

June Gibbs, Margaret Snape

We are now planning a programme for 2009, which we hope will be varied and interesting. Details will appear in future newsletters also on the website and at the monthly meetings.

Heritage Group Committee



On September 3rd, 52 members from the Heritage and Churches and Pubs Groups joined forces to visit the Church and Friary of St. Francis, or Gorton Monastery as it is popularly known.

On approach, the Monastery appears as a spectacular landmark in the Gorton Regeneration area, and once inside we were not disappointed. It is the tallest single storey building in Manchester, and according to our interesting and dedicated guide, Tony Hurley, was built to impress the citizens of Manchester, especially those of other faiths, being even taller than Manchester Cathedral itself! We also learned from Tony the difference between Monks and Friars, and to our surprise, that we were not really in a Monastery at all!

The human stories behind the founding and building of this magnificent place by a handful of Franciscan friars and volunteer helpers from their congregation were quite inspirational to hear. The dedicated work of the volunteers who have striven tirelessly to restore the Monastery is still continuing, and once again this architectural gem is beginning to serve the community, albeit in a different role from its original one as a place of Catholic worship. It is now hosting conferences, banquets, etc, and hopefully soon, more money will be raised towards the upkeep and further restoration.

After a light lunch in the Refectory, we all agreed that we had enjoyed another most interesting U3A outing. Thanks once again to Steve Reynolds.

Visit to St Ann's & St Mary's (Hidden Gem) - Wednesday October 15th



38 members of the Churches & Pubs Group were met at St Ann's by the Rector Nigel Ashworth & his Verger Paul Campion.

The church was consecrated in 1712 and gets its name from the monarch of the time, Queen Ann and its founder, Lady Ann Bland. The Grade 1 listed building was built with Collyhurst stone and is pink/mauve in colour, the architect was one John Barker. You would never realise it but there is a churchyard, although long since paved over, & St Ann's is one of very few city centre churches with tombs on display outside.

The interior is strongly protestant with Tuscan columns supporting the galleries. The pulpit was originally centrally placed but was too dominant, so has been moved and at the same time sunk several feet into

the floor. The pews are interesting in that several of them have numbers or names. This really went against the spirit of the Church which was to encourage access to all and to sit anywhere in the nave.

The outstanding window in the Church is on the north side and was painted by William Peckitt of York in 1769, although not installed at St Ann's until 1981. It depicts the apostles Peter, John and James and has wonderful vibrant colours.

The Church has a very strong musical tradition which the current Director of Music, Ronald Frost has done much to maintain and enhance, so the organ attracted great interest as did the imposing Steinway piano.

All in all, a very enjoyable, informative and interesting visit to one of Manchester's iconic buildings.

We then paid a short visit to St Mary's in Mulberry Street (the Hidden Gem of Manchester). No guided tour here but members were able to see the marked contrast between the interior here and St Ann's.

There's no doubt that Norman Adams's famous Stations of the Cross are visually stunning even if they are not to everyone's catholic taste.

Then it was time to adjourn to Sam's Chop House in Chapel Walks for a well-earned lunch. Plenty of city centre atmosphere here and a very pleasant end to our final visit in 2008. Stephen didn't let us go however, without first handing out his end of year quiz covering all our visits during the year.

Ann Reynolds

THEATRE GROUP



New theatre booking - **Lowry Theatre April 1st 2009** at 2.00 p.m.
Birmingham Royal Ballet perform "**Pomp and Circumstance**",
tickets cost £21 each, coach £6.

June Gibbs

TRAVEL GROUP - CRUISE APRIL 25TH 2009

I have booked our own private coach to take us from High Lane to Southampton Cruise Terminal. The return fare will be £89. As I have had to pay a large deposit to secure the coach, would those who intend travelling on this coach please pay on or before the meeting on December 10th. Cheques should be made payable to High Lane U3A (Heritage)

Margaret McDermott.

WALKING GROUP



24th September 2008

Lucky were the 13 who joined Sam Chappell's "maiden" walk. They enjoyed a lovely walk in the picturesque Strines valley. From Marple Ridge, we descended overgrown Plucksbridge Road (however did we drive cars down there 40 years ago?), went over the canal and down to the Roman Bridge and Lakes (there used to be a massive mill here – scenically it is a blessing in disguise that it burned down years ago!).

From Bottoms Hall (Old Hall), we climbed the ancient track towards Gibb Lane, but turned across Mellor Golf Course, with stunning views to our right, on our way to the charming hamlet of Brookbottom, and its welcoming Fox Inn. There the sun came out as we had our lunch stop.

A warm and pleasant amble down to Strines village followed, where the millpond dovecote is now being disturbed by an unwelcome housing scheme, before we had to climb up to the High Peak canal, past the ancestral 17C cottage of David Lloyd's wife.

A level stroll towards the Romper Inn completed a very pleasant walk. Thanks, Sam.

OCTOBER 2008 WALK REPORT

21 joined Peter and Louanne Collins, and undeterred by dire BBC warnings of dangerous icy roads, we zoomed through the High Peak to Ashford-in-the-Water. A clear blue sky and frost-free landscape greeted our walkers, as we threaded the limestone field paths and narrow muddy lanes, with a gradual ascent to a surprise aerial view of the Monsal viaduct. A airy narrow path above steep slopes led to a drinks stop at the picnic tables of Monsal Head viewpoint.

Then a steep, but easy descent, dropped us down to the dale, and a footbridge crossing over the River Wye, well swollen from weekend rains. The grassy walk by the river was suffering from too much damp, and too many pedestrians, but the views of the weir and the Monsall Dale woods were superb – "Peaks' Autumn Leaves Are Golden And Brown", said the poem on a passing bench!

After a lunch stop at White Lodge, we skirted Dimin Dale (or Demon's Dell), which was settled 4 ½ thousand years ago by Beaker folk. Then a climb into Shacklow Woods, with one or two slippery stretches. Back down to the River Wye, there was interest from extensive fish ponds, from the Magpie Sough – the drainage tunnel from the former Magpie lead mine (once navigated by one of our members!), and from the Shacklow Mill – with its unusual two water wheels, one on either side!

But soon we were back at Sheepwash Bridge in Ashford-in-the-Water, having very much enjoyed Peter and Louanne' walk.

For the November 26th walk we will meet at 9.30am, for a short and relatively easy walk in Castleton, followed by a pub meal. Ruth and Dave Smith will lead the walk.

In December, the walk will be on 17th December from the Devonshire Arms, Mellor, to be led by Steve Reynolds, and again followed by a pub meal.

Plans are being prepared by Steve Reynolds for a walking weekend at Ravenscar next summer. Those on email will be circulated with details when finalised. Any walking group members who have changed email address recently, or who haven't received email reminder of walks, please send updated email address to Walter Mason.

Walter Mason

PHILATELY GROUP



At the meeting on 14th October, we were scheduled to have a guest speaker to talk about rare stamps, watermarks and the numerous perforations, which differentiate certain stamps from others. Unfortunately, he was unable to come and sent his apologies afterwards. We hope to have him attend some future meeting, but in his absence, we were able to cover the subjects adequately, ourselves. Due to a number of people being away in November, the next meeting of the Philately Group will be held a week later than usual on 18th November at 2.00pm, at the usual venue.

Brian Farquhar

PHILOSOPHY GROUP

The group met on the 1st September, in the High Lane Library. We continued our discussion on freedom. This time the topic was education, we defined education, more in agreement with the Existentialist view, that education was much more than the 3 R's and it really was helping the person to self-actualize i.e. to be what they are capable of being. The view [Rousseau, Marx, Nietzsche and Foucault] that education's primary purpose was to produce workers to function as frictionless cogs in a vast, inhuman socioeconomic machine was also discussed. Some fun was had with Rhonda Byrne's 'Law of Attraction' which states that if you positively visualise what you want--a bike, a piece of jewellery--it will appear.

The group met on Monday 15 September. We examined the philosopher Rene Descartes' work 'on how do we know that external things exist?' Descartes described how he experienced certain 'real' events, only to wake up and find that he had been dreaming. In order to prove that he actually exists he concluded that thinking and doubting were activities that proved that he was conscious. Therefore he arrived at the principle, 'I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I am.' We did have to grapple with these concepts of external existence, are really living or just dreaming. We included in our discussion the 'brain in the vat' theory. This states that we are merely brains in a vat with leads attached and something pushing buttons to create the sensations of actually living. On looking at each other, the chairs etc. each member privately concluded that at least, 'I know that I am real.' Next came Descartes proof that there was a God. He stated that a supremely good, all powerful God would not let him think that there was a God--if there was not. This is summed up as, 'God would not deceive me.' This led to a lively discussion on the need for a God and whether the human race was good and fought off bad or whether we are bad and have to fight to be good. My mind was full of thoughts on reality, external existence, brains in a vat, God etc as I put my papers into my brief case, and when I looked up the group had silently, mysteriously disappeared.

The group met on 29 September and the topic was Eugenics. Eugenics is a social philosophy which advocates the improvement of human hereditary traits through various forms of intervention. It was the various forms of interventions that we discussed. It soon became obvious that the types of interventions, and the rationale behind them, led the group to such topics as, euthanasia, mercy killings, and who shall be deemed, for what and by whom, to be sacrificed for the future good of the

human race. The term 'eugenics' was first formulated by Sir Francis Galton in 1883. Galton was the cousin of Charles Darwin and it was Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' that gave Galton the idea of intentionally applying the theory to humans. It was surprising to find that people from diverse fields were interested in eugenics these included: H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, John Maynard Keynes, William Keith Kellogg, Margaret Sanger and G. K. Chesterton to mention a few. The group concluded that this was a vast, complex field and that we had only scratched the surface.

The group met on Monday 27 October and we discussed the real life case of a child suffering from Diamond Blackfan Anaemia. We followed, and discussed the ethics, the various treatments that were unable to cure the disease. It was not until the child reached 7 that a 'cure' was found--a bone marrow transplant from her sister. This case covered many ethical areas such as: the future quality of life, the parents role as each treatment failed and they wrestled with the often, conflicting, suggestions from the medical profession, the production, and discarding, of embryos, producing a saviour sibling to provide the bone marrow, is the saviour sibling seen as just a commodity-- in philosophy referred to as instrumentalism, and the current topic of euthanasia. Due to holidays our next meeting will be on the 24 November.

Liam Canavan

--ooOoo--

Speakers

In **November** there will be musical entertainment by "Three of a Kind" There will be an opportunity to socialise at our **Christmas** meeting over light refreshments. Entertainment includes songs from our choir, a folksinger and a variety of quizzes We start the **New Year** with well known speaker Nan Ironside whose talk is "The Dating Game"

Louanne Collins

Are you interested in family history? There will be a new group starting in January 2009 "Exploring Family History". It is proposed that the group meet on a Thursday late afternoon so that we can use the computers at Brookside primary school in High Lane. Please give your name and contact number to Pat Christopher or Jean Drinkwater if you are interested.

THE DEADLINE FOR MATERIAL FOR THE
JANUARY NEWSLETTER IS
MONDAY THE 29TH DECEMBER 2008

High Lane U3A committee nomination form 2009

Committee	Nominee	Signature of nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
Chairman				
Vice Chairman				
Treasurer				
Member				
Member				
Member				
Member				
Member				
Member				

NOMINATIONS

The Committee for 2009 is to be elected at the AGM on February 11th 2009.

The committee comprises:

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman who are elected for two years and are allowed to serve for a total of four years if re-elected. The Vice Chairman wishes to stand down. The Secretary and Treasurer who are elected for two years and are allowed to serve for a total of six years if re-elected. The Secretary was elected last year. The Treasurer wishes to stand down.

Six other members each serve for one year but are eligible for re-election annually.

If you wish to nominate any member for a position on the Committee, please complete the form above and either bring it to the meeting on December 10th.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY MEMBER NOMINATED MUST SIGN THE FORM TOGETHER WITH THE SIGNATURES OF THE PROPOSER AND SECONDER BEFORE IT IS SUBMITTED.

VOTING takes place at the AGM.

If you cannot attend the AGM, you can print a Voting Paper, via the website from 20th January, or contact Margaret McDermott for a copy.

Your completed Voting Paper should be returned to Margaret by 31 January 2009, together with a note saying who it is from. If you wish to keep your vote anonymous, put the voting paper in a plain envelope and also include a separate note with your name.