

u3a High Lane

Newsletter

April 2026



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FROM THE EDITOR

Happy Easter

Welcome to the April 2026 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. A Happy Easter to all our members.

In this edition, as well as news from our Groups, we have information about our Open Day later this month and this year's annual lunch in July. 2026 is our 25th anniversary and we hope that members, those long standing and those recently joined, will join us at Marple Golf Club to celebrate. The menu is on page 2. In the same theme, the cover photo this month is a photograph taken at the 15th anniversary lunch in 2016. This was 10 years ago, but there are many familiar faces! Good to see there were lots of members there. Also, on page 4, you can find our Programme for 2026 which brings together separate lists of monthly meetings, social events, trips and holidays. We hope this will be a useful reference.

I am also resending the Programme and Groups contact list for 2026 with this newsletter. This contains contact details for the Committee and interest group leaders, group meeting places and times and the monthly speaker meetings. Also attached to the email is the latest National Office bitesize newsletter. You can read the full newsletter [here](#). This has reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country.

This is your newsletter so please feel free to share some of your interests, items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members, places you have visited, books you have read, films you have seen; your recipes, limericks; the list is endless. The next issue of our newsletter will be May 2026 so please send your contributions to me by 28th April 2026 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

FROM THE CHAIR

Hope you all enjoyed the sunshine last week but a shame that it's back to normal this week. The clocks have now gone forward, and we are well on the way to Spring/Summer with longer evenings to sit out in the garden. Hope everyone is keeping well.

On the subject of health, the Village Hall is having a defibrillator installed in the corridor in the hall and a few members of the committee and group leaders who use the hall were given an insight as how it works. It was very interesting and all the instructions are described to you when the defibrillator is activated. Hopefully we will not have to use it.

Paul Kenneth

25th ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

We are pleased to be able to confirm the arrangements for the lunch and here is the menu! As well as what looks like a delicious lunch, we have a guest speaker, Steven Taylor, a performance poet.

Tickets will be available at the monthly meetings. The cost is £35 for 3 courses and coffee/tea and includes a gratuity. If you can't get to a meeting, contact Pam Cooke to make an arrangement to get your ticket.

25th Anniversary Lunch

Friday 10 July 2026

12.00 for 12.30 pm.

MARPLE GOLF CLUB

Caprese salad

Seasonal velouté with herb crouton

Chicken liver pate with brandy, rosemary and shallots



Braised beef cheek with mash, vegetables and red wine jus

Herb-crusted chicken breast with crisp herb crust and tenderstem, broccoli

Baked salmon with new potatoes, vegetables and white wine sauce



Summer berry pavlova with Chantilly cream

Sticky toffee pudding with treacle sauce and vanilla ice cream

Classic lemon tart with clotted cream and pistachio meringue

Followed by Coffee/Tea

Cost £35

OPEN DAY

Village Hall, Wednesday 29 April, 2pm – 4pm

We are having an open day on the 29th of April at the village hall for Members and potential new members. This is an opportunity to meet committee members and group leaders and have a look at what they do. If you have any friends that would be interested in joining or learning about the u3a please tell them about the meeting. There will be light refreshments.

MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the March monthly meeting was Allan Shalks and his talk was My unusual early life: some experiences in TV, films, theatre and radio. Quite a title and quite a life!



He took us through his traumatic childhood when he was selling newspapers in the pubs to assisting his magician cousin in The Sooty Show in the Leeds Variety Theatre. He trained as a hairdresser and by 18 he owned his own salon and soon after a wholesale business. His varied life continued including coming second on the Generation Game!

After being unfairly sacked from a car delivery business he decided to have a complete change. He tried his hand at acting and he has several small parts in a selection of TV shows and films working with many of the big names in the industry. He once was a body double for Tom Conti! More varied jobs following including a teacher at the Jewish museum and a presenter on Radio Manchester. Driven by a derogatory comment in his youth about how worthless he was he thinks he has put that demon to rest and can honestly say " You did good"

There was a very big turn out and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the talk which included much humour.

The speaker at the next meeting on Wednesday April 8th is Allan's wife Marilyn Shalks whose talk is entitled I wish my life was like a musical.

Kath Wareham

PROGRAMME FOR 2026

Blue – monthly meeting Black – social and other events Green – holidays

| Date | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| 14 th January | Monthly meeting | Lyme: Science and superstition, Leeches and Leghs |
| 26 th January | Potters Five Lakes | |
| 11 th February | AGM | |
| 11 th March | Monthly meeting | Allan Shalks: My unusual early life; some experiences in TV, films, theatre and radio |
| 8 th April | Monthly meeting | Marilyn Shalks: I wish my life was like a musical |
| 29 th April | Open Day | |
| 3 rd May | High Clere Castle (Downton Abbey) | |
| 13 th May | Monthly meeting | Joy and Kevin Siddall: Sinatra: The man behind the music |
| 15 th May | Day trip to Well Dressing and visit to Bakewell | |
| 10 th June | Monthly meeting | Fran Sandham: A solo walk across Africa |
| 26 th June | Beetle Drive | |
| 29 th June | Cumbria and Lake District | |
| 8 th July | Monthly meeting | Simon Michael: Crime fiction author |
| 10 th July | 25th Anniversary Annual Lunch | Steve Taylor: Performance Poet Marple Golf Club |
| 17 th July | Cruise from Liverpool | |
| 12 th August | Monthly meeting | Paul Isherwood: Child gambler wins back life |
| 28 th August | Quiz Night | |
| 9 th September | Monthly meeting | Brian Halliwell: It's a wonderful life; innovations and inventions |
| 14 th October | Monthly meeting | Caroline England: From divorce lawyer to Duchess of the Dark Domestic Noir |
| 11 th November | Monthly meeting | DC Haroon Acram: Fraud protection officer |
| 9 th December | Christmas Party | |

GROUP NEWS

BALLROOM DANCING

Dancing is continuing steadily alternate Friday afternoons in Hawk Green Reading Rooms, with Chris/Jackie and Walter as our DJs in March, and Kate/Ian next in April, when Freda will make a long-awaited return.

Walter Mason

CANASTA

The canasta group continues to be popular with 20 members currently in the group. We play every Tuesday night from 7 till 9pm at the Royal Oak pub in High Lane.

Pauline Wright

CROWN GREEN BOWLING

I am really pleased and honoured to be taking over from Andre Lister as the coordinator of the Crown Green Bowls group and as a member of the U3A committee. When Pam and I moved to High Lane just over four years ago, André persuaded us to join the bowls group, and we are both really pleased we did. We now play every Tuesday and Thursday 10 - 12 at Torkington Park bowling green. We play with a warm and welcoming group of players, all willing to guide new members particularly those like us, who have never played the game before. If anyone would like to give it a go and join us you will be most welcome. Speak to me if you are tempted.

Mike Counsell

HISTORY

Of course, we picked the worst weather day of the year for this month's history group meeting. I took one look out of the window on Wednesday at the snow hurtling down and immediately penned my apology to Pam. She made the trip from Marple and Kath crossed the canal! So we're just shuffling the cancelled meeting to the 4th Wednesday in April, when Kath will be taking about Brick Lane - I think the place not the book, which we've already discussed in the reading group. All welcome to join and attend at Marlene's, as ever.

Barry Taylor

CRIME FICTION READING



The crime fiction group met on March 27th to discuss *On Beulah Height* a long and complex novel written by Reginald Hill, 16th in his series featuring detectives Superintendent Andy Dalziel and Detective Chief Inspector Peter Pascoe. Overall, the group rated the book highly. We also discussed how the book translated to the much-condensed TV adaptation.

Set in the Yorkshire Dales during a long hot summer, a seven year old girl doesn't return from taking her dog for an early morning walk bringing back memories of 15 years ago during another long hot Summer when three seven year old girls disappeared one after the other at the time when a new reservoir was being excavated in the next Dale. Dalziel was involved in the unsolved case which still haunts him.

As the hot weather continues the water levels in the reservoir gradually recede revealing the submerged village and then rumours start spreading among locals, the original inhabitants of the drowned village, of sightings of the main suspect in the case who also disappeared 15 years ago but no trace of him can be found. As the days pass with little progress, it is decided to interview another of the original suspects. However, he has a firm alibi for the morning the child disappeared, as he did 15 years ago, and is released, but he does have secrets and through the diligence of Shirley Novello, a young detective on the case, his covert activities are discovered and progress is finally made.

Throughout the story preparations for a recital in the new village by a local girl now on the threshold of an international singing career but who, it would seem, 15 years earlier escaped being the fourth victim of the suspected murderer. She has chosen to sing for the performance Mahler's 7th symphony *Songs for Dead Children* although she decides to change the original lyric using her own words referring to the lost children of long ago.

Eventually the case breaks leading to the discovery of the body of the missing child and of the person responsible for her death. The remains of the other three missing children are found in the emerging village and although there are hints as to who may have murdered them the story is left with an ambiguous ending. However, the story isn't just a straightforward crime fiction novel as it deals with the love for and the grief and devastation of the parents of a lost child and of its effect on the whole community. Throughout the story there are moments of wry humour, interesting, well rounded characters and has poetic, almost mystical, imagery of the beautiful Yorkshire Dales

Our next meeting is to be on Friday, April 17th when we shall discuss *Guilty by Definition* by Susie Dent. Do come along to swell our ranks and introduce us to new authors telling different tales.

Nancy Colclough

CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. Do we think Donald Trump is causing instability in the world to cover up from the Epstein revelations in USA.
2. The government is proposing to build seven new towns. If they go ahead, they will need infrastructure for new schools, doctors' surgeries, shops etc and also a good bus service so that residents won't have to rely on using their cars.
3. Food Agencies are experimenting on plants to be developed for food, also insects. One of the arguments for using insects for food is they have a good nutritional value and are high in protein.
4. In view of the current world situation should we bring back National Service for young men.
5. Should car owners be charged when visiting the Lake District, maybe an idea would be for a toll charge.
6. Would we be in favour of a CO₂ pipeline from Derbyshire cement works through to the Wirral and into the Irish Sea to help carbon-capture CO₂.
7. Why have Muslims been criticised for holding a prayer meeting in Trafalgar Square when Christians and Jews are allowed to do so.
8. The Bank of England is replacing historical faces on bank notes with those of wildlife and animals. The public are being asked to help choose theme of next series of banknotes.
9. How can a bank such as NS&I misplace over £400million on admin errors that result in bereaved families not receiving funds that they claim were rightfully theirs with up to 37,500 people affected?
10. Proposals for advice to parents on screen time for young children. For two- to five-year-olds, parents are advised to aim for no more than one hour of screen time a day. Social media bans, digital curfews and time limits on apps are to be trialled in the homes of hundreds of teenagers.
11. Several major retailers and supermarkets in the UK are proposing to sell plug-and-play solar panels which can be hung on balconies placed in gardens as part of a government to reduce energy costs.

Thank you to Margaret for the lovely chocolate cake.

Angela Knight

GARDENING

The group enjoyed wall to wall sunshine for its first meet of the year. A dozen members enjoyed a good selection of cakes, after seeing plenty of spring bulbs and flowers, plus camellias, magnolia stellata, early azaleas and a Japanese cherry. During the meeting a draft 2026 programme was prepared.

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Walter Mason

MEMOIRS MARCH 2026

Barbara F told us about her attempts to pass her driving test. She admitted that she didn't know her left from right but failed her test at the age of seventeen due to nerves. She didn't try again until her children had both passed but again failed due to another car clipping hers. She passed on her third attempt, and this opened up a new world for her.

Linda told us about the different rules on pregnancy in the 1940's when being admitted to St Mary's Hospital in Manchester. She remembered they had no bathroom until she was fourteen. Before that they had a tin bath which they all shared in turns. There was no central heating and there was frost on the inside of the windows, and she became an expert in lighting fires. They had two milkmen, one delivered round the back, and one delivered round the front.

Margaret M gave a very interesting account on how the u3a started in 1972 in Toulouse, France. Since then, it has spread all over the world even to China and Russia. The first u3a in the UK was in Cambridge in 1982 and there are now over 1000 groups. High Lane u3a started in 2001 and it is our 25th anniversary this year.

Marlene remembered her visits to Berlin before the wall was built. She went there in February 1961 when she was a student in Munich. Travel between East and West Germany was easy then and she and a friend were able to buy books and records from the East and smuggle them out to the West but six months later the wall was built cutting off West Berlin from the rest of Germany.

Stuart wrote a poem based on 'a letter to me Mam' written by Ted Lune. I am sorry to say that I didn't make any notes as I was laughing so much.

David flew to Singapore on a business trip and stayed in the same hotel the same night that his brother was there. He hadn't seen him for many years. What were the odds on that?

Barbara K told about a treasured possession that belonged to her grandmother who died before she was born. It was a rose gold bracelet and she described what had happened to her grandmother.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 7th April at 2pm in the small hall.

Quote for the month

To be trusted is a greater compliment than being loved. — George Macdonald.

Barbara Kenneth

PHOTOGRAPHY

Our March competition was Umbrellas. We had some good pictures to choose from.

1st ...This should keep the rain off ... 11 points ... Mark

2nd ...Wet day in Pisa 6 points ... Mark

3rd ...Umbrella collection ... 5 points ... Diane.



Next month our topic is "BRIDGES" Entries by the 16th April please.

Good luck

Ken Jackson

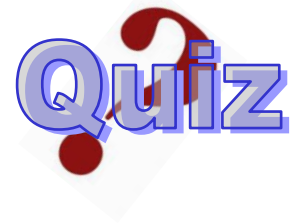
DINING

The dining group started the year with a bang. We visited the Three Bears in Hazel Grove and we had an excellent meal. Great staff, good company and a pleasant room. The Three Bears is no longer a carvery. It is still a Robinson's house, but it has been renovated after they left and is now run by the chap who had Peruga, hence the good food. There were 27 booked for lunch but unfortunately two were unable to join us. Five of the group were new members. We welcome them and hope we see them again.

Our next lunch will be in May, and we will be showing it at the April meeting. We hope to see you then.

Dorothy Gerrard
Dorothy Neillands

QUIZZING



It was my turn to set the quiz this month. We had Where is, What is, Who is, rounds plus abbreviations, food and drink, TV and radio and we finished with an In the News round. Easy to find things to ask for the news this week! This is not always the case. Everyone scored well on this one.

This month's sample questions.

1. Which juice is mixed with lime and vodka in a Cosmopolitan?
2. Which fruit has red skin, white flesh and black seeds
3. What was the Silver ghost
4. The UK Shipping Forecast is broadcast on which radio station?
5. Who presents the Classic FM morning show?
6. In which radio show is there a strategy game called Mornington Crescent

We normally meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. The next meeting is 23rd April. If you like quizzing please get in touch. It's a very sociable group and we have a lot of fun trying to recall things we know we know. You could come and try us out first if you wish.

Diane Saxon

SHORT WALKS

March, a month of many 'faces' one being sunny and warm Saturday 21st was just so. Thirteen folk set out from an unusual meeting point – a farm (permission was given by the farmer). A way marker indicated through the farm access road which the group took until a rough grassy path with a short upward hill. At the top of the hill a beautiful blossom tree was seen in full bloom. Through a kissing gate took the group over a field and upward ((Middlewood hill) with hazy views toward Stockport and Manchester.

Which footpath to take next, as there were many. The group was in 'good hands' with Helen and Roger leading as the path wound round a few ponds. Next taking a path down to Middlewood road.



Coming to and crossing Middlewood road onto a track leading to Middlewood Way and the old station platform of Higher Poynton, here we stopped for a coffee break. Walking down Anson Road passing the Engineering Museum and onward onto a track with Davenport Golf club on each side of us, over a field and eventually taking a footpath off left which brought us back to the farm.

Some paths were new to folk who knew the area.
Thank you Helen and Roger for a brilliant walk.

Ruth Smith

WALKING

A “Spring” walk in the New Mills, Buxworth and Furness Vale countryside looking at our industrial past and its recovery by man and nature. 26th March

Despite the weather forecast of very cold conditions with sleet wintery showers and blustery winds 11 valiant members of our group turned up for this 6-mile walk led by Merlyn and Joyce. The weather didn't disappoint. Yes, it was cold, blustery with sleet and snow showers falling against our backs as we walked along; but interspersed with dry conditions and sunshine.

The walk started from Top Torrs carpark in New Mills. We descended the Torrs, crossed the River Sett to meet the River Goyt path adjacent to the Torrs Hydro. You can see our industrial past of old water and steam powered mills and the huge Railway and Road stone bridges over the gorge. We followed the river as it meandered beneath the tree canopy with spring flowers just showing. Onwards passing Goyt Farm we continued on a field path heading towards Marsh Lane.



A short snowstorm started as we journeyed uphill on Lady Pit and Dolly Pit Lane. We sheltered and had our coffee stop under a railway bridge followed by our first glimpse into the history of this area. Underground horse drawn tramways (Jowhole Tunnel) linking Lady Pit to the coal wharf and onwards to Gowhole sidings. We passed the site of Lady Pit, Furnace Pit, Dolly Pit and Gowhole sidings and the marvels of man

and nature turning this area back to nature. Some features of our industrial past blending into the background were observed: – Pit railway embankment, mine trackways, air shaft and foundations of Gowhole railway turntable.

Intermittent snow flurries continued as we walked downhill to Bugsworth Basin. Lunch on dry picnic tables under a large canopy at the closed Navigation Inn proved an ideal venue.

The route back was along the canal towpath to Furnace Vale marina, down to the river Goyt bridge and retuning back via the Torrs.

David thanked Merlyn and Joyce for the well-received walk on behalf of the group members.

Merlyn and Joyce Young



u3a Northwest Summer school

... is taking place from 11-14th August at MMU.

Some courses are already fully booked so don't delay if you wish to attend.

Still available are

- Making sense of everyday mathematics
- Opera appreciation
- Art challenges
- Photography – beyond the snapshot
- UK and USA political scenes

You can find out more [here](#) and book your place.

National Office Learning Events

These are a selection of the **April events**. All are free via Zoom. Remember they can fill up quickly. Typically, there are several hundred attendees.

| | |
|----------|---|
| 10 April | Staying Safe Online – A u3a Presentation with Q&A |
| 17 April | The Magic of Magic Squares |
| 21 April | Anglo-Saxon England |
| 23 April | The Missing Pieces project: connecting people and place |
| 30 April | Oi! Mind yer language! |

Click here for details and to book a place. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

DID YOU KNOW?

Easter eggs

Easter eggs predate Christian times by a long way. Ancient Romans, Egyptians and Persians exchanged eggs as gifts during spring festivals. In Greece, red eggs, or kokkina avga, are an Easter tradition symbolising the blood of Christ and his resurrection. Ukraine has a tradition of pysanka eggs which are highly decorated using wax-resistant dyes.



pysanka egg - created by Copilot 31/03/26

The chocolate Easter egg made its first appearance in 1873 when Fry's produced hollow eggs made of chocolate. Cadbury soon followed with its egg in 1875. Chocolate Easter eggs didn't become mass produced until the late 19th century. Nowadays, almost 90 million chocolate Easter eggs are bought in the UK each year, spending close to half-a-billion pounds. Cadbury and Fry's merged in 1923 and produced a cream filled egg. What we now know as Cadbury's Crème egg was launched in 1963, originally marketed as Fry's Crème egg.

Egg hunts originated in Germany in the 16th century and were brought to Britain by Victoria and Albert.

The tradition of egg rolling appears to date from the 1700s in northern England and Scotland. Annual egg rolling takes place in towns including Preston and Edinburgh and there is an annual Easter Egg roll hosted by the President and First Lady on the lawn of the White House, inaugurated by the wife of James Madison in 1814. The tradition is also seen in other European countries.