

April 2024



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the April 2024 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. A Happy Easter to all our members. In this edition, we have reports from members about their recent experiences, some good, some less so, group activities and information about forthcoming holidays and visits. For the cover photo this month, I raided the archives and found a photo taken at the new members' meeting in September 2013.

This is your newsletter. Please feel free to share some of your news, your interests, or items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members. This could be places you have visited, books you have read, films you have seen; your stories, anecdotes, photographs, recipes, poems, limericks, jokes; the list is endless. We welcome new members to our u3a and look forward to meeting you at our meetings and interest groups. Your contributions to the newsletter will be very welcome. Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition. I couldn't do it without you.

There are a few changes to the Programme and Groups contact list for 2024 so I am resending it with the newsletter. This contains contact details for the Committee and interest group leaders plus the programme of monthly meetings. Also attached to the email is the National Office bitesize newsletter for March. You can read the full newsletter here. This has reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country.

The next issue of our newsletter will be May 2024 so please send your contributions to me by 28th April 2024 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

From Phoenix Ringers u3a

We would like to thank everyone who attended our talk, and demonstration of handbell ringing on Jan 10th. Our comfort zone limit for an audience is about 25, so we were trying not to feel overwhelmed at such an amazing turnout and did not want to disappoint. It was the first time we had put enough information together for a "talk" as such, and we hoped you would be sufficiently interested. Your warm response and great attention proved that you were, which made it all the more rewarding for us. We hope our nervousness and the odd discordant note didn't detract too much! (There will always be a few clangers). It was a great pleasure for us to share our somewhat niche activity, and its history with so many appreciative people.

Thank you.

Kate Hellar



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FROM THE CHAIR

Since Covid our u3a has increased back to the level that we were before Covid struck. We are very lucky as our u3a is financially sound and we have a large number of interest groups.

I think we have one of the lowest membership fees in the country. There are quite a few u3a's who charge up to £20 or £25 plus for a year's membership. We are also lucky to have a full committee. If you look at other u3a website details, they are all asking for at least 2/3 people to join their committee. Not only u3a groups but many different social groups are struggling to find committee members. Again, we are very lucky to have a full team of valuable committee members.

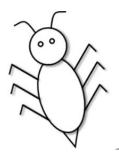
As I write this it looks at last as if the weather might be changing (or not) for the better. Last but not least any ideas for new groups please let us know.

Paul Kenneth

UPCOMING EVENTS

Beetle drive

We still have a few tickets left for the Beetle Drive on April 12th. The cost is just £8, including supper with tea or coffee. All you need to bring is a pencil preferably with a rubber on the end.



Annual lunch

The annual lunch this year is on July 19th at Hazel Grove Golf Club. We are pleased to welcome Mervyn Saunders to speak to us. Mervyn is Chair of his local u3a and has a lifelong interest in entertainment in its broadest sense. His talk is entitled "A Brief History of Entertainment".

Tickets will be available at the May meeting. Cost is £30 for 3 courses and coffee/tea and includes a gratuity.



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MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the March monthly meeting was John Hooley whose talk was entitled Royal Yachts. Although John's career was in banking, he has always had an interest in the history of the royal yachts. Since the reign of Charles 11 the monarch has always had a yacht for his or her personal use. It was used for royal visits, reviews of the fleet and family holidays away from the public eye. The last royal yacht was decommissioned in 1997 much to the great sadness of Queen Elizabeth 11. The ship is now berthed in Leith Scotland and a visit is highly recommended.

The talk was illustrated with many interesting slides of the various yachts, many including photographs of the royal families.





The next monthly meeting is on 10th April when Caroline Melliar-Smith will be giving a talk entitled 'Camera Rolling'.

Kath Wareham

Have you spotted this?

Matchstick men in Hazel Grove





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MY EXPERIENCE AT THE ART EXHIBITION

When asked to do the "public table" at the recent art exhibition having had previous experience my initial thought was "oh no what a lot of work!" Putting everything together and staying in one spot to oversee budding artists who wanted to have a go seemed a chore but how wrong it proved to be!

Apart from the day itself being a wonderful success thanks to Madeleine and the camaraderie of all the group who all participated and worked hard and contributed not only to display the art works but provided a real social get together for the village as many were seen chatting away enjoying a relaxed tea, coffee and homemade cake. We had wonderful appreciative comments but for me the day was made by our younger generation! Two young footballers with muddied kit sat down eagerly and excitingly exclaimed that their High Lane team had just beaten their Wythenshawe opponents 4–1. Having assured me they'd left their boots at the door they proceeded with of course modern smart phones to paint in one case his pet, a Maine Coon cat. He showed me it at a month old and explained it's the size of an adult cat and would be "huge" when fully grown. He quipped "His name is Diablo and did I know its meaning – the devil". I could well believe it looking at his very green–eyed evil creation! His teammate proceeded to paint a floating futuristic train prompted by one of his school's projects – what an imagination!

As I wiped the muddy seats clean, two personable, very pleasant teenagers appeared

and as he took down his hoodie. I recognised the young man from last year only he'd grown by what seemed at least a foot. Previously he was accompanied by another lad of about a similar age but this year he introduced his companion, a teenage girl. They proceeded to draw and paint their own ideas. Again, in the modern era, out came the smart phones. When enquiring did they know what they would like to be in the future the young man stated maybe an historian or build a modern futuristic castle as is his drawing. The young lady replied I am going to be an architect and she painted a road at night.

As I struggled with an upmarket technical pencil sharpener and sprayed them with wood shavings there were no complaints and they quietly cleared them up and reassured me it didn't matter! As they left to go home to watch a movie I thought how lucky are we to have such a young generation often maligned but who had provided me with such pleasure on what was an all-round enjoyable day.



Pam Cooke



Another new scam. Be warned

A fortnight last Saturday, I received a phone call, on my mobile phone, apparently from O2, stating that, as a valued customer, I would be sent a special gift to arrive on the Monday, but to confirm that it was me he was talking to, I would need to let him have the "once only" number that he had just sent me as a text message. The man knew my name and address and (obviously) my phone number, so I was happy that he really was from O2.

I therefore checked my texts, and indeed there was a "once only" number present which I duly let him have. There was a warning with the text not to give this number to anyone who might not be from O2, but I was happy that this man was from O2 and I therefore gave him the number.

On Sunday, I received three texts from DHL to say my packages were on their way.

On Monday morning, DHL presented me with three packages, which, when opened, were all Apple watches. This puzzled me. About an hour after receiving these, I received another phone call from the "O2" man, telling me that there had been a mistake, as someone with a name similar to mine had ordered the Apple watches and that he would arrange for Royal Mail to collect them the following day so that they could be returned to O2.

At this stage I told my wife what had been happening and she immediately said "THIS IS A SCAM, I'VE SEEN IT ON TV". I then checked the phone number of the alleged O2 man and discovered that he was phoning from the Czech Republic!

Realising this, I immediately phoned O2 Customer services, who informed me that this was definitely a scam and that O2 never phone their customers. She told me, quite definitely, NOT to give the watches to Royal Mail. She said she would send me return packaging to the O2 warehouse.

Tuesday morning, our usual post-man arrived to say he was to pick up three packages from me. I told him that I had been scammed and that I was not to give him the packages. He showed me the "special delivery" note, which showed that the packages were to be delivered to a "Return Center" (note American spelling of centre) at an address in Manchester. We checked with Google maps and the address was simply a road with houses. The post-man said he would report that there was "no reply" so he could not pick up the packages.



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Less than an hour later I received another phone call from the same "O2" man who angrily started to ask why I had not returned the packages, to which I replied that I now knew he was a scammer from the Czech Republic and terminated the phone call. He has not since phoned me back.

The return packaging from O2 duly arrive a few days later. I posted them off and have since had an email to say that the packages had arrived and that I had been refunded. They also informed me that their fraud team were investigating.

I reported this incident to the police and they sent a policeman round the take down all the details. He said that he would forward the "return centre" address the their intelligence department. I suggested to him that if the police were to search the premises they would probably find that it was full of laptops, watches and phones all recently bought from O2.

I also informed my bank, and asked them to look out for unusual activity regarding my O2 direct debit. As a precaution, they have blocked my Credit card and sent me a new one.

Interestingly, when I was speaking to O2 customer services, the email address that she had on record was not my email address, although it looked as if it might have been.

I now feel that the sequence of events went something like this:--

- 1. Scammer in the Czech republic gets hold of my name, address and phone number.
- 2. He logs into "My O2" account online, and pretends to be me. He manages to create a fake email address and presumably creates a new password.
- 3. He then orders, in my name, three Apple watches.
- 4. O2 then send as a text, to my phone, the "once only" number.
- 5. Scammer, still online to O2, then phones me and tricks me into telling him the "once only" number. Scammer then gives O2 the number and O2 believe that I had ordered the watches.
- 6. O2 then send me, by DHL the three Apple watches, which they thought I had bought. I received them 2 days later.
- 7. Scammer then phones me again to say there had been a mistake and he would arrange for Royal Mail to collect and return them to O2. However, the "return centre" was a private house and nothing to do with O2.

If I had let Royal Mail send the goods to this fake "return centre" They would have stolen three Apple watches, and I would have been several thousand pounds out of pocket!!!

Jeff Mortimer



GROUP NEWS

BACKGAMMON

The Backgammon group meets alternate Wednesdays in the Bull's Head, High Lane and is going well. New members are always welcome, and time is taken to teach new players the game. Come along, have a drink, and enjoy a few games.

Ken Jackson

CHURCHES AND PUBS

Wednesday 3rd April. St.Leonard Monyash. Full.

Wednesday 5th June St George's New Mills. Bookings taken at April and May u3a meetings.

Wednesday 7th August. St. Mary's Disley.

Wednesday 2nd October. St. James Taxal.

Wednesday 4th December. To be confirmed.

If you require any further information on the group, just ask or send me an e-mail.

Paul Kenneth

GERMAN

We continue to meet each Friday with attendance varying between four and eight. Members have not experienced a warm doggie welcome in the last two weeks as Sandi is no longer with us. She always knew it was Friday and would hover expectantly at the door as 10 o'clock approached. We are continuing to read our book about life in the DDR and engage in lively discussions on a variety of subjects of interest to the group.

Marlene Brookes



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CRIME FICTION READING

The Crime Book Group met again on 15th March when we discussed The Singing Sands by Josephine Tey. This was the last book written by Tey before her death in 1952 and the last in a short series featuring the detective Alan Grant. In need of rest and recuperation, Inspector Alan Grant plans a quiet holiday with an old friend and cousin. However, on the way to Scotland by night train, he comes across a body in a neighbouring compartment. He also finds a cryptic verse about 'the stones that walk' and 'the singing sands'. The story follows his decryption of the verse which leads to his own recovery and the ultimate solution of the murder.

As usual, there were mixed responses to the book, but on this occasion more of the group thoroughly enjoyed it and only one person was really disappointed. The main criticisms were that the story took several chapters to move forward and that the ending was too abrupt. Generally, everyone praised the descriptions of Scotland and Tey's writing style. Tey's entire work is available very cheaply electronically, and several of the group said that they definitely planned to read more.

The group next meets on Friday 12th April when we shall be discussing The Rising Tide which is the tenth book in Ann Cleeves' Vera series.

Lesley McCall

DINING

Have you been to The Aviator yet?

It's a fairly new restaurant in Woodford, opposite the garden centre. If you would like to see what it is like come and join us on April 16th.

Twenty-four U3A members are already going and have chosen their menu, and you would be very welcome. It is a three-course meal and the cost is £18.50 (inc gratuities).

If you would like to know more, come and speak to us at the April meeting or phone or email us and we will be happy to help

Dorothy Gerrard Dorothy Neillands



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CURRENT AFFAIRS

This month's meeting was shorter than usual but discussions were no less lively..

According to Suella Braverman Islamists are in charge of running the country. Has Sadiq Khan given London away to his Islamist friends? We all thought that this was not true and that she was stirring up dissent although there have been several rallies and protest marches exacerbated by the war in Gaza.

The vetting of recruits to the police force needs substantial improvement. Wayne Cousins should never have got through the system and been allowed to become a policeman. We were appalled at the treatment of a homeless man by a woman police officer in Manchester.

We tried to come up with a suggestion as to who should be the next Conservative leader but although several names were mentioned none of the group had could think of a suitable candidate.

We were all pleased to see that the dilapidated Dog and Partridge has now been demolished and look forward to the opening of a new branch of Sainsburys, but some were concerned that it may lead to an increase in traffic in the already crowded A6.

On a recent Radio 4 phone in programme listeners were asked that if they had some disposable income what they would the spend it on. Suggestions were: seeds to grow food; reduced items in supermarkets; buying some kittens; eyeliner and nail polish. Our group would put it in a savings account; spend it on a cruise; or help grandchildren.

We asked what was the most interesting programme you watched or listened to last week. Darren McGarvey made a 3-part TV series on the Justice system, Education and the NHS. He interviewed a graduate trainee police officer and a young female barrister both of whom were quite critical of the system. He went to Norway and compared what happened in their prison system with the UK. They believe people can change with good rehabilitation and their punishment is loss of freedom. Norway's prisons were much more humane than ours with not the overcrowding experienced here. The warders train for 2 years but here for only a few weeks. Some of the group were interested in Question Time, 24 Hours in A&E, repeats of old comedies such as To The Manor Born and David Attenborough's Wild Life programmes.

We discussed the election of George Galloway in the recent Rochdale bye-election. We thought his Worker's Party is very left wing and that he is unlikely to be elected in the General Election later this year.

We welcomed two new members to the group but there is still room for one or two more. Margaret McDermott.



GARDENING

At last, it is time for gardening meetings to recommence. A mixture of visits to public, private and our members' gardens has been prepared, with the first visit to Walkden Gardens on the 3rd April. Frequent showers have made gardening difficult so far this year, but most plants seem to be thriving in spite of the often soggy soil. Hopefully our visits will miss the showers, and we will have a good year.

Some current flower pictures show what we've been missing for the last 6 months.









Walter Mason



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PHOTOGRAPHY

The photography group continues with a monthly themed competition. This month's being "Easter". If anyone would like to join the group, they would be most welcome. Contact me, Ken Jackson, via the U3A site and I will include you in the emails sent out.

March's competition theme was ANIMALS, and here are the three winners.

- 1 Bellowing (Ken)
- 2 Foxy eyes (Ken)
- 3 Highland cow (Jeff)







Ken Jackson

QUIZZING

Our quiz for February was set by Sue. Questions were in various categories, including football, the Royal Family, James Bond films, books and music. Judging from the final scores, perhaps our most challenging quiz so far!



This month's sample questions.

The name of the bridge destroyed by a Singapore tanker this week The name of the current Deputy leader of the Conservative party The four actors who have played M in the Bond films The Babinski reflex

The timespan of James Joyce Ulysses

We normally meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. The next meeting is 25th April. Please get in touch if you would like to join us.

Diane Saxon



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READING

We were taken out of our comfort zone in March when we discussed THE MASTER AND MARGARITA by Mikhail Bulgakov, widely regarded as one of the masterpieces of Russian literature in the 20th century, a film version of which is breaking box office records in Moscow at the moment. The book was banned during Stalin's reign but is now widely available despite its criticism of the totalitarian regime of the time.

It was quite a difficult, but compelling read as it was so well written. We all had problems with the Russian names and there were at least three different plots, one involving Pontius Pilate, and the Master (the devil) was a morally ambiguous but life-affirming character. I think we all felt glad we had read it, despite initial misgivings.

Our book choice for March is THE SCARLET LETTER by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Marlene Brookes

SHORT WALKS

I'm trying to get a regular Saturday morning once a month for the Short Walks Group but in the meantime to keep the group going, we have the following two walks.

Saturday 6 April

Meet at Anglesey Drive nr Poynton Pool 09.30 hrs or meet High Lane Village Hall Car Park to share lifts no later than 09.15hrs.

Saturday 18 May

Meet at Etherow (left at Marple Bridge traffic lights) at 9.45 hrs or High Lane Village Hall Car Park at 9.15 hrs.

Please contact me for details.

Ruth Smith



The Easter lily (lilium longiflorum) symbolises purity, rebirth, new beginnings and

hope. It is most often associated with the resurrection of Jesus Christ as observed on Easter. In Pagan traditions, the Easter lily is also associated with motherhood.





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TRAVEL

LITTLECOTE June 17th-21st £449 sharing £549 single Entrance fees to be paid later. **BALANCE at MARCH Meeting**



IRELAND July/August Information at March Meeting

RIVER CRUISE October 3rd-10th River Rhone, Burgundy and Provence Cabins for sole occupancy have very high supplement.

WALKING

U3A walk round Peover Superior 27/03/2024

In total, 21 people were on the walk, which had an estimated distance of 7.6 km.

Peover is a largely flat rural area in Cheshire with narrow incised gullies along streams. It takes its name from the main brook called Peover Eye, which is formed from several springs and field drainage and runs west into the Wincham Brook a short distance northeast of Lostock Gralam. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as "Pevre", from a Celtic word meaning "the bright one" and it is thought that "Eye" comes from the Saxon word for a brook.

To start our walk, we headed towards Peover Hall which is a Grade II listed Elizabethan country house built in 1585 and which is still in use today as a family home. The day started overcast but without any rainfall, although it had rained hard overnight, and the

ground was wet. Due to flooding on the road near the entrance to the Hall driveway, we had to divert and take an alternate path via the Village Hall. This gave us the benefit of a much better view of Peover Cottage and a good panorama of the Hall and stables as we approached.





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Peover Hall was built by Sir Randle Mainwaring in 1585, with a new wing being added by the fourth baronet Sir Henry in the 1760s before the Peels bought the hall and estate in 1919. The Brooks family acquired the property some 20 years later, and the family continue to live in the Hall today. During World War II the house was requisitioned as the HQ for General George Patton of the United States 3rd Army to train for the D-Day landings in 1944. It also housed a POW camp. As we neared the Hall, the rain started, so we only had time for a quick look at part of the gardens and the Grade 1 listed Carolean stables which were built in 1654 as a gift from Ellen Mainwaring to her son Thomas, who became baronet in 1660. On its roof is a cupola with a clockface. The coach house is listed at Grade II. Also listed at Grade II are ashlar gate piers and wrought iron gates which came from Alderley Park.

Luckily, we had arranged to take a look inside the nearby Grade I listed St Lawrence Church, so we were able to be educated and sheltered at the same time! The volunteer church warden who showed us round provided us with a most educational and entertaining (and dry!) visit. St Lawrence Church is the parish church of Over Peover and was built in three stages which started in 1456 when the South Chapel was built. This was followed by the building of both the North Chapel and the Tower in 1648 and 1741 respectively. The Nave of the church was finished in 1811.



During his stay at Peover Hall, General Patton used to visit the church to pray, and so on his departure, he presented the American flag which is now displayed. There is an interesting story concerning the building of the South Chapel. When Sir Randle Mainwaring died, his wife, Margery, honoured his wish to be buried in the churchyard. Afterwards, however, she erected the chapel and tomb over him, where they have lain together since her death.



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The South Chapel is a Chantry Chapel where the priest said daily prayers for the souls of the departed. Spaced between two pointed windows is a fine, canopied tomb, the reason for building the chapel originally. The ancient stained-glass window in the South Chapel portraying Thomas Becket, the famous saint, is a rarity, one of only two in England to survive destruction on the orders of Henry VIII.

The North Chapel is a mortuary chapel, never used for services. It was built in 1648 by the widow of the then Lord. She installed a marble monument with life-size effigies of them both. The Lord's actual armour hangs on the wall. Their coat of arms can be seen in an elaborately carved timber ceiling and the semi-circular windows depict their family crests. The other monuments in this chapel were moved there when the main body of the church was demolished and are equally interesting. The North Chapel displays a Cromwellian helmet and breastplate. Lady Ellen Mainwaring is known to have assisted Cromwell's cause and legend has it that Cromwell's troops were frequently billeted in the church. All the more surprising, therefore, that the glass in the South Chapel has survived. A more recent feature of interest is the William Morris Window, this is a memorial window (dated 1936) in the north-west corner of the nave, portraying the charitable activities of a much-regarded parishioner.

By the time we were ready to leave St Lawrence church and continue our walk, the rain had stopped. We continued through the gardens of the Hall and out onto the open fields once more, heading away from the Hall, along the main driveway. We then passed by the Barclays Technology Centre (Radbrook Hall), and what appeared to be a huge new hydroponic tomato growing facility.

By 13:20, we had returned to our cars, at which point those who had brought a packed lunch were able to avail themselves of the seating in the park, whilst the rest adjourned to the Dog Inn at Peover Heath for pub lunch.

Rick Hedley

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 over a hundred attendees.

- 2 April Aviation Network Meeting: Milestones in Aviation
- 4 April An Introduction to Al Chatbots
- 5 April From Pleasure Gardens to Theme Parks
- 9 April Electing the President in 2024 an Update
- 16 April Living with purpose: The key to longevity, happiness and global change
- 17 April The Road to Clean Water: Beginnings of a sewage system in Victorian London
- 19 April The Climate Crisis and some solutions



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

I've managed to catch three excellent talks this month. The first was a meeting of the u3a Aviation network (I didn't know there was one) where a retired Concorde captain took us through the development of the Concorde and its day-to-day operation. This was a fascinating talk, and it was great to see that beautiful plane again.

This was followed by a talk entitled entitled Al News, given by Peter Lord. During the talk, he used three of the current Al engines, Open Al's Chat-GPT, the Microsoft Al tool called Copilot and Google's Gemini (previously called Bard). He first asked each bot to

describe a picture. The factual content of the results were very similar but each bot added its own interperation on the image. This was followed by asking the AI engines to draw a variery of pictures. Gemini is not yet able to draw pictures. The results looked okay at first but on closer examination there were some parts that looked odd. For the image here, I asked Copilot to draw a picture of a group of u3a members discussing a book. It took just a few seconds to produce this and offer me a number of enhancements to the image.



u3a has a Al subject advisor, Barry Claydon, some future events are planned, and there is already an extensive library of Al resources, Al for everyone.

The third talk was entitled Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Three: Brain & Behaviour, presented by Dr Bob Pullen of Prudhoe u3a. This is part of a series of seven interactive talks which cover many aspects of our brains. The fourth talk is later this month. In this talk, Bob compared what he called the 'old brain' with the 'new brain'. Old brain was defined as the capabilities that are common to humans and animals. These are largely provided by the hypothalamus, which manages body temperature, hunger and thirst, mood, sex drive, blood pressure and sleep. In humans, the cerebral hemisphere is much larger, and this 'new brain' is responsible for intelligence, self-awareness, ability to plan etc. This was another very interesting talk in the series. We have some very talented members in u3a.

Diane Saxon



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Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

Health and Well-being College

hwcollege.penninecare.nhs.uk Stockport Campus Cirtek House, Higher Hillgate SK1 3QD

These are the sessions starting in April. All are Wednesday or Friday 2pm - 4pm.

Reclaim Your Life

Reclaim your life from illness, pain and disability. Ideal for those experiencing chronic pain, stiffness, lung or heart problems, tiredness, high blood pressure, diabetes or any other long-term condition. This 4 week course can help you reclaim your life when it feels like illness is taking over.

Course leng	gth: Five sessions	Duration 2 hours each
Session 1	Wednesday April	10 th 2pm to 4pm
Session 2	Wednesday April	17 th 2pm to 4pm
Session 3	Wednesday April	24 th 2pm to 4pm
Session 4	Wednesday May	1st 2pm to 4pm
Session 5	Wednesday May	8 th 2pm to 4pm

No Worries

In Partnership with NHS Stockport Talking Therapies, come and join us for a one off workshop exploring 'worry' in the context of our everyday lives. Through this interactive session we will define what worry is, and how this fits in with anxiety.

We will explore what skills can be used to manage worry more effectively, including some useful techniques such as worry time, problem solving, mindfulness and relaxation.

Course length: One two hour session Session one Friday April 12th 2pm to 4pm

Curtains to Sleepless Nights

This course looks at the importance of getting a good night's sleep, how we can improve sleep and our sleeping habits. It will equip you with tools to try and end the struggle with sleepless nights.

Course Length 2 sessions each 2 hours Session one Friday 19th April 2pm to 4pm Session two Friday 26th April 2pm to 4pm

See Home Page - The Health and Wellbeing College (penninecare.nhs.uk) for more information

Sue Roworth.