



Newsletter

August 2026



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FROM THE CHAIR

Hope you are all enjoying the very good weather we have had for the last couple of months. I think a lot of us have found it a little too hot at times. We are not used to it but it seems we are going to have to in the years to come.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the Beetle drive and also the Quiz evening. We are hoping to rearrange both events for later in the year. The trip to the Lake district was excellent. The hotel, food and staff could not be faulted. Thanks Sue.

Also, a big thanks to Linda and Diane for organising the annual lunch at Marple Golf club. The speaker was a modern-day poet and was excellent.

Please don't forget if you want to go on any of the trips or group outings, please remember to bring some money for the deposit to secure your place.

Paul (Chair)

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the August 2026 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. In this edition we have reports of activities from the last two months. We have this year celebrated our 25th year of activities. The cover this month shows members enjoying the recent Anniversary lunch. Thanks to the contributors for their interesting and informative contributions.

We welcome our 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. The ethos of u3a is that we are a self-help group where members play an active part in running their local u3a and the activities so please don't hesitate to get involved. The u3a can't prosper without you.

Regarding National u3a information, August has another varied and interesting range of [online talks](#). As well as these, the newsletter is accompanied by the Northwest u3A summer newsletter and the latest National Office bitesize Friends newsletter. The full version is available [here](#).

The next issue of the newsletter will be September 2026 so please send your contributions to me by 27th August 2026 at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

HIGH LANE U3A 25th ANNIVERSARY LUNCH Friday 10th July 2026 At Marple Golf Club

Chairman Paul welcomed 50 members to a splendid "Silver Celebration" lunch at Marple Golf Club, who did us proud, with attentive staff serving up meals from an excellent menu offering good choices. It was an occasion to reminisce with "us older members" wondering how on earth 25 years had passed by so quickly. Our guest speaker was Steven Taylor, a performance poet from Bury, who entertained us with his humorous and poetic takes on life. Here's one:

The Roux Brothers

I went for the dining of Michel Roux
Of the famous cooking Roux brothers
La Gavroche with three Michelin stars
Was a class ahead of the others
People said you should try the food
Of his brother Albert Roux
Albert ran the Waterside Inn
So I thought I'd give it a do
The restaurant was also three Michelin stars
So I went and took my mother
We didn't enjoy the food, which just shows
You can't judge a cook by his brother

After Steven and a bit more conversation, another Steve cut the magnificent celebration cake so we were all able to go home happy with a slice of our U3A history.

Well done and thanks to the organizers particularly Linda and Diane for such a memorable occasion.



Steve Reynolds

JUNE MONTHLY MEETING

Fran Sandham was the speaker at the June monthly meeting. His talk was entitled A solo walk through Africa. Fran is a freelance lecturer and writer who has written for many newspapers, magazines and travel publications. He has travelled in over fifty countries and was an editor of Rough Guides for many years.

In 1997 he walked across Africa from the Skeleton coast in Namibia to Zanzibar. He had become interested in Africa as a child when stuck in hospital for 2 months he read about Stanley and Livingstone. He was fascinated by their desire to travel to unknown territories. From first hatching the idea it took him a year to scrape together sufficient money to fund his journey. He worked in a couple of bookshops and this inadvertently got him fit as the job involved a lot of lugging books about!



His journey did not resemble the travel exploits of many people seen on TV. He had no sponsor, no back up team, no cameramen and no digital communications. He decided to depend on the local people, making the most of their knowledge and hospitality. He found a lot of the men thought he was tough and some were frightened of him! The women wanted to mother him and the children just wanted their photographs taken. He started off with a huge backpack which he began to realise was a hindrance. On one occasion he acquired a donkey to share the load but the donkey was having none of it. It refused to walk and eventually ran away!

Fran was aware of all the scaremongering stories of lions, snakes, bandits and malaria but nevertheless he finished his journey largely unscathed. He walked 3,500 miles in just under a year. He wrote a book about his journey and he signed copies for quite a few people. It is called Traversal and has excellent reviews.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the talk which was reflected in the many questions which followed.

JULY MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the July meeting was Simon Michael, a crime writer who has published many crime novels. His career in the law gave him inspiration for his plots.

His journey to becoming a barrister was not an easy one as he had several things against him. He came from a poor Jewish family with no tradition of the law, and he didn't go to public school. He amused us with his stories of dinners in Middle Temple and the ridiculous rules which had to be followed. He eventually made it and was able to practice as a barrister specialising in criminal cases where he hoped he was doing some good for society.

His talk was well received, and he answered some interesting questions.

AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING

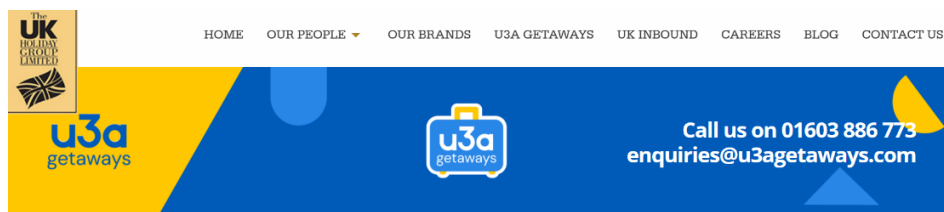
There has been a change of speaker for our August meeting. On Wednesday 12th August it will now be Andy McCullough 'From running away to running a marathon'

Kath Wareham

u3a getaways

Holidays for u3a members and friends

u3a has teamed with The UK Holiday Group to create itineraries that enable members to travel and share experience with like-minded travellers.



Welcome to u3a getaways

Currently themes include Shakespeare in Stratford, Agatha Christie in Torquay plus breaks for wine lovers, aviation enthusiasts and fans of the outdoor life.

Connect with others doing the things you love!

u3a getaways is our exciting new partnership with u3a UK. Each getaway offers a unique opportunity to laugh, learn, and enjoy shared experiences on a range of individually designed holidays created exclusively for u3a members and their friends.

Find out more at theukholidaygroup.com/u3agetaways or by phone 01603 886773.

GROUP NEWS

ART

Earlier this year we had a workshop with Julia Borodina who introduced us to working in multimedia to enhance and enliven our paintings. Jim Gilligan has been working further on the ideas she showed us and has produced two great pieces inspired by his and his wife Christine's recent holiday trip to the Greek islands. Using things like tissue paper, bits of card as well as dry flowers and shells collected on the holiday, he has really brought these buildings to life.

As we are now having a few weeks break Jim has asked us to "have a go" at producing a piece of work based on somewhere we go during the break and to bring our work in to discuss and share with each other when we return in September. Hopefully this project will lead us to more sharing of skills and ideas.



Madeleine Hennessey

BRIDGE

The Thursday Bridge Group enjoyed another of our Bridge parties at the end of July.

20 members attended Marple Golf Club where we enjoyed a two-course lunch. Following lunch, we had a Bridge competition with M & S vouchers as prizes. A good time was had by all.



Linda Dale



CRIME FICTION READING

The title of the book chosen for the group to read in May was "A Song for the Dark Times" by Ian Rankin featuring his now retired Scotland police detective, John Rebus. A small but enthusiastic group met on June 26th to discuss the book which was enjoyed by all present.

The book starts in Edinburgh where, due to health problems, Rebus and his dog, Brillo, are moving to the flat below his original home assisted by his friend and former colleague DI Siobhan Clarke who, though supposedly on leave, decides to become involved in solving the murder of a wealthy Saudi 'would be businessman' student. Rebus receives a frantic phone call from his estranged daughter, telling him her partner, Keith, has been missing for two days. He realises that if anything untoward has happened to him his daughter will be the prime suspect, so he sets off for the fictitious village of Naver in the far north of Scotland where, despite being warned by the local police not to become involved, he starts questioning the locals about Keith. In due course Rebus finds a body so a murder enquiry ensues. Back in Edinburgh the case there makes progress and eventually, linked by the future use of land in the area round Naver, both cases are resolved. Rebus, now reconciled with his daughter, returns to his new home and his dog. Nancy Colclough

June's read was One Puzzling Afternoon by Emily Critchley. The story is set in 2018. Edie is 82 and often muddled these days. A young man is giving out free retro sweets from a tray outside the Ludthorpe post office. Edie takes a packet of Parma Violets which used to be her childhood favourites. The sweets remind her of her childhood in Ludthorpe, of spring flowers and warm days, of cycling down to the sea with the sun on her face. That's when she sees Lucy, in her school uniform looking exactly the same as she did when she and Edie were 15, and best friends in 1951. Edie's confused mind goes backwards and forwards between 2018 and 1951 as she remembers in snatches what happened to Lucy when she disappeared 67 years ago. Edie's son, Daniel, and granddaughter, Amy, are kind but sometimes exasperated by Edie's memory lapses, mood swings and fixation on finding out the truth about Lucy's disappearance. Eventually Edie does piece all the remembered fragments together and reveals the shocking truth to the police.

Emily Critchley works as a librarian. One Puzzling Afternoon, published in 2023, was her first adult novel. The book received mixed reviews from members of our group. All thought the writing style was good and the characters well drawn. Two of us really liked it, two thought the story too sad and depressing to be enjoyable; and two of us didn't like it at all.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 26 August when we will be discussing Elly Griffith's new novel The Frozen People.
Betty Mackman

CURRENT AFFAIRS

At our June meeting, we discussed several topics in Margaret's house with a fan and doors open to keep us all cool!

We understand the BBC is losing £1bn a year due to declining revenue, high inflation, and people not paying their TV license fees. There was a discussion as to why this was. Many felt that salaries were very high, however, it was argued that the BBC would not get the best people if there was a reduction in salaries as ITV, SKY and other channels will be offering more. There were suggestions that the BBC reduce the programmes where the viewing was low and stop supporting the Eurovision Song Contest!! The consensus was that the BBC like any other organisation should try to work within their budget!

Musk brands UK a 'Police State' because Keir Starmer's planned social media ban for under 16's. There was very little discussion, the group welcomed the PM's decision and did not agree with Musk that the UK was a 'Police State'!

Government closing Hotels where migrants were living and relocating them to military barracks. The group examined the arguments for and against the topic. Many felt that the press highlighted the negative aspects of small boats entering the UK, and not some of the good work the government was doing to reduce immigration. Most felt that using the barracks was realistic and less costly than hotels.

There was debate on the recent PMQ's when the opposition leader called the education secretary of state a 'spiteful class warrior'. It was considered that insulting phrases like the above loses the argument and the general public expects MP's to set the tone of the debate.

Who is going to be the next Prime Minister was debated and the group did not spend time coming to a conclusion; we agreed that Andy Burnham will be crowned the next Prime Minister in July 2026! More discussion was held on who would be the next chancellor! A few names were mentioned but no one was sure who it would be.

The King and Queen are not going to live in Buckingham Palace was news this morning. What is going to happen to the palace after £370m refurbishments? There were suggestions that it may remain as an administration HQ for the royalty. That they will use it for all functions and events, and the royals will appear on the balcony as usual, but not live there!

We also considered the vetting process for MPs, cars driving into crowds and coping with excess heat!

Shan Alexander

GARDENING

A challenging year for gardeners, and a quiet year for our group. Medical and transport issues preventing visits to arranged gardens, but our own gardens provided plenty to see, and some enjoyable visits.



Walter Mason

MEMOIRS

July meeting

David reminded us of sayings that our parents said when we were naughty. They ranged from minor threats such as 'I'll box your ears, I'll smack your bottom, I'll wipe that grin off your face' etc. Then things got dangerous such as 'I'll knock your block off, I'll skin you alive, I'll tear you from limb to limb' etc. Other sayings were 'Wait till your father gets home, and you'll get what's coming to you'. Then there was school to contend with. 'Bend over my lad, hold out your hands or You're in for the Headmaster'. Corporal punishment in state schools was abolished in 1987. In private schools it was as late as 1999.

Marlene was fed up with watching football on the TV and resorted to an Arts channel and watched Les Mis which reminded her of one year when she took a group of students to an International Youth Camp and they went to see Les Mis in Manchester which was a great success. There have been programmes over the years to celebrate 20/30/40 years of the show. She also watched an Andre Rioux concert to escape the football.

Lynda told us about her neighbour's memories. She was an ex journalist. In September 1943 she was five years old and was not impressed by being left by her mother at school and she cried and cried. One teacher had callipers on both legs but she had an extremely good aim with the board rubber. At secondary school her cousin showed her round. They were placed in 'houses' and she had to go to different classrooms for lessons. The boys were in another building and they there were not allowed to contact the girls.

Angela told us about her early life in Newcastle. She lived near the shops and often had to pass a Spiritualist church which she found very scary. She played skipping with a long rope and she and her sisters went to school on the trolley bus. Happy memories.

Margaret remembered her husband's aunt and uncle, Alice and Billy. They were always moving house as Billy liked to buy a house and do it up and then move. On retiring they moved to the Isle of Man living near Laxey then moving to Onchan near Douglas. Margaret and her family went to stay with them for a holiday and her two daughters' lasting memory was watching Billy's hat blow off and go out to sea when he was waving them off on the ferry. Alice and Billy had a busy life. They were involved with the Wild Life Park and had lots of holidays abroad but always took their own tea bags.

Barbara F recounted some painting disasters that her husband had had. The first one was when he was decorating the third bedroom for the birth of their second child. He had a break and went for a cup of tea. When he went back he discovered that the older son had crayoned on the walls.

The second disaster was when he was putting a cork floor down in the bathroom. He was on his knees and Barbara was so pleased with what he had done that she hugged him not realising that he had a Stanley knife in his hand and he cut himself very badly. The third disaster was when he was emulsifying his granddaughter's bedroom. He had finished two walls and was stood on a two step stool with a brush and paint tray in his hand. He carefully avoided spilling the paint when he stepped off the stool but managed to put his foot in the tub of paint that was on the floor.

Quote for the month

Life gives you lots of chances to screw up which means you have just as many chances to get it right. Candace Bushnell

June Meeting

Lynda told us that when she was 16 most of her friends went to uni and were dependent on their parents. She went for a job at Swizzles in New Mills as a student and worked for six weeks in the summer holidays. It was an 8 am start and a four hour shift packing Love Hearts. It was quite intense as you had to be quick otherwise the sweets went off the packing conveyor. The supervisor was called Nancy. On one occasion the sweets came down the conveyor unwrapped. Nancy was chatting to a colleague and didn't notice. Many sweets went on the floor and had to be swept up and binned. Lynda never went back and now hates Love Hearts.

Avril recounted some childhood memories of going to an Anderson shelter at the bottom of the garden that was made of corrugated iron and covered with turf. They all had to wear gas masks. Her father was involved in building aircrafts and was a warden in the ARP. She went to school when she was 4 and a half and on her first day she was made to stand against the wall for talking. She remembered seeing a sign that said 'Trespassers will be prosecuted' and was scared because she thought it said 'Trespassers will be executed'. She remembered women cleaning their door steps with a Donkey Stone. A lot of our group remembered getting the Donkey Stone from the Rag and Bone man.

Marlene was very grateful to her parents for everything they did for her. They married in 1932 and her mother wore a blue lace dress which Marlene still has in her attic. Her mother worked for Colonel Morgan and her father was a furnace man who worked six hour shifts. He had an allotment and was able to provide for his family.

Sue remembered hot summers with no rain and wet and cold winters with frost on window panes. She had a stone hot water bottle in bed. She played out with friends and her parents never worried about her. They would have jam sandwiches. There were bike rides with her father usually on a Saturday and going fishing with her half brother. She felt lucky to live in a semi with hot water and a bathroom with a separate toilet.

Pat's first memory was when she was four and being woken up by her father to see her new baby brother who had been born at home. For one Christmas she had a Sweet Stall, made by her father which was full of jars and bags with the name Pat's Sweets on. She went to Avros where her father worked and she sat in a Vulcan bomber. Her best friend Margaret lived in a grocery shop and on Sundays they had the run of the shop while Margaret's parents stayed in bed. When she was 12, Pat went to Australia for 4 years.

Margaret J remembered 'high days and holidays'. She stayed in a B&B boarding house and families were not allowed to go back after breakfast until the evening. When she was 10, she went on a boat on the Norfolk Broads. There were annual Sunday school trips to Fleetwood and Blackpool and Whit Sunday walks which were always led by a brass band.

Barbara F told us about her Grandma and Grandpa who had a corner shop in Leeds. There was the shop and a storeroom which was also Grandma's kitchen. Upstairs was a lounge and a bathroom. The bedrooms were in the attic. They sold bacon and cheese in the shop which was cut with a wire slicer. Weighing scales were on the floor to weigh the potatoes and the shelves were filled with tins etc. Under the counter were trays of sweets for the children and there was a small freezer which sold lollies.

It was a very lively meeting.

Quote for the month

To travel is to live. Hans Christian Anderson

Barbara Kenneth

PHOTOGRAPHY

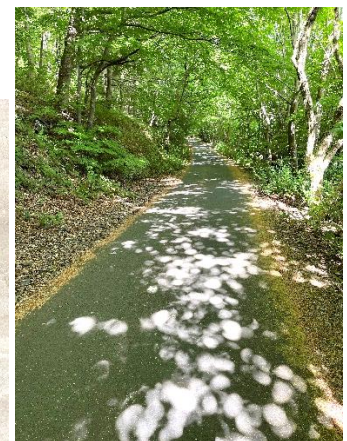
June's competition was Places of Worship. The winners were:

- 1st ... Santorini chapel 8 points... Ken
2nd ... Needham chapel Peak District 7 points ... Barbara
3rd ... St Paul's cathedral ... 6 points ... Diane



July's competition was Shadows. Thanks for all the entries. We had a good range of interpretation and images.

- 1st ... Leaf shadows on Beech tree 12 points, Barbara
2nd ... Butterfly 9 points ... Diane
3rd ... Middlewood way early summer ... 7 points ... Veronica



The topic for August is "BOATS". If you would like to join in, please send your three entries to me at photographygroupleader@highlaneu3a.org.uk by Aug 20th please.

Ken Jackson

READING

Our June book was Barry's choice, THE MANCHESTER MAN by Mrs G. Linnaeus Banks, published in 1876. I had received a copy of this book from a Mancunian friend when I first came to the Manchester area in 1967, so that I would get to know my new home and its history. It didn't mean so much to me then, but reading it after so many years, I was able to appreciate it so much more.

The novel is the story of two men born in 1799, one a foundling orphan, Jabez Clegg, raised by a poor family, who works his way up in the world, and the other, Laurence Aspinall, of wealthy stock. Their paths cross as schoolboys, Jabez attending the Bluecoats School (Chetham's College) and Laurence attending Manchester Grammar. Their feud, instigated by Laurence, persists into adulthood and Jabez loses the love of his life to Laurence, but there is a happy ending eventually.

What makes the novel so absorbing is that real events are recounted, the Peterloo Massacre plays a pivotal role and locations, not too far from here are described in detail. There is an exciting ride from Ardwick to Whaley Bridge taking in Hazel Grove, the Ram's Head and the White Hart so there is a lot of local interest. For anyone who knows Manchester and its history, this is a very good read.

Marlene Brookes

QUIZZING

As Paul says in his message from the Chair, our planned Quiz night in August has been postponed, hopefully until later this year. The Quiz group has also not met for a couple of months, but we hope to be able to get together again in Autumn. New members will be very welcome.

A quick word quiz. Each answer begins and ends with same letter.

- In which city would you find the Walker Gallery?
- Small canoe, originally used by Inuit
- State capital of Georgia
- Tracking system for aeroplanes
- River that flows through Nottingham
- Name used to refer to the prison camps in Russia
- Greek goddess of wisdom?

Diane Saxon

WALKING

Circular Walk 24/06/2026 :- High Lane – Macclesfield Canal – Marple Golf Course – Middlewood Way – Jacksons' Brickworks – Macclesfield Canal – High Lane

Our planned June walk was revised at the last minute to help cope with the very hot weather conditions. Five intrepid members enjoyed a 4.5 mile easy walk on level ground starting from HLVH carpark, walking towards Marple along the Macclesfield Canal towpath, eventually joining a footpath across Marple Golf Course (which was in magnificent condition – highlighted in the radiant sunshine). A welcome drinks stop was taken under dappled shade before joining the Middlewood Way, progressing towards Higher Poynton.

We elected to have our lunch stop at Middlewood Station, which provided shade, seating and solitude. The enthusiastic (sunshine inspired) birdsong only briefly interrupted by two non-stopping trains.

Jacksons' Brickworks Local Nature Reserve provided our next point of interest – it is a special place reclaimed by nature after its industrial interlude. We found ourselves knee deep in wild flowers including Common Blue Orchids. Well worth a visit.

We then followed a path to rejoin Macclesfield Canal and returned to our start point, inspired by our survival – warmed but not burnt!

David Burke

U3A walk report 19th July 2026 – Rudyard Lake



Twelve of us met at the northern car park of Rudyard Lake. The weather was mainly sunny, and for most of the walk, we were in pleasant shade provided by trees.

After a preamble about the history of Rudyard Lake, we set off down the disused railway line that ran along the east side of the lake. The miniature railway was active and a train was soon observed. It looked like a steam locomotive, but there was no steam and the sound it made sounded like a diesel.



We soon crossed the dam at the southern end of the lake, where we found some comfortable seats and stopped for our coffee break.

We then set off following a road and then a path which took us past Rudyard Villa. Apparently, the owner used

to boast about the good view he had of the lake, and this so annoyed his neighbour, that he built a further building out of spite to block his view. The name "Spite Hall" is still used to this day.

We continued through some very pleasant woodland until we reached a road which took us past some lovely lakeside dwellings, many of which had attached boat houses.

Soon after that we reached the Rudyard Lake Yacht Club. With permission from the yacht club cafe owners, we enjoyed our packed lunches sitting on the cafe's outside seats and were entertained watching some radio-controlled model yachts competing in a race.



We continued our journey past Cliffe Park Hall, which used to be a private residence built in 1811 in a classic Gothic style. It later became a golf course club house and then a Youth Hostel. It was obviously undergoing restoration, as it was fenced off and surrounded with scaffolding.

We then continued through open fields until we returned to the car park. A very pleasant, relaxing walk on a beautiful day.

Jeff Mortimer

National Office Learning Activities for August

Some highlights you might want to book.

5 Aug Building the world's most advanced airliners

11 Aug Digital hobbies for the third age

20 Aug Scottish colourists of Iona

There are many other events. All are free via Zoom. Click here for details and to book a place. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

[u3a Virtual Visits](#) is a place where members can record and share their most interesting trips and discoveries with the wider u3a community. Whether you've explored a hidden garden, wandered through a museum or admired artwork in a gallery, we'd love to hear about it!

This Learning Activity invites u3a members to create a short visual and written record of a visit they've enjoyed. These submissions will be used to:

- Inspire other members or interest groups to visit new places
 - Create a growing gallery of real-life recommendations especially of less well-known locations.
 - Provide slides and stories that can be shared in meetings or talks by members both online and in local u3as.
-

AUGUST ECLIPSES

We haven't seen a deep solar eclipse since 2015, but, around 7pm on 12th August, weather permitting, the UK may be able to see up to 96% of the Sun covered by the Moon. Scotland, Ireland and the Southwest will get the best view. Remember it's important not to look at the sun directly. You can watch it safely by joining the [Royal Observatory Greenwich live online stream](#). The next full solar eclipse we will see will be in 2090!

On 28th August we may be able to see a partial lunar eclipse, possibly hiding up to 90% of the moon's diameter. Eye protection is not needed for this, but you will need to be up and about around 5am before the moon sets.



image generated by Copilot