

Newsletter

December 2025



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*The Officers and Committee would like to
wish all members a Happy Christmas and
a healthy and interesting New Year.*



FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the December edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Another bumper edition of group news and individual contributions from members – which are always welcome – and swelled by reports from the recent river cruise organised by the Travel group. It's great to hear from the History group after a prolonged absence – we've missed you. As always, my thanks to the group leaders and contributors for their articles and photographs. The cover photo this month is from a 2014 travel group holiday in Vienna.

On page 4 we have information about membership for 2026 and the programme of speakers. Our thanks go to Lynn for a broad and interesting range of topics. Something for everyone!

Bridge for all

Would you like to learn bridge? It's never too late to start playing. Bridge is one of the most popular activities across u3a – combining mental challenge, strategy, and social connection. Nationally, u3a has a Bridge subject specialist and a team of fellow players who together have created training materials and have been running courses for beginners for a couple of years. One of this month's online learning events is a chance for you to find out about this. Details are on page 21. If you are interested, I would advise booking a place without delay as these events can get booked up quickly.

Accompanying your newsletter is the latest National Office Friends bitesize newsletter. This contains reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country. There is more information on u3a activities in the Winter edition of the u3a Matters magazine which has a condensed version online that you can read [here](#).

We are pleased to have recruited a good number of new members in 2025 and it would be good to hear from you. Stories, anecdotes, poems, pictures are all welcome. What does u3a mean to you? What have you done this year? What was the high spot?

The next issue of our newsletter will be January 2026, the first of the New Year.
Please send me your contributions by December 28th at
newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk.

My best wishes for a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Diane Saxon

Merry Christmas



Thank you!

The Committee would like to thank

- the Group Leaders for their support during the year. We wouldn't exist without you.
- the tea ladies who, as usual, have looked after us so well at the Monthly meetings.

FROM THE CHAIR

Yet again another year draws towards the end. We had the usual annual lunch at Hazel Grove golf club which was very good. Any suggestions for where we could try next year? I think this was the third year we have been and it would be good to try somewhere different.

Again, we have had an excellent variety of speakers and a big thanks to Lynn for organising these. She has also fully booked the speakers for 2026.

Your committee has worked hard this year, as they always do, organising different events along with quite a few holidays and more are planned for 2026. Please keep a look out for new holidays or come along to the monthly meeting to find out more. If a deposit is required, make sure you have the money/cheque to reserve your place.

If you have any ideas for new groups or resurrection of old groups, please let us know. All ideas are welcome.

The December Party meeting is ALL TICKET, and all the tickets have been sold.

I hope you have enjoyed your u3a this year and are looking forward to 2026.

Hope you all have a merry Christmas.

PLEASE KEEP AWAY IF YOU HAVE COUGHS OR COLDS from all meetings and groups.

Thanks

Paul, Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

On a financial note, can those who report to me on a quarterly basis please submit your figures as soon as you can after your last meeting of 2025 as I only have about four weeks in 2026 to complete the annual accounts and get them to the auditor.

Many thanks and best wishes for Christmas and New Year.

Les Birks

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2026

Membership renewal will be available at the January and February meetings. The membership fee is the same as last year; £8 or £12 to include the magazine.

Forms do not need to be filled in if your details are the same as last year. If your details have changed, you will need to complete a new membership form. You will find a form attached to the newsletter email.

Cheques should be made out to High Lane u3a and should be completed beforehand to avoid large queues. Similarly, it would be appreciated if paying by cash that you have the correct money.

AGM

The AGM is on 11 February 2026. Officers will remain the same for next year. .

Nominations for committee members need to be with Lynn Arnold by Wednesday 14th January, which is our first meeting of the year. You can find a Nomination form on the last page of this newsletter. This needs to be signed by the member being nominated and by the members who are nominating and seconding them. These should be current members of the u3a but not currently Officer or Committee members.

Lynn Arnold

PROGRAMME FOR 2026

Date	Speaker	Title
14 th January	Colin Mail	Lyme: Science and superstition, Leeches and Leghs.
11 th February		AGM
11 th March	Allan Shalks	My unusual early life; some experiences in TV, films, theatre and radio
8 th April	Marilyn Shalks	I wish my life was like a musical
13 th May	The Baroness of Bolsover	Afternoon tea etiquette; absolutely no slurping!
10 th June	Fran Sandham	A solo walk across Africa
8 th July	Simon Michael	Crime fiction author
12 th August	Paul Isherwood	Child gambler wins back life
9 th September	Brian Halliwell	It's a wonderful life; innovations and inventions
14 th October	Caroline England	From divorce lawyer to Duchess of the Dark Domestic Noir
11 th November	DC Haroon Acram	Fraud protection officer
9 th December	TBC	Christmas Party

MONTHLY MEETING

The talk at the November monthly meeting was led by Jenny and Nick from Stockport Magistrates Court. They posed various questions to check our knowledge of magistrates. We were surprised that magistrates have been in existence since 1362 during the reign of Edward the third. People are eligible between 18 and 75 regardless of ethnicity, gender, occupation or qualifications. The only people not eligible are those with a criminal record and serving police officers.

We gained an insight into the working of the court. There are three magistrates present to prevent a split vote but only the middleman speaks. There is always a legal adviser present. We learned about the sentencing procedure, their purpose and the various forms these sentences can take.

There was a lot of interest from members, and they appreciated the interactive element of the session.

Kath Wareham

A visit to CERN

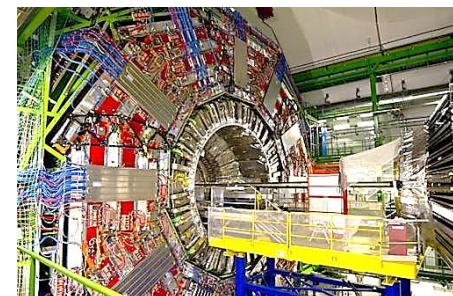
If you take the free number 18 tram located on the right side of Geneva Cornavin train station it will take you directly to Meyrin, the home of CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire). Entry into CERN is free as it was when I visited 30 years previously. Established in 1954, CERN is the world's largest particle physics laboratory with the aim of finding out what the Universe is made of and the laws of physics that dictate its behaviour. Many physicists have worked there (including Professor Brian Cox who works there as well at Manchester University), and several Nobel prizes have been awarded for their discoveries.

Work on the LHC (Large Hadron Collider) started in 2008. You may wonder what that is. Well here goes. Particles are fired down a large diameter pipe with 9,600 huge electromagnets strategically placed around the pipe. The physicists tend to use Hydrogen as the primary element which is stripped down to a stream of protons which are found in the nucleus of hydrogen atoms (particles). A given particle will fly off in a straight line and keep going at a given speed. That's ok but the physicists want to fire this stream of particles as fast as possible. So how do they achieve that?

Now we can bring in the use of electromagnets mentioned earlier. These magnets do two things. One, bend the path of the particles so that they can travel around the curvature of the pipe and two, accelerate the particles, hence a particle accelerator.

Each of the electromagnets accelerates the particles and as they travel around the pipe they are getting faster with each rotation. Here's the fun bit. The particles can reach 99.99% of the speed of light in a vacuum. The crafty physicists send other particles in the opposite direction and guide them onto a collision course. There are some very sophisticated cameras and detectors surrounding the collision site which pictorially capture the collision and detect other particles that are given off. The magnets can become very hot, so they use technology to reduce their temperature down to minus 271°C. In contrast your freezer at home goes down to around minus 20 °C.

The tunnel is 27 km (17 miles) in circumference, and the pipe sits inside a concrete tunnel which scientist and engineers can easily walk around but they generally use bicycles. The tunnel sits on average 1000m underground beneath the France Switzerland border near Geneva. The reason for this depth is to eliminate vibration from trains and vehicles travelling overhead



pexels.com

The technology used at CERN is at the leading edge in science and some of the equipment used has taken 15 years or more to develop. The exhibition halls are extremely well organised. There are interactive displays everywhere. Screens that talk to you about a particular section of the equipment and if you are inclined it's well worth a visit. The question you might ask is what's the use of this to mankind and how much did it cost. It's a fair question indeed.

- Physicists are trying to create what happened at the beginning of the universe, the Big Bang. They also try to prove scientific theories by experiment.
- The World Wide Web (WWW) was developed by Tim Berners Lee when working at CERN and CERN hosted the first website in 1991.
- A particle detector developed at CERN is now used to give better imaging and reduce radiation for and to patients in our hospitals. Georges Charpak won the Nobel prize in 1992 for that one.
- CERN took a major role in developing PET scanners used in diagnosing and treating cancer and other conditions. CERN is also deeply involved in very sophisticated X-Ray imaging which reduces the need to use expensive PET or CT scans.
- CERN works in strong collaboration with a host of medical organisations throughout the world, major universities, International Space Programs.
- The LHC build cost over £3.5 billion. The annual operating budget is £1.3 billion. CERN is publicly funded by the 27 members.

Jim Hindley

GROUP NEWS

BALLROOM DANCING

Walter's hip fracture meant that immediate changes were needed. But Kate and Ian, and Chris and Jackie, came to the rescue as DJs, and the group has been able to continue dancing on schedule. A big thank you to them, and to the group for their continued support.

Walter Mason



CANASTA

The Canasta group is still very popular with three new couples joining us lately, but you do not need to come with a partner.

We play every Tuesday night at The Royal Oak pub 7 till 9 pm.

Pauline Wright canastaleader@highlaneu3a.org.uk

READING

At our last meeting we discussed THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD by Agatha Christie which went down well with most of the group. It was my first reading of Agatha Christie and probably the last, but I was in a minority, as most found the plotting extremely skilful.

In December we will be meeting on the 8th and are again invited to Ingrid's house for our customary Christmas tea party. We will also be discussing works of non-fiction which we would recommend to the group.

Marlene Brookes
readingleader@highlaneu3a.org.uk

CRIME FICTION READING

The Janus Stone by Ellie Griffiths, Book 2 in the Dr Ruth Galloway series

A gruesome discovery at an old children's home lays bare terrible secrets from Norwich's past in the second gripping mystery for Dr Ruth Galloway. The setting is enticingly atmospheric . . . an intelligent murder story.

Ruth Galloway's forensic skills are called upon when builders, demolishing an old house in Norwich, uncover the bones of a child – minus the skull – beneath a doorway. Is it some ritual sacrifice or just a straightforward murder? Ruth links up with DCI Harry Nelson to investigate. The house was once a children's home. Nelson traces the Catholic priest who used to run the place. He tells him that two children did go missing forty years before – a boy and a girl. They were never found. When carbon dating proves that the child's bones predate the home and relate to a time when the house was privately owned, Ruth is drawn ever more deeply into the case. But as spring turns into summer, it becomes clear that someone is desperate to put her off the scent by frightening her to death.

The novel was popular with the group, for which I am grateful, as I chose it to appeal to people who had been finding some past choices less appealing.

Sue Roworth

4:50 from Paddington by Agatha Christie

This is a Miss Marple book originally written in 1957. One of Miss Marple's friends, a Miss Elspeth McGillicuddy, is going to see her by train when she sees a murder actually taking place in a train that is running parallel to her own. Miss Marple, of course, takes up the case and pursues it doggedly. She identifies a large house which may be involved and engages Lucy Eylesbarrow, who works as a temporary (and very efficient and expensive) housekeeper, to take up a job in the house to investigate. The story follows the unpicking of the mystery and introduces a large family group of possible suspects – with lots of the usual red herrings.

The book was largely well received – for two members it was their first ever Agatha Christie. We also discussed the various television and film adaptations of Christie's work and all agreed that we enjoyed the Joan Hickson BBC version of this book.

Lesley McCall

Our next meeting is Friday 12th December when we will review 'The Long Shadow" by Celia Fremlin.

Nancy Colclough

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Seven of us met this month to discuss various topics; –

The BBC panorama report on Donald Trump, who was to blame? should compensation be paid to him? We all agreed that the government has to be wary. Compensation should not be paid out of taxpayers' money, but even though we don't like him, we do need Trump.

Then we discussed the immigration problem – a subject which seems to crop up every month. Questions were raised, suggestions were given, but there was no conclusion.

The next topic was good news for a change! Scotland's football World Cup in America, the first since 1998. Discussion covered football in general, finance, supporters, visas, and once again, Donald Trump!

Then came an interesting question to each individual member "If you were Chancellor, what would be in your budget?" There were various replies, but many views that business rates should be lowered and taxes raised for high earners. The fairness of motility allowance was considered, and we all agreed that being the Chancellor is the most difficult job.

The latest Covid report was discussed, and then we went onto processed foods and health.

Andy Burnham was the subject of the next topic. Did we want him as Prime Minister? Angela Raynor's name came into the mix, too. There were very mixed views on Kier Starmer's performance as Prime Minister.

The final question was "should English spelling be changed to make it easier for children and others to read and write?" There was a unanimous "No!" – reasons being hundreds of years of history and successful ways of teaching spelling.

It was an enjoyable meeting with each member bringing one or two discussion topics, and our usual halftime break of cake and a cuppa, thanks to Margaret.

Mavis Dean

HISTORY

Hi All. The history group hasn't gone away – we're still here, though we've been a bit quiet lately. New members are always welcome on the fourth Wednesday of the month; more details from Pam Curley, history@highlaneu3a.org.uk

For our November meeting, our focus turned back three thousand years, as Gordon Longworth's presentation, intriguingly entitled 'Coffin Dodgers of the Nile', revealed some of the mysteries of Egypt's ancient funeral practices.

Many of these were intended to preserve the memory of the deceased ruler, which was believed to survive while his name was remembered, leading to it being frequently carved on walls. It was believed that the body and soul were separated by death and reunited in the afterlife. Mummification (an Arabian word, from 'mummiya', pitch, bitumen or tar, which is used as a preservative, helping to maintain a person's living corporeal appearance) was intended to assist the soul to recognise the body in the afterlife. The process involved seven stages and took around seventy days. The tomb was equipped with all the items it was thought would be needed by the deceased in the afterlife.

The goddess Ma'at played an essential part in funereal practices. The ancient Egyptians believed that she maintained order (maat) and was essential to the deceased continuing their journey to the afterlife.

Ma'at is depicted as a young woman with an ostrich feather on her head. The feather played an important role in the afterlife where the heart of the deceased was weighed against the feather to determine their fate.



January's presentation will be given by Marlene Brookes, who will be discussing the first post second world-war Prime Minister, Clement Atlee.

Barry Taylor

At the October meeting we discussed *The History of the Civil War* in Lancashire; how the conflicts in Ireland and the disconnect between the King and the Commons in Parliament led to the King declaring war with Parliament in August 1642.

Prior to that there had been considerable unrest in Lancashire between the Catholics under Lord Derby's banner, and the Protestants represented by the majority of the deputy lieutenants. When, in July, Lord Derby came to relieve Manchester of his munitions, having been invited to a banquet, it proved a trap and during a skirmish the first fatality of the war occurred. When news of the bloodshed reached London, it was all that was needed to spark off the War.

Derby escaped Manchester only to return in September with an army to besiege the town, but the residents resisted, and Derby left, leaving Manchester to become the unchallenged Headquarters for the Parliamentarians.

Had Manchester fallen the whole course of the war would have changed.

Ben Alexander

GARDENING



Fourteen members of the gardening group enjoyed an early Festive meal on November 19th. Janet took over some of the arrangements at short notice, because of Walter's hip fracture. But he was already mobile enough to attend the event on the day.

Walter Mason

GERMAN

Our little group continues to meet every Friday. We are looking forward to seeing a former member who has moved south who always drops in when in the area. It will be an opportunity to celebrate Christmas early with some German Christmas food.

Marlene Brookes

MEMOIRS

November meeting

A tale about being a lifelong football supporter. His love of the game started when as a young boy he played in the park using coats for goal posts. He supported Manchester United and remembers going to the first match after the Munich disaster. The team list in the match programme was empty as it was uncertain who would be available to play. As the entry price escalated, he then supported Stockport County. When his boys were young, he and Stewart started a local junior team. Paul became a referee for the princely sum of £5 a match!

One man recalled a very embarrassing moment during a convention in Las Vegas. He inadvertently got involved in a boxing promotion by being mistaken for the photographer! But worse was to come. After returning to his room on the tenth floor he had a bath and went to bed. Sometime later he woke up to find himself having a wee in the ashtray beside the lift on the sixth floor! He had no clothes on, and he found refuge in a linen cupboard. He was rescued by a guard who took him back to his room dressed in pillow cases! The next morning, he could hardly believe it had happened.

The time one lady lived in Norway sponsored by the British Council. She taught English in a school and also at an evening school. She made many friends and loved learning the language and the different way of life. There were Government wine shops, and you could only buy alcohol in the railway station.

A poem a member had written for his wife celebrating 60 years together. It consisted of a list of things he was sorry about including telling white lies and making her jump with his loud sneezes!

Also, a poem about an umbrella which one lady had decorated for a barbecue. These barbecues were a regular event and were usually themed. She did not really want to win a prize for the best umbrella as it was always a garden gnome! It was amazing how many words she found to rhyme with umbrella!

The wedding photograph gremlin which haunted three generations of weddings. In 1931 her mother and father could only afford one photo and unfortunately her mother's face is partially hidden by her veil. In 1961 the photographer's camera did not work for her wedding and there were no official photos. They had to appeal to the guests for theirs. In 1986 her husband took photos of their daughter's wedding. He was mortified to discover that he had forgotten to put in a film. So once again no wedding photographs.

Memories of bonfire night as a child in the late 40's. They made guys and went round knocking on doors singing a rhyme. There was parkin and treacle toffee and jumping jacks. Years later she remembers the bonfire in a dustbin lid.

Remembering family holidays. Travelling in the night in the old family car. Sleeping in an old army tent in sleeping bags made from old blankets. They were lovely times.

There was the history of one lady's hair. She had very curly hair until it was all cut off when she caught nits. After that just an annoying kink which plagued her all her life. No matter how hard she tried it was always there, and her dreams of straight hair came to nothing.

Quote for the month

Don't be pushed around by the fears in your mind, be led by the dreams in your heart. – Roy T. Bennett

Barbara Kenneth

QUIZZING

This month's quiz, our last of 2025, was set by Monica, and we had another interesting mix of questions which included Films, Water, Manchester, Science, Culture, History, and a set where all answers contained an x.

Some for you to try:

Who was the author of the book which Les Misérables is based on?

Which river flows through York?

In which county does the Thames rise?

Which library is the oldest public lending library?

How many Bennett sisters are there?

Who wrote The Night Manager?

That's it for 2025. The Quiz group is small, and new members will be welcomed. If you are interested, you are very welcome to come and see what we do. It's a very friendly group and our quizzes are a lot of fun.

The next meeting is 10am on 22nd January 2026.

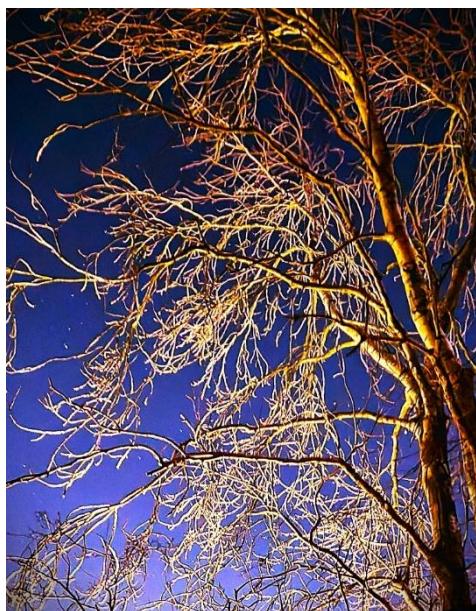
Please contact me if you would like more information at quizgroup@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

PHOTOGRAPHY

This month's competition was a LONE TREE. All very close again this month.

1st ... joint 1st with 6 points each: Autumn in Saguenay Mark
Tree at night.... Ken



2nd ... joint 2nd with 5 points Tree and cage ...Veronica
Dead tree in the snow... Jeanette

3rd... joint 3rd with 4 points Chimney brush... Barbara
Tree in the mist ...Veronica
Tree with a view ... Veronica

Unfortunately, we are not able to show all of these because of copyright issues.
Permission is needed to publish any photographs taken on National Trust properties.

Thanks for all the entries. I thought there were some great pictures this month. Apologies to Anthony as I left one of his photos out, and it was a good one too. It was Farm Lane, High Lane and is shown here.

Our topic for December is ... surprise, surprise
CHRISTMAS. Entries by Dec 18th please.



Also please send me topics you may think of by next week and I will arrange them into monthly groups for you all to vote on.

Ken Jackson photographygroupleader@highlaneu3a.org.uk

TRAVEL**River cruise October 31st – November 7th**

A group of eight members left Manchester Airport for an early flight to Dusseldorf where we had fingerprints and photographs taken which is the new EU Entry/Exit System. We were surprised that a group from Birmingham did not have to do this. We travelled by coach from Dusseldorf to Cologne where we boarded the Oscar Wilde.

KOBLENZ

On our first full day we arrived at the town of Koblenz where the Rhine and Moselle meet. We walked along by the Moselle to reach the cable car passing the magnificent horseback statue of the first German Emperor Wilhelm I. The cable car took us to the Fortress of Ehrenbreitstein where we had a panoramic view of the Deutches Eck from the terrace and enjoyed a Costa coffee in the cafe.

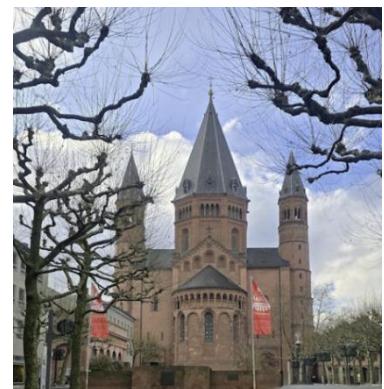


The following morning, in beautiful sunshine we enjoyed a very pleasant journey through the Rhine Gorge where there are numerous castles perched on the hillsides. They were mainly built between the 12th and 14th centuries as defence strongholds because of conflicts and power struggles between German principalities and noble families over territorial rights and collection of river tolls. We passed enormous barges piled high with containers, many flying the Dutch flag. What a wonderful transport system!

MAINZ

With a short stop in Mainz, we left the ship in light drizzle and made our way into the city famous for being the birthplace of Johannes Gutenberg and the Printing Press. The city is also known for its extensive carnival celebrations and half-timbered houses in the old town.

Mainz has Germany's largest wine growing region. very much in evidence on our journey from Boppard through the middle Rhine Gorge.



We visited Mainz Cathedral known as St. Martins in the market square. For the visitor, Mainz has various museums such as the Seafaring Museum, Gutenberg Museum and the Art Society.

HEIDELBERG

We arrived in Mannheim and took a 40-minute coach trip to Heidelberg, a romantic old town on the banks of the River Neckar. It was formerly the residence of the Elector-Palatine. We took the funicular up to the castle constructed of local red sandstone previously ruined and later rebuilt. The wine cellar has the world's largest wine barrel with a capacity of over 200000 litres.

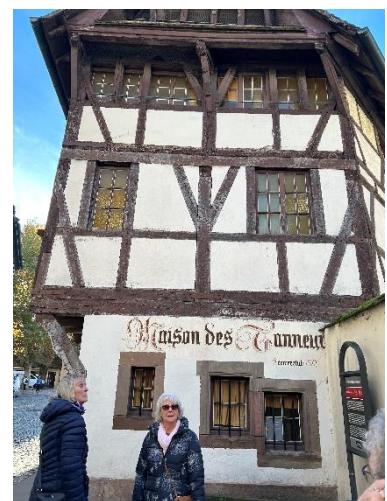
The town is home to the oldest university in Germany dating from 1386. This lovely old town is a maze of historic, baroque and gabled buildings. In the centre is the Heilig Geist Kirche which was unusually built for both Catholics and Protestants. It had a floor to ceiling wall built to separate the two religions. What a good idea all worshipping under the one roof! The wall was removed fairly recently when the Catholics built their own church. The tour ended in the market square with coffee and cake.

STRASBOURG

The weather was a lovely and on a bright November day the coach dropped us off for our walk into the centre of Strasbourg, the official seat of the European Parliament and the largest city of the Grand Est region of Eastern France in the historic region of Alsace.

We were met by Robin, a very proud Frenchman who said that Strasbourg being on the Rhine and the border of Germany had changed allegiance during its history between Germany and France many times but now was most definitely French. He proudly pointed out restaurants and their enticing menus telling us where to enjoy that famous French cuisine! We slowly meandered past beautiful historic buildings with a "le bateau" passing under a swing bridge at its centre.

Four of us left Robin then to explore on our own and after a very welcome hot coffee (not quite what we were expecting as having ordered "grande" the cups were on the small side!) we discovered some very exclusive clothes shops (no prices!) and interesting little gift and Christmas shops. Having resisted purchasing all the treats (they wouldn't fit in my case anyway!) we joined Robin for a leisurely walk back to the coach anticipating our delicious lunch on the Oscar Wilde – we got used to the continual eating unable to resist the chef's delicious offerings!



RUDESHEIM



The Drosselgasse is a famous cobbled street in Rüdesheim. It is about 2 metres wide, about 144 metres long and very steep. It is visited annually by about three million people including us. The numerous half-timbered houses included many gift and souvenir shops.

We had a lovely afternoon window shopping and enjoying the Rüdesheim coffee. We watched the waiter making it at the table with Asbach brandy, sugar, black coffee and whipped cream. Very delicious on a bright sunny November afternoon.



COLOGNE

Cologne is a 2000 year old city founded by a German tribe in 38 BC and became a Roman settlement in 50 AD. The twin towered cathedral is the largest Gothic structure in the world. Started in 1248 it took six hundred years to complete and is now a UNESCO World Heritage site. It houses the relics of the three wise men and has magnificent stained-glass windows. On our final day, we left the ship at 11am, travelled by coach to Cologne to spend a few hours there with time for coffee and Black Forest Gateau (the Germans do have wonderful cakes) before the return flight from Dusseldorf to Manchester.



Contributions from: Pam Cooke, Barbara Dawson, Karen Ganly, Ron Holt, Diana Moore, Kath Shah, Betty Smith, Margaret McDermott

Holidays for 2026

January 26 th	Potters resort Essex Final information at January meeting
June 29 th	Cumbria and Lake District 4 nights at Damson Dene Hotel Bowness
July 17 th	CRUISE FROM LIVERPOOL 8 nights Ireland and Scotland Fred Olsen, Bolette Cabins still available
May 3 rd	HIGH CLERE CASTLE (Downton Abbey)

Margaret McDermott

SHORT WALKS

The November walk started at Jacksons Brickworks Car Park when nine folk braved the weather, or so we thought, after the storm of Friday 15th. In fact, even the sun decided to blink when on our way back to the car park.



Our route took us along a familiar way down Middlewood Way until we reached bridge 16 where we walked a track to link with the canal. Passing many narrow boats along the canal to Nelsons Pit Car Park, taking a path downward came back onto Middlewood Way to gain access to Poynton Coppice. The Coppice had lost most of the leaves, but colourful leaves on the ground. On coming out of the Coppice onto an unmade road, passing the house with blue windows and door the group found the signpost down to the river.



After carefully navigating the steps, we passed over a bridge and carefully crossed an overflow from the fields above. A short flight of steps upward brought the group onto an even path through the Coppice once again and into Wards End.

Refreshments were ready in our rucksacks, so here we stopped. Time to go, but not before some folk collected apples 'please take'. Following another unmade road and turning off upward and back onto Middlewood Way. Crossing the recreation ground steps took us up to the canal where we walked to Bridge 13 taking a track and narrow path onto a field and back to Jackson Brickworks Car Park

Ruth Smith



WALKING

13 keen walkers set off from the Goyt valley car park along the west side of Fernilee Reservoir, up to Oaken End Farm, where we had a deserved coffee break. Table and benches were available. We then walked downhill crossing a clapper bridge. A clapper bridge is formed by large flat slabs of stone, often granite, these can be supported on stone piers.



We then walked up to Overton Hall Farm and then climbed up to Windgather Rocks where we had lunch. After lunch we made our way back along the path beyond the crag to the Pym Chair car park, then downhill back to our starting point.



It was a circular walk with superb views. We couldn't have had better weather for this time of year. Thanks to everybody who came on the walk.

David Shard

POETRY CORNER**Sixty Years of Sorries**

Lynne and I celebrated our fifty sixth Anniversary in April this year, so adding two years engaged, and two more going out together, we've now been together over Sixty years. I didn't always get it right!

For insisting that you join me to see my hero Bob Dylan in May 1965
For being so ungracious when coerced into seeing The Bachelors live
 I'm Sorry
For having spoken unkind words, which must have caused you pain
For the far too many occasions I enquired "Am I too late for tea" again
 I'm Sorry
For believing that a desirable Christmas gift, could be A Hostess Trolley
For not realising a complete set of Fine Crystal Glasses was also sheer folly
 I'm Sorry
For not telling you often enough, just how much I really care
For always walking past whatever it was you'd left sitting on the stairs
 I'm Sorry
For not realising that little black dress was actually brand new
For once more failing to comment when you'd had a new hairdo
 I'm Sorry
For disappointments which understandably brought resigned sighs
For having been guilty of telling far too many little white lies
 I'm Sorry
For few achievements which stand out from the crowd
For always making you jump by sneezing out loud
 I'm Sorry
For that house of your dreams I'd always threatened to build
For yet one more glass of Red Wine on a new carpet spilled
 I'm Sorry
For way too many of those "I'll be late" phone calls you got
For the one and only Wedding Anniversary which I forgot
 I'm Sorry
For not noticing that the ballpoint in my pocket had been leaking
For yet again not knowing exactly why we were not speaking
 I'm Sorry
For any unspoken apology which upon my conscience still sits
For any intended fond kiss I may have left dwelling on hesitant lips
 I'm Truly Sorry

Stewart Clay

NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR DECEMBER

Just a selection of events. As well as these, there are regular events which occur month by month.

- 3 December Amazing Tunnels & Tunnelling Feats of Engineering
- 4 December: Bridge: What's It All About? – **see below for details**
- 9 December: Making your smartphone easier to use – Apple
- 9 December: The Importance of Fungi for the Environment and Humans
- 10 December: Ways we can be happier
- 17 December: Boost Your Festive Batteries with Qigong

There are many other events on wide ranging topics. All are free via Zoom. Remember they can fill up quickly. Click here for details and to book a place.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

BRIDGE: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Join us for a friendly and informal online session with **Steve Carter**, the u3a Bridge Adviser, and some volunteer mentors from the national Bridge programme.

Bridge is one of the most popular and stimulating activities across u3a – combining mental challenge, strategy, and social connection. In this lively session, Steve and the team will share their passion for the game and explore how you can learn Bridge.

You'll discover how other u3a members are learning and playing Bridge online with u3a and in local clubs and hear inspiring stories from members who've completed the **u3a Beginners' Programme** and now enjoy regular games.



Whether you're a complete beginner or simply Bridge-curious, this is your chance to find out more. There'll be plenty of time for questions and discussion – so bring your curiosity and join the conversation.

Learning Bridge in 2026 could be one of the most rewarding things you do – a hobby to challenge the mind and lift the spirits for years to come!

About the speaker

Steve has been the Bridge Subject Adviser for four years and over that period has assembled a great team of keen Bridge Players who have worked together to design a set of Bridge beginner lessons ideally suited to the needs of u3a members. Many of these teachers will be available on the day to answer all your questions about Bridge.

HIGH LANE u3a**COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS FOR 2026**

The Committee for 2025 is to be elected at the AGM on 11 February 2026.

If you wish to nominate a member for any of the roles, please complete the form appropriately and return it to the Secretary, Lynn Arnold, by the date of the monthly meeting on 7 January 2026.

Please ensure you have the permission and signature of the person you are nominating.

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	NOMINEE	SIGNATURE OF NOMINEE	NOMINATED BY	SECONDED BY
Committee Member				

Note: people nominating and seconding must be current members of High Lane u3a and not currently an Officer or Committee member