



Newsletter

July 2025



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the July 2025 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. Slightly later than usual but our usual information from group leaders and reminders about upcoming social events you won't want to miss. As I've said before, our u3a is unusual in offering these in addition to the regular interest group and travel activities. I'm sure you recognise there is a lot of work in organising these and we appreciate your support.

The cover photo this month showcases the winning photographs from the Photography groups May competition of Pools and ponds which didn't make it into last month's newsletter. Restful images from Eglwysbach, Giverny, Kew and Nice.

A taster, a shortened form, of the u3a magazine Third Age Matters is now available online in addition to the full print editions posted to subscribers. You can read about this on page 16.

We are pleased to welcome some new members to our u3a this month and look forward to meeting you at our events, meetings and interest groups.

All contributions to the newsletter are very welcome. As I always say, please feel free to share some of your news, your interests, stories, poems, photos or other items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members. As our newsletter is available online, it is important that any photos we use must be taken by us or we must have the owner's permission to use. I've included some information about digital image copyright on page 7.

The next issue of our newsletter will be August 2025 so please send your contributions to me by 28th July at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE WORKSHOP

The two-hour workshop is on Tuesday, 29th July 2-4pm in the small hall. I am unable to take any more names for this workshop.

Barbara Kenneth

EVENTS

To book your place at these events, see André at the meeting or contact any committee member. Contact details are on the Groups sheet you received earlier in the year. If you've mislaid it, please email the Editor and I will send you a new one.

ANNUAL LUNCH 18 July

The date of our annual lunch is fast approaching – just a few days left to join us at Hazel Grove Golf Club.

We are very pleased to welcome Simon Michael to speak to us. Simon is the author of the Charles Holborne legal thriller series, set in 1960s London, a city of bomb sites, gangsters, police corruption and prejudice. The violent streets where Charles Holborne, former boxer and criminal and now misfit Barrister at Law, fights the good fight. The Crime Fiction reading group recently enjoyed their reading and discussion of one of the series.

The talk is entitled "A Life in Crime" and is highly recommended by members. You won't want to miss this.

The menu this year is

Home-made Tomato and Basil Soup
Ham Hock Terrine with a Red Onion Marmalade
Smoked salmon salad

Chicken Breast with a Red Wine Sauce
Pan Roasted Salmon with Lemon Dill Sauce (£2.50 supplement)
Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding
All served with fresh seasonal vegetables and potatoes

Sticky Toffee Pudding with Custard
Lemon Tart
Cheese and biscuits

The time is 12.30 for 1 pm. The cost is £35 for 3 courses and coffee/tea and includes a gratuity.

PUB QUIZ NIGHT

The Quiz group is busy sorting out the questions for this year's quiz night. Last year's light-hearted quiz was good fun and enjoyed by all. Hosted by the Quiz group, there will be several different rounds with a break for a light supper. Questions will cover a wide range of topics and interests. Something for everyone!

The date is Friday, 22 August, 7pm start. Teams of up to six people and you can bring a friend. Please bring your own drinks and glasses.

Please, don't worry about coming on your own or as a pair – we will find you a team.

We hope you will support us at this event. Tickets are just £8 for the evening's entertainment and will be on sale at the July meeting.

JUNE MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the June meeting was Sue Holden and her talk was entitled... and the band played on.

Sue describes herself as a solicitor singer and storyteller. She began by singing the popular song And the band played on. What a voice! The title of the song referred to the band that played continuously while the Titanic was sinking.

She took us through the history of The White Star Line with its rivalry with Cunard until the building of the 3 ships the Olympic, the Britannic and the Titanic. Sadly she described how the tragedy may have been averted. She mentioned delay, the illusion of invincibility which meant a shortage of lifeboats, a greed for speed, a neglected fire in one of the coal bunkers and confusion and misunderstanding among the wireless operators. While all this was going on the band played on and many believe that their last tune was Nearer my God to Thee. Sue finished her talk by singing this song.

The meeting was well attended, and the talk was very well received.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 9th July when Joy and Kevin Siddall will give a talk entitled DNA of British Musicals.

Kath Wareham

GROUP NEWS

BALLROOM DANCING

The group celebrates a “milestone birthday”.

Walter Mason, group leader, became a nonagenarian in June. To mark this auspicious occasion, 18 group members held a celebratory lunch at the Istanbul Grill in Marple. A good time was had by all; everyone cheered and clapped when the birthday cake was brought in with suitable Turkish dance music playing in the background.



As well as an opportunity to congratulate Walter, we also wanted to say thank him for his hard work in keeping the Group thriving. **KEEP DANCING!**

Steve Reynolds

TRIVIAL PURSUITS

We continue to meet every 6 weeks on Saturday evening at 7.00 pm.

It is a fun sociable group, and new members will be very welcome

Jean Barrow

CHURCHES AND PUBS

August 6th

Our next church is the Church in the Peak Forest on August 6th. This church is dedicated to Charles the Martyr and has a fascinating history. It is a beautiful drive to the church, and we will be met there by Peter and his wife who will be greeting us with home-made cakes and tea and coffee. Peter will be telling us the story of this church. Later we drive down to Chapel en le Frith for lunch at the Shoulder of Mutton.

Sandy Mclean and Dorothy Neillands

September 3rd

St. Lawrence's Church, Over Peover, a 14th century Grade 1 listed building. Lunch at the Churchill Tree. Bookings at July meeting.

Mark Saxon

Oct 1st

Hayfield Methodist Church. Gill and Dave Edmonson.

December 3rd

Pam Cooke. Church still to be finalised. It will be confirmed in the Newsletter and at the Monthly meetings.

Paul Kenneth

TRAVEL



Ireland	September 1 st – 5 th Please come to the August meeting to collect information and boarding cards for the flight to Cork.
POTTERS RESORTS FIVE LAKES	Jan 26th–30th Waiting list. Please contact Sue Harlin for further information.

Margaret McDermott

Sue Harlin

CRIME FICTION READING

Our book for May was Skinner's Rules, the first book in the Skinner series (currently number 36!) by Quintin Jardine, a prolific Scottish crime writer. The books are set in Edinburgh and in this first book we get to meet many of the characters who are with us throughout the series as Jardine develops their careers and life stories.

Soon after starting the book, we have three apparently random (and pretty gory) murders in Edinburgh. The story expands as we progress to a complex political situation closely related to an issue which is as difficult today as it was when the book was written, and an explosive ending.

Most of the group enjoyed this book. It was agreed to be very readable; clear English and short chapters help with this. We felt the setting was well described and relatable. Comments included Skinner's rank of DCI wouldn't allow him to be as hands on as he is, it was difficult to work out who all the characters in Skinner's team were, and some felt these were not sufficiently developed in this first book. It was agreed that the ending was implausible as danger was averted by an extremely fortuitous happening! However, several of the group have decided to read some of the later books in the series.

Our book for June is Big Sky by Kate Atkinson. This is the fifth book in the Jackson Brodie series and was published in 2019. Jackson Brodie is a private investigator living in a quiet seaside village in Yorkshire.

We mostly meet monthly on Friday morning to discuss the book, share our reading and enjoy some refreshment. We have space for more readers. If you too have a love for crime fiction in its widest sense, please get in touch.

Diane Saxon

DIGITAL IMAGES, PHOTOGRAPHS AND THE INTERNET

The basic principle is that any digital image is protected by copyright. The image belongs to the owner of that image and the permission of the copyright owner(s) is required to copy, share or use the image on the web. This includes photos taken on cameras and smartphones, diagrams and illustrations. The regulations are complex as you would expect (see www.gov.uk) but in general, photographs of buildings, sculptures etc in public spaces are copyright free but may not be on land such as National Trust properties. Images of people clearly require their permission to take and share.

However, it's good to know that there are several excellent sources of free to use images including pixaby, pexels, unsplash and Wikimedia commons.

GARDENING

The group had two visits in June'. First to Kate and Ian's lovely cottage style garden, which never disappoints.



The second visit was to an impressive house and garden in Mobberley, which was well admired by all. Chris took photos concentrating on the lovely flowers, although there was much more to see. The lady of the house did not disappoint in her lovely selection of cakes, so all in all a super visit.



Walter Mason

CURRENT AFFAIRS

In the latest spending review the chancellor has set out the government spending plans for the NHS, defence, education, housing and other public services. The group discussed the winners and losers and questioned how fair the allocations are. We wondered if spending allocated to government departments should be the responsibility of all party's and some of us agreed that a cross-party policy might be a fairer way of allocating government money.

A question was asked, has the government done the right thing by making more pensioners eligible for the winter fuel allowance. We all thought it was a good move and that it was a much-needed U-turn, we also thought it's how it should have been done in the first place.

We discussed housing and if building on the grey belt could help with the housing crisis – the grey belt is a new concept established by the labour government meaning: parts of the green belt that are lower quality like car parks and wasteland. Some of us thought this was a good idea and most of us agreed to building more houses providing they are affordable. We all agreed that we need more social housing.

Another question was do we think that driverless taxis are a good idea. The government has confirmed that there are to be trials in the near future. Every one of us said that we preferred a taxi with a driver. Nobody seemed impressed with the idea of vehicles without drivers.

One member talked about renewing their passport and recommended Hazel Grove Post Office. Several of us have used this service at Hazel Grove and we whole heartedly agreed that it's an efficient, much needed and appreciated service.

We discussed:

The latest riots in Ballymena, Northern Ireland.

Emigration.

The Covid contracts.

Do we need to prepare for war.

The war in the Middle East.

Trump and Putin.

It was a lively and interesting meeting covering lots of topics. Thank you, Margaret, for tea and cakes.

Betty Smith

MEMOIRS

One member shared with us his experience of trying to buy online. He is of the generation when fountain pens were cutting edge technology! He needed some ink for his computer so he decided to have a go online. After being amazed by the huge choice on offer he made his selection. All he had to do was pay but got lost in the intricacies of online banking and PayPal accounts and to his horror he discovered he had bought 3 cartridges for an obscene amount of money! Luckily his daughter sorted him out, bought the necessary cartridges which were successfully delivered. We could all identify with this.

ne lady remembered a holiday in Abersoch in 1975 with her husband and 2 young children. They rented a cottage for approx. £18 pounds a week and the owner took the children out in his fishing boat and they were thrilled to catch mackerel. He taught them to skin and bone them ready for his wife to cook for their tea. One day they travelled in the train along the coast to Barmouth and back. On this fateful day their train hit a group of adults and children who mistakenly thought the line was disused. There were a few casualties who had to be put onto the train as the ambulance could not reach them. The lady being a nurse was later praised at the coroners' court for her prompt actions.

Another member was born in 1940 and grew up in Swansea which was a target for the German bombers during WW2. Her memories of the war years are made up mostly of atmosphere and smells. The air raid shelter, the allotment and the kitchen. Although food was rationed her family were well fed especially with dark green cabbage. She remembers eating chicken and rabbit. Also cockles and laverbread from the market which were not rationed. Furniture and clothes were rationed, and she remembered rugs and even coats made from scraps of material. Swansea took a long time to recover after the war, and she can remember seeing the two princesses who came to look at the bomb damage.

One man wanted to be a star when he was at school, but things seemed to be against him. He was, selected for the quiz team but failed to find an answer for "who is the compere of Sunday night at the London Palladium?" His school groaned when he said he had no idea. He tried boxing but after being knocked out in the third round during a match he retired graciously from that sport. Gymnastics was equally short lived. He tried cricket but he was never very good. He took part in the football trials but was hampered by his thick strip. He enjoyed running in sports day and one year he won the long jump event with a new school record. He reckons it must have been a fluke!

Another lady got to thinking about things she did as a child which would never be permitted today. From a very early age the headmistress encouraged the children to walk to school on their own. When she was a bit older, she remembers making tea for the teachers. The school had a savings scheme and every week two children would take the money to deposit in the bank on their own! Slaps on the leg were frequent events. Sometimes, a cane was used. She cannot remember any adult supervision in the playground. One day she was sent home ill on her own and when she couldn't reach the key which had been left her neighbour let her into the house and left her! When she was a girl guide she remembers travelling to camp in the back of a van with no seat belts or ventilation.

One lady recalled when there was a time when only BBC existed. When ITV started it was of course funded by advertisements. She reminded us of some of the most popular ones with their catchy phrases. Murray mints the too good to hurry mints and Smash means mash. We all remembered them and more. She wondered whether we were influenced by them. Are we so gullible that we need adverts to make us buy?

Another member remembered the birth of her undiagnosed twins. Even though she was huge no one suspected twins although her mum was suspicious. They were conceived on New Year's Eve in Seaham Harbour with the help of Newcastle Brown ale! They were born 6 weeks early and the second baby surprised everyone. When the babies were born, they didn't realise the weights were in kilograms and they thought they weighed the same as two bags of sugar! The babies were in IC for 3 weeks. Life was never going to be the same.

One man recalled his cruise holiday to the USA. They had one scary moment just out of Miami when there was a fire in the engine room. In New Orleans they visited a jazz club where the music was great. Later in the same year they cruised to the remote part of Norway and saw polar bears and Arctic foxes. They visited the Svalbard Global vault which is the world's largest secure seed storage. It's purpose is to back up gene bank collections to secure future food supplies. From this remote part of the world a tender went to an island and took lots of postcards to send home. Their cards arrived a year later!!

It was a lively meeting with lots of laughter.

The next morning will be on Tuesday 1st July 2.0–4.0pm in the small hall.

QUOTE FOR THE MONTH

There is no failure. You either win or you learn. – Gary Keller

Barbara Kenneth

PHOTOGRAPHY

June's competition was Garden sheds.

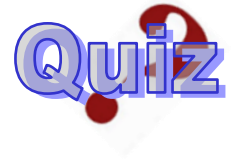
1st ...Wybersley Rd shed, 11 points ... Pamela Nelson
2nd.. My shed stuff. 9 points ... Anthony Berry
3rd ... Shed wall hangings 5 points ... Dave Turner
The key to good gardening 5 points ... Anthony Berry



July's comp is "SHOES". Entries by July 24th please

Ken Jackson

QUIZZING



The quiz this month was created by Monica. Questions covered a wide range of topics and interests. We had famous Michaels, art and music, notable events, quotations, films, Shakespeare and general knowledge.

Here are a few for you to try:

Which Michael had 'something of the night' about him?

Which was Jane Austen's last novel?

Who composed the ballet Romeo and Juliet?

Who were Butch Cassidy and the Sundance kid?

Know the answers? Fancy challenging yourself with us? New quizzers are very welcome. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. Meetings always have a relaxed and sociable environment. You can be assured of a friendly welcome. Please contact me if you would like to join this group or would like more information.

And don't forget our quiz night in August. We'd love to see you there. Don't be worried about coming in ones or twos as we will make up teams.

Diane Saxon

SHORT WALKS

June walk

The group congregated at Higher Disley, 16 in all, on a hot morning, for a walk above Lyme Park. A breeze was very welcome as we walked up the road toward the Linen Cottages passing 'Linen Cottage' and the Wesley Sunday School building, (now a play group).

From the Linen Cottages walking down a narrow path between fields where straw was being baled, bringing the group to Green Lane/Gritstone Trail near a farmhouse with a very old notice on a tree "trespassers will be shot, those still alive will be shot twice".

After walking a while along Green Lane turning left off onto a tarmac road and finding the metal Kissing Gate walked through a field to the shade of trees for the 'coffee break'. Continuing along a shady track bringing us to Red Lane. Walking UP Red Lane – shady, very close to St Mary's church, Disley. Retraced our steps from here down Green Lane and along the path between fields and a left turn onto the busy Higher Disley to Whaley Bridge Road brought us back to our cars. Thanks to D for an enjoyable walk.

Ruth Smith

WALKING

A circular 6.5 mile walk in the beautiful Derbyshire Dales.



On 25th June, in perfect walking weather, sunny with a gentle cooling breeze, twelve of us set off from the village of Curber.

We walked alongside the tranquil River Derwent, with its wild bird life and its reflections in the water, were “food for the soul.” Upon leaving the river we walked uphill through meadows and woodland, providing us with beautiful views of 360 degrees. Leaving the woodland, we found ourselves on the outskirts of Eyam, a village known famously for the Bubonic plague in 1665/66. Choosing to isolate the village, people sacrificed their lives. Whole families being wiped out.



We had lunch in the village square and visited the Anglican church of St Lawrence, where the history of the plague is displayed. We were fascinated by a sundial located up above the outer chancel door, dated 1775 with the inscription; ‘Encourage an Enquiring Mind’ Suitably refreshed, we continued onto the Boundary Stone of Eyam/Stoney Middleton, finding another story of a young couple, sadly parted by the plague. The boy survived and never married.

Dropping down through fields with views yet again, we arrived in Stoney Middleton from whence villagers would take food to the Boundary Stone and collect disinfected money with vinegar by the people of Eyam during the plague.

We visited the Parish Church of St. Martin. Remarkable by its octagonal tower. Walking on we passed the Roman Baths, so called, as Roman coins were found on this site. Looking through the windows, we could see a large dark rectangular hole with steps alongside down to the water, supposed to have healing powers in 49AD. The building was rebuilt in the early 19th century.



Walking on we walked up a moderately challenging track, then downwards to join the Derwent River again, and follow it back to the start. Optional lower paths were made available to one of our group.

Later, we refreshed ourselves in the Calver Arms Pub after an enjoyable 6.5 miles of History and Nature in the beautiful Derbyshire Dales.

Monica Martin

Did you know?

3rd July is the first day of the Dog Days of Summer. This period extends to 11th August so includes St Swithin's on 15th July. Dog Days refers to Sirius, the Dog star, which is the brightest star in the night sky. In Latin, Seirios means scorching. Sirius is eight light years from the Earth and radiates more than twenty times the energy of the sun.



[1dom1706 pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com/1dom1706)

Sirius begins to rise with the sun in summer and in times gone by it was thought that Sirius caused the heat of the late summer days.

NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR JULY

A selection of this month's events you might want to book. There are many more including Mindfulness and Yoga.

- 7 July An Introduction to the Arts and Crafts Movement
- 10 July Veggie BBQ cooking
- 11 July Plant, medicine and magic
- 16 July Technology in sport
- 17 July Turner's timeless treasures
- 17 July Age proofing your home
- 31 July Human brain part 6: taste and smell

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>

If you attend one of these events, I'm sure others would be interested so please write a brief piece for the next edition of the newsletter.

THIRD AGE MATTERS

A digital version of the u3a Third Age Matters magazine is now available which you can read and download for free on the National u3a website.

A lot of members have expressed interest in having an online version to read, so we have produced a taster version of the latest Summer issue.

This is a shortened version of u3a matters, free to read online and covers some of the highlights from the most recent issue. Click the 'fullscreen' button to enlarge the pages or download it as a PDF.

The full magazine, published five times a year, is 92 pages and features even more member stories, advice and entertaining content from across the u3a movement.

Community spirit

Hedge hopes



From left, Croydon u3a members Joy Ellery, Jenny Wilson and Peter Bollingbrook

Another day, another challenge for the always active Croydon u3a. This time, members volunteered to help a local organisation, Friends of South Croydon, to plant hedging around the town's historic 8.5-acre recreation space. "A small group of us pitched up with forks and spades to join about 25 other volunteers, and track in – quite literally," says chair Jenny Wilson. "We were given 'whips' – twig-like bare branches with stumpy roots – by the organiser of CPRE (the countryside charity), which provided the funding. These were actually a mix of hedge varieties which, we were told, is not only good for different types of wildlife, but is a sensible precaution in case one type becomes diseased. "We were shown how to plant the mixed hedging in a sort of zig-zag line, so it will look more natural once it's established, and given plenty of interesting tips and information. We learnt a lot, had great fun – and exercised our muscles as well!"

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR



Putting back the fun

Chair **Allan Walmsley** considers the key objectives of the u3a movement

With summer now here, I've been reflecting on all that has happened over the last 12 months or so. Introducing and winning support for the governance changes, seeking election as chair and working with a new CEO have made this quite an intense period for me, as well as for many of my colleagues and some in the wider membership. There have been numerous changes at national level, and while these have been welcomed by many, others have felt anxious and uncertain, all of which is understandable, but has created challenges at times.

Now, some nine months since the October AGM, we are past the initial stages, decisions have been made, elections have been held, and the new Board and u3a Council have started to operate in their respective areas. It's time – for me, anyway! – to pause, take a breath, and think about what we've gained, and possibly what we've lost too.

On a personal level, I've had to remind myself why I joined the u3a in the first place. I didn't become a member of my home u3a in South Birmingham to change the movement. I joined to build a social connection in my local community after many years working abroad. I signed up to various interest groups for the experience of learning from other members. I wanted to enjoy the fun of the group showcases, the Christmas party, and going out for a laugh with my Real Ale group. I believe that what we've done is really important for the future of our movement, but I don't want to lose sight of why I joined as a u3a member – and I know that others feel the same.

Since becoming chair, I've had the pleasure of visiting lots of u3as and networks in many regions and nations of the UK, and everywhere I go, I aim to make the point that while we are all here to learn, we're also here to have fun. In my view these two facets are inseparable, and I hope all of us will remember that no matter what's going on in the movement, having fun is at least one-third of the fundamental u3a strap line of Learn, Laugh, Live. So, let's make sure we do!

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