

**u3a** High Lane

# Newsletter

June 2026



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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the June 2026 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. In this edition, you will see the travel group has been very busy. Our group pages are swelled with their reports of the holiday to Highclere Castle and Marlborough and the visit to Tissington well dressing. I'd like to thank the organisers and the photographers for their pictures of these events – and extend these thanks to all the group members and leaders who send the photographs which make the newsletter look so much better.

The cover this month shows the audience enjoying the Life of Frank Sinatra at the recent monthly meeting. There is more about this on page 3.

I have also included the information about our upcoming events as the last chance to get your tickets for some of these will be the June monthly meeting. Paul also mentions these in his message. The Beetle drive is this month, and this year's annual lunch is in early July. We hope you will support us in these events.

2026 is our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we hope that members, those long standing and those recently joined, will join us at the Annual Lunch at Marple Golf Club to celebrate.

The newsletter mailing this time also contains the latest National Office Friends bitesize newsletter. These newsletters contain news and reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the region and nationally.

Please don't forget that this is your newsletter so please feel free to share some of your interests, items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members, places you have visited, books you have read, films you have seen; your recipes, limericks; the list is endless. Don't forget that a picture speaks a thousand words and photographs are very welcome.

The next issue of our newsletter will be June 2026 so please send your contributions to me by 28<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at [newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk)

Diane Saxon

## FROM THE CHAIR

As I write these notes the temperature has hit an all-time record. By the time you get to read the newsletter I am sure it will be back to normal.

We have quite a few things lined up for the rest of the year. There is a Beetle Drive, following on from last year's success. Then we have the holiday to the Lake District and I think there are only a few spaces left. Don't forget we have the Annual lunch on Friday, 10th July.

In August we are having a Quiz evening which was held last year for the first time. Again, an enjoyable evening. The travel group is looking at organising a trip to the Isle of Man next year. As usual if you are interested make sure you put your name down as I am sure spaces will soon be snapped up.

If you are interested in any of the above, don't forget to please bring a method of payment for the deposit for the trip or the entertainment for which you wish to put your name down for. You will also need a deposit for Churches and Pubs and the Dining group.

The open day we had last month brought in a few new members. A big thanks to all the committee members and group leaders who helped on the day.

Paul Kenneth

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## 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY LUNCH

Our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration is rapidly approaching on 10 July, 12.30pm for 1pm. You won't want to miss this.

The venue this year is Marple Golf Club, and we have a very appetising three course menu. As well as what promises to be a delicious lunch, we have a guest speaker, Steven Taylor, a performance poet.

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

## MONTHLY MEETING

Once again, we were entertained by Joy and Kevin Siddall. Their talk was entitled Sinatra the man behind the mask. They assured us that they were not a tribute act!

Joy took us through his long and very varied life. We heard about his rise to fame as a singer, his obsession with Ave Gardner, his political activism, his charity work, his alcoholism and his many comebacks! Her narration was interspersed with songs beautifully sung by Kevin which illustrated these periods of his life. They included I've got you under my skin, New York, New York, My Way and That's Life.

The meeting was very well attended, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The next meeting is Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June when Fran Sandham is giving a talk entitled A solo walk across Africa.

Kath Wareham

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## u3a AT THE HOUSE OF LORDS

The u3a movement took a step in raising its profile in Westminster last month, as u3a members from across the UK attended a special invitation visit to the House of Lords. The event formed part of the Third Age Trust's ongoing work to ensure that u3a expertise, particularly around positive ageing, is heard by policymakers in both Houses. Each region and nation of the UK was allocated two places for the visit, so that a wide spread of the movement was represented.

During the day, a number of next steps were discussed. One proposal was the possibility of a House member becoming an ambassador for u3a in Westminster. This would enable u3a to contribute expertise in a range of ways on topics relating to positive ageing, nonformal learning, social isolation and other relevant policy areas.

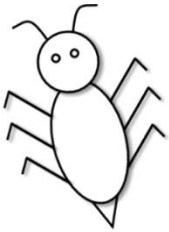
## BEETLE DRIVE



Are you ready for a fun night out? If so, we have one lined up for you.

On June 26<sup>th</sup> we are having another Beetle Drive. I am sure many of you will remember playing this at some time but if not, it is very simple. The idea is that you have to draw a beetle, and you do this by throwing a dice and getting the correct number eg 6 for a body 5 for a head etc. It is very sociable and a good laugh as the race to get that missing leg or tail draws closer. If you came to the previous one we held, you will know what fun we had!

This is a game where you are playing for yourself and there will be PRIZES. You can come in a group, or as a couple or you can come on your own, because you will be sitting at tables of four and you will move around the room. You are welcome to bring a friend.



Barbara and I hope you will join us at the Village Hall on June 26<sup>th</sup>. The doors will be open at 6.30pm for 7pm.

Tickets will be on sale at the June meeting for £8 which includes a light supper with tea and coffee.

Dorothy Neillands  
Barbara Kenneth

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## QUIZ NIGHT



Back by popular request!

Hosted by the Quiz group, the date this year is Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 6.30pm for a 7pm start. Teams of up to six people. We will have a number of different rounds covering varied topics and interests and a mid-evening break for a snack.

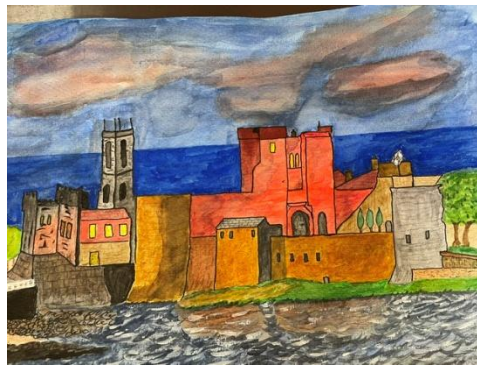
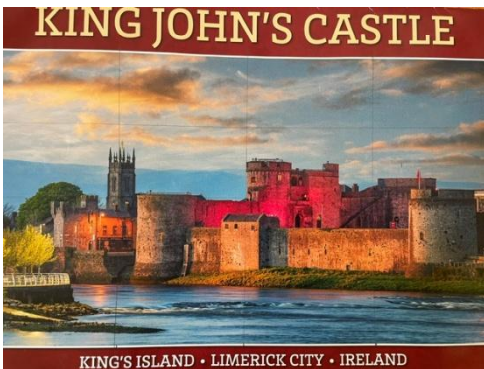
Tickets are just £8 for the evening's entertainment and will be on sale at the meetings in the next few months. You are welcome to bring your friends to join us for another great quiz and perhaps win a prize!

Diane Saxon

# GROUP NEWS

## ART

Margaret Jones recently went on the U3A trip to Ireland where she visited King John's Castle. She loved the building and the colours so much that she decided to paint her own version which I'm sure you will agree is a wonderful piece of work! Well done Margaret!



Last month we had a workshop with Julia Borodina, an artist who lives in Romiley and had also been a contestant on Landscape Artist of the Year! Julia was a great presenter and fun to work with. The aim was to loosen up our painting techniques. The subject was the

Ogwyn Valley in North Wales; we had great fun and produced some very different paintings than usual.



Madeleine Hennessey

## CRIME FICTION READING



This month's book was *A Banquet of Consequences* by Elizabeth George (the 19<sup>th</sup> in the Inspector Lynley series). This book is quite unlike George's previous novels in that the pace is much slower and there is more focus on the relationships of the characters rather than the police work involved in solving the crime. This means that the book at almost 600 pages is much longer than earlier Lynley novels.

The starting event is the death of William Goldacre, a young man who commits suicide by jumping from a cliff in Dorset. His death increases the pressures on his mother, Caroline, who already has a volatile and controlling personality. Caroline works as assistant to Clare Abbott, a feminist writer. Clare is found unexpectedly dead, and the cause turns out to be poisoning. We are now well into the book, but it is only now that Inspector Lynley and Sergeant Havers make their appearance. Havers is under pressure to keep her job as, after several demeanours, the Detective Chief Superintendent is wanting to send her from the Met to a Northumbrian force. Lynley's persuades the DCS to allow Havers to work on the case and she is sent to Dorset to investigate the Goldacre family and their links to Clare Abbot. Havers has an uncompromising no-nonsense approach and is famously badly dressed, and she upsets the family with her usual direct approach. One member of the family commented that she was like a barrel on legs with porcupine hair. However, as ever, she manages to unravel the case and how it links back to the original suicide.

Our discussions centred around the relationships in the family and how developing these as George has done leads to the book being overlong. Most of the group felt it was hard to read; chapters were long and the level of detail was more than we needed or wanted. Those who had read earlier Inspector Lynley books were disappointed by the book and commented on the changes in Lynley's character.

Our book for May is *A Song for the Dark Times*, by Ian Rankin, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of 24 books in the John Rebus series.

Meetings are quite short, just one Friday each month, but is a good opportunity to meet with other crime fiction fans.

This group needs more members.  
Why not come and join us?

Diane Saxon

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

These are the subjects we discussed at the May meeting.

- 1) Initial plans on the agenda of TFGM – for A555 to join up with M60; will it ever happen?
- 2) Did the King’s recent visit to Donald Trump in America go well? The King seemed to enjoy himself and impart some useful information in the nicest possible way.
- 3) Stockport Operational Sceptre reports various raids in Police raids in Stockport area and found many crimes concerning illegal weapons, drugs etc (the full report can be found in an email from Stockport Neighbourhood).
- 4) 1 in 8 young people between the ages of 16–24 are not in Education, Employment or Training. The Government needs an urgent plan to end this unemployment, get these people off benefits and into work. Will their latest plan succeed and at what cost?
- 5) 1.4 billion pieces of plastic waste a week are in the nations rubbish – what can be done?
- 6) Three young teenage boys were in Court for raping two young teenage girls. They also filmed this and distributed it on Facebook etc. The judge did not send them to prison; was this a correct punishment? These girls will suffer from this trauma for the rest of their lives.
- 7) 70,000 pupils have been suspended from schools – what is happening to our society?
- 8) Did we enjoy the heatwave of last week? It had its good points and sometimes it was just too hot for comfort.
- 9) Should Sir Keir Starmer stand down as Prime Minister? He is a good person but has no pzazz. Will Andy Burnham win the Labour seat at forthcoming election and try to become our next Prime Minister? Do we approve of Andy Burnham giving up being Mayor of Greater Manchester to fulfil his own ambition of being Prime Minister?

Irene Podalanski

## DINING

When we were thinking where to go for the Dining Group next lunch the weather was cold and wet, but we were dreaming of sunshine and holidays, so we decided to go to Turkey.

Topkapi is a Turkish restaurant on the A6 in Hazel Grove, close to the bus stop (handy, if by May 19<sup>th</sup> the petrol situation was worse). What a good choice, the restaurant is light and airy with an open kitchen. We were given a group table so we could all mingle.

Drinks were ordered and lunch began. The staff were pleasant and professional, the food is good and very tasty with ample sufficiency, in fact doggy bags were needed for some of us. Altogether we had a very enjoyable lunch and would be very happy to come again



Keeping in the holiday mood, for our next lunch on July 21<sup>st</sup> we are going to Spain for Tapas, why not join us, you will be very welcome.

Dorothy Gerrard  
Dorothy Neillands

## GARDENING

In April, the group visited Deirdre's garden. Weather was less kind than for our March visit, so after viewing her Spring flowers, there was a rain-led rush to her conservatory. As a bonus, plenty of cake was consumed as the group discussed their gardening plans for the year.



In early May we visited Monica's garden for the first time. It was well worth the visit. She has an eye for choosing interesting plants and making the most of the contours in the garden. A lovely yellow rhododendron particularly received admiring glances.

Walter Mason



## MEMOIRS

At our May meeting, Barbara F told us about her dislike of school milk. She hated the layer of cream on the top and couldn't stand the taste of it. She has walked out of cafes if she could smell milk. She went home for lunch when she was at school but always wanted to stay for school dinners but when she actually had school dinners, she hated it.

Angela signed up for the Breast Cancer midnight moon walk with some friends in 2001. They walked ten of the thirteen miles along canal towpaths and the walk started and ended at Battersby. They all decorated their bras. She did the walk in 4hours 25 minutes, and James Nesbitt started the walk.

Lynda's mother was very good at sewing and knitting but was unable to read patterns as her mother made up her own. Her mother made clothes on her Gran's treadle sewing machine. There was no set uniform at primary school but at secondary school the uniform had to be bought from Hill's in Buxton which was very expensive. The skirt length had to be one inch below the knees. When she was older, she had her own electric sewing machine and made clothes for herself and her Mum and during Covid she made face masks.

We then had a discussion about skirt lengths and Sue talked about her nurses uniform which had to be mid-calf. Some nurses couldn't afford stockings so drew a line up the back of their legs to look like a stocking seam. None of us knew whether the line came off on bed sheets or if it rubbed off on to their clothes. If anybody does know, please can they tell me.

Marlene and a group of students from Marple Ridge went on a school trip to Germany in 1990, after the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. The East Germans were then able to go into West Berlin. The students all stayed with families while Marlene and Bill stayed with a couple on the 8th floor of an apartment block. Everyone wanted to buy a piece of the wall. They went to the Brandenburg Gate and there were rows of crosses there representing people who had been shot.

Avril told us about a gold locket that her husband had given her. The locket went everywhere with her and contained two photographs. After a later stay in a posh hotel in London, she realised that she had left it on the bedside table. It was never found. Many years later when she was eating her favourite digestive biscuits, her husband had put another locket in the packet, but she had to eat all the biscuits to find it.

### Quote for the month

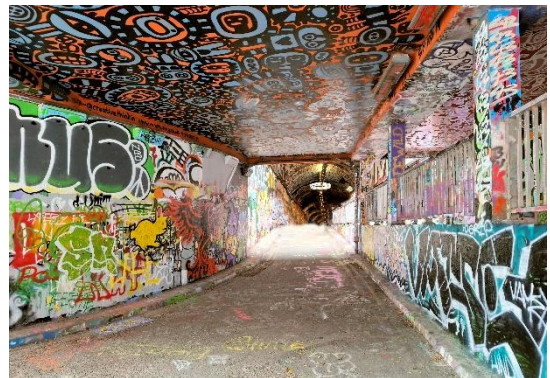
A day without laughter is a day wasted. — Charlie Chaplin

Barbara Kenneth

PHOTOGRAPHY

Thanks for all the entries, a wide range of weird and wonderful graffiti.

- 1<sup>st</sup> ... Portrait ... 9 points ... Mark
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ... Marseille ... 8 points ... Mark
- 3<sup>rd</sup> ... Waterloo ... 7 points ... Diane.



Well done Mark and Diane.

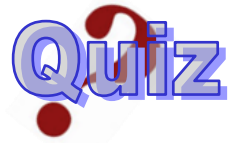
The next topic is " PLACES OF WORSHIP"  
Entries by 18<sup>th</sup> June please.

We have space for a selection of some more of our graffiti photos.



Ken Jackson

## QUIZZING



This month's quiz was set by Monica. Our categories included Geography, answers containing qu, Sport, historical TV programmes, animals, crime and death, and we finished with a round of general knowledge. A very enjoyable quiz!

This month's sample questions.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Where is Napoleon's tomb?                               | 4. Which ear did Van Gogh cut off?                       |
| 2. What was the name of the snail in the Magic Roundabout? | 5. Which French cheese's name contains the letters 'qu'? |
| 3. Which bovine animal is found in mountainous regions?    | 6. Who designed the Glasgow Museum of Art?               |

We would welcome some new members. We normally meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. The next meeting is 23<sup>rd</sup> June. If you like quizzing, please get in touch. It's a very sociable group and we have a lot of fun trying to recall things we know we know if only we could dig them out of our brains. You could come and try us out first if you wish.

Diane Saxon

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## READING

This month's book choice was LOST HORIZON by James Hilton, written in 1933 which engendered many quests into the Himalayas in search of the fabled Shangri-La which has fascinated adventurers since the book was published. The place never existed but a town in the Himalayas has been given that name and was visited by the teams in Race Around the World a couple of years ago and a chain of hotels has also adopted that name.

Four diverse travellers: take a flight from India which crash lands in the Himalayas where they are rescued by a mysterious lama who takes them to his lamasery which seems to have amassed a vast library of all the knowledge of the world, provides great comfort and excellent food. It seems that the High Lama has selected Conway, the British Consul to be his successor who will gain some form of immortality. Mallinson, his young vice consul is impatient to leave as are initially the other two passengers, a female missionary and an American businessman on the run from the law, but at the end, those two stay, as it suits their purposes and Conway and Mallinson return to the real world. It was a very good read, beautifully written and led to an interesting discussion.

Our next meeting is on June 1st when we will be discussing THE MANCHESTER MAN by Mrs George Linnaeus Banks.

Marlene Brookes

**SHORT WALKS**

May 2026 Walk

Today's walk was down the Hagg bank steps or the Lea, as known by the locals. Onto a lane past Athertons farm, with far reaching views to Kinder Scout. Then, onto the canal, where we watched the swing bridge in action and saw the ancient path that bought goods to be transported onto the canal.

Up a little way to Turf Lee and back onto the canal for the return journey, up a gentle slope to the farm with the Escape Room and onto Leafield Road/The Ridgeway estate. The walk was nearly 4 miles with beautiful views, and we were lucky with the weather.



Ruth Smith

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**TRAVEL**

**Forthcoming Travel events**



June 29 <sup>th</sup>	Cumbria and Lake District. Information at June meeting
July 17 <sup>th</sup>	Cruise from Liverpool. Please pay for coach from High Lane to Liverpool and return at the June meeting.

Margaret McDermott

### Tissington well dressing

Nineteen jolly travellers arrived at Tissington in beautiful sunshine after a lovely scenic journey through the Derbyshire Countryside.

As we wandered through the village, we admired the designs and craftsmanship that went into each well dressings, all created by volunteers.



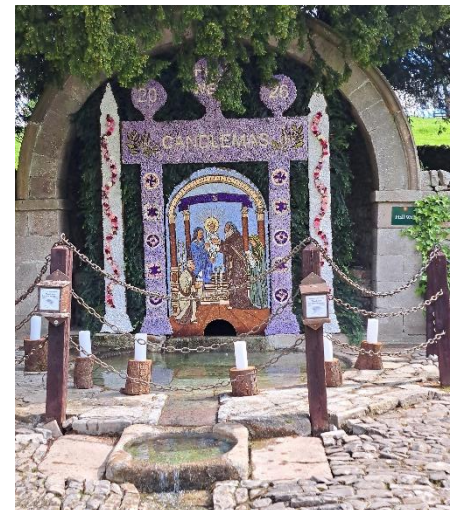
Inside the church some volunteers were showing a video on how the wells were assembled, each petal, leaf and seed pressed into the clay by hand.

There are different opinions of the history of the wells. Some believe the tradition has Pagan roots that was later given a Christian meaning. Another theory relates to the Black Death of 1348-49. While the

surrounding Community suffered loss, Tissington escaped largely unaffected. The villagers believe this was due to the purity of the water from the wells.

A further theory dates back to the severe drought of 1615, when crops and livestock was lost across the area. In Tissington however, the wells continued to flow, and in gratitude the villagers held a thanksgiving service, a practice that has become an annual event. Since then, the wells have been dressed every year, apart from the war years.

Doreen Potts



## Highclere Castle and Marlborough

Sunday 3rd May 2026

Our journey to Newbury was uneventful and smooth. We had a short coffee stop at Norton Canes services and proceeded to Banbury where we had lunch. Banbury is a market town with a wide Main Street and the well-known cross now surrounded by traffic lights. Nearby is a statue of 'A fine Lady on a white horse' except it was black!

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Monday 4th May

Our visit to Highclere Castle which began as Highclere Place, renamed a castle after modernisation in 1842. On our visit to the above, our spirits on a cold, drizzly day were immediately lifted on entering the magnificent entrance hall to Highclere. A warmly patterned tiled floor set the scene for the rest of the castle.

The first room was the library, the first of many providing a backdrop for portraits, elegant furniture and family photographs through the ages. Everywhere there were wonderful ceilings, chandeliers, carved door frames, wall panelling and tapestries. All well cared for and framing magnificent views from every window.

In the middle of the house, we could look down on the central saloon with its high vaulted ceiling.

The saloon was used as the technical hub for the Downton Abbey programmes. Photographs of the cast were in most rooms, sharing the space with traditional furniture including a desk and chair belonging to Napoleon Bonaparte!



We climbed many stairs, both up and down, determined not to miss a thing. Upstairs were many pretty bedrooms. My favourite was Lady Sybil's with its rocking horse and three floor to ceiling windows overlooking the parkland.

Venturing to the basement we saw the Egyptian exhibition showing the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun found by the 5th Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter, who became world famous for his work there. It took four years to clear the tomb of the treasures, work he continued after the sad death of the Earl from a mosquito bite six weeks after the tomb was fully opened in 1923.

The only disappointment with the tour was we couldn't take photographs in the house so can't fully share all the things we saw with everyone.

After all our walking round the castle in the morning we were happy to spend some time in the market town of Marlborough. Timbered buildings lined the high street where we found a range of lovely shops and cafes. We were able to rest and relax with welcome cups of tea or coffee before returning in the coach to our hotel.

Sheila Small  
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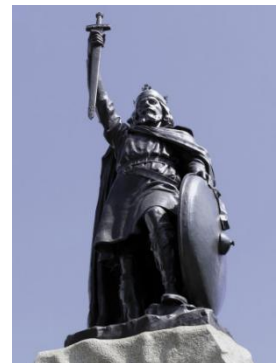
Our coach driver, Carl, had taken his wife with him previously. She was an avid Downton Abbey fan. He said she stood in the saloon and said, 'this isn't right, the piano should be in the other corner'!

Hazel Jones  
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### Winchester Tuesday 5th May



Our driver, Carl, took us to Winchester, where we were dropped off by the statue of Alfred the Great (848-899) the former King of the Anglo-Saxons.



Some of the group made their way to Winchester Cathedral where (after collecting 10 people for a group discount) we had a guided tour with a very enthusiastic guide called Sue.

The cathedral was built from 1079–1532 and is one of the largest in Europe. The magnificent nave is 560 ft long and 79 ft high and is a fine

example of medieval architecture. There are also many magnificent windows, including the West window.

The Cathedral is dedicated to the Church of the Holy Trinity, St Peter, St Paul and St Swithin. (Apparently there was torrential rain during St Swithin’s funeral service which is the origin of the saying about 40 days rain in July.

The Winchester Bible is shown with great pride in its own Kings and Scribes exhibition. It was produced from 1150–1175 by one scribe writing on calfskin using a goose feather quill. (It took him over five years writing all day every day). A beautiful manuscript.



The novelist Jane Austen is buried in the Cathedral in the North aisle. The friends of Jane Austen put fresh flowers near her burial spot every week. A memorable visit.

Margaret Williams

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We arrived back at our hotel to find the car park almost full (at least 20+) British Gas vehicles. The irony was that some people had no hot water in their rooms, but they were not there to fix that problem!

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Wednesday 6th May

We left the hotel on Wednesday morning and called in at Bicester Village on the way home. It was beautifully kept, lovely flowers and even the outdoor seating had cushions. We quickly realised everything was designer and enjoyed the Jo Malone and L’Occitane shops. All the shops were very welcoming, but it quickly became apparent the sizes were much smaller than the High Street stores and if only I could still wear Manolo Blahnik shoes!!

The best shop was Pret a Mange for coffee!

On returning to the coach a few were clutching designer bags, but the majority had just enjoyed the experience and window shopping.

Alison Frater

## WALKING

### Walk 27 May: Alstonefield – Narrowdale – Wolfscote Dale – Gipsy Bank

Those able to participate in this walk were handsomely rewarded with ideal weather, superb scenery and jovial company! A day earlier had been sufficiently hot to deter any activity, but on the day the sun shone with an accompanying cooling wind making ideal walking conditions.

The walk started in Alstonefield, a small village in Staffordshire with three car parks, a public toilet and a pub! Unfortunately, the pub is closed on Wednesdays! Despite the distance from High Lane, we all managed to rendezvous and set off on time, heading for Narrowdale.



At Narrowdale we observed some quality renovation work on the old farm buildings. The track from here led us down eventually to the River Dove at the junction of Beresford Dale and Wolfscote Dale, and a welcome coffee break. At this point we had crossed into Derbyshire and the walk down Wolfscote Dale is arguably more scenic than the popular Dove Dale lower down.

The River Dove was made famous by Isaak Walton with his publication of *The Compleat Angler* in 1653 and expanded with contributions from Charles Cotton in 1676. Along this section we passed a series of man-made weirs created to stock and breed trout. However, work is now underway to remove the dams and return the river to its natural state.



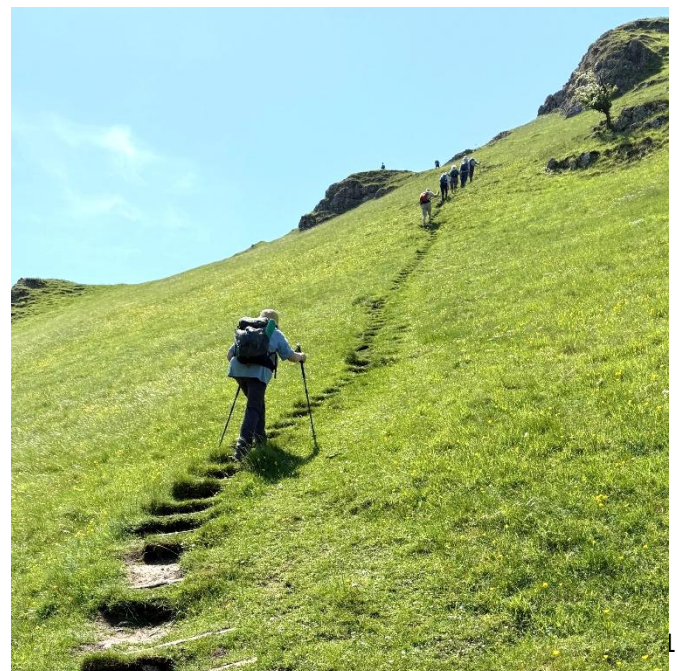
Further along the river we crossed Biggin Dale via a wooden bridge. This seemed unnecessary as the attractive dale was currently completely dry; however, after periods of heavy rain it can turn into a fast-flowing stream – a remarkable transformation.



Soon after, we arrived at the footbridge and crossed back into Staffordshire to ascend the impressive Gipsy Bank – a significant challenge to arthritic and weary legs! However, it was rewarded with lunch and superb views from the top!

In comparison, the return to Alstonefield was uneventful. The disappointment of the closed pub was compensated by a detour on the way home to the Royal Oak at Hurdlow and refreshments in the sunny beer garden!

Peter and Joan Wareham



## National Office Learning Events

These are a selection of the **June events**. All are free via Zoom.

Remember they can fill up quickly. Typically, there are several hundred attendees.

3 June	FoodTech: the technology involved in food processing and food service
10 June	Learn bridge online with u3a
11 June	An ABC of Victorian painting
11 June	Achieving lasting happiness and joy in today's busy world
16 June	Of Mice and Men: how experience shapes the ageing brain
19 June	One small triangle to a man, one giant leap for mankind
28 June	Islands of the Venetian Lagoon

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

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## MISSING PIECES

[\*Missing Pieces\*](#) is a collaborative learning activity where u3a members help uncover the stories behind historic buildings in their communities. Inspired by *Historic England's* national *Missing Pieces* project, this activity invites members to look beyond official records and explore the lived experiences, memories, and personal connections that bring listed buildings to life. Whether it's a place you've passed every day, a building with a family connection, or one that's quietly overlooked, your contribution can help build a richer, more human picture of our shared heritage.

As part of this learning activity there will be a series of online events about buildings around the UK.

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## DID YOU KNOW?

June is named after Juno, the Roman goddess of childbirth and fertility. She was the chief Roman goddess and Protector of women, family and married life. She was married to Jupiter and the mother of several gods including Mars, the Roman god of War.

Some firsts in June:

The first FIFA World Cup (1970).

The first TV licences in the UK were issued (1946). The licence fee was £2.

The first Premium bond winners were drawn (1957). The top prize was £1,000.

The Heimlich manoeuvre was first published (1974).

Voyager 2 discovered Neptune moon Proteus (1989).