



Newsletter

June 2025



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the June 2025 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. A quieter month for the newsletter with our usual information from group leaders and news about upcoming social events you won't want to miss. 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. The cover photo this month is from the Art group's recent workshop. You can read about this later in the newsletter.

We are pleased to welcome some new members to our u3a this month and look forward to meeting you at our meetings and interest groups. Your contributions to the newsletter will be 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. It's been a while since we've had any poems or limericks?

This month's email also includes the most recent National Office bitesize Friends newsletter. I know some members did not receive the email last month. I have been investigating and there is information about this on page 12.

The next issue of our newsletter will be July 2025 so please send your contributions to me by 27th June at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Diane Saxon

FROM THE CHAIR

Hope you have all enjoyed the excellent weather we have been having for a good few weeks, even though it has changed now. Your committee members have been planning some exciting events for the coming months.

July 18 th	Annual lunch
August 22 nd	Quiz evening with supper.
October 24 th	Music evening with Nancy Ann Lee (Little miss Sixties) She sang for us about 5/6 years ago and it was an excellent evening.

As there are quite a few events planned plus Churches and Pubs and the Dining out group please make sure you bring a cheque book or money to make sure you have enough to pay or put a deposit down on the event you want.

Thanks

Paul (Chair)

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING

The speaker at the May meeting was Eric Newton whose talk was called I am a Busker.

Eric who is 84 began life in Burslem. Life was hard as he was one of 6 children, living in a 2-bedroom house with an alcoholic father and a mother who eventually had a nervous breakdown. His grandfather also lived with them, and he made them all wooden toys and entertained them with songs. He was a life saver.

He didn't do well at school but at 16 he discovered jazz and persuaded his grandfather to buy him a clarinet. He taught himself to play by listening to a Chris Barber record on a Dansette record player. From then his life consisted of a variety of jobs by day and playing gigs at night. Unfortunately, he followed in his parent's footsteps and became a heavy drinker and struggled with depression and anxiety for many years but fortunately was eventually able to stop his excessive lifestyle.

By chance he made friends with Dick Whittington who lived in Melbourne and for 37 years he escaped the English winters. Initially he took his son who unfortunately is now struggling with a drink problem but is dry at the moment. To help fund his trips to Australia Eric started to busk and he continued until he was 82!

He has run in 38 marathons playing his clarinet as he goes and has raised thousands of pounds for charities.

Eric told us many amusing stories about his eventful life interspersed with jazz tunes played on his clarinet. He didn't mention it but I know that Eric plays in High Lane Conservative club on the first Monday of the month with his group.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 11th June. The speaker is Sue Holden whose talk is entitled... and the band played on.

Kath Wareham



SOCIAL EVENTS

Annual Lunch

The annual lunch this year is on July 18th 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. Our Crime fiction reading group has been reading one of his books for their May book choice. You can read their thoughts later in the newsletter.

The talk is entitled "A Life in Crime" and is highly recommended by members.

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

Please get your tickets at the June meeting.

Cost is £35 for 3 courses and coffee/tea and includes a gratuity.

PUB QUIZ NIGHT

Back again by popular demand. Last year's 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! We hope you will support us at this event.

The date is Friday, 22 August, 7pm start. Teams of up to six people. Tickets are just £8 for the evening's entertainment and will be on sale at the June meeting.

BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE

Further to my announcement at the April meeting about learning British Sign Language, I am pleased to inform you that there will be a two-hour workshop in either July or August (date to be confirmed) with a 10-minute break for refreshments. It will be at the Village Hall on a Tuesday afternoon. June Battye from the Stockport Deaf Society at Walthew House will be showing us how to sign the alphabet, colours and learn basic communication skills.

I have already had some interest in this. If you have not given me your name and would like to take part, please let me know or see me at the June meeting.

Barbara Kenneth

Interest Groups Online (IGO)

Some members may already know about this? Or already have joined? If you have, please tell us about your groups.

Interest Groups Online (IGO) is an online community of learners. Those who subscribe to IGO can participate in our online interest groups and also access the u3a national learning programme, which is free to all u3a and IGO members. There are many groups already and new ones start every month.

Anyone can join IGO if they meet u3a's guiding principles:

- The Third-Age Principle – u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full time employment has ceased.
- The Learning Principle – u3a learning is informal, for enjoyment and self-fulfilment. There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers, and a collaborative learning approach is encouraged.

IGO News Extra is published each month with items of interest and information about new groups.

Annual membership is £12, covering the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. If you join after 1st October, the fee is £6.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Interest Groups Online Noticeboard

groupsOnline / Interest Groups Online Noticeboard

Our Noticeboard Archive



May 25 News Extra
Published: 15 May 2025

This month we have lots of news re groups – including Bridge, Proust, Virtual Visits and Mindfulness, Meditation and Poetry.



New Groups and Potential Groups
Published: 13 May 2025

Discover the range of new groups which have recently been set up, and what start up groups are underway.



April 25 News Extra
Published: 16 April 2025

This month in News extra you'll find a word about how to name your zoom screen and how to politely leave a group you've not been attending. Plus we have five new groups for you to have a look at and a quiz ...

GROUP NEWS

ART

We have been busy over the last few months with two workshops from Ali Hargreaves.

In the first one in March, Ali taught the group about perspective and distance in landscapes. She demonstrated how to draw trees, lampposts and railway lines all disappearing into the distance, explaining about vanishing points and eye lines. The group then drew these out themselves to better understand the techniques.

We then chose to paint either trees or a street scene



We welcomed Ali again in May for a further session on perspective, this time of people and also incorporating an abstract style. First, we drew a couple separately then moved on to painting them within a crowd and merging the colours which overlapped, the crowd figures getting smaller and blurry to indicate distance. It was a tough couple of lessons, but everyone enjoyed the challenge.



Madeleine Henessey

CHURCHES AND PUBS

June 4th

The next meeting of the Churches and Pubs group is Wednesday 4th June. We are visiting St. Matthew's church in Meerbrook, Staffordshire. Following the visit we shall be dining at The Lazy Trout in the same village.

August 6th

After our visit to St Matthews, 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 attached to Peover Hall. 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



NE England/Durham	July 6 th – 11 th Information at June meeting.
Ireland	September 1 st – 5 th BALANCE AT JUNE MEETING
POTTERS RESORTS FIVE LAKES	Jan 26th–30th Twin/double rooms available for the Potters Five Lakes Resort. Deposit due at the June meeting. Please contact Sue Harlin for further information.

Margaret McDermott
Sue Harlin

CRIME FICTION READING

Our May read was *An Honest Man* by Simon Michael. This is the second book in a series set in 1960s London and featuring Barrister-at-Law, Charles Holborne.

Following on from the first book in the series, Charles Holborne has escaped the hangman, but his wife is dead, his high-flying career has morphed into criminal notoriety and bankruptcy threatens. He can't refuse the lifeline, the best brief of his career, but now he is caught between the Kray twins on one side and police officers playing fast and loose with the evidence on the other. Is this one brief too many?

(<https://simonmichaelauthor.com/book/an-honest-man/>)

The book was enjoyed by all our group members. We thought it started and finished well and liked the excitement at the end which enticed us to read the next book in the series. The legal arguments in the central part of the book received mixed reviews; some enjoyed, some skipped, some read but thought they were too long.

Our book for June is *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 that are with us throughout the series as Jardine develops their careers and life stories.

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

CURRENT AFFAIRS

We discussed Reform's success in the local elections. They won 10 councils, 2 mayors and 1 MP. However, what are their policies apart from controlling immigration (how?) and reducing debt by sacking bureaucrats copying Elon Musk in America. A woman was interviewed on TV who said she always voted Labour and will no longer vote for anyone. She had obviously not read history and how many years it took for women to get the vote in the first place. The most surprising outcome was that Durham City Council which has been a Labour Council for decades voted Reform.

We thought that the VE celebrations shown on TV were spectacular. Of course, the UK is very good at ceremonies. There were also celebrations in Europe in Amsterdam and Paris. Germany celebrated May 8th as Liberation Day and had an exhibition at the Brandenburg Gate entitled Peace at Last.

In recent weeks the BBC has been asking what programmes we think they should provide in future. We thought that most of their output is of good quality, and this should continue to be the case. Some would like an increase in Current Affairs programmes and more local news on the National channels. Several of us would like less Sport with which we are inundated at the moment and less Reality TV. We definitely did not want any commercial adverts, and most were quite happy to pay the licence fee.

We discussed the conviction of Peter Sullivan who has just been released from prison after serving 38 years for a crime he did not commit. Improved DNA evidence has proved his innocence. Why did the Appeals Court take so long to come to this conclusion? Will he get compensation and how long will that take, and will he have to live on benefits? He is not the only person who has been wrongfully imprisoned.

A question asked was whether the new Labour Government is making life better or not. Unfortunately, many people are expecting quick solutions to the cost of living and as one of the group pointed out this is not possible and will take much longer to improve. Stopping the Winter Fuel Allowance has caused much concern and maybe there will be a rethink.

We did not approve of the Government's policy on immigration. Where were the care workers, building workers to come from as wages are too low to attract British people. If wages were to be increased where was the money to come from? Increased taxation? It was also thought that some UK Universities would have to close without the income from foreign students.

Most of us thought that we were now getting closer to the EU with proposed defence cooperation and allowing exchange of young people to study here and in Europe. There have been meetings with European leaders from France, Germany and Poland and others by video link. Should the UK leave the ECHR and join Russia and Belarus as the only European countries not members? We all thought definitely not.

Margaret McDermott

JUNE SNIPPETS

June is named after the Roman goddess Juno – the goddess of marriage and childbirth, and the wife of Jupiter, king of the gods. This statue is in the Louvre.

Birthstones are pearl, alexandrite and moonstone.

Flowers are rose and honeysuckle.

1st June is Dinosaur Day. CBBC is celebrating this!

5th June is Sausage Roll day.

21st June is the Summer Solstice – and World Giraffe day.

GARDENING

The group had two events in May. First to Janet's garden, with a lovely backdrop of colourful bushes, and a striking wisteria. It is terraced, as the ground slopes down to Torkington Brook, but has some interesting artifacts for our group to admire.



The second May event was an arranged visit to Norley Court, an impressive large garden near Delamere, also terraced but on a grander scale with walled garden, swimming pool, formal pond, and a substantial number of unusual trees all listed and plotted on a diagram. Several of our members were really taken by Norley Court, although my own taste is for more flowers – each to his (or her) own.



Walter Mason

GERMAN

Our little group continues to meet every Friday, and we are looking forward to visits from some of our old members when they make return visits to the area.

Marlene Brookes

MEMOIRS

One lady remembered her three brushes with the Beatles who she loved as a teenager. When living in Goole her father who was a policeman arrested George for dangerous driving. He drove his car into a wall! When the case came to court, she had the day off to attend the trial. George gave her a signed photo. Her father had told him to cut his hair and was relieved when he and Brian Epstein attended the hearing immaculately turned out. A few years later thanks to her father again she was able to see Paul Mc Cartney when he went to record with The Black Dyke band in Saltaire. Many years later she and her family were watching the Antiques Roadshow and were thrilled to hear their father's name. A retired policeman had a signed photo of George Harrison which had been given to him by his sergeant, her father.

Memories about how she and her husband tamed a rather wild garden which they had inherited with their house. After many years of hard work it was included in an open garden event. After the event they received several postcards saying how magnificent the garden looked from the air! They came from all over the world. It was a while before they realised it was all a hoax. In fact, it was local teachers who used their holiday cards to invent some very funny comments!

One lady recalled her childhood growing up in the North East of England. She remembers oil lamps and open fires. For entertainment she was a girl guide, went to the pictures and danced in the Miners Welfare Hall. Sometimes she played in the dene instead of attending a Sunday school! She went to Farnham for her holiday and remembers following the tractor to pick up potatoes. They harvested blackberries which were made into blackberry jelly. One of the big social events was Durham Gala which was held every year. All the local miners marched through the city with their banners accompanied by brass bands. Everyone assembled in a field by the river where they listened to speeches by politicians. She remembers a parade in memory of an explosion in the local colliery. The event is marked by a horizontal pit head wheel with crushed coal between its spokes. Fairly recently her village was used for street scenes in the film Billy Elliot.

This week is the 80th anniversary of VE day.

The only memory another lady had of the VE celebrations was fairy lights in the trees and bunting. She can recall her uncle giving them some pieces of metal which she now knows was shrapnel. They had an Anderson air raid shelter which was never used. When it was taken down the children played on the piles of corrugated iron until it eventually rusted away. She remembers the King and Queen visiting Stalybridge station. All the school children were there waving flags. The station was decked out with flowers and flags. She brought a Union Jack to show us which had probably been on display that day.

One lady's father had joined up when he was only 15 years old! Her uncle was only 17 when he enlisted and was in 624 squadron. It was not until 60 years later that his family found out he was in a secret squadron which flew under the radar to drop agents into enemy country. On one raid all his friends were killed. He was awarded the Croissant de Guerre which is a French medal for bravery.

We were told about experiences in a school in which she worked after Manchester reorganised its secondary schools. It was called The High school of Art but there was no evidence of any art! There was a shortage of parking, so pupils were allocated to keep an eye out for traffic wardens. Her original classroom had been set alight and the one she eventually got was nicknamed the yellow submarine because of its strange shape and hideous yellow walls. Not all the staff were welcoming and most of the pupils less so and were quite a challenge at times. The crunch came when a boy strutted round her classroom and tore up all her carefully prepared worksheets. She told the head that she was leaving but was consoled when he supported her to change to primary teaching. The naughty boy did her a favour in the end.

There was an occasion when another lady's friend organised her a lift in a police car to get her to a party! At the party she danced with the brother of Richard Burton! On another occasion she had been driving home to South Wales with the same friend. They were fog bound on the way and had to stay the night in an expensive hotel as everywhere was busy because of the fog. They could not contact anyone, and her parents were relieved when she turned up the next day.

A very interesting meeting. The next one will be on Tuesday 3rd June at 2.0pm in the small hall.

Quote for the month: A ship in a harbour is safe, but that is not what ships are built for.
John A Shedd

Barbara Kenneth

Last month's email problems

Some members did not receive their newsletter by email last month. This only applied to those with btinternet.com email addresses. I have been in touch with the postmaster at btinternet and hope this is resolved. However, if it continues, there are things we can do. Firstly, please check your Spam folder; it may have been placed there. You can add my email address to your Safe sender list. If that doesn't work. Remember that you will be able to read the newsletter on our website www.highlaneu3a.org.uk.

QUIZZING



The quiz this month was created by Janet. Questions covered a wide range of topics and interests. We had science, geography, food and drink, arts and music, answers beginning with J, famous Stockport people (on which I'm embarrassed to say we didn't do well) plus Janet's entertaining True/False questions. If you came to the Quiz night last year, you will remember these.

Here are a few for you to try:

Which Blackadder actor hailed from Stockport? (he was born in Cheadle Hulme)

Which plant does vanilla come from?

How many time zones are there in Russia?

What is pumpernickel?

What is the ability that enables a person to move objects without physical interaction?

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.

Diane Saxon

READING

Our book choice for May was *LITTLE RED CHAIRS* by Edna O'Brien, an unusual story set in Ireland, the main character being Fidelma, the neglected, childless wife of an unfeeling husband who is seduced by a charismatic "healer", a character based on Radovan Karadzic, the Butcher of Bosnia, who indeed practised as a healer in Serbia after going into hiding after the war in the former Yugoslavia.

Fidelma flees to England and finds solace with a group of outsiders, working with animals and finally attending the villain's court hearing in the Hague where her tormenter is sentenced for his crimes. Edna O'Brien died last year in her 80s, still producing powerful novels to the very end of her life.

Our next meeting is on Monday, 9th June when we will be discussing *BRICK LANE* by Monica Ali.

Marlene Brookes

SHORT WALKS

May walk



Travelling from High Lane to Fernilee Reservoir on a cloudy, mild Saturday morning a group of 12 folk set off over Fernilee Dam. Climbing steadily a path above the reservoir, where blue bells were in abundance. A downward path, with many steps, took the group along a path by the reservoir, again bluebells in full bloom.

Arriving at Errwood Dam (the yachting club) the group sat down for a coffee, tea, whatever, drink break. Whilst enjoying our break we watched a rescue dog pulling along a man in the reservoir. Fishing was active with a catch of an enormous Pike.

There were many dog walkers and a few runners around, but no collisions!

Upward onto a disused rail track, built to bring the necessary material to make the dam. Passing a fairy house in a tree we came back to our parking place.

A few folk had brought lunch and enjoyed sitting by the reservoir as the sun shone.

Thank you, Helen and Roger.

Ruth Smith



WALKING

Wednesday 28/05/2025 Ladybower Reservoir, Derbyshire.

Twelve members' attended our May walk led by David Shard, his first time leading the group. He selected an area of the High Peak that the group had not visited for some time.

We started from the shoreline of Ladybower Reservoir and then walked to all that remains of Ashopton and then started the steady climb through woodland along the Western flank of Lead Hill. Our upward ascent proceeded through open ground, and we were rewarded by spectacular 360 degree views upon reaching the summit, where a welcome coffee stop was enjoyed.



Fortunately, clear conditions provided us with stunning, magnificent, panoramic views of the Dark Peak. Gritstone rock outcrops as far as the eye could see. The landscape is large-scale sweeping moorland which forms an elevated plateau. Our descent towards Grindle Clough provided further far-reaching vistas of the Upper Derwent Valley and beyond. We stopped for our picnic lunch on a grassy bank before arriving back at reservoir level.



We then went to visit the remains of Derwent village, which were exposed due to low water conditions. Alas, the picturesque villages of Derwent and Ashopton were consumed by the Ladybower Reservoir construction, built between 1935 and 1943. Our onward level route back along the waterline of Ladybower passed

through impressive mature woodland and provided classic views of Ladybower, before returning to our starting point.

A superb walking day out which was celebrated with a visit to the local pub!

David Burke



NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR JUNE

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

- 12 June Roads were not made for cars!
- 13 June Glasgow Society of Lady Artists
- 17 June Use of Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare
- 19 June Live cookery demonstration: Seasonal eating!
- 20 June Bridge: What's It All About?
- 27 June Puzzle Solving with Pascal's Triangle

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. I had a message from a member who joined the laughter Yoga session. She reported a lot of laughter but not much yoga.

u3a Paint and Draw

This activity started during lockdown and has continued. It is not a competition, and it is not about your artistic ability – what we want are interesting pictures, possibly different perspectives on everyday scenes or objects, anything which has inspired you to paint or draw. There is a new theme each month. The theme for this month is: "Window". The deadline for submissions is 18th June. After the deadline, up to 15 artworks will be chosen and published in the online gallery. You can see previously selected artworks [here](#). The page also contains tips on starting out in pastels, acrylics and watercolours.

u3a Eye

This also started during lockdown and has continued. You are invited to submit a photograph on the given theme. It's not a competition and it is not only about your photographic skill – it's about any interesting photos and interpretations of the theme. Anything which has captured your imagination or caught your eye.

For u3a Eye, each theme lasts two months. The current theme is 'Fresh'. The deadline for submissions is noon on Thursday 24 July 2025. After the deadline, up to 15 photos will be chosen and published in the online gallery. You can see previously selected photos [here](#). Looking further ahead, the theme for August and September is 'Fragments'.