

FROM THE CHAIR

I was reading an article in a national newspaper recently about keeping healthy in old age. It stressed the importance of keeping the mind active, for which social interaction is the key. The young journalist had most likely never heard of U3A which was not mentioned. Not for the first time I am so pleased that I discovered there was a U3A in High Lane. In 2001 when the pioneer members first convened they would already have been in their third age and sadly some of them are no longer with us but they have handed down to us a great legacy for which we should be profoundly grateful.


Next year we will be celebrating our 20th anniversary.

Sheila Harrop

MEMBERSHIP

Membership was due for renewal at the February meeting. If you have not yet renewed your membership there is a membership renewal form and instructions on the website. Please write clearly so we can read your name and email address and make sure you complete both sides of the form. The membership fee is still at the remarkably good value of £6 and for an extra £3.00 you can receive the next five issues of the Third Age Magazine delivered to your door.

If you don't already have an Emergency card shown below please collect one from the Membership secretary or your group leader. You should complete this and take with you to all your U3A group meetings so that assistance can be organised without delay if required.



Name _____


In Case of Emergency Contact: _____

1. _____

Tel: _____

2. _____

Tel: _____




ANNUAL LUNCH

This year's Annual Lunch will be on
Monday, 20 April 2019.

As last year we are going to the Alma Lodge hotel.
There is a good choice of dishes on the menu.

Tickets cost £22 including a gratuity
and are on sale at the March and April meetings



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FROM THE EDITOR

Items for the newsletter from members are always welcome so if you have any suggestions for content or articles of interest to U3A members please contact me at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk

The next edition of the newsletter will be the May 2020 edition. Please get your contributions to me by Friday 25 April 2020.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

JANUARY MEETING: STOCKPORT HYDRO

At this meeting Ben Alexander, one of our members, gave an interesting talk about the Stockport Hydro project. This was the first Community Funded project of this sort in the Greater Manchester Area. The primary funding of £250,000 came from a Community Share Offer. Additional funding came from grants from the local authority and government sources.



The Hydro is not a spa for pampering the glitterati but a hydro-electric machine using two Archimedes screws to harness the power of running water to generate electricity in an environmentally friendly way. The hydro is on the river Goyt at Otterspool weir by the bridge. Power was first produced in 2012 and enough is being generated to power 60 houses, saving over 100 tonnes of CO₂ per year with a lifetime total of 4,000 tonnes.

Once electricity was being produced and sold to the National Grid it was possible to pay a dividend to the shareholders. Over 30% of the shares were sold to investors within the Stockport local area. These are earning a dividend of 3%. In addition to the dividend there is an additional fund that is distributed to local environmental projects which at presents is in excess of £3000.

The technology

The Archimedes Screw was used to lift water from one level to a higher one by means of a spiral in a close-fitting tube. The lower end of the tube and spiral was immersed in the water, the whole assembly was rotated, water was carried up the tube and overflowed at the top. By keeping the tube rotating a continuous flow of water was obtained.

The Hydro reverses this principle. By holding the tube stationary and allowing the spiral to rotate water flowing down the tube will rotate the spiral. In the Hydro the tube is removed and the spiral runs in a close-fitting trough down which the water flows, the force of which acts upon the spiral which is connected to the generator, causing it to rotate. Under full power 260 tons of water flow through the spirals per minute.

The project is supported by a large group of volunteers but additional volunteers are always required.

AGM

The AGM was, as usual, well attended with 115 members present. The Secretary, Pam Curley, read the minutes of the previous meeting which were accepted as a true record of the meeting. This was followed by reports from the Chair and the Treasurer and the Election of Officers for 2020. We then enjoyed some entertaining reports from the Group Leaders.

The Officers and Committee for 2020 are

- Chair: Sheila Harrop
- Vice chair: Paul Kenneth
- Treasurer: Les Birks
- Secretary: Lynn Arnold
- Membership Secretary: Margaret McDermott

Committee Members:

- Pam Andrew
- Maureen Christian
- Pam Curley
- Linda Dale
- Sue Harlin
- Barbara Kenneth
- Trevor Kinvig
- Andre Lister
- Margaret McDermott
- Diane Saxon

The updated Committee, Speakers and Groups list will be mailed with this edition of the newsletter and printed copies will be available at the March meeting. This is also available on the website but for privacy and security does not have personal contact details.

U3A REBRANDING

You may have noticed on your membership cards or annual lunch tickets - and on this edition of the newsletter that the logo has changed. We no longer have the strapline University of the Third Age as part of the logo. This is part of a rebranding exercise by the National Office which aims to project U3A as *'a movement for a dynamic, exciting and ultimately fulfilling way of living'*.



As 2020 progresses, we will see new publicity material some of which will support the first U3A Day which will take place across the UK on 3 June 2020. U3A Day is set to celebrate the new experiences that come from being in your third age. This is planned to be an annual event, which will take place on the first Wednesday in June and will *'showcase the amazing and diverse things that our members get up to and challenge preconceptions of what being an older adult means'*.

You can find out more about U3A Day on the National Office website
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/u3a-day>

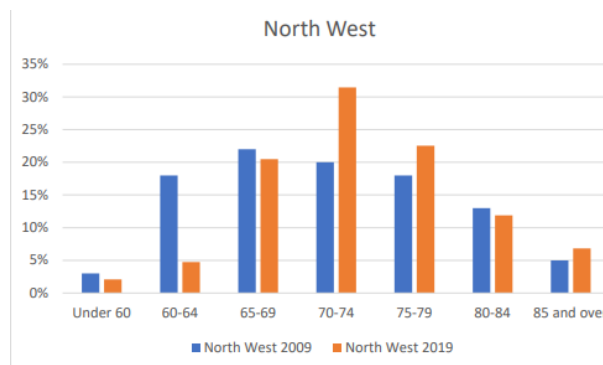
How we celebrate U3A day in our U3A will be discussed at the next Committee meeting. if you have any ideas please speak to a Committee member.

NATIONAL SURVEY 2019

In October 2019, 4520 member survey forms were sent out to 202 randomly chosen U3As, selected in proportion to the number of U3As in each of the nine English Regions and three Countries. The overall response rate was a very good 77%. The total U3A membership is currently around 430,000.

The average number of meetings attended by each member was 4.3 per month. The gender balance of members has improved slightly since the last survey although female members still make up around 70% of our membership.

Most regions are experiencing an ageing membership. This is understandable as members are living longer and remaining in the U3A but shows that younger members are not joining. The graph shows the age distribution for those U3As in the North West region.



The survey found that 95% had access to the Internet and 82% used it daily, mainly via a smartphone or tablet. 93% of respondents said they had email and 73% checked it daily. The average number of devices per member was 1.8.

82.2% of respondents said that U3A had improved their social life; 72.3% that it had broadened or enhanced their interests; 69.5% that it had increased their knowledge and understanding and 67.8% said that U3A had given them new interests

You can read the full report here
<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/h/halesworth/docs/u3amembershipsurvey2019v1.pdf>

DISCOUNTS FOR SENIORS

There are a number of websites that have collected together freebies, offers and discounts available for people of the third age. Some we particularly like are Martin Lewis’s moneysavingexpert.com and 2020 Financial <https://www.2020financial.co.uk/freebies-and-discounts-for-over-60s/>. Age UK and Saga also have similar information on their websites.

CORONA VIRUS ADVICE

We have received this information from The Third Age Trust – our national U3A organisation:

The Government and NHS have issued advice for members of the public following the confirmed cases of coronavirus in the UK. Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

The UK Chief Medical Officers are advising anyone who has travelled to the UK from mainland China, Thailand, Japan, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia or Macau in the last 14 days and is experiencing cough or fever or shortness of breath, to stay indoors and call NHS 111, even if symptoms are mild.

The list of countries is now extended to the affected areas in Tenerife and Italy and of course we have cases not too far away from us. If you have travelled to any of these areas or been in contact with anyone who has please do not attend your U3A meetings and follow the official advice.

More information about the virus, as well as symptoms and advice, is available to view at: www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirusinformation-for-the-public or on the NHS England website at: www.england.nhs.uk/2020/02/statement-from-nhs-england-and-nhsimprovement-on-coronavirus/

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OUR U3A ACTIVITIES

11 March	Last laugh of the railway king: Geoff Scargill
8 April	Avoiding re-offending: Eddie Tarry (HMPS)
20 April	Annual Lunch. Alma Lodge Hotel. £22
13 May	Family Secrets: Caroline Melliar-Smith

FORTHCOMING TRAVEL GROUP EVENTS

Contact: Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith

1 May	SHIBDEN HALL AND PIECE HALL HALIFAX. £26 Payment at March meeting.
1-6 June	HAMPSHIRE. 5 Nights. Holiday Inn Winchester. £587 + entrance fees Balance at April meeting
26-31 Aug	RHINE CRUISE TO SWITZERLAND. Travel insurance details required. Balance at April meeting
23 -27 September	IRELAND. Downhill Inn Ballina. £545 Single supp. £75 Flight from Manchester to Dublin Balance at June meeting.
9 – 11 October	LINCOLN. Forest Pines Hotel £243 Single supp, £50 Balance at August meeting.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL U3A EVENTS

12 March	Close Encounters of the Animal Kind. National Gallery. £25
16 March	U3A explores Science at the RI. £21.50
3 June	U3A Day

GROUP REPORTS

art

On 13th February, the Art group had a visit from Radio Manchester. It was all rather frantic and quick. We had about 30 people in the group and we were looking at another project as well as questions to me from the members so it was very noisy in the room. I had allocated five people to talk to the presenter including me. The presenter asked us how I started the group and what went on in the group. We told her about our exhibition and how it was so successful we are having another one in the Spring. She also spoke to other members about what they were doing – and even did some drawing. The event was aired during Becky Want's programme

Brian Chadwick

BALLET APPRECIATION

22nd Jan / 6th Feb.

After a break over the Christmas period, we started 2020 with a performance by the Paris Opera Ballet of La Dame aux Camelias. This was choreographed by John Neumeier and set to glorious music by Chopin. The ballet is based on the story of Marguerite Gautier – a high class courtesan. Her story is also told in the opera La Traviata.

Next on the agenda is the Royal Ballet with two pieces performed in 2019: Within the Golden Hour and Medusa. I also intend to show Frederic Ashton's version of the story of Marguerite Gautier.

Meg Humphries

BALLROOM DANCING

This spring saw Ian (of sequence fame) start to share music playing/instruction duties with Walter. Meanwhile we have temporarily lost two of our keenest dancers after Chris's freak accident, and we hope his recovery goes well.

Walter Mason

BRIDGE WORKSHOPS

The bridge workshops have been well attended. We have introduced members to a number of different bridge conventions including transfers, weak twos and Roman Keycard Blackwood and explored how using the correct leads and signals can help your partner. It takes time to learn and practice new ideas but we hope that members will be able to include some of these in their normal bridge play.



Diane Saxon

CHURCHES AND PUBS

The first visit this year is to Birtles near Macclesfield in April. This visit is fully booked. If you would like to go on any of the planned visits please make sure you put your name down early.

Paul and Barbara Kenneth

CINEMA

"Little Women"

This film (a modern take on the much loved classic) had received rave reviews from the critics and seemed just right for our group. It was beautifully filmed, well directed and acted. A bright and happy evening of escapism for a February evening.

Some members found the pace rather too fast

and were confused by all the flashbacks but we thought our grandchildren would enjoy it!

Sheila Harrop

CURRENT AFFAIRS

January 2020

Although our numbers were somewhat depleted we had a lively discussion on a number of topics. The recommendations for a rise in the minimum wage were approved of as it was recognised that many families are struggling to make ends meet and most businesses should be able to afford the increase.

The plight of the lower paid was contrasted with the generous bonuses awarded in the financial sector to people just doing their job. Special mention was made of the Amazon workers who have to keep to a strict schedule, often losing money for toilet breaks. Most of us shop online more for the convenience than for the low prices and would be prepared to pay more to ensure basic human rights at work.

Inevitably, the problems in the Royal Family cropped up. Generally it was felt that the Sussexes should be allowed to choose how and where they should live in future but that they should pay for their own security. After all, Harry has inherited £34 million from his mother and the Queen Mother and Meghan has £4 million of her own earnings at her disposal. It was pointed out that most European Royals have proper jobs as well as royal duties.

Other topics discussed included the assassination of the Iranian general in the Middle East; the candidates for leadership of the Labour Party – Keir Starmer with Jess Phillips or Lisa Nandy as deputy were favoured; Dominic Cummings' advertising for 'weirdos' as advisors at No: 10; 1 million missed GP appointments.

Finally, would you be happy to fork out a "bob for a bong"? To celebrate Brexit, we are being asked to contribute to getting Big Ben to chime on January 31st at a cost of £500,000. We are sure we could find a better use for all that money.

Marlene Brookes

February meeting

There were just five of us, a little depleted because of half-term holiday, but many topics were discussed, as usual.

We covered 2 questions about the Royal family - Prince Harry, Meghan and the paparazziwho should pay? We couldn't decide. The subject of Prince Andrew and his refusal to give evidence or not in the USA brought more agreement, that this was an appalling error of judgement, and that although he has done some good for the country in the past, he has now let everyone down.

Boris's first cabinet meetingwe all agreed that the chanting was disgraceful and childish, and the discussion progressed to financial austerity, the "Garden bridge", promises, and timescale. Sajid Javid's resignation was another topic, as was Dominic Cummings' comments. Then we went on to talk about the future Labour leadership. Although there were differing views, there was no animosity.

On a less political note, we discussed cremations v funerals? traditional v modern? And funeral plans? Not a cheerful topic, but a lot of humour was included, and a final comment from one member " we won't know anything about it!"

A lighter topic was about the increase in demand for Jack Russel terriers (42%)is it because Boris has one?this wasn't really a discussion, more a selection of humorous news reports.

On a more serious note we debated the BBC licence fee to be paid by pensioners, and the points-based immigration proposals. The former brought a general agreement, but that it would be difficult for people on low incomes, whilst the latter brought mixed commentswould the hospitality and care industries suffer?would people pay more if wages go up? Several examples from personal experience were given, but there was no general agreement.

The inevitable topic of Corona Virus raised its ugly head, but there was no time left to discuss thismaybe next month?

We have a few spaces available if anyone would like to join this friendly group.

Mavis Dean

DARTS

The Darts Group continues to meet every first and third Thursday of the month at The Bull's Head in High Lane. We had a post Christmas meal at The Bull's Head before our last meeting which was enjoyed by all.

The photograph shows a one in a million chance of one dart sticking into the end of the previous dart - which caused much amusement.

We are fully subscribed at present but if anyone wishes to join the waiting list please let me know.

Linda Dale



DINING

On a cool rainy day, 24 of us arrived at to a warm welcome at the Kingfisher in Poynton. Everyone was soon chatting and enjoying the free drink included in our meal; very good value for £12.

The service was good and the food hot and plentiful. We had four new members and toasted Monica whose birthday it was. All in all a very pleasant lunch.

Dorothy Neillands
Dorothy Gerrard

GARDENING

The new year started with a very pleasant meal at the Deanwater, marred only by being too substantial for some of us! (Doggy bags came to the rescue!)

Then in February, ten of us visited West Drive Gardens in Gatley, where a light drizzle didn't spoil the lovely show of early spring bulbs, hellebores and cyclamen, especially when set against magnificent varied shrub backdrops, gravelled pond and alpine surrounds, and majestic white-barked himalayan birch. Tea, coffee, scones and fancy buns in a cosy sheltered arbour rounded off a damp but superb afternoon.



Walter Mason

GERMAN

Our meetings have been less frequent in recent weeks because of my illness and half term commitments. We have still managed to have several lively sessions with average attendance of 12. The members of the group with their varied knowledge and experiences make our meetings so enjoyable. There is always so much to discuss! Amongst articles read recently was one about the inadvisability of eating bananas for breakfast – too much sugar which can lead to so many problems!

Marlene Brookes

HISTORY

Our presentation covered a variety of geographical influences, such as why English is the predominant language in South Wales. Also, due to the Gulf Stream, Europe had very favourable weather conditions to promote food production which provided work and subsequently population growth. The long flat rivers in Europe enabled easy movement which was crucial for trade. The British coastline had many natural harbours and with our abundance of trees, which were used for building boats, Britain was able to produce a very significant navy which subsequently led to, 'Britannia Rules the Waves.' Although Africa is one of the richest countries in the world because of its natural resources, due to its lack of natural harbours and navigable rivers, trading was extremely difficult. Russia has always felt that it has been surrounded by enemies and due to its lack of a warm sea port, has found it extremely difficult to travel easily.

At the January meeting, Sheila Harrop gave a presentation of the Must Farm Archaeological Excavations.

In 1999 decaying timbers were discovered protruding from the southern face of the brick pit at Must Farm situated between Peterborough and Whittlesey. Following further investigations these timbers were identified as dating back to the Bronze Age and were part of a settlement consisting of houses built on piles or stilts. Although this site came to light due to the extraction of clay for brick production, unfortunately, the extraction process had destroyed half of the settlement. However, once it was discovered the Cambridge Archaeological unit began excavations and as well as houses they found wheels, log boats, pots and yarn wound round bobbins amongst other things.

Pam Curley

MAHJONG

The Mahjong group has made a good re-start since November. Meeting on the 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings, from 7-9pm (approx), all those who come have quickly picked up the essentials of the game. We are generally 12 in number, which is good for 3 tables of 4; but if fewer or more than 12 come along, we can play as a mixture of threes and fours.

If you came to the recent U3A AGM you may have caught a little of the linguistics we have adopted to make it an authentic game. Recently a new member has given us all a further dimension for playing, so we can develop clever strategies and maximise our scoring.

In future we can mix and match all players and abilities, to give everyone some good evenings of Mahjong fun.

Sue Ardern

MEMOIRS

The title of this group speaks for itself.

We are people who enjoy writing and like to reminisce. Some have plans to publish an autobiography, others just want to set down a record for subsequent generations to read.

Whatever the finished article we enjoy going down memory lane.

Subjects have involved really cold winters with frost on the inside of the windows and chapped knees and chilblains, and recently good and bad memories of school.

We spend a lot of time chatting and laughing and it's great fun. The group has been meeting since September at Windlehurst Methodist chapel hall, once a month on the first Tues of the month. If you would like to come along for a taster session, please let me know.

Sheila Harrop

OPERA APPRECIATION

8th / 13th Jan.

We watched the Royal Opera in a recent production of La Traviata. This was an outstanding performance, marred only (in my opinion) by Placido Domingo in the role of Germont Père. Not everyone agreed with me and there was some lively debate.

5th / 10th Feb.

We watched the New York Metropolitan Opera in a performance from 1998 of Samson and Delilah. This starred Placido Domingo as Samson – still not my favourite singer, but much better in a tenor role.

Next, I intend to show a performance of La Bohème from La Scala, Milan.

Meg Humphries

PHOTOGRAPHY

The January competition “Reflections” results were:- 1= Brian – The Rockies, Canada, and Jeff – Canal Barge near Whaley Bridge (not pictured); 3= Walter – Dovestones Reservoir, Saddleworth, and Jeff – Canal Bridge and House.



A group photograph was taken to mark Jeff's recent run of success!



Walter Mason

QUIZ GROUP

We continue to meet monthly on the fourth Thursday of the month. Our first meeting of the year was a quiz set by Diane. We spent a pleasurable morning answering questions in various categories, plus trying to identify all the 15 National Parks in the UK and disentangling anagrams of chemical elements; accompanied by the usual cakes and posh biscuits!



At our February meeting, quizmaster Margaret had some challenging questions for us to try. The National Parks theme was continued but this time we tried to name the largest National Park in various counties; with not much success. At the end of the quiz we were surprised to find that all three teams had exactly the same final total score. As ever, good fun, tasty refreshments and lots of learning - we now need to remember it!

Please contact me for details if you are interested in this group.

Diane Saxon

READING

Our book choice for January was PORTERHOUSE BLUE by Tom Sharpe which made for a lively and enjoyable start to the new year, appreciated by all. February's book was THE PILOT'S WIFE by Anita Shreve which was an enjoyable and intriguing read but most of us felt that the pace of the book was somewhat flawed: too slow at the beginning and too rushed at the end, but it made us think about how well we can really know our nearest and dearest.

Our book choice for March is THE HOUSE OF MIRTH by Edith Wharton, our classic for this half-year which I am sure will lead to a lively discussion. April's book is I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS by Maya Angelou.

Our group has now grown to 12 members but we can take a couple more. Please contact me if you are interested.

Marlene Brookes

WALKING

The first walk of 2020 was on familiar ground in Lyme Park. Walter's five mile route started in the far car park and kept relatively low – just as well as a ferocious wind hit us in one or two exposed places. But rain held off, and although far views were misty, our walk had plenty of variety and things to see close at hand. Paddock Cottage, Cluse Hay, Knight's Low, Hampers Wood, Cage Hill, Elmerhurst Trail and Crow Wood all had interest and we were treated to



close views of 10K runners treading the same paths more quickly – a lot more ladies than in my youth as a fell and cross country runner! At the Stables Cafe the 13 of us went separate ways, some to the cafe, some homewards, and a few to the Bull's Head – but, for all, it had been a very pleasant start to the year 2020.

Walter Mason

Wednesday 29th January. - Local Area

In view of the possibility of bad weather – even snow, at this time of the year - it was decided to start and finish today's walk at the High Lane Village Hall car park.



21 of us set off along the Macclesfield Canal tow path to reach Prince's incline footpath towards Poynton. Jeff explained that, in the past, wagons carrying coal from the nearby Canal pit would have run down the incline, connected by a cable over a pulley wheel at the top, to empty wagons which would have been pulled up. He pointed out the stone blocks which would have been the site of the pulley wheel.

About half a mile down the path we stopped for a coffee break at the site of the old Albert Pit. There was an interesting placard there explaining the history of the local pits and their associated tramways. Jeff produced some old maps of the area and gave a short talk about the mining history of Poynton.

We then continued down the incline to Towers Road and then took a diversion to walk around the edge of Poynton Pool, which, Jeff explained, was an artificial pool created by Sir George Warren of Poynton Towers in the 18th century as part of his extensive gardens. We then continued along Towers Road where we tried to identify the site of the old Poynton Towers building. Jeff produced some old photographs of Poynton Towers before its demolition in the 1930s. We then went cross country, by the side of Towers Farm, until we found a downed tree trunk which some of us sat on while we ate our packed lunches. After that we proceeded through Norbury Hollow Wood, to emerge onto Middlewood Road and then cross the A6 to reach Hazel Grove golf course. We crossed the golf course, over the railway line, across some fields to reach Windlehurst Road and then back to the Village Hall.

Jeff Mortimer