

**u3a** High Lane

# Newsletter

May 2026



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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the May 2026 edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. In this edition, as well as news from our Groups, we have information about our upcoming events. Firstly, we have a Beetle drive next month, then this year's annual lunch in July and our Quiz night in August. 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 Marple Golf Club to celebrate. The menu is on page 2.

These events plus the forthcoming Dining group lunch and a Churches and Pubs visit means that, at the May monthly meeting, you may wish to reserve your place on some or all of these – so this is a reminder about bringing your cheque book or sufficient cash with you.

The cover this month shows some of the excellent photos from the recent Photography group monthly competition. You can see the winning photos on page 9.

As you know, we held an Open Day this week on a very windy Wednesday and are pleased to welcome those who joined us on the Open Day. We welcome all our new members and look forward to meeting you at our meetings, events and interest groups.

The newsletter mailing this time also contains the latest National Office Friends bitesize newsletter and the latest newsletter from Northwest u3a. These 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> May 2026 at [newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk)

Diane Saxon

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Celebrating the great weather we've had recently with some seasonal pictures.



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

We are pleased to be able to confirm the arrangements for the lunch and here is the menu! As well as what promises to be a delicious lunch, we have a guest speaker, Steven Taylor, a performance poet.

Tickets will be available at the monthly meetings. The cost is £35 for 3 courses and coffee/tea and includes a gratuity. If you can't get to a meeting, contact Pam Cooke to make an arrangement to get your ticket.

### 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Lunch

Friday 10 July 2026

12.30 for 1 pm.

#### **MARPLE GOLF CLUB**

*Caprese salad*

*Seasonal velouté with herb crouton*

*Chicken liver pate with brandy, rosemary and shallots*



*Braised beef cheek with mash, vegetables and red wine jus*

*Herb-crusted chicken breast with crisp herb crust, mashed potatoes and tenderstem, broccoli*

*Baked salmon with new potatoes, vegetables and white wine sauce*



*Summer berry pavlova with Chantilly cream*

*Sticky toffee pudding with treacle sauce and vanilla ice cream*

*Classic lemon tart with clotted cream and pistachio meringue*

*Followed by Coffee/Tea*

*Cost £35*

## MONTHLY MEETING

This month the roles of last month were reversed, and Marilyn Shalks gave the talk and her husband was responsible for the audio visuals.



The talk was called I wish my life was like a musical. She imagined a perfect life including falling in love, first dates and a stag night. A wedding followed, then a honeymoon and eventually emigration to America. Each event was accompanied by an appropriate song from the musicals. They included My Eyes Adore You from Jersey Boys, I'm Getting Married in the Morning from My Fair Lady, What a Photograph from Half a Sixpence and Food Glorious Food from Oliver.

Marilyn gave us interesting facts about each musical. There was a lot of toe tapping and singing from the audience!

The musical theme is continued into this month. The speakers at the meeting on May 13<sup>th</sup> are Joy and Kevin Siddall and the talk is entitled Sinatra: the man behind the musical. We have enjoyed their entertainment on a couple of occasions already and are looking forward to welcoming them back to our u3a.

Kath Wareham

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## WEDGWOOD TRIP

We were pleased to be invited by Marple u3a to join their coach trip to the Wedgwood Museum in Stoke on Trent, as they had spare places. The group was very friendly and welcoming, and we found we knew a few folk already.



The highlights of the trip were: tea, coffee and biscuits on arrival, served in beautiful Wedgwood china: a guided tour of the factory, where we could watch products being made; a tour of the Wedgwood Collection from 1700s to present day; a lunch of cheese/fruit scones had been booked and was delicious.

We also had free time to look round the gift shops and museum. We were interested in the £26,000 vase but decided against it!

Jill and Ian Kenna

## 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 May 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 for all 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 June meeting. Bring your friends to join us for another great quiz and perhaps win a prize!

Diane Saxon

## GROUP NEWS

### CRIME FICTION READING



The Crime Book Group met again on 17 April when we discussed *Guilty by Definition* by Susie Dent. This is the first novel written by the lexicographer and Countdown expert. The book concerns a group of lexicographers in Oxford working on updates to a major dictionary. They start receiving anonymous cards and puzzles which appear to be linked to the disappearance of the main character's sister who had disappeared several years ago.

There were only six of us at the meeting today. Four of us really enjoyed the book, and only one was far less impressed. People commented on the word definitions which preceded each chapter – and suggested that we should learn them! The general feeling was that the puzzles were fascinating and we are looking forward to her next book due out in August.

The group next meets on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May when we shall be discussing *A Banquet of Consequences* by Elizabeth George (the 19<sup>th</sup> from the Inspector Lynley series).

Lesley McCall

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### DINING

I think the last time I wrote in the Newsletter was to tell you how I was looking forward to our next lunch which was at The Three Bears in Hazel Grove which is now run by the chap who used to have Peruga.. Well, we were not disappointed. All 27 of us had a great time and a thoroughly enjoyable meal. Well done 3 Bears.

On May 19 we are having a complete change and are going to Topkapi, the Turkish restaurant on the A6. I was there for the first time a few weeks ago and regretted I had not been there before. So come and join us, I am sure you will not be disappointed. £16.50 for two courses (including gratuity) and, here's a bonus, the bus stops outside so you can ditch the car and save your petrol.

By the way, if you fancy a fun night out join us on June 26<sup>th</sup> for a Beetle Drive. Only £8 including supper and a PRIZE for the winner, in fact more PRIZES if there is more than one winner. You can bring a friend. Tickets are on sale at the May meeting.

Dorothy Gerrard  
Dorothy Neillands

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

At our meeting on Friday 24th April the topics discussed included:

1. Should the King's visit to the USA still go ahead?
2. Is there too much news reporting of the issue about Peter Mandelson?
3. RSPB bird watch done at the end of January found that the House Sparrow ranking as the most common bird for the 23rd consecutive year, then Blue Tit, Starling, Woodpigeon & blackbird.
4. Government Campaign to improve the key skills of children starting school which includes, language skills, going to the toilet unaided, taking off & putting on coats, etc. At present 37% fall below acceptable levels.
5. Is the word National in NHS inappropriate? There is concern that throughout England the services available are inconsistent.
6. A person may become a councillor from the age of 18, albeit they are subject to rigorous assessment including DBS checks, etc. Discussion was whether or not the age was too young.
7. Should we make any further payments to France even with the new clauses added?
8. Should Starmer resign? View is he will be forced out after failures in May elections.
9. Swedish schools, which originally supplied all children with laptops, has decided to stop the practice and concentrate on using only books instead of screens.

The next meeting is on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2pm to 4pm.

Sue Rowarth

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## MESSAGE FROM RSPB – UPDATE on Seasonal bird feeding

RSPB advises that from 1<sup>st</sup> MAY to 31<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER we should not feed seeds nor peanuts to garden birds. Suet pellets or balls in 'small amounts', little and often are needed, to reduce the spread of infection and encourage the eating of natural, seasonal foods. Bird baths should be emptied daily and refilled with clean fresh water.

The latest information backed by scientific research is on this page and there is a short video <https://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/news/how-to-help-garden-birds>. There is also advice on plants to grow to encourage butterflies and bushes which will produce berries.

Sue Rowarth

## HISTORY

The April meeting featured a presentation by Gordon Longworth inspired by his work on tracing his family history. Gordon has managed to get back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, helped by having a relatively uncommon surname (it is much more difficult when you are called Taylor!). He detailed some of the problems involved in the process, including document legibility and accuracy. This is particularly relevant when using census returns, which are highly dependent on the ability of the household respondent and the census taker. He encountered similar problems with military records when researching the WW1 activities of a great uncle, who fought in northern France.

Another factor to be considered is cost: access to many records involves joining a commercial organisation (Ancestry, Find My Past, etc.), then vital documents, such as birth, marriage and death certificates are individually expensive.

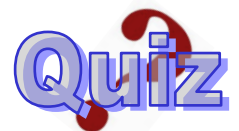
Many other group members have also carried out family history projects, and this led to a lively discussion on methodology.

Our May gathering has been cancelled, so the next meeting will be on June 24<sup>th</sup>, when Kath Wareham will be talking about Brick Lane (the place and not the book). New members are always welcome, with details available from group leader Pam Curley.

Barry Taylor

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## QUIZZING



This month's quiz was set by Angela. Our categories included Geography, History, Scottish people, Food and drink, famous Janes and we finished with cryptic clues for sweets and chocolates. A very enjoyable quiz!

This month's sample questions.

1. Which spirit is in a Moscow Mule?
2. Which Royal palace has a chocolate kitchen?
3. Which Jane directed the movie 'The Piano'?
4. Which is the largest island in the Mediterranean?
5. Which PM said 'a week is a long time in politics'?
6. In what year was the Suez crisis?

We normally meet on the fourth Thursday of the month. The next meeting is 23<sup>rd</sup> May. 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

## MEMOIRS MARCH 2026

The theme for this month was items that we treasure.

- David told us about his love of stamps. He inherited three albums from his father, and this has now increased to over one hundred. In the early 1800's, postage was charged by distance and paid for by the recipient. In 1839 postage was charged by weight and prepaid by the sender. On 7th May 1840 the first stamps went on sale and the 1d black was born and after nine months the colour changed to red and remained so for forty years. David brought in some 1d blacks for us to see.
- Stewart's contribution this month was a poem entitled Seven Momentous Months between August 1963 and February 1964 which related to the historical events, loosely linked by musical references of the time. This was quite a serious poem so to lighten the mood he told us about bloopers and misprints from Church magazines which were very funny.
- Sue told us about an autograph book that she had.
- Marlene's mother was in service and worked for a Colonel Morgan who was a wealthy landowner in Swansea. She gave Marlene a Panoramic View of the 1851 Crystal Palace Great Exhibition which was amazing to look at through two small holes at the front. Marlene also brought in a tin plate album from 1953.
- Lynda had several items that she cherished. A cut-glass water jug from her mother and two ribbon plates that were on the wall at her house when she was young. A musical box from her father which she said would benefit from a trip to the TV repair shop. Also some silver photo frames and candlesticks, a stuffed kingfisher which was in the loft and her teddy bear.
- Irene brought in an old photo album which was her grandmother's. It was very heavy and had a clasp. There were beautiful painted surrounds where the photos went but all the photos had been removed. She did bring in a very special photo of her grandmother from about 1903 holding her husband who was just a baby.
- Pat told us about a Ralph Wood Toby jug dated 1780. It belonged to her husband's great aunt and was pale turquoise with a caramel-coloured hat. She took it to the Antiques Road Show when it was at Lyme Park and was given a favourable valuation.
- When Margaret J's father retired, he made items out of wood. He made wooden carts that were pulled by ceramic horses that were popular with people in Devon. Her husband made her a barrel organ before they were married which played two tunes.
- Barbara F brought a walking stick with a dog's head on that her father had made. She said he only made them for people that he liked.

We then got on to the subject of funerals which was extremely entertaining.

### Quote for the month

"I have realised that when people try to dim your light, it says more about them than it ever will about you." - Adam Thomas

Barbara Kenneth

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Thanks for all the entries, some great bridges.

- 1<sup>st</sup> ... Iron Bridge ... 9 points ... Ken
- 2<sup>nd</sup> ... Ladybower ... 7 points ... Mark
- 3<sup>rd</sup> ... River Dee bridge ... 4 points ... Mark
- Forth Bridge ... 4 points ... Barbara
- Berwick bridges ... 4 points ... Helen



Well done all.

This month's topic is "GRAFFITI", plenty of it about.  
Entries by May 15<sup>th</sup> please.

Good luck to everyone.

Ken Jackson

## READING

We have reports for our last two books here.

Our choice for April was *THE READER* by Bernhard Schlink. It tells the story of a German lawyer, who, as a 15 year old starts an affair with a much older woman. During their time together she asks him to read to her from the literary works he is studying at school. She suddenly disappears from his life just as she is about to be promoted in her job on the trams.

Years later, as a law student, he attends a trial in which Hanna is one of the defendants. To his horror, he finds out that she had been an SS guard at a concentration camp and that she was harbouring a secret that could save her at the trial but she lies to save herself from embarrassment.

15 years later she hangs herself just as she is about to be released from prison. Although an uncomfortable read, this book gave us quite a lot of food for thought and quite rightly became a best seller in Germany and even more so in the USA and Britain.

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Our book for March was *THE FAR PAVILIONS* by M.M. Kaye which took us to India in the late 19th century. Some of us remembered the story from the TV series of the 1980s. It was a very long read but well worth the effort. It transported us to India in the heyday of the Raj and told us the story of Ash, an orphaned boy, born to British parents but who spends his early years, living as an Indian with his foster mother, but after his schooling in England returns to the country of his birth as a British officer. Much of the book deals with his rescue of his great love, Juli, from being burnt alive (suttee) on the death of her husband, an elderly rajah.

The book is extremely long but very readable and tells us a great deal about India in the 19th century. MM Kaye spent most of her life there and obviously loved the country and its people. We were also transported to India in our tea break when we were able to sample Marsala tea and two types of cake made from Indian recipes, courtesy of our hostess, Marion, who recently visited the country.

Marlene Brookes

## SHORT WALKS

April 2026 – A Bluebell Walk

'April showers bring forth May flowers'. A sunny morning took the group from the Car park at the end of Ashbourne Drive, High Lane passing Brookside school to Brookside Lane, on to the A6.

Avoiding the busy Saturday traffic, we ventured through Hartley Wood on both sides of Alderdale Drive. Walking about half a mile down the A6 (this could not be avoided) we eventually found the footpath by the cottages opposite the Royal Oak pub. An unclear path over a field and a low stile then through wooded area with many bluebell flowers. Following the rough footpath between two ponds where a nesting coot was sitting on a number of eggs, passing by quickly so as not to disturb. A lovely sign of spring.

Arriving on Middlewood Road the group made their way toward Middlewood Station and there the group had a coffee break; the Manchester train had already passed through!

On to the Middlewood Way then turning right to walk in the woods by the railway, here masses of Bluebells as we passed under sunlit trees. Eventually arriving on the Macclesfield Canal and walking to bridge 13 – crossing onto the other side towpath, through a small wood, below Woodside Tennis Club and back onto the path by Brookside school to take us to the car park.

Ruth Smith



**WALKING**

**Walk 29/04/2026: Chadkirk – Woodbank Park – Vernon Park – Pear Mill – Bredbury Hall**

On this month's walk, ten walkers set off from Chadkirk car park in the sunshine via the old Hare and Hounds pub down a country lane passing a field with some basking cows and headed up a footpath towards Offerton Green.



From here we turned right along the main road for a couple of hundred yards, past Offerton Sand and Gravel, then turning down Holiday Lane and the wooded area of Poise Brook valley reserve. We then turned West to follow the higher path above the river Goyt to the park and playing fields of Little Moor where we stopped for a coffee break.

After coffee, we continued into Woodbank Park and then on into Vernon Park, where we took advantage of the sunken garden to shelter from the strong wind whilst having lunch.

After lunch we descended via the Vernon Park gardens to pick up the Alan Newton way near Pear Mill and started to head back East via Bredbury Hall and the very attractive Goyt Hall Farm.

We eventually returned to the Chadkirk car park, passing by the Stockport Hydro Archimedes Screw power generation project.

Total distance 6.5 miles.

Rick Hedley

## National Office Learning Events

These are a selection of the **May events**. All are free via Zoom. Remember they can fill up quickly. Typically, there are several hundred attendees.

- 8 May            Enormous numbers and where to find them
- 12 May          The Call of the Wild: Stories from the Frontiers of Exploration
- 14 May          Suffering and hope in Tolstoy's Anna Karenina
- 29 May          Drones, huh? What are they good for?

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

## Coming in June

- 10 June        **Learn bridge online with u3a**

### Curious about Bridge but not sure where to start?

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

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



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

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

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

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

Action for Happiness brings people together and provides practical resources. We help each other learn skills for happier living, feel a sense of belonging and commit to personal action to create more happiness, for ourselves and others.

Action for Happiness produces a monthly calendar and other resources. For example, there is an online course to help us learn to be happy! Check the [website](#) to find out more.



**Meaningful May 2026**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				1 Do something kind for someone you really care about	2 Focus on what you can do rather than what you can't do	3 Take a step towards an important goal, however small
4 Send your friend a photo from a time you enjoyed together	5 Let someone know how much they mean to you and why	6 Look for people doing good and reasons to be cheerful	7 Make a list of what matters most to you and why	8 Set yourself a kindness mission to help others today	9 What values are important to you? Find ways to use them today	10 Be grateful for the little things, even in difficult times
11 Look around for things that bring you a sense of awe and wonder	12 Listen to a favourite piece of music and remember what it means to you	13 Find out about the values or traditions of another culture	14 Get outside and notice the beauty in nature	15 Do something to contribute to your local community	16 Show your gratitude to people who are helping to make things better	17 Find a way to make what you do today meaningful
18 Send a hand-written note to someone you care about	19 Reflect on what makes you feel valued and purposeful	20 Share photos of 3 things you find meaningful or memorable	21 Look up at the sky. Remember we are all part of something bigger	22 Find a way to help a project or charity you care about	23 Recall three things you've done that you are proud of	24 Make choices that have a positive impact for others today
25 Ask someone else what matters most to them and why	26 Remember an event in your life that was really meaningful	27 Focus on how your actions make a difference for others	28 Do something special and revisit it in your memory tonight	29 Today do something to care for the natural world	30 Share a quote you find inspiring to give others a boost	31 Find three reasons to be hopeful about the future

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS** **Happier · Kinder · Together**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The month of May is named after the Greek goddess Maia. Maia is one of the Pleiades. The Pleiades are the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione. Their names are Maia, Electra, Taygete, Celaeno, Alcyone, Sterope, and Merope. According to myth, they were transformed into stars by Zeus to escape the hunter Orion. The Pleiades cluster can often be seen with the naked eye.

