

HIGH LANE U3A NEWSLETTER

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Editor

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November 2011

GRAND HAT PARADE – CHRISTMAS PARTY – 14TH DECEMBER 2011



Don't forget the Christmas Party on the 14th December, the preparations for your hat should be underway. We are all looking forward to the Grand Parade at the Christmas Party. The theme this year is "The Olympics", preparing for summer 2012.

ooOoo



Visit to ST.WILFRID'S CHURCH GRAPPENHALL, Nr. WARRINGTON

What an agreeable surprise it was to find that the Church at Grappenhall is situated in a picturesque old world village, complete with cobblestones, village stocks, and two pubs in close proximity! On arrival we were greeted by two of the Churchwardens, Gordon Berry and John Bygate, who, between them, were able to give us a very comprehensive history of the Village and Church. The original Church, founded in the 12th century, was of quite primitive form with a hard earth floor. Later, the Boydell Chapel was added as a memorial to members of that family, and that is how the Church remained for 400 years, until in the 16th century, north and south aisles, a chancel and a tower were added.

The last major reconstruction was in the 19th century, during which an ancient font was discovered buried some three feet below the floor of the nave. Now restored and remounted, it is in use today.

In the Church can be seen a 12th century primitive parish chest, the ancient stocks, and a beautifully carved pulpit. There is an extremely rare stained glass window, with mediaeval glass incorporated, situated in the Boydell Chapel, and this, we were told is internationally famous.

The sandstone used to build the Church gives it a warm and welcoming look the Reredos, carved in oak and depicting the Last Supper, is very beautiful.

Outside, the Church tower bears a carving of a grinning cat, which may possibly be the inspiration for the Cheshire Cat featured in Alice in Wonderland.

After such an interesting morning, a very short stroll took us to the Ram's Head to enjoy our lunch. Thanks once again to Paul for finding us another hidden gem to visit.

Eileen Fielding

DISCUSSION GROUP

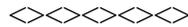


On the 21st Sept 2011 the topic of the eviction of Irish Travellers from Dale Farm, Crays Hill in Essex was introduced by June Gibbs. The history of the dispute began in 2001 when an Irish traveller named John Sheridan bought the land from a scrap metal dealer for £120,000. The local Council had used the land to dump scrap cars etc. and evidently found this use quite acceptable. Then the caravans started to arrive, the travellers cleaned up the site and set up home there. Half of the land received permission to allow caravans to stay there but the other half never received planning permission. The reasoning behind this was never satisfactorily explained. This was the start of a 10 year legal dispute between the travellers and Basildon Council. Approximately 800 people (40 families) live on the site. The local primary school has 110 pupils, 107 of whom lived on the Dale Farm site. It was pointed out by a member of the group that removing the travellers from the district would have a disastrous effect on the school and the travellers' children. The travellers claimed that they paid the same sort of taxes as other citizens and this was not disputed. The Council say that they have offered alternative sites and accommodation but these have been declined. All the legal processes have been exhausted and the Council has no option but to use the police to evict them. Our discussion ranged around the morality of eviction, the wishes of the local residents who claim that the nuisance created by the travellers is insufferable, the devaluation of local property is unacceptable, and the travellers should be made to abide by the same planning laws that others have to observe. So far It has cost the local Council about £18,000,000 which locals claim could have been put to better use. So in with the police and bailiffs and out with the travellers. We can discuss the ethics and morality of this and similar situations but in the final analysis the law should apply to everybody. In this case it might be said that the law has been used to remedy a situation brought about 10 years ago by short sighted councillors who allowed an eyesore (scrap metal yard) to be replaced by a living nuisance (travellers).

On the 26th October Pam Curley introduced the subject of Donor Cards i.e. organ and tissue donation. Should it be that one is automatically assumed to be a donor with the onus upon the individual to opt out or should we retain the present system which requires permission from the next of kin? The B.M.A. has long complained that on many occasions organs and/or human tissue are wasted, organs which could benefit others. Transplant material is usually taken from suitably young and otherwise healthy people who are being kept alive by life support machines. There is an understandable reluctance on the part of relatives to authorize the turning off of the life support especially if it involves the life of a child. One of the tenets of Christianity is that on the Final Day, at the sound of the Final Call, the dead shall all rise and shall be whole. So what happens if somebody else is in possession of your heart and/or liver, kidneys etc? Will this belief influence devout Christians? One of the parts of the

body which is not age dependent is the cornea which is apparently useable regardless of its age; otherwise there is a cut off age. We discussed the fact that in some parts of the world there is a market in some transplantable organs, notably kidneys. The introduction of opt out donor cards might go some way to ensuring that this practice would not happen in Britain. But if such a system was introduced could it be applied to immigrants who neither speak nor read sufficient English to understand what was required of them? It is a subject which is worthy of a much more detailed and informed discussion which unfortunately we did not have sufficient time for.

Jim Mc Dermott



GERMAN GROUP

We continue to meet on most Fridays but will have to cancel Friday 25th November. Recent items discussed have included memories of Frank Sinatra, insomnia and the crisis in Greece. We will be making plans in the next few weeks for our Christmas lunch.

NEEDLEWORK GROUP



We have been busy in recent weeks making items for our annual raffle and greetings card sale at the next General Meeting in November. The charities chosen to benefit from the raffle this year are the Salvation Army and the RNLI. In the last two years we have been able to send off cheques amounting to £100 for both charities and hope to be able to do so again this year.

Reading Group



Somewhere Towards the End by Diana Athill, published by Granta Books, 2008.

Diana Athill was born in 1917 and had this book published in 2008 when she was eighty-nine years old. At the time of publication all the reviews were very favourable and the Sunday Telegraph captured the essence of the book in the following sentence, "Athill reflects candidly, and sometimes with great humour, on the condition of being old—the losses and occasionally the gains that age brings, the wisdom and fortitude required to face death."

However, out of the eleven Reading Group members at the meeting when the book was discussed, only one person had enjoyed it, some had thought it was alright, whilst most of the group had actually disliked it. Unlike the one person who had admired Athill's honesty, in the words of another

reviewer the majority of the group thought that, "she is a selfish, childless atheist and the consolation must come from the now and not the hereafter." As a result of reading the book not many people felt that they would like her and also thought that the book had been published as a consequence of her life-time involvement in the publishing world, rather than on its own merit.

Ordinary Thunderstorms by William Boyd

October's book was "Ordinary Thunderstorms" by William Boyd, a book which the majority of the group really enjoyed despite finding the ending not totally satisfactory. Some members thought a sequel might follow to tie up some of the loose ends. The book tells the story of Adam Kindred, a climatologist returning to London from America for a job interview, who after a chance encounter with another scientist, is plunged into a nightmare world of being simultaneously pursued by the sociopathic hitman; Jonjo, and the Metropolitan Police. He is forced into living rough, without all the trappings of life in the modern world, to begging and to spending time with less desirable members of society, while trying to discover the reason for his predicament.

The book has been described as a modern picaresque novel and it is true that Adam meets a wide variety of characters from the worlds of high finance, a drug company; the aristocracy; an evangelical religious sect; prostitution and general low life. This was another interesting book by one of our favourite authors.

HOLIDAYS AND VISITS



CHINATOWN

Wednesday December 7th. The tour will start at 11:00 at the Chinese Arch on Nicholas Street (side of Art Gallery) Lunch at approx. 13:00 at the Pearl City Restaurant

TUSCANY

May 3rd-10th 7 nights Half Board at the Hotel Ercolini in Montecatini. Flight from Manchester to Pisa. Approx. £720

NORWAY AND ICELAND CRUISE

August 18th. 14 nights on P&O Oriana. Coach from High Lane to Southampton.

Information on any of the above from Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith

Ballet Appreciation Groups 1 & 2



In August and September the Ballet Groups enjoyed the following programmes:-

Meeting 8th & 17th August - The Royal Ballet Co. Celebrates Kenneth Macmillan

1. “Concerto-music Piano Concerto No.2 by Shostakovich

(Short Synopsis)

Concerto is a plot less ballet in three movements. The mood of the first is joyful, with a male and female soloist leading the bright activities of three other couples and a supporting group of six girls. The lyrical second movement is a pas de deux with the three couples from the first movement who mirror some of the actions of the central pair. The third movement is introduced by a brilliant variation for a female dancer. A large corps de ballet then enters and the other dancers in the work join in the ebullient finale

2. “Elite Syncopations” – music by Scott Joplin

(Short Synopsis)

“After an opening general dance, three girls mooch through a number and then four boys zip and roar through “*Hothouse Rag*”. A ballerina struts about as a “*Ragtime Nightingale*”, and a pair of young lovers are innocently demure in the “*Golden Hours Rag*”. Another ballerina is saucy with a cane, and a very tall girl is hilariously mis-matched with a very small partner. The “*Bethena Concert Waltz*” contains some sardonic moments, and “*Friday Night Rag*” is a virtuoso solo for a male dancer. To the final “*Cataract Rag*” the company nip and tuck over the stage with great good humour. (The costumes were fantastic.)

3. Stuttgart Ballet Co.

The making of Choreographer Macia Haydee’s “Sleeping Beauty”

(This is a very interesting documentary & Master Class of a beautiful ballet in which you see the ballet dancers rehearsing and also taking a peep into the back room where the costumes are being made, all very interesting)

After the ballet group watched this programme they decided they would like to see the full ballet hence this was the programme for September.

Meeting 2nd & 21st September

4. Amsterdam National Ballet – “Sleeping Beauty” (in 3 acts) enjoyed by everyone.

Sheila Hall

Visit to Normandy by Margaret Glynn



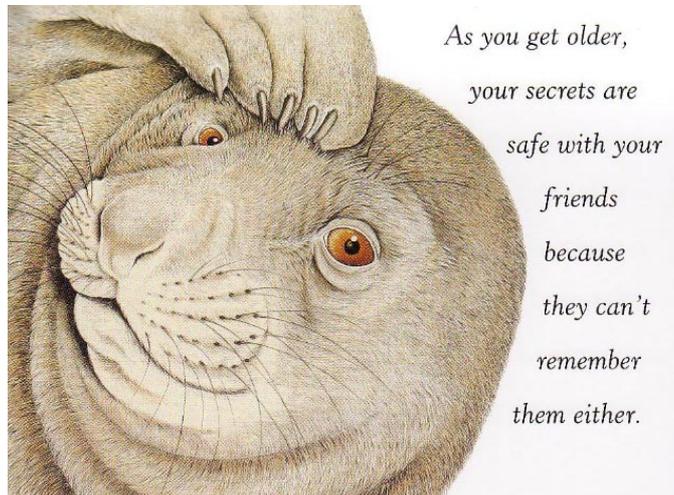
Twenty seven U3A members arrived in Caen, tired, but full of anticipation for our stay at the Mercure Cote de Nacre hotel, which proved to be very comfortable and excellently positioned for our tours.

The next day we travelled to Rouen, where we visited the Cathedral, the subject of many of Monet's paintings and also the beautiful new Church, built to commemorate Joan of Arc's burning at the stake in 1431. Some of our adventurous members also climbed the clock tower of the famous gilded clock. On the way back to the hotel we stopped for a tasting tour at a Calvados distillery. In explaining the crushing process, our charming young French guide explained that the crushing wheel had been pulled round in the old days by "Ze usband of a cow". We were told that the intoxicating smell was the angel's share of the Calvados: we made sure they didn't get all of it! Sunday was wet; nevertheless we set off for Giverny, to visit Monet's garden. It was most certainly not a disappointment and to make-up for the wet weather, all the water lilies were in bloom. Later, the sun shone and we visited Honfleur, with time to explore this delightful, very pretty little port.

Monday, we visited the Caen Memorial Museum and then drove along the Normandy beaches to Bayeux where we had time to explore, before being enthralled by the 11th c Bayeux tapestry and the story it told. We ended the day by visiting one of the many war cemeteries; immensely thought provoking. One soldier was noted as being just 16.

Thank you Margaret (McDermott) for organising such a well planned and interesting trip.

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## Visit to Arboretum & Tamworth Castle - Staffordshire



We set off by coach on a drizzly, cold and windy morning to visit the National Memorial Arboretum. This is the UK's Centre of Remembrance and is set in beautiful wooded parkland and gardens. Luckily the sun decided to shine and stayed for the rest of the day. The war memorials honour the Armed Services Personnel and are a poignant tribute to all who have lost their lives in the service of their country. A very special; interesting and thought provoking experience.

We had lunch and boarded the coach for Tamworth. The castle is spectacular set right in the middle of this historic town, is mentioned in documents as far back as the 7th century and was the principle royal and administrative centre of the Mercian kings.

We were taken on a tour of this medieval castle by 'Hugh' whose stories, said to be true, of various 'ghostly' happenings enthralled us. At one point we felt an icy cold blast of air when we were in the Lady's Chamber, but alas, no 'ghost' just a cold draught through a corridor. There are Tudor and Stuart chambers to explore and a magnificent Great Hall. The castle is full of artefacts, armoury, helmets, swords, is people and child friendly and the scenery from the tower is amazing. We all had a superb, well organised day. This castle is well worth another visit.

Ann Simpson

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Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history:

Spades - King David

Hearts - Charlemagne

Clubs - Alexander, the Great

Diamonds - Julius Caesar

## WALK REPORTS



### **13 AUGUST 2011**

In the wake of former Hurricane Katia, pleasant sunshine, a brisk breeze, and clear visibility provided lovely conditions for Sam's walk. From Disley, the route sneaked upwards on secluded footpaths beyond the Quaker House to join Green Lane at Stoneridge Farm. Further on we were intrigued by the contrasting curios in a farm (unnamed on Ordnance Survey) by Long Lane. Bollinhurst Bridge was still closed as unsafe, but walkers can now bypass on a rather ugly footbridge and wooden steps. The route turned sharply just before East Lodge (noting that Lyme Park was still closed due to fears of high winds and falling trees), and meandered over grass fields to Bolder Farm. Just up the road, a footpath sign directed us onto a narrow grassy path winding up the 350 foot climb to 1300 ft. Black Hill.

The climb became exhilarating as the breeze degenerated into a strong gale on the ridge, but a handy sheepfold provided a welcome lunch stop shelter, so we could admire the fantastic views in comfort. Then it was a rapid descent down the narrow ridge, and a turn at Longside to head in gentler conditions for pleasant path by the reservoirs of Bollinhurst and Horse Coppice, both depleted after a dryish August. A change in direction at Stonehead found us heading straight for Disley and down the steps to Disley Station. "A 5 star walk" said one of the ladies, as we thanked Sam. Were there crowds of walkers to enjoy the very good route? – Sadly, no, as only 4 turned up. Perhaps others were put off by gloomy forecasts, seduced by table tennis, or were recovering from a long journey back from Giverney. But they missed a treat!

### **31st AUGUST 2011**

On a grey, but pleasant, August day, John McCartney led 29 u3a walkers on an easy 5 mile walk from Millers Dale Station. The walk combined the familiar delights of Water-cum-Jolly Dale with its fiercesome limestone rock overhangs and scenic former millponds, and the unfamiliar experience of the newly opened tunnels on the Monsal Trail. The two 500 yard tunnels were impressive, both for their original engineering and for the well lit and atmospheric interiors; their well advertised opening has enabled new circular routes to be established in the area. Everybody seemed to enjoy the easy walking, attractive surroundings and views, and absence of stiles, and were impressed by the way, that a former railway and mills could enjoy a new lease of life as a long distance trail and luxury flats respectively. The only downsides were the fairly frequent encounters with bike riders, and the lack of variety on the first section of the Monsal Trail.

John was well complimented on his fine walk, particularly when there was a welcome ice cream van back at Millers Dale, which did a roaring trade!

## **28 SEPTEMBER 2011**

It was third time lucky for Steve Reynolds. Previous attempts to have a walk from Ilam had fallen foul of bad weather. But this time there was success, and what success, with glorious warm sunshine to display the lovely scenery in Dove and Manifold valleys to best advantage.

21 made the long trip to the National Trust car park at Ilam Hall, and were led past Ilam's picturesque cottages and over the lower slopes of Bunster Hill, past the Izaak Walton hotel to the River Dove car park. Then we followed the crowds by the lovely river to the stepping stones, where all ventured across to a welcome coffee stop.

The crowds were left behind as we climbed gently up Lin Dale. Nobody seemed tempted by Thorpe Cloud, a shapely mountain, sharply pointed from Lin Dale, but earlier seemingly with its top cut off flat. Soon we ambled through pleasant Thorpe village, where several succumbed to windfall apples generously left free in buckets for the taking, past the attractive church, and descended a scenic path to Coldwell Bridge and a lunch stop. Steve had led us further South than ever before on our monthly walks, and the group were now off the bottom of the Peak District White Peak area map! A long grassy stretch in the lower Dove valley led past the confluence of Dove and Manifold, where we followed the Manifold back to the bridge at Ilam. There an ice cream van had rich pickings from our group. By the church, recently visited by Pubs and Churches, and within sight of our car park, the group split. The harder walkers made a short circuit of Ilam Hall Park, and returned over the grassy parkland, to teas or coffees in the NT tea room, or to quick halves in the Izaak Walton. Whichever, all had really enjoyed Steve's mostly level (?) walk, which had taken us to new ground and a fabulous area. Thanks Steve.

## **WEDNESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2011**

David Lloyd struck lucky with a lovely autumn morning for this 6 mile walk, as he led a party of 26 into the varied cloughs and side valleys of Torkington and Ochrelay Brooks.

First the route went along the canal towards Hawk Green, then across Marple Golf course into the steep-sided cloughs of Torkington Brook. Then it cut across Stockport golf course to head south past Broadoak Farm and its "medieval" moat. After a lunch close by Ochrelay Brook, noteworthy for equine interruptions (who was feeding titbits to the horses?), David changed direction to avoid a mass of cattle on the footpath, in case the bull amongst them was unfriendly! The Middlewood Way led under the A6 to Middlewood Station, and a track took us by the appropriately named Middle Wood to the Macclesfield Canal and back to the village hall.

Apart from the rather tricky paths in the cloughs, the route had been easy and very pleasant, showing us that the nearby parts of Hawk Green, Offerton Green, Torkington and Middlewood, have plenty to offer, for which we thanked David and his local walk.

Walter Mason

## **NEXT WALKS**

**TUESDAY 8th NOVEMBER** - Brian Allerton to lead a 5 mile easy/moderate walk. Meet 930 at village hall (or 1000 in Bollington at the country park car park (between Middlewood Way viaduct and park/recreation ground). We will be able to eat afterwards at the Vale Inn – choose food at the pub.

**WEDNESDAY 30th NOVEMBER** - Walter Mason to lead a 4/5 mile moderate walk. Bring National Trust cards, and meet 930 at village hall (or 945 at Lyme Park). No definite plans for eating, but some obvious local places (eg Dog and Partridge, Ram's Head, or Lyme Hall itself) within easy reach, depending on consensus on the day.

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## **Family History**



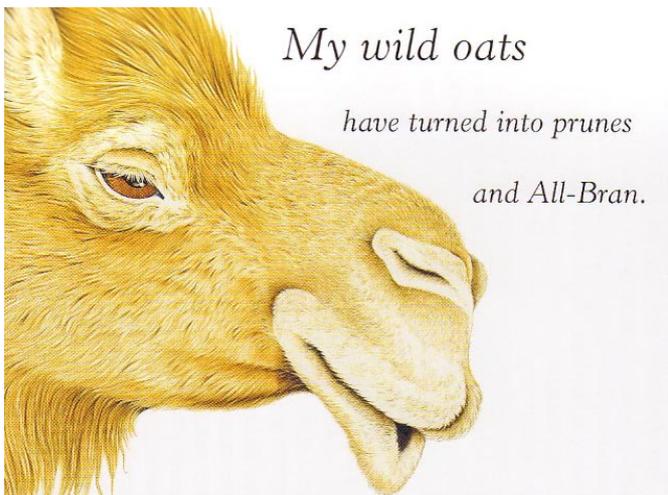
The Family History Group has three more sessions planned for this year:-

17<sup>th</sup> November – “Talk By The LDS Church” in the computer room

1<sup>st</sup> December - “Keeping Records and Storing Information” in the computer room

8<sup>th</sup> December - End of Term Summary and Spring Programme (and some Christmas cheer)  
At Sue's house.

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Enjoy Christmas but don't forget to have reports to the Editor for the January newsletter by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011