

**FROM THE CHAIR**

I have recently celebrated a milestone birthday, with family and friends. One comment I would like to share with you all came from my Bridge partner, who is quite a bit older than me. She told me that she had really enjoyed her eighties. She was sure I would do the same. And that's exactly what I intend to do, and of course U3A is at the heart of that. What wonderful stimulus and fun we get from the variety of outings and group activities on offer. I now know more about Kurling, Terry Pratchett and the Moravian settlement in Manchester, to name but a few.

The "pièce de résistance" must be the fantastic Murder Mystery evening. Many thanks to Diane and her thespians who gave us such a great show.

At times like these, I feel most privileged to belong to High Lane U3A. I am already looking forward to the Music Evening and the Christmas party. See you all there

Sheila Harrop

**GROUP LEADERS' MEETING**

Late in June your Group Leaders, their helpers and Committee members got together for our annual meeting to thank the leaders and helpers for all that they do in running your groups. We enjoyed finding out about each other's activities along with good conversation, cake and strawberries.

**U3A DIARIES FOR 2020**

U3A diaries for 2019 are available to order. This year the diary has a purple cover and costs £3.25 which includes postage.

If you would like to order one give your name and payment to Pam Curley at the September meeting.



Frog Art Trail – see page 4

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**FROM THE EDITOR:** If anyone has any photos of the action in the Murder Mystery evening would you please let me have a copy. We were all busy and didn't manage to take any photos.

The next edition of the newsletter will be the November 2019 edition. This is your newsletter so please let me have any items that you think would be of interest to our members or any ideas for items or topics you would like to see. The deadline for contributions is 27 October.

[newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk](mailto:newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk)

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### JULY MEETING

At the July monthly meeting members were given a useful presentation on why we should have a Lasting Power of Attorney, of which there are two parts. Part One concerns property and financial affairs and Part Two relates to health and welfare.

On the financial side we were informed that if we do not have an LPA, in the event of our death or an inability to manage our own affairs, then the bank could freeze an account, even if it is a joint account: if this should happen then the situation has to be referred to the Court of Protection and its resolution could take up to two years and cost between £5,000 and £8,000.

The second part relating to health and welfare ensures that the appointed attorney/s can make decisions regarding your care and have access to medical records held either by your GP or hospital.

We were strongly advised to make a Lasting Power of Attorney whilst we still have mental capacity, because if it is left too late and someone has to have a mental capacity test which they fail, then it is impossible to take out an LPA and everything becomes much more difficult and complicated: in fact, we were advised that anyone aged over eighteen should have an LPA.

It is possible to complete the relevant forms for an LPA online, which is the least expensive way of doing it. Otherwise, it can be done through a solicitor whose costs can vary. However it is undertaken, it is vital to register the document with the relevant government department, otherwise it is worthless.

### AUGUST MEETING

At the August meeting Graham Nicholas, Head of Engineering for the A1 Steam Locomotive Trust, gave us a very interesting talk about the construction of the Tornado locomotive. We thank Graham for this summary of his talk.

In 1990 a group of people came together to share an extraordinary ambition – to construct a brand new Peppercorn A1 Pacific. They formed The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust and after nineteen years of incredible effort that locomotive, No. 60163 Tornado, moved under its own power for the first time in 2008. Tornado's construction is an amazing tale of cooperation, skill and sheer hard graft which defied the critics who said it could never be done.



In the 10 years since its introduction into service, Tornado has travelled over 100,000 miles, visiting all four corners of the country, hauled the Royal Train, has featured in several TV programmes and achieved the first authenticated 100mph speed for a steam locomotive in 50 years.

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## WHO KILLED THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN?

Well. The closely guarded secret is out, and we now know who killed the Ship's captain! Several teams managed to identify at least one of the evil perpetrators and picked up on many of the clues. The winning team was led by Les and Rosemary. The runners up also correctly identified the murderers so congratulations to both teams. We asked Kate and Ian from that team to let us have their thoughts about the evening's entertainment.

Having led sheltered lives, we had no idea what to expect. We thought the Shipboard atmosphere was nicely established immediately, as we were greeted by The Captain, and handed a colourful lei to set the scene. The format held our attention, as each character introduced his/herself, and gave a short, but significant resume of their situation. We liked the touches of humour and felt that the actors aka members of the committee really entered into the spirit of the story, interpreting the script with just the right touch.

We noticed that everyone was thoroughly engaged and absorbed by the developing scenario, which is no mean achievement in itself! Certainly, on our table there was a great deal of concentrated, not to mention heated debate, as we wrestled with the intricacies of the plot! Those cunning monkeys, the cast, managed to bamboozle us into confusion as regards motivation for the dastardly deed, but we identified the murderer and his accomplice, which was most gratifying!

A light supper was served to complete the evening, which was a resounding success. We would like to offer a huge Thank you to the committee, and anyone else involved in providing such an entertaining event.

Kate and Ian



On behalf of the cast I'd like to thank Kate and Ian and Sheila and everyone else for the appreciative comments that we have received. At the start, I think it's fair to say that we were more than a little apprehensive but we found the rehearsals good fun and we were pleased how well it came together on the night. I thought the actors did a brilliant job!

Diane Saxon

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## MERSEYWAY REDEVELOPMENT

Council plans include a new 'hotel lobby' style entrance to the centre, a redesign of Adlington Walk and improvements to the centre's links to the historic core of Stockport and to the new £120m transport interchange being constructed with TfGM (due for completion in 2022). More details at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/news/stockport->

## [council-sets-out-plans-for-merseyway-redevelopment](#)

The new transport exchange proposes a link between rail and (a new) bus station covered by a two-acre park. There is a video walk through at <https://play.buto.tv/vyyYD>

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## MUSICAL EVENING 1 November 2019

For this year's musical evening we have entertainment from the Mixture, a local 60s chart band covering all your favourites. The food choice this year is curry or hotpot.



Tickets are on sale at the September and October meetings. Tickets are just £15. Don't delay in getting yours; we expect demand to be high.

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## U3A IN CHINA

China has a kind of special universities with an average student age of above 60 years. It is called the Senior Citizens' University (SCU). The concept of SCU or better known as the Third-Age University (U3A) originated in France in the 1970s.

Today, many Chinese SCUs offer foreign languages, computer skills, music, dance, photography, painting and other crafts, sports and cooking; together with courses in traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting, literature and science, digital graphic design and video editing.

The first SCU was opened in east China's Shandong Province in 1983. By 2018, there were over 62,000 such universities nationwide, with approximately 13 million students, including those taking online courses. This figure accounted for half of the SCU enrolments around the world. In recent years, SCUs have become very popular in China. Sometimes applicants have to draw lots for certain courses. Most SCUs in China are sponsored by the government and the average tuition fee is about 200-500 yuan (£20-£60) per semester.

## FORTHCOMING TRAVEL EVENTS

Contact: Margaret McDermott or Ruth Smith

14 September	Day visit to PENRHYN CASTLE and CONWAY. National Trust members £13 Non-members £25 TWO PLACES LEFT. Depart at 9:00 from Village Hall. Final payment at September meeting.
3-10 Oct	MEDIEVAL GERMANY River Cruise on Rhine, Main and Mosel. Minibus to Airport. £5. Payment and information at September meeting; please try to attend.
8 Dec	RENISHAW HALL Guided tour and Christmas lunch. Choice of menu. £40. Includes cost of coach, tour and lunch Payment at September meeting

## EVENTS IN STOCKPORT – SEPTEMBER

**Frog Art trail** - there are 19 brightly coloured frogs (recently joined by three more!) spread around the town centre. Each frog has been sponsored by a local business and individually designed and painted to showcase the businesses and the people who are 'Totally Stockport'. The Frogs will be in place until 28 September. Details at <https://stockportsgiantleap.co.uk/art-trail/>  
Photography group's theme this month is street furniture; we may see a frog or two in the competition!

**Stockport Beer Week** is running again this year between 19 September and 29 September. 11 days of events including tours, walks, visits and a beer quiz. More details at <http://www.ssmcamra.co.uk/beerweek.htm>

**Stockport Food and Drink Festival** – between 6 and 8 September, Stockport's first annual three-day festival of food and drink will treat visitors to tasty culinary delights from over 70 traders. There will be music and stalls in various locations and on Saturday, 7 September there will be cookery demonstrations from local chef, Simon Rimmer.

## OUR U3A ACTIVITIES

11 Sept	Amazing History walks: Josephine Gosling
9 Oct	Life and times of a busker: Eric Newton
1 Nov	Music Evening. £15. Entertainment by The Mixtures plus curry/hotpot.
13 Nov	Working with orangutans in the rainforest of Borneo: Sarah Lionheart
11 Dec	Christmas Party Entertainer: Tony Johnston

## NATIONAL U3A EVENTS

5 Sept	The Big Sing £15. Now fully booked. Led by Stuart Overington, a conductor from the Halle, and members of the North West Regional U3A Team.
18 Sept	'We the Curious' - Is there anybody out there? £22. Bristol. 3D Planetarium show plus hands-on workshops examining aspects of the search for new life forms.
21 Sept	Family History conference. Buxton. £23. Palace Hotel, Buxton.
7 Oct	U3A Explores Science at the Ri 2019 £21.50. London Three presentations: science of sunlight, illusions, Beyond the Higgs

Online Booking is available for national events at [www.u3a.org.uk/events](http://www.u3a.org.uk/events) or call the National Office 0208 466 6139

### ADVANCE NOTICE - ST ANN'S HOSPICE 'Christmas is Coming' concert 2019.

St Ann's Hospice Festival Choir will be performing at the Bridgewater Hall on Friday December 6th 2019 at 7.30pm. Also appearing are Loreto Prep School choir and Corus Brass.

Tickets are available from the Bridgewater Hall Booking Office, price £23.50 including £2.50 booking fee. A coach will again be going from Hazel Grove Park and Ride (£7 per person). Contact Carol Traffon for further details.

## GROUP REPORTS

### BALLET APPRECIATION

24th July / 1st August.

The film *White Crow*, issued earlier this year, tells the story of Rudolf Nureyev's early life and his defection to the West in 1961. In the film, Nureyev is played by a member of the Kirov Ballet.

We saw a documentary, recorded in 2007, which told the same story, illustrated with film of Nureyev himself. This was followed by illustrations of Nureyev dancing with Margot Fonteyn, including extracts from *Giselle*, *Marguerite and Armand*, and *Birthday Offering*.

28th August / 5th September.

We watched the 1965 production of Kenneth Macmillan's *Romeo and Juliet*, starring Fonteyn and Nureyev.

It was surprisingly good, despite the age of both the film and Fonteyn (she was 47 at the time).

At our next meetings we will stay with Macmillan's choreography for a recent performance of *Mayerling*.

Meg Humphries

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### BALLROOM DANCING

Unfortunately, a hip break for Freda meant that music playing in August had to be rearranged at short notice, but we were rescued by Roger and Alison, with help from Chris and Jackie.

Walter Mason

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### CHURCHES AND PUBS

#### July: St John's Church High Legh



Our visit this month took us to the tiny village of High Legh and the church of St John. After a warm welcome from Philip Robinson (priest in charge) and his wife we enjoyed a refreshing cup of tea and homemade biscuits.

The outside of the church is quite a revelation as it looks like a form of Tudor house rather than a church. Inside it is red brick with a beamed wooden ceiling and really quite simple in both layout and adornment. Philip explained that there had been two families (landed gentry) in the area in the 1400's who both had a private chapel, the Egerton Leighs and the Cornwall Leighs. The Egerton Leighs had the west chapel which is the site of the church today. It was originally built in 1408 but after centuries it became derelict.

In 1814 to celebrate the victory at the Battle of Waterloo a new church was built on the site. However, a fire destroyed the church in 1891 and in 1893 the building we see today was erected. It is a Grade 2 listed building and comprises a simple chancel, nave with three rows of pews and a narthex with a two-level tower above. There are three stained glass windows. Outside there is an 'arts and crafts' style facade which is decorative. It is possible to see where the original stone has been cut to allow the supports for the timber frame. The grounds are beautifully maintained, with a memory tree at the entrance and a secluded, peaceful garden behind the church. Well worth a visit.

We adjourned to the Jolly Thresher pub for a delicious lunch. Thanks to Paul and Barbara for another triumph.

Lynn Arnold

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## **CROWN GREEN BOWLING**

We would welcome any members who would like to give bowls a try, or experienced players to join us as we play all year round at Torkington Park, Hazel Grove, we have various level's players, play in pairs generally, we are not in any league, play for fun and exercise , you just turn up by 10am any Tuesday and/or Thursday morning till 12 noon (weather permitting), with a coffee break at 11am (you bring yourself).

we are very easy going and tuition can be arranged by contacting me in advance. Bowls are available to borrow from the bowling hut until you decide the game is for you when you would obtain your own set of bowls.

Andre Lister

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## **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### **JULY MEETING**

There seems to be a dearth of subjects to discuss as the news seems focussed on nothing but Brexit and the travels Boris is making around the country.

However, our first question was Why do so many Old Etonians become MPs. It seems Eton gives boys great confidence and they are encouraged to believe they are capable of anything to which they aspire. As they are likely to be from wealthy families, they can afford to spend time fighting an election rather than having to hold a job down.

Next it was New Government, new PM - what do we think of it so far? Opinions were divided. Will all these promises be kept and where is the money coming from? A split ensued when asked if it was ironic that we have asked for help from other EU countries when Boris says we are leaving 'do or die'. One view was that it was fine, the other that it was incredible that we should even ask.

We discussed the plight of Nizarin Zaghari Ratcliffe who has been in prison in Iran since 2016. It seems that Boris, when Foreign Secretary, did not help due to not having the correct facts but Jeremy Hunt has since tried to help, so far without success.

Mental Health was on the agenda as it seems to be more prevalent than in the past. The internet was felt to be partly to blame. It may well be that, with all the media publicity, we are more aware nowadays when previously it was kept hidden.

One problem which certainly seems to be escalating, is knife crime, particularly with school children and it has been suggested that a dedicated police officer should be attached to each secondary school. Our unanimous view was that it would need far more than one policeman and this would need careful planning.

Finally - which would you give up, Radio or TV? Two chose radio, three TV.

After which we relaxed with Margaret's always welcome cake and biscuits.

## **AUGUST MEETING**

As we are still dominated by Brexit there is very little happening currently and difficult to find other topics to discuss. Much of our discussion was therefore taken up with Brexit mania.

Boris Johnson has stated that there will be bumps in the road after we leave the EU and a recent Government document says that there are likely to be shortages in food, fuel and medicines together with a rise in prices. The IMF says that Boris's plans will have little effect on the wealthy and it is the bottom end of society that will suffer.

We discussed the recent A level results which are not as good as last year. We all agreed that it would be better to wait for results to be available before applying to University rather than being awarded provisional places on predicted grades. This would probably mean having to take the exams earlier in the year.

Some NHS Trusts are now denying fertility treatment to single women (without partners). Is this fair? We thought that it was, as it costs approximately £5000 a session and these women would probably need help from the state for childcare, housing etc. We had no objection to them paying for the treatment themselves!

Should the UK grow more of its own food rather than importing so much? We thought this was a good idea but could see many difficulties in putting it into practice. Where would we get more farmers as many are already giving up farming. We are short of agricultural workers and rely on immigrants to fill the gap.

Margaret McDermott

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## **DARTS**

The Darts group is going from strength to strength with some of us even managing to hit the board! The last darts meeting at The Bull's Head had 12 members playing and everyone seemed to enjoy it. I think 12 is the maximum number we can have at any one time as the room cannot accommodate any more.

The next darts matches are on the 29 August and 12 September. If you are interested in joining please let me know and I will add you to the list and let you know when we have spare capacity.

Linda Dale

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## **DINING**

The Joshua Bradley Pub and Restaurant

Joshua Bradley was the gentleman who presented Hyde Town Hall with its clock and Bells in 1883/4. In honour of Mr Bradley there is a hotel at Gee Cross named after him and this is where the Dining Group went for lunch in August. What an enjoyable lunch we had.

The hotel is set back from the road within large grounds. We dined in the large bright conservatory overlooking the grounds. Two long tables made socialising easy and it was nice to meet some new members to our group who enjoyed themselves as much as we regulars did.

The 3-course meal was tasty, nicely presented and served; the most popular dishes being Mushrooms followed by Sea Food Basket and Fruit Crumble.

Our next lunch will be at The Fickle Mermaid in October and at the September meeting we will have details about our Christmas meal.

Dorothy Neillands  
Dorothy Gerrard

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## FAMILY HISTORY

We have enjoyed a summer break after a year in which we discussed; family sayings and local (to us) dialects, Family History Societies, Record Offices and many other topics.

This month some of us will be attending the annual Family History Conference in Buxton. Scheduled talks include: mill workers, railway workers, migration and graveyards. We will also have the opportunity to browse the exhibitors' stands and possibly spend our money on old maps, books etc.

Our meetings will resume on Monday 23rd September. If you would like any information about the group please contact Sue Harlin or Pat Christopher

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## GARDENING

July saw us at Pam's garden, which though small had some choice plant varieties, growing well. Clematis, phlox, hydrangeas, and roses caught the eye.

In August we had good attendances, first to Hill Top Avenue in Cheadle Hulme with a huge lacecap hydrangea dominating the front garden.

There we were impressed by the luscious planting in the large long narrow garden (over 100 varieties of clematis alone!), and by the comprehensive plant knowledge of the lady gardener. Her secret to a weed-free garden – don't hoe (it raises the weed seeds) and fill the ground with plants!

Later in August a visit to Chris and Jackie 's lovely garden was in real contrast, with colourful dahlias, hydrangeas, and phlox growing and displaying well.

Generous helpings of cake and cream scone, washed down with prosecco, rounded off a lovely visit.

Walter Mason



## GERMAN

We continued our meetings until the end of July, then took a break for August. Despite some members taking holidays, the numbers at meetings have been a steady nine.

As well as our usual mix of crime and human interest stories we have been entertained by accounts of interesting visits by members to the USA, several parts of the UK and a trouble-free tour by rail through East Germany which include a visit to the Bauhaus which is celebrating its centenary this year. We will restart our Friday meetings in September.

Marlene Brookes

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## HISTORY

At the July meeting, Julia Curtis gave a fascinating talk on St Odile (660-720).

Odile was born blind and as consequence her father did not want her because she was a girl and handicapped, so her mother took her to Palma where she was raised by peasants. A tenth-century legend relates that when she was twelve, she was taken into a nearby monastery where she was baptised and miraculously recovered her sight. Her younger brother Hughes had her brought home again, which enraged their father so much that he accidentally killed his son but Odile miraculously revived him and then she ran away again.

She fled across the Rhine and hid in a cave near Basle in Switzerland, but her father pursued her. However, as he tried to approach the cave the cliff face opened up and he was injured by falling rocks, but Odile helped to nurse him and he finally gave up resisting her and founded the Augustine monastic community of Mont St Odile, of which Odile became the abbess. She subsequently founded another monastery which included a hospital and was also known as the patroness saint of good eyesight.

Pam Curley

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## KURLING

Indoor kurling is going very well. We continue to meet after the monthly meetings. Even though we are not up to Olympic standard yet we have great fun. If you have not played before and wish to do so, please let me know.

Paul Kenneth

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## OPERA APPRECIATION

3rd/8th July.

We watched a recording from 2001 of the Paris National Opera's production of Manon.

I bought this DVD recently (second hand because I thought I might not like it). I was bowled over by the quality of the singing to Massenet's glorious music.

Not all the group agreed with me, but I thought it was a very elegant performance showing Renée Fleming and Marcello Alvarez at their best.

7th/12th August.

We saw the 2007 Salzburg Festival production of Eugene Onegin. Tchaikovsky's music was conducted by Daniel Barenboim, and the singing and acting were superb. The director had over-emphasised the seamy side of Russian society, which rather marred the performance.

Next : After two tragedies, we need some light relief, so I intend to show The Barber of Seville.

Meg Humphries

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

In July we had two competitions. First on "Lakes and Pools", 1st Derek – Sandringham; 2nd Equal Walter – Gawsworth Jand eff – High Lane; 3rd Diane – Finland (not pictured).



Our second competition was of the pictures from the May group photoshoot in Stockport. We had a beautiful sunny day for this which enabled us to find interesting light effects. The results were 1st Walter – Warren Street; 2nd Equal Brian – Viaduct and Bob Mealhouse Brow.



We then spent time discussing plans for our October display at the monthly meeting.

Our next meeting is in September and the competition subject is Street furniture. New members are welcome. Please contact me for details.

Walter Mason

## QUIZ GROUP

In July Diane set the questions; some standard categories plus pot luck and 'in the News' sections.

Our table quizzes were pictures of bridges and cocktails with missing letters to identify.



At the August meeting, Mavis set the questions. There were the usual categories of science and nature, Geography, Art and Literature, Entertainment, General Knowledge, and (the less popular!) Sport. During our refreshment break the group tried to identify pictures of famous people and buildings, and completed a short 'Dingbat' quiz, with varying degrees of success!

A new, experimental venture this month was a music quiz which was well received and brought back memories for some of us.

On 5 November members from the Quiz group are taking part in an inter U3A quiz organised by the Greater Manchester Network of U3As. The team did well in the previous Greater Manchester Network quiz so please wish us luck!

Diane Saxon

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## READING

Our book for July was A MAN CALLED OVE by Fredrik Backman, translated from the Swedish. It tells the sad/humorous story of recently widowed Ove whose attempts at suicide are thwarted by a ragbag mix of neighbours and acquaintances who will keep interfering in his well-ordered life. We all enjoyed this story which was both funny and moving in equal measure and it is no surprise that Tom Hanks has acquired the rights to make a film of Ove's story. It should suit him down to the ground. In August we discussed THE WYRD SISTERS by Terry Pratchett. Most of us approached this book with some misgivings but we were pleasantly surprised and grateful to Marion for suggesting it, as it opened up to us the amazing fantastical world that Pratchett has created. His three witches are really down-to-earth characters who made us laugh out loud with their droll comments. In the intricate plot there were nods to both Macbeth and Hamlet with so much humour in all the characters. I'm sure most of us will pay another visit to Discworld.

Our next meeting is the first Monday in September when we will be discussing DUNE by Frank Herbert and in October our book is THE MINIATURIST by Jessie Burton.

Marlene Brookes

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## SEQUENCE DANCING

We are still dancing fortnightly at Hawk Green. This year we have added lots of new dances to our programme, including a waltz, a cha-cha, a tango, a mambo, a blues and a jive. Our attempt at a foxtrot caused serious brain overload, so is confined to the long term 'work in progress' category!

We are resuming our Sunday afternoon dances at the Village Hall on Sept 8th, Oct 13th, Nov 10th and Dec 8th. If anyone new wishes to join us, please ring first for details.

Kate Heller

## SINGING

The U3A Choir will perform at High Lane Methodist Church on Saturday 5th October; afternoon tea will also be served. Tickets available at the September meeting. Buy your tickets and come and enjoy the following programme.

Botox & Nosedrops (my favourite things)

All things Bright & Beautiful

Bridge Over Troubled Water

You are the New Day

Little Polly Flinders

Sing a Song of Sixpence

Autumn Leaves

Mamma Mia

Somewhere over the Rainbow

Money Money Money

The Seal Lullaby

Flying Free

Waterloo

Audience Participation Number

Margaret Glynn

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## TRAVEL

### Wedgwood and Trentham Gardens – Thursday 27 June 2019

Following the factory tour signs, the group found itself on the first floor, where we could look down to the factory floor. There were samples of tools etc. such as a Batt – slabs of damp or dry plaster used within the potting process. Didding Stick- a tapered sponge to smooth clay around handles and spouts. Knocker -to knock clay into a figure mould. Biscuit where an item had been fired once but not yet glazed. Glazing ceramic materials are applied to a biscuit item and once fired give a glass-like appearance. Hand painting where artists mix dried colour with a medium clove or pine oil to form a paste. Using different types of brushes skilfully painting decorative scenes or patterns taking 14 hours to decorate one of many prestige plates with nine separate firings. Then the Jolly Machine – used to form a shape in 'Jasper' production.

Did you know a typical clay item shrinks by approximately 13% when fired in the Biscuit Kiln! Josiah Wedgwood 1730 – 1795 founded the company, producing pottery, elaborate vases, plates etc; later generations of the Wedgwood family have carried on the business.

After morning coffee/tea the group travelled to Trentham Gardens. We were given an informative map so we could look round the gardens at our own pace and have a bite to eat. The David Austin rose bed was a delight with varieties of perfumed and colourful roses. Looking across the lake was interesting when a pleasure boat appeared from the south end of the lake. If one walked round the lake, I understand, there could be fairies!

After a breezy warm day the group travelled back to High Lane with plants to place in their gardens to emulate parts of Trentham.

Ruth Smith



## **BUXTON MILITARY TATTOO – 6TH JULY 2019**

On a somewhat grey afternoon, we waited in Devonshire Road Buxton to enter The Dome, once the final rehearsal was completed. We were escorted to our seats and serenaded by musicians from the Stockport Squadron of RAF Air Cadets.

The Tattoo programme was quite varied opening with a trumpet Fanfare followed by items from 7 bands, including intricate marching displays by:

The Band of the Mercian Regiment, The Band of The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, The Nottinghamshire Band of The Royal Engineers, The Yorkshire Volunteers Band and Corp of Drums, The Pipes and Drums of RAF Waddington, Combined Bands of the Army Cadet Force and 162 (Stockport) Squadron RAF Air Cadets Band.



Plus, to add some glamour the Emerald Isle Dance Team. All performances were enhanced by an excellent narration by David Meller. All proceeds from the Tattoo go to ABF – The Soldiers' Charity. This 10th year for the Tattoo also marks the 75th Birthday of ABF.

Roger Drinkwater

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## **SOMERSET HOLIDAY 15-20 JULY 2019**

### **DAY 1**

We left High lane in brilliant sunshine stopping at Stafford services for a coffee break on route to Slimbridge. Slimbridge opened in November 1946, it is a wildlife reserve in Gloucestershire founded by the naturalist Sir Peter Scott. Subsequently he opened eight reserves around the country forming the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust. We could wander around the 2,000 acres of pasture, reed bed, lagoon and salt marsh where we saw some of the water birds who live there all the year round and others who are migrants on their way to and from their summer breeding grounds. An increasing number of Bewick swans and white fronted geese overwinter here. After a most enjoyable three hours we continued our journey to the Swan Hotel in the centre of the city of Wells.

Paul Kenneth

### **DAY 2**

After a morning of free time in Bath we took our coach back to Wells to visit the Bishop's Palace. The palace which is adjacent to Wells Cathedral is a grade 1 listed building and has been the home of the Bishops of Bath and Wells for 800 years. The guides were excellent, knowledgeable and friendly. We passed through the medieval vaulted undercroft, long gallery to the chapel where weddings regularly take place. Outside people were playing croquet on the front lawn and through an archway the stunning beautifully kept gardens were fabulous. The moat has two resident swans who are taught to ring the bell for food, unfortunately I didn't hear them during our visit.

Sue Harlin

### **DAY 3**

After a brief look around the local market we set off for Cheddar driving down the spectacular gorge which never fails to impress. The towering limestone cliffs had everyone craning their necks in an attempt to see the top. Our first stop was the award winning Cheddar cheese factory where we were able to view part of the process of cheese making and see a video of the later stages. The large range of cheeses which we were able to sample ranged from extra mature to those with varied flavours: marmite, cider, herb, port and chilli (which

had several people breathing fire and gasping for breath!). After time in Cheddar for lunch we drove to Rich's cider farm. Here we were shown the orchards and had the cider making process explained. We were able to see some of the original equipment and understand how the process has changed over the years. This family run business only produces on a comparatively small scale but makes award winning cider which we were able to sample before enjoying afternoon tea in their café.

Pat Christopher

## DAY 4

Today, was to me, the highlight of our holiday, a full day at Longleat House and Safari Park. The drive through the safari park took two hours and it was magical. We saw elephants, wolves, zebras, lions, tigers, cheetahs, rhinos and many more animals roaming freely. But the best to me were the cheeky macaques. They are highly intelligent and inquisitive, jumping on cars and our coach to see if they could find any loose parts. Our coach didn't go unscathed, Malcolm our driver found the Scania badge missing from the front of the coach.

After the safari drive we had the rest of the day to enjoy the many attractions. The miniature railway and jungle cruise were popular and enjoyable. Of course, Longleat House and gardens were an attraction on their own. The home of the 7th Marquess of Bath has been open to the public for many years. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to visit everything but would love to visit again perhaps on another U3A holiday!! Sue Harlin

## DAY 5

Being in the centre of Wells, our hotel was conveniently situated for our morning visit to the cathedral. We strolled over to the cathedral where we were divided into three groups for a guided tour. Our guide was a very professional lady member of the cathedral who pointed out the amazing Gothic architecture. Approaching 11 o'clock we made our way to view the famous astronomical clock which dates back to the 14th century ready to see it chime the hour. Another interesting visit to a most beautiful cathedral.

Susan and Peter Bailey



This afternoon's visit to the Somerset Rural Life Museum was again fortuitous as it enabled us to escape the rain. The museum is on the site of the former abbey farm and is dominated by the magnificent Abbey Barn where food produced on the abbey land was stored during the middle ages and beyond. It is still used today, especially on Twelfth Night when the traditional Wassail Ritual is celebrated in true Somerset style, with plenty of cider! Outside is an impressive sculpture of a horse, Punch, made from bits of farm machinery and equipment and also a traditional barn on saddlestones, those mushroom like supports which kept the rats out and raised the building above any flooding in the area. Our enthusiastic guide, Natasha, explained that the farm was renovated in 1918 and new tenants moved in – the Mapstone family. The farm was used mainly for dairy products and cheese making. Our visit to the farmhouse kitchen reminded many of us of our own childhoods, with black-leaded stove and rag rugs. Our visit to the museum was extremely interesting giving us an insight into life in rural Somerset.

Marlene Brookes

## DAY 6

Returning home we had a 40 minute ride on the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire steam railway from Cheltenham Race Course to Toddington through some of the most spectacular scenery in the Cotswolds. A fitting end to a perfect holiday.

Ann Wright

## FAIRFIELD MORAVIAN SETTLEMENT

After overcoming many obstacles such as parking problems, torrential rain, and one member of the party not getting off the tram, we arrived at the settlement.

The settlement seems a haven of tranquillity going back to a time gone by. We were given an interesting talk on the history of the Moravians and their life today. There are many more Moravians around the world than I had thought.



The Moravians were originally from Moravia and Bohemia and disagreed with the practices of the Roman Catholic Church and were persecuted for speaking out. A few survived and a benefactor gave them land in Germany. Eventually they increased their numbers until they arrived in Fairfield after again being given land for their settlement. They were an industrious people and sold their products far and wide evangelising as they went. They were forward thinking in that they educated the girls to be able to earn their own living. Nowadays they work outside the settlement but come home to their peaceful surroundings at night.

We received a very warm welcome and felt that God's love was all around us.

Thank you, Pat, for organising another interesting trip.

Jean Barrow

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## IRELAND 25-29 AUGUST

Here we present a compilation of impressions from members of the group.

Our sixth visit to Ireland and probably the best. After a short flight to Dublin with Ryanair we met our usual coach driver who took us to our first visit, Castletown House, built in 1722. The estate was eventually owned by Thomas Connolly who married Lady Louisa Lennox in 1758 when she was only fifteen. She then set about transforming the house from its somewhat dark and dreary interior into a beautifully decorated home. Obviously a very determined young girl! The result was very impressive.

One incredible inspirational young man called James, who was very skilled at walking backwards, led us round the National Stud Farm which belongs to the Irish people. The horses were absolutely beautiful and worth enormous amounts of money. The top stallion, Invincible Spirit, is father to world champion race horses which sell for millions at auction. Over 250 foals, of which we saw several, are born here every year. One was very boisterous and had been even known to bite the guide. Many retired race horses have a wonderful life on the farm with beautifully designed air-conditioned stables with roofs in the shape of Japanese lanterns. Also on this site are the Japanese Gardens created between 1906 and 1910 by the Japanese horticulturist Tassa Eida to portray the story of life from Birth to Death through rocks, trees, flowers and water. Wonderful!



Continuing to our excellent hotel we discovered that the day happened to be Cemetery Sunday when Catholics tidy graves in churchyards, lay fresh flowers and have the graves blessed to honour their ancestors. This explained the large number of cars parked outside many churchyards.

The Irish National Heritage Park is an open-air museum with reconstructed historical sites depicting nine thousand years in Ancient Ireland from the Mesolithic Period to the Norman Invasion in 1169. Derek, our wonderful informative guide, brought the past to life as he described each of the exhibits. We followed this by a visit to Altamont Gardens with its woodland walk and lake covered in water lilies just like a Monet painting.

The drive through the Wicklow Mountain the following day was fabulous. The Wicklow Gap is a valley formed in the Ice Age. littered by huge boulders; the scenery is absolutely beautiful. We arrived at Russborough House, the longest house in Ireland, which is full of works of art and ornate plasterwork. There have been four robberies in the past. One particularly audacious one was when a gang drove a jeep up a steep flight of stone steps and crashed through the front door. Bollards are now in place! Some paintings have been recovered and are now stored in the National Gallery in Dublin. In an exhibition in the basement there was a letter from Jackie Kennedy to Lady Breit (the previous owner of the house) thanking her for "an enchanting weekend"

The Birds of Prey Centre at Russborough is superb. Again, a very friendly guide showed us hawks, eagles etc. all of whom had names such as Professor, Princess..... I think our favourite was the baby barn owl, five weeks old, sitting on the ground, near our feet, not yet able to fly. We were treated to a flying display by Stanley one of the eagles. Some of our group were brave enough to allow him to land on their arm, wearing a special glove of course.

There was an unexpected addition to our itinerary when our driver, Wayne, booked a tour for us to Wicklow Brewery and lunch in Mickey Finn's Pub. This is a family owned small brewery in the tiny village of Redcross. They brew seven different beers from Wicklow Helles Lager at 4.3% alcohol to WB40 at 6.5% A very friendly young man explained the process and offered us a taste of all of them. Later we managed to get safely on the coach to go on to Wicklow Gaol, our next visit

Wicklow Gaol is a very gruesome place, established in the eighteenth century, where inmates were treated very harshly. Prisoners from the various Irish Wars of Independence against the British were held here. About 50,000 Irish convicts were transported from Wicklow to Australia. Many children were convicted of very trivial offences and were kept in the same cells as the adults. Fortunately, it is now a museum. We had a wonderful journey from Wicklow back to our hotel following the coast road next to the Irish Sea with the sun glistening on the water. The road was extremely narrow but our driver skilfully avoided oncoming traffic.

On the way to the airport on our final day we asked Wayne, a native of Dublin, to take us on a tour of the city. Unusually Dublin has two cathedrals, St. Patrick's and Christ Church, both Church of Ireland. We saw homes for the poor and homeless maintained by the Guinness Foundation which also makes many donations to many charities and supports some of the colleges in the two universities. We went to Phoenix Park, the largest in Europe which has the biggest Viking cemetery outside of Scandinavia. The Irish President's Residence is in the Park which looks like the American White House; Churchill lived in the Royal Lodge as a very young child before moving to Blenheim. Dublin has many statues which have been quirky nicknames with the Irish sense of humour Oscar Wilde: the quare on the square. Anna Livia, in honour of the River Liffey: the floozie in the jacuzzi. James Joyce: the prick with the stick.

To complete our holiday, we toured Malahide Castle. It started as a wooden building and then became a stone fortress. It has magnificent wood panelling and lovely furniture. The surrounding lands and harbour were gifted in 1185 by Henry 2nd for services to the Crown. The Butterfly House in the walled garden has some of the most colourful creatures on earth flying free among tropical plants, many from Australia.



A short drive from the Castle brought us to the Airport to negotiate the baggage check machines again, It is a pity they don't all work!!

## WALKING

### 31st July Malkins Bank



Our 6 mile walk took us along the canal and then through rolling farmland and pretty wooded valleys. This area once contained a thriving salt industry due to large underground deposits which, once extracted, were pan dried and then sent by train (the salt line) to the Potteries.

Nine of us met at the now defunct salt line carpark and set off along the Trent and Mersey canal (part of the Cheshire ring) with its unusual sets of twin locks built by Telford and Brindley. A steady stream of boats was going through the locks.

At Wheelock we left the canal where we had to make a slight detour as the recent heavy rain had left our original route waterlogged. However, we were soon able to get back on track at Sandbach mill and without getting too bogged down were able to complete the original route.

What we hadn't catered for was the freak weather conditions which had resulted in flooding, road closures and diversions in the Stockport area, both in the morning and on our way home. We hope those who braved the conditions thought the walk worthwhile!

Louanne Collins

### Tuesday 13th August 2019 Hayfield /Little Hayfield Walk

Merlyn and Joyce led 16 walkers on a historical walk from Hayfield to Kinder Reservoir, the shooting cabin on Middle Moor returning via Park Hall and Little Hayfield. We followed the route of the Kinder reservoir construction railway, up through the village along the river Sett. Old photos were circulated of the train route dating back to the reservoir construction from 1903 to 1912. At the reservoir dam we stopped for coffee admiring the views of surrounding hills rich in purple heather. Joyce gave a historical summary of Upper House sited in woodland above the dam: and its former owner Sir James Watts a Manchester Textile merchant.

Refreshed we followed the reservoir path through muddy sections and high bracken to Williams Clough and then followed the gradual heather clad diagonal path up to Middle Moor. A red grouse scurried along the pathway in front maybe avoiding the shooting season!

Lunch was taken on a sheltered heather bank in sunshine on the moor overlooking views of Chinley Churn, Lantern Pike, and beyond. Walters's grandchildren who accompanied us on the walk finished lunch quickly and picked small bilberries in nearby cloughs.



Our return route was via Park Hall to see the recently cleared wall garden and then through Little Hayfield. We took a seldom used path following a tributary of the river Sett back to the village.

Merlyn Young

## Wednesday 28 August Winster and Stanton Moor

Eleven of us met in the public car park to the south of Winster for a roughly 6 mile walk up to and around Stanton Moor. Our walk began in Winster with its fine architecture and steep quaintness, before climbing up to Stanton Moor and delving into its mystery and secrets of earlier times. We set off from the car park across the common, immediately passing the capped off shaft of Wesson Mine, before descending to Main Street via one of the many jitties (narrow footpaths) past well kept gardens. Having noted in passing the Wesleyan Chapel, Bank House, Burton Institute, Dower House and Winster Hall we reached the Market House, where we turned left down Woodhouse lane onto a gently downhill path. At the bottom of the escarpment we began our 200m (700ft) or so ascent to the South East corner of Stanton Moor.

After a dry start the predicted rain arrived shortly before we made our way onto the Moor. Here we decamped to a wooded dell with a convenient flat rock outcrop for a welcome but damp lunch. Refreshed we set off along the eastern edge which falls away sharply exposing dramatic weathered gritstone shapes and views of Darley Dale and Matlock. We visited the first of the notable named rocks, the Cat (contraction of Cath meaning battle) with its enigmatic carving. This was followed by a look at the Reform Tower, erected in honour of Earl Grey's steering of the Reform Act. It is worth noting that the silver birch tree clumps dotted around the moor have only grown up over the last 50 years. During the early World War I period the coniferous plantations of larch, spruce and Scots pine, which then covered Stanton Moor, were systematically felled to produce trench timber for shipment to the battlefields of Europe. The moor contains numerous burial cairns and stone circles dating back 3500 to 4500 years, the majority of which are barely, if at all discernible under the covering of grass, heather and bracken. We inspected the only one feature remaining in something like its original form, the Nine Ladies Stone Circle. The fanciful name is said to come from a legend of nine ladies who were turned to stone for dancing on the Sabbath. Reflecting on the cremated remains of hundreds of people beneath, we descended gently southwards back down the centre of the moor with panoramic views to Youlgreave in the west, Winster and Matlock in front and Darley Dale to the east (albeit slightly marred by the now easing rain). Nearing the bottom of the moor we took the path sharply right to exit the moor below the numerous disused quarries that mark its western edge, passing another notable rock known locally as the Cork Stone for its resemblance to a champagne cork.

After a short walk down Birchover Road we reached the entrance to the one remaining working quarry, Stanton Park. Here we turned right and exited through the rear of the quarries car park into a wooded ridge running behind the village of Birchover. Following the gently descending path we emerged back onto the road at the other end of the village by the Druid Inn. Taking the lane at the left of the inn we passed the small outcrop known as Rowter Rocks. As the name of the inn implies there are tales of ancient religious activities and magic being performed on this weathered and now tree covered outcrop. The real magic of this place is the work of The Rev. Thomas Eyre, who built the first chapel below the rocks. He carved seats and caves into the rocks where he spent much time entertaining friends and writing sermons. We continued down the lane to just beyond Rocking Stone Farm where we looped back along the top of the ridge, below Birchover and above Birchover Wood into Uppertown, a tiny hamlet on a quiet lane back to Winster. A few hundred metres down the road we took the path left through fields to the bottom of the valley and rejoined our outward route for the last half a mile up to Winster and back to the car park on East Bank.



It's hard to imagine that the quiet, rambling roads of Winster or the wild heather clad Stanton Moor have ever been touched by the hands of industry. What we saw on our walk today, though, is a reminder of how time can wear down and reclaim scarred landscapes.

Ron Rennell