



Newsletter

September 2025



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FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the September edition of the High Lane u3a newsletter. As always, thanks to the group leaders and contributors for their articles and photographs. In this edition, as well as reports from our interest groups, we have information about the October entertainment evening. Tickets will be available at the monthly meeting or get in touch with André. You won't want to miss this event.

This month's cover photo displays a section of photos from this month's photography competition.

Our next monthly meeting is 10 September when Pete Turner will be giving a talk entitled Through the eyes of a magician. Don't forget to bring some cash or your chequebook to the monthly meeting so you don't miss out on the events.

We are pleased to welcome some new members to our u3a this month and look forward to meeting you at our meetings and interest groups. Your contributions to the newsletter will be very welcome. I always look forward to hearing from members so please feel free to share some of your news, your interests, or items you have found that you think would be of interest to other members.

Attached to the newsletter email is the latest National Office Friends bitesize newsletter. This contains reports of many varied activities taking place in u3as across the country.

The next issue of our newsletter will be October 2025. The newsletter will be published a few days later than usual next month, so you have until 3 October to send me your contributions at newslettereditor@highlaneu3a.org.uk.

Diane Saxon

u3a Week: 20–28 September 2025

u3a week is taking place between 20–28 September and we are celebrating with a programme of online events focussing on positive ageing.

Age Without Limits: Celebrate Ageing 22nd September 10am

Eating Well for Health and Vitality in Later Life 22nd September 12pm

What do official statistics reveal about positive ageing? 23rd September 2 pm

These events are all exclusively open to u3a members and their friends, to help us spread the word about the benefits of being in the u3a movement.

More details at [u3a – u3a Week](#)

MONTHLY MEETING

At this month's meeting we were given a fascinating talk by Frank Pleszak on "The Bombing of New Mills" during the Second World War. The planes also attacked Hayfield, Stoney Middleton Quarry and Chatsworth.

First, he explained his background. His father was arrested when the Russians invaded Poland in 1939 and was sent to Kolyma, one of Russia's notorious gulags. This was a virtual death sentence. Over 20,000 Poles were sent to gulags and only 583 survived, including Frank's father who was eventually released. He recorded his experiences in a book entitled "Two Years in a Gulag".

In 1942 the Germans had a new plane, the Junkers 88 bomber, which they decided could make lightning raids on the UK, flying at low levels to avoid detection and with just two planes, rather than the many that were sent conventionally. They could carry 4 x 250kg high explosive bombs plus incendiaries and machine guns.

They started from France and flew up over the Irish sea to avoid detection. This was a long way which meant they hadn't enough fuel to go back via the same route. So, after the raid they had to turn east and try to get back to The Netherlands or Germany.

The target was the de Havilland factory at Lostock near Bolton, but due to low cloud, they couldn't find their target and flew over Stockport heading east. They decided that they would try to do as much damage as they could on their way home, so they first bombed New Mills. The bombs were dropped towards what seemed to be industrial targets and any large crowds of people were shot at. In Low Leighton the Wesleyan Chapel was hit together with adjacent houses and a ten-year-old girl was killed, and the caretaker of the chapel was machine gunned in his allotment shed and died later of his wounds.

The two Ju 88s then carried on along the Sett valley and bombed Hayfield, where six people were killed when three cottages on Spring Vale Road were destroyed. They dropped the last of their bombs on Darlton Quarry, near Stoney Middleton and finally they strafed Chatsworth House before heading for home.

Four spitfires of the 303 (Polish) squadron were scrambled and shot down the first plane with the loss of the four crew. The other one was damaged and manged to land. The crew were taken prisoner and spent the rest of the war as PoWs.

Our next meeting is 10th September when Pete Turner will be giving a talk entitled Through the eyes of a magician.

Mark Saxon

ENTERTAINMENT EVENING

Friday October 24th is the date for our entertainment evening.

Nancy Ann Lee, otherwise known as Little Miss Sixties, who we had a few years ago, is coming to entertain us again.

She was a great success, so if you want a good evening put this date in your diary.

Doors open at 6.30pm and we will eat at 7pm. Please bring your own drinks and glasses.

The menu is

Irish Tavern Pie / Lasagne / Veg Lasagne

Apple Pie and cream / Pavlova with fresh fruit and cream

FYI The Irish Tavern Pie consists of beef cooked in Guinness, with carrots, onions and shallots with a pastry top and served with red cabbage. We had it last year and it was very tasty.

Tickets on sale now, cost £25

Don't forget to bring some cash or your chequebook to the monthly meeting so you don't miss out on the events.

PHONE SCAM

We have recent reports from members of a scam where you are called but when you answer there is no-one there. The phone rings for just a few seconds before hanging up. It could be tempting to ring them back, but you shouldn't – it's a scam, and falling for it could be expensive. Your return call is routed to a premium rate number, often international. Calls often appear to come from developing countries. They will try to keep you on the line for as long as possible. This might involve saying you have won a prize and keeping you on the line to claim it, or you might just be played music to make you think you are in a queue.

This is known as a Wangiri scam which originated in Japan. There have been victims all over the world. You should ignore the call and don't ring back. You could try blocking the number.

If you think you have fallen victim to this scam, contact your provider as soon as possible, as well as [Action Fraud](#), the UK's national fraud reporting centre

Quiz night



Eight teams of quizzers enjoyed a competitive but fun evening at the recent Quiz Night hosted by the Quiz group. A range of question categories were included with the questions written and asked by members of the Quiz group.

Question rounds included Sport, TV, film and musicals, memorable dates, science, True/false, famous Johns plus a couple of table rounds of famous faces and Dingbats. Our supper was provided by a local caterer, and the food was plentiful and very good.

All teams scored well, and the final result was very close. Thanks to everyone for supporting us and congratulations to the winning teams.

If this event has whetted your appetite for quizzing, why not come and try out a meeting of the Quiz group. We meet monthly, normally on the 4th Thursday of the month from 10am to around noon. Meetings are very friendly, and we would be pleased to see you.

Diane Saxon

GROUP NEWS

BACKGAMMON

The backgammon group continues to meet fortnightly in the Bull's Head, High Lane on Wednesday afternoons. Attendance has been low during the summer months obviously due to holidays etc. I hope the autumn months will see our numbers back to normal. New members of all standards are always welcome and if you have never played before and want to try it, come down and we will be happy to teach you. If anyone is interested, contact me Ken Jackson via BackgammonLeader@highlaneu3a.org.uk

Ken Jackson

BALLROOM DANCING

After an eventful summer break, ballroom dancing restarted with a wide variety of dance types from foxtrot to Paso Doble, from waltz to Argentine tango, with some sequence dances too, to make for an enjoyable afternoon.

The only sadness was to hear that Kath Taylor, our original leader, and one of the founder members at High Lane, had died at the age of 94.



Walter Mason

CHURCHES AND PUBS

August visit

On Wednesday 6th August the group enjoyed a pleasant drive to Peak Forest in Derbyshire to visit the church, 'Charles King and Martyr'. On arrival we were warmly welcomed and enjoyed drinks and lovely homemade cakes. Old churches are usually cold so we dress appropriately but the treasurer, Peter Henson, put the overhead heating on so we could be comfortable.



Peter, with a clear voice and excellent microphone, informed us of the church's history. The first chapel was built in 1657 by Christiana, Dowager Countess of Derbyshire, as a memorial to her son who was killed in the Civil War. When monarchy was restored, it was dedicated to Charles, King and Martyr. The building was on royal forest land so was known as a

'Peculiar' and that allowed the minister to perform marriages at any time of the day or night.

The church became known as the Gretna Green of the Peaks. (Before you get excited and make plans; this ceased in 1753!. A new larger church was built by the Duke of Devonshire in 1876 at a cost of £6,000.

After a most informative talk we made our way to the 'Shoulder of Mutton' in Chapel-en-le-Frith to enjoy lunch.

Sandy Maclean and Dorothy Neillands

Forthcoming visits for 2025

September 3rd

St. Lawrence Over Peover. (In the grounds of Peover Hall). Church 11.00am.
Lunch at the Churchill Tree.
Mark Saxon

October 1st

St. John's Hayfield Methodist Church and then The George for lunch, price £22.
Names taken at August and September u3a meetings. Meet at church at 10-30am.
Gill and Dave Edmonson.

December 3rd

St. Mary's Lymm
Pam Cooke.

Please make sure you have your names down and money to pay for the meals when you book. Thanks.

Paul Kenneth

MEMOIRS

Meeting 5th August 2025.

This was our 66th meeting. Barbara Speake came to see us. It was lovely to see her again. She was our mentor for five years. We also welcomed a new member.

The suggested topic was 'The day I can't forget' or 'The day I remember'. We could all remember exactly the things that happened, but several members could not remember the date.

One lady told us about her driving ambition. She recounted several occasions when she tried to get a driving licence. Life seemed to get in the way including having a baby and having a knee operation. She tried gears and automatic but finally decided it was not for her. Despite her knowledge of cars, she never did achieve her ambition.

A tale about the most romantic unromantic day. She spent a wonderful day in Cambridge. She saw inside Trinity Hall, had lunch in the Great Hall, punted on the Cam stopping for tea in Grantchester. The friend who escorted her remained a friend as no romance blossomed.

Another lady remembered the day she went to visit a friend of her dads who had a donkey. Her sister got the first ride. The donkey had no reins, and her sister fell off and the donkey ran away. Unfortunately, she banged her head, lost consciousness and ended up in hospital for six weeks. She had fractured her skull. Her brother retrieved the donkey, and no more rides were ever mentioned!

A final day of doing the coast-to-coast walk. The weather was atrocious; the terrain was treacherous and there were no views to be seen. However, they did complete the walk and were able to throw their pebbles picked up in St Bees into the sea in Robin Hoods Bay.

Barbara Speake read from her published memoir. She loved to "shoot the breeze" with her father when she was home from college. She was dismayed when her father disclosed that he had never once enjoyed going to work. She realised what a sacrifice he had made for her and her siblings.

There were experiences as a young teacher who had had little encouragement from the head or the other staff but her love for the children got her through.

A member remembered a day when she lost her son. They were going to Spa and somehow he disappeared. A lady found him and took him to the Spa when he told her that's where he was going. A police car returned him to his Mum. She was devastated and he was excited! We all felt that we could relate to this.

An experience in Moscow. On trying to get into his hotel he was propositioned by three prostitutes! He was only able to escape by giving one of them a 5-dollar bill. Unfortunately, this payment showed up in his business expenses!

There was a trip to Edale with friends after a night in the pub. When they got home one of them was not with them! A return journey had to be made to find him. Luckily, they did!

We all had such a laugh at these stories. Very entertaining.

Quote for the month

Instead of worrying about what you cannot control, shift your energy to what you can create – Roy T. Bennett

Barbara Kenneth

CRIME FICTION READING

Our book for July was *A Death in the Parish* by Rev. Richard Cole. Classed as 'Cosy' Crime, this novel is the second of three novels set in Upper and Lower Badsaddle, a classic English village. The writing focuses more on the interactions of village life in the 1980's and relationships than on the two deaths. Although there are several references to the first book it was not necessary to the plot of Book Two.

The main character, Daniel Clement, is a traditional Anglican vicar of those times. Dealing with a newly arrived evangelical, fundamentalist fellow priest tests Daniel's patience and his friendship with 'policeman' Neil Vanloo, is also under strain. Worries about a couple who wait like vultures for the death of a formidable old parishioner cause problems when Daniel is named as Executer but soon a much more violent crime occurs. His likeable character and his relationship with his sparky mother Audrey are well developed. Neil arrests the wrong suspect, Audrey is up to mischief and one of their dachshunds is expecting puppies, but we can rely on Daniel to solve the mystery.

The group was divided between those who dislike 'Cosy' crime and those who were interested to read a different style. The downside of this novel is perhaps the amount of religious content.

Our book for August is *Our House* by Louise Candlish.

We have space for new members. Do get in touch if you would like to join us.

Sue Rowarth

READING

We meet on the first Monday of the month. Unfortunately, I had to miss the July meeting when my favourite author, Thomas Hardy's novel *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE* was discussed. At our August meeting we planned our programme for the next nine months and enjoyed a superb strawberry and cream sponge made by our expert baker, Ingrid.

In September we will be discussing *A TIME OF GIFTS* by Patrick Leigh Fermor, who was portrayed by Dirk Bogarde in the film *ILL MET BY MOONLIGHT* when he was a secret agent on the island of Crete.

In October our chosen book is *THE INSTRUMENTALIST* by Harriet Constable and our November book is *THE MURDER OF ROGER ACKROYD* by Agatha Christie.

Marlene Brookes

CURRENT AFFAIRS

- Immigration. Are there any solutions? Should we leave the ECHR? Moving women and children out of hotels and making them male only is causing concerns in small villages. No one answer to this difficult question.
- Should police disclose the ethnicity of people charged with crimes? This discussion also brought in discussion of the increased use of England Flags and Union Jacks. It was discussed that anything which would prevent what happened in Southport riots would be welcomed.
- Foreign criminals' deportation was discussed, and it is considered that immediate deportation would be better than partway through a sentence as gaols are full.
- GOOD NEWS –A UK library book found on the Paris Metro was returned to its original library
- Should State Pension be paid to people working beyond pension age or should government save money by not paying until the person stops working. Should National Insurance be paid by people still working after reaching state pension age which doesn't happen now. It was agreed that if people are working, they should pay NI but those eligible for a pension through their contributions should be able to collect them.
- Should people be able to take dogs into pubs including areas where people are eating? We thought finding a venue which has areas where people can eat Dog-free was the best solution.
- Opticians notifying the DVLA, of people whose eyesight fails driving limits. Yes. We know that the fear of loss of independence is a major factor however safety on the road is important. We discussed that the savings on costs from running a car, insurance, service and MOT, could offset the costs of taxis.
- Mike Burton, the leader of the Reform-led Nottingham Council has banned communications with local papers. Is this what a country led by a Reform government would mean?
- Housing minister ended a tenancy agreement then re advertises the property at a higher rental. It was found that though this was not, at the time illegal, but considered unethical. The minister did resign. We also agreed that buy to let using mortgages was inappropriate in the present housing crisis. Mortgages should only be available for purchasers who will use the property themselves.
- Starmer's popularity – who is best to replace him? Wes Streeting, Andy Burnham, Angela Raynor.
- Does High Lane need a Post Office? Yes, but unfortunately it is unlikely to happen. Closure was due to lack of profit and the future for Post Offices is not good anywhere.

Next meeting Friday 26th September 2pm.

Sue Rowarth

GARDENING

Gardening rounded off its gardening year with visits to Sam and Irene's garden – always lovely and immaculate, and second to a garden in Ellesmere Park, Salford which was amazingly jungly with some quirky touches. A fine end to our year's visits.



Walter Mason

GERMAN

Our little group continues to meet most Fridays and our new member, a beginner, is making very good progress. One of our former members who now lives down south recently visited. There will be no meeting on 29th August.

Marlene Brookes

PHOTOGRAPHY

The group does not meet up, we just hold a monthly competition online . No prizes, just for fun. A different topic is given each month and members submit three of their photos in the category. I shuffle them up and email them out to the group to vote on. We usually try and feature the top 3 in the U3A newsletter.

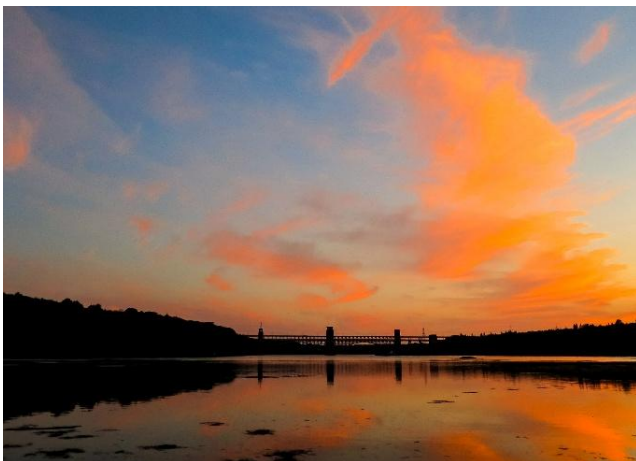
This month's topic is "FARM ANIMALS". If anyone would like to join in simply send me your three pictures by September 18th and I will add them in.

August's topic was "SKIES" and we had some beauties.

1st was Golden Britannia, Anthony Berry

2nd was Rainbow over a barn, Veronica Duffy

3rd , jointly were Winter Sky, Diane Saxon and Daffodils at sunset, Ken.



Ken Jackson

SHORT WALKS

16 August Walk

The Group was lucky for today's walk. It was not quite as hot as previous days, and we had a cooling N to NE breeze for most of the walk. Seven members plus a guest from the sweltering south met in Jackson's Brick Works car park, all equipped with sun hats and plenty of water.

The route took us through the nature reserve to the Middlewood Way. The path was



lined with Blackthorn trees which were offering up a fine display of sloes, not quite ready for picking but in a few weeks, they could be the source of our Xmas lunch aperitif (don't forget where you saw them first). Following the Middlewood Way towards High Lane we soon reached Middlewood Station, the only station in England without vehicular access.

We took a short-cut through the station's upline platform into Norbury Hollow, then climbed out of the Hollow up a near overgrown path into open fields below New House Farm housing a few nosey and perhaps over attentive ponies. Through the farmyard we crested the hill and had a 360-degree panoramic view.

The descent of the hill was a bit of a problem. The grass had grown since the walk was recc'ed and the trod of all paths had disappeared. On the basis that the only way was down we followed the hedge to meet up with the track to Prince's Incline. We were not lost but missed our preferred stop for coffee. It didn't mean we missed our coffee break, this was taken by Bluebell Cottage. We continued along Prince's Incline to meet the Macclesfield Canal before branching off across the fields back to the car park.

Thank you, Mike and Maggie Bradbury,

Ruth Smith

TRAVEL

Proposed holidays for 2026. The Isle of Man is not possible as there is insufficient hotel accommodation available

January 26th	Potters resort Essex Balance October
June 29th	Cumbria and Lake District 4 nights at Damson Dene Hotel Bowness DEPOSIT NOVEMBER
July 17th	CRUISE FROM LIVERPOOL 8 nights Ireland and Scotland Fred Olsen, Bolette
August 3rd	SCOTLAND 4 nights at Landmark Hotel Dundee. Includes visit to Edinburgh Tattoo DEPOSIT OCTOBER

WALKING

Seventeen people came for the 5 mile walk in New Mills area starting at the top of Laneside Road. The weather was causing concern, supposedly lightening, thunder and rain!

We set off in lovely warm temperatures, went gently uphill with coffee stop after about an hour. The walk continued in lovely weather, all hoping our lunch stop, on Cracken Edge, would be ok....it was! Great views and lots of "I Spy" found!



On the last part of the walk, it did rain but not much and so a rocky but dry walk back to the car.

Sandra Barber

NATIONAL OFFICE LEARNING EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

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

3 September	Small Modular Nuclear Reactors
4 September	Rainer Maria Rilke: The Journey Within
9 September	Railway History at the National Archives
11 September	The Life & Music of Ian Gillan – Deep Purple
11 September	Upgrade your Urban Driving with IAM RoadSmart

All are free via Zoom. Remember they can fill up quickly. Click here for details and to book a place. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

DID YOU KNOW?

The full moon in September is called the Corn moon as this is the month that corn is traditionally gathered. This year's Corn moon is special because it is also a blood moon and the second lunar eclipse of 2025. A blood moon is when the moon turns a reddish colour due to light from the sun being cut off by the Earth.

The eclipse will be visible next weekend 7th September. The best view will be in Asia and Australia but, weather permitting, it may be visible in Stockport between 19:40pm and 21:55pm, with peak magnitude at 19:46pm.

During a total lunar eclipse, the Earth's shadow can be seen on the moon. It happens when the moon, Earth and the sun are aligned in space, with Earth in the middle. I asked Google's AI engine, Gemini, to draw me a picture of a total lunar eclipse. This is the result.



Image generated using Google Gemini from the prompt Lunar eclipse

And finally...

I would tell you my autumn joke but you probably wouldn't fall for it
If money did grow on trees, autumn would be the best season ever!
What did one autumn leaf say to another? I'm falling for you.
What did the tree say to autumn? Leaf me alone.

Autumn One-liners courtesy of onelinefun.com