

CHEADLE AND GATLEY U3A

Registered Charity Number:1172853



APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

Message from the Chair

Dear Members,

What hopeful news: we just had a message from Elm Road URC that they are preparing their premises for reopening as soon as government guidelines allow! Who knows, we might be able to meet again in the not too distant future. How exciting!

One of the many positive things to come out of Covid times is our changed and changing U3A Newsletter. It is so heartening and enjoyable to read all the varied and captivating contributions by fellow U3Aers: personal stories, poetry, local news, quizzes, and all the wonderful images from around Gatley.

At the time of the first lockdown a year ago, preparations for our planned 60s Celebration Day came to an abrupt halt. We were reminded of that, in a good way, at our last Virtual U3A Meeting on 14th April, when David Walmsley took us on A Whistle Stop Tour of the 1960s. Indeed, it was a right whirlwind of images and information covering most aspects of the decade when we were all so young! Perhaps we will get to create our very own 60s Celebration Day soon?

A great big thank you to all members who have renewed their membership! We would be most grateful for all outstanding renewals by this Friday, 30th April. Renewal forms can be collected from outside 16 Oakwood Avenue, Gatley.

We'd like to inform members that David Wrigley has resigned from the committee for personal reasons. We are very appreciative of all that David contributed to our U3A and look forward to seeing him at meetings in due course. In the meantime, we are delighted that Sue Somerville has agreed to be co-opted onto the committee and is willing to stand for election at the AGM.

Keep well, keep upbeat, and keep smiling!

Batsheva Samely



Deer at Lyme Park

INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Gatley Carrs Nature Reserve

Keith Marsden

To our shame, Judi and I were unfamiliar with Gatley Carrs despite living in Gatley for the last twenty years, preceded by living in Cheadle for twenty-six years. Regular walking as a result of the lockdown took us to all parts of our area, including a visit to this local nature reserve, which really is a hidden gem. It's easy to find, down the side of the Horse and Farrier and left at the bottom of the road, or via the alternative more difficult entrance off Lorna Grove.



The pond from the north



One of several beautiful wooded walks

We became members of the Gatley Carrs Conservation Group (GCCG - single member £5.00 p.a., couples £7.50 p.a.) and I also decided to volunteer for the occasional working parties. That was a good decision as I have really enjoyed helping to clear some very overgrown areas, create a new path through the wild garlic area, get backache from digging over the wildflower meadow etc. There is a good group of volunteers and the occasions are sociable as well as useful. Most of these activities are pulled together by the Head Warden Alan Butler, who many of you will remember running the newsagents in Cheadle. Early each morning Alan visits the main pond to feed Gary, the resident Muscovy duck, and the Carrs is home to a wide variety of fauna and flora. A heron is a frequent visitor and a kingfisher is seen regularly – the Group's Facebook page often features the superb photographs of Josie Leibrick and Tony Braithwaite.



The viewing platform at the south end of the pond



Gary

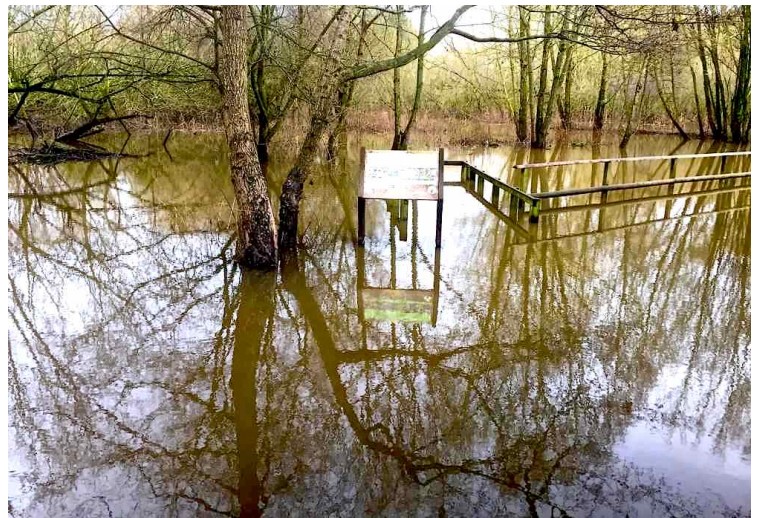
There are 19 acres of woodland, scrubland and grassland with 4 acres of willow swamp including two ponds, benches where you can relax and soak it all in, and a sizeable picnic area. It truly is a suburban oasis and it has once again been awarded Green Flag status, the international standard recognising good management of parks and green spaces. Prior to lockdown the GCCG used to organise very popular kids' events on the Carrs – e.g. Teddy Bears picnic, and they also plant a lovely Christmas Tree in December, organise Carol Singing and ask the local children to make eco-friendly decorations to hang on it.



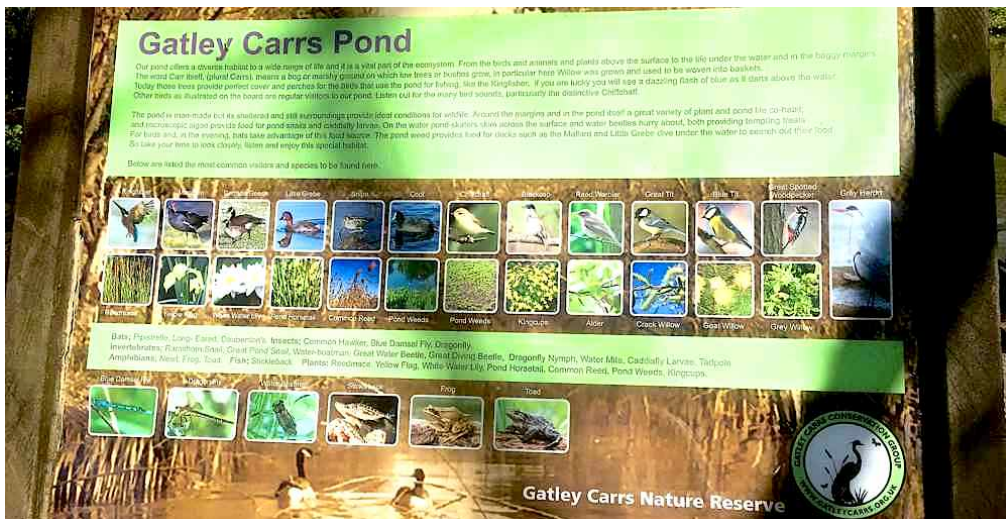
All in all it's a great community asset and if you are not a regular visitor there, I think you are missing out on a local treasure.



Christmas Day morning, 2020



The south viewing platform under water on 21st January



Henry the Heron

Allan Witton

In the January 2017 edition of our Newsletter John Pollard won second prize in our Photographic Competition for his image of Henry the heron, a regular visitor to Gatley Carrs. Over the winter months he has taken to visiting our garden in Oakwood Avenue, and recently flew off with a frog from our pond! A wooden frame and netting now protects the remaining frogs and their tadpoles.



The prize photo "Who, me?"



Photo by Michelle Slater at the Carrs



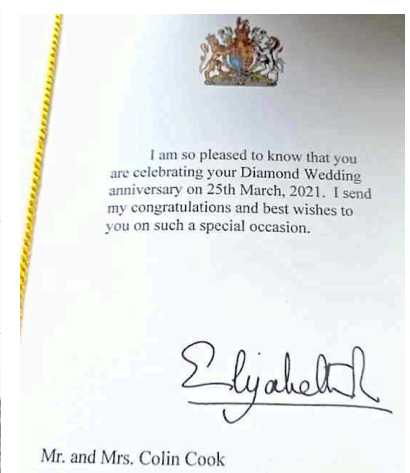
In our fir tree, about to swoop on the pond

Diamond Anniversary

Claire Cook

Claire Cook, daughter of C&G U3A member Sue Cook and her husband Colin, wrote to inform me that on the 25th March her parents celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. A surprise socially distanced family visit (in the garden of course) was had bringing gifts, cards and a delicious cake, which made their day.

One of the most memorable stories of their wedding day was Colin being asked not to smile showing teeth due to knocking a few out playing football. Of course he's OK now! To top the day they even got a card from HRH, which was a perfect ending to a Diamond Lockdown Day!



Susie

Pam Allen

Susie did not really believe in the spiritual world, but she had had some strange visitations. It all started just after a good friend of hers died and a few nights later, he appeared in her bedroom. She did not feel anxious, instead it really calmed her. The following night his daughter also saw him and she felt reassured.

A few years later Susie moved to Leeds. She had extensive work done on her new house and felt very settled. One night she had a feeling that someone was lying next to her in bed and as she moved, the feeling disappeared. Was it a dream? A few weeks later the same thing happened and then nothing for months when one night while she was asleep, she felt someone sit on her in the bed and she said, 'Ouch!'. A female voice apologised and Susie went back to sleep. Was that real? Susie continued to live happily in her house but the strange feelings did not go away.

Several months later while lying on her side, she woke, or not? In front of her stood a middle-aged lady dressed in Edwardian clothes and her yellow, blonde hair was done in the typical Edwardian fashion. The lady was just staring at her. Susie could not move or speak and they continued to look at each other until the lady eventually disappeared. Was that a dream? Susie still could not decide.

A few days later, again while asleep in bed, Susie felt someone behind her putting their hands around her waist. She said 'Don't!' And the feeling stopped. Is this the end of the story or does it continue? We will just have to wait and see...

The Bus Driver

Pat Ayaydin (Bus/Trips Convenor)

Sitting in his seat, face like a thunder cloud.
Barking "Where to?" he snaps so loud.
Revvng up and off, people still on their feet.
"No time to wait," a schedule to meet.

Driving along, feels like a fairground ride,
Missing cars, sliding from side to side.
Stopping for some, if they press the bell in time!
To alight from his bus feels like a crime.

Someone is rushing towards the next stop.
"Whoops, sorry dear, your shopping you've dropped!"
Too late, like a madman he drives on.
"Got you!" He thinks, "This is great fun!".

Watching The World Go By

Josephine May

I'm sitting watching the world go by
And thinking of how we were,
When everything was open,
But now it's just a blur.

So take me back to those halcyon days,
When there was so much to do and see,
And friends and families met,
And hugs, they were for free.

But good times, they are coming,
I can feel it in my bones.
Soon dark days will be over,
So let the good times roll!

Until that time I'll sit and dream,
And try hard not to sigh.
I'll smile and wave and nod at folk,
And watch the world go by.

Through Her Eyes

Rosaleen Davies

Her sea green eyes blinked awake and She slowly stretched her limbs. Looking around the room, She noticed a sparkling band of dust motes and was almost lulled back to sleep by the lazily swirling particles. Eventually, She shook herself out of her trance - can't lie around all day. Things to do and things to see!

After a satisfying breakfast and a preening session - must present a neat and clean demeanour - She left the cosy warmth of the house, heading into the wilds of the poorly kept garden.

Pushing through the jungle of overgrown plants and bushes, She basked in the warmth of the sun, the wind hardly reaching her in amongst the tangled leaves. Suddenly, a buzzing monster flew towards her head. Fearlessly, She batted at the pesky bee, which happily landed on a welcoming flower instead.

Watching the bee flit from flower to flower, She sighed. So much energy! Better to lie in the sun, dreaming of...well, whatever came to mind that particular day. Following the bee's flight was so exhausting, having to crane her neck, up and up and up. Wow, that's a HUGE plant! Wonder what it's called? It's saucer-like yellow head seemed to be reaching for the sun. Would it be good to climb? No, don't think that stem would hold me, light as I am.

Onwards She went, finding hidden pathways through the daunting muddle of branches and clinging vines. Occasionally, She would stop, mesmerised by the myriad colours of the rainbow in a dewdrop or the satin shine of a dragonfly's delicate wings. All the things that filled her day and kept her mind alert.

Ooh! A patch of sunlight. Just right for an afternoon nap. She made her way to the gap amongst the leaves and sat upon the warmed earth. Curling up, ready for her nap, She looked up to the beautiful blue sky, the clouds forming funny shapes above her. Hmmm, maybe she would dream about fluffy white sheep, or dragons or horses or...

Much later, her sleep was disturbed by someone calling her name. "Sheba! Time for tea! Here, kitty, come to mama!" Licking at her grey, ruffled fur, She - short for Sheba of course - trotted towards the house. She couldn't help thinking that her name, though unoriginal, was nevertheless, quite fit for a Queen. Well, She WAS the Queen of this particular castle after all!

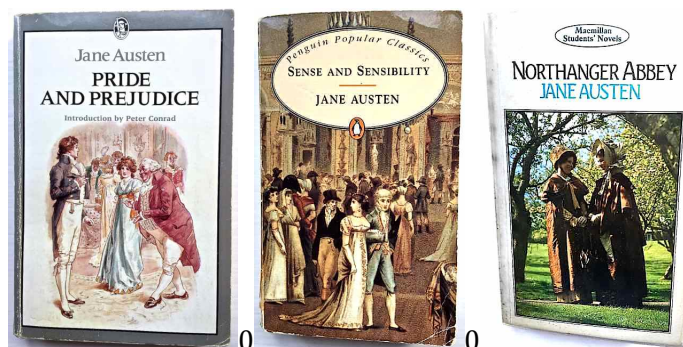
GROUP NEWS

Book Group 1

Lesley Witton

We have continued to enjoy our monthly Zoom meetings and recently 're-visited' Jane Austen. Her depiction of character is so perceptive and we can all recognise the 'types' she describes – they certainly all still exist!

Our next theme is 'The interface between humanity and machines'; it will be fascinating to discover what our members have found to read on that subject!



Book Group 2

Tina Kelly

We have recently welcomed our 14th member to our Zoom e-book group which serves as a helpful remedy for the isolation of lockdown. The Borrowbox service has given us choices, which we do not have normally. Its range has featured more popular reads and some of us have needed this escapism but all members have shown sterling patience with Zoom's limitations. Hopefully sunlit uplands are not too far now. These are what we have read and scored.

<i>The Long Call</i>	by Ann Cleeves, of TV's "Vera" series fame.	3*
A good absorbing read featuring a new detective.		
<i>City of Spies</i>	by Mara Timon	2.5*
First novel. Set in occupied Portugal in WW2. "A female James Bond".		
<i>The Sparsholt Affair</i>	Alan Hollinghurst	3*
Gay lives skilfully depicted in the artistic community spanning the period from WW2 to 2012.		
<i>Need You Dead</i>	Peter James (13th in his detective series)	3.5*
An enjoyable page turner with detective Roy Grace. This series has currently been piloted on TV.		

Bridge

Linda and Ian Ewing

Four members of the Bridge group have been meeting via Bridge Club Live on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month in an effort to re-establish the routine for when we can meet up in the Church Hall again. It has been very successful and in addition we can all play individually on the site whenever we want to. If anybody would like more info about BCL please get in touch.

I am hoping that if the road out of lockdown goes well we will be able to meet up again on the 19th May. If there any new people who would like to join us please contact me on 01613125072.

Bus Pass/Day Trips/Holidays

Janet & Pat, Brenda & Yvonne

Each month Pat and I send an email to the Bus Pass and Day Trippers. Until we can safely get together again we have nothing much to report other than to wish you all well, and to say the Holiday is being kept under review.



Many of us will have had stunning displays of tulips this last fortnight.



I'm afraid that during the lockdown the group has rather lacked motivation for new projects, the usual blankets for charity groups (for people and pets) have been produced but no fresh projects. I think this just proves how much we all miss the social side of the group: discussion, 'chatter' and laughter all mean such a lot and we have missed the personal interaction.



The Craft Group in happier, pre-covid times

I have personally done a few small bits and pieces which I hope will sell at our next church fair; hopefully this will be allowed later in the summer. I have made a variety of small bags, knitted a rather playful kitten and started a hand sewn quilt that I can't finish yet because I am some particular fabric short and my favourite local fabric shop has been closed all through the lockdown. Again, on a personal level, my family has come through the covid crisis well, and I sincerely hope other U3A members have not been too badly affected.



I'm really looking forward to meeting up with craft group friends again and hope it won't be too long before we can all be sitting round the table chattering and crafting again.

As we (should) know, ignorance of UK Law is no excuse for being let off from prosecution. So here is a cautionary tale.

The Long Arm Of The Law

You may have read the U3A February Newsletter, and my article on 60s Manchester. I started at Manchester College of Building in 1964. Although the College is long gone, it was on the other side of Gartside Street from the rear of the (then) new Law Courts.

Looking out on to the rear steps of the court from classroom windows we occasionally saw posh chauffeur-driven cars pull up and bewigged and cloaked circuit judges climb the steps and disappear inside the court. Presumably, the judges stayed at say, the Midland Hotel, and got dressed for the day’s judging in their room. Whether the cars and chauffeurs were their own, or supplied by the court, I don’t know.

One day, whilst waiting for a tutor to appear, one of the class saw the judge spectacle and immediately slid up the classroom window and bellowed, “Get your hair cut, judge “. Pandemonium ensued, and the whole college was rounded up into the main hall, where a very senior policeman was waiting to speak to us. Apparently, a judge can hold you for “Contempt of Court” once he is in his court uniform whether he is in the court or anywhere outside. He explained that the judge had powers to hold us all in the college indefinitely for as long as he liked, presumably until someone owned up.

Anyway, the judge must have remembered that he was a bit of a lad once, and he did no more about it. We were dismissed without a witch-hunt. I know the culprit, but my lips are sealed.

So if you see a judge in all his regalia wandering aimlessly near the Manchester Law Courts, be kind to him.

Gardening

Heather Wilkinson

One can tell things are improving when you are out and about and you can hear the background sounds of lawnmowers, strimmers, pressure washers etc. The days are longer and lighter and the weather, well, we all know the vagaries of that!

There are lots of Spring flowers in evidence - daffodils, tulips, forget-me-nots, euphorbia, brunnera, bluebells ,etc. This is a busy time for gardeners, preparing the beds and borders and sowing flower and vegetable seeds. Sowing seeds can be very time consuming - watering, turning them, pricking them on and if you are a listener to Gardener’s Question Time on Radio 4 - wafting spindly seedlings to make sturdier stems!!

Gardeners in the North West are excited at the prospect of the new RHS garden at Bridgewater opening on 18th May (book online), certainly one to add to the list of many wonderful gardens in our area to give us inspiration and advice. Happy gardening!



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The magnificent magnolia on the corner of Darley and Delamere



Cowslips in Hollyhedge Park

The Environment Group was formed by conservationist members in Spring 2018 when tales of climate change (storms, hurricanes, floods) and pollution to our air, our rivers and to life in the oceans were regularly reported. Our general approach has been ‘we’ll think globally and act locally’. Increasingly that seems to meet our members’ interests and we find diverse topics that have a local appeal (such as the role of canals and railways in the Industrial Revolution). We can also relate to environmental influences on modern buildings, to other transport, to health and leisure, and to nature. Our most popular meetings are those outdoors and where we can study places of historic (as well as of natural and environmental) interest.

This year 2021 is important for the UK as ‘Climate Change’ will have the World’s attention at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow from 1st to 12th November. Organizations such as Friends of the Earth (FoE) and Greenpeace will be expecting Governments and Industry to address the massive challenges of global heating. There will be much scrutiny of political, economic, scientific and health issues. In preparation for this World Conference, FoE are working with local councils throughout the UK and trying to determine what can be done to tackle the Climate Emergency. There are 5 influencing areas that are being examined by local councils and their targets for improvement are being quantified. We have obtained access to the SK8 figures and to FoE proposals that are relevant to our local interests.

What are Stockport Council doing to tackle the Climate Emergency?

- 1. **Transport** 25% commuter journeys are made by public transport, cycling and walking. *Stockport should aim for a higher % to be made by 2030.*
- 2. **Renewable Energy** Stockport has 34,529 MWh of renewable energy available, enough to power 2% of homes in the borough. We need to have all energy to come from green sources (such as wind, sun, sea and gas). *Stockport should aim for 93,356 MWh (5%) to match the best of similar local councils.*
- 3. **Waste** 58% of household waste is reused, recycled or composted. When waste isn’t reused, recycled or composted, it may end up burnt, in landfill or even in our waterways and seas. *Stockport should aim for 100% by 2030.*
- 4. **Housing** 31% of Stockport’s homes are well insulated. Poorly insulated homes cost more to run, which is inefficient and contributes to fuel poverty. *Stockport needs to ensure 100% of homes are properly insulated by 2030.*
- 5. **Tree Cover** Trees are great at removing carbon dioxide from the air around us. Doubling tree cover across the country would help reduce emissions and benefit nature and our mental health. *Stockport needs to double tree cover. A target of 34% has been set at present as a 2030 milestone on the path to doubling tree cover.*

How can U3A members contribute to the above programme?

We will follow the media (especially expert Environmental Correspondents such as Damian Carrington and Fiona Harvey, both of The Guardian). We could inform Stockport MBC about our local concerns and ensure that British views contribute to responsible scientific, engineering and medical solutions that might mitigate the huge problems that global heating creates.



• Cycleway over the M60, Cheadle
More cycleways are needed to encourage commuting by bicycle



• Spring has sprung in Cheadle Royal Business Park
More trees should be planted in Stockport’s open spaces

Editor's note: Huge thanks once again to Richard Petter for sending three more splendid paintings for us to enjoy.

The first quiz in this issue is: Can you identify these historic houses?

Also, thanks to Linda Corry who took the photographs of the paintings and sent them to me.

The answers are on the last page.



Thanks also to Linda Corry for her own drawing of a squirrel in pastel pencil.



Singing for Pleasure

Ian Ewing

Out of necessity the choir has been dormant throughout the Covid restrictions but Barbara was determined that a little thing like a pandemic would not get in her way. She therefore persuaded me to put together a short programme of folk tunes which could be shared via Zoom.

This took place on 20th April and I must thank Batsheva and Janet Farrall for their help in setting things up. Zoom is perhaps not the best vehicle for choral singing; people have differing equipment and broadband speeds meaning that synchronisation is not possible so everyone but the singer has to be “muted”. Anyway we went ahead and it seemed to work out OK. I sang a dozen or so folk songs from England, Ireland and Scotland with a couple of more modern American tunes thrown in finishing with “I’ll tell me ma” on the mandolin.



Is this to be repeated? If restrictions persist (and people can put up with my busking) I guess I could put together another programme but let’s hope the choir is back with Barbara belting out “Nymphs and Shepherds” at Elm Road before too long.

There are two new members joining our weekly Spanish session on Zoom: Val Roberts and Chris Bester. We continue to find fun quizzes to do on Kahoot and more serious verb activities that keep our knowledge and understanding edging forwards. We often talk about if, and when, we might get to go to Spain. We are all excited by the prospect of flying off to the sunshine, the bars and the beaches and practising our Spanish. With that in mind, below is a picture quiz for you of 10 Spanish cities. Answers are on the last page.

1. B-----



6. --d--d



2. -e---e



7. C---e



3. ----da



8. -ord--a



4. Sa-----



9. ---da



5. Sa-----



10. B----o



Long Walks

Allan Witton

Our temporary plan of doing more frequent walks for groups of up to 6 was able to resume in April, and we have done 2 walks this month, with possibly another to come, though we have yet to fill our full quota of 6.

Apr 9: From Styal along the Bollin valley, Morley Green and over Lindow Common (6½ miles – easy)
There were just 4 of us on this short but interesting walk on a cold, bright morning.



On Giant's Castle Bridge



Coffee stop 1 in Styal Woods



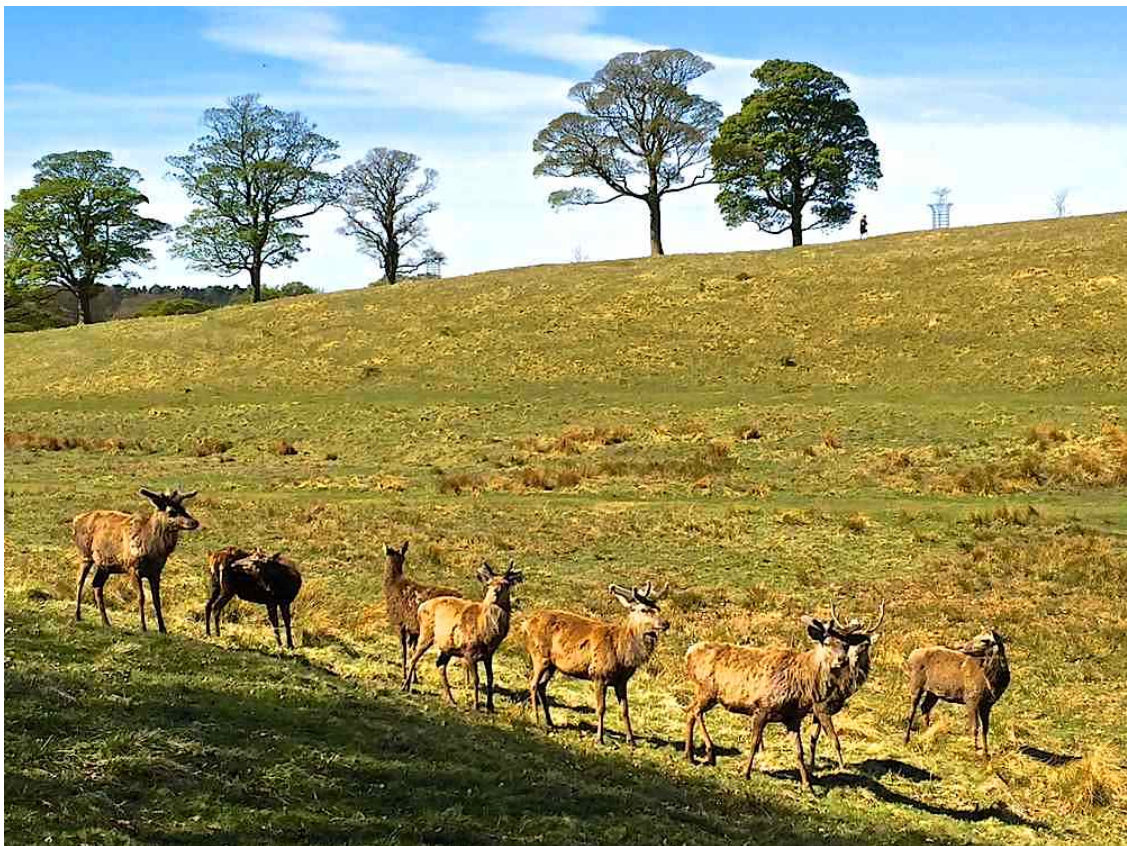
Coffee stop 2 overlooking Black Lake on Lindow common



Lindow Common information board

Apr 23rd: Five of us really enjoyed Linda's 5 mile circuit through Lyme Park from Disley on a perfect spring day.





Answers to the quizzes

Artwork A. Lyme Hall B. Little Moreton Hall C. Gawthorpe Hall

Spanish Cities 1. Barcelona 2. Seville 3. Granada 4. Santander 5. Salamanca
 6. Madrid 7. Calpe 8. Cordoba 9. Ronda 10. Bilbao

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**Editor's Note:** Once again, a big thank you to all contributors who sent copy, please start collecting material now for the next edition.

**Allan Witton**