



Newsletter – March 2024

A message from your Chair,

Gosh! Its March and the start of spring – this has got to be one of my favourite times of the year. Nights getting lighter, spring flowers appearing, birds building nests – it really is a beautiful time and has a real feeling of happiness.

The committee are very busy right now preparing our annual report and accounts in time for the AGM next month. Going over the progress made is a time for reflection and considering how we have done over the last year. Have we achieved what we wanted to? Are we in a better position today than we were this time last year? What do you as members think? It would be good to get your feedback – whether that be to say what you like or where you think things could be improved. Let's have it!

Kathy



learn,
laugh,
live

INTRODUCING....

Last month Jackie Barlow and her sister joined the u3a. On hearing our plea for a secretary to the committee Jackie very quickly volunteered and she is now fully signed up and already making a difference. Here are a few words by way of introduction:

I was born in Blackburn and after my degree in Hull worked as a careers officer before becoming a primary school teacher. I taught in Blackburn for 13 years before becoming a peripatetic specialist teacher of children with Special Educational Needs for LCC. In 2009 I returned to work full time in a large primary school in Preston supporting children with special educational needs. I left this role intending to go self-employed but Covid put a stop to that! I moved over to Lytham a year ago with my cat Zak and am now planning to spend my retirement enjoying being by the sea and meeting new people.



WALKING GROUP

Stanley Park and Marton Mere

February 2024 stormed its way in, with Tuesday 6th and Thursday 8th forecast as pretty grim. Our walk was due to take place on Wednesday 7th. That morning, ten of us headed off to meet at Stanley Park under a glorious blue sky with no wind. The sun had decided we most certainly must be righteous.

Starting our walk was easy. The warnings of mud must surely be wrong as we made our way alongside the lake, across the bridge and out of the park into Salisbury Wood. Sightings of squirrels sparked off a lively discussion on how many of us had – incorrectly as it turned out – lived our lives believing that squirrels hibernate.



Continuing past the WW2 pillbox, which served as a reminder that Blackpool Zoo is built on the site of the former Blackpool aerodrome, we met early indications of

mud as we turned onto the path circling the zoo. Slipping and sliding and finally giving up on trying to go round, it was easier to just go straight through the puddles, with the added benefit of giving our boots a wash at the same time. And here was what must have been the highlight of the morning; a lioness staring down at us, safe behind her fence and clearly trying to decide if she could manage all of us in one go. We were spellbound and stood for ages just marvelling at such a magnificent creature. Sadly, it was only as we left that someone took 2 steps back up the bank and spotted there was a second one as well.



Can you spot the lion?

But continue we must if we wanted to get back in time for lunch. More wildlife was viewed at one of the Marton Mere hides, including a variety of birds, squirrels and an enormous rabbit. Here the ground was not just muddy but squelchy as well, as we continued across the grass past the caravan park to the top end of the Mere.

From here, we were able to slide our way round the back of the golf course to a reasonable path that returned us to Salisbury Wood. A short walk across the golf course took us back into Stanley Park and a well-deserved lunch at the café. We couldn't have asked for a better morning.

Walk Leader Linda Nugent.

♟️ CHESS GROUP

We had two sessions in Feb with Ladder challenges and matches against the clock. The latter producing the usual hasty moves that leave one open to attack if the opponent has time to notice. We normally finish well within the time allocated and yet the mere presence of the clock activates the brain to do some strange things.

Ken remains atop the Ladder (for now). But we do it for the fun from beginners upwards.



We meet every two weeks on a Monday at 10 am using the main lounge at Sandhurst Grange. Our next date is March 4 and then March 18 but.....there has been a need to cancel March 18. On March 18 I will be radioactive and I am told to steer clear of young people on that day!

When I listen to the chess people talking, and I do not mean about matters of chess, then there is a mix of quite remarkable subjects of all kinds. These are people of great depth and interest. Their actions are those of young people who have lots of get up and go (some parts may have left) and thus despite our ages I feel that they fall within the category of "young people" and thus are excluded from being near me on that day.



Thus, the next meet after March 4 will be on April 1. The coincidence of April one and my comments do not escape me but if you see a glow above Sandhurst Grange on March 18 then that might just be me.

Alan Shearn (alanbevuk@gmail.com)

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Nine members attended the February meeting when we first shared some problems that members had in doing research and then started on a look at the use of Parish Registers.

The March meeting is on Friday 15th at 10 a.m. in The Drive Methodist Church, Community Room. There is a meeting fee of £4 to cover room hire and coffee is available at £1. We now have wifi available if you wish to bring your laptop or other device. This month we will continue where we left off looking at Parish Registers. As well as the general history of the Parish registers we will look at how we can use them and why they are important. We will look at particular examples of the problems of using them.

We welcome new members. We currently have 17 people registered as being members but don't usually have an attendance of more than 10.

Jeff Butcher

PLAY READING GROUP

A classic whodunnit was on the February bill for the Play Reading group.

Agatha Christie's *A Murder is Announced* provided plenty of intriguing twists, as well as a few laughs along the way. The session was hosted by Sylvia and Bernard Cullen.

The play concludes at the next meeting on Wednesday, March 20.

Steve Kendall

HISTORY GROUP

When Cotton was King

The History Group meeting will be at 2pm Wednesday 27th March at The Drive Methodist Church, Clifton Drive, St Annes.

Jenny Butcher will give a talk on the Lancashire Cotton Industry from its origins in the mid-18th century to its peak in the Victorian era when cotton was king. Jenny was born and brought up in Bolton at a time when it was still a cotton town and her family history has many links to the cotton industry. Come to discover why cotton is part of the heritage of the county in which we live.

PRACTICAL GARDENING GROUP

On a Friday afternoon in mid-February, 10 members of the Practical Gardening Group met up at Muriel and Mike's for our monthly meet. Being February, was it going to be wet? Fortunately not. It was a bright, dry afternoon and after a short meeting indoors and some liquid fortification against the cold, we each were set our tasks. An opportunity to master new techniques and to share gardening experiences. So, the jobs for the day were, potting on young lavender seedlings (Marjorie), potting up lily bulbs for a display in summer (David & Elizabeth Ann), creating spring planters for some early colour outside around the house (Peter, Sue and Caroline), dividing established plants to start new plants, primroses and snowdrops in the green (Freda), while a large buddleia was trimmed



and shaped (Mike and Martin). All ably supervised and guided by Muriel.

Once the tasks had been completed, back indoors, so each of us had the opportunity to pass on tips and techniques picked up and now shared. The afternoon was rounded off by the usual fine refreshments, the gardening quiz and a raffle today to bolster group funds. The prizes being the planters and lilies prepared earlier. Everyone heading off home with new plants for their garden.

A different meet to our usual, a real treat that has given us inspiration for the weeks ahead, thanks Muriel and Mike.

Finally, we welcomed Sue to her first member's home meeting today, and she's bravely volunteered for March, where we'll be planning a makeover for her front garden. And we thank Ann for her support of the group and wish her well with her new-found pastime.



Martin Lammas

martinslammas@btinternet.com

BIRDWATCHING GROUP

We welcomed 3 new group members at Lytham Hall on 13 February. John Swarbick had kindly agreed to lead us on a walk which took us past the pond with its mallard, coots and moorhens, into the woodlands with the sound of woodpeckers at work and a song thrush living up to its name and on to see a mixed flock of gulls and oystercatchers in the adjacent fields. It proved to be an enjoyable morning with sightings of 20 species including a nuthatch, treecreeper, tits and robins; 3 mistle thrushes were spotted in the fields where the gulls and oyster catchers had settled. Our thanks go to John for leading and sharing his knowledge.

Our next trip, on Tuesday 12 March, will be to Rossall, Fleetwood marshes and Stannah (Wyre Estuary Country Park). David Blair, a very experienced birdwatcher, has agreed to lead. I will email group members with details nearer the time: other U3A members who would like to join the group can leave a message for me using the link to the right of the Birdwatching entry on the Groups page of the website.

Peter Hulme

PLODDERS

There were only seven of us walking last Thursday. I think that was because it was raining earlier. The rain cleared though and let's just say that the weather was 'bracing'.

We met at the pier and finished off the St Annes Town Trail we'd started last time, beginning at the Public Offices and finishing at George Formby's house on Inner Promenade. Then back along our lovely promenade, by the beach huts and eventually to the Bedford for a light lunch. We talked so much that I forgot to take a photograph until we were eventually leaving the restaurant, so here are Viv and Susan looking as if they've had an enjoyable morning.



Our next walk is on Thursday 21st March at 10.45, meeting at the Ansdell Institute on Woodlands Road. We aim to walk 2-3 miles. Anne Butterworth has volunteered to lead. Hope to see you there.

Catharine Oldroyd (Isau3a@theoldroyds.net)

GARDENING FOR PLEASURE

The March meeting will be held on Tuesday 26th March at 2.00 at Lowther Gardens Cafe.

All are welcome to come along to discuss their planting, their garden problems, share plants and share ideas.

Do join us.

Norman & Christine Buckley

POETRY

SNOW

Waking up
Feels strange,
Quiet,
Different,
Subdued.
Out of bed, go and see.
Snow, lots of snow.
On the rooftops, on our tree.
Beautiful snow.
Jump up,
Get dressed.
Quick breakfast and out to meet a friend.
Lucky it's weekend.
Sledging, on the Hardplats.
Dad's home-made sledge
It's fast, splat.
Careful to stop before the railway line fence.
Great fun.
We're young.
Back up the hill,
Do it again.
Snow's wonderful when you're ten.
Time goes by,
Perceptions change.
Travelling, working, shopping,
More difficult in snow,
Still beautiful though.
A winter wonderland,
Bright, pristine, fresh, giving pleasure.
Years pass,
Different problems.
Slippery streets, cancelled buses, low temperature.
Stay inside and look through glass.
Gentle flakes falling on houses, rooftops, grass.
Enjoy the view,
It makes everything new.
Peaceful, quiet, soothing, cold.
Keep warm and safe,
When you're old
And it snows.

Pat Duxbury U3A Poetry group

Nature

Nature is wonderful, Nature is majestic, but it is having to fight back.
For every flood plain that now contains houses,
Land that has been stolen to meet Mans needs,
Fields of Solar panels instead of seeds,
For every power station belching out CO2,
Depleting the Ozone layer for me and you,
All have a profound effect on the weather.

Every Earthquake, volcanic eruption or forest fire
Is Natures' way of showing us the folly of our ways
Thousands homeless who should not have been there
Nature needs space to flourish, Land needs to be returned,
Before there is no space left for nature to expand and protect us.

Sue Pullar

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

John Oliver	Deirdre Oliver	Angela Edwards
John Brookes	Mike Coyle	Sarah Dotterer
Jan Hill	Michael Keane	Margaret Keane
Diane Smith		Alan Wood

ANNOUNCEMENTS

'Threads through Creation' - Spectacular textile art at Blackburn Cathedral – creating the world with eight million stitches!

'Threads through Creation' is an astonishing textile art exhibition showing at Blackburn Cathedral from 6th March until 14th April. It might be a bit of a journey for some, but it's probably right up their street for many u3a people – a real treat for anyone interested in the applied arts, textile art and sewing.

The show is touring twenty cathedrals. We've had a lot of positive feedback from u3a groups all over the country. It consists of twelve beautiful silk panels re-imagining the story of creation from the bible. They're huge – nearly 3m high. It's one of the largest textile art projects by a single artist, ever. It took artist Jacqui Parkinson three years – and eight million stitches! You'll find the huge scale, vibrant colours, dramatic and complex designs truly breathtaking. You've never seen anything like it ...

www.blackburncathedral.com

Admission free (donations welcome)

www.creation-threads.co.uk

Free PDF

Whether or not they visit the exhibition, I think some u3a members will find this very interesting: a free downloadable 24 page pdf: 'Behind the scenes' is full of detail - especially for people with a focus on textile art and stitching. It explains the background and shows the extraordinary techniques used: visit www.creation-threads.co.uk, go to the bottom of the page and click on the button.

Andrew Parkinson

u3a Online Events

You can find several online events organised by u3a central here:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

SOCIAL EVENTS

Date	Group	Where	Time
5 Mar	Cinema	Island Cinema, St Annes	13.00
11 Mar	Coffee	Trawl Boat Inn (Wetherspoons)	10.00
19 Mar	Lunch	Salters Wharf	13.00
27 Mar	Eating Out	TIGGIS	5.30pm

The life of a Social Butterfly

Dates for future social meetings

(Details to be confirmed closer to event and more dates on website)

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING ANY SOCIAL EVENT, JUST TURN UP AND YOU WILL BE MOST WELCOME.

Eating out (5.30 pm)

27 Mar	TIGGIS
24 Apr	ZEN
22 May	Flame – Greek
26 Jun	Anatolia – Turkish
24 July	Olivers
28 Aug	Le Patio
25 Sep	Un Momento
23 Oct	Lorenzo
27 Nov	Dalmeny Hotel

Cinema Dates	Coffee Dates	Luncheon Dates
Island Cinema or Lowther: all 1 pm	Trawl Boat Inn (Wetherspoons) all 10 am	Locations vary: all 1 pm
5 Mar	11 Mar	19 Mar: Salters Wharf
2 Apr	8 Apr	16 Apr: Jai Lounge
7 May	13 May	21 May: Tiggis
4 Jun	10 Jun	18 Jun: Pavillion, Ashton Gardens
2 Jul	8 Jul	16 Jul: Le Patio
6 Aug	12 Aug	20 Aug: TBC
3 Sep	9 Sep	17 Sep: Fish & Chips on the pier
1 Oct	14 Oct	15 Oct: TBC
5 Nov	11 Nov	19 Nov: TBC
3 Dec	9 Dec	17 Dec: TBC

MEETING PROGRAMME 2024

Our General Meetings are open to all Members and are held on the second Friday of each month (except August) at St. Anne's United Reform Church Hall, St George's Road, St Anne's, Lancashire, FY8 2AE. Members gather from 10am for coffee and chat with other colleagues before sitting back and enjoying a talk that begins at 10.30am and, usually, ends at about 12 noon. Members should always be prepared to show their current membership cards at each meeting.

Our speaker programme is as follows:

- March 8 – Song of the Guitar – Spanish Guitarist Scott Robertson
- April 12 – The Tale of Two Cliftons – David Hoyle
- May 10 – The DNA of British Musicals – Kevin & Joy Siddall
- June 14
- July 12
- August – no meeting
- September 13 – The RNLI at 200 – David Forshaw

CONTRIBUTIONS

If you have any contributions that would be of interest to u3a members, please send them to the newsletter editor at the contact address below.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Our website:	www.u3asites.org.uk/lytham-st-annes
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u3a Lytham St. Annes is a registered charity: 1013058