



Newsletter – April 2024

A message from your Chair,

Reading through this bumper issue of our newsletter it strikes me that there is certainly a lot going on across our u3a. I find it very uplifting to read about all of the activities that take place. We really are lucky to live where we do and to have this organisation that presents so many opportunities. Furthermore, thanks to all our members that have come forward to volunteer, we now have nominees for all committee positions! This is the first time since I have been the Chair that I have been able to say this and I am delighted. Having a full complement helps with the workload of the committee and it will give us all a better run u3a. As a reminder, you will have the opportunity to vote in the committee at our AGM, which coincides with our next General Meeting on Friday, April 12. It's a slightly earlier time than usual – muster at 9:30 for a 10:00 start. After the short AGM we will be treated to a return visit by Lytham Archivist David Hoyle, who will be talking to us about the Cliftons [as in Lytham Hall]. **DON'T FORGET YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD TO VOTE!** See you then, **Kathy**



learn,
laugh,
live

INTRODUCING....

Linda Adams has recently joined our committee responsible for promotion and marketing. Here is a little bit about Linda:

I was born in Bolton, where I spent most of my life. My first career was as an Embroidery designer but after 20 years I decided for a change of direction and did a degree in History with Literature. My plan to teach didn't materialise but I enjoyed my later working years as a Trainer for the Co-operative Bank.



My dream was always to live by the sea, to that end I moved to St Anne's in 2022 and I am proud to be part of the RNLI shop crew. I was an active member of Bolton U3A and look forward to making friends here in Lytham St Anne's.

BRIDGE GROUP

It is a pleasure to report that our well attended group continues to thrive.

The attraction perhaps is a game where your hand of cards can have six million variations and that variation applies equally to the other three hands round the table. A game which can be frustrating and exhilarating but never boring. Always challenging and exciting. A game where partners can be Angels from Heaven or partners from Hell, then reverse roles at the next game!

As a u3a Bridge group we do not teach the game but if interested, we have two good local clubs, Lytham Bridge club and St Annes Bridge club. Both run Beginner and Intermediate classes. Contact the one which suits you. You will not be disappointed.

Maybe some day you will join us for a lovely afternoon playing a friendly game. Members can come along to the sessions on their own and they will be given a partner.

Jack Henderson (Group Leader)

Email: Jack17lytham@gmail.com Tel: 01253 739752 or 07793 086 665

WALKING GROUP

On a glorious Spring morning in early March, 19 of us set off from Granny's Bay along the beach to the RNLI Station at St Anne's.

On arrival we were met by Chris, RNLI Visitor Volunteer (and a u3a member too!), and Tom, Coxswain of the Lifeboat.

Having divided us into two groups, Tom and Chris then took it in turns to give the history of the RNLI, the "Mexico Disaster" (when crews from Southport and St Anne's lost their lives), the kit worn by the crew and, most interestingly, the Lifeboat itself.



The RNLI Boat, "Barbara Anne" is 5 years old, a 'Shannon' Class boat, costing over £3.5M including the transporter. Named after a lady who made a very generous donation of £2M., it is "water-jet" propelled (ie. no propeller blades) and takes a crew of 6.

After thanking Tom and Chris for their time and very informative and interesting visit, we returned along the beach for lunch in the Fairhaven pub.

Margaret Mayor (Walk Leader)

PAINTING AND DRAWING GROUP

We had an enjoyable meeting at Ansdell Unitarian church hall. Our theme this time was Easter. Various types of medium were chosen including watercolour, ink and charcoal. The favourite subjects turned out to be Easter bunnies and eggs! Next month the suggested topic is cats. If you would like to join us on the fourth Friday of the month, please contact me at:

allanlesley1@gmail.com



CHESS GROUP

We had two sessions in March and on one of these it was the birthday of two players. A small candle-lit muffin suitably decorated welcomed in their joint new year, adding to the total of 158 between Brian and Fraser.



It was appropriate that one of them had a notable chess victory on this day and this photo captures the facial expression of someone who knows that they have done well. A fine birthday gift for Fraser.

We have new members and now three ladies playing. This wide shot has all 10 of us on March 25 (excluding me of course).



We have a lovely spread from beginners upwards.

There were some good matches on show as we took it all in with a smile, win or lose. But the ladder is there to illustrate players of similar skill levels or just to see who is at the top. Ken remains in that position and needs to be challenged, I think.

We are back to a two-week cycle with meetings due on April 8 and then April 22.

Alan Shearn alanbevuk@gmail.com

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Last month we completed our look at parish registers, noting their usefulness getting back into the pre-1837 period but also looking at examples of problems with them. We saw how the handwriting of clergy changed with the change of incumbent, how some of it was illegible and the spelling of simple names varied enormously, with one 17th century vicar creating Latin versions of plain English names. Parish registers also reveal many quirks of history. Did you know that from 1678 until 1814 there was a law that required that everyone being buried had to be in a woollen shroud? It was a blatant bid to boost wool sales.

Our April meeting is on the third Friday (19th), as usual, in our venue at The Drive Methodist Church community room in East Bank Road, St Annes from 10 a.m. until noon. We ask £4 for room hire and coffee or tea is available at £1 (from the church). We are looking forward to hearing from one of our members, Penelope Marshall, about a relative of hers who was a campaigning woman in the early 20th century. We will also take members' questions or comments to aid personal research.

New members always welcome.

Jeff Butcher (j.butcher273@btinternet.com)

PLAY READING GROUP

A classic whodunnit saw the Play Reading group in top form at their March meeting.

A Murder is Announced kept everyone guessing until the end and Leslie Darbon's adaptation of Agatha Christie's novel had plenty of twists and quite a few laughs around a cake called Delicious Death.

Everyone in the group relished the roles and provided a fine ensemble performance.

The meeting was hosted by Martin and Andy, complete with their own delicious walnut cake.

The next meeting on April 17 features a comedy by Michael Frayn.

Steve Kendall

WINE APPRECIATION GROUP

One of our group, Trudie, hosted a wine tasting evening for 12 of us. What a marvellous hostess she is! We were treated to the most sumptuous “nibbles” which we all enjoyed. Ah yes - and we also enjoyed some excellent wines.

As we have been round the world and tasted many different grape types over the past 8 years, I decided to start back with Old World wines and chose France.

The wines were selected with the help of Majestic wines and I prepared the tasting notes, the vineyard’s history etc and read them to the group while we tasted. We sampled a Cremant, then 3 whites with an interesting Picpoul Villemarin coming out on top. Of the 3 reds, the Chateau Tour Bayard-Nicole was a very firm favourite.



A very enjoyable evening.

MAHJONG GROUP

The Mahjong Group is looking for new members. All welcome - we can teach newbies. We meet every Monday morning, 10-12:30 at the Hope Street Pavilion in St Annes.

Suzan Bradley

GARDENING FOR PLEASURE

The next meeting will be held in Fairhaven Lake Cafe on Tuesday 30 April at 2.00 p.m. Do join us to discuss your garden problems and plantings over a nice cup of coffee. All welcome.

Contact Norman & Christine Buckley for further details. 01253 728666

PRACTICAL GARDENING GROUP

A New Challenge

Our challenge at the March meeting was to design a garden for one of our members who moved into the area last year. Living just 150 yards from the Irish Sea (!) and the lovely North Beach is indeed a joy – but it does bring a challenge for gardeners. 12 of us, equipped with pre-drawn garden layout and compass orientation were set the task.

The requirements were to:

- Provide privacy to a large open corner plot currently laid to lawn with narrow borders and bounded by 2 busy roads!
- Design a seating area not overlooked by passers-by.
- Create height, evergreen focal points (especially for the winter months) and flowering deciduous trees/shrubs for spring and autumn interest, create screening, and suggest perennials for fragrance and colour.

It took no more than a minute (and I'm sure that readers will have spotted this one already) to realise what the main problem was going to be – the force of the wind tearing off the sea. We sat down and started our designs. A big help was a list we were given of trees and shrubs which seemed to be thriving in neighbours' gardens.

We will no doubt be a little wiser next February when our guest speaker, the talented young man from Lytham Hall will be talking to us about "coastal planting". In the meantime, we have left our best ideas with our member and hope that a group effort has been of use.

Scones, jam and cream and a cuppa were ample reward for our efforts before we plunged into our garden quiz and finally raffled off 3 large Easter eggs – the funds going to our winter programme of guest speakers.



BIRDWATCHING GROUP

The weather forecast for our trip on 12 March was not good and so, with a late change of plan, 6 brave folk set off first for Rossall Point Fleetwood, moving on to Fleetwood marshes. We intended to use the indoor facilities of Rossall Point Observation Tower, but found it was closed to the public. However, one of our group, Stuart Kay, pulled some strings and members of the National Coastwatch Institution who were on duty at the time granted us access to the tower. Well done Stuart!



[Photo By Steve Daniels, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=94817325>]

We enjoyed our diversion with the National Coastwatch Institution which allowed the worst of the weather to pass and, on venturing out, we spotted several species including ringed plovers, sanderlings, turnstones and oystercatchers on the shoreline and skylarks, pied wagtail and meadow pipits on the golf course.

After a walk round the marine lake we headed off for the marshes where we encountered one or two people enquiring about a reported Bittern. Bitterns are secretive, difficult to see on the ground and generally spend daylight hours hidden in reed beds; they were driven towards extinction in the UK in the 1870s due to over-hunting for food and draining of their wetland homes for agriculture but are now a conservation success story. With no real expectation of spotting a Bittern, our attention turned to the birds we could see which included tufted ducks, a pair of great crested grebes, grey heron, kestrel, cormorants, reed bunting and stonechat. But the highlight of the day was the emergence of a male bittern from a reed bed quite close by; to our astonishment he remained stock still and in full view for several minutes before retreating back into the reeds. A fine end to an interesting day during which we had spotted 25 species. Our thanks go to David Blair for leading the group.



Peter Hulme

PLODDERS

Ooops! It started off wet again, but twelve intrepid Plodders, led by Anne Butterworth, followed a circular walk through the golf course from Ansdell Institute. We learned about the coming of the railway and the beginning of Royal Lytham as we walked. Did you know Royal Lytham GC originally had two courses? There were eighteen holes for men and a nine hole course for the ladies! I don't think the Equality Act would allow that now!



Our next walk will be on Thursday 25th April, meeting at 10.45 at Wetherspoon's, The Railway Hotel, Station Road, Lytham. Walk 2-3 miles, followed by lunch for those who wish. Do join us. All welcome. Further details from:

Catharine Oldroyd (Isau3a@theoldroyds.net)

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

A dozen of us met at Lytham Hall for our March meeting. Although dull, the weather was dry, so we split up into groups and explored the grounds. The woodlands showed the ravages of winter though buds were appearing. The formal gardens, as expected, looked bare though beautifully trimmed. Plenty of photo opportunities.

For the last half hour of the morning we retired to the cafe where our findings were discussed and compared over cups of coffee.



Roger Oldroyd.

POETRY

GOTHIC MOON

Flicker sparkle in bedroom dark
Stiletto shards of silver
Tap on my eyelids
Force my gaze.

A Gothic moon
White and slim
Black liner drawn
Against the hell of night.

Frissons of wafting cloud
A charcoal netting
An ebony veil
Drawn about herself.

Rustling taffeta of mist
To cloak her power
To shield alabaster brow
As befits a lady.

She shines cold, proud
Defies the panting
Impatient puppy sun
Commands and keeps the night.

Velvet leather bats
Worship, swoop, whine
A distant howl
Lupine homage.

By Jacky Ramage u3a Poetry group

Here are two submissions
from our talented writers.
The Poetry Group is now full.

Joy Holden
(Poetry Group leader)

Drink More Bleach!

This is life girls, but not as we know it
The world has gone to pot
Our politicians and their cronies
Have let it go to rot
How did this happen? I ask myself why weren't we prepared?
We should have heeded wise Bill Gates And now we're running scared
Rumours are flying here and there
As to how this pandemic first began Some say it came from an infected
bat
Eaten by a woman in Wuhan
This bat, it passed the virus on
And the bug has spread abroad
It's silent and its deadly
And can't be killed by gun or sword

So let's get set for battle girls
St Trinian's hue and cry
Not hockey sticks but Dettol spray to bat it in the eye
And those of us, whilst living will do the things we can
To keep our health and sanity and devise a battle plan
So let's get down and dirty While we have to stay indoors
We're not known for shirking And we're certainly not bores
We've still got a bit of gumption
We still have a bit of vim
We're certainly not quitters
And we're certainly not dim
Let's make masks from our knickers Agent provocateur is best
Because they make us look mysterious and too sexy for a vest
And should your lovers dare to visit
Make them stay six foot away
Remind them we're in lockdown but leave the chocolate milk tray
The internet is the wizardry
By which we can keep in touch
With our family and our friends
And the media and such

We give virtual hugs and kisses
Send emojis by the score
To our friends and to our family not permitted through our door
We all applaud the NHS
On Thursdays prompt at eight we bang our drums and wave
To neighbours at the garden gate
All wars produce their heroes
But there's one must be mentioned here
It's Captain Tom who's raised a mint and in his hundredth year!
One hundred laps, still going strong he's put us all to shame
As he's marched around his garden with his trusty zimmer frame
In a way, this has changed our thinking about what life is all about
Of the things that are important
And the stuff we can do without
Together girls we'll conquer this evil covid nineteen bug
And soon we shall be able to give everyone a hug.
So keep the spirits strong girls
Let's not get histrionic
And when we're at last together girls
Remember mine's a gin and tonic

Love you all
Keep safe and sober
by Angela Edwards (u3a Poetry Group)

HISTORY GROUP

At our February meeting we were treated to an excellent talk from Graham Whalan on the History of The Musical Theatre. From the delights of opera all the way through the centuries to rock musicals we were well entertained. There were lots of questions and many memories of musicals seen and performed. It was an all-round enjoyable afternoon. Many thanks to Graham.

For our March meeting the talk was not as advertised, WHEN COTTON WAS KING, as it had to be cancelled due to personal circumstances. So the meeting of the 27th March saw a lively talk and discussion on RASPUTIN, that well known Russian, led by Linda Adams. As always we went off on a few tangents but a good time was had by all. And a big thank you to Linda for stepping in at short notice.

Next meeting is on 24th April and the subject will be FOREST LAW.

If you want more information please contact Tina Edwards, History Group Organiser on email u3alsacomm@gmail.com



APRIL SOCIAL EVENTS

Date	Group	Where	Time
2 Apr	Cinema	Cancelled	
8 Apr	Coffee	Trawl Boat Inn (Wetherspoons)	10.00
16 Apr	Lunch	Jai Lounge	13.00
24 Apr	Eating Out	ZEN	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)

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, 10 am	Locations vary: all 1 pm
2 Apr CANCELLED	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

The February Dining Out Group at the Isara, a Thai and Japanese restaurant



NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members:

L Chandler

A Empey

L Markey

D Parkinson

A Tomlinson

A Gledhill

F Corrigan

D Shelley

D McNicholl

ANNOUNCEMENTS

u3a Online Events

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

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

Science: Milestones in aviation, AI News, Climate crisis – and solutions, Sewerage system in Victorian London, Human brain – the blood brain barrier;

Arts: Pleasure gardens to theme parks, Arts and crafts designs of May Morris, Sonnets of Gerald Manley Hopkins;

Lifestyle: Laughter yoga, Bollywood laughter – yoga dance, Live cookery demonstration, Key to longevity, happiness and global change, Mindfulness and meditation;

A global view: Electing the president in 2024.

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:

- April 12 – The Tale of Two Cliftons – David Hoyle
- May 10 – The DNA of British Musicals – Kevin & Joy Siddall
- June 14 – tba
- July 12 – tba
- 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