



Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at Hallfold Church Whitworth. Refreshments are served at 1.00pm and speakers start at 1.30pm. New members are welcome for an annual membership of £15 and £2 monthly meeting subs.

6th March 2024

Jan Hicks: Bletchley Park Decoded

3rd April 2024

Mebs Ahmed: My life and career in Lancashire Constabulary

1st May 2024

Izabella Donohue from Lancashire Wildlife Trust: The Wonderful World of Watery Waders

5th June 2024

Paul Blakey M.B.E. Street Angels

3rd July 2024

Martin Lunn FRCA Earth, Wind and Fire – the inner planets

New Interest Groups

It's been sometime since we asked members for suggestions for new interest groups. The most recent groups have been Craft, Philosophy and Ukulele which are all up and running successfully. At the same time there were suggestions for History, Country Dancing and Card Games which as yet haven't been taken forward. The possibility of starting a Billiards/Snooker group at Hallfold was mentioned a few weeks ago. The upstairs room is now ready so if you play either game and would be interested please let me know. I will then arrange for people to meet up to make arrangements. If you have an interest in any of these or have any other suggestions, please let me know by e-mail at helen@illingworth.org.uk or have a word with me at the next monthly meeting.

Helen

Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone

I am delighted to report that our membership continues to grow from strength to strength. From the dark days of Covid when our membership was decimated, we have rebuilt and now stand at 114 members, with new folk coming through in a steady stream. I've decided 'word of mouth' in this part of the world is a great way to spread the word of what we offer but its also true that special interest groups continue to offer a magnet, particularly with ukelele (how many folk stay home to practice a particularly difficult Gsharp 7 note!!!) or perform across the area for audiences young and old? Italian has also attracted new members, as have book club, walking and photography. Audiences at the monthly meeting have increased significantly, which was a bit of a worry as the room is smaller than our previous venue. But I am delighted to report that capacity at Hallfold is good and we have room to grow even more! It has been particularly heart warming to talk to new members who have fed back what a difference being part of the u3a has meant for them. They have discovered that they have new interests, new friends and opportunities they had never previously considered. Long may this continue! And watch this space as new groups spring up. 17 so far with more in the pipeline.

As some of you know, I plan to step down as chair at the September AGM. I feel that an influx of new ideas and directions are always a good thing – but it doesn't mean I have lost interest or won't do my utmost to ensure our u3a remains strong and vibrant. I am also hopeful that we may have identified a new chair so I can hand over the reins with confidence. Meantime, I am hopeful that, having achieved charity status for our u3a, we can now tackle the issue of gift aid. It is simply a way of claiming tax paid from the government, which any charity can apply for, at no cost to members. I will be a very happy chair if we achieve this during my tenure. Its a useful source of income and a way of ensuring we are independent and can continue future growth. I'm advised its not a simple process (from the Government? Hmmm) so wish me luck and continue to enjoy all that our u3a offers.

See you at the next monthly meeting

Pat

Interest Groups

For insurance purposes only members can join Interest Groups – details are available on our FB page, website or at the meetings. You can contact the Group Leaders for information on dates, times and venues for group activities. Lynne, our Groups Coordinator can be contacted on 07718913131

Group Leaders

Amblers:

Phil Ellis 07907 854891

Lynne Hutton 07718 913131

Helen Illingworth 07860 314968

Art:

Lindsay Fairhurst 07800 820096

Julie Latham 07801 306776

Birdwatching:

George Scaife 07956 294775

Book Club:

Helen Illingworth 07860 314968

Craft Group

Meg Starkey 07778017443

Creative Writing:

Kay Grayson 07903 570008

Family History:

Jean Ainsworth 07790192120

Flower Arranging:

Nina Gardner 07411 520771

Garden Inspiration:

Pat Matson 01706 853691

Learning Italian Together:

Meg Starkey 01706 343381

Luncheon Group:

Margaret Croxon 07790891962

Philosophy :

John Hall john@firefly.me.uk

Photography:

Doreen Brown 07813 056481

Play Reading:

Mary Cawley 01706 356109

Tap Dancing:

Paula Bradbury

g-pbradbury@outlook.com

Walking:

Garry Bradbury 07486 009581

Wellbeing:

Sheila Daly 0772 757925

Ukulele:

Deborah Whitham 07776 332 666

Art Group

Drawing exercises with willow charcoal sticks, A first attempt for many and a bit of a challenge as its quite different to work with.



Apples in small bowls

Waves and hillsides



Flower Arranging Group

We meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month at Whitworth Library. We like to do seasonal arrangements using foliage from gardens if possible. We sometimes do experimental arrangements as well as some of the more traditional ones, but most of all we like to have fun and enjoy what we do.

Nina



**A lovely afternoon with the flower group.
Next meeting 21st March at Whitworth
Library**

Interest Groups

Craft Group

The Craft Group looked at pictures then produced some exotic ladies, the group meet at Megs House every Monday Morning. Please contact Meg Starkey 07778017443



Book Club

Members continue to meet monthly at Hallfold UR Church. With 14 members, the group is full as we are limited by the number of books Lancashire Libraries can supply and also discussion would be difficult with more members.

At the February meeting we will be discussing *Where We Belong* by Anstey Harris. It follows Cate Morris and her son Leo as they move from their London home to an old rundown museum, Hatters, in the wilds of Kent. The property was once the family home of Cate's deceased husband Richard and remains filled with memories and mysteries. Despite the move being due to necessity rather than desire, Cate and Leo find the dusty old museum gradually drawing them in.

Anstey Harris is another Richard and Judy author choice, her debut novel *The Truths and Triumphs of Grace Atherton* being introduced by them in 2019.

Helen I

Amblers

Although our monthly ambles are well attended by both amblers and walkers we are happy to welcome new members. Ambles are short and easy, no more than 3 miles and mostly flat with only one or two stiles. For March's amble we are revisiting Queens's Park and the River Roch. Meet at the car park on Queens's Park Road at 10am. We will have a drink at the cafe on our return so no need to bring a snack.

Garden Inspiration

The group got off to a late but very fine start to the season last week, when a number of members met to begin planning the year – a fine reason to visit Park Farm in Ramsbottom for a lovely lunch and a chance to catch up with people we hadn't seen for a while. The group's aims are very simple: we visit beautiful gardens, have a nice spot of lunch and find any chance we can for 'retail therapy' – or more simply, some shopping! We decided this year we will continue to car share (as long as we have enough drivers), we will visit venues both local and far off (well, to a maximum of 60ish miles) and we will continue to meet on a Saturday, once a month. Our hope is to find inspiration to bring back to our own gardens. But we admitted this year that we may just go out for the pleasure of an enjoyable day surrounded by interesting and beautiful places. For more information contact Pat on 07922 593032

Pat Matson

Interest Groups

Ukulele Group

The Uke3A group were very busy throughout December playing for various Christmas parties and events including Middleton Masons, Probus, U3A, Whitworth Library, Stronger Together Carers, Alzheimer's Society, Springhill Hospice, Barley View Care Home & Riddiough Court. As we don't charge for our performances, hosts who would expect to pay for entertainers made donations to Stronger Together Carers in lieu of this. We believe Stronger Together have received donations in excess of £150.00 as a result of our efforts.

Uke3A has doubled in numbers since setting up 15 months ago. As a result, we now meet in the residents lounge at Riddiough Court.

The group is going to adapt to different leaders for a couple of months - I am sure this will be a good learning experience for all. Many thanks to Julie & Andrew Huxley for agreeing to step up. In July we hope to perform again at Summer Strum - should we dare to apply for the Main Stage.

New bookings for Uke3A are welcomed. Plenty of notice is preferred so we can plan accordingly.



Everyone enjoyed the Pantomime, thank you to the Play Reading Group – and the Camel stole the show!

Play reading Group

The Play Reading Group produced a fantastic mini pantomime for our Christmas meeting.

