



## Newsletter – May 2026

*A message from your Chair,*

The AGM was held successfully, with the committee members voted in (old and new), therefore the 'Business' end of the u3a has been fulfilled. Now we can continue to enjoy the real reason we joined!

**LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE.**

**Learn** a new language, about you family history or to play an instrument.

**Laugh** while you play Mahjong, enjoy a good wine, or read a play.

**Live** in the garden, go out for a meal or coffee, have a nice walk, draw a picture, write a poem, read a book.

Whatever you do, enjoy our groups, meet new people and live your life to the full.

Finally, as this is the last newsletter to be edited by Kathy, I'd like to thank her for all of her hard work and effort in making sure that we have had an interesting and professional newsletter each month.

Best wishes

*Shirley*



learn,  
laugh,  
live

# GROUP NEWS

## Discussion Groups

The new Monday Discussion Group had its first very successful meeting in March. There will be a new 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday Discussion Group starting on 15<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30 pm at the YMCA Café, St Annes. The new Friday Discussion Group will take place on the first Friday of the month, in the afternoon. Further details, including contact information is available on the Groups webpage:

<https://lytham-st-annes.u3asite.uk/groups/>

**Note:** Please be aware that like the majority of new groups being formed, they will be self-managing, in that there will not be one 'leader' who decides and does everything. Members of the group will be expected to contribute and share responsibility for their group.

Jan Breame, Groups Coordinator

## WALKING GROUP

Fourteen of us met up outside the Offshore on a bright but very chilly morning and set off up the beach towards Fairhaven. Showers were forecast; if we wanted to avoid them (for once!), we needed to be off!

We dodged the cruel wind by dropping down onto the path around Fairhaven Lake and admired the beautiful wildflowers and the birdlife with which the area was teeming. We continued over the golf course, the sky growing ever darker, but the conversation flowed and our cheerful band made excellent time back through town, to return for a hearty lunch at the aforementioned Offshore. As we tucked in, the heavens opened! Another bullet dodged!



Pam Trivass [pamsheppard@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pamsheppard@hotmail.co.uk)

## ***PLODDERS WALKING GROUP***

What a brilliant sunny day we had. There was a cold wind, but the sun and the beach were wonderful. We met at Ashton Gardens Pavilion and reminded ourselves of a little of the history. Ashton Gardens was originally called St George's Gardens and they were built 1874-1875 in the very early years of the town. In 1912, WJ Porritt, who built so many of the beautiful stone houses in St Annes, asked the council if he could build over the gardens. The story goes, that possibly a council clerk, alarmed at the thought of losing the gardens, sent two copies of the St Annes Express, which detailed the plans, to Lord Ashton of Lancaster. The wealthy Lord Ashton, who had made his money manufacturing lino, decided to step in and bought the gardens for the town. He paid £21,000 for them and then gave a further £4,500 for further land and improvements. The rock and water gardens were built and six thousand rose trees planted. We didn't count them as we walked through today, but they all looked to be thriving.

From Ashton Gardens, we walked past the tennis club to Highbury Road and then across to the beach. Not for the first time did we all agree that we are so lucky to live in such a beautiful place! The beach seemed endless. During the walk, we remembered Steve King, one of our regular Plodders, who has sadly died. Steve, a great archaeologist and historian, would always add interest to our walks. It was he



who told us that Sainsbury's in St Annes is built on the site of the old railway goods yard, where stone for the Porritt houses was unloaded, having come by rail from Porritt's own stone quarry in Helmsshore. We will miss Steve.

*Catharine Oldroyd*

## ***DISCORDS GUITAR GROUP***

This month in the Discords we have explored some wonderful songs. We learned The Mighty Quinn (written by Bob Dylan but performed by Manfred Mann), City of New Orleans (as performed by Willie Nelson), Bottle of Wine (Tom Paxton), Is this the way to Amarillo? (performed by Tony Christie) and Teach Your Children (Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young). All great fun to learn.

Sadly, one of our members passed away. Steven King was with the group from the very beginning and was an accomplished guitarist as well as a true gentleman. He had a deep knowledge and love of music and we will all miss him.

*Shaun*

## **EATING OUT GROUP**

Thirteen members of the eating out group met on Wednesday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at Tiggis Italian restaurant, off Wood Street in St Annes. The time of the table reservation had to be delayed by half an hour from our usual time of 5:30pm, due to the popularity of the restaurant. Most people choose from the fixed price menu, which consisted of a wide selection of starters and main meals. The quality of the food and drink at Tiggis is always excellent, as is the service. Below is an assessment of six criteria, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

Service =5, Quality of Food= 5, Menu options=5, Cost=5, Value for money=5 and Accessibility=5.

The May meal out will be on Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> at Salters Wharf Toby Cavery, South Promenade in St Annes, at 5:30pm.

*Donald Mobbs.*

## **LUNCHEON CLUB**

The luncheon club outings continue, with Donald Mobbs at the helm following a successful few years with Linda Adams running the group. The latest luncheon event, attended by 6 members, was on Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup> April at the Victoria Hotel in Church Road, St Annes. The Victoria Hotel has been recently refurbished and had only reopened a short time before our visit. It is a Greene King Pub-Restaurant of which there are several in Lytham St Annes. The choice of items on the standard lunch menu was wide and no one I believe took advantage of the "senior" menu, that was on offer, which seemed to be more limited. The quality of the food was good and after ordering at the bar, the wait for the food to arrive was satisfactory.

Below is an assessment of six criteria, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. Service =5, Quality of food= 5, Menu options=5, Cost=5, Value for money=5 and Accessibility=4 (N.B. If required there is a disabled person entry/exit).

The next luncheon will be on Wednesday May 13<sup>th</sup> – venue has yet to be decided.

*Donald Mobbs*

## **COMPUTER & TECHNOLOGY GROUP**

There will be a session on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 10.30 until 12.30, at St Annes Library. The room is restricted to a maximum of about 8-10, so please book your place beforehand, by sending me an email. There is internet connectivity available at the library.

There are currently no subjects planned for this session. So please email me if you would like any specific subjects covered and I will try and incorporate them. There will be time for Q & A to answer people's individual questions, on all subjects, and if required to repeat earlier sessions. The cost of each session will be £2.

*Tim Renicar , Group Leader [trenicar@hotmail.com](mailto:trenicar@hotmail.com)*

## TRANSPORT HISTORY GROUP

We had a successful inaugural meeting on **Thursday 23rd April** for our maiden talk entitled "**Helicopters and how they Fly**"

We have now set a date and venue for a series of **FIVE** talks to be held on the **last Thursday** of the months, **May to September**. The exact dates and planned speakers are: -



Date	Speaker/Subject
May 28th	Keith Thorpe – Journeys on 2 Wheels
June 25 <sup>th</sup>	Debbie Morris – A Racing Start!
July 23 <sup>rd</sup>	TBA
August 27 <sup>th</sup>	Barry Lees – Trains (TBC)
September 24 <sup>th</sup>	Gordon Day – Little Imps

Meetings will commence at **10.30** with refreshments and the talk of the day is planned to commence at about 10.45 lasting about 50 minutes. Our venue will be at the Community Room of the **Drive Methodist Church, 268 Clifton Drive South, Lytham Saint Annes FY8 1LH**

If you missed us last time, our aim is to have regular meetings, with a speaker, covering *any* transport related subject. The deliberate intention is to keep the subject matter wide and thus including anything transport related, on land sea or air, old and new.

If *you* have a favourite transport related subject you'd like to talk about to a like-minded audience – now is your opportunity!

Contact us at [transporthistorygroupu3a@gmail.com](mailto:transporthistorygroupu3a@gmail.com) if you would like to know more. We very much look forward to meeting friends old and new!

**Peter Skinner & Chris Holley**

## FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

There will be a session of the group on Friday, May 15, at St Annes Library, 10.00–12.00. The room is restricted to a maximum of about 8–10, so please book your place beforehand, by sending me an email. There is internet connectivity available at the library, where we can access family history records, free of charge.

So, if you are interested in tracing your family history, come along and we can try and help. It is a fascinating subject that can become addictive! You might discover things you didn't know about your family, we have! For example, last month we delved into DNA in Ancestry, and it helped clarify entries in a participant's tree.

The cost of the session will be £2

Anyone interested in attending our group sessions should either add themselves to the group in Beacon, or contact me, below.

**Tim Renicar, Group Leader** [trenicar@hotmail.com](mailto:trenicar@hotmail.com)

# BIRDWATCHING

## Bird Walk at Brockholes LWT reserve on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April

Fortunately, the weather stayed dry for us almost until we finished our trip. The first summer migrants had started to arrive with good number of Sand Martins, Chiffchaff, Blackcaps and a single Sedge Warbler on show.

Our best sightings were really close up views of the Chiffchaff, Blackcap and two Nuthatches and a very showy Cetti's Warbler, normally only heard and glimpsed but seen sitting out in the open a couple of times.

The whole list was:

Great Crested Grebe	Teal	Coal Tit	Willow Warbler
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Buzzard	Great Tit	Cetti's Warbler
Grey Heron	Pheasant	Blue Tit	Tree Creeper
Little Egret	Moorhen	Dunnock	Oystercatcher
Mute Swan	Wren	Magpie	Carrion Crow
Canada Goose	Redshank	Blackbird	Starling
Greylag Goose	Lapwing	Green Sandpiper	Greenfinch
Shelduck	Wood Pigeon	Black-headed Gull	Goldfinch
Mallard	Sand Martin	Long-tailed Tit	Reed Bunting
Gadwall	Swallow	Song Thrush	Ringed Plover
Shoveler	Pied Wagtail	Sedge Warbler	Herring Gull
Little Ringed Plover	Nuthatch	Blackcap	C Common Gull
Tufted Duck	Robin	Chiffchaff	

Our next meeting will be on the 12<sup>th</sup> May – probable venue Mere Sands Wood or Marshside – to be led by John Swarbrick. Details will be confirmed via Beacon email nearer the time.



*David Blair*



## **PRACTICAL GARDENING**

Our April meeting took us to another group member's garden. We were welcomed by Angela and Joe to their garden, which grows ever larger each year. It was probably the warmest and sunniest day of the year so far, so we enjoyed the pleasure of an outdoor meeting.

We commenced with our regular review of what is likely to need to be done over the coming weeks. With fresh new growth and warmer, longer days, our gardens need our attention and bring new challenges and opportunities.

Seeds can be sown, young plants can be planted out – but do remember anything tender and prone to damage from frosts should remain protected for just a few weeks more.



Our practical session this month gave us an opportunity to plant a selection of vegetable and salad seeds, these can be grown on at home and harvested later in the year. Thank you Muriel for encouraging us all to try some new and interesting varieties.

With our quiz completed, we set out to explore the extensive gardens and glasshouse. It's an open sunny location and shows how each garden can be so individual. Many plants were well ahead of some of our gardens where buildings, fences and hedges provide shade in a smaller garden.

Spring colour and growth was in abundance, with traditional displays of tulips underplanted with wall flowers showing how spectacular such bedding can be in spring.

The meeting concluded with some very fine refreshments and convivial chat, together with some strong early tomato plants. Thanks Angela.

We still have space for a new member or two, so if you are interested, please contact Muriel Farrow or myself.

**Martin Lammas**



## **WALKING GROUP – 2<sup>ND</sup> WALK**

The Walking Group went out on a cool cloudy 1st April 2026 (I'm no fool), to Penwortham along the River Ribble in Preston.

There was a good turnout (I am sure nothing to do with the weather) and we met in the free car park near the swing bridge by the docks.

We walked along at a gentle pace between the steam train railway track and the river. Train enthusiasts of the group were delighted to see a steam train puffing along and to hear it whistle at us. The walk took us along the river with lovey views across to the opposite bank.

The group crossed over the river at Penwortham Bridge and were soon on the south side of the bank.



The walk took us through Penwortham village and by St Mary's Church, which is on the site where Penwortham Castle and Priory used to stand in Medieval times, during the Norman Conquests. It had been built to guard the river estuary however, it declined in importance when Lancaster Castle was built.

It was a circular 5 mile walk which finished back at the

swing bridge via the docks where we had refreshments at the Beach Hut on the Marina.

*Allan Williams*

## **PAINTING & DRAWING**

This time we worked on the suggestion of a 'stag'. There were some good pictures, notably this pencil drawing from new group member, Chris.

Next month the suggestion is a well-known personality, either portrait or caricature. Should be interesting. If you fancy having a go contact me for information.

**Allan Lawton** [allanlesley1@gmail.com](mailto:allanlesley1@gmail.com)



## WINE APPRECIATION

We felt honoured at our March meet up that John and Joan Peet decided to celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at our event. John and Joan are regular attendees and it was wonderful to share such a special day with the happy couple.

That evening we tried a different format. Following a welcome glass of fizz we tasted 3 different grape varieties: Viognier, Pinot Noir and Rioja – each in both a bottle under £10 and a more expensive one around the £20 mark. Could we tell the difference? Was a bottle at double the price worth it? Well there was a mixture of views on that but most were in agreement that it was a fun trial and we'll revisit that format again in the future.

**Kathy**



We were very sad to learn that long standing member Steve King sadly passed away last month. Steve has been an active supporter of our u3a and indeed the wider Lytham St Annes community for many years. Steve has given talks to members on his experience of living in Japan and in the past he ran a successful Archaeology Group and History Group. He was an active member of the Plodders Walking Group and the Discords Guitar Group and he is fondly remembered by those groups within this newsletter.

Recently Steve has been involved with the planting of Sakura Cherry Trees around Fairhaven Lake. The gift of the trees from the Japanese government was facilitated by Steve, who previously helped to create Fairhaven's Japanese garden and who had donated the garden's stone pagoda statue. Next time you are at the lake spend a moment in the Japanese Garden and remember our friend Steve.



## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the following new members:

Garry Wharrier  
Dilys Robinson  
Jean Spurr  
Michael Spurr

Susan Waring  
Carole Waters  
Eunice Taylor  
Jeremy Taylor

Eileen Leahy  
Moira Johnson  
Robert Johnson  
Carol Broughton

## SPEAKER PROGRAMME 2026

Our Speaker 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 friends, old and new and the opportunity to find out about the different interest and social groups that are available. At 10:30 we spend a few minutes on general u3a news before sitting back and enjoying a talk or entertainment that usually ends by 12 noon. Our 2026 speaker programme is as follows:

May 8	Lyrical Allsorts – Songs & stories; Joy and Kevin Siddall
June 12	It's a Wonderful Life – Brian Halliwell
July 10	My Life at Granada TV; Judy A Popley
September 11	The Assassination of John Lennon; Peter Mellor
October 9	Photos Tell Stories – the stories behind famous photographs; Jackie Mafi
November 13	Wives, Workers & Widows of the Great War; Jennifer Ray
December 11	Festive Music; Yvonne Pinder

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Our website:	<a href="https://lytham-st-annes.u3asite.uk">https://lytham-st-annes.u3asite.uk</a>
Northwest u3a website:	<a href="https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk">https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk</a>
National u3a website:	<a href="http://www.u3a.org.uk">www.u3a.org.uk</a>
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