



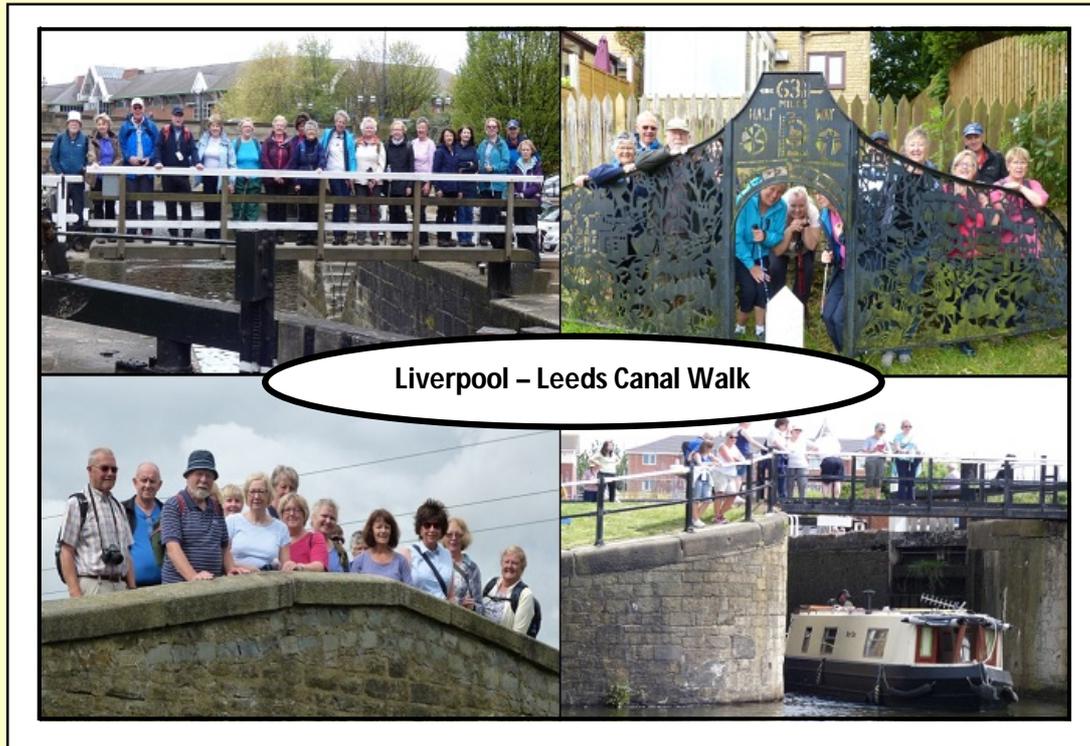
Maghull and Lydiate U3A



Reg. Charity: No. 1116576

ISSUE 111 September

CANAL CONQUEST - WE DID IT!



Over the last year some twenty U3A members trekked along the 127 miles of towpath between Leeds and Liverpool. Our journey took us through Burscough, Chorley, Blackburn, Colne, Gargrave, Skipton, Keighley, Bingley, Saltaire and Shipley before we reached our destination.

The route passed through lovely "hills and dales" countryside in Lancashire and Yorkshire and was full of super views and canal side buildings. These included several Victorian "wonders" such as the huge "Straight Mile" embankment at Burnley, an absolutely massive cotton mill at Brierfield, the spectacular Five Rise Locks at Bingley and the Victorian planned town of Saltaire.

We started the adventure in Autumn 2016 completing 6 to 8 mile stages using cars, buses, trains and minibuses to get us to and from each stage which usually ended in a welcoming pub or cafe.

The weather was generally kind to us, only once did we have to cancel because of storm Doris. But we did have to battle through torrential rain, hail and snow once or twice before reaching our destination.

Looking back, it was great fun and well worth all the effort!

Thomas Kelly

Hampshire Pre-Holiday Talk - Tuesday 11th September at 11:15 in the Coffee Room at the MBC.

Deadline for items for our October Newsletter is the 12th of September. Available 30th of September

Four Dutch Villages Visited

Green wooden houses built on stilts, a clog demonstration with a stand up comedian; a museum dedicated to times gone by and a warm breeze as we crossed the Marker Meer; cheese to sample, wine to sip, girls in traditional costume and windmills; perfection one might say. Certainly a great way to start our Dutch holiday.

Marken, once an island, but now joined to the mainland by a long causeway was charming. Narrow paths meandered between weather-boarded houses. An old church with long gone ships hanging as memorials from its ceiling gave us a taste of the life the people had when Marken was a thriving fishing port. Today the tourists have replaced the fishermen but the museum provides a glimpse of the past, with clogs you can try on before you buy and trinkets of every description hanging from the beams of the old boathouse.

The Marken Express took us across the Marker Meer towards busy Volendam. The calm sea and the apple pie and cream made the journey a delight; being on deck in the cooling breeze on such a hot day watching Volendam get ever closer was even better.



Volendam with its busy street full of colour, shops, bars and cafes gave us a chance for lunch; essential after a sea crossing you'll agree!! Colourful costumes, statues on the front, Volendam was bursting with life. Behind the sea front shops we found a labyrinth of old streets with quaint bridges crossing narrow canals; a hint of what Volendam used to be before the tourist flooded in.

This glimpse into the past was even more apparent in Edam; here the tourist trade had not made such a mark and the cheese weighing bridge, the churches and the canal still had a tranquil air about them. Life seemed to have a slower pace here - with time to smell the flowers!

Our last town was Zaanse Schans and the cheese tasting to beat them all. Who could have known that there would be so many different types of Gouda available? But for me, the question was - how could they make so many versions and yet manage to get them all to taste like rubber!! Everyone else thought they were wonderful! Perhaps the ever flowing wine that the girls in traditional costume kept pouring helped?

Outside the sun shone on windmills with slow moving sails, on old barges with their battered grandeur and on wooden seats, which were bliss for weary bones. A perfect end to a perfect day.



Armed with cheeses, trinkets and gifts to take home, we said farewell to Zaanse Schan, knowing that as this was only the first day there was so much more to come!

Jane Jones

The Third Battle of Ypres - Passchendaele

On our journey through Belgium we passed Pilkem Ridge; scene of the opening battle of the Third Battle of Ypres which took place between the 31st of July and the 2nd of August 1917. This memorial, close to Langemark, is the only memorial to the Welsh soldiers who fought in the Great War and was raised in 2014.



Nearby was Brandhoek, resting place of Captain Noel Chavasse, and Artillery Woods, resting place of the poets Francis Ledwidge and Ellis Humphreys Evans (Hedd Wyn). The two poets fell on the first day of the battle.

Jane Jones

Time for a Change



For many years Mary Prendergast has been one of the driving force behind the membership desk at the U3A. Her dedication, her planning skills and her enthusiasm have helped make our membership renewal process the slick effective system it is today.

Now Mary plans on taking her talents on a different course as she leaves the Membership Team. We don't have to worry though; Mary will still be around, so that warm encouraging smile of hers will still light up our Coffee Mornings. Thank you Mary for all your hard work both for the U3A and the Macmillan Trust.

A Thank You Note

We all know Val Turnbull for her amazing card display at the Coffee Morning. Her work has brought pleasure to so many; with personalised cards to suit all. For some eight years Val has worked tirelessly passing on her skills to the members of the card making group. Val says the joy in making the cards is surpassed only by the pleasure of seeing members delight at their own success. The gang at the Card Group all send their best wishes to Val as she gives up her role as co-leader of this popular group. Thanks Val for all your help & support.

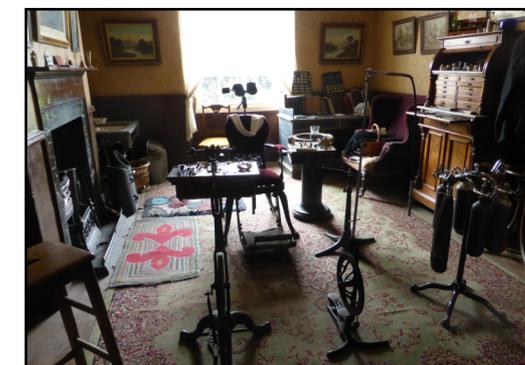


DELIGHTS OF DURHAM

The weather was just right for our three day stay in the lovely World Heritage, Cathedral City of Durham. Our hotel was right in the centre of town; just a short walk up and over the River Wyre and we were in the Cathedral / Castle enclave. Twenty-three members enjoyed a brilliantly educational weekend that included talks in The Cathedral, The Castle, Beamish Open Museum and The Mining Gallery.

The self guided tour of the Cathedral was very relaxed and finished off with evensong which some of us attended; the Verger kindly let us sneak out of a side door to attend the Castle tour! The Castle has been

continuously inhabited since 11th century and is now used as student accommodation so we were very lucky to be allowed into certain areas. The small Norman built chapel was awe inspiring in its architectural simplicity. This whole area is steeped in history and more recently mining struggles and tragedies.



The Beamish experience was an eclectic mix of old, re-sited properties which included a row of terraced houses. One of the houses, owned by a Dentist, included a display of the tools of his trade (that definitely gave us shivers!) Next door, all fully set out in the style of the era, lived a Piano Teacher. Close by was a bank which had been moved from Liverpool. There was also a chemist complete with potions and pills. This was a real memory trip for many members of the group.

On our visit to the Mining Gallery we were greeted by very informative staff and some ex miners. One of miners was a little lively fellow who filled us in on the harsh realities of mining life. We have all enjoyed the fruits of their labour often unaware of the conditions that these men worked under . Not one of us would have liked to do this job for a living! For most there was no choice, children followed fathers into the mine and in some cases their whole families went down below ground with them. Until 1947, there were no laws protecting the miners from the unscrupulous mine owners who exploited them, often forcing them to work in unsafe conditions which many a time resulted in tragic consequences. We had an introduction to the 'The Bevin Boys' in The Mining Art Gallery at Bishop Auckland. Most of us were unaware of the life led by these heroic, if unwilling war heroes. These men enlisted to fight in the war but were forced to go down the mines instead. Miners became soldiers, soldiers became miners, none having experience in each other's roles. The tragic loss of life, young and old affected each family in County Durham and beyond. Some of the miners were very accomplished artists, their work at last being acknowledged. Art seemed to be a release from the daily grind of mining for these men. Some such as Norman Cornish have found fame with some of the most emotionally effective art I have seen, showing the viewer every aspect of life underground.

Everyone we encountered was friendly, helpful and enthusiastic for the future of this heart warming part of the British Isles.

Moe Birchall

If you know of any member who is ill or in need, please inform Lill Boyle (Welfare) on 526 4303

ENCHANTING ESSEX

Our coach met us at Central Square - good old Holmeswood Coaches used all the time for Day Trips. Scott was our driver and he was great. Off we set, would you believe in a rain shower, after all the lovely weather we'd been enjoying for ages. However, we soon ran out of it and never saw another drop.

Our first call was at Curborough Hall Farm which had a delightful and very reasonably priced tea room. After suitable refreshments we set off again with a short comfort stop before reaching our Hotel - Holiday Inn near Colchester. The Hotel was very comfortable, with excellent food and very attentive staff and Management.

There followed a full few days starting with a visit to Southend on Sea, a popular holiday resort with the longest pier in the world. Many of us enjoyed the train ride, which ran from one end of the pier to the other whilst the more energetic made the effort and walked its one and a third miles.

We followed this with a visit to a Vineyard which was both an educational and social experience. After a cool Pimms on arrival, our guide was a fountain of knowledge and full of enthusiasm Will you ever pull a cork again without thinking about its' tanning, nosegay, provenance etc? Plenty of samples flowed together with delicious nibbles. Next day saw us cross into Suffolk, to visit Sudbury, home of the painter Thomas Gainsborough. We continued on to Kentwell Manor, a beautiful moated Tudor Mansion, still privately owned and occupied by the family. We really didn't manage to see an awful lot here, especially the gardens, as it was far too hot - did you ever think we would be saying that!

Our final full day took us to the Tiptree Shop and Jam Museum and from there we went to the ancient Hythe Quay at Maldon. The scene here took you back in time with the picturesque old sailing barges docked alongside the Quay and a Steam Boat. Two delightful Inns were right on the water's edge where we could have some lunch. Then, with time to reminisce, we made a journey on the Heritage Steam Ongar Weald Railway.

Sadly, all good things come to an end and we had to set off on our homeward trek. We saw The Cross and the Lady on a White Horse statue at Banbury and some of us sampled Banbury Cakes - delicious. We also stopped at the Guide Dog Breeding Centre where we were given a guided tour of this multi-million pound investment. The very young puppies undergo a selection process as to their suitability to be a guide dog and start their basic disciplines here. We were only allowed to see the puppies from behind glass because of the danger of infection, but there were still plenty of oohs and aahs.

We arrived back in the Square and sure enough it was raining - just as we had left it. Did we care???



Marj Atlay

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 7th Sept - Family History - Members' Query Day
- 11th Sept - Hampshire Holiday Talk 11:15 in the Coffee Room
- 12th Sept - Day Trip to Llangollen with a cruise on the River Dee
- 12th Oct - Theatre Group - Epstein Theatre - A Taste of Honey
- 19th Oct - Day Trip to Buxton and the Hanging Gate Inn
- 22nd Oct - Theatre Group - St George's Hall - Billy Joel Songbook
- 7th Nov - Theatre Group - St George's Hall - World War One Poetry and Music
- 9th Nov - Theatre Group - Empire Theatre - La Traviata
- 30th Nov - Theatre Group - Empire Theatre - Calendar Girls
- 13th Dec - Day Trip Christmas Lunch at Singleton Lodge Country House

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For general enquiries please contact us on: mandlu3a@gmail.com