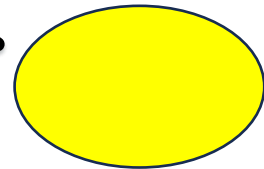


u3aNorthwich Newsletter

JUNE 2026

<https://northwich.u3asite.uk>



Monthly Meeting – May 2026 'The Mountain Rescue Service'

The presentation this month was entitled, 'Oldham Mountain Rescue Service' and was given by one of its long-standing members, Peter Hyde. This service is a charity, manned entirely by volunteers, which relies on donations and needs £50,000 annually to carry out its work. There are 47 rescue teams in 8 regions across the country and their patron is King Charles.

Peter began the session with a fact-based film about The Mountain Rescue Service and everything it does – and there is a lot more to it than anyone thought!

In the 1930s, after someone had a climbing accident, in the Oldham area, Eustace Thomas designed (with the help of others in 'The Rucksack Club') a stretcher which could transport an injured person over rough terrain. This was known as the 'Thomas Stretcher' and was used until the 1970s when it was superseded by the 'Bell Stretcher'. Over the years, it was noted that more people needed rescuing from different environments and situations and eventually, in 1964, The Mountain Rescue Service was founded.

A rescue usually follows a set itinerary: a rendezvous, a briefing, a search (maybe using dogs), medical care, evacuation. A rescue may also require air support, coastguard, stretcher winching, police involvement or other services and could be at any time of day or night and in very poor weather conditions.

There are different sorts of rescue and evacuation which require different sorts of techniques: crag rescue techniques, horizontal

stretcher evacuation, cableway evacuation, steep ground raise, shaft rescue, buildings rescue, tower crane rescue, wildfire aid, rescue from railway tunnels, water rescue, helicopter/plane crash rescue and road traffic accident rescue.

As if all that isn't enough, the service also helps with animal rescue, replacing stepping stones in out of the way places, rubbish recovery, attending Remembrance Sunday, rebuilding a Sri Lankan school and being on set of TV programmes (e.g. Emmerdale).

A volunteer will probably train for 2 years to become accomplished in mountain skills as well as attending a series of courses in other skills necessary. It will take approximately 18 months to train a dog.

The service has a long list of well-deserved awards, including 'The Pride of Oldham' and the Queen's Award (2019).

This was a thought-provoking, interesting and informative presentation as many in the audience did not realise the amount of people and skills needed or the wide range of activities that the service carries out. Peter told many stories of rescues and members enjoyed the afternoon tremendously.

Postscript – Message from the speaker, re donations received.

Just letting you know that the cash amounted to £182.00 and there was one card donation of £10.00. One hundred and ninety-two pounds plus the speaker's fee when it arrives is a wonderfully generous amount. Please will you thank everyone from myself and the rest of the Team at your next opportunity.

Northwich U3A is a registered charity (number 1113103) Secretary: Liesje Thompson, liesje.thompson@gmail.com.

Membership Secretary: Geoff Wales, gww.u3a@gmail.com. Please send submissions for the Newsletter to Karen Banks

Please check the website for national and local events. u3a North West activities can be found at www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is on 17th June at 2pm at Owley Wood Recreation Club, Weaverham, when Gary Conley will tell us all about his 'Life at the Manor'.

Gary was a miner at Sutton Manor Colliery for 19 years up to 1991. He subsequently became involved in art. He starred in the Big Art Project on Channel 4

Message on behalf of u3a festival - fringe event (take part from home).

If you aren't able to attend *u3a Festival 26*, there will be a *u3a Festival Fringe*. This is an online events programme specifically curated to complement the festival activities.

The events will take place in the lead up to, and following on from, the festival in York on 1-3 July, making a full two weeks of learning and fun. The programme will feature online workshops and talks from Festival speakers with highlights including *How to watercolour*, *The role of women in ancient Egypt*, and *The role of wind energy in the UK's electricity system*. More information on how to take part will come in future u3a newsletters.

Group news Singing for pleasure



The Singing for Pleasure group is now meeting monthly, at the Methodist Hall, Hartford. Colin and David have provided the guitar accompaniment.

The next meeting will take place on Saturday 20th June

Photography Group

The group had it's first guest speaker in May, who gave an informative talk on phone photography and travel.

The speaker was Vince Sparks who is a member of Congleton u3a camera group. The next meeting is on Monday 8th June. It will be a practical portrait session using both cameras and phones.



Feature from member: David Arcus



The picture above, shows a Common Reed Warbler captured recently by one of our Walking Group Leaders. David Arcus is a keen wildlife Photographer. David says, these are common summer visitors to our shores from April to September, mostly spending their time inhabiting the reed beds of our waterways, flying back to the warmer Africa for the winter. They make their nest between the reeds & consume mostly insects. Patience is the key for any chance of a photo! Suffice to say it took him a few visits to a spot on the River Weaver to get the shot he wanted.



Registered Charity No 1159091

invite applications for the 2026 Residential Summer School

**Tues 11th August – Friday
14th August**

**At Manchester Metropolitan
University, M15 6GX**

The Metropolitan University is located in the centre of Manchester and less than 20 minutes' walk from Oxford Road Railway Station. The campus has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access. There will be a quiz on the first evening and a "Gala Dinner" on the third and final evening. Speakers will also attend on the second and third evening.

Full Board Residential Delegate: £430. (+£15 car parking charge if applicable;)

We include full board for 3 nights, including dinner on 11th August, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 12th August, breakfast, lunch and Gala Dinner on 13th August, and breakfast on 14th August.

Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215 (+£15 car parking charge if applicable)

This includes lunches, teas and coffees, excludes breakfast daily and dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday but does include the Gala Dinner on 13th August.

Accommodation is available nearby in the Manchester city centre.

An Application form (available online at north west region.u3asite.uk) must be completed by post or email. Payment can be either by bank transfer (North West Region of u3as, Lloyds Bank sort code 30-90-16, account 00197002 quoting name and post code) or by cheque (payable to North West Region of u3as)

£100 DEPOSIT (£50 non residents) PAYABLE UPON APPLICATION;

BALANCE BY 11 MAY 2026

Queries should be directed to Alan Hough or Neill Stewart at

alanhough1949@gmail.com; neillstewart.uk@icloud.com

Post to 8 Salwick Close, Wigan, Gtr Manchester. WN3 6RE

The 8 courses on offer are:-

Archaeology Explorers

Making sense of everyday Mathematics

An introduction to Geology

Photography - Beyond the Snapshot

Art challenges - the history of colour

The UK and USA Political Scenes

Operatunity – opera appreciation

Intermediary Ukulele

**Full course synopses available
separately (and on north west site).**