

# the northern line

*the newsletter of north london university of the third age*

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## Found in translation

Anthony Burgess said: 'Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture.' **Judith Abbs** asked **Miriam Mazower** whether the Reading in Translation group was interested in both the language and the culture of the books they read each month

**What made you decide to read novels in translation, rather than those written in English?**

We wanted to learn about different lives – to discover other countries and cultures through the experiences of their writers.

**How did the group start?**

About six years ago, I was chatting to Patricia Isaacs, who was the groups organiser at the time, about widening my horizons by reading books in translation. Before I knew what was happening, I had agreed to start a group.

**How do you choose what to read?**

Members of the group make suggestions and we choose a booklist twice a year covering the next six months.

**Does that mean that you read 12 books every year?**

We give ourselves a break in August. Instead of reading, we watch a film, sometimes based on a book we have read.

**Is the quality of the translation an issue?**

Without knowing the original language, we are not able to judge how well a book has been translated but sometimes we become aware that the English is jarring. Of course, that may reflect the original.

**Do you include contemporary books and classics?**

We try to achieve a balance and read both.

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From the Austrian film *Der Trafikant* (*The Tobacconist*)

# Our publications

The **Northern Line** (TNL) and **Update** are each published three times a year. TNL is edited by Leni Green, with assistance from Judith Abbs, and

designed by Barry Davies. **Update** is edited by Jane Marsh. Please send Jane submissions for the next Update by **5 October** to [oriana.jane@btinternet.com](mailto:oriana.jane@btinternet.com)

• **The editors may shorten or otherwise amend articles to fit spacing and style requirements.**

## Editorial

**L**oneliness and social isolation are potential killers. A large-scale research review, published in 2015 by academics in the US, found that these factors are as much a risk to health and longevity as obesity or smoking.

In the same year, as part of our 21st anniversary celebrations, we carried out a survey to find out exactly who our members were. One of the findings was that half of NLU3A members lived alone. In addition, a quarter classed themselves as carers, nearly half caring for grandchildren.

Why do so few carers join NLU3A? And how can we reach those who might feel isolated and extend our provision to them? In this issue, one former carer and three members who live alone give us their views.

Our interview in this issue is with the coordinator of the Reading in Translation group. We asked this group and six other reading groups to recommend books that they all enjoyed. Our series on blue plaques in north London continues with a feature on Mary Kingsley, who lived in Highgate. And we



include a photo collage from NLU3A's spring study tour to Northamptonshire.

Happy reading!  
**Leni Green**  
Editor  
[editor@nlu3a.org.uk](mailto:editor@nlu3a.org.uk)

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**When you discuss the books, is the focus on the plot and characters or on the culture and way of life?**

Everyone approaches the books in their own way, so we can discuss any aspect. Sometimes we might focus on the way it's written. For instance, we found that the Heinrich Boll book *The Lost Honour of Katerina Blum* was written in a very impersonal manner and some of us felt that this lessened the impact it should have had. Of course it was clearly

written this way for a reason and this provoked much discussion!

**Have you and the group agreed on books or authors that you all loved or that you all hated?**

We all enjoyed *The Tobacconist* by the Austrian writer Robert Seethaler. On the other hand, some of us thought *The Asiatics* by Frederic Prokosch – published in 1935 to universal praise – was not what it had been cracked up to be.

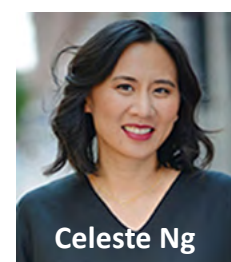
**Are you aiming to complete a world book tour?**

As you could predict, we have read many European books from France, Germany, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Russian books are another obvious choice. Authors from Brazil, Mexico, Columbia and Chile are on the South American list. Scandinavia is represented by books from Sweden, Finland and Norway. Then there is Israel, Turkey, Malaysia, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Kuwait, Croatia, China. We may not have completed a world tour, but we are doing quite well!

## Books chosen by our reading groups

**Contemporary Novelists:** Vivien Preston and Hilda Wilson chose *Everything I Never Told You* by Celeste Ng – the author's first book, a well-written story about an American/Chinese family in the 70s in a small Ohio town, their problems and the parents' wish that their children should 'fulfil their dreams'.

**Reading Classic Novels:** Veronica Devine's group selected Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*. This picture of life in rural England in the 1840s describes the farming



Celeste Ng

community, using the local rustic language and adding humorous commentary by the serving maids.

**Reading Non-Fiction:** Candiss Waldram recommends *Eleanor Marx: A Life* by Rachel Holmes – a well-written account of a remarkable woman. Her energy and commitment to improving the lives of ordinary people, including women, were ahead of her time. Alas, she wasn't so lucky in her private life.

**Reading in Translation:** Miriam Mazower's choice is *Pereira Maintains* by Antonio Tabucchi, historical fiction set in Portugal in the 1930s at the time of the dictatorship. Diana Athill said: 'It goes on getting

better in one's head after one has stopped reading it.'

**Reading the World:** Barry Davies nominates *The Tobacconist* by Robert Seethaler. A young man from the mountains of Austria comes to work in Vienna. He grows up quickly, faced with the increasing brutality of the Nazis, helped by a sexual adventure and a friendship with Sigmund Freud.

**Sharing Novels and Poems:** Dorothy Barnes says that *Flight Behaviour* by Barbara Kingsolver was one of the group's favourites. It explores the challenges of life in small town America and also tackles climate change with a very gentle profundity.

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## As I see it

**Keith Richards** wonders if the internet is causing U3As to lose the personal touch

I am sure that many members of the U3As will have been following the recent reports of the 'troubles' at the Open University, culminating in the resignation of the vice chancellor. Many of the issues do not concern us directly, unless you are a member of both institutions.

Reading a letter in the press from the son of Harold Wilson, which was broadly lamenting the present state of the University of the Air (as his father had conceived it in 1963), I noticed that, above all, students are missing the element which gave greatest concern at the outset – personal contact with their tutors and with each other. In the early years enormous efforts were successfully made to bring people 'face to face' at regional centres and the wonderful summer schools. Financial cuts have brought about a sad dilution.

No such worries in the U3As, of course, but I have noted over the past few years moves towards a 21st century version of what early pioneers called 'the French model' (the

teaching material comes from outside the movement instead of arising from the dynamic of peer-to-peer learning groups). The original intention was beneficent. Technology would help us to reach the most isolated member who could not attend a U3A interest group. A virtual U3A which had the great attraction of worldwide membership was initially exciting.

In recent years I have noted that the agendas of the Standing Committee for Education (which was the source of summer schools, shared learning projects, the resource centre, subject advisers and the magazine *Sources* itself) were dominated by MOOCS, which stands for 'massive open online courses' and means 'online courses open to all' and other downloaded learning. I was reassured that many U3As form groups to study this material together but there is a dominant image in my mind of a U3A member seated, as I am as I write this, in front of a computer screen.

At the recent EGM of the



Third Age Trust in Birmingham, delegates approved a proposal that candidates for high elected office (eg chair) would no longer address the AGM in person but would instead make a film about him or herself which would be distributed to all U3As, whose members would participate in a postal ballot.

The personal AGM address was always a formidable, but in my view an essential, 'test' of the candidates. It was followed by voting in the hall. Somehow sitting here alone watching a film does not seem to me to match it.

KEITH RICHARDS IS A FOUNDING MEMBER OF NLU3A AND A PAST CHAIR OF THE THIRD AGE TRUST



# Friends indeed!

In response to our 2015 survey finding that half of us live alone, we ask: Would people who live alone welcome more weekend and holiday activities? Three members (one who prefers to remain anonymous) address this issue

**L**ike many people in NLU3A I live alone. I greatly appreciate and enjoy the regular, stimulating weekday activities in which I engage. These provide a structure to my day (so replacing full-time work), learning, fun and, not least, social intercourse. But all this ends at around 4pm. Weekends and holidays can be long and empty – quite the reverse of when I was working full time.

After retirement I enjoyed spending time with my mum and we did many things together – including U3A activities. Subsequently I cared for her until she passed away. I have no family in the UK. Friends I used to socialise with or go on holiday with have also sadly gone.

I think it would be great if our U3A, like some other U3As, offered more weekend and holiday activities, particularly for those of us on our own. Activities such as trips and visits to theatre and concerts are more enjoyable when shared with like-minded people.

**I**would welcome more weekend activities, particularly short painting and drawing projects, and also opportunities to meet people who normally travel alone but would be interested in a group of solo travellers.

Chloe Varela

**I**t would be a good idea if weekend activities could be arranged, especially on Sundays and in winter. I live alone and sometimes have an empty weekend, sometimes enlightened by a walk around Brent Cross – bright and peopled. I find a bridge group can kill time, although not much conversation takes place. I could offer to show slide photos with music, or just a chat and of course tea, but only 10 or so people can fit in my house. Maybe a bit sedentary, but although I drive I can't walk far. Maybe there are those who have a similar problem?

Ruth Bourne

And to address the finding that a quarter of our members are carers, we ask: Are there really so few carers in our age group or do we need to think about the needs of carers to make it possible for them to join? **Jenny Clark** says:



**I**wonder how many NLU3A members are carers? The term covers a multitude of meanings: some people care for elderly parents; others care for their husband or wife, who

may have dementia; a lot of people care for grandchildren; and there are those, like me, who are no longer hands-on carers, but have a parent or spouse in a care home. The time-commitment

involved for all these carers varies, but it can be full time.

Being a member of a U3A can be a lifeline for carers; and maybe as well as our regular groups, we could think about organising a support group just for them – to talk about their caring, problems, solutions, and strategies, with other people who know what it is like, and understand how it feels. Finding a time when people could meet will be the most difficult part of it, as everyone has different patterns to their days, but surely it could be done?

# Interest groups

## Meet...

... **Henrietta Cohen**, who is taking over the role of groups organiser from Sue Teller. **Judith Usiskin** introduces her



**S**ue will be 'a hard act to follow', says Henrietta, who is anticipating a steep learning curve in the months to come.

Nevertheless she is enthusiastic about this job and is confident in the support of the groups organiser (GO) team, with whom she has been working for some time and in which she finds the warm friendship and efficiency which she so much appreciates in our U3A. She has been a member since retiring in 2011 as a manager of a busy architectural

practice and brings to the task efficiency and vibrancy and the organisational skills she developed during her professional career.

She has worked in the team with Sue and very much admires her. Her previous role in the GO team was to source and negotiate venues, and she sees this task as a challenge in the future as the cost of venues increases. But she looks forward to encouraging more groups and hopes to hear from members with new ideas to develop.

### Who's who in the GO team

Henrietta Cohen	Groups organiser	07976 903767	henanded@gmail.com
Candiss Waldram	New groups	8883 1395	scwaldram@yahoo.com
Ruth Newman	Venues organiser	8340 3516	ruth.newman@blueyonder.co.uk

## GROUPS SEEKING MEMBERS

**Jazz Listening**, which listens to a variety of jazz and related music, needs new members. All you need to join is enthusiasm – no knowledge of jazz is required. Sometimes group members present their own choice, with or without commentary; occasionally there is an outside speaker; at other times everyone brings one of their favourites. And from time to time we go to famous jazz venues, such as Ronnie Scott's.

**Time:** Fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons, 2 to 4pm.

**Place:** Muswell Hill Methodist Church, Pages Lane, N10 1PP

**Contact:** Kathleen Greaves, 7263 3324;  
kmgreaves34@googlemail.com

### Art Space

Formerly called Arts and Crafts, this group has changed its name to emphasise the fact that it provides somewhere for members to pursue their interest in art with the encouragement of other members rather than a teacher.

**Time:** Thursdays 10am to 12.30pm

**Place:** Cranley Dene Court (rear entrance), Muswell Hill N10 2BX

**Contact:** Gill Pellant, 8340 7990,  
gillpellant@waitrose.com

See page 6 for more groups seeking new members

## Other groups seeking members

Portable computing	Barry	8368 6421	<a href="mailto:campbellbb@btinternet.com">campbellbb@btinternet.com</a>
Reading the world	Barry	7226 7658	<a href="mailto:julibar@blueyonder.co.uk">julibar@blueyonder.co.uk</a>
Drama workshop	Paul	8350 4790	<a href="mailto:angelapaulwharton@gmail.com">angelapaulwharton@gmail.com</a>
Rubber bridge	Marion	8458 9915	
Embroidery	Ann	8346 7194	<a href="mailto:annmdugdale@tiscali.co.uk">annmdugdale@tiscali.co.uk</a>
Yoga group: Thursday	Candiss	8883 1395	<a href="mailto:scwaldram@yahoo.com">scwaldram@yahoo.com</a>
Photography	Martin	8445 7128	<a href="mailto:mgoldman666@gmail.com">mgoldman666@gmail.com</a>

# Keeping our constitution healthy

The **annual general meeting** is a constitutional requirement for the committee to report to members on the previous year and consult them on future proposals. **Judith Abbs** and **Leni Green** summarise the July 2018 proceedings

- **NLU3A's membership** has remained at about 800, despite two new U3As (Hampstead Garden Suburb and Crouch End) being launched in north London. We have over 100 interest groups. We play a full part in the national organisation – we are part of a north London network of eight local groups and a member of the London region, and we will be represented at the national conference. Also, we have winter and summer programmes, which fill in gaps for many members between terms.

- **The website** offers details of events and interest groups – and

a chance to read The Northern Line. A team is working to make the website more accurate, accessible and readable. If you have any ideas about this, please email [info@nlu3a.org.uk](mailto:info@nlu3a.org.uk)

- **Committee matters:** Edmond Cohen is NLU3A's new chair, succeeding Ruth Silver, who took over this role after Patricia Isaacs completed her term last year. The new treasurer is Roy Seger, replacing Leon Levy. Henrietta Cohen has become groups organiser; we profile her on page 5. And a new post, coordinator of volunteers, is filled by Mary Callaghan. For a full list of

committee members, go to [nlu3a.org.uk](http://nlu3a.org.uk) and click on 'contacts'.

- **Membership fees** have risen by £3 a year: an individual now pays £39 and two people living at the same address pay £68. The increase is needed to meet the rising cost of meeting venues, which contributed to a loss of £4,400 during the year. However, this was covered by our reserves of £27,000.

**We owe a massive vote of thanks** to the committee members – past, present and future – who take on all the tasks that keep NLU3A going.

# An adventurous woman

While strolling around Highgate, **Patricia Isaacs** discovered a blue plaque to Mary Kingsley in Southwood Lane. Intrigued, she looked her up and as a result, introduces the second in our series on blue plaques in north London

**M**ary Kingsley, best known as a traveller and ethnologist, was born in 1862. She was a niece of Charles Kingsley (*The Water Babies*) and he and her doctor father probably influenced her views on British imperialism, generally unfavourable other than in terms of trading rights. In addition to being a cultural anthropologist, she also collected specimens of insect life for the British Museum. Although firm in her Christian faith, she was equally convinced by Darwin.

Mary Kingsley had little formal education – after all she was ‘only a girl’ – but educated herself from the books in her father’s very considerable library. His own stories of foreign travel were a great delight to his questing daughter. In 1890 Mary was given a place in Cambridge as a medical student, but later she had to care for her mother during a serious illness, and then for her father. When they died in 1892 she was free of obligations, and



having inherited half of £8,600 (shared with her brother), she was able to travel.

At that time it was extremely unusual for a European woman to travel alone, and even more unusual to travel around Africa as this adventurous woman did. She was not a feminist and

refused to become involved with the suffragette movement, possibly because she wanted to be acknowledged in a man’s world.

In 1975 a blue plaque was added to the front of the Highgate house where Mary spent her childhood.

## U3A DIARIES 2019

A limited number of diaries will be available for collection at the October monthly meeting.

Colour: red

Price: £2.50

To order, contact **Eve Brenner**, 8446 0393, or [ezbrenner1@gmail.com](mailto:ezbrenner1@gmail.com)



# Five days in May

A study tour upholds the U3A principle of education and its motto of ‘live, learn, laugh’, with perhaps a new one – ‘learning, not lonely’. **Frank Kelsall** reports on this year’s spring study tour, and **Jane Marsh** offers a pictorial appreciation

**B**lessed by glorious weather, 33 intrepid members made a whistle stop tour of Northamptonshire in five hectic days in May. We packed in a variety of places, with special concern for the works of Sir Thomas Tresham (1543–1605), whose adherence to the Catholic religion cost him dear but did not stop him building; we saw his home at Rushton Hall, the Market House he gave to the town of Rothwell and especially Lyveden New Bield, planned as

a cross, and Rushton Triangular Lodge, designed to reflect the holy trinity. Both are laden with religious symbolism.

Churches ranged from Anglo-Saxon in Earls Barton to 20th century in Wellingborough. In Northampton we saw the Victorian Gothic town hall and the Charles Rennie Mackintosh house for the Bassett-Lowke model maker. Country houses included two that were originally castles – Kimbolton, now a school, and Rockingham, still

inhabited by the family who, in the 16th century, made it a comfortable home surrounded by beautiful gardens – and at Lamport a pioneer classical house, renowned for the gnome who inhabited the rockery.

On our way north we stopped at Letchworth Garden City to see where Henrietta Barnett got her idea for Hampstead Garden Suburb, and on our return we stopped at the army’s Napoleonic War depot at Weedon.

Lamport Hall, home of the Isham family for 400 years – and of the best wisteria in Northamptonshire!







Letchworth Garden City. Spirella factory, arts and crafts influence.



Lyveden New Bield, not a ruin as it was never completed. Planned as a banqueting house by Thomas Tresham. Work stopped when he died in 1605.



Rushton Triangular Lodge, complex, elaborate design full of religious symbolism.



St Mary's Wellingborough, 20th century church designed by Sir Ninian Comper. Its richly decorated interior reflects its 'high' church tradition.



High Victorian gothic style at the grandiose Northampton Guildhall, designed by EW Godwin.



Northampton is also home to the only interior in England designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, commissioned by the Bassett-Lowke family.

One of four ornate monuments to the Montague family in St Edmund's Church, Warkton.



Rockingham Castle, lived in by the Watson family since the time of Henry VIII. Parts date from the 13th century, although a motte and bailey castle was built on the site by William the Conqueror.



# Government Art Collection (GAC)

Queen's Yard,  
179a Tottenham Court Road  
London, W1T 7PA

**Friday 19 October**

**W**orks of art from the GAC are displayed in UK government buildings in nearly every capital city, making it the most dispersed collection of British art in the world. The role of the collection is to promote British art while contributing to cultural diplomacy. Dating from 1898, the collection has expanded over the years and now contains over 14,000 works of art from the 16th century to the present day by mainly British artists in a broad range of media. On the tour we will see a selection of works from the collection, hear about our history and role, and get a behind-the-scenes look at works as they are prepared for display.



visit will last about an hour.

## Travel

Queen's Yard is a short narrow street between Torrington Place and Capper Street on the east side of Tottenham Court Road, i.e. on the other side from nearby Goodge Street Tube Station. There are also buses: 10, 14, 24, 29, 73, 134, 390 (up Tottenham Court Road and down Gower Street).

## Cost

Free to all, but only in groups.

**Booking is essential, and early application is advisable.** Please use the booking form on page 11 or send us a note with the requested details.

## Facilities

Toilets but no on-site café. There is a wide selection of cafés and sandwich shops on Tottenham Court Road and the surrounding streets

## Times

12.20pm for 12.30pm start in the reception area. (Note later than usual start time.) The conducted



# London Glassblowing Gallery

62-66 Bermondsey Street  
London SE1 3UD

**Friday 16 November**

**L**ondon Glassblowing was founded in 1976 and is one of Europe's most successful hot glass studios and galleries, with a reputation for its particular use of colour, form and texture. We have arranged a guided visit in which we can see at close quarters a little of how it is done as this ancient magical art unfolds.

## Facilities

Toilets but no on-site café. There is a wide selection of cafés and restaurants on Bermondsey Street and in the surrounding area, which has become a food and culture hub.



## Times

10.50am for an 11am start from the reception area. The conducted visit will last about an hour.

## Cost

£3 per person (to charity).

## Travel

The gallery is a little over 10 minutes' walk from London Bridge Tube Station. (Tooley Street or St Thomas Street leads in to Bermondsey Street.)

## Booking is essential, and early application is

**advisable.** Please use the booking form below or send us a note with the requested details and your cheque.

## Away days booking form

Name(s)\_\_\_\_\_Membership number (s)\_\_\_\_\_  
BLOCK LETTERS please. No more than two names per application form.

Phone number(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Date	Name of visit

- Cheques payable to NLU3A
- Send booking form and cheque to Sue Teller, 27 Midholm, London NW11 6LL. Please send a separate booking form and cheque for each visit.
- You will be notified **by phone if you have a place (or not)**. Your cheque will be banked or destroyed accordingly.
- If you are unable to attend the visit, please phone Sue Teller on 8381 4480 so that your place can be offered to another member or 07748 478 428 for last-minute cancellations.



# Autumn term monthly meetings

All take place at 10.45am at St Paul's Church, 50 Long Lane, Finchley N3 2PU. Refreshments are served from 10.15am. Please note that, out of courtesy to the speaker and to abide by the fire regulations, you might find yourself locked out of the meeting if you do not arrive by 10.40am.

**8 October**

## The customs and traditions of the City of London

**M**ark Lewis, freelance artist, designer/silversmith and university lecturer, will explore the colourful pageantry, customs and ceremonies in the City of London's Square Mile. He will include church traditions, the Freedom of the City, the Worshipful Companies and civic customs and the popular annual Lord Mayor's show. Many of these ancient customs are quaint and eccentric but all are part of a rich and vibrant culture that has lasted for centuries.



**12 November**

## Lives remembered

**A**s part of the church's commemoration of the World War One centenary, Reverend Nicholas Pye, the vicar of St Paul's, has been researching the stories of the lives of the people listed on the church's First World War memorial as well as those on the St Luke's Finchley roll of honour.

Reverend Pye will share some of the most moving stories of those who died during the 1914–18 conflict. He will explain how the research was conducted and the way in which, after the war, the memorial and roll of honour came into being.



**10 December**

**The annual festive lunch replaces the monthly meeting.**



## Term dates



Term	Start date	Finish date
Autumn	3 September	14 December (half term 22–26 October)
Spring	7 January	9 April (half term 19–22 February)
Summer	23 April	19 July (half term 27–31 May)