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Check out our website

Registered Charity
Number 1168597

Web: www.south-manchester.u3asite.uk



www.facebook.com/groups/807060236097165



SMu3a Christmas Lunch 2025

March 2026 Newsletter items to: editor.smu3anews@gmail.com

NO LATER than Saturday 21st February 2026

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Quiz Master	Tom Grimshaw		

GENERAL MEETING at DIDSBURY BAPTIST CHURCH

Tuesday 3rd February 2026 at 2.00pm

“The British in Palestine” by Paul Atherton

See page 5 for details

Parking at Didsbury Baptist Church – Members please note that there is no parking at the church with the exception of temporary drop-off for the catering team. (Blue badge holders could use double yellow lines)



Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

It's February already. I trust you are all well and happy. I am writing this after visiting Belong, a home where the singing group visit monthly. The room was full of elderly people in various stages of old age and, as they sang, they smiled. Those smiles were a joy to see, as it lit up faces and brightened the room. A smile is a powerful tool in meeting and greeting folk. Every month I watch our meet and greeters in our u3a divest you of your money but it is so lovely to see them smile at everyone as they greet them. Those welcoming smiles are wonderful. Smiles make us all feel that we belong and they lift our spirits, so please smile with us.

Welcome to all of our new members and I hope that you feel at home with our u3a family. Please join a group or even start a new one. Diane is our expert, and the committee are here to help as well.

Spring is just around the corner and, as the flowers come in to bloom, it is my desire to see all of you flourishing in this organisation. If you do have any worries or concerns, please feel free to contact me or any committee member, and we will do our best to help. In these uncertain times we have each other, so let's keep smiling, and together may 2026 be a great year.

Beryl

P.S. Don't forget that your annual membership subscriptions are due. It's £15 and worth every penny for the fun, laughter and learning that we can do together.



MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS WERE DUE ON 1st JANUARY 2026!

If you haven't yet paid yours, you need to do it immediately (see the instructions later in this newsletter).

If you haven't paid your subscription by 28th February 2026, your details will be removed from our database



Message from the Editor

If you have an article or interesting story that you can submit for the newsletter which our readers might find enjoyable, I would be very grateful. The story could be about something which you have done with the u3a or it could be totally non-u3a related. Perhaps something you did on holiday, some interesting place which you have visited or something to do with your hobby.

Please email me: editor.smu3anews@gmail.com

NATIONAL AND NORTH WEST NEWS

National: www.u3a.org.uk for latest news of u3a around the country and courses/events on offer.

National Newsletter: January newsletter can be found here: [January National Newsletter](#)

North West Region: www.u3asites.org.uk/north-west for the latest information and newsletter

SOUTH MANCHESTER u3a NEWS

SMu3a welcomes the following new members

Geraldine Preston	Peter Townsend	Ray Abbott	Anthony Jolly
Cherryl Clements	Karl Vogt	Paul Sweeney	Jan Coles
Rosemary Burton	Christine Nortney	Angela Holt	Jean Franey
Jane Thorpe	Alison Hagan		

If you have any information about members' special birthdays, anniversaries, illness, bereavements, etc. please notify Kath Thompson

Tradesperson Book

Is available at general meetings. It will only be of value if members use it, so please do.

South Manchester u3a General Meeting Speakers

Tuesday 3 rd February 2026 at 2pm	"The British in Palestine" by Paul Atherton
Tuesday 3 rd March 2026 at 2.15pm	"Dementia. Can It Be Cured or Prevented?" by Dr. Robert Baldwin
Tuesday 7 th April 2026 at 2pm	"My Life of Crime" by Simon Michael
Tuesday 5 th May 2026 at 2pm	"All at Sea" by Mark Llewellyn
Tuesday 2 nd June 2026 at 2pm	"Osteopathy" by Jennifer Emmott
Tuesday 7 th July 2026 at 2pm	"The Lost Buildings of Manchester" by Jonathan Schofield
Tuesday 4 th August 2026 at 2pm	"Centenarian Lady Hires Buff Butler" by Paul Isherwood
Tuesday 1 st September 2026 at 2pm	"My Life in Broadcasting" by Roger Johnson
Tuesday 6 th October 2026 at 2pm	"Great Forgers" by Jim Williams
Tuesday 3 rd November 2026 at 2pm	"My Life and Challenges" by Dr. Carl Austin-Behan OBE DL
Tuesday 1 st December 2026 at 2pm	A Performance by the SMu3a Ukulele Orchestra followed by a Christmas Quiz hosted by Tom Grimshaw
Tuesday 5 th January 2027 at 2pm	"TBA" by Dr. Diana M Leitch MBE

South Manchester u3a September General Meeting

Tuesday 3rd February 2026 at 2pm

At Didsbury Baptist Church, School Lane

“The British in Palestine” by Paul Atherton



Paul Atherton received an MA in creative writing at Lancaster University and went on to write ‘Billy’s War’, which is about his father’s experiences during and after World War Two. Paul will recount the history of Palestine, also known these days as the Middle East.

Paul’s father, William, joined the British army in July 1942. Billy arrived in Palestine in 1946 which he described as a paradise, food wise, compared to Britain at this time. Post war, the majority of people would not have tasted oranges and other fruit for a long time, perhaps even never. Soldiers would have taken advantage of the cheapness and abundance of fruit, and being able to send it home cheaply would have gone down well with relatives. A similar bounty for the folks at home would be eggs sent back from Palestine, as their ration of eggs was one egg per person per week. When Billy was serving in Palestine, the troops could enjoy the latest films, and one of them might have been ‘The Killers’ an American movie starring Ava Gardner. Billy frequented the King David Hotel and became friendly with a barmaid there, who was the very image of that film star. Sadly, the barmaid was one of the victims of the Irgun bombing in 1946. The talk will cover the history of the region. Both Arab and Zionist viewpoints will be represented by Paul.



Members of Cinema group taking refreshments at HOME cinema.

THE CINEMA GROUP

The SMu3a Cinema Group meets once a month at Home Cinema in Manchester.

There is a bar/café, a great atmosphere and a choice of films. At this time of year, we can catch up with major Oscar contenders from around the world.

If you want more information about the group, contact Russell Ramsden

Why not give it a go? We are all lovely people

A Lovely Encounter!

By Barbara Goodman

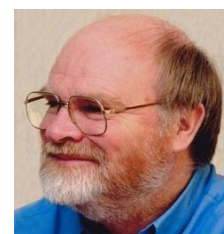
Some of you may remember the famous Prom at the Albert Hall in 1974. In the middle of the performance of Carmina Burana, the famous baritone, Thomas Allen, suddenly fainted and had to be carried out. In the audience was a young man, who was urged by his friend to go backstage and tell them that he was a singer, and knew Carmina Burana. With his long red hair, and beard, this 28-year-old dashed out. He was given a score, put into a dinner jacket and strode out on the stage to the amazement of the conductor, Andre Previn. So, Patrick McCarthy performed the rest of the oratorio to a standing ovation from the audience.

I found myself on a recent music holiday with my daughter, sitting in a hotel in Eastbourne having dinner at a round table. Facing me was this charming gentleman in his late seventies. Now, almost blind and still having a touch of his red hair, was this same man, who is still singing and has enjoyed a career in opera and conducting choirs.

Editor's note: There is a marvellous clip on YouTube of this very incident hosted by David Jacobs.

You can find it at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7T2Qc0cn9-c>

Patrick McCarthy continued his career in music with performances in opera, music hall, and musical theatre. In 1980, he re-located from London to Colchester. His voice had changed and he became a tenor singer, before moving to orchestral and choral conducting in 1992. He retired from conducting in 2022, in the wake of deteriorating eyesight.



CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2025



We had our annual SMu3a Christmas lunch on Wednesday 3rd December at the Hough End Centre and it was a fantastic event.

72 people attended, many more than the previous year and everyone had a great time. After our 2-course meal, we were entertained by the SMu3a Ukulele Orchestra playing Christmas songs that everyone was encouraged to sing along to. This was followed by a Christmas-themed quiz with the winning table receiving some fantastic prizes. Then came the grand Christmas raffle with prizes ranging from a hamper to a box of mince pies – all of the prizes having been kindly donated by the committee and other members.

A big shout-out goes to Pat Ford for all of the hard work that she put in to make the event a huge success. Thank you also to everyone who attended the lunch and joined in the Christmas spirit. I can't wait for our next lunch in December!

More photos of the lunch can be found on the front cover.



COMMUNITY SING-ALONG GROUP

We are having the following performances: -

Thursday 19th February 2026 at 2pm at BELONG (M20 2UW)

Thursday 12th March 2026 at 2pm at BELONG

We held our Seasonal Charity Concert on 9th December last year at the Didsbury Baptist. It was a huge success!

Through our charity raffle and donations from our SMu3a, we raised £275 for Francis House and £275 for Moya Cole Hospice (formerly St Ann's Hospice).

Both Francis House and Moya Cole have thanked us for our donation.

Thank you also to The Cheese Hamlet in Didsbury for their generous donation to our raffle.

New voices are always welcome. We sing well-known songs in unison and without rehearsal.

Contact Mike Evans for more details



NEW YEAR

NEW MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION



Please remember that your membership subscription was due for renewal on

1st January 2026 for just £15 again—no inflation!

If you have already paid your subs – thank you. If you still haven't paid, then payment can be made by **standing order**, if you haven't already set one up. You can fill in a standing order mandate (see the next page) and either post it, or take it to your bank, and they will set up a standing order, which will take £15 from your account now and then each subsequent 1st January.

If you bank online, you can set up a standing order yourself or, if you prefer, you can make an **electronic transfer** of £15 to our account using these details: -

Name: **South Manchester U3A**. Sort code: **40-31-20**. Account number: **61483765**

Please remember to put your name and membership number (if known) in the reference section.

Finally, you can pay in person at one of our monthly general meetings by **card, cash or cheque**.

If you haven't paid your membership subscription by the end of February 2026, I will assume that you no longer wish to be a member and I will take your name off our mailing list.

Don't worry however! If you have forgotten to pay your subscription by this date, you can easily rejoin. Just contact our Membership Secretary: Joanie Yoffe: smu3amembership@gmail.com

South Manchester U3A Standing Order Mandate

To (your bank)

Branch Address

Your Account Name

Account Sort Code Account Number

Pay: HSBC Sort Code: 40-31-20 Account Number: 61483765

For the credit of: South Manchester U3A Membership

Reference (Your name/Membership No)

The sum of £15.00 immediately then on 1st January of each subsequent year until further notice

Your Details

Title First Name Surname

Signature Date

Please send this form directly to your bank (or set it up online)

**THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF SOUTH MANCHESTER U3A
3rd MARCH 2026, 2.00 PM
VENUE: DIDSBURY BAPTIST CHURCH,
BEAVER ROAD, DIDSBURY**

A G E N D A

1. Welcome.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of the AGM held on 4th March 2025 (see below).
4. Matters arising from the minutes of the AGM held on 4th March 2025.
5. Report from the Chair.
6. Treasurer's Report and presentation of accounts for the year ended 31st December 2025.
7. To authorise the appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts for 2026.
8. The election of members of the Committee.
9. Any other business notified to the Chair/Secretary by Friday 20th February 2026.
10. Close of AGM.



TASTE OF THE MONASTERY HISTORICAL TALK/TOUR

Tuesday 10th March 2026

Discover the history of E.W. Pugin's neo-gothic treasure and walk in the footsteps of the Franciscans. This talk offers an insight into the life and work of the friars who created this much-loved place of worship, and important example of Victorian architecture in Manchester.

Learn about the rise, decline and fall of the Monastery and its magnificent restoration.

South Manchester u3a is working with Gorton Monastery to bring you this event. It is a talk by a trained guide from the Monastery followed by a lunch of sandwiches with tea/coffee. After lunch, you are free to walk around the Monastery (fully wheelchair accessible). There will be a guide available, who can answer any questions.

The cost is £22.95 including the lunch.

We meet at Gorton Monastery, Gorton Lane, M12 5WF at 11.00. The talk starts at 11.15.

To book your place, contact Jill Evans: **by 3rd February 2026**



GENERAL COFFEE AFTERNOON

Thursday 19th March 2026 at 2pm

Didsbury Baptist Church

Come along and enjoy a free tea or coffee together with a nice biscuit and a good chat!

For more information, contact Andrew: smu3a.secretary@gmail.com

Notice of AGM and Nomination Form for the Committee 2026

Notice is given that the AGM of South Manchester u3a will be held on **Tuesday 3rd March 2026 at 2.00pm in Didsbury Baptist Church.**

The agenda and papers are attached below.

In the meantime, **NOMINATIONS** are invited *in writing* for a maximum of 12 members of the Committee. (The acceptance of the nominee is also required.)

Under our Constitution all Committee Members stand down at an AGM. The process for voting in a new Committee requires each person willing to stand, both current Committee Members and others, to be nominated from within the membership (*paid up members only*).

At the first Committee meeting after the AGM the officer posts are decided by the Committee.

If, for any vacancy, no nominations have been received, then nominations may be accepted at the AGM. Any vacancies not filled by nomination/election will be filled by the Committee in accordance with our rules.

Paid up members may **nominate by post** using the form below, or your own paper if it contains all the information we need, or **by email** stating the details – nominee, proposer, seconder – the proposer and seconder will need to send an email confirming their nominee.

SOUTH MANCHESTER u3a COMMITTEE 2026 NOMINATION FORM – for election at the AGM on 3rd March 2026 (*paid up members only*)

NOMINEE.....

PROPOSED BY.....

SECONDED BY.....

SIGNATURE OF ACCEPTANCE BY NOMINEE.....

(or email /postal confirmation by nominee)

DATE.....

Address for postal nominations: Dr A J Bradbury

Email nominations to smu3a.secretary@gmail.com

Both to arrive by Friday 20th February 2026.

Members may also send a *written motion* for the AGM to the addresses above, also by Friday 20th February 2026.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF SOUTH MANCHESTER U3A

4th March 2025 14:00 p.m.

Didsbury Baptist Church

Minutes

1. Welcome – The Vice Chair welcomed everyone to the AGM and thanked members for attending. She reported that the Chair was recovering from her recent illness.
2. Present – 95 members and 0 proxy votes.
3. Apologies for absence – Beryl Cowen, Jill Evans, Michael Evans.
4. Minutes of the AGM of 5th March 2024 – accepted as correct by the meeting.
5. Matters arising from the minutes of the AGM of 5th March 2024 – none.
6. Report from the Chair. The Vice Chair read out a report from the Chair. 2024 was a successful year with membership growing to more than 540 members. Several new groups have started. All those who work for the u3a in many roles were thanked for their efforts. Helen Chambers was thanked for her work on the committee as she has now resigned. Diana Bradley was thanked for her 12 years running the creative writing group as she is also retiring. Members were reminded that the Summer School is taking place in Manchester this year with many interesting activities on offer.
7. Treasurer's report for the year ended 31st December 2024. This had been published in the newsletter. There was a small deficit of £116 in 2024. Approximately £800 had been spent on publicity. Higher membership numbers led to new groups with associated costs for venues but also increased income. More members and groups are to be welcomed as this is what u3a is about.
8. Authorisation of appointment of an independent examiner of the accounts for 2025. The meeting approved the appointment of Jose Anderson.
9. Election of the committee. Nine members had been nominated and were elected unopposed. These were Andrew Bradbury, Ian Burn, Beryl Cowen, Patricia Ford, Pamela Smith, Alwena Stevenson, Diane Ward, Elizabeth Williams and Joanie Yoffe.
10. Any other business – none.

The meeting closed at 14.10.



Opera at Menorah

Opera for All and Menorah Synagogue

Opera Appreciation with Diana Rosenthal

All events are on Thursdays at 1.30pm

£10 per performance, paid at the door using card payment

Menorah Synagogue, 198 Altrincham Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M22 4RZ

Go to <https://menorah.org.uk/opera/> for more information

5th February 2026



THE MINOTAUR (BIRTWISTLE)

Award-winning opera in a stylish production with a starkly poetic libretto, this large-scale music drama is Birtwistle's reworking of an ancient myth with music that weaves together beauty and visceral force. It's high-impact theatre. Please give it a go!

26th March 2026



SAMSON ET DALILA (SAINT-SAËNS)

When Samson falls in love with Dalila, his strength – both physical and spiritual – is put to the test. This biblical epic opera is characterised by the composer's vivid emotional insights and orchestral brilliance.



OPEN TUESDAY

Activities, interesting discussions, films.

A selected film every other week with a discussion afterwards

7.30pm on Tuesdays

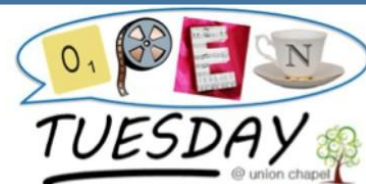
Always a warm welcome, tea, biscuits and a chat

FREE

Held in the Small Hall at the Union Chapel, top end of Wellington Road, Fallowfield, M14 6ER

For more information: <http://www.unionchapelbaptist.org.uk/open-tuesday/>

Or contact Megan Bennett:





Didsbury Probus Programme 2024

Didsbury and District Probus Group meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month. Unlike many Probus clubs, we are a mixed group of men and women. Annual membership is £40.

Thursday 5th February 2026

“S & J Watts – Founders of a great wholesale empire and of Kendal and Milne” by Diana Leitch

The Watts started as weavers in Burnage and finished up owning Abney Hall, Cheadle, the centre of their operation being their magnificent building on Portland St, Watts Warehouse now the Britannia Hotel. This building has the most impressive staircase leading up to the various floors with show rooms for their range of products for retailers and exporters to discuss business. If you wanted to impress your client this was the place.

Thursday 19th February 2026

“Cold War Naval Aviation” by Julian Bond

In this difficult period of deterrent and defence, Julian will give a snapshot of naval aviation in the Cold War years on HMS Ark Royal. Julian’s talk includes his experiences with 450 daytime deck landings and 35 nighttime ones.

All meetings are held in the Didsbury Baptist Church, School Lane, opposite the Scout Hut and Didsbury Metrolink station.

Tea/coffee and biscuits are served from 10.30am before the talk at 11am.

Visitors are very welcome. Any donations from visitors to help with running costs would be very helpful.

Women's 55+ Band Workshop
Ever dreamed of playing in a band? Now's your chance.

Tuesdays 6pm – 7.30pm
£20 per person
Limited spaces

Call Neil: 07716 755 544
neilmaunder@maundersschoolofmusic.co.uk

FIRST SESSION FREE

Maunder School of Popular Music
manchestermusiclessons.com

Price: £20 per person with the first session free

Limited spaces – Book your place now!

<https://www.manchestermusiclessons.com/>

Call Neil: 07716 755544

Email: neilmaunder@maundersschoolofmusic.co.uk

Riot Women Rock Band Workshop

For Women Aged 55 and Over

Inspired by the BBC's Riot Women TV show

Ever dreamed of playing in a band?

Now's your chance! Join our brand new workshop just for women aged 55+.

No experience needed—just a love for music and a sense of adventure!

- Play Bass, Guitar, Keyboards, Drums, or Sing
- Meet new friends and make music together
- Perform at a real Manchester music venue
- Supportive, inclusive, and fun environment

When: Tuesdays, 6pm – 7.30pm

Starting: 27th January

Where: Maunder School of Popular Music, Building 8, Biz Space/Wilson's Pk, Monsall Rd, Manchester M40 8WN



invite applications for the 2026 Residential Summer School

Tues 11th August – Friday 14th August 2026

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: <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2026/>

It 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)

Balance by 11 May 2026

Queries should be directed to Alan Hough or Neill Stewart at:

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

CALLING ALL OPERA AND BALLET LOVERS

Did you know that you can watch *live* opera, ballet and theatre performances at cinemas including Cineworld at Parris Wood?

Here is a list of live performances in 2026: -



The Royal Opéra – Covent Garden

Wednesday 14th January 2026 at 18:45

Opera: **La Traviata** by Giuseppe Verdi

Monday 9th February 2026 at 19:15

Ballet: **Woolf Works**

Composed by Max Richter

Choreographed by Wayne McGregor

Inspired by the writings of Virginia Woolf

It won the Laurence Olivier Award for best new dance production

Tuesday 3rd March 2026 at 19:15

Ballet: **Giselle**

Tuesday 31st March 2026 at 17:15

Opera: **Siegfried**

This is part of Wagner's "The Ring Cycle"

Tuesday 21st April 2026 at 18:45

Opera: **The Magic Flute**

The Metropolitan Opera (New York)

Saturday 10th January 2026 at 18:00

I Puritani by Vincenzo Bellini

Saturday 21st March 2026 at 16:00

Tristan und Isolde by Richard Wagner

Saturday 2nd May 2026 at 18:00

Eugene Onegin by Tchaikovsky

Saturday 30th May 2026 at 18:00

El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego by Gabriela Lena Frank
Libretto by Nilo Cruz

If you miss an opera or ballet there may be an encore but you need to watch out for those, as dates are not given. There is always a small group of u3a members attending these productions. Come and seek us out. If you need more help or more information, please contact Joan Timm:



WEST DIDSBURY ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

EVERYONE WELCOME - FROM COMPLETE BEGINNER TO EXPERIENCED ASTRONOMER

Monday 9th February 2026 at 7pm

"OSIRIS-REx – the Journey to Bennu and Back" by Sarah Crowther

Monday 9th March 2026 at 7pm

"From Telstar to Starlink – Evolution of the Telecommunications Satellite" by Nigel Linge

As usual, meetings take place at Nazarene Theological College. Visitors welcome.

For more details visit www.wdas2.com.

QUIZ

Find the odd one out

1. 9 25 28 64
2. Venus Earth Mars Jupiter Saturn
3. Red Green Blue Yellow
4. Wimbledon Middlesbrough Coventry City Bolton Wanderers
5. Biscuit Bungalow Shampoo Caravan
6. Danish Blue Blue Stilton Roquefort Gorgonzola
7. Clement Atlee David Lloyd-George Ramsey MacDonald Tony Blair
8. India Lima Tango Waltz
9. Mars Hades Poseidon Zeus
10. Centre Forward Goal Attack Goal Defence Wing Attack
11. Trapezium Rhombus Rectangle Pentagon
12. Caesar and Cleopatra Loves Labours Lost Romeo and Juliet Titus Andronicus

ANSWERS ON PAGE 21

Walking for Health Group 2 Walk - Wednesday 11th February 2026

Alkrington Woods Nature Reserve

A 2.5-mile walk around Alkrington Woods in Middleton. No steps, no stiles, some rough ground, may be muddy in places. Wear suitable shoes or boots, bring a wet coat and a bus pass if you have one. Meet at Victoria Station by the information board at 10.10. Lunch at the Lancashire Fold in Alkrington. If you want to come, phone Anne Clarke

Walking for Health Group 1 Walk - Tuesday 17th February 2026

Cheadle Hulme to Cheadle

A 3-mile walk from Cheadle Hulme to Cheadle on the Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail. Mostly good level paths but could be muddy in places. Wear suitable shoes or boots, bring a wet coat and a bus pass if you have one. Meet at Stockport Interchange by information office at 10.25. Lunch available at the Ashlea pub in Cheadle. If you want to come, phone Ian Burn





Walking for Health Group 1 – Tuesday 25th November 2025

Worsley Wood and Beesley Green



This was the last walk of 2025 and the weather gods came out to celebrate with us. It was cold but the sun was shining and there wasn't a cloud in the sky.

We met at St. Peter's Square to catch the bus to Worsley – a long 40-minute journey! When we reached Worsley, we crossed the Bridgewater canal and headed up towards Old Warke Dam where we stopped at the lake to feed the ducks. (Shirley, like a true girl guide, had brought some bird food for everyone). From here, we entered Worsley Wood which was spectacular at this time of year with the copper-coloured leaves both on the trees and on the ground. This brought us out on to Beesley Green, a lovely green area of land surrounded by old cottages. This area had originally been known as Roe Green until the railway came and split the area in two with one part continuing to be known as Roe Green but the other becoming Beesley Green. We then headed back down towards Worsley, passing the beautiful Kempnough Hall. This is a timber-framed building dating back to the 15th century. It fell into disrepair but was renovated in 2015 by a property developer who made it into his family home. It once sat in its own grounds but now is part of a modern residential estate and could so easily be overlooked. A bit of pavement walking now and a chance to have a "nosey" into people's gardens as we head back into Worsley. We stopped at the nail-maker's workshop, one of the oldest buildings in Worsley, built in the early 18th century. Near to this point is the alphabet bridge over the Bridgewater canal. This is a bridge with 26 planks, each one marked with a letter of the alphabet, said to be used by the local school to help their students to learn the alphabet.

A short walk now along the Bridgewater canal to our lunch stop at the Barton Arms and a delicious meal. Let's hope that 2026 brings many more good walks.



Future North West Region & National Events



u3a NATIONAL FESTIVAL
1st–3rd July 2026
York University



NW REGION SUMMER SCHOOL
11th— 14th August 2026
Manchester Metropolitan University



Dates for your diary. More information to follow later

COMMUNITY SING-ALONG GROUP

BILL WATSON “RETIREMENT”



At the end of the year, we expressed our enormous thanks to Bill Watson (pictured at piano) without whose musical skills, the group could not have existed. He will be greatly missed and we wish him well as he "retires".

But life does go on and we continue with our gigs mainly at the Morris Feinmann (Belong) Residential and Nursing home in West Didsbury on Palatine Road and occasionally at Buccleuch Lodge.

SMu3a Groups A-Z LIST

Check Group News and this month's diary. Contact Group Leader before attending.

ANGLO SAXON AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY	Meetings are on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 10.30 via Zoom. This group covers all aspects of Anglo Saxon and Viking life in depth through language and social history readings and discussions. Beryl Cowen
ART APPRECIATION	Monthly meetings held at Didsbury Parsonage on the afternoon of the third Wednesday of the month cover a wide variety of artistic topics. Talks are either by the leader Diane Ward or guest speakers, followed by tea and discussion. Diane Ward
BIRDWATCHING AND NATURE	This group is now closed for Winter. It will restart in April 2026. Rita Berriman
BOARD GAMES	Lots of different games are played by this group which meets at the Parris Wood pub from 2-4 pm on the second Friday of the month. Christine Salamone
BOOK GROUP 1	Meeting at 10.30 am at Meg's home in Didsbury, on the first Wednesday of the month. A small friendly group who enjoy reading and discussing a wide variety of books. Meg Davis
BOOK GROUP 2	Held at Didsbury Library 1.30 pm on the fourth Thursday of the month, meetings are led by members in turn to discuss titles suggested and agreed by the group members. Tom Grimshaw
BOOK GROUP 3	This group meets on the second Thursday of the month at 1.30 pm. There's no fixed venue but we meet in our homes on a rota. Johanna Keane
BRIDGE	Held at the Nazarene College, Didsbury. This group meets fortnightly on Fridays from 10 to 12 noon. This group is for experienced players only. Liz Thornhill
BRIDGE for BEGINNERS	This group meets fortnightly on Mondays from 1.30-3.30, at Emmanuel Parish Centre on Barlow Moor Rd. This group is for beginners and improvers although more experienced players are also welcome to join. You don't need a partner. Hilary Poole
CINEMA	Meeting on the last Friday of the month at 12.15 in the downstairs bar of HOME, 2 Tony Wilson Place. This group watches a variety film then meets afterwards to discuss them. Group Leader emails what's on the Tuesday before the meeting. Russell Ramsden
COMMUNITY SING-ALONG	This group sings well known songs in unison (no rehearsal time needed) in residential homes. Dates and times vary. Mike Evans
CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY	The group meets at Didsbury Parsonage at 10.30 on the second Monday of every month. The emphasis is on creativity rather than technical skill. Ann Howarth
CREATIVE WRITING	We meet at Withington Library on the last Friday of the month at 10.30 am. Members read and discuss their writings. New members always welcome. Sandra Grant
CURRENT AFFAIRS	This group meets to share and discuss items in the news on the 4th Thursday of the month at 1.30pm in Ye Olde Cock pub, Didsbury. Adrienne Simpson
DRAMATIC READERS	Held on the 3rd Friday of the month, both face to face and by Zoom. Beryl Cowen
EGYPTOLOGY	This group meets at 10.30-12.30 on the third Thursday of the month at Didsbury Parsonage, to discuss all aspects of early Egyptian art and culture. Kathryn Fyfe

FRENCH CONVERSATION	We meet on the third Tuesday of the month 2 - 3pm at HOME cafe. Speakers of all levels of conversational French are welcome. Jean Thompson
GERMAN CONVERSATION	This group is for those who would like to practice their spoken German. Last Friday of the month at the Nazarene. Diane Ward
GETTING BY IN WELSH	At 10.30 on the first Friday of every month, this group meets at Burnage Library, to discuss the language, history and culture of Wales. Beryl Cowen or Wena Stevenson
HOLIDAY GROUP	Keep an eye on the monthly newsletter for information about forthcoming holidays.
ITALIAN CONVERSATION	We are a small group looking to improve our Italian through listening and conversation. Please note that there is a separate group for beginners – see Parliamo Italiano below. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month from 10.30 – 12.00. However, the group is currently full. If you like to be put on the waiting list contact: Elizabeth Wilson
KEEP FIT	This group caters for a variety of fitness levels – there is no competition! It meets on Friday mornings at 11.30 at St Nicholas Church Hall in Burnage. Anne Clarke
KNIT AND NATTER	We work on either our own projects or on items for charity. Don't worry if you can't knit—this is the place to learn. It's never too late! We meet on the last Wednesday of the month at Nazarene College. Diane Ward
LOCAL INTEREST VISITS	These will be advertised in the newsletter from time to time. Jill Evans
LUNCH CLUB	The club meets monthly at a variety of local restaurants and pubs, chosen with a view to ease of parking or public transport as well as price. John Olbrich
OPERATIC AND VOCAL APPRECIATION SOCIETY (OVAS)	Lovers of opera and music meets from 3.30 – 5.45 on the last Wednesday of every month. Len Evans
PIANO GROUP	We are a small group for piano players to play to each other in a supportive and relaxed setting, and share ideas about anything piano-related. All types of music and all levels welcome. We meet monthly on a Thursday morning in Chorlton. Hilary Taylor
PARLIAMO ITALIANO Let's speak Italian!	A friendly and fun group for people who have little or no Italian but would like to learn. We aim to be able to understand and use familiar everyday expressions and basic phrases which would be of value on an Italian holiday. We aim to be able to interact in a simple way and to improve with time so that in due course, members could move on to the Italian Conversation group or attend both. We meet at St Christopher's Church, Moorgate Avenue, from 10.30 – 12.00 on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month. Andrew Bradbury
PHILOSOPHY	This group meets at 1.30 pm at Chorlton Library on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. John Olbrich
PLAYREADING	Meetings are at Withington Library at 1.30 on the third Tuesday afternoon of the month. Numbers are limited for this group, but please contact the group leader to register your interest. Helen Nicolson
POETRY APPRECIATION	Poems on a chosen theme are discussed on the 1st Monday of the month from 11.00-12.30 at Victoria Grange, Barlow Moor Road. The group is currently full. Contact group leader to go on waiting list. Lynne Taylor

PSYCHOLOGY	This group meets on the 1st Monday of the month at 2 pm via Zoom and the 4th Monday of the month face to face at Burnage Library at 1pm. Beryl Cowen
SINGING FOR FUN	This group meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 2 pm. Judith Newton
SPANISH CONVERSATION	This group meets on the 1 st and 3 rd Thursdays of the month at 2 pm at the Slug and Lettuce in Didsbury. Debbie Delange
TABLE TENNIS AND BADMINTON	Every Tuesday from 10-12, this group meets at the Armitage Centre, Moseley Road, Fallowfield. Equipment can be provided and the cost per session is £3.50. Ray Dumpleton
TAI CHI	Gentle exercise which benefits balance and calmness at the Lower Hall, Emmanuel Offices, behind the church from 1-2 pm every Tuesday. Peggy Foster
UKULELE	Would you like to strum and sing along with the ukelele group? Beginners are welcome. We meet from 10 – 11.15 at the Upper Hall of Emmanuel Parish Centre, behind the church, every Thursday. Gerard Allcock
WALKING FOR HEALTH 1	Walks of around 3 miles are enjoyed by this group on the last Tuesday of every month. Details are given in the newsletter. Ian Burn
WALKING FOR HEALTH 2	This group meets on the second Wednesday of every month to follow the same route as Walking for Health Group 1. Anne Clarke
WELSH CONVERATION	Siawns am Sgwrs. For learners who have already made a good start with conversations and want more practice. Not suitable for beginners. We meet monthly on the 2nd Wednesday from 10.00 - 12.00 at the Didsbury pub on Wilmslow Road Megan Bennett

ANSWERS TO QUIZ

1. All are square numbers except 28
2. Venus is the only planet without a moon
3. Green is not a primary colour
4. All are FA cup winners except Middlesborough
5. The word biscuit derived from the French language. The rest are from the language of India
6. Roquefort is the only cheese made using sheep's milk
7. David Lloyd-George is the only Liberal MP
8. All are NATO phonetic call signs except for Waltz
9. Mars is a Roman god. The rest are Greek
10. All are netball positions except for centre forward
11. All have 4 sides except for pentagon
12. Caesar and Cleopatra written by George Bernard Shaw. The rest were written by William Shakespeare

Mime Club

Today I got kicked out of a mime club.

Must've been something I said.

I tried to use my Tesco club card to scrape the ice off my car windscreen but I could only get 10% off!

February 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>2</p> <p>Anglo Saxon and Medieval History Via Zoom 10:30</p> <p>Poetry Appreciation 11:00-12:30 Victoria Grange</p> <p>Psychology 14:00 Zoom</p> <p>Beginners/Improvers Bridge 13:30 - 15:30 <i>New players see info for 16th Feb below.</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p>Table Tennis / Badminton 10:00</p> <p>TaiChi 13:00-14:00</p> <p>General Meeting 14:00- 16:00 Didsbury Baptist Church</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Book Group 1. Meg's house 10:30. (Closed group)</p> <p>The Bird Watching & Nature group - Closed until April. If interested, contact Rita: [REDACTED]</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Ukulele 10:00 -11:15</p> <p>Spanish Conversation 14:00</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Bridge 9:45 - 12:00 * <i>*Note: Bridge is every week</i></p> <p>Italian Conversation 10:30 – 12:00</p> <p>Getting by in Welsh 10:30 St. Nicholas Church, Kingsway Burnage</p> <p>Keep Fit 11:15-12:15</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Creative Photography 10:30 The Parsonage</p> <p>Beginners/Improvers Bridge 13:30 - 15:30. <i>New players see info for 16th Feb below.</i></p>	<p>10</p> <p>Table Tennis / Badminton 10:00</p> <p>TaiChi 13:00-14:00</p> <p>Philosophy 13:30 Chorlton Library</p> <p>Singing for fun 14:00–16:00 Didsbury Baptist Church.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Welsh Conversation 10am (for 10:15) to 12pm The Didsbury Pub Wilmslow Rd</p> <p>Walking for Health 2. See Newsletter.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Anglo Saxon group's trip to Liverpool. Meeting 10:00 at Piccadilly Station.</p> <p>Ukulele 10:00 -11:15</p> <p>Book Group 3. 13:30 HOME Café, Emmanuel Church.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Bridge 9:45 - 12:00 *</p> <p>Parliamo Italiano (Andrew) 10:30 - 12:00 St. Christopher's Church Moorgate Ave M20 1HE</p> <p>Keep Fit 11:15-12:15</p> <p>Board Games 14:00-16:00. Parrswood Pub</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Anglo Saxon and Medieval History Via Zoom 10:30</p> <p>Beginners/ Improvers Bridge 13:30 - 15:30 A new group for complete beginners is starting in March 2026. There are limited places in this group, so all new players must email Hilary before the session date. [REDACTED]</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Table Tennis/ Badminton 10:00</p> <p>TaiChi 13:00-14:00</p> <p>Playreading 13:30</p> <p>French Group 14:00-15:00 HOME Café Emmanuel Church.</p> <p>Walking for Health 1. (Change of day for February only). See Newsletter.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Lunch Group. 13:00 <i>To be added to the contact list please email John at:</i> [REDACTED]</p> <p>Art Appreciation 14:00 The Parsonage.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Ukelele 10:00 - 11:15</p> <p>Egyptology 10:30 - 12:30 The Parsonage</p> <p>Piano Group 11:00. <i>We meet in group members' homes in Chorlton & Didsbury. Contact Hilary for details. 07982 231682</i> [REDACTED]</p> <p>Community Sing-Along 14:00 BELONG M20 2UW</p> <p>Spanish Conversation 14:00</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Bridge 9:45 - 12:00 *</p> <p>Italian Conversation 10:30 – 12:00</p> <p>Keep Fit 11:15 - 12:15</p> <p>Music & Mindfulness 14:00 – 15:00 St. Christopher's Church Moorgate Ave. M20 1HE</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Beginners/ Improvers Bridge 13:30 - 15:30 <i>New players see info for 16th Feb.</i></p> <p>Psychology 13:30 St. Nicholas Church, Kingsway Burnage</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Table Tennis / Badminton 10:00</p> <p>TaiChi 13:00-14:00</p> <p>Singing for fun 14:00–16:00 Didsbury Baptist Church.</p> <p>Walking for Health 1. See 17th Feb.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Knit & Natter 14:00-15:30.</p> <p>OVAS 15:00 – 17:15. [REDACTED]</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Ukulele 10:00 -11:15</p> <p>Book Group 2. 13:30 Didsbury Library</p> <p>Current Affairs 13:30 The Olde Cock Pub</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Bridge 9:45 - 12:00 *</p> <p>Creative Writing 10:30</p> <p>German Conversation 10:30 (Nazarene)</p> <p>Parliamo Italiano (Andrew) 10:30-12:00 St. Christopher's Church Moorgate Ave M20 1HE</p> <p>Keep Fit: No group this week.</p> <p>Cinema 12:15</p> <p>Music & Mindfulness 14:00 – 15:00 St. Christopher's Church Moorgate Ave. M20 1HE</p>