

February 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the second 2026 issue of the Kidsgrove and District u3a Newsletter. If you have any items you would like to be considered for future publications please forward details to our secretary by email: u3amemsecst7@outlook.com

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Last month we were entertained by the Mad Hatters, their third visit treating us to music, banter, funny hats and audience participation. With a mix of chorus, actions and songs like 'My favourite things', with alternative lyrics! 'Love is all around', 'Next door to Alice', 'Leaning on a lampost' and 'My grandfathers clock' it brightened up a very blustery afternoon with Storm Chandra blowing outside. A warming cuppa and cakes were provided by Gill and Jan.



Future events:

24th February - Silvertime - advice on Wills and Power of Attorney.

31st March - Paul Lillie - live on stage who combines singing and painting to bring famous musicians alive on stage. This time his chosen musician will be Elvis.

28th April - Fran Sandham talking about his book "Traversa: A solo walk across Africa"

MEMEBERSHIP RENEWAL

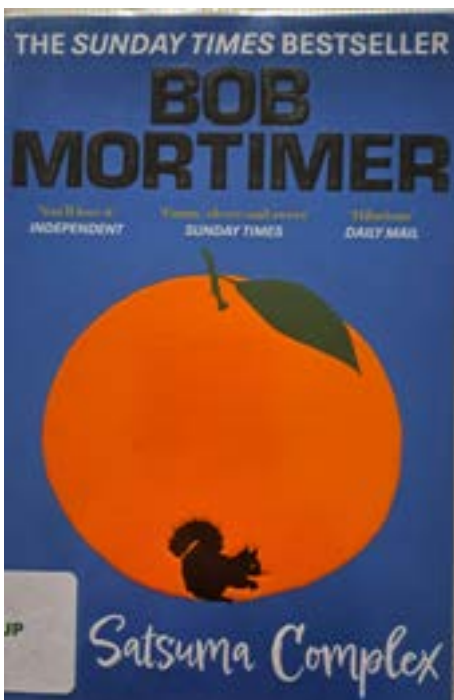
Annual membership runs from 1st April to 31st March so renewal will be due soon. Renewal forms will be available next month at our monthly meeting or from your group leader. More details in next months newsletter.

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NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

BOOK GROUP

We meet on the last Friday morning of the month at 10.00am at Kidsgrove Library.



This is this month's chosen book.

Gary Thorn goes for a pint with a work acquaintance called Brendan. When Brendan leaves early, Gary meets a girl in the pub.

He doesn't catch her name, but falls for her anyway. When she suddenly disappears without saying goodbye, all Gary has to remember her by is the book she was reading:

The Satsuma Complex. But when Brendan goes missing, Gary needs to track down the girl he now calls Satsuma to get some answers.

And so begins Gary's quest, through the estates and pie shops of South London, to finally bring some love and excitement into his unremarkable life...

CRAFT GROUP

We meet weekly every Monday afternoon at 1.00pm at Butt Lane Community Centre.

This month we've been making Valentines cards and Tie Dye T-shirts. Future projects we're gearing up for in the year ahead are Easter Bunnies and Egg Trees, Pebble Art, Macrame.

Alongside this we are knitting for charity on a weekly basis, mainly blankets. We are looking into what Dougie Mac may need/want now that they have added dementia care to their growing list of caring for our local community.

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Recently we had a donation of wool and needles which were greatly appreciated, should anyone have any spare wool they would like to give to the craft group so that we can continue to support various charities, we would certainly make good use of it.



CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

We meet monthly on the 2nd Tuesday afternoon of each month at 2.00pm at Kidsgrove Library.

We met on February 10th in Kidsgrove Library 2.00 pm as usual. It was an excellent meeting which we all enjoyed. If you would like to know about our writing, then feel free to join us. We focused on auto-biographies which proved to be very fertile ground. But also we covered subjects from the following list.



Optional homework for the next meeting is to choose from this list.

- The poshest dinner I ever had was.....
- The kindest comment from a teacher I ever had was
- The happiest holiday I ever had was
- The funniest/strangest present I ever received was
- The most amazing view I've ever seen was
- The biggest adventure I've ever had was
- One of the most exciting things I have ever done was
- The most generous things that anyone has ever done for me was
- The time I laughed the most was
- The most interesting book I ever read was
- The most interesting painting I ever looked at was.....

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The most splendid garden I ever walked around was
The grandest house I have ever visited was
The strangest dream I have ever had was

New members are welcome no matter your level from beginner to published, or just come along to list. Maybe I'll see you on March 10th at 2.00pm in Kidsgrove Library

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

We meet weekly every Tuesday Morning at 11.00am at Kidsgrove Library.

We've continued to hear extracts from Philip's very interesting autobiography but have also been discovering about life in Goldenhill in the 1800s from newspaper cuttings reporting fighting, blood sports and drunkenness. Would you believe someone was transported for 10 years for stealing 9 chickens! There was a report of an unofficial road closure due to 'road racing' an early version of 'Boy Racers' but without the fast flash cars they have today.

Philip told us about the introduction of the "poor law" and workhouse records and a number of cases of real hardship.

Finally we discussed sewage seepage, cess pits and night soil collection - then we all went to our annual late 'Christmas lunch' at the Red Bull which was enjoyed by all.



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MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP



We meet fortnightly at 1.30pm at 36 Ravenscliffe Road.

We met on 4th February to share 23 tracks over 2 hours. We heard a hilarious Greek take on "Old McDonalds Farm" - well, we think it was judging by the honks, oinks and moos - the late Chris Rea's "Road to Hell", "Massachusetts" by the Bee Gees before their disco era, and "Can't Fight This Feeling Anymore" by REO Speedwagon which had

me rushing home to check my 1980s vinyl albums. Mixed with these were Glen Miller, the Shirrells, Nickelback and Pete Tong. A real dancers week!

PHILOSOPHY GROUP

We meet weekly every Thursday morning at 10.00am at Butt Lane Community Centre.

Returning from the Christmas break we were saddened to have lost our leader and good friend Geoff Locke. He was an inspirational man, a true Scholar & always acted with integrity. At the moment we are using a book called "Philosophical Dilemmas" by Phil Washburn to base our discussions on. We have considered the meaning of Happiness, Capitalism and Morals - different codes for individuals and cultures, is it possible to introduce a global set of morals? As always lively debate has taken place usually ending with more questions than answers.



We offer a warm welcome to new members. For further information contact Julie Salisbury on 0748 484 6334.

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QUIZ GROUP

We meet every 4 weeks on a Wednesday afternoon at 1.30pm at Butt Lane Community Centre.

The winners of the quiz on 11th February were '3 Girls and a Guy' with a total score of 125½ points only 3 points ahead of the 2nd place team the '3 Amigos'. The winning team consisted of Wendy, Jackie, Alan and Helen.



Examples of questions included in this months quiz were:

1. How many Prime Ministers have served under King Charles III and name them?
2. Which has the biggest population Scotland or the Republic of Ireland?
3. What is the most common species of Owl in Britain: Long Eared, Barn, Tawny or Short Eared?

4. How many sides does a nonagon have?
5. Name the book and author of the following quote 'Call me Ishmael'

If you can answer these questions it would be good to see you at the next quiz on 11th March at Butt Lane Community Centre commencing at 1.30pm.
(answers in the next issue)

TAI CHI GROUP

We meet weekly every Wednesday morning at 10.00am at Kidsgrove Town Hall.

The aim of this group is to do gentle, slow movements to improve balance, stability and flexibility, improve breathing and well being. The first part of the class focuses on gentle Tai Chi exercises followed by a short yoga section and finishing with the Chen style 18th form Tai Chi.



It's pretty much a set routine of gentle exercises a little yoga followed by the tai chi sequence so not a group that has much to report on a monthly basis but anyone is welcome to join whatever their ability.

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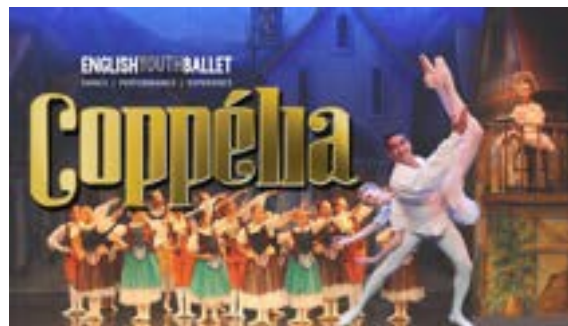
THEATRE GROUP

February was a quiet month for theatre visits only going to the New Vic to see John Godber's Teachers, a school based comedy highlighting the challenges of the education system through the eyes of students.

We held our quarterly meeting on 6th February where we arranged future visits to the New Vic to see Hound of the Baskervilles, Good Golly Miss Molly, Around the World in 80 days and to the Regent Theatre to see Coppelia and Sunny afternoon, The Kinks.



Anyone interested in join the theatre group please see Philip.



UKULELE GROUP

We meet weekly every Monday afternoon at 2.30pm at Butt Lane Community Centre.

We have an enjoyable session each week with an average of around 18 members. Our aim is to improve our playing and singing, along with a break for tea, biscuits and a natter. Popular songs this month have been Brand New Key, Galway Girl and San Francisco Bay Blues.

Anyone wanting to give playing the Ukulele a try, including complete beginners, you are welcome to come and join us. We've got spare instruments for you to use.



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WALKING GROUPS

SUNDAY STROLLERS

We've been on a variety of walks this month, we had a walk to the Chatterly Whitfield that's quite some steps! Then a trip to Tunstall park last week in the car, the cafe there is now open at weekends, winner!

Next walk Westport lake by car, a walk around the lakes will be our exercise.

It's been a bit too muddy to do our regular visit to Leg o` Mutton pool, we are still trying to convince the owner to get a van and do refreshments!

BATHPOOL STROLLERS

We meet every Wednesday morning at 10.00am on the car park at Bathpool Park.



LONGER WALKS

The **Intrepids** have had a busy month, walking along the Biddulph Way disused railway line and Gillow Heath finishing at The Talbot for lunch. They also visited Newstead Woods and Barlaston ending up at the Hem Heath and finally the Wheelock Rail Trail and Salt Line finishing at The Fox in Elworth as reported below.

For once it wasn't raining! Quite an easy 6 mile walk this week for the 9 Intrepids. As the majority of fields are waterlogged at the moment, these were avoided. Our start was from The Fox Inn at Elworth, close to Sandbach railway station. From here we headed to the nearby Trent & Mersey canal where we took to the towpath, heading south. The towpath was bad enough underfoot, being somewhat muddy for most of the way. This



path was followed as far as the Wheelock Rail Trail, which is the 'other end' of the Salt Line, with Malkin's Bank golf course between them. Our return was along this route, finally taking a path over the main railway by the station and then a short road trek to the pub.



A really good meal was enjoyed afterwards.