

# March 2026 Newsletter

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Welcome to the third 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](mailto:u3amemsecst7@outlook.com)

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month in the Workingmans Club (formerly the Masonic Hall) starting at 1.30pm. All members are welcome.



Last month we had a visit from SILVERTIME who gave a very interesting and informative presentation covering the intricacies of Wills, Trust Funds, Power of Attorney and how to avoid the Court of Protection. Lots of questions answered and several members have booked follow-up visits.

### **Future events:**

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"

26th May - Presentation about Thomas and Samuel Peploe Wood, local Staffordshire artists/sculptores

## MEMEBERSHIP RENEWAL

**IMPORTANT** Your annual membership is now due for renewal.

The cost of renewal remains at £15.00.

Renewal forms are being circulated via your group leaders, and will also be available at our monthly meeting.

Please check all the details on the form and mark any amendments clearly. **Also remember to list ALL the groups you participate in as this enables us to contact you in the event of any changes in the group meetings.**

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*Philip Leese who received the Lifetime Achievement award from Borough Mayor Robert Bettley-Smith and Professor Kevin Shakesheff, Vice Chancellor of Keele University.*



Congratulations to Philip Leese, recent winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award at Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council's fourth Borough Heroes Awards for showing passion, generosity and lifelong commitment in promoting his hometown's identity. As most of you will already know, Philip is a very popular leader and member of several u3a groups.

The council invited Philip and other inspirational residents, groups and organisations – who all make an outstanding contribution to borough life – to a ceremony at Keele in Town. He's a local historian who is the driving force behind the preservation of Kidsgrove's heritage is celebrating today after scooping the top accolade in an annual competition.

After many decades the former librarian continues to collect stories, document community memory and share local history through books, talks, walks and a long-standing weekly group. His encyclopaedic knowledge is relied upon and his published works have become essential reading for anyone interested in the area's past.

On receiving his award, Philip said “ *When I sat there listening to what all the other finalists had done I assumed I was just there to make the numbers up! I was truly shocked when my name was read out. I am delighted to have won the award but I really wasn't expecting it. It means a lot to me and hopefully for the history and heritage of Kidsgrove.*”

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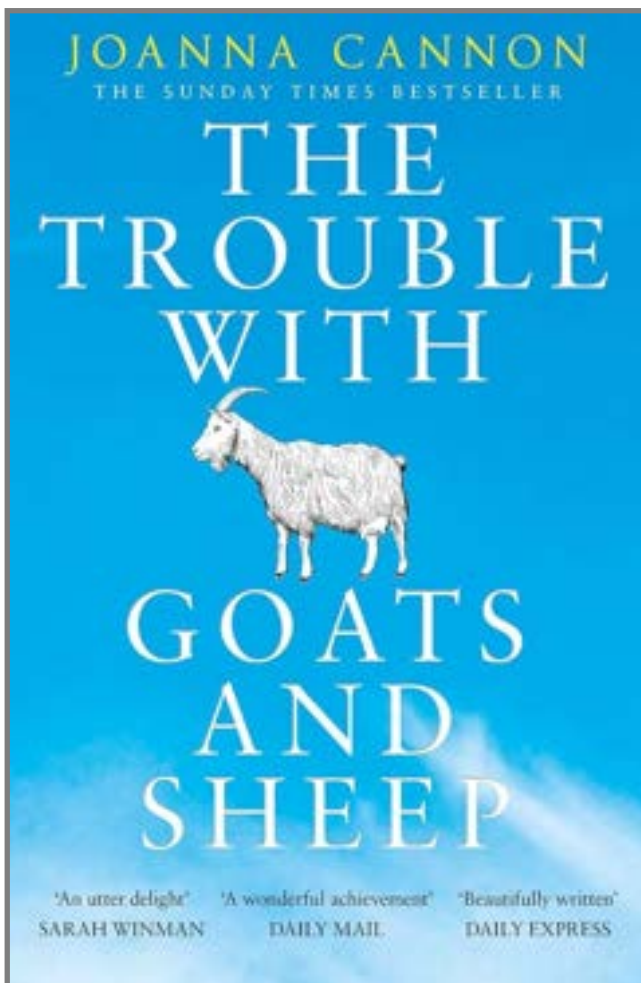
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## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### BOOK GROUP

We meet on the last Friday morning of the month at 10.00am at Kidsgrove Library. At the moment the group is unable to accept new members due to book availability at the library but if you are interested in joining please contact Barbara who will put you on a waiting list.

This months chosen book is:



**“The Trouble with Goats and Sheep”** is a charming debut novel that intertwines a coming-of-age story with a mystery, exploring themes of community, secrets, and the complexities of childhood. Set in a small cul-de-sac in England during the summer of 1976, the story follows two ten-year-old girls, Grace and Tilly, as they embark on a quest to find their missing neighbour, Mrs Creasy. Inspired by a sermon from the local vicar about the distinction between “goats” and “sheep” the girls believe that finding God might also lead them to uncover the truth behind Mrs Creasy’s disappearance. As they investigate, they delve into the lives of their neighbours, revealing hidden secrets and the complexities of adult relationships.

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## CRAFT GROUP

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

This month we've been busy making Tie Dye T-shirts, starting with white t-shirts and have got to say we had some good results. We also made some delightful Easter Bunny transformations from the humble sock.

If anyone has any spare wool they would like to give to the craft group so that we can continue to support various charities with knitted blankets, we would certainly make good use of it.



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## CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

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

Hi From the Writing group.

We had a meeting on 10th March. Five members attended, it was an excellent meeting even though one member arrived late because his motor cycle broke down and another member couldn't find anywhere to park so went home again.



All the writing advice tells us to flex the writing muscle daily so for the umpteenth time I resolve to do that.

New members are welcome, no matter your level from beginner to published, or just come along to listen. Next meeting on Tuesday 14th April at 2.00pm in Kidsgrove Library.

## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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

We're spending some time this term in reading in its entirety 'A Reminiscence of a Colliers Life' written by Charles Lawton back in the 1880s, the only known contemporary account of mining practices in Kidsgrove and Talke in the C19th, when the Kinnersleys and Heaths were in charge of mining at Birchenwood. We have never before looked at the whole document with its close descriptions of how coal was got in those days, and the rough behaviour of both bosses and men which Lawton, as a Methodist and tea-totaller, disapproved of. It is a proper eye-opener!

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## MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP

We meet fortnightly at 1.30pm at 36 Ravenscliffe Road.

18th February was a much depleted group, maybe due to the cold and miserable weather, but we still had an interesting mix including The Beatles, Peatbog Faeries, and Frankie Valli, offset by a spoken, and at times amusing, descriptive of the construction of the North Staffordshire Railway.

As if to compensate, our next meeting on 4th March was a full house, including a new member. To mark the passing of Neil Sedaka we played 'Calendar Girl' and 'Laughter in the Rain' and our resident cyclist shared 'Ride like the Wind' by Christopher Cross. Very apt. Technical problems meant that playing vinyl wasn't possible but we still managed 24 tracks, with halftime coffee and birthday cakes, in the two hours, ranging from operettas, concertos, musicals, and lots of classic pop.



## PHILOSOPHY GROUP

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

Over the last few weeks The Philosophy group have discussed Capitalism - Does it work for just a few or for the majority? followed by the question of Are we always selfish? - Are you a psychological Egoist or Altruist? Next - Are we responsible for our own actions? - Are you an Excuser or a Judge? As always there have been differing opinions and lively debate without any of us falling out!! We are moving onto Crime and Punishment, which I am sure will be interesting. The older I get, the more I realise that many choices in life are not black or white but shades of grey. As always we welcome new members into our group.



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## QUIZ GROUP

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

This month's quiz was held on 11th March. The winning team were "The Team" consisting of Wendy, Barbara and Colin with 113 points and the team who came in second place with just 1 point less were the "Blossoming Brains".



The answers to last month's brain teasers are as follows:

1. How many Prime Ministers have served under King Charles III and name them?  
- *there were 3 - Liz Truss - Rishi Sunak - Keir Starmer*
2. Which has the biggest population, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland? -  
*Scotland*
3. What is the most common species of Owl in Britain, Long Eared, Barn, Tawny Short Eared? - *it is the Tawny Owl*
4. How many sides does a nonagon have? - *9*
5. Name the book and author of the following quote 'Call me Ishmael'? – *Moby Dick by Herman Melville*

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This month's brain teasers are below and the answers will be in next month's newsletter

1. What is the name of the highest waterfall in the world?
2. Marie Antoinette was married to which King?
3. What kind of creature would be tended by an Apiarist?
4. How many hearts does an Octopus have?
5. Name the 7 deadly sins

If you can answer these questions it would be good to see you at the next quiz on 8th April 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.

## THEATRE GROUP

The group has a number of outings planned both to The New Vic and The Regent Theatre. On 26th March a dozen members went to see a matinee performance of Fawlty Towers. This production is currently touring following an extended run in London. Written by John Cleese it is a number of storylines from the TV series.

Comments from a couple of people who went to see the show:

- ◆ *Everyone agreed that the actors portraying the known characters were excellent although a few people were disappointed that it was not an original storyline.*

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- ◆ *The cast of Fawlty Towers really did the TV show justice. The start seemed a little slow, but it soon became a nostalgic trip as the characters found their stride and made their mark. The mannerisms and dialogue were so memorable. It was great to see Basil going off at tangents trying to work out which guest was the hotel inspector, his attempts to hide his horse racing winnings, the fire alarm testing, and of course the unforgettable line, "Don't mention the war," in reference to the German guests. Overall, it was quite an entertaining afternoon.*

A small number of the Theatre Group attended the New Vic's production of The Hound of the Baskervilles, none of us really knew what to expect from this well known Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tale. A horror story? Gothic Thriller? To the surprise of most of us, we were presented with four excellent actors playing multiple roles in a slapstick comedy. An extremely, energetic, fast paced, entertaining production which was appreciated by the audience.

Well worth a visit if the production returns.

Later this month a few of us are going to see Coppelia at the Regent theatre.

April is looking busy with visits to see The Kinks and Good Golly Miss Molly

## 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 'Always Look On The Bright Side Of Life', 'Mexican Hat Dance' and 'A Picture Of You' by Joe Brown and the Bruvvers.



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## WALKING GROUPS

### SUNDAY STROLLERS



We've been on a variety of walks this month, Here we are admiring the mosaic at Burslem park. The Chatterly pub was the next walk. Not made it to Leg o` Mutton yet this month due to it being so muddy, come on sunshine!

### 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, starting with a walk around Tittesworth Reservoir a bit muddy in places but blue skies and a gentle breeze, lunch at The Lazy Trout. The following week, trying to avoid the mud, we met a The Horseshoe in Lawton Heath end with a circular route encompassing Hassall Green and the Salt Line.

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3rd March was a different walk, no countryside this time, starting at Festival Park we circumnavigated Hanley, passing both Hanley Forest Park, The Bone and Flint Mill at Etruria followed by lunch at The Toby Inn. Our next walk, four in a row with no rain! took us around Congleton, starting by the park, passing Westlow Mere and the Lower Heath area returning to the park for lunch in The Cafe in the Park.

