

July 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the sixth 2026 issue of the Kidsgrove and District u3a Newsletter covering last month's activities. 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

WEB SITE

Don't forget our web site which has full up to date details of all our groups and contacts.

Click on this link to see more <https://kidsgrove.u3asite.uk>

MONTHLY MEETINGS REVIEW

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

It was a pleasure to welcome Rodney Paul back to our monthly meeting in June.

Previously he had fascinated us with his talk on penguins, so we had high expectations of this month's talk on Antarctica, 'The Coldest Place on Earth'. We were not disappointed!

'The Coldest Place on Earth' covered some of the geographical aspects of the Antarctic continent, describing it as not only the coldest, but driest and windiest place on earth. Temperatures range between minus 25 degrees and minus 60 degrees, plus wind chill. Although it contains 70% of the world's fresh water there is no vegetation for it has no soil.



Rodney took us on a history tour of the explorers and their expeditions, starting with the first explorer to cross the Antarctic Circle in 1773, Captain James Cook, then onto other world-renowned explorers, some of whom perished but others who successfully reached the South Pole and returned home.

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Rodney's passion for Antarctica resulted in him visiting the landmass three times, feeding his love of the landmass. While there he took a vast amount of photographs, principally of the wildlife. As we viewed them he quipped "and not a polar bear in sight!"

Future events:

28th July - Penny Wheat with a talk entitled 'Well I never' about a collection of weird facts she's accumulated over several years and you will be amazed, amused and enlightened by all the things you will discover.

25th August - Philip Leese

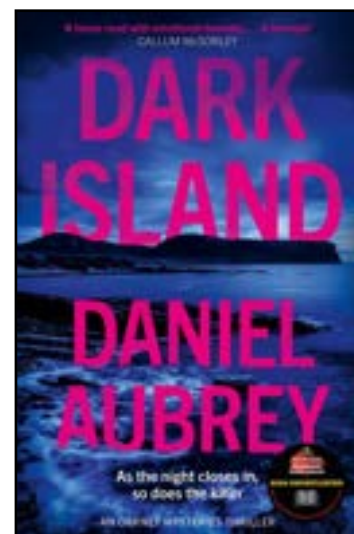
29th September - Return visit by Penny Wheat talking about "The Craft of a Silversmith"

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.

Our book this month was Dark Island by Daniel Aubrey. This murder mystery is set on Orkney and centres on Freya, an award winning journalist, returning to the Island to begin employment with the local paper. The body of a missing teenager is discovered and, along with Freya's own secrets, the plot develops with a few twists and turns, towards an ending that very obviously leads to a follow-up book. Most of our group enjoyed the story and discussions were around autism (mentioned in the book), misuse of power, grooming, marriage, and the difficulties in returning to where we grew up. Quite a mix. Many of us agreed we would look for the next book in the series.



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CRAFT GROUP

The craft group have been busy this month knitting and crocheting.



The Sunflowers and Forget-Me-Nots we reported on last month were on display on the Dementia Support Group table at the Flower Festival held earlier this month at Whitehill Methodist Community Church.



We are moving on to try embroidery who knows how successful we will be but pics to follow.

If you feel inspired come and join us, we meet weekly every Monday afternoon at 1.00pm at Butt Lane Community Centre, you'll be made very welcome.

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CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

The July meeting was well attended. Some members are continuing their autobiographies others, keep us entertained with descriptions of amusing and interesting anecdotes.

The theme for next month is: 'Choose the title of a song and make it the title of your next piece of writing; perhaps a short story.'

The August meeting will be on Tuesday 4th which is the first Tuesday of the month. We will meet in the Victoria Hall at 2.00pm. If anyone wishes to join us, you will be welcome. You may come to listen in the first instance to see if you like us. As the facilitator of this group, I feel privileged to hear member's work.

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

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

As our leader clings to the old fashioned custom of having a rest in the summer, we regretfully bid farewell to Local History until Sept 8th. (MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARIES) with the birthday meal of one of our founder members, Malcolm Rigby who hit 90 this month. Considering he's been attending the local history class since 1997, he's looking in remarkably good condition. Subject wise, we are scuttling through some tours of Kidsgrove and Butt Lane recorded in 1979 (good grief, that's over 45 years ago!) noting things which have changed, and particularly a decline in wildlife, though we have also had time off for a trip down the Grand Canyon which our leader made in 1976, and is not, strictly speaking, part of Kidsgrove's local history.

MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP

We meet fortnightly at 1.30pm at 36 Ravenscliffe Road.

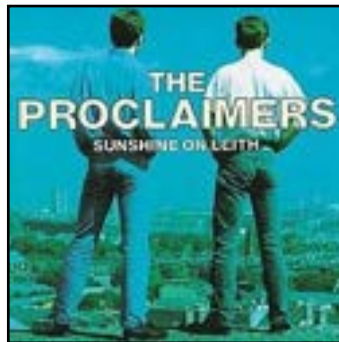
8th July.

A very small group met on a scorching hot day to play some 'cool' tracks. In keeping with the weather we had 'Summer Breeze' by the Isley Brothers, 'A Place in the Sun' by Stevie Wonder, 'Sunshine on Leith' by the Proclaimers and, of course, 'Mad Dogs and English men' to set the scene.

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We enjoyed very welcome ice lollies instead of our usual coffee at half time, and then had a mixture of classics and pop to finish the afternoon.

Although we left a little early we still managed 16 different pieces of music. Well done us!!



PHILOSOPHY GROUP

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

As always our group has enjoyed lively debates on a variety of topics including NHS screening programmes - are they a good thing or do they cause more harm than good?, Quantum physics- what's it all about?, the association between brain and mind and do we have a soul? Qualities that make us English.

Ian made us think about whether criminals are born that way or become naughty because of poor life circumstances, and Philip wondered whether we have minds or just brains, and where, if we do have minds, they actually are. We can actually see and dissect brains, but we don't know of anyone who's dissected a mind, or, come to that, a spirit. It hasn't happened yet, but you never know, one week we might



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actually come up with the answer to one of the questions we ask. It is always interesting to hear different opinions and keeping the mind active keeps us young!!

New members are always welcome to join us on Thursday mornings 10am - 12noon at Butt Lane Community centre (next to the Fire Station). We will continue to meet over the Summer holiday.

QUIZ GROUP

There was no quiz on the 1st July but the dates of the next quizzes are 29th July, 26th August and 23rd September.

The answers to last month's brain teasers are:

1. To which Country do the Galapagos Islands belong? - *Ecuador*
2. What star signs are represented by a Ram, a Sea Goat and an Archer? -
Aries, Capricorn, Sagittarius
3. Name the 4 monarchs who ruled in the 19th Century -
George III, George IV, William IV, Victoria
4. What element is a diamond composed of? - *Carbon*
5. Which Scientist first discovered gravity? - *Isaac Newton*

This months brain teasers:

1. Scarlett O'Hara is a character in which book?
2. How many Chromosomes are there in a human body?
3. What is an LED?
4. Who is the only British Prime Minister to win a Nobel Prize for literature?
5. How many eyes does a spider have?

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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

Its been a quiet month with no theatre visits since our last report.

Looking forward, tickets have been booked for Uncle Eric's Downton Abbey in September and Romeo and Juliette in October both at the New Vic Theatre.

If you're interested in joining future visits you can contact Philip via the link on the theatre group on our website.

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 attending. Our aim is to improve our playing and singing, along with a break for tea, biscuits and a natter.

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Last month we visited Johnny Cash in 'Folsom Prison', were out of this world with The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band's 'Urban Spaceman' and got 'A Little Stick of Blackpool Rock' from George Formby. Then Long John Baldry told us 'Everything Stops For Tea'.

We've got 2 spare Ukuleles, provided with a grant from Kidsgrove Town Council, which are free to use so why not come and give it a try. It's not that difficult but its lots of fun.

WALKING GROUPS

SUNDAY STROLLERS

These past few weeks we have been to Westport Lake, Leg O' Mutton and as pictured, Burslem Park with its lovely fountain and Astbury Mere have been our walks/ bus outings this month. Weather has been kind to us!!! We manage to get back before scorchio!



BATHPOOL STROLLERS

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

LONGER WALKS

The **Intrepids** have been out each week walking and battling the weather, although it's been the sun and heat, not the usual rain and mud, that they've had to deal with.

They've been to Stone, walking along the canal and expecting to dine at The Star, only to find the kitchen closed. Quick change of plan and nipped into 'spoons.

A short walk before our monthly meeting took them from the Red Bull along the Trent and Mersey canal and into Lawton Woods making their way back through The Spinney and Little Moss Lane to return along the Macclesfield canal.



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Over the border and into Cheshire and a walk along The Salt Line and after passing under the M6 once again taking the canal tow path back to the Broughton Arms

The latest walk saw them leaving the Railway Inn in Congleton and exiting the canal at the "Snail Bridge" and heading towards Priestly Fields. After an "unintended diversion" they made their way back to the pub via Congleton Park and Biddulph Valley Way, about 4.5 miles.



OTHER NEWS

"STV Studios is looking for people to take part in the new series of the BBC's The Travelling Auctioneers.

- *Is your home overflowing with unwanted antiques, heirlooms, or collectables?*
- *Would you like to turn that clutter into cash?*
- *And do some of your items need a touch of TLC to restore them before they head to auction?*

The team are back on the road in their trusty van and would love to help you.

We're looking for people who could use the help of an auctioneer, and an expert craftsperson, in the hope of selling some possessions at auction. You might even make a little money along the way. "

