

August 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the seventh 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.

Our meeting this month started with our Annual General Meeting and the election of committee members. Your committee comprises the following members:

Chair: Hilary Coombes
Vice Chair: Josephine Locke
Secretary: Steve Travers
Treasurer: Angela Travers
Membership Secretary: Hilary Allman
Events Co-ordinator: Sara Anthony
Web Master: Alan Key
Committee member: Paul Elden

Hilary C gave a shout out to everyone to remind them its '**Your**' u3a and the committee is there for you so if anyone has any ideas they think would be suitable for our group please get in touch with any of the committee members.

Following the AGM Penny Wheat delivered the July talk on the obscure title of 'Well I Never'. The talk was an amusing look at the quirkiness of words and how they can be used, usually deliberately, to create humour. Most of her examples were taken from signs, notices, poems and gravestones, as in these examples:

A sign on an opticians window, "If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place"

August 2026 Newsletter

On a shoe repairers, “We will heel you, We will save your sole, We will even dye for you”.

On a church notice “Remember in your prayers the many who are sick of our church”.

On a gravestone, “To follow you I’m not content, until I know which way you went”.

This was a charming, clever, and thoroughly enjoyable talk - the kind that sends you home scanning every sign, inscription, and letter for hidden jokes. A light-hearted reminder that English, even at its most serious, has a habit of making us smile.

But perhaps the most memorable part of her talk was towards the end. Penny surprised us with a little game of Name That Tune. At first it sounded simple enough - eight tunes, drawn from a century of popular music. But what we didn’t expect was the way in which she delivered them: she tilted her head and began to whistle. Each melody came out bright, clear, and pitch perfect. By the time she reached the eighth tune, the quiz had become secondary. We were simply watching Penny, delighted and a little awestruck, as she stitched a hundred years of music together with nothing more than her whistle.



Future events:

25th August - Philip Leese

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

27th October - Helen Johnson will be telling us all about Historic Christmas Traditions

August 2026 Newsletter

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 'My Grandmother Sends Her Regards And Apologises' by Fredrik Backman, who was also the author of the perhaps better known 'A Man Called Ove' (made into the Tom Hanks film A Man Called Otto). The story was based around an eight year old girl (Elsa) and her eccentric granny. There was a distinct fantasy element, which not everyone appreciated, using a made up land and characters relating to all Elsa's neighbours. Once we'd worked out who was who the tale flowed much more smoothly. Our group was a roughly 50/50 split on those who enjoyed the read and those who did not. A few of us thought it would make an excellent TV series.



CRAFT GROUP

Last month we said we were going to try embroidery, well here are some of the completed projects with some very professional results.



August 2026 Newsletter

Some of our members have been having a dabble at pebble art.



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.

CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

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

August's meeting was attended by six members. The homework was, 'choose the title or first line of a song' to begin your writing. It could be a story, poem, memory or whatever inspires you.

I chose Food, Glorious Food and Drink, Drink, Drink. I wrote about the five course meals I enjoyed when I lived in France. Each course was accompanied by a different glass; aperitif, red wine, white wine, red again, mousseux, eau de vie and coffee.

'I could have danced all night' was a second song which reminded me of my passion for Breton dancing. I wrote about the times I did dance nearly all night in a circle of two hundred people, by the light of the moon and stars in Brittany. We also discussed style, comparing writing and painting.

If you would like to know more why not join us?

The next meeting will be September 8th at 2.00 in Kidsgrove, Town Hall.

August 2026 Newsletter

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

We usually meet on a Tuesday Morning at Kidsgrove Library but are currently taking a Summer Break. Meetings will resume on Tuesday 8th September at 11.00am.

However last week 8 of us met up at the Red Bull and Philip took us on a short historical walk around Old Butt Lane, stopping to tell us about the other Red Bull or Top Bull as it was better known and the long building behind which in the late 1800s was converted from a plaster mill to a fusion cutting mill employing 40 or so young girls and married women. Philip explained 'life in the mill' and told us they had to pay a fee of £1 to learn how to do the work. We then headed down Slacken Lane, stopping to tell us about Windmill Cottage then through the woods to the ruins of Woodshutts farm, one of the oldest buildings in Kidsgrove returning to the pub where we were joined by 10 other members for a very enjoyable lunch.

Last month we reported that one of our longest serving members, Malcolm Rigby, celebrated his 90th birthday, we were all invited to lunch at the Red Bull.



MUSIC APPRECIATION GROUP

We meet fortnightly at 1.30pm at 36 Ravenscliffe Road.

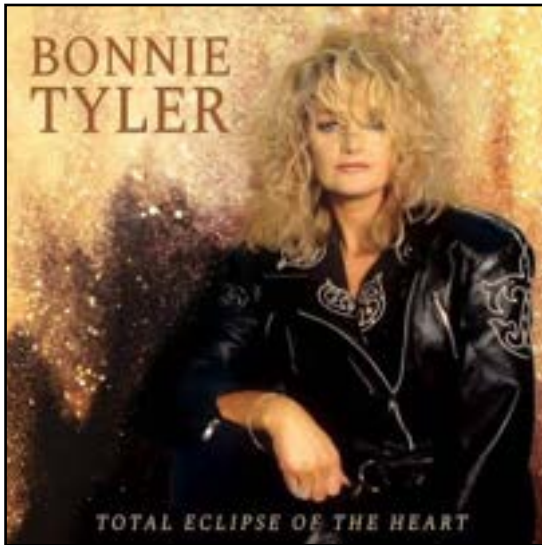
Our meeting of 22nd July was cancelled which made for a very eager group gathering on 5th August, to share our favourite music. The Beach Boys opened the afternoon with the dreamy 'God Only Knows', and coincidentally also closed with 'Wouldn't It Be Nice'.



In between we celebrated the life of Bonnie Tyler and her biggest hit 'Total Eclipse of the Heart', and the 40th Anniversary of the release of Paul Simon's album Graceland.

The mood swung between operetta, a low key Mary Chapin Carpenter and a somber Michael Ball self penned song, to a Lady Gaga upbeat track and a Moloko dance track (it is festival season after all)...not forgetting the Cher "Life after Love" that seemed to last as long as a 12 inch single (who remembers those?).

August 2026 Newsletter



It was mooted that next session we have a theme of artists beginning with A, B or C. Hmmm. Interesting. Watch this space.

19th August and the theme this week was bands or artists beginning with A, B and C giving us an interesting mix of new, old, and a tenuous classical track.

For the As Abba was an obvious choice, but less well known were Aztec Camera and The Adventures.

The Bs began with Michael Ball, of course, but included The Bravery, Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, and Buddy Holly.

There were fewer Cs, although some artists such as Belinda Carlisle covered two criteria.

Overall the Bs had it but we managed 25 tracks until the CD player overheated and ended our fun. The Group decided to keep the theme going so next time will be D,E and F. I suspect this may get difficult as the alphabet progresses....!

PHILOSOPHY GROUP

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

The Philosophers have continued to meet during the Summer break, each week enjoying lively debate. Subjects discussed have included 'Is it possible to have a World Government', 'would it work with honesty and integrity' and 'could the World become a more peaceful place'. Following the tragic case involving the Police and Henry Nowak does the Equality Act need updating so it is more equitable? As usual we drifted off topic several times but enjoyed our time together.

New members are always welcome to join us on Thursday mornings 10.00am - 12.00pm at Butt Lane Community centre (next to the Fire Station). For more details contact Julie Salisbury on 0748 484 6334

August 2026 Newsletter

QUIZ GROUP

Last month's quiz was held at the Butt Lane Community Centre on 29th July. The winning team were a 'Rose between 3 Thorns' consisting of Joan, Wendy, Philip and Jackie with a magnificent score of 103 points, well ahead of their nearest rivals who scored 91 points.



The answers to last month's brain teasers are:

1. Scarlett O'Hara is a character in which book? - *Gone with the wind*
2. How many Chromosomes are there in a human body? - 46
3. What is an LED? - *Light-emitting diode*
4. Who is the only British Prime Minister to win a Nobel Prize for literature? - *Sir Winston Churchill*
5. How many eyes does a spider have? - 8

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

1. What does a Geiger Counter measure?
2. Name the Eight Countries that border France.
3. What organ in the body stores bile?
4. What are the 3 longest rivers in Britain?
5. Which shipping line owned the ill fated ship Titanic?

The next quizzes will be held on 26th August and 23rd September

August 2026 Newsletter

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.

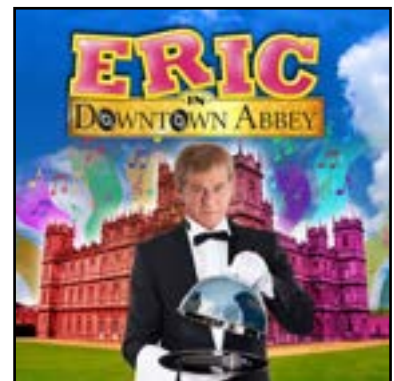
It's pretty much a set routine of gentle exercises a little yoga followed by the tai chi sequence so not a group that has much to report on a monthly basis but anyone is welcome to join whatever their ability.

THEATRE GROUP

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

We're looking forward to our next visit to the New Vic in September to see Uncle Eric's Downton Abbey and Romeo and Juliette in October.

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



August 2026 Newsletter

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.

Last month we were Dreaming A Little Dream and Feelin' Groovy. We went Rambling around Manchester and down Red River Valley ending up Leaning On A Lamp Post with George Formby.

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

This month we have been to Astbury Mere. Chatterly Whitfield, along the loop line behind Aldi emerging from the tunnel out into the sunshine.



Congleton park was our next outing, small but perfectly formed, with lovely flower beds and a cafe. Leg o' Mutton is always a pleasure, keeps us up to date with any new developments and usually a chat with Chris and Kevin who work their socks off. Coffee, cakes or savouries finish our walks off.



BATHPOOL STROLLERS

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

August 2026 Newsletter

LONGER WALKS

The *Intrepids* have been walking and dining around the local area and as far afield as Wrinehill.



21st July, 5 *intrepids* set off from Alsager on a 4½ mile walk into the countryside, fighting through paths overgrown with long grass, nettles and brambles. They battled through thick and thin to arrive back at The Bod for lunch.

28th July, 12 *intrepids* met at The Red Bull for a circular walk towards the canal basin, through the woods to Slacken Lane and onwards up Old Butt Lane towards Alsager, crossing Linley Lane through a field of new mown hay then maize onto the Trent and Mersey Canal back to toward pub for lunch.

4th August, as one of their favourite watering holes, The Redwood, is closing Dave thought it fitting they dinned there one last time, so a walk around the Apedale area fitted the bill. Starting at the Heritage centre, through woods and across fields, up hills and down dales, passing through the village of Apedale, where there can't be more than half a dozen houses, before returning to the car park.

August 2026 Newsletter



11th August, a bit further afield to Wrinehill, although with all the dry brown fields and in the hot sun it looked more like Greece. Starting at the Hand and Trumpet, passing Betley Mere and the through the cricket ground they endured all the hazards and scorching sun before returning to the pub for lunch and lubrication.

Some comments from fellow *intrepids*:

"Was good adventure! Who knew there were so many fields around Alsager"

"Lovely walk, great company and nice food, who could ask for more"

OTHER NEWS

Our u3a is keen to support local causes and this summer it has chosen to make a donation to the friends of Kidsgrove Station who, as volunteers, work throughout the year, to make the station environment as attractive and welcoming as possible. Those with a keen eye will spot many members from our u3a are also members of this group.

August 2026 Newsletter

The Friends of Kidsgrove Station Gardens are a small group of volunteers who meet together regularly to maintain the gardens at Kidsgrove Railway Station. There are four platforms of established gardens, raised beds, wall racks, wildflower borders, extensive barked areas and planters to work on. Our work involves planting, weeding, pruning, cutting back, deadheading, composting, watering, sweeping, laying bark, to name but a few.

We are also there to interact with the travelling public who may ask which platform to catch a train from or a number for a taxi. Visitors to the station are always very generous with their comments about how lovely the station gardens look and how busy we must be.

The North Staffordshire Rail Partnership, to which we belong, does provide us with some monetary and physical resources but we are mainly self-funding through applying for grants to buy bark, compost and plants.

Kidsgrove u3a is pleased to make a donation to the group and congratulate them on their achievements.

