



Newsletter April 2025

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From the Chairman

John McKellar – chair@maccu3a.uk

Dear All,

By the time you're reading this, Easter will be upon us and Spring will be in full flow with our summer groups taking to the great outdoors. It is a refreshing time of year with the warm summer months ahead of us and the prospect of more carefree sunshine days (we hope). It's an opportunity to try a new group and see if you like it – a way of keeping active and maybe developing a new interest.

We are also in the run-up to the AGM (I hope you've considered volunteering for the committee); I'm very grateful for the experience and support of my fellow trustees and committee members. The Macclesfield u3a is a very stable ship, and chairing it is an absolute pleasure. The quiet efficiency of the work done is a testament to the professionalism and serious attitude of every one of them.

In January, my wife & I had a young house guest from abroad, then she moved across the country to start a year-long placement. As advice about how to settle in, make friends and socialise; I found myself referencing the u3a – it is easy to join and make contacts who in turn become friends. We learn a little, or a lot, we voice our views (definitely a lot!) and we share a smile and a "how are you?". It is remarkable how easy it is across the groups to make friends, to meet people you would

trust. This comes from a certain attitude, an open and appreciating mind and I'm pleased to see it so well established across all our groups. So, thank you Group Leaders for doing what you do so well – you are the face of the u3a and your positive attitude makes us what we are.

If you see me, say hello,

John MCKellar

chair@maccu3a.uk

From the Membership Secretary

Phyllis Thomas – membership@maccu3a.uk

A warm thank you to all the members who have renewed their membership for 2025/26 and to all the recent new members. Clearly our u3a is important to so many people and a special thanks to the early renewers that have helped to spread out the workload for the treasurer and myself.

If you haven't yet renewed, we do offer a generous grace period so please do reach out to me at the above email address. The subscription remains at £28.00 for Individuals (and £24.00 if you belong to another national u3a group). By the way, we don't offer a discount if your spouse also belongs to our u3a.

If your personal details have changed (address, phone numbers) or you no longer belong to another national u3a group, please let me know.

Also, if you're not enjoying the paper copy of the national u3a Matter magazine and/or would rather read it online, please let me know. The link to it is available from the Links tab of our Macclesfield u3a web page.

Thanks, Phyllis

From the Newsletter Editor

[Peter Whithameditor@maccu3a.uk](mailto:PeterWhithameditor@maccu3a.uk)

This Newsletter provides a link for each group, which (if you are connected to the internet) will take you to the group's web page. You can always access all the groups' webpages at <https://macclesfield.u3asite.uk/welcome/> as well. Our aim is to provide you with news and updates, rather than repeat material from the Year Book and website. I always welcome any comments and suggestions to improve the Newsletter.

The Committee is planning a printed Year Book in September.

Members' Mornings

When: Third Monday of the month 10am to 12pm

Where: Meetings from May onwards at
St John the Evangelist church hall, Wilwick Lane,
Macclesfield SK11 8RS

Why: Socialising, learning and belonging

What: Refreshments from 10, notices 10.25, speaker or activity
from 10.30, questions from 11.30

It's a chance to get to know new people, chat to old friends, have a cuppa and then enjoy our interesting speakers.

All are welcome. We hope to see you soon.

Coming soon:

- Mon Apr 28th AGM followed by Emma Kennedy from AgeUK with tips for identifying and avoiding all sorts of scams
Note that this is at All Saints' Church – see [Notice](#)
- Mon May 19th Charles Golabek: Crewing a boat round the North of Scotland, with charity, Stella Maris
- Mon June 17th Frank Vigon: The History of Advertising

From the Members' Mornings Co-ordinators

Anna Franks and Diane Styles

members.mornings@maccu3a.uk

Notice of the Annual General Meeting

MACCLESFIELD u3a NOTICE 2024-5 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Monday 28th April 10am–Noon

Coffee at 10am followed by AGM at 10.15 then at 10.45am:

- Emma Kennedy from Age UK:
‘Tips on avoiding scams’

Venue: All Saints’ Church,
Brough St. West (off Oxford Rd), Macclesfield, SK11 8EL.

Please advise the secretary if you have any questions for the Committee concerning our u3a by 17th April. We cannot take any detailed questions if not provided before the meeting.

The committee also requests nominations for a further Trustee for the Macclesfield u3a to be voted upon at the forthcoming AGM. Form from the secretary.

The committee is also looking for someone to write our policies (good drafts are available).

General news of group activities

Please note: If there is no news listed, the group is continuing, and the details can be found on the website (or in the last Year Book).

Name Badges

It has been suggested that some groups might benefit if members were to wear name badges. This would be optional, and certainly not formal – members may wear a badge of whatever design they feel comfortable with (or to express their personality!). And not all groups need to do it.

AI (Artificial Intelligence)

- John McKellar

Both parts meet in the Scout HQ.

Main AI is 1st Tuesday of month at 10am–noon

AI (Tech) is 3rd Tuesday at 2pm–4pm

If you're curious about AI, and want to stay informed on this exciting topic, come for a coffee on a Tuesday morning, as our group is the perfect place to explore and learn together.

Our u3a group delves into the fascinating world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – its uses, benefits, and potential downsides.

We meet once a month, at the Scout HQ on West Bond Street, for two engaging hours, and take a conversational approach to learning.

By encouraging members to share their insights, questions, and reflections, we all contribute to the group..

From the ethical considerations of AI to its potential to revolutionize industries, we aim to understand how AI affects our lives and our future.

Mainly written by ChatGPT, with assistance from CoPilot and Mike & Gill Greenwood

We have also started an “AI (Tech)” subgroup. This has quickly grown to 12 members. I'm sure we'll have enough to discuss on the technical side of AI. We've committed to remaining a subgroup of the main AI Group and will feed into the main group as much as possible. This has allowed the main group to be “less mathematical” to the huge relief of about half the members.

Allotment Gardening

Most plot holders felt that last year was a bit of a nightmare from a weather point of view, but perhaps we're just recycling the same old excuses...

We have a short waiting list, as plots do become available from time to time. Feel free to get in touch if you think that you may be interested.



Art Appreciation

Bird Watching

Upcoming planned visits

10/04/2025	Bosley Cloud	Congleton	10am
08/05/2025	Derbyshire Bridge	Goyt Valley	10am
12/06/2025	Lapwing Pool	Lower Withington	10am

Bookworms 1

- [Vicky Darlington](#)

Our Group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 2pm. The venue for our meetings are at various member's homes in Macclesfield.

As a Group, we continue to receive the books via the local library on a monthly basis and we are never sure which book they will be sending to us from the central library at Chester until we open the "green box". We are also sent 2 or 3 times a year an updated list with new books listed, so that we can request for them to be sent to us in the future. Our Group is made up of ten members however, at present we do have two vacancies and if anyone is wishing to join us or find out more information, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number.

In the meantime, enjoy the challenges of reading various books that you perhaps wouldn't have chosen to read. `and also appreciate hearing other people's views of the books we have read – very thought provoking!!

Bookworms 2

Bookworms 3

Bookworms 4

Bookworms 5

Café walks

We meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month for a 10am start. We walk for about an hour (roughly 2 miles) before settling down for a drink and a chat. There are usually about 9 or 10 of us walking. Some members do not walk but join us for the coffee afterwards

In January we had a walk along the canal from Bollington Rec with a belated Christmas lunch at The Vale Inn, and our latest walk in February discovered three pools in Macclesfield.

The attached photo was taken at Leadbeaters' Reservoir.



Canasta

- Shirley Stretton

Our new Canasta group had a very successful start at the beginning of the New Year. Meeting twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, 2.00–4.00 pm at Gawsorth Methodist Church Hall, it has provided a good opportunity for new card players to learn the rules of the game without any pressure. Now members are slowly getting their heads around an entertaining and enjoyable game. Do come along and join us if you would like to learn something new or just brush up on old skills.

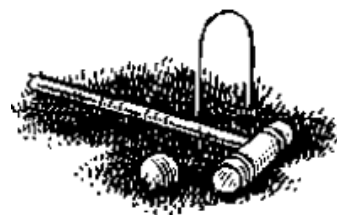
Card Making

Country Dancing

Crafters Together

Croquet

- Leader: David Lee
- Deputy Leaders: Andrew Redwood and Colin Smith



Our group enters its eighth season this year, and has grown from strength to strength. We play on the outfield of the cricket ground. We see ourselves first and foremost as a social group playing Social Croquet, with the very clear aim to have fun! We do, however, play to the rules of Association (as opposed to Golf) Croquet.

Croquet has been likened to a mix of snooker, bowls, and chess! Most folks who have joined the group have had little or no previous experience of the game, so we always offer introductory sessions, and ideally at the start of the season.

We would love to see you. Please get in touch if you would like any further information.

Crown Green Bowls

The Crown Green Bowling group will start their new season in the lovely surroundings of West Park every Wednesday morning from 10am to 12 noon. The first session will be on April 2nd 2025, and all interested members are welcome. There will be coaching available for people new to the sport, and refreshments and a friendly chat available mid-morning. Please feel free to contact the group leader via the group's webpage if you have any queries.

Indoor Bowls

The indoor bowling season is nearly over and sadly will finish at the end of March. It has been a very sociable and well attended group with the added chance of new friendships being formed. Most of our new bowlers have now got their own bowls and are showing great promise and we are hoping that their enthusiasm will be transferred to Crown Green Bowling once the summer season begins.

Discussion

European Studies

The European Studies group is not meeting at the moment, pending the appointment of a new leader.

French Conversation 1

Games

Geology

- Adrienne Noble
- Admin Beryl Beattie

We meet on the 2nd Friday of each month.

Most of our meetings are outdoor visits, often following geology trails that give new insights into well-known landmarks. Membership is open to anyone with an interest in Geology and we encourage everyone to volunteer to lead at our meetings.

We also have a 3-day annual trip to a location of special interest (see photo: Flamborough Head in 2024). The group is currently full but there is a waiting list.



German 1

German 2

Italian – Beginner Fumblers

Italian Conversation

Mah Jong

Make and Create

Painting and Art

The Painting and Art sessions are lively, productive and fun. The group are only too willing to help anyone new. We cover a wide range of mediums and topics and members are encouraged to either join in or do their own work if they want to.

One of our members, Hilary Plymen, has written the following:

As someone fairly new to art, I was

astonished when it was suggested that I join three talented friends in



John Staveley, Catherine Stephens, Hilary Plymen and Hilary Raymond

putting on an art exhibition at Macclesfield library. It took a good deal of cajoling but I'm so glad I finally agreed! It's been a lovely experience in a beautifully warm and well-lit venue which I can thoroughly recommend to anyone hovering on the brink of exhibiting their work. The staff in the library have helped us every step of the way.



My friends in U3A have been most encouraging – as have other friends locally – and apprehensive though I was, I'm now extremely glad to have taken part. I'd like to encourage any other nervous, shy and unconfident artists out there to give it a go! If you're quietly producing beautiful work alone at home or indeed in a group, please will you show us?

People, Poems & Prose

- Liz Smith

2nd Wednesday at 2pm.

Scout HQ

"Are you Free, Ay?" by Chris Hewitt.

Retired? Retiring? Not for we
The slow decline of activity,
The pipe, the slippers
The kitchen sink, all very well,
But if you think
There is no room for fun and play,
Come down and join the U3A.
We learn, we laugh, we make new friends
And life can start where working ends!

Politics

- Graham Hall
- Alec Johnston

We meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 2 pm at the Scout HQ at 32 West Bond St SK11 8EQ.

The Politics Group is a new group and looks at politics in the widest possible way. We have attracted an enthusiastic and diverse membership, with a wide range of views and opinions, and we are determined to keep all discussions friendly, fun and constructive even if challenging at times.

We will discuss factual and theoretical topics as well as current burning issues and the occasional bits of philosophy and morality.

We commenced with looking at the Nation State, and will go on to look at Brexit (inevitably) and Patriotism next, followed by Nuclear Deterrence and Trump and Putin, and How to Subvert a democracy. We are open to new members and all are welcome. Please don't think politics isn't for me, this is the group for those who say they are not interested in politics, or especially if you know nothing about it. So please come along and see what it's all about.

I read International Politics at University back in the 70s – (think Wolfie Smith with an 'ology!) and was told that I'd never use it. It just goes to show "THEY" are not always right. That sort of sums us up.

[15th April – What's the point of the House of Lords?](#)

Is the Monarchy a medieval anachronism out of place in a modern State; should it be reformed or disestablished?

[13th May – What are the consequences of President Trump?](#)

Does the special still relationship with the USA actually exist and does it still serve our vital interest?

[17th June – Will the assisted dying bill deliver the results that it's intended to deliver?](#)

Is there a danger that it may have unintended consequences in forcing people to seek its comfort out of concern for their families and that they may be a burden?

[Pickleball](#)

[Indoor Pickleball](#)

[Psychology Forum](#)

[Rummikub Plus](#)

During March, Rummikub was at Prestbury Village Hall. From April 14th we are returning to Gawsworth Methodist Church Hall, each 2nd and 4th Monday 2-4pm

Spanish Improvers

Spanish improvers continues to offer a casual, supportive atmosphere where members can gain confidence in their Spanish.

Table Tennis

Technology & Science

- David Burnham

In April Professor Paul Connolly from School of Earth and Environmental Science at University of Manchester will talk about Atmospheric Science and, in May, Dr Yagya Regmi, Reader in Energy Conversion and Storage at the Manchester Fuel Cell Innovation Centre of Manchester Metropolitan University will talk about fuel cells. Finally in June, Dr Kathryn Simpson from Cancer Research UK's Manchester Institute will talk about her work on cancer biomarkers.

22nd April

Atmospheric Science

Professor Paul Connolly, School of Earth and Environmental Science, University Of Manchester.

27th May

Fuel Cells

Dr Yagya Regmi, Reader in Energy Conversion and Storage, Manchester Fuel Cell Innovation Centre, Manchester Metropolitan University

24th June

Cancer Bio-markers

Dr Kathryn Simpson, SCLC Biology Group, Cancer Research UK, Manchester Institute

Charles Mackay will be taking over as Technology and Science group leader from David Burnham after the June group meeting. There is currently an extended hand-over in progress.

Ukulele

Walkers 5 Milers

The Five Mile Walking Group has continued to walk the first and third Thursdays of the month throughout the year. Walks have been about 5 miles in length and are varied, ranging from Grin Low at Buxton to out on to the Cheshire Plain. We are a small friendly group and would welcome new walkers joining us.

Part of Ladybrook trail between canal and Lyme Park, January walk 2025



Walking Mondays

We have been successful in attracting some new members. However we can squeeze in a few more as some of our members are sleeping members. Do contact us if you would like to try us out.

Walk details are sent out to members approximately 10 days before each walk and we normally attract 10 - 15 walkers each time.

Wild Flowers

Dates for visits on Mondays, generally a 10.30am start:

Monday 12th May	Litton, Tansley Dale & Cressbrook Dale [Park Litton Village road side SK 164 751 – meet near village shop] SK17 8QP: 3 hours+
Monday 26th May Bank Holiday	Jacksons Brickworks, Middlewood, Higher Poynton: grid ref SK 947 843, post code SK12 1UT Car park: Half day
Monday 9th June	Deep Dale, Brierlow Bar: grid ref SK 0855 6984 [park road side on Harpur Hill road, just before book shop: SK 17 9PY]: 3 hours
Monday 23rd June	Hartington Station: grid ref SK 149 612, post code SK17 OAZ: 3 hours
Monday 7th July	Chee Dale A6: Wyedale car park grid ref SK 1038 7251 , SK17 9TE and Bellamy's Bank: grid ref SK 156 731. Drive between venues: All day visit
Monday 21st July	Solomon's Temple, Buxton: grid ref SK 049 720, post code SK17 6UJ: 2 hours

There are a couple of new sites this year to add to some favourites so all welcome to bring their skills, learn from others or just brush up on your knowledge of the country side. Please ensure that you bring suitable clothing and foot wear as this area of the Peak district is mainly limestone and slippery. Please bring your own refreshments.

If you plan to attend one or all of these outings please liaise with the leader as the venue may change due to poor weather or an exciting find elsewhere!

Open Group meetings

Open Groups are groups at nearby u3a's that welcome our members to their meetings. You do not have to join the other u3a to attend. There is often a contribution required from visitors.

Technology for Everyone (Cheadle Hulme u3a)

- Peter Cadman

The Technology for Everyone (The Appliance of Science) Group of Cheadle Hulme u3a is an "Open Group" in the North East Cheshire Network. This Group invites Speakers on technical subjects that we all come across in our day-to-day activities. You are therefore invited to attend any of their meetings on the first Tuesday of the month (Feb to April, and Oct to Dec inclusive) at 2pm in the Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, Heald Green, SK8 3JL. Admittance fee is £3 including Tea/Coffee and Cake/Biscuits.

List of Group Leaders and Contact Numbers

AI (Main and Maths)	John McKellar
Allotment	Steve Fallows
Art Appreciation	Christine Johnston
Bird Watching	Noel Massey
Bookworms 1	Vicky Darlington
Bookworms 2	Linda Godfrey
Bookworms 3	Margaret Burnham
Bookworms 4	Liz Lawson
Bookworms 5	Pete Caulkett
Café Walks	Anna Franks
Canasta	Shirley Stretton
Card Making	Ann Harris
Crafters Together	Jackie Boulton
Country Dancing	Jill Smart Jane Turner
Croquet	David Lee Andrew Redwood
Crown Green Bowls	Shirley Stretton
Discussion	Chris Hewitt
European Studies	Norton Wragg
French Conversation 1	Val Cutter
Games	Shirley Stretton Mandy Orton
Geology	Adrienne Noble
German 1	Kate Bonson
German 2	Nicky Campbell
Italian – Beginners	Phyllis Thomas
Italian Conversation	Val Cutter
Indoor Bowls	Shirley Stretton
Mah Jong	Pete Caulkett
Make and Create	Janet Parkinson
Painting and Art	Jackie Gibbs
Pickleball	Mandy Orton
Indoor Pickleball	Mandy Orton
People, Poems & Prose	Liz Smith
Politics	Graham Hall
Psychology	Angela Raval
Rummikub Plus	Denise Jones
Spanish Improvers	Mary Pollard
Table Tennis	Sue Whyatt
Technology & Science	David Burnham
Ukulele	Steve Hodgskiss
Walkers 5 Milers	Linda Hallatt
Walking Mondays	Valerie Herbert Frank Nicholson
Wild Flowers	Alec Johnston

Please ensure that the details of contact names are not publicised outside Macclesfield u3a.

u3a General Committee Members & Contact Numbers

Please ensure that the details of contact names are not publicised outside Macclesfield u3a.

Chair Elect	John McKellar	chair@maccu3a.uk
Vice Chair	vacant	
Secretary	Marion Grant	secretary@maccu3a.uk
Treasurer	Steve Hodgskiss	treasurer@maccu3a.uk
Web Master & Beacon Management	Tony Middleton	u3a@middleton.me.uk
Membership Secretary	Phyllis Thomas	membership@maccu3a.uk

Other post holders

Publicity	Alec Johnston	
Groups' Co-ordinators	Mandy Orton	groups@maccu3a.uk
	Shirley Stretton	groups@maccu3a.uk
Members' Morning Co-ordinators and Speakers' Secretaries	Anna Franks	members.mornings@maccu3a.uk
	Diane Styles	members.mornings@maccu3a.uk
Newsletter Editor	Peter Whitham	editor@maccu3a.uk

List of Group activities Times & Dates

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
All	10am Italian Beginners 10am Wild Flowers (Summer only, alternating Mondays)	10am Croquet (Summer only) 10am Indoor Bowling (October-March)	10am Crown Green Bowls (April-September) 10am Outdoor Pickleball (summer only)	10am Table Tennis 2.30pm Croquet (Summer only)	Painting & Art (during school term) 10am Pickleball (summer only)
1st	2pm Country Dancing 2pm Mah Jong	10am AI (Main) 2pm German 2 2pm Spanish Improvers 7.30pm European Studies	2pm Canasta	10am Discussion 10am Walkers 5 Milers 10.30am Ukulele 2pm Bookworms 1 2pm Crafters Together	10am Indoor Pickleball (winter only)
2nd	9.30am Walking Mondays 2pm Rummikub plus	10am Italian Conversation 10am Card Making 11am Art Appreciation 2pm German 1 2pm Politics	10am Make & Create 10am Café Walks 2pm People, Poems and Prose	10am Bird Watching 10am Bookworms 3 10am Psychology 2pm Bookworms 2	10am Geology
3rd	2pm Crafters Together 2pm Country Dancing 2pm Mah Jong	2pm AI (Tech) 2pm German 2 2pm Spanish Improvers	2pm Bookworms 4 2pm Canasta 2pm French Conversation 1	10am Bookworms 5 10am Walkers 5 Milers 10.30am Ukulele	10am Indoor Pickleball (winter only) 2pm Games
4th	9.30am Walking Mondays 2pm Rummikub plus	10am Italian Conversation 11am Art Appreciation 2pm German 1 2pm Spanish Improvers 2pm Technology & Science	10am Café Walks	10am Psychology 2pm Allotment Gardening	
5th	2pm Mah Jong				