

u3a Macclesfield

Year Book

2025-6



Allotment Gardening p12

Website: www.maccu3a.uk

Phone: 0300 102 4507



u3a General Committee Members

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

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Chair's Comments

John McKellar – chair@maccu3a.uk

Oh, hello, and welcome to the Macclesfield u3a Year Book – it is a pleasure and honour to introduce the activities. Across Macclesfield, we have well over 40 activities and close to 500 members – so there is usually something for everyone.

On retirement, I decided to challenge myself with a few different and new (to me) activities – I'm learning to sketch and trying creative writing; but old habits die hard, so I also enjoy the science talks and the meetings on artificial intelligence (statistics is "my thing", and although it's not quite the same, it is at least in the right area).

The people who lead the groups tell me that it is very rewarding; a bit of work, but the feedback is great. That's a core element of the u3a, shared learning – keeping the old brain ticking over. And a huge benefit is the friendships created through joint activities. It would be remiss of me not to suggest that if you have a passion, you might like to create a group and share it with other like-minded souls. Reach out and we'll help you try it. Whether it is your hobby or your work, you have a wealth of knowledge to share and we all like to discover something new.

For those among us who are less able or willing to get out to new activities; there is always the online meetings. If you browse the national u3a webpages, you'll find a huge amount of things going on (many on Zoom) – there are many opportunities to keep learning.

So, whether you're challenging yourself or sharing your knowledge with others; I recommend trying something new.

"Who knows, you might enjoy it!"

John McKellar

From the Vice Chair

Graham Hall vice.chair@maccu3a.uk

Born in the '50s, I spent my childhood in Wales before the family moved to Wilmslow in the mid' 60s. Still proudly Welsh, I can't speak the language but I can sing in Welsh if given enough beer. Educated at the Hough Secondary Modern and Wilmslow Grammar before University back in Wales at Aberystwyth where by accident or good fortune I gained a degree in International Politics. Father was very proud but commented that it's 'a degree I'd never use'.



In the intervening years I have been married for 47 of them to the very wonderful and infinitely patient Heather.

We live in Happy Valley and have two talented and sporty sons one of whom is a Welsh International hockey player. We also have 3 rumbustious grand children, all of who fortunately live locally. Apart from Current Affairs I have a long standing passion for Human rights and Criminal justice. I retired from Magistracy in 2018 after 15 years on the bench.

I love listening to and playing music – mostly folky stuff in local pub sessions on my Irish bouzouki.

The Family business – 'Avocet Materials Group' is in the capable hands of my younger son. Having almost retired I was encouraged by Heather to get from under her feet and find something to occupy my mind and absorb my energy. This led me to the u3a last October and in January 2025 to finally use my degree, prove Father wrong and establish the now thriving u3a Politics group with Alec Johnston (see p31).

From the Secretary

Marian Mackay – secretary@maccu3a.uk

I took over the role of Secretary of Macclesfield U3A from Marion Grant in April 2025, after having been warmly welcomed to my first committee meeting, as an observer, in March.

I am looking forward to working with the Chairman and committee members to ensure the smooth running of the group.

Many thanks to Marion Grant for her help and guidance during the handover of the role.

From the Treasurer

Steve Hodgskiss – treasurer@maccu3a.uk

The overall financial position of Macclesfield U3A remains stable and healthy.

The accounts for 2024–25 were presented at the AGM in April, where we reported income rising by £2.1K to £19.1K. 69% of income came from membership subs, where we saw a 9% increase in membership compared with 2023–24. The 2nd main source of income (24%) was from contributions by members of higher spending groups towards venue costs. Total expenditure increased by £1.8K to £17.4K, with 62% being spent on venue costs, and there was an overall surplus for the year of £1.7K.

The budget for 2025–26 predicts a further increase of venue costs of ~£3K, mainly due to the start up of new groups, leading to an overall deficit of £1.1K. We'll review the financial outlook again next January, when we'll decide whether we need

to increase membership subs and/or group contributions to achieve a balanced budget for next year (2026–27).

I'd like to extend my thanks to other committee members and group leaders for their support in the last year. Please get in touch if you have any comments or questions about the U3A finances.

From the Membership Secretary

Phyllis Thomas – membership@maccu3a.uk

It has been my ongoing pleasure to serve this u3a community. We have had a successful membership renewal period with 90% of members choosing to renew. The current membership is over 480 members. If you have friends or neighbours interested in joining us, please remind them that we offer two free taster sessions before they would need to commit to membership. Please contact me if you have moved or changed telephone contact information, or if you no longer wish to receive the national paper u3a Matters magazine, which is also available electronically via our website's Links tab. If you belong to another national u3a group, then please get in touch to see if a small discount can be applied to your membership (or if you no longer belong to another u3a group, then please let me know). Finally, if you happen to know of the death of a fellow member, please let me know this as well. This year I have permanently deleted the records of 64 members from the Beacon system due to lack of contact with us for the past 7 years.

From the Groups' Co-ordinators

Mandy Orton – groups@maccu3a.uk

Shirley Stretton – groups@maccu3a.uk

Over the past year, there have been a number of important updates within our u3a.

Here's a summary of the latest changes:

European Studies: The group is currently not running due to Norton Wragg's retirement and the absence of a new leader. We want to express our thanks to Norton for his leadership and the fascinating debates he guided. If anyone is interested in reviving this group, please get in touch

Technology & Science: We are pleased to announce that Charles Mackay has stepped up as the new leader of the Technology and Science group. A huge thank you to Dave Burnham for organising a wide range of interesting talks from some outstanding speakers over the years.

Creative writing: The Creative Writing group has undergone a refresh and is now called People, Poems, and Prose! The group has expanded its focus to include a broader range of creative writing activities

Canasta: This popular new group is already thriving, with enthusiastic players enjoying regular sessions.

Dru Yoga: The Dru Yoga sessions have proven to be very popular, helping participants with flexibility, relaxation, and wellbeing.

Politics: A lively and engaging group discussing the issues of the day and the challenges we face both here in the UK and worldwide.

Alexander Technique Workshops: These popular workshops offered a one-off chance to explore the principles of the Alexander Technique. Three instructors demonstrated

positions of posture and relaxation techniques to a total of over 40 members.

Military Aviation This is a new group with the first meeting Friday, September 26th 10am–12noon at the Scouts HQ, 32 West Bond Street, Macclesfield SK11 8EQ. The group then plans to meet 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month.

We already have an enthusiastic and knowledgeable group leader and a list of interested members. If you'd like to be included, please get in touch groups@maccu3a.uk.

Finally, we want to thank all our dedicated Group Leaders, one-off event providers, and all those who support them. u3a wouldn't run without your hard work and commitment. If you have an idea for a new group or activity, we're here to help you get it off the ground! Get in touch if you'd like support in starting something new.

Mandy and Shirley

Members' Mornings

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

Where: St John the Evangelist church hall, Wilwick Lane, (Off Earlsway), Macclesfield SK11 8RS

Why: Socialising, learning and belonging

What: Tea and Coffee served **from** 10am, notices 10.25am, speaker from 10.30am, questions from 11.30am.

Come along and 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 15th September Author Brian Groom

Made in Manchester.

How the city shaped the modern world.

Mon 20th October Kevin & Joy Siddall

The DNA of British Musicals.

Through stories and songs.

Mon 17th November Researcher Pete Mellor

The Assassination of JFK, using
testimony and statements.

From the Members' Mornings Co-ordinators

Anna Franks and Diane Styles

members.mornings@maccu3a.uk

From the Editor

Peter Whitham – editor@maccu3a.uk

I hope you find this Year Book interesting and useful.

The Committee has asked me to provide this Year Book and two Newsletters each year.

This Year Book does not contain personal contact information; contact information will be emailed separately to members, and printed for members without email.

Members (and prospective members) without email should also note the Macclesfield u3a phone number, 0300 102 4507, which can be used to contact the committee.

This Year Book aims to give you a feel for what each group does – we have a very wide range of activities. Many groups have vacancies, and would welcome you.

We also welcome suggestions for new groups – please talk to the Groups' Co-ordinators with any suggestions.

In this Year Book, after the Groups' descriptions, you will find a section on wider u3a activities members can join in (p38) and an Open Group (p39) at Cheadle Hulme.

Publicity

We are keen to publicise our Macclesfield u3a activities in as many places as possible and you the members are in the best position to do this. Word of mouth, directing people to the web site www.maccu3a.uk, inviting them to the members mornings, Technology lectures and more.

We have an ongoing entry in Local People, and some items in Macclesfield Express, Bollington Live, Cheshire Post and Congleton Chronicle when appropriate.

We have articles on line in Ilove Macc, visit Macc and NUB news online.

If you have any features and pictures you think would be interesting please let me know at 'publicity officer' on the web site.

Alec Johnston – Publicity

Lift Sharing – a gentle reminder

We would like to make it as easy as possible for all members to get to meetings of their groups. If anyone, but particularly group leaders, is aware that a member may be having difficulty with transport, please consider if there may be another member who can help, and try to facilitate where possible. Lift sharing is economical and environmentally friendly, and is permitted by most car insurance provided it is not for 'hire or reward', though it is, of course, worth checking individual policies.

Reports from our Groups

A very big thank you to all the Group Leaders for getting their contributions in in good time for this Year Book.

AI (Artificial Intelligence)

- John McKellar

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) group meets at 10am–12noon on the 1st Tuesday of the month, in the Scout Group HQ at 32 West Bond St SK11 8EQ.

We welcome anyone wanting to find out about AI. If you are interested in joining us, please contact the leader.

The group has led discussions about topics around AI, including government laws, the impact on personal freedoms, the science, the potential for good and the potential for bad! The more technical aspects (which can be quite deep) are discussed in a sub-group, the Tech sub-group (membership is by invitation), which reports back to the general group. They meet on the 3rd Tuesday at 2pm to 4pm (watch, venue subject to change).

There is a shared area where we put documents for both groups (though admittedly mainly technical) and there is the all-important (if top-level) glossary AI Glossary. It is important as we are working through it in both groups to discuss the terms and what they mean.

We will explore the many tools and determine which we find helpful (it is a fast-moving space, so we're unlikely to settle on one). We'll trial some and discuss the features and cost of them. It is a very steep learning curve – but it is exciting. Members are encouraged to bring their knowledge to the table.

Allotment Gardening

- Steve Fallows

4th Thursday of the month at 2pm,
Byron's Lane Allotments, off
Laburnum Road.

We are an enthusiastic group of 13
amateur gardeners and we share
two half plots on the site. We each
have small individual plots, where
we grow a wide range of

vegetables, fruit and flowers for our own use. We also share
communal maintenance tasks. Success varies with the weather
and our expertise but we generally manage to produce
something that we can take home without too much
embarrassment. We also have a shared greenhouse and shed.
As well as meeting other Group members on the plot, it's a
good place to meet other allotment holders. These are
invariably friendly, interesting people from all sorts of
backgrounds who are more than willing to share their own
failures and successes with one another. They often offer
advice such as "On allotments there are no mistakes – just
experiences you probably shouldn't repeat!"

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

- Chris Johnston
- Subject leader Julia Marwood

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month in a member's home.

A topic for discussion is chosen by the group, who all prepare a piece about the art work they have chosen and present it to the group.

It is very informal and we have a wide range of knowledge within the group.

Currently the group is full but we do have a waiting list.



Bird Watching

- Noel Massey
- Val Cutter
- Alec Johnston

Various Event Locations

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month visiting a variety of locations in our local area throughout the year. We meet all through the year except for July and August.

We usually have a walk to explore habitats in the area visited. Meetings usually continue until early afternoon with members bringing sandwiches and drinks, although we do try to ensure that it is practical for members to leave at lunchtime.

2024/25 has been another successful year for the group, we only had to cancel two meetings due to heavy snow and then



moorland fires, but the majority of walks have been well attended with some good sightings.

We are currently in the process of agreeing a schedule for the next year's meetings which will be available on the website when complete.

This is a friendly group and welcomes both those experienced in bird watching and those who are totally new to it. New members are always welcome.

Further details can be found on our web page.

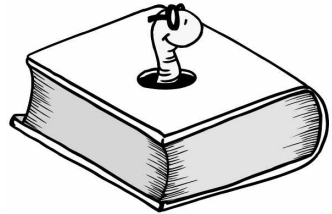
Bookworms 1

- Vicky Darlington

We meet on the 1st Thursday of the month at 2pm in various members' homes.

As a Group, we have continued to use our local library to collect the books each month, which are obtained initially from the Central Library at Chester. As you can imagine we have a really good cross-section of books to read and find that we always have a good debate about the book we have read that particular month.

At present, we have no vacancies in the Group, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you are interested in joining us in the future.



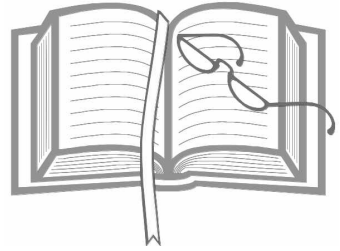
Bookworms 2

- Linda Godfrey

2nd Thursday at 2pm in members' homes.

In Bookworms 2 we each choose a book in the Autumn for the following year, covering a wide range of fiction and non-fiction reflecting our varied

tastes and interests. The books are easily available and generally there are copies in the library. We start the meetings socially with tea or coffee then discuss the book chosen for the month and any issues arising from it. It is an excellent introduction to a wider range of authors. We generally finish by talking about any other books that we have been reading recently and often pass books round. We are a very sociable group and have room for a couple of new members so if you would like to join us please get in touch.



Bookworms 3

- Margaret Burnham

2nd Thursday at 10am in members' houses.

Bookworms 3 continues strongly with fun and friendship with 8 members.

Books are chosen by members and are mostly fiction but few interesting nonfiction as well. Members get their own books and some read them on audiobooks . We could welcome maybe one more member.

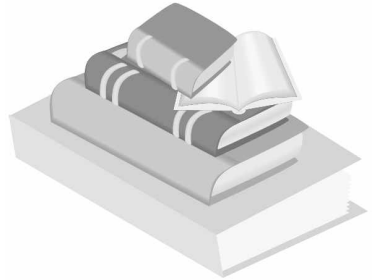
Bookworms 4

- Liz Lawson

3rd Wednesday at 2pm in members' houses. We are a friendly group of 12. In December, following extensive discussions between all members, we select the books for the upcoming year; we usually try to include a 'Classic' in our line-up.

Books can usually be read as either a hard copy, on Kindle, or listened to as an audio book.

At our gatherings, we discuss the chosen book, giving everyone the chance to express their opinions, whether they are positive or negative.



Bookworms 5

- Peter Caulkett
- Christine Johnston

3rd Thursday at 10am in members' houses.

Love reading? Have you read a good book that you want to share with others?

Well Book Worms 5 is the place to come – you will hear about books that our other members recommend – fiction, non-fiction, biographies, crime, award winners, books of yesteryear as well as the latest releases. What variety!

You may also find something that would make an ideal gift – we have!

You will never again say – I don't know what to read!

Café walks

- Anna Franks

2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 10am. The Cafe Walks group is what it says it is. When planning the walks, we choose the cafe first, and then find the walk around it. This isn't hard, in the lovely area where we all live. We have walked from Yas Bean on Buxton Road, Waterside Cafe in Bollington, Alderley Edge, Tegg's Nose, Lyme Breeze Casual Kitchen, Tittesworth Reservoir, Sutton Hall, Sandy Lane ... the list is not yet complete.



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.

Canasta

- Shirley Stretton

On 1st & 3rd Wednesday afternoons 2-4pm in Gawsorth Methodist Community Hall. The Canasta group is on a summer break at the moment but will resume again on September 3rd. We are always happy to welcome new members to our sociable group whether new to the card game or an experienced player. Canasta has various versions so we have a set of rules that hopefully will suit everyone. Come along and give it a go and make some new friends in the process.

Card Making

- Ann Harris

We meet 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10am to 12 noon at the Scout Headquarters, West Bond Street.

We make different types of card, using techniques such as gatefold, z-fold, easel,

pop up, iris folding, etc. We decorate our cards such as stamping, fussy cutting, die cutting, embellishments, brusho and water colours.

We are a small group of about 10 regular members.

At the moment we have enough members, but it is possible we could include one or two new members.



Country Dancing

- Jill Smart

1st & 3rd Mondays at 2pm in St Thomas's Church Hall, Henbury, Macclesfield – 90 Minutes of Country Dancing.

- Dance Caller: Christine Smith
- Music Provider: Graham Smith

Country Dancing has been running for many years. We have Dancers who still attend and remember those early days.

There have been a number of different callers, (the person who calls out the steps as one dances) all with their own style.



We think Christine, our caller, has been good for us – clear when she calls and with an expectation that we improve, even when we are all laughing because we just cannot get the hang of things!

So there was a lot of sadness when Christine and her husband Graham, who provides the music, thought they might have to retire but we're delighted that they have now worked out how they can continue!

So come along and see what you can learn and enjoy at (the still extant!) Country Dancing.

Crafters Together

- Jackie Boulton

3rd Monday at 2–4pm (except August) in Gawsworth Methodist Community Hall, Dark Lane, Gawsworth SK11 9QZ
Crafting in a group is a very sociable activity. It helps with general wellbeing, keeping our brains active and having fun. It's never too late to learn a new skill or revive an old one. Crafters together always welcomes new members so if you have a free afternoon, come and give us a go, we're a very friendly group.

Croquet

- David Lee

Every Tuesday morning from 10am–Noon, and Thursday afternoon from 2–4pm at Macclesfield Cricket Club, Victoria Road from April until October.



Our group completed its eighth season in the Autumn, and has grown from strength to strength since we were set up. We play on the outfield of Macclesfield Cricket Club, and remain the only group playing Croquet in the whole of the Macclesfield area. The group has built up a regular playing membership of about thirty players, but we are always very keen to attract new folk to the sport.

If you are at all interested in joining us in the Spring, we can offer a gentle induction programme for newcomers. Croquet is the most fascinating of all sports – it has been likened to a mix of bowls, chess, and snooker.....

In addition to our twice weekly sessions, we have developed close links with the u3a group in Congleton and have also enjoyed reciprocal visits to the Buxton Group. We do see ourselves as a social group first and foremost, with the very clear aim to have fun!

Do please contact me should you want any further information.

Crown Green Bowls

- Shirley Stretton

Wednesday at 10am on West Park Bowling Green.

Thanks to the beautiful weather, we have had a brilliant turn out this season and the green at West Park has been a hive of activity. We have welcomed a number of new members who have all shown their bowling potential to the max. Once again, our group coach, Sylvia Bostock, has passed on her tips and encouragement to ensure that everyone has been at their ease whilst learning a new sport. Also, our regular members have done a grand job of passing on a warm and friendly welcome. Long may the fine weather continue!

See also Indoor Bowls (page 25).

Discussion

- Christine England

1st Thursday 10am every month at members' houses.

We are a sociable and friendly group who like to discuss anything and everything.

Members each choose and present a topic for discussion

on average about once a year. The discussion is lively and often sparks new ideas and angles on things we may have 'taken for granted.' No topic is off limits but we do try to stick to the subject in hand, it is fascinating to hear a different view to one's own and good for us not to be stuck in our own rut! As a group we have a long history and have been running since 2001, we have covered many topics and yet more and more



keep on coming, what a fantastic way to keep our brains ticking over!

If you are interested in attending, please contact the group leader to get details.

Dru Yoga

- Mary Baker

2nd & 4th Tuesday at 2pm, at Townley Hall, SK11 6HZ.

Dru comes from the Sanskrit word dhrva which refers to the stillness that can be experienced in the Dru yoga lessons. It is the calm in the eye of the storm, the refuge we all seek, where we can be free from the stresses and strains of our modern world.

Based upon soft flowing movements, controlled breathing and visualisation it is both a graceful form of exercise and a potent means of stress relief. This ancient yogic tradition helps improve strength and flexibility, creating core stability and a heightened feeling of positivity and rejuvenating your whole being.

I encourage people to work within their own comfort zone. Do what you can and know that every endeavour will make a difference.

French Conversation 1

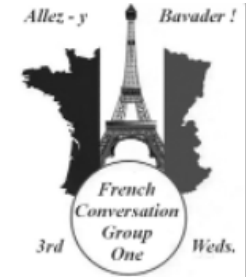
- Val Cutter

3rd Wednesday at 2pm at members' houses (limits apply).

The group is suitable for people with a good knowledge of French.

Recently, we have seen some changes, saying goodbye to some long-standing members and welcoming some new recruits. However, we keep our established format of trying to talk French together for an hour and a half before breaking for refreshments. We do not agree a topic in advance but often talk of interesting places we have visited or shows or exhibitions we've seen. Recent events in France, particularly the more light-hearted ones, can provide subjects for discussion. Members usually come prepared to chat about one or two topics that they consider diverting.

Vive la France!



Games

- Mandy Orton
- Shirley Stretton

The games group meets on the 3rd Friday of the month 2pm-4pm in the lounge at McCarthy Stone, John Percyvale Court. It continues to be a success with both u3a members and the residents who spend a pleasant afternoon playing a variety of card and board games. Tea/coffee (and often very nice biscuits!) are provided. New members are most welcome.

Geology

- Adrienne Noble
- Admin: Beryl Beattie

Meeting 2nd Friday every month in various places.

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

- Kate Bonson

2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 2-4pm in various members' homes.

We currently have 10 members in the group (the maximum is 12, for practical reasons). At each meeting, we start with "Was gibt es neues?" (What's new), where each of us describes (in German) some event or activity which they have experienced since we last met. Then, after a break for coffee/tea, the "Leiter/in" (that day's leader) takes us through a written or sometimes recorded sound article, which we read and translate.

This group is not suitable for beginners. Our members have varying degrees of fluency, but that does not stop us enjoying our meetings.

German 2

- Nicky Campbell

1st & 3rd Tuesdays at 2-4pm in group members' houses.

The aim of our group is to converse in German as much as possible, while keeping everything light-hearted. For the first hour, called, "Was gibt es Neues", each member gives a brief resumé of what they have done since the group last met. The others will join in by asking questions or commenting on what has been said. We then break

for Kaffee/Tee und Kuchen. In the second part of the meeting there will be an activity led by the host for that session. Recently we have played games, such as German Scrabble, Tabu and Eine Wochenende in Berlin. We talk about our favourite places in Germany, or favourite foods or cartoons or books. From time to time we read articles from German newspapers or magazines. The emphasis is always on enjoyment, and whenever anyone is stuck on grammar or understanding, there is always someone to help them out.



Indoor Bowls

- Shirley Stretton

1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 10am-noon, at Macclesfield Leisure Centre (winter only)

Indoor bowling starts again on October 7th after the summer break to accommodate Crown Green bowling. The group is extremely popular and is currently up to capacity but we do have a waiting list. Please check the u3a website to see if our

circumstances change. Or message the group leader and she can add you to the waiting list.

Italian – Beginners Fumblers

- Phyllis Thomas

Mondays at 10am

Zoom

Calling all newbies! In September we are offering to bring on board new members to the group. Studies have shown that learning a new language is good for your brain's health and Italian is amongst the easiest new languages to learn. So why not take up the opportunity to help ward off dementia and have some fun trying something new? We continue to meet on Zoom, which is especially attractive to those with a busy schedule and/or those who find getting out of the house to be a challenge. We are a friendly group (none of us is proficient at Italian and we are better at reading it than conversing in it). The experience is not at all meant to be like that of a traditional classroom. As a bonus you get to hear about what other members in the area do with their lives... but in Italian of course.



Italian Conversation

- Val Cutter

2nd & 4th Tuesday at 10am

We meet twice a month to improve our Italian in a relaxed atmosphere.

About half the session is spent in conversation and topics have ranged from a favourite book or film to describing a childhood friend; from a favourite pastime to Catholicism and the election of the new Pope.

We also read books in the “Italiano Facile” series and have recently completed a set of stories about well-known figures in Italian history.

The group is currently full and we have a waiting list.

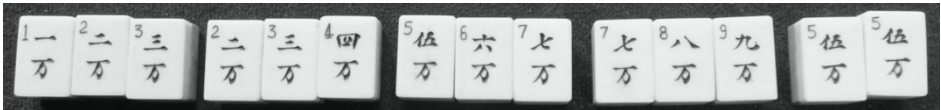
Knit & Natter

The group is currently not running. If you feel you could help resurrect the group, please get in touch with groups@maccu3a.uk

Mah Jong

- Pete Caulkett

1st, 3rd & 5th Mondays at 2pm at Sutton St. James Church Hall
Mah Jong is the Chinese game of "Winds and Dragons"; it is a charming game that fascinates from the very start, with hands such as Moon at the Bottom of the Well and Wriggling Snake. Mah Jong is an easy-to-learn game and new people are welcome to come along and enjoy a good social afternoon; members are on hand to teach the games. No partners are needed. We have expanded our programme to include rummikub.



Moon at the Bottom of the Well

Make and Create

- Janet Parkinson

2nd Wednesday at 10am–Noon
St. James Church Hall, Sutton.

The aim of this group is to share enthusiasm for creating, to develop confidence in ourselves and to inspire one another. We meet each month to try a new craft project or repeat one enjoyed previously. Each session is led by a volunteer and we aim to share our ideas to take some new creation away each month.

No previous knowledge or experience is necessary and members are asked to bring along everyday household materials they may have at home and share – there may be a small charge for special purchases usually £1.

As we draw near to Christmas, we will be making cards and decorations.

We are a lively group of around 15, we welcome anyone to come along to watch or join in.

Painting and Art

- Jackie Gibbs

Fridays, am and/or pm, during school term time
(see website for schedule)

Langley Methodist Church Hall (Cock Hall Lane entrance), Langley, SK11 0BU

The morning is led with a topic or theme, and the afternoon allows artists to be free to do their own work. The morning welcomes beginners and accomplished artists alike, who want to be amongst like-minded people, in a relaxed atmosphere.



People, Poems and Prose

- Elizabeth Smith

2nd Wednesday 2pm-4pm at Macclesfield and Congleton Scout District HQ, 32 West Bond St. SK11 8EQ.

Come and join this new group to talk about writing, poetry, prose or even your memoir for your Grandchildren. No experience necessary... we are a lively group who bring our short pieces to share if we want to. We also have a timetable of field visits to get the juices running.

Pickleball

- Mandy Orton

Pickleball is an easy to learn game that is a cross between tennis, badminton, and table tennis. Play is at Macclesfield Tennis Club during the Summer months (April – September) Friday 10am-12noon, weather permitting. In the Winter (October- March) play is at Macclesfield Leisure Centre Fridays 10am -12noon twice a month (usually first and third Fridays). Cost is £2 per session

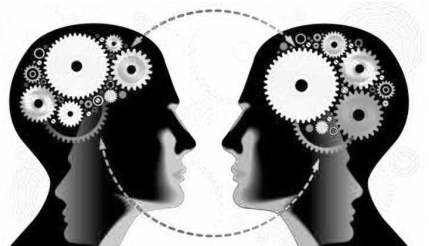
If you are interested, please get in touch. New members are welcome. There are paddles that you can borrow so you don't need any equipment

Psychology Forum

- Angela Raval

2nd & 4th Thursdays at 10am- Noon at Macclesfield and Congleton Scout District HQ, 32 West Bond St. SK11 8EQ

This lively group discusses different psychological phenomena with stimulus material from articles, things to view and some theory. We share thoughts and experiences though there is no requirement to share. We break for a cup of tea and cake part way through. Overall the group has a very relaxed atmosphere where we leave having indulged our curiosity and having had a stimulating discussion with others.



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 was set up to provide a forum for u3a members to discuss the ever more confusing and complicated world and making sense of what is going on around us which is becoming increasingly difficult. Climate change, Economic competition, Conflict, fake news, conspiracy theories and more all make the search for truth harder to find.

We have held six discussion sessions in the year with attendance of over 20 each time. Lively debates have followed on the topics which have included:

- The Nation state and does it serve our needs?;
- BREXIT – success or failure?;
- Nuclear deterrence – does it work?;
- How to subvert a democracy;
- The consequences of Donald Trump and does our special relationship still serve our vital interests?

A paper is produced before the discussion day – anyone can propose a subject and write it up – and a series of questions are proposed for discussion but this does not stop new thoughts and ideas being brought forward.

This year's programme will start again on Tuesday September 9th and continue on Oct 14th, Nov 11th, Dec 9th, Jan 13th, Feb 10th, March 14th. u3a new season April 14th.

If you are interested in leading a session please email Graham Hall via the web site.

PS We do have house rules – 'Kindness and respect at all times.'

Rummikub Plus

- Denise Jones

2nd & 4th Mondays at 2pm.

Gawsworth Methodist Community Hall, SK11 9QZ.

The Rummikub group continues to have a good attendance with recent new members coming from Poynton and Handforth. As always, we enjoy home cooked cakes during our refreshment break thanks to the super baking skills of our group leader Denise Jones. The group offers a sociable and fun filled afternoon to enjoy a chance to gently exercise your brain. Why not join us.? Check the details on the u3a website.

Spanish Improvers

- Mary Pollard

1st & 3rd Tuesdays 2pm. We meet in members' homes (rotational basis) The Spanish improvers group meet on the first and third Tuesday afternoons of the month at members' houses. Meetings are informal self help friendly events where everyone chips in.

The host typically chooses what to do for half of the meeting – it might be some

grammar, a podcast, a YouTube video, a game, some reading, an exercise or a surprise. The rest is usually spent discussing members 'noticias'. There is always a welcome tea and biscuit stop part way through.

The group also occasionally attend cultural events and some have gone on holiday to language school in Spain for a week.

The picture is from Agenda Cultural social fiesta arranged by Viviana that some of our members attended.



Table Tennis

- Sue Whyatt

Thursday at 10am–Noon in Macclesfield Leisure Centre.

The section continues to do well with over 20 members attending regularly and at least half socialising in the café afterwards. We have 3 coordinators due to us all having other commitments: Sue Whyatt, Chris Dahlstrom and Jane Martin.

At present the cost remains at £1.50 per session payable in cash on arrival. Any aspiring players should bring their own bat and already be able to play the game at some level. Please contact one of the coordinators before turning up.

Technology & Science

- Charles Mackay

We meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 2pm, except for July, August and December, at Oakleigh House, 1 Riseley Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK10 1BW (The Masonic Hall). There is a carpark on site. Street parking is difficult in the vicinity, but Whalley Hayes carpark is about 200m away.

In the 2024–25 session we have had an interesting and varied selection of talks many of those from speakers from Manchester University, which have covered bioscience, with the life of a pharmaceutical, from conception to end of patent life, how clinical trials are done, sustainable bio inspired ways to build molecules, and cancer biomarkers and preclinical models. We also had a talk on bio-fabrication and the importance of emerging technologies for the next generation of healthcare therapies.

In the physical sciences our talks have covered the science of batteries, solar flares, and how these are the most powerful

explosions in the solar system. We had a talk on clouds, nucleation and snowflakes, and also a talk on Global Satellite Navigation Systems by a member of our own group. In the run-up to Christmas, we have:

September- Palaeobiology and Zooarchaeology by Mass Spectrometry

Dr Michael Buckley, Reader/Head of Ancient Life Research Group, The University of Manchester, Manchester Institute of Biotechnology

October - OSIRIS-REx: The journey to Bennu and Back

Dr Sarah Crowther, Research Fellow, Isotope Geochemistry and Cosmochemistry Group, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, The University of Manchester

November - Developing genetic tools for the control of pests and vector-borne diseases

Dr Roberto Galizi, Reader in Infectious Diseases, Keele University, School of Life Sciences (CAEP)

Ukulele

- Steve Hodgskiss

First & Third Thursday at 10.30am-Noon in Macclesfield and Congleton Scout District HQ, 32 West Bond St. SK11 8EQ
Parking is free on the street or in the car park behind the building.

The ukulele group started up in January 2024, when most of us were beginners. We have since welcomed a steady trickle of new members, again mostly beginners.

The main aim is to have fun, while singing and strumming some great songs. The list of songs we've done continues to grow

and we like to add at least one new one (including requests) at each session.

Please get in touch if you would like any more information or advice about getting started.

Walkers 5 Milers

- Linda Hallatt

We walk on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month starting at 10am. The distance is between 4.5 to 5 miles over easy/moderate terrain. Details of each walk are emailed out to members of the group usually on the Sunday before the walk takes place.

Members meet at the arranged point and set off at 10, no need to book. New members are always welcome to join us.



Walking Mondays

- Valerie Herbert
- Frank Nicholson

2nd & 4th Mondays at or after 9.30am, every month.

The Monday walking group has been enjoying a number of excellent walks this year. Although the group is almost full we can still squeeze in one or two more members

Normally we have about 12-14 members on each walk enjoying conversation and the camaraderie of this friendly group.

Details of walks are sent to members approximately 2 weeks before each walk and are posted on the u3a website.

Wild Flowers

- Alec Johnston

This year at the time of writing we have visited 6 venues – Hartington Station, Jacksons Brickworks, Litton and Cressbrook, Swettenham and a new location at Deep Dale, near Brierlow Bar, Buxton. Other venues included Solomon’s Temple and Tideswell Dale with Bellamy’s Bank. The group identified 227 different wild flower species, with Hartington station area being the most



Field scabious – Solomon's Temple

productive and Jacksons Brickworks a very close second. We all like the exciting orchids and Twayblade but learning to spot the smaller and more commoner varieties is just as rewarding. For instance we saw 23 species of Asteraceae (daisy family), 13 species of Fabaceae (pea family) and 18 species of the Rosaceae (rose family), as well as 5 orchid species.

Without the skill set of some of the members we would struggle to identify so many species, but we are learning, so thank you to them and particularly to Elise Maddocks for her analysis of the records. If you would like a copy or join us exploring the country side please ask via email from the web site www.maccu3a.uk

The dates for next year’s visits are 2nd and 4th Mondays beginning on 11th May 2026. Depending on our weather we might do an earlier visit on April 20th.

u3a – More than just the Macclesfield groups!

Being a member of the u3a opens other opportunities for us to learn; there are zoom talks, online meetings, regional and national conferences and day meetings, and extensive self-learning resource pages. Here are some of the main links:

u3a Communities – <https://u3acommunities.org/>

A free online platform which offers all u3a members with inquiring minds the opportunity to take part in regular, lively meetings on a range of different topics.

u3a Interest Groups Online –

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online>

Interest Groups Online (abbreviated as IGO) is an online u3a community that gives you the opportunity to join groups, talks and courses from the comfort of your home.

In the same way as a u3a, the activities are run by members and are a great way to meet people from all across the u3a movement (this has a small joining fee).

u3a NW Region – <https://u3asites.org.uk/north-west/home>

Offers activities across the NW including a smaller conference and day meetings along with other resources (it is best to read their website).

The above are excellent opportunities to enjoy ourselves – though there is no substitute for the face-to-face of regular meetings in Macclesfield, we recommend that members do both!

Drop the chair@maccu3a.uk your thoughts on these resources and any others of which you know and we will share them.

Open Group – Technology for Everyone

Cheadle Hulme u3a

- Peter Cadman

The Cheadle Hulme U3A Technology group will begin their 25/26 season on Tuesday the 7th October 2025 at 2pm in Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Rd, Heald Green, SK8 3JL. Admittance fee is £3.00 which includes tea/coffee and cakes/biscuits. Members of Macclesfield u3a are most welcome – you do not need to join Cheadle Hulme u3a. Please bring your membership number.

Our talk programmes so far for this season will be:

7th October 2025. A talk on A.I. by Alistair Sutcliffe from Wilmslow U3A.

Are computers about to take over the world completely and if so what are the consequences?

4th November 2025. A talk on Lithium by Peter Webb. Details to be confirmed.

2nd December 2025. A talk about our atmosphere by Peter Cadman from Cheadle Hulme U3A entitled “From the ground up”.

How the different layers of our atmosphere affect us and exactly what is going on inside them.

January. NO MEETING.

3rd February 2026. A talk by Tariq Aslam.
Details to be confirmed.

Website: www.maccu3a.uk

For latest information, activities and events.

The website also has contact details for each group, and you can send a message to the group leader from each group's page.



Telephone: 0300 102 4507

This calls a member of the committee.

Morning Activities

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Monday	Italian 1 p26	Italian 1 p26 Walking Mondays p36	Italian 1 p26 Members' Morning p8	Italian 1 p26 Walking Mondays p36
Tuesday	AI p11 Croquet (summer only) p20 Indoor Bowls (winter only) p25	Art Appreciation p13 Card Making p18 Croquet (summer only) p20 Italian 2 p26	AI Tech p11 Croquet (summer only) p20 Indoor Bowls (winter only) p25 Local History p28	Art Appreciation p13 Croquet (summer only) p20 Italian 2 p26
Wednesday	Crown Green Bowls p21 Walkers Mid Week p36	Café walks p17 Crown Green Bowls p21 Make & Create p28	Crown Green Bowls p21 Walkers Mid Week p36	Café walks p17 Crown Green Bowls p21
Thursday	Discussion p21 Table Tennis p34 Ukulele p35 Walkers 5 Milers p36	Bird Watching p13 Bookworms 3 p15 Psychology Forum p30 Table Tennis p34	Bookworms 5 p16 Photography p30 Table Tennis p34 Ukulele p35 Walkers 5 Milers p36	Psychology Forum p30 Table Tennis p34
Friday	Painting & Art p29	Geology p24 Painting & Art p29 Military Aviation p8	Painting & Art p29	Painting & Art p29 Military Aviation p8

Various dates: Wild flowers p37

Afternoon Activities

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Monday	Country Dancing p18 Mah Jong p28	Rummikub p30	Country Dancing p18 Crafters Together p19 Mah Jong p28	Rummikub p30
Tuesday	German 2 p25 Spanish p33	Dru Yoga p22 German 1 p24 Politics p31	German 2 p25 Spanish p33	Dru Yoga p22 German 1 p24 Technology & Science p34
Wednesday	Canasta p17 French Conversation 2 p23		Bookworms 4 p16 Canasta p17 French Conversation 1 p23 People, Poems & Prose p29	
Thursday	Croquet (summer only) p20 Bookworms 1 p14	Croquet (summer only) p20 Bookworms 2 p15	Croquet (summer only) p20	Allotment Gardening p12 Croquet (summer only) p20
Friday	Painting & Art p29	Painting & Art 29	Games p23 Painting & Art p29	Painting & Art p29

u3a Macclesfield



Crown Green Bowling at West Park p21



Dru Yoga p22

Website: www.maccu3a.uk

Phone 0300 102 4507

