

Wilmslow u3a Newsletter

October & November 2021

Meet our Chairman

Our new Wilmslow u3a Chairman, Martin Cook, took up his role during lockdown, so you may well still have the pleasure of meeting him for the first time. Initially you will find him friendly and quietly unassuming. But once you get talking to him you will be taken aback by his zest for life and the enthusiasm with which he has always seized opportunities when they have arisen. Which is probably why he is now our chairman. When asked how he became chairman he said that he wasn't sure but thought to himself 'Why not?'

From his earliest memory of seeing barrage balloons in the sky, Martin was set to be a high flyer. He is very professional, highly gifted and not afraid to make decisions.

His father taught at an Approved School in Birmingham, so they lived in a house in the grounds.

After A-levels, school wanted him to go to Cambridge, but he decided to stay in Birmingham where he gained a degree and PhD in Chemistry. Whilst at university he was involved in a huge amount of music making, playing his clarinet. Then came the time to make an enormous decision - was his career to be in music or chemistry? He chose chemistry but never gave up music and, looking back seems to have, very successfully, managed to combine both.

Whilst studying chemistry he met his wife Ann during a production of Ruddigore. She was a music student and their combined love of music has always been a big part of their lives.

Having decided that chemistry should be his chosen path, Martin accepted a 2-year Fellowship in Carbohydrate Chemistry in Ottawa traveling by sea to take up his new post. However, before he left, he had an interview with Glaxo and later had another interview with them in New York. So, after the two years, he joined the group in Middlesex. The research was into anaesthetics and antibiotics.

All the while he enthusiastically continued

with his music and has played in orchestras, chamber groups, operas and shows wherever he has lived. He owns and plays a family of clarinets and saxophones.

After working in research for several years he became involved in negotiations between the staff and the company and decided to move into general management. This took him to Speke in Liverpool working in personnel and sales before becoming site manager of the research site in Ware. This involved several building projects. In order to expand the company further he became involved in the purchase and development of Glaxo's new research centre in Stevenage. While there, he represented the company on the Chamber of Commerce and arranged a visit to the site by Gordon Brown.

Once their family started moving away from the London area, Ann and Martin decided to return to Ann's roots, which had been in High Lane. They moved to Bramhall and later to Wilmslow where they have lived for about eight years. They have a son, a daughter and five grandchildren.

Their daughter plays the cello and their son the violin and horn. You won't be surprised to hear that they used to give family concerts in Hertfordshire.

Their son is an architect and his three children are all very musical, playing piano, violin and cello. Their daughter is a teacher and her two sons are, like many others, keen on computer games.

Ann and Martin joined Wilmslow u3a



in 2016 to meet people and Martin has been involved in several groups - Science, Intermediate Walking and Play Reading where he finds that you can learn so much more about a play by reading a part. He's also playing in several local orchestras.

The big challenge for the Committee now, he feels, is to persuade the membership to come back to real meetings and not to be too cautious. But the positive opportunity then could be that by returning to groups and meetings, members' confidence might be built in other respects too. – **Beryl Pearce**

When making payments to the u3a, please remember that all payments should be made to the u3a, never to an individual member and membership numbers should be included.

A poor Chairman can't win

If he starts the meeting on time he's a tyrant but if he waits for late-comers he's too tolerant. If he expects regular attendance he's a despot but if he says nothing he's not bothering. If he makes speeches he's boring but if he lets others make them he's passing the buck. If he asks for silence he's missing his power but if he lets disorder reign he lacks authority. If he's taciturn he's taking

things too seriously but if he's free and easy he's lacking in presence. If he puts forward his own ideas he's forcing his views but if he offers choices he's indecisive. If he is dynamic, he's excitable but if he is prudent he lacks capability. If he does things on his own he's pretentious but if he delegates he's lazy. If he is pleasant to the ladies he's obsequious but if he is not he's arrogant.



My Old Grandson

A short story
by Dave Mangnall

When I answered the door there was an elderly chap standing outside. His face looked a bit familiar but I couldn't place it. His clothes looked a bit outlandish, but I couldn't say why.

"Hello Joe", this chap said, "I'm your grandson. May I come in? I've parked my Time Machine on your drive. I hope that's OK. I don't seem to be blocking anything." He paused, giving me a few seconds to process this, which he knew I would need. Having processed, I said, "If you think I'm going to let some complete stranger, a man clearly thirty years older than I am who says he's my grandson, into my house, then you must think I'm as mad as you obviously are. Clear off, and get that thing off my drive, before I call the police. And the men in white coats!"

I slammed the door in his face and went back inside, only to find that the living room was almost entirely filled by this so-called Time Machine. "It would have been far more convenient if you'd just let me in", said my self-styled grandson imperturbably. "I seem to

have damaged some of your furniture." Well, whether this was a dream or reality, there seemed no alternative to going with it. "OK, I'm convinced", I said. "Put the Time Machine back on the drive and I'll let you in. We can talk about what to tell the Insurance Company about this furniture." "Oh, I'll pay for that", he replied with a casual shrug, climbing back into his machine. They both vanished and I went back to the front door to let him in again. "Where's the Time Machine?" I asked. "I put it in stealth mode", he replied. "It will attract less attention that way, obviously. Unless someone walks up your drive and bumps into empty air!"

"OK", I said, ten minutes later when we were both settled in armchairs with cups of tea. "Nice as it is to meet you", I continued, glancing sadly at my wrecked table, "I'm wondering why you've come to see me. The only reason I've ever heard of for people going back in time to meet their own grandfathers is to kill them, thus causing a time paradox." "I'm not going to kill you", he laughed. "Although if I did, I wouldn't wink out of existence. But I'd be stuck in an alternative reality in which I'd never been born, so I'd never be able to get back home."

"No, this isn't visit isn't about your death; it's about the avoidance of my death, or at least the delaying of my death for a bit. You see, I need a new liver, and finding a matching donor has proved troublesome, to say the

least. My best bet seems to be a close relative."

"No, I don't want your liver", he added hastily as he saw me looking round for anything that might serve as a weapon. "I just need a DNA sample. A lock of hair will do. Then we'll be able to use our cloning technology to get me a nice new liver. We've come on a long way since Dolly the sheep, you know."

"Well, I was due for a haircut", I said as I went out to fetch some scissors. "I must say, you don't look as sick as I thought you would if you needed a new liver." "Early diagnostics have advanced quite a bit since your day", he replied. "Right, thanks for the DNA", he said, pocketing my hair. "I'll be off now. I don't think anything's happened here that will put you onto an alternative timeline. I hope not. If I'd done something that prevented you meeting your future wife I'd be in big trouble. I suppose you might fall in love with the telephonist at the Insurance Company!" "You said you'd pay for the damage", I reminded him. "Ah, yes", he said, patting his various pockets, "I seem to have left my money in the Time Machine. Excuse me a moment." With that, he popped out of the door, and vanished as he entered the Time Machine, which was still in stealth mode. I waited. I waited a bit longer. Then I went inside. I suppose the bankers of today wouldn't have accepted the currency of the future anyway.

I never saw him again. I thought of him often as the years went by. I assume he made it home alright. I never contacted the insurance company, lacking a suitable story to explain what had happened, so I never did fall in love with their telephonist.

Instead, within a few months, I fell in love with my wife to be. The union was happy, at first, but no children were forthcoming. My wife tried to be discreet about her subsequent infidelities, but when our only son was born I was pretty sure he wasn't really mine. Perhaps my grandson found another donor.

The things our parents said

How many of us were corrected by our mothers each time we would say things like "Mike and me are going to play in the garden"?

The retort "No darling, you should always say "Mike and I" would have proved far more useful if accompanied by a basic grammatical explanation as to why the correct expression is "Mike and I". "I" is the subject pronoun

(nominative case) and "me" is the object pronoun (accusative case) One would never say "He invited I to lunch" and yet "He invited Mike and I to lunch" is used with gay abandon. Similarly one would never hear "Between we" and yet "Between you and I" is extremely common.

Some non-pedants might find this totally acceptable and a natural consequence of the evolution of the spoken language, and yet it creates serious difficulties for native English speakers when trying to learn a highly disciplined language such as German where the accusative noun/pronoun is always different from the nominative (as are the accompanying adjectives)

It has been very satisfying in these lockdown times to count the number of times this I/me mistake occurs on the television.

I doubt however whether my corrections shouted at the set will be heeded. – **Duncan Marr**

Val Evans tells us some of the things her mother used to say:-

"A lie must be thatched with others or the truth will come raining through."

"He's got short arms and long pockets" (meaning he's mean).

"It only takes the same amount of effort to smile as it does to frown, and you get a lot more from it." How true.

I once met...

In 2007 I was involved in the formation of a Welsh male voice choir in Swansea. It was only a small choir of about 35 members, and after a year we decided to put on a Gala Concert in the Taliesin Theatre in Swansea to celebrate. To ensure a full house we decided that we needed a well-known person from the area as compère for the show. After discussion by the committee, I approached, through his agent, the actor Philip Madoc who was from nearby Merthyr Tydfil.

Philip had been married for 20 years to Ruth Madoc, who played Gladys Pugh in *Hi-de-Hi!*, a BBC comedy show of the 1980s. On the night before the show he travelled up from London and a few of us had dinner with him at his hotel. As with most people, I suspect, I only really knew him for his role in an episode of *Dad's Army*, playing a German U-boat commander. He turned out to be a fascinating



character, speaking at least five languages. He had been an interpreter in the mid 1950s (he was born in 1934) when he was studying at the University of Vienna.

When he said this I asked if he had met Anton Karas. To my amazement he told me that he had known Karas well, visiting his hueriger (tavern) many times. As many will remember, Anton Karas wrote, and performed, the theme music for the 1949 movie *The Third Man*. He said that Karas was a very friendly man, but that he had grown tired of the fame the movie had brought him, although it had brought him the money to enable him to buy his heuriger.

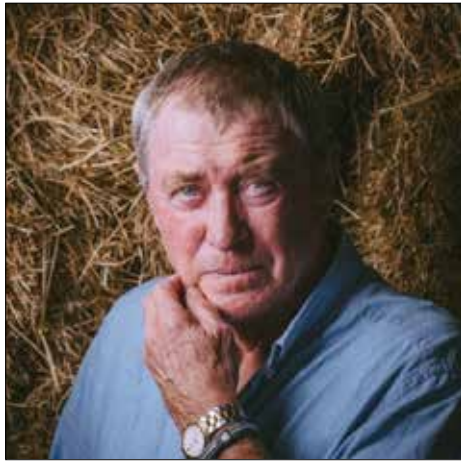
Madoc then went on to say that most people got his line wrong in *Dad's Army*. Most people think he said "And what is your name?" What he actually said was "Your name will also go on the list. What is it?" The concert went well, Philip Madoc was terrific, and we played to a full house. – **Alastair Jones**

Do you remember Bergerac or do you watch endless repeats of Midsomer Murders?

Well many years ago when I was teaching in Hendon I taught Emma Nettles for 2 years. She

was a quiet intelligent girl but it was because of her that I met her parents. You guessed it. Her dad was John Nettles. Her mother Joyce was a casting director. They lived just across the road from school in a large block of flats.

I think at that time John Nettles had just got



back from the States and had got the part of Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* on TV. He was very good looking and even more so in real life, enough to set our hearts a flutter! He came to parents' evening with his wife and in the second year they told me that they were going to split up. It was all very amicable and they had waited for Emma to finish primary school before doing so.

Joyce Nettles was lovely too. One Christmas she got Dave and me tickets to *Once A Catholic*. They were front row seats in the stalls. What luxury!

When he got the part of Bergerac in 1981 I watched every single episode. My biggest regret was that after we moved up to Wilmslow we took the girls to the pantomime

Unseen heroes

Consistently working for you through uncertain times is your committee – a BIG THANK YOU to all members who have regularly met on Zoom. All financial and business matters have continued, together with the circulation of much information from National Office. There have been more

Alastair Jones contributes the following:-

■ Did you hear that Julie Andrews will no longer endorse cheap lipstick? It crumbles easily and makes her breath smell. She explained, "The super colour fragile lipstick gives me halitosis."

■ Did you hear about the blind parachutist? He did parachute jumps for charity and somebody said to him, 'How do you know when you get near the ground?' The blind

in Manchester where he was playing the Pirate King. I was too reticent to go backstage to say hello. What a noodle! – **Caroline Mangnall**

Anne Grace says that about 40 years ago her husband played in a charity golf competition at Shrigley Hall. It was followed by a fantastic meal in the evening where Norman Wisdom was the guest speaker.

She and her husband sat on the same table eating wonderful food. He tucked into egg and chips with lots of tomato ketchup!

In the early 1990s the senior partner of the firm I was working for organised a charity dinner for several hundred people with HRH Princess Anne as the main guest. Part of this was that we partners and our wives were lined up at the office to meet her before the dinner.

As she worked her way down the line she asked each of my partners what they did, and chatted with them all. When she reached me we shook hands, I bowed slightly, as instructed, and she said "What do you do?" I looked her in the eye and heard myself saying "I am a receiver and manager, liquidator, and trustee in bankruptcy". I watched as her eyes glazed over before she moved quickly on to the partner on my left. – **Alastair Jones**

I was at the Aldwych theatre in London and decided to go to the loo before the tube journey home but there was a long queue. An employee told me that there were some other loos in the basement so I went down there and they were empty except for Judy Dench. Whilst we were waiting we talked about 'Tina' the show we had just been to see which was amazing and how posh the loos were. She said that they had recently been refurbished but it was a pity that no one used them much. –

Eileen Clayton

technical issues for Zoom meetings and the update of changing information.

On our back page we have three committee vacancies. Wilmslow u3a cannot function without the committee. Please don't let all this good work go to waste by thinking that this is for someone else. If you want to keep the Wilmslow u3a YOU can help?

A BIG THANK YOU again to our committee.

parachutist said, 'The lead on my guide dog goes slack.'

■ I went into my tailor's in Wilmslow the other day and, as I wanted to rekindle my youth, I asked him to make me a Beatle jacket. "What's that?" he asked, taking out his notebook. I said, "No lapels, no buttons, no buttonholes, and no vent down the back." I asked him how much it would be, and he replied "I don't know, with all those extras"

News from the Interest Groups

Contact details for all the Interest Groups are on the Wilmslow u3a website.

Chris Foreman tells us that the **Table Tennis Group** is now playing every Monday and Friday (except Bank Holidays) at Wilmslow Leisure Centre 10:15 to 11:15. It is a drop in session - turn up, pay £1, and play. Please bring your own bat. If you need to borrow a bat, please contact Chris Foreman 01625 530007. The Leisure Centre car park only accepts card payments at the moment and any parking charges are refunded by the Leisure Centre when you use their facilities.

The **Philosophy Group** met face-to-face for the first time this year in August, though there were only four present. Interested? Contact Dave Mangnall.

The **Amblers** held their first post Covid walk on 15 September when sixteen members completed a circular walk from the Racecourse Road car park to Morley Green and back. Some members were rushing off to play bowls afterwards but the majority stayed for a coffee on the new terrace at Hickory's. To join the group email amblers@wilmslowu3a.org.uk. The next walk will be on Wednesday 20 October.

Bridge is up and running again at Oakmere on Mondays and Fridays from 14:00 to 16:00. Caroline Mangnall has started a complete beginners session with 4 people on Monday afternoons as well as the usual play and there will be a chance for those who have forgotten much over lockdown to have a bit of a refresher course starting in September. The Monday evening seems to be a non-starter for the minute although maybe there will be more people interested later.

If there are any Bridge players out there who have lost their partners or their confidence over the Covid period, we would love to welcome you to our friendly Rubber Bridge sessions on Friday afternoons at Oakmere, Handforth from 14:00 to 16:00. This is an ideal opportunity to get back into the game and meet new people. You can just come along or contact Lynne Rudd at lynnerrudd46@gmail.com for further details.

Unfortunately, due to Family commitments, Heather Coward is unable to restart the **Tuesday Coffee Mornings** before January 2022.

From zero to 18 registered players in four weeks - that has been the heartening re-start of our **Pickle Ball Group**. Convenor Jack Statham says there are still a few places available. If demand warrants they could take

a third court. What is Pickle Ball? Basically a version of soft tennis with table tennis type bats played less strenuously on a badminton court with net lowered to tennis height. Played before? Like to try? Contact Jack or turn up at Wilmslow Leisure Centre any Thursday 10:00 - 11:00. Seeing is believing but the main idea is to enjoy it and, clearly, they are doing just that.

If you would like to play **Scrabble**, perhaps at Morley Nursery, on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month from 14:00 to 16:00, please contact Audrey Rogers by email at alr1948@outlook.com.

Kate Bryant reports that the **Cycling Group** may be the only group to have benefitted from the lockdown. Before March 2020 there was one ride every two weeks on the 'shorter/relaxed' side of the group, and one each week on the 'faster/road cycling' side of the group.

During lockdown, cycling was encouraged, but they had to go on our own. By July 2020 groups of six were allowed so they introduced two rides each week for both sides of the group, potentially four rides per week. There were no more than six per ride with follow-on leaders taking additional riders a few minutes behind the main group. Success was largely due to those dozen or so members planning and leading rides, to whom many thanks.

Now that many people are considerably fitter and wanting to cycle further, the balance of ride distances in the group has moved towards longer rides. They still have the four rides per week if there are willing leaders, and 51 members on the email circulation list.

Kate has been group convenor for 6½ years but is stepping back at the end of the year. Hopefully someone else will take over, either of the whole group, or maybe, two or three groups with different cycling preferences, perhaps 'Road Cyclists', 'Short Cyclists' and 'Cyclists who Lunch'.

Sadly, the **Mahjong Group** has now ceased to meet.

Dates for your DIARY

Information correct at press time

OCTOBER 2021

- 27 Monthly meeting on Zoom. David Allen: Blood, Guts & Gore: Murder in Victorian England. This is a particularly blood-curdling tale, in which David will introduce you to an eccentric, bad-tempered ex-teacher who hires a new servant - but is she too good to be true? Another true tale of Victorian murder told with humour and lots of detail. Are you sitting comfortably? Then let's begin...

NOVEMBER 2021

- 24 Monthly meeting. Susan Craig JP DL: Look Back with Laughter. Originally from southern England, Susan has lived 'up north' for 39 years. Susan has been a magistrate on Trafford Bench since 1993 and is a Deputy Lieutenant. Her late husband Mike, spent his retirement, following a career as a BBC producer and comedy script writer, lecturing on cruise ships about the 'Golden age of Comedy' and when accompanying him Susan often gave talks about the role of magistrates. Her talk tells of meeting her late husband Mike Craig and of all the many show business performers she has met and entertained at home in Timperley.

DECEMBER 2021

- 8 Steve Price: Comedy & Magic. Monthly meeting.

JANUARY 2022

- 26 Steve Shakeshaft: Chester Uncovered. Monthly meeting.

FEBRUARY 2022

- 23 Roger Devonside: The Aeroplane Wing-walker. Monthly meeting.

Vacancies in Wilmslow u3a

Vice-Chairman

Enquiries to Chairman Martin Cook: chairman@wilmslowu3a.org.uk

Interest Group Co-ordinator

Enquiries to Beryl Pearce: beryl.pearce@waitrose.com

Social Secretary

Enquiries to Christine Roberts: streborcm2004@yahoo.co.uk

Your u3a needs YOU

Please email your contributions for the next issue not later than Friday 19 November to newsletter@wilmslowu3a.org.uk

Newsletter is compiled by Beryl Pearce & Mike Redfern and published by Wilmslow U3A (Registered Charity Number 1174413) (www.wilmslowu3a.org.uk)

For general queries about Wilmslow U3A, please contact Chairman Martin Cook at chairman@wilmslowu3a.org.uk