



Learn, laugh, live

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Maximising the Benefit of Your Membership in 2026

The end of the year is traditionally a time for reflection and thinking about changes we may like to make in the year ahead. To hopefully contribute to this process the Committee would like to ask whether you are fully aware of all the opportunities that the Wilmslow, North East Cheshire and National u3a's can offer you. This newsletter has some information and suggestions you may like to consider. to enable you to take full advantage of the range of options available.

You might also like to consider whether there are friends, contacts, acquaintances or family members who may gain from being a part of the u3a network to enhance their physical, social and mental wellbeing. That would be a charitable gift at this time of year.

Chairmans' Message

At the end of the year and looking forward to 2026 the theme of this newsletter is to encourage people to get the most out of their membership of the u3a.

Why do people join a u3a? In my case, I joined soon after being widowed and starting to work part-time; I was looking for some 'things to do'. There are many other reasons to join – e.g. you already know a member or you have a particular interest you want to pursue etc. What this means is that our u3a represents something different to each member and everyone's expectations are different.

Once you are involved with an interest group or groups, it is very easy to forget that, when you join a u3a, you become part of a national organisation. Indeed, this can be the case for an entire u3a because each operates independently under the wider u3a umbrella.

Did you know there are various activities available to members advertised through the u3a website (www.u3a.org.uk):

- On-line only interest groups – well over 100 with half of them open to new members
 - On-line learning – activities and projects to undertake, plus puzzles and quizzes
 - On-line talks – if you enjoy our monthly talks, take a look at various topics covered via the 'Online Learning Events' link on the site

On the website you can also access both the quarterly Third Age Matters (TAM) magazine and the monthly u3a Friends Newsletter, which gives information about National and Regional events that might be of interest. If you want a hard copy of TAM please let the Membership Secretary know because requires an additional annual subscription of £2.50. The u3a Friends North West region newsletters can also be accessed through on the website (wilmslowu3a.org.uk).

Wilmslow u3a is part of the North East Cheshire Network of u3a's which covers Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle & Gatley, Bramhall, Poynton and Macclesfield. Across this network there are some interest groups that are open to members from any of the participating u3a's. The NE Cheshire Network page on our website provides a list of such groups, although, as with all such lists, the precise details will need to be checked with the contacts provided.

Update on Your Committee

We are sorry to see Stella Martin, the Interest Groups Co-ordinator, move away from Wilmslow and a replacement is now required.

Any IT guru's out there? John Cookson has dealt with the IT issues for Wilmslow u3a for many years but would now appreciate assistance and/or someone to take over the role. The responsibilities include maintaining and updating content to the website which John created in 2016. We are considering developing a new website based on a format produced by u3a Siteworks, a group set up to help individual u3a's improve their websites. To enable John to share his knowledge we are looking to find one or two people who have the necessary interest and skills and are prepared to take on the responsibility going forward.

There is also a position of Deputy Chairman to be filled. The role is not especially demanding or time consuming but is necessary to deputise for the Chairman when they may be away.

We now have a new Business Secretary - John Andrew. John moved to Wilmslow 8 months ago having previously been a stalwart of the Cowbridge u3a, near Cardiff. He takes over from Caroline Mangnall who has done sterling work over 14 years on the Committee as Business Secretary and Membership Secretary. Caroline remains as ex-officio to provide continuity from her long experience.

This year 5 new Committee Members have joined Wilmslow u3a taking on new responsibilities or allowing others on the Committee to retire or change their role. As the population ages it becomes increasingly important for people to remain physically and mentally fit and bodies such as the u3a play a vital role in ensuring social interactivity. New members are also required to revitalise the work of the Committee.

New Members

A warm welcome to the 42 new members who have joined Wilmslow this year taking our total membership to over 400. The national organisation is on a recruitment drive to achieve 500,000 members across the UK. Pre-covid the total was 450,000 but after falling back the number has recovered to 420,000.

Xmas Social

Members of the u3a were entertained this year by a return visit from Roger Browne who used his keyboard to good effect giving examples of how to improvise well known songs. This was accompanied by a fascinating stories of Tin Pan Alley with stories about Jerome Kern, Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. It is no surprise that Roger plays in a Jazz band and members may recall a fascinating talk last year by a clarinet playing busker who also plays in the same band.



Roger was keen to invite music / jazz lovers to The Club, 23 Buxton Road, High Lane, SK6 8DR on **Monday 19th January** when **Enrico Tomasso** will be playing. He is an award winning traditional jazz trumpet player, inspired by Louis Armstrong and is arguably the best player of this type in the UK.

Tickets to u3a members are only £8 each using the link below: <https://buytickets.at/jazzband/1934884>. "Be there or be square cats!" You can take your own lunch food and drinks are available at the bar.

Book Club - Reading List 2026

An opportunity to enjoy books from your armchair and, under a pseudonym, write a few words for the Book Group Online. This is how it works:

Choose a book each month. A choice from two is offered. Members source copies from the Library, Kindle, second-hand book shops/charity shops

Using the pseudonym, which allows free flow of opinion, write a few lines about how you found the book and send them by email to Linda Bain, Group Leader. The reviews are sent to each member at the end of the month - some are a couple of sentences, some four pages long.

Jan	Lady Gregory's Toothbrush	and/or	So Long See You Tomorrow
Feb	This Must Be the Place	and/or	Cider with Rosie
Mar	The Alchemist	and/or	Evenings and Weekends
April	Lark	and/or	As I walked out One Summer Morning
May	Ulysees	and/or	The History of Man
June	The Magic Mountain	and/or	A Moment of War
July	Tender is the Night	and/or	Precipice
Aug	Timequake	and/or	Intermezzo
Sep	The Good Soldier	and/or	The Unexpected Inheritance of Insp Chopra
Oct	A Tale of Two Cities	and/or	Crew Train
Nov	A House for Mr Biswas	and/or	The Teahouse of the August Moon
Dec	The Glassblower	and/or	Hygge and Kisses

If you would like to know more about authors of the above books with a simple outline of each book or are interested in joining the group email me

linda.bain@hotmail.co.uk

Poetry Too

Running alongside the Book Group is 'Enjoying Poetry'

A member of the book group is currently highlighting a few poems we can enjoy. This member also offers thoughts on each poem together with links to perhaps their history and techniques by which they were put together. Input from members is encouraged.

November Talks

The Science Group's talk last month was on How to See Atoms Magnified over 1 million Times. Alistair Sutcliffe, the Group Leader, is to be congratulated for continually being able to source some extremely eminent speakers from the field of Science who provide a highly interesting talk on their area of speciality.

The Monthly Talk was on Blood Bikes, a Charity entirely run by volunteers, which delivers blood, tissue matches, biopsies and medication to Hospitals, Hospices and Patients throughout Greater Manchester and indeed the UK in liaison with other Blood Bikes. They also deliver medical equipment, patient notes, files and scans as well donor Breast Milk to the Milk Bank at Chester Hospital.

There are 35 groups throughout the UK and volunteers work every day including Christmas Day! They provide an invaluable service and apart from providing an emergency service they enable Hospitals to discharge patients to reduce bed blocking

In addition to 7 motorbikes the Greater Manchester Blood Bikes has 4 cars and one van for transporting larger supplies. Last year they covered 153,000 miles on 4,214 call outs and have so far saved the NHS £1.2m.

They have a strategic alliance with the North West Air Ambulance and undertake two trips daily from Salford Royal Blood Bank to the helicopters at Barton Airport. An amazing service for which we should all be grateful. Please note, as a Charity they are always looking for donations to enable them to purchase the bikes, cars and the petrol to keep them going. The talk raised a total of £440 in donations, retail goods sold and the speakers fee.



Monthly Talks 2026

General - 2.30 pm Church Hall Wilmslow Reformed Church

28th January 2026: Factual Information of Kennedys Fateful Time in Dallas

25th February: Soloing the Matterhorn

25th March: AGM

22nd April: Post War Britain

Science Group Meetings - 2pm Wilmslow Library

January 20th: A Lake's Life in Time, Ecology, pollution, lake sediments analysis

February 17th: Electric Flight

March 17th: Air Traffic Control, Manchester Airport

April 21st: Biomarkers in cancer research

May 19th: Errors in clinical publications contributing to the genetic medicine odyssey

June 16th: Mummies, medicine and healing practices

July 21st: Psychedelic assisted therapy: Psychedelics and mental health: hype, hope and healing

For further information and details of the speakers please refer to the website:

www.wilmslowu3a.org.uk



The Wilmslow u3a Committee Wishes You

All a Very Merry Christmas and Our Hope

for a Peaceful and More Enjoyable 2026.

