



Learn, laugh, live

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The Rise of Pickleball

John Wilson, Group Leader of Wilmslow’s u3a Pickleball Group, is overwhelmed with people interested in playing the game. As such he is looking into starting more Social Classes a good way for beginners to learn the game. Why is the game is one of the fastest growing sports in the UK?

The game is ideal for older adults as it involves plenty of movement but doesn’t require the same physical strain as other sports. It offers a variety of health and fitness benefits, making it an excellent addition to any workout routine:

Cardiovascular Health: The movement required in pickleball helps elevate your heart rate, promoting heart health and endurance.

- **Improved Balance and Coordination:** The quick changes in direction and reaction time needed for pickleball improve balance and hand-eye coordination.
- **Low-Impact Exercise:** For those looking to stay active without stressing their joints, pickleball provides a safe yet effective workout.
- **Mental Wellness:** The social nature of the game, combined with the focus and strategy required, can help improve mental sharpness and reduce stress.

It’s popularity can be attributed to several factors. It’s a highly social game. The smaller court size means players are closer together, making it easy to chat, laugh, and interact throughout the game. This social aspect makes it an appealing activity for people looking to stay active while enjoying a sense of community.

Played on a badminton-sized court play resembles tennis with serves, volleys, and rallies. pickleball has its own unique set of rules and scoring system. The rules are simple, making it easy to pick up and great for people of all ages, with many of its greatest benefits specifically helping older people.

Monthly Talk

Who Killed JFK? Mystery Solved?



Peter Mellor gave a fascinating talk about the assassination of John F Kennedy in Dallas 1963. His encyclopaedic knowledge not only covered not only the events of the day but put forward a number of interesting facts pointing to those likely to have been responsible.

Evidence suggests key areas of doubt on the official line of the assassin being Lee Harvey Oswald:-

1. The open windows in the Book Depository - the Secret Service were tasked to ensure all windows were closed
2. The rifle found was a 6.5mm; the bullet holes made a 3-5mm entry / exit wound
3. The bullet discovered on the hospital stretcher after the shooting was like new, despite the fact that JFK and John Connolly, the Governor of Texas, suffered 10 wounds from one bullet
4. The bullet hole in the limousine windscreen; the entry/exit wounds in JFK and the sighting of smoke from the Grassy Knoll suggested the fatal shot was from that direction and not from the Book Depository
5. The slow reaction to the shooting by the Security Service; their manipulation of the autopsy; the switch of coffins and the shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald in a secure building under their control, all point the finger toward their complicity.

Dallas was the last time a US President rode in a convertible limousine and not the armour plated vehicle now used.

For those interested in further detail Peter recommends the book 'Crossfire' by Jim Marrs. (extended 2013 version.) To expose the full nefarious actions of CIA, Secret Service & U.S. Military on the 22nd November '63, the 5 volume series of 'Inside the A.R.R.B.' by Doug Horne is, he says, an amazing read.

Science Group Talk

Lakes & Sediment

Last months talk was by Dr John Boyle of the University of Liverpool on the Life in Time, Ecology, Pollution, Lake Sediments Analysis for Water Quality Markers over time.

The talk about water quality was specifically related to a project John has been working on involving the Tatton Meres the key takeaways for which were:-

- Lake sediments are an environmental time machine
- Lakes act as a purification process, dirty water in cleaner water out.
- Polluted substances sink to the bottom of the Lake into the sediment.
- Phosphorus is the main problem, from buildings, industry, animals and humans
- Measurement of core samples of sediment started in late 1940's
- Radiocarbon Dating has been undertaken to determined the age range of the sample
- The good news is that phosphorus is decreasing but blue-green Algae blooms are growing due to rising temperatures.

'Technology for Everyone' (The Appliance of Science) Group

Interpreting Medical Scans using AI

A talk by Dr Rhidian Bramley at the Cheadle & Gatley Open Group was a fascinating insight into the impact of AI on medical scans. Working at Christie Hospital Dr Bramley is a leading specialist in his field of Radiology. His efforts have raised £21m for investment in AI.

Scans have evolved from the first Xray in 1895 to MRi scans and CT scans using Computer Aided Detection. There are 50million scans each year with 10billion images. AI is a valuable tool in assisting Radiologists interpret the scans for signs of cancer and other abnormalities. Trials have proved that, compared to the results from two humans, a combination of a human plus AI can detect 12% more cancer growths.

At present there 500,000 chest X-rays in Greater Manchester with these identifying cancer or other abnormalities in 20% of scans.

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence is not, at the moment, recommending the use of AI as it is not convinced of the value for money. It can only be a short time before this changes.

Current AI models can only perform tasks for which it has been trained. The next generation of AI is likely to be able to think for itself and thus improve the detection rate. Clearly good news for the future.

WILMSLOW u3a THEATRE OUTING

CAROUSEL

by Romiley Operatic Society

Billy and Julie fall in love instantly, ignoring warnings from the townspeople. Their relationship is plagued by Billy's inability to communicate and his volatile temper. When he learns Julie is expecting a baby Billy turns to robbery to provide for his family but is caught in the attempt. Unfortunately he commits suicide to avoid prison.

Some fifteen years later he is allowed to visit earth for one day. He discovers his daughter, Louise, is lonely and haunted by her father's reputation. He tries to do a good deed by giving her a star from heaven but she rejects him and he hits her in frustration. Despite this, he offers a moment of love and hope to her and Julie before returning to heaven. The musical includes "If I loved you", "June is bustin' out all over" and "You'll never walk alone"

Wednesday 18th March 2026 at 7.15 p.m.

Ticket, travel and driver's tip - £36.00

The coach will depart from the bus stop by the Coach and Four public house in Wilmslow at 6.00 p.m. prompt

ALL Payments must be received no later than Friday 20th February 2026

BACS Payments: Wilmslow U3A Sort Code: 40 52 40 Account No: 00032217

in the reference box state your membership no eg 2023 followed by CAROUSEL

OR cheque[s] payable "Wilmslow U3A" to Anne Grace at 18 Edgeway, Wilmslow, SK9 1NH

If paying for several people please include names of all. For insurance purposes only u3a members can go

NB Once payment has been received we are not able to give refunds in the event of a cancellation. If there is a waiting list someone else could pay them for the use of their ticket. For insurance purposes, we regret only paid up members of the u3a may join outings and theatre visits. If an individual wants the benefit(s) of a u3a activity, even just a particular outing, they need to become a permanent member.

Programme for 2026 Talks

General - 2.30 pm Church Hall, Wilmslow Reformed Church

25th February: Soloing the Matterhorn

25th March: AGM

22nd April: Post War Britain

Science Group - 2pm Wilmslow Library

17th February: Electric Flight

17th March: Air Traffic Control, Manchester Airport

21st April: Biomarkers in cancer research

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

16th June: Mummies, medicine and healing practices

21st July: 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

‘Technology for Everyone’ Group of Cheadle & Gatley - 2pm Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, Heald Green, SK8 3JL

3rd March: Time Machines by Paul Humphries

This is an Open Group. Cost £3 including tea/coffee and biscuits. In order to ensure that members are covered by the u3a Insurance Scheme, please take your membership card or membership number with you.

This Month's Talk

Soloing the Matterhorn - 25th March

Five Hours Up and Five Hours Down by James Elison

The story of his repeated attempts to climb it, his ascent and the terrible postscript. James was a police officer in the UK for 15 years, starting in London and finishing as a Detective Inspector at Moss Side, Manchester. When he left the police he started writing and has been doing so ever since. He is also a keen mountaineer. His debut novel *The Trail* was published in 2020, and the sequel *Cold Dawn* in 2022

Britain's Older Generation vs Technology

Following last month's article on technology it was interesting to see this (edited) version in the u3a's North West Events & News.

In homes across the UK, a mighty battle is raging. It involves determination, confusion, mild panic. Yes, it's older people taking on modern tech — and somehow, winning.

A national report shows that 4.7 million over-65s struggle with basic online tasks, including turning devices on, logging in and knowing which password goes with which account. Around 2.3 million older people don't use the internet at all, nearly half of whom are over 75.

And yet — tech use among older people is booming. Millions are now online regularly video-calling relatives, sending WhatsApps messages and using the search engines. Age UK notes that older people are enthusiastically browsing, emailing, shopping, and banking online.

Then there's tech designed especially for them. Devices like the GrandPad — built for simplicity and featuring a more responsive touchscreen — are becoming a hit. It's essentially a tablet that says, "Don't worry, you can't break me"



Do You Want to Join a Choir?

U3A members Alan Hill and Phil Edgington are singers with the Semitone Singers, a Singing for Fun choir that rehearses at Wilmslow Rugby Club. As it has been mentioned that there had been a suggestion to set up a choir within the U3A they point out they are actively seeking new members.

Semitone Singers is comprised of three choirs:

Women's Choir (meets in Wilmslow on Wednesday afternoons)

Men's Choir (meets in Wilmslow on Wednesday mornings)

Mixed Choir (meets in Cheadle Hulme on Tuesday mornings)

The Men's Choir is very active in the local community and performs regularly in Care Homes and Dementia Day Centres. Choir members find this extremely rewarding.

Musical Director is Taylor Giacomina who trained at a Music Conservatory in America and is highly skilled at voice coaching. Several of our choir members started their singing careers at Semitone Singers and now also sing at audition choirs.

They aim to take members (especially those new to singing and music) on a journey to becoming confident choir singers but we the aim is also to have fun together and to build friendships. Several of our choir members took up singing for the first time on retirement and, as a result of the confidence and competence gained in our choirs, now sing with auditioned choirs. Each choir sings a varied repertoire, usually in two or three part harmony, with arrangements of pop songs, songs from musical theatre, traditional songs, folk songs, spirituals, madrigals and some classical pieces.

You can join a rehearsal as a taster with absolutely no obligation.

Further details can be found at info@semitonestudios.com (link sends e-mail) or by leaving a message at **0161 826 7613**.

Theatre & Music Festival

Buxton Opera House

For those willing to travel further afield, independently, there is this production on **17th - 21st March**.



Spitfire Girls is inspired by the extraordinary true stories of the women who dared to fly during WWII and the incredible bond that tied them together.

Reminders

1. There is the **32nd International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival** taking place at the **Buxton Opera House** on **1st - 15th August**.
2. Anyone interested in volunteering as Stewards for the **Alderley Edge Music Festival 2026, 20th -25th April**, should apply by accessing the website stewards@alderleyedgifestival.com

North West Region Summer School

Tues 11th August – Friday 14th August Manchester Metropolitan University, M15 6GX

An incredible opportunity for u3a members to come together and learn and develop new skills. If there is one event not to miss it is this one

The 8 courses on offer are:-

- **Making sense of everyday Mathematics**
- **An introduction to Geology**
- **Photography** - Beyond the Snapshot
- **Art challenges** - the history of colour
- **The UK and USA Political Scenes**
- **Operatunity** – opera appreciation
- **Intermediary Ukulele**

An Application form and further details are available online at <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2026>.

Costs for attending the full school:

Full Board Residential Delegate:: £430 (+£15 parking charge if applicable)

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215 (+£15 parking charge if applicable) Includes lunches, but only dinner on the gala evening).

u3a Festival 2026

1st - 3rd July The University of York

Our festival in 2026 is a chance for members from across the UK to gather and share the joy of the movement and will build on the success of the first event, with more availability, a stronger programme and even more opportunities to take part.

Margaret Fiddes, Chair of the Festival Working Group, says:

“The first festival was an amazing milestone for u3a, and the feedback we’ve had has been so encouraging. For 2026 we’re aiming even higher – more space, more choice and a programme that will reflect the creativity and energy of our members.

What is most exciting is the chance to bring people together again. York’s campus has so much to offer – from auditoria and exhibition spaces to beautiful grounds and excellent sports facilities – and we plan to fill it all with the best of what u3a has to offer.”

Accommodation will be available on site. The campus is just east of the historic city of York, with excellent transport links by train and plenty of parking for those who prefer to drive.

All updates will be shared on the u3a Festival 26 page. Ticket and accommodation bookings aren't open yet but please save the date.

If you are interested in taking part, or have any questions or ideas, please email festival@u3a.org.uk

Wilmslow Town Council Community Fair

The Council have arranged the first Community Fair which will take place between **3 - 5pm on Sunday 8th March.**

We have arranged to have a table promoting the u3a at this Fair. In total there will be 34 organisations from Wilmslow taking part and this will be a good opportunity to promote ourselves and hopefully recruit new members.

HOBBIES — **INTERESTS** — **VOLUNTEERING** — **FRIENDSHIP** — **SKILLS**

THE #CONNECTEDWILMSLOW COMMUNITY GROUP FAIR

SUN 8TH MARCH, 3PM - 5PM.
WILMSLOW UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALLS.

PURPOSE, PASSION, PEOPLE.
FIND YOURS HERE IN WILMSLOW.



 **A FREE EVENT BY
WILMSLOW TOWN COUNCIL**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
WILMSLOWTOWNCOUNCIL.GOV.UK
OR SCAN THE QR CODE**  

The fair will showcase Wilmslow’s community, voluntary, not-for-profit and charity organisations, including arts groups, choirs, youth services, sporting clubs and support groups. Across the four spaces within the URC Church halls, visitors will have the opportunity to chat with group members, enjoy mini taster experiences, and discover the wide range of activities on offer locally.

Easy Walking Group!

Thanks to Sheila Cookson for this photograph of a recent walk at Eaton by the easy walking group. Looking at the photograph, with the results of the recent inclement weather clearly shown by the amount of water and mud, is this group properly named? It will be interesting to see the conditions faced by the difficult walking group.

The hardy and intrepid members who took part should though be congratulated for their persistence and dedication.



Housekeeping

Members Survey

Many thanks to those people who have completed the survey so far. Understanding the make up of our members, their interests and what they would like to see in the future is extremely helpful and goes towards creating a vibrant organisation.

However the response to date has only been 59% of members so if there are people who are planning to respond to the survey, but haven't done so, or may have overlooked it, your response would be appreciated. This can be done by clicking on the following in the email originally sent to you:-

FILL I Wilmslow U3A Member Survey
forms.cloud.microsoft

New Members

Carole Hobson,, Helen Whitehead, Roger Whitehead, Janet Boys, Graham Gornall, Maria Dandy, Philippa Chau, Sandra Thornton, Shirley Highfield, Susan Moore, Tim Mitchell, Elisabeth Thompson, Gill Ridley-Fink. A warm welcome to all and to Joyce Davis, a returning member.

Committee

Sadly, after many years of serving on the Committee in a number of roles, Caroline Mangnall has stepped down. Wilmslow u3a should be extremely grateful for all the dedication and hard work Caroline has given over the years. This means we are now looking for someone to step up and take over her last role, co-ordinating with the Interest Group Leaders. Anyone interested?

Interest Groups

Members have suggested an interest - Italian for Beginners ; Mah Jong and Backgammon.

Are there any other members willing to set up / take part in these groups?