

KANUTA

**Newsletter
June 2024**

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From the Chair

I, along with all the other members of the Committee, was extremely saddened to hear of the death of Robert Watson after a short illness. Robert had been a member of the Committee for several years now and he will be sadly missed both for the unfailing support that he has given us all and for the amount of practical help he gave to the running of our u3a over many years, particularly on the technical side but also as a Group Leader. You can read more about Robert's contribution to our u3a in a separate article in this Kanuta.

We will, of course, now need more support for our Technical Team at Members' meetings. If you have experience of laptops and projectors and feel that you could help a speaker to set up before a Members' meeting please contact me via chair@knutsfordu3a.co.uk. With enough volunteers there would be no need to attend every Members' meeting, it would be much easier to spread the load!

The grace period for membership renewal expires on 3rd June so, if you haven't renewed your membership, this is the last Kanuta you will receive. If you haven't renewed but still want to be a member of our u3a to be able to enjoy all the benefits of membership* you can still renew by printing the renewal form which is available on our website, www.knutsfordu3a.co.uk, or by contacting our Membership Secretary, Helen Smith via membership@knutsfordu3a.co.uk. Please note, unless you act soon, you will no longer be able to renew your membership on-line as it will have lapsed after 3rd June.

*** If you do not renew your membership please be aware that you are no longer eligible to take part in any Group activities or to go on any theatre visits or outings.**

My thanks go to our Groups Supporters, Stuart Allan and Marian Goddard, who have helped to get several new Groups up and running over the past few months. If you find a Group that you'd like to join is full, please contact the Group Leader to ask to be put on a waiting list or you can contact Stuart or Marian via info@knutsfordu3a.co.uk and they will investigate whether there is enough interest to start another Group on the same subject.

You will see on page 6 that we are trialling taking on-line payments for Outings and Visits. This on-line system has been developed by our Webmaster, Tony Roberts. We are very grateful to him for the work he has put in to getting this up and running. In addition, it will hopefully be possible to pay for trips by credit/debit card at Members' Meetings (a booking form will still be required with these payments). Please note: we are not taking BACS payments because this involves too many complications for our Treasurer.

Sue Allan, Chair

Obituary - Robert Watson

Robert Watson sadly passed away on 17th May after a short illness. He was a pillar, a stalwart of our u3a in Knutsford over many years. He was on the current Committee but had also served on previous Committees, helping many a past Chair with advice and support. He was an extremely hard worker who always gave his best for our organisation. He was highly principled, he was a problem solver (he wouldn't rest until he found the solution), he held firm to his convictions and did the most important thing that a colleague can do: held us to account, gave us cause to examine our positions and test the rightness of collective decisions. Several of the past Chairs, and also the current one, Sue, have expressed their appreciation for his support and unfailing effort, not to mention his kindness.

In the past Robert was responsible for upgrading our IT, adopting new technology and making it work for us. He looked after our equipment and made sure it was kept up to date and PAT tested when necessary. He would always help anyone with a computer problem and, indeed, ran a Computer for Beginners Group for many years where his help was appreciated by many group members, enabling them to maintain contact on-line with their family and friends when they might otherwise have been left behind by technology. He also helped Group Leaders get to grips with the Beacon system and also with the use of laptops and projectors.

Together with Tony Roberts for many years he worked behind the scenes to ensure that the Members' Meetings and, more recently, the Hidden Talents meetings took place without hitch, always there to ensure that communications were working, fettling and fussing over microphones, connections and other essential electronic stuff so that speakers' presentations appeared effortless.

Robert also ran the Railways Interest Group which was his brainchild. Their programme featured visiting enthusiasts and away days including a visit to see a railway layout owned by Pete Waterman. He kept this group of railway enthusiasts connected and interested. The group will be carrying on under the auspices of David Custerson but I'm sure Robert's spirit will continue to be with them.

Robert also helped his partner, Margaret Joscelyne, run Wine Group 1. They will inevitably miss his energy and erudition and will remember him hosting lunch parties, skilfully opening the fizz at the start of an event. A glass will surely be raised in his memory!

He became a friend to so many u3a members and leaves so many loose ends by his sudden departure. Our hearts go out to Margaret and to his family who have suffered such a loss. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him and had dealings with him.

Roger Brown / Sue Allan

Margaret Joscelyne extends her thanks to all those members who have sent her cards, letters and messages about Robert, acknowledging his kindness and in particular his patient individual help with modern technology. Their support is much appreciated.



Margaret and Robert

Notice of the AGM

The 19th Annual General Meeting of Knutsford and District u3a will be held on Thursday 11th July 2024 at 2.15pm in the Knutsford Methodist Church.

All members are invited to attend the AGM which will be followed by a talk entitled 'Experiences of a Tour Guide' given by Tom Jones who has been a tour guide in Chester for over 20 years.

Refreshments will be available.

The AGM will include the Trustees' Report and Accounts together with the election of new Committee members.

A copy of the Trustees Report is included on page 13 of this edition of Kanuta.

Committee

To bring our Committee to full strength we welcome nominations for new members to join the Committee. Please use the form below or phone Sue Allan, Chair, on 01565 632904 or 07773022373 if you would like to discuss the possibility of standing for the Committee or to ask for more information. If you have already made contact with Sue to discuss serving on the Committee you don't need to fill this form in.

Nomination for the election of Knutsford u3a Committee Members

I nominate..... who has agreed to stand for membership of the Committee.

or

I am willing to be nominated to stand for the Committee.....

Members nominated will need to be seconded before or at the AGM.

Please send nominations to Mark Barley, Secretary, by 1st July at the very latest.

Email secretary.knutsfordu3a@gmail.com

Post 10 Beechwood, Bowdon, Altrincham WA14 3DW

Membership Renewal

(due 1st April 2024)

This year nearly 500 members renewed using the Beacon online system. Thank you to everyone who renewed online. I know that some of you experienced significant issues doing this so thank you for persevering.

About 200 members renewed through the post using the old process of filling in a form and sending a cheque. Each renewal off line takes me about 15 minutes including inputting amended details, printing membership cards for people without emails and sticking them on cards and banking all the cash and cheques at the Post Office in Knutsford as well as shredding all the non-Gift Aid renewal forms. In total this is quite a chunk of my time. It would be so much better if everyone renewed online.

I know that renewing your membership has been complicated this year and we are working towards making the process next year much simpler.

NON-RENEWALS

Maybe you are one of the 70-odd outstanding renewals. You will not be removed from the mailing list until 9 weeks have passed from the end of the membership year so this will be the last Kanuta you will receive before your membership is officially lapsed.

If you are one of these previous members, please let me know if you have resigned. This will avoid you receiving any more emails or letters reminding you to renew. I should also mention that YES, you do have to renew your membership each year if you want to carry out u3a activities including trips and outings and NO, you cannot go on outings if only your partner or best friend is a member. You must also be a member.

If you only attend one activity group you must still be a member and if you are a member of another u3a you can join our u3a as an Associate Member at a reduced rate of £8:00 if you wish to participate in our activities.

MEMBERS WITHOUT AN EMAIL ADDRESS

Some of you have not included an email address when you applied to join Knutsford u3a. Whilst we do send members without an email address a copy of each Kanuta magazine, you will be missing out on reminders about monthly members' meetings, trips and outings and updates about new groups.

If you do not have an email address perhaps you could ask a friend to receive these messages on your behalf so that you won't miss out. Please let me know if you would like to do this.

Helen MacAlister Smith

Membership Secretary

Lions Community Fair

Knutsford u3a had a stand at the event on 29th May. It was manned by around 20 members over the day.

There was significant interest by members of the public with some taking away membership forms with the intention of joining. We had 3 new members on the day and one member took the opportunity to renew.

Many thanks to those members who volunteered and helped to spread the word about Knutsford u3a.

Members' Meetings

Knutsford Methodist Church
Second Thursday of every month starting at 2.15pm
Please aim to be seated by 2.00pm

13th June

Dave Thomas will give a talk on the Egerton family who have owned the Tatton estate for some 360 years from 1598 up to the death of the last Baron Egerton in 1958. Dave volunteers as a 1940s Teamsman at the farm at Tatton working with Shire horses.

11th July

AGM – Our AGM will be followed by **Tom Jones**, giving his talk 'It's a Guide's Life'. Tom was born in Chester and his admiration for the city led him to become a city of Chester guide, a role he has been doing for over 20 years.

There is no meeting in August

12th September

Groups' showcase event and post summer catch-up.

10th October

Dr Helen Naylor, tour guide, geologist and historian will speak on "A coffee-fuelled revolution." She will explain how the arrival of coffee in England during the 1600s stimulated the birth of businesses, charities, and some of our great art institutions and will also weave in the tale of King's Coffeehouse in Knutsford!

Meeting for New Members

On Tuesday 21st May we held a meeting for new members at St Vincent's church hall. It was well attended by the newest members to join u3a in the last few months. It was also attended by three Group Leaders.





Dates for your Diary



Friday 6th September

A visit St Giles' Church in Cheadle to view the work of Augustus Pugin and then on to the award-winning Trentham Gardens to explore the beautiful Italian gardens, shopping village and garden centre. The cost will be £25 per person and booking forms will be available at the end of June.


Tuesday 26th November

An evening performance of Matthew Bourne's 'Swan Lake' at The Lowry.

On-line Payments for Theatre Trips, Concerts and Outings

Now that on-line payments for renewals and new membership are well established the Committee, with the full support of the Outings Committee, feel the time is right to introduce the option to pay for Theatre trips and Outings using PayPal or Credit/Debit card. A PayPal account is not required for the latter.

Pay with **PayPal**

 Debit or Credit Card

Our membership system, Beacon, is unable to provide this facility but after several months of research and testing we are now able to do this through our website using an easy to complete on-line form.

Initially this will be on a trial basis with a limited number of tickets available on-line for War Horse and the trip to Pugin Church and Trentham Gardens:

- to purchase War Horse tickets on-line click www.knutsfordu3a.co.uk/online-tickets. You are still able to purchase tickets by cheque using the booking form at the end of this newsletter
- a flyer giving details of the trip to Pugin Church and Trentham Gardens will be sent out by email in the summer with a link to pay on-line and a booking form (for cheque payments).

If the trial proves to be successful, then for future events more tickets will be available for purchase on-line.

Tony Roberts
Webmaster



Theatre and Music Trips



WAR HORSE

Based on the novel by Michael Morpurgo
The National Theatre Production

Thursday, 26th September, 2024, 7:30 pm
The Lowry Theatre, Manchester

Cost, including travel,
Coach departs the bus station

£65.00
6 pm prompt

'An unforgettable theatrical experience'



The National Theatre's acclaimed production of 'War Horse' is returning to the Lowry in an all-new UK tour. The National staged the World Premiere in 2007 and since then it has been seen by over 8 million people in 14 countries, making it the most successful play in the history of the National Theatre.

It is a powerfully moving and imaginative drama, based on the novel by Michael Morpurgo, taking audiences on an extraordinary journey from the fields of rural Devon to the trenches of the First World War. At its heart are the astonishing life-sized horses, who bring galloping, charging horses to thrilling life on the stage – quite unforgettable! (And well worth a second visit to my mind!)

I have had a small grant to help with theatre costs, so I am using it to keep the cost down considerably, for this rather expensive production.

Tickets for this event can be bought via PayPal or Debit/Credit card at www.knutsfordu3a.co.uk/online-tickets/

They can also be reserved by sending me a completed booking form (see page 12) and cheque made payable to Knutsford u3a. Any remaining tickets will also be on sale at the Members meeting, Thursday, June 13th.

Margaret Hinde



Outing Reports



Shrewsbury Prison Excursion on 26th April



Our u3a trip to HM Prison in Shrewsbury on 26th April was so interesting and informative and our guide, Paul, brought everything to life with his knowledge and humour. With its history dating from 1793 to finally closing its doors to inmates in 2013, conditions certainly changed dramatically over those years, which was demonstrated so well within the cells and in the stories we were told.

After our prison lunch, we were able to spend the afternoon getting to know Shrewsbury town itself which also has so much character and history with its many beautiful buildings, park and riverside walk etc. and it is a joy to explore.

I would definitely recommend a trip to Shrewsbury to anyone.

Jane Smallwood



Outing Reports



Norfolk Holiday May 2024



The Outings Committee of Knutsford u3a, with the help and support of Simply Groups Travel Agency, took 40 members to Norfolk in May. We stayed at a Best Western hotel in Norwich.

“Very flat, Norfolk”

That quote is, quite possibly, the truest words Noel Coward ever wrote! The scenery was indeed monotonous, but luckily the company and the visit programme provided plenty of variety. It’s not every coach trip that loses a wooden rolling pin and a jar of chutney on the coach whilst en route!

We started with a delightfully sunny guided visit around Stamford – an attractive Georgian town that not many people had visited before. Next day we went to Sandringham Estate – another popular visit – and then on to the Sainsbury Collection. A day of looking at beautiful things.



By Wednesday our weather had deteriorated rapidly but Norwich Cathedral kept us dry and did not disappoint. Thursday saw us on a boat trip on the Broads, (more rain!) but luckily the afternoon dried up for our visit to Blickling Hall, an imposing Jacobean stately home. Our day ended with a delicious private dinner in the glamorous Assembly House in town. Lovely!

A long journey home (on a lovely sunny morning, of course!) was broken by a moving visit to a modern Memorial Centre dedicated to recognising the importance of Bomber Command in WW2, which proved extremely interesting – and also provided us with a very tasty lunch.

So, as I said, a very varied programme, which I think was widely enjoyed. And anyone who wasn’t tired on Friday night is made of stronger stuff than I am!



Thank you all for coming. I enjoyed your company. Our three friends who couldn’t make it were sadly missed – and in dear Robert’s case, still are.

Text by **Margaret Hinde**

Photographs by **Sandra Stonehill**

For more photos from this memorable trip, go to the Archive at <https://knutsfordu3a.co.uk/activity-groups-visits/photo-archive/>

News from the Groups

Recorder Group

The Recorder Group meets every other Wednesday afternoon at 61 Boothfields. We play a wide variety of music and have beginners to more advanced players. You need a descant recorder, music stand and most importantly enthusiasm!

Get in touch if you are interested: 07811 570 463.

Carol Goodwin

Beginners' Italian Group

The new u3a Beginner's Italian group has successfully reached the end of its first 10 week term. With the support of Jane Froehlich we have learnt greetings, food and drink and asking for directions. All very handy for travel in Italy.

We are deciding how to continue and would welcome any interest from brand new beginners to form a new class from September or from those with a little knowledge who could join our "not completely beginners" class.

Currently classes are held every other Thursday at 2pm in Knutsford. For more information please email me via info@knutsfordu3a.co.uk

Jane Lloyd-Green

New Book Group 7

This Group is now set up under Sheila Harmsworth with meetings to be held in members' homes at 11am on Mondays.

The first meeting is at 48a Cranford Ave on the 17th June. The book selected for discussion is Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell which is a fictional account of William Shakespeare's son Hamnet who died aged 11 in 1569 focussing on the parents' grief. It won the Women's Prize for Literature in 2020.

For details contact Sheila on 07738 017 583.

Stuart Allan, Groups Supporter

Photography Group

A Preliminary meeting was held at the beginning of April and the Group is now well underway.

Meeting are on the first Tuesday of each month, so the next meeting will be on Tuesday, 4th June 2024 in Room 5 at Knutsford Methodist Church. Everyone is welcome to come along.

Please contact me via info@knutsfordu3a.co.uk for more information.

Marian Goddard

News from the Groups

Pickleball Group

Pickleball is the fastest growing racquet sport in the UK at present. It is played on a slightly modified badminton court with a lower net (85cms) with a bat (called a paddle) and a light hollow plastic ball.



With the help and advice of David Pechey, the u3a Subject Advisor for Pickleball, we have set up a Group under Group Leader Guy Hill an accomplished player. We started with a demonstration session run by Jane Portnell a professional coach associated Pickleball England which was very successful particularly with members who had not played before.

35 people have joined the Group which runs two sessions sequentially; 2-3pm and 3-4pm weekly on Wednesday afternoon at the Egerton Football Club where there are 3 courts available.

30 members have joined for the first 5 sessions which have been very enjoyable and 3 Pickleball nets are on order partly funded by the Group members.

If you are interested in such a Group please let me know (info@knutsfordu3a.co.uk)

Stuart Allan, Groups Supporter



Proposed Luncheon Club

Beryl Roberts, a new member, has offered run and organise a Luncheon Club monthly on Fridays at 12.30 and has suggested 4 dates in June and July.

If you are interested in joining this Group please contact Beryl on 07554 011 513.

Stuart Allan, Groups Supporter

Booking Forms

PLEASE use a **separate booking form** and a **separate cheque** for each outing

- Write the name of the outing on the back of your cheque
- Make your cheque payable to Knutsford and District u3a
- Send a stamped, addressed envelope if you want your reservation confirmed
- Send your form and cheque **to the organiser as noted for each event**

Unless you send an SAE, you will only be contacted if your booking was NOT successful.

For further information contact the organiser (details on the appropriate booking form)

BOOKING FORM – War Horse		Organised by Margaret Hinde
<p><i>Please note for insurance purposes, people attending this outing should be members of the u3a.</i></p> <p>Event: War Horse at The Lowry Theatre, Manchester Date & time: Thursday 26th September 2024, departing Knutsford Bus Station at 6.00 pm PROMPT</p> <p>I/We would like to book place/s at £65.00 each and enclose a cheque for £.....</p>		
<p>Name and Address <u>with postcode</u> of all attending</p> 		
Phone number	e-mail	Phone number In case of emergency on the day
<p>Send this completed form and cheque made payable to Knutsford and District u3a to Margaret Hinde, 1 Warford Hall Drive, Great Warford, Alderley Edge, SK9 7TR Telephone 01565 872643</p>		

A Summary of our Trustees Annual Report

The full report will be uploaded to the Charity Commission website. This is a brief summary of that report.

This year from April 1st 2023 to March 31st 2024 has seen our u3a continue to thrive with a record number of members by the end of the period.

Our membership at the end of March 2024 was 760, which includes 43 Associate Members (those who are also members of other u3as).

Over the year we have inevitably had a few groups that have run their course or could not find a new leader and have had to close. To offset this a great deal of work has been done to facilitate the setting up of new groups and 12 new ones have been set up during this financial year.

Our Outings sub-committee has been very active this year organising eight trips to places of interest including a holiday to Slovenia. They also organised nine trips to concerts or the theatre.

The Committee organised three events that support our organisation to grow and thrive. These included a stall at the local Lions Fayre, a stand at the 'Knutsford Refresh' event and In September we held our 'Showcase event' with displays provided by many Activity groups so that both members and the wider public can get a better idea of what we do, and the groups themselves can attract new members.

We also held a coffee morning for new members. Such events had been held in the past but not for quite a while. We wanted to make new members feel welcome, to give them more information about what we do for members and to get ideas from them as to what type of activities they would be interested in taking part in or setting up. We wanted to emphasise the self-help nature of the u3a movement. This event was much appreciated by the new members and several ideas for new groups were proposed. These ideas have been followed up by our Groups Supporter and several new groups formed as a result.

In the autumn we had a group leaders' coffee morning. Also invited were key members involved in the organisation of our u3a, such as the technical team, and the Outings' and Speakers' committees. This is a networking event, usually with a theme, so that key members can share ideas and experiences to develop our organisation.

In addition to our monthly meetings where an outside speaker gives a talk, we have continued with our 'Hidden Talents' programme which involves presentations by Knutsford u3a members on a topic of their choice to the membership. During this period, we had four presentations on a diverse range of subjects which were very well received, and we intend to continue this new programme into the future.

We claimed Gift Aid on our subscriptions for the membership year 2023/24. This was the first year of doing so and It was very successful in raising extra income which will enable us to reduce our subscriptions for the following membership year.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Committee for all their hard work and their enthusiasm during this year. My thanks also go to the many people who help on our various sub-committees, particularly the Technical Team who support all our events, our Outings and Visits Committee and our Speakers' Committee. Thanks are also due to all our Group Leaders and other helpers without whom our u3a would not be as successful as it is.

Sue Allan, Chair.
Knutsford & District u3a