

KANUTA

Newsletter
February 2026

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From the Chair

So that's the first month of 2026 gone already! Too late really to wish you all a Happy New Year but I hope 2026 is a good one for everyone.

One of our Committee members, Tony Axon, has had to step down from the Committee and I'd like to thank him for his work as Chair of the Speakers sub-committee and also his role in starting up our Hidden Talents series of talks which have been very well received by members.

Several Committee members have been serving on the Committee for a number of years and will also be thinking of stepping down in the not-too-distant future. My term as Chair is due to end in July this year so we will need more members to put themselves forward to help run our u3a. The best way of ensuring smooth running of our organisation is to have two or three new Committee members each year so that they have time to see what needs to be done and to work alongside existing office holders. Being a Committee member is also sociable, enjoyable and, often, a good laugh. Please consider coming along to a Committee meeting to see what we do. They are held on the 4th Thursday of the month with the next one at 10.00 am on Thursday 26th February. If you would like further information, please contact me via chair@knutsfordu3a.co.uk.

I understand the Outings and Theatre visits sub-committee have got a number of interesting visits planned, some of which are yet to be advertised. Please remember that these trips are only available to members or associate members of Knutsford u3a and you should not book a ticket for anyone (including your partner) if they are not u3a members.

The Committee has discussed the cost of subscription for the membership year 2026/27 and come to the conclusion that it needs to be increased to £14 for full members and £7 for associate members to sustain our current stable financial position. I'm sure you will agree that it's still great value for money.

Sue Allan, Chair

Members' Meetings

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

- 12th February** Historian and Biographer **Joanna M Williams** returns to introduce **Manchester's Radical Mayor - Abel Heywood**. Known in his day as the man who built the Town Hall, Abel was also a leading Publisher who entertained royalty at his home and twice became Mayor of Manchester. A campaigner for votes for all and social reform, Heywood attempted to enter Parliament twice, but his working-class origins and radical ideas proved an insurmountable obstacle.
- 12th March** **Mark Llewelin**, Deputy Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, will talk about life **On the Cobbles – insider tales of the early days of Coronation Street**. Mark is a Coronation Street aficionado who has been involved with the ITV series and its cast for over 30 years. In his talk he will share lots of insider details and tales from the early days of those famous Weatherfield cobbles.
- 9th April** **David Maidment** is the founder of "**The Railway Children**", a charity which works with children on the streets who face many dangers - from violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking. Many are at risk from the very people who should be keeping them safe. Working in the UK, India and Tanzania, the charity helps children work through the issues that have led them to the streets.
- 14th May** **Neil Hanson** will speak on **Inn and Out at the Top** describing the highs and lows of running Britain's highest inn - so isolated that its next-door neighbour was 4 miles away and so high that it had its own climate, with winds that could tear car doors off their hinges, and winter snows that cut off the inn for weeks on end.



Hidden Talents



Knutsford Methodist Church at 2.15pm prompt
Please aim to be seated by 2.00pm.

- Thursday 26th February** **Growing up in Manchester in the 1960s and 70s**
Howard Thorp will describe his journey from playing in his parent's back garden in Sale, to a Northern University, via a grammar school.
- Thursday 26th March** A double bill! We will start with some poetry by **Gerrard McCreesh** and then **Zoe Langmead** will describe **The Journey of a Donated Baked Bean Tin!**

January's talk **Chemistry with cabbage - motivating children to study sciences** by Professor Lorelly Wilson MBE resulted in many requests for more information. You can find her website, with lots of ideas for entertaining/educating children at <https://lorellywilson.co.uk/> under the Students/Children drop-down.



Dates for your Diary



Tuesday 28 th April	Visit to Morgan factory
Saturday 16 th May	Matinee visit to Theatre Clwyd, Mold for 'Shawshank Redemption'. Coach will depart at 11.30am. Tickets will be on sale in February.
Monday 18 th May	Visit to Tissington Hall
July	Visit to Biddulph Grange Gardens
August	Visit to Buxton to see The Mikado



Theatre and Music Trips



Music in the Afternoon - Friday 24th April

Knutsford Methodist Church 2pm



We are delighted to welcome back the Eblana String Trio for their fourth visit to Knutsford, on Friday 24 April at 2pm. This time, Jonathan Martindale, Lucy Nolan and Peggy Nolan will be joined by oboist Emmet Byrne.

Jonathan is associate leader of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the son of members of our u3a. He founded the Eblana Trio with Lucy and Peggy in 2006, when they were studying at the RNCM. Emmet is principal second Oboe at the CBSO and an RNCM graduate.

Programme Mozart: Oboe Quartet K370
Beethoven: String Trio in C Minor, Op.9 no3
Britten: Phantasy Quartet Op.2

Tickets are £15, to include tea after the concert, with a chance to meet the musicians.

The Concert starts at 2pm, please be in your seats by 1.50pm

Tickets can be purchased on our [On-line Tickets](#) page or at the door.

Margaret Joscelyne



Outings



Hill Dickinson Stadium and Museum of Liverpool

Tuesday, 17th March, 2026

Coach departs the bus station

9.00 am

Cost, including all travel, tips,

stadium tour and museum entrance £45.00

A visit to a local premier league football stadium is something of a departure from the norm for us, however, the Hill Dickinson Stadium – home of Everton Football Club - is a departure from the norm too.

Situated on the Liverpool waterfront this iconic modern stadium was only opened last summer and was built for more than just football.

At 10.30 we have a 90-minute tour of the stadium which will show us how a modern football club is run. I am sure that even a non-football fan would find this interesting. After the tour we will take the short coach journey along the waterfront to the Museum.



At the Museum we start with lunch at 1pm in the Museum's café. The time is booked but the choice of food is for you to make and purchase.

At 2.30pm we are booked to see the exhibition - 'Treasures: History Unearthed' featuring the largest collection of archaeological treasure ever shown in the region with finds from the North West as well as key exhibits from national and regional institutions.

We will be leaving Liverpool at 4pm so you can spend as much time as you like in the exhibition or choose to go up into the main part of the Museum.

Both venues are accessible. The stadium has lifts and the café and exhibition are on the ground floor of the museum.

Places for this trip can be bought via PayPal or Debit/Credit card using our [On-line Tickets](#) page. Otherwise, to book by post, send your cheque together with a completed booking form (see page 11). Please remember to enclose a SAE if you want confirmation that you have a place on this tour.

Any remaining places will be on sale at the monthly U3A meeting on Thursday, February 12th.

Lynda Harris

News from the Groups

Recorder Group

New members of all standards, including beginners, are very welcome to join our group. We recently played at Sharston House and we are expecting to play there again soon.

We meet every other Wednesday afternoon at 2.15 at 61 Boothfields WA16 8JY. You need a recorder and preferably a stand for your music though you can easily manage without. The most important thing is that you are enthusiastic about playing with the group.

Carol Goodwin

Photography Group



Eight members of the photography group visited Biddulph Grange Garden for their November meeting. The garden was chosen to capture the autumnal colours and explore the garden at a quiet time of year. The Grade 1 Listed garden is described by The National Trust as quirky and playful with unusual features; it was designed by Victorian James Bateman and his wife Maria. Plants and seeds were collected from around the world and a collection of eclectic buildings erected. After many changes of ownership, the garden was returned to the original design and restoration is an ongoing project by The National Trust.

After meeting for coffee, we were able to wander through the different areas of the grounds and had the opportunity to discover and photograph in dry conditions.

Areas of interest included:

- The Himalayan glen built from enormous rocks.
- The Egyptian garden with statues and yew pyramid.
- The Chinese garden with the pool, painted bridge and temple.
- The oldest stumpery in the country made from ancient oaks.



In December the subject of the monthly meeting was "Trees and Leaves" so photographs taken on our visit to Biddulph Grange filled the brief. The Chinese garden was certainly the most photographed but it was interesting to see what features some had seen then and others did not.

The group meets on the second Tuesday of the month starting at 10 - 11.30 in Room 5 at The Methodist Church Rooms. There is a lift. We charge £10.00 a term for 3 meetings and 1 photography away session.

Members take their photos with both cameras and phones; images have to be put onto a memory stick so they can be viewed on the screen. Simple help and support is given by members so come along if you would be interested to join.

The subjects and dates for 2026 term are:

- February 10th - Water and seascapes
- March 10th - Things beginning with the letter A
- April 14th - Away day to Dunham Massey

Contact me via info@knutsfordu3a.co.uk for more information

Elizabeth Hosking

News from the Groups

Tai Chi Group

TAI CHI - THE PERFECT EXERCISE FOR YOU!

Tai Chi is a gentle, low-impact exercise that can help maintain strength, mobility, flexibility, concentration and balance. It is suitable for you whatever your level of fitness and you will leave each session with a feeling of calm and inner peace.

We hold two Tai Chi classes every Tuesday at the Knutsford Sports Club on Mereheath Lane. Each class is an hour long.

The beginners class starts at 1.30 pm and the intermediate class at 2.30 pm for anyone who has learnt Cheng Man Ching short form (or part of it).

The sessions are run by a Senior Instructor Member of the Tai Chi Union with many years of experience.

We currently have a waiting list but please let Philip Smith the group co-ordinator know your interest by phoning 07801 310399 or dropping him an email via info@knutsfordu3a.co.uk

Philip Smith

Fitness Group 1



Taking time out from our fitness regime, the group enjoyed a pre-Christmas get together at Piccolinos in Knutsford on Tuesday 16th November.

It was a super meal with a great atmosphere and excellent company.

Sandra Stonehill

Quiz Group

On the third Wednesday afternoon each month between 2pm and 4pm there is a u3a Quiz. After only a few months it is a well-established event that all appear to enjoy. The topics of the rounds vary each month as do the setters and presenters of the questions. Some questions are easy (if you know the answer) and others are hard (if you don't)!

Attendees usually come along on their own or as couples or small groups and then join others to form a team of six. There is a prize for each member of the winning team - a Discover Knutsford voucher - to be spent in any of the dozens of local businesses who take part in the scheme.

You do not have to commit to every month just come along when you can - everyone is welcome. We are a friendly and inclusive group. See the website for more details or email info@knutsfordu3a.co.uk

Lynda Harris



Outing Reports

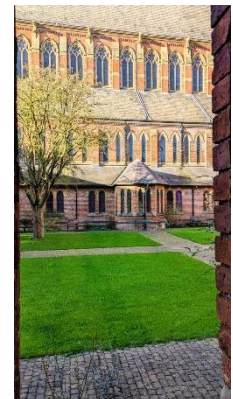


Gorton Monastery at Christmas

We all enjoyed the day out on 2nd December last year. About 50 of us from Knutsford u3a boarded the coach just before 11:00 and arrived in Gorton ahead of schedule having navigated a rather narrow stretch of road!

Mulled wine was served, to warm us up. We had been assigned our table numbers on the coach & found our places quickly. A talk on how the Monastery came into being and its trials & tribulations along the way was very interesting. It is now a non-religious space and is used for a number of community occasions such as health & well-being, education, entertainment and meal functions as well as a wedding venue. Maintenance is of course ongoing and we all gave generously.

We had a short while to wander, or shop before heading home just after 3:15, arriving back in Knutsford about an hour later.



Thanks must go to Lynda Harris for organising our day out.

Sandra Stonehill

For more photos from this trip go to the online [Photo Archive](#) and look for "Gorton Monastery - December 2025"

Halle Christmas Carol Concert



Our outing on 14th December to the Bridgewater Hall was a great success. There must have been around 500 voices, aged eight and upward, performing in three different choirs, accompanied by the full Halle Orchestra.

Four percussionists were busy keeping the fun going! No wonder it is a popular event!

Many thanks to the coach company and driver for getting us there.

Margaret Hinde



Along Cheshire Lines



This is the third of an occasional series which will seek to highlight some little-known facts about the companies, the people, the history and events taking place on our local railways in Cheshire.

January 2025 saw the closure of the soda ash works at Lostock due to the high cost of energy. This brought an end to one of our freight flows - the block trains of limestone from the Buxton area, known as 'The Hoppers'. These had been established in 1938 as part of a re-organisation of traffic that had started as far back as 1873 moving 600 tons each month. The quantity of stone had increased over the years until 4500 tons each day were being moved in the 1960's, with up to 12 trains of stone per day and, of course, the corresponding number of empty wagons being moved back to the quarry.



This leaves us with only three remaining freight flows and a handful of trains each day. You may have noticed the trains moving wood pellets from Liverpool Docks to Drax power station in Yorkshire; these are a moving advert for green energy and the word Drax is writ large on the side of the wagons. Here's one passing through Knutsford station.

The second flow is from various waste transfer stations in Greater Manchester (you pass one at Northenden between Navigation Road and Stockport) taking refuse for processing at Runcorn. These are the large plain blue wagons.

The trains are known to the railway community as 'Bin Liners'. This one is passing over the pedestrian tunnel from The Moor.



Our third and final flow is the occasional train of roadstone from the Buxton area quarries seeking to access the West Coast Main Line for rapid movement to civil engineering terminals.

Contrast these three flows of perhaps five or six trains in each direction daily with the situation in 1911 when Northwich saw 105 daily freight movements and 1937 with an amazing 143 daily freight trains. This reflects some huge changes in our society, industry and technical capabilities over the last 85 years.

Part 4 of Along Cheshire Lines will take a look at some of the changes and the reasons behind them.

David Custerson

Our Wider u3a



The North West Region of the u3a invite applications for

the 2026 Residential Summer School

Tuesday 11th August – Friday 14th August 2026

at Manchester Metropolitan University, M15 6GX

The Metropolitan University is located in the centre of Manchester and less than 20 minutes' walk from Oxford Road Railway Station. The campus has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access.

There will be a quiz on the first evening and a "Gala Dinner" on the third and final evening. Speakers will also attend on the second and third evening.

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

- Full board for 3 nights, including dinner on 11th August, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 12th August, breakfast, lunch and Gala Dinner on 13th August, and breakfast on 14th August. Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215 (+£15 car parking charge if applicable)

- This includes lunches, teas and coffees, excludes breakfast daily and dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday but does include the Gala Dinner on 13th August.

An application form is available online at <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2026/>
This must be completed and returned by post or email.

Payment can be either by bank transfer (North West Region of u3as, Lloyds Bank sort code 30-90-16, account 00197002 quoting name and post code) or by cheque (payable to North West Region of u3as)

£100 deposit (£50 non-residents) payable upon application; balance payable by 11th May 2026.

Queries should be directed to Alan Hough or Neill Stewart at alanhough1949@gmail.com or neillstewart.uk@icloud.com

Applications by email should be sent to Alan

Applications by post should be sent to Alan at 8 Salwick Close, Wigan, Greater Manchester WN3 6RE

The 8 courses on offer are:

An introduction to Geology
Art challenges - the history of colour
Making sense of everyday Mathematics
Photography - Beyond the Snapshot

Archaeology Explorers
Intermediary Ukulele
Operatunity – opera appreciation
The UK and USA Political Scenes

Full details including course synopses and booking instructions are available on the website.

Beyond our u3a

KNUTSFORD LIONS -SENIOR CITIZENS VARIETY SHOW

KNUTSFORD METHODIST CHURCH

SATURDAY 7th February 2026 : 2pm – 4.30pm

THE PHOENIX CHOIR - a fabulous local choir

Plus more great entertainmentand the Lions sketch!



FREE TICKETS available from 5TH Jan at:

**THE MARKET BUTCHER, KNUTSFORD MARKET, KNUTSFORD.
KNUTSFORD OLDE SWEET SHOPPE, 119 KING STREET, KNUTSFORD.
or ANY LIONS MEMBER**

Web : www.knutsfordlions.org.uk

email: knutsford.lions@gmail.com

Booking Forms

Places on u3a trips and outings can only be booked for full or associate members of Knutsford u3a. If you need to bring a companion/carer to enable you to take part in a trip or visit please see our [Accessibility Policy](#).

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)

<p>BOOKING FORM – Liverpool Trip (Hill Dickinson Stadium & Museum of Liverpool) Organised by Lynda Harris</p>		
<p>Event: Liverpool Trip (Hill Dickinson Stadium & Museum of Liverpool) Date & time: Tuesday 17th March, 2026, departing Knutsford Bus Station at 9.00 am PROMPT I/We would like to book place/s at £45.00 each and enclose a cheque for £ made payable to Knutsford and District u3a</p>		
<p>Name and Address <u>with postcode</u> of all attending</p>		
<p>Phone number</p>	<p>e-mail</p>	<p>Phone number <small>In case of emergency on the day</small></p>
<p>Send this completed form and cheque made payable to Knutsford and District u3a to Lynda Harris, 10 Lindop Close, Knutsford, WA16 8AY</p>		