



UP2DATE



MAGAZINE FEBRUARY 2026

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

A Happy New Year to you from the Committee. This is going to be a special year for Stockport u3a because we are **FORTY YEARS OLD**. And that is why I am asking you to send me your thoughts about Stockport u3a and what it means to you.

This could be a couple of sentences about why you joined, which group you joined and the friends you have made. You could tell us about trips you have been on or holidays with the Travel group which you have enjoyed. Maybe you joined a group and learnt a new skill or developed a new interest. Please share your thoughts with the rest of the membership, we would like this to be a celebration of Stockport u3a. And we would like everyone to take part, even the people who only joined last week. Why did you come along to that first meeting, which group brought you to us and have you developed an interest in a different group since ?

Send your contributions to me, Ruth Faulkner. I look forward to receiving them, as I have said on many occasions, I enjoy compiling the magazine.

There are many ways you can send them to me. You can handwrite them and give them to me or post them. You can email or text me your contribution. All my contact details are below.

I am also collecting photographs, especially early ones which show our history as a u3a. I have some but would like more. So, get writing, I'm waiting.

Ruth Faulkner,

14 Silverdale Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport SK4 2RN

Mob. 07907875522

bellahu465@outlook.com

THE STOCKPORT GARRICK MURAL

The number of murals around Stockport has multiplied over recent years. However, this one is quite different from its predecessors both in its style and in the way that it has greater visibility, given its prominent position on the A6 next to the Hat Museum.

So how did it come about?

Totally Stockport consulted the Garrick Theatre about the idea, which was then jointly financed between the two of them. They put the idea out to tender and despite a good number of well-liked proposals, there



was a unanimous feeling that this was the one that gave most back to the town.

It was produced by Captain Kris, an artist who originally hails from New Zealand and who has completed many projects around the world - some of them on a much bigger scale than this one. He started using spray paint as a teenager when he loved messing about and experimenting. He was heavily influenced by comics and cartoons which explains his style as well as his use of colour.

There is a range of artistic and local content, but probably the most evident part of this lies in the heart of the work: "Stockport the Hollywood of the North."

But you really need to stand and take a good look to see such things as a little bit of Lowry and a reference to Christopher Isherwood's "Goodbye to Berlin" on which the musical "Cabaret" was based.

The idea is to celebrate theatre and the arts in a range of ways and so it is not surprising to see a reference to "Fiddler on the Roof" as well as various scenes depicting costume and makeup.

It takes time to explore its variety. Look also for the number of animal references, another love of Captain Kris

What you can now see however is not the end of things. We must wait patiently into the new year before work will start on the main frontage of the building facing onto the A6. Watch for the scaffolding going up and you will know that it is getting very close.

Even that will not be the end of it. The theatre's box office wall on Exchange Street is not part of the project, but the back wall, which you can see as you look up the street, is.

Be prepared for a very different style of art there to enthral us from that perspective.



Article by Keith Mills

Photographs by Ruth Faulkner

THE SECRET GARDEN

It was there in the corner, a little green gate,
And it was always open for me.
It led to a garden of magic and fun
And places where no-one could see.

Whilst Mum read her book, I could wander about,
It was quiet and sunny and bright,
I could be a Princess, a bird or an elf,
With no-one else ever in sight.

But sadly the time came when home we must go,
And the garden and I had to part.
Goodbye little green gate, I'll see you next week,
But your magic I'll keep in my heart.

Written by Margaret M. Jones

Margaret is a member of our Poetry Group and wrote this poem some years ago when someone at her church mentioned the secret garden in Torkington Park. Sadly, when I went to take the photograph, the little green gate was no longer.

Photograph Ruth Faulkner



MY INDONESIAN HOLIDAY

Yesterday scraping the ice off the windscreen memories of my last trip to Indonesia filled my mind. As many of you know, my son now spends most of his time there and he and his wife, Nia, are always keen for me to go. The temperature there is thirtyish all year round, but they do have quite a lot of rain and that is why it is so green and productive. They live in Depok on the outskirts of Jakarta. Jakarta the capital is a beautiful green city full of galleries and museums. When I visit, I live in their apartment which is in a twenty- four storey block, the lower part of which is a shopping mall with restaurants and a cinema as well as shops and a supermarket.

Our apartment is on the sixth floor, and the outdoor pool is on the fifth. So, if we are not at the pool we are on the balcony overlooking.

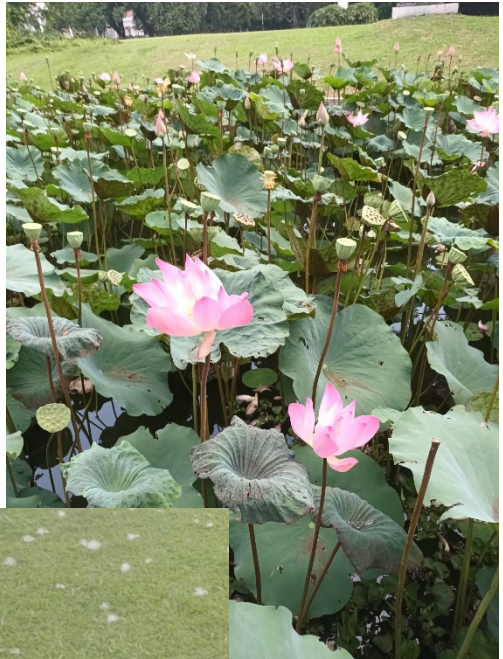
Indonesians don't tend to swim in the sun, so we normally have the pool to ourselves. Gareth and Nia live only minutes away, so Gareth comes over to swim when Nia goes to work.



Nia works in Jakarta and goes to work on a Go-Jek, a motorbike taxi of which there are hundreds and are the commonest means of transport, whole families on them weave in and out of the busy traffic. Taxis wait

outside the mall for custom and one of my favourite trips is to the botanic gardens at Bogor, a taxi ride of about an hour costing £8.

The gardens surround the old Government buildings, built during Raffles' time as Governor and there is a monument in his wife's memory.



There is a large lake with lotus flowers and a bamboo forest.



Last time we were there the kapok trees were filling the area with balls of kapok

There was also a new orchid propagation house built, although we were too late, maybe next time.

Another favourite place was Batavia, the old Government centre of Jakarta with a restaurant allegedly frequented by Raffles, it certainly has the look and aura that makes it believable.



A new experience this last visit was “Carefree Sunday”, no cars between 6 and 9 on Sunday morning on the main roads outside the mall which are usually teeming with cars and motorbikes. The locals make the most of the opportunity with hundreds walking up and down, and bands and Zumba classes taking place in the car lots. The area just off the main road, Persona, is particularly beautiful with mango and jackfruit growing along the pavement and many beautiful old houses.

Last time I was there for two months and organised my next two group outings whilst there. Because, although it is seventeen hours away by plane and halfway round the world, with internet, emails and Zoom the world is a very small place.

Written by Kay Jones Photos Kay Jones

SENIORS TRYING TO RESET PASSWORD

WINDOWS: Please enter your password

USER: cabbage

WINDOWS: Sorry, the password must be more than 8 characters

USER: boiled cabbage

WINDOWS: Sorry, the password must contain 1 numerical character

USER: 1 boiled cabbage

WINDOWS: Sorry, the password cannot have blank spaces

USER: 50 damnboiledcabbages

WINDOWS: Sorry, the password must contain at least one upper character

USER: 50DAMNboiledcabbages

WINDOWS: Sorry, the password cannot use more than one uppercase character consecutively

USER:

50danmBoiledCabbagesShovedUpYourAssifYouDon'tGiveMeAccessNow!

WINDOWS: Sorry the password cannot use punctuation

USER:

ReallyPissedOff50damnBoiledCabbagesShovedUpYourAssifyouDontgiveMe
AccessNow

WINDOWS: Sorry, that password is already in use.

This amused me, I thought it might amuse you, although I'm sure a lot of you have come across one version or another of something similar,

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to this magazine, as usual the variety of articles makes it a pleasure to put the magazine together.

www.stockport.u3asite.uk

Don't forget you can always check out activities and keep up to date if you use our website.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS



We would like to welcome these people who have joined our u3a since the last Magazine which was published in October 2025.

Brian Adshead

Rebecca Blackwell

John Bowyer

Nigel Collinson

Sandra Dootson

Simeon Farrington-Newman

David Fletcher

Anne Gorrod

Mark Haddrell

Barbara Hapgood

Terence Hope

Paul Marlon

Paul Marlow

Anne Maw

Brenda Murphhy

Dorothy Neillands

Helen Nelson

Lynne O'Brien

Jan Smith

Jacqueline Squires

Denise Whelan

Patricia Willis

Stephen Wood

STAMPS



Don't forget to save your postage stamps, although you may not get many of them. Pauline Hadfield always puts a bag on the microphone for your contributions. They are for charity. Thank you to everyone who has contributed.

RED KITES FOR THE SECOND TIME

Before Covid I was lucky enough to go on holiday with the travel group to South Wales. On the way south we stopped off at a farm to watch the Red Kites being fed. A wonderful experience or so I thought.

Last year my daughter, her friend and I decided to call at a different farm in the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) on our way south to spend a week in Tenby. I researched the farm before we went, it would cost £6 (in cash), we were requested not to take food or drink, we were told there were no toilet facilities and that misbehaving children would be asked to leave, Wow!

So, having stopped off at Bluith Wells for coffee, sandwiches and a visit to the ladies we headed off to the farm down narrow, windy lanes which were extremely well signposted with pictures of Red Kites. We arrived, as requested, one hour before the birds were to be fed, parked on one of the small gravel car parks and walked down the lane to the hides.

The couple seated on deckchairs at the entrance directed us to the door. No, they didn't want money yet, they'd be in to collect it later. So, we entered and sat down to wait the hour not expecting to be entertained,

just waiting for the main show. How wrong could we be? The area outside the hide was much smaller than I had seen on my first experience, a small field surrounded by trees and shrubs. Beyond that we could see the landscape of the Brecon Beacons and high in the sky some Red Kites. There were plenty of smaller birds swooping onto the ground or above the ground presumably feeding on small insects



which were attracted to the remnants of the previous day's feeding. So, something to see. Then after about twenty minutes a man appeared with a large bucket which he placed on the ground at the edge of the field, covered it with one of those brightly coloured, two handled buckets so useful for gardening and left the field. Immediate interest from the circling Red Kites, they swooped in to investigate but with no food they lost interest and went away. But we had a taste of what was to come. Twenty



minutes later a repeat performance, so now there were two buckets, a good distance from each other. Then five minutes from show time the man appeared in the hide to collect our money and informed us that as many of the Red Kites had fledglings on the nest the adults could well be fighting for food, and it could be chaos out there. Exactly three o'clock and he appeared again on the

field with a third bucket but this time he was dressed for action, Wellington boots, long coat, hat and long gloves. He walked round the field throwing food from the bucket into the air, and as he finished one bucket, he retrieved one of the others until he had emptied all three buckets. Then collecting all the buckets, he left the field.

From the minute he threw the first handful in the air the birds had swooped down to feed catching the food in their talons before it hit the ground, then gaining height and leaving. It was like an aerial ballet with birds swooping in from all directions, if they



didn't get food they circled round for another pass. And despite the speed they were flying and the fact they were coming from all heights and directions they didn't appear to collide. Once the man had left the birds proceeded to swoop down to the ground talons outstretched to collect any food which might have landed on the floor. Not only were the Red Kites attracted to the food, but a buzzard also appeared and having collected its food it perched on a stump and proceeded to rip its prize to pieces. This display went on for a good forty minutes until we realised that the number of birds were lessening and it was time to leave. The fact that the field was so much smaller than my first experience meant that the birds were much closer to us, the photo opportunities were fantastic and even though I only used my phone camera I was amazed at the results. (Though I must credit my daughter with the best shot.)

We chatted with the couple who run the experience as we left complimenting them on what had been a fantastic show. They do not open every day but the farmer who owns the land comes down on the closed days to feed the birds so there so no break in their routine.

We left, thrilled with our experience and promising ourselves that we would return in 2026.

Article Ruth Faulkner
Photos Ruth and Joanne
Faulkner

