

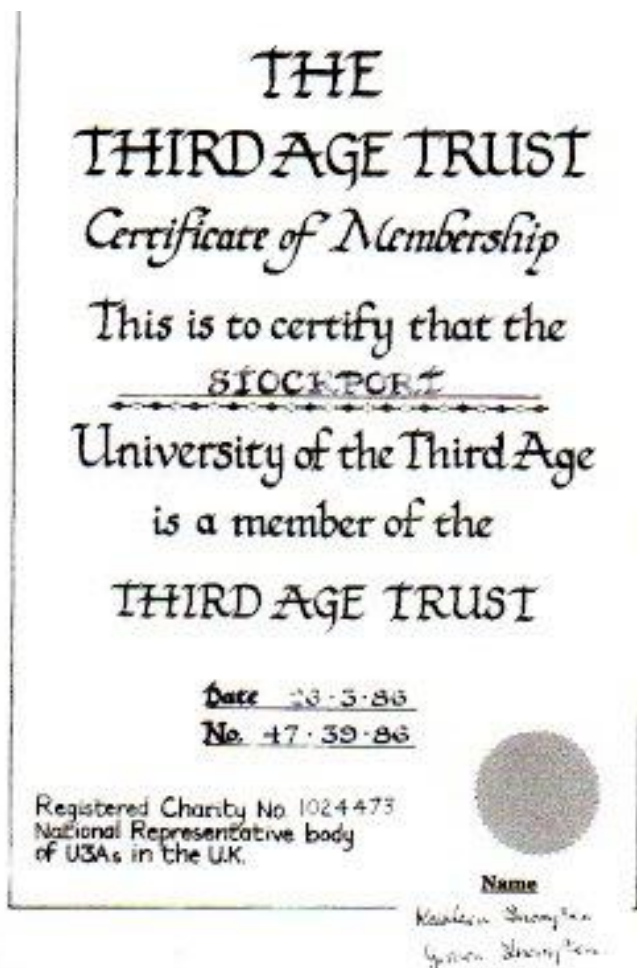


UP2DATE



MAGAZINE AUGUST 2026

40 years ago Stockport U3A came into existence and here is the certificate to prove it.



STOCKPORT U3A OR STOCKPORT u3a AS ITS KNOWN TODAY

(With thanks to Jean Budd who, in 2001 produced "Great Oaks.....A brief History of Stockport U3A")

The U3A originated in France, in Toulouse in 1972 where it was closely linked to the university. In Britain it was decided that there was already a well-established form of continuing education provided through local authorities. So, the idea of U3A as a self-help or mutual aid university was born.

How did Stockport U3A get started? Mary Shepperd read an article about the U3A in a local newspaper. She contacted the national office asking for advice to start a group. Two meetings were funded and addressed by a representative of the northern office resulting eventually with the founding of Stockport U3A on 26.03.86. At this point there were 33 members and meetings were held members' homes until it was discovered that accommodation could be provided at the Dialstone Centre. The first constitution was drawn up in 1988 and the second followed in 1993. With initially only a small number of members there were financial concerns especially when Stockport council started charging for the rooms. Funds were raised from Jumble Sales, Plant Sales, Car Treasure Hunts and even a Car Boot Sale. Some members held coffee mornings and sold hand made greetings cards.

In addition to the main monthly meeting being held at the Dialstone Centre many of the groups met there. There was also an onsite café and many of our present members talk of spending the day there, group in the morning, lunch with a second group in the afternoon. Stockport U3a remained at Dialstone Centre until 2011 when the site was sold for house building and we moved to Trinity Church on Bramhall Lane. This move meant that other rooms had to be found for the group meetings because there was only room for the main meeting. This is when we started our links with Stockport Sunday School to name but one. 2020 brought us to the end of our links with Trinity, it was decided to close the church and to sell the land. When after Covid in July and August 2011 we were finally allowed to meet in large groups for social

activities we moved for a short time to the Brookdale in Bramhall before finally moving to Hazel Grove Methodist Church in April 2022.

By 1988 there were five interest groups, this grew to eight in 1989 and by 2009 to twenty-one. At this moment in time, if my addition skills are correct, we have twenty-six interest groups, though I may have cheated as I have included the four book groups as four. However, although the number of groups remains similar the subjects on offer have changed over time. Some groups, for example the walking groups, the Poetry group and Music Appreciation have been around for a longtime, with different leaders. The Art group is another long-time group, but as interests change so did the group's name, from "Art" to "Art and Craft" to "the Handcrafters". As with those who enjoyed dramatic arts, with "Culture Vultures" changing to "Culture Quest" and now "A Little Bit of Culture". There was a Holiday group before the Travel group took over that responsibility, indeed an off shoot of the Holiday group were the "Long Haul" trips which went to China (1997), Australia (1999) and Canada (2001). History started off as a local history group until members whose historical interests were varied widened the scope of topics. Tai Chi meets weekly and so popular has it become that a second class has now been started. There was at one time a Pub Lunch group. Science and Technology was a very popular group., as was Wildlife.

The first book Group was started in 1997 and now we have four different groups. Languages including French, German and Spanish have had their day. Food Appreciation is always a popular choice. There has been Gardening, Computer, Discussion, Art History, weekly Bowling, and a Singing group. In more recent years the new additions are Canasta, Scrabble, Music Making, Family History, Strollers, Line Dancing, Cribbage, Play Reading, Rummikub, Cryptic Crossword and the Sunday Club. I apologise at this point for any groups I have not mentioned. The change over in the subject matter of the interest groups demonstrates the changing interests of the group leaders.

And none of this would be possible without the Committee and the volunteers who work at their various duties linked to this. Without the Committee Stockport u3a would cease to exist.



Dialstone Lane Centre

Trinity Methodist



Brookdale

Hazel Grove Methodist Church



MY FIRST TIME AT THE U3A

After losing my husband my sister, who is a member in Somerset e-mailed pauline and put my name forward to join. On my arrival Pauline made me feel very welcome and I have met lots of friends and joined many groups. It has opened a new world for me.

Liz Whittleworth

MARGARET JAMES

When my husband died three years ago, I found being on my own very lonely until my daughter -in-law suggested I join my local u3a in Hazel Grove and it was the best decision I have ever made.

I have joined the groups that appeal to me. Everyone is so friendly and I have made some lovely friends.

The Group leaders do an amazing job organising everything and are to be praised for their hard work.

U3a has certainly made a big difference to my life.

GAYNOR McCONNELL

I joined the u3a on the recommendation of a person at Church. Having lived in Canada for 30 years, I was looking forward to meet people and make friends.

I enjoy the talks at the general meetings and have started to learn about the local area through Amblers, A Little bit of Culture and the Sunday Group.

Through the Book Group I have Found a true friend, someone similar minded who shares outings and experiences with me.

I would recommend the Stockport u3a to anyone looking for an interesting and friendly group.



Friendship at an Easter Food Appreciation with Beryl masquerading as a chicken.

U3A- MY JOURNEY SO FAR

I am curious by nature- so “University of the Third Age” sparked my interest.

University implies learning. I didn’t experience it until I was thirty, and a mother, spending three years at Manchester and then a year at Salford. In those days we were called “Mature” students, and we didn’t have to pay fees!

A few years later Keele Uni beckoned me, for a Professional Degree. And in 2025, curiosity again brought me to my first u3a meeting. A bit overwhelmed at first by the number of members and the variety of groups and friendly people. Starting slowly, I have joined the Family History Group, enjoying the outings as well.

Now in my 70’s I am of the Third age, still learning, still curious.

G. Davies

On the Bus ready for an Amble



BARBARA BOWDEN

I started u3a at Dialstone Lane School.

The first time I thought I had stepped into Tiviot Dale Church as Mr. Marshall, John and Enid Price, May Elliot and a few more whose names I can't remember. I had to wait two years before I could start.

One trip I remember well was a trip run by Sheila Fleming initially for the Family History group. We stayed at a lovely hotel outside of London and all travelled down on a brand-new coach on its first trip. Driving through Macclesfield we all heard a crash, one of the windows had smashed. We had to go back to base and get on another coach.

Lots of the group went to the family records at Kew, whilst others went to Kew Gardens and Hampton Court Palace. We all had a good weekend. The journey home took hours, we arrived in Stockport late and some of us walked up Mile End Lane together, both of us, Joan Davies, Joan Motison to name a few.

KEN

I joined u3a because Barbara had joined so we could do things together.



Music Appreciation at Stockport Sunday School

JEAN HOLLINGSWORTH

I joined the u3a twenty years ago after being on the waiting list for a few months. This was because at the time the meetings were held at the Dialstone Centre in Offerton and, due to the size of the room, membership was limited to 200.

Over the years I have enjoyed many day trips to places I probably would never have visited of my own accord. Some places which immediately spring to mind are the National Arboretum, Port Sunlight, Saltaire, the Halifax Piece Hall and Dalemain Marmalade Festival in Cumbria. Also, Brodsworth Hall near Doncaster with its beautiful gardens and the nearby garden centre where we enjoyed the biggest scones I have ever seen. And not forgetting nearer to home, the wonderful Rochdale Town Hall.

These are just a few of the places I have enjoyed, so thank you u3a.



One of the Groups at Saltaire.

JOAN DAVIES

When Michael and I applied to join the u3a there was a 3 year waiting list. I first heard about the movement from friends. It sounded just the ticket as we had just retired. We were already active in our local church, but as self-starters needed something extra. Being on a waiting list was frustrating. However, one day there was a knock on the door. It was Marion, the membership secretary, wanting to know if Michael was fit, active and able to climb ladders and thus able to help Brian Jones who was the go-to man, setting up all classes at Dialstone Centre. Brian was at almost every group meeting, setting up tables, getting out the chairs, setting up computers, information boards and anything else that needed doing. I readily volunteered Michael and we were in.

Joining the u3a was one of the best and most positive things we did with the extra time that we had on our hands. We threw ourselves into it. The group subjects got our brains working again and the social outings and holidays were so enjoyable.

I joined the committee as Secretary when the previous secretary, Donald Chare, surprised the membership by resigning and said that we would cease to operate without a secretary. I could barely operate a computer which was very testing. It has been a privilege serving on the committee the last few years as Chair. I think that the more you put into something like the u3a the more you get out of it.

The u3a was a God send when Michael died. The friendship and support was wonderful. Someone had a supporting message slipped into my pocket on my first outing after his death and Ruth even shared a bedroom with me on my first solo holiday. Where else apart from family would that happen?

As long as I am able, I will support this wonderful institution.



40 YEARS REMEMBERING

I was encouraged to put my name down on the U3A waiting list as there was a very long waiting list, about two years at the time. Eventually, the day arrived to join. What excitement, like the first day at school! I knew quite a lot of new members already but was made to feel so welcome by everyone.

I joined the brilliant Gardening group having talks and visiting some beautiful gardens, I learnt a lot. Also joined the Short Walks where I enjoined the friendship and the places visited, but walking has never been my strong point. The Travel group was another long established, very organised group. I enjoyed trips to countries I had never heard of from the comfort of a chair. Also, many outings and superb holidays, both at home and abroad. The History group was yet another group I enjoyed. A very local affair plus day trips. When Peter finally joined, my scope was enlarged! Science and Technology and Geology were added. Sometimes I even understood what was going on! Food Appreciation has been offered to us food loving people for many, many years- in fact for ever. We have had the most wonderful food experiences and fun with originally Beryl and Ron Emerson. They both put their heart and soul into providing so much fun and laughter on so many special occasions. Wonderful times. Now Gill and Margaret run it with as much enthusiasm and fun with excellent venues and food.

My first membership card is dated 2002. Is it my first? – not sure! Stockport u3a has changed a lot with some groups gone, and new groups added, but the ethos of friendship and the enjoyment has continued. Many friends have been made, and sadly a lot we have lost, but we continue to enjoy everything the u3a has to offer. Thank you to all the leaders of groups for their unstinting hard work over the years. So, to all you new members- get stuck in and make it your u3a for the future.

Dorothy Prydderch



Group photograph at the Kelpies in Scotland while on holiday with the Travel Group.

MY TIME WITH STOCKPORT U3A

I can't believe it, but I joined Stockport u3a in the March of 2004! Wow that's over 20 years ago. I have to say it was a slightly different organisation then and many members have been with the U3A (as it was known then) more or less since its inception. I joined as a bit of a youngster, having found myself with an empty nest as my two creatures had gone off to uni.

I had heard of the University of the Third Age before then as my sister, Monica, had volunteered to teach Art to "seniors" attending the Università'della Terza Eta' in Rovereto, where she lives.

A friend, widowed like me, had worked at Stockport College and she told me about Stockport u3a as quite a number of her colleagues from the College were members already.

I contacted Marion Cunliffe, the membership secretary at the time, and she said there was a waiting list, but she would take my details and get back to me once there were places available. A few months later she contacted me to offer a place at the Annual lunch, which I of course accepted. I went along with my friend Chris who had suggested the u3a, and there met a number of members who have become great friends over the years.

Stockport u3a has a 40-year history now. I happened to be Chairman when we celebrated our 30-year anniversary. There was a photo printed in the U3A matters magazine at the time, of the Mayor of Stockport and me standing before the Open Meeting. (I had my mouth open, so I was probably talking!) but the caption underneath stated, "The Mayor and Mayoress of Stockport attend the 30-year anniversary of Stockport U3A." Some of my cousins, who happen to be members of other u3as, emailed me asking "We didn't know you were the Mayoress of Stockport!?" Problems with incorrect information in the media!!

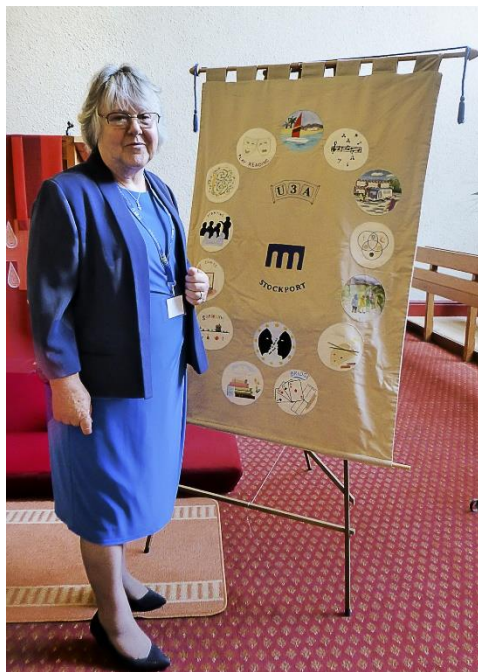
As well as being Chairman for 5 years, I also helped Mary Moon with Culture Quest and took over from her when she was unable to

continue. I ran that group for 10 years or so. We saw so many wonderful performances in Manchester, Salford and a few times even going to the Crucible in Sheffield. I took over from Ron and Beryl to run the Wildlife group with the help of Len and Sylvia Massey. Some great talks and interesting visits, occasionally by coach, at other times more locally, self-drive. I have been a member of the History group from the start. Such a great group to be a member of. Over the years I have given group talks on different historical subjects and in recent years organised self-drive trips to local places of interest.

Talking about trips, I joined the Travel group and ventured off with them on a number of holidays, which were enjoyable, as although I am a "lone traveller, I was surrounded by good friends! I've given a few talks to the Travel Group and also took part in presentations in the Science and Technology Group. The Family History Group is another group in our u3a which I have enjoyed over the years.

I have always tried to take an active part in all groups I have been a member of. We are all volunteers and the u3a is about helping ourselves to keep active both physically and mentally as we grow older. The Committee and the Group Co-ordinators need our help to run the u3a and without that help, it is extremely difficult to keep the organisation going and to thrive as it should.

Isabella Collinson



WHAT HAS THE U3A MEANT TO ME?

What has the u3a meant to me? So many things, it has been a lifeline after so many years restricting activities due to hospital appointments and treatments with my husband. I have made many new friends while catching up with others I hadn't seen for a long time. I've also enjoyed visits to new places, and I've learnt new skills (or attempted some). Holidays to new parts of the country have also been very enjoyable. All in all, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time in the u3a thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who do such a good job in running the group.

Linda Braid

BERYL EMERSON

U3a can be compared to a warning triangle- red and dangerous to ignore. One side represents the mind and keeping your brain active. Another side represents fitness and health. The third is socialising. Our u3a embraces all these aspects. I have been a member since 1995 and enjoyed the triangle leading and participating in different groups. Linguists have had the opportunity of learning French, German and Spanish. Science and Technology monthly meetings were popular, and some members joined an annual seminar for four days in Abergavenny. Stockport College used to arrange summer schools for u3as and there is still a summer school annually which I attended in Chester and York.

The Art History group introduced members to varied works of art, painting, sculpture, and architecture.

In 2002 the first Computer group was set up. Cast off computers were acquired and set up in Brian Jones' garage which he had converted to a computer suite. The group started by taking computers apart and moved onto programming. It was so popular that soon three different groups were running.

A Discussion group covering many topics, excluding religion and politics, gave members an opportunity of expressing their opinions. Also, a Public Speaking group gave confidence of standing up in front of a group and projecting your voice. The Genealogy group originally started as a house group and was the forerunner of our present Family History group.

The Wildlife group embraced visits to bird reserves, a falconry display. Bampton Cliffs, Chester Zoo, bat walks, and the Manchester Museum where we adopted a frog. There were presentations on butterflies, the birds and the bees.

An Outings group to locations like the Jewish Museum, the Midland Hotel and the Old refuge Building. Blue Badge coach trips, sailings, National Gardens, scarecrow festival, and a walk across Morecambe Bay were included in the programme. The outings always included lunch or afternoon tea.

The Culture Vultures later called Culture Quest had regular followers to theatres and a variety of productions. For a while we had a Film Group.

Some members with specific interests were prepared to run a short course and these included medieval English literature, Shakespeare, comparative religions and geology. If you have a specific interest in a subject, consider sharing your enthusiasm.

Our walking groups to support our health needs are geared to all levels of fitness with plenty of friendly chatter. Annually in the summer we had a walkers' challenge one of which was walking up the Great Orme at Llandudno. We also had a walking holiday in Jersey.

There is nothing more social than sharing a meal together A Food Appreciation group (FAGS!) to cater for gastronomes was started in 1998 and included visits to many ethnic restaurants, a turkey and tinsel weekend, medieval banquet, beer and chocolate visit to Belgium, rhubarb festival, making Bakewell puddings, Yorkie Bar trip, and a marmalade festival.

Our singing for pleasure group was very popular, and we all enjoyed their voices when our Christmas meeting consisted of various groups doing a turn. The more memorable of these were the German group's pantomime and the Computer group's leaders doing a sand dance.

In the days before I Phones, we produced a U3A calendar with pictures of the various groups. Another annual event was the photographic competition when a subject was selected, and three different photos could be submitted. Subsequently we then had Photography group. For those with green fingers the Gardening group met monthly with interesting horticultural talks and visits to gardens.

I joined Stockport u3a in 1995 when we met in the Dialstone Centre and could attend a meeting in the morning, have lunch and attend another meeting in the afternoon. I have loved my meetings with the concept of the more you put into something the more you get out of it.

Happy 40th Birthday Stockport u3a. May you continue to prosper with enthusiastic members introducing fresh ideas.



The Royal Jubilee Party

KATHLEEN THOMPSON

I joined Stockport U3A in September 1989 and have been a member for 37 years. It has been interesting to see the group growing from a fairly, small group to the size it is today.

When I joined, Albert Hopper was the chairman, he and his wife Sylvia were in the Art group which was the first group I joined. Albert gave talks at Stockport College to retirement groups. Through these talks we gained some new members. Albert kindly donated his fee to group funds.

Wyn Thompson was our next chairman, and she was instrumental in getting us a grant which was very welcome.

When the Stockport U3A had grown in numbers, Phil Royds introduced some different things within the Art group. We made a lovely banner which was on show at the open meetings for some time. (Barbara Marriot was the last holder I know of). Jean Jones taught us calligraphy. We had a small craft group at Dialstone library for a while.

I eventually joined the Committee and was Treasurer for 9 years. A thing the Committee did in my time was liaising with the staff from Stockport College to set up some summer courses at the college for us. I had my first dabble with the computer at one of these! In the time I was on the Committee I recall going to a meeting about the forming of areas. Another time we went to a meeting at a chapel in Marple where they were hoping to start a group. Someone from the "top" came to speak and as a result Marple group was formed.

I have been with Art and Craft group all these years and took over as the leader in 1999 from Joan Cook. I handed over to Bernice Davis a few years ago.

Over the years I have been a member of quite a number of groups, Tai Chi, Singing, Play Reading and Bridge to mention a few. Paul Cariss and Peggy, his wife ran a casual group going for a pub lunch. You just went if you felt like it. They joke about how many pubs they went to over a number of years. I had visits to places of interest, for example to the Elizabeth Gaskell House, the Victoria Baths and the Lowry. Joyce Brocklehurst along with Paul Cariss started the first Travel group, John Hayes did outings and John Price an Archaeology group. But my worsened hearing has now limited what I go to.

It has been a lovely part of my life being a member as along with the groups I have participated in, I have been on numerous holidays at home and abroad and a great number of day trips.



Bernice, Kathleen and Joyce with a display of items produced by the Art and Craft Group.

MY JOURNEY WITH THE U3A

As Dylan Thomas started Under Milk Wood

To begin..... at the beginning

A long time ago, I'd been thrown out by my employer, as no longer needed on the voyage, at age 53½. Having been a salesman all my life, sitting at home with my feet up wasn't an option for me. So, I set up a small business selling dreams.

U3A required that members were available to participate in the activities offered.....Pensioners! I was able to meet that requirement.

However, at that time it was run by the Methodist Mafia, whereas now, it's an extension of Stepping Hill Hospital. Things change.

There was a waiting list of about two/ three years, and my wife, Dorothy, had her name on the waiting list. A member of the M/M discreetly approached me to point out that I wouldn't be able to attend social functions as her guest. As I was known to attend the opening of envelopes, my name was quietly added with Dorothy's.

Thus, the journey began, and I've never knowingly missed any event involving strong drink.... Methodists have been able to drink since the Act of Union of 1923, but not on the church premises!

However, it wasn't all just self-indulgence. Oh no!

Education was mentioned. I'd done O-level Geology as a fun subject during A-levels, and there it was a Geology Group. 'Thought, "I'll 'ave some of that".

There were outdoor overnight breaks with that, and day-long field trips.

This led to my becoming the auditor for the Manchester Geology Society. Thus, more folk to interact with, indirectly arising from U3A.

Then, there was a group dealing with Local History, 'Always a fascinating subject, particularly to an ethnic-minority immigrant. Incomers always seem more interested in the locality than the locals..... 'suppose they take it all for granted. This provided me with the opportunity to give talks for the education, and entertainment, of the group. I just love being at the front performing, away from Dorothy's restraint. 'Should have been in the circus, really.'

I was then recruited by the Longer Walks Group. I'd never walked for leisure, but being from a rural community was used to walking from one village to another. School had been a couple of miles away. Not forgetting that I was twenty years younger....no, not at school! Ten to twelve miles were undertaken on a Friday – with a pub lunch, with about a dozen-and-a-half others, with Badminton after tea. 'Couldn't do that now.'

Those with more restricted abilities held short walks on a Wednesday morning. The attraction here was the pub lunch afterwards. It was, however, a great way to explore the locality.

There was, and still is, a Food Appreciation Group. 'Like manna from Heaven. Dorothy, and I, are both social animals, though very different in temperament. We attend all events.

Just to keep our noddles working there was the Science group. Most were fairly recently retired from scientific careers, and able to pull favours from ex-colleagues, to provide speakers. A Methodist Mafia contact at the MRI was able to have doctoral students talk to us about developments in the medical research community. As my Mum always maintained," It's who you know....&etc."

Where the Science group differed, was in their outdoor visits to factories. We visited a brewery, and a manufacturer of rocket fuel. 'Couldn't tell the difference, as they were both computer controlled inclusive self-contained processes, and there was nothing to see.....and no free samples from either. I

could have bleached my hair with the rocket fuel, I suppose. 'Wouldn't need much now!

A pal made a biscuit cutter in the shape of the Greek letter Pi. For the December meeting one year, I gave a talk on Pi, and Pies. Dorothy made mince pies with the lids in the shape of Pi. Whilst I spoke for ninety-minutes, it was a jocular occasion looking at the fun side of numbers. Most of us have a talk inside us.

The preparation for such talks is quite engrossing, and a voyage of discovery.

Whilst not a member of the Gardening group, I was a groupie. And it was another way of meeting people, particularly at the outdoor visits.

The more social direction that our U3A was taking wasn't to everybody's liking, as some wanted a more educational erudite approach. In fact, an ex-headmistress took over the chairmanship and put a stop to the Christmas Concert being a joyful experience. Auditions were held by her. The larger-than-life characters who provided the colour and humour weren't having that and no longer performed. It fizzled-out soon after. My first experience was of the Sand Dance performed by our own "Wilson, Keppel, & Betty"", 'never forgotten it, and will be playing Canasta with "Betty" tomorrow.

Speaking of which, several new sedentary interests have been introduced by more recent members, of which Rummikubs, and Canasta, have occupied my attention. Once again, it's all about interaction with other human beings.....I exclude Bridge players from that genus.

Last, but not least, for me, were the holidays organised by S & J Tours. These were two of our members, who each year organized, with McCarthys, a coach holiday. They were marvellous, and have long ceased, as have they both in 2023.

Looking back, I've not mentioned names, as most are most of the folk are no longer active members, and the names would not rekindle memories with many current members.

As with many things in life, you get out what you put in.

Over the last twenty years, or thereabouts, it's been a very rewarding journey.

To paraphrase Fanny Crosby's famous hymn's chorus

"That was my story, that was my song".

Peter Prydderch

Sand Dance? Sadly before my time and minus Peter



SHEILA FLEMING

U3a has enabled me to re-connect with friends from my youth, make lots of new friends, share my interests in music and family history and try lots of new activities.

My late father, Eric Marshall, was a keen member of Stockport u3a. He joined shortly after my mother died and said he found u3a to be a lifesaver. At that time there was a waiting list, so he put my name on the waiting list 2 years before I retired. Even so, it was almost 6 months after I retired that I was offered a place. We went to my first meeting together and I was amazed to see so many people that I knew from my younger days and hadn't seen for years. It was wonderful to be able to re-connect with them. Sadly, by then, my father was in poor health, so we were unable to enjoy many u3a activities together.

Within a couple of years of joining the u3a I was a committee member (where I served for 6 years) and I've also been able to share my interests in music and family history by acting as group leader. I've now been a member for over 17 wonderful years. I've made lots of new friends, been on holidays and day trips, and tried lots of new activities.

Thank you so much, Dad.



RUTH FAULKNER

I heard about the u3a purely by accident. My friend, Gillian, and I were on a trip with Stockport Horticultural Society and overheard Judith Curry and Kay Jones talking about some of the activities they were doing with the u3a. We asked them to tell us more, said that it sounded good fun, but as we both had a couple of years to retirement thought nothing more about it. Imagine my surprise when I received a phone call from Marion Cuncliffe. "Who?" She told me my name had come to the top of the list. "What list?" and she could offer me a place with the u3a. "Where?" Luckily the penny dropped immediately, and I accepted saying that I would come to my first main meeting on 1st September. What Gillian and I didn't know was that Judith had put our names down soon after she had told us about the u3a and we were both offered places at the same time. Gillian had to refuse as she and her newly retired husband were moving to Cleveleys for their retirement.

So, I retired from my work as an Early Years' teacher on August 31st and came to my first meeting 1st September. As a teacher I had had the advantage of being in an equal opportunities job and was allowed to retire at 65, and I had pushed to stay an extra 6 months so I could finish with my class, and they didn't have to get used to a new teacher mid- year. As a result, with many women retiring at 60 and very few men in primary education, when I retired, I was the oldest person in the building. When I walked into my first main meeting at the Dialstone Centre my first thought was that everyone was old. (Apologies to anyone who was there that day).

I soon learned that belonging to the u3a kept all our minds and bodies active, and that age was just a number. Everyone was welcoming, but unlike other people whose stories I have read whilst compiling this magazine, I didn't meet up with a lot of old friends, but I very soon made many new ones. The groups I initially joined were History, Family History, Short Walks and Book Group No2. I was given my first book on 1st September, so was sort of ready when I attended my first meeting at the end of the month. The Short Walks made me learn a lot about the local area as I studied Cheshire and Derbyshire maps for the best route to places I had never been to before. I was given a

good start in Family History by my mum who had compiled a family tree many years before (without the aid of a computer and website). Although on one visit to a records office, the gentleman helping me, on finding out my grandparents' surnames, asked had I thought of taking up knitting. The names were Williams, Jones, Smith and Hulme.

History was my main love. I enjoyed the meetings and eventually the trips. When Enid Price and Wendy Robinson gave up the leadership it was Mike Stoney and I who took over the reins and I continued in that role until Joan Davies and her team took over last year. Mike and I also started a different type of walking group when we both found that the short walks were a little bit too much, but we didn't want to give up walking. We formed the Strollers group with shorter, preferably flatter walks and it proved to be successful although finding shorter walks was something of a problem. This group continued after Covid although with new leaders. I also started the Cryptic Crossword group, not because I was good at crosswords and wanted to share my skills but because although I enjoyed a general knowledge crossword, I had no idea where to start with a cryptic. The group has been going over ten years. The original concept of those who could helping those who can't proved to be frustrating for all concerned and we soon broke up into like ability groups. And I still enjoy preparing for and attending the group.

Over the fifteen years I have been a member of many groups and have gained experience and friends in all. These include, Computers, Photography, Travel, Food appreciation, Art and Craft and Wildlife. I have been on trips, great holidays to places I would not have gone on my own and attended short courses both with our u3a and at Stockport College.

I was a member of the Committee for a number of years extending my length of time when Covid interrupted the smooth running of things. And this magazine, I have been compiling for over eleven years and enjoyed the experience greatly. The hardest part is to get people to put contributions in in the first place.

I have been a member for fifteen years, have enjoyed every minute of it. I've made lots of new friends, learnt lots of new skills and extended my knowledge in many areas. And I agree with a statement made in a number of these articles, that the more you put into the u3a the more you get out of it.



PATRICIA COOPER

I don't think I could ever be described as a "People Person". I have always been happy in my own company and never felt lonely. While I almost never reach out, I appreciate those who reach out to me, as long as it without judgement or expectation.

However, I would always, if I were asked, recommend anyone to join the u3a. No matter your personality, introvert or extrovert, you will find a group just for you.

After I had a knee replacement, I joined the Tai Chi group for a while to help with my rehabilitation. Though I did not carry on, I did find it useful. I enjoy the History group, especially the trips out. I like the talks and indeed I have helped my sister with some research and planning the talks she has done. You never know, this introvert may even join other groups in the future.

I would really like to thank the group leaders for organising the groups and trips and looking after us. It's something I could never do and appreciate these people all the more for that. The u3a would be a poorer organisation without the kind of people who run groups and the committee. You are all to be commended for giving us your time and your talents.

Thank you.



MEMORIES

I joined the u3a in 1999. My first class was to learn tatting; this I knew about but had not been taught. This was a ten-week course and at the end I decided to join the Art group. I had never painted so I bought myself a child's set with some paints, a brush, a rubber and a ruler. I arrived at class with a postcard to copy and a piece of paper. I left like a child from nursery waving a picture. I went on to improve with the help of the members who advised when needed. I even won 1st prize for a painting I put in a competition.

We also went to classes on Geology. This has left very good memories. We went on a trip to Whitby for five days. Daytime we were looking at cliffs, rocks and old mineral sites. And at night we went to the Abbey bell ringing. But the funniest memory was Robin Hood's Bay. The carpark was at the top of the hill, and we were going searching for jet on the beach! We had to wear hard hats and carry a hammer. Imagine twenty people walking single file down to the beach, we looked like dwarfs.

Geoff joined the Computer group, and after many classes he did build his own. We both look back on all the things we have done. Bridge, Bowling, Art and Craft, Science, Music, History of Art, Short Walks, Long Walks, Food Appreciation and Line Dancing.

Geoff did the signing on at door at the main meeting, and I did the kitchen teas for thirteen years.

Joyce and Geoff Goodwin



MEMORIES

Groups and
Holidays.



I want to thank everybody who has contributed to this special, longer edition of our magazine, the one that belongs to Stockport u3a alone. It has taken longer to put together because many of the contributors are happier with a pen than with the keyboard, but it has been as usual been a pleasure. I have learnt so much about our u3a. One point I would like to make is that during our 40 years the way we write U3A/u3a has changed, both are used in this magazine.

I want to thank Vivian Bath especially who has dived into her wonderful collection of photographs to give us this wonderful collection of memories. The Sand Dance came from Beryl Emerson and the photos of our venues from my old friend Google. Kathleen Thompson lent me books linked with Stockport u3a.

The next edition will be available in November, and I am accepting pieces for it now.

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**Finally, everyone talks of the friendships they have made.
Long may that continue.**