

Cheadle and Gatley u3a

January 2026 Newsletter

The u3a is a national organisation for men and women who are no longer raising a family or working full-time. Cheadle & Gatley u3a has over 200 members who enjoy talks from entertaining speakers, outings, social events, fun and friendship.

We have 28 activity groups of like-minded people to further your current interests or tempt you into trying something different. Learn, laugh, live!



Cryptic Crosswords group



Local History group visit John Rylands Library



Explorers at Portmeirion



Gardening group at Ness Gardens



Dance group



Horse in Stable, a Watercolour by Linda Corry



Long Walks group at Sale Water Park

Message from the Chair

Margaret Seaby

As I write this, the weather has turned decidedly wintry after a mild autumn, so it seems like a good time to reflect back over our last six months and enjoy reading about what our members got up to.



I was delighted that 120 members could attend our u3a Christmas celebration on the 10th December when we enjoyed live entertainment, a buffet with hot drinks and prosecco, plus a raffle.

Through your generous donations, we raised an excellent £302.07 for our chosen charity: Francis House Children’s Hospice.

On behalf of you all, I would like to thank everyone on our u3a Committee for the time and effort they put in to making our meetings and activities successful. I would also like to thank all the Conveners and their helpers who are the backbone of the organisation without whom none of this would work.

Hope you enjoyed your Christmas with family and friends. Good health (and enough wealth) for 2026.



Gatley Festival - July 2025

Cheadle and Gatley u3a was represented at the Gatley Festival on July 6th. The weather behaved itself and there were many visitors from the whole South Manchester area.

We owe Elaine Bowker many thanks for putting together a rota of volunteers who chatted to enquirers and promoted the u3a as an organization supporting learning, community and enjoyment for those of us with lots of life experiences.



Monthly Meetings

Heather Wilkinson

Meetings are on the **Second Wednesday: 1:15 for a prompt 1.30 start** (every month except August) at the United Reformed Church Hall, Elm Road, Gatley SK8 4LY.

The monthly open meeting is where to find out about all our activities and visits, to hear speakers talk on a wide range of subjects, as well as a good opportunity to socialise with friends over refreshments.

From July to December 2025, we had a variety of speakers like Michael Billington who talked about the launch of the National Health Service in 1948 at Park Hospital, Davyhulme and Catherine Faulkner, a retired minister from Urmston, who entertained us with amusing anecdotes of ‘four funerals & a wedding’.



‘The Launch of the NHS’ at Park Hospital, Davyhulme



‘Four Funerals and a Wedding’

Other speakers included Marilyn Shalks on a return visit and there were contributions from two of our members, Batsheva Samely on setting up Fare Shop and John Barnard on his many travels particularly the Amazon Basin. I hope you will find the speakers at our Monthly Meetings for the next 6 months just as interesting! They are:

January 14 th	Telephone Boxes	Professor Nigel Linge
February 11 th	Bramall Hall through the Ages	Howard Green
March 11 th	Francis House Children’s Hospice	
April 8 th	A World of Mules and Minders	Brian Topping
May 13 th	Chutney and Cheer	Melanie Latham
June 10 th	AGM & Refreshments	
July 8 th	The Magic of Musicals	Marilyn Shalks



Media Working Group

The u3a is a national organisation, set up for people who are no longer working full-time.
 People like you, or your parents, who are looking to spend their spare time doing something interesting and enjoyable with like-minded people.
Get in touch and find out more
 Visit our website - cheadle-gatley.u3a.site
 or talk to Marian on 07914028502

A Media working group has been formed bringing together our publicity, website and newsletter teams. Its aim is to create a coordinated approach to raise awareness of our Cheadle and Gatley u3a in the local community and attract new members.

In July, a cut-down version of the newsletter was produced, plus flyers and a bookmark designed and printed for distribution at our stand on Gatley Hill at the Gatley Festival.

We also now have our own Cheadle and Gatley u3a Facebook page which promotes our weekly Interest Groups. This information is also posted on the Gatley Facebook Group and the Cheadle and Gatley Forum.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, please contact Tina Kelly.

GROUP NEWS

Book Group 1

Lesley Witton 428 1522

I suggested Robert Louis Stevenson as our choice for July having recently visited an exhibition about his life and works in Edinburgh. We all thoroughly enjoyed tales of derring-do and moral conflict.

In August we read novels by Beryl Bainbridge. She tends to write about dysfunctional characters and some of us could empathise with them and find some poignancy in their stories while others found them irritating!

Edith Wharton was our choice for September. Her social satire and moral criticism of her age were much appreciated.

For October we decided to read novels written in the last five years. A wide range of topics was covered in the books chosen and all were recommended. They were: *Creation Lake* by Rachel Kushner; *Held* by Anne Michaels; *The Safekeep* by Yael van der Wouden; *The Woman behind the Door* by Roddy Doyle; *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* by Gabrielle Zevin and *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig.

Our choice for November was Daphne du Maurier. The general consensus was that her stories were 'too big, too dramatic and too Gothic and her characters were all caricatures'. Not particularly complimentary, though we did concede that the stories were quite readable and there was some good description in the settings.

We are reading novels by Anita Brookner to discuss in December.

If you'd like to widen the scope of your reading, you'd be very welcome to join us.

Book Group 2

Jean Lawrowitsch 428 9678

We read a variety of books selected for us by the Stockport Library Service. They encourage us to read books we haven't considered before, including the occasional non-fiction book and both contemporary and classic novels. We learn about the different authors and find out interesting facts about their life and work. We also talk about other books we have enjoyed and would recommend.

We meet to discuss them on the first Tuesday of the month, 1.30pm at Cheadle Library.

Unfortunately, we do not have any spaces currently available in the Book group.



Book Group 3

Margaret Seaby 221 0944

We continue to have lively discussion about the books we read together from Stockport Library Reading Groups Service and other books we have read individually and recommend to each other. Group members research and select titles from the extensive list of titles available to us; we aim to extend our range of reading matter by selecting writers we have not read before as well as classics we have not yet read.

Here is a list of titles recently read:

<i>Songbirds</i>	Christy Lefteri
<i>Blood Orange</i>	Harriet Tyce
<i>Bottled Goods</i>	Sophie Van Llewyn
<i>Remember Me</i>	Charity Norman
<i>Case Study</i>	Graeme Macrae Burnet
<i>Fragile</i>	Sarah Hilary

If you would like to join us, please contact me.

Bridge**Linda Ewing 312 5072**

The Bridge group has been running very well. Membership has increased lately and we regularly have four tables. We have all enjoyed the social contact as well as the Bridge.

We are a very friendly group and would welcome any new members. If there were enough beginners wanting to come along, I am sure we could arrange some tuition.

We meet at St James Church Hall on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 1.30pm. If you would like to join us, please ring me on the number above. Anyone who would like to come along for a visit to see what it is like, then just turn up on the day.

**Card Games****Michelle Slater 07710 883579**

The Card Games group continues to be popular with up to 16 members attending each month.

Members are now confidently playing Canasta and Cribbage but we hope to introduce other games as well. New members are welcome.

Computing**Peter Bayley 282 3468**

This group operates in a low key manner and I have been able to offer advice and assistance to help try and solve those niggly little issues which seem to crop up from time to time, especially with the technology we seem to need to interact with on an almost daily basis.

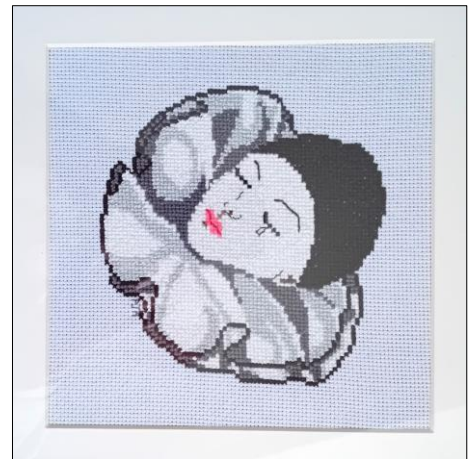
Craft**Pam Allen 971 1880**

We meet monthly on the third Tuesday of the month at 10:30am in a member's home.

We work on our own crafts - currently knitting and cross stitch but we have also done crochet, card making and embroidery.

Members will gladly help you with your crafts offering advice on your projects.

We stop for tea/coffee and biscuits and there's always plenty of chatting! Please come and join us.



'Pierrot' – a cross stitch embroidery by Pam.

Creative Writing**Nigel Bann 491 6835**

The Creative Writing group meets at the house of one of the members on the second Tuesday of the month from 2 to 4pm.

Each member brings along a piece of about 600-1000 words. It can be on any subject, poetry, short stories, report writing, anything that comes to mind. Each person reads their work to the group.

After eleven years of co-ordinating, I have found the following:

- Creative Writing cannot be taught by any of the members, but there are college courses.
- Members write what they know about and are comfortable with.
- Helpful comments only. In the past, criticism has caused disharmony.

If you are interested, please contact me.

Cryptic Crosswords

Jane Lloyd 07713 84 8734

There are seven members in our group and we meet on the second Friday of each month at 10.00am, usually at one of the member's houses but occasionally at a café in Gatley.

As convenor, I provide all the crosswords (and the solutions if needed!).

The puzzles are of varying levels of difficulty and we solve them together, usually three or four puzzles per session.

If you require any further information, please contact me on the above number.



Dance

Elaine Bowker 07833 347231

Our new Interest group has on average, around 25 members who come to dance and have fun. It's from 1.15 pm at the URC on Elm Road, with the doors closing at 1.30pm when the music starts and lasts an hour.

The music is similar to what you would expect at a wedding reception - many of the songs are requested by the members. It is good exercise, good company and good fun - and all for £2! If you'd like to join us, do get in touch with me at the above number.



Explorers

Janet Farrall 428 7883

After another enjoyable and successful year, our group continues to have something on the go every month. That could be inviting you to put your name on a list for our next event, day trip or holiday, to support and donate to Gatley Food Bank, to look at our 'Where We Have Been' book (so ably put together by Norman) or simply to enjoy refreshments and a 'catch up'. Whatever is your choice, you will always be welcomed. The Explorers have enjoyed a variety of day trips during the last six months.



July - Ullswater Cruise

We made our way to the Lake District from Gatley, with a short break at Shap motorway services (voted one of the best in the country). Our destination was Glenridding where we had enough time for a gentle stroll before boarding our boat.

We enjoyed a sedate cruise along Ullswater, taking in the majestic mountain scenery around the lake before disembarking at Pooley Bridge, where we were met by our coach for the journey back home via Penrith.



August – Harewood House

On a very hot summer’s day, members visited Harewood House, exploring both the grounds and the house. We learned that it was constructed between 1759 and 1771 for Edwin Lascelles and funded by wealth from Caribbean plantations and slavery.

The original classical mansion was altered by Sir Charles Barry in the 1840s and the gardens were designed by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown.

The house then became a wartime hospital in the early part of the 20th century. Since the 1980s, the house and gardens have been managed by a charitable trust and housed numerous exhibitions.



September – Portmeirion



Portmeirion

We had a very enjoyable visit to Portmeirion, the private Riviera style village designed and built by Welsh architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis over a period of 50 years from 1925 to 1975.

The village is compact and reasonably accessible. The clever use of arches, slopes and smaller than usual window sizes make it look much larger than it actually is.

Famously, Portmeirion was the village used as the setting for the 1960’s cult TV series ‘The Prisoner’ - a programme watched by many, but understood by few!

Our group explored the many different areas within the village and grounds, including the quayside with its very realistic concrete boat and the woodland complete with Japanese garden.

October – Lake District

The group returned to the Lake District for what was named ‘Autumn Tints’. The lakes and mountains were resplendent in their autumnal colours.

Members took in the views around Keswick and the surrounding area, stopping at Grasmere for lunch, plus time to explore.

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Plans are already being made for 2026, with new locations and events being researched.



Grasmere

### Family History

Linda Corry 428 4094

The Family History group meets in my house off Styal Road. We usually discuss where we have got to in our own research and try to help each other by giving advice. Recently some group members have been giving short presentations to the group about some aspect of family history research.

Currently, as most of us have had our DNA tested, we have been considering DNA matching as a tool for research - and some of us have had success in breaking down 'brick walls', or in confirming that previous research is correct.

If anyone is thinking of taking up family history as a hobby but doesn't know where to start, I can help.



Tatton Park

The Gardening group meet on the 4th Thursday of the month. We car share from Elm Rd URC or occasionally hire a minibus to go on visits to unusual and beautiful gardens and garden centres where we enjoy gathering inspiration. Then we head to their café for drinks and cake. It's always a grand trip out!

In June, we visited Tony Shepherd's garden in Monton, Salford which he, together with his partner Tracey, has transformed into a jungle oasis. The garden features tropical plants like gunneras, bananas and bamboo. And surprisingly, a genuine tuk-tuk!

In July, our visit was to Ness Gardens spread across 64 acres with impressive views of the River Dee. Ness provided us with a diverse range of plants and planting areas, including a fine collection of rhododendron and camellias.



Tony Shepherd's garden

In August, we visited our member Janine Walter's garden. This is a fairly new project for her and included a lovely shaded area provided by multi-coloured sails strung between the trees.



Janine's Garden and a Welcome Cuppa with Biscuits

Then in September, we all ventured to Tatton Park. We were impressed by the Italian garden and delighted in our visit to the 100 year old Japanese garden. We finished our day with walks through the walled kitchen garden, pinetum and rose garden. The orchard was most impressive and we all helped ourselves to the free apples left for us to take.

In October, we were led by Liz making Christmas stars made out of beads. We very proudly took our creations home at the end of the session to display in December.

## German

Marianne Owen 491 3323

The German class is held every third Tuesday of the month from 10 till 12 at Elm Road. The price is £2 and includes coffee and a biscuit. We do not have a teacher but take it in turns to prepare and lead a session. The aim is to improve our spoken German. To achieve this we use games, pictures and role-play. Most lessons also comprise some translation - both ways - and grammar; all in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere.

## History

John Houghton 428 2892

The History group has attracted a couple of additional members to join and we continue to examine interesting events in Nineteenth Century Europe. One of our group describes how we work:

"We choose a topic such as the Early Middle Ages or a country such as India. Then John, our Coordinator and Tom come up with headings starting from the earliest period and working towards more modern times.

Members of the group often volunteer to take a heading, do a bit of research and then give a short 15-30 minute presentation. There is always an interesting discussion to follow. However, there is no pressure to take the lead as the core group of knowledgeable historians enjoy that part while they are equally interested and appreciative when other members volunteer."



November's Meeting

The History of Art group have been studying the life and works of the artist Caravaggio.

Our endeavour coincided with the Event Cinema production featuring the artist, showcasing his life and curating his work.

We encountered a man with an enormous talent. He was arrogant, rebellious and a murderer whose short tempestuous life matched the drama of his works. His pictures were characterised by their almost theatrical lighting.

Caravaggio's paintings were controversial, popular and hugely influential on subsequent generations of artists all over Europe.

In July, we visited Rose Hill Gardens and St Wilfrid's church in Northenden as a follow-up to the talk we had about the Watkin family in June. Few people know about Rose Hill (including some of our members!) and we can certainly recommend it for a lovely walk in the woods and you can also see the memorial to the Watkins. The church is beautiful with lovely windows and you can see the Watkins' graves in the churchyard.

After an August break, in September, I gave an illustrated talk called *Exploring Stockport* which was very well received by our members.

I took us on a tour of the town focusing on lesser known corners. Some people decided to go off later on an exploration themselves!

In October, we had a fascinating tour of the Avro Heritage Museum in Woodford.

It was wonderful to be able to climb up into various cockpits and get some idea of the experience of flying these amazing machines.



Two of our group 'co-piloting' a Nimrod in Woodford!

November brought us a talk about another local location. This time it was the Withington Baths. They have had a chequered history, but there is now a thriving community centre including work spaces, gym and sauna as well as the Edwardian swimming pool on the site. We hope to arrange a visit next year.

Our December outing was a tour of The University of Manchester's renowned John Rylands Library.



A short talk on the Gutenberg Bible



Display Cases in the Reading Room

We have about ten members who work individually on a variety of subjects using pencil, chalks and paints.

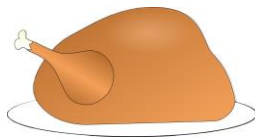
There's an informal and friendly atmosphere but we still work with concentration, seeking inspiration and advice from each other, making it an enjoyable and fruitful experience.

New members are always welcome.



'Lion' in Pencil by Pam Allen

The Poetry group have been joyfully preparing for the festive season with a couple of our festive poems:



### The Turkey Shot Out of the Oven

The turkey shot out of the oven  
And rocketed into the air.  
It knocked every plate off the table  
And partly demolished a chair.

It ricocheted into a corner  
And burst with a deafening boom,  
Then splattered all over the kitchen  
Completely obscuring the room.

It stuck to the walls and the windows.  
It totally coated the floor.  
There was turkey attached to the ceiling,  
Where there hadn't been turkey before.

It blanketed every appliance.  
It smeared ever saucer and bowl,  
There wasn't a way I could stop it,  
That turkey was out of control.

I scrapped and I scrubbed with displeasure  
And thought with chagrin as I mopped,  
That I'd never again stuff a turkey  
With popcorn that hadn't been popped.

By Jack Prelutsky

### Just Doing My Job

I'm one of Herod's Henchmen.  
We don't have much to say,  
We just charge through the audience  
In a Henchman sort of way.

We all wear woolly helmets  
To hide our hair and ears  
And wellingtons sprayed silver  
To match our tin foil spears.

Our swords are made of cardboard  
So blood will not be spilled  
If we trip and stab a parent  
When the hall's completely filled.

We don't look VERY scary,  
We're mostly small and shy  
And some of us wear glasses,  
But we give the thing a try.

We whisper Henchman noises  
While Herod hunts for strangers,  
And then we all charge out again  
Like nervous Power Rangers.

Yet when the play is over  
And Miss is out of breath  
We'll charge like Henchmen through the hall  
And scare our Mums to death.

By Clare Bevan

Basically, we're a happy group who love poetry in all its forms.

**Scrabble****Ann Gane 428 0204**

Our Scrabble Group is friendly and non-competitive – although we still try to win! We usually get between four and five at our fortnightly meetings. We can still accommodate new members and would welcome anyone interested in joining us.

**Short Walks****Stuart Forsyth 491 3592**

The Short Walks group undertakes walks between 4 and 5 miles with very few inclines. If any u3a members would like to join us, they would be made welcome. Recent walks have included Lymm, Marple, Goyt Valley, Delamere Forest and Woodley.

We meet outside the URC church on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 10:00. Then we travel to the area of the walk in our members' cars. If you would like to join but do not have a car, there are usually spare seats in members' cars.

The last 12 months have seen a decline in attendances but with your help, we are hoping that in 2026, we can see an improvement in this.



Vernon Park and River Goyt



Woodley

**Singing for Pleasure****Marjorie Maddison 437 7694**

Hello to you all from your Singing for Pleasure group. We are a group of u3a men and women meeting twice a month on the second and fourth Tuesday starting at one in the afternoon.

Our great leader and pianist Barbara Clark took us on a journey singing songs from 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat', leading on to a medley from 'Les Miserables', plus just for fun 'Kumbaya', 'The Colour of Christmas' and a selection of American songs.

We also open the singing for any songs the choir would like to try. If you like to join us, do come along to a meeting to try us out and enjoy singing for fun and each other's company. Looking forward to meeting you.



Thank you Barbara!



Singing for Pleasure in the URC Hall

**Spanish****Michelle Slater 0771 088 3579**

The Spanish group is trying to continue despite a significant drop in numbers. However, we remain a small but committed and enthusiastic group wanting to improve our ability to speak and understand basic Spanish using various techniques.

We would welcome enquiries from all members with any level of Spanish.

**Strollers****Marianne Owen 491 3323**

We meet twice a month on the 1st and 3rd Mondays at 10.30 at Elm Road. We usually do an hour's walk in a local park such as Fletcher Moss or Bruntwood. Sometimes we just do a walk from Gatley and occasionally, we take the train or bus to walk a little further afield, but always finish with a coffee and a chat.

New members are always welcome.

**Theatre Visits****Chris Bester 376 7909**

Forthcoming amateur productions at our local theatres – 2026.

|                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Brookdale Theatre</b><br>Bramhall<br>0161 302 2302                                          | <i>GOD OF CARNAGE</i><br><i>THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME</i><br><i>THE PRODUCERS</i>                          | Yasmina Reza<br>Simon Stephens (based on novel by Mark Haddon)<br>Mel Brooks                            | Jan 20 <sup>th</sup> to 24 <sup>th</sup><br>Mar 4 <sup>th</sup> to 7 <sup>th</sup><br>Apr 20 <sup>th</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup>                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>CHADS Theatre</b><br>Cheadle Hulme<br>chads.co.uk<br>0333 666 3366<br>(Booking fee applies) | <i>DANGEROUS CORNER</i><br><i>BLACKBIRD</i><br><i>THE BIRTHDAY PARTY</i><br><i>LITTLE GEM</i><br><i>A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM</i>  | J B Priestley<br>David Harrower<br>Harold Pinter<br>Elaine Murphy<br>William Shakespeare                | Jan 24 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup><br>Feb 24 <sup>th</sup> to 28 <sup>th</sup><br>Mar 14 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup><br>Apr 14 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup><br>May 9 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup>                                              |
| <b>Garrick Theatre</b><br>Stockport<br>0333 666 3366<br>(Booking fee applies)                  | <i>PRESSURE</i><br><i>LOVESONG</i><br><i>BRAINSTORM</i><br><i>THE LYING KIND</i><br><i>CLOSER</i><br><i>LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS</i> | David Haig<br>Abi Morgan<br>Garrick Youth Theatre<br>Anthony Neilson<br>Patrick Marber<br>Howard Ashman | Jan 17 <sup>th</sup> to 24 <sup>th</sup><br>Feb 10 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup><br>Feb 19 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup><br>Mar 21 <sup>st</sup> to 28 <sup>th</sup><br>Apr 21 <sup>st</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup><br>May 16 <sup>th</sup> to 23 <sup>rd</sup> |
| <b>Heald Green Theatre</b><br>0161 436 5000                                                    | <i>SHOWSTOPPERS</i><br><i>ROPE</i><br><i>CALENDAR GIRLS</i>                                                                        | Songs, Dance and Cabaret<br>Patrick Hamilton<br>Tim Firth                                               | Feb 17 <sup>th</sup> to 21 <sup>st</sup><br>Apr 7 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup><br>Jun 16 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup>                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Northenden Players</b><br>07846 089035                                                      | <i>A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED</i><br><i>THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME</i><br><i>DRACULA, THE BLOODY TRUTH</i>       | Agatha Christie<br>Simon Stephens (based on novel by Mark Haddon)<br>John Nicholson                     | Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> to 7 <sup>th</sup><br>April 12 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup><br>June 7 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup>                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Players Theatre</b><br>Cheadle Hulme<br>0161 485 1441                                       | <i>WHISKY GALORE</i><br><i>THE GREAT GATSBY</i>                                                                                    | Phillip Goulding<br>F. Scott Fitzgerald                                                                 | Mar 9 <sup>th</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup><br>May 18 <sup>th</sup> to 23 <sup>rd</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Poynton Players</b><br>poyntonplayers.co.uk<br>0333 666 3366<br>(Booking fee applies)       | <i>PACK OF LIES</i><br><i>THINGS I KNOW TO BE TRUE</i><br><i>MURDERED TO DEATH</i>                                                 | Hugh Whitmore<br>Andrew Bovell<br>Peter Gordon                                                          | Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup> to 28 <sup>th</sup><br>Apr 13 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup><br>Jun 8 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup>                                                                                                                                      |

We offer varied walks to suit a range of abilities, mostly 6 miles or so and occasionally up to 8 miles. Car sharing from Gatley Hill House is the normal arrangement. If you would like to join us for fresh air and exercise in marvellous countryside with convivial company, then register your email to receive monthly details of the forthcoming walks, and feel free to come on as many or as few as you wish.

- August: Dunham, Trans-Pennine Trail, Heatley, Bridgewater Canal, Dunham Massey (6 miles)
- September: From Hawk Green via both the Macclesfield and Peak Forest Canals (7.7 miles)
- October: Poynton Coppice and Lyme Park (6 miles)
- November: A shorter walk round Sale Water Park due to icy conditions elsewhere (3½ miles)
- December: Styal Village and the river Bollin with a festive lunch at the Horse & Farrier



The Mill at Dunham Massey



Enjoying Macclesfield Canal



Turflea Lift Bridge - Peak Forest Canal



Above Poynton



A Circuit in the Woods round Sale Water Park



Setting off from the Cross at Styal Village

**Ukulele** **Ian Ewing 312 5072**

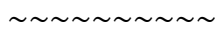
The Ukulele group meet at St James' Church Hall at 2:00 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. There is now a core of 6 players and, having been together for many years, we are now reasonably competent. There is little left I can teach in the way of technique, so we concentrate on expanding our repertoire which now includes French and Spanish songs and many jazz classics.

We will always welcome new players and I have a couple of spare ukes for absolute beginners. If anyone is interested in joining us please give me a ring.

**Wine Appreciation** **Peter Bayley 282 3468**

The group has continued to meet regularly each month during the past year. When we meet, the host for the evening selects the theme and the wines for that month and then costs are shared. In addition, we hold a 'Summer barbecue evening' and a 'Midwinter dinner'. Although our typical meeting formats have remained largely unchanged, they always prove to be very interesting and lively evenings of animated discussion, coupled with the opportunity to sample a wide range of different wines and also increase our knowledge of various wines.

The meetings are held in the homes of the group which effectively limits the overall size of the group to the current ten members. However, I believe there is potential within Cheadle and Gatley u3a for the formation of a second wine related group and we would be very happy to assist in the formation of another group.



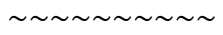
**North-East Cheshire Network**

**Cheadle Hulme Technology Group** **Peter Cadman 437 8235**

The 'Technology for Everyone' (The Appliance of Science) group is an Open Group of Cheadle Hulme u3a. This group invites speakers on technical subjects that we all come across in our day-to-day activities.

You may attend any of their meetings on the first Tuesday of the month (Feb to May, and Oct to Dec inc.) at 2pm in the Heald Green Village Hall, Outwood Road, Heald Green, SK8 3JL. Admittance fee is £3 including Tea/Coffee and Cake/Biscuits. Bring your membership card or membership number with you.

The next meeting will be on February 3rd 2026. It will be an illustrated talk on Interpreting Scans using AI. This is a real live application of AI in use now by doctors at The Christie Hospital. You don't want to miss this.



**December's Open Meeting - Christmas Celebration at URC**



## Christmas 2025 - Group Celebrations



Explorers at the Horse & Farrier



Family History



Gardening group at the Vinery, Bruntwood Park



Long Walks group at the Horse & Farrier



Poetry group



Long Walks coffee break at Styal Mill



Short Walks at the Boathouse, Sale



Book group 2



Gardening group Crafting Christmas Star Decorations



### A Short Story

by Nigel Bann

Bob leapt off the bus and jogged across the market square, oblivious to the cars tooting him and swerving around him. Heading for the opticians, he took one of the many alleys that radiated from the square. It was a typical dull October day, making the alley even less inviting than usual. Half a dozen steps into the alley and in the eerie half-light, Bob noticed a large bundle of rags stacked against the wall. As he came closer, he realised that it was a body slumped with its back against the stonework and legs splayed across the ground.

Slightly unnerved, Bob cautiously approached the still form. "Are you OK?" he ventured. No reply. Bob bent down to get a closer look. It was a man for sure, old trainers, jogging pants, scruffy anorak and a distinctly grey and unwell looking face. 'Probably a tramp that's been at the meths', he thought. "Hey mate, are you OK?" Nothing. Bob gently brushed the face. It was neither hot nor cold, almost stiff to the touch. No reaction.

Bob thought back to the dim and distant past when he had sporadically attended first aid classes, so he put his head on the man's chest. It gave a little - with a mysterious rustle. Bob wasn't actually sure what he was supposed to hear, but he couldn't hear any breathing noises or heartbeat. He picked up a gloved hand to feel for a pulse, then reeled back in horror as it came away with a crackling noise which sounded like very dry bones breaking. 'Well, that's settled that - he's dead alright - I wonder how long he's been here? - that's typical of the council street cleaners - what do I pay my council tax for?' he thought aloud.

He reached for his mobile phone from his inside pocket and started fiddling with it. 'Who should I ring? Ambulance? Nah - no point, funeral parlour? Nah, better make it the Police'. He had a habit of thinking aloud. 'It's no good, I'll have to get a new mobile, I can't read the numbers - they're all rubbed off and blurred'.

Bob was poised on his haunches by the body, messing with his phone when he suddenly had a queasy feeling. Three weak shadows, caused by the lights from office windows overlooking the alley, slowly appeared on the stone wall above the body. Bob froze, not daring to look around. 'I'm gonna be mugged for my phone - oh no - did they kill the old man?' Thoughts rushed through Bob's brain.

"Any coppers to spare, mister?" Bob whirled round to see what appeared to be three young lads standing over him, 8 or 9ish at most. He looked at the kids and then back at the corpse, until it finally dawned on him, October 31<sup>st</sup>. He'd been trying to resuscitate a Halloween dummy. Bob sheepishly gave them a few loose coins and continued on his way down the alley to collect his repaired glasses from the opticians.

"That's it, I'm ordering a spare pair this time", Bob muttered under his breath and scowled at the large billboard at the end of the alley. He could read that alright. "Should've gone to Specsavers".

**Is the water cold?**

This is the most common question we get asked - I won't write down what our most common response is! Swimming in open water has hit the headlines in recent years, often for sad reasons but all over the country there are communities of swimmers who enjoy the benefits and quite frankly the exhilaration of swimming in nature. Whether it's in rivers, the sea, lakes, reservoirs, pools, waterfalls or ponds to name but a few.

**Who swims?**

Anyone can. I know of swimmers who are in their 80-90's and I introduced my grandson to open water this summer aged 3 yrs. I first dipped my toes just before Covid when my daughter suggested we go for a swim at Sale Water Park. Open Water UK were running a taster swim. I was hooked. You can swim distances or just dip because you still gain benefit from being in the water if only for a few minutes.



**Why do we do it?**

Many reasons, you only have to google open water/cold water swimming and you will disappear down a rabbit hole full of articles, research papers and documents about the health and other benefits of OWS.

These include but are not limited to improving fitness, boosting the immune system, reducing anxiety and stress, to name but a few.

For me swimming in nature has a positive impact on my physical and mental wellbeing. I leave the water feeling on top of the world.

**Is it safe?**

Yes, if you are sensible and know your abilities, limitations and are constantly aware of your surroundings.

I generally swim at the OWS club at Sale Water Park. They have safety crews out on the water during the sessions. But I also swim with a group of friends and we are all experienced OW swimmers.

I've even participated in challenges to raise money for charity including the Llandudno Boxing Day Big Dip. An annual event that raises money for the Teenage Cancer trust. (see photo). You become more attuned to your body so you adapt your swim accordingly. You can also swim throughout the year if you acclimatise to the changing temperature of the water.

**Do you need a wetsuit or lots of equipment?**

Wetsuits are optional! Just a swimsuit, bright head covering so you can be seen from the shore, swim shoes or flip flops to protect your feet entering the water. Warm clothing and most importantly a hot drink and a delicious post swim treat, usually cake, because you deserve it!!

I hope this has given you an insight into OWS and its benefits, who knows I may meet some of you swimming at Sale next spring.

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Thanking Our Conveners – August 2025

Cheadle and Gatley u3a Committee held an afternoon get together in August to thank our Group Convenors and their helpers for making our u3a a success whether at Interest groups, Wednesday open meetings or contributing to the newsletter. It was also an opportunity for attendees to provide useful feedback and suggestions to the Committee.

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**Newsletter Handover**

Just a quick mention that this will be our last newsletter before we step down in January. We have both really enjoyed volunteering for this role and we thank you all for your support, Tina and Hilary.

## Your Cheadle and Gatley u3a Committee

|                         |                   |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Chair                   | Margaret Seaby    | 221 0944                |
| Business Secretary      | Gill Brown        | 491 3623 / 07972 429489 |
| Treasurer               | Linda Louch       | 291 1855                |
| Membership Secretary    | Marian Fahy       | 07914 028502            |
| Speaker Secretary       | Heather Wilkinson | 428 9278                |
| Groups Co-ordinator     | Margaret Seaby    | 221 0944                |
| Catering Co-ordinator   | Elaine Bowker     | 07833 347231            |
| Network Representative  | John Barnard      | 436 4150                |
| Newsletter Co-ordinator | Tina Kelly        | 376 7909                |
| Trustee                 | Sue Somerville    | 07305 311716            |







Marian Fahy   Gill Brown   Margaret Seaby   Elaine Bowker   Tina Kelly   John Barnard   Linda Louch   Heather Wilkinson

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## 5 Ways to Wellbeing

Social Prescribers employed by the Health Service are promoting wellbeing in the community with the message that looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical health.

When one of them came to talk to our committee, it was clear that many of the health recommendations on their posters and leaflets could be fulfilled simply by joining our u3a!

|                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>connect</b></p>                |  <p><b>be active</b></p> |  <p><b>take notice</b></p>                 |  <p><b>keep learning</b></p>                      |  <p><b>give</b></p> |
| <p>Connecting with the people around us is a great way to remind ourselves that we're important and valued by others</p> | <p>We know that there's a link between staying active and positive mental health and wellbeing</p>          | <p>Taking notice of our thoughts, emotions and surroundings is a great way to stay present and pay attention to our needs</p> | <p>Learning new things is a good way to meet new people and boost our self confidence, which improves mental health and wellbeing</p> | <p>Research has found a link between doing good things and an increase in wellbeing</p>                  |

Courtesy of Health in Mind, see [www.health-in-mind.org.uk](http://www.health-in-mind.org.uk)

## **Membership**

We would be delighted to welcome any new members to join our Cheadle and Gatley u3a. Please pass this Newsletter on to anyone that you think might be interested. There is no minimum age but instead a focus on groups of people who are no longer in full-time employment or raising a family, to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning subjects of interest to them while making new friends and having fun.

We are all volunteers who support each other to keep learning. You can opt to join the Committee, help out at the Monthly Open Meetings, run an Interest group or research a topic to impart to others. Car sharing can be a good way to introduce yourself. Whether you join one group or many is up to you, but why not give it a go and try something new?

Prospective members are welcome to attend one Monthly meeting or one Interest Group meeting as a taster before joining. The fee to join is £12 per year pro-rata (April to March) and renewals are due each April. There is a small charge for each Monthly meeting and for some Activity group meetings to cover room hire and refreshments.

Membership queries to Marian Fahy, 07914 028502.

## **Contacting Our Members**

We use email as an important way to communicate with you, so if you change or acquire a new email address, please let one of the Committee know. Then you will not miss out on u3a notices, e.g. about the monthly Open meetings and other useful information.

Likewise for phone numbers: as well as your own number, an emergency contact number is requested, in case you should fall ill at a meeting or on a trip out.

## **Cheadle and Gatley u3a Website**

Our website is at <https://cheadle-gatley.u3asite.uk/> and is an important link into all our activities.

There you can find amongst other things;

Contact information, Group summaries, Copies of our newsletters, Links to member application and renewal forms, Convener documents, Privacy, diversity and safeguarding policies, plus links to the National u3a and North West region websites with details of courses etc.

## **Beacon Online u3a Management System**

Our version of this national system enables many aspects of our u3a membership to be managed by our Committee online. Group convenors can also use it to maintain membership lists and email their members.

## **Note to Convenors**

Please give any group activity notices to Gill Brown, our Business Secretary, so they can be displayed at Monthly meetings and emailed to other members. Please notify her if any member has a special birthday, is undergoing serious illness, medical treatment or sad event so that we can send a card as soon as possible.

## **North-East Cheshire Network (NECN)**

We are part of a regional group of u3as, comprising Bramhall, Cheadle Hulme, Macclesfield, Poynton, Wilmslow and ourselves. These u3as allow some of their Interest groups to be open to fellow members, provided you show evidence of membership of Cheadle and Gatley u3a and pay for attendance at those meetings where required.

There are over 20 regional Open groups available for you to go to and you can find out more about them via our website on the Groups page.

## **Note from the Editor:**

Many thanks to all who sent in reports, articles and pictures. Remember, it does not have to be the Group Convener who contributes, so start collecting now for inclusion in your next newsletter!

Please send photos with the largest size possible as low size images produce poor print quality.

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THANK YOU FOR PARKING CONSIDERATELY ON ELM ROAD AND
SURROUNDING STREETS WHEN ATTENDING URC MEETINGS.

DETAILS OF INTEREST GROUPS

If you are interested in setting up a new Group, please contact any member of the Committee.
Our Cheadle and Gatley u3a Network Open Groups are shown below in *italics*.

GROUP	CONVENOR	CONTACT	DATES	TIME	VENUE
Book Group 1	Lesley Witton	428 1522	1st Monday	7:30	House
Book Group 2	Jean Lawrowitsch	428 9678	1st Tuesday	1:30-3:00	Cheadle Library
Book Group 3	Margaret Seaby	221 0944	1st Monday	10:30-12:00	Cheadle Library
<i>Bridge</i>	Linda Ewing	312 5072	1st & 3rd Wednesday	1:30	St James' Hall
Card Games	Michelle Slater	07710 883579	4 th Wednesday	1:30	St James' Hall
Computers	Peter Bayley	282 3468	As arranged	Various	House
Craft	Pam Allen	971 1880	3rd Tuesday	10:30-12:00	House
Creative Writing	Nigel Bann	491 6835	2nd Monday	2:00-4:00	House
Cryptic Crosswords	Jane Lloyd	07713 848734	2nd Friday	10:30	Zalo's Cafe
Dance	Elaine Bowker	07833 347231	Fridays Fortnightly	1:15	URC Oak room
Explorers	Janet Farrall	428 7883	3rd Thursday	10:00-11:45	Bethany Church
Family History	Linda Corry	428 4094	1st Tuesday	9:30	House
Gardening	Deborah Connell	07970 103503	4th Thursday	Various	Various
<i>German</i>	Marianne Owen	491 3323	3rd Tuesday	10:00-11:30	URC Hall
History	John Houghton	428 2892	2nd and 4th Friday	1:30	URC Hall
History of Art	Mary Sharples	428 4901	Last Wednesday	1:30	URC Hall
Local History	Lesley Witton	428 1522	First Wednesday	1:30	Cheadle Library
Painting and Drawing	Pat Marsden	428 7820	1st and 3rd Friday	10:30-12:30	URC Hall
Poetry	John Barnard	436 4150	3rd Monday	1:45	URC Hall
Scrabble	Ann Gane	428 0204	Fridays Fortnightly	2:00	House
<i>Singing for Pleasure</i>	Marjorie Maddison	437 7694	2nd and 4th Tuesday	1:00	URC Hall
Spanish	Michelle Slater	07710 883579	Wednesdays Weekly	10:00-11:00	On Zoom
Theatre Visits	Chris Bester	376 7909	As arranged	Various	Various
<i>Ukulele</i>	Ian Ewing	312 5072	1st and 3rd Tuesday	2:00	St James' Hall
Walking (Long) (About 6 - 8 miles)	Allan Witton	428 1522	3rd Friday	9:15 - 3.00	Meet at Gatley Hill car park
<i>Walking (Short)</i> (About 4 miles)	Stuart Forsyth	491 3592	2nd Thursday	10:00	Meet at URC
Walking (Strollers) (Easy local walks)	Marianne Owen	491 3323	1st and 3rd Monday	10:30	Meet at URC
Wine Appreciation	Peter Bayley	282 3468	Monthly as arranged	7:00	House