

SANDBACH U3A



Your park in bloom, thanks to Mike Benson and the *Friends of Sandbach Park* team

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March 2019 ... that's right ... 2019!

Instead of having a speaker at the Members' Morning, on that day Groups will be invited to take a table or space in the hall to show other members what their Groups do; if you make things you could bring things to sell or just display; if you are walkers you could bring maps to show where you have been and maybe some photos; art groups could display pictures; the language groups could, perhaps, write a little quiz for members to try etc.

We are telling you about it now, so there is plenty of time to get your thinking caps on! *More details to follow.*

A Reminder. *Members' Morning in May* at the Town Hall is on the first Monday of the month – 7th May – which is also the early May Bank Holiday.

A Vacancy. *Organiser for Members' Mornings.* Our Winter 2018 Newsletter asked for volunteers to take on this important role and ... it's your lucky day ... it still isn't too late to express your interest! To find out more, please email: secretary@sandbachu3a.org.uk

New Sunday Group

Nothing happens between Friday evening and Monday morning!

This cry has been heard from a number of members recently and it is now being answered. A Weekend Group event is to be formed as a 'Sunday Lunch Group' starting on 22nd April at Malkins Bank Golf Club. The actual name of the group will be decided at the meeting.

Future meetings will be held at the golf club in the Summer House, on the ***Third Sunday of each month.***

Registration and food ordering will be from 3pm with the service from 3.30pm.

Two people have come forward to lead the group. And, would anyone who is interested in joining, please email:

secretary@sandbachu3a.org.uk

before 15th April 2018.

Committee Changes

It's true that nothing stays the same for very long and, since introducing our committee to you in the Winter Newsletter, already there has been some movement.

Three members, ***Alan Butler (Chair), Jinty Pyke (Secretary) and Geoff Pyke (Groups Co-ordinator)*** have all stepped down recently.

On behalf of all U3A members, we extend our thanks to Alan, Jinty and Geoff for their hard work and commitment during their time in office and we look forward to their continuing journey with us.

Until the AGM in November, the following members will be acting in the vacated roles:

Chair: Arnie Laing

Vice Chair: Alan Casey

Secretary: Sandy Boyle

Groups Co-ordinator: Alex Black and Paula Reilly-Cooper (sharing these duties alongside their existing responsibilities).

Riviera Travel Commissions

Sandbach U3A has a special arrangement with Riviera Travel. When members use the company for their travel arrangements, they pay a commission to Sandbach U3A, which we pass on to the member, if they so wish.

Following discussion with the Third Age Trust, Sandbach U3A is changing the procedure for claiming the commission. In future, ***the member will claim direct from Riviera Travel*** and the procedure is as follows:

- ❖ request a claim form by emailing Sandbach U3A at sandbachu3atreasurer@live.co.uk.
- ❖ send the completed form direct to Riviera Travel - either by post or by email.
- ❖ Riviera Travel will make payment into the bank account that you nominate.

The new procedure will not change the end result for members who wish to receive the commission themselves and may even be quicker than the previous method. Naturally, you are welcome to nominate Sandbach U3A to receive the commission.

Computers - for - Beginners



**Does your
computer make
you feel like
this?**

**If so – please
read on**



**I am planning to run a new group, as a 10-week course in October,
for computer – beginners.**

**This will be for Laptop computers running Windows 10, and you will need
to bring your own Laptop.**

Topics will include:

- ❖ **Power up/Shutdown/sleep mode**
- ❖ **Where to find and save your files/documents/pictures**
- ❖ **Computer security**
- ❖ **Logging onto the Internet and using search engines**
- ❖ **How to send, receive and reply to emails**
- ❖ **Cloud storage – do I need it?**
- ❖ **Housekeeping – remove unwanted files and photos**
- ❖ **USB sticks and external drives**
- ❖ **How to uninstall programs**

**To indicate your interest, drop a note into the U3A library box in Sandbach Library,
addressed to computer.beginners. If you already use email, then send an email to
computer.beginners@sandbachu3a.org.uk**

Geoff Pyke

SWISH (Sandbach Web-Integrated Support and Help)

Membership Renewals and Login to your U3A Website - An Update for ALL members!

As in previous years, our band of volunteers will be delivering membership renewal reminders to every member's address early in May. If you wish, you will be able to return your letter with your payment in the normal way, either by post with a stamped addressed envelope enclosed, or by taking it to our desk in the Library on either the second or fourth Wednesday-morning in each month.

But this year, we are introducing the additional, more convenient option, to renew online. If we know your email address, you will also receive an email providing instructions for quick and easy online renewal allowing secure online payment. Of course, we hope you will use the online method, as it's fully automatic and will save us a lot of work.

The online payment uses PayPal, but you don't need a PayPal account, you can simply checkout as a guest and use your credit or debit card in the normal way. Just follow the instructions in the email.

So, you have two ways to renew this year, either by using the letter, as described above, or by our new preferred online process. But whichever method you choose, as soon as your renewal is registered, and providing we know your email address, you will be sent your username and instructions to logon to the SWISH system.

When you are logged on you will be able to view, check and if necessary edit your personal profile information such as your email address or your 'in case of emergency' contact's details. Each member will have an individual account.

This is the first major step in bringing the new system into operation. At the same time as we introduce online renewal, it will be possible for new members to join online and as the year progresses several further major features will be added to support and help members.

Once the renewal process and logging on is underway, the next stage will involve group leaders. We are planning a series of tailored sessions for leaders to introduce the features designed to help in the running of their groups. Leaders will be able to choose the level of support they feel they need, ranging from a short basic introduction to the long-term involvement of an assistant external to the group (a 'buddy'). We will soon be writing to leaders with further details on these planned introductory sessions and the support to be provided.

We will continue to provide regular updates in the newsletters and monthly diary emails on the SWISH programme and its features as they become available.

Alan Casey

Breaking News on Railcards

Our Winter Newsletter tipped everyone to ask Cheshire East Council for a Senior Railcard Discount Code to save 20% on your railcard from the library. The latest cost saving measure ferreted out by our members is:

- if you wear NHS hearing aids you are entitled to a Disabled Persons Railcard from the council (at the library) for the princely sum of £16 instead of the usual £20. This allows the cardholder plus a companion (carer?) to save 1/3 on their rail journey.

Thanks to **Doreen and Paul Hebden** for this budget-busting nugget.

Ukulele Acquisition Syndrome (UAS)

Closely related to Guitar Acquisition Syndrome (GAS), UAS is a less explosive condition that can still lead to a room full of musical instruments. It is frequently caught from a well-meaning relative on occasions such as Christmas, or on retirement, 'to give him something to do'. The disease manifests itself in up to 13 stages:

1. Acquisition of a *plastic ukulele*. There are many good quality ukuleles on the market - your local charity shop doesn't have one.

2. A *wooden soprano ukulele* will rapidly follow. Hawaiian hula girls are usually pictured playing the soprano, though these are generally a bit small for male fingers (the soprano, not the hula girls). The ukulele originates from the 19th century in Hawaii, where it was adapted from an earlier Portuguese instrument, which the inhabitants of Madeira had tried to lose.

3. Having large hands, possibly swollen from actually playing the thing, he will then move up to a *concert size*, similar, but larger than the soprano.

4. By now, the UAS sufferer will be immersed in one or more groups, possibly for therapy, and will have seen a *tenor ukulele* played by the group leader. This sounds really good to the patient who fails to realize that the group leader is much more skillful than he is and would create better music on a cheese grater. Though, perhaps, not for so long ...

5. Now, he will acquire another ukulele, in *linear tuning*, particularly suitable for the blues, which the UAS sufferer has in spades. Which reminds me, "I woke up this

morning ... "

6. In his support group, he will be surrounded by all kinds of different distractions, one of which is the *banjolele*. This has a banjo-like resonator body and, famously, was used by George Formby in a vain attempt to frighten off his audience.

7. Now properly delusional about a future Glastonbury gig, he will procure an instrument with a *piezo-electric pickup*. Thus amplified, he

8. The next phase is *baritone ukulele* craving, for the deeper tone, 5 semitones below standard ukulele tuning. That bloke in the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain who plays the fancy bits has one. He has a lot to answer for.

9. A fellow sufferer will now convince him to have an 8-string because of that sound. This instrument features pairs of strings, the bottom 2 being an octave apart, the top two the same, rather like a 12-string guitar, but with fewer strings, obviously.

10. By now, the serious sufferer may be looking at an instrument made from *Hawaiian Koa wood*. Some believe this to be the epitome of ukulele woods: others believe that any old bit of timber will do. If you invite a luthier for dinner, be wary of him eying up your dining table.

11. Convinced of the need to strum while on holiday, the patient acquires a thin bodied *travel ukulele*, easy to pack in the space where he should have put the insect repellent.

12. If the disease shows any signs of mutating into Bass Acquisition Syndrome (BAS), this is a *very bad thing*, deserving of a smart crack on the back of the head, though not with a ukulele as it may break and lead to further acquisitions.

13. Finally, the patient will obtain the easily-overlooked *sopranino*, an instrument even smaller than the soprano. No-one has ever found anything to play on one of these.

Run by Bryan Roberts and Pat Howells, Sandbach U3A Ukulele group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month and offers support for the treatment of UAS, although without much success. I wish I'd been in the musical instrument supply business, though.

Steve Walton

Group Leaders – New Venues!

If you have a space problem, you will be pleased to learn that a number of new venues have been unearthed by Arnie Laing.

In addition to those previously identified at *Elworth Scout Hall* and the new *Gym Studio* at Sandbach Rugby Club, Arnie has discovered there are also regular indoor slots at *Malkins Bank Golf Club*. The golf club could make space available **FREE** to U3A groups, if attendees agree to make use of the refreshment and/or catering facilities for their regular gatherings.

A selection of room types and sizes is available at these venues to suit a range of activities. Please note that, at present, no bowling mats are available at these venues.

If you wish to explore the possibility of moving, either now or from September, please contact Paula or Alex who can arrange a visit to the relevant venue.

Alex Black and Paula Reilly-Cooper,
Programme & Venue Coordinators (U3A tel: 08445 899670)

BAS Goes to Chester

The Brewing Appreciation Study Group (BAS)

recently enjoyed their first field visit. Taking the train to Chester, they visited three micro-breweries – and most returned safely.

From the railway station, a brisk walk along the Shropshire Union Canal and part of the city wall brought us to our first destination, the *Pied Bull* in Northgate Street.

This 12th century pub has an original handmade staircase dating from 1533 and houses in its small cellar the only operational brewery within the city walls. A tour of their compact facilities provided by their extremely enthusiastic brewer, proved most interesting and the opportunity to try some of his creations was a delight.

Our tour of the *Pied Bull* was followed by an excellent meal, before moving on to *The Brewery Tap* in Gamul House, a Jacobean great hall now serving as an outlet for another local brewery, *Spitting Feathers*.

Our journey back to the station happened to pass close to the *Brewhouse & Kitchen* in Love Street, providing an opportunity not to be missed for further research at yet another of Chester's microbreweries and a chance to reflect on the day's studies.

Alan Casey



Education in Action

At the recent extraordinary general meeting Sandbach U3A voted to change the objects clause in our constitution to confirm for the Charity Commission that *we are an educational charity*. The learning may not be obvious, while we are taking part in the activities that give so much pleasure, but the potential is there.

Take walking as an example. Sandbach U3A contains nine groups dedicated to walking; in six of them members drive to a pub, take a circular walk for three or four miles and have lunch in the pub. Other groups are differentiated by the distance that they walk: the so-called 'Austerity' walkers do three or four miles but don't have lunch in a pub; the intermediate group, with the largest number of walkers turning out, aims for walks between 5.5 and 7.5 miles long.

The website entry for the long walking group states that 'Walk length varies between 8 and 13 miles' but, since two recent outings exceeded 14 miles, we can say the length is somewhat flexible.

The long walking group is also flexible in its approach to the location of the walks. As well as walking in Cheshire, we go further afield to Wales, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire seeking new ground to explore. The members who plan the walks find out about the features to be encountered, whether man-made or natural, and explain them to their fellow walkers. In 2018, we have already learned about the centenary of the Minnie Pit coalmine disaster, a murder in Wilmslow, the Joule's brewery in Stone and the Wedgwood family in Barlaston (see photo).

All of this information is additional to the conversations that flow within a group of like-minded people who meet regularly.

This is common to all groups in U3A, but the long walking group has added an extra dimension to it. The resident scribe records details of what happens in a monthly post on the Sandbach U3A website, together with pictures taken on the walks. The group has a resident photographer, but anyone else who takes pictures can have them included. If members are unable to attend an event they are able to find out from the website what happened in their absence. Those who did walk can see themselves on the Internet and the authors of the text and the pictures can take pleasure in their creativity. Everybody wins!

This is not a piece of marketing to encourage more members into the long walking group. New members keep turning up without much encouragement. It does demonstrate how groups can enhance their activities by using the facilities of the website to record what they do.

Any group wishing to create its own posts on: www.SandbachU3A.org.uk may do so by sending a message to enquiries@sandbachu3a.org.uk to find out what is involved.

Kevin Dean



Football Fun

Walking football has welcomed a number of new members to the group over recent weeks, but there is always space for more players to join us. We meet from 2pm on a Friday at Sandbach United Football ground on Hind Heath Road.

Arnie Laing

Settle to Carlisle and return by Road and Rail

At 7.30am on 14th March, a party of intrepid Sandbach U3A members boarded a coach bound for Settle in North Yorkshire. Despite a slight delay on the M6 we were soon heading through the rolling Lancashire countryside. Young lambs scurried away as we zipped along through picturesque villages where signs of the recent snowfalls were still in evidence.



Arriving in Settle with time to spare, we eagerly awaited our transportation to Carlisle. Though the wind blew with the feel of winter it did not dampen our spirits.



Our train arrived without Michael Portillo - a diesel 158 series sprinter.

A mighty diesel freighter has to wait whilst our train gets priority. What he carries and where he goes we will never know.



Soon we arrive at Ribbleshead and the famous viaduct. There is not much you can see of it from the train, and the terrain looks quite wild. Then it's through several tunnels as we climb up towards Aisgill Summit, the highest point on the line at 1,169 feet. We pass through Dent station, but there is no sign of Arthur or Ford Prefect in the car park - all highly improbable. Then through Garsdale, where the statue of Ruswarp, the dog, sits proudly watching travelers go by.



And still we climb to the top and then it's through Kirkby Stephen and Appleby and now the downward run through Langwathby, Lazonby, Armathwaite and finally Carlisle. This tower greets you as you leave the railway station. Heading up through the many shops leads you towards the cathedral and the historic quarter.



Despite a service going on at the time, access was allowed into the cathedral.

Another sortie into the cold and you come to the castle. Now run by English Heritage, I opted to walk around it rather than pay to go inside.

By 2pm it was time to head for the station and meet up with the rest.



It was a cold wait for the guard to open the doors, and the locals were surprised to see so many passengers. Arriving at Settle again by 4.30pm we headed off to Sandbach expecting long delays on the M6. Instead we sailed back in record time – I think Alice must have arranged that. Thanks to Alice and her team for another wonderful educational day.

Geoff Pyke

If I Remember Correctly ...

This is the space where you can share your special memories, those life changing experiences and untold bits of personal history that you may wish to preserve and which other readers might enjoy. Please send your story (100 – 400 words) to newsfeed@sandbachu3a.org.uk

There must be some wonderful memories
out there,

Are we poised, uncertain ... afraid of the
glare?

.....

If you're not sure whether to share your
thoughts, why not contact me with your
ideas, first of all. All messages sent to:

newsfeed@sandbachu3a.org.uk

come direct to me.

Thank you

Editor