

## Newsletter January 2024

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### Committee



*The Committee at October's Meeting*

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### Website

For latest details of our groups and activities, please see

[Macclesfield u3a Website](#)

Or follow the links below to any specific group.

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## Chair's Comments

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Alec Johnston [chair@maccu3a.uk](mailto:chair@maccu3a.uk)

Dear All,

I do hope that your Christmas and New Year festivities went well and you are looking forward to getting back to Macclesfield u3a activities. As you have seen from the group emails, we have several new groups that started late last year and Mandy and Shirley will expand on them with new ideas too. Do take them up and encourage friends to join you. As I have said before u3a is for those who may have retired from work but not from life and want to Live Laugh and Learn new things and skills. See our [web site](#) or email [groups@maccu3a.uk](mailto:groups@maccu3a.uk) to book in.

I welcome John McKellar to the role of Vice Chairman and I do not need to introduce him as he has written below.

The [members' morning details](#) are also included in this newsletter as well as the [AGM notice](#). Please put the dates in your diaries.

Very best wishes

Alec Johnston

Chairman

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## Treasurer, Vice chairman and Secretary

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## From the Vice Chairman

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John McKellar – [vicechair@maccu3a.uk](mailto:vicechair@maccu3a.uk)

I'm John, what is obvious when you meet me is that I've a Scottish accent (of which I'm proud) and I have a ready smile (of which I'm proud). Harder to find out (unless written here) is that I was born in a small village in Ayrshire and had a rural childhood – I was good at science, maths and sports. After studying Statistics at Glasgow University, I worked in Sandwich for 4 years, then took a year out back-packing and developed a love for travel, but that's another story. After returning to the UK and work, I moved to Cambridge where I was an early member of the Cambridge volleyball club and am proud that it grew from nothing to compete in the highest league in England. My wife, Carole, played for the ladies' team and for one season we coached one another, but that's another story. Our love of the sport rubbed off on one of our sons and he ended up playing in Hawaii, but that's another story too. We moved into Macclesfield in 1996 "for my job". I recently retired after 40 years as a statistician in pharmaceutical research; I was a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society and involved on the committee of a professional group of statisticians in the industry. I also retired in the summer from being a trustee at the Cheshire based charity, Space4Autism (it does what it says on the label). I was involved in kicking it off to get support for children in 2007 and have seen it grow into a very healthy support hub for over 1000 people. They have a lovely café which is open to the public. With the newfound freedom of a supposed simpler life in retirement (Ha!), I joined the u3a and have enjoyed some of the discussion groups and a little walking – the instant friendship is something special. Throughout my life, I've felt the need to put back what you get from a group, so accepting a role on the u3a committee was almost inevitable. I hope I can help and I hope that I can count on the support of every one of you to keep the Macclesfield u3a thriving in the years ahead.

John McKellar

Vice Chair

[vicechair@maccu3a.uk](mailto:vicechair@maccu3a.uk)

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## From the Membership Secretary

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Phyllis Thomas

We welcome 20 new members who have joined us in the autumn. The Macclesfield u3a has just under 450 members.

Since the 2024 Yearbook won't be issued until September, if anyone hasn't received the Spring 2023 Yearbook and would like to have this handy booklet (even though it is not as up-to-date as the Macclesfield u3a web page), please let me know.

Thanks,  
Phyllis

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## From the Groups' Co-ordinators

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Shirley Stretton and Mandy Orton

We have two new groups that have started in the last few months:

- [Indoor Bowls](#)
- [Indoor Pickle ball](#)

These are both Winter activities.

We are also starting a new [Ukulele](#) group.

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## Their Finest Hour

Some WW2 personal and family stories, treasured photographs and memorabilia have now been submitted by several Macclesfield U3A members to help build this important national, digital archive. Thank you to all those who helped and contributed.

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## From the Newsletter Editor

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[Peter.Whithameditor@maccu3a.uk](mailto:Peter.Whithameditor@maccu3a.uk)

This Newsletter changes from previous ones by providing a link for each group, which (if you are connected to the internet) will take you to the group's web page. You can always access all the groups' webpages at <https://u3asites.org.uk/macclesfield/home> as well. Our aim is to provide you with news and updates, rather than repeat material from the Year Book and website. I always welcome any comments and suggestions to improve the Newsletter.

The Committee is planning a further email Newsletter in April and a printed Year Book in September.

Peter Whitham



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## Members' Mornings

From the Members' Mornings Co-ordinators

[speakers.secretary@maccu3a](mailto:speakers.secretary@maccu3a)

We are delighted to be able to restart the Members Mornings. From January 2024, they will usually take place on the third Monday of the month, at the Masonic Hall in Riseley Street. There is parking for 35 cars there, but perhaps think about sharing lifts, just in case.

Our future speakers are:

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Monday January 15th 10am – Our own Craig Thornber will speak about Sir Henry Holland

He was the Knutsford born physician to Queen Victoria and six prime ministers, a traveller and socialite. In other words, a local-born worthy who had a most interesting life.

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Monday February 19th 10am – Kevin and Joy Siddall will offer us A Musical Meander Around Britain

A light-hearted journey with songs and stories. This talk has been well reviewed by other u3a groups.

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Monday March 18th 10am – A speaker from Macclesfield Space4Autism.

The specific subject not arranged yet, but an important topic, you will agree.

Then there is the AGM on Tuesday, April 30th, which is at All Saints' Church (notice below).

Future Members' Morning dates are:

- Monday May 20th
- Monday June 17th
- Monday July 15th

We hope to see you at as many of these as possible. Let's get things going again.

Anna Franks and Diane Styles

[speakers.secretary@maccu3a.uk](mailto:speakers.secretary@maccu3a.uk)

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## Notice of the Annual General Meeting

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MACCLESFIELD u3a NOTICE

### 2023-4 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 30th April 2024 10am–Noon

Coffee at 10am followed by AGM at 10.15 then at 10.45am:

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Chris Brooks [u3a member] on

“Why is Macclesfield called the Silk Town”?

Venue: All Saints’ Church, Brough St. West (off Oxford Rd),  
Macclesfield, SK11 8EL

Please advise the secretary if you have any questions for the Committee concerning our u3a by Monday 22nd April 2024. We cannot take any detailed questions if not provided before the meeting.

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## General news of group activities

Please note: If there is no news listed, the group is continuing, and the details can be found on the website (or in the last Year Book).

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## Allotment Gardening

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## Art Appreciation

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## Bird Watching

After eight years of dedicated service in leading the group, Tony Middleton has decided that he can no longer continue as leader/co-ordinator and the role has been taken up by myself (Noel Massey) jointly with Alec Johnston and other group members, who will co-ordinate when either Alec or I are not available.

I would like to offer the thanks of the group to Tony for his dedication and efficiency over the past eight years

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## [Bookworms 1](#)

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## [Bookworms 2](#)

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## [Bookworms 3](#)

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## [Bookworms 4](#)

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## [Bookworms 5](#)

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### [Café walks](#)

The Café Walkers have continued to enjoy short 2-mile walks, with refreshments and conversation as part of the experience. We have been to Kerridge (with coffee and cake at the Hollin Hall Hotel), Swans Pool, Alderley Edge, Quarry Bank Mill and Poynton from the Brookside Garden Centre.

Walks from Sutton and Prestbury are planned. We are sad at the closure of Tegg's Nose Café, and hope a new manager will be found soon.

We would welcome new members if you would like to give us a try. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, for a 10 am start.



*Quarry Bank Mill*

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## Card Making



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## Country Dancing

Well, we keep on Dancing!

And

We are becoming quite professional!! Well, not ever so, but Christine (our caller) is getting us into shape!

It has been a long job! Goodness knows how she copes with us all laughing and some of us skipping off in the wrong direction! But she does!

Some Dances are from different eras e.g. the Regency period and as the music progresses one can see us all beginning to Dance in a more elegant manner! We curtsy and spread the spare denim on our jeans! Christine tells us the exercise is good for our bodies and our brains and one can well believe it is as one commits 4 and 5 moves to memory. Or not!

You can see it is a session of exclamation marks, much laughter and good fun!

Many thanks to Christine for managing us and to her husband Graham who organises the music.

Come along and be welcome!





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## Crafters Together

If you enjoy crafts, good company and chat, this may be the group for you.

We knit, cross-stitch, crochet, quilt and any other soft crafts you can think of. Between us we have a vast amount of craft knowledge, so if you've ever fancied having a go, there will usually be someone who can help you.

We welcome new members and hope you will give us a try soon.

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## Croquet

Our group completed its sixth season in the Autumn, and has grown from strength to strength since we were set up. We play on the outfield of Macclesfield Cricket Club on Tuesday mornings, and Thursday afternoons, during the season (April–October), and remain the only group playing Croquet in the whole of the Macclesfield area. The group has built up a regular playing membership of about thirty players, but we are always very keen to attract new folk to the sport.



If you are at all interested in joining us in the Spring, we can offer a gentle induction programme for newcomers. Croquet is the most fascinating of all sports – it has been likened to a mix of bowls, chess, and snooker...

In addition to our twice weekly sessions, we have developed close links with the u3a group in Congleton and have also enjoyed reciprocal visits to the Buxton Group. We do see ourselves as a social group first and foremost, with the very clear aim to have fun!

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## Crown Green Bowls

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## Discussion

Members each choose and present a topic for discussion on average about once a year, this gives us a range of topics and makes for added interest. Topics coming up include:

- Newspapers.
- The water industry, is it fit for purpose?
- Litter, waste and recycling.
- Encouraging students into skilled work: carpenters, plumbers, etc rather than academia?



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## European Studies

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### French Conversation 1

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### French Conversation 2

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### Geology

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### German 1

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### German 2

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### Italian – Beginner Fumblers

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## Italian Conversation

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## Indoor Bowls

Indoor Bowls is a new group that started at the end of November. We had a great turnout of 16 for our initial session which included both novices and experienced players. Everyone had a very enjoyable time playing on the four long mats with a break for coffee mid-session. We are now playing on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month during the winter months, so come along and join us if you are interested. Only £2 for a 2-hour session starting at 10am. Look on our page on the [Macclesfield u3a website](#) for more dates.

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## Knit and Natter

This is a small friendly group who have just reformed after a long break due to COVID. They meet to chat while knitting, embroidering, crocheting, or doing a similar activity 1st Thursday of the month 1pm–3pm in the Scouts HQ on West Bond Street, Macclesfield. The group would welcome more members both beginners and those more experienced. Next meeting Thursday February 1st 1pm–3pm. Please see the group webpage for more information, contact [groups@maccu3a.uk](mailto:groups@maccu3a.uk) or just come along and give it a go!

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## Mah Jong

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## Make and Create

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## Painting and Art

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## Photography

The Macclesfield u3a Photography Group aimed to meet in January 2023, to discuss a programme for the coming year, but unfortunately the meeting was cancelled because of snow! The planning meeting then took place in February, where the following programme of visits was agreed:

March – Quarry Bank Mill

April – Port Sunlight

May – Silk Museum

June – Cromford

July – National Arboretum

August – Sandbach

September – Sculpture Park

October – Liverpool

Only a few photography meetings took place in the year so we plan to relook at the photography group as a whole to understand the interests of the group members and perhaps invite some new ones to revitalise our activities and learn new skills. A meeting is planned in Mid January so please email via the web site if you would like to 'add your penneth', join the discussion and bring some new faces. Please bring along your Christmas pictures as well.

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## Pickleball

### Indoor Pickle ball

Following on from the success of outdoor pickleball at Macclesfield tennis club, some indoor sessions have been arranged over the winter months. These sessions place from 10am–12 pm 1st and 3rd Fridays December to March (for January only it is 2nd and 3rd Friday) at Macclesfield Leisure Centre £2 a session to help with cost of venue. If you are interested please make contact via the website page or [groups@maccu3a.uk](mailto:groups@maccu3a.uk)

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## Psychology Forum



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## Rummikub Plus

Rummikub is a fun game which is easy to learn and challenges the brain! Come along, join a fun afternoon and enjoy a laugh with new friends. All welcome.



We are looking to expand our group, so would welcome any new members who want to come and try their hand. The game is very similar to the card game Rummy only using tiles rather than cards. It is a very relaxed session providing the opportunity for friendly chats whilst playing. We have a half-time break for tea/coffee and delicious home-made cakes. Sounds interesting? Contact the group leader via our Rummikub Plus webpage.

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## Spanish Improvers

- Mary Pollard

Mary Pollard has taken over as the group leader from Pam.

We meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month at members houses.

We've all done a little bit of Spanish before but we're all keen to improve.



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## Table Tennis

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## Technology & Science

We have had three interesting speakers since the last newsletter. Professor Alistair Sutcliffe described the benefits and potential problems associated with Artificial Intelligence. He came down on the pessimistic side for the implications of the technology for humanity, in spite of clear benefits in some areas. My grandson, who is working on AI, thought he was too pessimistic. Let's hope Rishi's regulations will sort it!

In October, Dr Soheb Mandhai from Jodrell Bank described how the elements that make everything around us have been produced in stars. Some, like gold, silver, lead and the all-important rare-earth elements, have been synthesised in merging neutron stars. These merging neutron stars can be observed by electromagnetic radiation ( $\gamma$ -ray bursts and optically – blue and red kilonova) and by gravitational waves. Coincidentally, the optical observation of such a merger was reported in the press the next day.

Our year ended with Dr Mike Palmer talking about the proper use of statistics, showing how effectiveness of new pharmaceuticals are demonstrated. He also described the very sad consequences of misuse of statistics which led to the wrongful imprisonment and eventual death of a local woman.

Our programme for 2024 starts with a talk on soil microbiology and the importance of chemical transfers by fungi. Later talks include reducing animal usage in drug development and, separately, novel formulation development. We also cover plastic recycling and how the safety of complex industrial systems are assessed.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to find speakers on sodium ion batteries, recent applications of graphene or the role of hydrogen in the net zero economy. I will continue to look. The programme so far is:

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#### Tue Jan 23rd – Professor David Johnson

Chair in Soil Microbial Ecology, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Manchester  
The Wood Wide Web

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#### Tue Feb 27th – Ron Pierce

Keeping Complex Systems Safe

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#### Tue Mar 26th – Dr Sarah Jones

Reader in Thrombosis and Haemostasis, Department of Life Sciences, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Manchester Metropolitan University

Reducing animal usage in cardiovascular research.

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#### Tue Apr 23rd – Professor Arthur Garforth

Professor of catalysis, University of Manchester  
Circular Economy and the up-scaling of Polymer Waste to Chemicals.

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## Tue May 28th – Professor Jayne Lawrence

Professor of Pharmacy at University of Manchester

Neutron scattering and the development of novel drug formulations.

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## Ukulele

At the end of November, 3 members of the newly formed ukulele group went to a session organised by West Cheshire Rural u3a which give advice on starting up a ukulele group from scratch. The Macclesfield group is meeting for the first time on 14th December to share learning from the West Cheshire trip, and to discuss the way forward, with meetings planned to start in January. Please watch the website for details.

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## Walkers 5 Milers

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## Walkers Mid Week

The Walking Mid Week group is not active at present. Anyone wishing to undertake similar walks should consider joining the Monday Walkers (below). Their walks are similar to ours, as described below, but usually a mile or so longer.

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## Walking Mondays

We continue to have super walks every 2nd and 4th Monday. A few new walkers have joined in recent months but we can still squeeze a few into the membership list.

In case you don't like walking in a big group, we seldom have more than 16 on any walk and often less in winter; we are particularly interested in attracting new members who would be prepared to lead the occasional walk.

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## [Walking with Dogs](#)

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## [Wild Flowers](#)

Details will be on the web site with first visit planned for Monday 29th April.



## List of Group Leaders and Contact Numbers

Allotment	
Art Appreciation	Julia Marwood
Bird Watching	Noel Massey
Bookworms 1	Vicky Darlington
Bookworms 2	Linda Godfrey
Bookworms 3	Margaret Burnham
Bookworms 4	Liz Lawson
Bookworms 5	Pete Caulkett
Café Walks	Anna Franks
Card Making	Joy Kewney
Crafters Together	Jackie Boulton
Country Dancing	Jill Smart
Creative Writing	Veronica O'Connor
	Chris Hewitt
Croquet	David Lee
Crown Green Bowls	John Hayes
Discussion	Chris Hewitt
European Studies	Norton Wragg
French Conversation 1	Val Cutter
French Conversation 2	Sally Lowden
Geology	Adrienne Noble
Admin	Beryl Beattie
German 1	Kate Bonson
German 2	Nicky Campbell
Italian – Beginners	Phyllis Thomas
Italian Conversation	Val Cutter
Indoor Bowls	Shirley Stretton
Knit and Natter	Mandy Orton
Local History	Steve Hurley
Mah Jong	Pete Caulkett
Make and Create	Janet Parkinson
Painting and Art	Jackie Gibbs
Photography	Vacant
Pickle ball	Mandy Orton
Psychology	Angela Raval
Rummikub Plus	Denise Jones
Spanish Improvers	Mary Pollard
Table Tennis	Sue Whyatt
Technology & Science	David Burnham
Ukulele	Steve Hodgkiss
Walkers 5 Milers	Linda Hallatt
Walking Mondays	Valerie Herbert
Wild Flowers	Alec Johnston

Please ensure that the details of contact names are not publicised outside Macclesfield u3a.

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## u3a General Committee Members & Contact Numbers

*Please ensure that the details of contact names are not publicised outside Macclesfield u3a.*

Chairman	Alec Johnston	<a href="mailto:chair@maccu3a.uk">chair@maccu3a.uk</a>
Vice Chairman	John McKellar	<a href="mailto:vicechair@maccu3a.uk">vicechair@maccu3a.uk</a>
Secretary	Marion Grant	<a href="mailto:secretary@maccu3a.uk">secretary@maccu3a.uk</a>
Treasurer	Steve Hodgkiss	<a href="mailto:treasurer@maccu3a.uk">treasurer@maccu3a.uk</a>
Web Master & Beacon Management	Tony Middleton	<a href="mailto:u3a@middleton.me.uk">u3a@middleton.me.uk</a>
Membership Secretary	Phyllis Thomas	<a href="mailto:membership@maccu3a.uk">membership@maccu3a.uk</a>
Groups' Co-ordinator	Mandy Orton	<a href="mailto:groups@maccu3a.uk">groups@maccu3a.uk</a>
	Shirley Stretton	<a href="mailto:groups@maccu3a.uk">groups@maccu3a.uk</a>

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## Other post holders

Publicity	Alec Johnston	
Members' Morning Co-ordinators and Speakers' Secretaries	Anna Franks	<a href="mailto:speakers.secretary@maccu3a.uk">speakers.secretary@maccu3a.uk</a>
	Diane Styles	<a href="mailto:speakers.secretary@maccu3a.uk">speakers.secretary@maccu3a.uk</a>
Newsletter Editor	Peter Whitham	<a href="mailto:editor@maccu3a.uk">editor@maccu3a.uk</a>

## List of Group activities Times & Dates

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
All	10am Italian Beginners 10am Wild Flowers (Summer only, alternating Mondays)	10am Croquet (Summer only)	10am Crown Green Bowls (April-September) 10am Outdoor Pickleball (summer only)	10am Table Tennis 1pm Knit and Natter (starting February 1st) 2.30pm Croquet (Summer only)	Painting & Art (during school term) 10am Pickleball (summer only)
1st	2pm Country Dancing 2pm Mah Jong	10am Indoor Bowling (Winter only) 2pm German 2 2pm Spanish Improvers 7.30pm European Studies	2pm French Conversation 2	10am Discussion 10am Walkers 5 Milers 2pm Bookworms 1 2pm Crafters Together	10am Indoor Pickleball (winter only)
2nd	9.30am Walking Mondays 10am Café Walks 2pm Rummikub plus	10am Italian Conversation 11am Art Appreciation 2pm German 1	10am Make & Create	10am Bird Watching 10am Bookworms 3 10am Psychology 2pm Bookworms 2	10am Creative Writing 10am Geology
3rd	2pm Crafters Together 2pm Country Dancing 2pm Mah Jong	10am Indoor Bowling (Winter only) 1.45pm Local History 2pm German 2 2pm Spanish Improvers	2pm Bookworms 4 2pm French Conversation 1	10am Bookworms 5 10am Card Making 10am Photography 10am Psychology 10am Walkers 5 Milers	10am Indoor Pickleball (winter only)
4th	9.30am Walking Mondays 2pm Rummikub plus	10am Italian Conversation 11am Art Appreciation 2pm German 1 2pm Spanish Improvers 2 2pm Technology & Science	10am Café Walks	2pm Allotment Gardening	10am Creative Writing
5th	2pm Mah Jong				

# u3a

## Macclesfield

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### Website

For latest details of our groups and activities, please see

[Macclesfield u3a Website](#)

Or follow the links in this Newsletter to any specific group.