



Olton and District u3a

February 2025

Newsletter 97



Welcome to the February newsletter, I love February for many reasons but the one everyone can enjoy is the fact that the days are getting longer with daylight lasting later in the afternoon. The birds are busy finding nesting spots, beautiful snowdrops are appearing and although the weather can be cold and awful, Spring is really just around the corner.

[NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE](#)

Change of February Core Meeting - Jo R

Please note that the February Core meeting will now be held on Tuesday 18th February. Normal meeting time. Speaker and Focus group will take place at the Friary as arranged on **Tuesday 18th February**.

Riviera Travel - Jo R.

Do you book with Riviera Travel? We have recently been informed that if you tell them you are a member of a u3a they will contribute a percentage of your holiday package to the group. When booking with other travel organisations please ask if this is applicable to them. All contributions are greatly received.

Eastbourne Holiday Deposit - Jo R. on behalf of Joy E.

Thank you to members who have booked the holiday in September to Eastbourne. The time has come to secure your booking with a deposit of £40.00 which can be paid either by cheque or bank transfer. Details as follows:

If you pay by cheque make it payable to Olton and District u3a and include your memberships number and the word EASTBOURNE on the reverse.

Details for payment by bank transfer:

Account - Olton and District u3a

Account number - 73822729

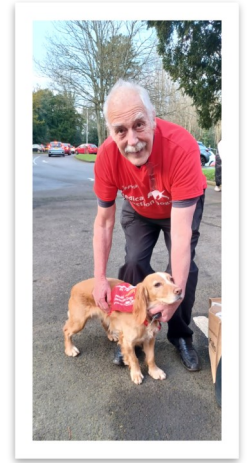
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Please annotate the transfer with **EASTBOURNE**

Speaker Secretary - Beverley P.



I think most people who attended the January core meeting thoroughly enjoyed our guest speaker. Geoff spoke about the work of the Medical Detection Dogs and brought along his dog Archie. The presentation was informative, very interesting and at times amusing. We learnt that dogs have an amazing sense of smell and have been able to detect breast cancer in a patient 12 months before it showed up on a scan. They can detect Parkinsons up to 5 years before symptoms show. There are 135 dogs who live with people that need to be accompanied 24 hours a day due to health conditions and another 143 are on a waiting list.



We had a collection and the grand sum of £194.20 was donated to this worthy charity.

In February we are having an **author Bobbie Darbyshire** talking to us about where writers get their ideas.

In March Katherine Reynolds will be coming to tell us about old remedies with a talk entitled **‘Goose Grease and Paper.’**

In April our talk is **‘The Sweet Life in Bournville.’**

Lots to look forward to. I am now booking speakers for 2026 so if you have any suggestions please contact me.

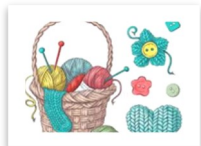
Recycling opportunity - Roy W. (Treasurer)



We will have a collection box for used cartridges at the next core meeting. Any money raised for recycling cartridges will be used to support Olton and District u3a. We have so far, raised over £150 by recycling used ink cartridges.

[NEWS FROM OUR INTEREST GROUPS](#)

Craft and Chat Group - Jan B



The Craft and Chat Group started the New Year with a demonstration from Viv J, on Needle Felting. She showed us the equipment that is required, how to card and prepare the wool to create a picture and then compress the wool using the needle tool.

Here are some of the pictures that we made. Can you tell which ones are Viv's?



Local History Group - Pat K.

A party of 30 members enjoyed a super post Christmas lunch in beautiful surroundings at the college of food. Food was delicious and staff very attentive. Some of us also bought bread from the bakery on the way out. Excellent day, We all thoroughly enjoyed it.



Garden lovers' group - Rob C.

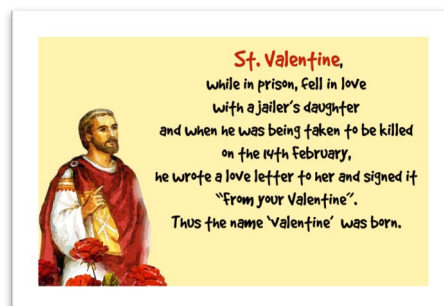
I was very pleased to tell our members a little about the garden lovers group at the last core meeting and I am happy to report that some new members have now joined the garden lovers group.

In January 18 of us met up on Friday 10th January at Baddesley Clinton for a bite to eat and a wander around the house and gardens. Considering the cold and dreary weather this was a splendid turnout! There is a photograph of some of our group although others had already dashed inside.

In February our meeting will be on Friday 14th February (Valentine's Day for the romantics) when we will have a self-drive visit to Hatton Country world and village. There is a garden centre, two dining options and about 15 independent shops on site. Similar to January meeting I think an earlier meet up time of 1pm would enable us to have a bite to eat and good time to explore.

This month's question – why is St. Valentine's Day on February 14th – The cartoon provides the answer. Please do not take this as a serious literal answer – its open to debate and contradiction!

Our meeting in March will be a self-drive visit to the National Trust property at Hanbury Hall on Friday 14th March. The whole site will be open, however the house closes at 3pm so I suggest getting in by about 1.30. The gardens and cafeteria are open until 4pm. Similar to January and February Gill and I will probably arrive about lunch time for a light lunch before going in.



Quiz Group - Hilary B. and Carol O.



As a nod to the recent Burns Night celebrations, this month's quiz has a Scottish flavour.

Can you name all eight cities and the two National Parks of Scotland?

Here are the answers to January's looking back/looking forward quiz.

1. Cillian Murphy
2. Keely Hodgkinson
3. Yvette Cooper
4. Denmark
5. Danny Jones
6. St David
7. Ringo Starr
8. Thomas Tuchel
9. Princess Beatrice
10. Rod Stewart

The Quiz Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 1.30pm at Olton Friary. Our next meeting is on Thursday, February 13th. Carol and Hilary would be pleased to see you if you would like to join us.



Creative Writing - Gordon C.

At our January meeting we discussed our individual submissions on the subject of 'New Beginnings' which as usual were varied but all enjoyable. Our constructive criticisms were well received and we are looking forward to our February meeting which will be at 2.15 pm on 19th February in The Dwell which is inside Solihull Central Library. Our topic is a continuation piece, started by one member and completed by the rest of us; its theme centres on a lady who feeds the crows in the park. Will she come to a Sticky end? Who knows, well I hope our writers will decide.

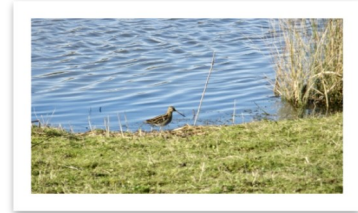
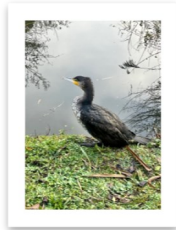
One of the group Wendy Wesley has had her novel published, much to the delight of the rest of the group. She has set the bar very high for the rest of us, but we are delighted for her.

Further information on the group from Gordon Creswell, gordon@gordoncreswell.co.uk

Birdwatching - Pat C

I have always enjoyed watching birds so I was delighted when I had the chance to join the Balsall Common u3a Birdwatching Group last year. We visit lots of different reserves and in December we went to Brandon Marsh in Coventry. While there we saw spectacular murmurations with their dazzling displays at dusk.

Last month we visited the local nature reserve at Marsh Lane in Berkswell. Although it was very cold and wet we all enjoyed spotting a total of 37 species from the hides. These included cormorants, lapwings, avocets and oystercatchers. We also spotted different species of duck. The highlight of the visit was observing a group of nine snipe with their long probing bills and cryptic camouflage which were right next to the hide.



Singing for Pleasure Group - Pam W.

St. Patrick's Day Sing-Song

Free entry & free tea and biscuits!!

Presented by:- Olton, Solihull & Widney U3A

'The Zingari Singers'



Tuesday 18th March
2 pm - 3.15 pm



Solihull Methodist Church Hall
Adjacent to Solihull Station



We would like to extend an invitation to anyone interested to come along as our guest.



You will be most welcome to join in with the singing, or just be part of our audience if you prefer.

Our group is officially called 'Singing for Pleasure'
There are **no** auditions, **no** need to read music
and you need **no** ability to sing either!

Singing Group co-ordinator contact : 0121 744 3265

We just enjoy singing and have a heap of fun.

We are continually recruiting new members and so we are holding this 'Open Day' singing session with an Irish theme to advertise our group and entertain members of the community.

Previous 'Open Day' sessions include: ** 'The Proms', ** 'West - End Show Songs' **
'Christmas Carols', and ** 'Music Hall Songs'.

If you have any items you would like included in the March newsletter, please send them to or contact me on oltonu3aeleanor@gmail.com