



Olton and District u3a

February 2026

Newsletter 108

Website - oltonanddistrict.u3asite.uk



Welcome to the newsletter for February. Well what a month January was weatherwise!! I do love the cold dry frosty days but all this rain was something else. What can February bring? Colder or wetter weather who knows but this month is one step nearer to Spring.

[NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE](#)

What the Hack is Happening? - Geoff T (Beacon Administrator)

“If you use email, you are no doubt aware that a few of our members have had their email addresses compromised recently. This has led to some members receiving Spam emails supposedly from people we know. Messages have included asking whether you use Amazon, the sender not being too well and needing help or requests for help with money etc.

Try to be in the habit of looking at unexpected emails carefully. Even if the senders' name and email address seem correct :-

- 1) Does the message content seem unusual for that person?
- 2) Is the wording of the message not quite right?
- 3) Are there any spelling mistakes or grammatical errors?
- 4) Is the message signed in the usual manner?
- 5) Another give away is if you are being asked to click on a link within the message. **PLEASE DO NOT CLICK ON ANY LINKS.**
- 6) **DO NOT ANSWER THE MESSAGE IF AT ALL SUSPICIOUS.** Contact person by another method, for example telephone, WhatsApp, Facebook etc. They need to know, if they are not already aware.
- 7) Report the email message as SPAM. There is usually an option to do this in your Inbox.

If you think you have been hacked the following suggestions may be of use:

- A) Change your password: This is your top priority to secure your account.
- B) Consider setting up a new email address and password. If you let BJ or myself know the new address, it can be changed on your u3a membership details.
- C) Enable two-factor authentication: This adds an extra layer of security.
- D) Contact your email service provider: Inform them about the breach for further assistance.

E) Notify your contacts by another means: Let them know your email was compromised to prevent them from falling for scams.

F) Run a virus and malware scan: Check your devices for any malicious software that may have contributed to the hack.

G) Review your other accounts: Change passwords for any accounts linked to your hacked email.

It would appear that the Hackers are currently accessing hotmail email addresses. Please be extra vigilant if you use hotmail. There is no evidence that Beacon is at fault or has been compromised.

Lastly, it is unlikely to happen to you, but I hope the above information may be of help some of you.”

Speaker Secretary - Beverley P.



“We started the year off with an excellent speaker, singer and poet by the name of John Homer. His talk on Why the Black Country was entertaining and we learnt that there were 2000 chain makers in Cradley Heath and the Earl of Dudley was the 8th richest man in the world at the time of the industrial revolution. All down to the coal.

The **February** speaker is going to bring along some uniforms and weapons from the 18th Century.

In **March** we will learn about the Car and the Crown from the British Motorcycle Museum.

I am going to stand down from my role as Speaker Secretary as it is time for a change and some new ideas. I have speakers booked for this year so you would only need to find people for Jan 2027 onwards. Please contact me in person or email Oltonu3a54bev@gmail.com if you are interested and I can explain the role to you.”

Interest Group Co-ordinator – Glenys T.

A NEW GROUP

“Ros Powell a member of our U3a is a BACP accredited counsellor with over 30 years in the profession
Website (www.newleaftherapy.com)

Ros has offered to run a Mental Health Education Group/Course for our U3a.

Size of Group – 5 members (with a waiting list)

Venue – Ros’ home in Hall Green B28. (Parking on her drive and the road)

Meeting – Tuesdays weekly except when it clashes with our Core Meeting.

First Meeting -Tuesday 24th February 2026

Time - 10.30am till 12 midday with tea and coffee afterwards. Bring your own mug.

Members interested in learning more about mental health issues e.g. stress and anxiety management and to learn coping strategies email Ros rosalind009@blueyonder.co.uk or phone 07802 961 054.

As a member you will have received a plan of the course.”

Interest Group Co-ordinator – Glenys T

Paying money to our U3a Treasurer Yvonne:-

“Bank transfer - please **do not use your name as a reference**

The **reference** should be **what you are paying for and your Membership Number** e.g. London Trip/your membership number

Each payment must be a separate transaction

Paying by Cheque

Write on the back of the Cheque **what you are paying for e.g. book/your membership number**

Each Payment must be a separate transaction

With over 350 members the Treasurer’s role is very time consuming and we can all help Yvonne by remembering the above when we make a payment. Many thanks”

Recycling Opportunity



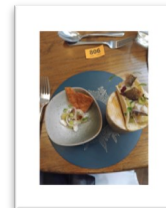
“ We will have a collection box for any used cartridges at the next core meeting. Any money raised from this will be used to support Olton and District u3a. We have so far raised over £200.00 by recycling used ink cartridges.”

NEWS FROM OUR INTEREST GROUPS

Local History Group - Pat K.



“On January 30th a group of 35 u3a members went to the Birmingham College of Food for a slap up meal. As usual the food was delicious. Although there were slight waits between courses, we enjoyed chatting and getting to know each other. It is encouraging to see the next generation learning how to serve properly. A really lovely day out. “



Garden lovers' group - Rob C.



“Our next meeting will be at Baddesley Clinton on Friday 13th February starting at 1pm. We are hoping to see a good display of snowdrops particularly by the path up to the church. I went along there a few days ago and the snowdrops were beginning to flower so I am quite hopeful for a good flowering display on our visit.

I will start our visit with a light lunch and some of you may wish to also have lunch there. We will then be able to visit the house and gardens in our own time and finish with a walk up to St. Michaels church probably finishing at about 3.30.”



Poetry Group – Glenys T.



“At our January meeting the theme was Colours. An amazing variety of poems covering several centuries were read, some were familiar to us like ‘Silver’ by Walter de la Mare and Jenny Joseph’s poem ‘When I am an old woman I shall wear purple’ There were many poems written in more recent times and one written by Gill W for the meeting. She started her poem ‘Colours’ with the rising of the sun and cleverly finished it with the colours of the setting sun.

As we meet at Hobbs Moat Library for Poetry we were invited by Julie, one of the Librarians to a talk by Professor Anne Green about her book ‘Sheila’ (non-fiction). A few of us went and were so glad we did. The remarkable story is of a brave little girl, who at the age of two was diagnosed at Birmingham Children’s Hospital with a rare condition Phenylketonuria (PKU). She was the first in the world to receive dietary treatment for PKU. Her condition led to the introduction of newborn screening and worldwide treatment of PKU. It is such an interesting story – I recommend the book to you.

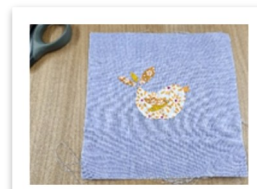
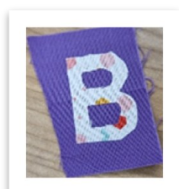
Our theme for February is Friends/Friendships.”

Craft and Chat Group - Jan B.



“Happy New Year to you all. For our first meeting of the year, some of the group wanted to know how to do raw edge applique, so Jan did a short demonstration.

Below are the results ready to take home to sew.”



Ukulele Group (O.A.P's) - Jim H.



“For all sorts of reasons I missed the deadline for the January edition although getting ready for a cruise might have played a part....



Anyway I had intended to review 2025 from the O.A.Ps perspective so I'll start with that and say a bit about what 2026 has lined up for us. The band played 15 gigs during 2025, our most in one year to date but since we have 9 already in the diary for 2026 that record may not stand for too long. Worth noting that 5 of the 2025 list were in December and I had to turn down a couple more as we couldn't fit them in so I think it fair to say that we are somewhat in demand. Now that could be due to us not charging for our appearances but it could also be that audiences actually like what we do - not for me to say which! Were there any 'stand-out' shows?

Our regular appearance at the Olton and District u3a December Core meeting has to be a highlight; we really enjoy that one and everyone that gets a seat seems to as well, but we had another 'regular' one earlier in the year at the Acocks Green Methodist Church in aid of Christian Aid which was a sell-out in 2025 (yes, the audience actually pay to see us for that one) so that must rank pretty highly too. One thing we did learn during the year was that open-air gigs are best avoided, it is just too difficult to hear ourselves and be heard by the audience properly, so our appearances at the Acocks Green Beer Festival, and St. Bernards Road Open Gardens events are unlikely to figure in 2026; we play for fun after all and if the band don't enjoy it then we don't do it. Simple!

We took a slightly extended break and didn't restart until the 22nd of January which only gave us two rehearsals before our first gig of 2026 which was another repeat booking for the Widows Group at the Shirley Institute; I'm guessing that you won't be reading this until at least the 4th hence the past tense. We return to The Royal Star and Garter Home on the 18th for our second performance for them and have a further two for them during the year.

One for your diaries, and notable for being a rare (for us) public performance for which a ticket must be purchased, is at the Acocks Green Methodist Church in support of Christian Aid on 30th May, As mentioned above this was a sell-out in 2025 so don't bet on buying a ticket on the door! Our repertoire continues to expand with a new 2026 song book due (when I finish it...), and maybe a fresh take on some of our regular numbers.”

Scrabble & Rummikub Group - Chris F.



“At last the Scrabble and Rummikub group finally managed to meet up after one cancellation due to the room already booked and the weather. Seven members attended and played a few games of Rummikub.

The next meeting will be Monday 2nd March.”

Quiz Group - Hilary B. and Carol O.



“This month’s quiz will take you all around the world. Here are 10 well known landmarks. Can you name the country in which they are located?”

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Taj Mahal | 6. Burj Khalifa |
| 2. Uluru | 7. Wailing Wall |
| 3. Angkor Wat | 8. Chichen Itza |
| 4. Spanish Steps | 9. Forbidden City |
| 5. Acropolis | 10. CN Tower |

Here are the answers to January’s Dates quiz.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. January 25th | 6. July 15th |
| 2. February 14th | 7. October 31st |
| 3. March 1st | 8. November 1st |
| 4. March 18th | 9. November 5th |
| 5. April 23rd | 10. November 30th |

The Quiz Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 1.30pm at Olton Friary. Our next meeting is on Thursday, February 12th. Carol and Hilary would be pleased to see you if you would like to join us.”

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