



Newsletter

July 2026

Issue 113

u3a
Olton & District

Website

oltonanddistrict.u3asite.uk

Hi everyone and welcome to the July Newsletter. For the sport lovers among us, this time of the year is providing us all with a great range of sporting events. For football fans, the World Cup, cricket fans, the T20 and the Test series and, of course Wimbledon! For the less sporty among us there are still many activities for us to be involved in within our u3a and, as you read through this newsletter, you will see just how much is going on this summer. Talking of the summer, I hope you are all managing to survive the heatwaves that seem to have become part of our English summer. Keep cool and enjoy whatever you do this summer.

There will be NO newsletter in August, but look out for the September edition in the first week of the month.

News from our Committee

This year is the 10th anniversary of Olton & District u3a. We will be having our AGM (Annual General Meeting) at the Olton Friary on 14th July 2026. Our u3a is run by the members, for the members, and this is a great opportunity for you to become involved in your u3a and to influence what we are doing. So

please come along on 14th July and support your u3a.

Hope I will see you there,
Tony, Chair.

APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL MANPOWER TO SET UP CORE MEETINGS

As you all know, our monthly Core Meetings are a wonderful opportunity for members to meet and catch-up over a cuppa, along with enjoying the talk from a visiting speaker.

The team behind the hall set up needs extra support in preparing seating for 100+ attendees, as well as the requisite tables (not forgetting they all need putting away again at the end of the meeting).

This is a physical task, so we understand not all are able to support, but there is a need for more members on the team if the room is to be ready in time for the 1.15pm door-opening time.

If you feel this is something you could help with when you attend Core Meetings, please speak to JESS or CAROLYN C.

Information from our Speaker Secretary

At the June meeting we had an interesting speaker, Bob King, who gave us a talk on the Magic of Glass. It centred around how the glass was made for Concorde's windscreen and the

problems they overcame with regards to glass being light in weight, able to withstand heat of 100 degrees and enabling the pilot to see with the UV rays. Concorde travelled at twice the speed of sound and it is because of our engineering skills that the plane was a success. It took 4 years to engineer the glass in Kings Norton and was then used on Boeing planes.

There will be no speakers in July and August so the next one is in September when we will have David Williams giving us the history of London's Underground in a talk entitled 'Mind the Gap'.

OLTON AND DISTRICT U3A FLY THE U3A BANNER AT ST BERNARD'S OPEN GARDENS

Sunday 28th June saw the 10th Anniversary of St Bernard's Open Gardens where Olton and District U3a had a table with a display board and our U3a Banner which attracted garden visitors enabling us to explain who the U3a are.



Throughout the afternoon there were always a few of our members to interact with the public, answering their questions, and talking about the U3a in Olton and how we come together to learn, to have fun, and to make friends in retirement. There was an informative flyer, which we gave to people who were particularly interested, and a quiz about Olton which was written by Hilary one of the facilitators for our Quiz Group. We certainly attracted a lot of interest from both people who had recently moved into the area and from those who had lived in the area for a while and we felt our time was well spent.

News from our Facilitators

Creative Writing

"We enjoyed a lovely meeting on 17th June. All this month's submissions received excellent critiques. Gordon's 'The Letter' was a clever way of sharing his exciting news, Liz's umbrella adventures was a lovely, feel-good story which we all thought would make a wonderful child's book, Wendy's 'The Retreat' was a well-written tale of moving on through loneliness after a break up, with an uplifting and optimistic ending, Sue's engaging chapter from her ongoing project of writing her childhood memoirs was very well-received and led to many reminiscences of our own childhoods, and Trish's scenes from her play 'Black Lace' attracted appreciative comments, especially about the farce-style humour. Next month we meet on Wednesday 22nd July 2026 in The Dwelling, Central Library."

(Gordon C. Facilitator)

Gordon's "exciting news", referred to in his piece above, certainly did refer to a letter that he received. The letter came from the Palace to say that, by the recommendation of the Prime Minister, Gordon was to be awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire,) in the 2026 Birthday Honours List for his services to the payroll. Gordon was one of the founding members of the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals (CIPP) and played a leading role in securing Chartered Status for the CIPP in 2011 and was also instrumental in advancing the profession internationally, helping found both the Irish Payroll and the South African Payroll Associations.

Congratulations Gordon on receiving, what was clearly a well-deserved reward.

Garden Lovers

"On 12th June we visited Stockton Bury Gardens and Berrington Hall by coach. It was a lovely day which everyone enjoyed. In addition to two lovely gardens, we set our coach driver Darren some challenges by finding the narrowest roads and the most difficult entrances to the sites!



We do not have a meeting in July but our next coach trip will be on Friday August 14th to National Trust properties at Tatton Park in Cheshire and Little Moreton Hall in Staffordshire.



There are a few spaces available with a cost of £51 which covers coach costs and entrance to both sites but reducing to £22 for members of the National Trust." (From Rob C., Facilitator.)

Scrabble & Rummikub

"On another sunny warm meeting five members arrived to play Rummikub and an enjoyable couple of hours were passed. Hope you have all survived the past heat waves and girded your loins ready for the next one!!

The next Scrabble & Rummikub will be on the 3rd August, hope to see you there." Regards, Chris F. Facilitator.

O.A.P.s Ukulele Group

"The band have been quite busy at times since my last newsletter article, having played 7 gigs up the end of June this year. In fact, with the rehearsals for those we had not a lot of time trying new material but we're rectifying that slowly...

As I mentioned in the last article, we played one of our most popular gigs at Acocks Green Methodist Church at the end of May to raise funds for Christian Aid. We had a very enthusiastic audience who joined in all the songs which was really encouraging for the band, and some even got up to dance for our 'encore' number. Great fun for all concerned, and we raised £615.80. But, rather unexpectedly, we had not one, but two, mentions in the Solihull Observer. The first advertising the event on the 29th May and the second on 19th June bringing things up to date.



The OAPs raise the roof during its charity performance.

Raising some vital notes

UKULELE music raised the roof during a charity concert.

The Olton Amazing Pluckers (OAPs) performed performed at Acocks Green Methodist Church to raise funds for Christian Aid Week 2026.

The 20 musicians, all part of the Olton University of the Third Age, or USA, raised \$615.80 for the annual appeal.

Event organiser Kate Harding said: "We had a very successful concert with a large audience.

"The musicians love playing this event as they have a proper stage, good acoustics and a big audience who are keen to get involved, clapping and singing along. This year we had more people than ever before literally dancing in the aisles by the end."

Money raised will help Christian Aid and its partners to support communities to find practical and sustainable ways out of poverty.

This year's appeal focused on work in Nairobi, Kenya, where intense poverty means families have a daily struggle to feed their children.

With secure jobs hard to find, and most people earning less than a dollar a day to cover school costs, rent and water, some days there isn't enough for a meal.

But with tools, seeds and specialist training from Christian Aid's partner, Beacon of Hope, families are learning how to make the most of a small space in the city to grow a steady supply of fresh vegetables to cook or sell.



The OAPs are ready for their next fundraising concert.

Strings attached

UKULELE'S are being finely tuned ahead of a fundraising performance.

The Olton Amazing Pluckers – or OAPs – will be performing at Acocks Green Methodist Church to raise funds for Christian Aid Week 2026.

From 7.30pm on May 30 the group are set to play songs from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Kate Harding, event organiser, said: "Their debut performance at our church, and in the Acocks

Green area, two years ago went very well and we raised £318.50.

"We more than doubled this last year so we're hoping for even more this time."

Money raised will help Christian Aid and its partners to support communities to find practical and sustainable ways out of poverty.

Tickets cost £5 each (£10 for a family) and are cash only, on the door.

For more or to reserve tickets, call 0121 711 2362.

Our most recent, and slightly unusual gig, was at the Marie Curie Hospice in Solihull; we were asked to play at their annual 'Open Garden' day which is part of the National Garden Scheme. As the name suggests the focus is on their very extensive garden, but experience with playing outdoors led me to state we would play indoors. Happily, the indoor space allowed the band to be inside, playing to a small audience in the refreshment area, but I was able to put our speakers outside facing another seating area by the plant sales. Best of both worlds you could say. It went down well with many compliments afterwards, including thanks for not being too loud! I noticed some of those outside joining in on some of our songs too.



We have another two performances in July and then there is a break until October so we'll get a good bit of practicing in and add those new songs to our set lists."

(From Jim H., Facilitator.)

Swimming Group

"Please note that there will be no Swimming on Wednesday 5th August 2026." (From Susanne R, Facilitator.)

The Quiz Group

This month the USA celebrates 250 years of Independence. Can you find the name of a US state from the short clue? The number of letters is given to help you. For example,

State capital Phoenix (7) = Arizona.

1. President's surname (10)
2. Country (7)
3. 1950's musical (8)
4. Green mountain (7)
5. River and dam (8)
6. 5 - 0 (6)
7. Col. Sanders (8)
8. Cookies (8)

9. The Sunshine State (7)
10. Ladies Wimbledon Champion, 1977 (8)
11. Playwright Williams (9)
12. Harrison's adventurer Jones (7)

Here are the answers to June's Artists and Composers quiz.

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Gustav | 2. Edgar |
| 3. Jackson | 4. Frida |
| 5. Paul | 6. William |
| 7. Aaron | 8. Edward |
| 9. Igor | 10. Benjamin |

The Quiz Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 1.30pm at Olton Friary. Our next meeting is on Thursday, July 9th. Carol and Hilary would be pleased to see you if you would like to join us.

PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL BE NO QUIZ IN AUGUST AS THE OLTON FRIARY HALL IS BEING REFURBISHED DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS.

REMINDERS

Don't forget to bring a mug with you to the Core Meeting if you would like a drink.

There is no speaker at this month's Core Meeting as it is our AGM (Annual General Meeting).

Please send any contributions for the September Newsletter to oltonu3alynda@gmail.com