



Olton and District u3a, December 2023, Newsletter No 84

Merry Christmas to everyone and welcome to the December newsletter. December is a month of big celebrations, closing the old year ready to receive the new. Hope you are all keeping warm during this recent cold spell which I think creates a lovely Christmassy feel.

NEWS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

Message from Jo R (Chair)

“This time of year, is busy and costly but enjoyable when we see and contact friends and family everywhere. This year has been very busy, and Olton and District has grown beyond expectations and thanks to all the hard work of the not only the committee but members who have told friends about us and encouraged people to join. We have enjoyed groups returning and continuing both in size and exploring new areas of interest. I am looking forward to 2024 as to how much more we will develop. I hope you all have the Christmas that you wish for and that 2024 brings you good health and continued friendships. See you in 2024”.

The Last Core Meeting – Beverley P

“At the November meeting our speaker was Jean Jackson who is the u3a Regional Trustee for the West Midlands Division. She gave an interesting talk about our Region giving facts and figures of groups, membership etc.

There will be no speaker in Dec so the next talk entitled 'As I See it - My life as a Blind Man' presented by David Carrington Porter will be on 9th Jan 2024.

The February speaker is Kelly Matthews from the Cats Protection League.

In March Helen Lloyd will be telling us about the Extraordinary lives of Ordinary people”.

Festive Lunch – Jo R.

“Although damp and cold outside the welcome from the staff of Hogarth’s was warm and inviting to all members who attended the Festive lunch last Tuesday. Having enjoyed our chosen meals there was lots of meeting with friends and enjoying time with old and new friends, lots of chat and laughter which makes the day go so well. We had our Regional Trustee Jean Jackson with us who said it was the best meal she had had and also the Chair of Balsall Common, Matthew Stephens who said how much he enjoyed the event and we had given him some ideas!



Several raffle prizes were donated: an Afternoon Tea voucher from Hogarth’s, a basket of various fruits donated by Cornucopia of Dovehouse Parade, and a diffuser kindly donated by Wishes and Kisses of Solihull town centre, plus a further prize of a box of chocolates.

Thanks must go to the staff who worked tirelessly and efficiently. All returned home after an enjoyable afternoon”.

Next Core Meeting - Tuesday 12th December 2023 1.30pm for 1.45pm start

“This is our last meeting of the year and there will be no speaker, but we will be joined by our Ukulele Group. Feel free to wear festive attire if you wish to.

Please remember to book your place to attend this meeting by emailing Val Rapson valrapson06@gmail.com by **Sunday 10th December at the latest.**

Please also remember to **bring your own cup** if you wish to have a drink”.

Recycling opportunity from Roy W. (Treasurer)

“We will have a collection box for used cartridges at the next core meeting. Any money raised from recycling cartridges will be used to support Olton and District u3a. We have already raised over £26.00 so please keep bringing your cartridges along”.

NEWS FROM OUR INTEREST GROUPS

Craft and Chat – Jan B.

“The crafters had a jolly old time at Craft and Chat with chocolates and mince pies aplenty. There were many sparkly jumpers and festive makes on show. Gill N gave a demonstration on how to make an origami flower, and Pat G was a super waitress, taking chocolates around on a platter with a handknitted Mother Christmas on. Annette L showed us her fabulous crochet tree decorations and Jan B gave us a flash of her quilted stockings!”



Creative Writing – Gordon C.

“Unfortunately, due to illness we had to cancel our November meeting and, because our normal monthly date falls in Christmas week, we always skip December. Consequently, we are looking forward to starting the New Year with a bang on 17th January 2024 at 2:00pm in the Café at The Core, Solihull Library. We are especially excited about meeting our new member too, so we have great hopes for the coming year”.

Strolling Group – Barbara C.

“Strolling group’s last stroll of the year was around Elmdon Park in November. (photos courtesy of Mike Goodwin). In January we are having our post-Christmas Christmas meal, and Strolling resumes in February 🍷

Wishing everyone a safe and Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year!”



French Language and Culture – Pam D.

“There were two sessions during November. The music listened to was ‘Comme D’Habitude’ sung by Claude Francois and ‘C’est si bon’ sung by Yves Montand. ‘Comme D’Habitude’ is the French version of ‘I did it my way’ although the lyrics bears no resemblance to the English version just that the tune is the same.

We have started to work our way around the map of France and to learn a little bit about each region: during November we had a look at Corsica, the birthplace of Napoleon, and Provence famous for its lavender fields”.

The group meet at the Facilitator’s home in Shirley usually on the second and fourth Friday of the month. Anyone interested in joining us should email pamelajoandavis@yahoo.co.uk



'Un champs de lavande Provence'

Garden lovers' group – Rob C.

“On 10th November, an incredible 53 of us visited the College of Food for lunch. Everybody I spoke to said they thoroughly enjoyed the meal. I also had a quick chat with the manager, and she was delighted that so many of us attended.

Our December meeting will be on Friday 8th December at the hall at the Friary from 1.30pm to 3.30 pm. Carol, Gill and Annette are helping me to organise a nice afternoon. There will

be a chance to use your garden craft skills to make something nice for Christmas, a garden related quiz, a festive wear competition and some food and drink.

The plans for garden lovers' group in 2024 are now beginning to take shape and hopefully will include three coach trips. It will be an opportunity for group members to find out what is planned and say whether they think the plans will appeal to them. There will be a small entry charge of £2.00 per person (reduced to £1.50 per person if you are wearing something Christmas related) to go towards the hall hire costs but we have built up a small surplus since Covid from coach trips and I am hoping this will cover all other costs.

We already have over 30 members coming along but anyone else interested will be very welcome. Please let Rob know if you intend to come.



As we did not visit a garden in November the photo opportunities were limited, but Gill and I have been on a couple of trips. I thought you might like to see a photo of Gill at Knightsthayes court in Devon and one of me at Calke Park in Derbyshire!

Wishing everyone a restful Christmas and New Year.

Let us look forward to more u3a fun in 2024".

Ukulele Group – James H.

"Our group is going from strength to strength and no longer can be considered a beginners group so in 2024 we plan to start a sub-group specifically for those new to playing the wonderful ukulele; this will run alongside the existing one starting at 10 am on Thursday mornings and will last for an hour after which new members will be welcome to join the main group for their second half until 12 midday. All at the Solihull Methodist Church Hall. Some details have still to be finalized so watch this space!

We will be appearing at the December core meeting, as is becoming a sort of tradition, and will be playing a selection of Christmas songs which, everyone is very much encouraged to join in singing along with us. No carols, plenty of those elsewhere, instead we prefer songs of a more 'pop' variety".

"On the subject of 'gigs' we have another booking the following week at the Sheldon Heath Social Club, once again Christmas-themed and in the evening this time. And then in the new year we already have a booking on the 14th of February over in Wythall. Added to the ones we have had this year already, on 8th July 8th August and 25th October, we are getting rather used to performing in public. Not for us to say whether we are actually getting any



better though! We have just the one rule - whatever we do we have FUN. Hope everyone else does too.

The photo is of our regular sessions at the Methodist Church Hall”.

Quiz Group – Hilary B. and Carol O.

“This month’s quiz has a Christmas theme – what else?! All the songs below are Christmas Number 1’s from the 70’s. Can you name the singer or group who took these songs to the top of the hit parade?”

1. ‘I Hear you Knocking’
2. ‘Ernie’
3. ‘Long Haired Lover from Liverpool’
4. ‘Merry Christmas Everybody’
5. ‘Lonely This Christmas’
6. ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’
7. ‘When a Child is Born’
8. ‘Mull of Kintyre’
9. ‘Mary’s Boychild’
10. ‘Another Brick in the Wall’

Here are the answers to November’s Craft and Chat quiz.

1. Wool
2. Nylon
3. Canvas
4. Linen
5. Lycra
6. Satin
7. Gingham
8. Denim
9. Silk
10. Velvet
11. Chintz
12. Organza

The Quiz Group meets on the second Thursday of each month at 1.30pm at Olton Friary. Our next meeting is a special Christmas Quiz on Thursday, December 14th. Carol and Hilary would be pleased to see you if you would like to join us”.

If you have any articles, you would like included for the January newsletter, please send them to me at oltonu3aeleanor@gmail.com