

Dear u3a members

Our Speaker meeting this week (1st February) is **Royal Art: Treasures from the King's Collection**. This talk from Lizzie Rowe explores some of the highlights of the vast and wide-ranging collection of collections assembled by the royal family over the centuries. Moving from magnificent painted portraits by Van Dyck to an exquisite miniature by Levina Teerlinc and sketches by Leonardo da Vinci, it also covers furniture, jaw-dropping jewellery and a porcelain and gold clock that has to be seen to be believed. Many of the treasures displayed are on show to the public either at Windsor Castle or the Queen's Gallery in London but this talk also takes you behind the scenes to tell you stories of how this art collection was formed and who the colourful characters involved were. All members are invited to St Hugh's Hall at 1.45 for 2pm talk (visitors £2) followed by light refreshments.

ATTENTION – ATTENTION – WE NEED A NEW PRESS SECRETARY

Our search to find a new Press Secretary continues – please do let me know if you would like further details of the what this involves, but a monthly submission combining newsy items and information to the various local resident magazines probably sums it up.

INTEREST GROUPS' NEWS

We are very pleased to be able to open the new group of **MAH JONG**. This will be run by Fiona who is a local Mah Jong enthusiast and she has provided the following information about the game:

Mah Jong is a friendly game of luck with simple strategies. Four people play a lively, individual game with tiles that have intriguing designs and are delightful to touch. It's not played in silence - there are things to say as well as things to do! It's sometimes compared to card games or board games that you may know but no previous skill or experience is needed to learn and play this fascinating game. Mah Jong has its own uniqueness. Come along and join the 'Mah Jong for Beginners' group!



Players will be given full instructions at the beginning of every meeting to refresh their memories of how the game is played. During the game, players can ask questions, refer to notes, and help each other when playing non-competitively. Every session is supported with a follow-up email to each member, giving them a summary of what was covered in the last meeting and what will be covered in the next meeting. Anyone who wasn't able to attend a meeting is sent an email to provide them with information about what they missed so that they can catch-up before the next session.

If you are interested in joining the group (there has already been interest from several people) - please contact the Group coordinator via the website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/woodstock/contact>.

And as a follow up to last month's speaker , a reminder about the new **DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY Group** which Susan Brett is proposing. There has already been strong interest from members so please contact susanbrettu3a@outlook.com if you are interested in finding out more. Susan will be arranging a meeting to discuss plans soon.



The **Coffee Morning** in Woodstock is proving very popular, as can be seen from the photo. Meetings are held in the Crown Hotel on the first Saturday of the month. The times have changed slightly so that the group now gathers between 10.00am and 11.30. The back room on the right-hand side of the Bar area is being used. The next meeting will be on 3 February. There is no need to book - just turn up.

The **CANASTA Group** is also flourishing. Meetings are held on a Monday afternoon in Yarnton. There are sufficient players for the present time, but Denise has created a Reserve List for others who may be interested.

News from Marika about the original book group: **READING Group 1** had a very enjoyable Christmassy meeting with 'proper' coffee and mince pies in December. The librarians at Holton Library send lists of their latest acquisitions and we are invited to select our favourites. However, it is not always possible to be given our selected title as the library services a vast number of book groups throughout the county; we therefore look forward to seeing what turns up in the 'Blue Box'.

This month's read was Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* - not a particularly seasonal read as it turned out. Waugh included some of his more painful personal experiences in the novel. As so often happens, the group was split between those who loved it and those who couldn't get to finish it, which always makes for an interesting morning.

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The **Thames Valley Network** (TVN)'s offering this month is *The music of Burt Bacharach*. A presentation from Clive Aronson at 10.30 on Tuesday 27th February by Zoom. Book via TVN website - £1 charge per member.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone you know who may be interested in attending the speaker meetings and/or joining interest groups. I look forward to seeing you on Thursday.

Best wishes – Sue Blackshaw – Chair of Woodstock & District u3a
chair@woodstocku3a.uk