



December 2025 Newsletter

TODAY'S MEETING

6th Dec - Jules O'Brian "Starting Stand-up comedy at nearly 50."

DATES FOR YOUR 2025 DIARY (All talks start at 2pm)

8th Jan - Janet Palmer "Net Zero Stratford - its projects and purpose"

5th Feb - Fran Sandham "Dr Livingstone, I presume"

5th Mar - Ian McLean "The work of the Stratford Food Bank"

2nd Apr - Clare Lott "Walks with hawks"

* Please check the website "Events" for a list of speakers for 2026

FROM THE CHAIR

David Haggarty

Hello Everyone

As Christmas approaches, may I wish you joy, peace, and the warmth of our cherished traditions. May your homes be filled with the comforting aromas of roast turkey, hearty stuffing, and the richness of plum pudding.

This season is a time for reflection, gratitude and togetherness. Whether gathered around the table with loved ones or sharing fond memories of Christmases past, I hope that your hearts be uplifted by kindness and companionship. On behalf of all our Committee members I send you our heartfelt wishes for a joyous and peaceful Christmas, and a New Year blessed with health, happiness, and the warmth presence of those you hold dear.

Our informal coffee morning on the first Wednesday of the month will be held at the Deli Cafe, next to closed down NatWest Bank until we find an alternative venue. This friendly gathering is enjoyed by everyone who comes along. The next coffee morning will be on Wednesday 3rd December 2025, from 10.30am. Everyone is welcome – just turn up.

Finally, If you do not want to receive the quarterly u3a magazine, "Third Age Matters", could you please let us know via email or inform any of the committee at our monthly meetings. Your u3a can save money if you cancel and this also helps reduce waste.

**** NEW YEAR LUNCH**** Please keep the 22nd January 2026 free for our New Year's lunch at the Stratford Sports club as before. Please contact Sue if you haven't received a Lunch Selection Form, (also available on our website).

David

Winter Solstice

21st December



Christmas

25th December



Kwanzaa

26th December



NOVEMBER SPEAKER REPORT

Tim Folan

Dr White gave a spirited talk on the life of the first Duke of Devonshire, William Cavendish - rake, politician and re-builder of Chatsworth who was described by a contemporary as "the most dissolute man in London".

His womanising began early - at the age of 16 he embarked on a 4 year tour of Europe accompanied only by his 21 year old tutor and we can easily imagine what cultural activities two rich young men were interested in when unsupervised and far from home. Subject to a fiery temperament Cavendish was also addicted to gambling. Married at 21 into the Irish nobility he nevertheless had at least 5 children with one of his many mistresses. So notorious was he that Charles II felt he had to warn his own mistress, Nell Gwynn, to avoid Cavendish.

Cavendish also found time for politics. Following the death of Charles II he became increasingly unhappy about the autocratic and Catholic tendencies of James II and was not shy of speaking his mind. This culminated in his imprisonment for refusing to pay a large fine, following his escape it was his mother who got him out of trouble. Cavendish was instrumental in the "glorious revolution" which led to William III taking the throne. His reward was a Dukedom and many other sinecures that enabled him to undertake the rebuilding of Chatsworth over a 20 year period.

Dr White closed with an account of the rebuilding and decoration and, true to form, arguments with Talman - his architect.

ALL THAT SWINGS AND JAZZ

Sue Tringham

Geoff Harrison presented us with a great programme in November! Just a reminder that there will be no Jazz meeting in December, or January, our next meeting will be at 2pm on Thursday 26th February at the Methodist Church. Hope everyone has a peaceful Christmas!

BOOK CLUB – MONDAY

Jackie Biggs

We meet on the 3rd Monday of each month. For more information please contact me, email: jackiebiggs@btinternet.com

BOOK CLUB – WEDNESDAY

Gillian Caveney

Our selection this month included three historical novels, a South Korean tale and a fantasy in an alternative world. Sarah Dunant's *The Birth of Venus*, set in Florence, tells through Alessandra Cecci's story how Boticelli's painting was saved from the bonfire of the vanities at a time of flux in the city. *The Witchfinder's Sister* by Beth Underdown describes how women from Manningtree were scapegoated as witches in the 16th century and Andrew Miller's *The Land in Winter*, a Booker finalist, follows its characters through the big freeze of 1963-64. Mirinae Lea's *8 Lives of a Century Old Trickster* details the extraordinary life of a South Korean woman and Philip Pullman's *The Secret Commonwealth* continues Lyra's story in the second part of his *Book of Dust* trilogy. We enjoyed another lively discussion.

COMPUTER GROUP - OFFERING I-T ASSISTANCE FOR OUR MEMBERS.

Robyn Nicoll

Computer Group - offering I-T assistance for our members. Robyn Nicoll We will not be organising an Autumn course but hope to offer one in the Spring.

A pre-Christmas Treat. - An Afternoon with Gilbert and Sullivan.

(arranged by the Computer Group and Classical Music Group)

"HMS Pinafore"

Friday afternoon, 5th December, in the New Room, 2.00pm to 4.30pm. Entrance Fee which includes afternoon tea: £3 to be collected in advance. All spaces have been booked but there is a reserve list so if interested in coming along, please add your name and contact details to the list at the reception table or contact Edwin Lilly at edwin.lilly44@gmail.com or Robyn Nicoll - redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

CARD MAKING CLUB

Angela Ramsey & Jane Edkins

The sale of Christmas cards has been very well supported by members and the Card Makers are very pleased to announce that they have now achieved a total of £7,000, raised since they began making cards for Charity. 123 Charities, mainly local, have received donations. The next donation from the sale of cards will be given to "Stratford upon Avon Samaritans".

Anyone interested in joining us for a relaxing few hours, including a buffet lunch, would be very welcome. Base cards of different sizes and colours, A4 white and coloured card, backing papers and accessories are all provided. Next workshop: Friday, 12th December, 12.30 to 4.00, in the new room.

For more information, please chat with Angela and Jane at the card sale table.

CHINWAGS

Glynis Holloway

We are a small, friendly group which meets on the 4th Monday of each month at 12.30pm in Bistrot Pierre to enjoy a nice lunch and good conversation. On Monday, 7 of us met for our final lunch of the year. We had an enjoyable time. Our next one will be on January 26th 2026!! We are full at the moment but we have a waiting list so if you would like to join us please contact me at glynisa.holloway@gmail.com

CHOIR

David Haggarty

The choir invites you all to our free concert on Friday 19th December at 10.30 am. Join us in singing some well-loved carols interspersed with festive pieces from the choir. There will be a retiring collection to cover costs. **Please note the time, 10.30 not 11.00 as previously published.**

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Edwin Lilly

We meet on 2nd Monday each month. For more information please contact me Edwin, Email: edwin.lilly44@gmail.com

CREATIVE CRAFT GROUP

Robyn Nicoll

The Crafters meet monthly on the 2nd Monday afternoon at the Methodist Church, 2.00pm to 4.00pm in the reception area. At the November afternoon, the Crafters completed their Christmas Angels made using old books. See the Choir of Angels on the information table in the reception area. The Crafters would welcome new members to join us for a relaxing afternoon each month and possibly finish a project they have had tucked away at the back of the shelf. Next Get-together: 8th. December.

For more information about the Group please contact Robyn, email: redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

DINAHS

Sylvia Crooks

In November Dinahs met at the Pen & Parchment and enjoyed lots of chat over a nice Lunch. We meet again for our Christmas Lunch on Tuesday 2nd December Pen & Parchment 12.00 noon. Wishing our friends in the U3A a Happy Christmas.

FINE DINING

Hazel Miller

We had a very enjoyable evening at the newly refurbished Red Lion in town. We were all impressed with the quality of food and each received a complimentary glass of very good house wine via their loyalty scheme. There's also a small free car park on site. We missed the company of Jackie Biggs due to an injury but Sue Jeffries was a welcome addition for the evening. If you would like to be on our reserve list please contact Ingrid Rooney. We're celebrating Christmas at the Blue Boar in December.

TUESDAY DINING GROUP

Sue Short

The Tuesday Dining group met at Wildwood in Sheep St in November. We had a great time, excellent food with good service...and lots of happy chat

GARDEN APPRECIATION GROUP

Suzy Genge

We met in Stratford sports club this month for coffee before we visited The Butterfly Farm. Lovely and cosy in there, with beautiful butterflies and some healthy-looking tropical plants. We were not too keen on the ants and spiders, although mostly inside cages. December meeting is at 10am in the Stratford garden centre, Clifford Chambers on 9th December.

HISTORY GROUP

Robert Tringham

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 18th December where we shall be delving into the story of language, who was the first hominid to speak, and why. The meeting will take you on a thoughtful journey through the history of human language, from the first shared sounds around ancient fires to the rich tapestry of speech and writing that shaped our cultures. We'll explore how languages grew, changed, and travelled—carried by explorers, poets, and everyday people. Along the way, we'll reflect on why there are 7591 different languages in the world, and what is the difference between a language and dialect. What did Edward Bulwer-Lytton mean when he said in 1839, "the pen is mightier than the sword." Whether you grew up with Latin in school or watched the rise of texting and emojis, words and expressions have meanings that have helped us to communicate and connect with each other. Coffee, Christmas cake and biscuits will be available after the meeting

KEEP FIT

Jan Jones

Our small friendly group consists of both males and females of mixed abilities. The class is designed for our age group, with standing and sitting exercises. We meet every Thursday morning from 10 - 11am in the Parish Centre at St Andrews Church in Shotton. We really enjoy the exercises and a chat. At present there is a waiting list, but please contact me if you are interested in finding out more about the group and being added to the list..

PLAY READING

Sylvia Crooks

Play Reading was cancelled on Thursday 20th November. We will get together again on Thursday 18th December where we begin a new play. Coffee, Christmas cake or Mince pies over a chat

SCRABBLE, DOMINOES AND CARD GAMES

Sue Tringham

We meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month from 2pm until 4pm in the Foyer of the Methodist Church playing Scrabble, Dominoes and Card Games. Dates sometimes difficult in December but we will meet on the 1st and 15th (with mince pies)! Cribbage went down well at our November meeting! It's a light hearted afternoon of fun, laughter and conversation! In January we will only meet on Monday 19th. Tea, coffee and biscuits at 3. All welcome!!

SNATTS

Mike Genge

For our November meeting we took a trip to Swindon to see STEAM, the Great Western Railway Exhibition featuring our old friend Isambard Kingdom Brunel. It was a great museum featuring a lot of trains as well the social history of many of those involved the railway. Next month we will have our traditional Quiz and tea. Friday 12 Dec at 14.00

THEATRE GROUP

Glynis McDougall

Unfortunately our November visit to the Attic was postponed until February/March 26. December is Panto time, FRIDAY 12th December, CINDERELLA. Some have already signed up and I will put the list out for Thursdays meeting. Call or email me if you are interested glynismcdougall1@gmail.com

WALKING GROUP

Lin Randall

Our next walk is on THURSDAY 11th December starting at 10am. Please note the change from the usual second Wednesday of the month. We will start from Moreton Close, CV37 7HB where you can easily park, or park nearby. The walk will be shorter than usual as Jacky has kindly offered to host a Christmas Get together with nibbles and drinks at her house following the walk. Everyone welcomed. Lin



SNATTS visit to Steam in Swindon



Remembrance Parade in Stratford

TEA /COFFEE ROTA 2025/26
Refreshment Co-ordinator
Gillian Edward, email: gillian_edwards50@hotmail.co.uk

Group Leaders please check the Newsletter for your rota.

Below is a list of the interest Groups that will be responsible for serving tea and coffee each month.

Dec	--	Current Affairs	-	Jan	-	Computer	-	Feb	-	Monday Book Club
Mar	--	Creative Cards	-	Apr	-	Choir	-	May	-	Bridge