



February 2026 Newsletter

TODAY'S MEETING

5th Feb - Marilyn Payne "Save the Children, Then and Now" →

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

5th Mar - Ian McLean "The work of the Stratford Food Bank"
 2nd Apr - Clare Lott "Walks with hawks"
 7th May - John Kinory "My life and times as a film extra"

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

FROM THE CHAIR

David Haggarty

Hello everyone

February is named after an ancient Roman festival of purification called Februa. Before Julius Caesar changed the calendar in 46 BC, February was the last month of the year so the cleansing was similar to our New Year's resolutions and was meant to prepare people for the coming year. Forty-four members attended the New Years lunch on Wednesday 28th enjoying a good meal prepared by the catering staff of Stratford Sports Club. In what was otherwise a wet week, the sun came out for what was a very relaxed and sociable occasion.

Once again I would like to ask some members to join the committee and help to take our u3a forward and continue improving. We are a good team that needs some extra input, particularly in the area of using computer software.

Another change of venue for the First Wednesday of the Month Coffee Morning! Thought we could try The Town House Hotel in Church Street opposite the Almshouses! Meet there 10.30 onwards this coming Wednesday 4th February.

ALL THAT SWINGS AND JAZZ

Sue Tringham

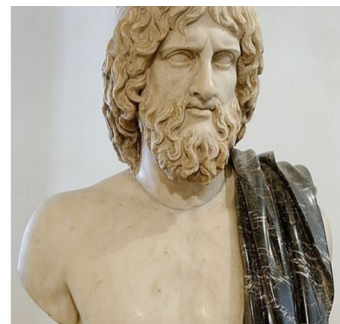
In February 2026 we will meet at 2pm on Thursday 26 at the Methodist Church when someone will be presenting a jazz programme. As expected our January meeting was filled with laughter and, of course, great jazz. New members welcome.

BOOK CLUB – MONDAY

Jackie Biggs

We meet on the 3rd Monday between 1.30pm – 3.30pm. For more information contact Jackie at jackiebiggs@btinternet.com

February is named
After **Februus**
God of Purification



Candlemas
2nd February



Valentines Day
14th January



JANUARY SPEAKER REPORT

Tim Folan

[Net Zero Stratford](#) works to create community spaces for climate action & awareness in Stratford, On a very wintry day indeed Janet Palmer came to explain what they do. The most visible projects are the Climate Hub in Meer Street, the Community Kitchen at the Ken Kennet Centre in Justins Avenue and the Repair Cafe at the Methodist Church Hall - all of these are run by local volunteers. These projects align with the main net zero issues facing the community. Janet explained the "Bustrated" campaign to improve information about bus services in the area and lobbying the County Council. Food waste is being reduced at the community kitchen with up to 30 people a week served free hot meals made from surplus food donated by supermarkets. Consumer waste is reduced at the Repair Cafe and [Act on Energy](#) advises on grants etc. to help people reduce their energy bills. Janet also told us about the Carbon Literacy training courses they run and their ambitions to get more involvement from young people. It was disheartening to hear that volunteers at the Climate Hub have had to receive training on anger de-escalation to deal with visitors influenced by social media disinformation.

BOOK CLUB – WEDNESDAY

Gillian Caveney

We read Songbirds by Christy Lefteri for January's meeting. The novel, set in Cyprus, is shocking in both its description of the treatment of migrant workers brought to the island to serve as maids and the illegal trade in the songbirds of the title. We had mixed reactions to the book, described as beautiful by one member but slow to really engage the reader by others, with a not entirely satisfactory ending. We all agreed on the importance and relevance of its themes though, and its depiction of characters trapped in different ways by circumstance and environment.

COMPUTER GROUP - offering I-T assistance for our members.

Robyn Nicoll

Please sign the sheet on the information table if interested in a short computer course designed to give individual assistance to help you gain the best use of your laptop, tablet, and phone. To enable this course to go ahead, 5/6 "students" are ideal and 5 sessions will be booked. Proposed Dates: 1st and 3rd Friday afternoons, 2pm to 3.30pm in the lounge.
April 17th, May 1st and 15th, June 5th and 19th. Fee will be £20 approx. to cover hire of room.

CARD MAKING CLUB

Angela Ramsey & Jane Edkins

Members are looking forward to another year of card making for themselves and helping to support local charities by making cards for sale at monthly meetings. We spent the January afternoon creating card backgrounds using Brusho powders sprinkled on watercolour card, spritzed, and dried. The card pieces were then decorated with silhouette stamps and mounted onto card blanks to create stunning finished cards. 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 provided.

The next donation from the sale of cards will be given to "Stratford upon Avon Samaritans". Next workshop: Friday, 27th February, 12.30 to 4.00, in the new room. For more information, please chat with Angela and Jane at the card sale table or email Robyn, at redbird22@hotmail.co.uk

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.

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

We have a number of new pieces to rehearse for our next concert in late April, date to be confirmed. Since our Christmas concert we have welcomed four new members from three of our local u3a's. We are a happy and relaxed choir of mixed abilities and sing for the pleasure and health benefits it gives. We meet every Friday, 10.30 to 12.00, at the Stratford Methodist Centre.

TUESDAY DINING GROUP

Susan Short

We had a really good meal ...with super chat around the table...at El Greco, in Rother Street/ Wood Street. I think everyone agrees the food and reception are excellent there. Alas, it was our last get together, only one year one from inception of the group, as I am unable to be the organiser due to increased family commitments. No-one in the group is able to take on the role. If there is anyone in our U3A who would like to organise a similar group, do feel free to get in touch and I will help you in any way I can. Thanks to all the diners and the fun evenings we have enjoyed this past year.

CLASSICAL MUSIC GROUP

Edwin Lilly

Thanks to Graeme Ramsey for the January Programme and the report that follows. At the January meeting of the Classical Music Group, members were treated to extracts from Pergolesi's liturgical work Stabat Mater, followed by a complete performance of Mahler's Second Symphony. The next meeting will take place on Monday, 9th February, starting at 2:00 pm, in the Community Room of the Guild Cottages in Church Street, entrance opposite Elizabeth House (Stratford District Council offices). All u3a members are welcome. If you like classical music, do come along and enjoy an afternoon listening to and discussing a variety of music.

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. The Crafters would welcome new members to join us for a relaxing afternoon each month. At our January afternoon we planned the year ahead with an emphasis on recycling. The first project is to create a useful container using a cardboard pot and old postage stamps which we will be making at the March afternoon (9th March). See some samples on the information table. Members are invited to come along to join us and to have a cuppa. Next Get-together: Monday, 9th. February. For more information about the Group please contact Robyn at [email: redbird22@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:redbird22@hotmail.co.uk)

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Sylvia Bevan

Our next meeting will be on 11th February at 2pm in the upstairs community room of the Guild Cottages. Enter through the double doors opposite the council offices and you will be greeted. Much to talk about with International, British and local affairs. All topics for discussion are welcome as are new members, just come along.

DINAHS

Sylvia Crooks

Dinahs have a change of venue on the 3rd February to the Red Lion 12.00.noon. Before Heartwood Inns - we lunched at the Red Lion every month. Very different now.

FINE DINING

Hazel Miller

January's dining experience was at Sabai Sabai on Wood Street. It was the first time the group had been to this Thai restaurant and we were pleasantly surprised. There was an extensive menu which was well priced. The portions were quite large so only a few managed dessert. All the food was full of flavour and spicy but they will reduce the heat on request when ordering. It may lack some of the character that other local restaurants have but it was very clean and the staff were accommodating. Unusually the staff were not allowed to receive a tip which was a shame as it was deserved.

GARDEN APPRECIATION GROUP

Suzy Genge

We all met at Stalls coffee shop near Preston on Stour this month. There was scenery to admire and even a herd of deer. Some bargains to be purchased in the shop too. Next month, Tuesday 10th Feb, we shall meet at the Ettington Park hotel for coffee and possibly see some snowdrops. Meet at 10:30 in the coffee lounge.

GRUMPY OLD MEN

Keith Riste

We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month to discuss a variety of topics and have an enjoyable. For more information, please contact Keith at keithriste@yahoo.com

HISTORY GROUP

Robert Tringham

The Group met on 16th December to consider the origins of languages. We discussed the findings that all languages devolved from the first African Tongue which was the cradle of all modern languages. We saw photographs of ancient carvings especially the Java Shells carved by Homo Erectus 500,000 years ago.

We also looked at "Lucy" who walked upright and is likely a Homo Erectus but lived 3.2 million years ago. We considered whether a dog barks in different languages, or birds sing in their own local language. Part 2 of origins of languages will continue in similar theme in March. More details to follow in the March Newsletter and on the Website.

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 10am - 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 in January, hopefully we will meet on the 19th February 10.30am for coffee.

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. It's a light hearted afternoon of fun, laughter and conversation! In February we will be meeting on the 2nd and 16th! Tea, coffee and biscuits at 3. All welcome!!

SNATTS

Mike Genge

We had a lively discussion about AI. Its origins and its current impact and potential impact on life, the arts and employment. The base presentation had actually been written by AI (Copilot) and provided lots of food for thought. In February we will have the second half of Jo from Haven4Natures fascination talk on The a secret Life of Trees. Friday February 13th at 14.00 in the New Room

THEATRE GROUP

Glynis McDougall

The February theatre visit to the Attic is Sherlock Holmes on the 26th February 7:30. Meet up at 7pm sign up at the meeting or email / phone me

WALKING GROUP

Lin Randall

Our next walk is on Wednesday 11th February and will start at 10am from Loxley Close, Wellesbourne. It will mostly be on a hard surface doing a circular route to Walton Hall and back which will be about 4 miles taking under two hours. There is plenty of free parking on the close which is adjacent to the sports field. Sandy will lead this walk and everyone is welcome to join us!

MAGAZINE EDITOR REQUIRED

The

role will involve maintaining an organised archive system, digitizing records for accessibility, and collaborating with team leaders to curate exhibits or publications that highlight our rich history and activities of the Heart of England u3a, and produce a quarterly magazine for publication on our website. For more information please contact David Haggarty at d-haggarty@outlook.com



Heart of England u3a Lunch at the Stratford Sports Club on Wednesday 21st January 2026

TEA /COFFEE ROTA 2026

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.

Feb - Monday Book Club	- Mar - Creative Cards	- Apr - Choir
May - Garden Appreciation	- Jun - Fine Dining	- Jul - Games