learn, laugh, live

u3a

Welcome everyone to our October edition of the *Sentinel*.
What a busy and enjoyable month we've had! We've seen successful library exhibitions from our Photography and Art & Painting Groups, as well as a wonderful trip to Belfast organised by Peter and Christine Calver for the Out and About Group. You can read all about their trip and enjoy some photographs of their experiences in this edition.
A big thank you to everyone who came along to our Anniversary Dance last Saturday. We enjoyed some excellent musical entertainment from Prime Numbers, along with a quiz and raffle. The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the beautiful anniversary cake, made and generously provided by Hannah, Sheila Jones' daughter. It was absolutely delicious!

Out and About Group – Belfast – Peter Calver

On the first day 53 of us boarded the Harry Shaw coach and arrived at Sizergh Castle a National Trust property near Kendal, Cumbria. A medieval manor filled with items collected by 26 generations of the Strickland Family. After suitable refreshments we continued our journey to Gretna Green and an overnight stop at the Gretna Hall Hotel.
On Day 2 we began our journey to the port of Cairnryan. The journey was broken in Kirkcudbright where we visited the small Scottish National Trust of Broughton House and Gardens. A very short walk from here was the waterfront of Kirkcudbright and a number of cafes.
The smooth crossing took 2¼ hours and then we were driven to the Corr's Corner Hotel on the outskirts of Belfast, which would be our accommodation for the next three nights.
On Day 3 we picked up a local guide in Belfast we also visited the key places we had all heard of during the Irish troubles. Mainly in the west and north of Belfast. We drove along Falls Road, Shanklin Road, saw Crumlin Road Gaol. We stopped at one of the peace walls and several members wrote peace messages on the wall.

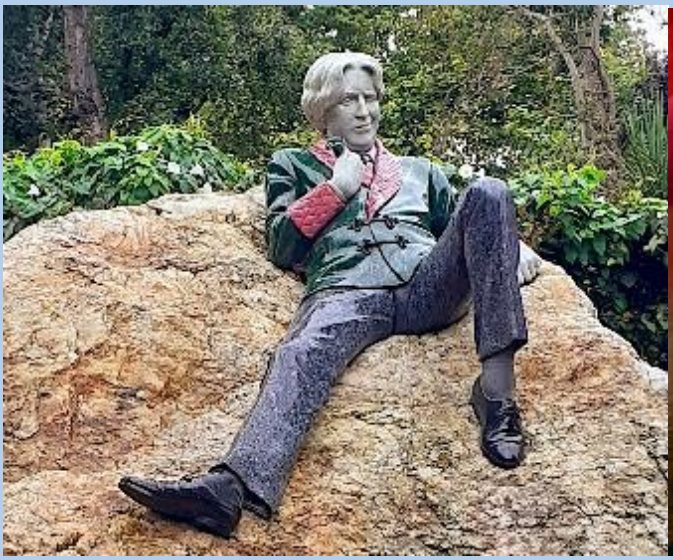




On day 4 we visited the Bushmills Distillery on the Antrim coast. We had a guided tour and saw the malting and distillation process, barrel making plant and the bottling plant. Scottish whisky is spelt without an ’ E’ our guide proudly told us that the ‘e’ in the Irish product whiskey stood for excellence.

We returned to the coach and travelled the 4 miles to the Giants Causeway visitors centre. All members either walked to the causeway, or took the courtesy bus. The causeway is a geological wonder comprising 40,000 interlocking basalt columns. The result of intense volcanic and geological activity over 60 million years ago. The area is steeped in folklore. Giant Finn McCool said to have left behind the causeway.

On day 5 our journey would take us to the Bonnington Hotel in the Whitehall district of Dublin.





En route we visited Hillsborough Castle and Gardens. This elegant “Irish Big House” was originally established in the 1750s. In 1925 it was bought by the British Government and become the seat of the Governor of Northern Ireland and the residence of the Monarch when in the province. The house is filled with artworks from the Royal Collection. We were guided around the state rooms with very knowledgeable guides. Following the tour of the castle we explored the 100 acres of well tended gardens. We had lunch in the Weston Pavilion before embarking our coach and were driven over the border into the Republic of Ireland and onto Dublin and our hotel for the night.

On the final day of our visit we were driven into Dublin At one point we got off the coach to see a statue to celebrate Oscar Wilde. There were a number of displays listing his sayings. One of them “I drink to keep body and soul apart”

We were guided through the Phoenix park, I mile from the city centre, it is the largest enclosed public park in any capital city in Europe, spanning 1,750 acres of green space, historic monuments, and wildlife.
Once our ferry sailed from Dublin, the crossing was smooth, in spite of warnings of high winds. 3½ hours later we disembarked in Holyhead. Because of the change in sailing time we did not arrive back in Balsall Common until 1:30am on Saturday.
Every passenger enjoyed the holiday. This holiday was arranged by Harry Shaw Group Travel to an itinerary specified by Balsall Common u3a. The itinerary was customised specifically for the group at a cost effective rate. **For more details and images on the holiday follow this link: Nothern Ireland Report**



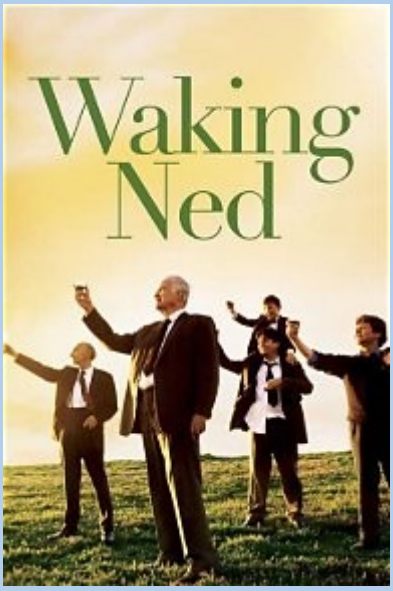
Titanic interesting facts – Peter Calver



5 factors led to the high loss of life for the Titanic.

- Titanic was travelling too fast in an iceberg area and would have had no chance of stopping if an iceberg was seen.
- There were no binoculars available for the iceberg lookouts in the crow's nest, they were late in seeing the iceberg and with the speed of the ship too late to stop or avoid.
- The double skin outer walls of the ship did not go high enough, when the ship listed they filled with sea water.
- Titanic only carried 20 lifeboats that could hold 1178 passengers. There were 2240 souls on board. Only 495 passengers were rescued plus 214 crew members.
- After the collision with the iceberg, Titanic's crew used flares and radio signals to call for help. The nearest ship was only 4 miles away. SS California, its captain saw the flares but thought they were fireworks. The radio operator had gone to bed so there was no one on radio watch. The first rescue ship to reach the disaster was SS Carpathian which was 58 miles away.

Film Appreciation Group – Kim Kathrell



The October Film Appreciation Group screening, to be shown at 2pm on Wednesday 14th in the Westlake Room at the rear of the Village Hall, is the 1998 comedy Waking Ned (PG). When Ned Devine dies from shock after winning the lottery, two longtime friends, Michael and Jackie, discover the body and agree Ned would want them to benefit from his good luck. They embark upon an outrageous scheme to claim the ticket - but need all the townsfolk to go along with their plan!

Written and directed by BAFTA nominated Kirk Jones, and starring Ian Bannen and David Kelly, Waking Ned is a comedy about friends pulling together to make a dream come true. Doors will open at 1:45pm, and the nominal charge of £2.50 covers the hire of the room. The group is open to all u3a members. Contact the coordinator, Kim Hathrell, via the u3a website for more information.

Winning Images 'reflections' – Photography Group

Reflections competition judged by Van Greaves 27 Aug 2026

Prints - Adams

	title	by
First	Splash Down	Anne Watkinson
Second	Winter Calm	Anne Watkinson
Third	**Coffee Break**	**Pam Martin**

Prints - Leibovitz

	title	by
First	**A Light Breakfast**	**John Hayes**
Second	**To Crow Island and Cat Bells**	**Angela Reid**
Third	**Egret**	**John Hayes**

Projected images - Adams

	title	by
First	**Centenary Square**	**Karen Coates**
Second	**Ladybower Reservoir**	**Roy Chambers**
Third	**Outside Looking In**	**Andy Roe**

	title	by

Winning Images ‘reflections’ – Photography Group









Ladybower Reservoir – Roy Chambers; To Crow Island and cat Bells – Angela Reid; Loughrigg Tarn Reflections – Angela Reid; Egret – John Hayes

Coffee Break – Pam Martin; Outside looking in – Andy Roe; Tudor Reflection – Ray Manning;







Winning Images ‘reflections’ – Photography Group







Ce

ntenary Square – Karen Coates; New York – Riahl;

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Pilates Group – Vivienne Waterer

Reflection Leslie de Chernatony

A new group has started in the past few months; it is Pilates and is led by Abi Edmunds who is a qualified physiotherapist and founded the Resync practice on Balsall Street. She holds 2 classes on Thursday mornings in the village hall costing £ 7 per session.
The chair class starting at 10.15 concentrates on the whole body to improve strength and stability, whereas the mat pilates class starts at 11.15 and is focused on core strength flexibility and posture. The classes suit any ability and as Abi says ‘you go at what ever level suits you’.
So many exercise classes attract just women, but at these classes there are several men who benefit just as much as the women
Both my husband and I are regular participants and we both feel better for this type of exercise. If you are interested, do come along and join us for a taster session to see if it is for you. Abi is always more than willing to have a chat to give you better insight into this activity
Feedback from Henry:-

The sitting Pilates class is excellent, I wasn’t entirely sure what to expect but it delivers core strengthening posture benefits but without the strain on your joints, Don’t be fooled by the class being a chair class you will definitely feel the effects in muscles you forgot you had

Race Night – Mick Gill

Date		Event
1st October 2pm	St Peter's Hall	Monthly Meeting - Judge, Jury, Judgement, Justice -- Alan Cutler
1st 2nd Mondays	Xcel Leisure Centre in Canley	U3A Swimming sessions continue on the first and second Mondays of October, November and December.
3rd November	TBC	20th Anniversary Ramble
5th November 2:00 pm	St Peters Hall	Monthly Meeting - Songs and Stories of the Season (Autumn and Winter) -- Steve and Julie Wigley
27th November 2026 7:00 pm	Village Hall	U3A Race Night
Thursday Mornings @ 10am and 11.15am	Village Hall	Chair and Mat Pilates Classes
Monday 5th October from 2-4 pm	Village Hall	Indoor Curling - free but a contribution to the refreshments would be appreciated. The taster is on a 1st come 1st served basis

Make sure you've got the date in your diary. Places can be reserved by completing the online booking form on the Balsall Common website "What's On" page.
Booking will be made available from 14th October.

Cutting the Cake – 20th Anniversary Dance

The Anniversary Dance was well attended and here is the delicious cake prepared by Hannah
If you fancy trying something new, we are piloting an **Indoor Curling** session at the Village Hall on **Monday 5 October, from 2–4pm**. Check your emails for more details or contact Vivienne Waterer.
And don't forget to look out for the booking form for the return of our popular **Race Night**, taking place on **Thursday 27 November at 7.30pm at the Village Hall**. I hope to see lots of you there!



