

KEY CONTACTS & INFORMATION

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Website

www.solihullurc.org.uk

Hall Lettings in Hobs Moat, Olton or Christ Church –
details are on the website.

Generations Project - enabling the Church in care homes

www.generationsssolihull.org.uk
generationsssolihull@icloud.com

Moments - a dementia cafe

Mondays 10am—12 noon@ Christ Church

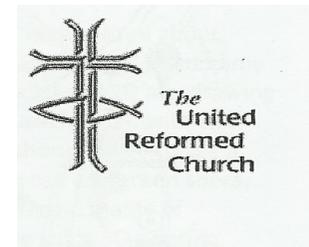
JULY/AUGUST NEWSLETTER

Material for the July/August edition
is due to Marian Batten 0121 689 8213
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by Sunday, 21st August, please.

SOLIHULL

United Reformed Church

Christ Church - Hobs Moat— Olton



JUNE 2016 NEWSLETTER

Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, 'Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,'
even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

from Psalm 139





SOLIHULL UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

An amalgamation of three fellowships - Hobs Moat, Olton and Christ Church - Solihull URC seeks to continue serving the three communities in a different way. Sunday worship is focused at Christ Church, but opportunities at other times and in other places are being explored and developed.

Prayer is at the heart of what we are doing, as our desire is to fulfil God's calling to us as a Christian fellowship.

We invite you to join us on the exciting and challenging journey we are on, and look forward to seeing you in the future.

PSALM 91 v.5

*'You need not fear any dangers at night
or sudden attacks during the day.'*

We live in a world of death and sorrow. We should not be alarmed, by the terror - be what it may - for the promise is that the believer shall not be afraid. Why should we? God our Father is here and will be with us all through the lonely hours. He is an almighty watcher, a faithful friend. Nothing can happen without His direction. Darkness is not dark to Him. He has promised to defend His people - and who can break through such a barrier? Worldly people may well be afraid, but we who rely on Jesus are saved from all these through rich mercy. If we give way to foolish fear we shall dishonour our Lord. Down, then, with dismal forebodings; God has not forgotten to be gracious. It may be night in the soul but there need be no terror, for the God of Love changes not. We may walk in darkness but we are never cast away.

We trust in our Heavenly Father.

A Church Member

CHRISTIAN AID

Sincere thanks to everybody who helped at the Methodist Church Hall Sale/Coffee morning, to those who helped at the book stall and those who attended the event.

I also thank all the kind folk who helped me do door to door collections. We always make a lot of money and I find it a great way to be re-acquainted with some folk that I only see once a year!. A fair number of the house dwellers also remember you from previous years, even if you don't recall them.

Bridget

A Big Thank-you to Anna and Rebecca, who made the wonderful sum of £48.10 from the sale of cakes for Christian Aid on Sunday. Thanks to all for your support.

PRAYING FOR WORLD PEACE—WITH A SIKH

There he was again, seated on a folding stool; his head reverently bowed in prayer with his colourful holy book on his lap. Beside him the usual notice telling the busy shoppers, 'I am praying for world peace'. Another notice invites people to sit beside him and pray.

Sometimes someone is sitting beside him. But today the spare folding seat was empty - and I wasn't in too much of a hurry to get home. So I parked my shopping trolley out of the way and sat down. How strange it felt sitting there beside a Sikh man - and doing the same thing as him; praying for peace. Peace between nations, peace between faiths, peace between people on earth.

As I bowed my head I felt the light around me, surrounding me, inside of me - healing light, comforting light, familiar light - the light of God. I don't always feel it when I pray, but when I do it is the most wonderful feeling and hard to describe.

As I finished my prayer I opened my eyes and looked at him. I told him I am Christian and that "It is good to be with you praying for peace". He looked back at me and said, "May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you. And please come again and pray for peace with me".

So I will.

Carol Andrews

SHOE BOXES

The new leaflets are now out for anybody wishing to prepare a shoe box this year, and can be found at the back of the church or from me. They don't need to be ready before October, but sometimes it helps to start collecting things a few months before. The leaflets are very helpful about what to collect and how to prepare the box.



Anne Cherry

AA Bi

How can I know God when I don't know my loved ones?

Mark begins his sabbatical

My Christian faith has much to do with the fact that I grew up in a Christian family. Sunday by Sunday I benefitted (mostly) from one or two sermons delivered by my Father, which all now reside in his study neatly filed by date and theme. Sadly, because of dementia, my Father would no longer make sense of his filing system and would struggle to read more than a few lines of any of his sermons, the fruit of so much thought and time. And I wonder if the faith that he has so clearly shared with thousands over the years has any substance for him today.

How might it be possible to know God when one struggles to recognise someone you have known well who is physically in front of you? It strikes me that this question is at the heart of any Christian approach to dementia.

In our life of faith we depend a great deal on our intellectual capacities. We are 'people of the book', reading and interpreting the Bible. In the life of the Church we share our understanding and learn from each other. Aspects of our belief, such as the Holy Trinity, challenge our ability to make sense of complex concepts as we seek the God who will remain beyond our full understanding (otherwise he would not be God!).

Yet our faith is more about a relationship of trust in God and, as in any relationship, is something we experience and sense rather than learn on an intellectual level. We have all had experience of some beautiful part of God's creation. This experience, with a sense that it is a gift, is our knowledge and awareness of God, the loving creator, in whom we can trust.

The important question then is 'do we need more than this?' To experience beauty, to feel love, to receive care - are these our relationship with and knowledge of God?

I am very aware that my own faith in Jesus Christ has come from experiencing him through my family and others. I trust that while my

Father's faith can no longer be supported by his intellect, he might remain in relationship with Christ through the love and care he is given in his confusion.

During my sabbatical I am hoping to have a number of conversations with people who, with experience of dementia in themselves or in loved ones, may be able to give some substance to these thoughts of mine. I trust that we might see that dementia is not the disaster that we tend to think it is because, in the love of Jesus, God is as much a part of life as he ever has been.

Mark Fisher

CHURCH @ HOME

Irene Bound and Rosalind Smart are taking responsibility for ensuring that those of our folk who are not able to get to worship with us on a Sunday are able to receive Holy Communion. If you, or someone you know, would like to be included in this, please let us know.

Church@Home, rather like the Generations Project does in care homes, is seeking to ensure that 'the church' is not just those who can gather on a Sunday, but all who seek a relationship with Jesus Christ.

LINDA FABER - MISSION ENABLER

Linda has begun her ministry amongst us and over the next weeks and months will help us to see a clear strategy for sharing the Gospel with those on the fringe or outside the church. This will include, for each of us, ensuring that we ourselves are continuing in our journey of faith. Central to all this is prayer - for our church fellowship, those we seek to share with and to strengthen our own relationship with God.

We might not all be able to be physically active in initiatives we make as a church, but we can all pray that our church fellowship can be an effective instrument through which Jesus Christ may be discovered and known.

ZIMBABWE - Stories for Chabge 122

Prayer in times of food shortages

Loving and almighty God,
We pray for all who are working to combat the growing food crisis.

For international aid agencies and local community organisations.

In particular we pray for those in positions of power. May the leaders of the nations act with wisdom and compassion, bringing relief to those who suffer now and moving us towards a world without hunger.



We pray for our sisters and brothers caught up in a cycle of drought and hunger; for parents struggling to find food and seeing their children go hungry; for farmers seeing their crops fail and livestock die.

We pray for ourselves; May we generously share from the abundance that you have given us and join our voices with those who call for an end to poverty, that lives may be saved and rebuilt with hope for the future.

May we act in your name, Lord, and be an instrument of your grace

Amen



VISIT TO A MOSQUE

I was very disappointed last year due to another commitment to have missed the visit to the Orthodox Church. When I saw that the Central Mosque at Balsall Heath had an open day I went to look round.



Firstly, of course you leave your shoes at the door. Secondly, you are overwhelmed with the odour of sweaty feet as there are hundreds of pairs of shoes neatly lined up. You enter the prayer room which in the middle had a MASSIVE chandelier; the room is unadorned apart from a small area which was described as the equivalent of 'our altar'. There are acres of carpet, the Mosque can hold around four thousand people!

We were present when there was a call to prayer, it was magical. There was a board with eight clocks, all set at different times, five of these were the times you were obligated to pray, the rest you could choose to. As prayers were about to begin the ladies were asked to leave the prayer room so not to distract the men! As you can imagine this went down well. In the end I felt quite sorry for the young man who was showing us around and trying to defend that part of his faith. He probably volunteered just to escort visitors and had not expected the flack he got from some very eloquent woman.

In all I have to say we were made very welcome. It was stressed that the Mosque was for the whole community regardless of your faith, They were open almost twenty four hours, you could pop in for tea, coffee or counselling, they even have a marriage bureau.

One comment the escort made which stuck in my mind was " to make sure we were all singing from the same hymn sheet" I can't remember in what context it was said though, and it was strange coming from him. An example of how sayings get absorbed and repeated without thinking perhaps.

So by way of comparison, SURC does the tea and coffee, does the counselling (I think); there could be scope for a marriage bureau, can I run that please? I just hope we don't adopt taking shoes off though.

Marian Clarke

THE FUTURE OF THE OLTON URC SITE

Olton Residents Association have organised a Public Meeting on Wednesday, 1st June for all interested parties, residents, tenants, local organisations, the Council and the United Reformed Church so as to determine the local interest in making the site a community facility. If such interest exists, find a way to explore how it can be achieved.

The church itself, if it was cleared of the pews, would make a very large hall. The site has the potential to become a Community Centre for Olton – the only area of Solihull without such a facility

Everyone is welcome on Wednesday, 1st June, at 7pm in the church.

SUMMER LUNCH, 26th JUNE

We are planning the Summer Lunch, so please put the date in your diaries. There will be plenty of food, fellowship and fun! It would be great to fill our garden so do invite your family and friends, they are all welcome.



I will put lists out at the back of church in case you feel able to help, and tickets will be on sale from June 5th, priced £5.

Transport can be arranged if needed.

Trixie Harman

OLTON SCOUTS

Olton Scouts AGM will be held on June 20th at 6.30pm. It lasts for about an hour with refreshments afterwards. The Beavers and Cubs will provide some entertainment. Please come and offer your support.

MISSION ENABLER - TWO RESPONSES

Not surprisingly, I am getting a number of different responses to the Church employing me as a Mission Enabler - some of them positive and some more negative. I suspect the more negative ones come from a sense of not knowing what I will be doing and how it might impact on them or their group. I want to reassure you that I am not here to be like the thief Jesus described as coming to “steal, kill and destroy”, but I come to be part of Jesus’ mission where he stated his purpose as coming “that they may have life, and have it to the full”. I am not coming to take-over anything, but to encourage you to look at what you are doing and ask, “Is it doing well?” If it is, then fine, but if it isn’t then let us work out together a better way forward.

It is quite usual, when someone in a role like mine first asks people about what they want to do in churches, for them to come out with a list of things they want to give up and stop doing! It looks, to those who haven’t been a part of the conversation, as if this new-comer is making people stop doing things they assume the person was happy with (what a meany!) - but what is really happening is that by asking, the Enabler has provided a valve to release the pressure of things they weren’t happy with but had kept secret. From the outside it looks wrong. If you are not sure about something, or are not happy about something, then speak up - I will do my best to get to the bottom of the upset. Please don’t suffer in silence. Of course the Elders are there to speak to as well.

I also want to reassure another group of people. There are some who are feeling that my new role is an exciting opportunity, but they are sad, or disappointed, that they are in a stage in life where they feel they cannot take advantage of this new initiative because they are too busy already, or they are physically not as able as they once were. Obviously I can’t change your circumstances, but what I can do is make sure that you are included. It is my observation that people are more likely to feel included when they know what is going on - so we will do our best to communicate to you, and you must do your best to hear and communicate back. We will try to tell you not just about

THANK YOU

Thank you for the lovely flowers and messages of support we have received over the past few weeks, which have helped us to cope with our health problems.

Val and David Cross

We would like to thank Irene Lambert for all her hard work on the Hobs Moat garden, which is looking lovely.

Iris Webb

MONDAY NIGHT CLUB AT HOBS MOAT

June 6th The Merlin Singers - listen and enjoy or join in
13th Beetle Drive
20th Ondrei - Classical Pianist
27th Strawberries and Cream. This will be our last meeting before the summer break.

We shall return on Monday 5th September which will be our AGM and coffee evening. Please come and join us at 7-30 to 9-30pm. We are a friendly group and you will be made to feel very welcome.



‘Talking flows easily when people are doing things.’

Cheryl Hawkins

FELLOWSHIP PRAYERS

Housebound or in care

Doris Thompson, Gordon Straight, Brenda Cotes, Mary Stimpson, Phyllis Macer-Wright, Joan Shaw, Vera Thomas, Alf Andrews.

Many with health issues or increased frailty

We pray for patience and perseverance as life is adjusted to cope each day:

Vera Thomas, Pam Tovey, Jean and Brian Mather, Margaret Agnew, Thelma Philips, Eunice Thomson, Margaret Toogood, David Cross, Irene Lambert and partner Keith, Beryl Pullin, Maureen Bellamy, Andrea and Phil Holt, Peggy Crosby, the Jenkins family, Thea, Keith and Barbara Fisher.

In hospital - Jim Durant

Those who have moved away

Linda, Dunne, now happily settled in a village near Frome, sends love and greetings to all her Olton friends.

On Sabbatical

We pray for God's blessing on Mark and Judy as Mark begins his sabbatical, and we send them our best wishes, hoping they will be able to find some time for the rest and relaxation which they need and deserve.

WE PRAY

for God's love and peace to surround our friends, families and members of our congregation who are in need of our thoughts and prayers as they cope each day with their individual problems.

We pray for those who are carers, that they will have the strength and patience to care for those in need with love and kindness.



things that are going to happen but about how things went, or how they are going. You might think of some way to develop what we have done before - tell me about it. I am not promising we will do your idea but we will add it to the conversation. For those who have time, there are a whole host of things to do with preparing activities that you might be able to do from your armchair, and I won't be shy in asking. Are you good with scissors?- let me know. Can you knit or sew or wield a saw? - there will be things to be made for our new Story Room. Can you fold leaflets? Can you address envelopes? These types of jobs might not be so glamorous but they are essential. Tell me what else you *can* do and I will almost certainly find a way to use it.

And then we come to prayer. One of my favourite sayings is "Prayer is the work, all the rest is just gathering up the results." I can't remember who said it but I believe it to be true. If you can pray for the work of the Church you have got the best job. You can pray at home alone, you can pray with others. I fully intend to provide more information on what to pray for in the Church and how to pray about things, and what the results of those prayers have been. Prayer is how we engage with God in His Mission and I hope we all want to be a part of that.

You may have a different response, from the two I have mentioned here, to my appointment as Mission Enabler. I would love to hear your thoughts.

Linda Faber



'There are many roads
up the holy mountain.'
Anon

DIARY for June – Worship, Prayer and Events

- Wednesday 1st 10am Community Prayers @ Olton
7pm Public Meeting at Olton URC
- Thursday 2nd 2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
- Sunday 5th** 10am Holy Communion @ Christ Church
- Monday 6th 10am Moments Café @ Christ Church
10.30am Job Club
- Wednesday 8th 6.15pm CT in Central Solihull @ St Helen's
- Sunday 12th** 10am Worship @ Christ Church
2pm Queen's Birthday Celebration @ St Margaret's
- Monday 13th 10am Moments Café @ Christ Church
10.30am Job Club
- Tuesday 14th 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat
11am Holy Communion @ Hampton House
- Wednesday 15th 10am Worship @ The Grove
- Thursday 16th 10am Fellowship Prayers @ Hobs Moat
2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
- Sunday 19th** 10am Worship @ Christ Church
1.30pm CT in Olton Picnic @ The Friary
- Monday 20th 10am Moments Café @ Christ Church
10.30am Job Club
6.30pm Scouts AGM at Olton
7.30pm Elders' Meeting @ Hobs Moat
- Thursday 23rd 2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat
- Sunday 26th** 10am Worship @ Christ Church
2pm Garden Lunch @ Yew Tree Cottage, Barston
- Monday 27th 10am Moments Café @ Christ Church
10.30am Job Club
- Tuesday 28th 10.30am Neighbourhood Coffee Morning @ Hobs Moat
- Thursday 30th 10.30am Mission Enabler Reference Group
2pm Singing for Pleasure @ Hobs Moat

another aspect of grace – humility. *'Give me the grace to let you be my servant too'* - I quote words from one of our favourite hymns, 'The servant King.' I have found it really hard not to be independent – not to be able to give lifts but instead receive them. This is a very subtle aspect of grace, yet one that many of us have to accept as we age and become more dependent on help from others. It takes good grace to cope and appreciate all the love that is being offered – especially if you would rather give than receive - like me!

So thank God for his grace and the grace we find in others. Thank God when things are difficult and he is teaching us patience and grace; for that is just as important as all the good things he gives us by his grace in this wonderful world.

Carol Andrews

LETTER FROM GANESH (OUR SPONSORED CHILD)

Dear Supporter, Greetings. Your sponsored child Ganesh Kumar says " I am very well in my nice and greenery village with my family. I have drawn the picture of a beautiful flower plant in a flower pot for you by using water colour and thread brush. You know, I ate mango in more of no. in this summer. I love mango very much. My father bought mangoes from market for me and my brother and sister."

Update on the child. Ganesh Kumar is a very brilliant child. He is improving well in his study. He has learnt tense from his teacher and so he can translate sentences from Hindi to English. Now a days he is learning narration and antonyms & synonyms in his school from his teacher. His parents are benefitted with a govt. housing scheme. The govt. provide to below poverty line family a one room cemented house. They are very much happy and thanking a lot for your great support. Best wishes.

This is exactly as written as I hesitate to correct (or guess) anything. Ganesh's drawing can be seen on the notice board. Thank you to all who contribute.

Anne Cherry

GRACE

'By the grace of God I am what I am' - 1 Corinthians 10:15

The story of two women: a modern parable. One of the pair was feeling low – 'What have I got to thank God for?' And her friend replied 'Did you wake up this morning and were you breathing? Could you see, hear etc. Did you have water for a drink and water to wash yourself? Had you clothes to put on?' The friend goes through a list until the sad woman realises exactly what God has given her by his grace. He does it for love of humanity – not because he has to. *'By the grace of God I am what I am'.* And by his grace we have God's favours to us.

'We have received one blessing after another'. John 1:16. God's grace goes way beyond what we actually need for survival in this world. Why did he give us flowers to enjoy – and amazing coloured gemstones from the earth? These are just two examples of his abundance. It is so easy to take things for granted. Think of the beauty of the seasons for example and give thanks – and think of the sheer joy of colours. But God's grace is not just favours to us. It is far deeper than that. God's grace also teaches us the importance of self-sacrifice. How many of us could give our only son as a sacrifice? Yet God did, and through Jesus he taught us to have sacrificial grace.



Two years ago I found the changes at church, and particularly worship each Sunday at Christ Church when my heart was in Olton, very difficult indeed. I talked to a Christian Baptist friend from my guitar group about it – and he said, 'Carol it will take a lot of grace. But give it a season – try it.' And I did. And then I gave it another season and so on. It's still hard – it still takes a lot of grace – but I'm glad I did it and the joys are beginning to outweigh the sacrifice. The situation was a huge lesson in grace for me – and I am grateful for it and grateful to God for all the friendships and love I have found through doing it. God never promised being a Christian would be easy did he? How true!

'My strength is made perfect in weakness.' 2 Corinthians 12:9
Not being able to drive - albeit temporarily I hope – has taught me

LECTIONARY READINGS for JUNE

Sunday 5th 1 Kings 17:8-16, (17-24) and Psalm 146
1 Kings 17:17-24 and Psalm 30 Galatians 1:11-24 Luke 7:11-17

Sunday 12th 1 Kings 21:1-10, (11-14), 15-21a and Psalm 5:1-8
2 Samuel 11:26-12:10, 13-15 and Psalm 32 Galatians 2:15-21
Luke 7:36-8:3

Sunday 19th 1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a and Psalms 42 and 43,
Isaiah 65:1-9 and Psalm 22:19-28 Galatians 3:23-29 Luke 8:26-39

Sunday 26th 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14 and Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20
1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21 and Psalm 16 Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Luke 9:51-62

SOCIAL EVENTS

More Dates For Your Diary:

Saturday 17th September - Games Evening and Supper at Olton. An evening for all, not just the fit and active! Watch this space in July's Newsletter for more details.



Saturday 3rd December - Home-grown Talent Evening in the John Palmer Hall. An evening of Christmas entertainment which can only take place with your help. Look out those favourite Christmas poems or stories, rehearse that skit, song or piece of music - the choice is endless!

And in **January or February**, a quiz will be held at Hobs Moat.

If you have any other ideas for social events, please tell Judith Kembrey, Jackie Justham, Elaine Jones or myself.

All are welcome to the picnic which Churches Together in Olton are having in the grounds of The Friary at **1.30pm on Sunday 19th June**. You don't have to live in Olton.

Maureen Butler

EVENTS AT ST.MARGARET'S CHURCH, OLTON

Enjoy an afternoon of celebrating the **Queen's 90th Birthday** at 4pm on **Sunday 12th June** at St. Margaret's Church. There will be a recital of Music for Royal Occasions by Eddie Guard, the church organist. Wave a flag and join in singing 'Land of Hope and Glory'. This will be followed by a 'proper' afternoon tea. Memorabilia will be on show and there will be a quiz to enjoy. The cost is £7.50 for adults and £3.00 for children. HOWEVER, if you are celebrating your 90th birthday this year or are already 90, then you are invited to this event free of charge, but please let Maureen Butler know if you wish to attend so she can let the organisers know for catering purposes.

Following the afternoon events, there will be a special **Choral Evensong**. Proceeds of the day will be shared between the Royal School of Music, Music Day and St. Margaret's Organ Fund.

Commemorate 100 years since the Battle of the Somme on Saturday 2nd July at 7.30pm.

Andrew Crabtree will be giving a concert of War Songs, many of which you will be asked to join in, interspersed with readings and poems. Cakes and Coffee/Tea will be included in the admission charge of £5.00.

DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

Congratulations to Chris Cotes for completing his Duke of Edinburgh Bronze hike. This involved a two-day trek in the Peak District with an overnight camp.

Despite the mixed weather (a combination of snow, hail, rain and sunshine) he and his group of 5 others successfully completed the activity. He and his pals then had to carry out a power-point presentation of their expedition to Leaders and parents to pass the exercise."



COACH TRIPPERS UNITED

Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park

Thursday, 16th June 2016

Adam's Cotswold Farm Park was the first rare breeds farm to open to the public, and has over fifty flocks and herds of British rare breed farm animals. Admission is £9 with no further charges.



Daily activities are listed on an information board at the entrance, and you may enjoy the Rare Breeds through History without an experienced member of staff if you wish. For those wanting to explore further there is a fully signed two-mile WildlifeWalk

with interpretation boards indicating what to look out for.

Adam's Kitchen is open from 10am to 5pm daily, and visitors are able to choose lunch from the daily blackboard or simply relax with a pot of tea and a variety of home-made cakes. Lunches are served between 12pm and 3pm. Visitors are asked to use the café and gift shop on an individual rather than group basis as the facilities are not extensive. If you wish to bring a packed lunch there are outdoor and undercover areas in which to sit.

The Touch Barn gives the chance to get close to the smaller inhabitants of the Farm - chicks, rabbits, guinea-pigs and piglets. Bottle feeding takes place daily with the younger goats and sheep.



Seasonal demonstrations and shows follow the farming calendar, including lambing, shearing and milking and meeting some rare breeds. A ride on the Farm Safari to enjoy a guided tour of the sights and sounds of a working rare breeds centre is highly recommended.

The coach will leave Olton URC at 8.30am. The fare will remain at £18, which includes a tip for the driver. The person to contact if you would like to come is Val Cross on 706 9687. Please contact her at least ten days before the event, so that the coach can be booked.