



FEBRUARY 2026

CHAIR'S CHAT

Fun/Interesting fact:

We will never see this again in our lifetime – this February will have:

4 Sundays, 4 Mondays, 4 Tuesdays, 4 Wednesdays, 4 Thursdays
4 Fridays and 4 Saturdays.

This only happens once every 823 years. It is called a Miracle in.

We have seen/experienced a lot of technology [changes] in our lives. I'm not going to name them as the list is too long.

I'm happy to use most of the new technology as it makes my life easier – or does it??

I realised last week that I had become very reliant on my Sat Nav/Google maps on my phone.

I set off to a meeting in Wootton [Bedfordshire] when my phone decided to switch itself off !!!!

First thoughts – don't panic Trish – you worked in various schools in Bedfordshire – you'll be able to find it. BUT I hadn't factored in all the new roads and houses e.g. The Barton Way and The Great Ouse Way. Added to that it was raining heavily and the traffic was horrendous.

After one or two wrong turns I arrived at the correct address. Lesson learnt?? – make sure I have a real map with me next time 😊

Trish.

GOOD NEWS! We have finally appointed a new Treasurer, after a long search. Alan Nixon, who has been a member of our u3a for a long time and whom many of you will know, has kindly agreed to take over this role.



Queen Elizabeth II: Her Life In Style

This exhibition is being held at the Kings Gallery and is a collection of the clothes worn by Queen Elizabeth II throughout her reign. I have reserved tickets for Tuesday, the 4th of August. I need to establish how many people are interested in going. The cost will be in the region of £50 to £60, dependent on Numbers.

Turkey & Tinsel

This year's Turkey & Tinsel event will be at The North Devon Resort, Ilfracombe (same as last year). The dates are from Monday 23rd to Friday 27th of November (a week earlier than previously). Cost to be in the region of £385 for 5 days/4 nights dinner, bed, and breakfast, with entertainment on each evening and games and quizzes during the day. I'm currently looking for names of those who might be interested so that I can reserve the rooms and book the Coaches. At this stage, no deposit is required.

Jean Mole



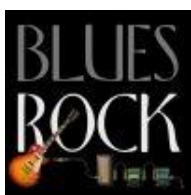
Garden Group:

Our first meeting for 2026 has already taken place, with our speaker talking about weeds and how to love them. Great time was had by all including singing.

Our next meeting is a coach trip to Anglesey Abbey Cambridgeshire, where we have a guided tour to see the daffodils in bloom. Booking and payment is open if anyone would like to join us. The date is March 12th and picks up at Higham and Rushden.

We then are back to Rushden Hall for our April meeting, at the new time of 14:30 for April only.

Lorraine



Rock & Blues Group: Our next meeting is at 14.00 hours on 26th February at the leader's house. This month's topic is the letter "V." Currently the group is full and there is a waiting list.

Jim Morrison



MMFC (Monday Morning Football Chat).

We have resumed our sessions on Monday Mornings at 10am in Waitrose Cafe. A wide range of clubs and views are represented from AFC Rushden and Diamond to Ipswich to Chelsea and all stops in-between! Insightful punditry at its very best! MOTD eat your heart out!

Mike Gibbons



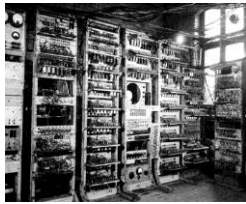
Dine at Home Suppers:

I currently have spaces on Monday 23rd Tuesday 24th and Wednesday 25th of February for my home dining suppers.

The menu is Onion Soup/Pâté. Teriyaki Salmon/Lemon Chicken. Raspberry Trifle/Bread and Butter Pudding.

The cost is £15 for a three course meal, a glass of wine and a cup of tea or coffee. Please see me at Monday's meeting or give me a ring on 0773644 5658 to book.

Jean Mole



Computer Group: New Details

WE HAVE CHANGED OUR MEETING DATE – we now only meet once a month on the first Tuesday of the month from 10:00-12:00, still in the Waitrose Community Room.

The next meeting will be on 3rd March 2026.

We cover Windows 10/11 and most office applications for all levels of computer knowledge and are happy to help Group Leaders with all aspects of Beacon.

We had a very successful first meeting on 6th January. Anyone who dropped out of the group when it changed to Saturday may reconsider rejoining, so why not come along, and try it out, who knows, you might just learn something, All welcome.

Further information from Jim or Maggie Morrison, Group Leaders.



Guitar Group

The group meets on Thursdays from 4 - 6 pm at The Windmill Club, Rushden. You don't have to be able to read music, but a few chords under your belt would be a great start. We play mostly 60s & 70s pop/rock songs & attempt to sing along.

Please get in touch with Andrew on 07879 577433 or by email: vancouvercresswelljenny@gmail.com should you be interested.

Karin Wilkinson



Handicrafts

The next meeting of the Handicrafts group is Thursday, 26th February, 2.00 pm at Rushden Bowls Club.

It will be popular as Susan will be leading the session and we will be focusing on creating some very professional looking cards. Her sessions are always popular and enjoyable.

Kathy and Jenny.



History Group:

The next meeting will be on the 5th March at the Masonic Hall, Wellingborough Road, Rushden at 2.00pm. The subject of the talk will be "The Home Guard in Northamptonshire" during WW2.

2nd April. Roman Northamptonshire.

7th May. Pork Pie Heaven. The History of the Parsons in Irchester.

4th June. The Women's Land Army during World War 1.

Understandably we are all planning our coming year's activities and this is the case with trips for the History Group but they do take a lot of organizing to get them planned properly and make them interesting.

Having just taken over the running of the History Group to stop it disappearing I need time to get everything put together correctly.

At the next meeting of the u3a we will be taking bookings for a visit to Drayton House at Lowick the home of the Sackville family. The date will be the 15th July.

Other trips to be confirmed are:

The Shuttleworth Collection.

Blenheim Palace

Didcot Railway Centre

John Holdom-Eyles



Ten Pin Bowling:

We continue to regularly have over 24+ bowlers each session who enjoy two games of friendly competitive bowling on a Friday morning.

We are always able to accept and welcome new members as more lanes are available to us if required.

Our latest session was held on 6th Feb, the next session will be on 27th Feb, postponed from 20th Feb, due to half term school holidays, then continuing every alternate Friday. The calendar on our HR website will show details of the future dates for the first quarter of 2026. Latest scores are always available to be seen on the HR website group page.

If you would like to know more about this group or advise us that you would like to join, then please get in touch via the website. Contact page, Group Leaders – Alan Collinson, Martin Cromwell, or Alan Nixon.

Alan Nixon (Group shared leader)



Wine Appreciation:

January tasting was a simple test of blending. Two wines from the same vineyard, one was 2022 the other 2023. We all agreed that they were very similar, so a good job. About 50/50 as to which they liked best. If you would like to join us please phone me!

Steve



Chatterbox:

Chatterbox has broken away from WALT. It is a group that focuses on female-friendly chatter and discussions over a cup of coffee. We offer social outings too. We meet in the Community Room at Waitrose every Monday morning 10 till 12. If you are interested in trying us out please feel free to come along. You are assured of a warm welcome. Chris Murdin and Jenny Robertson.



Canasta

We meet at my home in Stanwick on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month from 10 am until 12 noon for a friendly game (or two). Due to Christmas and my holiday the next session will not be until February when further information will be available on the website if you would like to join us. There is always cake.

Jean Mole



Greetings Cards

At our last meeting all the members opted to make this unusual 3D birthday card.

Our next meeting will be on 4th March 2026. Why not come along and try making 3D cards for special people or events. We have an infinite number of designs available from which to choose.



We also have crystal art cards for you to try. All materials (including envelopes) are provided at a very small charge.

Please contact me at my new email address: tesscards@myself.com or 07899 695822 for details if you are interested in joining the group.

Tess Pratt



Scrabble

We meet on alternate Tuesdays @ 2:00 pm in the Waitrose Community Room for friendly matches to keep our brains operational. For details contact John Ellingham on 07833 017855



Non Fiction Book Group, truth is stranger than fiction.

Our small friendly group reads Biographies, History, Travel, Memoirs and Nature. etc. We are open to suggestions from members.

New members to u3a are very welcome. We meet monthly at various members' homes.

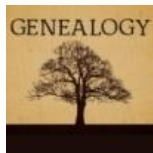
New to u3a or just interested in reading something different for more details contact Linda Walker spidar.girl@btinternet.com



Sunday Lunch Group Again:

We usually meet on the last Sunday of the month. New members are welcome to join us.

Please contact Linda Walker 07384 601603 or preferably email spidar.girl@btinternet.com to book or for more information.



The newly formed Genealogy group has decided to go ahead with communicating mostly through a WhatsApp group, with face to face meetings every few months only.

If you have an interest in this subject, but get frustrated and unsure how to proceed, feel free to join us and get hints and tips from other enthusiasts. Please text in the first instance to – Janet 07488351136 or Ken 07725055865



Bookmarks Again:

Honour by Elif Shafak. This is a novel about an immigrant family from Turkey in London, focusing on the devastating consequences of an “Honour killing” in the community that tears the family apart. The themes of love, betrayal, tradition versus modern English life are explored by the points of view of three generations. Sisters Pembe and Jamela are born in Kurdish Turkey with Pembe moving to London with her husband Adem. They have three children who are caught between home expectations and modern life. Jamila becomes a traditional midwife with herbs and potions to help her village. Pembe’s children adapt to life in London supporting their mother when the father leaves and gambles.

Elif Shafik is a skilled writer who uses different characters to present the story from their viewpoints and keep the reader engaged. The Book Group found plenty to discuss

Ann Kemp



Art for Fun

Brian Laurence has confirmed he will be continuing as Group Leader.



W.A.L.T: Would Anyone Like To:

Janet Embling & Ken Chambers have made a decision to stand down as group leaders. So unless someone else comes forward to replace them, the group will be in abeyance. If anyone is interested please let the Groups Co-ordinator know.

It may be useful for members to know that they can set up a standing order with their banks for payment of the annual u3a membership fees of £15 or £20. Doing so will ensure you don't forget to renew when the time arrives. The details are as follows:

Bank: Nat West.

Sort Code: 54-41-05. Account Number: 32986734. Higham and Rushden u3a.

If you are unsure or in any doubt please contact any committee member.

REALLY GOOD BANANA BREAD

Ingredients:

75g unsalted butter
125g golden caster sugar
185g plain flour
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt (sea salt if you have it)
4 large ripe bananas
2 medium free range eggs
100ml buttermilk
1 tbsp demerara sugar, for sprinkling

Method:

Preheat the oven to 170°C, gas mark 3. Grease and line a 900g loaf tin with baking parchment. Melt the butter in a large pan, take off the heat and stir in the golden caster sugar, then set aside to cool while you sift the dry ingredients into a bowl. In a separate bowl, mash 3 of the bananas. Using a balloon whisk, whisk the eggs, one at a time, into the pan with the butter mixture. Whisk in the mashed bananas, then the buttermilk. Finally gently mix in the dry ingredients (don't over whisk). Tip the mixture into the tin. Halve the remaining banana, arrange on top, then scatter over the demerara. Bake for 1 hour-1 hour 15 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool in the tin for 15 minutes, then put on a wire rack to cool completely.



u3a MONTHLY MEETINGS		
<i>Please note there is a small charge for non-members. Details can be found on our website or call 01933 522934 for further information. If you, or a friend, have experience as a speaker at other groups on topics which you think would be of interest to our members then please contact the Speaker Secretary.</i>		
2026		
16 Feb	Home Instead	Dementia
16 March	Sweet FA	Musical Trio with clever ditties
20 April	Roger Prescott	Juke Box Jury – 70s
18 May	Dave Pinion	Antarctica
15 June	TBA	
20 Jul	Neil Hanson	Champagne Breakfasts & Flying Pigs: How not to have a career.
17 Aug	TBA	
Sep	TBA	
Oct	TBA	
Nov	TBA	
Dec	TBA	



A Frosty Stanwick Lakes

GROUP LEADER CONTACT DETAILS –

In accordance with GDPR we don't publish contact details for group leaders on a publicly available website or newsletter. There is a contact form on the website which can be used to email group leaders & u3a officers.

If you wish to telephone a group leader you will need to log into Beacon at <https://www.u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?u3a=118&sc=LUDE>. You will need to create a password the first time you use the members' portal & full instructions are available on our u3a website.

Clicking on the Higham & Rushden u3a groups link opens a page listing all our current groups & gives telephone numbers for each leader.



CAN YOU SPOT THE TOY KITTEN?



GROUP DETAILS	VENUE	DAY/TIME
<i>There may be waiting lists for some of the groups but if you are interested please contact the relevant group via the contact form on the website to be added & the group leader should contact you.</i>		
Check the group calendar on the website for further details		
Art for Fun	Waitrose Community Room	Alternate Mondays 14.00-1600
Badminton Beginners & Improvers	Pemberton Centre	Wednesday 14.00-15.00
Intermediate Badminton	Pemberton Centre	Every Tuesday, 10.00 to 11.00. £2.50 per session
Badminton for fun	Pemberton Centre	Tuesday 09.00-10.00 & Friday 12.00-13.00
Bookmarks Again	Waitrose Community Room	1st Monday of the month*
Canasta	Leader's Home	1 st & 3 rd Thursday of the month
Card Making	Leader's Home	1 st Wednesday/month.1000-1200
Chatterbox	Waitrose Community Room	Every Monday 1000-1200
Computing	Waitrose Community Room	1 st Tuesday of the Month 1000-1200
Country Dancing	Hensman Hall. NN10 8HT	Alternate Mondays 2 00-3.30pm
Cycling multi-Groups	Rushden Lakes	Every Monday 10.30 (Apr-Nov)
Digital Photography A	Rushden Hall	2nd & 4th Wed 10.00 to 12.00
Driving	On the Road	By request
Garden	Rushden Hall	2nd Thursday 10.30-12.30
Genealogy	WhatsApp group. Face-to-face meetings every few months. Please text in the first to Janet 07488351136/Ken 07725055865.	
Golf	Various	1 st Wednesday & 2 nd & 4 th Friday monthly
Guitar	Rushden Windmill Club	Tuesday 4pm Thursday group, 4pm.
Handicrafts	Rushden Bowls Club	4 th Thursday per month at 2pm
History Group	Rushden Masonic Hall	1st Thursday monthly 14:00
Home Dining	Leader's Home	Three times per Month varying days
Knit & Natter	Leader's Home	Alternate Mon 10.00-12.00
Mahjong for fun	Waitrose Community Room	Alternate Mondays 14.30-16.30
MMFC	Waitrose Cafe	Weekly Mondays 10am – 11am
Non-Fiction Books	Leader's Home	4th Monday 10.30-12.00
Continued		

GROUP DETAILS	VENUE	DAY/TIME
Play Reading	To be advised	1st Tuesday 13.15-14.15
Rock & Blues Appreciation	Leader's Home	Last Thursday of the month 2-4pm
Scrabble	Waitrose Community Room	2-4pm Alternate Tuesdays
Singing for Fun	Rushden Hall, Hall Park	Alternate Thu 14.00-16.00
Spanish	To be advised	
Special Events	Various	Various (see website for details)
Sunday Lunch	Various	Various (see website for details)
Table Tennis	Pemberton Centre	Wed 13.00-14.00
Ten Pin Bowling	Hollywood Bowl, W'boro	Alternate Friday 1100-1300
Ukulele	Rushden Transport Club	13.30-15.30 Every Monday
Video Editing	Leader's Home	2nd & 4th Tues 10.00-12.00
W.A.L.T.	In abeyance until new leaders available	
Wine & Dine	Various	Various (see website for details)
Wine Appreciation	Leader's Home	Check calendar for information.





EDITORIAL:

With the promise of winter easing its grip on us (although we still have March to endure) the sight of daffodils poking their heads through makes me more optimistic and cheerful. They are one of my favourite flowers, I love their yellowness – reminiscent of sunshine. They are also determined not to let the weather stop them from putting in an appearance. They are one of the few flowers I put into vases and dot about, making me smile every time I see them in all their glory.



The botanical name for the daffodil is *Narcissus*, and in Greek mythology, it is claimed it is named after a young man known for his beauty who was tricked into falling in love with his own reflection. The drooping flowers that characterise most daffodils are said to represent *Narcissus* bending over to catch his reflection in a pool of water.

The name derives from the Greek 'narco,' which is the root of the word narcotic. The etymology probably relates to the daffodil's toxicity – all



parts of the plant are poisonous. I know this first-hand as when I was about 8 or so, my Mum mistakenly used daffodils instead of leeks to make a beautifully tasty soup. The whole family was violently ill for a couple of days. According to our doctor we were very lucky the soup was not more potent. For several years afterwards, the

doctor would inquire if Mum had made any more daffodil soup. The worst part was that my Dad had spent quite a bit of money buying special daffodil bulbs from Holland – yes, they were the ones Mum used! I still love them, just not as food. Don't worry, I will not be sharing the recipe.

How daffodils came to Britain: The Romans are known to have planted daffodils in memory of loved ones or comrades fallen in battle. It's likely they brought them to Britain from the Iberian Peninsula, predominantly Spain and Portugal, where the largest variety of daffodil species are found.

Every shade of yellow: daffodils' uplifting yellow flowers and true perennial habit make them an enduring garden favourite. Clumps of daffodil bulbs have been known to survive in the ground for well over a century, flowering consistently for decades.

FRIDGE FREEZERS

Can anyone tell me who uttered the immortal words “size doesn’t matter” because I am here to tell you that it certainly does when it comes to fridge freezers. Because what we elderly folk need is a smaller fridge at the top and a larger freezer at the bottom, why? Simply because, at our age, we tend to store more food than we eat.

Now, let’s take a look at all those, be it male or female, who not only do lunch, but also dinner. And let’s throw in afternoon tea, What happens when they get home with all those doggy bags they have collected be it for let’s pretend we have a dog, they eat a little for supper and freeze the rest. This adds up to quite a lot, given how many lunches, dinners, and of course those delicious afternoon teas we attend on a regular basis each month.



To all you manufacturers I know you work on the ratio of 20 to 80%, that is 80% fridge at the top and 20% freezer at the bottom, but what we actually want is that ratio the other way round. In other words a smaller sized fridge (20%), at eye level and a larger freezer (80%), at waist level. Because as I have said we elderly store more food than we eat

Let’s stay with the manufacturers for a little while longer and take a look at the chappie who employs those male designers who will create your kitchen appliances. They come into his office waving their degrees in his face and immediately get the job. Why, oh why, do you not take a good look at the degrees they are waving at you because if it’s for, let’s say “How to tie your shoe laces,” or “How to chop down a tree” they are not going to be any good at kitchen appliances are they? NO. Now before all you men start jumping up and down and gnashing your teeth, yes there are the few good men who can cook but ask one to turn on the dish washer or washing machine and he hasn’t got a clue. Of course there are always exceptions to this rule, but, for goodness sake, let’s have a few more women sitting behind your desks. They know exactly what is needed in the kitchen. For example, would a women design a washing machine with 30 to 50 programmes on how to wash clothes, no. Only a man could come up with all those ridiculous choices.



Sorry I have digressed. Back to the fridge freezer. In a nutshell less fridge more freezer please. And for all those men I may have offended in this article, you do of course have some finer points but unfortunately designing modern kitchen appliances is not one of them.. I am going to leave it here before I get into any more trouble, but I will leave you with this.

Be generous with the kindness you give, it can mean so very much to all who receive it.

Talk again next month.

Ta ta.

GG

Etymology of Some Common Phrases

Bite the bullet.

Meaning: To accept something difficult or unpleasant.

Origin: In the olden days, when doctors were short on anaesthesia or time during a battle, they would ask the patient to bite down on a bullet to distract from the pain. The first recorded use of the phrase was in 1891 in *The Light that Failed*.

Mad as a hatter

Meaning: To be completely crazy

Origin: No, you didn't already know this one, because it didn't originate from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. Its origins date from the 17th and 18th centuries — well before Lewis Carroll's book was published. In 17th century France, poisoning occurred among hat makers who used mercury for the hat felt. The "Mad Hatter Disease" was marked by shyness, irritability, and tremors that would make the person appear "mad."

One for the road

Meaning: A final drink before leaving a place.

Origin: During the middle ages, the condemned ones were taken through what today is known as Oxford Street to their execution. During this final trip, the cart would stop and they would be allowed to have one final drink before their death.

Steal One's thunder

Meaning: Win praise for oneself by pre-empting someone else's attempt to impress.

Origin: You think that you've done something awesome and unique, but someone got in there first and took your credit! Spare a thought for playwright John Dennis who, back in the 18th Century, made a machine that could nicely mimic the sound of thunder for his play. Sadly, his play wasn't a success, but somebody had taken note of his clever invention. When, later on in another theatre, Dennis found somebody had copied his thunder machine and was using it without credit, he got mad. Really mad. Somebody had stolen his thunder!

My ears are burning

Meaning: One is subconsciously aware of being talked about or criticized.

Origin: The idiom dates back to ancient Romans who believed that burning sensations in various organs had different meanings. In fact, it was believed that if your left ear is burning it signalled an evil intent, and if your right ear was burning you were actually being praised.

Blue Blood

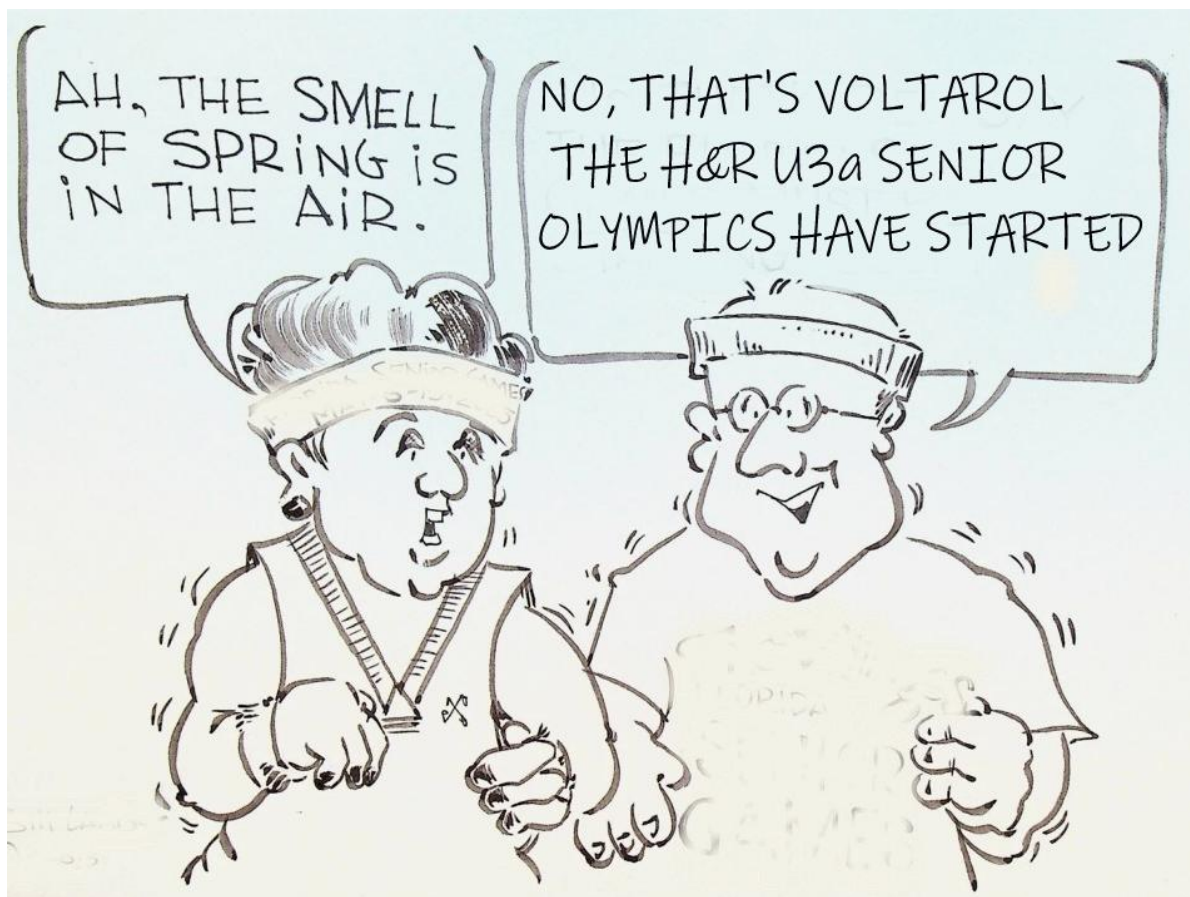
Meaning: Noble birth.

Origin: Saying that some has blue blood comes from the Middle Ages, where it was believed that those who had pale skin (meaning their ancestors had not inter-married with darker skinned partners) were noble or aristocratic. The main reasoning behind it is that when your skin is really pale, the veins are more visible, and they usually look quite blue.

ANOTHER SUDOKU PUZZLE TO SOLVE

(Answers in March)

					5	3		
	8				3	5	2	
	4						8	7
			7		6	2	5	
		8		1		4		
	2	5	4		8			
2	6						7	
	5	7	2				9	
		9	1					



NEOLOGISMS

(a new word or expression, or a new meaning for an existing word)

Coffee (n)	The person on whom one coughs.
Flabbergasted (adj)	Appalled over how much weight you have gained.
Abdicate (v)	To give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
Esplanade (v)	To attempt an explanation while drunk.
Willy-nilly (adj)	Impotent.
Negligent (adj)	A condition in which you absently minded answer the door in your nightgown.
Lymph (v)	To walk with a lisp.
Gargoyle (n)	Gross, olive-flavoured mouthwash.
Flatulence (n)	Ambulance which picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.
Balderdash (n)	A rapidly receding hairline.
Rectitude (n)	The formal, dignified bearing adopted by proctologists.
Pokemon (n)	A Rastafarian proctologist.
Circumvent (n)	An opening in the front of boxer shorts worn by circumcised men.
Frisbeetarianism (n)	The belief that when you die, your soul flies onto the roof and gets stuck there.