

NEWSLETTER

February and Snowdrops



Editor: Margaret Thompson.
Sub Editors: Jill Ibbott & Sylvia Jones.
Proof Reader: John Reeve.

NEW YEARS Day saw me stomping out for a breath of fresh air and a desire to check out the winter visitors at the Aquadrome. Well here is Stockers Lake but I wonder where the birdies is? A complete, desolate sheet of ice met out disbelieving eyes, despite the rise in the temperature. However we were well rewarded, rounding a corner



on the far side, we came upon a piece of open water and there they all were. A flock of my favourites, Shoveler ducks, aren't they lovely, spinning round and round, hoovering up the water to collect food.

When out for a long walk I sometimes wonder what would happen if one of us fell over and broke a limb. At the January Monthly Meeting we heard about the Hertfordshire Air Ambulance from Debbie Harvey and I felt reassured. She outlined the valuable work they do, landing in extremely difficult terrain and whisking the injured to the most appropriate hospital.

Here's hoping 2011 will bring us health and happiness with no need for this service.

Study Group Leaders Meeting

Friday 11th March 2.30-4.30pm

Orbital Community Centre

Haines Way Watford
WD25 7QU

Parking available on site

Message From the Chairman Terry Godfrey



AS one gets older the Christmas and New Year celebrations become distant memories almost immediately. Thankfully I can remember and if you can too, I sincerely hope that you enjoyed the break.

We all agree that our U3A is continuing to meet our needs with the number of diverse Study Groups that we have. However, if any of you would like to start another Study Group you would be more than welcome to do so, perhaps, for example, a monthly tea-making Study Group would be of interest (I am joking of course), but I am serious about those members wishing to start a group of their own that would be of interest to others. Our very able Study Group Coordinator, Margaret Foster, is always available to help new groups get underway and indeed continues to help longstanding Groups that, sometimes, may need help in finding another meeting place, or a replacement Study Group Leader, some of which have been SGLs for many years and would like a break. Please think about what you can do to help keep our U3A to continue to be interesting, up to date and successful.

Thank you, Terry

Study Group Topics

By Margaret Foster

Study Group Coordinator

Studygroups@watfordu3a.org.uk



HOORAY! the Snow Drops are out. We can look forward to spring being round the corner and the weather getting warmer.

Good News, Ray Gynne has offered to be the new Study Group Leader for "Music Appreciation" thank you Ray. Ray takes over from Johanna Woodmansterne who started the group when our U3A was founded in 1997. Thank you Johanna for all your years of work which has been very much appreciated.

We still need a new Study Group Leader for "Food and Nutrition". Valerie Webster has been the Study Group Leader of this group for many years and sadly has to retire for health reasons. This is a large group and I feel, like all of our groups, it would be a big loss if it had to close, so please everyone think about it and if you feel you would like to know more about becoming the Study Group Leader please let Valerie or me know. We will offer all the help we can.

We are also looking for anyone who would like to start a second "Current Affairs" group, as our existing group cannot take any more members, even if we do a building job and push the walls out.

We need a second group. When you think "should I show an interest" remember one very important thing, what you do, you will be doing among friends. If you feel you would like more information on this group please contact Betty Crowder or me.

The 4th London Underground Course will end on 21st of January.. Another super course given by David Burnell. This will mean that over one hundred of our members have attended since David first started the course.

I look forward to seeing as many of the Study Group Leaders as can possibly attend the Study Group Leaders Meeting. Looking back I note we always have a good attendance so let's make it even better, say 100%! I wish you all a happy and healthy safe month.



Committee Notes from Our Secretary Margaret Redding

AT the November committee meeting it was agreed to continue with the new refreshment arrangements with the help of the Study Groups.

The Treasurer reported an improvement in income due to the introduction of Gift Aid.

It was agreed to cap membership at 500 until April 2011, and to clarify the policy, at our next committee meeting, regarding visitors to our U3A members

The annual subscription will be reviewed at the next committee meeting.

The Secretary was asked to check Security and First Aid requirements with the Club.

The next committee meeting will be on 16th February.



Support for the Peace Hospice

IT was great to be able to welcome Jill Crowson, to once again accept our cheque in support of the Peace Hospice from our chairman Terence Godfrey. Jill is the fund raising Manager for the Hospice and this is the 10th year that she has come to our New Year Meeting for this pleasant purpose. Each year we have beaten the

previous years target; this year's grand total is £1861.

The bulk of the money comes from the Bi-monthly raffles so ably run by John and June Baughan. To this is added various funds from the Study Groups often collected as coffee money.

It has been decided not to hold the Hunton Park garden Party this year but to try to raise funds in a slightly less energetic way. Something which will not necessitate the enormous amount of organising. One idea, not a new one but one with a proven track record, is morning coffee or afternoon tea in our own homes, for a group of friends and neighbours at so much per head, to give to the 'Peace'. What a great way to survive the dark days of winter.

I remember Claire Ward, our then MP, organising afternoon tea, part of the 'biggest tea party in the world' at Port Cullis house in aid of Breast Cancer research. This raised an enormous amount of money. I for one will be starting baking the cakes and biscuits. (or I might just buy some!) but I think it is a great idea; how about you? Ed

Amazing Pictures Partial Eclipse of the Sun

captured by Pat Walker



Two shots taken through the clouds with my small digital camera, through a small 1 inch telescope. They were taken at about 9.00am on the 4th of January. The picture on the right shows, in the bottom left hand corner, the shadow of the International Space Station on the cloud tops.



Obituary

Brenda Pratt

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden death, in December, of Brenda Pratt in an accident in the Caribbean, while on holiday with her husband Reg. She was an enthusiastic U3A member, regularly attending our Monthly Meetings and the Science Interest Group. A keen golfer Brenda will be greatly missed by all her friends and family to whom we send our deepest sympathy at this distressing time.

USE BCC PLEASE! By Colin Richards

WOULD you write your friends' phone numbers on a lavatory wall? No? Then why would you share their private e-mail addresses with a group of strangers, when you know that many of them may forward the same addresses to even more strangers?

Don't do it!!!

Instead, use your e-mail program's BCC feature. A BCC (blind carbon copy) is a copy of an email message sent to a recipient whose email address does not appear in the message. This is in contrast to TO and CC recipients, whose addresses do appear in the respective header lines. Every recipient of the message can see all the TO and CC recipients, but does not know about BCC recipients.

Place your own email address in the TO field, but keep your recipients' addresses in the BCC field.

WHY:- Using BCC protects your recipients' private email addresses from being sent to strangers; effectively placing them in the public domain, so using BCC helps prevent SPAM. Using BCC shows your consideration of others by not passing hundreds of your contacts to strangers (and potentially, SPAMMERS or maybe even stalkers.)

HOW:- In most email clients, the BCC field is very apparent and obvious. In a new message using:-

AOL's web mail, click BCC.

Gmail and Yahoo Mail, click 'add BCC'.

Hotmail, click Show CC & BCC.

Outlook and Outlook Express, it's not so obvious, but turning it on is simple. To activate the BCC field in Outlook Express, create a new message and choose View, All Headers.

To activate the BCC field in MS Outlook, create a new message and choose View, BCC.

Lotus Notes - the BCC field always there; nothing has to be "turned on", just use it. AND FINALLY...

There are NO emails that need to be sent to your ENTIRE address book.



Christmas Lunch 2010
 from our archivist **Jan Palmer**
 A very enjoyable beginning to
 the Christmas season.



THIS was held
 at our usual
 venue on
 Wednesday
 December
 15th. It is an
 ideal setting
 when so many
 want to take
 part. The room
 was full with



about a hundred and twenty cheerful people, all chattering away.

The meal was of a very high standard, as we have come to expect, and the service was excellent. The success of the occasion was, of course, very much due to the organiser, John Friend. Unfortunately, after doing all the work John was not actually able to be present, so I'm sure we all extend a very big thank you to him for a job well done.



Antiques by Sheila Wolff

WE started the new year with the last of the available videos from Third Age Trust, on silver. This wasn't as good as the earlier videos as the camera-work was very poor, not giving close-ups of the pieces they were showing. However we did gain some interesting bits of knowledge, such as the fact that old tankards had lids to protect the beer (mead?) from the smoke and dust that swirled around the taverns. Also – and we didn't find this worked – you can breath on a silver mark that had faded to bring it to more life so that one could identify the mark. However, I seem to remember that a better way would be to take a 'brass' rubbing, and that might give a better impression on tissue paper. It interested us that assay marks were started as early as the C13, to stop less than honest silversmiths from adding more nickel to the pure silver, which cannot be worked in it's purity.

As usual, some members brought items from their own collection to discuss and in some cases identify the marks and thus the age.



**A Big Thank You
 to you all from
 Celia Jackson**

I would like to convey my grateful thanks to members of the Singers and the 'extras', who gave up their time to sing at either/ or Asda on 11th December. and/or in The Harlequin on 16th December, the latter venue proving particularly difficult to get to owing to the snow showers and the dreadful traffic. Warm letters of appreciation for our participation and efforts have been received from both charity coordinators.

We helped to raise £234.98 for Action for Children, and £525 for Oxfam.

CHRISTMAS 2010

Under the watchful eye of Comperre /Director Brian Redding [L] a show was born. Rehearsals began in August and gradually a variety of acts emerged to the ultimate delight of the Audience at the December Meeting. [below] 'My Mince Pies' David Helliwell.



Eileen Burnett [above] Yuletide Voyeur and Heulwen Jones. [L] Letter to Santa.



'Christmas Dinner' & 'Nativity' Monica Creegan.

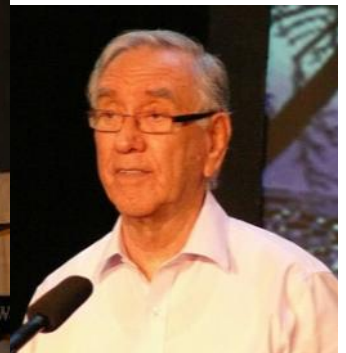


'Song & Dance duo Jackie Godfrey & Margaret Thompson gave us 'We're a Couple of Swells'.

Magic Mike Dix [R] mystified us all!!



Colin Dorme [R] sang 'Night and Day' & 'In the still of the night' but – NO Christmas Show is complete without *The Pantomime* and David Helliwell, Coin Dorme, Cynthia Morgan & Margaret Redding performed 'Snow White'. The Music was provided by John Jackson [below R] and the Watford U3A singers led by Celia Jackson [below with the full cast] opened the show and led us all in Carols to bring down the curtain. **MCT**



Technical Support:- John Morgan & Phil Redshaw Lights; Robin Hurley Sound; & Colin Richards effects and back projection. Photos John Grainger and Ian Charteris



Science Interest Reports

DIAMOND LIGHT VISIT

ON 16th December members of the Science Interest SG travelled by a Turnabout Transport mini-coach (driven by our member Roger Millard) to the Diamond Light Source, the UK's national synchrotron science facility located at the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus in Oxfordshire, where an introduction was made by Laura Holland, the Outreach and Events Manager.

The facility is classed as a medium energy synchrotron, a research tool vital for the 3rd millennium using a source of intense light at various wavelengths and frequencies which fall in the spectrum from infrared (10^{-3}), through visible light and ultra violet light up to X-rays (10^{-12}). The machine acts like a series of microscopes and can actually see the positions of atoms in certain materials and



in reality the machine can see down to 10^{-9} (1 nano metre) and can examine a very wide range of materials ranging from objects like a whole Rolls Royce jet engine down to chemical pollutants in the environment.

It is a type of particle accelerator similar in construction to that at CERN but on a much smaller scale. The function of this machine is not to smash particles together but rather to hive off some of the electrons that are produced by methods similar to those found in a cathode ray tube. The electrons pass through a linear accelerator where they are boosted up to almost the speed of light (99.99%) when they are passed into a booster. From there the electrons are sent into the storage ring where the beams are guided around by dipole and quadruple

magnets. They also pass stacks of bar magnets which in turn wiggle the beams. The bending and wiggling of the electron beam causes it to emit beams of high intensity light. This light is then focussed onto the sample which interacts and produces a diffraction image which is displayed on a computer screen.

As well as producing diffraction patterns the X-rays can be used to find the chemical composition of the samples. Different elements will react differently with the X-rays as they penetrate the sample. By detecting the X-rays as they come out of the sample they can be used to identify its chemical and molecular composition. Most analyses take a relatively short time but interpreting the results, invariably many, can take many months or even years to assess.

The Synchrotron has been running for three years now and so far has looked at a wide and varied range of subjects such as future foods and their nutritional qualities, rust and corrosion to understand the various processes involved, cancer research and the development of drugs that target faulty cells whilst leaving the good ones alone, and hydrogen storage in relation to the development of hydrogen storage batteries, the hydrogen being stored in metal organic frameworks.

Further research has been made on looking at the materials used for metal hip replacement to stop body rejection, even molluscs and mussels have come under scrutiny. Minerals under pressure and temperature have been studied in order to understand the causes of earthquakes. The whole plant itself has been designed and built to withstand local earth movements.

At the moment, because of demand, five more beam structures are being added to expand the output of the machine. Further information may be found by visiting their website on www.diamond.ac.uk.

In conclusion, it is a well known fact that every time Man arrives at an answer to a particular problem, the answer throws up another series of questions, so it would seem that there will be an endless supply of work for the Synchrotron for many years to come. The cost to research groups for its use is totally FREE, unless the machine is to be used solely for industrial profit, then a charge is made.

Dr David Price was thanked for arranging a most interesting and instructive visit. *Pat Walker (who also took the photos).*

A PRE-CHRISTMAS QUIZ set by Roger Millard

We split into three groups of seven before Roger, wanting to be different, gave us the answers and then required us to provide the questions. With questions based on all scientific disciplines we were certainly kept on our toes throughout. After refreshments, provided this time by the members themselves, those making up the table calling themselves 'The Duffers' were awarded the winners' accolade and were given prizes of Fair Trade products provided by Jackie Mee.

Roger was given a resounding round of applause, which was then repeated for Susan Sidders and Jean Dolamore in recognition of all the time and effort put in by them to organise the refreshments each month throughout the year, especially for supplying the flapjacks – a tradition started by Jackie.

Tony Platts.

FAUNA & FLORA

In January, Jackie Nutkins, President of the Watford Camera Club and a jobbing gardener, made the 48 members (including some from the Gardening SG – by special invitation) think very carefully before answering her quiz questions based on a cornucopia of photos she had personally taken of animals and plants that she paraded on her easel. The members of the winning teams were each rewarded with a packet of seeds as a prize while Jackie was given a box of bulbs, hopefully for her to plant in her own garden.

Before the talk, accompanied by applause, Susan Sidders and Jean Dolamore were presented with small gifts to mark their dedication behind the refreshment counter (an opportunity having been missed at the previous meeting). *Tony Platts.*



Tale of a Nuthatch from Pam Grant

ONE very hot day of the many at the end of last June, halfway between my mother's birthday and my parents' wedding anniversary, a nuthatch arrived in my garden for possibly the first time in all the time I've lived at the house. He/she took a liking to the food and the company of the kindergarten of fledglings I seemed to be continuously feeding and stayed around making several visits each day for quite a few weeks.

My mother's favourite bird was the nuthatch and she often asked my father to return to the watercolour painting he had done in the early days of their marriage. Needless to say he was fully occupied with work and sadly she died

before he retired over 30 years ago. The next winter he set to and did the first of about 20 subsequent beautiful bird paintings in her memory. Yes, you've guessed – he started with her beloved nuthatch. She never saw any of the paintings of course although they are now distributed around the family and close friends in her and my father's memory.

The moral of this tale? You may not have a nuthatch to paint but if you have an equivalent intention...



MoneyMatters from Philip Wolff

IN DECEMBER, despite the snow and ice, ten of the hardest (or stupidest) of our members turned up for what eight of them said was a most interesting meeting. There was a glut of coffee and biscuits and we all had an enjoyable time. In fact we over-stayed our time!

In January we started by discussing the merit and otherwise of selling gold jewellery. The consensus was NO to posting it. YES to getting three quotes from readily available sources and it was confirmed that the present BEST OFFER was from TESCO !!!

Having cleared that subject, we went on to the challenge of the loss of that family member who holds the purse strings and pays bills, etc. One of the most important actions that need to be done prior to anything else, is establishing a POWER OF ATTORNEY and a WILL. If he/she becomes incapable to manage the family affairs, how does the survivor manage? It is essential that he or she leaves a complete run down of the family assets, liabilities including identity of insurance policies, bank accounts, national insurance references, mortgages, religious sources, doctors, solicitors, local council (tax), investment advisors/trust companies, and anything else one can think of. Details relating to all of the above are policy numbers, their name address and phone numbers. with bank accounts each and every account number with the bank name and phone number; direct orders and direct debits all to be cancelled and the companies advised. In the event of death, first and foremost, The registrar's address and phone number. *Anything I have left out you will tell me!*

Not one of us is infallible. Neither do we know what can and will happen when we least expect it. Don't leave your loved one with a terrible problem as well as the trauma of your problem.

Sent in by John Grainger with Apologies to W Wordsworth.

I wandered silent as a cloud
When from my reverie I woke.
For all at once I heard a crowd,
A host of rowdy rambling folk:
Along the path, beneath the trees,
Nattering and chattering in the breeze.
More noisy than a herd of cattle
In ever louder tones they talked.
And filled the air with ceaseless prattle
As o'er the verdant field they walked:
Then voice from this garrulous gabble,
Invaded me to join their babble.
I joined this strident swarm; and they
Did greet me with great shouts of glee;
What rambler would not wend his way,
In such loquacious company:
I walked – and talked- and often thought
What wealth to me my ears had brought.
But yet, when in my bed I lay
In quiet and reflective mood,
And in my mind did recall that day
Of raucous vale and clamorous wood:
A nagging doubt remains there still.
I think I saw a daffodil. Anon

FROM THE BOOK GROUP from Ann Woods

A Review of "The Pregnant Widow" Martin Amis

I THOUGHT that Martin Amis was an interesting author and that this book was about a pregnant widow. I was wrong on both counts! I struggled my way through, desperately hoping to discover both what it was about and what was the trauma caused by the holiday in Italy. I could not find either, although the author's statement that it concerned sex without love was some help and at the end of the book his contemplation of his own, and other's deaths indicated futility.

The central character, Keith, who I presume represents the author in his youth, was supposed to be steeped in the 19th century classical novel; if so he has totally failed to imbibe any of the characteristics of this genre. A most laborious read with selfish, superficial and thoroughly boring characters.

A group of idle young people spend a summer holiday in an Italian castle obsessed with sex, relationships and clothes. I failed to see the significance of all this. The blurb on the jacket describes the book as "a brilliant nightmare".

Amis, in the introduction, states that "this is the story of a sexual trauma" and adds that all the characters in the story, and everything that happened therein, are true. Looking back over his past experiences, he wonders what is the matter with him. "Body Dysmorphic Syndrome" or "Perceived Ugly Disorder"? It seems to me that the problem concerns his realization that his "disease" is called "aging and facing death".

When I read a novel I expect to be able to empathise with most of the protagonists and to care about what happens to them. In this most laborious read and I did not care about anyone; in fact I found myself hoping for some tragedy to liven the whole thing up a bit!

Aside from this, I have to admire the writing. Amis' power of description is truly remarkable; his observations spin as effortlessly as candy floss and do indeed make us see the mundane in a truly new light. It must be for this that he is seen as "the finest English writer of his generation". Such a pity that his subject matter falls so short of his writing!

We read this book in our book group; Not a single person liked it. I do not recommend it.

Writing Workshop News from Janice Day

MEMBERS of the Writing Workshop would like to wish you all a belated Happy New Year. We have just put together our programme for the coming months. We are including sessions called Setting the Atmosphere, Writing realistic dialogue, Haunting, thrilling and killing and also Legends, myths and magic.

Last year we looked towards the media for inspiration. This led members in several directions. In one of our sessions we looked at random Headline Titles from a variety of sources and the following was presented the next session. It was written by **Aelwyn Edwards**, one of our founder members.

THOMAS GETS HIS OWN BRANCH LINE

Thomas was in a predicament. Here he was at the top of this very tall tree. He had never before climbed as high as this and found it very frightening. Suddenly all his confidence deserted him. How on earth was he going to get down again? He peered carefully down through the leaves; the ground was such a long way off, and he started to feel a bit sick. He closed his eyes and then after a while opened them again, hoping that he had been dreaming and wasn't up a tree at all. But no, it wasn't a dream. He was still up a very high tree and was no wiser about how to get down again.

He took a very deep breath and looked down again towards the ground. A brief puff of wind blew the leaves to one side and he saw something he hadn't noticed before, a branch that had broken off the main trunk, but was still attached. The tip of the branch reached almost down to the ground. If only he had the courage to climb down to this point, he should be able quite easily to reach the ground and safety. So, after another deep breath and a brief prayer to whatever god lurked at the back of his mind, he set off carefully, carefully down the tree. At last he reached the broken branch and set off down the slope. He had reached roughly halfway down when there was a sharp flurry of wind accompanied by a heavy shower of ice-cold rain. He held on tight to avoid being blown off, but could do nothing about the rain, and was soon soaked to the skin. He closed his eyes again until the squall had gone by and soon made his way down to the leafy part of the tree. The small leafy twigs made a slope down to the ground, so with another deep breath and a closing of the eyes, he slid down the leafy path. No sooner had he arrived than he heard voices exclaiming, "Oh there you are Thomas! We were getting worried about you." Thomas received a nice warm hug and expressed his gratitude with one word; "Miaow."

Food & Nutrition

40 of us enjoyed a very good Christmas meal at 'On The Street', the new College restaurant, and put us in a good mood to tackle the busy period ahead. We had a raffle on that day and, with the recipe sheets kindly put together by Tom O'Callaghan, we raised £75 for the Peace Hospice. This money has been added to the total amount presented to Gill Crowson at the January meeting. Thank you all for your generosity. Valerie Webster

Dear Editor

WE seem to be going through a

spate of what I will call email disinformation messages. These messages contain dire warnings of unstoppable viruses. Generally they are harmless in content, all they serve to do is to clog up the airwaves so to speak.

If any contain an attachment then delete it immediately, they are almost certainly a virus.

They quote information supposedly supplied by Nortons and various servers, the last one I had quoted AOL.

The one disturbing fact of all these messages is that as they are circulated, a large chunk of the sender's address book goes out with the message, consequently the addresses are now in the public domain for anybody to see. This is an open invitation for an undesirable person to access or use a person's e-mail address to send out spam or even worse undesirable data.

Please think carefully before you pass these messages on, you could get something back that you find most disturbing.

If a message comes in from a parcel carrier about a package with a query on it, and it asks you to open the attachment to answer it, DON'T. It definitely is a virus.

**Again, delete it immediately
Pat Walker. SGL Computers**

See important advice from Colin Richards in his article [p2] on BCC Copies which will overcome the wanton and irresponsible distribution of all our email addresses. Ed

WU3A COMMITTEE

2010-2011

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Terry Godfrey



Secretary
Margaret Redding



Membership Secretary
Alan Prest



Study Group Coordinator
Margaret Foster



Vice Chairman
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Tricia Ashby

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Committee member
Frances Ayrton

Speaker Secretary (Non Committee)
David Helliwell

STUDY GROUP NEWS

Sub Editor Study Group News

Please see 'The Study Group Synopsis' for Group Leaders' contact numbers and times and venues of Study Group Meetings.



Jill Ibbott

We are now well into 2011 and the next 'Study Group News' is due to be

published in March and will be a 'Study Group News' only issue. Please send me your contributions for the March issue by **20 February** to watfordu3a@yahoo.co.uk. Thank you.

Anglo-German Walks

4th Friday 9.30am.

Antiques

2nd Tues 2.00-4.00pm at my home. I now have room for one or two new members.
8 Feb Photography etc.

Art Appreciation

2nd Mon 10am for 10.30am at Hollytree House.

In Dec we had an unusual and illuminating presentation by Phil McMahon entitled 'One's a portrait, two's a company, three's a crowd', showing how various artists solved the problem of painting crowds of people. This was followed by a very enjoyable Christmas buffet.

To a record attendance in January, Margaret Thompson gave us a splendid reintroduction to L S Lowry, whose painting we had seen at the Lowry Centre in Salford during our trip to Liverpool in September.

14 Feb 'The New English Art Club': some of the best of current figurative art, presented by Phil McMahon.

14 Mar Pat Woollard presents the local artist: Hubert von Herkomer.

Book Discussion Group

4th Mon 2.00-4.00pm.
28 Devereux Drive.

Chess

2nd & 4th Tues 9.30am.

Computers

3rd Thurs 2.00pm. Thorpe Community Room, Garston Fire Station, St Albans Road, (Next Asda).
New members welcome.

Classics Group

3rd Mon 2.15pm.
New members are always welcome.

Cryptic Crosswords

1st & 3rd Fri of the month.
I regret this group is full.

Current Affairs

3rd Tues 10.00am.
Hollytree House.

A very thin meeting in December (because of the snow and despite the attraction of mince pies) was followed by a full meeting in January. We've managed to touch on the usual range of topics. We generally disapproved of Wikileaks and thought Julian Assange should be put on trial; but where and on what charge? Under our highly regarded British justice, he'd probably survive any trial on his leaks offences and Sweden will have to provide a good case to extradite him. Less certainty about how he'd fare in the USA. We're appalled that Enid Blyton has slipped off the list of best-read children's books but Stephanie Meyer, who writes about 'lusty teenage vampires' has come in instead. Those who had seen the film 'The King's Speech' thought it excellent but there were doubts about portrayal of the royal family in this way. This led us to a discussion of privilege and the upper classes and how long the monarchy will survive. Local matters also featured in our discussion; there'll be changes in Watford's

sheltered housing and fewer managers, though Hollytree House will still be a focal point in the system. We then got round to asking why inadequate interest is shown in local councils' actions, though we're much concerned about what goes on in parliament. In Watford and in Hertfordshire, however, there was plenty to say about education and about the state of the roads. The NHS and electoral reform will feature in future discussions.

15 Feb Next meeting, when there'll be information about a group lunch in March.

Cycling

1st Mon and 3rd Wed starting at Wat Met Station 10.00am.

I am finding it increasingly difficult to plan rides as the recent weather has caused many of our routes to be very wet, muddy and hard going. If you have any inspired ideas, please let me know. You will be sorry to learn that our friend John Parsons fell whilst walking in the snowy conditions before Christmas and fractured his hip. I am in touch with him and he is making a steady recovery but it will be some while before we see him on his bike again.

7 Feb St Albans via Chiswell Green.

16 Feb Elstree Airfield.

7 Mar Whelpley Hill.

16 Mar Soup run. Mystery ride ending chez Y & D for home made soup and bread.

DIY Discussion

2nd Mon 10am-12 noon Tree Bridge House, Garston La.

European

Studies

4th Wed 10.00am.

23 Feb William Turner.



Janet Carleton

23 Mar Napoleon 1804-1812.

27 Apr Napoleon 1812-1815 and Congress of Vienna and exile.

Followed by Lunch at the Blue Check Restaurant
This group is full.

Exploring London

2 Mar Cabinet War Rooms and Central Hall Westminster Visit and Tour

Food & Nutrition

Film Group

1st Thurs 2.15pm.

52 Malden Road.

3 Feb Last of the Blond Bombshells.

3 Mar Jerry Maguire.

7 Apr Sleeping with the Enemy.

Sorry this group is now full.

Gardening

After a couple of very enjoyable indoor meetings and our Annual Anniversary lunch we are hopefully ready for a mix of interesting trips in 2011.

As before, some are old favourites but looking completely different at a different time of year and we include some new destinations too.

17 Feb Outing to Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum near Romsey in Hampshire to see the Winter Garden, reported to be the largest in Europe. There is also a new Visitors' Centre. Tickets now on sale.

17 Mar 10am Hollytree House. A photo morning - Gardens and more.

20 Apr WEDS (Day changed from Thurs because of Easter). Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Tickets on sale to Group members in March, on open sale in April.

Genealogy

Normally 2nd Fri

10.00am. Watford Rural Parish Council Hall, Oxhey Drive, South Oxhey.

Look at our website for more information :www.watfordu3a.org.uk

German Conversation

1st & 3rd Thurs 10am-12 Noon

This group is now full.

Greetings Cards

Hollytree House

2nd Thurs. 10.00am & 1.30pm.

10 Feb. Embossing with powders and heat tools and also using chalks.

10 Mar. Weaving using paper and/or ribbons.

14 Apr. As for March? (YF away)

NB. Please note –am class as before, 10-12.30, but earlier start for pm class 1.30-4.00. Somebody left an embossing pad behind at the last meeting. Please contact YF.

History

2nd Mon 2.00pm Fire Station Garston (Asda CP off A41).

Italian

Alt Thurs 10.00am.

A self help group, using audio/visual material, written exercises and original Italian texts. We are guided by a fluent Italian speaker.

Jazz

3rd Wed 2.30pm.

London Theatre Group

Luncheon Club

4th Wed.

Any members who would like to join us for lunch please phone Fay for further details.

Money Matters

1st Thurs 10.00am to Noon Hollytree House.

Music Appreciation

3rd Wed: 10.00am Coffee and chat. 10.30am meeting.

I have now taken over the running of the Music Appreciation group from Johanna Woodmansterne. However, the group will still continue to meet at Johanna's house. We plan to both watch and listen to music using DVDs and videos. However there will be some occasions when CDs will be used. At the meeting in February we will be seeing a performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony "The Choral". The performance will be by the New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by the legendary Otto Klemperer. It was filmed at the Royal Albert Hall in November 1964 and will be shown as a DVD. Future plans

will be showing the great orchestras and conductors of the World on DVD and video, including a performance of Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" orchestrated by Ravel, played by the Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini on DVD, filmed at Watford Town Hall in March 1964, and Leonard Bernstein rehearsing and conducting "West Side Story", with Kiri Te Kanawa and Jose Carreras. New members will be warmly welcomed. Ray Gynne

Needlecraft

1st and 4th Mon, at Combe-wood, Garston. 10am.

Opera

2nd Mon 2.00pm at Christine's.

For our tribute to Joan Sutherland in January we saw Act III of 'Lucia di Lammermoor' and the first act of 'Norma'. We had a good laugh at some of the costumes in the latter but all agreed the final aria that Sutherland sang in this excerpt would give us a wonderful memory of this superb diva.

14 Feb Don Carlos – with Simon Keenleyside as Rodrigo, Ferruccio Furlanetto as King Philip of Spain and Jonas Kaufman as Carlos. This production was given last year at Covent Garden. We shall be seeing the first 2 acts in February and then -

14 Mar Don Carlos (last 2 acts).

Pathfinders Group

4th Tues 9.25am Essex Arms.

Performing Arts

Science Interest

3rd Monday 10.00am

21 Feb Alternative Medicine: Paul Mostyn.

16 Mar Visit to Culham Centre for Fusion Energy.

21 Mar Potamogetons: Tony Platts.

18 Apr Friction: Dr Malcolm Bailey.

Prospective new members please contact SGL.

Scrabble 1

2nd and 4th Thurs.

The group is now full.



Jean Dolamore

Our Scrabble Group started back in the mists of time. We began meeting in Shirley Ross's house. She was such a great help in the starting up of so many groups. Scrabble, Exploring London and Wine Tasting, to name but a few, began their life there. We would find the key left in a flower pot and make ourselves at home in her lovely house - tea and biscuits awaiting us! I think it was about ten years ago when we started meeting in my home twice a month. Some of us can produce a "Scrabble" (using all the letters in one go) with ease while most of us don't aspire to such greatness. Nevertheless we all enjoy ourselves and have fun!

Scrabble 2

2nd Thurs

10.00am.

Our group is now full.



Alan Rose

Shakespeare

Last Wed 2.00pm.

23 Feb Back to our usual meeting place of 135 to continue reading Hamlet.

30 Mar More reading of Hamlet.

Snooker

Every Mon 11.00am-1.00pm.

Joint Group with WPU3A.

Sporting Forum

3rd Tues 2.00pm

Combewood, unless otherwise advised.

Strollers

2nd & 4th Tues 11.00am.

Table Tennis

Mondays TBA at 7.30pm.

St. Marks Church Leggatt's Way.

The Explorers

1st Friday Most walks start at 10am.

The Rock 'n' Roll Yrs

4th Thurs 2.30pm Hollytree House.

On 26th November we celebrated Cliff Richard's 70th birthday - his life and his music.

27 Jan Ladies Special. Female recording artists of the 50s and 60s.

24 Feb Original Versions. Who originally recorded the famous song?

Thirsty Walkers

4th Thur 9.30am outside The Essex Arms to share cars. At the end of the walk we stop to enjoy a friendly lunch. Why not come and join us?

Toffee

3rd Thurs 10.00am-12.00.

We had a full house for our December meeting when we tried a few tastes of the season. On this occasion we had an "open quiz" which started off various conversations and discussions. It was a happy, noisy, morning which everyone enjoyed.

Travel Group

Tuesday Trekkers

Meet 9.45am for 10.00am.

8 Feb Brian leads, meet Chipperfield CP by the church. Not the same walk as Dec and no mulled wine or tinsel! Will I be walking alone?

8 Mar Leader required, highest bid wins.

12 Apr Jean & Peter leading, from where? Watch this space.

Tuesday Ramblers

4th Tue Meet varied.

(formerly known as Walking for Pleasure and Fitness)

This is a new group walking 10 - 11 miles in 4-5 hours, stopping for a pub lunch mid-day. New members welcome

U3A Singers

1st & 3rd Mon 2.30pm.

Extra voices welcome!

7 Feb Lunch at Watford Town & Country Club, Rosslyn Road. Meet at 12 noon for lunch at 12.30. Please make sure you have indicated your choice of meal to Cynthia

21 Feb Combewood as usual.

21 Feb Combewood as usual.

Walking

2nd & 4th Wed

Most walks meet JS A41.

Six miles 9.30am.

9 Feb Flamstead.

23 Feb Coldicot.

Contact Peter Manhire.

Wine Appreciation

Last Friday 2.30-4.30pm.

'Wit Knits'

1st Monday 10.00am.

Various venues

Writers Workshop

Fortnightly Tues 2.00pm.

VIRTUAL U3A

www.vu3a.org.uk;

There is a Virtual U3A on line for those unable to attend an ordinary U3A. If you have any friends or know anyone who would benefit from this please pass it on. The website says "An important target group for this virtual development includes older people who are geographically isolated through illness or perhaps personal commitments (carers, for example)".

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MRP Cost: **£450+**

special offer to bona fide members of the U3A:

£56.40

to order a copy, first contact Colin Richards

digitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk

HEARING NOT AS SHARP AS IT WAS?

FREE HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECK

Would you hear a fire alarm in the night?

Please call this freephone number for your free appointment

0800 587 3347

DISTRACTION BURGLARIES

POLICE are warning of distraction burglaries. 9 people in Herts have been targeted by a couple who con their way into homes of the elderly who live alone.

They either involve a female who claims she's injured her hand or who asks to borrow pen and paper to write a note to her relative who lives nearby. Meanwhile the man enters and usually leaves with a quantity of cash. Don't open the door! Don't let anyone in if you don't know them. Ask them to return when you have someone else with you. Always ask to see their identification. Never keep large amounts of cash at home.

If in doubt call 999 or email mathew.scales@herts.pn.n.police.uk

VUE CINEMA OVER 60s RATES

Mon-Thurs before 5p.m.

£4.70. After 5p.m. £5.65

Fri before 5 p.m. £5.65 after 5p.m. £6.30

Sat & Sun £6.30

SENIORS CLUB

Mon at 12.00noon £3.50.

Selected films are shown and include tea and biscuits
Titles can be obtained from the website or by telephone
08712 240240

WATFORD PALACE THE BIG GIVE

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this Appeal at the December meeting. We collected £150, which was then doubled by The Big Give to £300. Gift Aid added another £42! Watford Palace was delighted and we felt we made a worthwhile contribution on behalf of Watford and District U3A. The theatre achieved its target so we must watch out for the refurbishment of the façade. **Margaret Redding**

U3A Study Afternoon Science & Conservation at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Thursday 5 May

1.30-4.30 pm. £12.50

including refreshments.

Places are limited.

Details of Summer Schools

1. Newport 18-21 July

2. Cirencester 22-25

August.

Contact **Margaret Foster**
SG Coordinator

U3A Almoners

Please let us know of any member who is sick or bereaved and in need of support.

Irene Lowe

Peggy Element

Janet Carleton

Kath McMahon

Computer Repair Home visits

Viruses cleaned; Memory upgrades; Data backups
Price agreed in advance
10 years repairing PCs
John Boughton

JB Computer Services
01923 230607

Watford U3A's Projector & Laptop computers



To make a booking for a digital projector and a laptop computer contact:

Colin Richards
digitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meeting Talks programme.

1st Tuesday

10.00am - 12.00noon.

1st Feb Ray Gynne:
Journey to India

1st Mar Robert Lowe:
The genius of Gilbert & Sullivan

5 Apr David Butler MBE & Chairman of the British Motor Sport Association:
Driving for the Disabled

3rd May Kim Crundall:
Balance Nutrition:
Nutritional advice in plain English

For more detail contact
Speaker Secretary:-

David Helliwell

speakers@watfordu3a.org.uk

Next Newsletter March

Will be
Study Group News

Copy can be sent anytime but **MUST** be received by:

20 February

e-mail copy to:

watfordu3a@yahoo.co.uk

Next Peace Hospice Raffle March

For those who weren't at the January Meeting, we were pleased to hand over a cheque for £1,786 to Gill from The Peace Hospice. Valerie Webster added a further £75. from the Food and Nutrition Study Group, making a grand total of £1,861. Once again we have managed to increase our total – this time by over £287 more than last year. We wouldn't be able to do this without all your generous support, prize donations, surplus Study Group monies and all our lovely hard working "helpers".

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

Next raffle will be in March – let us make a good start to the 2011 Peace Hospice donation.

We will be pleased to collect any prize donations, or you can bring them to the monthly meetings. We sit at the back of the hall (on the right as you come in).

John and June Baughen