



## NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2026

### EDITOR'S CORNER

#### MERRY CHRISTMAS



You can contact me, Phil Joiner at [ww3aphil@gmail.com](mailto:ww3aphil@gmail.com) or by mobile which is 07728 748 131. Contributions for next month to be received please by 19th January 2026.

The FREE Christmas edition of 'STILL SMILING.' Is still available at [smiling2025.tiiny.site](http://smiling2025.tiiny.site) It contains jokes, cartoons and 6 quizzes that may be fun to use over the Christmas and New Year period.

#### COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Richard Barnes (Chair). On behalf of your committee, may I wish you all, Seasons Greetings and a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year.

In addition, Val and Jane (joint group coordinators) would like to thank all the Convenors and Volunteers for their hard work and support throughout 2025, particularly with the added admin task of completing the risk assessments.

A special thank you should also go to all the members who serve the teas and coffees at the General Meetings. It would not be the same without you!!! We both appreciate the time and effort that our members spend in helping to ensure the smooth running of our u3a. We wish you a very Happy Christmas and a very healthy 2026.



#### POSSIBLE NEW GROUPS

Jane Brown advises: With the influx of dozens of members, we are trying to set up a number of new groups launching in the New Year. These for instance may include dining, table tennis, board games and crime novels. Any more details will be in the next newsletter.

Fed up with cooking? Why not try one of our two new lunch groups hopefully starting to meet in the New Year on the third Thursday and Sunday of the month? There is also some limited availability on one of the existing lunch groups on the second Tuesday in the month (see Interest Groups page)

If you have any other activities in mind, Val and I can help you get them off the ground.

Don't tell me not to worry. It's the only thing I'm any good at

### NEXT MEETING



On Tuesday 6th January  
at 10.30 a.m.  
(Doors open at 9.45 a.m.)

At: The Memorial Hall, South Woodford,  
209 High Rd, E18 2PA.

As those of you who were at the December meeting will be aware, our January speaker (Mark Smith) has cancelled us. He has had the temerity to move to Somerset and so will not be able to attend. In his place, I have now booked Andy Smith, a Performance Poet. Andy is an author and former business communicator who has 2 artificial limbs, a wonderful wife, 3 fine children and a whippet. He also had 2 chickens until Basil Brush appeared.

His talk is entitled, "Wartime & Romance". War is a grim business, but doesn't come to a grinding halt, neither does romance. Andy shares real-life stories of two world wars and he weaves romance and humour into an entertaining talk that stimulates responses from the audience.



#### TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Annette Chowthi-Williams, Sue Cohen,  
Pamela Bainsfair, Ninette Davis,  
Margaret Jarvis, Vincent Keddle,  
Lanya Michaelson, Elaine O'Flanagan,  
Dermot O'Flanagan, Sheila Roberts,  
Julie Zeff.

#### CURRENT GROUP VACANCIES

Boules	Bridge	Bridge Tuition
Enjoying Opera	French	History
Racketball	Rummikub 1 (Monday)	Ten Pin Bowling
Trains, Boats and Planes		



#### THE GRUMPIES

The "Grumpies" enjoyed their last meeting of 2025 by lunching at Bread and Oregano in South Woodford, please see photo attached. Despite our name, there was much sociable chatter and laughter. Whilst lunching we discussed our programme for 2026 and decided to change future meetings to the 2nd Thursday of the month. The January meeting will therefore, be on Thursday 8th January 2026 when we will visit the Redbridge museum located in Ilford Central Library. We will meet at 10.45 in the foyer of the library for a guided tour of the exhibits. Following the guided tour, there will be time for individually exploring either of the displays and then have a light lunch in the Hardback Cafe on the ground floor.

If any member wishes to join us, contact Ron on 0777 5600 543 or [ronwu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:ronwu3a@hotmail.com), Remember to include your phone number.

## WWU3A OUTINGS

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Janet Taylor writes: I will start taking names for Kinky Boots the musical starring Johannes Radebe from Strictly Come Dancing at the next meeting. Date for your diaries, The show at the London Coliseum opens in March 26th and I have secured 20 Dress Circle tickets for the matinee performance on Thursday 9th April at a cost of £55.00. No payment required yet, just come and see me and put your name down, it's a GREAT show.

### TRIP TO OLIVER CROMWELL'S HOUSE AND ELY CATHEDRAL



Exciting 2026 outing

Join us for a day out on February 12th 2026, exploring the history and heritage of Ely! There are 7 places left for the trip

Oliver Cromwell's House. The House was the family home of Oliver Cromwell, who lived there with his wife and children from around 1636 to 1647. The house offers a unique insight into how a middle-class family lived in the 17th century. Exhibits also chart Cromwell's remarkable rise from local gentleman to military leader and eventually Lord Protector.

The tour of the house will be divided into two groups and will take approximately 90 minutes. Please note that there is no lift, and access involves around 20 steps with a handrail. After the house tour, there will be time for lunch before we enjoy a guided tour of Ely Cathedral at 3:00pm. Ely Cathedral is one of the most magnificent medieval cathedrals in England, dominating the skyline for miles—hence Ely's nickname, "The Ship of the Fens." The cathedral has also featured in major films and TV shows, including The King's Speech, The Golden Age, and The Crown, often standing in for Westminster Abbey.

A reminder for all members who put their names down for the Ely trip, but were unable to pay at the December meeting. Remember to bring along your credit or debit card to the January meeting to make payment. Cost of the trip is £40.50. You can also pay by bank transfer to the following: Wanstead and Woodford University of the Third Age, Account Number 23064565. Sort code 20-52-74. Or pay with a cheque made payable to the Wanstead and Woodford U3A. I am unable to attend the meeting, but please let Sandra Reekie or Janet Taylor know when you have made payment.

## WWU3A

### FILM GROUP



We had a good turnout for our December meeting and we enjoyed a Christmas film together. It was called The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey and was based on a bestselling children's book.

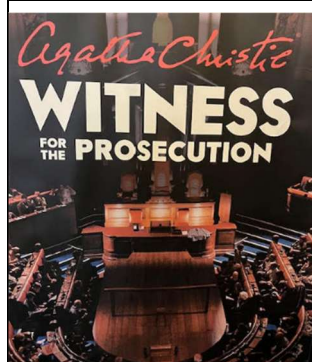
When a boy loses a treasured nativity set which is the last link to his dead father his mother (Joely Richardson) persuades a lonely and anti-social local wood carver (Tom Berenger) to create a replacement.

The boy and the wood carver begin to form a friendship and heal their wounds, for the man has suffered tragic loss also. After some friction between them, everything is resolved and they both move towards a happier Christmas than either of them could have imagined.

Many of the group are finding it easy to pay by tapping their bank cards on the SUM UP machine at the monthly general meeting on the first Tuesday of the month. The first Tuesday of 2026 is the 6th January and I will be asking our members to pay £12 for 3 meetings. Otherwise you can pay online or we do accept cheques as a last resort.

Our next film will be shown on Wednesday 14th January and it will be something to brighten a dark winter's afternoon.

Angela Barnes 0781 790 4572 angelabarnes1972@gmail.com



A group of U3A members recently spent a very enjoyable afternoon at County Hall watching an Agatha Christie mystery, Witness For The Prosecution. Spoiler alert for anyone planning to go and see this,

Witness for the Prosecution is one of Agatha Christie's most gripping courtroom dramas, originally written as a short story before Christie adapted it into a stage play. The plot centres on Leonard Vole, a seemingly ordinary young man

accused of murdering an elderly woman who had taken a particular interest in him. The evidence appears overwhelmingly against him—motive, opportunity, and suspicious behaviour—but Leonard pleads innocent. The tension escalates as the trial unfolds, with Christie carefully layering doubt and intrigue to keep the audience guessing.

What sets the play apart is the character of Romaine, Leonard's enigmatic wife, whose testimony becomes the dramatic crux of the story. Her motives are ambiguous, her allegiance uncertain, and her presence electrifies the courtroom scenes.

Christie masterfully blends psychological complexity with traditional mystery elements, creating a narrative that is both tightly structured and emotionally charged. The play's famous twist ending—still considered one of Christie's best—delivers a final shock that redefines everything the audience thought they knew, reaffirming her reputation as a master of surprise.

After a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon in the company of our U3A friends the journey home was good with the District and Central lines behaving themselves. Come and join us at the next outing.



## WWU3A GROUPS



### MUSIC APPRECIATION

Led by Edna Edwards and Dorothy Sullivan, this group is going from strength to strength. Photo is of Edna and the group. It is held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month in the Churchill Room at Memorial Hall from 2.00 until 4.00 p.m.



### FREEDOM PASS ROVERS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Janet Taylor writes: On a very wet and windy Thursday, members of FPR1 met for their annual Christmas lunch in The Bull at Theydon Bois. This was arranged for us by Sandra Reekie, so a big thank you to Sandra. We would also like to thank Lesley Smith, our convenor who has the job of keeping us in line during the year, and this she does with humour, thank you for all your hard work during the year, Lesley. We send greetings to all U3A members for a Happy and Healthy 2026

### BRIDGE TUITION GROUP



Ron Prince writes: The group have now successfully completed the full EBU course and so we had a celebratory lunch at the Salash Kitchen on the 28th November. As the group are wishing to continue, we will recommence on Friday 13th February in 2026 when we will be playing, and scoring, more competitively and we will also discuss the hands after playing them to see how we could have improved. If there are any u3a members who already play bridge, and are conversant with the Acol system of bidding, who wish to join us please contact Ron on 0777 5600 543 or email [ronw\\_wu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:ronw_wu3a@hotmail.com) including your phone number.

**Stop Press!**



### CURRENT AFFAIRS POTENTIAL NEW GROUP

This will be a discussion group held at Tina and Richard's home, on 3rd Thursday of month from 2.30- 4.30 p.m. Initially this will be offered to new members joining in the past year. Please contact Richard and Tina Harris for further details at 0208 504 7626

I don't need to put anyone down to build myself up

## LONDON REGION NEWS

### LONDON REGION U3A ONLINE TALKS BOOKING NOW



The talks will be delivered via Zoom on the second Monday of each month from 17.30-18.30 (log in from 17.00).

Monday 12th January 2026

Speaker: Jane Kershaw

Topic: Revealing the origins of the Viking Age through the scientific analysis of silver

Monday 9th February 2026

Speaker: Richard Westwood-Brookes:

Topic: Elgar - The composer you thought you knew

Monday 9th March 2026

Speaker: Alan Freeland

Topic: Catherine The Great - ruler of Russia 1762-1796

The full programme can be seen [here](#) with links to the booking forms. For a full list of these and other events, please see the [Events](#) page of our website. Please register early as bookings will close 48 hours prior to each talk. The zoom link will only be sent to those who have registered. Requests for the link cannot be actioned on the day of the talk. [talks.lru3a@gmail.com](mailto:talks.lru3a@gmail.com)

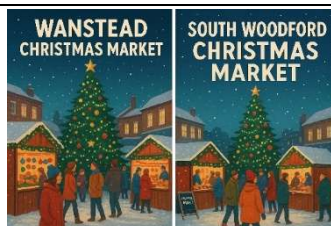
### LOCAL PANTOMINES THIS CHRISTMAS



**Wizard of Oz** at Redbridge Drama Centre, Churchfields until 31st December 029 8798 8800

**Jack and the Beanstalk** at Sir James Hawkey Hall Woodford Green from 2nd to 14th January 020 8708 2858.

**Sleeping Beauty** at Queen's Theatre Hornchurch until 3rd January 01708 443333



### CHRISTMAS MARKETS

Wanstead Market on Saturday 20th December

South Woodford Market on Sunday 21st December

## CHRISTMAS CARTOONS

I have a copy of the 1982 Radio Times if anybody wants to know what's on the BBC this xmas.

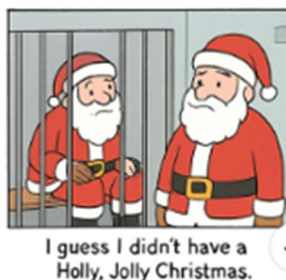


Christmas is truly a magical time. It makes all my money disappear!



During the Covid lockdown, if you had family round on Christmas Day, police could force entry to your home and make them go home.

Does anyone know if this is service is still available, and if you have to book?



## CHRISTMAS CRACKERS



I've reached the age where the best Xmas gift is someone else hosting.

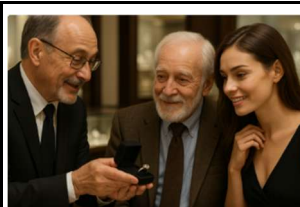
Christmas shopping is 90% walking around, buying stuff I didn't plan to.

Or buying presents for people I don't even like!

All I want for Christmas is for the lights to untangle themselves.

I bought all my gifts early... then promptly forgot where I hid them.

I asked Santa for patience this year, but I want it NOW  
Christmas is magical: one minute you're shopping, the next you're broke.  
My Christmas wish is for Wi-Fi to be strong and the family drama weak.



An older, white haired man walked into a jewellery store on Christmas Eve with a beautiful young lady at his side. He told the jeweller he was looking for a special ring for his girlfriend. The jeweller looked through his stock and brought out a £5,000 ring. The old man said, "No, I'd like to see something more special." At that statement, the jeweller went to his special stock and brought another ring over. "Here's a stunning ring at only £40,000" he said. The young lady's eyes sparkled and her whole body trembled with excitement. The old man seeing this said, "We'll take it." The jeweller asked how payment would be made and the old man stated, "By cheque. I know you need to make sure my cheque is good, so I'll write it now and you can call the bank after Christmas to verify the funds and I'll pick the ring up on the day after Boxing day. On this day, the jeweller phoned the old man. "There's no money in that account." "I know," said the old man, "But let me tell you about my wonderful Christmas!



A couple, both in their sixties, were celebrating on Christmas Day when a magical fairy appeared to grant each of them a special Christmas wish. The wife wanted to travel around the world. The fairy waved her wand and poof - the wife had tickets in her hand for a world cruise. Next, the fairy asked the husband what he wanted. He said; "I wish I had a wife 30 years younger than me." So the fairy picked up her wand and poof - the husband was 90!



Grandma decided to try a smart Christmas tree this year—one with an app-controlled light display. Proudly, she demonstrated it to the whole family... until the lights began flashing wildly, switching to disco mode. Turns out the neighbor's Wi-Fi name matched Grandma's, and *they* were controlling the tree. Grandma called it "the most festive hacking I've ever seen