

# Watford Central

## U3A

*Learn Laugh Live*

**Hello Everyone,**

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2025! As I write this it feels very strange because in reality, I am writing this before Christmas has happened. Not a sprout eaten, not a mince pie warmed and my Christmas Pudding is sitting in wait for me. I hope the day goes well for everyone or, depending on when you see this, went well for you?

All good wishes for a good year ahead for everyone. I hope that problems that may come are small and solvable. I have had a look at some of the poems that, over the year have described or predicted the approach of a New Year. A bit gloomy some of the until I found this one, I hope you enjoy it too, with thanks to one Joanna Fuchs an American lady.

### **Tick Tock**

I'm writing this in a state of shock,  
Watching the clock—tick tock, tick tock,  
Advancing, approaching, relentlessly,  
brand new year; Oh, can it be?

The calendar says the same thing, too;  
Time races, vanishes for me; Boo hoo!  
Wait! If time flies, I'm having fun!  
Year of fun! It's gone! It's done!

I now embrace the blur of time,  
Because it simply means that I'm  
Too busy with pleasure, joy, delight  
To mourn the passing days' swift flight.

So, I'm wishing you fast, happy days,  
Pleasuring you in myriad ways,  
Filled with happiness and cheer,  
Oh Happy, Happy Bright New Year!

*By Joanna Fuchs*

Sentiments of many of us, I think. I'm looking forward to the clock ticking towards our first meeting of 2025 and I hope to greet many of you on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

With best wishes, Sally



**The next monthly meeting of Watford Central u3a will be on**  
**Thursday, 2nd January 2026 at 2.00pm**  
**at the Ex-Services Club, 12-14 St Albans Road, Watford WD17 1BN**  
The Speaker will be Simon Keable-Elliott whose talk is entitled  
*Utterly Immoral* about his grandfather Robert Keable.

***Our Speaker Secretary's intriguing introduction to Simon Keable-Elliott's talk gives an insight into what could be a fascinating experience at our first general meeting of 2025.***

*Utterly Immoral* is Simon Keable-Elliott's first novel and is a fascinating insight into the life of a remarkable man - his grandfather.

Raised in Croydon by evangelical parents, Robert Keable became increasingly high church while studying at Cambridge. Once ordained he travelled to Zanzibar as a missionary. Following the outbreak of the First World War, he moved to Basutoland to work as a Parish Priest. After moving to France he began to question his faith.

One of the most controversial things that Robert Keable is remembered for is his First World War novel *Simon called Peter*. When published, critics called it "offensive, a libel and reeking of drink and lust." Apparently Scott Fitzgerald suggested it was "utterly immoral" and referenced it in *The Great Gatsby*. Needless to say it became a huge international best-seller, a Broadway play and the sequel made into a Hollywood movie.

We will learn a great deal more of his very varied life by listening to his grandson.



## Christmas Party 2024

What great fun we had at our annual festive party on 5th December. Everyone was tapping their feet, other than a few very brave girls who gathered in the back row for a real rock & roll experience, dancing on the spot to the Newkelele Band. Thanks to all of the band members for a superb afternoon's entertainment.

Thank you also to Sally and other committee members for their help preparing for this event and making it such a success.

## Christmas Lunch 2024

Our hosts at The Oddfellows Hall surpassed themselves by providing an excellent meal in, of course, pleasant company. Once again, thanks Sally for organising.

## Who didn't receive any Christmas presents this year?

With the UK economy in decline and prices continuing to rise, it seems the Watford public have been cautious Christmas shoppers so far, businesses have said.





This pleasant winter scene, captured in December 2024 by Judy Record, was from a window in her Central Watford home.

Tree in Snow



This atmospheric wintry scene was sent by Watford Central u3a member Lynda Bullock.

## Weather predictions for Watford in January 2025 from Weather 25.com

Our weather forecast can give you a great sense of what weather to expect in **Watford in January 2025**.

- **temperatures between 2°C and 7°C**
- **very cold - warm clothes are a must**
- **expect rain for roughly half of the month - 8 to 15 days**
- **your rubber boots and umbrella are going to see plenty of use**
- **plus a few days of snow**
- **wear snow boots and mittens to stay warm**

We had a white Christmas in 2009, when 13 per cent of stations recorded snow or sleet falling, and 57 per cent reported snow lying on the ground.

The last widespread white Christmas in the UK was in 2010, when 83% of weather stations recorded snow on the ground. This was the highest amount of snow ever recorded on Christmas Day in the UK.

The traditional festive images of snowfall on Christmas Day are something that often eludes the UK. There will be no white Christmas in 2024, according to the Met Office, with the chances of widespread snow lying on the ground seeming unlikely. The nation's weather forecaster said pressure will build as 25 December approaches and there are likely to be settled conditions, mild in many places.

*Ref: The Standard*

This was the highest amount of snow ever recorded on

## Theatre Visits

This is a poster for an event taking place at St Albans Arena in March. Would anyone be interested in going? There are two days of the event but we would go to one of them, the Saturday. It begins at 11 a.m. and finishes at 7 p.m. The cost is £35 for the day. What I don't know about is eating and drinking during the day? To be discovered. If you are interested there will be a sign-up sheet in January but I will not take money until the February meeting.

This is what the website says:

Doors open 10am • Curtain up 11am • Event ends 7pm

### TWO DAYS OF GENUINE FUN!

*Every year, Talking Pictures TV and Renown Pictures take over the Alban Arena,*

*St Albans, for a star-studded spectacular of a weekend, with live on-stage entertainment plus screenings of lost and rare shorts, films & TV episodes – perfect for fans of good old-fashioned entertainment.*



## Watford Palace Theatre

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 2.30 p.m.** Abbots Langley Gilbert & Sullivan Society presents **Orpheus in The Underworld**

*For the first time in Watford Palace Theatre history, ALGSS proudly presents Offenbach's operetta "Orpheus in the Underworld", the comic reimagining of the Orpheus myth. With a libretto by political satirist and comedian Rory Bremner, this production breathes new life into the classic tale.*

*Expect a delightful evening of satirical humour that critiques society while exploring themes of love, infidelity, and social pressure. The show is brought to life with lively melodies and features the iconic 'Can-can'. Don't miss this fresh, modern twist on a timeless story! Ticket Price £23.50*

## Interest Days Out

**Leader: Sandra Kay**

Hope everyone had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year.

For our trip on **Tuesday 20th February 2025**, we will be going to the British Museum in Great Russell Street, London. Entry is free, but we need tickets to get in, so there will be a sign up sheet at January's monthly meeting in order to get the number of people required to book tickets for.



### Canasta at The Ex-Services Club

Good news for Canasta players; from January there will be two sessions per month which will be held on the first and third Friday in the month, so in January we shall meet on 3rd and 17th January 2025 at 12:30pm.

Sandra

### What's Your Story?

#### Our new Interest Group for Watford Central u3a starting in the New Year

Our first meeting will be at **2.00pm until 4.00 pm on Wednesday, 22nd January**, at the Almshouses, Church Street, Watford. We will introduce ourselves to each other and discuss in general our Christmas and New Year experiences.

Sue

### Walking Group

**Leader: Jenny**

Our dedicated walkers went on various journeys in 2024 around Watford. Let us hope that weather permitting even more country lanes and hidden rural and urban treasures can be found by these intrepid travelers. New walkers are always welcome to join the walks.

### Out and About Visits

**Leader: Sally Macaulay**

This interest group got off to a fantastic start in 2024 and no doubt we will hearing from Sally about some more great adventures to be had in 2025.

### A footnote from your editor

The first footing is a tradition that says the first person who sets foot in your house after midnight will dictate your fortune for the year. The luckiest person, or first footer, is a dark haired man carrying bread, salt, a coin or coal.

A male neighbour would bring it in the house after midnight with the words "Old year out, new year in, open the door and let me in". The coal represented warmth, the bread, food, and the tanner, money, as a good omen for coming year'.

**Lunar New Year**—also known as the **Spring Festival**—is celebrated in many East Asian countries, including China, Korea, Vietnam, and more. It begins with the first new moon of the lunar calendar and ends with the first full moon of the lunar calendar, which is about 15 days later. These dates vary each year according to Gregorian (Western) calendars but generally begin between January 21st and February 20th.

**Jewish New Year** - Rosh Hashanah means "head of the year" or "first of the year" in Hebrew, and is the celebration of the new year in Judaism and one of the holiest days of the year. Based on the Hebrew calendar, the holiday occurs on the first day of the seventh month, so it generally begins in either September or October.

In whatever religion, culture or language ... Happy New Year is what I wish you all and thanks to everyone for your support of our Watford Central u3a and the dedicated and hardworking committee members and Interest Group Leaders. Let's all hope for peace, good health and much happiness in 2025.