

Watford Central

U3A

Learn Laugh Live

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the newsletter for February. As I write this, I am very glad to see that the sun has broken through, it's still there and may even give some warmth one day. Yesterday, was rather gloomy and my daughter and I both said it made us feel 'January'. I'm sure you understand the sentiment.

In January 2024, we looked at whether we could sustain the branch for another year? We kept going and the year has passed, so we must ask the question again. Can we keep going another year? This is the critical time because it is when we decide how much the membership will cost (we will give that information later in the newsletter) and how many members we might have? I understand that everyone has times of wanting to make changes and sometimes change is forced on us, but I do hope that we will have enough members to be remain viable. That isn't just about money but the comfort and enjoyment of our various meet ups. We all know about costs and speakers are our greatest but most important expense. We try to keep things low, and Pam has found us a couple of excellent free ones this year, but the fees are edging higher. We find we're asked for travelling expenses too these days.

Along with the question of being viable is the question we ask of the Committee. 'Will you serve another year' is the question. If you don't want that will someone come along to take your place? Please bear in mind that most of the committee have served much longer than the Third Age Trust expects. We cannot and should not be permanent fixtures. If, when the question is asked, they say 'I can't do another year' will any of you be willing to take their place? We have nine people on the committee at present, just about enough to run things, but an impossible task with fewer. The same question applies to Interest Group Leaders, will you keep going for another year? I do I hope so?

This is the February Newsletter but it's probable that by the time you read it Chinese New Year celebrations will have begun. According to Wikipedia the **Chinese New Year, or the Spring Festival**, is a festival that celebrates the beginning of a new year on the traditional lunisolar Chinese calendar. Marking the end of winter and the beginning of spring, this festival takes place from Chinese New Year's Eve (the evening preceding the first day of the year) to the Lantern Festival, held on the 15th day of the year. The first day of Chinese New Year begins on the new moon that appears between 21 January and 20 February. Another source says 2025 is the Year of the Wood Snake, the sixth animal on the 12-year cycle. The snake is meant to symbolize wisdom, growth and renewal. The snake has the ability to shed its skin, which shows transformation. This is said to make people, with the Snake zodiac birth sign, visionaries and good leaders.



I look forward to meeting with many of you at the next meeting on the 6th February.

With best wishes, Sally

Your two-page Membership Form for 2025 is attached hereto. Please complete and send to Sally Macaulay, or bring to the next meeting, together with your cheque for the membership fee of £26.

**The next monthly meeting of Watford Central u3a will be on
Thursday, 6th February 2025 at 2.00pm
at the Ex-Services Club, 12-14 St Albans Road, Watford WD17 1BN
The Speaker will be Martin Orkin, who will be telling us about
The Beatles, their heroes and their music.**

The Fab Four February Feature!

Our Speaker Secretary has organised what looks to be a "ab fab" afternoon with one (not "Four") interesting chap who obviously knows something about the "pop" scene of the 1960's! Pam tells us that ...

On Thursday 6th February 2025 we are pleased to welcome Martin Orkin to tell us how The Beatles evolved from the early rock n roll stars like Bill Haley, Elvis and Buddy Holly through to Cliff Richard & The Shadows.

We will hear snippets of some great records from this exciting musical era.

Martin will also talk about how special The Beatles were and the effect they had on some of the groups who came after them like The Rolling Stones, The Byrds, Billy J Kramer and The Monkees.

It promises to be a lively afternoon.

Sally Macaulay has just sent the following notification regarding one of our members.

David Abraham

We heard the very sad news today that one of our members, David Abraham, husband of our treasurer Meryl, has passed away.

David had been struggling with poor health for some time but still came to occasional monthly meetings and was a regular at our monthly Lunch Group. He had been in the Peace Hospice recently and I know that many of us understand the care that they give.

We send our sincere condolences to Meryl and to their family, from the Committee and members of Watford Central u3a.

**25 years have passed since we celebrated
the beginning of the 21st century on 1st January 2000.**

The Millennium Dome, built in 1999

The dome is one of the largest of its type in the world, Externally, it appears as a large white marquee with twelve 100-metre-high (330 ft) yellow support towers, one for each month of the year, or each hour of the clock face, representing the role played by Greenwich Meantime. It has become one of the United Kingdom's most recognisable landmarks, and can be easily identified on satellite images of London. (*Wikipedia*)



5 great expectations for 2025 in London!

GOOGLE will open a new Head Office at Kings Cross.

IKEA are opening a new super store in Oxford Street.

MARKS & SPENCER are rebuilding their Marble Arch shop.

A TUNNEL AT SILVER TOWN will be built under the Thames to ease traffic congestion.

THE THAMES TIDEWAY project will clear the Thames of sewage.



These two bridges situated in Watford green spaces, are amongst a variety of bridges in our town. Some are built of stone, iron or brick, whilst others such as these are of wood. The top one in Oxhey Park is over the river Colne and the other in Cassiobury Park is over the river Gade.



Photographs by Lynda Bullock, Watford Central u3a member (Facebook post January, 2025)



Valentine's Day 14th February

In England, people have given flowers on Valentine's Day since the 16th century. Red roses symbolize love and the blood of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

In Denmark, people exchange white snowdrop flowers.

In Japan, women traditionally give chocolates to men.

In Wales, men carve wooden love spoons with symbols to convey their feelings.



Who has received cards (vintage or modern) on this special day?



WHEN YOU ARE OLD

WHEN you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep:

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim Soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face:

And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

W. B. Yeats

A sonnet or perhaps
a poem has come
your way.

Weather predictions for Watford from Weather 25.com

- 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

The weather in England in February will be very cold with temperatures between 3°C and 8°C, warm clothes are a must

It seems that so far Weather 25.com got it about right in their December prediction for January.

Their prediction for February is not much better. So, take care on icy pavements and wrap up warm.

Interest Days Out

Leader: Sandra Kay

For our first visit of the year on **Tuesday 18th February to the British Museum**, we will be catching the 10:02am train from Watford Junction to Euston, then the Northern Line to Tottenham Court Road, it's then a short walk about 9/10 minutes to the Museum. Please meet at the Junction about 09:40am or in time for the train from platform 9.

On **Tuesday 18th March we will be visiting The Home Museum in Hoxton**. As it says, it's all about homes but also give us ideas for modern living. It has a cafe and also gardens, which will depend on the weather of course. A sign-up sheet will be available at the February monthly meeting.



The British Museum,
Great Russell Street and
(below) The Museum of the Home, Hoxton



Lunch Group

Leader: Sally Macaulay

Thursday 20th February at 12.30 p.m. at the Oddfellows Hall.

Cost will be £18 which includes the price of the meal and a small tip. There will be a choice of two main course dishes and two deserts which we will need to order in advance. There will be a sign-up sheet at the next meeting where you can make your choice. The Oddfellows Hall is not licensed, but you can buy soft drinks if you wish. You can always pop a small bottle or can of wine into your bag on the way.

What's Your Story

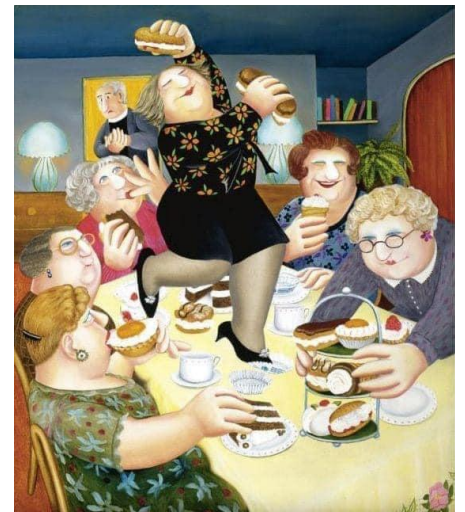
at the Almshouses in Church Street

Leader: Sue Ettridge

Date of next meeting: 22nd February 2025

Sincere apologies are due from me to all our readers! In last month's issue of our Newsletter, in the section giving details of Interest Groups, it stated that our new Group will be meeting on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. This should, of course, have read the 4th Wednesday.

At our inaugural meeting on 22nd January, we introduced ourselves to each other and decided on a rough agenda for the next few meetings. I am very much looking forward - alongside some of our lively Watford Central u3a friends - to getting this Group running successfully, Judging by the variety of ideas put forward already, there should be no problems finding suitable subjects to discuss.



The Vicar's Tea Party, Beryl Cook

Walking Group

Leader: Jenny

The next walk on **Friday 28 February** will be along the canal from The Grove Hotel to Two Bridges at Croxley Green.

Meet at Watford Junction in time to catch the 10.40 am 322 bus towards Hemel Hempstead. You can catch it earlier at the top of Clarendon Road opposite Beechen Grove Church. It no longer stops in Market Street. I shall be on the bus as I will catch it near my home.

We shall walk for about an hour and then go to the pub for refreshments.



Our walk in Verulamium Park, St Albans

Theatre

Leader: Sally Macaulay

Festival of Film Saturday 22nd March 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Cost £35

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. We have seven people who have signed up for this event but there is still time to change your mind and come too. We are still not sure of which films are showing or which actors might come but, if you don't mind a bit of a lucky dip, it sounds a fun way to spend a Saturday. I will be collecting money this month for the tickets.

We have found out more about the eating arrangements and this was the reply to my email to Renown Pictures: *The lunch break is 1-2pm on either day and we do have a little café on site offering lots of savory and sweet options and hot and cold drinks – the lunch boxes are just for ease as you collect them without queuing for the café. - and you can eat in the auditorium or pop out – no pressure - it's very relaxed. I think you'll all enjoy it! It's a lovely atmosphere too, very TPTV!*

So, please bring your own food, pop out to the town or order a lunch box to pick up on the day. The cost is £12 and there is a selection of finger foods and a soft drink, you can choose meat or vegetarian. If you would like to book one of these please write it on the booking sheet and adjust the amount of money to pay which would be £47.

We would meet at St Albans Arena at 10.30 a.m. on the morning of 22nd March, you can stay as long as you wish or until it finishes at 7 p.m.

Save the dates

I have found some shows that are coming to the local theatres:

19th April 2025: **Bugsy Malone** Watford Palace Young Company

24th May 2025: **Pride and Prejudice – sort of** - a retelling of the Jane Austen book Watford Palace

3rd May 2025: **A Chorus Line** St Albans Arena