

Watford Central

U3A

Learn Laugh Live

Volume 15, Issue 8 - August 2026

<https://watfordcentral.u3asite.uk>

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the newsletter for August. I hope you have been able to find a way of staying cool in the recent weather. I think it has been difficult for everyone and nights have been particularly challenging. The long-range weather forecast for August in the UK: *is to start changeable and mixed, turning warmer and drier later in the month with temperatures expected to stay above average overall, particularly in the south.* Does that mean we might have rain? I never thought I would long for rain.....

We hope to keep our groups going in August, as we normally do, but the very hot weather has been challenging and we have already cancelled a couple of afternoons. We also have the important feature of modern life that some are on grandparent duties during the school holidays. If you are not able to attend a group, for whatever reason, please let your group coordinator know as soon as possible as we have to liaise with organisers of the Club, the Almshouses or other u3as.

A feature of modern life is the 'keep the date' cards that we sometimes get for weddings etc. So here is a similar request for Watford Central. Please keep the date for Monday 7th December 2026, which is the date for our Christmas Lunch. It was booked the very next day after last year's as Sara's skills are in great demand. She will be sending me the menu for this year very soon so I will put the information in the newsletter as soon as I can. Just at the moment I can't imagine Christmas or rather, I am not dreaming of Christmas just yet. My neighbour, however, usually has everything under control and organised by July.

There's lots of advice being given out over the hot spell but I am going to add a bit of my own. Remember the Australian advice used to be 'slip, slop, slap'. They have added a bit more 'slip, slop, slap, seek and slide'. That is: slip on a shirt, slop on a hat, slap on the suncream, seek the shade and slide on sunnies'.

Enjoy the summer, hope to see you on the 6th August,

With best wishes,



Sally

The next monthly meeting of Watford Central u3a will be held on
Thursday, 6th August, 2026 at 2.00pm
at the Ex-Services Club, 12-14 St Albans Road, Watford WD17 1BN

Dance around the world with Meryl Abraham

At our next meeting I'll be sharing my love of folk dancing from around the world. Not so much a 'talk', more of a 'show and tell' with some costumes, photos, accessories and music. I hope you'll find it enjoyable and be ready to do some (seated!) joining in!

Everyone will most certainly be admiring Meryl's dancing skills and some of us will be wondering from where she gets her energy! Thanks, Meryl for this opportunity to learn about one of our members' interests.



Some Like it Hot!

The three girls on the left are taking advantage of being in Trafalgar Square, London, whilst on the right, the girl with the bucket by Watford pond, is taking advantage of the water from the stand pipe perhaps to make her next cup of tea!

Watford's last Heat Wave in 1976

Water Scarcity: As reservoirs across the South East depleted, local water authorities enforced strict hosepipe bans. Residents were forced to conserve water by reusing bathwater for the garden or toilet and, in the most severe periods, collecting water from communal street standpipes.

Local Impacts: Outdoor areas such as Cassiobury Park saw crowds of children and families cooling off in streams and paddling pools. Meanwhile, the unrelenting sun caused structural damage like melting roads, and the extremely dry conditions led to a plague of greenflies across the region.

Ref: Watford Observer

Did anyone dip their toes in the pond that year?

*If you venture out try not to make it between 11.00am and 3.00pm
when the temperature is at its hottest.*

Wear a hat and sun glasses and use sunscreen to protect your skin.

As I finish drafting this Newsletter on Sunday morning, 26th July, the rain is glistening on my window. At last we have some rain, but high temperatures are predicted again for the coming week.

Keep cool, Sue

What's Your Story? Leader: Sue Ettridge

We held our July meeting at Sue's home which made a change from being indoors, so have decided that our August meeting will also be held in my garden room. We will be back at the Almshouses in September and very much look forward to welcoming some new members to our group.

Lunch Group

Leader: Sally Macaulay

Thursday 20th August at 1 p.m. Opuz Kitchen, King Street

the cost of the meal is **£18** for a starter, main course and the service charge. Drinks, coffee, dessert are extras and should be paid for separately. Opuz kitchen is modern Turkish and Mediterranean cuisine.

A booking sheet will be available at the August meeting.

Theatre Visits

Leader: Sally Macaulay

There is very little to see at either Watford Palace Theatre or St Albans Arena, so I have looked again at the Abbey Theatre which is in St Albans Park. The actors here are amateurs but if you have ever been to one of their productions you know they are very gifted amateurs and they put on very interesting and, sometimes challenging, productions.

Sunday (yes, that is right) 20th September at 2.30 p.m. at the Abbey Theatre, the Company of Ten on the main stage present: Home, I'm Darling.

Grab an after-work cocktail and step into the world of Judy and Johnny. Judy is the perfect housewife – all day she keeps their 1950s home in order, preparing for Johnny's return from a hard day at work. She cooks, cleans and mixes cocktails, immersed in an idyllic retro fantasy. At first, the arrangement seems playful and mutually satisfying, but as illusion collides with practicality, the couple must confront uncomfortable truths about identity, ambition and the stories we tell ourselves about happiness.

Winner of the 2019 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Comedy, *Home, I'm Darling* is by turns funny and unsettling, exploring the tension between freedom and fantasy.

"Witty, sad and clever... a portrait of crippling obsession and role-play in marriage." London Evening Standard

Ticket Price: £13 for over 65s

Walking Group

Leader: Jenny Graham

Poor Jenny is incapacitated currently following a foot operation. Sadly, she will be unable to take the lead on walks for a while.

More information will be advised to walkers and potential walkers as soon as it is made available,

In the meantime we send Jenny our kindest regards and best wishes for a speedy recovery.

INTEREST DAYS OUT

It's a Walk in the Park - Tuesday, 18th August

For our Walk around Cassiobury Park on Tuesday 18th August, please meet at The Tea Pavilion (Ex Cha Cafe) Shepherds Road at 10:30am, meet at the gate entrance. Anyone who would like to join us on the day just turn up at the cafe by 10:30am.

The other side of the Palace Gates, Wednesday, 10th September

For the Kensington Palace trip on Wednesday 30th September, anyone wanting to join us, the cost is £20:00 and hopefully Sandra will be at the monthly meeting, but if not, Sally will be taking the money and Sandra will give you a receipt when she see's you next.

A trip to the oldest working hospital in London

In October we will be visiting St Barts Hospital North Wing, which has recently been refurbished with its Great Hall and Staircase, nothing to do with the museum, it's just Architecture. This will be on Tuesday 20th October, it's free but they have to be informed of numbers attending in advance.

Best wishes, Sandra.

Sign up sheets will be available at the August meeting.

Browsing through some of the bits and bobs that are kept in my "Possible for Newsletters" folder, I spotted an article by a u3a member who takes a great interest in technology and future developments. Although there is no room here to past the whole article, the snippet below is an interesting sample:

Future Lives : Life in 2050 Minority Report : A film by Steven Spielberg

If you've seen the film, you may recall that he has his eyes replaced so that he won't be detected by the police, who use retina scans for identification. One of the many technologies shown in science fiction is rapidly developing into fact: originally, actors pretended to use headsets to access information, but in 2014, **Google Glass** became commercially available. It was a headset that looked like glasses, that really did allow access to digital information. It rose and died, dismissed as too geeky and too expensive, but developments continued. **Smart glasses** which look much more wearable, and may become affordable, are now available, and the first **replacement eyes** or "bionic eyes" have been developed.

Steven Spielberg employed scientific advisers for the film. I watched an interview with one of the scientists 10yrs afterwards, in **2012**. He said it's pretty well all come true, *except of course magnetic levitation and flying cars...* in 2012, that was still felt to be pure sci-fi. BUT ten years on, all that has changed.

Jean.Jackson@u3a.org.uk Future Lives May 2023

I think most of us in Watford Central branch will miss out on eye replacements and other body parts that wear out, but not cars that drive themselves - they are here already!!



This drawing is by local artist Roger Kattenhorn. The following text was used in a flyer created in 2011 inviting prospective members to attend the inaugural meeting of Watford Central u3a at The Beechen Grove Baptist Church.

Would you like to learn and meet new people?

Are you semiretired?

Come along to:

Beechen Grove Baptist Church

(Corner of Clarendon Road)

Watford

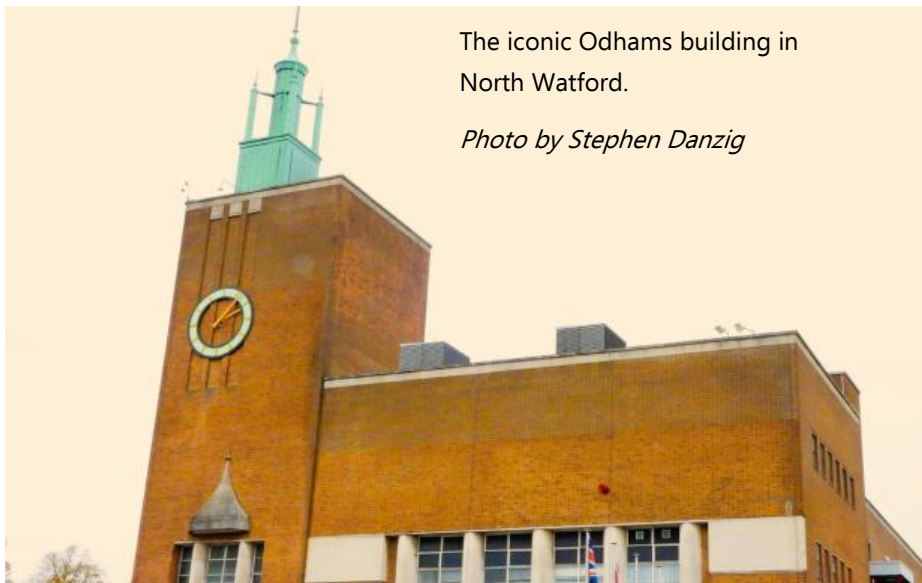
on Tuesday 29th November 2011 at 1030am

You will find out about forming a new u3a in the town centre. The u3a helps people to share educational, creative and leisure activities on a self-help basis. No qualifications are necessary and none are awarded. Among the activities so far suggested are:

Theatre, history, travel, walking, chess, bridge, languages, computer skills, current affairs, money etc.

Watford Central u3a - 15th Anniversary

We will be celebrating this event at our meeting in October 2026!
Details will be included in our August or September Newsletter.



The iconic Odhams building in North Watford.

Photo by Stephen Danzig

Odhams Press Ltd was a British publishing company, operating from 1920 to 1968. Originally a magazine publisher, Odhams later expanded into book publishing and then children's comics. The company was acquired by Fleetway Publications in 1961 and then IPC Magazines in 1963. In its final incarnation, Odhams was known for its Power Comics line of titles, notable for publishing reprints of American [Marvel Comics](#) superheroes.

"While it is the right thing for us to do as a business, that doesn't change the sense of gravitas around the day as the team sends the Mirror out their door for the last time after nearly 40 years."

"The BBC reports that a small team is understood to be remaining at the Watford site to oversee its safe closure over the next few months, but workers have shared goodbye messages and confirmed they had their final day on Sunday, 19th July 2026."

Piers North. CEO Reach