

Watford Central

U3A

Learn Laugh Live

Volume 15, Issue 7 - July 2026

<https://watfordcentral.u3asite.uk>

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the newsletter for July. As I am writing this, we have not quite got to the summer solstice, the longest day but we are very close. This is the explanation found online: During the summer solstice, the earth's axis is tilted at its closest point from the sun. This means that in the northern hemisphere, the sun is at its highest point in the sky. Once that has passed, we will be in the second half of the year. That term chimes with the World Cup being played at the moment. If you are interested in how the national team fares (and/or another nation if that is your interest), I hope you enjoy watching the various games. I am not really very interested unless we do well and get into the knockout stages.

July brings us to our day out on the 10th July. We are going to the zoo on that day and I hope the weather stays kind for us. We still have a few seats unfilled so, if you would like to go, please let me know and I will put your name on the list. Whether we go with a full minibus or there are spaces the cost is the same. The fewer people joining the group means that it costs more for each individual. The zoo, formerly known as Paradise Wild Life Park, has an outstanding reputation for giving people access to some of the world's most exotic and endangered species, including jaguars and tigers, meerkats and lemurs. Let's hope for a fine day and an endless supply of ice cream!

July is a time for, we hope, good weather and happy memories. If you happen to be in King's Lynne on the 18th July or in Wales in Snowdonia (Eryri) on the same day, there are contrasting events taking place which you might find of interest.

In Snowdonia there is a 10 miles (16 km) **endurance race** that starts at Lake Padarn in the village of Llanberis to the **top of Mount Snowdon** which is 1,085 metres (3,560 ft) above sea level.



The contrast, in King's Lynne, is a World Snail Championship. Snails compete for the **fastest time over a 13-inch course.**

Snail owners, unlike race horse owners who name horses based on their pedigrees, name their snails for effect, 'Zipper' and 'Speedy' are two examples. Spectators have a great time watching their favourite battle through heats until they make a (painfully slow) 'dash' to the final finish line. Might they also have a very small flutter on the winner?



I'm looking forward to our next meeting which is on Thursday 2nd July

With best wishes, Sally

The next monthly meeting of Watford Central u3a will be held on
Thursday, 2nd July, 2026 at 2.00pm

at the Ex-Services Club, 12-14 St Albans Road, Watford WD17 1BN

The Speaker at our next meeting will be Martin Brooks who will be relaying his vast knowledge about Leavesden hospital and giving us some updates that he has gathered about this well known institution.

No doubt Martin will answer any questions you may wish to ask.



Polly Odbert BEM!

**Manager of the
New Hope Trust shop
in Queens Road**

Well done, Polly BEM!

Extract from the recent Watford Observer story.

Congratulations to Polly Odbert BEM! Polly, the much-loved volunteer manager of our Queens' Road shop, has been awarded a British Empire Medal in the King's Birthday Honours!

Polly has been volunteering at the shop for over three decades, serving generations of local people and dedicating her time and energy to this job.



Watford Central u3a 15th Anniversary

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

Meantime, here are your committee members putting their thinking caps on at their June meeting. Thank goodness there were plenty of fans to keep us cool.

Lunch Group

Leader: Sally Macaulay

Thursday 16th July at 1 p.m. Barracuda, High Street Bushey.

The information about the Barracuda on their website says: Barracuda began as a dream — a dream to bring the warmth and flavours of the Mediterranean to the heart of Bushey.

We are paying for two courses a starter and a main course and includes 12.5% service charge. As always if you want wine (it is licensed), coffee or anything other than the set menu, they have to be paid for separately.

Cost £19

Buses 142 and 258 pass the door - from Watford Junction, Beechen Grove or the High Street Station

Theatre Visits

Leader: Sally Macaulay

Unfortunately, there is not much on the horizon for us at Watford Palace Theatre. They seem to be having a quiet time over the summer. **However**, there is something happening at St Albans Arena on Saturday 4th July at 2 p.m.

Rare Productions Present **Aladdin**. Yes, you read that right. Rare Productions is the UK's largest musical youth theatre group producing shows on professional stages. I saw one of their shows last year and if this is as good as that was then we're in for a great afternoon!

Ticket price: £24

The 321 bus goes from Watford along the St Albans Road to St Albans four times every hour and takes about 30 minutes (depending on the traffic).

Walking Group **Leader: Jenny Graham**

The next walk on Friday 31 July will be one that has been cancelled twice this year. We shall walk along the canal from the Grove Hotel to Croxley Green.

Catch the 322 bus towards Hemel Hempstead at 10.13 am at bus stop S in Clarendon Road opposite Beechen Grove Church or at 10.22 am at Watford Junction. I shall get the bus near my home.

We shall get off the bus at the Grove Hotel at about 10.30 am and take a leisurely walk along the canal to Two Bridges where we shall have refreshments at the Rising Sun before getting the bus back to Watford.

There will be the usual signing up sheet at the main meeting or you can phone or text me if you would like to join our friendly group.

OUT & ABOUT VISITS

Leader: Sally Macaulay

Friday 10th July 2026 to Hertfordshire Zoo.



I shall be taking money for this trip at the next meeting on the 2nd July. The details of the place and time of the minibus are to be found in the June newsletter.

The costs are:

Cost per person of the minibus: £32

Entrance Fee: £26.50

Total = £58.50



That is a good deal of money, the biggest part of the cost is the minibus which is £350 for a 16-seater. If more people come along, the cost can be reduced and a refund given.

INTEREST DAYS OUT

Leader: Sandra Kay

As you all know Sally is doing the trip for July.

For the Days Out trip for August, as it's school holidays and travelling etc will be busy, we are just going to do a walk around Cassiobury Park, along the Canal perhaps and then have a tea/coffee/snack in the cafe afterwards.

We will be meeting at about 10:00am on Tuesday 18th August.

For September, we are going to Kensington Palace where there is also an Exhibition of The Last Princesses of the Punjab, included in the entrance fee, which is £24.70. However, the Palace is going to be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays so **I am running it on the 5th Wednesday of the month which is 30th September.**

Sign up sheets will be available at the July meeting and Sandra will also be collecting your money for Kensington Palace.

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.

"The Times they are a'changing" - so said Bob Dylan who turned 85 a few weeks back!

It is at this time of year when we feel able to stop for a while to pay attention to what is going on around us and appreciate the wonders of nature." Apart from this heat wave, of course.

The photo below was taken recently in Cassiobury Park by Lynda Bullock.

Lynda has captured the formation of this flight, which could usefully be copied by the Red Arrows!



This photo, taken in 1903, shows more about Watford and the Edwardian era than does its caption.

120 years ago we had steam trains that looked so different to the bullet style locos now on the same track-way. People were then being transported by horse and cart.

However, the weather was unpredictable and diverse, just like it is now.

Coles, Photographer, 60, Queen's Road, Watford.
**THE FLOOD AT WATFORD, JUNE 16, 1903. BUSHEY HALL ROAD.
 URBAN COUNCIL FREE FERRY.**

What's Your Story? Leader: Sue Ettridge

After a two-month break, we are looking forward to our next meeting on **Wednesday, 22nd July**. For those thinking about joining us, we meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at the Almshouses, in Church Street. In a recent study, people over the age of 55 who participate in social events had a lower risk of losing their memory.