Watford Central U3A

Learn Laugh Live

Volume 15, Issue 10 -October 2026 **https://watfordcentral.u3asite.uk**

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to the newsletter for October. This year October and November mark very important place in the history of Watford Central u3a. Let me explain this way.

In the Autumn of 2011, I had just retired and had a date with an orthopaedic surgeon. Whilst recovering from the operation, I was reading the Watford Observer and spotted a very small interest piece at the bottom of the page. It was about a new u3a group that was being launched in central Watford. I knew about the u3a and I had thought to join one when I had recovered. The piece said that there was going to be a first meeting and anyone interested could come along. Unfortunately, at the time that was impossible for me, so I put the idea to the back of my mind for another time.

That time came in, possibly January or maybe February of 2012. I plucked up courage to come to one of the meetings at Beechen Grove, I really quite enjoyed it and was launched into the next 15 years and counting. Colin Shelock was, the Chair aided and abetted by Jenny, his wife and there were others who had been formed into a committee. Val Hubbard was one of them and half a dozen others who have fallen away over time. The committee were working hard to make it a viable u3a branch and ideas about Study Groups were being tried out. Speakers were being invited to meetings and there was a great buzz of activity.

So, this year, 2026 we are celebrating our 15th Anniversary. We didn't meet in the pandemic, for all the reasons we know about, but once it was over we started again, so it is legitimately 15 years.

Speaking personally, I have had a lot of enjoyment from being in Watford Central u3a. I have lost count of how many places we have been to, certainly many of them I knew nothing about or I would not have visited without others. How many times to the theatre, exhibitions, walks and carriage rides in the park. How many times I have played Scrabble and I had never heard of Rummikub, let alone played it. I have heard talks from people with interesting personal stories, learned about charities, heard about many histories, how to be a town crier, how to be a Morris dancer and, recently, country dancer. How many lunches have we had, how many cups of tea? I have travelled by train many times with groups out to have fun. I have laughed and talked my way through all those years and I am very grateful to the people who not only thought a new u3a branch was a good idea but who made it into a reality and the others who joined throughout the years and who contributed to its life.

So please join us at the meeting on 1st October when we will have celebratory cup of tea and a spot of entertainment.

With best wishes,

Sally



1st October 2026 will mark International Day of Older Persons (IDOP), which ties in well with our branch anniversary of 15 years!

The next monthly meeting of Watford Central u3a will be held on

Thursday, 1st October, 2026 at 2.00pm

Watford Central u3a - 15th Anniversary

Once Sally has taken us through the reality of our October programme, we will be introduced to Seral, who will arrive on his broomstick and keep us spellbound whilst performing his tricks. This is bound to be a magical afternoon for all of us.

Christmas Lunch Monday, 7th December at The Oddfellows Hall
An order form is attached at the back of this newsletter.

Those who wish to join Sally and other members for this festive meal, should bring it with their payment to the October or November meetings,
or let Sally know by email and post it to her with a cheque by
. **5th November at the latest**

INTEREST GROUPS

If you have ideas about what new Interest Groups would suit us, then tell Sally or one of our Group leaders about it.

We are always looking for new ideas. Thanks. Sue

Lunch Group *Leader: Sally Macaulay*

Thursday 15th October at 1 p.m. lunch at **The Blue Check,** High Street, Bushey

Cost: £22 including Service Charge.

Choose from the set menu on the day, pick a starter and main or main and desert. Some of the menu items may have a surcharge and if you would like to order one of those or if you would like three courses please do so and pay the extra cost as we do for coffee or drinks.

Many of you will be pleased to know that the Prawn Cocktail is back on the menu!

Buses 142 and 258 pass the door - from Watford Junction,

Beechen Grove or the High Street Station

Theatre Visits *Leader: Sally Macaulay*

Watford Palace Theatre Wednesday 30th December 2026 A Christmas Carol – the Panto

Watford Palace Theatre proudly presents a spectacular, sparkling, laugh-out-loud panto remix of Dickens' classic tale – with a proper Watford twist! Join Ebenezer Scrooge, the g rumpiest Watfordian in town, as he learns the true meaning of the season. With his trusty (and long-suffering!) clerk Bob Scratchit, the Scratchit family, and the whole community cheering him on, even the bitterest miser might just melt. But Scrooge isn't getting away that easily…
Dame Dilber herself bursts onto the scene – larger than life, fabulously festive, and playing ALL the Ghosts of Christmas with enough glitter to dazzle the front row. She'll drag Scrooge through the past, present and future with sass, sparkle, and more costume changes than strictly necessary.

And watch out for Jakebob Marley, Scrooge's reggae-loving former colleague, back from beyond the grave with beats, bass lines, and a warning that if Scrooge doesn't change his ways, he'll be jammin' in chains forever!

You can expect:

- Pop hits, big vocals, and irresistible sing-alongs
- Proper panto gags, silly jokes, and family-friendly chaos
- Dancing, sparkle, surprises – and a full-on Watford party

Come for the Christmas spirit. Stay for the Dame. Leave with your heart three sizes bigger.

Ticket Price: Flat rate of **£20** applies to the end of October however, each ticket has an additional *surcharge of **£3** per ticket this goes to supporting the work and future of Watford Palace Theatre, including our artistic programme, youth & community activity, audience services and the care of our historic building*

Total Ticket Price: £23

Walking Group *Leader: Jenny Graham*

Sandra, who is leading the Group for the time being, advises that although the September walk around the park in St Albans was cancelled, **this will now take place on Friday, 28th October** instead. During our walk around Verulamium Park in St Albans we can stop for our break at the cafe in the park or walk up to The Cathedral to their cafe. Anyone wishing to walk into the town may do so. We will be taking the Abbey Line to St. Albans, but if you want to return on the 321 bus, it's up to you whether you get a return train ticket or a single. We are catching the 10:45am train from Watford Junction, so please meet in time to catch the train. We get to St Albans Abbey at 11:02am and can just walk across the road to the Park. If you prefer to travel by 321 you will need to be at the Park entrance by 11:05am.

INTEREST DAYS OUT *Leader: Sandra Kay*

For our trip to St Barts North Wing and Great Hall on **Tuesday 20th October**, please meet at Watford Junction Station at 09:40am in time to catch the 10:02am train to Euston. From there we will get the Northern Line to Tottenham Court Road then change onto the Elizabeth Line to Farringdon. It's then approximately a 7 minute walk to St Barts.

There's still time to sign up for our trip to the V **& A Museum on Tuesday 17th November** and a sign up sheet will be available at our October monthly meeting.

Best wishes, Sandra

What's Your Story? *Leader: Sue Ettridge*

Our September meeting returned to the Almshouses when we chatted non-stop about anything and everything, including our chosen subject "The cost of living". Is the new Aldi the place to go? Could driving to Watford be cheaper than hopping on a bus? Is it at all possible to keep household costs down? Why not join us in putting the world to rights at the Almshouses on the fourth Wednesday of each month? We would like to know What Your Story is.



Looking towards Dame Fuller's School from St Mary's Churchyard

(*Lynda Bullock*)

Lynda has captured the brightness of this late September day in the centre of Watford.

How green this area has stayed despite the heat waves.

It is true that pumpkins are carved into lanterns in the month of October, but there are also some very important dates to remember. Here's two that come to mind:

1st October each year
Autumn Opening of the Law Courts

The legal year is divided into four terms, beginning with the Michaelmas term, and is marked with a ceremony at Westminster Abbey, which has maintained much of its historical elements including prayers for guidance.

21st October 1805 - Trafalgar Day



Trafalgar Day marks the day on which Britain triumphed in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. This historic marine conflict was fought off the Cape of Trafalgar, offshore from Cadiz, Spain, with forces from Spain and France clashing with Britain.

The Battle of Trafalgar made Lord Horatio Nelson one of Britain's most famous war heroes. As Admiral in the Navy, he led our British fleet to victory; a fleet then being composed of warships built from wood, powered by sails and armed with cannons along both sides.

More than 7,000 Spanish and French sailors were wounded or killed and whilst the British losses amounted to a mere 700, Lord Nelson himself died after being shot, as he paced the quarterdeck of the Victory, by a sniper from the rigging of the French ship, Redoubtable.

Dame Julie Andrews
was born on 1st October 1935.



Bringing in The Harvest

This October view of farmland close to Watford was taken by Stephen Danzig who recently received his Watford Community Champion Award for services in our area.

Well done Steve who is happy for us to use his photos in issues of our Watford Central u3a branch newsletters.

