



*Hi Everyone,*

Well, here we are again approaching the festive season (where does the time go?) I hope those attending our Xmas meeting will enjoy the food and entertainment provided. As mentioned the profits of the Xmas raffle will be donated to the Age UK Hertfordshire, that provides a range of services for older people in need and those living with dementia. So thanks in advance for your support.

Our u3a continues to thrive and prosper and for that the Committee and I give our heartfelt thanks. As I may have mentioned in the past it is your u3a, we just endeavour to keep it the way you like it.

On behalf of the Committee may I take this opportunity of wishing you a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

*Adrian Wilson*



## PICTURE QUIZ



Where are we?

Do you recognise this place on the left?

It is within five miles of Greenwood Park and this photograph was taken in about 1912.

Answer on the page 2.

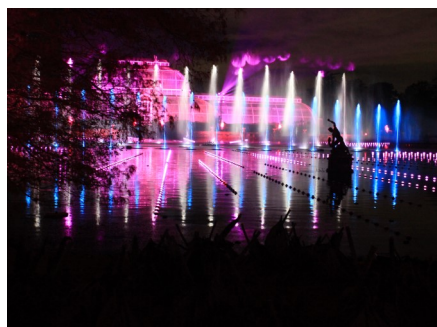
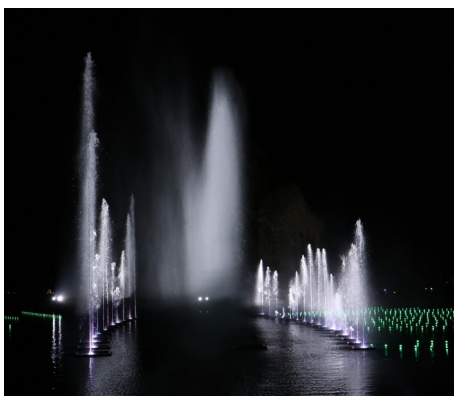
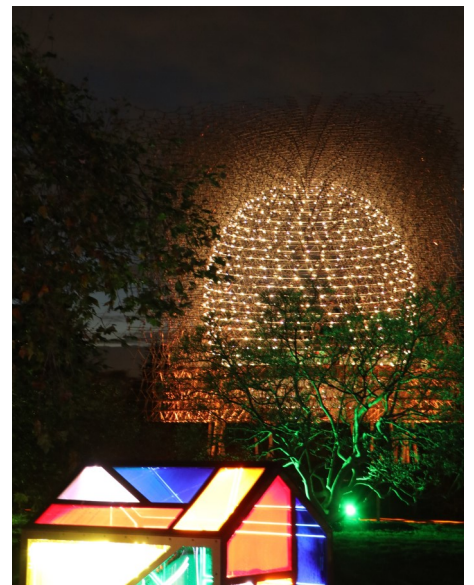
I'm dreaming of a white Christmas.  
But if it runs out, I'll drink red.





## **XMAS LIGHT TRAIL AT KEW GARDENS 29th NOVEMBER 2023**

After an uneventful journey we arrived at Kew Gardens with the temperature at near freezing, but at least it was dry. This is the tenth anniversary of Kew Gardens winter spectacular. This year they are 21 light installations to see around the three kilometre walk. In addition to some past works such as *Christmas Cathedral* (a tunnel of lights), Kew has eight new light installations including *Spark Ballet and Floating Candles*. I am sorry, but these photographs do not do justice to the various installations; a video would be better, but you need to see them for yourself. This is a spectacle of light, colour and sound. Along the route there were a selection of independent street food vendors with hot food and hot drinks - just what was wanted to warm ourselves on this cold evening. Despite the cold everybody appeared to enjoy the visit.



**Do not forget**  
Second visit to  
Kew Gardens Light Trail  
Wednesday 3rd January  
2024  
departs  
Greenwood Park 3.30pm

**Picture Quiz Answer**  
Leverstock Green c1912



## 2023 XMAS QUIZ *My thanks to Mary McKerrow for compiling this quiz*

1. Which country adopted the euro and joined the Schengen area in January 2023?
2. The Prime Minister of New Zealand at the beginning of January 2023. What is her name?
3. Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon resigned in February 2023. Who succeeded her?
4. What was the name of the film that won the 76<sup>th</sup> BAFTA award for best film?
5. Nationwide demonstrations throughout France took place in March against plans to raise the retirement age to what?
6. Harry Kane overtook which footballer to become England's all-time greatest goal scorer on March 23<sup>rd</sup>?
7. On April 4<sup>th</sup> which country joined NATO doubling NATO's border with Russia?
8. In April US president Joe Biden visited Northern Ireland to mark which anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement?
9. The coronation of Charles and Camilla was held on which date?
10. The Eurovision Song Contest was held in which UK city in May 2023?
11. What was the name of the Andrew Lloyd Webber show that closed in New York after only 85 performances?
12. On June 18<sup>th</sup> a submersible exploring the wreck of the Titanic imploded: what was the name of the submersible?
13. On July 7<sup>th</sup> NASA beamed Ringo Starr's voice wishing "peace and love" across the universe via the Deep Space Network. How old was Ringo on this day?
14. Persian Gulf International Airport hit a heat index high on July 16<sup>th</sup> of which of the following 42.3, 56.1 or 66.7 degrees Centigrade?
15. The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup was won by which country?
16. "Barbie" film passed \$1 billion at the global box office on August 6<sup>th</sup>: who is the film's female director?
17. Who won the US Open Men's Tennis Championship for the fourth time in September?
18. Which Australian media mogul announced his retirement in September at the age of 92?
19. Who became the 1<sup>st</sup> speaker of the US House of Representatives to be voted out by fellow Republicans?
20. On October 6<sup>th</sup> who became the most decorated gymnast ever with 34 world and Olympic medals?

## LONELY AT CHRISTMAS - a short story

"I am not part of it," Jenny thought longingly as she looked out at the Christmas scenes.

It was Christmas Day. Neighbours had festooned their homes with joyous decorations. Jenny had simply not bothered. She saw no point when it was just her.

Children squealed with delight as they rode their shiny new bikes and scooters up and down outside. Parents were loading cars with gaily wrapped gifts as they prepared to visit their families.

It had been so long since Jenny had shared her Christmas with anyone. Widowed now for many years. Her beloved son, Peter, was settled in Australia with his lovely wife and the two little ones. The Zoom calls only made her feel more alone. She could not give hugs or kisses.

"I just want the day to be over," she thought sadly.

As she turned away from her window something caught her eye. Crouched fearfully beneath her dense privet hedge was a little terrier. Its coat looked dirty, matted and it was shivering either from fear or from the icy cold day.

She was not really a dog lover and was about to shoo the scruffy creature away but as she looked into the little dog's eyes she recognised the loneliness. The despair.

She knew how that felt.

She gently picked him up and carried him inside to the warmth. He felt so skinny. She gently rubbed him dry with an old towel as he nervously licked her hand in thanks.

Christmas Day now had a purpose. Someone to care for, to spoil.

She found titbits for him in her fridge and he wolfed them down hungrily before curling into a tight little ball at her feet and falling into a deep sleep.

All this was almost a year ago. In the days that followed no-one came forward to claim little Noel as Jenny had named him in recognition of his seasonal arrival.

Noel had turned into a cheeky little character adored by the local children and all the neighbours.

As she took him for his walks Jenny chatted to everyone and now felt part of local life. This year she had received no fewer than three invites for her and Noel to join neighbours on Christmas Day.

Never again would she be lonely at Christmas.

*Ann Traynor*



### Christmas Quote

I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph.

*Shirley Temple*

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- March 6th *Golden Oldies*
- April 16th *Romney Marsh tour*
- May 1st *Steam Train on Kent & Sussex Railway*
- June 5th *Chiswick House*
- July 11th *Cruise on Lee and Stort boat*
- August 29th *Peacocks Auctioneers*
- September 24th *"Call the Midwife" tour etc*

*Details regarding these visits to follow*

### RESULTS FROM THE RECENT SURVEY FOR 2024 TRIPS

Regarding The Mill at Sonning, 64 persons wished to visit this venue, but would be dependent upon the cost and what was showing.

TRIP	VOTES	RANK
Cruise on the Lee and Stort Boat	118	1
Xmas music at the Royal Albert Hall	104	2
Steam train on Kent & East Sussex Line	94	3
Peacocks Auctioneers	91	4
The Romney Marsh Tour	82	5
Romford Dogs	71	6
Call the Midwife / Chatham Dockyard	61	=8
Chiswick House	61	=8
Golden Oldies at the Teresa Joanne	61	=8
Mary Rose and Portsmouth Dockyard	59	10
Cottesbrooke Hall	56	11
Vineyard Tour/Amersham Organ Musum	52	12
Brick Lane Panto	48	13
Jordans Mill	47	14

### VALUATION DAY

Our Valuation Day for the CG u3a members was held on Monday 20th November, and from the feedback it was considered a great success. Although we were unsure how many people would attend, on the day about 50 members brought their "treasures" to be valued. These objects included pictures, watches, silverware, jewellery, wooden tables, a chair, and even a large doll.



Our thanks goes to David Palmer, Stephen Drake, and our own Pam Whitfield for giving their time to answer members queries.



### Christmas Poem

Christmas, here again.  
 Let us raise a loving cup;  
 Peace on earth, goodwill to men,  
 And make them do the washing up.



*Wendy Cope*

**Xmas is the most wine-derful time of the year**

### 2023 Xmas Quiz Answers

1. Croatia. 2. Jacinda Ardern. 3. Humza Yousef. 4. All Quiet on the Western Front. 5. 64. 6. Wayne Rooney. 7. Finland. 8. 25th. 9. May 6th. 10. Liverpool. 11. Bad Cinderella. 12. Titan. 13. 83. 14. 66. 7. 15. Spain. 16. Greta Gerwig. 17. Novak Djokovic. 18. Rupert Murdoch. 19. Kevin McCarthy. 20. Simone Biles.