

WOODSIDE U3A NEWSLETTER  
DECEMBER 2018

Meeting at The Church of the Nazarene, The  
Brow, Woodside, Watford, Herts WD25 7NW  
On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 9.30am  
<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodside>

The festive lights seen out and about in early November, were possibly not early Christmas lights but those of Divali, the Annual Hindu festival of light, celebrated each year at this time. However hot on Divali's heels comes the festive season of Christmas, a busy and special time for most people. Lights have such appeal, but where did the tradition originate, why are lights such an essential part of many cultural festivals?

Bonfires, beacons, then lamps and candles have all been used to illuminate the northern hemispheres long dark winters for hundreds of years. If we feel negative about the early onset of darkness through the Winter, how much more challenging must it be to dwell where further north there is little or no daylight for long months, amazing how adaptive we human beings are to our environments, but then for some the sighting of the Aurora Borealis is a real bonus.

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*Laila, Chair*

AGENDA FOR 18 DECEMBER  
9.30 MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS,  
STUDY GROUPS & VISITS SIGN UPS  
10.00 **LET THE PARTY BEGIN**  
11.45 ROUND-UP AND CLOSE

AT OUR MEETING ON 15 JANUARY  
OUR SPEAKER WILL BE ALAN WISE  
WITH A TALK ENTITLED 'FINDING  
HEALTH AND HAPPINESS'.

**Albert Hall ClassicSpectacular. Sunday  
24th March 2019. Circle seats&coach  
£32. Tickets are reserved but they  
must be paid to Albert Hall by 1st Jan  
2019. If you have put your name down,  
please pay at the meeting on the 18th  
December; if unable to pay then,  
contact Ken Emmons by email or 01923  
672139. Thank You. Ken**

## YOUR COMMITTEE



Linda Williams Vice Chair



Sheila Ramsamy  
Speaker Secretary 01923 510207  
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[caffreyba@gmail.co](mailto:caffreyba@gmail.co)



Anita Gullis



Ken Emmons  
Social Secretary 01923 672139



Barbara Elman, our new business secretary  
[barbaraelman@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:barbaraelman@hotmail.co.uk)

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Paganism, meaning people of the earth, pre-dated Christianity, creating light in the darkness was one way of bringing the longer brighter days closer. Winter Solstice (still celebrated today) during Pagan times was a candle and lamp occasion of robust merriment as a nudge to 'Mother Earth', to bring forth spring. The ubiquitous colours of green and red are said to be associated with Pagan rituals that represent female and male fertility, these colours have now remarkably been absorbed into the Christmas festival, as have lights.

For Christians such illuminations symbolise Jesus, being the light of the world and it therefore follows that this ritual of light remains and enduring reminder and central tradition during the Christmas season, even where long hours of daylight still remain.

History tells us (via Google) that the first Christmas lights began with the practice of lighting candles on trees, which was not without risk, inevitably trees caught fire with dire consequences. With the coming of electricity, the first known lights in a string sequence were created by Edward H Johnson, Vice President of Edison Electric Light Company, in 1882 in USA. The process of stringing lights

together, that we take for granted today, was in fact a complex electrical feat and proved very expensive, that few individuals could afford to deck their homes with such a luxurious invention. By 1900's it was becoming common place in USA, for festive lights to appear on public buildings during the Christmas season, though right up and till the 1930's candles were still used to illuminate private homes, despite the fire risks. In the post WW2 era colourful electric lights became more popular, known as 'Fairy Lights', as mass production made the product more affordable to the general public. In the present day lights are used in most big cities on a grand scale, bringing seasonal good cheer to locals and tourists alike. Most towns and villages across the country also provide festive light displays. It must be noted that there still remains an electrical fire hazards if lights are not checked or connected properly, it's always worth examining last years lights before switching and a good idea to turn them off when folks go to bed.

During a recent visit to Calais, I was excited to visit one of their parks that had been taken over by an amazing Festival of Lights, adding to the magic of Christmas. Continued page 4



### *Festival of lights in Calais*

Quite an extraordinary and creative feat of electrical engineering and artistry.

Lighting up the darkness still remains an essential part of our daily lives, most streets are resplendent across the land, with their own unique light displays. Such a delight, especially here in the Northern Hemisphere where we experience long hours of darkness. As far back as our history has been recorded, the lighting of fires bringing both warmth and light has been a sustaining theme of legends and stories that ignite our imagination and our plethora of light displays stands testament to our past, gives joy to our present and lightens our future.

As we move towards the end of another successful year at Woodside U3A, I want to thank our executive committee for all their enlightened work on behalf of the members, and all those who have

provided refreshments which have sustained us, together with the study group co-ordinators without whom so many opportunities for new learning and activities would not be possible. I thank our reception and greeters who are the first important point of contact for our members at our monthly meetings, which from feedback I receive regularly from old and new members, indicates Woodside is a welcoming and friendly U3A, which is very pleasing.

And speaking of old and new friends I am pleased that Anita has rejoined the committee and that we have a new business secretary, Barbara Elman. Welcome Barbara.

I wish you all and your families a peaceful and heartwarming Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year, keeping on the theme of light, I am looking forward to another Bright and Dazzling year with you all.

Laila  
Chair

### **Refreshment Rota**

December - Bridge & Spanish  
Cookery

January - creative writing and  
environmental

February - family history and  
garden visits

At our **November meeting** we had a special treat when we were entertained by the talented **Ady and the Sheddettes** with a rousing rendition of World War 1 songs and songs from the stage.



*We were all invited to sing along which we did of course. Thoroughly enjoyable.*

This was followed by guest speaker Glen Owen, a civil engineer. Glen explained that The Institution of Civil Engineers is an independent professional association for civil engineers. Based in London, ICE has over 92,000 members in 150 other countries. Founded in 1818 by Henry Robinson Palmer, Joshua Field, William Maudslay, and James Jones, and with their with 87 members were responsible for creating hospitals, roads, sanitation etc through the Victorian era - maybe saving more lives than doctors at that time.

Years are often spent getting projects off the ground (one North Circular project took 30 years to get planning permission); first land is purchased, money raised and in more recent years the

environmental impact assessed. This includes impact on rivers/ water systems, birds and other wildlife, noise and visual intrusion. Civil engineers must try to improve the existing eco-system not damage it.

The first example of a mega project Glen gave was Crossrail, the longest length of railway line for 100 years measuring 80 miles from Reading through central London the Shenfield. Moving and disposing the 4 million tonnes of subsoil was a major challenge. Apart from golf courses one place that welcomed the subsoil was Wallasea Island, Europe's largest man-made nature reserve, transforming farmland into coastal marshland. Wallasea Island Wild Coast project has used 3 million tonnes of subsoil to raise the Essex island by 1.5m, to create lagoons across 670 hectares of farmland.



This area is twice the size of the City of London, restoring the marshland to what it was 400 years ago. New sea walls breached to allow for tidal flow into the marshland at high tide Cont. Page 8

# WOODSIDE STUDY GROUPS

## December 2018

American History. Contact Barbara Lewis on 01923 260410. Suspended at the moment. Next meeting to be advised  
*Joint with SWH*

Antiques. Contact Lesley Barrett on 01923 676427. This group will meet at varying days and times. Please contact Lesley for details.

Art: Contact Sue Walters on 01923 682317. Thursday, Fortnightly 10-12am, at Tanners Wood Hall.

Badminton: Contact Susan Coultrup on 01923 334387. Wednesday, weekly, at Watford Leisure Centre.  
*This is a joint group with SWH*

Belly Dancing: Contact Bernice Caffrey 01923 672359. Meeting 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday at 11.30 – 12.30 at All Saints Church Hall.

Board Games: Contact June Dyer on 01923 265229. Meeting Monday afternoons. Monthly at members homes

Books: Contact Libby Crawford on 01923 247847. Meet every 6 weeks

Bowls ( Outside): Contact: Anne Howarth on 01923 673110.

Bridge: Now closed as all moved to Bridge Improvers. Any members wishing to learn could start a new group.

Bridge Improvers: Contact Judith Evans on 01923 260354 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 1.30-4.30pm Asda Room 3  
*Joint Group with SWH*

Cookery (Spanish) Contact Carmen Copley on 01923 671003. Meeting every 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 1.00pm at Carmen's Home.

Curry Group: Contact Anne Mitchell on 01923 671662. Thursday – times and venue vary.

Crafters: Contact Janet Perry on 01923 679844 or 07778056026. Meetings fortnightly on Monday evenings at 7.30 – 9.30pm. Venues differ

Creative Writing: Contact Anne Davison on 01923 269548. Monthly meetings 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 11.00am

Cycling; Contact Derryck Croker on 01923 673719 as times to be arranged

Environmental Group. Contact Laila Namdarkhan on 01923 269388. Times and venues to be confirmed

Family History: Contact Bea Luffrum on 0771 1709039. Meeting monthly on the 1st Wednesday in the morning at members homes.

Flower Arrangement: Contact Jill Macey on 01923 221634. Meet monthly on a Friday at Asda Community Suite. *Joint Group with SWH*

Folk Dancing at All Saints Church Hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month at 2.00 – 3.30pm.  
*This is a joint group with SWH*

Garden Visits and Outings: Contact Teresa Brunswick on 07712710811. Venue, days and time vary

History: Contact Heather Lace on 01923 270584. Meeting monthly on the 1st Thursday at 2.00-4.00 at Asda Community Suite.

Language (French): Contact Heather Lace on 01923 270584. Fortnightly on Monday at 2.30pm at Members Houses.

More people required to join the Badminton group to play doubles.

Language (Spanish): Contact Carol Stanton on 01923 676471. 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday at St Hilda's Room, All Saints Church Hall at 1.30 to 2.30pm

Language (Spanish 2) Contact Alison Theobald on 01923 463573. Meeting every other Wednesday at 10am to 11am starting.

\*Line Dancing: Contact Judy Lovell 01923 893368 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays. 10.15 for line dancers and 11.15 for beginners.  
*Joint Group with SWH*

Listening to Music: Contact Diane Reilly on 01923 261840. Meeting monthly on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday afternoon at members homes

Local History: Contact Jan Taylor on 01923 262565 or 07725940453. Monthly 4<sup>th</sup> Monday

Lunch Group: Contact Joyce Gray on 01923 263213 or [rejoyce.gray@gmail.com](mailto:rejoyce.gray@gmail.com). Monthly 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday. Venues vary

Philosophy – Contact Jeanne Johnson on 01923 263598  
Meeting monthly 1<sup>st</sup> Monday 2.00-4.00pm  
*Joint Group with SWH*

Photography: Contact Ken Jones on 01923 264855. Meeting monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday at 2.0pm at members homes

Play Reading for Fun: Contact Derek Giles on 01923 270971. 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 10-12 at Asda  
*Joint Group with SWH*

Science and Technology:  
*This group is looking for someone to take it over on a temporary basis*

Sing for Pleasure. Contact Ady Shaw 01923 518021 meeting fortnightly on a Thursday at 9.30am until 11.00

Social Group: Contact Ken Emmons on 01923 672139 or email [kjemmons23@gmail.com](mailto:kjemmons23@gmail.com) 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday at 1.30pm at Watford Leisure Centre Cafe.

Table Tennis: Contact John Simpson on 07531 542605. Fortnightly at 10,00am until Noon at YMCA Haines Way

Trips by Coach  
Contact Martin Rodel on 01923 442417

Ukelele: Contact Trevor Boardman on 01923 244016. Meet 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday and 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at 2.00pm at Tesco Extra Watford Community Room.  
*Joint Group with SWH*

Whist: Contact Gwen Barker on 01923 510699 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 2pm-4pm  
*Joint Group with SWH*

Woodside & SWH Pathfinders.  
Contact Patrick Turner on 01923 263511 or 07954640263 for details of next meeting

Woodside & SWH Striders.  
Contact Patrick Turner on 01923 263511 or 07954640263 for details of next meeting

Woodside Strollers Contact Gloria Barber on 01923 462462 or mobile 07708020583. Meeting monthly 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues at 1pm.

Woodside Walk 5: Contact Derryck Croker on 01923 673719. Monthly morning meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday

Quiz Group. Contact Sue Brown on 01923 661516 or 07812840047. Monthly quizzes-dates & times vary - held at Asda Community Suite

Yoga. Contact Uma Patil on 07459 731597. Sessions 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays on the month, 9.30 – 10.30am at the Orbital Centre

Vera Pickering, who has led the Line Dancing group for some years, has died. Her daughter Janet may want to continue the group but in the meantime Judy Lovell has kindly offered to act as go-between so if members want to find out about forthcoming sessions they can call her on 01923 893368.

Next Glen told us about The Millau Viaduct which is a cable-stayed bridge that spans the gorge valley of the Tarn near Millau in southern France. In a Franco-British partnership, it was designed by the English architect Lord Norman Foster and French structural engineer Michel Virlogeux.

It is the tallest bridge in the world with one of its masts as tall as 343 meters and is 1 ½ miles long. Before the bridge was built it could take 4 hours to drive down the valley and out the other side, now it takes 1 ½ minutes to cross the bridge.

Glen's final example of a mega project was The Delta Works, a series of construction projects in the southwest of the Netherlands to protect a large area of land around the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta from the sea.

The works consist of dams, sluices, locks, dykes, levees, and storm surge barriers located in the provinces of South Holland and Zeeland. Over 895 square miles of land were created due to the Delta Works. Most of this reclaimed land is 4m below sea level and is the home of 4 million people.

The construction was started after the occurrence of the North Sea flood of 1953, which led to 8,361 fatalities and flooded nine percent of the farmland in the Netherlands.

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The project was finally completed in 1997, at a cost of \$5bn, and protects the 4 million people that live there.

Glen's talk had most of our members in awe of the scale of these construction projects.

### **Study Group News**

We now have an **Antiques Group** and the **Jewellery Group** are currently arranging a meet up to get their group off the ground.

Also I believe the Model Making group will be up and running.

This group is available to U3A's in the Watford area.

If anyone has ideas for new groups, please come and see me **Note for Leaders** - Should the details of your group be shown incorrectly in the newsletter please let me know.

Bernice

**Albert Hall Classic Spectacular. Sunday 24th March 2019. Circle seats and coach £32. Tickets are reserved but they must be paid to Albert Hall by 1st Jan 2019.**

**If you have put your name down, please pay at the meeting on the 18th December, if unable to pay then, contact Ken Emmons by email or 01923 672139.**

**Thank You.**

**Ken**



### **Study Group news cont.**

In January 2018 I started my **Singing for Fun Group**. A small group of about 8 have evolved over the year in a direction chosen by all group members.

Their confidence has grown month on month, and growing from regular practice in my garden studio/shed (sheddio).

After their 1st public performance at the November meeting I felt a great flow of pride.



We look forward to a new start in January 2019 with additional new members.

Onwards and upwards - Ady Shaw.

The **Social group** visit - 13 members enjoyed a magical experience on a 25minute steam train ride over a historic narrow gauge railway that's almost 100 years old.

We were able to take pictures of Santa on the train with us and also enjoyed carols on the journey. We had a guide to show us round the shunting sheds where they had trains dating back to 1835.

Afterwards we had mince pies and mulled wine followed by a visit to Santa's grotto.

Before leaving we enjoyed refreshments in their cafe.

The outing was a very interesting experience.

Joan

### **The Curry Group**



Curry group in November went to the Everest Abercorn in Stanmore to celebrate diwali. They ate the food before the photo was taken - as you can see by the empty plates - the food was delicious.

Anne

Eleven members of the **Social Group** enjoyed the evening listening to organ music at St Albans Organ Theatre. A selection of past and present music along with carols were played on three different organs.

In the interval we were offered mince pies and Mulled wine.

Joan

The **Environment Group** was in for a real treat when they visited WorkAid, a charity based in Chesham; the building is an Aladdin's Cave containing a vast array of tools and workshops covering three floors. Rob Levine, general manager, explained that the charity came about as a result of the shocking reports by journalist, Michael Buerk, on the Ethiopian famine in the 1980s -who can forget those images.

Rob started the tour with an overview of the charity and its work in refurbishing donated and unwanted tools; from the time the items enter the factory to packaging and crating up the goods for shipment to East Africa, empowering underprivileged areas to overcome poverty by supplying the tools to enable skills-based training. Each application is carefully considered before approval is given by WorkAid, ensuring that all donations are fully and appropriately utilised. The WorkAid Hub also runs a supported workshop for those recovering from brain injuries and learning disabilities on two days a week. WorkAid relies heavily on donations of tools, plus the support of a great band of volunteers who do anything from cleaning, refurbishing and packaging and crating tools, to manning the office and shop, each

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member of the team plays to their skills; if you've got a few hours to spare, why not think about joining them. Don't forget to give the charity a thought when you're turning out your shed and garage, they also accept donations of sewing and knitting machines and craft items, the charity can even arrange to collect items from home if you cannot manage to take them along yourself.



The WorkAid shop is different and is certainly worth a visit to bag a bargain, from craft items to garden tools & machinery. The shop is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10am - 4pm; located next to The Old Boot Factory at 71 Townsend Road, Chesham, HP5 2AA. WorkAid offers a number of craft-based courses at the Hive, visit [www.workaid.org](http://www.workaid.org) or 01494 775220.

We all agreed that it was such an informative and inspiring visit and feel privileged that Rob took the time to show us round within his busy schedule, thank you Rob.  
Laila



*The Crafters Group with their finished quilt ready for the raffle draw.*

The Blue Check Restaurant in Bushey was well attended for our second Christmas lunch.



and everyone was full of cheer.



*Picking the winning ticket at the Christmas lunch and the winner was*



*Shirley Harman, seen here on the right holding her prize*



A happy conclusion to the end of our second year at Woodside U3A.

## **Environmental Study Group News**

Forward Programme for 2019

Our study group meeting in November identified various areas for study which have been formulated into a draft programme for 2019 comprising visits to various locations to gain greater awareness of how our locality deals with waste, recycling and alternative energy options. Watch this Space.

**Batteries:** Please bring your used batteries with you each meeting as we now have our own recycling depot stationed at every meeting.

Two **Useful websites** for exploration

[https:// www.recyclenow.com](https://www.recyclenow.com)

Excellent website for finding out how you can recycle more difficult items like paint tins with or without left over paint, furniture. Also has great ideas for reducing waste, well worth a visit.

[https:// greatist.com/happiness/ways-help-environment](https://greatist.com/happiness/ways-help-environment) (correct spelling)

**WorkAid:** contact see page 10

If you have unwanted tools, machinery, sewing machines, wheel barrows, bicycles and much more, donate to this worthy cause. WorkAid also runs a variety of craft workshops and the shop up-cycles various donations that are not required for their projects in African Countries. Well worth a visit call to check opening times.

Our next meeting: 29 January (last Tuesday of each month) 2.30 for those who would like to attend please call Laila (contact in this Newsletter).

## **SOCIAL GROUP MEETINGS**

**January:**

12th January. Sat. Numbers needed for this event Bushey Museum/Gallery

**February:**

4th. Mon Hollywood Bowl

February: 21st. Thurs. Wardown House/Museum.

Numbers needed for this event

**March:**

12th. Tuesday Tring museum/Lakes

March: TBA Postal/Mail Rail.(London).

Coach. Booking

**April:**

14th. Sunday Roman Baths. (Welwyn)

29th Monday. (Afternoon)Adventure Golf/Crazy Golf

**WANTED:**

**NEWS & PHOTOGRAPHS**

suitable for publication please send to The Webmaster, Andrew Cummings at [andrew.cummingsu3a@btinternet.com](mailto:andrew.cummingsu3a@btinternet.com) for

inclusion on the website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodside>

**AND FOR THE NEWSLETTER**

**Copy date** for the January Issue of the Newsletter is 3<sup>rd</sup> January.

Send to Jo Bromwich, 01923 443758 or email [jo.bromwich@ntlworld.com](mailto:jo.bromwich@ntlworld.com)

Our monthly newsletter is available in full online

<https://u3asites.org.uk/woodside>

**IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS**

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