

SPRINKLE A LITTLE SPARKLE THIS DECEMBER

On Behalf of Myself and our Committee



May we wish all the members of our
WONDERFUL WYMONDHAM u3a

Fulsome Festive Greetings!



Recently we held a special Coffee Morning for new members. We had 40 members attend! The atmosphere was just alive with chatter and friendliness. One new member arrived slightly later and said that she thought she had entered a room full of old friends talking to each other!! I was SO delighted, as that is what is so good about our u3a - it's so friendly.

Another lovely example of what we are about happened at our quilt making 'Stash Busters' group. Last month we made six Christmas quilts and this month we made another six 'Fiddle' quilts for people with dementia. All these will go to a local Care home. However, what was so brilliant is that the nine ladies involved, just decided what aspect of construction they wanted to do and just got on with it. We all worked so co-cooperatively, with much chat and laughter, enjoying a shared lunch and pleasure in a really memorable day.

I'm sure such pleasurable working together happens throughout our many groups. It is also very evident in the increasing numbers of members attending our weekly coffee mornings.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS WITH OUR u3a, I say!

My very best wishes for a *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year* to you all, **Gilly**



COFFEE MORNING DATES FOR DECEMBER

8th and 22nd - 11 am finish

1st, 15th and 29th 12 noon finish

Important Notice

U3A WYMONDHAM WEBSITE

Due to circumstances beyond our control, SiteBuilder websites are down due to technical difficulties with the organisation that hosts the websites. We will, of course, let you know as soon as we have further information.

Editor and Vice-Chair - Chris Yemm - newsletter@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1183055

Officers of U3A Wymondham (2020/21)

Chair - Gilly Spencer - chair@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Secretary - Howard Brown - secretary@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Treasurer - Geoffrey Briggs - treasurer@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Chris Grant - it@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

John Spencer - Committee Member

Membership Sec. - Jo Sinclair - membership@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Groups Co-ordinator - Alan Browne - groups@wymondhamu3a.org.uk

Linda Burkett - Social Wellbeing - tiptreelinda@aol.com

Thought for the Day



Good things come
to people who
wait, but better
things come to
those who go out
and get them.



Poinsettia



The two Zodiac signs that fall in the month of December are **Sagittarius** and **Capricorn**. Zodiac Sign: December 1st - 21st **Sagittarius** Zodiac Sign: December 22nd - 31st - **Capricorn**.

December has three birthstones, **Turquoise**, **Zircon** and **Tanzanite**.

Turquoise is regarded as a love charm. It is also a symbol of good fortune and success, and it is believed to relax the mind and to protect its wearer from harm.

Zircon - In the middle ages, zircon was believed to help the wearer sleep, and to bring prosperity, honor and wisdom. Zircon is now believed to have the ability to increase one's self-confidence, and to aid the wearer in loving the self as well as others, as it opens up the heart and brings compassion

Tanzanite brings soothing peace to the wearer. It also helps their communication as that is one of the spiritual characteristics of the stone. The blue and violet colors of Tanzanite portrays it as a soothing gemstone.

Interesting Facts for December

In 1843, a man called Sir Henry Cole was behind the first printed Christmas card, like the ones we buy in shops and send to each other today. He asked someone called John Callcott Horsley to design it. It had the words A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year To You printed on it. About 1,000 cards were made and it cost a shilling.

December 21st was a rather painless day in Britain, at least for one man. For the first time in Britain, anesthesia was used on a patient by Dr. Robert Liston at the University College Hospital in London in 1846.

During early Victorian times, mince pies used to be made from actual meat! It is thought this dated back to Tudor times. However, throughout the 19th Century, the traditional mince pie recipe started to develop to the one we know today, with fruit and spices.

On December 5, 1901, a little magic came into the world along with the birth of Walt Disney. Disney released his first cartoon, featuring Mickey Mouse, called Steamboat Willie at the age of 27. By the time he was 54, the Disney empire grew in size with the construction of Disneyland in California.

December saw the birth of John Milton, the abdication of Edward VIII and the Boston Tea Party England's King Henry I died. Sir Christopher Wren's St Paul's Cathedral is opened in London

The Anglo-Saxons originally had their own names for the month of December. One of these names was "Winter Monath," which quite obviously translates into "Winter Month" A second name that the Anglo-Saxons had for December was "Yule Monath," which relates to the custom of burning a Yule log during this month as a part of the pagan Yule celebrations

British people spend more on Christmas gifts than anyone else in Europe. In 2014, the average spend for one person was between £100 - £350.

It has become very popular in Japan to eat KFC for Christmas dinner and they need to place their order two months in advance!

RAILWAY GROUP

(John Peat, Group Leader)

On October 26th the U3A Railway Group visited The Colne Valley Railway at Castle Heddingham in Essex.

I am please to report that the group has grown by 33% in the last two months, with an additional two members joining. When the trip was originally planned back in the Spring, the date was agreed by all six members at the time. By the actual day of the trip our membership had grown to eight, but due to varying factors, including a late call off due to a Covid Positive test, only three of us were available.

However off we went and with an early warning from the railway regarding a lack of food on offer, we went to a local café for breakfast in a recommended café at Sible Heddingham. We arrived at the railway at 11.15. It is a small compact railway with a mixture of standard gauge stock, including industrial steam locomotives to High-Speed Train Power cars, a miniature railway, and a 33' x 15' model railway in its own building.

The small group of us had rides on both the main railway and the miniature railway, visited the model railway and the museum. Luckily, we were in the model railway building when the heavens opened for about 15 minutes.



The industrial steam locomotive at the head of our train. This locomotive was built in 1964, only four years before all steam had been withdrawn from the main line. Note that we travelled First Class



U3A group members enjoying a ride on the miniature railway just after the downpour.

A good time was had by all and we set off back to Wymondham at about 3 o'clock. We are now all looking forward to our Christmas Breakfast meeting at The Station Bistro in December to plan next year's visits.

This item has been carried forward from October due to lack of space last month

Group News Corner

A second Painting group has been set up with Jackie Barnes as Group Leader. They will be meeting monthly, with the first meeting on Monday 19th December at 10.00 am in the Tiffey Room. If you would like to join in please email using the address below.

A second Sunday Lunch for Singles group has been established with Alan Provis as Group Leader. Sundays can be quite trying if you live alone and if you would like to join in, please email using the address below.

The Discussion Group is being relaunched with Bob Linnell as Group Leader.

Remember: If you want to join an established group, or you have an idea for a new group, please email: groups@wymondhamu3a.org.uk



Gardening Corner



Now the nights have drawn in make the most of any good weather for an end of year tidy in the garden. Leaf clearing should be coming to an end, keep paths and patios nice and clear to avoid them getting slippery. The grass is still growing so if we do get a nice, dry, windy day a high cut will not do any harm and will smarten up for Christmas.

Keep planting bare root roses, hedging and trees as long as the soil is not water logged or frozen. Move terracotta pots and planters into a protected place if possible, a south facing wall is fine if you cannot get them under cover.

In the veg garden harvest leeks, parsnips, Jerusalem artichokes and winter brassicas. Frosts will sweeten the flavour of parsnips. Weed and clear beds where crops have finished and add generous amounts of manure and compost to the surface. No need to dig in, let nature break it down through the winter. Avoid manuring beds where next year's carrots and parsnips are going unless you like funny shaped ones you can post pictures of online!

If you are overwintering tender plants in the greenhouse insulating the glass with bubble wrap will add a good deal of protection, heating with a small electric fan heater or a paraffin heater may be necessary in severe spells of cold weather but with the price of fuel you need to justify how important the plants are. Frost protection fleece really helps too and can be placed over things when needed or bring those really special plants into a bright spot in the house if you have space. Importantly reduce watering of pots through the winter to keep the soil on the drier side. Cold and wet is not a good combination. On a sunny day still open doors and windows of greenhouses to get a bit of ventilation.

Get in the festive spirit by making your own wreaths and table decorations. It is nice to use material from your own garden (or a friend's!). Ivy has lovely foliage and old flower stalks and together with conifer make a good base. Pop in a few pine cones, wild rose hips, perennial seed heads, holly and mistletoe if you are lucky enough to find some but leave some berries for the birds.

Finally draw up your Christmas list.

Maybe some Okatsune secateurs or snips, not cheap but excellent quality and a good, positive feel when pruning. I used Felco products for years until I tried these. Another handy tool I swear by is the Japanese razor hoe or Cape Cod weeder. It makes weeding so much easier and can be used delicately between plants or more aggressively to break up soil. Gardening gloves are always welcome and Amaryllis make wonderful gifts in a multitude of colours to brighten the winter gloom. A Happy New Year and looking forward to gardening in 2023 whatever that shall bring.

(Written by Alan Vanhinbergh and submitted by Lindsey Leveridge)



Don't wash your hair in the shower

(It's so good to finally get a health warning that is useful)



IT INVOLVES THE SHAMPOO WHEN IT RUNS DOWN YOUR BODY WHEN YOU SHOWER WITH IT.....A WARNING TO US ALL!!!

I don't know WHY I didn't figure this out sooner! I use shampoo in the shower! When I wash my hair, the shampoo runs down my whole body, and printed very clearly on the shampoo label is this warning:

"FOR EXTRA BODY AND VOLUME."

No wonder I have been gaining weight! Well, I got rid of that shampoo and I am going with Fairy dish washing soap instead. Its label



to start showering reads:



"DISSOLVES FAT THAT IS OTHERWISE DIFFICULT TO REMOVE."

Problem solved!

If I don't answer the phone I'll be in the shower!!!



Growing old is inevitable. Aging is optional.



I hate people who go to sleep as soon as they close their eyes 😴.... it take me 4 hours, 7 pillow flips, 11 different positions, 2 trips to the bathroom and A partridge in a pear tree.



We can collect stamps at coffee mornings and open meetings for Motor Neurone Disease. Current UK stamps with the Queens Head on will be collectors items. Do you know which is the only country in the world that does not have the name of the country written on it? Yes- it is the UK

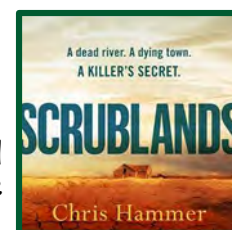
I had hoped to set up a scheme where we could collect the medicine blister packs to be recycled, but that isn't going to work out. The only place fairly locally that takes them is Superdrug at St Stephen's Norwich. However they are now only taking small amounts from individuals, and they won't take group collections now. If you ever have occasion to go into Norwich do take your own in. What a shame, [Georgette Vale](#)



SCRUBLANDS BY CHRIS HAMMER

Set in a small town in the Australian scrublands, the question is:

Why did the young Priest do what he did? After addressing his assembled parishioners, he went into the Vestry, changed into his vestments and after he emerged the whole life of the town was changed.



A Journalist came a year later in an attempt to reveal the truth. A good page turner

THE GUEST LIST BY LUCY FOLEY

At a celebrity wedding on an island off the West coast of Ireland, The guest list contained a number of guests with a motive to kill.



I dare you to put this book down!! [Wendy Bowles](#)



Welcome
New Members



Janet Daniels

June Webster

Karen and Richard Hollingworth

Laurence Barnett

Karen Broom

Celia Macy

Jan Walton

Jan Shearing

Stephen Allen.



Humorous Quotes

"When I'm feeling down & someone says 'suck it up' I get the urge to break their legs and say 'walk it off!'"

"I get most of my exercise these days from shaking my head in disbelief."

"Have you ever just looked at someone and knew the wheel was turning' but the hamster was dead?"

"An apple a day keeps anyone away if you throw it hard enough."

"Saying "have a nice day" to someone sounds friendly but saying "enjoy your next 24 hours" sounds threatening."

"The main function of the little toe on your foot is to make sure that all the furniture in the house is in place."

"Fitness tip: Stretching is important. Stretch out flat on your back. Stretch your eyelids over your eyes. Stretch a blanket over your body."

"I can't believe how old people my age are."

"My mind is like my internet browser 19 tabs open 3 of them are frozen & I have no idea where the music is coming from."

"I'm not antisocial I very much enjoy socialising with the right people at the right moments for the right amount of time."



Jigsaw



A hobby of mine is doing jigsaw puzzles, mainly 1000 pieces and 500 pieces. Many of us who do jigsaws end up with a stock of them we have done and don't want to do again. I would usually give my left overs to a charity, but it is much better to share them around first.

I am a new member and have agreed to coordinate a group to do just that. Many thanks to Brenda Gaudi who had been swapping jigsaws previously and has provided me with a great stock to get started with..... if you were involved before then it is possible you will recognise some of them. So to begin with I am not looking for contributions, but willing takers!

I plan for it to work as follows:

I will send around an e-mail to those interested with photographs of the jigsaws ... perhaps 10 or so at a time.

You say which you would like to borrow and we arrange convenient pick up time and place, e.g. Thursday coffee mornings, but I can deliver, particularly for those who find it difficult to get about for any reason.

Do the puzzle(s) at your leisure and then return them to me or arrange for me to pick them up. You can share with others first, but if you do I would be grateful if you let me know where they are! Do let me know if you find there any pieces missing (in time I hope to only offer those I know are complete).

Please let me know your e-mail address if you would like to go on the mailing list - there is no obligation to take any and there is no cost. My e-mail address is davidp.frith@gmail.com.

NOVEMBER SPEAKER – CHARLIE CUSHING ON THURSFORD COLLECTION AND CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

I confess that I was a bit concerned when I got the call the day before to say that John Cushing was tied up with finalising this year's show and couldn't come. However, the voice quickly said "but I am his son Charlie, and I can come instead." This was the first time he had ever done such a talk to a group such as ours, but he filled the bill nicely.

It all started when his grandfather George Cushing was made redundant from his road mending job in 1930 and the Rural District Council allowed him to purchase the steam roller for £225. By the start of the second world war his collection had grown to 20 engines which were going for scrapyards prices.

In 1959 he acquired his first organ and the famous Wurlitzer came from Leeds in 1968 and was used to entertain visitors.

In 1977 it was decided to turn the private collection into a trust which was (and still is) run by George's son John. Entry was 35p and 60,000 people came the first year, and Robert Wolf was employed as a full-time organist. Shops and cafes were added to make a nice day out. However, this was mainly a summer activity and John began wonder what he could do to bring people in during the winter months.

They held a Christmas Carol Concert - and our Chair Gilly had been there. After a few years this got bigger and better and they decided to bring in professional entertainers and that was when it became real show business. By 1990 90,000 people attended and it was always sold out. John Cushing decided to make it bigger still,

The Thursford Christmas Spectacular as we know it started in 2001 and is now Europe's largest Christmas show - second only to Radio City in New York. During the six week run 1400 tickets a day are sold - most of them are booked a year ahead. The 84 performances are always sold out well in advance. There are 50 coaches a day and only 30% come from East Anglia. This gives a great boost to the tourism economy in Norfolk. There are 40 full time staff but many more temporary staff come in for the show - and they come back every year.

John Cushing is still very much in charge at the age of 82 although he is now assisted by his sons on the business side of things. The planning process begins in January. The rehearsals for the 120 members of the cast start in earnest in September and they are all accommodated locally. They have one day off a week.

More facts - the stage is 130 metres long. They use 1000 Ostrich feathers which are ethically sourced. There are 3000 costumes and they have 13 makers and fitters on site as there are lots of alterations and running repairs needed. There is an on site electrician and a standby generator just in case. They are looking carefully at energy efficiency whilst balancing the need to put on a good light show.

Next to the auditorium is Santa's magical journey - which is also a means of showing all the steam engines. Of course, children have an opportunity to meet Santa himself and we are sworn to secrecy not to divulge the fact that they have seven Santa's and they have an elaborate signal system to make sure that no child accidentally sees two Santa's. They have 25 Elves.

Last year they put on the Enchanted Journey of Light - a Covid innovation which will become permanent. They have their own electrician on site and a generator ready and waiting if there is ever a power cut.

Charlie also explained the heart-breaking decision to close down early last year to so many of the cast getting Covid. Some had to spend the Christmas in the isolation houses provided. Apparently, they were so well provided for they said it was the best Christmas they had!

What of the future? In the short term they are working on building up their wedding events. In the long term they have "Project Steam" where they will be working on getting all the steam engines in full working order so they can go full steam ahead with steam up days. [Georgette Vale](#)

THURSFORD
CHRISTMAS
SPECTACULAR

Note from the Editor - please don't let your 'little ones' read this as it mentions more than one Santa and we don't want awkward questions!!!!