



FESTIVE GREETINGS

A Christmas message from our Chair.

Jane and I would like to wish everyone a very happy occasion, whether you celebrate Christmas or not. We hope that you are able to make this a festive time whoever you are with.

Our u3a community is very special. If there is anyone known to you, who is alone or unhappy, it would be wonderful if you could extend a hand of

friendship to them so they do not feel isolated.

And - of course - we wish you a very Happy New Year too!

Rob Stansbury, Chair

COFFEE MORNINGS 10:00 am – 11:30 am :

Sacred Heart Church, 356 London Road, Waterlooville, PO7 7SR



Monday 9th December and 13th January

All members, particularly new ones, are very welcome.

Find out about our interest groups and social events.

Bring along your friends. Have a cuppa and chat, make new friends.

***** NO GENERAL MEETINGS IN DECEMBER *****

JANUARY GENERAL MEETINGS 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm :

Wednesday 15th January

Cosham Baptist Church, Havant Road, Cosham, PO6 2QZ

Speaker : Alan Kingshott MVO – HM The Tower of London Part 2

The presentation will look at the many prisoners and their punishment as well as some other exciting stories, including ghosts and ceremonies. Alan ended his career as the Chief Warden of the Tower of London, also he gave Part 1 of the presentation at the Annual Lecture in 2024.

Wednesday 22nd January

Sacred Heart Church, 356 London Road, Waterlooville, PO7 7SR

Speaker : Andrew Baker – Dickens – his life and influence

Andrew is an experienced and entertaining speaker with a particular interest in social, cultural and political change at home and abroad since the First World War and the ideas and forces which have shaped today's world.

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth. A novelist, humanitarian and critic of mid-Victorian English society, he lived among the great figures of his day; he was a complex and often obsessive man, revered in his own time, whose voice still speaks to us today..

SPEAKER'S CORNER - review of November's talk :

Speaker : Andrew Negus – Southampton – Gateway to the Empire

Perhaps Waterlooville u3a's most popular speaker, Andrew Negus, returned to continue his talk, "Southampton, Water, Slaughter and Trade." He vividly brought to life the history of 'Hampton' after the slump that occurred when the French raided in 1338; everything in sight was torched, bringing to an end the wealth brought in by the wool and wine trade; all because the rich merchants refused to lose their sea views and protect the area with walled defences! There were lots of interesting tidbits about characters such as Ascupart and Bevois and the inclusion of lions on Bargate, Richard Lister, adviser to Henry VIII, who built the magnificent Tudor House and who allegedly lent it to Henry to court Anne Boleyn. Lister's tomb is in the nearby church of St Mary's. The Pilgrim Fathers set sail from the town's dock; Richard Taunton, wine merchant and privateer founded the first Grammar School and many more.



Andrew took us through the arrival of the railways; the LSW Railway Company bought the marshy land to the east, bringing the building of a station and hotels to cater for travellers. The company also created the five parks which were to become the 'lungs' of the city with monuments to the great, the good and of remembrance.

In the Georgian era 'springs' were discovered near the town walls. This sparked the development of spas, which attracted people to take the waters for their health, prompting fine houses and hotels to be built; an Assembly Room and a grand promenade enabled visitors to be entertained and take the air by the sea. Jane Austen and Frederick Prince of Wales were among them. Unfortunately, both died young. The waters, tested years later, were found to contain effluent!

Diversification brought further commercial developments. Mansbridge was the first bridge in existence upstream, more were added downstream; canals connecting Salisbury, Romsey and Andover to the town were constructed; Princess Victoria opened The Princess pier and Woolston had a floating chain ferry which operated for 100 years taking people across the River Itchen into the town. In 1840 gas arrived in Southampton; streets and the houses of the wealthy were lit.

The four tides a day encouraged overseas trade and tourists; state of the art docks were added in 1867 and by 1900 a mile long extension had been added. The navvies who built the new docks attended St Mary's church; they formed a football team the 'Saints' named after the church and played at the 'Dell'.

As the port prospered, large ships made it a port of call and businesses provisioning these ships grew up nearby. Enter the Titanic. Of the 700 crew one third were from Southampton; relatives friends gathered at the offices of the White Star to read the daily lists of the dead; a harrowing time for so many. It is said that every street lost loved ones. There are memorials all round Southampton and particularly in Halifax, Nova Scotia where these photographs were taken recently (courtesy of Rich Edwards).



The talk was fascinating with, unfortunately, too much information to include here.

Hilary Ryan, Speakers' Secretary

GROUP MATTERS

I am Kevin Stock and I have now taken on the role of Group Liaison looking after all of our 100+ groups.

To join or leave a group, or for more information :

visit the Groups table at a general meeting or coffee morning or send an email to groups@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk

If a group is full, you can be placed on the waiting list; you will be offered a space when one becomes available and you are at the top of the list. Don't wait to go on a waiting list – popular groups usually have one and being on the waiting list increases your chances of being offered a space.

Waiting Lists I have now contacted everyone on the waiting list to confirm they are still on it. If you have not been contacted and think you are on the list then please contact me.

Have an idea for a new group?

Groups don't magically appear – they are born when enough members express an interest in a particular activity and someone (or two) volunteers to act as Group Coordinator. There is a wealth of support for budding groups so get in touch and see what happens.

Already a Group Coordinator? THANK YOU!

Please keep us up to date with any changes to your group's membership and provide feedback when members are referred to you, this ensures that advertised group vacancies and any waiting lists are as accurate as possible.

Kevin Stock, Groups Liaison

PHOTO 4 UPDATED THEIR WEB PAGE



We have some talented photographers amongst us! Check out more of their photos here : <https://www.waterloovilleu3a.org.uk/Photography4.htm>

MOTO 3 - CLOSED



Sadly MOTO 3 (Members On Their Own) has closed following the resignation of the Group Coordinator – Terry Bryant. Terry very ably managed the group for several years and we are very grateful to him for doing so. Unfortunately no-one felt able to take up the reins and sadly the group has had to close.

If there is sufficient interest from members and one or two are happy to act as GCs then do please get in touch and we'll see what can be done.

In the meantime, many thanks once again Terry for supporting your u3a by being a Group Coordinator and enjoy your "retirement"!

Kevin Stock, Groups Liaison

GEOLOGY 1 WENT TO LOUGHBOROUGH



Day 1 - Bradgate Park : a large, public deer park located between Leicester and Loughborough.

An energetic walk took us to the highest point in the park where we saw outcrops of Precambrian rock (560 million years old) created during a time of violent volcanic eruptions blasting volcanic rock and ash which settled in the surrounding sea where they solidified.

There were examples of Breccia (rock composed of large angular fragments of minerals or rocks cemented together) and Diorite (intrusive igneous rock formed by slow cooling underground magma).

Most recent deposits in the park are from the last ice age when sediments were carried by glacier from northern Britain and when the glacier melted and retreated to the north, around 10,000 years ago.

It was once believed that there were no fossils older than the Cambrian Period (541 to 485 MA), but the discovery of **Charnia** in these Precambrian rocks made the area famous for changing our understanding of early life on Earth. Access to the fossil beds is not allowed.

Day 2 Morley Quarry

Overlying the 600 million years old rocks are Triassic sediments from 230 million years old. This gap in age is called a discontinuity.

Then on Beacon Hill for more ancient rocks and finally at the BGS headquarters with their wonderful mineral displays and rock pavement.



Day 3 Leicester museum where we saw the **charnia** fossil, initially thought to be a flora but now considered an animal which lived on the ancient sea floor.

Pat Chalmers, Group Coordinator

U3A 2025 DIARIES



National u3a have 2025 pocket diaries available; there is a significant discount if you buy 10 or more so maybe get together with some friends and make a combined purchase.

<https://u3a-shop.co.uk/product/2025-diary/>

WU3A FACEBOOK GROUP

We have a private Facebook group that is open to any Waterloooville u3a member. To join, login to Facebook and search for 'Waterlooville u3a Members Group' and request to join. Or click this link



<https://www.facebook.com/groups/WaterloovilleU3A/permalink/5260385320729203/>

GROUPS WITH VACANCIES (as at 25th November, 2024)

Groups seeking members - register your interest by visiting Kevin Stock at the Groups table at any Coffee Morning or General Meeting or email groups@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk

Activity	When	Activity	When
Art History 1	2nd Wed am	Mah Jong 1	1st & 3rd Tue am
Art History 2	1st Tue pm	Mah Jong 2	2nd & 4th Tue pm
Backgammon	1st & 3rd Mon am	Modern History 2	1 st & 3 rd Tue am
Badminton	1st & 3rd Wed pm	Painting 2	Mon am
Birdwatchers	Last Sat am	Poetry	1st Wed pm
Board Games (Modern)	1st & 3rd Mon pm	Pub History	3rd Tue am
Board Games 2	3rd Mon pm	Quizzers 1	2nd Thu am
Bridge	Fri am	Quizzers 2	2nd Wed pm
Bus Trippers	Variable	Radio Hams	Variable
Card Games	2nd & 4th Wed am	Railways & Transport	3rd Mon am
Carry On French	Mon am	Rummikub 1	1st & 3rd Tue pm
Country & Western music	4th Wed pm	Rummikub 2	2nd & 4th Wed pm
Craft	1st Wed pm	Science	4th Thu am
Current Affairs 1	2nd Wed pm	Scrabble	1st & 3rd Thu pm
Current Affairs 2	2nd Thu am	Singing For Pleasure	1st & 3rd Wed pm
Drawing 2	1st & 3rd Tue am	Tai Chi 1 - Improvers	Fri pm
French Conversation 1	Tue pm	Tai Chi 2 - Improvers	Thu am
French Conversation 3	1st Mon pm	The Potting Shed	Various
French Improvers	1st & 3rd Wed pm	Ukulele	Thu pm
French Refreshers	4th Mon pm	Walking 1 – Stragglers	1 st & 3 rd Tue
Genealogy	1 st Thu pm	Walking 1 - Strollers	1st & 3rd Fri am
German (Advanced)	Mon am	Walking 2 – Striders	1 st & 3 rd Mon pm
German Conversation	1st Tue pm	Walking 2 - Strollers	3rd Tue am
Knitting	1 st & 3 rd Wed am	Walking 3 - Strollers	Fortnightly Fri am
Learn Guitar & Sing	2nd & 4th Tue pm	Weekenders	1 st Sat & 3 rd Sun
Line Dancing (Improvers)	Mon pm	Wine Appreciation 2	2nd Tue or 3rd Mon
Lunch Friends	Various		

COMPUTER HELP



One of our members – Rich Edwards – has offered to help members with any queries or problems related to their computer/tablet/iPad. This is mostly in the form of advice given over the phone or by email. Many problems can be resolved by user intervention. Rich provides this advice free, however he does not offer home visits.

Rich can be contacted, initially, by email at it-advice@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk

NATIONAL U3A ONLINE EVENTS

Each month, national u3a offer online talks and workshops on a wide variety of topics to keep our minds and bodies going.

Click the link to see what's currently available, then click on the event of your choice for full details and how to book: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

The current offerings include :

Flight Inspirations – role of electric-powered aircraft shaping aviation	10 th December
Laughter Yoga with Judith	13 th November
Paradigm of Plate Tectonics	13 th December
The hard science of herbal medicine	17 th December
AI news – 2024 review and looking forward to 2025	18 th December
Mindfulness and meditation	19 th December
Illuminating Hope : the transformative power of Christmas	20 th December
Essential tips for online safety	7 th January
Exploring World Faiths – Religious Education in schools	13 th January
Introduction to Duplicate Bridge for Bridge Improvers	15 th January
Secrets of the human brain – how can we age better?	21 st January

PORTSMOUTH PARK'N'RIDE AND OTHER BUS SERVICES

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SERVICES

The Daily PR1 service will continue to run every day except Christmas Day. Day tickets are £4 per car and up to five people; buses run every 15 minutes; journeys take around seven minutes to Portsmouth City Centre and around 11 minutes to The Hard.



Portsmouth City Council have teamed up with Stagecoach South and First Bus Solent who are each running special Christmas timetables.

Stagecoach South 18, 21 and 23 will run on Christmas Day – the full Christmas timetable can be found here :

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/south/christmas-and-new-year-bus-timetables#Portsmouth>

First Bus Solent have expanded their operating hours for Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day – full information here : <https://www.firstbus.co.uk/portsmouth-fareham-gosport/plan-journey/festive-fun-first-bus/christmas-and-new-year-bus-times>

FESTIVE FOOD FACTS – DID YOU KNOW?

Christmas Mince Pies were originally made using minced meat. Recipes show that variations included pork meat, mutton and even ox tongue. Figs, raisins, honey and spices were added along with the meat to create this festive fare.

Christmas Cake was originally known as Plum Porridge and then, over time, other fruits and honey were added and the Christmas Pudding was born. In the 16th century flour, eggs and spices were added to create the rich fruitcake we recognise today.



Roasted boar's head was a popular choice at medieval Christmas banquets, long before turkey was introduced as a Christmas meat.

Roasted peacock was also a fashionable choice of meat, but more for the wealthy from medieval times onwards.



A MINCE PIE RECIPE FROM THE DAYS OF YORE

For the "cookists" amongst our members, you may like to try the below Early Modern recipe for Christmas mince pies. The original document can be viewed at the National Archives under the title "*For six Minst Pyes of an Indifferent bignesse*" :

(<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/families/christmas/food/sp-14-189-f-7-six-mince-pies-of-indifferent-bigness/>)

Do get in touch if you give the recipe a try and let us know the outcome!

Take halfe a peck of the finest Flower, 2 li[br]e of Suger.

2 li[br]e of Butter, a Loyne of fatt Mutton, w[i]th a little of a Legg of Veale to mynce w[i]th it, 2 li[br]e of Reasons of the Sunn, as many Currons, of Cloves, Mace, and Nuttmeggs one ounce.

For the Paist mingle 1 pound and a half of Suger w[i]th the Flower and breake in the yolkes of six eggs, then worke it together w[i]th 3 parts of the two pounce of Butter. Sett on a little water, and let it seethe, then scym it and put in the 4th parte of the Butt[e]r, and when it is melted Scym it cleane from the Water, and worke it w[i]th the Paist.

For the Meate, let it be seasoned w[i]th Pepper, and mingled w[i]th halfe a pound of Suger, the other frute and Spyce, the Raisons must be stoned, & some of them minced amongst the meate, the others put in hole, put in the joyce of two Orringes and one Leamond, and the Ryne of them smale minced. When the Pyes are filled slyce Dates and stick in the top, and when you sett them into the oven wash them over w[i]th the yolkes of eggs and pynn them upp in Papers.



DECEMBER DATES

(From "*The Almanac*" by Lia Leendertz and "*Project Britain*" by Mandy Barrow)

- 1st Start of meteorological winter.
- (1990) Britain is connected with the European mainland for the first time since the Ice Age when workers from England and France meet 40 metres beneath the English Channel seabed.
- 2nd (1697) Opening of the "new" St. Paul's Cathedral in London.
- 4th Feast of St. Barbara – patron saint of anything connected with thunderstorms, fire, gunpowder, electricity or sudden loud noises.
- 5th Prime Minister Harold MacMillan opened Britain's first motorway.
- 10th (1960) First episode of "*Coronation Street*" aired.
- 13th (1577) Francis Drake set sail around the world in the *Golden Hind*.
- 21st Winter solstice – start of astronomical winter.
Yule (Pagan midwinter celebration) – the shortest day and longest night of the year in the Northern Hemisphere
- 24th Christmas Eve – sunset marks the traditional start of Christmas.
- 25th Christmas Day
- (1642) Sir Isaac Newton was born; he found white light could be split into the colours of the rainbow.
- 26th Boxing Day (also known as St. Stephen's Day) – traditionally the day to open the Christmas Box to share the contents with the poor.
- 31st New Year's Eve – the old year ends and a new year begins; a time to reflect on the past and hope for the future.

WINTER GARDEN AND WEATHER FOLKLORE

Any significant day in the year attracts weather folklore and there is none more significant than Christmas Day. The old saying "*the nearer the new moon to Christmas Day, the harder the winter*" does not bode well for us this year with the new moon following just five days after on the 30th December.

Another piece of folklore states at Christmas "*if the moon is bright and gleaming, next year's harvest will be poor. If the night is dark with no moon to be seen, harvest will be heavy and bountiful.*" Fingers crossed for a dark night and an invisible moon!

*"Snow at Christmas means Easter will be green;
A green Christmas – a white Easter."*

New Year's Eve (also St. Sylvester's Day) is another significant day and an occasion to which much lore is attached. Winds are generally considered a bad sign!

"High winds on Sylvester's Day will blow the New Year luck away."

However the direction of the winds will also set the weather for the coming year :

"If New Year's Eve the wind blows South, it betokeneth warmth and growth;

If West, much milk and fish in the sea;

If North, cold and storms there will be;

If East, the trees will bear much fruit;

If North East, then flee it, man and brute."

SOME FESTIVE PHOTOGRAPHS

National u3a run a rolling photography project with a different theme for each month. These photos were submitted by members of u3as across the country for the theme of "Festive" :



Melissa, Bristol u3a



Sue, Leigh Estuary u3a



Alan, Leigh Estuary u3a



David, Mawdesley Villages u3a

DECEMBER SNIPPETS

(From "*The Almanac*" by Lia Leendertz and "*Project Britain*" by Mandy Barrow)

Gardening by the moon :

1st – 8th December (until 15:27) (new moon to first quarter)

The waxing moon is associated with rising vitality and upward growth. Towards the end of this phase plant and sow anything that develops crops above ground. Prepare for growth.



8th (from 15:27) – 14th December (first quarter to full moon)

This is the best time for sowing crops that develop above ground – but is bad for root crops. Take cuttings and make grafts but avoid all other pruning.

15th – 22nd December (full moon to last quarter)

A "drawing down" energy. This phase is a good time for sowing and planting any crops that develop below ground – root crops, bulbs and perennials.

23rd – 30th December (last quarter to new moon)

A dormant period with low sap and poor growth. Do not sow or plant. A good time though for pruning while sap is slowed. Weeding now will check growth well. Harvest any crops for storage. Mulch the soil.

And for those who are musically inclined :

A December folk song – **Cherry Tree Carol**

Traditional, arr. Richard Barnard

A very old song known to have been sung since at least the 15th century.

Mary and Joseph are travelling to Bethlehem when they pass a cherry orchard and Mary asks Joseph to gather some cherries for her. When he refuses – "*Let him gather thee cherries that got thee with child*" – Jesus pipes up from the womb and makes sure Mary gets her cherries before a chastened Joseph.

There are many variations and this tune is closest to a traditional Cornish version.

♩ = 120

O, Jo - seph was in old man, and an old man was
he, and Jo - seph mar-ried Ma - ry, the Queen of Ga - li - lee.

O, Joseph was an old man,
And an old man was he,
And Joseph married Mary,
The Queen of Galilee.

So Joseph and Mary
Through a garden did go,
Where cherries a-plenty
On every tree did grow.

O, then bespoke Mary
With words meek and mild,
'O, gather me cherries,
For I am with child.'

And then replied Joseph
with words so unkind,
'Let him gather thee cherries
That got thee with child.'

O, then bespoke our Saviour
In his mother's womb,
'Bow down, good cherry tree
For to give my mother some.'

The uppermost sprig
It bowed down to Mary's knee,
'Thus you may see, Joseph,
'These cherries are for me.'

Prefer not to receive member bulletins?

We issue regular bulletins to our members to inform them of meetings, social events, group activities, membership information, etc.

IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO RECEIVE THIS BULLETIN, please tell us so that we can remove your details from the distribution list. A confirmation email will be sent to you but you can change your mind at any time and request your details to be added back on to the distribution list.

Members also receive the "*u3a Matters*" magazine issued several times a year by the Third Age Trust.

To unsubscribe from either of these, contact the Membership Secretary at members@waterloovilleu3a.org.uk.

AND FINALLY . . .

Whether you will be with family, friends or on your own, have the very best festive season that you can and look forward to a new year of friendship with Waterloo u3a.

