

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



The Lord of Misrule - December 17th. This is the first day of the Roman festival Saturnalia. It was a period of great feasting and festivity, with lots of drinking and eating. Slaves would become masters, and everything was turned upside down. This part of the Roman festival survived into the 17th Century.

December has three associated minerals, zircon, turquoise and tanzanite. All three feature substantially different looks and qualities, from the vibrant blues of turquoise and tanzanite to zircon's wide range of hues. Zircon is the oldest of the three stones, dating back over 4.4 billion years. Following behind is Turquoise, which dates back as far as 3000 BCE. The youngest is Tanzanite, which wasn't found until 1967.

From the Chair:



Dear Members.

Firstly Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.

Well this is the last time I write to you for this year and our last time we will be holding our meetings in the large hall at the Pemberton Centre. However we now move on and begin meetings, starting January 16th, 2019 using the sports hall.

The sports hall presents a few challenges; one being light, the others being lack of projection and sound equipment suitable for this hall. The committee are in the process of dealing with these issues so please, if things are not quite right in January, we apologise.

Along with your mince pie we will now be offering tea and coffee served in paper cups until we move to our new venue.

I'm sure we all will enjoy the Christmas entertainment along with some merry songs from the U3A Singing for fun group.

Please do have a happy new year and hope to see you in good health in January.

Merry Christmas. Joyeux Noël , Feliz Navidad, Fröhliche Weihnachten

Angela Mason

NB The Newsletter is available online from the Sunday before each Pemberton Meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be aware that Wellingborough U3A had a thief enter during their monthly meeting and items were stolen. So please be aware of your belongings at ALL times.

EVENTS:

Turkey & Tinsel: On Monday 3rd December a group of just over 30 set off by coach for Bournemouth; a Turkey & Tinsel 3 day break. Organised by Jean Mole. We duly arrived in Bournemouth about lunchtime. After getting to our rooms some of us gathered for a walk along the sea front in the brilliant sunshine. Behaviour on this walk was questionable.(see photo). Having worked up our appetites we sat down to dinner which included wine or a soft drink, according to taste. Then we had an evening of dancing. The next day was free. Of course, the ladies went shopping, as they do. However some of us were much more adventurous and went riding on the little train that plies along the seafront. We were certainly surprised when it took us through Boscombe High Street. Exciting times!! Then a short pre-dinner walk through the Winter Gardens where we saw the lights which were fantastic. After dinner there was Bingo but there were a few who managed to utilise some hotel equipment and get some dancing going.



The following day was a trip to Longleat. It rained something rotten but hey, we are of the U3A and cannot be put off. The coach took us through the Safari Park where most of the animals were sheltering from the rain. After that we could go to the house and see the smaller animals and just prior to leaving we saw the switch on of the Festival of Light show.

After Longleat there was more after dinner dancing and as always a few glasses of your taste. A noisy group added to the general atmosphere and a good time was had by all. Next day we headed home but we added to the break by stopping at the Winchester Christmas market(more shopping).

We were home by 4 having had a great time, bundles of laughs and knowing more of our fellow U3A members. Thanks Jean for organising it. Gerry Burnham

The Bodyguard ~ Thursday 21st March @ Milton Keynes

We have 10 tickets still available for this matinee performance. Price £34. Payment required **in full** by the end of October.

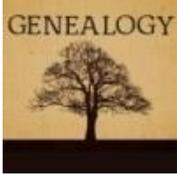
Les Miserables ~ Wednesday 5th June @ Milton Keynes

There are a few tickets left for this matinee performance at **£57.50**.

To sign up for any of these Events, please see Jean at the Treasurer's Table. Jean Mole.

Stamp Collecting for Charity

At each monthly meeting from now on there will be a box for used stamps on a table near the entrance and anyone who is prepared to save theirs can bring them along and deposit them in the box. There are a couple of members who will pass them on to various worthy causes. Every little helps, so please contribute if you can.



Family History Group:

Christmas came early this year, after our December meeting was snowed out in 2017. At last we could tackle last year's Christmas Family History Challenge, and after some early challenges, members were soon tapping and scribbling away to discover what Santa Claus was doing in Missouri in 1940 (working as a sewer man!), how many elves lived in the East End in 1911 (9, having settled there from Russia), and why a Wiseman and a Shepherd were sentenced to death at the Old Bailey in 1791, along with a lot of other Christmas/genealogy related trivia.

In January we have a change to our advertised programme, and will be looking at some skeletons in the cupboard! Sharon Safford



Computer Group:

The Computer Group is expanding in 2019 to 4 sessions per month, each will be held on a Thursday, exact timing and venue to be confirmed before restart on 17th Jan2019.

We want to benefit everyone with any PC system and/or any mobile operating system, giving both instructional and one-to-one help as required. Full programme for each session will be added to the calendar on the HR website. Check back after Xmas for final details. Alan Nixson Computer group leader



Rock and Blues Group: Next meeting will be next year, on 31st January 2019, and the category this time is Transport. If anyone is interested we still have a couple of spaces.

Contact the group leader:

Jim Morrison. : webmaster@highamandrushdenu3a.org.uk.



Wine Appreciation: This month we tasted Madeira and Port as it is the season to be merry! Ports were a Ruby and Tawny both of these were Waitrose own label and were vey good. Not as full bodied as more mature ones, The Madeira came from the island itself many years ago and was a 20 year Malmsey. Lovely full bodied with a spicy after taste.

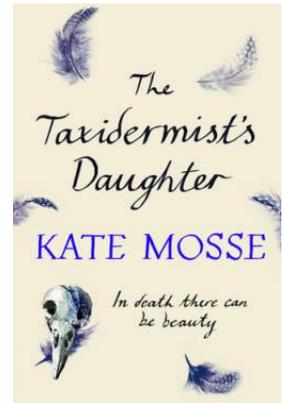
The next dates are in January, no meeting in December due to Christmas and we will be tasting Stonking Red Wines . Merry Christmas to all. Steve Evans 01933 356784.



BookMarks Reading Group:

The Taxidermist's Daughter by Kate Mosse

It's 1912, and Constantia Gifford practises her father's trade for, with the failure of his once-thriving business, the taxidermist has sunk into drunken inertia. Connie is bright, beautiful, determined, and has a very strong stomach. She's a victim of traumatic memory loss, and the plot involves her mind's restoration of obscene events 10 years previously.



A crime opens the story. Garrotted with taxidermist's wire, a woman's corpse is found outside Blackthorn House, where Connie is attempting to stuff a jackdaw. Can it be the woman nicknamed "Birdie" by villagers?

The tiny, pungent details of avian taxidermy add texture to a plot that includes elements of madness, torture, sexual predation, mysterious women, traumatic memory loss, partially burnt documents in grates, rising tides, rising panic and a cheesy romance. But Mosse does a beautiful job of assembling the familiar gears of gothic.

In Fishbourne the people inhabit the timeless territory of folklore. The marshlands and saltings, intimately known by the writer, seem to represent a primitive border between life and death. The date of the blithe closing moments, 1913, is doubtless intended to be a foreboding that gentle Harry will be marched off to the trenches and may become a cadaver himself in short order. But that's another story!

*To put us in a festive mood, our group will be delving into Christmas reads once again this time. Oh, doesn't time fly when you're having fun?!
Dominica Jones.*



Digital Photography B: Our next meeting is on 21st December at Stanwick village hall from 2-4pm. The subject will be "red" so if you have any photographs, either on a memory stick or prints that fit the bill please bring them along.

As this meeting will be very close to Christmas and the New Year, we will be having an informal discussion about what the group wants to achieve next year, and what subjects we want to include in our programme, whilst munching on some mince pies.

We are always looking for new members, so please come along and you will be made very welcome. Keith Saunders



Driving:

How to prepare your car & yourself for winter driving:

1. Make sure your vehicle is serviced.
2. Regularly check oil level, anti-freeze, hazard lights, wiper blades and battery.
3. Check the tyres for tread depth and pressure. Upgrade to a set of winter tyres for your car.
4. Clean your lights regularly and check the bulbs.
5. Make sure you're carrying de-icer and an ice scraper. De-ice your car before you travel, and ensure all windows are fully cleared of snow, frost and condensation.
6. Prepare an emergency breakdown kit, including a torch, bottled water, blanket, warm and waterproof clothing and a first aid kit.
7. Other items to pack include a reflective triangle, high-visibility jacket, jump leads and shovel.
8. Also think about leaving a selection of snacks and drinks in your boot in case you end up stuck in your car.
9. Spend time planning your journey, and don't make unnecessary trips if the weather has turned for the worse.
10. Leave extra time for journeys in poor weather.
11. Tune in to your local radio station for regular traffic and weather reports and advice.
12. Ensure your mobile phone is fully charged.
13. For longer journeys, let someone know when you expect to return.

Steve Evans



The wine and dine group still has vacancies for their Christmas Lunch at Knuston Hall on Monday 17th December 12 noon for 12.30pm. Cost £20 for three courses. Feel free to bring a friend, even if they are not members of U3A! Contact Lynn and Bob McIntosh on 01933 311342 to book.



Singing for Fun:

A reminder of the Singing for Fun Group Christmas concert to be held at the rooms of the catholic Church of St Peter the Apostle on Friday 14th December at 7pm. Doors opening 6.30pm.

Tickets are £5 (to include refreshments) and are obtainable from either Chris on 07778836094 or Gerry on 01933 770756.

We will both be at the next Pemberton meeting so you can approach us there if you prefer. Gerry Burnham.



History Group: "Sheep that eat men"

This was the intriguing title to this month's history talk and it did not disappoint the members. We were astounded by our speaker's ability to present us with dates and facts as well as to entertain. The speaker Martin Sirot-Smith came in the guise of the noble man Lawrence Washington of Sulgrave Manor, ancestor of the American president George Washington, dressed in a most eye-catching and magnificent Tudor costume with velvet cloak topped by a plumed hat. He traced the early history of the family, first in the North East in Washington, County Durham then in the North West where they were involved with the wool produced from the hardy Pennine sheep which created the famous Kendal Cloth. As a young man Lawrence was employed as an agent to the Parr family of Northamptonshire whose daughter Catherine Parr had outlived her husband Henry the Eighth. Lawrence Washington, now living in Northampton, married twice, both times to ladies of wealth and position. He was a successful business man in the wool trade dealing with trade links to Antwerp and rose to become the Mayor of Northampton while his cousin was a member of the influential Spencer family owners of nearby estates.

England, with the dissolution of the monasteries, strong central government, and peace and stability, had become a place where trade could flourish and land previously owned by the Abbeys and churches could be purchased. In 1539 Lawrence Washington purchased Sulgrave Manor and two villages with 3,400 acres for £324/14/3. As Mayor of Northampton he founded the Boys' Grammar School and paved the Market Square. The Black Death had devastated the rural population of England and the wealthy Manor and estate owners cleared their villages of workers and the old field systems to create more pasture for sheep and thereby increase their profits. Lawrence Washington cleared several villages from his manor lands as did the Spencers of Althorp. This harsh treatment of the rural poor caused moral outrage and Sir Thomas More, objecting to this clearing of the land writing in his book "Utopia", stated that it was as if "Sheep devour and eat both men and countryside". The family continued to grow with Lawrence's eleven children all surviving to adulthood and Lawrence reaching the age of 81 years old. Their wealth and prosperity ended when the family supported the Royalists in the Civil War and all property and money were taken from his Great Grandson the Reverend Lawrence Washington by Oliver Cromwell's government which prompted his son John's emigration to the United States in 1657. Ann Kemp 2018.





Country Park Walks:

Sunday 13 January, the walk will be at **Harrold-Odell Country Park**, Carlton Road, Harrold, MK43 7DS. meeting in the entrance car park to start the walk at 10.30am. It is a short circular walk around the lake with lovely views; there are also bird hides to view the migrating water birds and throughout the park wooden carvings of wildlife. We usually choose this walk for January as the weather can be unpredictable, but the paths are suitable for walking, preferably wearing sturdy footwear. There is a café and toilet near to the car park.

For those members who like to lunch after the walk it will be at The Bell, Odell. Some members like to extend the walk by leaving their car at the pub and walking through the park to meet us at the entrance car park for the 10.30am start.

If you are unable to join us for the walk, but would still like to book for lunch, please let me know as I need to firm up the number for lunch by the beginning of January.

LIFTS CAN BE ARRANGED from Higham and Rushden. Please contact Sylvia Wright by phone, text or e-mail if you will be coming on the walk, require a lift, and if you would like to order lunch. New members are very welcome. Sylvia Wright

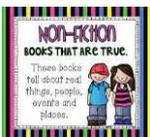
Point of Interest: Are you or have you been watching Mrs Wilson - 9pm Tuesdays on BBC 1.

Alexander Wilson, the main character, is a real life, largely forgotten writer of spy novels who predates John La Carre and Ian Fleming. All of his 27 books are available on Kindle (some free on Kindle unlimited). Excellent reviews. The 2nd book has references to the story line in part 2 of the serial.



A Little aloud

See website for details Contact Chris or Linda for details. Ideas of trips and to go on our mailing list. contact 01933 387892



Non Fiction Book group: has room for more members. 'Truth is stranger than fiction' they say. We have read about the 1st Afghanistan war, Nigel Slater the chef's childhood and more. We are a fairly new group, we haven't had our 1st birthday yet.

Contact leader for more information or visit website. Meeting on Monday afternoons at the leaders home. Depending on length of our read we met monthly or bi-monthly. Linda Walker



Days Out Car Share: Christmas at Waddesdon Manor. 16 November. 45 left Rushden at 9am sharp. The leaders are grateful for everyone arriving on time. With a no-holdups journey we were the first coach in

the car park. After a short introduction from our National Trust guide we set off to explore. The weather was typically English November: grey and damp, no rain or sun. We know some of you explored the grounds and would like to return in the summer. The Christmas market with over 80 stalls was varied and compact. We hope you managed to buy something. As Chris and I had been to the hall 2 weeks before to check things out we went inside the hall after looking at a few stalls and a visit to the shop to enjoy the decorations. Then 4 of us enjoyed a leisurely first Christmas lunch of the year. As we left someone mentioned the Aviary walk was lit, so we strolled back to the coach via the light walk. We were almost the last back! Everyone seemed to have a good time. Our return journey was uneventful. Thanks to Stuart and his RB travel coach.

If anyone has photos they would like to share I am happy to pass them on to other members who went to Waddesdon.

We are looking into a trip to Chenies Manor on tulip festival day, possibly a bank holiday Monday in May. Please put it in your diary and let us know if you are interested.

Sunday 24/3/19 10am-7pm for film buffs ..'Renown' pictures run Channel 81 Talking Pictures.

A variety of films, shorts and Celebrity Guests from the world of Film and TV we all love, on stage throughout the day and all included in the ticket price! A truly great day out for fans of vintage British film from the 1940s, 1950s & 1960s. The event address is: The Alban Arena, Civic Centre, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3LD.

Book independently - £25 or £20 if you are a Renown Club member 08081788212. It's free to join. Offers or requests for transport please. We have 2 spaces in our car, would you like to join us for a Sunday out? 10am until 7pm. Parking is £1 next-door to venue (see above) all day and there is a cafe at the venue.

Contact the Group Leaders (spidar.girl@btinternet.com 01933 387892) if you want to be added to the mailing list. Also contact the leaders if you have any ideas for trips. Linda Walker



Popular Music Appreciation: The more unusual the better. Each month we have a theme decided the month before by mutual consent. We have room for more members. 1st Friday morning each month at leaders' home. Contact leader for details or visit website. Linda Walker

Trivia:

Winter Solstice - most people count the whole day as the December Solstice. However, the Solstice is actually at a specific moment - when the Sun is exactly overhead the Tropic of Capricorn. This year the Solstice is on December 21, at 22:23. The December Solstice can happen on December 20, 21, 22 or 23, though December 20 or 23 solstices are rare. The last December 23 solstice was in 1903 and will not happen again until 2303.



Saint Nicholas was born in the Turkish town of Demre where he is known as Noel Baba (father of Christmas).



On the topic of St Nicholas, while in Albuquerque recently I was finishing breakfast in my hotel when two portly gentlemen wearing bright red tops with white braces and sporting luxurious heads of fluffy white hair and magnificent white beards entered the lobby. I immediately thought “oh ho” or should it have been ho ho ho? I approached them and asked them if they were who I thought they were. They confirmed that they were indeed and when questioned said they were taking a break before their busiest time of the year. I then asked why there were two of them and they replied that they were not getting any younger and there was just too much work for one and so they had divided Earth into the southern and northern hemispheres and they each took a half. As I have spent most of my life not liking Father Christmas (officially known as Santaphobia) I was pleasantly surprised that I had not felt the least bit afraid or awkward. In fact, I just felt a warm glow as the two gentlemen proceeded through the hotel spreading cheer. This was an unexpected meeting and one I feel honoured to have had.

***WISHING EVERYONE
A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY, HEALTHY
AND PEACEFUL NEW YEAR.***

U3A MONTHLY MEETINGS

Speakers for 2018

If you, or a friend, have had experience as a speaker at other groups on topics which you think would be of interest to our U3A members then please contact the Speaker Secretary.

Note: - The Speakers may be subject to change

Speakers for 2018

Dec 12th	The complete history of Christmas. A colleague of Lesley who you may remember as Nell Gwynn so expect something a little different. Please note this is a week early, the 2nd Wednesday, not the 3rd.	Mike Kennedy
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Speakers for 2019

Jan 16th	The Little Book of Monarchs. A wonderful, fascinating, amusing and accurate guide to English Monarchs.	Tony Boullemeir
Feb 20th	The Life and Times of Franz Lehár and The Merry Widow. With video, music and artworks.	David Price
Mar 20 th	Matron: The History of the Carry On Films. video, music, photographs, etc.	Steve Dimmer
Apr 17th	Discovering MacDonald Gill Architect, Artist and Mapmaker, Illustrated Talk. MacDonald 'Max' Gill (1884-1947, younger brother of the sculptor and typographer Eric Gill), was an architect, graphic designer, and lettered, best known for his pictorial maps. He created painted maps for houses such as Kelmarsh Hall and Lindisfarne Castle, magnificent murals for Cunard liners, and eye-catching publicity posters for organisations such as London Underground. An enduring legacy is his alphabet for the Imperial War Graves Commission used on all British military headstones since the First World War.	Caroline Walker
May 15th	Sing a Century: Songs and Instruments written and recorded over the last century. Performing at least one Song from each decade. It's a lovely musical journey spanning 100 years! Everything from Cole Porter and Charlie Chaplin to Elton John and Adele.	Andy Smith
Jun 19th	Higham and Rushden U3A 10th Anniversary Celebration Tea Party. Entertainment will be provided.	
July 17	'Flush with Success'. The History of the Smallest Room in the House - the Toilet	Historian & Lecturer, Kevin Varty.

GROUP	VENUE	MORNING	AFTERNOON
A Little Aloud	Alternate Fridays		
Badminton	The Pemberton Centre	Tuesday 10.00-12.00	
Badminton for Fun	The Pemberton Centre	Tuesday 09.00-10.00	Friday 12.00-13.00
Badminton for Beginners & Improvers	The Pemberton Centre		Wednesday 1400-1500
Bridge (Beginners)	Leader's Home		Alt. Mondays 14.00-16.00
Bridge (Social)	Leader's Home		2 nd & 4 th Tue 13.30-15.30
Canasta	Rushden Bowls Club	Mondays 10.00-12.00	
Computing and Technology	Venue to be decided		1 st 4 Thursdays every month 13:00 -15:00
Country Dancing	H/F WMC		Alt Mon 14.00-15.30
Country Park Walks	Various Parks	2 nd Sunday 10.30	
Crib and Solo Whist	Windmill Club		Alt Mondays 19.00-21.00
Cycling multi groups	Stanwick Lakes	Every Monday	
Days Out Car Share	Ad hoc	No Fixed Venue	
Digital Photography A	Rushden Hall	2 nd & 4 th Wed 10.00 to 12.00	
Digital Photography B	Stanwick Village Hall NN9 6QJ		1 st & 3 rd Fri 14.00-16.00
Driving	On the Road	Various	Various
Family History	St. Peters RC Church Hall		3 rd Tue 14.00-16.00
Garden	Rushden Hall and Visits	Garden visits in Summer. Otherwise Hall	2 nd Thu 14.00-16.00
Golf	Various	Fortnightly	Various
Guitar Monday Group	Monday	Full Gospel Chur	13.00 – 16.00
Guitar Beginners	Various	Thursdays	
Guitar Improvers	ASDA Training room		Tue 17.00-19.00
Handicrafts	Rushden Town Bowls Club		4 th Thu 14.00-16.00
History	Winter Months Full Gospel Church Hall, otherwise Trips		1 st Thu 14.00-15.30
Holiday Spanish (Beginners)	Alternate Mondays	10.00-12.00	
Holiday Spanish (Intermediate)	Alternate Wednesdays	10.00-12.00	
Home Dining	Various	Twice per Month varying days	
Jewellery Making	Members' Homes		3 rd Mon 13.30-15.30
Knit and Natter	Leader's Home	Alt Mon 10.00-12.00	
Mahjong	Windmill Club		1 st and 3 rd Friday 19.00 – 21.00
Non-Fiction Books	Leader's Home		3 rd Monday 14.00 – 16.00
Painting for Pleasure	Coleman's Craft Warehouse		Alternate Mon 14.00
Philosophy	Various		3 rd Mon 13.30-15.00
Play Reading	Higham Ferrers Library		1 st Tue 13.15-

GROUP	VENUE	MORNING	AFTERNOON
Popular Music Appreciation	Leader's Home	Alt Fri 10.00-12.00	
Reading Bookmarks	Higham Ferrers Library	2 nd Wednesday	
Rock & Blues Appreciation	Leader's Home		Last Thursday 2-4pm
Scrabble	Residents Lounge, Kilburn Place Higham Road Rushden		Alt Tue 14.00-16.00
Sequence Dancing	Heritage Halls Park Road		Alt Thu 14.00-16.00
Settlements A	The Vestry Hall, St Mary's Church Rushden		4 th Tue 14.00-16.00
Settlements B	Rushden Hall, Hall Park		2 nd Wed 14.00-16.00
Singing for Fun	Rushden Hall, Hall Park		Alt Thu 14.00-16.00
Special Events	Various	Various	
Sunday Lunch	Every 2 Months	Venue varies	
Table Tennis	Pemberton Centre	1 st ,2 nd & 4 th Wed at 13.00	
Ten Pin Bowling	Wellingborough AMF Bowl	Alt Fridays 10.00 to 12.00	
Ukulele	Rushden Transport Club	13.30-15.30	Every Monday
Video Editing	Leader's Home	2 nd & 4 th Tue 10.00- 12.00	
Walking	Various	Various	
Wine and Dine	Various	Various	
Wine Appreciation	Leader's Home		4 th Tuesday & 4 th Thurs 14.00-16.00