

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2025

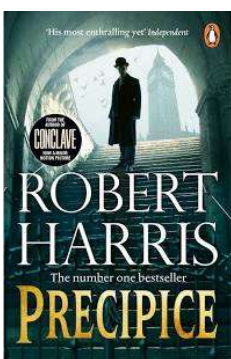
GROUP NEWS.....



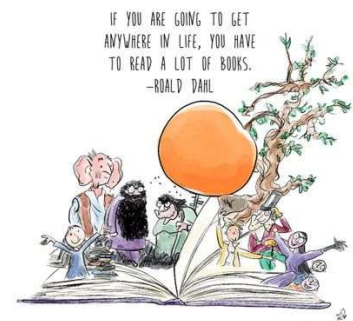
The yoga chair-based exercise class meets every Friday morning from 11am to midday in the room above the Radlett library. Access to the class is via the main library door and once inside go up the stairs or use the lift. Our teacher, Santoshni, takes us through a gentle exercise routine but we work every part of our bodies, and also do a few standing exercises. The cost is £8 per session. Please wear comfortable clothing and bring some water and your u3a lanyard. New members are very welcome. Please note that our last class for 2025 will be held on **Friday December 12th**. We are then closed for the Christmas and New Year holiday and reopen on **Friday January 9th 2026**. Wishing everyone a happy new year. **Marion C** thecurzons@btinternet.com

Reading Books is a Novel Idea.

At our meeting on Thursday 6th November we reviewed our latest book *The Stationery Shop of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali. Seven people had read the book, and one was still reading it. Of those that had read it, only two people would not recommend it. It was felt that the writing was mediocre, they did not like the way the timelines went backwards and forwards, and thought that it was predictable. Six people however thoroughly enjoyed the book and would recommend it. Views included that it was very interesting to read, liked the descriptions and learnt a lot of history with regard to the coup where the democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossaddegh was overthrown by The Shah of Persia. Everyone also appreciated how lucky we are regarding the freedom of women today, compared to life in Tehran. The book considered a lot of emotionally important topics, such as the importance of family, the impact of politics, dealing with the loss of a child and how mental illness is viewed in general. Other Recommended Books.....



- The Puzzle women by Anna Ellory.
- Wish you were here by Jodie Picoult.
- Before I go to Sleep by S.J Watson.
- Us by David Nicholls.
- The Innocent One by Lisa Ballantyne.
- The Guilty One by Lisa Ballantyne.
- Your Neighbour's wife by Tony Parsons.
- To exist as I am by Grace Spence Green.
- The Huntress by Kate Quinn.
- The Sewing Machine by Natalie Fergie.
- The Instrumentalist by Harriet Constable.



Our next book will be *The Precipice* by Robert Harris.

Looking forward to seeing all our members at our Chanukah / Christmas luncheon at The Three Compasses on Dec 11th.

Wishing all our U3a members Happy Holidays for whatever you may celebrate and a Happy New Year.

Our next book club meeting will be Thursday 8th January 2026 10am to 12 noon. **Sharon Strong.**

I will be starting up the **BUS PASS** group again later next year when the weather improves probably in APRIL will give more details nearer the time Regards **Bob Bassey**





The two Monday Bridge groups are having a complimentary Xmas/Chanukah luncheon party on December 8th for all existing members. We are a friendly group who have enjoyed a wonderful year playing Bridge together — it's time to celebrate!
 The new term starts in January on Mondays and we have room for a small number of new members for gentle Chicago Bridge in the afternoons from 1.30-4.00. It's just £42 for the entire term (14 sessions)- just £3 a session to include tea/coffee and refreshments. Venue: The Vision Hall, Christchurch, Watling Street, with free parking on site.

Standards vary, and everyone is paired up accordingly. Don't be shy or nervous - come along and give it a try. If you come along alone, we will always have a partner for you.

For more info call **Marilyn on 07775744785** or email marilyn@yellowgrass.co.uk

The improvers supervised bridge group currently has a waiting list as numbers are limited.

My thanks to my team of supervisors who are helping the players improve their bridge. **Laurie**

Quiz Group

Our first quiz was held on November 4th 2025 and we had 30 attendees with 5 tables of 6 people. The winners were the somewhat mis-named young ones – no team member names will be revealed!
 Our next quiz group will be on Tuesday 2nd December at 14:00 in the upstairs room at Radlett Library, Aldenham Avenue, at a cost of £4 per person. There will not be a quiz on Tuesday 6th January 2026 so the one after December 2nd will be on Tuesday 3rd February 2026. **Oliver**



What the papers say.

Thank you to all our members who came to our first meeting. Everybody agreed that they had a very enjoyable morning.

We look forward to seeing you again on Monday 15th December. If you have a subject you would like to discuss, please let me know beforehand or come to us at the beginning of the meeting.

Mince pies and Stollen will be served with our teas and coffees! **June Marks**



Relaxation group

The Relaxation Group is still going strong and includes the members of the Mill Hill u3a as well as our Radlett u3a.

We have monthly meetings on Zoom on the first Wednesday morning of each month, so you can log in in the comfort of your home, while I guide you through a visualisation to help you relax and find a quiet and calm space for half an hour in which to unwind from your busy lives. No experience is needed - it is open for the more experienced and absolute beginners.

I look forward to welcoming all those of you who would like to give it a try as well as our regulars.

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year. **Hannah Gottlieb**



History Group

We are delighted to tell you all that our next meeting will be on Tuesday 2nd December 2025. Usual time at 10.15 for a prompt start at 10.30am, usual venue upstairs at Vision Hall. We are further pleased to tell you that we have a really special presentation by our own member, Alan Byers, who will talk on The History of Jazz from the beginning up to the 1960's and will be illustrated by some video clips.

This will be a festive meeting to thank you all for your support during the year, there will be no charge for attending and we will have some festive treats to go with our tea and coffee! Please come early as if our numbers are excessive you may not be able to get into the room.



As you know our attendances have been increasing and it is now impractical to continue to meet in the small rooms upstairs at Vision Hall. From starting next February 2026 we will be meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the ground floor main hall at Vision Hall at 2.30pm. Our next 3 meetings are as follows:-



Tuesday 2nd December 10.30am upstairs at Vision Hall- Alan Byers on The History of Jazz

Tuesday 6th January 10.30am upstairs at Vision Hall- Aida Hougie on Madame Pompadour

Thursday 12th February 2.30pm ground floor at Vision Hall- Leon Freris on The Quakers

Looking forward to seeing you soon. **Stephen and Harvey**



HEART OF HERTS (LOCAL) HISTORY

Our final meeting of the year - and of the Group - will take place on **THURSDAY 4TH DECEMBER** at 1pm for 1.30pm. This will be our annual festive concert performed especially for us by the talented students of the Purcell School of Music. £22 for a sandwich, cake, and mince pie lunch. There are still a **few** places left but you need to let Carole Constad know on 01923 850515 coggie@yahoo.co.uk or email the school direct at development@purcell-school.org. But hurry as the **CLOSING DATE FOR BOOKINGS IS 2ND DECEMBER**. This is always a great event and is not to be missed.

Please read my article elsewhere in this newsletter about the closure of the Group and my thanks to all my helpers.

DIANA LOBATTO



Longer walks in Nov continued round the capital ring but slightly shorter than planned due to delayed trains and tubes which made us late to start.

Our December walk will start and finish at the Roundbush, walking 2 1/2 hours before enjoying a lunch.

In the New Year we will walk locally, before returning to the capital ring In February. **Fiona Turner**

Line Dancing

A few words to provide an update on our line dancing group.

It has taken a while to get back to almost full numbers since Covid but I am pleased to say that we are almost there. We would welcome a few more members to both the Tuesday and Thursday classes.

As we have been going for quite a few years we are not a beginners' class, and it would be necessary for you to have some knowledge of basic dance steps. The dances are easy and if you have waltzed or cha cha'd in the past I'm sure they could be easily learnt. We are very friendly group; chatting comes a close second to dancing 🐾

We finished last term with a Christmas party including a visit from Father Christmas, no pressies unfortunately.

If you would like more information please don't hesitate to contact me. **Mandy Burger**.



Remarkable Women.

Our last meeting in November featured Dame Stella Rimington who died recently aged 90. As well as an author, she was the first female Director General of MI5 from 1992-1996 and the first Director General to break through some of the government's secrecy barriers to make the service more transparent. Her role in the service was considered a model for Dame Judy Dench's portrayal of M in the James Bond series.

Our next meeting will be a light-hearted one to cheer us up for the Festive season, as we explore the life of Prunella Scales, actress, who died in October this year aged 93. She is

best known for her portrayal of Sybil Fawlty in the BBC television sitcom Fawlty Towers, but played many other roles including her performance as Queen Elizabeth II in Alan Bennett's play 'A Question of Attribution' (1991), which earned her a BAFTA nomination.

This will be on **Monday December 8th** at 3.15pm at my home as usual. More details nearer the time. **Carmel B**

Film group

The film group normally meets in someone's home on the first Thursday of each month. I also normally try to show the film on the Radlett u3a Zoom site. We show a complete film, sometimes a 'classic', sometimes a request and sometimes one of topical interest. Films we have shown this year include:

- "Something's Gotta Give" (2003) with Diane Keaton, to mark her passing
- "Blow-up" (1966) – a request by one of our members
- "Nowhere Boy" (2009) – on the early life of John Lennon, also a request by one of our members
- "Top Secret" (1984) - In memory of Val Kilmer
- "Mississippi Burning" (1988) – to mark the passing of Gene Hackman
- "Pierrot le Fou" (1965) - directed by Jean-Luc Godard

The December meeting will take place on 4th December and we will be showing the comedy "Barefoot in the Park" (1967) starring Jane Fonda and Robert Redford, again partly to mark his recent passing. If you are not on my mailing list and would like to watch this, please let me know ASAP.

Note there will **not** be a Film group meeting in January as the first Thursday is New Year's Day. **Gary**

Opera Group

The opera group normally meets in someone's home on the third Friday of each month. I also normally try to show the opera on the Radlett U3A Zoom site. We normally show a complete opera, sometimes broken over two months if it is a bit too long to fit in one showing.

Operas we have shown this year include:

- Fidelio by Beethoven starring soprano Lise Davidsen and tenor David Butt Philip
- La Sonnambula by Vincenzo Bellini starring Natalie Dessay and Juan Diego Flórez
- Verdi's Rigoletto starring baritone Quinn Kelsey and soprano Rosa Feola
- The Merry Widow by Lehár starring Renée Fleming and Thomas Allen
- Richard Strauss's Salome starring soprano Elza van den Heever

Most of the productions are from the Met Opera in New York For our 19th December meeting I have chosen a lighter opera for the Festive season, a recent production of Rossini's Il Barbiere di Siviglia starring mezzo-soprano Aigul Akhmetshina, tenor Jack Swanson and baritone Andrey Zhilikhovsky. If you are not on my mailing list and would like to watch this please let me know ASAP. **Gary**

The Bridge Group normally plays on the second, fourth and when there is one fifth Thursday in the month. We play duplicate style online using the Real-Bridge software which allows you to see and talk to your partner and opponents.



For an example of how it looks see the screenshot.

We have players of all standards and though it is best if you can play with a regular partner I can often find one for you if you need me to.

We typically have between 11 and 16 tables (44 and 64 players) and play 9 rounds of two boards each round and the session lasts about 2 hours.

You can see our recent results and forthcoming calendar on our BridgeWebs site - <https://www.bridgewebs.com/radlett3a/>

In December we will play on the 11th and 18th - unusually the third Thursday as the fourth Thursday is Christmas day. If you are not on my mailing list and would like to try playing, please let me know. email: Gary.Harding@Gmail.Com or Gary.Harding@outlook.com Mobile and WhatsApp: 07949 141214



You're right, I'd forgotten about Boxing Day...we'll have to get some more in!

The Wine Appreciation Group has 12 members and normally meets once a month on a Wednesday afternoon. For most months of the year one of the members, or a couple, in rotation, pick the five wines to taste at the session on a chosen theme. The themes can be, for example, wines from a particular region, from a particular supplier, wines related to the season or other topical subjects. Themes we have had this year include "Round the World Summer Wines", "Wines of Provence" and "European Summer Whites from the Wine Society". The person running the theme also normally prepares some notes on each wine.

With only the one bottle to be shared by up to 12 people it allows a maximum of 50 ml of each wine, but most normally take less. There are jugs to empty the remains of a glass if someone doesn't want to finish it, either because they didn't like to or they are driving, etc.

Often even the person running the session would not have had an opportunity to taste the wines before the meeting, so it is very much a discovery for all of us.

Every member at a tasting is given a sheet to record what they think of the wine, e.g. it's appearance i.e. colour or how bubbly, smell, taste and opinion, i.e. do they like the wine or would not touch it again with a bargepole! They are also asked to guess the price of the wine and the supplier. After each wine there is a brief discussion and any thoughts the members have about it. At most meetings there is a "guest" wine bought by someone not doing the main tasting and this can be anything that they think the group might like to try.

At the end of the meeting if any wines are left, they can be purchased by the members with a small contribution to the kitty. There are two other types of meeting during the year. One is a 'blind' tasting when one of the members selects six bottles that we have tasted during the year. The bottles are covered with opaque sleeves and the rest of the group taste the wine and try to remember what it was, the grape, price and supplier, etc.

The second special meeting is our 'festive season' meeting when we each bring a bottle of wine to share around the group and some snacks to eat.

Our membership is currently full, partly due to the need to share a bottle between 12 people and partly as we meet in people's homes and there is not normally room for more. However, members of the group have said that they would be very happy to help someone set up a second group in Radlett u3a. Please contact us if you would like to do this.

Gary and Alison



PLEASE NOTE:

It is important when booking an outing to please first check availability with the events organizer and have your name added to their list. This represents a firm commitment to attend this outing and you are expected to pay within a few days.

DO NOT MAKE OUR HARD WORKING COMMITTEE HAVE TO CHASE YOU FOR PAYMENT.

You will not have a confirmed place on our lists until your payment has been received.

We do not automatically offer refunds for any cancellations by our members but if you check with the Event organizer to see if we have a waiting list then we may be able to sell your ticket to someone on that list and we will refund you after receiving the new payment.

If we do not have a waiting list then it is up to you to resell your tickets to another u3a member.

When paying for outings and events please only pay by payment card (via the website) or by cheque. No cash please.

We cannot accept payments direct to the Radlett & District u3a bank account.

If you need assistance paying by credit card, to avoid long queues at the monthly meeting, please call Anthea on 01923 85 2274.

If you are paying for two members by credit card please show both names on the payments form.

THE FESTIVE SEASON WILL SOON BE HERE - JOIN US FOR OUR CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT

**THE BLUE CHECK RESTAURANT
144 HIGH STREET
BUSHEY WD23 3DH**



WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 3rd 2025 - 12.15pm for 12.30pm - £34

****WAITING LIST****

Contact: Helen Bocarro helenbocarro@yahoo.co.uk 01923 858155

NEW YEAR'S DAY PROM CONCERT AT BARBICAN HALL

Thursday 1ST JANUARY 2026 - LEAVE RADLETT 11.45am £58

****WAITING LIST****



Start 2026 in unforgettable style with the New Year's Day Proms in our Hall – a rousing celebration of classical favourites, uplifting anthems, and beloved operatic gems.

Programme Includes:

Nessun Dorma

Hornpipe

Pomp and Circumstance March

Auld Lang Syne

Land of Hope and Glory

Anthony Inglis - Conductor - The London Concert Orchestra

Contact: Sandra Clark. u3asandra@gmail.com 07770 467381



Gielgud Theatre London

On Wednesday 21st January 2026,

(Matinee)

Leave Radlett at 10.30am

This is the highly acclaimed production from Chichester Festival Theatre. £81

****WAITING LIST****

Contact: Vivien Summers events@radlettu3a.org.uk, 01923 856728



HEARING DOGS FOR DEAF PEOPLE

THURSDAY 29th JANUARY 2026

ROOM ABOVE RADLETT LIBRARY

2PM – 4PM

£5

COME AND MEET LIZ ARENDT AND HER WONDERFUL DOG, RUFUS. SHE WILL TALK ABOUT HER EXPERIENCES AND THE HELP SHE HAS RECEIVED FROM THE HEARING DOGS CHARITY.

TEA/COFFEE WILL BE SERVED.

Contact: Joan Altman joanaltmanu3a@outlook.com 01923 404920

SANTTU CONDUCTS BERNSTEIN, COPLAND AND GERSHWIN

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

THURSDAY 5TH MARCH 2026 LEAVE RADLETT 4pm £31

Artists

Santtu-Matias Rouvali – conductor

Mark van de Wiel – clarinet

Frank Dupree – piano

Programme

Bernstein On the Waterfront Suite

Dove Clarinet Concerto, 'Rainbow' (World premiere, commissioned by Mark van de Wiel and the Philharmonia)

— Interval —

Copland Clarinet Concerto

Gershwin Rhapsody in Blue

Contact: Sandra Clark u3asandra@gmail.com 07770 467381



TOUR OF APOTHECARIES' HALL

BLACK FRIARS LANE LONDON EC4V 6EJ

TUESDAY 24th MARCH 2026

NO COACH – MEET THERE AT 11am - £16

APOTHECARIES' HALL IS A FASCINATING HISTORIC VENUE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY. THE CURRENT HALL OF THE APOTHECARIES' SOCIETY IS THE OLDEST SURVIVING LIVERY COMPANY HALL IN THE CITY OF LONDON: THE APOTHECARIES ACQUIRED THEIR HALL IN BLACKFRIARS IN 1632. THE ORIGINAL HALL BURNT DOWN IN THE GREAT FIRE ON 1666 AND WAS REBUILT IN 1672.



A MAJOR RESTORATION WAS CARRIED OUT IN THE 1780S AND, ALTHOUGH THE HALL UNDERWENT MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT 200 YEARS LATER, ITS EXTERNAL APPEARANCE HAS ALTERED LITTLE SINCE THE LATE 18TH CENTURY. APOTHECARIES' HALL SECRET COURTYARD HAS BEEN REFURBISHED RECENTLY, TO A STUNNING WHITE WITH BLUE FACADE.

Contact: Helen Bocarro

helenbocarro@yahoo.co.uk

01923 858155

NEW NEW NEW



TOUR OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE MUSEUM

ST. THOMAS' HOSPITAL 2 LAMBETH PALACE ROAD LONDON SE1 7EP

WEDNESDAY 11th MARCH 2026 **NO COACH – MEET THERE AT 12.30pm**

£13

The Florence Nightingale Museum celebrates the life and work of the best-known figure in nursing history.

The visit will include a Museum Tour led by a museum team member who will give a welcome address, explain the story of Florence's life and point out significant objects in the museum. We will then be able to explore the museum by ourselves.

Contact: Peter Brent peterbrent35@gmail.com 01923 858155



THEATRE ROYAL TOUR
107-108 DRURY LANE, LONDON, WC2B 5BG
MONDAY 30th MARCH 2026
LEAVE RADLETT BY COACH 10am. £37

Nestled in the heart of Covent Garden, the Theatre Royal Drury Lane has survived tragedy, fire, bankruptcy & even murder, and is the oldest theatre on the same site in the world.

Join us on a magical journey through theatrical history in our beautifully renovated theatre. Please note this is a walking tour with numerous steps and backstage areas, we recommend wearing comfortable shoes.

After the tour there will be time for you to visit nearby Covent Garden for lunch or shopping!

Contact: Sandra Clark u3asandra@gmail.com 07770 467381

The Radlett & District u3a December 2025 meeting will be held at the Bushey Metropolitan Sports Venue on Tuesday 9th December at 10am
Our Christmas meeting will be a presentation by Peter Altman on "Remembering the 50's & 60's - The Music, The News, The Movies, The TV".

DINGBATS

TENTGOODIONS 01	COLT JNR 02	black coat 03	Bend Backwards 04
sight love sight sight 05	iS. 06	cut cut cut 07	£££££ WEIGHT 08
VAD ERS 09	I right I 10	house prarie 11	o2ne 12

There are those in the world who achieve glory because of the amazing heights they achieve. I, on the other have achieved asking for and getting through the powers that be a **NEW** toilet brush for the toilet at the Library. What an achievement, small, but so important.

Anonymous member 584



All good things come to an end. - The sad ending of the local history group .

This has always been one of our most successful groups since it's initiation by Philip Eastburn at the beginning of our u3a, 13 years ago. Diana took it over and made it her own together, with the late Marion Bulkan, her helpers Marion C, Carole C, Vivienne C and Adrienne P. And Tony C. I would like to thank them all for making it so popular. (Sorry if I have left anyone out). **Adrienne**

As many of you know, except for the Purcell concert coming up on 4 December, November saw the final monthly meeting of our Heart of Herts Group in Vision Hall. It's sad that, despite many of our members expressing regret at the closure of the group, no one has come forward to carry it on, but after 10 years of leadership I feel that the time has come for me to retire. As they say in the classics, all good things come to an end and it seems that the Heart of Herts Group has come to its natural conclusion.

Over almost 10 years we have covered numerous local topics. Some of the highlights include Paul Haworth's talk on the history of Battlers Green Farm, Paul Rabbits on various 50 buildings in Hertfordshire villages, Chris Langdon on the History of Thameslink, Dave Armitage and Bob Redman on the History of the Elstree Film Studios, Sue Gil who spoke about Bushey

Village, Tom Byers on Spielplatz, the Naturist colony in Bricket Wood, Diane Jeens on the Flower Festival, and going further back my original helper, the late John Silver gave a wonderful talk about Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Geoffrey Smythe has also spoken to us on 2 occasions about Veulamium and St Albans. David Bagon gave us several talks, notably the Ice Houses and local pudding stone. All these speakers stand out in my memory as having been especially good with their interesting topics. We carried on all through lockdown with talks on Zoom and these were really popular too.

We have had numerous very successful and sociable outings always including lunch or a Cream Tea. Tewinbury stands out in the memory as does Hatfield House and Knebworth House and 2 wonderful canal trips along the Grand Union Canal with fish and chip lunch. We held a lovely lunch event at Porters Park Golf Club where Martin Jeens also spoke to us about its history. Over 10 years that is approx 120 topics!

You will have to forgive me for expressing some individual thank yous as without my fab team I couldn't have run the Group. It all started in the old St John's church hall back in March 2016 when 2 or 3 volunteers offered to help set up and run the Group but within the first month I found myself having been voted to be the Group Leader. I really don't know how that happened! Marion Bulkan was my right hand helper and I will be forever grateful to her for all her valuable input, and tea making, also coming up with many ideas for topics and speakers. Her sense of humour was second to none and she is always fondly remembered, by me especially. Then along came Carole Constad who efficiently took over purchasing and carefully slicing the cakes pre lockdown, followed by wrapped biscuits ever since. Carole has always arranged them in pretty patterns and they have been much enjoyed by our members. But Carole's special „baby“ has been the booking and liaising for our annual Festive Concert by the talented students at the Purcell School of Music. She has made this event extremely popular and planned it meticulously together with staff at the School. Every year there has been a special magic, ending our Heart of Herts year with enjoyment and camaraderie. Thank you so very much, Carole.

In more recent years Vivienne Churchill has come on board and made the task of tea/coffee making her own and prepared and served with great enthusiasm and efficiency. And then Adrienne Pyzer came forward to be on the entrance door, creating her list of names every month, taking the entrance money, and warmly welcoming our members. A few years ago both Ralph Lobatto and Malcolm Curzon became chair and table monitors, setting them out and putting them away. Not an easy task as the tables are heavy but they never complain and do their job really well. Malcolm also manages the accounts side of our group. On the technical side originally Tony Clayden masterminded this and set up the equipment every month at the old St Johns Church Hall, then at Tabard and then at the new St Johns Church Hall, but once we moved to the convenience of Vision Hall, I asked Gary Harding and Simon Pyzer if they could help with the Audio Visual side and they have done their task with extreme efficiency, unobtrusively and willingly, and it has all run very smoothly except for a few occasional microphone blips. Edward Cross has given several votes of thanks in a most erudite, and humourous way, as is his wont. And his speech to me at our November meeting was much appreciated and very humbling. Last but not least, a few years ago, after Marion Bulkan sadly became unwell, my friend Marion Curzon offered to take over and has organised our highly enjoyable outings methodically and with extreme efficiency. She has kept me on the ball with reminders, suggestions, and numerous ideas, sometimes also arranging the speakers. I cannot thank all of these people enough – no way could I have managed without any of you. It's been truly highly appreciated and hugely supportive.

It's been a ride, both enjoyable and rewarding, often amusing, but interspersed with occasional problems. It's also been very hard work, but I am really pleased to have had the opportunity to lead a Group for so many years for our wonderful Radlett U3A. It's been stimulating and all absorbing too and a perfect replacement for retirement after having gone out to work in various different roles almost continuously for nearly 47 years. Wonderful friendships have been formed too both by me, and by others, and this is indeed the advantage of getting involved in a group or 2, or 3. Also my particular thanks to Adrienne for her unending support and advice through thick and thin.

My final huge thanks goes to you, all of my members, who have faithfully and regularly attended our monthly meetings and supported us every step of the way. **DIANA LOBATTO**



Retirement? Oh yes, bring it on! All that lovely freedom, time to do whatever I want whenever I want. Can't wait! No more work. Life will be wonderful! But will it?

Yes, for a time, in my case a short time, it was. However, I soon discovered that it wasn't enough, life isn't one long holiday, I needed something more - much more

When we retire, we lose everything: a purpose to our day, a reason to get up, get dressed and go out. We lose routine and structure. We lose many, and for some, all the people we knew and regularly

interacted with. We lose the identity that our working role gave us. We lose the opportunity to feel that we have something to offer, that we have skills that are valued, to feel valued and valuable.

We may also lose our sense of belonging, to feel that we don't belong anywhere, especially if, like me, you live alone and your children and grandchildren are many, many miles away.

If you listen to what the media and the press say, all you have to look forward to is your body and your brain falling apart, to becoming increasingly frail and dependent and being a drain on the NHS and Social Services.

But that wasn't the future I wanted. There's no way I can subscribe to this deficit model of ageing. There and then, I made the decision that my life was going to be dedicated to **positive ageing** - I would devote all my time and energy to discovering how best to do that. I gave the matter a great deal of thought, did some research and here is what I found.

5 main components for positive ageing

Education: I define education as learning anything that you don't currently know, or to do anything that you can't currently do, or can't do very well. It can be academic, or practical. It doesn't matter what it is, anything that interests you. Learning something new is the important bit.

Exercise: I define exercise as anything active; it can be mildly active or very energetic or anything in-between. It includes just getting from A to B or playing sport of some sort. It doesn't mean going to the gym or taking up Zumba, but it does mean moving your body, not just sitting about all day, and preferably leaving the house at least once every day.

Social contact: I define social contact as interacting with another person. This can be anything from passing the time of day with someone, to longer and more involved interactions and discussions. It is more satisfying to have a more prolonged conversation with someone, so joining a group of any kind would be preferable.

Blue light: I define blue light as natural daylight. This helps to regulate our circadian rhythms and therefore we sleep better, which in turn helps our concentration and improves our mood. It helps us to produce Vitamin D, which has many benefits, including helping to keep our bones and muscles healthy. Just going out of the house is enough for us to get some natural blue light.

Healthy diet: We all know what a healthy diet is and what foods are best for us to eat, so I'll say no more about that.

What does positive ageing look like in practice? So, it's all very well identifying the components of positive ageing, but what did I actually do to ensure that I had them all in place? The answer is, a lot, and I keep adding more all the time!

Education I found opportunities to be actively involved in conducting research, joined a couple of choirs, learned to play steel pans and ukulele, took up Zentangle art and became a member of a variety of groups, including philosophy, history, bridge, and craft. I have been a member of various committee. **Exercise** Wherever possible I walk rather than take the car, I'm fortunate to live near the sea and can also go for walks along the coastline. I lead a Circle Dancing group and am a member of a couple of table tennis groups. **Social contact** I have joined all sorts of groups, 16 at the last count, some u3a, some not. Some are purely social, including a lunch club and a coffee club. **Blue light** Just going out every day to attend my groups or meet friends for coffee or lunch means I am exposed to blue light. **Healthy diet!** do my best to eat healthily, I am vegetarian and don't buy ready meals - but I also need the odd treat such as scones, cakes, a cold beer or a glass or 2 of red wine! Of course I have some health issues, as we all do, but I don't focus on them, and I don't let them stop me doing anything, apart from a few weeks while my new knee decided to work properly! It's so important to keep our energy and enthusiasm for life and our 'can do' attitude.

Someone asked me recently what the happiest period of my life has been. Without hesitation I replied - 'my retirement'.



London Walks Thro' Time. From Danny, our London tour guide, whose walks are fascinating.

Marlene, my wife, asked out of interest, how many roads have been on my route during my last three years of guiding London walks. I thought for a moment and replied.

(Now before you read the answer try and guess yourselves.)

The answer being, just one road, although I have crossed two other roads. These being Charing Cross Road for only ten yards before crossing into Bear St and the two roads we crossed were Clerkenwell Road and Farringdon Road.

The distance which I covered have totalled with all the rehearsals that I'd made, as I had to start from scratch, was about one hundred miles.

Here are the thoroughfares on our routes in no particular order. (No Roads)

Main thoroughfares were: -



Strand, Fleet Street, Piccadilly, Commercial Street, Whitechapel High Street, Corn Hill, Tower Hill, Cannon Street, New Change, St Martin's Le Grand. Upper Thames Street, Fenchurch Street, St Paul's Churchyard, Ludgate Hill, Queen Victoria Street, Holborn. Victoria Embankment, Poultry. Cheapside. Newgate Street, Bishopsgate, Pall Mall, High Holborn, Whitehall, Chancery Lane, Tower Hill, St Martin's Place, Piccadilly Circus, and Trafalgar Square. Thirty-six other public thoroughfares, which we walked through: (This is I think is interesting, still no Roads) I don't want to double up on ways.

Bluebell Yard, Carting Lane, Bank Side, Eastcheap, St Peters steps, Cloth Fair, Millennium Bridge, Thames Walkway, Aldermanbury, Clements Inn, Crown Passage, Clerkenwell Green, Bartholomew Close, Bleeding Heart Yard, West Smithfield, Lincolns Inn Fields, Hatton Garden, Clair Market, Houndsditch, Bevis Marks, St. Mary Axe, Broad Street Avenue, Princes Arcade, Hind Court, Winchester Walk, Old Jewry. Postman's Park, French Ordinary Alley, Fenchurch Buildings, Ludgate Broadway, Sugar Quay, Tower Hill Terrace, Undershaft. Gough Square, Great Turnstile, Grant's Quay Wharf.

Aphorisms for us all... from Bette

Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.

If you can't think of a word say "I forgot the English word for it." That way people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot

I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.

I'm getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.

A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.

Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk 9 feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.

Senility has been a smooth transition for me.

I love approaching 80, I learn something new every day and forget 5 other things.

I think I'll just put an "Out of Order" sticker on my forehead and call it a day.

Just remember, once you're over the hill you begin to pick up speed.

It's weird being the same age as old people.

When I was a kid I wanted to be older...this is not what I expected.

It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.

Never sing in the shower! Singing leads to dancing, dancing leads to slipping, and slipping leads to paramedics seeing you naked. So remember...Don't sing!

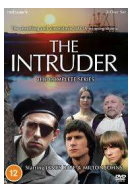
I see people about my age mountain climbing; I feel good getting my leg through my underwear without losing my balance.

I'm at that age where my mind still thinks I'm 29, my humour suggests I'm 12, while my body mostly keeps asking if I'm sure I'm not dead yet.

You don't realize how old you are until you sit on the floor and then try to get back up.



Happy watching for the holidays from Terri and Brian.....



We watched a four-part French series on BBC4 called **THE INTRUDER**, which is a psychological thriller set in Bordeaux, about a middleclass family who employ an au pair, who seems really perfect for them. She inveigles herself into the family and soon becomes a nightmare. Paula, the Mum, returns to work after maternity leave but feels overwhelmed. As strange incidents multiply, she suspects the au pair, Tess, has dark intentions and is out to "get" her but nobody believes her warnings. It was, as is usually the case, a bit farfetched in parts but we found it enjoyable and well-acted.

Another series on Sky that is also a bit farfetched but enjoyable is **THE IRIS AFFAIR** in 8 parts starring Niamh Algar as Iris Nixon, a genius problem solver who meets a charming philanthropist called Cameron Beck played brilliantly as always by Tom Hollander. He shows her a supercomputer known as Charlie Super Potatoes (!) that creates neural pathways



and has stalled, and he needs someone brilliant to “wake it up” for his super rich masters. It’s a preposterous tale but quite entertaining and when Iris realises this is a very dangerous concept, she goes missing with the notebook containing all the calculations made by the original inventor. Cameron funds an international hunt to find her and the notebook from Sardinia to Rome to Slovenia and to help her she enlists the help of a podcaster, and also a young girl that she was tutoring. As we said at the beginning it IS farfetched and although one TV critic gave the final episode 5 stars we unfortunately found it rather disappointing after the previous episodes had been so good.

The third series of **THE DIPLOMAT** on Netflix is airing at the moment and it gets better and better in our opinion. The acting of all is superb, especially the main three actors - Keri Russell as the US Ambassador to the UK, a career diplomat who helps to diffuse an international crisis, her husband Rufus Sewell with a great American accent and Allison Janney (of The West Wing fame). It’s worth watching the first two series to understand what’s happening, but there IS a good recap at the beginning. The British Ambassador visits the USA often and meets with the President and his staff many times, and when he dies his vice President, played by Allison, takes over. The story is about the interaction between the two countries and their staff, with many problems arising, as well as Keri’s and Rufus’s relationship, and it is interesting and full on. We really recommend this.

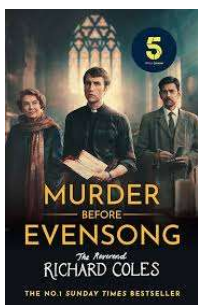


On BBC there is a 6-part series called **RIOT WOMEN** written by the marvellous writer, Sally Wainwright of Happy Valley fame. A disparate group of middle-aged women meet and their worlds collide when they accidentally form a punk/rock band to perform in a talent contest. It has a great cast including Lorraine Ashbourne, Tamsin Greig, Joanna Scanlon and Rosalie Craig, and all the women have problems and issues at the beginning, mainly with the men in their lives, so making music together is a great distraction for them. It’s also about the bond that evolves between the ladies, particularly Joanna’s character, Beth, and Rosalie’s character, Kitty, who find out they have a connection between them. It’s quite humorous in parts and very well acted by all.

There is also a second series on Netflix of **NOBODY WANTS THIS**, a different kind of rom-com about a young rabbi and an atheist young woman who fall in love. The first series is worth seeing first, but if not then you can pick up the gist of this second series. It’s sweet and very amusing, with both sides of their families not agreeing with their union! The two main characters are played by Adam Brody as Noah the rabbi and Kristin Bell as Joanne his girlfriend, and the three actresses who play Noah’s mother, sister-in-law and Joanne’s sister are all hilarious, as is Noah’s brother, Sasha, played by Timothy Simons, (who was terrific in the series VEEP). This second series is as good as the first and very enjoyable.



HAMZA’S WILD ISLES on BBC follows wildlife cameraman and presenter in four programmes as he visits many parts of the British Isles showing the viewer the beauty of our countryside in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. He has such a nice way about him and shows his amazing enthusiasm and love of animals, fauna and flora. It’s a lovely programme and you can certainly learn many new things about our Isles. It has been suggested that Hamza would be a good successor to the great David Attenborough, although David would be a hard act to follow.....



Then there is **MURDER BEFORE EVENSONG**, based on the book by the Rev Richard Coles, who used to be a singer with a pop group, then a reverend and now a TV presenter. It’s probably what you would call a “cosy” murder mystery, not a gruesome one like a lot of the others, and has many well-known British actors in it including Amanda Redman, Tamsin Outhwaite, Adam James, and Amit Shah, who plays the detective in charge. It starts very slowly as you meet all the various characters living in a small English village, and then the rector, Daniel, finds the village lord’s cousin dead in his church. The police move in and the rector, together with his interfering mother who lives with him, helps in the search for the killer, before more bodies turn up. It’s pretty well-acted, amusing in parts, and slow burning, and we thought it was a bit daft but quite good.

A 4-part series on Channel 4 called **TRESPASSES** is set in 1975 Northern Ireland and centres on a forbidden love affair between a Catholic young schoolteacher and a married older Protestant barrister who defends young Catholics. He hopes that securing them a fair trial will slow Northern Ireland’s cycle of violence, which makes him unpopular with other Protestants and with Catholics too, making him a walking target. A romance with him is the last thing Cushla, the school teacher, should be doing, but they can’t help themselves. She works some shifts at her brother’s pub and meets Michael, the barrister, when he goes in there and they fall in love. After closing time, she invariably goes home to find her widowed mother - played brilliantly by Gillian Anderson - drowning in loneliness and gin. She befriends a little boy at her school whose mother is Protestant and father is Catholic, and when she gives him a lift back from



school to their house in a Protestant flag-strewn estate she finds out his family has to contend with many bigots and also extreme violence to his father. She also helps the boy's older brother and gets involved in their lives. It was very good and interesting, although obviously a bit violent in parts, and very well acted.



On Apple TV is **DOWN CEMETERY ROAD** in 6 episodes starring Emma Thompson and Ruth Wilson. Ruth plays Sarah and when a house blows up in her road she sees a little girl, who has survived the blast, being taken secretly away in a car. She tries to find out if the girl is ok but finds difficulties at every turn. So she contacts a private detective, Emma playing Zoe Boehm, who turns out to be strange but very good at her job, together with her husband Joe played Adam Godley. They find out the Ministry of Defence is involved, and the explosion was planted by a rogue agent not a gas leak as everyone first thought. Their investigations take them to dark places and there's a lot of humour in the script too. Emma in particular, is brilliant.

Lastly on Sky is an eight-part series called **ALL HER FAULT** starring the wonderful Sarah Snook (from Succession) as Marissa, a working Mum, who goes to collect her five-year old son from a play date with a boy from his school only to find he's not been there at all. Also, he was apparently collected from school by another school Mum's nanny who has disappeared with him. The other Mum, played by Dakota Fanning, is understandably devastated about this and tries to help the family after the kidnapping, which she feels is partly her fault as after all it WAS her nanny who took him. Secrets are revealed about Marissa's husband and his sister and younger brother, who is disabled from childhood because of an accident and the ongoing police investigation finds out the nanny had an accomplice. It's well acted and quite exciting and we thought it was very good. Lots of good TV to watch in these cold evenings.....Happy watching. **Terri & Brian**



Scruffy aubergine lasagne from Maureen at the Recipe exchange group.....serves 6

- Three large aubergines 400 g each
- Three onions, six cloves of garlic, one bunch of fresh sage,
- 30 g olive oil, teaspoon of dried chilli flakes, one lemon
- Two 400 g tins of quality plum tomatoes,
- 80 g mature cheddar cheese, 80 g Parmesan cheese
- 300 g fresh lasagne sheets
- 50 g blanched almonds.



Place a large shallow casserole pan on a medium heat with 250 ml of water. Halve the aubergines lengthways and place in the pan. Peel quarter and add the onions then cover with the lid and cook for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, peel and finely slice the garlic and pick the sage leaves. Preheat the oven to 200°C/ 400°F /gas six.

Remove the lid and once most of the liquid has cooked away, make a well in the middle. Add 3 tablespoons of oil, the garlic chilli flakes and most of the sage leaves then finally grate in the lemon zest. Once golden scrunch in the tomatoes, pour in two tins with water and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove the pan from the heat, grate in the cheeses, then season to absolute perfection with sea salt and black pepper. Tear in the pasta sheets and mix up really well to coat and separate, then pull some of the sheets on the top to create a top layer. Bash the almonds till fine and rub the remaining sage leaves with oil then sprinkle on top. Use the back of the spoon to create some dips and wells and bake for 25 minutes until golden and bubbling.

I love this serve with a big crunchy green salad dressed with balsamic vinegar

Two of my girls are gluten intolerant so I often. Turn this into a pasta bake by using gluten-free pasta.

CHRISTMAS ANAGRAMS

1. IOTA INSTEP	1	
2. PAW GRIFT	2	
3. BLUE ABS	1	
4. A BEARS CURRENCY	2	
5. POTHOLER THEN	2	
6. THAWER	1	
7. TRUCK CRANE	1	
8. SURPLUS SORBETS	2	
9. SHELL BILGES	2	
10. AGGRESSIONS TENSE	2	
11. HURL POD	1	
12. STARFISH REMATCH	2	
13. SCRATCH ORALISMS	2	
14. YETI DUEL	1	
15. DISARMS SCRATCH	2	
16. ENCASES TART	2	
17. SNOG STICK	1	
18. SLIME TOTE	1	
19. MERRIEST CHATS	2	
20. UNREADY CABS	2	
21. VANDAL DECANTER	2	
22. AGGRESSIONS TENSE	2	
23. DISPATCH DRUMS GIN	2	
24. VICARS THEMES	2	
25. MICE PINE	2	
26. STREAKY ROUT	2	
27. CAN ASSAULT	2	
28. ENLIST	1	
29. STAN CASUAL	2	
30. BLESSING KIT PAN:	3	
31. LIGHT TENNIS:	2	
32. A CHICK MASTERS	2	
33. SCENT THUS	1	
34. MANS WON:	1	
35. IN ACTION SLASH	3	
36. SERPENT	1	
37. IVY TITAN	1	
38. KING SCOT	1	
39. HIM SWEETENER	3	
40 A DECKING OGLE SNOW	3	



At Sunday school, just before Christmas, the younger children were drawing pictures illustrating Biblical stories. The teacher walked by and noticed one little boy was drawing an airplane! "Oh, what Bible story are you drawing?" she asked. "This is the Flight into Egypt," the little boy answered. "See, here is Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. And this," he said, pointing to the front of the plane, "is Pontius. He's the Pilot."

Dingbat answers

1. Good Intentions
2. Son Of A Gun
3. Black Overcoat
4. Bend Over Backwards
5. Love At First Sight
6. That Is Beside The Point
7. Cut Above The Rest
8. Five Pounds Overweight
9. Space Invaders
10. Right Between The Eyes
11. Little House On The Prairie
12. Two In One

Christmas anagram answers

1. IOTA INSTEP	1	POINSETTIA
2. PAW GRIFT	2	GIFT WRAP
3. BLUE ABS	1	BAUBLES
4. A BEARS CURRENCY	2	CRANBERRY SAUCE
5. POTHOLER THEN	2	THE NORTH POLE
6. THAWER	1	WREATH
7. TRUCK CRANE	1	NUTCRACKER
8. SURPLUS SORBETS	2	BRUSSEL SPROUTS
9. SHELL BILGES	2	SLEIGH BELLS
10. AGGRESSIONS TENSE	2	SEASONS GREETINGS
11. HURL POD	1	RUDOLPH
12. STARFISH REMATCH	2	FATHER CHRISTMAS
13. SCRATCH ORALISMS	2	CHRISTMAS CAROLS
14. YETI DUEL	1	YULETIDE
15. DISARMS SCRATCH	2	CHRISTMAS CARDS
16. ENCASES TART	2	SECRET SANTA
17. SNOG STICK	1	STOCKINGS
18. SLIME TOTE	1	MISTLETOE
19. MERRIEST CHATS	2	CHRISTMAS TREE
20. UNREADY CABS	2	BRANDY SAUCE
21. VANDAL DECANTER	2	ADVENT CALENDAR
22. AGGRESSIONS TENSE	2	SEASONS GREETINGS
23. DISPATCH DRUMS GIN	2	CHRISTMAS PUDDING
24. VICARS THEMES	2	CHRISTMAS EVE
25. MICE PINE	2	MINCE PIE
26. STREAKY ROUT	2	ROAST TURKEY
27. CAN ASSAULT	2	SANTA CLAUS
28. ENLIST	1	TINSEL
29. STAN CASUAL	2	SANTA CLAUS
30. BLESSING KIT PAN:	3	PIGS IN BLANKETS
31. LIGHT TENNIS:	2	SILENT NIGHT
32. A CHICK MASTERS	2	CHRISTMAS CAKE
33. SCENT THUS	1	CHESTNUT
34. MANS WON:	1	SNOWMAN
35. IN ACTION SLASH	3	SAINT NICHOLAS
36. SERPENT	1	PRESENT
37. IVY TITAN	1	NATIVITY
38. KING SCOT	1	STOCKING
39. HIM SWEETENER	3	THREE WISE MEN
40. A DECKING OGLE SNOW	3	GOOD KING WENCESLAS



Eat whatever you like because...

- * The inventor of the treadmill died at the age of 54.
- * The inventor of gymnastics died at age 27.
- * The world bodybuilding champion died at age 41.
- * The best footballer in the world, Maradona, died at 60.

And then-

- * The KFC inventor died at 94.
- * The inventor of Norello died at 88
- * The inventor of Hennessy died at 98

How did doctors come to the conclusion that exercise prolongs life, when

- * The rabbit is always jumping but it lives for around 5 years, and
- * the turtle that doesn't exercise at all, lives over 200 years.

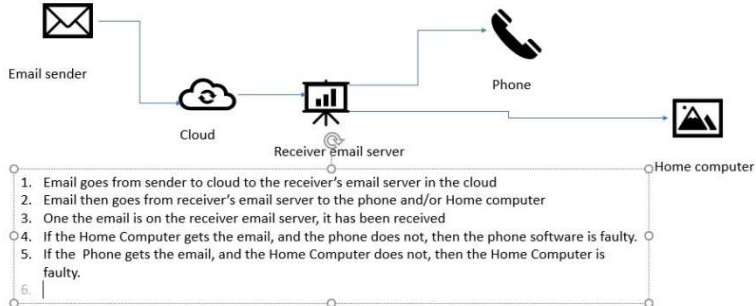
*** **So, rest, chill, eat, drink, and enjoy life**



As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?" The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"



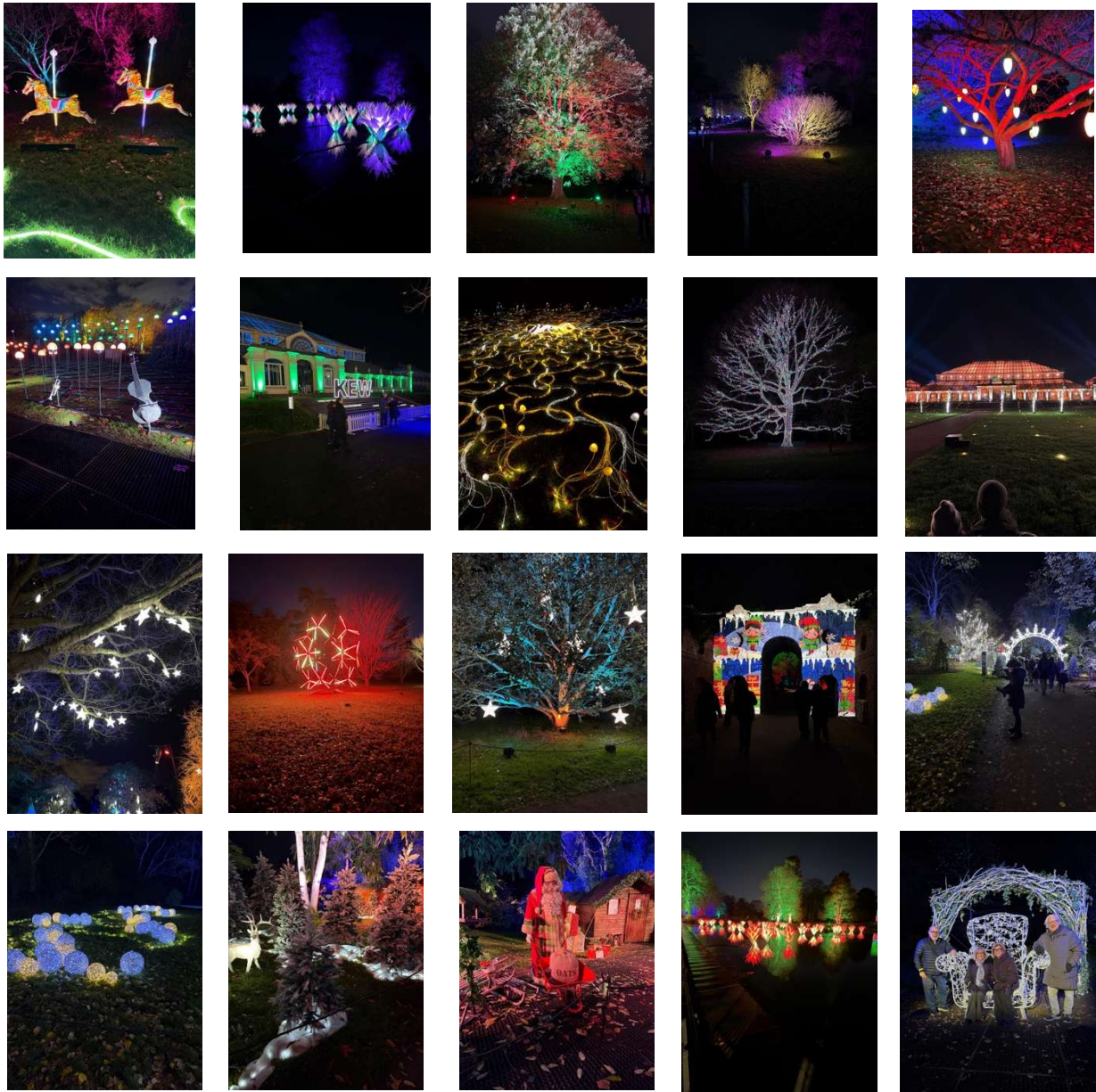
For those who are bewildered and say they do not receive our notifications etc Explanation.....





We are very sad to announce the passing of Harvey Berger, and send our condolences to Iris and family

There was a recent outing to the light show at Kew gardens – unfortunately no-one has written about it but Brian has sent me all these pictures for you to enjoy.



WISHING ALL OUR MEMBERS THE HAPPIEST FESTIVE SEASON EVER

