

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026

Our February Monthly Meeting is on Tuesday 10th February 2026 at the Metropolitan Bushey at 10 am

Our speaker for this meeting is Judith Kasriel about the life of Leonard Bernstein. Judith Kasriel is a very experienced speaker on the lives of composers and musicians. Judith is not a professional musician but is passionate about music. During Covid she decided to research different composers, initially just for fun. This resulted in her being asked to talk widely on her subject.

GROUP NEWS

Hi History lovers,

The next meeting of our History Group will be the first meeting at our revised date and time. Please note we will now be meeting on the second Thursday of each month. Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 12th February at 2.30pm in the main, ground floor hall at Vision Hall, Christ Church, Watling Street, Radlett, WD7 7JJ**



Unfortunately, our planned programme has had to be cancelled due to our speaker's wife being unwell. However, we are delighted to tell you that we have now arranged an excellent replacement. Michael Kushner, who gave that brilliant presentation on "Eddie Chapman, the double agent" at our last u3a monthly meeting, will be giving a presentation on "The early life of Winston Churchill". This promises to be another great talk so please put it into your diaries. We have plenty of room at our new home and look forward to seeing another big attendance. Please remember there will be refreshments after the meeting and there is free parking. Usual £4 entrance fee to cover our expenses. If you are not on our mailing list please enter it on the sign-up sheet at the next general u3a monthly meeting or contact me on eandsforman@gmail.com or phone me on **07775 504031**. Look forward to seeing you soon.

Stephen as well as Harvey

Music appreciation

Many thanks to Colin Berkovitch who at our January meeting presented a very interesting talk on the life and works of Josef Haydn, a musical giant of the Classical era. The group's next meeting is on Monday 16 February 2.30 at St. John's Church Gills Hill Lane.

What is Musical Appreciation?

How do you do it? Does it have any point? Is it no more than a personal opinion? Does it bestow any benefit?

Edward Cross will share some thoughts on how you might go about the appreciation of music with some examples of great music. And possibly some not-so-great just to make some points.

Please bring your U3A membership lanyard plus £3 for hall-hire and refreshments.

Edward Cross 07961 102197 Edx2017@outlook.com

Live Chat

The world seems to be becoming a more dangerous place by the minute and there are many controversial events to debate; so please come to the next meeting and join the discussion.

Would the Chagos Island deal be an act of great stupidity? Should Trump act against Iran? Will Farage be the next PM? Should Andy Burnham have been allowed to stand for MP? Are we caving in to Putin over Ukraine? Phones in schools? And now...Harry is back in court!

The next Live Chat meeting will be on Monday 9th February at 2.15.

Please let me know if you can come. **Kay Bagon**



Rummikub.

Our little Rummikub Group is going along nicely every other Wednesday. The next time we meet at 10:30 at the Red Lion in Radlett will be on the 4th of February. Please feel free to join come and join us. You can always phone me on 07917 773111 or email me at karis532003@yahoo.com **Karen Israel.**

Remarkable Women

Many thanks to David Bagon for his informative talk at our January meeting about the life and music of composer Emilie Mayer (1812- 1883), who became one of the most prolific female composers of the 19th century. Often called the "Female Beethoven," Mayer composed eight symphonies and numerous chamber works, piano sonatas, and orchestral overtures. At a time when there were many barriers to women pursuing musical careers, Mayer was successful and received positive recognition for her work, which sadly until recently has been largely forgotten. David played us some beautiful and rarely heard examples of her music, which made us hope that Mayer's music will be more widely known and performed in present times.

There will be **no meeting in February**, and the next one will be on **Monday March 9th at 3.15 pm** at my home. More details nearer the time. **Carmel Byers.**

Reading Books Is a Novel Idea

We had an amazing start to the New year with all ten members able to attend our January meeting.

We discussed our latest book *The Precipice* by Robert Harris. Nine people had managed to read it with one giving up halfway through.

The general consensus was that it was an acceptable book, but that we would not recommend it.

A lot of the content was based on the letters sent between the two main characters Venetia Stanley and the then prime minister H.H Asquith.

The story was a blend of fact and fiction. However the correspondence between them seemed repetitive and dull and took up a large portion of the story.



We all felt however that we learnt a lot with regard to the buildup of World War 1 and were appalled to read about his recklessness with sharing state secrets with her at the time.

Our next book will be *The Names* by Florence Knapp.

In the aftermath of a great storm a woman named Cora sets out with her nine-year-old daughter to register the birth of her son. Her husband intends for her to follow a long-standing family tradition and call the baby after him. When faced with the decision, she goes against his wishes, a risk that will have consequences, but is it right for her child to inherit his name from generations of domineering men? The choice she makes in this moment will shape the course of their lives.

Other recommended Books.....

The Mitford Girls by Mary S Lovell.

Homecoming by Kate Morton.

Welcome to Glorious Tuga by Francesca Segal.

The Pursuit of Happiness by Douglas Kennedy.

Mr Einstein's Secretary by Matthew Reilly.

Broken Country by Clare Leslie Hall.

The Correspondent by Virginia Evans.

The Seventh Girl by Andy Maslen.

Whiteout by R.S. Burnett.

A Knock at the door by Rob Parsons.

The Winemaker's Wife by Kristin Harmel.

The Glass Maker by Tracy Chevalier.

The next meeting for our members will be on Thursday 5th February 10am to 12 noon. **Sharon Strong.**



Bus Pass group

This group will be starting up again on Wednesday 25th March

This is a chance to leave your car at home and find out what it is like to travel around Hertfordshire by bus.

We usually meet at the bus stop near to Gails Coffee Shop on Watling Street in Radlett at 9.45am for a day out travelling to different locations in the county for a short half hour walk or an opportunity to shop with a stop at a coffee shop for refreshments and a chat before we return to Radlett around

4pm by a slightly different bus route. Come along and see things you would not normally see when you are driving, it is an enjoyable social day out.

If you have not been before just add your name to the sign-up sheets at our monthly meeting. We have to limit this to 10 people each time so as not to over fill the bus or the group being split up if the bus is full.

Thank you Bob Bassey

Don't forget yoga chair exercises on Friday morning at 11 am upstairs at the library – no need to book just come along. Don't need a leotard.....



Just a Minute is a renowned BBC radio and TV panel game (since 1967) where participants must speak on a given subject for 60 seconds without hesitation, repetition, or deviation. Players can challenge the speaker for breaking these rules, with the goal being to speak last before the minute ends. I thought it might be an interesting and fun group and wondered if anyone would like to give it a try. We could shorten the time to half a minute !!! **Adrienne**

Line Dancing

My Wednesday's improver Line Dancing has been going well and I have a total of 11 regular dancers with an average class of 8 dancers per session. It's hard to advertise for new dancers because I'm not a beginner's class and people do have to know some basic steps and have the ability to move in time to the music! I'm changing venues and will not be using Phillimore Hall anymore. There was no problem with the hall and it was perfect for line dancing but I found that the Village Institute had a large mirror on the wall which enabled me to see the dancers' feet behind me. So from Wed. 4th Feb I will be using the Radlett Village Institute from 12.15 to 1.15 pm and thereafter once a week for 1 hour every Wed. same time.



Sandra Lenson

Radlett u3a Philosophy Discussion Group

Happy New Year! Our next meeting is Thursday 19th of February at 2.00 pm in the Vision Hall, Christchurch
Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – ideas on Epistemology

As requested, we started the New Year with a philosopher based rather than philosophical discussion. I had been asked to include more on the philosophers and a good place to start was Ancient Greece where Western Philosophy originated. We are looking at the three philosophers responsible, and their answers to the question "How we do know *anything*"?



For the January meeting we looked at Socrates who laid the foundation of philosophical enquiry. Socrates himself did not write any philosophical texts. Our knowledge of the man and his philosophy is based on writings by his students and contemporaries, particularly Plato's dialogues, but also the writings of Aristotle. Perhaps Socrates' most important and enduring single contribution to Western thought is his dialectical method of inquiry as a way of analysing an idea to see if it is true. We focused on this method, and used two AI generated dialogues between Socrates and President Trump on the subject of Greenland to illustrate the effectiveness of the dialectical method. This turned out to be very interesting and at times, quite funny. However, it did show the effectiveness of Socrates' Dialectic method, and some interesting issues with AI.

We will continue in February with Plato, one of Socrates' students. His approach to what is real and how we gain knowledge differs from Socrates, but Plato's written works are the basis of Western Philosophy.



Where Plato had located ultimate reality in ideas or eternal Forms, knowable only through reflection and reason; Aristotle saw ultimate reality in physical objects, knowable through experience. Indeed, he considered it meaningless to discuss something which has not been encountered or experienced in real life.

Plato also floated the idea that knowledge is a matter of recollection ("anamnesis"), and not of learning, observation or study. Thus, knowledge is not empirical, but essentially comes from divine insight.

BBC iPlayer has some excellent programmes called "Great Philosophers" (BBC4) with Professor Bryan McGee, broadcaster and author interviewing experts on each of these great philosophers. [The Great Philosophers - BBC iPlayer](#)

Looking forward to seeing you again.

Christopher Langdon Radlett U3A Philosophy Discussion Group Leader

Boring admin stuff.....

1. As a courtesy to other members, please arrive on time in order to start at 2.00pm. It is very distracting for others if people arrive after the meeting has started.
2. Sadly we have to pay more for the room and other expenses, so the charge is now £5.00 per session.

Duplicate Bridge

The Duplicate Bridge group will play online twice in February on the 12th and 26th. If you are not on my mailing list and would like to play please let me know ASAP, but responses may be limited until 8th February. **Gary**



Film Group - The Film group will only meet face to face on 5th February as I am on holiday so no Zoom. Alison Sinclair will be running the session and will be showing "The Importance of Being Earnest" with Dame Edith Evans, Michael Redgrave, Joan Greenwood, Dorothy Tutin, Michael Denison, Margaret Rutherford and Miles Malleon. Please contact her if you want a space.. **Gary**

Opera Group

The Opera Group will meet, online and in someone's home, on 20th February. I don't know yet what Opera I will be showing but if you are not on my mailing list and would like details please let me know. Gary.Harding@gmail.com **Mobile and WhatsApp: 07949 141214**

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.

PLEASE NOTE:

When we organise any of our outings by coach we try to allow sufficient time for you to have a snack or a meal, and whenever possible, we will give advice on where to eat in the locality and recommend you to book in advance. Our committee are now getting many requests to book meals for our members. This is not part of their responsibilities and I cannot ask them to take on extra work. We are not in charge of what you want to do so please make your own arrangements.

Oliver – We had a lovely outing to see this show at the Gielgud theatre. We have very little control over the allocation of seats at the price we can afford and, on this occasion, the seats were too near the front. We hope that this did not prevent those attending from enjoying what was a fantastic production.



SANTTU CONDUCTS BERNSTEIN, COPLAND AND GERSHWIN

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL on THURSDAY 5TH MARCH

LEAVE RADLETT 4pm. £31 **WAITING LIST******

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



**TOUR OF APOTHECARIES' HALL
BLACK FRIARS LANE
LONDON EC4V 6EJ
TUESDAY 24th MARCH 2026**

NO COACH – MEET THERE At 11am. £16

****WAITING LIST****

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



**THEATRE ROYAL TOUR. 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



**MUSEUM OF BRANDS
111-117 Lancaster Rd, London W11 1QT
ON THURSDAY 16TH APRIL 2026 £13**

****NO COACH** – MEET THERE AT 11.15am**

The Museum of Brands in London focuses on the history of consumer culture from Victorian times to the present day.

Discover more than 12,000 original items, from motor cars, music and television to sweets and household goods.

5 minute walk from Ladbroke Grove tube station

Contact: Joan Altman
joanaltmanu3a@outlook.com
01923 404920

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO HAVE REBOOKED OUR

**TOUR OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
11 ST ANDREWS PLACE. REGENT'S PARK LONDON NW1 4LE
ON WEDNESDAY 29th APRIL £22**

NO COACH – MAKE YOUR OWN WAY THERE – MEET THERE AT 11am

NEAREST STATIONS: Regent's Park (Bakerloo line; 4 mins); Great Portland Street (Circle, Metropolitan and Hammersmith & City lines; 4 mins);



We will have a tour of the museum, followed by tea & coffee and then a tour of their medicinal garden.

Contact: Peter Brent
peterbrent35@gmail.com 01923 858155

NEW NEW NEW



**A TALK ON:
THE HISTORY OF AFTERNOON TEA
GIVEN BY GILLIAN WALNESS PERRY
ON**

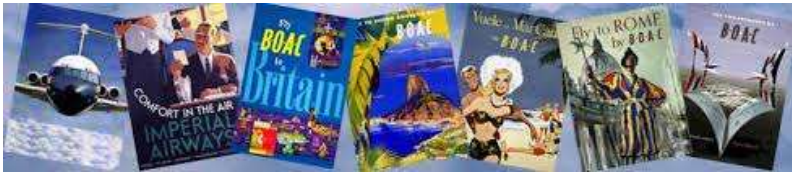
**WEDNESDAY 4TH MARCH. IN THE ROOM ABOVE RADLETT LIBRARY
(ENTRANCE VIA SIDE DOOR) £7**

**FOLLOWING HER VERY SUCCESSFUL TALK ON ANNE FRANK WE WELCOME GILLIAN BACK
TO RADLETT.**

Afternoon Tea is the quintessential British custom that has taken its rightful place as a sophisticated repast around the world. There's something about those savoury sandwiches, decadent cakes, and steaming pot of tea served in the most dainty china. Yet not many of us could be considered experts when it comes to the customs of this 200 year old tradition. Gillian Walnes Perry, lecturer, author, and Afternoon Tea specialist is however extremely acquainted with this beloved English Tradition and the rich history surrounding this delightful daytime ritual.

**FOLLOWING THIS PRESENTATION WE WILL BE SERVING RADLETT'S U3A VERSION OF ENGLISH TEA –
TEA/COFFEE AND BISCUITS**

Contact: Stephen Gold sgoldprop@aol.com 07831 559930



**VISIT TO BRITISH AIRWAYS
MUSEUM – HEATHROW
Monday 11th May 2026
£23
Coach from Radlett 10am**



**COME AND SEE THE BRITISH AIRWAYS HERITAGE COLLECTION OF UNIFORMS FROM THE 1930'S TO THE
PRESENT DAY, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF MODEL AIRCRAFT. LOTS OF MEMORABILIA AND ARTEFACTS
SHOWING THE DEVELOPMENT OF BA FROM IMPERIAL AIRWAYS TO TODAY'S MODERN AIRLINE**

Contact: Sandra Clark

u3asandra@gmail.com



**JOIN US FOR A SUPPER QUIZ EVENING AT
BLUE CHECK RESTAURANT**

**144 HIGH STREET
BUSHEY WD23 3DH**

ON THURSDAY 23^R APRIL AT 6.45 pm for 7pm START £24.50

**PLEASE MAKE UP TABLES OF 8, OR LET ME KNOW WHO YOU WOULD LIKE TO SIT WITH, FOR A
DELICIOUS 2 COURSE MEAL AND A FUN QUIZ**

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



**AN OUTING TO:
ESSEX & HERTS AIR AMBULANCE
AT EARLS COLNE BUSINESS PARK COLCHESTER CO6 2NS
ON WEDNESDAY 27TH MAY**

CAR SHARING – DETAILS TO FOLLOW

LEAVE RADLETT AT 10.15am £6.50

The visit lasts up to two hours and includes a mix of films, narrative and interactive features in the room. The Earls Colne airbase is home to one of their Augusta Westland 169 helicopters, which you will hopefully see, operations allowing.

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



**QUEEN ELIZABETH II:
HER LIFE IN STYLE AT THE KING'S GALLERY, BUCKINGHAM PALACE, LONDON SW1A 1AA
ON TUESDAY 2ND JUNE
LEAVE RADLETT 9.15am £22.50**

To mark the centenary of her birth, "Queen Elizabeth II: Her Life in Style" will open at The King's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, showcasing the largest-ever collection of her fashion, featuring roughly 200 items. This comprehensive exhibition explores the late Queen's wardrobe from all ten decades of her life, including her wedding and Coronation gowns, off-duty Balmoral looks, and iconic colourful suits, revealing the personal and diplomatic significance behind her style.

Contact: Valerie Gold

valeriegoldu3a@gmail.com

07831 562362



**HIGH SOCIETY
AT THE BARBICAN THEATRE
ON TUESDAY 30TH JUNE
£78 LEAVE RADLETT 11.45am**

YOU'RE INVITED TO THE MOST SWELL PARTY OF THE YEAR AS THIS SUMMER'S EAGERLY ANTICIPATED PRODUCTION DELIVERS ANOTHER GLORIOUS DOSE OF GOLDEN AGE MUSIC THEATRE ESCAPISM.

Helen George (*Call the Midwife, The King and I*) stars as glamorous socialite Tracy Lord and is joined by **Felicity Kendal** (*Rosemary and Thyme, Anything Goes*), alongside a full size orchestra, delivering a score overflowing with the best of **Cole Porter's** songbook including *Just One Of Those Things, Let's Misbehave, I Love Paris, Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?* and many more.

Contact: Joan Altman

joanaltmanu3a@outlook.com

01923 404920

Music, Magic, and Mid-Performance Mishaps

On New Year's Day, a group of us set off for the Barbican to welcome the year ahead with an afternoon of stirring music and great company. The trip began smoothly with the prompt arrival of our coach. After a light-hearted exchange with our driver, Barry, regarding New Year's Day hangovers, he reassured us that he has been teetotal for fifteen years. Suitably relaxed, we settled into our seats, confident we were in safe hands. Upon arriving at the Barbican, the group dispersed for lunch. Several members opted for Côte, the service suggested they won't be contenders for a Michelin star anytime soon. However, what the meal lacked in culinary excellence was more than compensated for by the fellowship we shared. The concert followed shortly after. We were grateful to find our seats located near the entrance, sparing our

"mature bodies" the challenge of navigating the auditorium's handrail-free steps. Armed with Union flags, we settled in for the performance. Anthony Inglis led the London Concert Orchestra through a joyful afternoon of stirring music, perfectly capturing the festive spirit. Despite the minor distress of his braces repeatedly coming undone—necessitating several mid-performance trouser hoists—he remained resolute. He charmed the audience, leading us in song and encouraging a brand of "gymnastics" that passed for 1960s teenage dancing. Participation was enthusiastic, reaching a crescendo of flag-waving during *Land of Hope and Glory*. As the music and indoor fireworks

concluded, we regrouped at the coach. Following a careful head count, we began the journey home to Radlett, ruminating on a thoroughly festive start to the year. **David Hammerson**



Hearing dogs for deaf people

Thanks to the Events Committee yet again – a great talk by Liz and her Hearing dog Rufus upstairs in the library.

What an asset these dogs are to people with hearing disabilities and what a safety measure when they can identify phone calls, smoke alarms, doorbells and all the things hearing people take for granted. This is all run by charity donations and we were delighted to be of assistance.

Adrienne



From your TV critics Terri and Brian.....

We saw a good film on Sky called THE BALLAD OF WALLIS ISLAND starring Carey Mulligan and with Tim Key and Tom Basden, who both also wrote the script. Tim’s character, Charles, is a lottery winner who owns Wallis Island, an extremely remote island in Wales, and Tom and Carey’s characters used to be a fairly famous folk duo from 2009 called McGwyer Mortimer, who were an item as well as singing partners and had split up many years ago. Charles pays them a lot of cash to stage a reunion gig just for him as he has always been a super-fan and he continually overflows with verbal diarrhoea and non-jokey jokes. In complete contrast Tom’s character is spiky with a wounded ego, and he wrote and sings all the beautiful music. Carey plays a sweet girl who has left all that behind and arrives on the island with her geeky birdwatching husband. It’s a really sweet and lovely film.



We started watching THE REVENGE CLUB on Paramount + in six episodes and we liked it at first telling the story of a divorce therapy group of people who meet in the pub after each session and talk about their anger. Each one is shown being interviewed by the police at the beginning of each episode about a murder that had occurred and further interrogation scenes are interwoven with the action. In the pub they decide to bring revenge one by one on their exes and it shows how brutal divorce has been on them all. It had well-known actors such as Douglas Henshall, Martin Compston and Meera Syal starring, but we felt it became too silly and didn’t continue watching unfortunately Anyone else agree?



The second series of RED EYE is in six parts on ITV (the 1st one aired in 2024) with a different story but with a few of the original characters. Jing Lisi reprises her role as DS Hana Li for a new investigation and it begins with the murder of a diplomatic courier at Heathrow and leads her to the US embassy in London where the new US Ambassador is hosting a party. She teams up with Martin Compston who plays Clay Brody, the security head at the embassy, to find the killer. Meanwhile a bomb threat has been received on board a government jet with the head of

M15 a passenger, played by Lesley Sharp. Some parts of it were a bit far-fetched but we enjoyed it on the whole, and the last two episodes had interesting twists and were particularly exciting, with a good conclusion.



If you love Judi Dench as we do then you would enjoy seeing TEA WITH JUDI DENCH on Sky Arts when she invites her old friend Sir Kenneth Branagh over for tea and they chat about Shakespeare and their extensive film and stage work and show some clips of them, some of which they also acted in together. We found it to be charming and very touching, especially when she was talking about her late husband, Michael Williams. They obviously have a great rapport and lots in common, and they chat easily and freely. Very enjoyable.



Then we saw GOODBYE JUNE, a film on Netflix starring and directed by Kate Winslet, whose son wrote the script. The story is that June, brilliantly played by Helen Mirren, is dying of cancer, which isn’t the most cheering of subjects. We weren’t sure whether to watch it but it had such good actors in it as well as Helen - Timothy Spall, Andrea Riseborough, Johnny Flynn and Toni Collette as well as many others that we recognised - that we thought we’d give it a try. However it was mainly about her husband, three daughters and son, and how they coped with the situation. It was beautifully written and acted and we thought all the

characters were excellent and it’s well worth seeing.



RIPPLE is an 8-part series on Netflix about family, friendship, love and loss. In New York City four strangers navigate life’s challenges whilst their separate paths intertwine in ways that change them forever through a series of chance encounters. There is Nate, a bar owner, separated from his wife, who discovers he has cancer, and a record label executive called Kris who is under pressure to discover the industry’s next breakthrough artist. Then there is an elderly man called Walter, whose wife unexpectedly dies after many happy years of marriage, and finally a talented young singer with some mental issues called Aria, whose husband has been cheating without her knowing. All very different people and they meet in a ripple effect that causes their stories to interconnect, as well as other people whose lives also connect with each other. Although quite sad in places we thought it was good and very sweet and it certainly makes a change from murder series!



The 4-part series on BBC 2 about the sinking of the Titanic is called TITANIC SINKS TONIGHT and tells the minute by minute first hand story of the most infamous disaster in maritime history. A vast archive of letters, interviews and memoirs of surviving passengers and crew acted by actual actors, and also the accounts of public enquiries have been pieced together. It's cleverly produced and filmed with experts who intersperse with the other information. It was very dramatic and showed many details that weren't known before; in particular the way that the crew dealt with the passengers, most of whom were completely unaware that the "unsinkable" ship was sinking! It's very good and we highly recommend this.



The film NUREMBERG had five-star reviews from some critics so we thought we'd watch it. About the Nuremberg trials from 80 years ago, where many top Nazis were charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, it stars Russell Crowe as Herman Goering, and Rami Malek (who played Freddie Mercury in the film Bohemian Rhapsody), who plays an American psychiatrist who is employed to interview all the 23 Nazis on trial and assess their morality and guilt. It explored particularly the complex relationship between his character and Goering, and although it was rather harrowing when it showed actual sequences of the death camps, it was very good and brilliantly acted by all, including Leo Goodall and Michael Shannon.



We haven't enjoyed many new comedy programmes recently but the new sit com on BBC called CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET starring Dawn French is pretty good. Her character, Debbie Fenton, is a "widow" whose oddball family commits a massive fraud when her husband, William, played by Mark Heap, is not dead. He's actually hiding in their house after a £250,000 life insurance policy is paid out. They confess this secret to their son, who is married to a police officer, and it IS quite funny, particularly as although they live in a fairly remote house, they have to keep the secret from various people who pop in to

see them randomly. We've only seen two episodes but it certainly is a relief from all the serious news that is happening at the moment!



And lastly we watched TOM STOPPARD: A CHARMED LIFE, the Alan Yentob interview about the extraordinary story of the life of Tom Stoppard in the BBC 2021 IMAGINE series of programmes. He was a brilliant playwright and also wrote the film script for the wonderful film Shakespeare in Love. His career took off with his play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the 1960s, followed by many more great plays, including the terrific Arcadia, and there was always a streak of melancholy below the sparkling surface. He reveals the influences and inspirations behind his writing and his play Leopoldstadt saw him face up to his painful past, with excerpts from many of his great works. A fascinating and brilliant man. This was repeated as Tom Stoppard passed away at the end of last year.

Happy watching and we appreciate any feedback. Terri & Brian

I love this column as I often pick up things that I would not have chosen to watch – thank you for all you put into this Terri and Brian, and they would love more comments from our members – Adrienne

I HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE
ACT ALL INTELLECTUAL
AND TALK ABOUT
MOZART WHILE THEY'VE
NEVER EVEN SEEN ONE
OF HIS PAINTINGS...

DINGBATS

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I said to the girl in B&Q, 'What's best for greasy ovens?' She said, 'Ammonia cleaner'. I said, 'Sorry, I thought you worked here'



Roasted butternut, mushroom & pearl barley strudel

Whether fully flaky filo pastry wrapped around a deliciously rich filling is the perfect meat-free main course – just serve with your usual slimming-friendly Christmas trimmings

ALLIUM EFFORT

SERVES 8 as part of a large roast dinner

SYNS PER SERVING 2½

READY IN 2 hours 15 minutes

1 butternut squash, halved, deseeded and chopped into chunks (no need to peel)

Low-calorie cooking spray

450g chestnut mushrooms, roughly chopped

4 garlic cloves, unpeeled

100g dried pearl barley

6 spring onions, finely sliced

10g fresh chives, finely sliced

1½g fresh flat-leaf parsley, leaves finely chopped

Juice of ½ lemon

3 x 35g filo pastry sheets

2 tsp black onion seeds

FOR THE ROASTED ROOTS

1 bunch fresh raw beetroot, peeled and chopped into wedges

500g parsnips, peeled and chopped into wedges

500g new potatoes, halved lengthways

400g spinach

1 Preheat your oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas 6. Spread the squash on a large, non-stick baking tray in a single layer and spray with cooking spray. Roast for 40-50 minutes, adding the mushrooms and garlic 20 minutes before the end, turning the squash over at the same time.

2 Meanwhile, boil the pearl barley for 25 minutes until tender, but still with a little bite. Drain, run briefly under warm water, then set aside in the sieve over the pan.

3 Once the squash and mushrooms are caramelised, tip them into a bowl with the garlic. Tumble the root veg onto the baking tray. Spray with cooking spray and roast for 30 minutes while you assemble the strudel.

4 Line a large, non-stick baking tray with baking paper. Squeeze the garlic from their skins into the squash and mushrooms, then mix in the barley, spring onions, herbs and lemon juice. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper, then mash together using your hands or a large spoon.

5 Lay the filo pastry sheets vertically side by side on the worktop, overlapping each long edge by about 10cm. Spoon the filling into a thick sausage shape along the bottom, leaving around 10cm border at the bottom and on either side. Shape the mixture into a neat pile, then bring up the sides and bottom overhanging around it and carefully roll up into a large sausage. Work quite quickly, as the filo will split as it dries out.

6 Once it's rolled up, carefully transfer the strudel to the lined baking tray, seam-side down. Spray all over with cooking spray, then scatter with the onion seeds. When the veg have been roasting for 30 minutes, turn the oven down to 180°C/fan 160°C/gas 4. Turn the veg, return to the oven on a lower shelf, then put the strudel on the oven shelf above them.

7 Bake for 35-40 minutes until the strudel is crisp and a deep golden colour. About 5 minutes before it's ready, scatter the spinach over the top of the root veg and allow to wilt. Stir the spinach into the veg. Using a sharp serrated knife, slice the strudel into 8 equal pieces and serve with the veg on the side.

PREP AHEAD The filling can be made in advance, then kept chilled for up to 3 days, or kept frozen for up to 1 month. Defrost completely before rolling up.

The vegetarian cookery group got off to a great start for 2026 making a savoury cheesecake, a winter salad and a lovely strudel of which the recipe is here if anyone wants to give it a go, it's well worth making. We are looking forward to trying lots of new recipes over the next few months and catching up with each other and putting the world to right.

Group leader Diane 🍷 Group leader Diane 🍷

Eddie Chapman – Double Agent – our last speaker subject.

At our January meeting, we were treated to a truly memorable lecture arranged by Stephen Gold. Our speaker, Michael Kushner, spoke on the extraordinary life of Eddie Chapman – crook, safe-cracker, and wartime double agent.

Without a single note in front of him, Michael guided us fluently through Chapman's tangled career: from his criminal exploits and imprisonment, to his recruitment by the Germans, and ultimately his role as a British double agent. His storytelling brought to life the



intrigue, danger, and sheer audacity of Chapman's adventures, holding the audience spellbound throughout.

Conversations afterwards confirmed the impression: members were unanimous in their admiration for Michael's delivery and the fascinating subject matter. It was a lecture that combined historical detail with vivid narrative, leaving us both entertained and enlightened.

Our thanks go to Stephen Gold for securing such a distinguished speaker, and to Michael Kushner for sharing with us the remarkable tale of Eddie Chapman – a man whose life was as ruffled as it was remarkable – **David Hammerson**

Modern Babysitting.

(Except not babysitting. More observing two near-adults while attempting not to interfere and still being blamed for everything.)

Arrive at daughter's house at 3.30pm and let ourselves in. Elder Grandchild (owns face of mild suspicion and limbs of a startled foal) arrives home from school at 4pm. He fumbles with the key box for a solid minute, which does not bode well for the future of Western civilisation. Eventually gets in. Appears genuinely shocked to find grandparents already inside, like burglars who've brought biscuits.

The Itinerary

- 4 O Clock: Grandson gets changed immediately.
- Suggest outfit. He listens, which feels like a trap.
- Husband escorts him to station like a Victorian chaperone, instructions being:
 - locate Debbie
 - identify Debbie by "waving sadly from carriage"
 - insert Grandson into correct train.
- Debbie does **not** wave sadly. Or at all.



WORRY PHASE ONE

Grandson boards train anyway, announcing he will walk up and down the train until he finds her, which feels wildly optimistic and possibly illegal.

Texts sent.

No replies.

More texts sent.

Still nothing.

Imagine Grandson living permanently on train, raised by commuters.

Eventually: text arrives. He has found Debbie.

Move immediately to :-

WORRY PHASE TWO

Husband returns home in torrential rain looking like a drowned spaniel who has made bad life choices. I decide tea is needed.

Discover: NO KETTLE

Instead there is a futuristic boiling device, possibly from NASA. Press buttons. Lights flash. Nothing happens. The machine judges me silently. Tea dream abandoned.

6.30 Pick up Younger Granddaughter from Tesco car park. This miraculously works, making it the high point of the evening.

Granddaughter immediately:

- explains cooker
- explains bin

The cooker has 8 settings, none labelled “normal oven”. The bin is electronic and beeping. After pressing all available buttons we decide it is safer not to use it and will simply *carry rubbish home in pockets*.

Granddaughter later reveals bin is broken and opens it effortlessly with one finger, like a magician.

Time to cook dinner.

Kitchen contains approximately twenty cupboards, all minimalist, all identical, all hiding things from me personally. Open every cupboard. Discover daughter does not own:

- normal pans
- normal utensils
- half the things I’ve used since 1983

Improvise wildly. Dinner now resembles a concept rather than a meal.

Fatal error: potatoes undercooked.

Dinner delayed by one and a half hours

Reflect that I have been looking forward to this ‘Babysitting’ for months. Now standing in beautiful silent kitchen, surrounded by appliances that hate me, cooking dinner for teenagers who will remember none of this and still text their mother every five minutes to check we’re doing it right.

Still. It’s lovely. I think! STEPHANIE MOORE

Happy New Year to you - and thanks as always for the newsletter which I always welcome receiving.

I see we should also be saying Happy New Knee to you - hope it's going well. My wife Sue has had both hips replaced and although there was a deal of discomfort and difficulty for the first week, both ops have proved very well worth-while and you wouldn't know she'd got new hips (except when she goes through the detectors at airports). I appreciate knees are a bit more involved than hips - Sue's surgeon said to her that hips are routine whereas 'knees are interesting' - but one of our near neighbours had her knee done at the same time as Sue's second hip so she and Meena did a good deal of comparing notes and encouraging each other's walking (which seems to be the best thing to do). We wish you well with it.

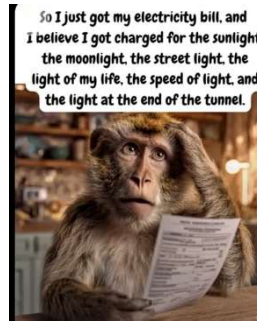
Incidentally, my equivalent to your knee op was having a hernia repair on 12 Dec. Just a day job of course but I had to be in the hospital by 7:15am - and as the hospital was at London Bridge, that meant a very early start. Train of course - not driving into London - so I got up earlier than intended having had the usual fitful night's 'sleep' worrying that I wouldn't wake up in time, despite knowing that the alarm was set. So, wander off to Radlett station for the 5:56 (yes there are trains at that time) only to find en-route that it was cancelled. But any experienced Thameslink traveller always goes for a train earlier than you need and the 6:16 was on time and after some agonising about a taxi I decided to wait and it arrived and got me there OK. All seemed to go well and I was duly sent off (Sue coming to collect me for the return train journey) with instructions to do what I felt able to do but not to lift anything over 5kg. My dog seemed to realise that she had to treat me carefully but small grandchildren still needed picking up - oh well, not much over 5kg.... And the point of getting the op done when I did was vindicated when I had no difficulty getting the turkey into the oven and properly lifting grandchildren over the festive season.....

Advance notice - Autumn u3a holiday for 2026

Sunday October 4th - Thursday 8th October to Harrogate.

If you are interested in joining this holiday send an email with your name(s) to Cathy Pole - email address: pole2pole@gmail.com and state if you want a single or double room. Further details to follow!

I note you asked whether anyone does the newsletter's Dingbats - well I always do and find them so infuriating (I count it a good month when I can get more than half reasonably quickly) that I inflict them on a bunch of my friends over a drink. **John Whiting**



Dingbat answers

- ☐ Peas In A Pod
- ☐ One Thing After Another
- ☐ Robin Hood
- ☐ Paper Cut
- ☐ 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9, Ten
- ☐ Six Of One Half A Dozen Of The Other
- ☐ Ambiguous
- ☐ Turned Inside Out
- ☐ Little Misunderstanding Between Friends
- ☐ The Odds Are Overwhelming
- ☐ See Through Blouse
- ☐ Gross Injustice

ARTS CORNER -- from Sandy Cohen

THE JOHN MADEJSKI FINE ROOMS @ THE ROYAL ACADEMY BURLINGTON HOUSE

Open from Tuesday to Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm until 24 February 2026 with free entry and no booking required. Access is via lift or stairs to 1st Floor inside the RA and there is seating throughout if needed.

See <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/fine-rooms-open>

Six beautifully embellished rooms not usually open to the public, showcasing a wide variety of paintings by Royal Academicians spanning 250 years.

The rooms themselves are worth seeing and so are the art works and while you are there why not visit some other wonderful art or sculpture in the general collection and have a coffee or lunch at their café.

We had a great day out with easy travel from Stanmore on the Jubilee line to Green Park followed by a short walk to the RA.

V & A EAST STOREHOUSE LOCATED WITHIN THE HERE EAST BUILDING

See <https://www.vam.ac.uk/east/storehouse/visit>

Where: Parkes Street, Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Hackney Wick, London, E20 3AX

Opening times: Open daily from 10am to 6pm, and from 10am to 10pm on Thursday and Saturday.

Admission: It is free to visit and you do not need to book in advance. Some special exhibitions and events will carry a separate charge.

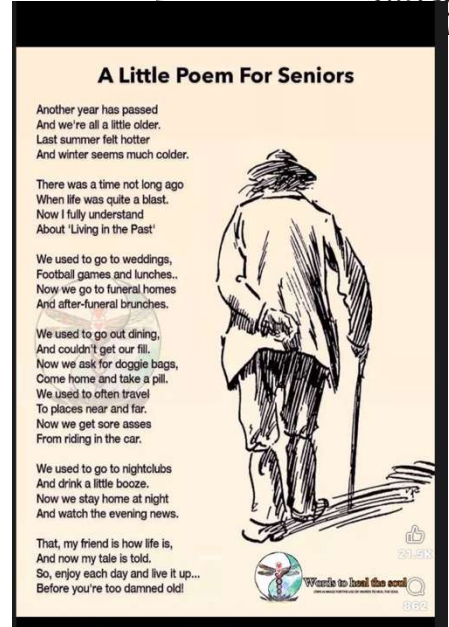
Getting there: The closest stations are Hackney Wick Overground (ten-minute walk) and Stratford station (20-minute walk). The 338 bus route stops outside Here East with the Here East bus shuttle running from Stratford stations Monday to Friday, every 10 minutes from 6.30am to 9pm. All stations have step free access.

Access is via stairs and lifts but there is no seating available.

There is a café but there are other food offerings nearby – we started with coffee and finished with lunch of course.

Part museum, part working warehouse, the Storehouse offers a radical new way to explore the V&A's vast collection, from a 15th-century Spanish ceiling to Elton John's glittering tour costumes. Think: the Hogwarts Room of Requirement meets an interactive archive – a place where history, culture and curiosity collide.

It is not set out like a normal museum or gallery and takes a little time to get used to the vast array of fascinating objects they have displayed and literally stacked up. There could be a Ming vase near a Phillip Treacey hat! It is mind boggling but if you like a bit of a challenge this could be for you.





There is no way you can see everything on one visit so if you like it you might want to go again – and again!

There is some curated signage but mainly the way to find out about anything that takes your fancy will be via an app on your phone that staff will assist you with.

The building is designed to get you closer to objects held in the V&A collections, and to the work of the museum. The central Weston Collections Hall is the in the centre of the public route. Spread across three floors it reaches a height of over 20 metres. In the centre of the Collections Hall there

is a section of glass flooring with a view down to the amazing Agra Colonnade and working store below.

YOUNG V & A

See <https://www.vam.ac.uk/young>

Cambridge Heath Road Bethnal Green E2 9PA

Free admission but modest charges apply for special exhibitions.

Getting there:

Bethnal Green underground (2-minute walk)

Cambridge Heath overground (5-minute walk)

Nearest step-free access station is Whitechapel (18-minute walk)

Buses 106, 254, 388 and D6 stop nearby



This is the museum where children, young people and families can imagine, play and design in three big galleries. Be inspired by spaces, explore the collection and get creative at the Art Fund Museum of the Year 2024.

We are taking one of our grandsons to their new exhibition celebrating 50 years **Inside Aardman: Wallace and Gromit and Friends** where you can go behind the scenes of stop-motion animation and

explore how Aardman's iconic characters and worlds are brought to life. The Friends include Sean the Sheep and Morph from the late Tony Hart's wonderful children's TV art programme and many more.

Opens on 12 February 2026 See <https://www.vam.ac.uk/exhibitions/inside-aardman-wallace-gromit-and-friends>

ANNELY JUDA FINE ART (GALLERY)

<https://www.annelyjudafineart.co.uk/>

At 16 Hanover Square London W1S 1HT

Based in a Grade II listed Georgian townhouse opened in 2025 after 35 years on Dering Street - the gallery has operated since 1968 when it was located in a former warehouse space in London's Tottenham Mews.

Opening hours: Tues – Friday 10 – 5.30 Saturday 11 – 5

Free admission and no booking required.

David Hockney Exhibition until 28 February 2026 entitled "Some very, very, very new Paintings not shown in Paris"

Hockney's fourteenth exhibition at the gallery, and following his celebrated exhibition at Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris last summer, this show will debut never-seen-before paintings completed in his London studio over the last six months, underpinning Hockney's unwavering commitment to and vigour for the act of painting and cementing him as perhaps the most iconic artist of today.



BERYL COOK EXHIBITION AT THE BOX, TAVISTOCK PLACE, PLYMOUTH, DEVON PL4 8AX

Entitled Beryl Cook: Pride and Joy Closes 31 May 2026

See <https://www.theboxplymouth.com/>

If you love the quirky and fun-loving art of Beryl Cook maybe a visit to Devon should be on the cards this Spring.

Celebrate the life, work and legacy of one of Britain's most distinctive artists in this landmark exhibition which marks 100 years since her birth.

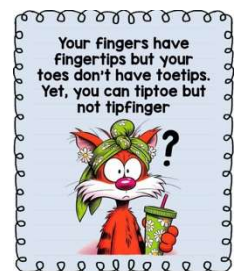
'Pride and Joy' will be the most extensive display of Beryl Cook's work to

date with more than 80 works, from iconic paintings to rarely seen treasures from private collections and the Cook family archives. The exhibition will fundamentally reassess Cook's significance as a chronicler of everyday life during a time of great change in Britain.

From last month's quiz.....with thanks to Peter

50s & 60s QUIZ with ANSWERS

- 1950** Who played PC George Dixon in Dixon of Dock Green? **Jack Warner**
Who was executed for a murder he didn't commit and exonerated 16 years later? **Timothy Evans**
- 1951** Where would you have found the SKYLON? **Festival of Britain at Battersea**
What was the name of the ship that capsized in the Channel and made worldwide news due to its Captain refusing to leave the ship until the very last moment? **Flying Enterprise**
- 1952** Where was Princess Elizabeth when King George VI died? **Kenya (Africa)**
Who were the panelists on the first UK episode of What's My Line? **David Nixon, Isabel Barnet, Barbara Kelly, Gilbert Harding.**
- 1953** What was the science fiction TV series that scared lots of people? **The Quatermass Experiment**
What song did Gene Kelly sing in the film of the same name? **Singin' in the Rain**
- 1954** What major sporting achievement was made in 1954? **4 minute mile**
What new family TV series is considered as the first TV soap opera? **The Grove Family**
- 1955** What significant medical advance was announced in 1955? **Salk vaccine for polio**
What film about delinquent pupils in a New York school introduced the song Rock Around the Clock? **Blackboard Jungle**
- 1956** What event resulted in the resignation of Prime Minister Anthony Eden? **Suez Crisis**
Which actress starred in the film The Girl Can't Help It? **Jayne Mansfield**
- 1957** What was the great scientific achievement of 1957? **Sputnik 1**
What was Elvis Presley's 2nd film, released in 1957? **Loving You**
- 1958** What cost 6d for the 1st hour? **Parking in London**
What does VOLARE mean? **To fly**
- 1959** What was the cost of a Mini at launch? **£496**
Who had a hit with Lipstick on your collar? **Connie Francis**
- 1960** Who was the U2 spy plane pilot shot down by Russia? **Gary Powers**
Who played Danger Man on TV? **Patrick McGoohan**
- 1961** Who was the first person in Space? **Yuri Gagarin**
What US cartoon series was launched on British TV? **The Flintstones**
- 1962** Who was Oleg Penkovsky? **Double agent who told JFK missiles nor ready for launch**
What series launched starring Roger Moore? **The Saint**
- 1963** How many shots did Lee Harvey Oswald fire at JFK's motorcade? **3**
What was the production cost of the Cleopatra movie? **\$50m**
- 1964** When was the first Channel Tunnel concept designed? **1802**
In which round did Sonny Liston retire in his title fight with Cassius Clay? **7th**
- 1965** Who did Ruth Ellis shoot and kill? **David Blakely**
What title was given to the theme tune from *Dr Zhivago*? **Lara's Theme – Somewhere My Love**
- 1966** What 2 words were overprinted on our 4d stamp after England won the World Cup? **England Winners**
What was the film from which the tune for *Strangers in the Night* originated? **A Man Could Get Killed**
- 1967** What was the first programme transmitted in colour by the BBC? **Wimbledon Tennis Championships**
Who was *The Fugitive*? **Dr Richard Kimble**
- 1968** Which 2 decimal coins were released to get the public familiarised with the new currency? **5p & 10p**
Who was the astronaut in 2001 A Space Odyssey - stranded in his space pod because the computer HAL would not open the main ships doors? **Dave (Bowman)**
- 1969** Why are there no good photos of Neil Armstrong on the Moon? **He was the photographer and had the only camera**
What was the film in which Barbara Windsor's bikini top was pulled off? **Carry on Camping**



Any answers ???



Sadly two of our members have passed away recently – our sincere condolences to Amanda Cheek, whose husband Eric died and to Michael Lester on loss of his wife Ros.

We also wish a speedy recovery to all those who are unwell, due to illness or accident.

