

November 2025 Newsletter

From the Chair



Hello everyone. So here is the email you have all been waiting for – the Thorley u3a Newsletter.

A few things to bring to your attention (full details further on)

1. If you are yet to re-new your membership you only have a few weeks left, after which time you will no longer enjoy the benefits of being a member.

2. Thank you to those involved in organising the recent Quiz Night and special thanks to Carmen and Ken for keeping the evening on track. A big thank you to our current events Co-ordinator who will be standing down from this important role in the near future.

3. Our u3a is still in need of a Membership Secretary, Communications Officer and Events Co-ordinator. Can you help to fill one of these important positions?

By the time you read this you might be recovering from Halloween and looking forward to Guy Fawkes night. I read a slightly amusing piece in the press the other day about Halloween and how it could be fraught with hazards such as mice and rats nesting in your carved out pumpkins! Have you ever wondered why we use pumpkins at Halloween? It would appear that Pumpkins became associated with Halloween in the 19th century, when Irish immigrants took the tradition of carving lanterns from root vegetables like turnips to the United States. They discovered that pumpkins were much easier to carve and so turnips were no longer used. The carving of the lantern is sometimes known as jack-o-lanterns which linked to the Irish legend of Stingy Jack.

Stingy tried to struck a deal with the devil but was doomed to roam the earth, with only a carved out turnip with a burning coal inside to search for a resting place.

Finally... just a reminder there is NO monthly meeting in December.

Best wishes

Nigel

Our Meeters and Greeters



PLEASE NOTE – THE MEETING STARTS AT 2.10 pm IN THE HALL.

The meeting starts at 2.10 pm in the Charis Centre with a welcome from the Chair.
The talk from our speaker will follow this.



Remember – We have step free access by the main entrance where meeters and greeters will take you into the hall. There is also a hearing loop system. To make best use of it, you should sit in the far right-hand corner of the hall, as seen from the stage.

Committee News

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

A number of members have yet to renew their subscriptions.

A final reminder will be sent to members who have not renewed by 31st October. If you have not renewed by 15th November, you will then be a lapsed member and removed from the membership list.



**Membership Subs 2025-2026
From 1st September**

**Our membership subscription
for 2025-2026 will remain at £15.**

Once you have renewed your membership you will be able to collect your new membership card at our monthly meetings at The Charis Centre.



Payment by bank transfer is our preferred method of payment. Please use a bank payment reference of **MEMBERSHIP** when making your payment. If you are renewing a membership, it is useful if you include your membership number in the reference too.

Our full bank account details are shown in the table below.

If renewing by post, please send your cheque to Anne Willett (Membership Secretary) at the address below, enclosing a stamped, self addressed envelope if you wish your membership card to be posted to you.

Anne Willett
9, Lloyd Taylor Close
Little Hadham
Ware
Herts
SG11 2NB

Cheques, should be made payable to Thorley u3a, or you can pay by cash at our monthly meetings. All cheques payable to Thorley u3a unless otherwise stated.

The **co-operative** bank

Account 1
Account name - Thorley u3a
Sort Code 08 – 92 - 99
Account Number 67274808
Payments - Annual membership subs only

Account 2
Account name - Thorley u3a
Sort Code 08 – 92 - 99
Account Number 67274947
Payments – All other money – Groups, trips / events

Committee News

RECRUITMENT OF NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2026

We are over half way through 2025, and we still need three new Committee members to join us next year. U3a has a 'Three Year Rule' where ideally, members serve on the Committee for this length of time. It enables all u3a's to have a regular turnover of new faces to keep everything going. We need –



Membership

Membership Secretary

Main role is to maintain the list of members on Beacon, keep the list up to date and add new members throughout the year. Publicise new subs renewals each August, print and distribute new cards to members at the monthly meetings. Send out a welcome letter to new members.



Communications

Main role is to prepare and send out to members the monthly email, liaise with Committee members, Groups Co-ordinator, and with our Neighbourhood u3a groups.



Events Co-ordinator

To organise events (other than holidays, theatre trips and outings organised by individual Group Leaders). This includes – Quiz Night, Christmas Lunch, the Group Leaders lunch, and the New Members Coffee Morning twice each year

What do you need to join our successful Committee? Basic IT skills like spreadsheets, and use of Word. There will be unlimited help, lots of support and training guaranteed.

We do need three new Committee members. If we cannot fill these roles, the future of our u3a is at risk. Please think about this, and talk to others who may need a little encouragement to 'step up'.

Tech Team Update



A new development in sound at the Charis centre.

The Charis centre has installed a new Auracast Transmitter that should help members with hearing aids. Older hearing aids relied on the induction loop system. The aids had to be switched to the "T" setting. We will keep this system going for the foreseeable period.



The tech crew noticed that newer aids do not have the "T" setting but rely on Bluetooth to connect to home devices such as your TV. Bluetooth used to rely on pairing the transmitter to the receiver (your Hearing aid). Newer versions of Bluetooth (V 5.2 or higher,) do not have this pairing requirement. This enables Bluetooth hearing aids with V5.2 to receive the audio being broadcast in the Charis centre. Some of you will have Bluetooth versions below 5.2, but you should be able to upgrade the software to the latest version. (V6.0) You may need to contact your supplier to do this.

If you have any queries please contact any member of the technical team.

Thanks

Committee News

Update Your Membership Details Online

Have you moved house or changed your telephone number or email address since joining Thorley u3a? Would you like to add your emergency contact details to your membership record?

You can now do this via the Thorley u3a website.

<https://thorley.u3asite.uk/>

At the bottom of the Home Page there is a link to the Membership Page where you can send us your updates by clicking on the button –

Update Your Details

Committee News

Committee News – Election of new Committee members for 2026



Our AGM is on Monday 5th January before our usual meeting at the Charis Centre.

We will notify all members by the 8th November that nominations for the vacant positions are now open. Nomination forms are on our website and can be printed.

The deadline for nominations is Monday 22nd December. In the event that there are two or more members interested in any position, there will be a vote. Details will follow if this is needed.



OUR FINAL SPEAKER FOR 2025 AND THE FIRST FOR 2026



NOVEMBER SPEAKER

Monday 3rd November
Oh Yes it is !



Jim Stebbings

A history of English pantomime

JANUARY SPEAKER

Monday 5th January

Cherith Lowry

Sir Frederick Gibberd - His life , work and garden

Future speakers for 2026 to include talks on -

✚ Wildlife in Zambia

✚ Ant & Dec – the WI and me as seen on TV

Lindsey Barrrell - who gave the burlesque talk, and who is giving the BSL talk later this month.



✚ Fraud and Scam awareness

✚ Dad's Army – the nation's favourite comedy

✚ Old Movies saved my life

✚ My adventures in helicopters

✚ The National Garden Scheme and the Mount Garden in Roydon

✚ Adventures of a ghost hunter

✚ Churchill's intervention in the Russian Civil War

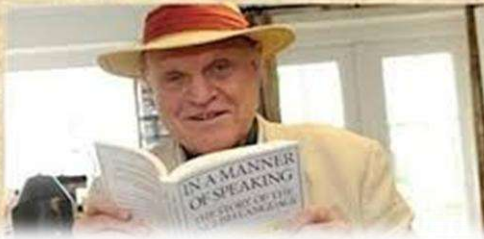
✚ Sing and song of Christmas

All the details of these speakers will be on our website early in 2026.

Please do come along to our monthly meetings. Our Committee always tries to get a variety of speakers that will interest many of our members. Some of the speakers have been recommended to us by our own members. We have seen more members attend our monthly meetings during 2025. This is very positive.

The October Meeting at the CC

History of Spoken English



CHARLIE HAYLOCK

Our guest speaker for our October meeting was Charlie Haylock. In a spellbinding hour, Charlie took us through the origins of the English language from its very humble beginnings in the 5th Century, as the Angles, Saxons and Jutes migrated to Britain from Germany and the Netherlands after the demise of the Roman empire.

This was the start of many changes that have been shaped by history leading to the global language that it is today. He answered the question about why we have so many dialects and why we do not all speak standard English. He said that all the dialects are an integral part of what makes up the English language and should always be encouraged.

They are rich with linguistic traditions and history with many ancient words and phrases deriving from Anglo-Saxon and old Norse origins. In 1755 Samuel Johnson published the first ever English dictionary and in today's money that would have cost some £800.

Currently, the English dictionary contains over 600,000 words.

He ended his presentation by reciting a simple poem entitled "Up" which demonstrated the full richness of the English language.

Read the description on the next page.

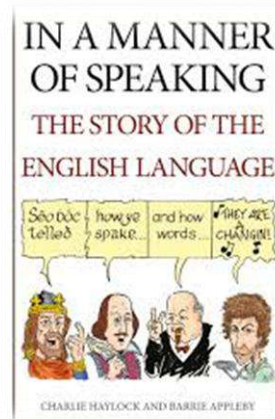
Charlie has been a very popular speaker at many functions over the years, particularly in the East of England.



He coached the actor, Ralph Fiennes, in how to speak with a Suffolk accent for the film "The Dig", and he has been awarded an Honorary Graduate at the University of Suffolk for all he has done to put Suffolk on the map.



We have been trying to get him to Thorley U3A for quite some time and as he is finally retiring from the speaker circuit at the end of this year, we have got in just in time!



Charlie stayed behind after his talk and the queue for his book sales was probably the longest that we have seen at our meetings.

Barry Maxwell

Charlie Haylock
part of his entertaining talk

UP - This two-letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and that word is 'UP.' It is listed in the dictionary as an [adv], [prep], [adj], [n] or [v].

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP?

At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP, and why are the officers UP for election and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report? We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the old car.

At other times, this little word has real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses.

To be dressed is one thing but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is stopped UP.

We open UP a store in the morning but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP!

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word UP in the dictionary. In a desk-sized dictionary, it takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about thirty definitions.

If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out, we say it is clearing UP. When it rains, it soaks UP the earth. When it does not rain for awhile, things dry UP.

One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now . . . my time is UP!

Don't mess this UP. Send this on to everyone you look UP in your address book . . . or not . . . it's UP to you.

Project for students: Look up in the dictionary every "up" in this list.

Discounts in 'Stortford
Just show your Membership Card

We are very grateful to the following traders in Bishops Stortford for their generous offers of discounts for our u3a members.

Coopers – Bridge Street, Bishops Stortford - 15%



Garden Terrace Café – near the War Memorial –15%



#CaffeeInn (Florence Walk near the Charis Centre) – 15%





Christmas Lunch - Great Hadham Golf Club
Tuesday 2nd December – 12 pm for a 12.30 pm start

Bookings Now Being Taken

Following the success of last year's Christmas Lunch, we are again holding it at Great Hadham Golf & Country Club, Great Hadham Road SG10 6JE. It will be on **Tuesday 2nd December** – doors open at 12.00pm for 12.30pm start.

Tickets for the lunch will cost **£38.50 per person** and will include a welcome drink on arrival (a glass of wine or a soft drink), tea/coffee and mince pie afterwards

The menu is attached. If you would like to attend, please email me to say which Starter, Main and Dessert you would like to order. If you are reserving two or more places, please make it clear who wants what.

Also, please state if there are other members you wish to sit with – some tables seat up to 10. We may need to combine smaller groups, and if there are just one or two of you, we will also seat you with other members.

I will then email you back to confirm that your place is reserved and with details of how to pay by bank transfer or cheque.

Please collect the welcome drink of your choice at the entrance (red/white wine or orange juice). Other drinks can be purchased from the bar, but please note that the bar does not accept cash, only credit/debit card payments.

As always there will be a raffle, with tickets priced at £1 each.

Christmas Lunch bookings, with payment, will also be taken at our October and November meetings, but please book by email if you possibly can.

Please note that the last date for orders will be
Friday 7th November.

Please contact John Bailey at –
treasurer2ic@thorleyu3agmail.com



Christmas Menu

Starters

-Sweet Potato & Red Pepper Soup with a Crusty Roll

NF, EF, DF, VG, (GF option available)

-Meatballs in a Rich Tomato Sauce with Toasted Ciabatta

NF, EF, DF, (GF option available)

-Salt & Pepper Battered Squid with a Zesty Dill Mayo

NF

-Sourdough Topped with Basil Pesto, Sun-Blushed Tomatoes &

Halloumi Drizzled with Balsamic Vinegar

V, EF, (GF option available)

Mains

-Traditional Roast Turkey & Gammon with Sage & Onion Stuffing &
a Pig in Blanket

NF, DF, EF, (GF option available)

-Butternut Squash, Leek, Kale, Mushroom & Cranberry Wellington

VG, (GF option available)

(All Served with Seasonal Vegetables, Roast Potatoes & Gravy)

-Fish Pie with Mash Potato Topping & Seasonal Vegetables

NF, EF, GF

Desserts

-Warm Salted Caramel Brownie Topped with Vanilla Ice-Cream

VG, GF, DF

-Christmas Eton Mess - Crushed Meringue, Mixed Berries in a Cassis
Cream

GF, NF, V

-Traditional Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce

V, (GF option available)

-Baked Vanilla Cheesecake with a Blackcurrant Compote

GF, NF, V

(NF - nut free, EF - egg free, GF - gluten free, V - Vegetarian, VG - vegan, DF - dairy free)



Groups News from Annie Compton

Annie Compton has a table in the Charis Centre at the back of the hall for our monthly meetings. New members are welcome to have a chat with Annie about any group in which they may be interested. Equally, if anyone is interested in becoming a group leader, would like to assist in running an existing group, forming a new group entirely, or joining our Committee, Annie will be more than happy to talk through what would be involved.



Suggestion Box. You can put your suggestions in the box about Groups, and for the Committee. If you prefer to email a suggestion, Here are the email addresses –

Annie Compton -
groups.thorley@gmail.com

Dave Willett at -
comms.thorley@gmail.com

Pickleball update 4 Thorley members now in the group



The Sawbridgeworth u3a Pickleball Group has now got 14 of our members. Pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports in the world for all ages. It is a bat and ball game played as doubles on a smaller tennis court. All very informal and friendly.



The group meets at Sawbridgeworth Tennis and Pickleball Club, Springhall Road, CM21 9ET, FREE parking, every Monday from 10am – midday.

It is outdoors so weather permitting. First session is FREE, thereafter £5 per session.

If you would like to try your hand at Pickleball (like Taylor Swift) then come along and have a go, or express an interest by emailing info@sawbridgeworthtennis.org.uk putting U3A Pickleball in the heading



British Sign Language



I have booked Lindsey Barrell, who gave us an interesting talk on Burlesque in 2024, to give us a talk on BSL. She has other talents, and other talks as well.

She has been a BSL Tutor for 20 years.



Did you know ?????

- ❖ BSL has 150,000+ users in the UK.
- ❖ In the 2011 Census, 15,000 people said it was their main language.
- ❖ The BBC use BSL for many programmes including the News.

Date – Monday 24th November
Times – 2pm – 4pm
Where ? – Emmaus Centre
Cost ? – FREE

This looks to be a really interesting talk, and I would like to fill the Emmaus Centre.

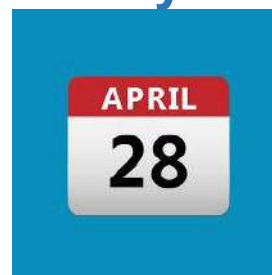
BSL is an important part of our culture to help deaf people.

Please contact me to book your place

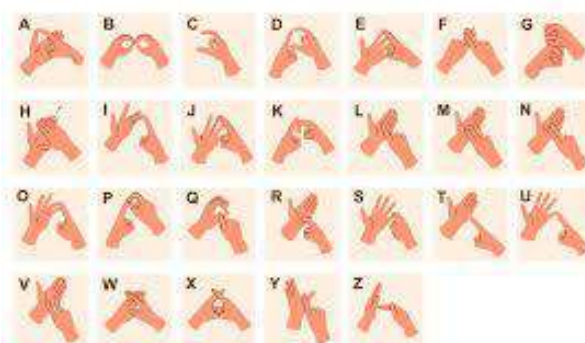
Annie Compton -
groups.thorley@gmail.com



This is on the 28th April
each year.



BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE



U3A Singers Christmas Concert



Tickets now on sale for our u3a Singers Christmas Concert

Tickets are now available for the u3a Singers Christmas Concert on **Saturday December 6th**. It's the perfect start to the Christmas celebrations!

The concert will again be held at the Hub in Apton Road, Bishop's Stortford, starting at 7.30pm.

This favourite annual event is both entertaining and great fun. This year's programme includes popular music by the likes of the Beatles and Eric Clapton, as well as classics from Mozart and Schubert. And of course lots of Christmas favourites, such as John Rutter and traditional carols.

There will be opportunities for the audience to join in with the singing... and we can also promise a few really memorable showstoppers!

Home-made mince pies and wine, plus our popular raffle, will add to the festivities.

Tickets will be on sale at our November U3A meeting, or you can contact Carmen Konopka using the email link or phone number below. Tickets are just £10 per person and £5 for children.

U3A SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT Saturday December 6th, 7.30pm

Musical Director: Sue Hickman

Pianist: Michael Smith

Programme of popular music by the likes of the Beatles, Joni Mitchell and Eric Clapton, as well as classics from Mozart and Schubert, plus lots of Christmas favourites - among them John Rutter compositions and traditional carols

The Hub, Apton Road, Bishop's Stortford

Tickets £10.00 (Children £5.00)
including drink & nibbles

Contact: 01279 653091

u3a learn,
laugh,
live



What the Papers Say



November's month's theme will be –

These days, do you encourage your grandchildren to go to university ?



Venue - Emmaus Centre

Date - Monday 17th November

Time - 10:30 am - £2 at the door.

PLEASE NOTE NEW DAY TO MEET

If this will be your first visit,
Welcome! And maybe drop a text to
Tom on 07977 574 454, so I bring
enough biscuits.

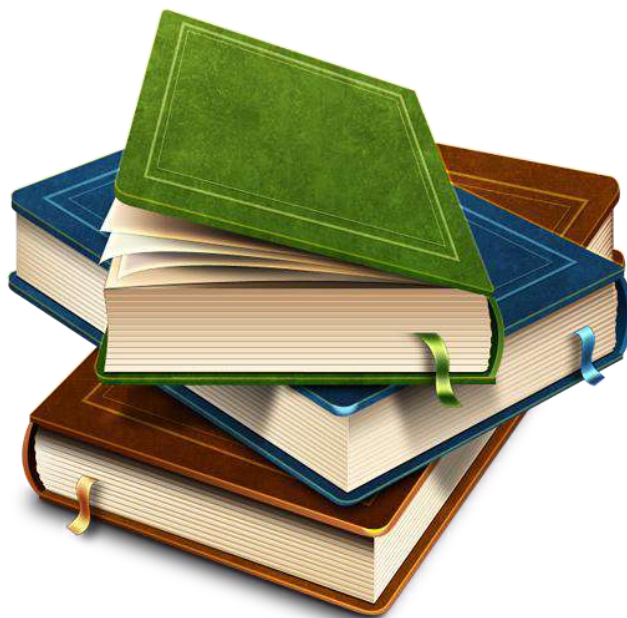
Tom McNeeney

**NEW MEMBERS WELCOME TO
'SOUND OFF' AND EXPRESS YOUR
OPINIONS.**



Book Club 1

Needs new members



If you like to read a good book, and
discuss it afterwards with friends, this
is the group for you.

Contact – Linda Ketteridge

Email -

vicechair.thorleyu3a@gmail.com



Reports from our Groups



Quiz Night – 18th October

Our 5th Quiz Night saw over 60 of our quiz loving members take part at the Thorley Community Centre. Eight teams pitted their wits against each other with some tricky questions set by Quizmaster Carmen Kanopka.



Table rounds included identifying pasta shapes, bridges around the world and more difficult anagram ones on football legends and music puzzlers.



Quizmaster Carmen and Ken the scorer comparing notes



Interval food – fish'n'chips or chicken'n'chips

The quiz rounds included rounds on local knowledge (all on Bishops Stortford), quotations, city breaks, deserts and desserts, and past times (History). Did you know that the first iPhone was introduced in 2007 ???



Linda Ketteridge announcing the results

The scores were –

Table 1 – 1st/The Invincibles – 133 points

Table 6 – 2nd/Top Stitch – 131 points

Table 5 – 3rd/Linda's Lovelies – 123 points

Table 2 – 3rd also /The Misfits – 123 points



Some of the winning team, The Invincibles, with their bottles of wine as prizes.

Our thanks goes to Carmen and Ken for all their hard work, and a few other volunteers for setting the hall up and packing it all away afterwards. An enjoyable Saturday night.

Dave Willett



U3a Singers

Festival fun for the U3A Singers

The U3A Singers were one of six choirs who took part in the Bishop's Stortford Choir Festival in the Methodist Church at the beginning of October, raising funds for the Isabel Hospice, whose volunteers served refreshments during the interval.

Each of the choirs performed for 15 minutes, then everyone sang together – and the volume from the 150 Festival singers nearly took the roof off!

Our U3A Singers programme included a song telling Mozart's life story in two and a half minutes, Eric Clapton's Tears in Heaven and a Beatles medley, with all the Festival singers joining us for the final chorus of Hey Jude.

We welcome new members to the U3A Singers – sopranos, altos and baritones. We don't audition and you don't have to read music, just to be tuneful and enthusiastic. We practice every week at the Havers Community Centre, meeting at 1.45 for 2.00pm until 3.45pm.

For more information please contact –

**Carmen Konopka on 01279 653091,
carmen.konopka@btopenworld.com**



Inside the Methodist Church in South Street



Carmen Kanopka

History Group Visit – 27th October

Two more Livery Companies in the City- Fishmongers Hall & Merchant Taylor's Hall

The History Group set off once again to see another two Livery Companies in the City of London. Both of these livery companies are in the list of the great 12 because of their wealth.

Once again, we had two very good tour guides who were informative and funny as well. They fielded many questions thrown at them.

Fishmongers Hall



We learned about the history of both companies, their part in London's medieval history, and their role today, including using their wealth for educational and charitable causes.

There was also a lot of beautiful wood panelling, paintings, and gold and silver to admire.

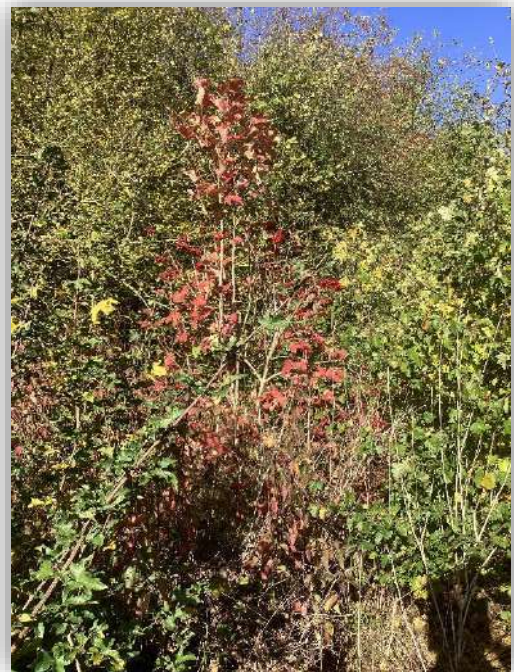
Certainly, another fascinating look into places you cannot normally go into.

Merchant Taylor's Hall



Dave Willett

**Strollers enjoying the Autumn foliage
on 24th October**





COMMUNICATION

To all our members



Remember that there are two easy ways for you to find out everything you need to know –

The monthly Newsletter

November 2025

and

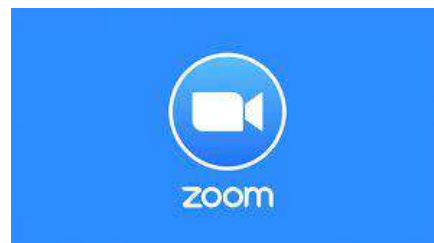
our website

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NATIONAL U3A ZOOM LECTURES



These are to be found on our own website.

Open the website page.

Click on [u3a](#) at the top

Now click on [Events and Workshops](#)

Finally, click on [On-line learning events](#)

A drop down menu will appear. Just click on the one at the top - [Online Learning Events](#) and you will see lots of interesting Zoom talks. There are links to Radio podcasts and free Zoom lectures - **NOVEMBER** talks include.

**These are only some of the talks.
Check them all out and you may find something that interests you.**

Friday 7th – 2pm – UK and US Constitutions Part 2

Monday 10th – 2pm – Catherine the Great

Tuesday 11th – 2pm – making your smartphone easier to use – Android

Thursday 13th – 2pm – What next?
Retired to Redefined

Thursday 27th – 2pm – Secrets of the Brain-Talk ten

Finally.....something funny to end on



Learn

AS I GET OLDER I REALIZE:

1. I talk to myself, because sometimes I need expert advice.
2. Sometimes I roll my eyes out loud.
3. I don't need anger management. I need people to stop pissing me off.
4. My people skills are just fine. It's my tolerance of idiots that needs work.
5. The biggest lie I tell myself is "I don't need to write that down, I'll remember it."
6. When I was a child I thought nap time was punishment. Now it's like a mini-vacation.
7. The day the world runs out of wine is just too terrible to think about.
8. Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it can muffle the sound.
9. Wouldn't it be great if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes; come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller?
10. "Getting Lucky" means walking into a room and remembering why I'm there.

Laugh



Live

3rd – World Sandwich Day



5th The Gunpowder Plot



9th 1989 – the day the Berlin Wall came down



11th Remembrance day



#19th – International Men's Day

● INTERNATIONAL
MENSDAY
November 19