

## NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2025

**From the Chair:** welcome to the last newsletter of the year. I'm sure you will agree that all our groups have had a successful year, as has the branch as a whole, with an increasing membership and a wide variety of groups on offer. Long may this continue.

The newsletter too, goes from strength to strength with Pat changing the presentation last month to critical acclaim. Keep those contributions coming so that everyone gets to know what's happening in our u3a. Do send any comments to Pat and all feedback about speakers at our general meeting, along with any recommendations for future speakers to David via our website.

We've had pretty mixed weather over the past month: the first real frosts, torrential downpours and grey and drizzly days as well as warmer, sunny days. The welcome at all our meetings is always warm, but do remember to introduce yourself and tell the member registering the meeting if you are new so that they can ensure that you're introduced to people.

For all the rest: remember to make sure you are signed in so we can all cope with any excitements that might occur!

The book stall has cleared its stock, so do bring fresh titles in January to delight your fellow members with books you've enjoyed, or, speak softly, ones you haven't but think might appeal to others.



A huge thank you to all those who helped with the Christmas do: Denise, whose friend contributed the lovely table decorations, and to Rosie for refreshments, to Sheelah and Sonia for organising and collecting the mince pies, kindly donated once again by the Coop, and the sausage rolls, delectable as ever from our very own Nicholson's and to Charlie for clearing up in the Mayfield Room kitchen. Washing and clearing up happened seamlessly as ever thanks to Pat, Sheelah and the other members of the refreshments team.

The very heavy lifting was literally done by David, Andrew and Charlie, setting out the room so that everyone could just about get about and so avail themselves of the refreshments after a delightful concert by the Weston Community Choir.

Prizes for the raffle were donated by the committee, so many thanks to all of them, most of whom have already been mentioned by name. Everyone owes your stalwart committee grateful appreciation for all the hard work that goes into general meetings and the running of our u3a.

It only remains for me to wish everyone a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year, Chris

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## General Meetings

### November Review

**Tales From a Dairy Farmer's Wife** presented by Jane Barnes (with interruptions from her husband Mark).

A much anticipated and eagerly awaited presentation about life on a dairy farm. The talk touched upon how the family business began in the 1940's with twenty milking cows, expanding in 2018 to a herd of more than 300. The business specialises in providing milk for cheese production which just happened to be available for sale on the day.

In addition to being a working farm, visitors are welcomed on site to view a 'cow classroom' to see the process of dairy farming today.

We also learnt what comes out of cows on a daily basis and I'm not referring to the Isle of Wight Ferry.

Jane says that everyone should meet a cow (a few jokes about that one, but we won't go there) take a tractor and trailer ride through open countryside and smell the fresh air on a real working farm.

Should there be sufficient interest there is a possibility of a group visit sometime next year.



Chris has already given an account of our General Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December. A good time was had by all. Here are a few photos taken that afternoon:



A seasonal atmosphere in the hall

Weston Community Choir



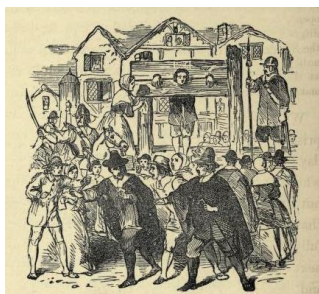
Clarinet solos by  
Linda



Traditional and popular songs followed by Christmas Music

## Speakers Corner

January 28th **The Curious World of Olde Time Punishments**



From birching to branding and beheading to burning the strange and curious world of olde time punishments is something to behold.

Listen to stories of ducking stools and witches, the pillory and perjurers and many more. We all know of corporal and capital punishment, but how do you punish the dead? And how do you punish a horse and cart or a train?

The answers are all here in the Curious World of Olde Time Punishments. Just what is a deodand or a Newcastle cloak and what about the Branks or the Hand of Glory.

Presented by Ian Morgan

February 25<sup>th</sup> **Going Underground:  
An Exploration of Nottinghamshire's Subterranean Spaces**

This talk will examine Nottinghamshire's underground spaces – including caves, crypts, cellars, reservoirs, tunnels and mines. Illustrated with a wealth of personal anecdotes and experience, it will shine a light on the history of these fascinating places, the way that they have been used over time and the people who have loved and been inspired by them.



Presented by Dave Mooney

March 25<sup>th</sup> **Nottinghamshire Puddings: Fact or Fiction**

Nottinghamshire does have a number of traditional puddings, although beware as all is not quite what it seems in some cases. Discover the history of puddings in Robin Hood County and take away some free recipes to make your own.

Presented by Mark Dawson

**Coming Soon**

Nottinghamshire Blood Bikes: How is blood transported? A blood bike will be in attendance.  
My Extra Life: Working as a film and tv extra.

Many thanks for all the suggestions and contributions regarding Speakers. When making suggestions please supply a current email contact. We try to promote a varied programme and we know not all subjects will be appreciated. However, your attendance and feedback on recent events is welcomed.  
dp

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## Groups

### Contacting Group Leaders

If you need get in touch with Lesley, our Groups Co-ordinator, or with any group leader, please use the contact page on our website:

<https://collingham.u3asite.uk>

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## Photography

There are twelve assorted photographs in the newsletter that reflect some of our best images taken over the last 12 months. I hope you enjoy them.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Paul



Carrick-a-Rede Bridge by Colin Smith

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## Breakfasters

I've come to the conclusion that it is very nearly impossible to get a superb venue as well as an excellent breakfast. Thus, it was that at our last venue, Gannets, at Middlebeck, that we had fabulously tasty food but a venue that was a tad too small for our increasingly expanding group. 14 of us could not fit around one table and the separate table for some incurred a few grumbles - they didn't feel fully part of the group. I totally understand, but the size of the cafe was not on our side. Still, the food was excellent and the conversation even better.

We shall try again on 22nd December at Belton Woods Garden Centre. 9.30am.

They have already confirmed that I cannot pre-book a table, so we may have to have a plan B up our collective sleeves.

Lesley

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## Creative writing

Our task this time was to look at a famous painting and write a "back-story."

Alexis chose *The Girl with the Pearl Earring*, by Vermeer. The story, mainly about her other earring, was truly delightful, twisting and turning in very imaginative ways.

My feeble attempt tried to imagine what that man in the cart might be thinking, and shouting, when he, and it, got stuck in the middle of a large stream (*The Haywain*, by Constable.)

Our next task is to try to reimagine some words or phrases to well-known songs - and again try to write a back story which would fit the narrative. Challenging certainly, but let's hope it will also be fun. I really enjoy this small group.

Lesley

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## Drawing

We finally made it to Penny's lovely house for our drawing session. Penny had set up two superb still life settings for us to try to copy-not easy, but we all gave it a go. The conversation flowed and our pencils did their best. The group decided that each member would take it in turns to host our group in future. Sadly, I forgot to ask someone to take a photo of our efforts so the newsletter may not have many sent individually by the Drawing group members. I'll try to remember next time.

Lesley

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## Literature Group

We have been reading 'Purple Hibiscus' by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and I quote from the Glasgow Herald; "With writing marked by infinite wisdom and heart-breaking generosity, Adichie draws the African struggle for a modern identity into the heart of family life.....Balanced yet passionate, hers was an inspirational new voice and Purple Hibiscus a book to read at all costs."

The Lord Nelson could not accommodate us this month, but we had a very jolly and worthwhile get together at my house in South End.

We will be reading 'The Book of Beginnings' by Sally Page during December/January.

Hope everyone has a lovely Christmas and a happy New Year.

Sheelah

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Girl in a Shawl by Paul Bass



Keeping Cool by Paul Bass

## Sing along

Our group continues to progress, very well indeed. We are having our, Christmas social, at the Beyond Coffee in Collingham, after our 15<sup>th</sup> December meeting.

We continue with the Christmas season carols, and also sing well-known Christmas songs: Frosty the Snowman, Jingle Bells, I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas, We Wish you a Merry Christmas and so on.

More importantly, here is advance notice, of our meetings coming up in the new year. As in 2025, we will continue to meet every first and third Monday of the month. This will start, on the first Monday in January 2026. The times and location are the same 10.00am-12.00pm at William Bailey House, Collingham.

The Sing-a-long group has now been running for one year. All the group members are extremely encouraging and supportive. We all have a really good laugh and everyone thoroughly enjoys coming along. Since, being given the trust and opportunity to lead and facilitate this group I have enjoyed every moment. Although at times, there have been challenges, such as going through the room booking process!

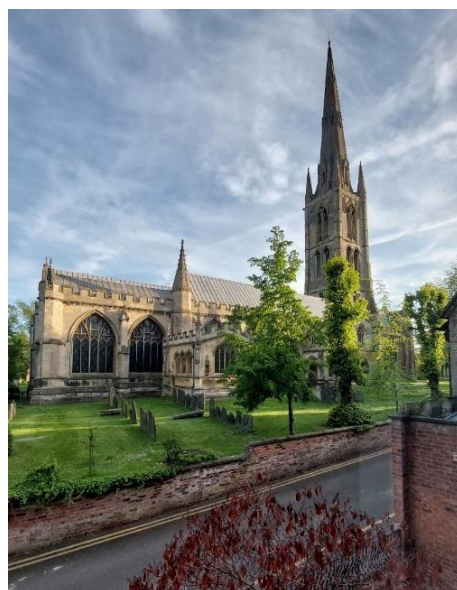
So now, what lies ahead, for the future. We will perhaps go back and look at the musicals and other songs of significant interest. My next update for you all will be in February 2026.

Our group would like to wish all the other groups and members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May your Christmas and New year be full of joy and fun!

Louis



Damselfly by Pat Morgan



St Wulfram's Church Grantham by Andrew Roberts

## Threads

Members of Threads Interest Group send very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to everyone at Collingham and District u3a.



Hopefully, we will have finished making intended gifts and, after the festivities, will be looking for new projects to keep our fingers and brains busy.



We are having a break in January as the first Thursday is New Year's Day, so our next meeting at Beyond Coffee will be on 5<sup>th</sup> February at 2 pm.

Happy crafting!

Barbara

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## So, you think you can drive

At this session we managed to fully complete a whole DVLA theory test - 50 questions in total.

I think we collectively passed, although some of the questions baffled all of us-they are certainly not totally straightforward.

Can you identify these road signs? You may need to refer to the Highway Code!



We also watched a couple of short videos which gave advice to us older drivers, and I for one now realise that I need to buy a hi-vis jacket and keep it in the boot of my car - and find the red triangle that I also need. Whoops!

David and Lesley

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## Gardening Group

We didn't meet in December as there was so much going on and not everyone could make it anyway.

So we're pencilled in now for Thursday 8th January 2026. I'll be in touch a week or so before regarding where and when. Unless we're very local we may want to have an earlier start again but we'll sort that out nearer the time.

Jan

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## Bowls

All at the Bowls group would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Our first session after Christmas will be on Monday Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 12-2pm at Grantham

Please contact me through the web site if you are wishing to join us, all are welcome of course.

Clive

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Lake Garda by John Geeson

# Nature Walks



The flooded Fleet at Besthorpe

The bird highlights during our walk at Mons Pool on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December were the 11 Cattle Egrets in the field by the entrance track, a Great Egret and a Red Kite, both of which flew through, as well as a wintering Chiffchaff in the reeds by one of the hides.



Cattle Egret



Red Kite



Reed Bunting



The island in front of the hide was underwater

There were good numbers of Redwing and Fieldfare, as well as Long-tailed, Blue and Great Tits in the reeds. A few flocks of Wigeon flew over.

So, it was a very good morning's birding, despite the rain at times, a good way to finish the year.

We've agreed not to do a walk Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup>, so the next one will be Friday January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026 I'll send an email to group members nearer the time.

Happy Christmas to all!

Robert

# Strollers

Margaret and Rosie wish all Strollers a very Happy Christmas.

We meet again on Wednesday January 14th when we will stroll and then have a New Year Lunch together.

We hope you will join us in celebrating another successful year for our Strollers Group.

If you have ideas for a 2-mile stroll in 2026 and are prepared to rekkie it with us We would love to hear from you!

We will let you know in the New Year, and hopefully by January 7th where we are Strolling and eating.

Happy New Year!

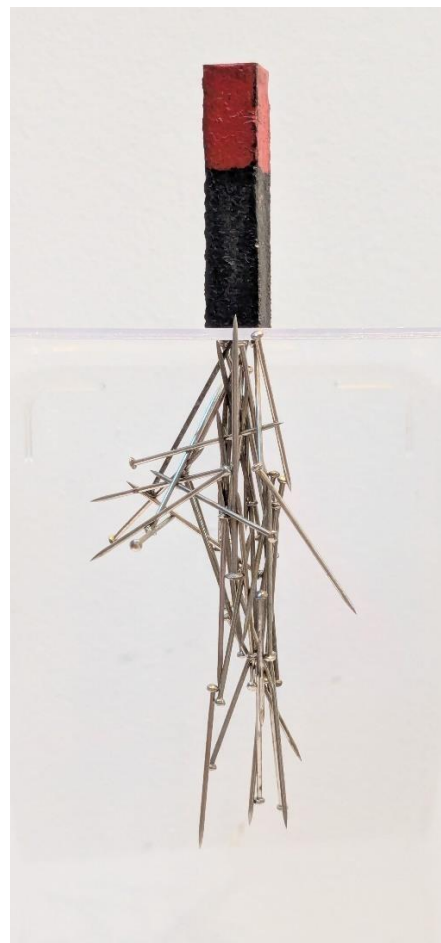
Best Wishes

Margaret and Rosie

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Light is the Sky by Gill Bass



Magnetic Attraction by Pat Morgan

# Table Tennis

Our friendly table tennis group **usually** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at the Winthorpe Community Centre for 1 hour from 10 – 11 am. Afterwards many of us enjoy a cup of coffee and the occasional cake at the Lord Nelson in Winthorpe. We do provide bats and balls and new members are always welcome.

Do come and give it a try!

Peter

**For your diary the dates going forward are as follows:**

Thursday	January	15 <sup>th</sup>	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	January	29 <sup>th</sup>	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	February	12 <sup>th</sup>	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	February	26 <sup>th</sup>	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	March	12 <sup>th</sup>	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	March	26 <sup>th</sup>	from 10:00 to 11:00 am



Making a Splash by John Geeson

## Weekenders



We now have 26 members and we meet monthly to arrange visits, which have been varied throughout the year to include meals out, theatre visits, garden visits and a recycling centre visit. We supported Collingham Singers at their Christmas Concert, and a few of us are going to the Royal Albert Hall Carol Service. We enjoyed our Christmas lunch at the Generous Briton at Brant Broughton!

Looking forward to an active 2026.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

Chris D

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## Family History

Following our now customary December meeting format we enjoyed a Christmas buffet with only a short time devoted to family history topics. This year several members brought items related to their family stories and gave a brief description to introduce them. Items included family photos, army medals and books showing old photos of the towns where ancestors lived. Members were able then to look at these and share thoughts during the refreshments period.

We will meet as normal early in the new year, on Tuesday January 6th.

Charlie

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Mousehole by Gill Bass

# Out and About

December has seen two Out and About activities: one successful and the other one somewhat less so!



Just in time to really get in the mood for Christmas, six members went to the Thursford Christmas Spectacular with Emjay Tours. Before the show they wandered through lit up scenes and an impressive array of steam engines. The show itself included bagpipes, singing, dancing, a Wurlitzer organ, three very clever Cirque de Soleil style acts and an orchestra.

A wonderful time was had by all.



Earlier in the month, with a nice afternoon forecast, members were invited to join Chris at Langford Lowfields for a spectacular of a wholly different sort. For several weeks there had been reasonable starling murmuration at the reserve with several different birds of prey joining the swirling throngs. Unfortunately, on this particular Monday, the only sight of starlings was small groups mostly heading in the direction



of Collingham Pits (what RSPB Langford missed, Notts Wildlife gained).

Luckily a couple of hundred did put on a slight display as the sun emerged from behind the clouds watched by two intrepid visitors who had been on the reserve all afternoon, Chris and Charlie and another couple, one of whom is also a volunteer. At least it wasn't raining that Monday like it has so many Mondays recently.

Chris

## Italian

The group meets in the home of the group leaders on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

In our final session of the year group members spoke about Christmas past and present. People recalled getting socks (calzini) containing presents and an apple (mela) and an orange (arancia) in the toe. We discussed travel arrangements and transport. We spoke about plans for meeting up with friends and family members.

We were pleased to finish reading and translating the story we had been working on for several sessions.

During our break for tea and coffee we marked the season by having panettone and Italian chocolate and orange biscuits,

Buon Natale a tutti.

Jannet and Mary

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## Bridge

2025 has seen a regular attendance at our weekly Bridge session in Beyond Coffee. We play informally to practise our Bridge for more formal sessions at Club level.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

Chris D

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Tunnel of Fun by Andrew Roberts

# Art Appreciation

At our meeting in November Alexis Waitman led the session on '**Lesser-known Women Artists.**' She began with the American painter, **Mary Cassatt** (1844-1926) whose work some of the group knew. She then introduced us to a number of artists with whom we were unfamiliar.

The work of **Yayoi Kusama** (b. 1929) from Japan was fascinating and created much discussion amongst group members. Her extensive use of dots is shown in her 1998 Installation.

The Nigerian born artist **Njideka Akunyili Crosby** (b.1983) works in California. She creates collages and photo transfer-based paintings that deal with the challenges of living in America and Nigeria.

Predecessors (2013) Tate

**Michal Raz** (b.1984) was born in Jerusalem but now lives and works in London. She uses paint, tape, stickers and different mediums and images when creating her work. Her paintings deal with order and disorder so although she has to plan her work, she 'leaves space for randomness and playfulness which goes along with the dynamic nature of the works.'

Here We Go (2016)

The American abstract expressionist painter **Helen Frankenthaler** (1928- 2011) had her work exhibited for over six decades. She sometimes used delicate colours as shown in her painting but she also created steel sculptures. She illustrated books and taught at New York University, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale.

Mountains and Sea 1952

Alexis drew our attention to the American artist **Faith Ringgold** (1930-2024) who was an activist and author. Ringgold included contemporary violence as a subject for her work. In 1967, her painting 'American People: Die' gained her 'critical attention as she depicted race warfare in the style of Picasso's Guernica'.

Jannet

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## Play Reading

No actual play reading this month, but instead a lovely Christmas lunch at The Five Bells, Bassingham. They did us proud and we had a lot of fun with chat, paper hats, John's jokes and a picture quiz. In the New year we are back to normal with "At the Sign of "The Crippled Harlequin"" by Norman Robbins, which is billed as "A Thriller"! Meanwhile, Merry Christmas to everyone.

Sue



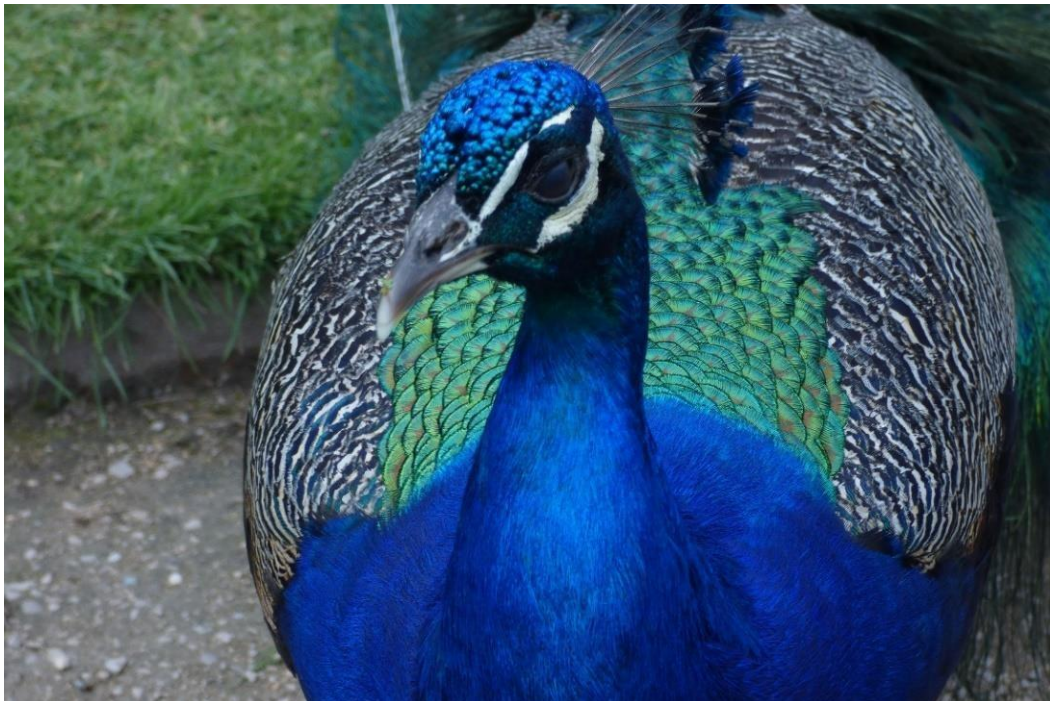
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## Thursday Talking Shop

The Group did not meet in December, so our next date is the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2026 when the topic will be 'Sovereignty'. In the meantime, best wishes to everyone for Christmas and the forthcoming year.

Anita

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Peacock by Colin Smith

# Quiz Group and History Group

Both these groups meet on Friday mornings and several members belong to both groups so we decided to pool resources on the Friday before Christmas. We met together in the YCC for a quiz session and fuddle lunch! Five tables of participants were selected at random to face John's cunningly devised quiz!

Many of the questions were general knowledge but several questions were based on topics presented to the history group during the year! It soon became apparent that our memories for detail are not as good as they once were! Facts about the Vandals featured strongly...but recall of them was on the weak side!

Scoring was close and the winning table had to be decided on a tie break question: Christmas Island is in which Ocean?

It was good fun and we all enjoyed the challenge of quizzing with different people, not to mention the splendid shared lunch!

Quiz Group meets on the third Friday of each month, so the next quiz session will be on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2026. John will send a reminder in the New Year.

The History Group meets on the fourth Friday so will meet the following week, the 23<sup>rd</sup> January. Ann will be in touch with group members in the New Year.

Have a very Happy Christmas, everyone, and here's to another good year in 2026!

By the way, Christmas Island is in the Indian Ocean!

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**From the Editor:** Please do take note of any advance notices in this newsletter as there will not be a January edition.

**The deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is 6p.m. on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

All that remains is for me to wish all Collingham and District u3a members a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year. Pat M

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