

## Learn, Laugh, Live.

No: 88. January 2026

### *Happy New Year!*



I hope you're really looking forward to this year as 2026 is a very special one for Swanland u3a: our 30th anniversary.

I want to start by sincerely thanking on your behalf those who had the enthusiasm and vision to start the organisation and to recruit members, encourage the formation of interest groups and to keep the whole thing going and growing.

A number of those original members will be involved in our celebrations of which you have already had details: our first "live" event day for some years at Lazaat's on 7 May and then a more social event with a cake on 3 September, to mark 30 years since the first meetings in September 1996. It isn't difficult to imagine the time and sheer hard work that went into setting up Swanland u3a from scratch and we should all be incredibly grateful.

Tickets for the 7 May event "30 years of Swanland u3a, celebrating Community, Culture and Heritage" will go on sale to members from 19 February to 2 April at £30, including lunch and afterwards to guests at £35. The 30th anniversary sub group which has worked hard to get this together includes members who are not on the Swanland u3a Committee but who wanted to contribute and I for one am very grateful to them.

This brings me to the subject which I have to mention each time I communicate with you. Our u3a began and has continued thanks to the sterling efforts of many members. Sadly, that culture of volunteering and

working together for mutual benefits has diminished, not just in the u3a but in all sorts of groups and activities. We have a lot of members who do contribute: the committee and specific role holders; the refreshment, sound, projection, chairs and meet and greet teams; the convenors who organise and enthuse their groups; Christmas lunch organisers; 30th anniversary organisers. There are loads of people who give to the u3a and they recognise the benefit of this. Just as one person I have really enjoyed getting to know many more members than I did before I took on the role of Chair.

You get far more out of your u3a if you put a bit more into it, and that has been and still is the whole ethos of the organisation. “For the members, by the members”. Please ask yourself if you could offer something: to start a new group because there is a subject which you are passionate about , or would like to learn about; to come onto the committee; to take on and develop a role; to help with everything that goes into Thursday afternoons – just a small contribution would benefit other members, but I guarantee you would enjoy it.

Our 2026 AGM is on 19 March. To continue we must have a Secretary and a Groups Co-ordinator. You don’t have to be a long-standing u3a member. On the contrary, I believe that newer members have a huge amount to offer and some have already demonstrated this.

You could be exactly the person with the fresh ideas and enthusiasm to help Swanland u3a develop and grow so that we look forward to the next 30 years.


How about it?

***Alison, Chair***

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## QUIZ TIME

<b>Who is this?</b>	
<b>What connects:</b> Gnome, Knuckle, Wrap and Psalms	
<b>What is this ?</b>	<b>ICE<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>True or False:</b> Paul McCartney sang a James Bond Theme song.	
<u>Answers on page 23</u>	

## THURSDAY PRESENTATIONS

Date	Subject	Speaker
1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	No Meeting	
15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Music for the Seasons	Nigel Willoughby and Julian Savory
5 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Hull: Myths, Legends and Witches	Paul Schofield
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Seven Wonders of the Modern World	Phil Walker
5 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Africa, Close Up and Personal	Ken Dunn MBE
19 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Annual General Meeting	Please attend so we will meet our quorum
2 <sup>nd</sup> Apr	The Mobile Police Museum	David Hardcastle
16 <sup>th</sup> Apr	The Tranby Affair ("The Royal Baccarat Scandal")	Michelle Lewis
7 <sup>th</sup> May	30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event at Lazaat's (See page 13)	
21 May	An Amusing History of Sales and Marketing Through My Own Eyes	Tim Forman
<b>St Barnabas Church, Main Street, Swanland 2pm to 3pm followed by tea and coffee</b>		



### *Did you know?*

January was named after Janus the Roman god of beginnings and transitions in Roman mythology.

He had two faces so he could see the past and the future.

## INTEREST GROUPS

Interest Group	Meeting Details
<b>ARTS, CRAFTS and LITERATURE</b>	
Art Appreciation (2 groups)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs of the month 10am
	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs of the month 2pm
Art – Hands On	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mondays. 2.00 - 4.00
Book Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs of the month. 7.30pm
Literature (2 groups)	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of month 2pm
	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of month 2pm
Poetry Appreciation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed of month 2- 4pm
Play Reading	4 <sup>th</sup> Tues of the month 2pm
Wine Appreciation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month 7pm
Writing for Fun	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed of the month 10.00am
<b>GAMES and SPORTS</b>	
Badminton	Most Fridays 2pm
Bridge	Most Mondays 2pm
Canasta (2 groups)	Wednesdays 10am <b>OR</b> Fridays 10am
Cribbage	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month 10am
Croquet	Every Friday. 2pm. (April to September)

Golf (experienced)	Contact Convenors
Mahjong	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month 2pm.
Scrabble	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month 2pm
Quiz	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month 7.30pm
<b>LANGUAGES</b>	
French Conversation (3 groups)	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Fridays of the month 2pm,
	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed of the month 10am
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs of the month 2pm <b>FULL</b>
German	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Mondays. 10am
<b>NEW</b> Beginner's Italian	2nd and 4th Wednesdays 10.00
Italian Self-Help	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month. 10am
Latin	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs of the month. 10.30am
Latin Improvers	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs of the month 2pm
Spanish - Basic Conversational	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month 2pm
Spanish Advanced Self-Help	Every two weeks 2pm
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Discussion Group	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month 10am
Luncheon Club	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues of the month 12.00
Philosophy	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of the month 2pm

<b>NEW</b> Photography	4th Thursday of the month at 2.00
Science & Technology	Contact Convenor
Supper Club	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat of the month. The time is variable.
<b>MUSIC, THEATRE, DANCING &amp; KEEP FIT</b>	
<b>NEW</b> Chair Yoga	Every Monday at 2.30
Choir	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of the month. 3.30pm
English Country Dancing	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month 1.45pm
Guitar	Contact Convenor
Singing for Fun	4th Wed of the month 2.15 to 3.45
Theatre Visits	Contact Convenor
<b>OUTDOOR PURSUITS (also see Games &amp; Sports)</b>	
Gardening	4 <sup>th</sup> Tues of the month 10am
Walking Short	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Weds of the month 10am
Walking Longer	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesdays of the month 9.45am
Wild Flower Walks	Contact Convenor (April to September)
Wild Swimming	Wednesdays, 10am

## Newsletter News

We are pleased to announce that this newsletter will now be published four times a year instead of three. The newsletters will be published at the beginning of January, April, July and October. The January and July editions will both contain an up to date list of Interest groups.

This would not have been possible without your support and the articles you have contributed. They are now more important than ever, so please let me know if you can contribute anything for future issues.

## Discover Swanland u3a Online!



<https://www.swanlandu3a.org.uk>

Your Swanland u3a website is an invaluable resource, and we encourage every member to explore its rich content.

It is the definitive resource for all our activities and events, providing a rich array of content for you to explore. From a wonderful collection of photographs capturing recent outings and special occasions to the latest news updates, the site is designed to keep you connected and informed.

You'll find comprehensive details on all our groups, including their meeting times and venues, making it easier than ever to plan your participation. Furthermore, the website is the best place to find all the essential information about our upcoming lectures, including who will be speaking, what the topic will be, and the date and time of the talk. We encourage you to take a look and see everything our vibrant community has to offer online!



## Singing for Fun

Why do people sing? A major national organisation that promotes singing has listed ten of the positives of singing together; this is what they say:

1. Singing helps you feel better because it releases 'happy' chemicals that boost your mood and make you feel good about yourself.
2. It enhances lung function.
3. It helps you beat stress and relax.
4. It helps improve your memory, mental alertness and concentration. This is why it features increasingly in dementia care.
5. It builds a sense of community.
6. It lets you express yourself.
7. It can help when life gets tough.
8. It can boost your confidence and fire up your self-esteem.
9. It features in wellbeing studies. The University of Leeds is so convinced of the impact music can have that they offer a MA in Music and Wellbeing.
10. Singing is for everyone. The good news is, it doesn't matter whether you think you can sing or not: the health benefits will still be the same.

One aspect of our Singing for Fun gatherings that is appreciated is learning a little about the background to the songs, as well as the artist(s) who sang them. We enjoy a very varied repertoire which encompasses traditional folk songs, songs from the shows and hits from the 1950's onwards. Examples from our current book are:

**Top of the World.** This is our current 'starter' every month and was made famous by that fabulous duo The Carpenters in 1973. It's an upbeat number and sets the tone for our afternoon together. Richard Carpenter – yes that really was their surname - was the musician and sister Karen the singer with that voice that, once heard, was instantly recognisable. She reportedly had a three-octave range and also played drums although her voice was her main instrument. Sadly a succession of health problems led to her very premature

death at just 32. Eight months later the Carpenter family celebrated the unveiling of a new star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Richard is still alive and has continued some involvement with music, although the name Carpenters will always bring back memories of the beautiful partnership with Karen. They left us with many memorable hits such as Goodbye to Love and Yesterday Once More.

**You'll Never Walk Alone.** Featured in 'Carousel', it is sung by the protagonist Julie Jordan as she tries to comfort her husband who is dying in her arms after becoming injured during an attempted robbery. It is also closely associated with football, sung on match days following a tradition started by Liverpool F.C., a custom dating back to 1963 after the chart success of the song as performed by Liverpool band Gerry and the Pacemakers. It acquired a particular poignancy during the Covid 19 pandemic as an anthem of support for medical staff, first responders and those in quarantine. It is also sometimes used in a religious context.

**Streets of London.** Written and made famous by Ralph McTell (real name Ralph May) who is arguably one of our greatest living folk artists. He grew up in extreme poverty in Croydon, cared for by his single-parent mum. He is as much a poet as a musician and has written many songs based around strong social issues, sometimes before they have come into mainstream focus. His most famous song (Streets . . . ) was based on his experiences of spending several years busking around Europe, sometimes taking on poorly-paid casual manual work to survive and sleeping wherever he could find a bed. The song reminds us that, however bad things may appear for us, there are others who may be suffering more. He initially entitled the song Streets of Paris but changed it to avoid confusion with Winifred Atwell's instrumental hit The Poor People of Paris. After all, the song has relevance on a world-wide basis (sadly).

We meet monthly – the fourth Wednesday – from 2.15 pm to 3.45 pm in the upper room of Swanland Village Hall. There is a lift for anyone who finds steps a challenge. We have a break at half-time to catch up with each other's news and enjoy a cuppa and biscuit.

**Gwyn** 

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

The **Hands on Art** group is now flourishing due to an influx of new members. If you would also like to join, please see the list above for more details.

The **Gardening** meetings will be held on the 4th Tuesday of each month and commence at 10.00 am, unless otherwise notified.

Our activities include:

- Speakers for 10 months of the year
- Helpful advice and chat over refreshments
- Plant sales and swaps regularly

A fee of £35.00 for the year is charged to members to cover venue hire, refreshments and speaker's fees. U3a members and guests who attend occasionally will be expected to pay £4.00 per session as a visitor to the group.

This is a popular group with over 30 members registered and we welcome any new members. Why not come along as a visitor and give us a try.

**Writing for Fun** (previously called the *Creative Writing Group*).

Have you ever fancied a go at writing? Then come along and see what we do at our Writing for Fun group. We are a small, friendly group who make new members feel welcome. There is a programme of topics to write for each meeting but this is optional. Writing can be in the format of a story or poem. Come and give us a try, you might be surprised at the enjoyment you derive from it.

### NEW GROUPS:

**Chair Yoga** meets every Monday at 2.30 pm.

**Beginner's Italian** group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 10.00.

**Photography** meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 2.00

## Wentworth Woodhouse.

On Thursday 7 August 2025, 31 of us visited Wentworth Woodhouse. Some, like John, dressed optimistically in shorts and T-shirt and others, like Sue, more realistically clad in cosy raincoat and big shoes.



Few of us knew little, if anything, about the house, its story, or even its exact location. Near Rotherham, it is grade 1 listed, has its own trust and a façade twice the length of that of Buckingham Palace. Parts of Downton Abbey, Mr Turner and Darkest Hour were filmed there.

Among other treasures there are several restored Van Dyck portraits and in 1762 the 2nd Marquis of Rockingham (founder of the St Leger), commissioned George Stubbs to paint a portrait of his retired racehorse Whistlejacket; the original now hangs in the National Gallery having been purchased in 1999 in a private deal with the family for £11million.

The house is un-furnished. Children are actively encouraged to engage in the hands-on projects in the various ornately decorated public rooms. The 'Who would you invite to dinner?' table had some interesting ideas – from Churchill to Wayne Rooney. One respondent wanted the Clangers because they liked soup.



The 90 minute guided tour was a revelation, albeit rather too much information in one sitting for some of our aged brains. Each group had both a guide in pole position and someone behind to stop us wandering off and getting lost, rather like a human collie dog – necessary for children and OAPs!

The Forest of Bewilderment has much for children to enjoy with a mud kitchen, beautiful willow models of local wildlife and a musical area. The gardens, once the site of open-cast mining, are well maintained and incorporate the David Austin Rose garden and the Camellia House. Both the latter and the Butler's Pantry offered a good choice for lunch.

Both John and Sue were vindicated in their choice of clothing as a heavy downpour curtailed further exploration but it was warm when the sun shone. A grand day out. Thanks to the organisers.

**Sue**

## **Hornsea Inshore Rescue Centre**



On the first of September a group of 25 of our members gathered at the Hornsea Inshore Rescue Centre for a most interesting and informative visit. This independent charity was founded in 1994 thanks to the support of the local community. They receive no funding from

the Government or RNLI and function solely on donations and income from training courses and local enterprises. They run a 24/7 volunteer rescue service attending an average of 50 incidents a year and so far this year have saved 7 human lives and two dogs.

They are based in a purpose built boat house and sea safe educational centre on Hornsea seafront where they have two jet skis and 8.5 metre rescue rigid inflatable, recently purchased from RNLI. However they are much more than a lifeboat crew, they are a team of highly trained volunteers who deliver educational and sea safety talks and presentations to local businesses and youth and other organisations. Their courses on sea safety are accredited by RYA.

We were entertained by the Station Manager Sue and crew member Carl and feasted on a lunch of Whitehead's best fish and chips.

Many thanks to them and to John for organising this most enjoyable visit.

**Jane**

## **Swanland u3a Choir**

There are vacancies in the choir especially for sopranos, tenors and basses. We sing a wide range of songs in four parts and we meet on the first and third Thursday of the month at 3.30.

If you can read music and you would like to come along and give us a try, you would be very welcome. For more information you can contact me on [minsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk](mailto:minsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk)

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**30 YEARS** of Swanland u3a celebrating  
**Community, Culture, Heritage.**

**THURSDAY 7 MAY 2026**

Lazaat Hotel, Woodhill Way, Cottingham

u3a members £30. Guests £35

Priority booking for members

19 Feb to 2 April, then non-members.

**Thursday 3rd Sept** - Swanland u3a social afternoon celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with cake cutting event.

## Tech Talk – Artificial Intelligence (AI)



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer the stuff of science fiction — it’s quietly becoming part of everyday life. From asking Alexa for tomorrow’s weather to getting travel directions from Google Maps, most of us are already using AI without even realising it. But for u3a members, AI can be much more than a convenience — it can be an extra pair of hands, a learning partner, and even a creative companion.

AI refers to computer systems that can “think” in limited ways like humans — they can understand language, recognise images, answer questions, and learn from experience. Modern AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot, or Gemini can write, summarise, translate, and explain almost anything — instantly and clearly.

AI can explain complex topics at your preferred level of detail — beginner, refresher, or advanced. Think of it as a friendly assistant available 24 hours a day, with a calm, patient attitude and endless knowledge at its fingertips! Ask AI a question and get a clear, plain-English answer:

- “What’s the best way to look after tomato plants in October?”
- “Explain the difference between a heat pump and a boiler.”
- “Give me gentle balance exercises I can do at home.”

U3a members are lifelong learners — and AI can be your personal tutor. You can ask it to:

- Summarise a long article or lecture notes
- Explain historical events or scientific discoveries
- Create short quizzes or flashcards to test your knowledge

For example, “Make me a short quiz about the Impressionist painters.”

AI can draft emails, help you plan a trip, or even suggest a shopping list.

- “Write a polite email to my energy company asking about tariff options.”
- “Plan a 5-day visit to York with a focus on museums and gardens.”
- “Give me healthy lunch ideas using tinned fish and salad ingredients.”

AI can boost your creativity

- Generate poems, songs, or stories for family occasions
- Help with knitting patterns or craft ideas
- Create custom crosswords or word games.
- Suggest presentation slides or handouts for talks.

One u3a member recently used AI to help write a witty poem for her 60th wedding anniversary — and said it *“felt like collaborating with a patient editor who never ran out of ideas.”*

AI can help you keep up with technology without feeling overwhelmed. You can ask it:

- “Explain what this iPhone notification means.”
- “How do I share a photo album with my grandchildren?”
- “Show me how to use FaceTime for our family chat.”

It’s like having a friendly tech helper sitting beside you — without having to bother the grandchildren!

A few simple rules keep AI use secure and sensible:

- Never share personal details such as bank numbers, passwords, or addresses.
- Treat AI’s advice like a newspaper article — useful, but worth double-checking for accuracy.
- If in doubt, ask it to show its sources or explain how it reached its answer.



You don't need any special equipment — just a smartphone, tablet, or computer connected to the internet. Try these free options:

- ChatGPT (free version at [chat.openai.com](https://chat.openai.com))
- Microsoft Copilot (built into Edge browser or Windows 11)
- Google Gemini (via the Google app or website)

Simply type or speak to it as if you were talking to a friend — no special commands needed. For example: *“I’m new to AI — please explain how you can help me learn more about photography.”*

Groups could use AI to:

- Create short background summaries for study sessions
- Prepare reading lists or discussion topics
- Design posters, event flyers, or newsletters
- Produce travel guides for group outings
- Translate material for language groups

AI can enhance, not replace, the human connection that makes the u3a special. It gives you time back — to think, talk, and enjoy learning together.

AI isn't about replacing human intelligence — it's about extending it. It's a tool that can help us stay independent, curious, and connected. Whether you're 60 or 90, AI can be a gentle companion that helps you keep learning, stay organised, and explore the world in new ways — all at your own pace.

*“The real joy of AI,”* as one u3a member put it, *“is that it never says you’re too old to learn something new.”*

**Jim [redacted] with the help of AI**

Our Swanland u3a quiz master, asked AI to provide a celebration of winning the u3a monthly quiz in the style of Raymond Chandler. This is what it came up with in 45 seconds.

## **Winning the monthly u3a quiz at the North Ferriby Club. (In the style of Raymond Chandler.)**

The North Ferriby Club was a long way from the shimmering lights of Hollywood, and the monthly u3a quiz was a long way from a blonde dame's office full of cheap perfume and bad news. But the shadows were still long, and the questions could be as crooked. I was just a guy with a pen and a foggy memory, caught in a room full of people who had more wrinkles than a city map. I'd come in for the promise of a cheap drink and the faint hope of a clean getaway, but the past has a way of catching up with a man.



The quizmaster, a fella named Nigel with a face like a worn-out shoe, rattled off the rules. He held the microphone like a foreign object he was afraid might bite him. His voice was all crackle and static, like a bad radio broadcast in a cheap hotel room. He told us there were eight rounds, a tie-breaker, and a strict no-phones policy. Fair enough. I didn't need a phone. All the information I needed was hidden somewhere in the dusty archives of my own grey matter, and a dame in a tight red dress wasn't going to distract me tonight.

My team was a mixed bag of trouble. A retired history professor named Frank, who looked like he'd just been dug up with some Roman artefacts, was there for the "Arts & Culture" round. And then there was Gladys, a woman with a hairdo that could stop a train, who had a mind like a steel trap for all things celebrity. They were solid, dependable, but you could

never be sure they weren't holding something back, a secret answer in the right place.

The first rounds were a breeze. A question on the Capital of Estonia. A gimme. I scribbled down "Tallinn" and watched Nigel give a little smile that didn't mean a thing. A question on the chemical composition of rust. Frank coughed and gave me the answer. The crowd was quiet, except for the nervous flipping of paper and the low hum of the air conditioning. It was a tense atmosphere, like a stakeout in a dark alley.

Then came the picture round. Faces on a sheet of paper, half-forgotten and faded like old photographs of dead men. I stared at them. A faded movie star, a grinning politician, a boxer with a broken nose. Nothing there. It was all a cheap distraction, a red herring designed to throw you off the scent. Then I saw her. A young woman with a smile that could buy and sell you. Gladys leaned in, her voice a conspiratorial whisper. "The one with the teeth. That's Marilyn Munroe, before all the glitter and the sadness." I jotted it down. Gladys knew her stuff. She was like a well-stocked library of useless information.

The music round was a low-down, dirty affair. Nigel played snippets of old songs, each one a different kind of pain. "Blue Suede Shoes." The whole room groaned. "Rock Around The Clock." A few people tapped their feet. Then came a piece of classical music, something with strings that sounded like a cat being strangled. The other teams were stumped, but Frank's, eyes lit up like a streetlamp. He scribbled the answer down, a smug little smile playing on his lips. He was good, but not for free. I wondered what skeletons he rattled around his closet.

The last round was a free-for-all, a mix of everything from science to sports. The air in the room was getting thick, like cheap cigarette smoke. The other teams were staring at their sheets, their faces as pale as a ghost's. The scores were tallied, but the truth was somewhere else. I was waiting for the twist, the dirty little secret that would put it all together.

Nigel read the final results. One team was close. Another was just a step behind. Then he called out our name. The crowd went quiet. He announced our final score. It was high enough. We had won. The prize was a bottle of cheap plonk and a bag of toffees. A small return for a lot of work, but a win is a win.

As we were collecting our prize, a man with eyes like two holes in a blanket came up to me. “You did good, kid,” he said “You got all the answers.”

I looked at him. “Just another day at the office” I told him. I took the bottle of wine. “Let’s drink to the truth,” I said. “Whatever that is.”

He just smiled, a thin, crooked line in his face. It was the kind of smile that didn’t reach his eyes. “You’ll never find the truth in a quiz, kid. Not in a place like this. It’s too dark in there.”

He turned and walked away, and I watched him go, a cigarette hanging from his lips. I stood there, with my cheap wine and my bag of toffees, the ghost of a smile on my own lips. He was right. You never find the truth in a quiz. It was just a con, another puzzle with a lot of missing pieces. But sometimes, when you’re out of options, a win is all you’ve got.

***AI with the help from Phil***

### *Did You Know?*



Private Detectives were called “Gumshoes” because they wore soft rubber (gum) soled shoes that were quieter on hard surfaces than ordinary shoes of the day. Gumshoes (early forms of sneakers/trainers) were worn predominately in the late 1800’s, but became a colloquialism for a plainclothes police detective, evolving further to include private detectives in the early 1900’s.

## New Year Celebrations



It doesn't matter if you are young or old, it doesn't matter if you live in Australia or Peru, at the end of the old year, it is the human condition to wonder what the New Year will bring. Many, if not most folk, may make some kind of New Year Resolution. You only need to count the increase in the number of joggers after 1st January to see that.

No matter how pessimistic we may be, we all hope that life will be kind to us in the coming year. In every country, in every culture, people take their own traditional measures to bring good fortune and avoid ill tidings.

In my home county of Lancashire, it was important for the darkest haired member of the family to exit the back door before midnight and enter the front door in the New year wishing everyone 'Happy New Year'.



In many cultures more extreme and involved measure are taken. In parts of Europe and the Balkans the ancient art of Molybdomancy is used to forecast the future of the New Year. Small pieces of lead (or tin) are melted and cast into water. A small ball suggests good luck. A cross signifies misfortune or death.

In Latin America they may throw out dirty water to cleanse the home and life of bad luck. The Danes jump off chairs to bring in the New Year. The Irish may bang the outside of their homes with bread to keep out bad luck and evil spirits or lay an extra place at the table for a loved one who they lost that year.

In Columbia it is considered good fortune to carry an empty suitcase and in Ecuador they may burn scarecrows. In the Philippines wearing polka dot clothing is considered lucky, but in Brazil wearing white clothing or jumping

over seven ocean waves brings good fortune. The Dutch take a dip in the freezing cold North Sea.

Perhaps it may be expected from Europe's oldest culture, Greece, in order to ensure good luck in the year to come they hang Pomegranates (a sign of luck, prosperity and fertility) on the front door. Just before midnight all lighting is extinguished and everyone leaves the house and a lucky individual is selected to re-enter right foot first. A second person then takes the Pomegranate and smashes it against the door. The juicier the fruit, the better the luck.



Around the world our eyes will see fireworks and our ears may ring to "Auld Lang Syne", and we may take the opportunity to kiss all and sundry.

If 2025 has not been the best of years, why not wear white, jump off a chair, smash a Pomegranate, and after rushing through the house from front to back, take a dip in the North Sea!

Whatever measures you may choose, we wish everyone  
a happy and healthy New Year.


**Tony**

### *Did You Know?*

The Gregorian Calendar (which we use) was named after Pope Gregory XIII and came into effect in most parts of Europe in 1582 except for Scotland, which introduced it in 1600, and the rest of Britain and its dominions which only introduced it in 1752.

Until then we celebrated New Year on 25th March

## QUIZ ANSWERS

Who is this?		Robert Redford
What connects: Gnome, Knuckle, Wrap & Psalms		All have a silent letter
What is this	ICE <sup>3</sup>	Ice cube
<b>True or False:</b> Paul McCartney sang a James Bond Theme song.		True. He wrote and sang (as Wings) Live and Let Die in 1973.
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Do you enjoy quizzes?</b>  Then why not join our Quiz group on the 2nd Monday of the month  at the North Ferriby Social Club. Everyone is welcome.</p>		

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH:

### Executive Committee from 2025-26

<b>Chair</b> Alison  chair@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Vice Chair &amp; Speaker Finder</b> Paul  vice-chair@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>Treasurer</b> Rosalind  treasurer@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Secretary</b> John  secretary@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>Membership Secretary</b> Graham  memsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Meetings Secretary</b> Brenda  minsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>New Groups</b> Joyce  newgroups@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Web Administrator</b> Keith  webadmin@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>Without portfolio:</b> John  Patricia 	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Details are on our website:</b>  <a href="https://www.swanlandu3a.org.uk/u3acontacts.htm">https://www.swanlandu3a.org.uk/u3acontacts.htm</a>.</p>	

## Contact Information



Swanland u3a WEBSITE

<https://www.swanlandu3a.org.uk>

To access, update or add information please email:

[webadmin@swanlandu3a.org.uk](mailto:webadmin@swanlandu3a.org.uk)



Look / Join our FACEBOOK Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/swanlandu3a/>

### Swanland u3a Contacts for Information and Help.

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[chair@swanlandu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@swanlandu3a.org.uk)

[memsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk](mailto:memsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk) or 01482 631497

### Newsletter Deadline

The closing deadline for the submission of articles for the

April 2026 newsletter is:

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

Send to: Anne   at [newseditor@swanlandu3a.org.uk](mailto:newseditor@swanlandu3a.org.uk)

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