



*The abbreviation of Christmas to Xmas has a very long history. The “X” is from “Χρηστος”, “Christos” or Christ in Greek. The first written use of it in Anglo Saxon was in 1021.*

## CHAIR’S CHAT

We are coming to the end of another year – has it been a good one for you? I’ve been asked that question a number of times.

Years ago I would have debated with myself how to answer the question – tried too hard to think of a ‘clever’ answer. Now, I say: ‘It is what it is’ or life is what you make it – the good /bad the happy/sad.

“Your time on Earth is limited. Don’t try to ‘age with grace’, age with mischief, audacity and a good story to tell.” I found this on a u3a site, and it made me smile and reaffirm that being a member of u3a will help us achieve the sentiments of that phrase.

At the AGM we may say good-bye to some of the Committee and welcome some new members. Thank you to everyone for all the time and effort they have put into their different roles. Without you we would not exist.

**AND Thank You to all the Group Leaders** – I never cease to be in awe of all the work you do for our members. You truly define the meaning of Voluntary Work.



Merry Christmas

Trish  
Chair



*(Special Events are now being booked through Lewis Harvey Events which is a company solely owned by Jean Mole. Please be aware that Jean's company has Public Liability Insurance, exactly the same as cover provided by u3a trips. Please note that neither cover includes travel or cancellation*

*insurance.)*

Watch this space in the New Year for more exciting Special Events.

Jean Mole.



### **Home Dining.**

Thank you everyone who has supported me by attending my Dine at Home meals over the last 10 years.

Whilst I am still continuing to do these, I am afraid that the price from January will be £15 per person, due to the steep rise in all ingredients over the past 12 months. This price includes a choice of 2 starters, 2 mains and 2 desserts, coupled with a glass of wine (or soft drink) and tea or coffee. I do still have a couple places available in January, (first come first served), and the menu is as follows: -

Prawn & Smoked Salmon Cocktail or Mushroom Soup/Chicken and Leek Pie or Honey & Garlic Salmon/Raspberry Crunch or Chocolate Brownie with Ice Cream & Chocolate Sauce.

Please contact me on 07736 445 658 for details of dates and to book your place.

***Please also note that my home telephone line (01933 626 608) is no longer operative.***

Jean Mole



### **NEW – Guitar Group**

The Tuesday Improvers Guitar Group has been at maximum capacity for some time. Consequently, a new Thursday group, 4 - 6 pm at The Windmill Club, Rushden, has just been started & is looking for new members who, preferably, have some experience of playing the guitar. You don't have to be able to read music, but a few chords under your belt would be a great start. We play mostly 60s & 70s pop/rock songs & attempt to sing along.

Please get in touch with Andrew on 07879 577433 or by email: [vancouvercresswelljenny@gmail.com](mailto:vancouvercresswelljenny@gmail.com) should you be interested.



## Greetings Cards

Please note the next meeting is not until Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February because of the Christmas and New Year holidays. It is 10am – 12pm in the Leader's house.

In December there were very few attendees, and we attempted some Quilling. Please contact me at [davewpratt@sky.com](mailto:davewpratt@sky.com) or 07899 695822 for details if you are interested in joining the group.

Tess Pratt



## Scrabble

We meet on alternate Tuesdays @ 2:00 pm in the Waitrose Community Room for friendly matches to keep our brains operational.

**I accidentally swallowed a bunch of scrabble tiles.**  
My next trip to the bathroom could spell disaster.

For details contact John Ellingham on 07833 017855



## Computer Group:

We continue to meet in the Community Room at Waitrose, on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday each month from 10:00 until 12:00. We cover Windows 10/11 and most office applications for all levels of computer knowledge and are happy to help Group Leaders with all aspects of Beacon. All welcome.

Further information from Jim or Maggie Morrison, Group Leaders.



## W.A.L.T: Would Anyone Like To:

Find some company for .....anything you fancy doing, but don't want to do it alone. Find some information or advice on .....anything you want to know about. Find someone to take away.....anything you don't need (but someone else might).

The new look W.A.L.T group is a bit of an amalgamation of social media, recycling, & a companionship group, & with 70+ members, you stand a good chance of some responses from your fellow group members.

Don't worry if you are hesitant about using email - we have a very successful Buddy system in place to ensure no one is excluded because of technology.

For more information either contact the group leaders, Janet, & Ken, via the website, or see us at the main u3a meeting.

Janet Embling & Ken Chambers, Group Leaders



### Ten Pin Bowling:

If you would like to know more about this group or advise us of your interest, please get in touch via the website Contact page, or contact: Group Leaders – Alan Collinson, Martin Cromwell, or Alan

Nixson



### Golf:

Following a review of the group members, emails were sent out to determine the actual playing courses with details of the required number of holes to be played and frequency.

If you have an interest in joining the group, contact the leader: Hensley 01933 805547 or via the website contacts.



### Rock & Blues Group:

Because there isn't a meeting in December our next meeting is at 14.00 hours on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> January, followed by a second one on 30<sup>th</sup> January, both at the leader's house. Currently the group is full.

Jim Morrison



### MMFC (Monday Morning Football Chat).

We meet on Mondays in Waitrose Cafe at 10am. New members always welcome.

Just turn up or contact me on 01933 631531. Mike Gibbons



### Country Dancing:

We meet at Hensman Hall Chichele St. Higham Ferrers on alternate Mondays from 14:15 – 15:45. We welcome new members. Dances to suit everyone of all ages, even those with two left

feet. All dances are walked through, nothing complicated. Some dances are very gentle, and one can sit out if one wishes. Why not come for a taste. First timers are free. Our group is very friendly, and we always help anyone who is struggling.

Dancing with the feet is one thing, but dancing with the heart is another.

A big thank you to all our members for their continuing support. Best wishes for Christmas.

Please ring me for details George 01933 622827.



### **Wine Appreciation:**

November is the last tasting of this year. Time for Beaujolais Nouveau, it comes out on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of November and it used to be more of a thing, charging off to

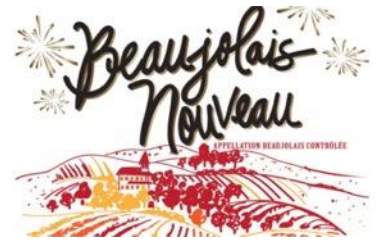
France to be first back. We tried this with a Beaujolais from 2022 which went down well.

A few people tried the Slivovitz (which you can get in the Xmas markets in Germany) to help keep out the cold it was not liked!

Merry Xmas to all and see in the new year.

If you would like to join us please call me.

Steve 01933 356784.



### **History Group**

Thursday 5th December meeting at the Masonic Hall was 'When Olive Oil was for Earache' Food History in the 20th Century by Sharn Matthews. Tea and Coffee and some Christmas food afterwards.



Thursday 2nd January The history of Charles Dickens Christmas Carol and its effect on Victorian life.

The trips for next year will be

- 1 Bury St Edmunds
- 2 Oxburgh Hall Suffolk National Trust
- 3 Whitwick Manor Wolverhampton National Trust
- 4 Hampton Court

I will try to finalise details this month.

Contact Brian Turner on 07812514456 or [brianitatu@gmail.com](mailto:brianitatu@gmail.com) if you have any queries.



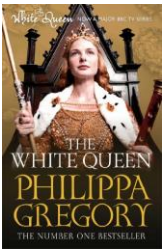
## SOME SILLY JOKES

- What's a good winter tip? Never catch snowflakes on your tongue until all the birds have flown south for the winter.
- Why do reindeer fly? Because they can't drive.
- Which reindeer can jump higher than a house? All of them – because houses can't jump.
- What do you call a deer with no eyes? No idea!



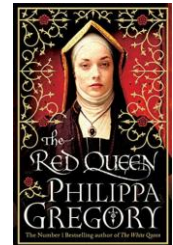
### Bookmarks Again:

The White Queen and The Red Queen, both by Philippa Gregory.



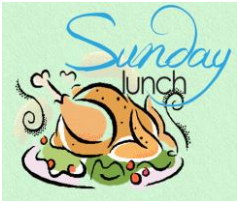
The very beautiful Elizabeth Woodville, despite her comparatively lowly status, marries into the family of the Lancastrians, her husband becoming Edward V. She is very involved in the War of the Roses with the many cousins fighting and plotting to take and rule the English throne. Elizabeth has to fight against rumour about her powers of witchcraft and lack of nobility and tries to keep her sons safe. Later two of her sons are taken to the Tower of London and it is believed they were murdered there.

The young Margaret Beaufort is an obsessively religious girl who believes that she could aspire to lead troops in battle like Joan of Arc. At the age of 13 yrs she is sent to Wales to marry Edward Tudor so that an heir to that side of the family will have a son who could claim the throne. She has to give her son up for others to care for and, as the result of too early a child birth, he is her only child. She becomes a pawn in the internecine battle between the families, with no regard for her feelings. Margaret focuses all her attention on plotting to get her son, the future Henry VII on the throne.



The book group while discussing the books admired the historical research in what were turbulent times that Phillipa Gregory had shown. Her skill as a writer made these historical stories easy to read and explained the sometime strange lives the women had both in their different ways but often at risk in ambitions for their sons.

Ann Kemp

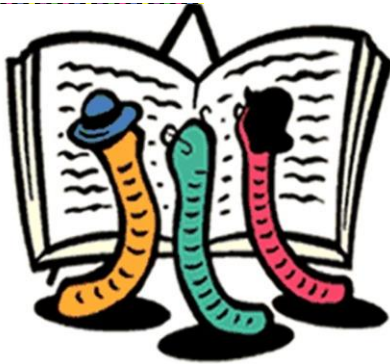


### Sunday Lunch Group:

Members new to u3a are especially welcome but be aware with our existing group members we have limited spaces. No deposit required.

Forthcoming dates are the last Sunday of each month, and you can find them on the Beacon calendar.

Inquiries to Linda Walker. 07384 601603.



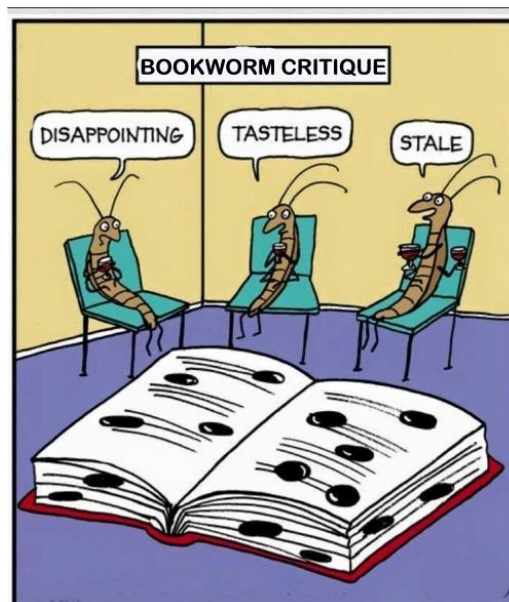
### Non-Fiction Book Group

New members very welcome. We meet on the 4th Monday of the month 10:30-12:00.at the leaders' home. Details on the beacon calendar.

Are you a non-Fiction reader? Are you interested in Travel, History, Biographies etc. Members would need to commit to obtaining copies. listening as a talking book or reading on Kindle.

Our book choices are varied. Recently we have read biographies, diaries , travel, & history, both newly published & from past years. We meet at the leaders' home in Rushden to discuss our choice of book & choose another.

More information from Linda & Chris Walker:

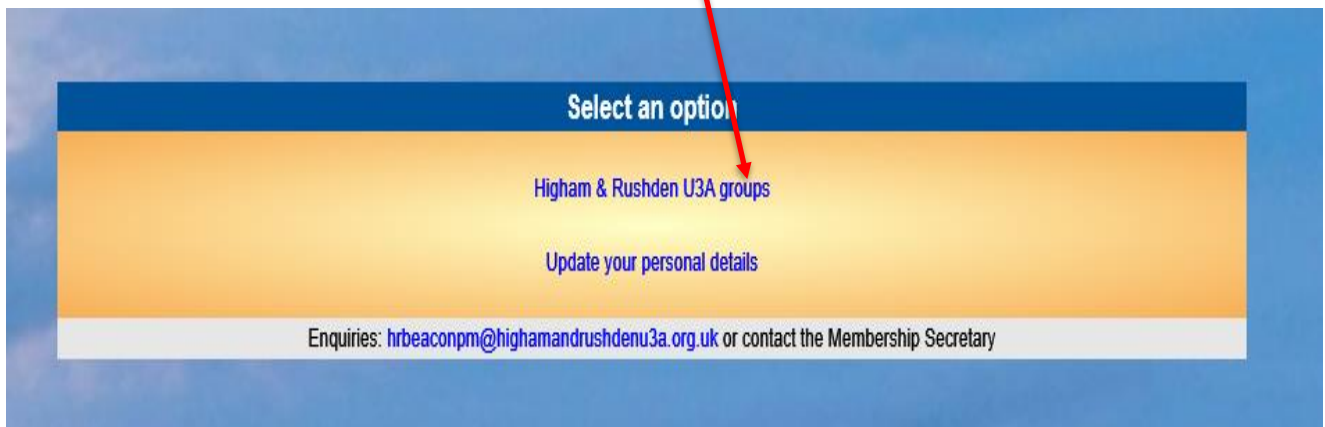


## GROUP LEADER CONTACT DETAILS –

In accordance with GDPR we don't publish contact details for group leaders on a publicly available website or newsletter. There is a contact form on the website which can be used to email group leaders & u3a officers.

If you wish to telephone a group leader you will need to log into Beacon at <https://www.u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?u3a=118&sc=LUDE>. You will need to create a password the first time you use the members' portal & full instructions are available on our u3a website.

Clicking on the Higham & Rushden u3a groups link opens a page listing all



our current groups & gives telephone numbers for each leader.

### QUICK FIRE QUIZ ANSWERS FROM LAST MONTH:

1 What is the only gemstone to come from a living creature?

**PEARL**

2 Who is the only author to have won both the Carnegie medal for children's fiction and the Booker prize?

**PENELOPE LIVELY**

3 It's name coming from the Ancient Greek for gold and flower, what is November's birth flower?

**CHRYSANTHEMUM**

4 What mythically named bird is the is the UK's smallest bird of prey?

**MERLIN**

5 November 2014 saw the completion of the artwork Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, when what filled the moat at the Tower of London?

**CERAMIC POPPIES**



| GROUP DETAILS                                                                                                                                                                                                   | VENUE                          | DAY/TIME                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>There may be waiting lists for some of the groups but if you are interested please contact the relevant group via the contact form on the website to be added &amp; the group leader should contact you.</i> |                                |                                                                          |
| Check the group calendar on the website for further details                                                                                                                                                     |                                |                                                                          |
| A Little Aloud                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Leader's home                  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday at Leaders' home 10.00 – 10. |
| Art for Fun                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Waitrose Community Room        | Alternate Mondays 14.00-1600                                             |
| Badminton Beginners &                                                                                                                                                                                           | Pemberton Centre               | Wednesday 14.00-15.00                                                    |
| Intermediate Badminton                                                                                                                                                                                          | Pemberton centre, Rushden.     | Every Tuesday, 10.00 to 11.00. £2.50 per session                         |
| Badminton for fun                                                                                                                                                                                               | Pemberton Centre               | Tuesday 09.00-10.00 & Friday 12.00-13.00                                 |
| Bookmarks Again                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Waitrose Community Room        | 1st Monday of the month*                                                 |
| Card Making                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Leader's Home                  | 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday/month.10-12 am                                 |
| Computing                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Waitrose Community Room        | 10-12am 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday every month           |
| Country Dancing                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Hensman Hall Chichele St. NN10 | Alternate Mondays 2 00-3.30pm                                            |
| Cycling multi-Groups                                                                                                                                                                                            | Rushden Lakes                  | Every Monday 10.30 (Apr-Nov)                                             |
| Digital Photography A                                                                                                                                                                                           | Rushden Hall                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed 10.00 to 12.00                     |
| Driving                                                                                                                                                                                                         | On the Road                    | By request                                                               |
| Garden                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Rushden Hall                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday 10.30-12.30                                     |
| Guitar Improvers                                                                                                                                                                                                | Rushden Windmill Club          | Tuesday 4pm                                                              |
| Handicrafts                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Rushden Bowls Club             | 4th Thursday each month 2-4pm.                                           |
| Continued                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                |                                                                          |

| <b>GROUP DETAILS</b>      | <b>VENUE</b>            | <b>DAY/TIME</b>                            |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Handicrafts               | Rushden Bowls Club      | 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday each month 2-4pm. |
| History Group             | Rushden Masonic Hall    | 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday each month 14:00  |
| Home Dining               | Various                 | Three times per Month varying days         |
| Knit & Natter             | Leader's Home           | Alternate Mon 10.00-12.00                  |
| Mahjong for fun           | Waitrose Community Room | Alternate Mondays 14.30-16.30              |
| MMFC                      | Waitrose Cafe           | Weekly Mondays 10am – 11am                 |
| Non-Fiction Books         | Leader's Home           | 4th Monday 10.30-12.00                     |
| Play Reading              | To be advised           | 1st Tuesday 13.15-14.15                    |
| Rock & Blues Appreciation | Leader's Home           | Last Thursday of the month 2-4pm           |
| Scrabble                  | Waitrose Community Room | 2-4pm Alternate Tuesdays                   |
| Singing for Fun           | Rushden Hall, Hall Park | Alternate Thu 14.00-16.00                  |
| Special Events            | Various                 | Various                                    |
| Sunday Lunch              | Various                 | Resuming 24 March 2024                     |
| Table Tennis              | Pemberton Centre        | Wed 13.00-14.00                            |
| Ten Pin Bowling           | Hollywood Bowl, W'boro  | Alternate Friday 1100-1300                 |
| Ukulele                   | Rushden Transport Club  | 13.30-15.30 Every Monday                   |
| Video Editing             | Leader's Home           | 2nd & 4th Tues 10.00-12.00                 |
| W.A.L.T.                  | Various                 | Various                                    |
| Wine & Dine               | Various                 | Various                                    |
| Wine Appreciation         | Leader's Home           | Check calendar for information.            |

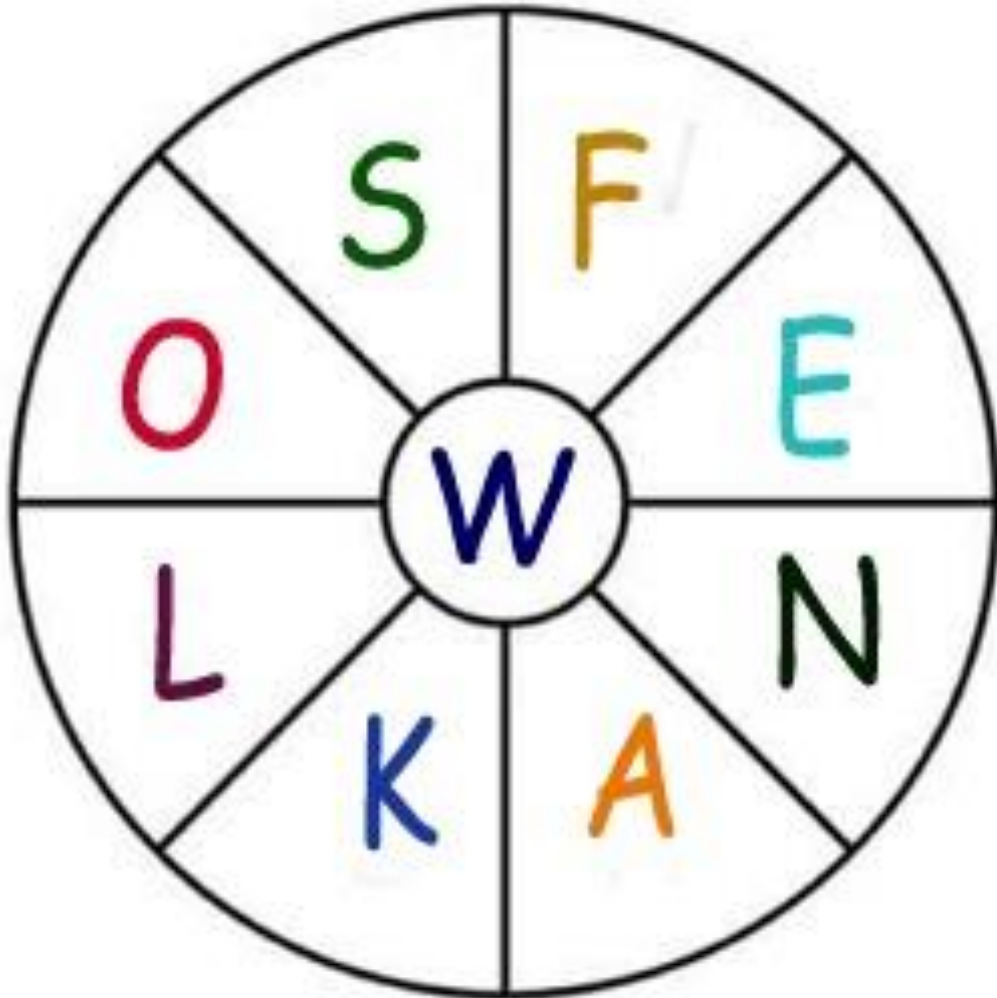
### SEEING DOUBLE ANSWERS

Each pair of words shares two middle letters. The first has been filled in as an example. Complete the remaining words to find the mystery keyword, reading down the middle.

|           |           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>AN</b> | <b>GO</b> | <b>RA</b> |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>GI</b> |           | <b>LO</b> |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>CL</b> | <b>SE</b> | <b>ET</b> |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>FR</b> |           | <b>TY</b> |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>WO</b> | <b>EF</b> | <b>UL</b> |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>PR</b> |           | <b>ER</b> |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>SO</b> | <b>LE</b> | <b>MN</b> |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>TA</b> |           | <b>NT</b> |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>BI</b> | <b>SH</b> | <b>OP</b> |
| <b>10</b> | <b>CA</b> |           | <b>EW</b> |

## WORD WHEEL

Create as many words as possible of four letters or more using the given letters only once but always including the middle letter. Don't use proper names or plurals. There is one nine-letter word. The score to beat is 30 but 26 is very good and 22 is also good.



*Answers will be in the January edition of the newsletter.*

### u3a MONTHLY MEETINGS

Please note there is a small charge for non-members. Details can be found on our website or call 01933 522934 for further information.

If you, or a friend, have experience as a speaker at other groups on topics which you think would be of interest to our members then please contact the Speaker Secretary.

|                       |               |                                                    |
|-----------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2024</b>           |               |                                                    |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec   | AGM           | H&R Singing for Fun                                |
| <b>2025</b>           |               |                                                    |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan  | Vince Eager   | What Time's the Midnight Buffet?                   |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb  | Steve Dimmer  | Hercule Poirot                                     |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Mar  | Sweet FA      | Musical Trio with Clever Ditties                   |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> Apr  | TBA           |                                                    |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> May  | Roger Brown   | Various Talks                                      |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> Jun  | Nick Cosgriff | You do not have to say anything, but anything..... |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> Jul  | )             |                                                    |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Aug  | )             |                                                    |
| 15 <sup>th</sup> Sept | )             | To be advised                                      |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct  | )             |                                                    |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov  | )             |                                                    |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Dec   | )             |                                                    |
| <b>2025</b>           |               |                                                    |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> Jan  | )             |                                                    |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Feb  | )             |                                                    |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> Mar  | )             | To be advised                                      |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> Apr  | )             |                                                    |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> May  | )             |                                                    |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> Jun  | )             |                                                    |



## EDITORIAL:

Having managed to find things to talk about in my editorial for the year to date, I have run out of ideas for anything interesting for December. There is so much going on between now and the Christmas break, that my mind is taking some time off to recover. So, instead I have tried to come up with some things to make for gifting or to keep. Hope you find them useful and/or tasty.

## THINGS TO MAKE AS GIFTS OR TO EAT AT HOME:

### ORANGE CURD

#### Ingredients; (Makes 2-3 jars)

3 Oranges, zested

1 Lemon, zested

300g Granulated Sugar

2 whole Eggs + 4 Egg yolks or Aquafaba\* (egg white substitute for vegans) and 4 tbsps. Cornflour (as a substitute for egg yolks.)

110g Butter (plant based for vegans)

¼ tsp Salt.



\*You can make an impressive egg white substitute using the water from a drained can of chickpeas. Simply set the chickpeas aside and whip the liquid until foamy or soft peaks start to form, just like you would with regular egg whites.

#### Method:

Start by sterilising your jars – wash in hot, soapy water and rinse. Transfer to a roasting tray and dry in the oven at 160°C for 15 minutes. While the jars are drying zest the fruit then cut the oranges in half and squeeze out 125ml juice. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze out 1 tbsp juice. Place the orange and lemon juices, all the zest, sugar, eggs (or egg substitutes), butter and salt in a small pan. Whisk over a low heat until butter has melted, and you have a smooth mixture. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Once boiling lower heat and continue to simmer, stirring constantly, for 5 minutes, or until the mixture thickens (it will thicken further as it cools in the jars). Pour curd into the sterilised jars, seal, and label. It lasts for up to 2 weeks in the fridge once opened.

## BRUSSELS SPROUT KIMCHI

### Ingredients:

450g Brussels Sprouts, halved.  
5r Garlic Cloves, minced (I use ½ tsp Garlic Paste)  
2 tbsp Ginger Paste  
5 Spring Onions, chopped.  
2 tbsp Soy Sauce  
3 tbsp Red Chili Flakes  
3 tbsp Maple Syrup  
1 Apple, grated.  
10g Sea Salt.

### Method:

Add all the ingredients to a bowl and, using your hands, mix for 5 minutes. Cover and leave for at least 2 hours. Compact into a clean glass jar (Kilner-style – clean but no need to sterilize). Cover with baking paper, then seal. Let it ferment for 2-5 days out of the fridge. It then lasts in the fridge for 4-5 weeks. Enjoy!



## CHOCOLATE, ORANGE, AND WALNUT BARK

### Ingredients:(Makes 6 bags)

1 Orange (makes 4 dried slices)  
300g Good Quality Dark Chocolate  
300g Good Quality Milk Chocolate  
A handful of Walnuts, roughly chopped  
Pinch of Sea Salt (Optional)

### Method:

Roughly chop a handful of walnuts and set aside. Slice oranges and place on a parchment-lined baking tray. Bake in a low oven for 2-4 hours, turning every 30 minutes. Remove, leave to cool, then roughly chop. Turn the oven to at its lowest setting and line a shallow-sided baking tray with parchment. Arrange the chocolate bars in a 2 x 3 grid, with the bars touching. Place this in the oven and leave to melt for 10-15 minutes. Remove and use a skewer to swirl the different chocolates together, to create a marbled effect. While still soft, scatter over the dried orange and walnut pieces\* and sprinkle with a little salt (optional). Place in the fridge until set then shatter into pieces and place into bags for gifting.

\*Any combination of dried fruit and nuts work just as well,

## CHRISTMAS KRAUT

### Ingredients: (Makes about 1kg)

1 Red Cabbage quartered then finely shredded.  
1 tsp Ginger Paste  
Zest and juice of 1 Orange or 2 Clementines  
150g Dried Cranberries  
2 tsp Mixture Spice  
2g Sea Salt for every 100g  
12 Bay Leaves



### Method:

Quarter the cabbage then shred finely (a y-shaped potato peeler can be used for fine shreds). Put the cabbage and ginger into a large bowl, then grate in the zest of orange or clementines. Cut the fruit in half and squeeze the juice into the bowl. Now add the cranberries and spices. Weigh the mixture and add 2g salt per 100g. Fold the salt through to distribute, then scrunch together to help soften the cabbage and massage in the salt. Spoon the mixture into a 1kg jar (or several smaller ones), add it little by little and pack down each layer as you go. It's important to exclude as much air as possible. Pour over any left-over juice from the bowl then overlap the bay leaves on top to fully cover the compacted cabbage.. Add a pinch of salt and fill the jar right to the top with water. Screw on an airtight lid and place on a plate (to catch any juices that bubble over during fermentation). Transfer to a dry spot at room temperature, out of direct sunlight. Let this ferment for two weeks, then eat straightaway or store at room temperature in a dark, cool place for up to 1 year.

## SCENTED PINE CONES

### Ingredients:

Pine Cones  
Tin Foil & Large Sealable Bag  
Essential Oils – clove, cinnamon, nutmeg, orange, & pine work well\*.

### Method:

Soak the pine cones in cold water, drain and place on a foil-lined baking tray. Pop into a preheated oven (180°C) and bake for 30-60 minutes. Check regularly to ensure they don't burn. Leave to cool then place them in a large, sealable bag and add a few drops of essential oils. Seal the bag then shake and leave for several days. The more oil you use, the stronger the scent. Remove the cones and pile in a bowl or make garlands by stringing together with twine.



\*Be aware that cinnamon and pine are not safe to use around pets.