

## **U3A FILM GROUP – PROGRAMME: September – December 2025**

**Venue: Stewart Bowling Club; Time: 2pm**

### **Friday 5 September 2025 – Fishermen's Friends: One and All (2022)**

Starring: James Purefoy, Dave Johns, Sam Swainsburg

Directors: Meg Leonard, Nick Moordroft

Running time: 107 minutes

Following the unexpected success of their debut album: "No Hoppers, Jokers and Rogues", the story begins a year later as the singers struggle to navigate the pressures, pitfalls and temptations of their new-found fame. The film follows the shanty singers through the highs and lows as lifelong friendships are put to the test, and they battle the dreaded curse of the second album.

### **Friday 19 September 2025 – The Critic (2023)**

Starring: Ian McKellan, Gemma Arterton, Mark Strong, Alfred Enoch, Lesley Manville

Director: Anand Tucker

Running time: 101 minutes

A deliciously dark and sharp-witted thriller set in 1930s London "theatreland". Jimmy Erskine (Ian McKellan) is the most feared and vicious theatre critic in town, and delights in writing vitriolic reviews of plays that he believes fall short of his high standards. When the new owner of the paper dismisses him, he strikes a sinister Faustian bargain with struggling actress Nina Land (Gemma Arterton), who is desperate to win his favour.

### **Friday, 3 October 2025 – Collateral (2004)**

Starring: Tom Cruise, Jamie Foxx

Director: Michael Mann

Running time: 120 minutes

A gripping neo-noir thriller. Set over one intense night in Los Angeles, the film explores morality, chance, and transformation through a taut, character-driven narrative. Max (Jamie Foxx) is a cab driver with dreams of starting his own limo business. He picks up Vincent (Tom Cruise), a seemingly smooth businessman who offers \$600 for a night of driving. Max soon discovers Vincent is a contract killer on a mission to eliminate five targets before dawn. As the night unfolds, Max is forced into Vincent's deadly world, leading to a tense psychological and physical showdown. Why It Stands Out: Tom Cruise plays against type as a cold, calculating villain – a rare role for him; Jamie Foxx's performance earned him an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor; the film was one of the first to use digital cinematography to capture LA's nocturnal glow. If you're into moody thrillers with philosophical undertones and sharp dialogue, Collateral is a must-watch.

### **Friday, 17 October 2025 – Music & Lyrics (2007)**

Starring: Hugh Grant, Drew Barrymore

Director: Marc Lawrence

Running time: 104 minutes

A charming romantic comedy. Reviews state that "the film succeeds because of the considerable charm of its co-stars" and "the music segments featuring Hugh Grant are worth the price of admission." Alex Fletcher (Grant) is a washed-up 1980s pop star from the fictional band PoP! (inspired by Wham and Duran Duran), now performing at nostalgia gigs. He gets a chance to write a hit song for current pop sensation Cora Corman (Haley Bennett). Alex excels at composing melodies but struggles with lyrics – until he discovers Sophie Fisher (Barrymore), a quirky woman who waters his plants and has a hidden talent for writing. As they collaborate on the song "Way Back into Love," their creative partnership blossoms into romance, with plenty of witty banter and emotional hurdles along the way. The film opened on 9 February 2007 in the United Kingdom and Ireland and ranked Number 1 at the box office. It was released on 2,955 screens in the United States and Canada on 14 February and ranked Number 4 at the box office.

**Friday, 7 November 2025 – Sphere (1998)**

Starring: Dustin Hoffman, Sharon Stone, Samuel L. Jackson

Director: Barry Levinson

Running time: 134 min

A spaceship is discovered under three hundred years' worth of coral growth at the bottom of the ocean. 1000 feet below the ocean, navy divers discover an object half-a-mile long. A crack team of scientists are deployed to the site in Deepsea Habitats. What they find boggles the mind as they discover a perfect metal sphere. What is the secret behind the sphere? Will they survive the mysterious 'manifestations'? Who or what is creating these? They may never live to find out.

**Friday, 21 November 2025 – Stan & Ollie (2018)**

Starring: Steve Coogan, John C. Reilly

Director: Jon S Baird

Running time: 98 minutes

A heartfelt biographical comedy-drama that beautifully captures the final chapter in the legendary partnership of Laurel and Hardy, the iconic slapstick duo. Set in 1953, the film follows Stan Laurel (played by Steve Coogan) and Oliver Hardy (John C. Reilly) as they embark on a gruelling theatre tour across post-war Britain. Their golden Hollywood years are behind them, and they're hoping to reignite their careers and secure funding for a new film. Along the way, they confront personal tensions, fading fame, and Hardy's declining health – all while rediscovering the deep bond that made them beloved worldwide. The performances are widely praised for their emotional depth and uncanny physical resemblance to the real-life comedians. Reilly's transformation, aided by prosthetics, is especially remarkable. The film received glowing reviews for its tender portrayal of friendship and showbiz legacy.

**Friday, 5 December 2025 – What Lies Beneath (2000)**

Starring: Harrison Ford, Michelle Pfeiffer, Katharine Towne

Director: Robert Zemeckis

Running time: 130 minutes

With their only daughter in college, the loving couple of Dr Norman Spencer and his spouse, Claire, a former cellist, retreat in picturesque Vermont to live a tranquil life at their serene and isolated lake house. However, their idyllic marriage will soon start falling to pieces when sensitive Claire becomes convinced that a supernatural entity has occupied their vacant home. Now, in her eyes, whispering voices and unexplained manifestations that chill the bone to the marrow grow in intensity. Could Claire's apprehensions be nothing more than figments of a vivid imagination, or is there a dreadful secret that lies deep within Norman and Claire's seemingly peaceful shelter?

**Friday, 19 December 2025 – Trains, Planes and Automobiles (1987)**

Starring: Steve Martin, John Candy, Laila Robins

Director: John Hughes

Running time: 93 min

In New York, marketing executive Neal Page wants to travel home to Chicago for Thanksgiving. He has difficulties getting a taxi and his flight is cancelled. He meets in the airport clumsy, talkative shower-curtain-ring salesman Del Griffith, who has taken his cab and they travel side-by-side to Chicago. However, the bad weather shuts down O'Hare Airport and they land at Wichita, Kansas. They both want to go to Chicago and they decide to travel together. Along their journey Neal changes his viewpoint about Del Griffith and his own behaviour.

**Friday 16 January 2026 – 84 Charing Cross Road (1986)**

A true story about love and the love of books. Helene Hanff (Anne Bancroft), a feisty New York writer, mails a letter to a small London bookshop requesting some rare English classics. Frank Doel (Anthony Hopkins), the reserved English bookseller, answers her request, beginning a touching and humorous correspondence that spans two continents and two decades. Their intimate, richly detailed letters draw us into their lives as they share their dreams, hopes, sorrows, and so develop a lasting and extraordinary friendship.