



January 2024

General Meetings are held on the **second Thursday** of the month at 2.00pm
at Christ Church, 164 New London Road, Chelmsford CM2 0AW



General Meeting Speakers

Thursday 11th January at 2pm Eve Regelous – I Blame It On The Beatles

The 1960s was a time that changed the world, from fashion to food, from music to microwaves, from the radio airwaves to television - if the 1950s were black and white then the 1960s were Multicoloured.

Thursday 8th February at 2pm AGM and 'Meet the Group Leaders'.

View from the Chair January 2024



I hope you had a wonderful Christmas. It never ceases to amaze me how something that is so long in the making suddenly arrives and is gone in a flash! Hopefully all that time you spent planning, shopping and preparing was well worth it! I don't know about you but I find that the sudden change of pace can be quite exhausting, especially as you get older. However, the rewards are the pleasure of sharing the day with friends and family, enjoying lots of good food and drink, receiving lots of lovely presents, watching the

Christmas Specials on TV, and perhaps playing Board Games. I hope you didn't have any culinary disasters like me! I cooked a nut roast in the oven in the dish it came in, thinking it was silicone, but it was simply plastic. The tray melted and stuck to the food and the baking tray. It went straight in the bin (good job I had an alternative for the vegetarians up my sleeve) and my non-stick baking tray is no longer non-stick!!

Backtracking a little I am very pleased to report that our Christmas Social was a huge success. The Magician, I am told was 'fantastic', the food was both plentiful and 'delicious', and the Christmas themed quiz made everyone laugh and groan (especially the answers to the Xmas Cracker jokes).

I would like to thank everyone who volunteered their time and effort to make the event special, in particular Marie & David Neale who spent almost the entire time in the kitchen, serving the mulled wine and endless cups of tea and coffee!



Not only that, but prior to the event Marie had put a lot of effort into shopping for food, drink and the associated tableware. Our team of home cooks (Judy Gillies, Geraldine Bartlett, Jeannie Temple, and Janice Buckmaster) came up trumps with a variety of delightful savoury and sweet dishes. Not only that, they arrived early, along with several other volunteers (including Anne Brereton, Laraine Linard, Francesca Lovison and a couple of others) to help divide up the food between individual platters and ferry it from Room 5 to the main hall, where more volunteers had worked hard to make it all look very Christmassy.



The tables had been covered in colourful cloths and paper plates were waiting to be filled. On the stage a tall Christmas tree had been dressed in cheerful red and white decorations made by the u3a Craft Group, led by Julie Nicholson.

It seems we might have overdone it a little in the catering department (we are no experts) but you will no doubt be pleased to know that the excess food was taken to CHESS from where it was shared out amongst the homeless in our community.

Those who were fortunate enough to attend the event were entered into a free prize draw, the winners were: Jackie Lambert (Hotel Chocolate gift box); Maureen Randall (Edinburgh preserves gift box); Francesca Lovison, Ian Heard and Janice Buckmaster each won a bottle of wine, and committee member, Wendy Hubbard, won a donated Xmas pudding (well deserved Wendy!).

As you are no doubt aware, we had to limit the numbers attending the Christmas meeting as the need for tables reduced the space in the hall. I am sure that some people found this to be disappointing but the health and safety of our members must come first. To make up for this disappointment we ran a second prize draw for those members who couldn't make it or where told the event was full up. Vouchers were

sent to the following members: Christine Prigg - John Lewis; Patricia Kempson - M&S; and Sandra Bell – Waterstones.

Plans for 2024

So now we have flipped the calendar on to 2024 what do we have to look forward to in Chelmsford u3a? Well that rather depends on you! We have had just two responses to our plea for people to come forward to join us on the committee, which considering the size of the membership is somewhat disappointing. However, I am pleased to say that one of these has resulted in a firm nomination already. I have no doubt that the focus of the committee in 2024 will be to continue to encourage and support the forming of new interest groups and to identify ways in which we can include and involve more people in our monthly meetings and events, especially as we now have something approaching 600 members.

As previously notified, our AGM will take place on Thursday 8th of February. Very shortly we will be sending out a more detailed agenda which will include the names of all those standing for election and details of some resolutions involving proposed changes to our constitution and to our membership categories. After the AGM there will be a chance for you to 'Meet the Groups' when you can speak to our Group Leaders, find out more about our existing groups and suggest ideas for new groups.

BREAKING NEWS!

We are to be in the third batch of pioneer sites to migrate our current website to a new platform known as **u3a SiteWorks**. The process for this is to start in January but it won't go live straightaway. Initially we will be reviewing our existing website data, considering how we want our new site to look, and testing out different page layouts.

Our Web Manager Andy Moir will be leading us through the migration process. We are fortunate in that Andy is a volunteer member of the national u3a SiteWorks Team so he is familiar with the new software and website platform.

Interest Group Leaders may like to take this opportunity to review the content of their web page and think about what changes or additions they might like, especially photographs of group activities.

Hoping to see many of you at the January meeting, I'm looking forward to the talk!

Best wishes
Lesley Wood

The Wider u3a Movement

Highlights of 2023 Click here to watch the video.

<https://youtu.be/5uztNg-gA5g?si=D5zz15AP02wzeWRN>

The u3a National Newsletter for 'Friends of u3a' is filled with information, stories and advice including items of interest or offers for you from across the u3a movement. Click here

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter> to sign up and receive regular u3a updates and offers both regional and national, direct to your email inbox throughout the month.

Walking Group

Leader: Alan Mayo

On 1st December six members of the Walking Group met outside the White Hart PH, Little Waltham. It was a chilly, crisp morning after a heavy overnight frost. After pre-ordering our lunches, we set off towards Great Waltham. After crossing Blasford Hill we took to the footpaths across open countryside.

Our circular route took us past two well preserved Pill Boxes which made me remember the efforts my parents' generation went to, to keep our country safe. Before we reached Pleshey we turned and followed the Essex Way back towards our starting point. We were joined for lunch by members of the group who were unable to walk for one reason or another, which made for a very enjoyable time.



However, **our group is in desperate need of new members**. Pre Covid, our numbers were usually in double figures, sometimes as many as sixteen walkers would come along. We even had a waiting list at one point.

Now we are down to the same regular six members or so, which means every other month, the same people are leading the walks. I fear the group is in danger of folding unless we get more regular walkers. If a couple of regular walkers are unable to attend on the day leaving only four, it makes a walk unviable. So please consider joining us. Members who do not wish to walk are always welcome to join us for lunch only.

We meet at 10.00am on the 1st and 3rd Friday of the Month. Our walks are around five miles and take about 2hrs 45mins (allowing for a fifteen minute break midway).

Each walk is led by a member who chooses a location within a 10 -12 mile radius of Chelmsford. The walks start and finish at a pub where a lunchtime meal is taken. To enquire about joining this group go to the U3A Website and click on the Walking Group to email the Group Leader, and please include your telephone number and email address in your message.

Alan Alexander

London - The City & its People Group

Leader: Berry Cornell

If you would like to join the London Group please contact the membership secretary Chris Rycroft for further information: Tel no. 01245 473047 email: c.rycroft123@btinternet.com.

The Group **usually** meets up on 4th Monday of the month at 2pm but **dates in bold** are exceptions due to Bank holidays, Christmas and availability. Meetings are held at Christ Church, New London Road, Chelmsford.



Programme from January 2024 – July 2024

- 29th Jan** A visit to Trinity House. **NB 5th Monday in January. We have eight seats available on the coach for £20 per person. The coach will drop us near the Tower of London, a great stepping-off place for shopping or visiting historical sites. Please telephone Berry if you would like further details. Please telephone Berry if you would like further details. 07811 091771/01245 355823.**
- 26th Feb London's Spectacular Riverside History. Peter Lawrence will be Zooming his talk. The zoom link will be sent via email nearer the time.
- 25th Mar Alfred Hitchcock's Leytonstone, speaker Gary Lewis.
- 22nd Apr A visit to the Horniman Museum – details to follow.
- 20th May** Walking in Southwark and Bankside, speaker Kathy Lancaster.
- 24th Jun Speaker David Williams – topic to be decided.
- 22nd Jul A walk around the Inns of Court lead by Richard Pusey and Terry Pipe.

Committee: Berry Cornell Convenor 01277 355823, Susie Fowkes, Chris Rycroft, David Marsh, Dave Sayers, Bob Smith Deputy Convenor.

Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499

The Birding Group does not meet in December, so I do not have a report to give.

I hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year. Below is the proposed programme for 2024.

Below is the proposed programme for the New Year

- 26th Jan. Hanningfield
23rd Feb. Old Hall Marshes
22nd March. Abberton
26th April. Tiptree Heath
24th May. Fingeringhoe
21st June. Lea Valley
July. No meeting
23rd August. Cockayne Wood
27th September. Rainham Marshes
25th October. Thameside
22nd November. Blue House Farm

I will email all members nearer the date to confirm where we will meet.

New members are very welcome to join us, please feel free to contact me on the numbers above, or by the U3A website email address. We meet at 10am on the fourth Friday of the month at the chosen venue and set off about ten minutes later. The walking is not arduous, we usually spend more time standing or sitting in hides enjoying the spectacle of nature. There is no fee to join the group and **all abilities are more than welcome** whether an experienced birder or total novice.

If members would like to be added to our growing WhatsApp Group, please let me know and give me your mobile number. As always, if any members have ideas or suggestions for visits, please let me know. I will send all members an email nearer the time, confirming the location and that we can go ahead.

Lunch Club 3

Leaders: Laraine Linard and Barbara Childs

The group is now lead by Laraine Linard and Barbara Childs who can be contacted via their group page on the Chelmsford u3a website.

Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse



Nine members attended our meeting in Chelmsford Library on 20th December 2023.

As is usual, each member gave a resume of what he/she had been doing over the past month. One had been for a short stay in Buxton, another had participated in a Christmas fun run for which he had arrived late because his bus had not arrived on time! Another described an unconventional funeral that he had attended, where the hearse was a yellow Reliant Robin and trailer (the deceased was a great fan of Only Fools And Horses!)

A member brought with her a book of short stories in Spanish (with an English translation on the opposite page). Both were historical tales relating to a king and his two sons, with the king being killed by an arrow intended for a wild boar (not surprisingly none of us knew what the Spanish for a wild boar was!).

From January onwards we agreed that our members would take it in turns to host the meeting and decide what would make up the agenda. The thinking is that this would provide a fresh input of ideas and keep the content fresh and varied.

After the meeting we used the surplus funds in our kitty to pay for a Christmas lunch at El Chigre. Three members unable to come to today's meeting joined us for the lunch, making the numbers up to twelve. A most enjoyable time was had by all. Regrettably El Chigre is about to cease trading from its premises in the High Street, so we will have to consider other options when we next eat out together.

If you already can hold a basic conversation in Spanish, and wish to join us, please click on the link on our website. The next meeting for the group will be on Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 10:30am at Chelmsford Library in a meeting room on the first floor.

David Gout

IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons



Happy New Year to you all.

We are making some changes to the IT Group for 2024. We will **move our monthly meeting to the 2nd Wednesday of each month and Only have nine monthly meetings per year. We will not meet in July, August and September.**

We will be having short presentations within the meeting on IT subjects such as Facebook, other social media platforms, online banking and any other subjects members would like to learn about.

Lesley Wood will continue with the digitalising photos project for as long as the demand is there.

A reminder that our monthly meetings are drop-in style meetings. You can attend as many sessions you want in order to gain solutions to your IT needs. There is no commitment to a long-term attendance. There is no upfront joining fee, just the £2 you pay at sessions you attend. Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 10th January 10.00 Christ Church New London Road.**

Bus Pass Group

Leader: Maurice Austin

Our final trip of the year was beset with late running buses, mostly caused by the road works on the A12. Apparently a much-needed investment in our highways network that causes years of congestion during the works and then, maybe a few years of respite before it fills up and needs to be widened again!

Rant over, for a few paragraphs!

We caught the 11.55 First Essex X71 from Chelmsford Bus Station. Nice cheery driver, quite a busy ride; more or less on time till those wretched road works and then the minutes ticked by! Quite late into Colchester, late enough to miss the planned connection. Only 16 minutes wait for an alternative route (Chambers 784) through the beautiful Suffolk countryside with chocolate box villages and their pigs-blood-coloured cottages, neat and hedgeless giant fields. This trip served Great Horkesley, Levenheath and Newton Green on its way to Sudbury.

The usual mad rush to a pub or café took place more dramatically than usual. It was half past two, tummies were rumbling, so most of us dived in the Huffers Café in King Street, just a few minutes walk from the bus station. The food was excellent, and so plentiful that several of us asked for doggy bags to take the surplus home. I didn't, but my fish and chips overhung the large plate by 2 or 3 inches each side! It was my duty to empty the plate! Jeannie and David found the local "Spoons" but were sober enough to later enjoy some useful Christmas shopping in some of Sudbury's eclectic mix of individual shops and a bit of culture in the Gainsborough museum .

By the time we had finished eating, it was getting dark, the Christmas decorations much in evidence. The power's that be had "gone to town" with superb displays of mainly white dangly lights. The central area was well covered with special attention given to the central churches, civic buildings, and former cinema. Most of us went into the central church where there was a display of 71 home-sized Christmas trees in

every colour and style imaginable. It seemed that just about every organisation in the town had submitted a tree. A great community effort.



Sandra Barnett and Maurice Austin outside the church by the town Memory tree.



One of the 71 community Christmas trees in the town centre church. Photos by Sandra Barnett.

We eventually got back to the bus station in good time as we didn't want to miss what was the last bus of the day (at the ridiculously early time of 17.26!). It was due in from Bury St Edmunds at 17.20 but didn't arrive until about 17.50ish. The A12 couldn't be blamed this time! This bus was a Chambers 754 which came back through Bures, the village on the Essex/Suffolk border. Bures is a pretty village and had its own attractive lights.

One of the other passengers on this trip had been to an office Christmas party (we know that as Chris commented on her extravagant seasonal jumper) and she recommended we visit her village next year to see the lights and enjoy the hospitality at The Dragon. That just might be well be worth following up!

Of course, we think we missed our planned connection at Colchester. It might have run but no-one seemed to know. The fancy electronic boards were only showing due times of buses, not the number of minutes one had to wait. The one we wanted wasn't on the board (we were late), the next one was but "dropped off" and the one after that was a very long time to wait! And the First Apps were not showing anything of any use!

Chris asked a very helpful First bus driver who said that many of the city services were coming back 40 minutes late due to congestion, buses using the A12 were often stuck for ages (we knew that!) and he

couldn't see where they were on his hand-held computer. So we decided to catch a local service to the main station and then a train as we were all getting cold.

The station booking office on the London-bound platform was closed although the gates were open and unstaffed. We had a dilemma; do we go on the journey without tickets and blag our way through the barriers at Chelmsford or run under the subway to see whether the booking office on the other side was open? A train was due. Most of us took the longish walk to platform 3, our leader tried to operate the ticket machine for a group ticket, but it wasn't indicated. A tense moment, then a help button spotted. Pressed. Nothing!! Tension becoming irritation, verging on panic! "Hello"!!!

A very nice lady asked how she could help, I explained I wanted 8 singles to Chelmsford as a group ticket, "what time are you coming back tonight?", "we're not coming back!", "What time are you coming back tomorrow?", "we are never coming back!", "ok". "Press this, press that, put your card in; no, not there!" Train pulling in, tickets being printed, party all gone for the train except Sandra who was busy helping and advising another intending passenger to use the helpful lady when we had finished. Tickets printed one by one, seemingly so slowly. Scooped them all up and made a mad dash for the train.

Everyone was witness to the rare sight of Maurice Austin running for the train. Actually, it was more like the hopping, lurching shuffle of Quasimodo accompanied by copious coughing and wheezing! But we all got on, tickets issued, breath back by the time we reached Chelmsford (a slight exaggeration!). The train was warm, bright, and comfortable and on time.

We arrived at Chelmsford about the same time as if we had caught the planned bus. The ticket barrier was staffed so we were pleased we had the tickets and were able to leave the railway without being arrested and besmirching the good names of ourselves and the u3a!

Despite the timekeeping difficulties, we did have a good time and as I write this, I have already had several nice letters of thanks from our lovely members.

I am having a break in January so our next trip will be Friday 9 February 2024. Nothing planned yet but I might try to arrange a shortish trip which will include an (optional) indoor trip to an art gallery or museum. Details and provisional programme for 2024 will be in the next newsletter, subject to the agreement of our editor.

Maurice Austin

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our December meeting we discussed *Silverview* by John le Carré. The novel was published posthumously in 2021 there are two major characters the first is Julian Lawndsley who has left a successful career in the financial sector in London to open a bookstore in a small seaside town in East Anglia. Soon after opening the shop, a Polish immigrant named Edward Avon comes in, not to buy books but to chat.

Edward Avon is later revealed to be a retired agent for MI6 who claims to have known Lawndsley's father at school. Julian soon becomes involved with the life of Edward Avon's family: his wife Deborah – also a former top British intelligence agent – who is terminally ill, and his daughter Lily, a single mother.

The second major character is Stewart Proctor who is the secret service's head of domestic security. As a result of a letter he received from Avon's wife Debora, Proctor begins to investigate Avon as the source of an intelligence leak.

We all agreed that John le Carré is a very good writer and the majority of the group enjoyed the novel. However a number of readers found the plot confusing and we had a lively discussion about what was happening in the book.

We weren't surprised that John le Carré didn't publish the book when he was alive because it painted a very negative picture of the British secret service. For example, in the novel one of Proctor's colleagues says to him *"As one old spy to another, I reckon I'd have been more use running a boys club"*.

Our books for the next three meetings are:

Mon Jan 15 th	The Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri
Mon Feb 19 th	Travels with my aunt by Graham Greene
Mon Mar 18 th	The Midnight Library by Matt Haig

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy

The annual Science Group Lunch is being held at Ivy Hill Hotel, Margaretting, on 18th January 2024. More information can be found at: <https://u3asites.org.uk/files/c/chelmsford/docs/sciencegroup-ivyhillhotel18thjan24r1.pdf>

**Thursday 16th February - Lord Rayleigh and the Discovery of Argon
By David Hall**

David will start by introducing Lord Rayleigh, an important 19th century scientist. He will explain how Rayleigh came to be doing the experiments that eventually led to the discovery of argon, and why this was important. David will perform some short physics demonstrations to explain the principles behind Rayleigh's own work, and then continue to discuss the results that Rayleigh obtained, and how these led, with much further painstaking work, to the discovery of argon. It is important to understand that Rayleigh was not looking for argon in the first place – he couldn't, since there was no pre-existing clue to its existence.

Science Group talks are held in the Catholic Church Hall in Melbourne Avenue, Chelmsford CM1 2DU. Doors open at 1.30pm and the talks start at 2.15pm. Tea/Coffee before the talk. **Non-members of the Science group are welcome. £2 for non-members.**

Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society

- 10th Jan Picking The High Hanging Fruit – Without The Effort. Dr Leo Geer, Electronic Engineer at BAE Systems, and Dr Fuli Wang, Research Associate at the University of Sheffield. As part of a team at the University of Essex Leo Geer and Fuli Wang worked on an automatic fruit picking machine.
- 25th Jan Seeing With Atoms. A FREE IOP talk for the public by Dr David Ward, Senior Research Associate, University of Cambridge.

For more details see the CES website at <https://cses.org.uk/>

Lunch Group 2

Leader Harry Franklin

Eighteen members of Lunch Club 2 met at EGO at The Running Mare in Galleywood on Tuesday, 19th December for Christmas lunch. An altogether enjoyable gathering of most of the Club's members who have now, over a period of several years, become friends to the extent that no matter where individuals sit, they are amongst familiar neighbours.

The pub was attractively decorated for the season and the food, without exception, well presented, appetising and reasonably priced. This was our second Christmas at EGO which speaks well for the establishment.

We meet again on 23rd January at the newly re-opened Miller and Carter, when Margaret and Paul will host.

Harry Franklin

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

Our speaker on 5 December, Andrew Summers, drew a good number of people to hear his talk 'Snatched from Essex', looking at how historic Essex shrank in size when the Greater London Council was created in 1965.

Essex, as recorded in the Anglo Saxon Chronicles, was bounded by the River Lea in the west, the River Stour in the north, the River Thames in the south and the North Sea to the east. This natural geographic area covered very different populations and activities. The area in the southwest adjacent to London arguably changed most, as people moved out from the East End. Without any referendum, 40% of the population of Essex woke up on 1 April 1965 to find themselves part of Greater London. The other 60% of the population, living in 92% of the geographical area, remained in the county of Essex. This brought some relief to the County Council in Chelmsford who had been struggling with the administration of the southwestern boroughs. As far back as 1907 Walthamstow Council had asked about the possibility of joining London, with the boroughs of East Ham and West Ham also interested. In 1965 the change involved not only them, but also Woodford, Chingford, Ilford, Barking, Hornchurch, Leyton, Romford, Dagenham, Wanstead and part of Chigwell, with five new boroughs formed – Barking, Havering, Newham, Redbridge and Waltham Forest.

These new parts of London included land which had been rural in previous centuries. Havering Palace, for example, was founded by Edward the Confessor and passed through the hands of many kings, with Charles I the last to stay there. After the Civil War it fell into decay, the building materials removed, and the grounds sold at auction in 1828 to Hugh McIntosh. Since the creation of the GLC the land has become Havering Country Park. A different type of housing development was the building of the Becontree estate as part of the 'Home Fit for Heroes' policy after World War I. This spread across what had been farmland. One area which became industrialised was Barking, on the River Roding, a tributary of the Thames. In 1850 Barking was home to the biggest fishing fleet in England, which led to shipbuilding, but in time fishing moved around the coast and other industries moved in, including Matchbox toys.

It's an open question whether those who live in areas which were part of Essex up to 1965 still think they are. The Henry Green School Dagenham, which was built in the 1920s, still displays the Essex Seaxe in a shield on its wall, and gives its official address as 'Green Lane, Dagenham, Essex.' Those people living next

to 'old' London, in the borough of Newham, and who have no connection to Essex are less likely to say they are from Essex.

We are heading to more rural parts for our first meeting of 2024. On Tuesday 2 January we will take a virtual tour of Bury St Edmunds, guided by Adrian Tindall. Then on 6 February we will hear from David Williams on 'The Estuary of Mysteries' and on 5 March Georgina Green will introduce us to the Buxton family. Do join us at 2.15pm – visitors welcome for £5.

Jane Humphreys

The Essex Branch of the Historical Association

2.30pm Saturday 6th January 2024

Oliver Cromwell: Hero or Villain?

Dr. David Smith. Cambridge University

2.30pm Saturday 3rd February 2024

Colchester's Victorian doctors: How was the local hospital regarded?

To what extent did it influence medical practice?

Dr Jane Pearson, Essex University

at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford

All Welcome £5 for non-members

Beginners Bridge Group

Leader: Eddie Wood

There will be no meetings in January 2024. From Wednesday 6th February 2024 we will be trialling a new venue:

The Globe Public House

65 Rainsford Road

Chelmsford CM1 2QJ

Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy

Secretary: Val Green

On Thursday 25th January we will be having lunch at Little Channels. The cost of the meal will be £21 for two courses and £26 for three. The menu has now been confirmed and has been sent out to all on the Garden Group email list in December. Please let Val Green (valgreen51@tiscali.co.uk) know if you are interested and have not yet informed her. Items for the raffle we have at the meal are gratefully received. The proceeds will be used to pay for future speakers.

For our 22 February visit we will be going to the Gardens of Easton Lodge at 2 pm to see the snowdrops and on 28 March to Blunts Hall at 2 pm to see their display of daffodils.

Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly



Lady Helen Vincent
by John Singer Sargent.

Hope you all had a good Christmas and are now looking forward to 2024. We have several things planned for the New Year.

- On Tuesday 23rd January we are meeting in-house to talk about 'My Favourite American Painter'.
- On Tuesday 27th February Lydia Goodson will be giving a Zoom talk on 'The Golden Age of Dutch Art'.
- On Tuesday 26th March we will be travelling to London to Tate Britain for the exhibition 'Sargent and Fashion'.
- On Tuesday 23rd April, Margaret Mills will be coming to Christ Church, New London Road for a talk on 'Joseph Wright of Derby'.

Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you soon.

Travel group

Leader Anne Brereton

On Thursday 7th December 42 travel group members met for a pre Christmas lunch at vita Bella East Hanningfield. The parking attendant had us parking like sardines which was a sight to behold. Mind you, the first to arrive were the last to leave as the other cars were parked either in front or beside them, but the parking was well organised.





Our meal was in the restaurant garden room nicely laid out, with room for the staff to get around. The food was first class and the staff very attentive. Everyone seemed to enjoy the meal with plenty of chat with good company. I certainly did . I'm sure it will be something we can enjoy in 2024.

Forgive me if I haven't been able to get everyone onto the newsletter. Have a wonderful happy healthy new year.

Best wishes
Anne Brereton

Reminder to Group Leaders

**Please send copy for the February 2024 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 27th January 2024.**

**Please would contributors use the Calibri Font size 12.
For MS Word use Paragraph settings; line spacing single and spacing 0 before and after lines.**

Committee To contact a member of the committee, go to the Contact page on our website.

Chairman	Lesley Wood	Vice Chairman	David Sweeney
Secretary	Marie Neale	Treasurer	Eddie Wood
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Newsletter Co-ordinator	Lyn Regan/Brian Littlechild	Speaker Organiser	
Events Organiser	Geoff Swaine	Public Relations	Nick Bailey
Committee Member	Ann Bell	Committee Member	David Marsh

Volunteers not on the Committee

Newsletter Editor	Andy Moir	Groups Co-ordinator	Jacqui Norfolk
Website Manager			