

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 14<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm Stephanie Disch – Dog Trust

Stephanie Disch of the Dog Trust Rehoming Centre will be presenting a fun and informative talk about the work of the Centre.

### Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm Easter Social

### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May at 2pm Alison Woollard – Hylands House

## View from the Chair

What a turn-out we had at our 31st AGM last month! There was no possibility of us not being quorate! It's really great that you take such an interest in the running of your u3a and good to see that you had considered the resolutions carefully prior to the meeting. Although there were some concerns raised over the proposal to introduce a subscription free Visitor Member category, in the end the motion was carried with a large majority. I have high hopes that it will help groups that are struggling to remain viable and over time I hope that our neighbouring u3a's may adopt reciprocal arrangements that will result in a greater diversity of interests being met by the sharing of groups between us. Furthermore, the 'Meet the Groups' session immediately following the AGM was successful, with several Interest Group Leaders reporting that they recruited several new members.



## Committee Matters

A couple of weeks after the AGM our committee met and decided on who will carry out what roles for the coming year. I can confirm that Wendy Hubbard will be taking over as Treasurer, Marie Neale will carry on as Secretary, and David Sweeney will continue as Deputy Chair/Beacon Administrator. As for myself I will continue as Chair in the short term, but at some point this year I will be handing over the reigns to Alan Caddy. The plan is that I will then take on the role of Groups Co-ordinator. For a full list of Committee Members see Page 18.

Having had absolutely no offers from within the membership to take on the role of Refreshments Organiser, the responsibility for this will stay on the committee, but David Marsh has agreed to take over from Marie. We will still require volunteers to help in the kitchen, and to set out the tables and chairs, so Brian Littlechild has agreed to organise a rota. Please be prepared to help.



Diane Read will be remaining as our Membership Secretary for the forthcoming year and she has asked me to remind you to renew your membership as soon as possible. By now, you should have received a reminder letter pointing out the various ways to pay.

Our **new website** is now up and running; Click here: <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/>. In particular I suggest that you take a look at the Beacon page (which is accessed via the Members Pages on the top menu) and discover the usefulness of the **'Members Portal'**. It allows you to see the personal information we hold about you. If the information is incorrect and needs changing it can be altered online through the option in the portal to 'update your personal details'.

The first time you use the portal you will see this screen. Do not enter an email or password but click 'register for a membership account'. Type in your Membership number, Forename, Surname, Post Code and email address, then press Confirm Identity. You will then be asked to create a password and update your account. This will result in an email being sent you within a few minutes (if you don't see it check your spam folder). Just click on the link in the email to take you back to the sign in screen where you can enter your email address and password and click 'confirm your identity'. After a successful sign-in you will be taken to the Portal's home page. If you experience difficulties in creating an account or signing in please contact David Sweeny or Wendy Hubbard for assistance.



Some of our newer members may not have received their Third Age Matters magazine in February due to distribution problems. The Trust sent us a few complimentary copies and these will be made available at our March monthly meeting on a first come first serve basis. We hope you enjoy reading the magazine but if you wish to opt out of receiving it please let the Membership Secretary know and she will make sure you do not receive it in future. I'm afraid our policy is not to reduce your membership subscription on account of this.

I'm pleased to say that about a dozen members have taken up Chelmsford Croquet Club's offer of a social day of Croquet. It will take place on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May and there are still a few spaces left if you are interested. Just drop me a line and I'll send you the details.

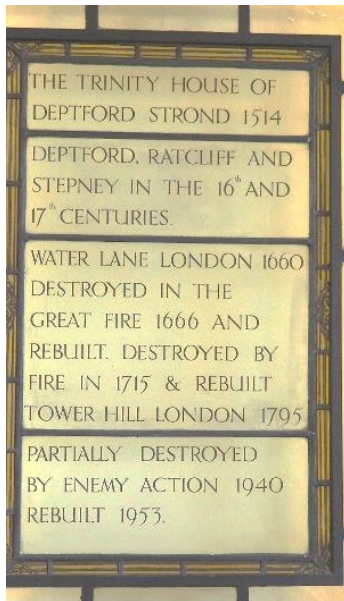


Don't forget the many other learning opportunities available to you as a member of u3a. For example the Aviation Network meets online and on Tues 5<sup>th</sup> March has a talk by a former British Airways Concord Captain. Alternatively on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March there is an Introduction to an Influencing & Social Change Workshop, whilst on Tues 19<sup>th</sup> March there is a discussion about Using AI to Fight Climate Change. You will find all the upcoming events here <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Best Wishes  
Lesley Wood

## London - The City & its People Group

Leader: Berry Cornell



London Group visit to Trinity House in January (Lesley Wood and Chris Bellamy)

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](mailto:c.rycroft123@btinternet.com). The Group usually meets up on 4<sup>th</sup> 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 February 2024 – July 2024

- 25<sup>th</sup> Mar Alfred Hitchcock's Leytonstone, speaker Gary Lewis.
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Apr A visit to the Horniman Museum – **flyer on page 19 of the newsletter.**
- 20<sup>th</sup> May** Walking in Southwark and Bankside, speaker Kathy Lancaster.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Jun Pounds, Shillings and Poverty, speaker David Williams
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Jul A walk around the Inns of Court lead by Richard Pusey and Terry Pipe.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Aug A talk – to be arranged.
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept Visit to "Shakespeare's Globe, Story and Tour"

**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

On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 8 members of the Birding Group met at Old Hall Marshes RSPB reserve. There had been a lot of rain over the previous week so many of the footpaths were flooded, regardless we set off with suitable footwear and a British stiff upper lip. We were rewarded with a glorious sunny day, if a little breezy. I was particularly rewarded with my first ever sighting of one particular bird, read on.

We set off towards the river wall. On the way we saw Blue Tit, Magpie, Carrion Crow, Canada Geese, Starlings, Lapwing, Greylag and Brent Geese, Skylark and Shell Duck in the flooded fields either side of the footpath.

When we arrived at the raised river wall overlooking Old Hall Creek, we were able to spot Pochard, Widgeon, Marsh Harriers circling above, dozens of Avocets swimming in a row. Herring Gulls, Pied Wagtail, Mallard and Coot. We heard the ever-elusive Cetti's Warbler. We saw Shoveler, Gadwall, Dunlin, Black Headed Gull, Meadow Pipit, Tufted Duck, Curlew, Lesser Black Backed Gull, Great and Little Egret, Little Grebe, Pintail Duck, Reed Bunting and Sparrow.

Without a doubt though, personally the highlight was seeing my first ever Great Egret.



Great Egret



Little Egret

Our next meeting is on 26<sup>th</sup> March at Abberton Reservoir  
Our 2024 Programme

26<sup>th</sup> April. Tiptree Heath

24<sup>th</sup> May. Fingeringhoe

21<sup>st</sup> June. Lea Valley

July. No meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> August. Cockayne Wood

27<sup>th</sup> September. Rainham Marshes

25<sup>th</sup> October. Thameside

22<sup>nd</sup> November. Blue House Farm

**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



On the 1<sup>st</sup> February Lunch Club 3 enjoyed another fabulous luncheon, this time at The Rose and Crown, Great Waltham which was kindly organised by John Gilks. There were certainly plenty of signs of bonhomie amongst the diners and a good time was had by all as evidenced by the photos! There were eighteen for lunch including five new members, so a warm welcome to them.

We look forward to seeing you at future gatherings, the next being Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March at the Rose and Crown, Writtle.

Barbara Childs

### Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

We had pretty much a full house for our February meeting. Twelve members came, which must be one of the best attendances that we have ever had.



Almost all the meeting was taken up with everybody saying what they had done in the last month. Members had been travelling abroad – one to Costa Rica, another to Australia, two others to Tenerife – and not surprisingly, they had plenty to tell us. Another had set up a “pen pal” relationship via Skype with a gentleman in Madrid with the objective of improving each other’s foreign language skills. We also discussed Chinese New Year and what the animals denoting a particular year are meant to signify.

With so many attending and each person giving their own presentation, listening and understanding rather than speaking was the order of the day! No harm in that, it’s a vital aspect of learning another language!

For the final twenty minutes we had a short quiz on colloquial phrases in Spanish and how they translate into English. Not always literally is the answer! For example, to be between the devil and the deep blue sea is paraphrased in Spanish as being between a sword and a wall.

If you can already 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 20th March 2024 at 10:30am at Chelmsford Library in a meeting room on the first floor.

David Gout

### Pickle Ball

Leader: Alan Mayo 07979 540053

**P**ickleball is a bat & ball game similar to tennis, the ball is much slower and less bouncy than a tennis ball. The net is slightly lower than in tennis and the court is smaller – so it's suitable for us thirdagers! Our new group is playing the game at Riverside Leisure Centre every Monday at 2pm. If you've played any racquet sports before you will adapt easily to this game and we normally play doubles as there's less running! Those interested in finding out more can contact me by phone, through Chelmsford U3A website Groups/Pickleball/Group email or directly at [pickleballu3a@gmail.com](mailto:pickleballu3a@gmail.com)



### IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons



The IT Group meeting in February introduced for the first time support and help with Facebook. This proved very popular with members so we will again, in March, have a table dedicated to Facebook alongside our regular help for members on Apple/Android devices.

Demand for digitising old photos & restoration of old photos has diminished, so Lesley will not be bringing in the required equipment. However, if you are interested please let Lesley or me know and she will bring the equipment along to a meeting to support you.

If you have any IT issues that you need help with please come along. Our knowledgeable support team have helped lots of members with their queries on using laptops/phones/tablets.

We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month 10.00 @ Christ Church New London Road.

### Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy

Science Group Talk Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March

#### **Air Traffic Management & Navigation**

**The talk is about how aircraft navigate around the sky using things called Nav aids, what those Nav aids do and how they are checked to ensure they are doing it properly.**

By Andy Emberton BSc CEng FIET

Andy has been involved in building new ATC Towers in Jeddah and Kuala Lumpur and in providing the flight calibration, inspection, validation and the checking of the full range of aircraft navigation aids.

## Lord Rayleigh and Argon.



Group member David Hall gave us a splendid talk on Lord Rayleigh and the discovery of Argon on 15 February in our usual venue in Melbourne. David had been a physics teacher at KEGS but he was nothing like the dry old sticks who attempted to get some knowledge into my little grey cells! (I was not a pupil at KEGS!). Further details of David's career and the talk were given in last month's newsletter.

In fact, although the content of the talk was fascinating, it was the style of delivery that most enthralled me. David obviously loved his subject and was thoroughly absorbed with it, but he had a wonderful array of little tricks to catch the imagination of his audience. For instance, he gave the impression of making little mistakes with his experiments which all led to the audience thinking about the subject and giving David the opportunity to explain more about the scientific processes being utilised by Lord Rayleigh. I found the teaching style stimulating and creative and I wished I had had someone with his skills and enthusiasm when I was at school.

Actually, the talk was really about the scientific process and Lord Rayleigh and the discovery of Argon was almost an excuse to demonstrate the importance of scientific method, patient analysis and scrutiny before reaching any conclusion. Argon was discovered because the patient scientists persisted in checking their own work many, many times and refusing to reach any conclusion until every aspect of their experiments had been gone over and repeated very many times. Any slight anomaly in laboratory results which could have been considered as experimental or measurement errors were not accepted as such. The work continued until firm conclusions could be reached.

Lord Rayleigh, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron of Rayleigh was born John Strutt in 1842 and he died in 1919. He was Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge University and did a lot of analysis on the physics of nitrogen, oxygen, and hydrogen, particularly their densities. He had set out to determine the density of nitrogen and discovered some discrepancies which led to the discovery of statistical anomalies which could have been treated as measurement errors but were, in fact due to an unknown inert gas, argon. His diligence led to him being awarded the Nobel Prize in 1904.



The audience were obviously as enthralled as I was as the questions covered a range of related areas, such as the uses of argon in welding - it is an inert gas so can enable a pure environment to prevent contamination of the weld, the right hand end of the periodic table consists of inert gases and is nicknamed the unsociable corner, and much more.

Chris Bellamy, our Chairman, thanked David, his glamorous assistant Paul Chaplin and the audience for their keen interest. He stressed the range of talent amongst our membership and urged everyone to renew their membership of the Chelmsford u3a science group for the

forthcoming year.

Maurice Austin

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

- 13<sup>th</sup> Mar **How Digital Technology And AI Are Changing The Horse World** by Roberta Blake, Research School Leader at ARU Writtle.
- 20<sup>th</sup> Mar **Satellite Communications From Arthur C Clark To Elon Musk And Beyond** by Paul Richardson, Founder SCAN (Satellite Communications And Networks).
- 27<sup>st</sup> Mar **Aerodynamics : Achieving An Advantage** by Dr Rob Lewis OBE, Managing Director TotalSim Ltd.

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

### Local History Group

**Leader:** Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

On 6 February David Williams, a City of London Guide and lecturer, helped us to explore 'The Estuary of Mysteries' as seen from the Essex bank of the Thames. Tilbury is a reasonable place to call the upstream start of the estuary. With a long history of commercial docks serving London, Tilbury is a gateway to the world. Today commerce is primarily a little to the east at DP World's London Gateway Port constructed on the former Shellhaven gas storage facility, and serving the largest container ships. Tilbury itself continues as a terminal for cruise ships, and has a ferry connecting to Gravesend. This is a far cry from the days of the Thames barges which brought hay from the coast to London and returned carrying dung from the City to the coast.

The North Sea end of the estuary can be marked at Shoeburyness, long home to the Royal Artillery garrison. Many of the buildings, including the horseshoe barracks, have been redeveloped for housing adjacent to the Gunners Park. This is a favourite location for dogwalkers. Evidence of the military history

can be seen in the boom constructed from Shoebury to the Isle of Grain to stop the approach of submarines in WWII. Foulness Island, to the northeast, is still controlled by the Ministry of Defence, and the high level of unexploded shells in the area was a key reason for the area not being chosen to site another London airport. The Shoeburyness Hotel at one time had a boxing ring which hosted fights with Bombardier Billy Wells, British Heavyweight champion – and later the man who struck the gong for J Arthur Rank films.

Defence has been part of the history of the estuary for at least 1000 years. Hadleigh Castle dates back to the early 13<sup>th</sup> century but became known internationally in the 2012 Olympics when it hosted the mountain bike events. Tilbury has had a fort since Tudor times – famously the location for Queen Elizabeth I to rally her troops ahead of potential invasion by the Spanish Armada. Less well known is the Coalhouse Fort at East Tilbury. The current structure was built in the 1860s when once again there was fear of invasion by sea, but there had been fortifications on the site back as far as the 1400s. These defences gaze over waters hiding a range of sunken ships, both military and civil. The river banks between settlements are largely marshy, providing seasonal homes to geese and other wildfowl. There is always plenty for someone to watch and reflect on the mysteries of this estuary.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March Georgina Green will introduce us to the Buxton family. Do join us at 2.15pm at Boreham Village Hall – visitors welcome for £5.

In April we will meet on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> at Stow Maries WWI airfield for a guided tour. For more details, please contact Nick Bailey [nickbailey01245@outlook.com](mailto:nickbailey01245@outlook.com)

Jane Humphreys

**The Essex Branch of the Historical Association**

2.30pm Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Sir Jules Thorn, the Man & his Empire –**

When you believe your business is safe, that is when it is most vulnerable.

(Thorn Electrical Industries)

Dr Jim Lewis. Official biographer

at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford

All Welcome £5 for non-members

**Lunch Group 2**

**Leader Harry Franklin**

A welcome return to the Horse & Groom, Roxwell, where eighteen members met on 27<sup>th</sup> February for lunch, hosted by Roger and Jan. It is absolutely correct to say that both the food and the company were extremely enjoyable but, like the curate's egg, it was good in parts. The exception to the good experience of most of us was that two diners, both of whom had ordered steak, each had a complaint. The one because the steak did not have the required degree of grilling and was exchanged by the staff immediately and the other because it wasn't as hot as it should have been. In this case, the diner having pointed out the problem, nevertheless decided not to have it returned to the kitchen although the offer was made.

We meet again on 26<sup>th</sup> March at The Fox & Raven when Jenny will host.

Harry Franklin

## Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly

This month we enjoyed a Zoom talk by Lydia Goodson on 'The Golden Age of Dutch Art'. As usual, Lydia's talks are enjoyable and very informative. They are well worth watching.



The Dutch Republic, which was created in 1588 after years of Spanish rule, leading to a very economically successful period between 1609 and 1672. The Dutch had properties overseas, Amsterdam was a rich town and everyone had money to spend on art. There was a flowering of painting, the Golden Age of Dutch Art. She spoke about five artists who lived during this time. Under Spanish rule paintings had all been of religious subjects, but under the Dutch Protestant Calvinistic Republic paintings were secular of ordinary people.

Frans Hals (1582-1666) painted people very skilfully with deft brush work, he painted wet on wet, not waiting for paint to dry. Van Gogh said that Hals used 27 different types of black - this was illustrated in particular with the painting of the black clothes of 'Man holding a Skull' which was on display at the National Gallery exhibition this year 'Portrait of a Woman' (his wife) was hung beside it. His painting of flesh, particularly on hands, was very skilful. There was also the painting of a child with her nurse where Hals manages to convey a loving relationship.

Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675) painted 60 paintings in all, of which only 36 are now in existence. He painted domestic interior scenes of middle class life, a private and enclosed world like 'The Little Street'. The maps of the world that he hung on the wall as in 'Officer and a Laughing Girl' were all very accurate, the glass she held was made in Venice and the man's hat was fashionably covered with beaver. 'Girl with a Pearl Earring' is very well known. Lydia said it is not a portrait but an exotic image having no eyebrows and with a large earring. 'Girl Reading a Letter' has a beautiful carpet on the table.

Rembrandt (1606-1669) was very good at depicting age. We saw 'Portrait of a Woman' which depicted an older woman very skillfully painted particularly of skin. He painted many self portraits, one at the age of 34 wearing old fashioned clothes of 100 years earlier. He sits with a confident stare, that says I can paint like Titian. We also saw a later self portrait at 63. There was one of an artist with a very large easel standing thinking of what to paint. His most famous picture 'The Night Watch' tells the story of a militia group with their young girl mascot.

Jan Steen (1626-1679) painted contemporary life but with a moral issue. We saw 'The Dissolute Household', children were running wild, a woman was drunk with wine, man was smoking a pipe - but he included still life elements of a basket filled with warning references to the plague and lepers.

Finally we saw Rachel Ruysch (1664-1750) a female artist in her own right who majored on Still Life's particularly of flowers. She had married at 29, had ten children but had a very supportive husband. Her father was a botanist which gave her access to specimens. Her 'Fruit and Insects' was teeming with life and her 'Vase of Flowers' was aesthetically appealing.



A very interesting talk.

On Tuesday March 26th we are going to Tate Britain for the exhibition 'Sargent and Fashion'.

## Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy

Secretary: Val Green

Members will be pleased to hear that Chris Bellamy spoke over the telephone with Val Green on Friday evening and wished her a speedy recovery and best wishes on behalf of us all. She is recovering with physio at Halstead Hospital Convalescent Home. If any of you wish to contact Val please email her on: [valgreen51@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:valgreen51@tiscali.co.uk) she would be very happy to hear from you.

Our members enjoyed a very good, private conducted tour of the Gardens of Easton Lodge last Thursday, periodically in light rain, followed by coffee/tea/cake. Photographs of the visit are on our group's website page and you can to view them using this link :[https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/garden-group/](https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/garden-group/)



Some of you may be aware that the gardens are managed by a Preservation Trust that aims to preserve, conserve and protect the historic Gardens and their biodiversity. In accordance with the garden's policy on group visits we were asked to pay the fee of £10 per person in advance of our visit. Such was the appeal of the gardens that a total of 30 members decided to come and a payment of £300 was made to the Trust a week before our visit.

On the day the weather was not kind to us and many members decided to cancel at the last minute. In general, the Preservation Trust's policy is only to make refunds of advance tickets if they have to cancel a tour due to risk to visitors or volunteers. We were advised that a risk assessment was carried out on the morning of our visit and it was deemed safe to go ahead with the visit. Several members who decided not to come stated they were happy for their £10 to go towards the continuing restoration of the Gardens. No doubt others of you feel this way too, but if you want us to try to pursue a refund please let Chris know and he will take it up with the Easton Lodge trustees. However, we cannot promise a successful outcome.

Our next garden visit will be on Thursday 28th March to Blunts Hall, Witham, CM8 1LX at 2.00 p.m. More information will appear on the website.

Blunts Hall is a restored three acre garden featuring:

- Courtyard garden and terrace, leading to lawns with restated parterre surrounded by herbaceous borders.
- Orchard with old and new fruit trees and a vegetable plot.
- Listed ancient monument.
- Woodland walk around spring fed pond.
- Fernery.
- Step laid down to front lawns recently planted with a yew avenue.
- Snowdrops and aconites in early spring, specimen trees.

Please email Chris if planning to come by Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Bus Pass Group**

Group Leader: Maurice Austin

We tried something a little different in February. Usually, we reach our destination, make a mad dash to a suitable eating establishment, and then break into groups each to do their own thing depending upon individual interests.

This time, we decided to lay on an optional trip to entertain participants in the case of inclement weather. Well, we certainly got that! It was gloomy, wet and bitterly cold in Harlow, especially on The High where the wind made walking difficult, even standing upright was a task!

Nevertheless, we had a nice time, starting with a pleasant driver on Arriva 59 to Harlow. Twelve u3a members boarded on time along with a similar number of other passengers, picking up small numbers on the route. It was particularly pleasant that the driver noticed a lady running along the road in Leaden Roding on the other side of the road between fixed bus stops. It wasn't clear she wanted our bus; he would have been justified in driving on, but he stopped for her, she crossed the road and boarded. That little act of courtesy was heart-warming.

We continued to pick up small numbers of passengers, the nearer we got to Harlow, the more we collected so that by the time we arrived at the Bus Station, we were almost full. As we passed The Stow, we were joined by a small group including our guide for the day, Patricia Mountsteven, a friend of mine who volunteers as a guide at the nearby Gibberd Garden whom I had pressganged into helping on this trip.

The 59 takes the pretty route to Harlow, going via Roxwell, the Rodings, Hatfield Heath and Sheering. Even when the weather is gloomy, it is almost pastoral in places with long stretches of Hawthorn hedges and snowdrop-filled verges. During daylight, the countryside views of open fields and typical eastern skylines contrast with stretches of woodland and pretty settlements.

We arrived on time, gathered round, and were introduced to Patricia, a long-term resident of Harlow who had worked for the New Town Development Corporation and then the Borough Council and had worked with Sir Frederick Gibberd, the Master Planner and architect for the New Town.

After a coffee and brunch in a rather splendid coffee shop, Patricia took most of our group to look at a few of the splendid collection of sculptures and other works of art in the town centre. Because of the cold wind, that adventure was truncated. The group adjourned to the Gibberd Gallery where the rest of the party joined after finished their brunch.



This shot looking east over the top section of the Water Gardens shows in the foreground Elizabeth Frink's Boar cast in bronze and listed Grade II in 2016.

Beyond that Hebe Comerford's Bird is taking flight and in the far distance is Auguste Rodin's 1882 figure of Eve fleeing the Garden of Eden, which came from the Musée Rodin in Paris in the early sixties.

Photo by Lesley Wood.

There are many more pieces both in the town centre and across Harlow, which has earned it the name of Harlow Sculpture Town.

The town now has an exceptional collection of more than a hundred public artworks.

This all began due to Sir Frederick Gibberd's vision for the town after having visited Florence and seen a city 'home to an open-air sculpture gallery of antique and Renaissance works'.

Here, the group are sitting around Henry Moore's first large piece in stone called 'The Family Group'.

This was commissioned by Harlow Art Trust in 1953 as the town began to grow and simultaneously expand a collection of public art. It is now sited on the ground floor of the new Civic Building at the foot of the Gibberd Gallery.

Photo by Lesley Wood.



Patricia showed us around the Gibberd Gallery, a rather magnificent adjunct to the civic centre which includes the Gibberd collection, formerly the private collection of British art by then relatively unknown artists and consisting of paintings and pottery, which he donated to the people of Harlow on his death.

The gallery, under the control of Toni Frostick, also hosts a changing programme of exhibitions. We saw the current display of work by local artists, a varied range of paintings, photographs, pottery and other media. Not everything was to my taste, but I did purchase two items, one painting of racing cyclists and an embroidery pastiche of highlights of Harlow.

We eventually spent some time perusing the shops in Harlow – well, some of us did! We gathered in the bus station waiting room for our bus home. That space had been one of the most useful bus offices in

Essex, but it was empty and almost derelict. There were no timetables or information and was really rather scruffy. But it filled up with intending passengers seeking shelter from the elements. We spoke to a member of staff who told us that this was the last day of operating of the facility. It was about to be demolished as part of a redevelopment. It is to be hoped that there will be a suitable replacement in due course.

On Friday 8 March, we will go to Saffron Waldon. We will catch the 0953 X30 towards Stansted Airport, from stand 1 at Chelmsford Bus Station. We will change at Great Dunmow to Stephenson's of Essex 314 for Saffron Walden. We aim to catch the 1438 Central Connect 316 back to Stansted Airport for the X10 back to Chelmsford. If the weather is nice (!), we can come back an hour later.



The winner of the competition last month was Andy Moir, our intrepid Editor who correctly identified the C4 bus passing the pond at Writtle Green. He wins a free trip on a future Bus Pass Group outing of his choice – and receives our congratulations!

Maurice Austin.

### Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex

Administrator: Michael Gray



Church Visiting Group stall at the New members Meeting Picture Lesley Wood

The Church Visiting Group intends to run a full season again this year. As usual, the visits will take place on the first Wednesday of each month, starting with close by Brentwood on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

## Tenpin Bowling Group

Leader: Roger and Ruth Spall.

Well, for the 10 pin bowling group you could say that things are looking up – and I don't mean looking at the overhead screens that display our scores. We have now had 3 sessions back at City Bowl and apart from our regular bowlers there have already been a few newcomers. Average numbers are in the mid-late twenties, but with 5 or 6 lanes available it's still quite comfortable to get in 2 games plus half-time tea/coffee and biscuit. The lanes and pin-setting machines are generally behaving themselves with little cause for complaint and our scoring continues to be consistently inconsistent!

And of course the benefit of spending a morning in the company of this group is the complete range of mental and physical activities we all get involved in. Obviously the bowling is good exercise – lifting, bending, throwing, and even occasionally retrieving dropped balls. And then there's the mental exercise – deciding which ball to use as it has the right size finger holes, then finding the same one each time; thinking about what to aim for and I mustn't forget the use of thought transference and willpower. By that I mean trying to persuade the ball to move in a certain way, and willing it to stay out of the gutter!

Then on the social side of things there's catching up with gossip, regaling tales of where we've been, what we've done and what we might eventually be doing, and even causing laughter with the occasional funny story. But in all these respects what can be more interesting is the fact that sometimes repetition occurs without realising it when we've forgotten that we've said/heard it all before!

And during our half-time coffee break there's often the opportunity for some meaningful and even educational discussion as we try and put the world to rights, or maybe learn new things (ask Alan Mayo about Pickle Ball, now that sounds like fun).

So there we have it, I think all of us would agree that the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays at City Bowl is something to look forward to.

And finally ..... is it true that the early bird gets the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.



Roger and Ruth Spall

## Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our February meeting we discussed *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. The novel follows the life of Nora Seed who is 35 and is depressed, has recently lost her job and her cat. She feels that everyone would be better off without her so she writes a suicide note and takes an overdose.

She wakes up in a library between life and death, with the opportunity to try out alternate versions of her life and find the one where she truly belongs. She might have been a pop star, an Olympic swimmer, a pub landlady or many other alternatives.

The majority of the group enjoyed the book and thought that it was excellent, well written and thought provoking. The book provoked one of the most wide ranging and interesting discussions that we have had in the group.

## Our books for the next three meetings are:

Mon Mar 18 <sup>th</sup>	Old Baggage by Lissa Evans
Mon Apr 15 <sup>th</sup>	Travels with my aunt by Graham Greene
Mon May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Beartown by Frederik Backman

## Family History Group

Leader: Lesley Wood

In February we tried to solve some Genealogical Puzzles.

First we tried to match the date to the event. We correctly guessed the date (1754) when Hardwick's Marriage Act came into force but we weren't exactly sure what it was about. Gradually with the help of several more experience members we established that it was the first statutory legislation in England and Wales to require a formal ceremony of marriage. Prior to it coming into force the requirements for a legal marriage had been governed by Cannon Law of the Church of England. The Act's main aim was to put a stop to irregular or clandestine marriages such as those conducted in London's Fleet Prison. Those under the age of 21 had to have parental consent if they married by licence. Marriages by banns by contrast, were valid as long as the parent of the minor did not actually forbid the banns. However, some couples evaded the Act by travelling to Scotland where the law didn't apply.



Next our attention turned to the Census Returns of England, Wales & Scotland. Most centennial census were taken in late March or early April but the 1921 Census was delayed until 19<sup>th</sup> June due to the Black Friday strike by railwaymen, coal men and transport workers. Of course we couldn't leave Ireland out. Unfortunately only two historic census returns survive and are available for public inspection, they are the 1901 & 1911 Census. The others were lost in the Four Courts Fire of 1922. You can view these returns on-line (without charge) at the website of the National Archives for Ireland.

Next we discovered how you can check which registration district covered the village/town/parish where your ancestors lived. We searched Free BMDs for possible births of a child born about 1884 in Letheringham, Suffolk. There were a number of possibilities but not being familiar with the area we couldn't be sure which one applied. However, by looking up the registration Districts in the lists held on UKBMDs we discovered that Plomsgate covered Letheringham so were able to determine the correct birth entry. Another source of information about registration districts is Genuki.

Our final 'puzzle' involved tracing a baptism for someone who was born prior to the start of civil registration in Cardiganshire, Wales. The name was a very common one, Margaret Evans, but when a search that included the first names of both her parents was conducted only one result was produced. Upon inspection of the Parish Register there were certain inconsistencies with the known facts including the father's occupation. However they were living at the same address where we had found them on the 1851 Census. The clincher was that above the entry for Margaret was one for a James Evans who had been baptised on the same day, same parents, same address etc. Margaret did indeed have a brother James. Further research revealed that two other siblings, Daniel & John were baptised in the same parish church and here the clergyman rather helpfully, included their exact dates of birth which corresponded nicely with their ages on the census.

If any of this intrigues you, then why not join our group and learn how to research your family tree the smart way!

Lesley Wood

### **Reminder to Group Leaders**

**Please send copy for the April 2024 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.  
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 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.**

#### **Wendy Elizabeth Cole (25 Aug 1942 - 15 Feb 2024).**

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Wendy Cole, who had been a member of Chelmsford u3a some years back. Wendy's husband Charlie had also been a member up until last year.

Wendy's son wrote: "Wendy passed peacefully at Madelayne Court care home with her daughter (Helen) and son (Philip) by her side on Thursday morning (~00.25). She had coped with dementia for around 8+ years. Wendy was an active member of the poetry and literature groups within the Chelmsford area for many years. Please pass on this message to those groups, so that their members can remember Wendy and get in touch if they would like to. The funeral is Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March at 3.30pm in South Chapel at Chelmsford Crematorium.

If you knew Wendy and would like to pay your respects or attend the funeral please let the Membership Secretary, Diane Read, know and she will put you in touch with the family.

### Chelmsford u3a Committee

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chair	Lesley Wood
Vice Chair	David Sweeney
Secretary	Marie Neale
Treasurer	Wendy Hubbard
Membership Secretary	Diane Read 01277 352413
Speaker Organiser/Deputy Treasurer	Eddie Wood 01245 601359
Newsletter Coordinator	Lynn Regan
Monthly Meetings Organiser	David Marsh/Brian Littlechild
Marketing/Recruitment	Alan Caddy
Groups Coordinator	Lesley Wood
Social Media/Deputy Web Manager	Allan Goldsmith
Publicity & Advertising	Peter Anderton
Committee Member	Ann Bell
Committee Member	Nick Bailey

**Volunteers not on the Committee:**

Web Manager	Andy Moir
Newsletter Editor	Andy Moir

To contact any of the above go to the Committee page on our website  
<https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/contact/>



## LONDON – THE CITY AND ITS’ PEOPLE GROUP

### A VISIT TO THE HORNIMAN MUSEUM 22<sup>ND</sup> April 2024

The **Horniman Museum** opened in 1901. The museum hosts displays of many fascinating objects - anthropology, natural history and musical instruments, with a collection of 350,000. It also contains an aquarium with a unique layout. The museum houses the 'Centre for Understanding the Environment' building which has a grass roof and incorporates passive ventilation.

**The Gardens** cover 16 acres including a Grade 11 listed conservatory, a bandstand, enclosure for small animals, a Butterfly House, ornamental garden, sound garden with large musical instruments for playing plus plants for materials, medicines, foods and dyes.

A totem pole carved from red cedar stands outside the museum’s main entrance with carvings depicting figures from a legend of a girl who married a bear!



**Entrance to the museum is free** but there is a charge for the Aquarium £6.00 Butterfly House £9.00 and some of the exhibitions. It is recommended that visitors book online for these on the Horniman Museum website:

<https://www.horniman.ac.uk/plan-your-visit/ticket-information/> but we suspect

that on a Monday in March demand will not be high and it should be safe to book on the day. **National Art Pass and NMDC members can visit**

**temporary exhibitions and the aquarium free of charge.** In 2022 the museum won the Art Fund’s Museum of the Year award. A lift gives access to all exhibition areas where required.

**The Horniman Café** provides hot and cold meals, sandwiches, drinks, etc. Food cannot be consumed inside the museum. There is also a Bandstand Café Kiosk providing packed lunches, etc. to eat in the gardens.

#### Coach times:

- 9.30am: Lay by opposite Pollards Green
- 9.45am: Bus stop layby near Chelmsford railway station
- 10 am: The Duck Pond, Writtle Green
- 4.00pm Leave Museum. Please try to be at coach approx. 10 mins. beforehand

Cost £19.00 covers coach and driver’s tip.

*Please note: We cannot offer a refund once you have paid. Any last minute problems contact: Berry 07811 091771/ 01277 355823 Email: mayberrynotes@outlook.com*

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#### Horniman Museum visit 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2024

Ch. U3A mem. No/s \_\_\_\_\_ No. places required \_\_\_\_\_ Tel No. \_\_\_\_\_

Names/s \_\_\_\_\_ Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay by BACs if possible to: Chelmsford U3A: A/C No. 41153684:

Sort code: 40.10.27 Ref. LGHM. Cheques payable to Chelmsford U3A and sent with tear off slip to: Berry Cornell, 24 Park Drive, Ingatestone CM49DT



The Friends of Chelmsford Museums present

## **THE ANNUAL MUSEUM LECTURE**

**at the Cramphorn Theatre, Fairfield Road, Chelmsford**

**on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 at 7.30 p.m.**

### **Climate Change and the Historic Environment: Essex and Beyond**

**by Dr. Peter Murphy**

Dr. Murphy worked for English Heritage for much of his career, first as an Archaeological Scientist and later as Coastal Change Officer, then Climate Change Officer. His principal project in Essex was the Hullbridge Survey, a complete survey of the Essex coast, recording sites from the Mesolithic to Post-Medieval period and focusing on one exceptionally well-preserved Neolithic settlement site, known as The Stumble, near Osea Island. It acted as a precursor for English Heritage's national programme of Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Surveys.

**Tickets £12 Friends of Chelmsford Museums £10**

**On line [chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk](http://chelmsfordtheatre.co.uk) Box Office 01245 606505**