

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 9<sup>th</sup> May at 2pm. Alison Woollard – Hylands House.**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> June at 2pm Jane Piper - Fashion to Die For.**

A history of dark, dangerous and deadly Victorian fashion.

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm Summer Social.**

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August at 2pm. Karen Lawrie – An Interactive Fitness Presentation.**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 2pm Amanda Sutherland – Make Do And Mend.**

## Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April The Easter "eggstravaganzer"



**Hats and Bonnets**



**Winner of the hat  
competition**



**Winner of the painted  
egg competition**

See the Chelmsford u3a website for more photographs

## View from the Chair

It is my sad duty to inform you that our dear friend and colleague, David Sweeney, passed away unexpectedly on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April after suffering a heart attack.

David joined our u3a committee in 2022 and without too much arm-pulling agreed to be the Vice Chair. David was already volunteering with the Third Age Trust, on their Advice Line a couple of times per week, and he wanted to continue with this role.

Before too long, David took a lead role on the committee in ensuring that we were meeting our Equality Diversity and Inclusion commitments. He was also instrumental in setting up our Beacon membership system and acted as Site Administrator following its adoption. As a trustee David was keen to ensure that the committee never lost sight of the u3a purpose and ethos. He was also well placed to check the u3a policy on various matters via his contacts in National Office. The education of our members was something David was passionate about and he felt this helped u3a stand out and stopped it being labelled as an 'old people's club'!

I first got to know David when he and I took part in u3a course named 'Learning to be Retired', back in 2019. David, had recently stopped working but hadn't yet decided whether to retire for good. The aim of the course was to show how retirement can be a wonderfully positive and fulfilling time in our lives. It appears that David didn't need much convincing on this point as he never did return to full-time employment.

I'm sure we will all remember David for his energy and enthusiasm in organising and running some great events at our monthly meetings, including the Indoor Team Games Event in August 2022; the car and hall treasure hunts, in July 2022; and most recently the Easter eggstravaganza in April this year.

At this time our thoughts are with David's wife Jane (also a member of Chelmsford u3a) and her family. We hope to be able to pass on news about the funeral arrangements in due course.

### Committee Update:

- Alan Caddy will take over the role of Vice Chair.
- Lesley Wood has become Site Administrator for Beacon
- Alan Caddy is still seeking interest in a new Amateur Dramatics Group he would like to set up. Please see the flyer on page 18 of this newsletter
- Smaller, more intimate, meetings for new members will be held throughout the year at Christ Church or other suitable venues. Invitations will be issued in due course.
- The next 'Meet the Groups' opportunity will be on 11<sup>th</sup> July at our Summer Social meeting.



U3a Friends Extra is a benefits website developed exclusively for members of the u3a Friends newsletter community. The website provides access to a wide range of offers, discounts and additional services. Friends Extra is completely free to access. Anyone signed up to the u3a Friends newsletter can now also make

savings on well-known brands, shopping, travel, days out and more. Offers and services on Friends Extra include:

- ✓ Health and wellbeing
- ✓ Shopping savings on major brands and retail discounts
- ✓ Travel and holidays

- ✓ Leisure offers, like family days out, trips to the cinema and theatre
- ✓ Insurance offers on car, travel and medical insurance
- ✓ Access to financial advice and a legal helpline.

To become a 'Friend', simply sign up to receive the Friends Newsletter on the u3a website:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter>

This is just one element of the u3a Friends newsletter, which brings together stories from local u3a groups, learning opportunities and news of upcoming events to highlight the fun and learning within the u3a community.

### u3a Magazine

I hope you have all received your Spring edition of the u3a members' magazine by now? If so, did you notice it has a slightly different name and a new look? It is now called 'u3a Matters' whereas previously it was called 'Third Age Matters', which many of us got used to shortening to "TAM". Of course we can't do that now so the Trust wants to know how you would like to refer to it in brief. Suggestions so far are: u3am, utam, umag. Let them know what you think by emailing [communications@u3a.org.uk](mailto:communications@u3a.org.uk).



**Pass it on campaign:** Rather than throwing your magazine away after you have read it we would like to suggest that you leave it somewhere where people might pick it up, like your dentist/GP surgery or your local library? That way you would be passing the magazine on to someone who may be interested in finding out more about u3a and becoming part of this great movement.

### Help develop a stronger u3a voice

Members have an important opportunity to have their say and help shape a movement-wide process to select issues on which to take national action.

Focus groups are taking place until early June 2024. For more information and to register your interest to take part in a focus group please follow this link to the national u3a website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/our-impact/influencing-and-social-change>. If you prefer I can forward you an email with more details, just let me know.



### Boom Radio Campaign

Do any of you listen to Boom Radio? If so you may have heard some adverts featuring u3a members. The Trust feels this is a good fit for their first radio campaign as the station reaches 627,000 adult listeners every week - most of whom are over the age of 55.

The Boom Radio advertising campaign is just one of the ways the Third Age Trust is working to meet the resolution of reaching 500,000 u3a members by 2028. They have called this the *Resolution 500K* campaign.

The focus of the national campaign is the positive impact that u3a can have on people's lives. The member stories emphasise the ways in which u3a can alleviate loneliness, help members take time for themselves in retirement, and continue their interests by starting new groups.

### Tickets for Festival 24



As mentioned in a previous edition of the newsletter, the u3a festival is taking place at the University of York between Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July to Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July. It will feature a wide variety of activities - talks, sporting events, musical entertainment and workshops

Tickets are now available to be part of the Festival. There are 5 options so you can book for the whole 3 days, or for Thursday only, Friday from 9 – 6pm, Friday from 9am – 11pm or for Saturday. For further details follow this link <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/festival-2024>

Lesley Wood  
chair.chelmsfordu3a@blueyonder.co.uk

### International Dining Club

Leader: Jennie Cappin

### Empty plates and smiling faces



I enjoy the opportunity to choose where the IDC will have its next meal. It is a challenge to find something different - either a restaurant we have not been to for a long time, or, as this time, a restaurant none of us had been to before,

L'Unico Italian Ristorante, tucked away in a corner in New London Road is one I had passed lots of times, but take no notice - Obviously a lunch time tester meal was a good excuse to see what it is like! ! Fourteen people accepted my invitation.

This is the kind of restaurant where the owner took the orders and cooked all the food. Because the food is cooked individually there is plenty of time to chat. The food arrive very hot ... unlike some restaurants. I have sampled a risotto and gnocchi as well as a chicken dish .-Good to know what an Italian recipe should taste like!

For the record there is a long wine list, and plenty of choice in a descriptive menu. Most of us had two courses, but some couldn't resist tiramisu or several scoops of Italian Ice cream. Cost in the ££ range and well described on the website, I have planned to go back again for another meal, and maybe I will get another hug from the owner! I wouldn't surprise me if some time in the future we meet here again.....but without the complications of explaining to the Italian waitress that we each pay individually using our

cards. And we all knew what to pay, saving her from having to go through the menu! Which seemed to take a very long time for fourteen of us.

There is a uniqueness about this group: We travel around the World not leaving Chelmsford, enjoying good food and company! It is the only dining group which meets in an evening as well.... Although there is one where you have to walk first!

We meet in the third week of the month - usually the Monday, but if we are going to an independent restaurant such as this, they are closed on Mondays so we meet on a Tuesday instead. We usually meet at 7 p.m. It could be years between being a host/hostess and so not an onerous task - with somebody always willing to help those unsure.

If you would like to join us contact Jennie Cappin who is our Convenor, ([jennie@jenro.co.uk](mailto:jennie@jenro.co.uk))

Cathy Trevaldwyn

### 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](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.



### 22<sup>nd</sup> April A visit to the Horniman Museum



Photos by Lesley wood

## Future Programme 2024

- 20<sup>th</sup> May** Talk: Walking in Southwark and Bankside, speaker Kathy Lancaster.  
**24<sup>th</sup> Jun** Talk: Pounds, Shillings and Poverty: London in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 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** Talk: "Bridging" London, speaker Katie Davies.  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Sept** Visit to "Shakespeare's Globe, Story and Tour"  
**28<sup>th</sup> Oct** Talk: Along London's Capital Ring Walk, speaker Tony Tuckwell  
**25<sup>th</sup> Nov** Visit to Wimbledon

**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 26<sup>th</sup> April ten members of the Birding Group met at Fingeringhoe Wick Essex Wildlife Trust Reserve. It was a beautiful sunny day and before we even left the car park we could hear Nightingales singing in the woods. We saw a Magpie and, sitting high on the topmost branch of a tree, the first Swallow of the year.

We walked into the woods and saw Goldfinch, Great Tit, Coot, Black Cap and Chiffchaff. We were surrounded by birdsong which was quite magical, Nightingales and Cuckoos were competing with each other for our attention. Eventually one of our sharp-eyed members picked out the diminutive shape of a Nightingale sitting in an oak tree. I was in awe, how could such a small bird sing so loudly?



A Nightingale

We made our way through the woods to the coast and looked out over the estuary. We saw Oystercatcher, Curlew, Whimbrel, Grey Plover, Common Tern, Mallard, Pied Wagtail and a Grey Heron.

We moved on to the Kingfisher Hide and saw Egret, Shell duck, Dabchick, Greylag Geese, Black Headed Gull, Pochard, Cormorant and finally a Pheasant.

Our next meeting is on 24<sup>th</sup> May. Tiptree Heath.

## Our 2024 Programme

- 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.

### **Short Walks Group**

Leader: Robert Lloyd

### **March 15<sup>th</sup> Writtle – Daffodil walk**



The walk was led by Martin Jackson, a resident of Writtle, who took us on a very interesting walk around the village. One of the aims was to see daffodils in full bloom and we certainly did!

### **April 19<sup>th</sup> Boreham – Bluebell walk**



## Sunday Lunch Group

Leader: Lesley Wood



Are your Sundays lonely and boring? Why not join our lunch group, you'll soon make friends and enjoy chatting to others over a good meal. We meet on the first Sunday of every month, except December. The group operates on a rota basis with members taking it in turns to book a table at a local restaurant or pub. They then inform the rest of the group by email providing details of the venue and arrangements for payment etc. Everyone makes their own way to the chosen venue but some members are happy to give lifts. There is no better way to spend a Sunday and there is no washing-up to do afterwards!

Contact Lesley by email: [lesleywood54@yahoo.com](mailto:lesleywood54@yahoo.com)

## Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy

### Science Group Talk Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> May



**Copped Hall**

**The Copped Hall Trust (a registered charity) saved it in 1995 and have been restoring it ever since.**

**By Linda Stewart**

The talk covers the nine centuries+ of the history of Copped Hall, its connections with royalty and nobility, and the progress of the restoration over the last 29 years. It will include details of recent work undertaken over the past couple of years. It also looks at the grounds and gardens, including the 4 acre Walled Garden, rescued in 1999 from several decades of neglect.

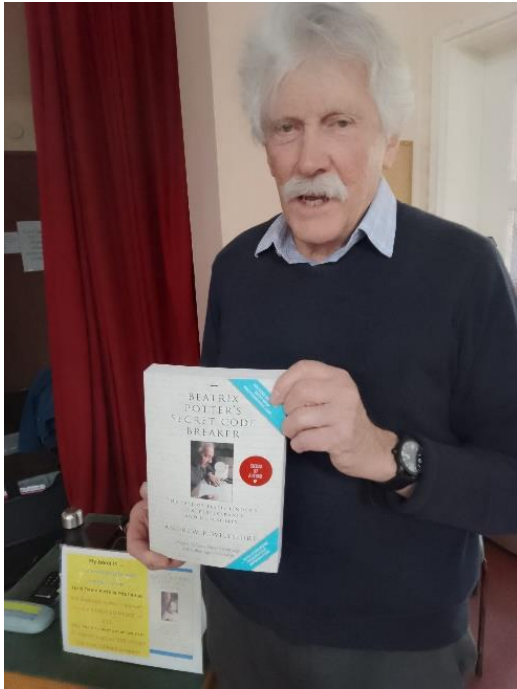
### U3a Science Group Meeting Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024

**Beatrix Potter's Forgotten Secret Code Breaker**

**By Andrew P Wiltshire**

Before our Chairman Chris Bellamy introduced the speaker, Chelmsford u3a Chairman Leslie Wood gave a short eulogy for David Sweeney Vice Chairman of Chelmsford u3a who died suddenly on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024. This was followed by a minute's silence for David.

Andrew Wiltshire gave a very polished Power Point presentation with an intriguing web of links between his family, Leslie Linder, and Beatrix Potter (1866-1943.) His presentation contained many particularly good archive photographs (see note at end). Beatrix Potter came from a wealthy family who would have had servants and had a domineering mother. We can get an insight of the times by watching Downton Abbey. To overcome servants (or her mother) reading her Journal Potter, from the age of fifteen, she wrote in a code she invented which she carried in her head. She did not leave an explanation sheet describing the strange symbols she had used to create over 200,000 words of private observations.



Linder (1904-1973) was a Director of Coubro and Strutton (C&S Group) of a ship's chandlers and manufacturer, founded in 1850 supplying ropes and pulleys to ships like the Cutty Sark in the 1870s. Leslie loved music and literature and was a Librarian for the Childrens section of the Congregational Church in Buckhurst Hill where he lived with his sister Enid. His interest in Potter began when he purchased a collection of her 'Little Books' for the Sunday school library at the Church.

Between 1953 and 1958 he first broke the cipher code that Beatrix Potter had invented and used, between 1881 and 1897, to record her private thoughts and observations, before creating her famous Peter Rabbit stories. Then, over the next four years he decoded over 200,000 of her words before spending four more years publishing, in 1966, his acclaimed work on her Journal and becoming a literary, film and TV celebrity.

Showing some of his unique photographs, Andrew illustrated this code breaking and amusing examples of what Beatrix wrote (never expecting others to read her jottings.) Additionally, he described Leslie's business career, and his upper-middle class background that was like the Potter's family, also in 'trade' with household staff, and the enjoyment of a country estate on the edge of London.

Living nearby Andrew was part of the Linder's social and church groups, receiving copies of their books and personal insights into Leslie's discoveries. Training, like him, as a mechanical engineer, he worked briefly in the 1970s for Linder as did his grandfather in the 1920s. Using their wealth, from work across the world for clients like Marconi, Leslie and Enid, his sister (1901-1980) formed the largest collection of Beatrix's art and writing which they bequeathed (on their respective deaths in 1973 and 1980) to the Victoria & Albert Museum. Andrew mentioned the museum's Leighton Gallery that currently has a display of the Linders, and the code-breaking, that Andrew has sponsored.)

For the complete story I recommend Andrew Wiltshire's book *Beatrix Potter's Secrete Code Breaker*. Subtitle '*The Tale of Leslie Linder's Luck, Perseverance and Generosity.*' Copies are available, at a discount from the shopping page of the website: [www.tap.uk.com](http://www.tap.uk.com).

Andrew started and ended his lecture on a very practical note – go through your family photographs and write on the back who they are, where they are and the date. He was able to give this talk and write the book because his family had kept very good records.

Report by Paul Chaplin

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**

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

## Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

Our April meeting had twelve members in attendance for the third month in a row! We divided our meeting into three segments.

Firstly, we looked at twenty colloquial phrases, seeing if we could work out how they translated from Spanish into English. In most cases far from literally! For example, we talk about our better halves, but the Spanish say “my half orange.” Nobody could work that one out!



Secondly, we split into two groups of six to talk about what noteworthy things had happened to us over the last month. Two had been to places with hot springs – Bath and Budapest – but neither had taken the waters – while others described a music festival in Central Park that they had attended.

Thirdly, one of our members brought a discussion paper (in Spanish) listing 14 factors which the writer believed would lead to a long and healthy life. Again, we split into two groups to read this paper and discuss the points raised – it produced some lively conversation.

As previously stated, our group is currently at full capacity, so we are not seeking additional members at this time. However, if you can hold a basic conversation in Spanish and wish to be put onto our waiting list, please click the link to our website.

The next meeting for the group will be on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 10:30am at Chelmsford Library in a meeting room on the first floor.

David Gout

## Lunch Club 3

Leader: Laraine Linard and Barbara Childs



Even April showers could not dampen the spirits for LC3's lunch at The Angel, Broomfield, where our host this time was Geraldine.

There was plenty of conversation and laughter, the food was very good and the service excellent. It was a very enjoyable lunch although one or two did mention that their chicken was a little dry.

It was good to see some more new faces and we extend a warm welcome to them. As you can see from the photographs, we all had a very good time. It may have been raining when we arrived, but the sun was shining for us, as we made our merry way home.



Our next lunch will be on 2 May where our host will be Sandra Ray at the Fox and Raven.

## IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons

At the IT Group meeting in April our team of helpers supported members with help on both android and Apple devices. Facebook users also received help with issues they had. We had several new members join.

If you are interested in digitalising/restoring old photos please let Lesley or me know and she will arrange to 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. New members welcome, please bring with you the device you want help with, there is no membership fee just £2 each time you attend and a mug for teas/coffee.



## Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590



On 5<sup>th</sup> April twenty of us ventured out to Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome. The downpours of this spring left the grass too boggy for exploring far but we were blessed with dry weather – though we were told it was too blustery for flying.

The airfield dates back to 1916 when the War Ministry

requisitioned the fields from the owner of Flambirds Farm – apparently he was quite happy as he expected to get the land back after the War. He was right, and the land now came with a useful suite of buildings which he used almost unchanged. Today some of the buildings are supported by scaffolding as they were built without proper foundations, but even so they have done well for 100 years. The original five hangars were destroyed in World War II when a German bomber thought they were part of an active airfield. They weren't (Stow Maries was only used up to 1919), and sadly the cattle being sheltered there were killed. The farmer used the compensation received to build the bungalow now located near the entrance.



Stow Maries was home to B Flight of No 37 Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps, tasked with fighting zeppelins. Pilots had to have been educated at public school, but the rate of attrition was so high that some Other Ranks were promoted. Two former Observers became two of the most successful pilots. Today's hangars have a number of replica planes, some of which fly in summer displays. One hangar

includes a tool bench with familiar implements from my grandfather's day – and a robust teapot and enamel mug.

The building now used for reception, with a small shop, has an excellent set of displays bringing to life what it would have been like to live at the aerodrome. There is an interactive map showing where bombs fell in Essex and east London, including in Admirals Park, Chelmsford. Another small building hosts information and exhibits about some of the men, and the officers' mess is still providing refreshments (in our case tea/coffee and a scone).

There is much to see at this unique aerodrome which today also is a valued site for wildlife. The building which used to house the generator is now off-limits to visitors as it is an owl sanctuary.

We will be back at Boreham Village Hall on Tuesday 7 May for a talk by Sarah Harvey on John Alec Baker, the Chelmsford naturalist about whom an exhibition has just launched at Chelmsford Museum, Oaklands Park. Do join us then. Visitors welcome, fee £5.

Jane Humphreys

Photos by Paul Levy

**The Essex Branch of the Historical Association**  
2.30pm Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024  
**The Historical King Arthur**  
**Professor Andrew Breeze University of Navarre, Spain**  
at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford  
All Welcome £5 for non-members

### Lunch Club 3

Leader: Laraine Linard and Barbara Childs



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## Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly



This month we enjoyed a talk by Margaret Mills on 'Joseph Wright of Derby', an artist who has become more popular over the last thirty to forty years. He lived from 1734 to 1797, was the son of a lawyer, and came from a fairly well-to-do background. Having decided to become an artist, at the age of seventeen he went to London to train. He was more interested in scientific ideas than religious ones. For years religious themes had been the subject of paintings.

He painted landscapes and portraits to make a living but was more interested in how the Industrial Revolution would affect society in the future. He became a member of the Lunar Society and one of his more famous paintings was 'A Philosopher lecturing on the Orrery', showing a varied audience, including two children, looking at planets going around the sun.

His paintings are famous for their contrast between light and dark. Possibly his most famous picture hanging in the National Gallery is 'An Experiment of a Bird in an Air Pump'. The scientist in his red gown looks straight at you as he experiments with life and death, will the dove be killed or will he inject enough air to save it? The air pump is surrounded with different people: a society couple who do not seem to be very affected in contrast to the two children opposite them who are horrified but comforted by possibly their father. The scientist has two assistants, one of them a working-class boy, who also looks straight at you. What is everyone thinking? A very interesting talk.



Next month we consider that we are marooned on a Desert Island. What picture would we take with us to cheer ourselves up?

## Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy Secretary: Val Green

### Barnards Farm, West Horndon Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April

Members walked around amongst the many trees, open grassed areas, Japanese garden, mixed borders, all dotted with quirky sculptures. Some members rode on the miniature railway cars through the trees, the estate perimeter and by the lake.

Members are advised to look at the Garden Group page on Chelmsford u3a website for details of the meeting on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and to view the photographs of past visits.



Val Green continues to recover slowly from her fall. Please consider offering to help with the running of the garden group & contact [chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com](mailto:chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com).

### **Bus Pass Group**

Group Leader: Maurice Austin

In recent years, bus route 46 from Chelmsford to Ongar seems to have carried mostly fresh air at most times of the day. So, on 12 April, when 20 of us turned up, the driver was amazed. So much so that when he left the bus station, he did a triumphant circuit to demonstrate his trophies to the crowd of other drivers and the inspector waiting near the former First enquiry office. He picked a few others up in the city centre, but they could have caught other routes, making this, yet again, a u3a special! Two more of our members joined and an ordinary passenger (!) taking her dog to the vet on the edge of Roxwell.



Group members including Jessica (!) and Barbara. Photo by Lesley Wood.

The country-side in this part of Essex is very attractive and we were blessed with a bright and dry day although it was decidedly nippy in the wind! We passed by the scout camp at Screens Park, through the oddly named Shellow Bowells and onto Willingale where there was much conversation about the two churches standing side by side. Of course, everyone knows that one of these was built by a bitchy sister to spite her sibling. WRONG!

We were lucky to have one of the Church Visiting Group's leading lights with us and he (Brian) made it clear that the tale was stuff and nonsense! Each church was built on the boundary of its respective diocesan area. Who started that errant tale? Presumably someone attending the now closed Maltsters Arms just up the road.

The historical truth is a valuable asset, but I do know which story I prefer!

A couple of young men boarded at the former pub and no-one gave them a second glance. In sharp contrast, a young lady boarded in Fyfield and almost everyone took notice. I didn't, of course, but most of our group did and she was a great source of conversation after she had left the bus!

We shouldn't have had long to wait for our bus to Epping, but it was running quite late. We were told by a local there were road works in Epping High Street, and these affected us for the rest of the day, though not seriously. Our bus arrived late but with a standing-load and we separated to do our own things as usual.

I think the consensus was that we need not go to Epping again! The church was cold dark and unwelcoming, the library was rubbish and unhelpful, there was a shortage of decently priced and attractive cafes and there really wasn't very much to do!



A couple of pleasant locals in Epping High Street. They have left their walking stick behind!  
Picture by Lesley Wood.

Most of us caught the bus through to Harlow where we had to wait in the town's awful bus station for a slightly late running bus back home. Nevertheless, the pleasant driver was already waiting for us and gave us a nice trip home through the very attractive Roding Valley and villages.

We were joined by two friends from Hutton u3a and look forward to meeting them again.

Despite the disappointment of Epping, everyone seemed to enjoy the countryside views and the companionship.

**On Friday 3 May, NOTE this is the FIRST FRIDAY**, we will go to Brightlingsea. We will catch the 09.45 First 371 to Colchester, from stand 3 at Chelmsford Bus Station. We will change to First 87 to Brightlingsea at Colchester High Street. My current plan is to catch the 13.50 to Colchester for the 371 back to Chelmsford. We expect to be back in Chelmsford about 17.03 hours. There are later and earlier buses back if we need to take advantage of the lovely weather!!

Maurice Austin.

## French Conversation Group

Group Leader: Marie Neale



Our French Conversation Group meets twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday afternoons of the month at Christ Church, New London Road, Chelmsford.

Some of us want to improve our French because we visit France, may be to visit family living there, or perhaps having lived there want to keep the language alive.

We work from the Rendez-vous magazine, reading and translating the articles, which are varied and interesting.

This week, as we were had completed all the articles in the magazine, one member showed us a photo of where she had once lived in The Hague and described life there. Then we played a simplified version of Articulate. It was not easy to find the vocabulary to describe words.

If you are interested in joining us, contact Marie on [mariedavidneale@btinternet.com](mailto:mariedavidneale@btinternet.com) or 01245 261099.

## Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex Administrator: Michael Gray

### Wednesday 3 April 2024 - EARLS COLNE St Andrew WAKES COLNE All Saints



Another good turnout for our visit to the Colne Valley. A warm welcome to St Andrew's with coffee and a choice of home-made cakes, served from the beautifully appointed in-church kitchen.

The vicar, Mark Payne, gave a lively introduction to the history of the church – the first documented place of worship here was in 1045. He pointed out evidence of the De Vere dynasty and the roof angels, once gracing the North Aisle, now the Nave. The Victorian glass, the wonderful Last Supper Mosaic, the carved wooden pew-ends, the Hill and Son organ. And, saving best till last, the pre-Reformation

paten [communion wafer dish], modest, silver-gilt, but an almost unique survivor of the break with Rome. So very valuable, taken from its safe especially for us. Should it [and the church itself] be returned to the Vatican? Or sold to feed the needy? What would Jesus do?

The organ and the tower were available to us, so we were a little slow to travel the few miles to Wakes Colne. Nigel Impey was waiting to greet us, and shared his knowledge and



enthusiasm with us individually. The windows illustrate biblical texts, a brick stairway, now blocked, indicates a rood screen long since removed. The font is Norman, the windows Victorian or later. The murals on the east wall are Edwardian. Much has changed over the centuries – there's evidence of a central tower, and a gallery once stood at the west end. But a charming church, set in beautiful countryside.

**Our next meeting is Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May  
THEYDON MOUNT St Michael CM16 7PP  
and STAPLEFORD TAWNEY St Mary RM4 1DQ**

### **Book Group**

Leader: Andy Moir

At our March meeting we discussed *Beartown* by Fredrik Backman. The novel is set in the small, rundown isolated town of Beartown in Sweden where most of the industry has closed down. The town's hopes and dreams are pinned on the junior ice hockey team, and the entire community is invested in their success. The story begins with the build-up to a crucial semi-final match, which is seen as the potential turning point for the town's fortunes.

The novel explores the relationships between its inhabitants. We meet the team's star player, Kevin, who is under immense pressure to perform, and his best friend, Benji, who is equally talented but lacks the same support. The team's coach, Peter, is a former player himself and is determined to lead the boys to victory, while his daughter, Maya, is a bright, independent girl who loves the game as much as anyone.

However, the town's unity is shattered when a tragic incident occurs at a party, leaving Maya traumatized and the community divided. The aftermath of this event forms the crux of the story, as the town is forced to confront uncomfortable truths about its values, loyalties, and the lengths to which people will go to protect their own interests.

As sometimes happens with our group we were dramatically divided in our opinion of the novel. The majority of the group really enjoyed the book and made comments like "compulsive reading", "I couldn't

put the book down, it was utterly gripping”, “very well written with well drawn characters” and there was a lively discussion about the motivation of the main characters.

However a minority of the group didn't like the book and didn't finish it. One member said “Beartown was dreadful. I know nothing about ice hockey I am not in the least interested. I didn't like any of the characters and was totally disinterested in who won the match and I hated the brutality that the immigrant boy had to endure. I gave up after that.”

As usual an interesting afternoon.

**Our books for the next three meetings are:**

Mon May 20 <sup>th</sup>	The Tenant of Wildfell Hall by Anne Bronte
Mon Jun 17 <sup>th</sup>	Travels with my aunt by Graham Greene
Mon Jul 15 <sup>th</sup>	The Only Story by Julian Barnes

Dear Members,

I am hoping to start an **Amateur Dramatics Group** and am looking for any u3a members that would be interested in:-

- Script writing.
- Directing and producing.
- Musical back-rounds.
- Costume Design.
- Make-up.
- Set design.
- Set construction.
- Lighting.
- Stage crew.
- Narrating.
- Health and Safety on stage.
- Not forgetting any budding Thespians.



I have probably forgotten to mention many skills that would be required but have listed what I know. If there is sufficient interest I will arrange a date for us to meet and discuss how we might achieve this.

I am Alan Caddy fishing group leader and committee member, if you are interested please drop me an email at [alan.caddy@btinternet.com](mailto:alan.caddy@btinternet.com)

### Reminder to Group Leaders

Please send copy for the June 2024 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.  
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May 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.

### Chelmsford u3a Committee

Position	Name
Chair	Lesley Wood
Vice Chair	Alan Caddy
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/>

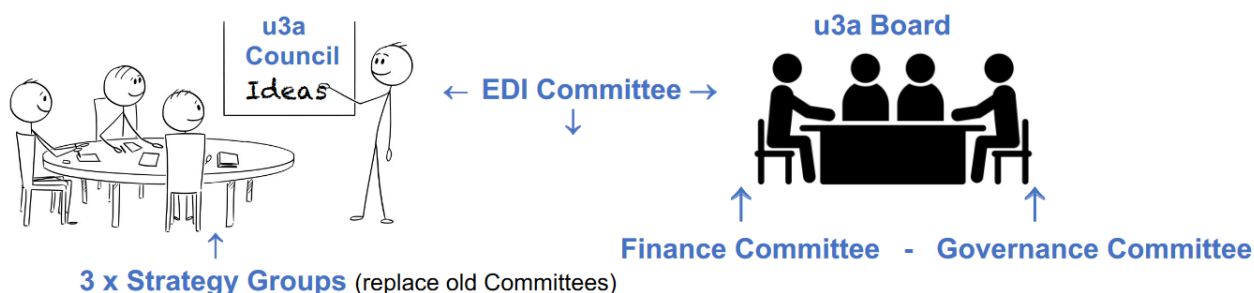


Extensive details have been mailed to all u3as since the end of January and are also available on the website at [www.u3a.org.uk/fitforthefuture](http://www.u3a.org.uk/fitforthefuture) This is a very short version outlining the main points about which many members have asked questions. It is important to remember these are drafts – the Board will decide on 19<sup>th</sup> June whether to propose the change and u3as will be able to vote at the AGM on 16<sup>th</sup> October. If proposed, the resolution will require a 75% majority of the votes cast in order to be approved. Please remember to register when requested to do so.

**For u3as there will be no change** to their independent operation or committee and trustees' responsibilities or charity status. However, u3as will have more opportunity to influence the development of the u3a movement with enhanced representation and two-way communication.

**Why make changes?** The present structure is out of date and the way in which trustees are elected does not ensure the Board has the necessary skills and experience for today's charity requirements. Trustees also have a huge workload resulting in a shortage of volunteers for the job.

**A possible solution:** Disband the present Board of 18 members and reform it with a maximum of 10 u3a members, experienced in oversight and compliance, who are elected nationally (rather than regionally as at present). Their suitability might be identified by a Nominations Committee.



**Form a u3a Council** which would have powers delegated by the Board and would be composed of u3a members elected by and representing the regions and nations, together with some ex-officio members such as Strategy Group chairs and Network Link. The two bodies would liaise closely, with the chair of the Council being an ex-officio member of the Board (without a vote) and a Board member, probably the vice-chair, attending Council meetings.

**Responsibilities: The Board** would continue to have a legal responsibility to act on behalf of the Trust; to provide oversight of the Trust's performance; to ensure compliance with charity and corporate law; to ensure financial integrity and to approve the final annual budget and strategy. **The Council** would give u3as a much greater voice than at present; it would have the time to identify and discuss the needs of u3as; to consider u3a-wide priorities; develop and participate in u3a impact assessments and encourage participation in initiatives. It would contribute to the overall budget and strategy of the Trust and oversee and co-ordinate the work of the Strategy Groups. Representatives would act as spokespersons for the u3a movement in their region; be key contacts to liaise with other organizations and be a conduit for strengthened two-way communication with the u3as and networks in their region or nation.

**Will this change cost more money?** The Board will be much smaller and conduct most of its meetings on line, as will almost all other committees and any working groups etc. The Council will meet in person but probably only twice a year and its other meetings will be on line. It is therefore anticipated that there will be very little, if any, increase in costs.



**Consultation** is open until the end of April but please send any comments or suggestions in as soon as possible, either to your Regional / National Trustee or email them to:

[governance@u3a.org.uk](mailto:governance@u3a.org.uk)



The Baddow Races at Great Baddow are back in 2024 on Sunday 19 May.

The Races will be held at the Great Baddow Recreation Ground, Great Baddow, CM2 9RL.

The event will consist of a 10 Mile Road Race and a 2 Mile Fun Run.

The 10 Mile Race is suitable for dedicated runners. The Fun Run is suitable for less serious runners, as well as for families and children, perhaps with pushchairs, dogs and fancy dress too!

This year our combined Races team from the Chelmsford Mildmay and Chelmsford Rivermead Rotary Clubs will offer a free T-shirt for all 10 Mile Race entries received before 30 April.

This BARR Gold Standard Road Race event will provide every entrant with a runner's pack and chip-timed numbering.

Bone conduction headphones are allowed.

10 Mile winners will receive a trophy and all 10 Mile finishers will receive a medal.

On the Great Baddow Recreation Ground there will be stalls, children's rides, food and refreshments, a sound stage and a warm-up exercise session.

Proceeds from the Races will support our chosen charities: Essex Dementia Care and The Children's Society East.

Both Races are also an opportunity for all runners to support their own charity.

On Races Day the 10 Mile Race starts at 10 a.m. followed by the 2 Mile Fun Run at 10.15 a.m.

Good Luck and see you there on 19 May!

Enter now on [www.baddowraces.co.uk](http://www.baddowraces.co.uk)

### Interest Groups (as of March 2024)

You must be a member of Chelmsford u3a before you join an Interest Group. However, if you would like a taster session before you join contact the Group Leader either by phone or by email.

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone	EMail
All Day Walks	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday		Berry Cornell	01277355823	Via website
Art Appreciation	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	14.00	Brenda Kelly	01277840621	Via website
Art Club	Mondays Weekly	9.30	Peter Anderton	07773074105	Peter.anderton@scion-uk.com
Art Group	Tuesdays Weekly	9.30	Cynthia Cronin	01245461215	Via website
Birding	4 <sup>th</sup> Friday	10.00	Alan Alexander	07712818499	Via website
Book Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	14.30	Andy Moir	01245440007	Via website
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus		Via website
Buss Pass Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	varies	Maurice Austin		Via Website
Church Visits	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	10.15	Brian Greatrex & Michael Gray	01245258833	Via website
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale		Via website
Craft Workshops	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	10.00 – 13.00	Julie Nicholson		Julnic138@gmail.com or via website
Discussion Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues	13.00-15.00	Brian Littlechild		brian.littlechild@blueyonder.co.uk
Family History	4th Friday	14.00	Lesley Wood	01245601359	lesleywood54@yahoo.com
Fishing Group	Wednesdays		Alan Caddy		Via Website
French Conversation	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday	14 -15.15	Marie Neale		Via Website
Garden Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy Val Green	01277353481	Via website
Information Technology	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	10.00	Lyn Parsons		Via Website
International Dining	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	Evenings	Jennie Cappin	01245 358629	Via website
Jazz and Blues Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10.30-12.30	Heinz Kassier		kassier2@gmail.com
Live Arts	Theatre Visits	As & when	John Heathcote	01245380766	liveartsgroup@aol.co.uk

Local History	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	14.15	Jane Humphreys	01245 259590	Via website
London the City & its people	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	14.00	Berry Cornell	01277 355823	Chris Rycroft via website
Lunch Club 1	Last Friday of month	12.30	John Heathcote	01245 380766	Via website
Lunch Club 2	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	12.30	Harry Glaser	01245 462760	Via website
Lunch Club 3	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	12.30	Laraine Linard Barbara Childs	01245 475444	Via website
Mah-Jong	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	2.00	Chris Paget	01245 474811	chrispaget@lineone.net
Philosophy	Thursday 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240	Via Website
Philosophy & Religion	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	10.00	Jim Mackay		Jim88mackay@aol.co.uk
Photographs on Face Book	Online		Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via Website
Pickleball	Monday Weekly	2.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via Website
Poetry Appreciation	2nd Wed	14.00	Judith & Tony Boniface	01245 266316	Via Website
Science Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	13.45	Chris Bellamy	01277353481	Via website
Sewing, Knitting & Crochet	3rd Thursday		Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517	Jacqueline.n@virgin.net
Short Walks	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245466167	Via website
Spanish Conversation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10.30	Lindsay Whitehouse	01245 356363	Via website
Summer evening walks	4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	Apr -Sep	Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via website
Sunday Lunch	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	13.00	Lesley Wood	01245601359	Via the website
Ten Pin Bowling	2nd & 4th Fridays	10.30	Roger & Ruth Spall	01245466486	Via website
Travel Group	See website		Anne Brereton		cu3atravelgroup@outlook.com
Walking Group	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	10.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via website