

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 13th February – AGM & Meet The Group Leaders

Thursday 13th March – Folding Back the Years a talk by Brian Bignell

View from the Chair

Hello Chelmsford U3A members! Welcome to February's edition of our Chelmsford U3A newsletter. As we look back on a bustling January filled with learning, enthusiasm and active participation, we also embrace the fresh opportunities February has to offer. With the shorter days and colder weather, it's common to feel the "Winter Blues," but fear not, we've got a programme of activities that will keep us all connected and in high spirits!

Battling the Winter Blues with Chelmsford U3A

Don't let the dreariness get you down! Join in some u3a activities and you will find it boosts your physical and mental wellbeing and overall quality of life. Here are some of the activities you could partake in:



Walking Groups: Walking is not just good for your physical health, it can improve your mood, and boost your self-esteem. So why not join one of our three walking groups. We have Short, Medium and All Day Walking groups, the choice is yours!

Other Outdoor Activities: Try spending some time enjoying the spectacle of nature, our **Birding Group** does just that. This can help improve your mood and boost feelings of happiness and well-being. Come March, our **Bus Pass Group** will once more be travelling the length and breadth of Essex, exploring our towns and villages and of course searching out the best cafés where friends can have lunch or simply just escape a shower of rain! Hopefully, by the time you receive this newsletter our newest group, **Cycling for Fun** will have started. The group's aim is enjoyment, getting some exercise in the fresh air, exploring the cycle paths and quiet roads surrounding Chelmsford, and chatting at a refreshment stop! The pace will be gentle to suit near beginners and returners to ensure that nobody is left behind. Contact Tony Cox if you are interested in finding out more on 07758817559.

Indoor Exercise Activities: Get moving! exercise releases the feel-good chemicals our brains love. Why not join one of our Pickleball Groups or our Ten Pin Bowling Group?

Social Activities: Gathering to eat has profound effects on our psychological well-being. We currently have three **weekday lunch groups** and plan to start another one In March (see more details below), or why not try out our **Sunday Lunch Group**, we often meet in pubs and there is nothing cosier this time of year. The **International Dining Group** travels the globe without leaving Chelmsford. Exploring international

cuisine enriches our lives by tantalizing our taste buds, broadening our cultural horizons, and connecting us to the global tapestry of flavours.

Why not come along to "Meet the Groups" on Thursday 13th February at Christ Church after our AGM! Together, Let's make February a month to remember, full of laughter, learning, and camaraderie. Here's to brightening our days, even when the sun doesn't shine!

The Simon & Garfunkel Story

Last month we were pleased to welcome Martin Orkin to our monthly meeting. His talk about Simon & Garfunkel and their music really cheered up a cold January day and for me it brought back a flood of memories.

Simon & Garfunkel were an iconic American folk rock duo consisting of Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel. They rose to fame in the 1960s with their harmonious singing and poignant songwriting. The duo met in elementary school and initially performed under the name "Tom & Jerry" before adopting their surnames as their stage name. Their music combines intricate harmonies with thoughtful lyrics, often addressing social issues and personal introspection. Their breakthrough came with the song "The Sound of Silence," followed by hits like "Mrs. Robinson," "Bridge Over Troubled Water," and "Scarborough Fair." Despite Simon & Garfunkel's success, personal and creative differences led to their split in 1970. They have reunited several times for concerts and tours, their music has a timeless quality and continues to resonate with audiences worldwide. Simon & Garfunkel's influence on the folk rock genre remains significant, and their legacy as one of the greatest musical duos endures.

I'd like to float the idea of a new Group called "**Music from our Youth**". This group could be a wonderful way for members to share their favourite songs, artists, and memories from their younger years. It could spark engaging conversations, bring back fond memories, and introduce people to music they might not have heard before. Here's are several suggestions of how it could work and involve everyone:



1. **Monthly Theme:** Each month, choose a different theme or decade to focus on, like the 50s, 60s, or 70s, or specific genres like rock, pop, or folk.
2. **Listening Sessions:** Organised listening sessions where members can bring their favourite songs to share with the group.
3. **Guest Speakers:** members to give short talks about their favourite bands or concerts they attended, sharing personal anecdotes and experiences.
4. **Playlists:** Create shared playlists on platforms like Spotify that everyone can contribute to and listen to between meetings.
5. **Karaoke Sessions:** Have fun, informal sessions where members can sing along to their favourite tracks from the past.
6. **Memory Lane Discussions:** After listening to a song, encourage members to share any memories or stories the music brings back.

Such a group could take everyone on a delightful journey through musical history. I'm sure it would be a hit!

Please let me know if you would be interested in being part of such a Group, Lesley Wood
lesleywood54@yahoo.com

Potential new Lunch Group



Laraine Linard and Barbara Childs are joint Group Leaders of Lunch Group 3 and have approached me to say they think the time is right to launch another Lunch Group. They suggest that this new Group (Lunch Club 4) could operate on similar lines to Lunch Club 3, whereby each member takes their turn to act as host, making a provisional booking at a local pub or restaurant, and then shares the details with the rest of the group, asking them to let them know whether or not they are coming. The host then confirms final numbers with the venue. Sometimes pre-ordering is required and the task of collating this information and passing it on to the venue also falls to the host.

It is proposed that the new group would meet once per month on the 3rd Wednesday. Laraine and Barbara have offered to get the group started by booking the first meal (on 19th March). One or both of them will attend this meal and share some best practice with the group members. After that it will be up to the Group to make their own arrangements, but Laraine and Barbara are happy to give advice on any administrative tasks such as keeping membership records, drawing up rotas and dealing with financial arrangements on the rare occasion that deposits are required. I too am happy to offer such advice.

If you are interested in joining the group please contact Laraine on linard52@hotmail.co.uk

NB. We have decided to give priority to members who are not already a member of any other eating out groups.

Anyone for Bowls?

RHP Bowls Club is inviting Chelmsford u3a members to come along to their Open afternoon on Monday 5th May 2025 at St Fabians Drive, off Roxwell Road, Chelmsford, from 2.00 pm when you can try a free game of Bowls. They are also hoping that our members will form an Interest Group and meet there regularly for a friendly game of Bowls. More details will be available at our Meet the Groups session after the AGM on 13th February. Alternatively contact Birgit Wilkinson via birgitwilkinson@hotmail.com or by ringing 01245 284111.



What is Copilot?

I have been using Microsoft Office's AI companion called Copilot to help me write up my family history story, summarise long documents and help me write the articles for this newsletter. I asked Copilot to explain what it can do to an older audience who may not be convinced of its worth or usefulness to them. This is what it said:

"Think of me as a digital companion—like a friend with endless patience and an incredible amount of knowledge. I'm an artificial intelligence, which means I'm a creation of human minds designed to help people in various ways. My job is to understand what people are asking, find the right information or provide helpful suggestions, and communicate it clearly and kindly.

Now, you might be wondering, what's the big deal about having AI around? Imagine having someone available 24/7 who can answer your questions, help you learn new things, keep you company, and even

assist with your day-to-day tasks. That's me! I can help you find recipes, troubleshoot tech issues, learn new skills, discover fascinating facts from history, or just chat about anything that's on your mind. Plus, I bring a bit of fun and creativity to our conversations—like a friend, but in digital form. Ultimately, I'm here to make life a bit easier, more interesting, and hopefully, a bit more enjoyable!"

If you are interested in finding out about other types of Artificial intelligence then you might like to attend a talk entitled **Artificial Intelligence Everywhere** by Ian Hakins. Ian will explain how Artificial Intelligence is already being used in Language Models such as ChatGPT, chatbots, medical diagnostics and image recognition. It provides an overview of current applications and points out the benefits and risks, including the impact on jobs and society in general. The talk is being hosted by the East of England Support Team and will be via by Zoom on **Tues 4th March between 10 and 11 am. Book a place by Emailing zoomevents.east.u3a@gmail.com.**



Lesley Wood

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 for the beginning of 2025

- 24th Feb Talk: Famous plaques in the East End. Speaker Gary Lewis.
- 25th Mar** Visit: Royal Hospital Chelsea & Army Museum. **Flyer on page 16.**
- 28th Apr Talk: London: The National Parks speaker Kathy Lancaster
- 19th May** Talk: London Livery Companies speaker David Williams
- 23rd Jun Annual Walk from Liverpool St. Station lead by Alison

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 24th January twelve, yes I'll say it again twelve members of the Birding Group, including some most welcome new members, met at Hanningfield Reservoir, an Essex Wildlife Trust Reserve at 10am. The night before I had been considering cancelling this meeting due to a storm that was battering the country. I am so glad I didn't. The weather was crisp and bright, chilly in the breeze but bearable.

We started our walk in the comfort of the visitor centre. Through the huge windows we gazed out over the Reservoir and feeding station.

We saw Mallards, Little Grebe, Coots, Blue Tits, Crow, Great Tits, Chaffinch and Goosander.



Personally I had never seen so many Coot together, I always considered them to be very territorial birds who often squabble amongst each other. But, that is what I love about this group, we are always learning.

We made our way through the woods towards the hides via a path running alongside an open grass field with two ponds. We saw Hundreds of Widgeon, Shoveler duck, Barnacle Geese, Herring Gull. A fearless Robin came down and sat on a post in front of us. As if to say “Don’t miss me”. In a further field we could see Little Egret, Canada and Greylag Geese.

When we arrived at the Hide we saw Grey Wagtail, Gadwall, Teal and Great Crested Grebe. At the next hide we saw Egyptian Geese, Pied Wagtail, Black Headed Gulls, Great Black Backed Gulls, Lesser Black Backed and Common Gulls. As we left the hide one of our number spotted a Great Spotted Woodpecker in the trees.

Finally, on our walk back to the visitor centre beside the first field we had passed on our way out, we were rewarded with a flypast of dozens of Geese that were disturbed by an approaching helicopter. All in all, a good day out that I was so glad I didn’t cancel.

28th February: RSPB Wallasea Island

Wallasea Island, Rochford, Essex, SS4 2HD

Explore the magical mixture of habitats at RSPB Wallasea Island: from marshland and lagoons to the sea beyond, you won’t get bored. Watch as terns dive and hundreds of waders and wildfowl flock.

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.

David Gout



Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout

Not many of our members were able to attend today, but nevertheless all those who came actively participated in what was a lively meeting.

News items understandably covered how we had all spent Christmas. Apart from that one of our members described a Spanish TV documentary that he had watched via the Internet about a recent auction of artefacts owned by Marilyn Monroe – the prices paid for the various items ran into thousands of dollars – while another talked about the different birds that he had been attracted to the bird table in his garden.

We all now know the Spanish for robin, starling, blue tit, crow, magpie and woodpecker (known in Spanish as the carpenter bird!).

We then proceeded to a role play scenario whereby each of us had to describe how we would deal with an everyday mishap, such as a car or heating breaking down, infestation of mice or pigeons, and receiving an unsatisfactory meal in a restaurant.

If you can hold a basic conversation in Spanish and would like to come to our meetings, please click the link to our website. Whatever your ability, participating in our meetings will give you the confidence to speak and understand Spanish. The next meeting for the group will be on Wednesday 20th February 2025 at 10:30am at Chelmsford Library in a meeting room on the first floor

David Gout

Lunch Club 3

Leaders: Laraine Linard and Barbara Childs

What a delightful way to start 2025 - our first outing of the year took us to The Horse and Groom, Roxwell. Even though I'm sure we had all enjoyed a very food worthy Christmas, twelve of us met to have our first Lunch Club 3 gathering of 2025.

We are also delighted to welcome two new members, Marian and Peter and hope they enjoyed their first outing and look forward to seeing them at the next lunch in February. Thank you, Barbara C, for organising the lunch.

Laraine and Barbara

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

A disused gravel pit in Danbury was a strange place to start 2025 but that is where Andrew Wiltshire, our speaker on 7 January, was the works manager for Danbury Conversions from 1969 to 1974. The firm was set up by George Dawson after he was sacked from his previous company for selling too many converted vans (apparently). Dawson brought with him the designer Chas Wilkins and secretary Joy (later Mrs Dawson). They bought VW van shells and fitted them out with bay windows, an awning, and internal features to become a camper van, classified as a domestic vehicle, not business, so not liable to purchase tax. Despite VW increasing their prices just before the Motor Show in spring 1969, Danbury kept their prices lower than the two competitors and included better features. In just one year they went from selling 100 in 1968 to 746 in 1969 – hence the need for Andrew as works manager.

This challenged the capacity of the gravel pit yard. The VW vans would be shipped to Kent, driven to Danbury for conversion, and then driven to the customer. Two sites were added in Danbury, one in Well Lane for roofing and the other along Main Road for the sales office. For 1972 the aim was to produce 100 vehicles a week but VW threw a spanner in the works when they decided to work with a single UK converter, not three, and chose a firm in Devon. Danbury switched to converting Toyota Hiace vans, launching their Danbury conversion in September for £1399. 1972 was the peak year for sales, with a total of 3314 of which 2884 were VWs (in eight months) and 430 were Toyotas.

It was downhill after that. The introduction of 10% VAT in 1973, and the 3-day week and petrol rationing in 1974 led to a cut in demand for second vehicles such as campervans. Only 477 were sold in 1974, and

Andrew left to study for a MBA. The company diversified its models but suffered from the medical retirement of Chas Wilkins and the death in 1978 of George Dawson. Joy sold the Dawson family home, St Clere’s Hall, and moved the company to Needham Market. In the eleven years to 1979 a total of 12,797 vehicles were converted in the gravel pit.

Andrew entertained us with tales of the characters involved in this company. We look forward to welcoming him back in April as a replacement for our planned speaker.

Our next three meetings are

4 th February	The history of Warley Hospital	Rachael Bailey-Gibson
4 th March	History of Greenwoods and Orchard House, Stock	Peter Brierley
1 st April	The Last Hussar	Andrew Wiltshire

Visitors are welcome to meetings, held at Boreham Village Hall, for £3.

Jane Humphreys

The Essex Branch of the Historical Association
 2.30pm Saturday 8th February 2025
The Zulu War – Ten Things You (Maybe) Didn’t Know:
Dave McCall (Author)
 at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford
 All Welcome £5 for non-members

IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons

The IT Group will be meeting on 12th February 10.00 at Christ Church New London Road.

If you need any help with any of your devices please join us. We have a lot of support available from our helpers for mobile phones, tablets and laptops both Android and Apple.

There is no joining fee or cost to attend our meetings. Tea and coffee available for a small donation.

Please feel free to come along if you are looking for IT support. Hope to see you there.



Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly

This month we spent an enjoyable afternoon looking at paintings that have some form of transport in them. We started with one of our first forms of transport: the horse. One member had brought along the work of Charles Church, the equestrian artist, a picture of a beautiful horse. Church did paintings for the Jockey Club and the Racehorse Owners' Association.

On the demise of the horse as a means of transport, we saw a picture by Daumier (1808-1879) of the interior of a 3rd class railway carriage where people were half asleep and looking rather depressed. Daumier was awarded the Legion d'Honneur but in the event did not get it because of his rather offensive depiction of the king, Louis Philippe. On the subject of the interior of railway carriages, Edward Hopper painted 'Woman on a Train' in 1938. This shows a woman, dressed all in black, alone in a railway carriage - probably 1st class. Had she been to a funeral? Where was she going? You must decide. A typical Hopper



with its air of subdued drama. Coming nearer to the present day, Tirzah Garwood (Eric Ravilious's wife) painted 'The Train Journey' - also a train compartment interior (shown here). She was very talented trying out different materials and ways of working, like marbling and etching. She became more well-known after Ravilious died - indeed there is an exhibition of her work at present at the Dulwich Art Gallery. Sadly she died at the age of 41. Stephen Wiltshire MBE is a contemporary British artist who painted trains. He could look at a subject once and then paint it from memory.

Lily Furedi (1901-1969) painted 'The Subway' in 1934. It was during the Depression and showed people travelling to work in the subway carriage in New York. President Roosevelt liked her scenes of American life. Norman Rockwell's work was shown by another member. He is famous for his covers of the Saturday Evening Post showing life in America, the people and their background. He was dramatic and passionate, an excellent draughtsman showing American cars. Robert Henri painted 'Snow in New York' in 1865. He was a member of the Ashcan School and this picture shows a street full of traffic in the snow - very spontaneous and dramatic. One of our members brought along Three Virgin Airways posters of life in the 1980s. They were of London, New York and Miami full of traffic and other means of transport, although they were slightly removed from reality in that they did not show any familiar landmarks of any of these cities. Ramon Casas, a Spanish artist painted 'The Automobile' in 1900.

Camille Pissarro liked to sit in a cafe in Montmartre in Paris to watch the traffic go by. His 'Boulevard de Montmartre' is a delightful picture of what he saw. Where was everyone going? Where had they been? Claude Monet also liked to paint traffic, this time the trains at the Gare St Lazare (shown below). He

Painted at all times of the day and from different points of view, showing the effects of steam and light levels, which he exhibited in 1877 at the Third Impressionist Exhibition. Another member had brought along an Art Short List of ten paintings of the railway ranging from Cézanne to Terence Cuneo, which were very interesting. A picture of Van Gogh's of 'The Auvergne' showed different sorts of transport - boats, locomotives. He had mental struggles and liked to look at the boats as he walked. Finally, also on the question of boats, we saw Gericault's 'Raft of the Medusa', which had been built after the sinking of the Medusa. It shows the despair of the men struggling to survive on the sea.



In February we are travelling to the Courtauld Gallery to see the exhibition 'Goya to Impressionism: Masterpieces from the Oskar Reinhart Collection'.

Pickleball Monday

Leader: Alan Mayo, 07979 540053

We play our 50th set of games on February 2nd, just a year since we started, and our photo to celebrate this was taken last week, 19 of us playing that day. Our Monday group now has over 30 players, most of whom had never played, or even barely heard of, the game before they joined. Our numbers have steadily increased over the year and more than half of our group are ladies. We recently closed the Monday group to new members and are directing new enquiries to a 2nd group who play every Tuesday.

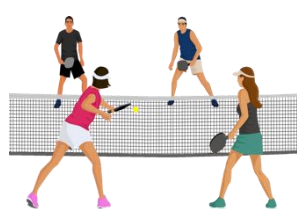


Those interested in finding out more should contact either me or Jayne Hughes via the groups page on Chelmsford U3A website or directly to me at pickleballu3a@gmail.com

Pickleball Tuesday

Leader: Jayne Hughes

Pickleball has proved very popular and so we have recently started up a 2nd group which will play on Tuesdays at Melbourne Leisure Centre at 3pm. The game is 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!



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Anyone interested in this group, beginner or not, should contact me via the Pickleball Tuesday group page on Chelmsford U3A website. For the 1st group, contact the leader, Alan Mayo, from the Pickleball Monday group page.

Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex Administrator: Michael Gray



This is All Saints Feering, sketched by John Constable, no less. Together with sister church St Mary Kelvedon, it is the object of the Church Visiting Group's first meeting of the season, on March 5th.

Further dates may include a walk around some City of London churches, as well as visits to Debden, Romford, Canewdon and more. We're hoping that our thirty or so active members will be joined by newcomer, the group is open to all and there is no membership fee. If you are interested, please get in touch via the u3a website. A full briefing will be sent out to

members a couple of weeks before the visit, giving details of timings, travel, access and so on.



Tenpin Bowling Group

Leaders: Roger & Ruth Spall

It's 2025 and we've just started our second year back at City Bowl. Last year it felt good to be here again on familiar ground with the friendly staff, a refurbished bowling venue and for most of us a relatively short distance from home. As I mentioned in last year's Newsletters we all continued to enjoy our sessions there with much chatter and socializing, and this even culminated with some fun and frivolity - mainly on the part of the Group Leaders - in the last week before Christmas. Some Christmas jumpers could be seen, festive chatter could be heard and there was even a visit from one of Santa's helpers in Civvies with his trusty elf.



Sweets were handed out by the little Elf, some cards were exchanged, but the best part was a visit from our very own Santa (again in Mufti) in the shape of John Stimson, when he handed round Christmas gifts to everyone and treated us to the bowling. Most unexpected but very gratefully received, and at the end of the morning a happy 10 pin Bowling Group headed homewards to prepare for their own Christmas festivities .

But the seasonal festivities didn't stop there. We had our annual post-Christmas lunch at the White Hart at the beginning of January when 24 of our regular bowlers enjoyed a very tasty meal. Some opted for the traditional Turkey dinner - quite appropriate for a 10 pin bowling group (for non-bowlers a "Turkey" is the name given to 3 strikes in a row), whilst others chose from a variety of other, but just as delightful festive fare.



We finished up with a raffle where everyone got a prize, all donated by an anonymous benefactor from within the group. Once again, we were all very grateful to whoever he or she may be and as a consequence we went home, not only well fed and watered, but as a group of "Happy Bunnies". I reckon all this demonstrates what a great bunch of people belong to this group.

And finally, as is my custom, here's a thought for the day:
Is it true that old age comes at a bad time, just when you finally know everything, you start to forget all that you knew!

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

Our January book was *The Ashes of London* by Andrew Taylor, set during and just after the Great Fire of London of 1666. The narrator, James Marwood, is a very junior clerk working at Westminster, and the son of a Fifth Monarchist who has recently been released from the Tower of London. All Marwood wants is a quiet life and the opportunity to protect his father. However while he watches St Paul's Cathedral burn, a young woman, Catherine (Cat) Lovett, runs past towards the fire. Marwood rescues her but she runs away

taking his cloak with her. Later, a dead body is found in the ashes - a man with his thumbs tied behind his back. Marwood is given the job of investigating the death.

Running parallel with his story is that of Cat who is the daughter of a regicide who was involved in the execution of King Charles I and who has been on the run since the restoration of the monarchy. As more dead bodies are discovered in the aftermath of the fire, Marwood finds that Cat is connected to the deaths in some way.

The members of the group really enjoyed the book and thought that it painted a very vivid picture of post restoration London. We agreed that we would like to read another book by Andrew Taylor. The only criticism we had was that the book was rather too long.

Another interesting afternoon.

Our books for the next three meeting are:

Mon Feb 17 th	Normal Rules Don't Apply by Kate Atkinson
Mon Mar 17 th	Middle England by Jonathan Coe
Mon Apr 21 st	The Figurine by Victoria Hislop

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy

On Thursday 16th January approximately thirty members enjoyed a three course meal at Ivy Hill, Margaretting. The annual Science Group meal has been arranged as for many years by Jenny Leeder with place/menu choices cards produced by Pat Nutton.

Many thanks to Jenny and Pat for all their hard work. As this was their Swan song a new organiser is needed for next year so that the lunches to continue.

**Science Group Meeting at 2pm on Thursday 20th February
Tesco a talk by Steve Halfteck**

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

12th Feb **Sustainable Flight – Decarbonising Aviation**
19th Feb **Reverse Engineering The Violin**

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

Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy Secretary: Val Green



On Thursday 23rd January approximately thirty members enjoyed either a two or three course lunch at our usual annual venue of Litte Channels.

Chelmsford u3a Chair Lesley Wood presented a large spray of mixed flowers on behalf of the Garden Group to Val Green, who is retiring, in appreciation for all her work in arranging visits and meeting over the last eleven years.

Members brought raffle prizes and then bought raffle tickets to raise money to pay for hall hire and speakers fees. Thanks to Jeannie Temple for ably selling the tickets

Horkesley Hall

At 2pm on Thursday 27th February Garden Group visit to Horkesley Hall, Vinesse Road, Lt. Horkesley, Colchester, CO6 4DB, 2 p.m. £10 including coffee/tea/cakes.

The garden features snowdrops set in a traditional garden of eight acres surrounding a classical house overlooking a lake. There are 50 varieties of Iris. The garden is close to St. Peter and Paul Church. See no. 38 page 18, NGS booklet Essex 2024.

Please email Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com by Wednesday 19th February . if you are planning to come.

From our Foreign Correspondent

Bus Pass Group

Group Leader: Maurice Austin

There was no bus pass trip in January; your leader spent Christmas and the new year period in the Antipodes sampling the delights of Tasmanian and Kiwi transport systems. Christmas Day saw Maurice and his friend Patricia catching an ordinary scheduled service from Richmond to Hobart, Rosney Park interchange, for a lift to Mount Rumney.

Whereas we get very few buses on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Years's Day, "Tassie" transport provides a full "Saturday/Sunday and Public Holiday service" on most routes at a very reasonable fare. We paid about an AU\$ each for a half an hour trip in a modern bus decorated with tinsel and driven by an extremely helpful and pleasant Aussie. We saw another bus being driven by the real Santa Claus in full costume and he gave us a pleasant wave but no presents!



Photographer: Patricia Mountsteven

It seemed that the city buses were charging no fares. Unsurprisingly, many of the buses we saw were carrying modest loads. More than would be seen on a normal Sunday service at home.



New Year's Eve saw us staying in Hobart, walking to the harbour area to see the boats coming in from the Sidney to Hobart yacht race. We came across a bus stop with a full timetable and information board and Maurice felt obliged to stop and examine it, in his usual eccentric way. A bus was due in a couple of minutes. It arrived spot on time and the charming lady driver let us on and charged no fare. We were later told that travel was free as we had boarded near the war memorial area!

Photographer:Tasmania bus pics.

A brief resume of our trips in New Zealand will be offered to our august Hon Editor next month.

The first Bus Pass Group outing in the new year will be on Friday 14th March. The destination will depend upon what the bus companies do to their timetables and whether highways authorities have finished some of the long-standing roadworks. I look forward to seeing you then.

Maurice Austin.

Reminder to Group Leaders
Please send copy for the March 2025 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 28th February 2025.

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 077144 32360
Speaker Organiser/Deputy Treasurer	Eddie Wood 01245 601359
Newsletter Coordinator	Lynn Regan
Monthly Meetings Organiser	David Marsh/Brian Littlechild
Groups Coordinator	Lesley Wood
Publicity & Advertising	Peter Anderton
Committee Member	Ann Bell

Volunteers not on the Committee:

Web Manager	Andy Moir
Newsletter Editor	Andy Moir

Interest Groups (as of Dec 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 nd Monday		Berry Cornell	01277355823	Via website
Amateur Dramatics			Alan Caddy		Via website
Art Appreciation	4 th Tuesday	14.00	Brenda Kelly	01277840621	Via website
Art Club	Mondays Weekly	9.30	Peter Anderton	07773074105	Peter.anderton@s cion-uk.com
Art for Pleasure	Tuesdays Weekly	9.30	Les Cooper		Via website
Birding	4 th Friday	10.00	Alan Alexander	07712818499	Via website
Book Group	3 rd Monday	14.30	Andy Moir		Via website
Book Worms	1 st Thursday	14.30	Jane Hickman		Via website
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus		Via website
Buss Pass Group	2 nd Friday	varies	Maurice Austin		Via Website
Church Visits	1 st Wed	10.15	Brian Greatrex & Michael Gray	01245258833	Via website
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale		Via website
Craft Workshops	2 nd Sunday	10.00 – 13.00	Julie Nicholson		via website
Cycling for Fun	2 nd Fri a.m. and 4 th Tues a.m.		Tony Cox		Via website
Discussion Group	2 nd 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 nd & 4 th Wednesday	14 -15.15	Marie Neale		Via Website
Garden Group	4 th Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy Val Green	01277353481	Via website
Information Technology	2 nd Wednesday	10.00	Lyn Parsons		Via Website
International Dining	3 rd Monday	Evenings	Jennie Cappin	01245 358629	Via website
Jazz and Blues Group	3 rd Wednesday	10.30- 12.30	Heinz Kassier		kassier2@gmail. com

Local History	1 st Tuesday	14.15	Jane Humphreys	01245 259590	Via website
London the City & its people	4 th 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 th Tuesday	12.30	Harry Glaser	01245 462760	Via website
Lunch Club 3	1 st Thursday	12.30	Laraine Linard Barbara Childs	01245 475444	Via website
Mah-Jong	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday	14.00	Chris Paget	01245 474811	chrispaget@lineo ne.net
Philosophy	Thursday 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240	Via Website
Philosophy & Religion	1 st Monday	10.00	Jim Mackay		Jim88mackay@aol.co.uk
Photographs on Face Book	Online		Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via Website
Pickleball Monday	Monday Weekly	14.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via Website
Pickleball Tuesday	Tuesday Weekly	15.00	Jayne Hughes		Via Website
Poetry Appreciation	2nd Wed	14.00	Judith & Tony Boniface	01245 266316	Via Website
Science Group	3 rd Thursday	13.45	Chris Bellamy	01277353481	Via website
Sewing, Knitting & Crochet	3rd Thursday		Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517	Jacqueline.n@virgin.net
Short Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245466167	Via website
Spanish Conversation	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	David Gout		Via website
Summer evening walks	4 th Wed	Apr -Sep	Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via website
Sunday Lunch	1 st 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 st & 3 rd Friday	10.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053	Via website
The Wonder of Words	3 rd Wednesday	14.00	Lindsay Whitehouse	01245 356363	Via website

LONDON – THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE GROUP

Visit to Royal Hospital Chelsea & The Army Museum Tuesday 25th March 2025

The Royal Hospital Chelsea was founded over 300 years ago to provide a home for soldiers 'broken by age and war'. Commissioned by Charles II and designed by Sir Christopher Wren the Hospital sits near the river Thames. Initially 90 Chelsea Pensioners were based at the Hospital but as need grew Wren expanded his design to include Light House Court and College Court.



During WWs I & II the Hospital was badly damaged but post war restoration and modernisation occurred. The Great Hall with an impressive painting of Charles II on horseback and Wren's original Figure Court remain central to the Royal Hospital. In 2009 the Margaret Thatcher infirmary, a state of the art care home and hospice opened to increase the level of care given to the Pensioners. In March 2009 for the first time in 317 years women were admitted. Today the Royal Hospital continues to serve as a living monument of the nation's gratitude to veterans who have served their country.

We will start our visit at The Army Museum (which is free). We have 2 hours to explore the museum consisting of a number of galleries full of interest which cover both World Wars and so much more! Lunch at the café or you may prefer to take your own picnic and spend more time in the Galleries. We then walk along Royal Hospital Road to the Royal Hospital Chelsea where we will split into two groups for guided tours lead by Chelsea Pensioners. **The Tours start at 1.45 & 2pm and there is much to see.**

Note: There are no eating facilities at the Royal Hospital.

- 9.00am: Lay by near ASDA, opposite Pollards Green
- 9.15am: Bus stop lay by near railway station
- 9.30am: The Duck Pond, Writtle Green Leave the Royal Hospital Museum.
- 4.30pm Leave the Royal Hospital Museum Please try to be at coach 10 mins. Beforehand

Cost £45.00 Covers Royal Chelsea Hospital Guided tour, coach and driver's tip.

We cannot offer a refund once you have paid unless there is a waiting list. Any last minute problems contact: Berry 07811 091771/01277 355823 Bob 07790 133727/01245 261077

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Please return slip to Berry

Royal Chelsea Hospital & Army Museum visit Tuesday 25th March 2025 Cost £45 pp

Ch. U3A mem. No/s _____ No. places required _____ Tel No. _____

Names/s _____ £ _____ Email address _____

Please pay by BACs if possible payable to: The U3A Chelmsford A/C No 67361669 00
Sort code 08.92.99 Reference LGCH

Or by cheque payable to Chelmsford U3A and sent to: Berry Cornell at 24 Park Drive, Ingatestone CM4 9DT.
Berry's email: mayberrynotes@outlook.com

For confirmation please include email address or telephone number

Treasurer's Report to the Members for the Year to 31st December 2024

During this last year we changed our bank to the Cooperative Bank.

In 2024 our income from membership subscriptions has continued to increase. Two years of Gift Aid has been received within this accounting year (the previous year's was not received in time for the 2023 accounts). Donations came through members taking holidays with Riviera Travel.

Expenditure has also increased. The Capitation fee that we pay to the Third Age Trust (TAT) and the cost of Third Age Matters are higher because our membership numbers are higher. This coming year we should not have bank charges as the Cooperative Bank do not currently make charges to charities for processing cash or cheques. This year we bought a card payment machine in order to offer the flexibility of different methods for members to make payments. It was also necessary to buy a new batch of membership cards. We continue to support spending on three social meetings in the year (Easter, Summer and Christmas). There was similar spending at Christmas in 2023 and 2024, however this year it covered the costs associated with two dates: hall hire and expenditure on the entertainer/speaker. We have increased our support to Interest Groups this year: one group that was struggling with numbers (but has now stabilised by changing location), a decision to support the Information Technology group so that it is available for all as drop-in support, and a new group. We also held a Group Leader's lunch meeting.

Expenditure has exceeded income for the year, by £1,377.60.

We have healthy reserves, currently £9,855.88, which the Committee considers should be sufficient to cover any unforeseen eventualities. For the coming year we will be able to both maintain the current rates of subscription and continue to offer support to some of the Specialist Interest Groups, particularly new groups.

I would like to thank the Examiner, Maurice Van Maellerts, for checking the accounts in an efficient and timely manner. I would also like to thank the Treasurers of our Special Interest Groups for their cooperation throughout the year.

Wendy Hubbard
Treasurer

Chelmsford U3A
Income & Expenditure as at 31st December 2024

INCOME	2024	2023
Membership Subs	7,408.50	6,749.00
Visitors	0.00	0.00
Donations	824.66	716.11
Gift Aid	2,342.53	0.00
Bank Interest	277.79	274.84
Group Closures	0.00	735.32
Unclassified	12.00	108.00
Raffle	283.55	0.00
Diaries	0.00	0.00
Sundries	0.00	3.00
Total	<u>11,149.03</u>	<u>8,586.27</u>
EXPENDITURE		
National Capitation Fee	2,176.00	1,664.00
Hall Hire	2,245.27	1,987.90
Zoom	155.88	143.88
Refreshments	95.14	115.36
Speakers	996.00	935.00
Newsletter Print	357.05	216.34
Stamps	248.10	196.10
Third Age Matters	1,656.72	1,389.70
Website	0.00	38.39
Beacon	595.00	521.00
Technology/Equipment	166.80	0.00
Travel	0.00	0.00
Conference	0.00	0.00
Admin	0.00	0.00
Advertising	107.99	138.66
Raffle Prizes	0.00	159.96
Diaries	0.00	0.00
Bank Charges	117.79	124.40
Christmas	825.53	867.77
Easter	745.21	310.92
Summer Social	493.62	464.24
30th Anniversary	0.00	868.31
Group Support	1,039.66	213.93
Sundries	504.87	0.00
Total	<u>12,526.63</u>	<u>10,355.86</u>
Net Surplus/Deficit for the Year	<u>-1,377.60</u>	<u>-1,769.59</u>
	<u>11,149.03</u>	<u>8,586.27</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2024

Current Assets	2024	2023
Accumulated Fund as at 1st January	11,233.48	13,003.07
Prior Year Adjustment	0.00	0.00
Net Surplus/Deficit for the Year	-1,377.60	-1,769.59
Accumulated Fund as at 31st December	<u>9,855.88</u>	<u>11,233.48</u>
Represented By		
Current A/c	1,469.12	659.31
Deposit A/c	<u>17,180.11</u>	<u>17,428.97</u>
	18,649.23	18,088.28
Less Held for Groups	8,793.35	6,854.80
	<u>8793.35</u>	<u>6854.8</u>
	<u>9,855.88</u>	<u>11,233.48</u>

Treasurer Wendy Hubbard
Date January 2025

Examined by Maurice Van Maellerts
Date January 2025