

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

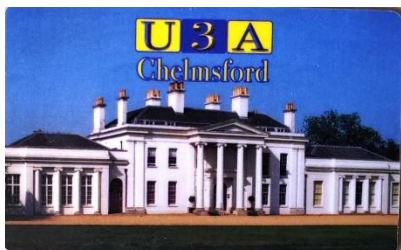
Thursday 13th March – Folding Back the Years, Rock ‘n’ Roll Memories a talk by Brian Bignell

Be transformed by the music and original images of the 60s. Accompanied by an insight into those heady times with anecdotes by the photographer who captured those wonderful photographs.

Thursday 10th April 2025 – Easter Social

Thursday 8th May 2025 (VE Day) – That man Tony Harris is back, this time as Winston Churchill

Membership Renewals



Our Membership year begins on 1st March each year, and so it is renewal time again. Please would you look out for an email message from 'Wendy Hubbard (our Treasurer) via Chelmsford u3a' inviting you to renew your membership.

If you joined Chelmsford u3a after the 1st November 2024, you will be covered until the end of February 2026 so will not need to renew. If you do not have email you will be notified by post. Thank you for your membership over the past year, we hope that you will want to continue to be a part of our organisation.

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

I am hoping to start a U3A SINGING GROUP. It will be purely for pleasure, no auditions. just enjoy singing all your favourite modern songs. If you enjoy singing and would like to know more about this new venture please contact

Julie Nicholson
julnic138@gmail.com. 07759108498



View from the Chair

Dear Members,

February marked a significant month for Chelmsford u3a, and as your chair, I am delighted to share my reflections on the Annual General Meeting and the subsequent 'Meet the Groups' session, held on Thursday, 13th February at Christ Church hall.

It was a remarkable turnout with over 85 members present, and the energy in the room was palpable. This enthusiastic attendance speaks volumes about our members' commitment and dedication. Seeing so many faces, both familiar and new, reinforces the importance of our shared purpose of lifelong learning and social connection.

The AGM itself was both productive and engaging, with members voting on important matters that will shape the future of our u3a. In the chair's annual report I focussed on the achievements and challenges over the past year, whilst the Treasurer's summary of the annual accounts provided financial transparency and accountability. I sensed real interest in both these matters. We then went on to re-elect eight Trustees and welcome a new Trustee, Janet Parson. This will help to maintain continuity and bring fresh perspective to the committee. I was pleased to be able to publicly thank several other Trustees who had either served their time on the committee or were retiring due to health reasons. A copy of my annual report can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Following the AGM, the 'Meet the Groups' session truly brought the room to life. The atmosphere was positively buzzing with interest and enthusiasm as representatives from various groups showcased their activities and achievements. The displays were nothing short of impressive, highlighting the diverse interests and talents within our community. From art and cycling to science and walking, the breadth of topics covered is a testament to the richness of our u3a experience. I would like to express special thanks to the group representatives who put in a tremendous amount of effort to create these engaging displays. Their passion and dedication was evident, and it was wonderful to see many of them attracting new members eager to join their ranks. It's this spirit of sharing and collaboration that makes our u3a so special.



Although the AGM has concluded, it doesn't mean that opportunities to get involved have ended. Members are always welcome to volunteer for the committee, start a new group or assist with our planned activities and events. Your contributions are invaluable and help to keep our u3a vibrant and thriving.

As we look forward to the months ahead, let's carry forward the momentum and excitement from our recent gatherings. I encourage each of you to explore new groups, participate actively, and continue to support one another in our journey of lifelong learning. Remember, our u3a thrives on the collective efforts and enthusiasm of all its members.

Committee Update

Following the AGM, the new committee met for the first time to elect the Officers and confirm the Ordinary Trustee Roles. The meeting also aimed to identify any unfilled posts and set goals and priorities for the upcoming year, including the possible co-option of additional Trustees to the committee.



Chair: Lesley Wood (also Groups Coordinator)
Vice Chair: Alan Caddy (also Recruitment/Public Relations)

Secretary: Janet Parsons
Treasurer: Wendy Hubbard
Membership Secretary: Alan Mayo (temporary Co-option)
Membership Assistant: Lynn Regan
Marketing Communications: Peter Anderton
Newsletter Coordinator: Lynn Regan
Assistant Groups Coordinator: Brian Littlechild
Speaker Organiser: Eddie Wood
Ordinary Committee Members: Ann Bell & Mike Harmer (temporary co-option)

As can be seen from the above there are currently no unfilled roles but the committee would like to co-opt one more member to ensure continuity and relieve the pressure on busy roles as such as Treasurer and Groups coordinator.

If you would like to find out what is involved in being on the committee please contact myself or Alan Caddy alan.caddy@btinternet.com.

Third Age Trust Update

Iain Cassidy, CEO of the Third Age Trust, participated in a programme called "Redefining Later Living," hosted by ITN Business. The programme challenges traditional ideas about ageing, presenting ideas for healthy and happy later lives.

In an interview with host Sharon Thomas, Iain discussed how the u3a can contribute to a better later life by fostering social connections through informal interest groups, where they learn subjects chosen by the members themselves. Iain went on to say that the u3a model encourages members to learn from each other in diverse subjects, providing structure and meaning in retirement. Iain highlighted the importance of social connections for a long and healthy life, and how the u3a helps members create new meaning and purpose after retirement.

The programme also featured conversations with other organisations like Alzheimer's Society and the British Menopause Society. You can watch the full programme, including Iain's interview, on the ITN Business Hub: <https://business.itn.co.uk/programmes/redefining-later-living/>

Warm regards,
Lesley Wood (chair@chelmsfordu3a.org.uk)

The Wonder of Words Group

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

We started a new group in February 2025, initially targeted at new members. The first meeting was greatly enjoyed by all those who attended.

We now have up to six vacancies for potential new members to join us starting from the April meeting (not the March meeting that is still part of the initial group orientation programme).

This group is nothing to do with crosswords, or any other puzzles. Neither is it about the dry learning of English grammar, oh no this group is all about fun with words.

We use words all the time. We write, we talk, we plan, we do it spontaneously, we put them in poetry, or in music, we write instructions, letters, emails, texts, books. This group will explore the many ways we use

words and give members the chance to practice and develop their skills in areas they enjoy, as well as challenging you to use words from a wholly new perspective.

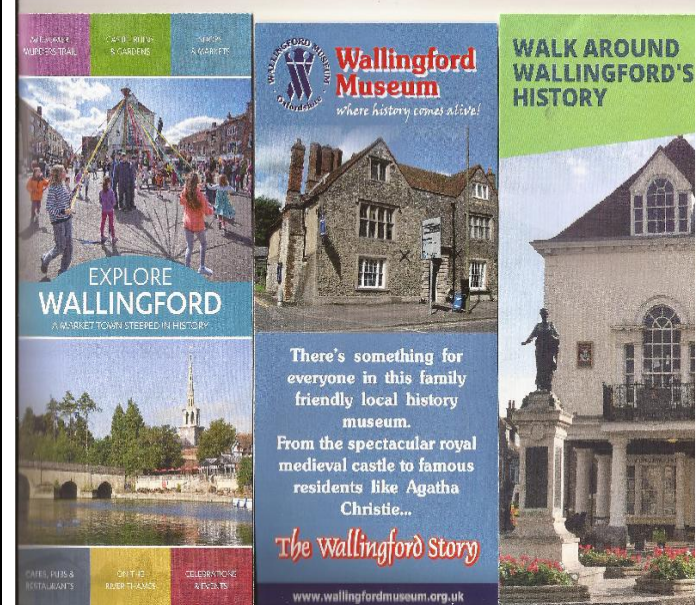
A more detailed description of the group can be found on the Chelmsford u3a website at https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/the-wonder-of-words/

We meet in Chelmsford Library from 2.00 to 4.00 pm on the third Wednesday of the month. If any of this interests you, please contact me by clicking on the email link on the website.

Lindsay Whitehouse

Coach Trips

Leader Malcomb Lonsdale.

	<p>I am running a Coach trip to Wallingford Oxfordshire on Thursday May 22nd. Wallingford is an old market town.</p> <p>There is a museum and old castle and gardens. Agatha Christie lived here and there is a walking trail to follow. Also midsummer murders were filmed here with a trail to see places you may have seen on TV. I hope it may be of interest to you. For further information about what to see and do in Wallingford please see the Chelmsford u3a website at</p> <p>https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/wallingford-oxfordshire/</p>
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We still have some seats available on this trip. If any members of our Chelmsford u3a would like to join us please contact me annebrereton@yahoo.com. The cost of the trip is £21.00 which includes the driver's tip. To be paid into the Chelmsford u3a account with the reference Wallingford.

For information about the second coach trip on Monday 30th June to Eton Hall please see the flyer on page 14 of this newsletter and on our website at https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/elton-hall-in-cambridgeshire/

Travel group

Leader Anne Brereton

Good news all Travel group members who have booked for the Normandy trip with Lodge coaches. This holiday is definitely going ahead. Thank you to Lesley for letting it go out to other u3a members and also other u3a groups in the Chelmsford area. We did get some response from our other outside groups but mostly we have had members from our own u3a joining us.

The Western Andalusia trip is also going to be well attended.. If anyone still would like information on the two holidays they are on the Chelmsford u3a website https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/the-travel-group/

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

- 25th Mar** (Tuesday) Visit: Royal Hospital Chelsea & Army Museum. **Two places left, please contact Berry for latest info.**
- 28th Apr Talk: London: The National Parks speaker Kathy Lancaster
- 19th May** Talk: London Livery Companies speaker David Williams
- 23rd Jun Annual London Walk – Bishopsgate architecture & much more (flyer in April newsletter)
- 28th July Visit to Highgate Cemetery (flyer in May newsletter)

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



Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout

Eight members attended today and participated in a lively meeting.

One of our members had spent much of January in Australia, where amongst other things he had attended a performance of opera at the Sydney Opera House. Other travel related news included plans for a trip to Rome and more prosaically Leeds and Maidenhead! A member told us that he is studying woodcraft and is making a bedside table for his youngest daughter.

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 19th March 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

This month's venue was Russells in Great Baddow. For a few of us it was the first time dining at this restaurant and am delighted to say that it certainly lived up to its reputation. Although we had to pre-order our meals, we were served very quickly and efficiently and thoroughly enjoyed the choices we made. There were wighteen members today and we all had a good old chat and put the world to rights

and were still sitting at the table gone 3pm. We would certainly recommend this restaurant and hopefully it will not be too long before we visit there again.

Many thanks to Lesley Wood for hosting the lunch.

Bookworms

Leader: Jane Hickman

Our February book was *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens. It tells a story of Kya who was abandoned at the age of six by her mother and lived with her father until he left when she was about 12 years old. She continued to live on her own in the marshlands of North Carolina and became known as the “marsh girl” by the local town folk. She survived by trading fresh mussels and smoked fish for money.

Unable to read or write, she made paintings of the marsh creatures and shoreline. She attended school for only one day in her life after being ridiculed by her peers. She also collected shells and feathers of local wild birds. She is befriended by Tate Walker, who fishes in the marshes, until he goes away to college without saying good-bye. At age 19 she forms a relationship with a local college football star, Chase Andrews. She believes he loves her and falls for his promises of marriage. She is devastated when she sees his engagement announcement to another in the local newspaper.

After graduation, Tate returns to town and tries to rekindle their friendship. After seeing her collection of sea shells, he encourages her to publish a reference book on the subject followed by a book on seabirds.

Some time later, Chase confronts Kya and attacks her and she threatens to kill him if he doesn't leave her alone. She is invited to meet her publisher and when she returns next day Chase has been found dead in the marshland with no trace of tracks or prints but the Sherriff suspects murder. Physical and circumstantial evidence suggests Kya to be the perpetrator and she is put on trial. The jury find her not guilty!

After these events, she reconciles with Tate and they live together until she dies peacefully at the age of 64.

However, the story doesn't end there and there is a twist at the end.

Everyone in the group enjoyed the book which gave way to a lively discussion.

Reviewer: Marian Jenkins

IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons

If you need any support with your devices: laptop, iPhone, android phone, iPad, android tablet please join us, our knowledgeable members will help you.

There is no joining fee or attendance fee. If you would like tea/coffee we ask for a 50p donation.

The next meeting of the IT Group will be on Wednesday 12th March 10.00 at Christ Church New London Road Chelmsford



Sewing, Crochet and Knitting Group

Leader: Jacqui Norfolk

We are a small friendly group and meet on the third Thursday of every month between 10am and 12pm. Members have varying degrees of experience. We would new members who are interested in crochet or sewing, beginners welcome! We would particularly welcome anyone with more experience of either sewing or crochet to share their skills and experience.

Please contact Jacqui via the Chelmsford u3a website if you are interested in joining the group.

Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex Administrator: Michael Gray

All Saints Feering, where we begin our 2025 Church Visiting season at 9:30 on March 5. For the rest of the year, we've a packed programme, visiting Essex east, west, north and south, as well as walking from Liverpool Street and venturing as far as Edmundsbury for its wonderful Cathedral of St James. New members always welcome; there's no commitment, no membership fee – get in touch via the u3a website.

The full season will be announced in March, and will be published in the April newsletter.



Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

Our February book was *Normal Rules Don't Apply* by Kate Atkinson. The book is a collection of eleven loosely linked short stories. We have previously read a number of novels by Kate Atkinson including both her Jackson Brody crime novels and her more literary novels, and we have enjoyed them. However whilst we all agreed that Kate Atkinson writes extremely well we strongly disagreed about this collection of short stories.

Our opinions ranged from "I totally enjoyed this collection of short stories. Her quiriness, the humour and the sometimes unexpected story line made reading a delight. I especially enjoyed the way in which references from a previous story crept into a new one." To "I didn't like it and I didn't finish it". The majority of members' opinions fell some where between the two extremes.

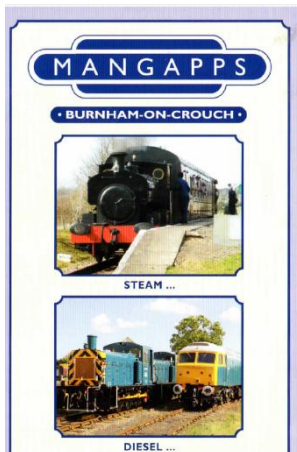
Another interesting afternoon.

Our books for the next meeting are:

Mon Mar 17 th	Middle England by Jonathan Coe
Mon Apr 21 st	No meeting – Easter Monday
Mon May 19 th	The Figurine by Victoria Hislop

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy



Science Group Talk Thursday 20th March Mangapps Country Railway and Working Museum

John Jolly will present an illustrated talk on Mangapps Country Railway and Working Museum at Burnham-on-Crouch.

The museum features a one mile long standard gauge line with restored stations, signal boxes and ancillary equipment from various sites throughout East Anglia. There are six steam and ten diesel locomotives on site.

For more information see https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/mangapps-country-railway-and-working-museum/

Chelmsford u3a Science Group Meeting – Thursday 20th February 2025

Some 30 Science Group members and visitors met at Melbourne Avenue Church Hall for a talk on the subject of 'Tesco'. Unfortunately, this did not happen, since the speaker was unavailable. However, group member Paul Chaplin stepped up at short notice, and provided a brilliant talk and presentation on 'Beeleigh Mill, Maldon, Essex - Past, Present and Future'. As Chairman of BMRG he introduced us to Victorian steam mills, and the progression of ownership and the advancement of the design and construction through the early years.

Beeleigh Mill is situated near Maldon, close to the confluence of the Chelmer, the Blackwater, and the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. A mill has existed there from Saxon times, and was owned by many well-known Essex families over the years. The water mill machinery was driven by an arm of the river Chelmer.

In 1793 an Act of Parliament formed the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Company, who bought the mill. Two years later they sold it, and it passed through many owners until it was bought in 1834 by Joseph Ward. In 1845 he brought the steam age to Beeleigh with a second-hand beam engine from Wentworth (Wandsworth), also increasing the mill's capacity by five further pairs of millstones. He also built Beeleigh Falls House in 1850 as his home, and it survives today. The mill was the largest in the area, and had two docks for barges that were used to ship the flour to Maldon, London, and beyond.

In 1875 there was a catastrophic fire that destroyed the wooden parts of the water mill. The brick-built steam mill lost its roof, but the beam engine and the boiler house were saved. The buildings and equipment were insured and the Miller was able to retire, so eight centuries of milling came to an end, and the site was abandoned.

In WW II the mill was used for the secret volunteers who had a hideout underground so if Britain was invaded, they were to come out at intervals to sabotage enemy efforts. Fortunately, this facility was never used.



In 1960 the abandoned site came into the ownership of Essex Water Co, and then leased to Essex County Council in 1994. Various work was undertaken in 1997 by the Maldon Archaeological Group, and in 2009 the BMRG was formed. At any one time, there are about 20 volunteers in the group. Restoration work has included restoring the original beam engine and the 'Elephant' boiler, both very rare items. Further work has been done on the mill building, repairing walls, and replacing the wooden floors.

It is open to the public for guided tours by appointment and for the Mills week-end in the middle of May and the week-ends during National Heritage Week. The volunteers meet up on Tuesday afternoons. If you are interested in visiting Beeleigh Mill or for further information please contact Paulchaplin@talktalk.net.

Following Paul's talk, a question-and-answer forum raised some further insights, and Chris Bellamy, the Group Leader, then profusely thanked Paul for his fascinating description of the history and workings of the mill, on behalf of the attendees, supplemented by such a professional presentation.

Finally, Chris Bellamy thanked the group members for adapting to a change of speaker. He thanked Jenny Leeder and Pat Nutton for their sterling work on making the Christmas meal a success. He also welcomed new attendees to the group

Stuart Mickel
Mike Nel

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

19th Mar **Space Imaging – Exploring the Universe by Gabriela Druitt, Director of Engineering at Teledyne e2v.**



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

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

It was great to see so many people at the February meeting of the Local History Group – the most in the Goodwin Room at Boreham Village Hall for 5 years. Thank you Alan for arranging a programme of speakers which appeals to a wide range of people, and thank you to everyone who comes for being welcoming and ready to share your own experience. The good news is that there is room in the hall for more so do come along to our next talk on Tuesday 4th March on the History of Greenwoods and Orchard House, Stock.

Our February talk was by Rachael Bailey-Gibson on the history of Warley Hospital. It started life as the Essex County Lunatic Asylum. Before the 1845 Lunacy Act made it compulsory to build an asylum for

paupers, any asylums had been run for profit and anyone with space for one or two people could take them in and keep them chained to the wall. Christopher Tower of South Weald wanted to build an asylum as early as 1819 and favoured a site in Chelmsford, but that became the prison. He definitely did not want it in South Weald, but when it became a legal requirement to build an asylum for the county, 86 acres in Warley were purchased by the commissioners for £8000. A competition for the building design was won by Kendall & Pope of London, and their redbrick Tudor style building was erected by Myers of Lambeth. Work started in 1851 and was completed in two years despite a number of challenges – intense heat which killed Myers’ horse, workers trapped when digging out the cellars cut into quicksand, and a five week strike by craftsmen fighting for a 58 hour week ending at 4pm on Saturday. The asylum offered better accommodation than private asylums or the workhouse, with wards set around courtyards, indoor lavatories, a chapel, laundry, washhouse, brewery, schoolrooms.

The first medical superintendent, Dr Donald Cochrane Campbell, was selected from 84 candidates, and remained till 1884. He encouraged patients to eat well, and engage in work, with no screaming or violence. Potential patients were assessed in the community by two independent physicians who then asked a JP to sign the reception order. Doctors believed that patients should interact with the community to avoid becoming institutionalised. By the 1880s over 50 types of medication were available including for epilepsy and depression. Asylums in Victorian and Edwardian times also included terminally ill patients as workhouses would not admit sick people. Almost all asylum doctors were male, but Essex was the first to appoint a female doctor, Adelaide de Steiger, in 1896.

The first patients were admitted in September 1853. Some early cases included Emily, aged 13, the youngest of 12 children with congenital syphilis in a shocking condition who died a year later of convulsions. Mary, aged 53, had lupus, was noisy and in pain from sores which became infected. Elizabeth, aged 23, had Down’s syndrome and died of TB some years later. James, aged 82, ‘couldn’t follow plain instructions’ – probably because he was deaf – but always perked up with food. He was not mentally ill, and kept refusing to return to the workhouse, but died at the Asylum three weeks after sustaining an injury to his foot which went gangrenous.

By the time Warley closed in 2002 a number of its buildings had been demolished, but the fine Tudor-style original block has been converted into luxury flats.

Our next three meetings are

4 th March	History of Greenwoods and Orchard House, Stock	Peter Brierley
1 st April	The Last Hussar	Andrew Wiltshire
13 th May	WALK: Forgotten History of Chelmsford	Alan Pamphilon

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

Jane Humphreys

The Essex Branch of the Historical Association
What have the Normans ever done for us?
By Professor David Bates
 2.30pm Saturday 22nd March 2025
 At Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford
 All Welcome £5 for non-members



Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly

This month we travelled up to the Courtauld Gallery to see the exhibition 'Goya to Impressionism: Masterpieces from the Oskar Reinhart Collection'. It was good to see these pictures on loan from Switzerland, which Oskar Reinhart (1885-1965) had collected over a number of years and shown at his home, bequeathing them to the public and the Villa 'Am Romerholz' opened in 1970.



Some while ago we went up to the Courtauld to see an exhibition of 'Van Gogh Self Portraits', so it was interesting to see the two pictures of his surroundings painted when he was in hospital in Arles following a mental health crisis. The first picture in the exhibition was a rather unusual 'Still Life with Three Salmon Steaks' painted by Goya during the Peninsular War with their blood red flesh. There was a calmer Still Life by Cézanne 'Still Life with Faience Jug and

Fruit' showing domestic objects - pottery and fruit on a kitchen table. 'Girl Reading' by Corot was a lovely portrait depicting a young woman possibly daydreaming over a book while a flock of sheep are grazing in the distance.

Another completely different and moving portrait was by Géricault showing a man suffering from mental illness 'A Man Suffering from Delusions of Military Rank' with gaunt cheeks but proudly wearing his hospital ward tag. 'Au Café' by Manet was half of a large painting which Manet had split in two. It shows figures sitting inside the café and is very striking - we are not sure of the relationship between the figures. Another well-known interior shows 'The Clown Cha-U-Kao' by Toulouse-Lautrec at the Moulin Rouge dance hall dressed in black knickerbockers, yellow ruff and white wig. With Monet, we tend to think of water lilies on water, but in this exhibition we saw his 'Break-up of Ice on the Seine' treating the ice with bold strokes of blue and grey paint.



These were just some of the paintings showing in this very enjoyable and unusual collection. We also looked at some pictures from the permanent collection of the Courtauld.

'The Art of Courtship and Marriage in Renaissance Italy' Lydia Goodson

on Tuesday 25th March via Zoom



We have enjoyed talks by Lydia in the past on 'The Golden Age of Dutch Art' and 'The Palladian Villas outside Venice'.

To join the Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84575144558>

Meeting ID: 845 7514 4558

Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy



Twenty Members enjoyed a very informative, knowledgeable and amusing guided tour of Horkesley Hall by our host Polly Eddis of parts of the extensive eight acres of gardens which surround the lake and the classical hall. Polly walked us amongst many mature specimen trees and other younger trees planted during the twenty-eight years that she and her husband Johnny have lived there. She pointed

out the many displays of over 50 different varieties of snowdrops. Many snowdrops sourced and planted by her were later divided to spread the pretty displays. Polly also named the snowdrop varieties and the many shrubs and trees as we continued our pleasant tour on a dry day.



Later Polly provided the group with a warming coffee, or tea and delicious cake inside the Hall. Members viewed the interesting paintings, photographs and period furniture, which rounded off a very good visit. We may return in the Summer when all the trees are in leaf. The Hall also has Airbnb available.

Chris has a brown woolly hat left behind by a member.

Warley Place - former home of Ellen Willmott - Past, Present & Future

A talk by Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson.

2 p.m. Thursday 27th March at Boreham Village Hall,
Main Rd., CM3 3JD. Car park available

Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499

28th March: EWT Abbots Hall (Guided tour)

Maldon Road, Great Wigborough, Colchester, CO5 7RZ

A 700-acre nature reserve and the head office of Essex Wildlife Trust, situated on the Blackwater Estuary. The site demonstrates a successful coastal realignment project and is in the process of being 're-wilded' after a long history of being a working 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.

Join Us for an Open Day at the Princes Marie Louise Bowls Club!

The Princes Marie Louise Bowls Club invites all u3a members to an Open Day on **Sunday, 11th May**, from **10am to 1pm**. Come along, have some fun, and try your hand at bowling!

Our friendly club features an outdoor green and indoor (Short Mat) bowls during winter. We also have a licensed pavilion and host various social events throughout the year.

If you can't make it to the Open Day, feel free to visit us any Monday morning from **10:00am**. You'll find us at **Bradford Street (at the rear of Christ Church), Chelmsford CM2 0BQ**.

For more information, contact us at **01245 505900** or email us at **friendly@pmlbc.co.uk**
We look forward to seeing you there!



Reminder to Group Leaders

Please send copy for the April 2025 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.

All copy must arrive no later than Friday 28th March 2025.

Chelmsford u3a Committee

Position	Name
Chair	Lesley Wood
Vice Chair	Alan Caddy
Secretary	Janet Parsons
Treasurer	Wendy Hubbard
Membership Secretary	Alan Mayo
Membership Assistant	Lynn Regan
Speaker Organiser/Deputy Treasurer	Eddie Wood 01245 601359
Newsletter Coordinator	Lynn Regan
Groups Coordinator	Lesley Wood
Assistant Groups Coordinator	Brian Littlechild
Recruitment & Public Relations	Alan Caddy
Marketing Communications	Peter Anderton
Committee Member	Ann Bell
Committee Member	Mike Harmer

Volunteers not on the Committee:

Web Manager	Andy Moir
Newsletter Editor	Andy Moir

**Coach Outing to Elton Hall Cambridgeshire
Monday 30th June 2025**



Elton Hall is an enchanting historic house, near Peterborough, packed with treasures and is set in an award-winning garden. A true hidden gem!

Our visit takes place outside public open times so we will have the place to ourselves! Our booking includes a guided tour of the house and we are at liberty to explore the gardens at our leisure. Prior to our visit we will stop for lunch at the Mulberry café in Bosworth's Garden Centre adjacent to the Hall. Pre-booking of food is essential.

The cost of the trip is £40 per member. For full details including departure and return times follow this link to our web site: https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/elton-hall-in-cambridgeshire/. Here you can also peruse the Café menu.

To enquire about availability and book your place on the trip contact Lesley Wood on the following email: chair@chelmsfordu3a.org.uk

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	11.15 – 14.15	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@ao l.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	jacqui.norfolk@outlook.com
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

Chelmsford u3a

Chair's Annual Report 2025

Period: March 2024 - February 2025

Introduction

This is my 4th annual report as Chair. It has been a privilege to lead the board of Trustees (i.e. committee) and to ensure that Chelmsford U3A continues to thrive and achieve its charitable objective, namely the advancement of education of older people in Chelmsford and the surrounding district.

Committee

- At the beginning of the reporting year the committee consisted of 12 elected Trustees and 2 new co-opted trustees. This allowed us the flexibility to make changes to existing role holders and the creation of 3 new roles in Marketing and Recruitment.
- Throughout the year, the committee experienced several changes, including the unexpected death of our Vice Chair David Sweeney, resignations due to health reasons, and members stepping down after long service.
- Following the passing of David Sweeney, Alan Caddy agreed to taking over the role of Vice Chair, whilst it fell to me to take on the role of Beacon Administrator as well as Chair and Group's Coordinator.
- In September Allan Goldsmith had to resign his post due to ill health. We wish Allan a speedy recovery and hope that one day soon he will rejoin the committee.
- In January Nick Bailey decided to resign from the committee. Nick had served on the committee in various roles for 4 years, and his contribution is much appreciated.
- Marie Neale and David Marsh are stepping down from the committee having both served the maximum number of years allowed by our constitution. We thank them both for their endurance and considerable contribution to the smooth running of Chelmsford u3a.
- Diane Read, has recently announced her decision to retire from the committee due to health reasons. Diane has served for 3 years and has been our Membership secretary for the last 2 years. We send Diane our best wishes, thank her for her valued contribution and trust she will make a speedy recovery.

Membership

The membership has grown significantly with 125 new members joining us since March 2024, bringing the total to 643. In addition there 15 visitor members. This is a new subscription free category that was introduced last year for members of other u3a's who wish to join a particular Chelmsford Interest Group. Whilst these members do not contribute to our general fund they have supported our Groups and enabled them to remain viable.

Groups

- Chelmsford u3a has 42 active Interest Groups, with five new groups formed and some put on hold or closed due to various reasons
- When Andy Moir's Book Group became oversubscribed he set up a waiting list and this was used as the basis of a similar group, named Bookworms.
- Following the amazing success of the Pickleball Group, Alan Mayo assisted Jayne Hughes to set up a 2nd group, at the same venue but on a different day.
- Lyndsay Whitehouse, persuaded his deputy, David Gout, to take over the Spanish Conversation Group whilst he turned his attention to setting up the Wonder of Words Group.
- The Cycling for Fun group was proposed by Tony Cox. Prior to contacting me Tony had contacted the u3a subject adviser for Cycling via the national website and had downloaded some useful start-up guidance.

- Regrettably, the Amateur Dramatics Group is on temporary hold due to insufficient interest.
- The Craft Workshops group is also paused at the moment due to the need to find alternative premises to hold their meetings.
- The Live Arts Group has unfortunately closed due to the retirement of John Heathcote and there being no volunteers to take the group forward. John has been advising me as to ways this group might possibly be reformed.
- A Group Leaders Meeting was held on 24th May. Wendy Hubbard demonstrated various aspects of the Beacon system and answered questions about Group Finances. Our web manager, Andy Moir, demonstrated our recently launched Site Works website and urged Group Leaders to submit more images to improve the appearance of the site.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly meetings featured a variety of speakers who spoke on a diverse selection of topics. Many thanks to Eddie Wood for providing such a varied program and ensuring the smooth operation of our meetings. Thanks also to our volunteers for setting up the hall and helping in the kitchen.

Newsletters

The monthly newsletters continue to be well received by our members, and are used to publicise our monthly meetings, social events, and group activities. Many thanks to Andy Moir for his initiative and talents in producing the newsletters.

Website

The website was successfully migrated to the new u3a Site Works platform, resulting in a modern, user-friendly site, that conforms to the u3a brand guidelines. It is hosted and managed by the Third Age Trust but is maintained locally by our web manager, Andy Moir. Our aim is to encourage Group Leaders to help with the day to day maintenance of the site.

Outings and Holidays

The newly formed Coach Outings Group organised three trips, and the Travel Group arranged two holidays, all well-attended and enjoyed by members. Thanks go to the organisers, Anne Brereton, Malcolm Lonsdale and Eddie Wood for their efforts

Social Events

The Easter Social event was devised and organised by David and Jane Sweeney who put a great deal of effort into making it so memorable. 120 members attended and activities included an Easter Bonnet parade, a painted egg competition, raffle and quiz..

Our Summer Social event was another sell out, with a quiz and a traditional cream tea. A 'Meet the Groups' session resulted in a number of groups signing up new members.

In September, an evening concert featuring a local male voice quartet called Song Cycle was held to mark 'u3a Day'. Spare seats were offered to Baddow & Galleywood u3a members. In total there were over 100 attendees. Favourable feedback was received and we are hoping to arrange something similar this coming summer.

In December we held two identical Christmas events, to ensure that as many members as possible could attend. We were entertained by Tony Harris who came in the guise of King Henry VIII. There were two table quizzes, raffles and seasonal refreshments. Thanks go to Eddie Wood for managing both events, and various volunteer helpers.

Publicity

Efforts to increase publicity included attending two outreach events, one at Boreham and the other at Chelmsford Cathedral, and the creation of some new promotional materials. This has contributed to our organisation's visibility in the community. Currently most new members hear about us via word of mouth, therefore, more work is planned for the coming year to spread awareness of our organisation.

Conclusion

There has been only one new nomination to join the committee this year, that is from Janet Parsons. Janet has agreed to take over the Secretary Role from Marie Neale.

Therefore, only 9 members are standing for election this year and this is bound to result in a number of vacant posts on the committee. I therefore urge members to respond to any vacancies we may advertise over the coming weeks so that we can continue to provide the same level of learning opportunities and social activities as we did in the last 12 months.

Lesley Wood