

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

## General Meeting Speakers



**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August – Summer Social** - Beetle Drive, cakes and raffle. No quiz. **Free Admission to all Chelmsford u3a members but please reserve your ticket at <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/chelmsford-u3a-summer-social/>**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September – Ian K Davidson - Consumer Competitions** - Entering and How to Win them - With Quiz & Prizes (please note this will be Ian's quiz, not one of Eddie's)

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September – Chelmsford u3a Celebrates u3a Day** – see page 16 for further details of the event and how to book your place.

**Thursday October 2:00pm – Eddie Wood – Virginia Hall** – An ordinary woman with an extraordinary story. An unsung heroine of the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, she was once top of the Gestapo's most wanted list.

## Chelmsford u3a Summer Concert – A Step in Time



On the evening of 25th July 2025, over 60 members of Chelmsford U3A gathered at Christ Church for a delightful summer concert. The atmosphere was filled with anticipation as we awaited the performance by Hexachordia, a talented trio of multi-instrumentalists renowned for their captivating renditions of music from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Our chosen programme from Hexachordia's repertoire was "A Step in Time," which the trio described as "a hop and a skip through early dance music in words and music." In just over an hour, Sarah, Jane, and Tony took us through a selection of dance-related music, tracing the evolution of dance from the medieval era to the time of Charles II. The earliest dances were often round or circle dances, which provided us with the origins of the carol - not a Christmas hymn at all, but a dance tune that was often sung. An important dance pairing from the Tudor age was the pavane and galliard: the slow and stately pavane was followed by the brisker galliard in triple time. While these were primarily courtly dances, a more rustic dance was the French branle, for example, the Washerwoman's Branle and Horse's Branle. An important collector and publisher of dance tunes during the seventeenth century was John Playford. His music is associated with the rising interest in social dancing, and the pieces often have amusing titles such as "John Come Kiss Me Now" and "Blue Petticoats."

Our members certainly seemed to enjoy themselves, and many a toe could be seen tapping in time to the music. There was a great deal of interest in the instruments during the interval. Sarah Doig played the vielle, viols, lute, recorder, and tabor. Jane Scheuregger played a variety of recorders, shawm, bagpipes, crumhorn, and tabor. Tony Scheuregger played the gittern, lute, guitar, recorder, flute, and tabor.

As the final notes echoed through Christ Church, Eddie Wood summed up the evening perfectly, describing the experience as both entertaining and educational. The concert was not just a performance, it was a journey through history, brought to life by the passion and expertise of Hexachordia. It was an evening that left our members not only tapping their toes but also enriched with a deeper appreciation for the evolution of dance and music. Truly, it was an event that embodied the spirit of U3A—lifelong learning and enjoyment.

The biscuits were 'nice' too!

Lesley Wood  
Chair



### Proposed new u3a Interest Group

Is anyone interested in forming a new u3a Group that uses WhatsApp as a means of contacting one another to arrange spontaneous outings?

The group might be called **WYBIG** which stands for 'Would You be interested in Going'. The intention is that it can be a port of call to see if like minded people would care to join in with a specific activity.

For example, "I'm new to Chelmsford - would anyone like to join me to watch the Chelmsford City v Manchester United game?" or "There's an Abba Tribute act coming up soon - is anyone interested in going as a group?"

This isn't intended to replace any existing u3a activity. It's aimed at one-off situations that **MAY** be of interest to a handful of members.

If you are interested then please email me at [markforster3000@aol.com](mailto:markforster3000@aol.com)

Mark Foster

## Chelmsford u3a Theatre Group's First Outing

Our newly formed Theatre Group launched its first outing on 25<sup>th</sup> July with a visit to London's Garrick Theatre to see George Bernard Shaw's Mrs Warren's Profession. Eleven members travelled together by train, making good use of senior rail cards for reduced fares - a thrifty and cheerful start to our cultural afternoon.

Once in London, we split into smaller groups for lunch. Six of us enjoyed Italian cuisine at a nearby restaurant, while others found a cosy café in the National Portrait Gallery before heading to the theatre for the 2.30pm performance.

We were seated in the Dress Circle with an excellent, unobstructed view of the stage. The production starred real-life mother and daughter Imelda Staunton and Bessie Carter as Mrs Warren and Vivie, whose emotional conflict around morality and independence captivated the audience. However, several members noted that the clarity of speech was occasionally challenging - some lines were softly spoken whilst others were rather shrill, and the rumble of underground trains added to the distraction.

Despite this, the outing marked a successful beginning for our group, combining good company, sharp theatre, and a touch of London adventure.



### What's Next?

In November, we'll be heading to Southend-on-Sea by coach to see Fawlty Towers: The Play at the Cliffs Pavilion — with 50 members already signed up!

If you'd like to join the Theatre Group or suggest ideas for future productions, please email **Lesley Wood** on [chair@chelmsfordu3a.co.uk](mailto:chair@chelmsfordu3a.co.uk)

## Wonder of Words

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse



Once again we met in the Library. Our group has been busy over the last month. Between us we produced stories that included a tale about a club cycle run, prompted by the beginning of the Tour de France. Another story followed the adventures of Paula the pigeon when she decided to build a nest on a boat. This started out as a story of love and affection and morphed into pigeon infanticide.

One writer highlighted a young lady born into poverty and social isolation and how she tried to overcome her humble beginnings. All those works were short stories. Finally, a member wrote a stage script based on a prisoner's experience inside his cell in which the prisoner acted as a mentor and advisor to staff and prisoners alike.

The main theme of our meeting was critique of our work. We quickly decided to banish the word critique and call it feedback. We set up some group guidelines that will enable all of us to give, and receive feedback in a supportive and motivating manner. This is important for any potential new members. Your work will always be seen positively and all feedback is aimed to help us improve and develop our skills.

One member then treated us to a delightful performance of her work. It is work that was designed to be seen and heard and not read. She delivered her view on how best to wash and dry pants and socks. The story developed, ebbed and flowed, and took us to a plan for the character to commit the perfect murder and deposit the body in a non-incriminating location. All of this was delivered much in the style, rhythm and humour of Pam Ayers. The performance rightly drew applause from everyone at the end.

Finally, we set the scene for our next round of stories to place a character we had created into a situation that had recently appeared on national or international news.

There are still vacancies for new members, please go to the website, click on the contact icon to let me know that you are interested.

Lindsay Whitehouse Group Leader

### 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.



### Programme for the 2025

- 18<sup>th</sup> Aug** Talk - The Aristocracy moving West & the London Squares in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century – Speaker Tony Tuckwell. **(Flyer for visit to Kew Gardens in Sept. on page 17 of this newsletter).**
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept Visit to Kew Gardens.
- 27<sup>th</sup> Oct Talk - Entertaining London - Speaker Katie Davies.
- 24<sup>th</sup> Nov Talk – The London of Samuel Pepys – Speaker Richard Pusey.
- 15<sup>th</sup> Dec** Film Show **The Lady Killers** plus tea and cakes at Christ Church

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

### Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our July meeting fourteen of us discussed American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins. It is a novel about Lydia, a Mexican bookseller, and her young son Luca, who are forced to flee their home in Acapulco after a drug cartel murders their family. They embark on a perilous journey north, aiming to reach the United States as undocumented immigrants, facing numerous dangers along the way.

The majority of the group thought that the novel was a well written page-turner, which told a moving and powerful story about the violence in Mexican society due largely to the drug trade with the USA. We learnt of the terrible dangers migrants face in trying to escape the violence. As one member said “It has been a long time since a book so completely absorbed me and left me drained as American Dirt has done.”

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

Mon Aug 18 <sup>th</sup>	Prophet song By Paul Lynch
Mon Sept 15 <sup>th</sup>	Orbital by Samantha Harvey
Mon Oct 20 <sup>th</sup>	Exit by Belinda Bauer

**Spanish Conversation Group**

Leader: David Gout



Seven of us gathered on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025 and participated in a lively session covering a wide range of topics.

In the slot where everybody gives their news we heard about trips to Carcassonne in France, York and Liverpool, a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party (not one of our members!), a school sports day which included an egg and spoon race, and a plague of ladybirds in Heybridge. That all took up a whole hour!

We followed that up by asking each other random questions such as whether we had ever met anybody famous (one of our members received a prize at her school from Harold MacMillan), whether anybody had ever been on the stage (other than to sweep it!), and what was his/her favourite place to visit. I have very fond memories of the beaches in Menorca, which I was happy to describe.

As we only had time to cover two items on the agenda, the one for August is ready-made! Agenda items will include two crosswords to complete, and lists of synonyms and colloquial phrases to study. Also, can everybody bring to the August meeting something of historical personal interest and explain its significance?

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 20 August 2025 at 10:30am at Chelmsford Library in Meeting Room 3 on the first floor.

David Gout

**Local History Group**

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

It was good to gather in Boreham on a very hot Tuesday afternoon to hear Cherry Burroughs talk about a dreadful winter’s day in 1953. Cherry is an Essex lawyer married to a farmer from Foulness. She has become fascinated by the stories her husband John’s family have told her about the night of 31 January 1953 when a powerful Atlantic storm combined with a particularly high spring tide to squeeze the North Sea in the bottleneck off East Anglia. On Foulness island John’s father was woken at 1am by the barking of their labrador. Looking out on the moonlit fields – well, they weren’t there because the farm buildings were surrounded by water. The power lines failed, and there were no communications with the mainland. The

tide ebbed a little before rising again, flooding the island for another night. Finally on the next day the children and women were rowed to the sea wall and then taken to the mainland to be housed temporarily with family and friends on higher land. After all the people had been rescued, lots of dogs and other domestic animals were collected and taken to the pet shop in Great Wakering until they could be identified and reunited with their owners. Meanwhile the men tried to herd the farm animals to safer land, but many of the cattle tried to swim and were caught in fencing which had been submerged.

Along the Essex coast around 250 to 300 farms were affected. There had been a minor flood in 1947 but no family knowledge passed down the generations for dealing with a flood on the scale of 1953. Not only cattle were lost – the winter barley was ruined. The incursion of salty water destroyed the insects and worms which live in the soil, changing the alkalinity. Farmers tried applying gypsum but this didn't reach far below the soil surface. It was over two years before there was a reasonable crop. Fortunately the sea wall held up well, but there were over 300 miles to check before the next spring tide was due fourteen days later.

Cherry has spoken to those living on or near Foulness with memories of the Great Flood, and consulted the local museum. Rather than write a treatise, she has penned a novel, the Farmer and the Fury (available to buy online), which tells the story of George and Annie Hadley of Butterwood Farm and their neighbours. The story follows the family from mid January 1953 to December 1954 through the battles to restore the farm and to secure compensation. An added bonus for those of us in the Local History Group was that Cherry's husband John came to our meeting to support her. We were treated to his actual memories of a 4-year-old in a flood, and also of continuing to farm on Foulness and other islands (by permission of the MOD) to this day.

In August we will be travelling to the edge of Essex for a visit to the former home of Sir Alfred Munnings at Castle Hill, Dedham. A guided tour has been arranged for 11am on Wednesday 6 August, and costs £12. For more details please contact Nick Bailey.

Our next three meetings are

Wed 6 <sup>th</sup> August	VISIT: Munnings Art Museum, Dedham	
Tues 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	VISIT: Doom painting, St Mary's Church, Woodham Ferrers	
Tues 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Boudica: Myth and Legend	Richard Bale

Visitors are welcome to meetings, held at Boreham Village Hall, for £3. For details of the visits please contact Nick Bailey [nickbailey01245@outlook.com](mailto:nickbailey01245@outlook.com) or 07854 822225.

### Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499

We do not meet in July, so our next meeting is due to be on 22<sup>nd</sup> August at Lee Valley, Fishers Green. I will email members with full details nearer the date.

**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.

## Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy

## Chelmsford U3a Science Group Meeting Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025

### The Shakespeare Conspiracy by Julian Whybra.



Every so often you go to a lecture or see a TV programme that has impact. This was one of those. The first words of our speaker were what has this lecture to do with science? Julian's answer - historical research has the same traits as scientific research. In his next breath he told us this lecture will raise more questions than answers – he was right!

Julian asked the audience a range of questions - when is Shakespeare's birthday, where was he born, where did they live in Stratford upon Avon and so on. The answer is we do not know yet we think we do!

Julian has spent fifteen years researching the life and times of Shakespeare and is still making discoveries. Records show that Shakespeare became a very wealthy man, yet calculations show this is not possible from playwrighting alone – so how did he make his fortune? Then why was he escaping from the tax man carrying debts? Whilst we do not know for certain Julian has some very intriguing answers.

Shakespeare was born during the time of Queen Elizabeth I who was head of the Church of England and had to fight off Catholicism. She had spies everywhere and it was very uncertain times.

Meticulous research was needed to piece together the original records that exist and to ignore many myths. If you get the opportunity to attend this talk do so! Your attention will be held and you will be quite amazed at the plotting and intrigue that was going on at the time. Was Shakespeare involved? How did he get ideas

for his plays? All this and more was explained but not necessarily answered! Was Shakespeare covering his tracks?

Thanks to Chris Bellamy for suggesting Julian Whybra as a speaker.

Paul Chaplin

### **Art Appreciation Group**

Leader: Brenda Kelly

Recently some of our members enjoyed a visit to Great Bardfield with the Local History Group to hear about the Great Bardfield artists who lived and worked there at the beginning of the 20th Century. Famous names like Edward Bawden RA and Eric Ravilious come to mind. So this month we visited the Fry Gallery at Saffron Walden which has shown a lot of their work for the last forty years.

In particular we saw the Bardfield Murals which kept the leading artists busy depicting English life, landscape and history. At that time there was an upsurge in mural work in ocean liners, schools, universities etc. This exhibition shows their preliminary studies and sketches for major projects - of which unfortunately many are now lost.



**Design for a mural by Edward Bawden**

We also saw the exhibition 'Finding a Home at the Fry', which has been curated by Ella Ravilious, Eric's granddaughter. It shows work which was made for the homes of the artists. We saw wallpaper, pottery, rugs, etchings, linocuts, that could be found on their own deeply personal kitchen mantelpieces or dressers. The Great Bardfield cats curled up and asleep were often depicted. It was an interesting and unusual exhibition. Well worth a visit.

In August we are visiting Henry Moore's home at Much Hadham for a Group Tour of his Studios, Gardens and family home of Hoglands. It will be great to see some of his sculptures, which you can see all over the world, standing in the gardens of his own home.

### **Lunch Club 4**

Leader Vic Pitts

The third LC4 meeting was held at The Compasses in Littley Green. The pub is a little further from the town centre, but was well worth the journey. The food was excellent as usual for this venue. We were lucky to be joined by committee members Lesley and Eddie on this occasion.

We meet on the third Wednesday of each month and the next meeting will be at Miller and Carter in Chelmer Village. If anyone is interested in joining us please contact me.

Vic Pitts

## **Bus Pass Group**

Leader: Maurice Austin

Hertford, where hurricanes hardly happen – but heat waves do! Our July trip took place on the hottest day of the third heat wave of the year and, by golly, it was hot!! Many members took the advice freely given by the media and decided to stay at home. Where, no doubt, they sweltered!!! So, we ended up with just six stalwarts.

The most common reason given was the need to avoid hot and sticky buses. We went on five different buses, and they were all cool and breezy and comfortable. All the windows were open, the seats were comfortable, and the driving was safe and pleasant.

Our first bus of the day was an Arriva 59 which took us and six others to Harlow where we had a 40-minute wait. We were joined en route by just one other person so, once again, our u3a party probably made the journey “pay for itself”.

The “back route” to Harlow via the Rodings is always pretty and ever changing. Highlights on this occasion were the stunning gold of wheat just about to be harvested and the vivid blue crops that no one could identify.

Harlow centre is undergoing rather a lot of development, and the usual bus station has been replaced by a temporary arrangement on the site of a former car park. It is actually rather well set out and it includes an information office with absolutely no information in it, a seating area and, most valuable of all, a toilet! Our party availed itself of the facilities. Several other wandered off to the nearby shops for a snack or window shopping. One ambled back just as our connecting bus was pulling in. Everyone else was concerned that our companion would be left behind, but someone was smiling on us and all was well!

The 11.33 Arriva 724 to London Heathrow loaded 14 people and departed at 11.35. Pretty good going. The driver had a bit of a struggle with the heavy traffic as we left Harlow, but the road through to Ware and Hertford was comparatively easy going. Ware is a very pretty little town and worth a visit in its own right, one day. One of our party left us there to take the river/canalside walk into Hertford.

Our next stop should have been Hertford Bus Station. We arrived at a tiny bus station and assumed we were still in Ware. When I say we, I mean me! Minutes later, I recognised the main road through Hertford and I realised that a boo-boo had been committed! So I rang the bell for the next stop. I had forgotten to tell people that the 724 is a limited stop service, a former Green Line route and so the next stop was some way ahead at Hertford North Station.

The driver suggested we use our passes to catch the train back into the other Hertford station close by the Bus Station. He was surprised bus passes are not valid on trains and wasn't aware that the two stations do not connect. The North station was on the Lea Valley line and would have taken us to London! One of the group stayed on the bus to Welwyn Garden City.

Our depleted group crossed the road for the bus back to Hertford and had to cross a road that was being resurfaced. The operatives were very concerned at our safety and escorted us to the bus shelter. We had about ten minutes to wait but that went by quickly as we watched a variety of road machines, sweepers and so on, which was rather entertaining. All of a sudden, the job was complete and everyone disappeared. Our bus then arrived.



We asked the bus driver for the bus station, we don't go there we go to Tesco, she replied.

A young woman heard this and gave us very detailed instructions in a friendly manner. She got off the bus and a young school age man took up her mantle and gave us detailed information about the town centre, but he couldn't advise on cafés as he had never been in one! I have to say that these interventions were charming as well as helpful.

We found the town centre, a nice café where we had our usual lunches, and looked for the Tourist Information Centre. Yes, they do have one, and what a wonderful experience it was. Two extremely helpful staff, lots of first-class

information, a good selection of souvenirs as well as well as effective air conditioning!

We all split up to do our own thing, it was far too hot to do too much.

Hertford is a very attractive town, well worth another visit, perhaps next year.

Our return trip was somewhat busier that the outward trip but we all arrived back in Chelmsford safely about five o'clock.



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The August trip will be on **Friday 15<sup>th</sup>, not the 8<sup>th</sup>**, to Southend-on-Sea for our traditional (!) optional ride on the open-top service which, this year goes all the way from Old Leigh via the Pier to Shoeburyness. Bus passes do not provide free travel on this service but flashing them at the driver will entitle you to a child's fare which I think is only £5.50 for a full round trip. The buses used are painted in all-over liveries for Rossi's ice-cream.

We will meet at **Chelmsford Bus Station, stand 1 for the 09.48 First X30** to Southend, which is due there at 10.24.

Southend itself, and both Leigh and Shoeburyness have many attractions, including the Pier, Cockle sheds, the Garrison, fish and chips and many other lovely things!

There are two buses an hour on the X30 as well as the occasional 3. I will aim to be back at Chelmsford for five o'clock but will be flexible! I can give you the times on the day.

I look forward to seeing you then.

## **Travel Group.**

Group Leader. Anne Brereton

The Chelmsford Travel group will soon be on our way to Western Andalusia. It's always a reminder when its time to pay the final balance. I'm looking forward to meeting my fellow travellers at the airport.

Involved Travel are still taking bookings, but it will mean paying the full amount if you are still thinking about going. Please ring Steve West 01858 896111 before the middle of August as that will be the cut off point.

Keep Well Keep Traveling.

Anne Brereton.

Travel Group Leader

## **Church Visiting Group**

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex, Administrator: Michael Gray

July 2<sup>nd</sup> Paglesham St Peter and Canewdon St Nicholas

St Peter's Church Paglesham



In the upper reaches of the River Roach is a flat remote area of agricultural land. It is home to a very small number of people but the village of Paglesham is in this isolated scene. There had been a village here long before the Normans came as there was a Saxon church on the site. The people lived off the fishing industry and the place was known for its oysters, hence the dedication to St Peter. The remoteness also lent itself to smuggling.

The church is a small rather dark building with its finest feature being the great square tower dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> century with its massive buttresses. Inside the Norman and decorated architectural nature of the stonework has been sensitively restored in the 1880s by Zachary Pettit, a local oyster merchant and others retaining its early style.

His portrait hangs near the handsome south door. Valerie Whittingham gave us a very clear and informative introduction to the church and told us about the two doors to the tower which came from Westminster Abbey.

## St Nicholas Church Canewdon



This splendid church was built to commemorate Henry V's win at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. Its massive tower and setting on the only hill for miles around made it a great lookout post for movements on the rivers and for sailors. This was at a time when Canewdon was more important and bigger than Southend.

Martin Adcock, the organist at St Nicholas for many years, gave us interesting information about the church and its people. A really significant vicar was Mr Kelly, a charismatic bachelor loved by his flock, who served the parish for over 50 years. He died aged 92 and is buried in the churchyard. Martin also explained the donations board on the north wall. The charity is still active and supports some projects undertaken by people in the parish. The superb carving in the 17<sup>th</sup> century pulpit, the parish chest, the medieval oak south door, the remarkable roof beams are among the many features to be examined and enjoyed here.

Prudence Jones

Our thanks to Prue for this report, and to Peter and Barbara for sharing their photographs

### **Garden Group**

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy

The July 24<sup>th</sup> visit to Lake Meadows, Billericay was cancelled due to by the accurate forecast of rain.



**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August Brook Cottage,  
Laindon Common Road, Little Burstead, Billericay,  
CM12 9TA**

**NGS booklet page 10. Entry, Coffee/ tea £10.**

Brook Cottage is a traditional cottage front and back garden, with additional curtilage of 3 1/2 acres of secluded meadows and woodland. The gardens combine a variety of colours and textures : with a profusion of roses, peonies, lilies and other classic blooms interspersed with more exotic plants and

flowers. Wandering through the garden you find an amphitheatre, A-frame 'treehouse', campfire circle, summerhouse and vines. The grounds invite exploration and contemplation.

Please email [chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com](mailto:chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com) by Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August if you are planning to visit.

## My Introduction to Chelmsford u3a

Having worked in London for 50+ years, I finally decided to retire in December 2019. I enjoyed my newfound freedom over the Christmas and New Year period and looked forward to having some me time with outstanding home/garden improvements starting in February 2020. When you work full-time, you always seem to put off doing things like this because you only have the weekends for free time. Alas, two weeks into the renovations Covid hit and we went into lockdown. Luckily for me, the work was outside so things could continue. With the building work completed the next thing to tackle was the garden. There was I thinking I would be bored in retirement but in fact I was busier than ever! So, although we were restricted about going out because of Covid, I was enjoying having all these little odd jobs sorted out at last. It wasn't long before I had finally caught up and then the boredom set in, and the question was *"What do I do now?"*

I enquired about volunteering at Cats Protection, but they had taken advantage of the lockdown to revamp the centre so were not yet open to the public or taking on volunteers. I put my name on their waiting list, but it was a case of 'okay back to square one - now what do I do?' Then I remembered some time back a friend who had recently retired mentioned she was joining her local u3a as they had lots of groups with various interests. I decided to investigate further, and I am so glad I did. Having joined Chelmsford u3a, my first meeting was on 9 February 2023 which was the day of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

Although feeling a little shy I walked in thinking *"no one is going to do this for me so just go for it"*. There were a few people already sitting at the tables and my first thought was *'I hope I don't sit in someone's regular seat'* so I was more than a bit hesitant. Then I spotted two lovely ladies called Janice and Jenny and asked if I could join them. They were very welcoming and introduced me to the other people who joined our table. I am now good friends with Janice and Jenny and we often car share to different events. You never know who will come into your life at any given time, but I am so glad they did because it made my introduction to U3A so much easier. It just goes to show that you can not only have friendships within the U3A but also outside of that environment. You meet people of a like mind and that goes a long way to alleviating the boredom and loneliness.

The following month I attended the new members briefing and found myself sitting with three other newcomers (Barbara, Geraldine and Val) and since then we have also become good friends and often meet up for lunch outside of u3a. We all decided to join a Lunch Group and having met at the designated venue, thoroughly enjoyed the camaraderie with the other members of the Group. Lunch groups are a very good way of meeting new people and hearing about the other Groups they belong to. Joining other groups on your own can be quite daunting, but if you already know at least one other member and know that you will see a familiar face when you walk in, it makes it a lot less nerve-racking.

The Lunch Group to which I belonged proved to be very popular and the numbers increased to a point that it was difficult to find venues to accommodate us all. The Group Leader decided it would be a good idea to form a new Lunch Group. He approached Barbara and me to see if we would be interested in forming the new group between us and, after some slight hesitation, we agreed to give it a go. We approached Lesley, our Groups Coordinator, for advice and she helped set up the group on the Beacon membership system and gave provided Barbara and me with user access. We contacted Andy Moir and he created a new group page on the website and helped us publicise the group in the newsletter. Everyone was so helpful that it made what appeared to be a daunting task quite straightforward.

I am delighted to say that the new Lunch Group also proved popular with u3a members and over the last 18 months has gone from strength to strength, so much so that a further Lunch Group (Lunch Group 4) has recently been formed. Barbara and I did a lot to get this group up and running, collating expressions of interest via the newsletter and the Meet the Groups event even down to booking the first lunch for them!

We handed out a list of tried and tested venues, guidance for dealing with tricky issues such as deposits, and advice about setting up a rota for booking the meal. There have been a few trials and tribulations, but the group now has a 'Leader' in Vic Pitts and I'm sure he will make a success of it. Vic Pitt is the leader and if anyone is interested in joining, he can be reached via email on: [vpitts@btinternet.com](mailto:vpitts@btinternet.com).

You never know what is around the corner so if you feel you can't do it, think again. There is so much opportunity within u3a and you might even find you have some ideas for a new Group of your own - anything is possible.

**Update:** I was finally accepted as a volunteer for the Cats Protection after lockdown and now volunteer two days a week and thoroughly enjoy it!

Laraine Linard

### **Spotlight on Artificial Intelligence: Essex u3a Network Event Recap**

On Friday 4th July, six Chelmsford u3a members (including myself) joined the Essex u3a Network event at Stanway Village Hall, where Artificial Intelligence took centre stage. While a few members were sadly unable to attend - perhaps deterred by the sweltering weather - it was an eye-opening and inspiring session for those who could make it.

Ian Hawker's presentation, "*Artificial Intelligence Everywhere*", explored the sweeping impact of AI across education, healthcare, climate change, and more. He shared how generative tools like ChatGPT are revolutionising content creation and personal interaction, while non-generative AI is reshaping industries behind the scenes.

Don Mobley added a fascinating perspective with "*AI in Aviation*", highlighting how intelligent systems are enhancing decision-making, safety, and innovation in the skies.

For anyone interested in catching up, you can view Ian and Don's presentations and explore broader U3A AI resources at <https://u3acomunities.org/interest-groups/computing/ai-for-everyone/> - a treasure trove of information, guides, and upcoming events. Just scroll down below the AI Team Contacts to the list of Past Presentations and under April you will see the East of England Roadshow listed with the two presentations highlighted.

Curious? Inspired? Don't hesitate to join the conversation - we're at the very start of an exciting journey.

Lesley Wood

### **Welcoming New Faces at Chelmsford u3a**

On Saturday 26th July, Chelmsford u3a welcomed fifteen brand new and recently joined members to an induction meeting at Christ Church. The event was generously supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, many of whom are also Committee members or Group Leaders.

Following registration, attendees took part in an icebreaker activity, reflecting on their reasons for joining u3a and sharing their experiences so far. This was followed by a light-hearted "Truth vs Myth" quiz dispelling common misconceptions about u3a, and helping new members better understand our ethos and approach to learning.

The exploration of Interest Groups offered a chance to compare our current Group Offer with the interests of the members. This revealed several areas that are not currently catered for such as baking, photography, crafts, German conversation. I was asked if more information about each group is available and was able to point members towards our website where programme information and details of the purpose and scope of each group is covered. When it came to establishing any barriers to participation, several members cited transport difficulties and contacting Group Leaders by email – something we can discuss at our next Group Leaders meeting.

After a well-earned tea break and plenty of mingling, the meeting resumed with a collaborative challenge: “Design a New Interest Group.” Although a number of new activities were suggested, a bit of prompting and gentle probing was needed to establish ideas for organising the group such as where and how often to meet, topic delivery methods, and practical planning. Time was short so we were only able to briefly discuss a couple of suggestions, one being a Wine Appreciation Group, and the other a Quiz Group. The former was apparently a figment of my imagination (or more likely wishful thinking!) as I had misheard the suggestion, but I think there is plenty of scope to explore the possibility of starting a Quiz group in the near future.

We closed the afternoon with a conversation on volunteering and participation. Participants were asked to complete a volunteer engagement questionnaire, and we left with a board full of ideas, several budding volunteers, and a shared enthusiasm for building an inclusive, active community. A warm thank you to all who attended and to the volunteers who made the afternoon such a success. We look forward to seeing our new members thrive and develop their interests within Chelmsford u3a.

If you weren't able to attend this meeting but are interested in joining a similar one perhaps in September/October, please get in touch with myself or Brian Littlechild (Email [brian.littleschild@bt.internet.com](mailto:brian.littleschild@bt.internet.com)).

Lesley Wood  
Chair & Groups Coordinator

#### Chelmsford u3a Committee

Position	Name
Chair	Lesley Wood
Vice Chair	Alan Caddy
Secretary	Janet Parsons
Treasurer	Wendy Hubbard
Membership Secretary	Alan Mayo
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
Committee Member	Ann Bell
Committee Member	Mike Harmer

**Reminder to Group Leaders**  
**Please send copy for the September 2025 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.**  
**All copy must arrive no later than Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2025.**



# Chelmsford u3a Celebrates u3a Day



On Thursday 25 September 2025

2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

## At Christ Church Youth Hall, Chelmsford

**Golden Games**, a fun and inclusive one-off session of indoor games specially designed for older adults. This session brings back the fun of school sports days—with a gentle twist—and are a wonderful way to boost physical activity, mental wellbeing, and social connection in a safe and welcoming environment.

**Golden Games** is a **1-hour** session of light-hearted, low-impact activities that everyone can enjoy at their own level. Set to the nostalgic soundtrack of the **1950s, 60s, and 70s**, the session includes:



Walking Rounders



Walking Races



Seated Volleyball



Egg and Spoon Races



Target Practice



Group Circuit Activities

Throwing & Catching Games



Led with Care

Karen Lawrie has 30 years' experience teaching group fitness to all ages and she will **facilitate each session**, guiding the group through all the activities and ensuring everyone is supported, encouraged, and most importantly safe and having fun. There's no pressure—just participation, at everyone's pace.

**Book your place at**

<https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/chelmsford-u3a-celebrates-u3a-day/> 😊

**Please Note: Chelmsford u3a members only and there will be entrance fee.**

**LONDON – THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE GROUP**  
**Visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**  
**22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025**

**The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew** is a world-famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding collections and scientific expertise in plant and fungal diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK. Kew's breathtaking natural beauty, iconic buildings and inspirational art make it a fascinating and delightful visit.

Horticultural highlights on display in September include the Agius Evolution Garden bursting to life with 700 varieties of plants. Kew's rose garden also offers stunning late summer colour and irresistible fragrance – the perfect spot to sit and relax as autumn approaches. Plus, every tree has a story to tell, some have stood for centuries a source of beauty and knowledge, shifting character with the seasons.



We will be having a private 1.5 hour guided walking tour lead by one of Kew's prestigious, award-winning guides.

Eating & Drinking Kew has numerous places to eat and drink - a Family Kitchen and shop, Orangery – take away or eat indoors, Pavilion Bar and Grill plus the Botanical Brasserie, OR bring your own picnic.

Cost is £46.50 pp which includes coach, entrance fee and guided tour.

Coach times and pickup points

- 9.30am: Layby near ASDA, opposite Pollards Green
- 9.45am: Bus stop layby near railway station
- 10.00am: The Duck Pond, Writtle Green
- 4.30pm: Leave Kew. Please try to be at the coach approx.10 mins. beforehand

**Cost £46.50 Covers Entrance, Guided tour, coach and driver's tip.**

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

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**Please return tear off slip to BOB at [robertsmith58@sky.com](mailto:robertsmith58@sky.com) or address below**  
**Visit to Kew, entrance fee & 90 min. guided tour 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2025**  
**Cost £46.50 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 LGKG

Or by cheque payable to Chelmsford U3A and sent to:

**BOB SMITH 28 Fifth Avenue, Chelmsford CM1 4HD For confirmation please include email address or telephone no.**

### Interest Groups (as of 11 June 2025)

You must be a member of Chelmsford u3a before you join an Interest Group. For more information see our website above. Group Leaders may be contacted by phone or by email via our website from within the relevant group page.

<b>Name of Group</b>	<b>Day of Month</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Group Leader</b>	<b>Phone</b>
All Day Walks	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday		Berry Cornell	01277355823
Amateur Dramatics	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	14.00	Alan Caddy	
Art Appreciation	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	14.00	Brenda Kelly	01277840621
Art Club	Mondays	11.15	Peter Anderton	07773074105
Art for Pleasure	Tuesdays	9.30	Les Cooper	07976292362
Art for Pleasure Too	Wednesdays	9.30	Doreen Wallace	
Birding	4 <sup>th</sup> Friday	10.00	Alan Alexander	07712818499
Book Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	14.30	Andy Moir	01245440007
Bookworms	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	14.20	No leader at present	
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus	
Bus Pass Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	varies	Maurice Austin	
Church Visits	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	10.15	Brian Greatrex	01245258833
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale	
Cycling for Fun	2 <sup>nd</sup> Fri, 4 <sup>th</sup> Tues	varies	Tony Cox	
Discussion Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues	13.00	Brian Littlechild	
Family History	4 <sup>th</sup> Friday	14.00	Lesley Wood	01245601359
Fishing Group	Wednesdays		Alan Caddy	
French Conversation	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	14.00	Marie Neale	
Garden Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy	01277353481
IT group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	10.00	Lyn Parsons	
International Dining	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	7.00 pm	Jennie Cappin	01245358629
Jazz and Blues	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	10.30	Heinz Kassier	
Local History	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	14.15	Jane Humphreys	01245 259590
London City and its People	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	14.00	Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Lunch Club 1	Last Friday	12.30	John Heathcote	01245 380766
Lunch Club 2	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	12.30	Harry Glaser	01245 462760
Lunch Club 3	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	12.30	Laraine Linard Barbara Childs	01245 475444
Lunch Club 4	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	12.30	Vic Pitts	07772 361096
Mah-Jong	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	14.00	Chris Paget	<a href="tel:01245474811">01245 474811</a>
Philosophy	Thursday 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240
Philosophy & Religion	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	10.00	Jim Mackay	
Photographs on Face Book	Online		Alan Mayo	07979 540053

Pickleball Monday	Monday Weekly	14.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Pickleball Tuesday	Tuesday Weekly	15.00	Jayne Hughes	01245 495151
Poetry Appreciation	2nd Wed	14.00	Judith & Tony Boniface	01245 266316
Science Group	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	13.45	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
Sewing, Knitting & Crochet	3rd Thursday	a.m.	Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517
Short Walks	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245 466167
Spanish Conversation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	10.30	David Gout	01245 268923
Summer Evening Walks	4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	Apr - Sep	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Sunday Lunch 1	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	varies	John Tritton	
Sunday Lunch 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	varies	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Ten Pin Bowling	2nd & 4th Fridays	10.30	Roger & Ruth Spall	01245 466486
The Wonder of Words	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	14.00	Lyndsay Whitehouse	01245 356363
Travel Group	Holidays -see website	-	Anne Brereton	
Walking Group	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fridays	10.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053

If your hobbies/interests aren't covered by the above then please contact our Groups Coordinator, Lesley Wood, by emailing [chair@chelmsfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@chelmsfordu3a.org.uk)