

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 November - A styling masterclass by Amanda Sutherland.



**Monday 8th December and Thursday 11th December 2:00pm
Christmas Social – Danielle Barnett - Sing A Song of Christmas.**

There will be a raffle and refreshments; sandwiches, wraps, festive cakes and biscuits, tea, coffee and mulled wine.

Booking required <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/chelmsford-u3a-ticketed-events/>

Thursday 8th January - Mary and Graham Brace – Zambia.

A return visit from the avid wildlife photographers and conservationists, this time with an illustrated talk based on their travels to Zambia.

New Craft Group

Would anyone be interested in attending a craft group, once a fortnight? We will make seasonal crafts, such as cards, bird feeders, Xmas things, book marks etc. We will also make things to sell on a u3a stall.

If you are interested, please contact me at kasmallwood@sky.com

Karen Smallwood

View from the Chair November 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the Chelmsford u3a Newsletter. If you have recently joined us and would like to follow up on any previous newsletters, please visit our website - <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/> and click on the Newsletter tab.

Following my 'Call for Action' in last month's newsletter, several members have volunteered to help run the committee and shown interest in running an Interest Group. It seems that our recent 'Getting to Know you' sessions have also struck a chord with our newer members who tell me they have discovered a lot about the u3a, its origins and its ethos – things they were not previously aware of.

Over the past few months, we have had several observers at our committee meetings, and whilst some people decide not to join, they leave us much more informed about the way our charity is run, and how they can help make things happen.

Anyway, I'm delighted to report that three members have been 'co-opted' onto the committee until we hold our AGM in February 2026, when hopefully they will be elected (by you) to stand for the forthcoming year. They are Sue Osbourn, Ann Goddard and John Burrow. They bring with them skills and experience in administration, organising events and a background in legal matters.

Clearly, this is a great start but don't sit back on your laurels – we still need more people to join the committee. Our newest recruits haven't chosen a role yet, so everything is up for grabs, whether it be something in administration, Groups Coordinator, Membership, marketing and recruitment, or even the Chair!

Last month a new Quiz Group started up and an existing Group Leader, Laraine Linard has offered to be the Group Leader, or what she and I prefer to call the 'Point of contact' for the group. Maureen Hodge kindly offered to 'do the money' and keep some simple accounts and Jane Seeney hosted the first quiz, creating six rounds of moderately hard questions that kept everyone on their toes. The 'host' will rotate monthly and there was no shortage of volunteers from amongst the membership. This is the true 'u3a way' of doing things!

Finally, another of our members, Karen Smallwood, has shared her knowledge and experience in social media marketing to create a Facebook Page for Chelmsford u3a. A Facebook page is always 'public' and therefore it can and will be used to raise awareness amongst potential members in our catchment area; ensure they know that we exist, know something about what we do, and how to get in touch with us. We intend to have only a few members who can 'post' anything themselves on the page, perhaps promote their group or post a photograph and short description of a group activity. The public will not be allowed to post.

Lesley Wood

Spotlight on the Third Age Trust

The Third Age Trust AGM took place on 15 October. It included an interesting and thought-provoking report from CEO Iain Cassidy:

From Then to Now: u3a's Journey from 1982 to 2025

Iain Cassidy reflects on the remarkable evolution of u3a over four decades, highlighting how societal shifts have reshaped retirement, community, and lifelong learning.

1982: A Different Landscape

- Retirement typically began in the mid-60s and was seen as a time to "slow down."
- Life expectancy for men was 70.8 years.
- Lower pensions were balanced by lower living costs.
- Communication relied on landlines, faxes, and paperwork.
- Fewer learning opportunities existed, but volunteering and community spirit were strong.
- u3a's self-help ethos resonated with the era's growing individualism.



🚀 2025: A New Era of Later Life

- Retirement is later, longer, and less formal — “70 is the new 50.”
- Life expectancy for men has soared to 87.1 years.
- Many retirees now juggle caring responsibilities, especially post-Covid.
- Technology dominates, smartphones, Zoom, and social media are everyday tools.
- Over-65s are spending more on travel and leisure.
- Volunteering is in decline, and loneliness is a growing concern.
- u3a has expanded beyond learning to offer connection, fun, and national advocacy for positive ageing.

🌱 Looking Ahead The next generation — Generation X — brings new expectations:

- Tech-savvy, individualistic, and less financially secure.
- More care responsibilities and a desire for flexibility.
- u3a must adapt with inclusive outreach, digital engagement, and fresh approaches to volunteering.

Ian Cassidy’s message is clear: u3a’s role in fostering community and combating isolation is more vital than ever. As society changes, so must we — embracing diversity, innovation, and the joy of lifelong learning.

From retired to redefined

While *u3a Week* may be over, our commitment to positive ageing doesn’t stop there. On Thursday 13 November from 2-3 pm, The Third Age Trust are hosting *What Next? From Retired to Redefined*, an inspiring session exploring how to navigate life after retirement with purpose, confidence, and creativity. Free for all u3a members, live on Zoom. Book your place on the national u3a website

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

Save on cinema tickets with *u3a Friends Extra*

As the nights start drawing in, save money on evenings out at the cinema with *u3a Friends Extra*. Whether you're seeing action, romance, comedy or thrillers, you can save money at around 500 cinemas across the UK. Find out more on the *u3a Friends Extra* website and sign up for news of more opportunities:

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

Calling All Embroidery & Textile Enthusiasts!

Are you passionate about needlework, textiles, or creative stitching? Would you enjoy sharing ideas, learning new techniques, and working alongside others with similar interests? Chelmsford u3a is exploring the possibility of launching a new **Embroidery/Textiles Interest Group**, and we’re seeking expressions of interest from members who’d like to get involved.

Whether you're a seasoned stitcher or just curious to learn, this group could offer:

- ✨ A friendly, informal space to share ideas and projects
- 🎨 Themed sessions with opportunities to collaborate and showcase your work
- 🧵 A chance to explore new techniques
- 🤝 Peer support and inspiration from fellow members



The format is flexible ranging from casual “sew and natter” gatherings to more structured sessions with shared themes and creative goals. If you have skills to share, ideas to explore, or simply want to be part of something creative and social, we’d love to hear from you.

Interested? Please contact Lesley Wood, Groups Coordinator, at lesleywood54@yahoo.com to express your interest or ask questions.

Sunday Lunch Group 1

Leader: John Tritton



This month, eight Merry Souls met at the Rose and Crown at Great Waltham. As usual the portions were generous and Alan’s whitebait starter was shared by most of the table. The Sunday roasts were popular including local partridge but the iconic fish pie was too.

Unfortunately the Yorkshire puddings were a little overcooked and some complained of too little gravy. Probably a new chef. Everyone was sufficiently replete that only one dessert was ordered, a picture perfect apple crumble and custard!

Everything went smoothly until we attempted to

pay at the bar. We had been presented with one bill for the whole table, but the waitress was clearly unfamiliar with the cash machine so took an inordinate time to sort everyone out. She got there eventually but found a half-pint unaccounted for at the end. John had to sheepishly admit that he had completely forgotten about it...

The group (and also LC3 on Thursdays), has been to this pub several times before and enjoyed the experience, so we treat this as a glitch and will no doubt be darkening their doors again in future.

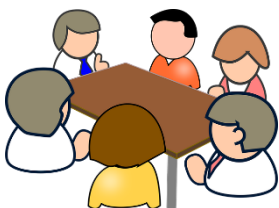
PS: Apologies to Pauline, hiding in the corner. I didn’t notice the poor photo until I got home.

Alan Baker & John Tritton

Wonder of Words

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

Review of Wonder of Words Group meeting - 14 October 2025



Five members enjoyed a very lively Wonder of Words meeting in the Newspaper room at Chelmsford Library. Had the tech been able to support facial images, we would have been six, as one member could only attend remotely on this occasion. Thanks to Lindsay for his valiant, if futile, attempt to facilitate this.

Although adequate, we found the new room stuffy after two hours and it felt cramped with no windows or ventilation. We all have a roving brief to find a suitable and cheap alternative. Suggestions welcome from the wider u3a, please!

Our monthly meetings are varied and fascinating and improve as we get to know each other better and our individual styles of writing. We are an eclectic bunch but have jelled remarkably well and provide support and encouragement, and feedback if requested. We are indebted to Lindsay Whitehouse our Group Leader who meticulously and imaginatively prepares and reports on our meetings. I thoroughly enjoy having structured discussions and delight in the contributions and shared thoughts of the group. We have room for one or two more members, who will be made most welcome.

This month one member treated us to a prepared reading of a letter from a “helpful idiot”. It was witty and replete with tongue in cheek humour. This was followed by a word game where we were set to find contronyms, which was a fun challenge (a contronym is a word that is also its own opposite in meaning) Eg to “dust” meaning to either spread or remove, or “left” to either remain or to go. We liked temper, radical, sick or sanction.

The main theme and inspiration of our writing session was based on a presentation and description of the Seven Deadly Sins. We had a good conversation on each then drew lots to decide which sin we would be allocated. Our efforts were shared with the group. These resulted in stories about the envy of a dress designer for a rival’s creation, an inevitable fall of a proud man in a hilarious office situation, and a suspenseful, wrathful revenge from a man whose car had been stolen. One member produced a powerful ranting monologue about lust and instant gratification, and another cleverly produced a poem about sloth in everyday life.

Three members have submitted entries for the National u3a short story competition!

Judy Gillies on behalf of the 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 2025

24th Nov Talk – The London of Samuel Pepys – Speaker Richard Pusey.

15th Dec Film Show **The Lady Killers** plus tea and cakes at Christ Church

Next years programme is in the planning stage and hopefully the first few talks and visits will be published next month.

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

Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout



Ten of us including one first-timer gathered on 15th October to embark on a lively conversation on a variety of subjects. Several of our members had been travelling and related their experiences. One member had recently come back from Majorca visiting Puerto Pollensa, a beautiful spot on the north east coast of the island. Another member mentioned reminiscences of the beautiful train ride from Soller through the lemon groves to Palma in Majorca. Closer to home another member related her visit to Harrogate and Knaresborough in Yorkshire. Somebody else had visited Dedham on the river Stour in Suffolk and spoke about the famous painter Sir Alfred Munnings, famous for his paintings of horses, not to mention another famous painter from the area, John Constable.

Our leader was absent, travelling around Andalusia in Spain visiting Seville, Granada, Cordoba and other spectacular locations but shared with us his experiences by sending us some beautiful photos of his visit.

Apart from the lively conversations we set about solving the clues for a couple of crosswords and then racking our brains to translate a number of Spanish colloquial expressions into English equivalents with the invaluable help from our native Spanish speaker, Luisa. Then, to finish up we worked on a quiz covering various aspects of Spain to enhance our knowledge of the country, its customs, history and geography.

Whatever your level, you will find our group very rewarding in helping you to improve your ability to speak and understand Spanish in a very friendly and welcoming environment. The next meeting for the group will be on Wednesday 19 November at 10.30am in the Biography section on the ground floor at Chelmsford Library.

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

On Tuesday 7 October we welcomed back local Roman historian Richard Bale to talk about Boudica: Myth and Legend. Boudica was no myth – the writings of Tacitus and Cassius Dio refer to Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, and his wife Boudica. Tacitus had an excellent source of information about Britain in AD60/61 as that is when his father-in-law Agricola was serving in Britain. Prasutagus had reached an agreement with the Romans who had invaded in 43AD, which allowed the Iceni to continue to live peacefully in Norfolk. When he died in 59AD his will left half his lands to the emperor and the other half to his two daughters. However the Romans determined that women could not inherit, and seized all his property including his family. Boudica was flogged and her daughters raped.



The Iceni revolted against Suetonius Paulinus, the governor of Britain. At that time he was fighting in Anglesey. When news reached him that the Iceni were attacking Colchester, he ordered his garrison leader in Lincoln to march to Colchester, and his garrison leader in Exeter to move towards the Midlands. Colchester was a well-chosen target for angry Britons. 100 square miles of land had been seized from the Trinovantes to provide a settlement for Roman veterans. Those veterans barricaded themselves into the only stone building – the great temple to Claudius – but they were massacred and all the surrounding wooden buildings were burnt. The Iceni also defeated the infantry sent from Lincoln. A contingent of Iceni marched on to London but there the citizens had time to be

evacuated. Most of the Iceni marched west, gathering other Britons, to engage with Suetonius who marched southeast down Watling Street. Suetonius picked a site for the 'Battle of Watling Street' between Coventry and Leicester. His force included 6000 legionaries, 4000 infantry and 1000 cavalry. Tacitus records the number of Britons as 120,000 – but relatively poorly trained and armed, and with no cavalry. The number killed is recorded as 80,000 Britons and 400 Romans. After this crushing defeat, 2000 legionaries were sent to control Norfolk, and Suetonius was withdrawn to Rome so that the province could be peaceful and generate tax.

What of the famous role of Boudica in leading the Iceni at Colchester and beyond? We owe the picture of a tall red-haired warrior to Cassius Dio writing 150 years later, and apparently using a Greek stereotype. While it is possible she was involved at Colchester, it seems unlikely she was at the Battle of Watling Street. A beaten queen would have been captured, paraded in Rome and then publicly strangled. Tacitus thinks she may have taken poison. He also records that Agricola told him that the Britons chanted 'Boudica' which was their word for 'Victory'. Which brings us to the romanticism of the 19th century and a movement to identify Queen Victoria with Boudica (or Boadicea). Thomas Thornycroft started work in the 1850s on a sculpture of 'Boadicea' and her two daughters in a war chariot led by fine horses (of a breed rather different from the stocky ponies known in 1st century Norfolk). This sculpture was cast in bronze and installed at the north end of Westminster Bridge in 1902, the year after the death of Queen Victoria and many years after Thornycroft's death.



Do join us at Boreham Village Hall for more talks, with an emphasis in the next three months at least on fact rather than legend.

4 th November	City centred: people and places, a talk about Chelmsford High Street	Yvonne Lawrence
2 nd December	A quiet day at Stansted Airport	Mike Benning
6 th January	The history of Broomfield Church	Ros Mercer

Visitors are welcome to meetings, held at Boreham Village Hall starting at 2.15pm, for £3.

Jane Humphreys

The London Shipwreck: Her Final Voyage by Jools McCusker-Maxwell, Archaeologist

2.30pm Saturday 18th November 2025
 At Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford
 All Welcome £5 for non-members

The talk will focus on the newly opened exhibition at Southend Central Museum, 'The London Shipwreck: Her Final Voyage'. The exhibition presents never-before-seen finds from the wreck of the London, a warship that sank off the Southend coast in 1665.

Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499



On 24th October nineteen (yes19) members of the Birding Group met Essex Wildlife Trust Abberton Reservoir on a cold but beautiful sunny day. Because the group was so large it was decided to split into two groups and walk around the hides in opposite directions. I led one group to the first hide where we saw Crows, Magpie, Cormorant, Swan, Canada Geese, Lapwing, Rooks, Coots, Egret, Great Crested Greeb, Black Headed Gulls,

Greylag Geese, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Gadwall, Mallard, Pied wagtail, Starling and over the other side of the reservoir with the aid of a telescope a Ruff was spotted in its winter plumage.

We made our way to the Island Hide and saw an incredible sight, one I have never seen, the experts in the group referred to it as a "Coot Raft". Consisting of hundreds of Coots flocking together on the water for we assume defensive purposes.

We could also see Black Backed Gulls, Stonechat and Brent Geese. Moving into the final Hide we could see more Coot Rafts across the reservoir, I counted at least four rafts. We saw a Kestrel being chased by a brave Crow, quite an arial display and some Long Tail Tits.

The other half of our group also saw Black Tailed Godwit, Goldeneye, Goldfinch, Grey Heron, Herring Gull, Linnnet, Little Egret, Long Tailed Tit, Robin, Shoveler, Teal and Tufted Duck. I am indebted to Brien Priestley for that list and a photo he took of a Stonechat.



Our next meeting is on The 28th of November at **RSPB Rainham Marsh**, New Tank Hill Rd, Purfleet, Thurrock, RM19 1SZ. A peaceful paradise for wetland birds on the outskirts of the capital, where you can spot waders, wildfowl, warblers and owls. 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.

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our October meeting we discussed Just Like You by Nick Hornby. The novel is set in North London during and after the Brexit referendum . It tells the story of an improbable relationship between Lucy, a forty-

two-year-old white English teacher, and Joseph, a twenty-two-year-old Black man who works in a local butcher shop. Joseph becomes Lucy's sons' babysitter, and then her partner.

We all agreed that Nick Hornby is a good writer and there were some laugh-out-loud passages in the book. We also agreed it was good to read a book where nobody was murdered! However the group overall opinion was divided. With one member saying "From the moment I began reading, this story absolutely chimed with me. The dialogue was pitch-perfect, almost as if you could overhear the characters talking and the story was so well written that it couldn't be faulted ". Whilst other members thought that there wasn't an interesting enough plot.

Our books for the next three meeting are:

Mon Nov 17 th	The Reading List by Sara Nisha Adams
Mon Dec 15 th	Orbital by Samantha Harvey
Mon Jan 19 th	The Seventh Son by Sebastian Fowkes

Short Walks Group

Leader: Robert Lloyd



Walk from the White Hart, Swan Lane, Margaretting Tye lead by Nick Bailey.

Bus Pass Group

Leader: Maurice Austin

Eighteen of us gathered at Chelmsford Bus Station for the October trip to Rayleigh where we were joined by a friend who had come on the train to Rayleigh station and bus up the steep Crown Hill. Once again, we greatly outnumbered other passengers. Unlike the previous ride on an X30, we all managed to stay on our seats!

The weather was overcast and gloomy, nevertheless, we were buoyant. On arrival a few minutes late, we split into groups, several went to inspect the local churches, some went shopping, others looked for refreshments and, I think, several went looking for the local auctioneers. "My" little group went to survey the National Trust property Rayleigh Mount. This former Norman Castle is situated just off the High Street close to the local art centre, theatre and windmill.



On our previous visit, a couple of years ago, we had discovered a set of steps climbing The Mount and that was enough. We came away. On this occasion, we climbed to the top of the flight, admiring the wooden rails and runners which the Chelmsford & District National Trust Supporters Group had funded as part of the "Wish List" programme. Whilst congratulating ourselves for our foresight in being so magnanimous and generous, we noted an interpretation board showing a picture of the view from the top of the River Roach. So, there was more to go! We found another set of steps and railings, longer and steeper than the first but equally as well furnished with good quality rails and steps. We had funded this lot as well no wonder the first tranche had seemed so expensive!!

We struggled up this second flight, pausing to let an elderly gentleman who was obviously on his constitutional, climb at a very impressive rate. We speculated that this was probably his daily exercise as we saw him later briskly leaving the site. When we say elderly, he was probably of the same age group as us, but he seemed very much fitter! Good for him.

The view from the top of The Mount is indeed impressive. Although nowadays largely restricted to the River Roach by masses of trees in other directions, we imagined the site would have had a 360-degree vista in Norman times. We spent some time at the top (getting our breath back!!), carefully descended the two sets of steps and went in search of the large area of water shown on the display boards. There was no water,

just a hardly muddy area. The dry conditions of many months had caused the ponds to disappear. We wondered whether anything like this has happened whilst the castle had been occupied. If so, the collection and transport of vital drinking and washing water would have been problematic.



Anyway, we eventually left the NT site to go to a very nice café we had used on our last visit. It was closed; permanently! After a little search we found a nice tearoom nearby which served us well. Several other sets from our group investigated the very full establishment. One group came in and found a spare table at the other end of the room. Yet another peeked in and, we assume, decided they didn't like the clientele. We didn't see them again! But we hope they found a pleasant place for lunch. Presumably, they got home in due course!

Our group broke up then. Several caught an early bus home to get back for other activities. Another went to the splendid local museum and the "leader" explored for a while and then caught another bus towards Basildon to do some research for future trips.

The November trip will be on **Friday 14 November**, when I plan to go to Bishops Stortford.

Meet at Chelmsford Bus Station, **stand 1 for the 0944 First Essex X30** to Stansted Airport. We then change to Arriva 509 at 10.37 and should be at Bishops Stortford for 11.02. The Arriva 508, 509 and 510 group of services run about every 15 minutes so catching the connecting bus should not be an issue!

Bishops Stortford is a busy town with a large park, plenty of shops, a riverside and even a Tourist Information Centre! We have been there before, and feedback was positive. The Christmas decorations should be up. The shops are an interesting mix of individual and chain stores and there are plenty of eating and drinking establishments!

Last time we went there, we caught a small bus which went "all round the houses" exploring many of the remote villages. Whilst a fascinating trip, we filled the bus up some school children couldn't travel. As this was the only bus home, discretion indicates this trip should not be used again!

My aim will be to catch the 15.36 Arriva 509 back to Stansted Airport where we will change to the X10 or X30 back to Chelmsford for arrival at about a quarter to five (16.47). There are two X30's an hour back and an hourly X10 for those who want to return earlier or later.

I look forward to seeing you then.

The December trip is still scheduled for **Friday 12 December**. I have had mixed feedback about a trip to Lakeside; the taste of Marmite comes to mind! The jury is still out, so I am putting my thinking cap on, will let you know when the little grey cell has reached a conclusion.

The suggestion that we use the train to do some trips to destinations further away than we usually attempt met with general approval. I will plan the trip by train to Harwich, a very historical maritime town, probably catch the little ferry across to Felixstowe and or Shotley and back on an alternative. Of course, we would have to pay fares but if there are 8 or more of us, we would be able to get a group fare. I will aim to get this "up and running" for late spring 2026 in the hope of reasonable weather. Watch this space!

Cycling For Fun Group

Leader Tony Cox



As we move into Autumn the seasons change, the temperature starts to decline and, this year at least, the wind returns. But on the plus side the Essex countryside is at its colourful best as leaves display bright colours and the sky is often clear and bright. So putting on one or two extra layers and some warmer gloves means that cycling in good company really can be fun.

Two successful rides this October. On the 10th Mark, Roger, Ian and Jeff led our two rides from the Central Park Cafe to The Bakehouse, in Cooksmill Green just off the A414. Roger and Ian shepherded the shorter route through Writtle which was six miles each way. Mark was aided by Jeff and took the longer route of 6 miles out and nine back. All enjoyed the rides and the café with the fruit scones getting a mention. A lesson on using the bike's gears was also appreciated (no names, no packdrill).

On Tuesday 28th October we, as usual, ran two rides from Central Park this time to one of the best cafes in Essex, The Stores at Gt Waltham. The shorter route of 6 miles out took us through Melbourne and out to Broomfield Village where we took the newish cycle path which goes behind the Church and delivered us to Broomfield Hospital where we then took the lane and a bit of gentle cross-country behind the hospital to Broads Green and then on to Gt. Waltham and the café. The longer route went through the city centre to the Bunny Walk along the river to Springfield and then on to the amazingly complicated residential area of Beaulieu eventually into the countryside and on to Wheeler's Hill before dropping down to Little Waltham and on to Gt. Waltham to the café at ten miles out. The two rides combined to return to Chelmsford via the Chignalls and Admiral's Park for a gentle seven mile ride. We welcomed back Glynn who had been on our first few rides back in the Spring.

We continue to plan rides for the rest of the year and into 2026. We will be very careful with the weather conditions and will cancel any time the forecast is for bad weather. The name of the Group is deliberate - we Cycle for Fun. But we will take advantage of settled weather to ride when we can.

If any u3a member is considering joining us then please contact me for a chat. And feel free to chat with any of our members - they'll tell you the unvarnished truth.

Tony Cox 07758817559

Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex, Administrator: Michael Gray

u3a visit to Alphamstone and Lamarsh 1st October 2025



Just short of the Suffolk border is an area of outstanding natural beauty. Overlooking the Stour Valley, its earliest known time of human occupation is the Bronze Age. There are sarsen stones in the churchyard and the walls of Alphamstone Church which date from that time.

Alphamstone Church is dedicated to St Barnabas. 11th June is his feast day and, in the past, a rather 'over the top' fair was held. Susan Langan gave us an excellent introduction to the church and its history. It dates from the Norman period and has a window in the north wall from that time. There are two splendid mediaeval doors

as well as some very early graffiti which people visit the church to examine.

We enter the Church of the Holy Innocents in Lamarsh through its magnificent 12th century oak door, as have all its visitors over its 900 year life. Robert Erith, a former High Sheriff of Essex and writer of the church's introductory handbook, gave us a fascinating history of the building. It has been in the estate of the de Vere family, it was owned by Robert the Bruce, both Constable and Gainsborough have included it in their landscapes. Lady Margaret Beaufort, Henry VII's mother is amongst the sculptured heads on the south wall. Its Norman round tower is one of only three in Essex. There are fragments of wall painting which residents would love to see more of, but the expense would be too much to have them revealed. There are visible remains of the rood screen staircase, now bricked up.



It was a real treat to pay a visit to two such beautiful, well cared for, superb churches from mediaeval times.

Our thanks to Prue for this report, to Peter for sharing his photographs, and to the two enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides.

Our November visit, on the 5th, will now not be to Romford, which, although interesting, proved difficult to access. Instead, Brian has chosen the impressive church of St Mary, Saffron Walden, one of the glories of north Essex.

IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons



The IT Group meets the second Wednesday of the month 10.00-11.30 at Christ Church New London Road Chelmsford.

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 & Apple. You may only need to come along for a couple of meetings to get the help you need.

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

Please feel free to come join us if you are looking for IT support, just bring the device you need help with fully charged and mug if you want tea/coffee.

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com

Deputy: Paul Chaplin paulchaplin@talktalk.net

Almost 30 members gathered to hear about the Safer Essex Partnership campaign “Vision Zero” and to seek details of the “Driving With Confidence” programme for mature drivers.

Tanya Garbutt, a former long service police officer and Liam Collins, Acting Special Inspector based in Loughton, introduced the SE Partnership and its target of reducing the numbers killed and seriously injured in Essex to zero by 2030 and spoke about some of the key figures concerning road safety in our county; these included:

- **54 people killed** so far this year on Essex roads (this number has increased to about 58 as this report is written!)
- 753 serious casualties
- 1300 drink driving arrests
- 1042 drug driving arrests
- 1732 mobile phone offences
- 2512 seat belt offences.

Much action is already taken to enforce speed limits, a major cause of accidents, for example:

- 12,120 Community Speedwatch letters were sent out to speeding motorists
- 1861 school age children were given advice on using the roads

In addition to the normal and extensive activity by police officers.

We were reminded that The Highway Code has changed from time to time to reflect changes in the law and driving conditions. In particular, recent changes included significant changes at junctions which emphasise a hierarchy of responsibilities giving priority to those road users less able to protect themselves. In brief, the disabled and pedestrians have top priorities, followed by cyclists, cars and vans and then heavy vehicles.

Mature drivers are less likely to drive at night, because they may experience problems with eyesight (they still must be able to read number plates at 20 metres), They take longer to recover from the glare of oncoming lights and have accidents when turning right due to restricted mobility including the facility to “look over one’s shoulder”. Age related loss of strength and slower reaction are other factors. Possible coping strategies include maintaining general levels of fitness, regular medication reviews, vehicle adjustments, seating positions and sensible shoes.

The opportunity was given to sign up to free Driving With Confidence appraisals and many of us did so.

There were many questions and comments, topics included the use of electric bikes (generally disliked!), use of green P signs for newly qualified drivers and the use of dash cams (recommended).

Maurice Austin.

Please note: Menu choices and payment are needed for our lunch at Ivy Hill by the November meeting.

**Science Group Talk 2.15pm Thursday 20th November
'What's the Matter' by David Hall**

The talk will start by explaining what atoms and molecules are, and how the Periodic Table of elements works. Then it will discuss types of materials made from those building blocks - solids, liquids and gases. But of these, solids are obviously the structural materials, so there is plenty more to say about those. We will also cover the difference between a compound and a mixture.

The second half of the talk will consider the evidence. How do we know about all these things that are too small to see directly? We will discuss the discovery and significance of Brownian Motion, and other major discoveries in physics made by people such as Thomson, Becquerel, Einstein and Rutherford. Finally we will talk about particle colliders such as the LHC in Geneva and also the broader questions about the value or otherwise of such research.

Science Group talks are held in the Catholic Church Hall in Melbourne Avenue, Chelmsford CM1 2DU. Doors open at 1.30pm and the talks start at 2.15pm. Tea/Coffee before the talk. **Non-members of the Science group are welcome. £2 for non-members.**

Chelmsford Science and Engineering Society

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

Bookworms

Leader:

The October meeting consisted of a small group of five, we had all read Victoria Hislop's novel The Sunrise and it was universally liked, although a couple of us thought it was slow going to begin with.

The novel set in Cyprus in the early 1970s, centres around a fictional luxury hotel called unsurprisingly The Sunrise in the town of Famagusta. It follows the lives of two families, one Greek Cypriots, the other Turkish

Cypriots as well as the lives of the owners of the hotel. The story develops against the backdrop of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The interplay between the two families is well written, as exemplified by the burgeoning relationship between the heads of the two which was initially one of mistrust. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and learnt a lot about what went on in Cyprus at the time.

As a side discussion, Marian described her visit to Famagusta whilst on holiday. Part of the town is still a "ghost town" and has been abandoned and cordoned off with barbed wire since the conflict. A far cry from its heyday as a tourist resort in the early 1970s.

If anyone would like to join the group our next reads are as follows:

November - Kala by Colin Walsh

December - Convenience Store Woman by Sayaka Murata

January - The Glass Maker by Tracy Chevalier

Meetings are on the first Thursday of the month

Lunch Club 4

Leader: Val Norfolk

The new Lunch club 4 is now up and running and we have fourteen members. We have now met on two occasions, the last venue being the Fox and Raven Chelmer Village. We did have rather a long wait for our meals but when on arrival it was excellent. Everyone was chatting and getting to know each other but not all of the group could make it unfortunately.

Our next meet up is November 19th.

Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly

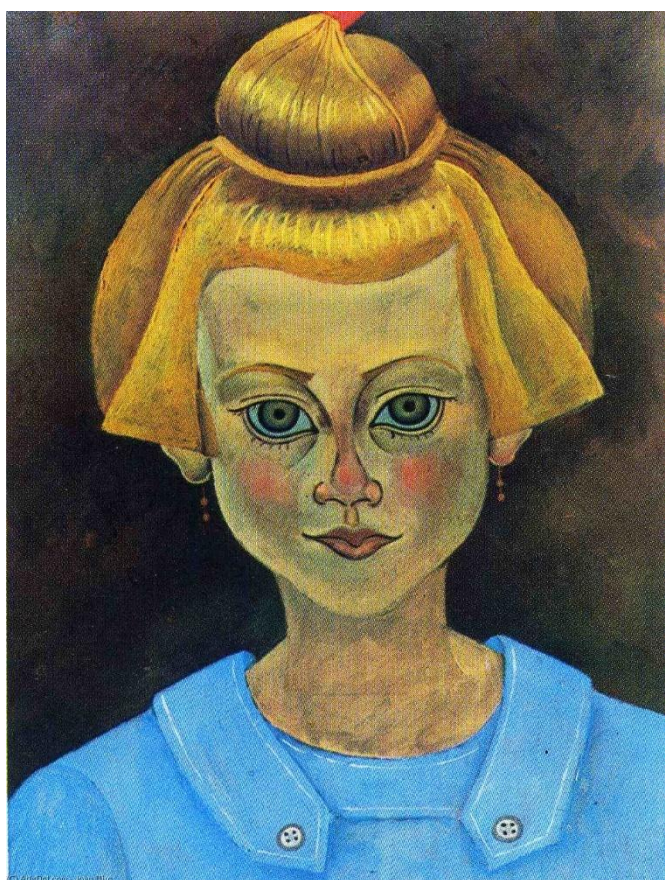
In October we met up at a member's house talking about 'Pictures which have Children in Them'. The choice was wide-ranging covering artists of varied nationalities.

Berthe Morisot (1841-1895), the French Impressionist and American Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) specialised in domestic scenes of family and children, often using family and friends as models. 'The Boating Party' shows a mother holding her child in an outdoor scene. John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), the famous American artist, renowned for his Society portraits, painted 'Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose' - a picture of two children in an English garden lighting Chinese Lanterns. It took him two years to paint. They were friends' children and he played tennis breaking off at intervals to do the painting. This calm picture revived his



reputation after the scandal of his rather erotic picture 'Madame X'. The English John Frederick Lewis (1894-1876) was an Orientalist, painting many of his water colour and oil pictures in the East. His 'Interior of a School, Cairo' gave us a very detailed colourful picture of how it was there.

Spanish Joaquin Sorolla (1863-1923) - a family man living in Madrid - painted many colourful pleasant paintings of people but he did something different in 'Sad Inheritance' showing a thought-provoking picture of crippled children bathing in the sea under the supervision of a monk. They were suffering from congenital syphilis through no fault of their own (syphilis was rife in Victorian times) and had no future. In this picture they were enjoying a day out on the beach. This picture gave him official recognition and he won a Grand Prix and Medal of Honour. The American, Norman Rockwell (1863-1923) was a renowned illustrator and artist and his pictures in the 'Saturday Evening Post' were a good depiction of the place and time. His picture 'The Problem we all Live With' is one of segregation showing a small black girl walking to school escorted by white guards past a wall defaced by racist graffiti.



Joan Miro (1893-1983), the Catalan artist lived in Barcelona. During his long life he tried many stages of art favouring abstraction but in this picture 'Portrait of a Young Girl' it is very realistic. She looks directly at you, clad in her blue dress and with her hair tied up in a sort of topknot. She is very serious no smile - what is she thinking? The Russian artist Ilya Repin (1844-1930) painted many dramatic pictures but in his 'Mother and Child' he successfully depicts a domestic scene. as does Spanish artist Ramon with his 'Wife and Son' Finally we went back to an American artist Winslow Homer (1836-1910). His paintings were often war or maritime related, but we saw some pictures of his summers in the Hudson Valley depicting children: 'Snap the Whip' showing boys swinging round in a long line until it broke against a rural background where we could see a wooden school house. His 'The Country School' shows students sitting at their desks in the one room school house with their young woman teacher - often tempted by the sunny outside they could see through the windows.

It was an interesting and enjoyable afternoon.

Unfortunately our talk on 'Aubrey Beardsley' did not materialise due to car trouble which meant that the lecturer was not able to show up. However, we will be going up to London to the National Gallery at the end of November to see the exhibition 'Radical Harmony: Neo-Impressionists'

**New Pickleball Group every Thursday
Leader: Alan Mayo**

Pickleball Thursday group is being launched this month; our Monday groups are very popular and unfortunately can't take any more we are starting this new group to save disappointing potential new



and Tuesday members so players.

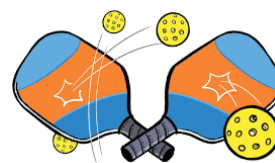
The group will play at Melbourne Leisure Centre every Thursday at 11am. However, the day and/or time could be changed to suit the majority as the group grows.



Pickleball is a bat & ball game similar to tennis, the ball is much slower and less bouncy than a tennis ball. the net is slightly lower than in tennis and the court is smaller – so it's suitable for us thirdagers! We accept players/beginners of any standard but if you've played any racquet sports before you will adapt easily to this game - we normally play doubles so there's less running! Those interested in finding out more can contact me by phone on 07979 540053, through Chelmsford u3a website Groups/Pickleball Thursday/ Group email or directly at pickleballu3a@gmail.com

Pickleball on Mondays & Tuesdays **Leaders: Alan Mayo & Jayne Hughes**

We have played doubles pickleball every Monday afternoon since February of last year and every Tuesday afternoon since January this year. We regularly use all 4 courts that are available to us – the photo here was taken recently at Melbourne Leisure Centre and we had equal numbers of ladies and gents on this occasion. We are using the markings of badminton courts as they are a similar dimension but I suspect more pickleball than badminton is played here now. As seen below, the net is much lower than in badminton although some of us still manage to hit the ball into it instead of over it! When we started, we found out about the rules online and we encourage new players to look them up themselves. We've also found several useful YouTube videos to explain tactics. The closest players in the photo are following the tactic of being up close to the 'kitchen' line (American parlance) in order to dominate the play.



The phrase 'u3a love learn laugh live' is appropriate for what pickleball does for us. We love meeting and mixing with others, we do learn new skills, we certainly have a laugh (often when we smash the ball into net when it should have been a winning shot) and we live in the moment of every rally. .

We started with just 5 players some 20 months ago and now have 50-odd on our lists so we hope to be starting another group in the next month to satisfy recent demand. It's interesting to note that just as with other groups, ours has been the reason why new people join our u3a, so that's a bonus!



Travel Group

Leader: Anne Brereton

Travel Group Holiday to Western Andalucía.

Our holiday started on the 14th October 2025 on arrival at Stansted airport for our flight to Faro in Portugal.. It turned out that Faro was only 1½ hrs from our Destination in Isa Canela, Western Andalucía.

Our hotel Vila Gale was very big and almost empty of holiday makers. We were joined by a walking group also from Involved Travel. The rooms were very big and comfortable. My room looked over the wetlands in front of the hotel and was greeted by the sight of Flamingos every morning once the sky lightened.

Our first visit was to Rio Tinto and the Tinto Mines. This proved to be spectacular. I have never seen such a patchwork of colours in an open cast mine . The river Tinto was blood red from all the minerals running into it. The trip into the mine in our hard hats was an experience as was the very bumpy train ride around the site.



Seville was our next trip, with a guide who did go on a bit, as most of us wanted to explore. Seville is a spectacular place to visit. Some of us had been before and were disappointed we didn't have the time see more. During our stay we did visit a market which they called a gypsy market which sold mostly cheap tops and clothing.

Next we visited the monastery that Christopher Columbus stayed with the monks before leaving going off to discover the Americas. We also saw replicates of the three ships which sailed with him The Pinta, The Nina and the Santa Maria.



After this visit we went to El Rocio which was apparently a major pilgrimage site which now is now no more than just a tourist visiting place, which is a shame.

Our last visit of the holiday was a 2½hr trip along the Guadiana river to Alcoutim a small village on the Portuguese side. Thank fully we came back by coach as the weather had turned a little chilly and any more time on the boat may not have been welcome . All in all it was a good holiday which I believe we enjoyed very much.

Tai Chi Group

Leader: Alan Caddy



On Tuesday the 14th October the Tai Chi group reached a significant milestone, we have completed the first 17 moves. Some of these moves will be repeated later in the 108 move set, however we are all enjoying the challenge. I still struggle to remember the moves. Fortunately we always start at the beginning every week.

Over time we will remember the moves and our Tai Chi will progress, for those that have missed a few classes not to worry as you will catch up. Terry and Moira are very patient, they constantly remind us this is not a competition, everyone is an individual and Tai Chi is a good health benefit and learning event.

Some of us suffer a few minor aches and pains and that is due to probably trying too hard. However if we relax a little bit more then those aches and pains will disappear.

Just a reminder for our team that there will be no Tai Chi on Tuesday 4th of November due to vacations. Class will resume on Tuesday the 11th of November.

Even with all our trials and tribulations I cannot wait to get to Tai Chi class.

Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy

Report of the October Garden Group Meeting - FAIRY RINGS AND FLAG STAFFS @ KEW GARDENS

Do you know that Beatrix Potter, author, and artist of the world-famous Peter Rabbit animal character stories, might have discovered penicillin if she had been encouraged to continue her mycology studies at London's Kew Gardens? AND for over 150 years that the same location had four of the world's tallest flag staffs in its grounds – and that woodpeckers brought down the last one twelve years ago? Probably not!

Andrew Wiltshire told the forgotten story of these fascinating facts at our October meeting, explaining how the fungi connects to Leslie Linder, the code breaker of Beatrix Potter’s almost lost Journal, and how Andrew’s grandfather helped erect the third flagstaff and the codebreaker, the fourth.

Using examples of her illustrations, Andrew showed Beatrix Potter’s skill at finding and illustrating rare mushrooms and toadstools. Her discovery of the Penicillin Spore could have been a breakthrough if eminent Victorian gentlemen scientists at Kew had not dismissed her work as that of a mere woman!!

We were also told how the Linders ship supplies, masts and rigging company, based in London’s Docklands from Victorian times, helped erect a 200-foot single-stand tree sent from the virgin forests of British Columbia, as a 14-ton flagstaff to commemorate the Achievement of Peace after the First World War, then its replacement in the 1950s. These actions have also been forgotten in the history of Kew Gardens.

Menu choices and details of the Garden Group Lunch at Litle Channels on “2nd January will be emailed to members.

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 December 2025 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.

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

FREE ENTRY




Christmas Fair & Tree Festival

Saturday 29th Nov '25
11am-3pm

Christ Church URC Chelmsford
164 New London Road, Chelmsford
CM2 0AW

Santa's Grotto, Free Gifts, Food, Games, Handmade Crafts & More

For further info please email:
cchubdesk@gmail.com or
visit: <https://christchurchchelmsford.co.uk>



SHOOTING STAR ENTERTAINMENTS PRESENTS

Saturday 6th Dec

Tickets £9 each **1.30pm**

Aladdin

A Genie-us Pantomime Adventure!

Christ Church URC
164 New London Road, Chelmsford CM2 0AW

To book tickets please email: cchubdesk@gmail.com or call Tel: 01245 354529 (option 2)

Schoolreaders
improving literacy • increasing life chances

Volunteers Needed!



One in four children leave primary school unable to read to the expected standard.

This will have a negative impact on their secondary education and future life chances.

Children's literacy charity Schoolreaders is recruiting volunteers in Chelmsford to listen to children read in primary schools.

If you have some time to spare, a good grasp of written English, and if you enjoy spending time with children, you could become a Schoolreader.

Volunteers are asked to listen to children read once a week in term time and to commit to a full academic year, though of course holidays and weeks off on occasion are no issue.

You can find out more on our website, or by giving us a call on 01234 924111.

If you can spare just an hour a week to listen to children read, you can help to change their life-story.

To find out more about Schoolreaders please visit www.schoolreaders.org

Schoolreaders CIO Registered Charity Number: 1159157. Registered in England and Wales

Interest Groups (as of 4th October 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.

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
All Day Walks	2 nd Monday		Berry Cornell	01277355823
Amateur Dramatics	1 st Monday	14.00	Alan Caddy	
Art Appreciation	4 th Tuesday	14.00	Brenda Kelly	01277840621
Art Club	Mondays	11.15	Peter Anderton	07773074105
Art for Pleasure	Tuesdays	9.30	Les Cooper	07976292362
Birding	4 th Friday	10.00	Alan Alexander	07712818499
Book Group	3 rd Monday	14.30	Andy Moir	01245440007
Bookworms	1 st Thursday	14.20	Groups Coordinator	
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus	
Bus Pass Group	2 nd Friday	varies	Maurice Austin	
Church Visits	1 st Wed	10.15	Brian Greatrex	01245258833
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale	
Cycling for Fun	2 nd Fri, 4 th Tues	varies	Tony Cox	
Discussion Group	2 nd Tues	13.00	Brian Littlechild	
Family History	4 th Friday	14.00	Lesley Wood	01245601359
Fishing Group	Wednesdays		Alan Caddy	
French Conversation	2 nd & 4 th Wed	14.00	Marie Neale	
Garden Group	4 th Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy	01277353481
IT group	2 nd Wednesday	10.00	Lyn Parsons	
International Dining	3 rd Monday	7.00 pm	Jennie Cappin	01245358629
Jazz and Blues	3 rd Wed	10.30	Heinz Kassier	
Local History	1 st Tuesday	14.15	Jane Humphreys	01245 259590
London City and its People	4 th Monday	14.00	Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Lunch Club 1	Last Friday	12.30	John Heathcote	01245 380766
Lunch Club 2	4 th Tuesday	12.30	Harry Glaser	01245 462760
Lunch Club 3	1 st Thursday	12.30	Laraine Linard Barbara Childs	01245 475444
Lunch Club 4	3 rd Wednesday	12.30	Val Norfolk	07500 444518
Mah-Jong	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday	14.00	Chris Paget	01245 474811
Philosophy	Thursday 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240
Philosophy & Religion	1 st 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
Pickleball Thursday	Thursday Weekly	11.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Poetry Appreciation	2nd Wed	14.00	Judith & Tony Boniface	01245 266316
Quiz Group	4 th Thursday	10.00	Laraine Linard	01245 475444
Science Group	3 rd Thursday	13.45	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
Sewing, Knitting & Crochet	3rd Thursday	a.m.	Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517
Short Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245 466167
Spanish Conversation	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	David Gout	01245 268923
Summer Evening Walks	4 th Wed	Apr - Sep	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Sunday Lunch 1	1 st Sunday	varies	John Tritton	
Sunday Lunch 2	3 rd Sunday	varies	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Ten Pin Bowling	2nd & 4th Fridays	10.30	Roger & Ruth Spall	01245 466486
The Wonder of Words	3 rd Wed	14.00	Lyndsay Whitehouse	01245 356363
Tai Chi	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Caddy	
Theatre Outings	As and when		Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Travel Group	Holidays -see website	-	Anne Brereton	
The Wonder of Words	3 rd Wednesday	14.00	Lyndsay Whitehouse	01245 356363
Walking Group	1 st & 3 rd 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