

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 8th January 2026 - 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.

Thursday 12th February 2026 – AGM

Thursday 12th March 2026 Yvonne Lawrence - The Show Must Go On (Early Theatre and Cinema In Chelmsford)

See pages 17 and 18 for a list of the Chelmsford u3a Interest Groups
and pages 19 and 20 for the Chelmsford u3a January 2026 Calendar.

View from the Chair

Dear Members of Chelmsford u3a,

As we bid farewell to another remarkable year, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for your enthusiasm, friendship, and unwavering support throughout the past twelve months. This year we have come together to learn, explore, and share laughter, making new memories and strengthening our community spirit along the way. Whether you joined a new interest group, attended a lively talk, or simply enjoyed a cup of tea with friends, your participation has made a real difference.

Looking ahead, the new year offers us a fresh canvas, brimming with opportunities to discover new passions, welcome new faces, and continue building the vibrant, inclusive community that makes Chelmsford u3a so special. Let us embrace 2026 with open minds and open hearts, eager to support one another and to make the coming year our best yet.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



GET INVOLVED!

Annual General Meeting 12th February 2026

As previously notified, this year's AGM will be held on Thursday 12th February 2026 at Christ Church New London Road, Chelmsford.

- The AGM will commence at 2.15 pm and will take place in the 'Sanctuary' on the first floor.
 - Registration/sign-in will take place in the Church Hall on the ground floor. Please don't proceed to the Sanctuary until 2.00 pm.
- After the AGM there will be an Interest Groups Showcasing event in the main church hall downstairs, where you will also be able to socialise over a cup of tea or coffee.

Quorum & Proxy Votes

I would like to impress upon you the importance of the AGM and ask that you do your best to attend as our constitution requires that we have a quorum of at least 10% of the membership present. If you are unable to attend, please complete a proxy voting form as this will count as if you are present at the meeting. Andy Moir has made things a lot easier this year by designing an online proxy form that you can complete via our website. You will find it here <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/form-of-proxy/> For those who do not have access to the internet a hard copy of the form will be included with your printed newsletter.

Showcasing Event

I would encourage you (especially our newer members) to attend the Interest Groups Showcasing event. The groups are the lifeblood of the u3a and it is here where you will find all manner of interesting topics and activities offering the opportunity to learn something new in retirement. The u3a philosophy of learner-led, peer-to-peer learning, means that participants feel more comfortable and confident to try new skills. Alternatively, you may have skills that you acquired earlier in life and would be willing to share with other members – believe me it does wonders for the self-esteem! If you are keen to improve your physical health or mental wellbeing, then come along and get involved in our walking, sporting & exercise groups. All our interest groups provide the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. It's so much easier when you share a common interest with them.

Interested in Yoga or being part of a choir?

I've been approached by two people who are willing to start up new Interest Groups if there is sufficient interest amongst the members to make them viable. The subjects are Yoga, and Singing as part of a Choir. In both cases the people are trained teachers, holding the relevant qualifications etc and are willing to impart their knowledge and skills for absolute free! When I know more about each proposal, I will of course pass on the details, but in the meantime if you feel you might be interested then let me know. Of

course, these people will need some help to undertake the administrative task involved in running these groups.

Wishing you all a happy and joyful new year, one that is filled with learning, laughter and friendship!
Lesley Wood
Chair Chelmsford u3a

Interest Groups Looking for New Members

Poetry Group

Leader: Jackie Lambert



The Poetry group meets on the second Wednesday in the afternoon, between 2pm to around 4pm at a member's house. We are a small, friendly, informal group with a common love of poetry.

Each month we choose a topic for the following month where we then take turns to read our chosen poems. There is no pressure and certainly no judgement! It's all very light hearted and followed by tea and biscuits!

Currently we are able to take two or possibly three new people. If anyone is interested, please come along and see if it's for you, you would be most welcome.

Canasta/Card Games Group

Leader: Julie Hagger



The Canasta/Card Games Group is a small friendly group who meet on the first and third Monday of the month at 1.30pm. No experience is necessary there, so come and join us for a friendly game of cards of your choice.

We meet in the Gardeners Pub, Crocus Way, North Springfield. There is ample parking in the pub carpark and it's warm and quiet on a Monday afternoon.

Please email me for more information julie.hagger@hotmail.co.uk

French Conversation Group

Group Leader: David Hall



Our French Conversation Group meets twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday afternoons of the month at Christ Church, New London Road, Chelmsford. Some of us want to improve our French because we visit France, may be to visit family living there, or perhaps having lived there want to keep the language alive. We work from the Rendez-vous magazine, reading and translating the articles, which are varied and interesting.

Please get in touch with David Hall on 01245 284409.

Quiz Group

Leader: Laraine Linard



The New Quiz Group has now been up and running for 2 months and is proving to be a great success.

We meet on the 4th Thursday in the month in the Farthing Centre (which is on the opposite side of the car park **to the main Christ Church Hall**) and there is a small entry fee of £3.00 towards the hire of the hall. We convene at 9:45am for a 10am start, finishing at 12pm and you are welcome to bring your own refreshments.

On arrival you pick a number out of the hat which is your table number. This ensures that the "eggheads" are fairly distributed amongst the players and each month we have a different quizmaster (this is purely voluntary - you don't have to be a quizmaster to join the group).

If you are interested, you can contact me via the Quiz Group page on the Chelmsford U3A website or through the Beacon Portal and I will send you details of the forthcoming dates.

Laraine Linard (Contact Person)

Sunday Lunch Group 1

Leader: John Tritton

This year our Christmas meal was organised by Laraine, who had thoughtfully booked a table some months earlier in order to avoid the Christmas rush. Eight of us sat down to dine at Miller & Carter, Chelmer Village, a venue which we have used on previous occasions and been quite satisfied. In fact some of us had been there on the previous Thursday with the LC3 group. However, this time not all went smoothly.

The pub allowed us to choose from their normal à la carte, fixed two or three courses, or Christmas menus. Unfortunately, the vegetables were undercooked and one member found them too hard to eat, so sent them back for replacement, whilst another asked for a different meal altogether.

Miller and Carter cannot do individual bills, so you get one bill for the whole table, but they can take individual payments. I had a 20%-off voucher with me which on previous occasions has meant working out individual discounts, but this time they allowed it to be used for each separate payment, which certainly helped to soothe a few ruffled feathers!

Not the best experience, but probably due to staffing problems on a busy day. Suffice to say we have had better times there, but no doubt we shall be eating at the venue again in future.

John Tritton



Theatre Outings Group

Group Leader: Lesley Wood

If you would like to receive details of proposed outings to see plays, musicals and concerts in London or provincial theatres then please ask to be put on the Theatre Outings Group's contact list by emailing me on lesleywood54@yahoo.com. Alternatively, you can join the group via the u3a Beacon Portal.

As a member of the group, you will be able to benefit from generous reductions in ticket prices and very often enjoy the benefit of coach travel there and back. The discounts offered to groups such as ours often depend on the tickets being paid for well in advance. The group therefore operates a policy of money in, .. before money out.

I still have a few seats left for **High Society**, starring Helen George and Felicity Kendal at the Barbican theatre on Tuesday 2nd June at 3.00 pm. We have front stall tickets that normally sell for £95, but the group price is £69.50. A coach has been booked and will cost between £16 - £19 per head depending on how many people take up this offer. If you want to join in the outing, please let me know as soon as you receive this newsletter.

Also, at the time of writing I have one seat left for the play **Shadowlands** starring Hugh Bonneville at the Aldwych Theatre on Thursday 2nd April at 2.30pm. Tickets and travel are £74 per person. Again, please let me know immediately if you are interested.

Wonder of Words

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

Wonder of Words December Meeting

For our December meeting we decided to hold our meeting in the United Brethren pub just off Moulsham Street. The manager gave us exclusive access to a room at the rear of the pub. We brought along our own snacks and effectively had a working Christmas party. We combined to write a story one line at a time, where we only had sight of the line immediately preceding the one we wrote. The end result was, as expected, a mish mash, but it was a nice fun exercise.

One of our members then read a poem by Charles Baudelaire, a famous French writer. The first reading was of the English translation. The second reading was in French, delivered by a native French speaker. The contrast was remarkable. We all preferred the French version, even though we did not understand much of the vocabulary. The natural rhythm, timing, timbre and sound combined perfectly, whereas the English version was strained. We concluded that literature works best when read in its original language, something is always lost in translation. We had some fun playing a few games.

We did no themed writing this month but we planned our major project for 2026. We are committed to writing an original script for an audio presentation, like a play on Radio 4, we are aiming to produce similar in format.

The theme is one that must be relevant to our age group, perhaps focussing on a group of people enjoying an adventure where things don't quite work out according to plan. One of our members is a former drama teacher and another is an experienced performer and stand-up comedian. When we combine their performance skills to a depth of writing talent amongst other members, we hope to deliver an outcome that we can perform live.

We are actively exploring possible new venues so that we will be able to accommodate more new members. Our meeting on 21st January will be held in the Brewhouse opposite the rail station. That venue will greatly increase our capacity.

If you have an interest in performance (acting, poetry, monologues, comedy, narration) or writing or debate and discussion, then our group is one that could be ideal for you. To express your interest please click on the contact symbol on the website.

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 2026

- 26th Jan Talk – The Printed City - speaker Alison Woollard.
- 23rd Feb Talk - London's Underground Railway - speaker Tony Tuckwell.
- 23rd Mar Talk - Topic to follow - speaker Kathy Lancaster.
- 27th Apr Talk - Slavery in the City - speaker David Williams.
- 18th May** Visit - Stephens House & Gardens.
- 22nd Jun Annual walk in the City - Money Tour: coffee shops, Bank, Royal Exchange with City of London Guides
- 27th Jul Visit - Thames Barrier & Greenwich.

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

Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout



Our meeting on 17th December 2025 comprised a small but select group of six people! Winter sickness bugs had depleted the turnout. Nevertheless, the meeting was lively and enjoyable.

We always start by telling each other what we have been doing over the last month. Topics were what you would expect in the build up to Christmas – a trip on a Christmas special on the North Norfolk Railway and a visit to the pantomime with grandchildren were examples.

One of our members organised an amusing game which involved passing a parcel either left or right whenever the word for left or right in Spanish was mentioned in a story that he read out. A box of chocolates was the reward for the winner!

We spent the rest of the time completing two crosswords and playing a version of Just a Minute. The latter prompted discussions about things that annoy us (litter, bad parking etc), things that frighten us (heights and, somewhat surprisingly, lizards were mentioned), and what we can expect life to be like in the Year 2100!

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 15 October 2025 at 10:30am at Chelmsford Library in the Biography section on the ground floor.

David Gout

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

For our last talk of 2025 we welcomed retired Essex policeman Mike Benning QPM. He took us to Stansted Airport, created in 1942 as a USAF bomber base and today having the longest runway in the country. Apparently the runway is undulated though I admit I haven't noticed those bumps in the ground – well, no more than anywhere else. The runway, plus the surrounding farmland and security measures, makes Stansted the airport of choice to handle hijacks, and visiting US Presidents.

Stansted currently handles around 28 million passengers a year though work is underway to expand. There is a police station on site and the ability to call in resources from around the county or beyond when needed. Most teams for the 2012 Olympics flew in to Stansted in a carefully planned manner. Another planned arrival was the space shuttle in June 1983, but what wasn't planned was the reaction of motorists on the M11 causing a major traffic headache. In 1977 Idi Amin invited himself to the Queen's Silver Jubilee but was refused entry when he landed at Stansted.

Hijackings can be of varying complexity, not always clear at the outset:

- In 1975 a BA flight from Manchester to Heathrow was diverted when a passenger put a gun to the head of a stewardess and demanded that the plane be flown to Paris Orly. He wanted to see his girlfriend. Stansted, in the dark, was disguised with the letters O-R-L-Y and the lovelorn hijacker only discovered the truth once he had walked down the steps from the aircraft.
- In 1982 an Air Tanzania domestic flight was hijacked by five men who succeeded in flying to Nairobi, Jeddah and Athens for refuelling before landing at Stansted. The UK never lets hijack planes take off. It took 26 hours of negotiations before the hijackers were removed.
- In 1996 a Sudanese airbus flying from Khartoum to Amman was hijacked by 7 Iraqis. It landed at 4.30am at Stansted, and it took 24 hours to negotiate the release of the passengers.

Everyone involved in managing Stansted airport and coordinating with the emergency services now takes part in annual exercises to simulate unplanned landings. The plane should be parked where it cannot refuel or take off, but will the rest of the airport be able to operate? If not, how are the flights rescheduled and passengers informed? Who is onboard – any casualties or people with medical conditions which need treating? Are translators needed for the hijackers or the passengers? Who handles contacts with families of those onboard? How do you handle the media? Once the hijack is over and everyone is off the plane it remains a crime scene with police carefully gathering evidence for a court case. Eventually a fresh crew needs to fly the plane home. Mike said it takes about a week for policing to return to normal.

Back in the safety of Boreham Village Hall do join us for our 2026 programme:

6 th January	The history of Broomfield Church and the glasswork of Rosemary Rutherford	Ros Mercer
3 rd February	The history of the Moot Hall, Maldon	Mike Fogg
3 rd March	Porridge revisited at Chelmsford Prison	Lindsay Whitehouse

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

Jane Humphreys

Essex Branch of the Historical Association
CHARLES II AND THE RESTORATION BY
Dr David L. Smith Selwyn College, Cambridge.)
2.30pm Saturday 10th January 2026
At Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford
All Welcome £5 for non-members

Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly



In December we had a very enjoyable Christmas Lunch at 'The Old Windmill', South Hanningfield. This month on Tuesday 27th January we are having a meeting at a member's home when everyone will talk about 'My Favourite Interior'.

On Tuesday 24th February we are travelling to Broomfield Church where we will be given a talk about the local artist Rosemary Rutherford in the hall, and then we can look at the fresco, her stained glass and the exhibition followed by refreshments, and finally on Tuesday 24th March we shall travel to Tate Britain to see the 'Turner and Constable Exhibition'.

Happy New Year to everyone.

Brenda Kelly

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our December meeting we discussed *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey. The short novel, which won the 2024 Booker Prize, follows six astronauts and cosmonauts from different countries aboard the International Space Station (ISS) over a single 24-hour period. As the ISS orbits the Earth sixteen times, they perform routine scientific tasks and maintenance, and they observe the earth below

The novel has a minimal plot, focusing instead on the inner thoughts and observations of the crew members as they experience sixteen sunrises and sunsets in one day. Events include news of a mother's death reaching a Japanese astronaut, a Russian cosmonaut noticing a suspicious lump on his neck, and a powerful typhoon gathering over the Philippines.

As frequently happens the group was divided in their opinion about the book. Our opinions ranged from one members saying "I thoroughly enjoyed *Orbital* and marvelled at the author's skill in conveying such a convincing portrayal of what life must be like for astronauts on their endless circling of Earth." Whilst some other members did like the lack of a strong plot and some didn't finish the book.

Our books for the next three meeting are:

Mon Jan 19 th	The Seventh Son by Sebastian Fowkes
Mon Feb 16 th	The Marriage Portrait by Maggie Farrell
Mon Mar 16 th	Brighton Rock by Graham Greene

Lunch Group 3

Leader: Laraine Linard and Barbara Childs



We had booked for sixteen but due to unforeseen circumstances we had a very lively thirteen for our Christmas lunch at Miller & Carter. We were all chatty and laughing with all our new found friends and there were so many menus to choose from it took a while to order. All the food was lovely and the service was as usual great.

Even though the restaurant had informed us that they would not issue individual bills, the waitress managed to do so which made it so much easier when it came to paying, especially as some people had to leave earlier than others. The only anomaly was that we all had a 1/13th share of a Pepsi on our bills but we soon discovered the reason - hope John T enjoyed his Christmas present of a Pepsi from all of us!

We are not having our monthly lunch in January as the first Thursday is on New Year's Day so the next lunch will be on 5th February where our host will be Lynn Reagan.

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Barbara Childs and Laraine Linard

Bus Pass Group

Leader: Maurice Austin

2025 has been the UK's sunniest year on record, the BBC reported this morning. Well, it didn't shine on the Bus Pass Group except for our trip to Hertford when it was too hot to do anything other than find shade and just survive! The forecast for our December trip was dire; rain all day, heavy sometimes, very heavy at those times we expected to be in the open air! And quite nippy!

But as the day approached, the forecast started to improve. Almost every day some of the black symbols moved away. By the time Friday arrived, it seemed we may only have rain at 1500 hours. And it would be warmer than average temperatures. And so, it proved to be. Not a bad day, perhaps a little cooler than we would have liked, and no rain until three o'clock!

But we had competition! Several of our regulars were seeking the warmth and luxury of Lodge Coaches on a day trip. Others were going to the Travel Group Christmas Dinner. We hope you all had a lovely time.

Seven of us boarded a First single decker 170 for our trip to Braintree. It wasn't busy and neither were the roads, so we had a nice, gentle ride to the newish drafty and coffee-less bus station. As we had 23 minutes to wait, some of the party went in search of refreshment and comfort and returned with stories of the local hero John Ray who was born, lived and died in Black Notley.

Wikipedia tells us that "John Ray (29th November 1627 – 17th January 1705) was an English Christian naturalist and one of the earliest English parson-naturalists. Until 1670 he wrote his name as John Wray. From then on, he used 'Ray', after "having ascertained that such had been the practice of his family before him". He published important works in the fields of botany, zoology and natural theology." Arguably, he was as important as Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778), the Swedish botanist and zoologist known as the Father of Taxonomy who created the modern system of naming and classifying organisms.

What we thought may be our next bus arrived rather early, but the pleasant driver said he had to go to the other end of the town, but he would be back soon. He was! He arrived with an enormous bang as the bottom of his bus clouted the kerb. It certainly drew the attention of others waiting in the area. This bus was a double-decker operated by Flagfinders, a long-standing local company which has recently been bought by a rapidly expanding national group.

This new route 60 is really the expansion of a county-council school trip from just journeys to and from Hedingham School to an all-day service. After all, the additional cost of running a service all-day rather than having a bus and driver hanging around is quite marginal; not many passengers are needed to cover this.

The timetable for this service is tight, at least at the Braintree end, and the driver was determined to keep to his schedule. There were several occasions when a sharp intake of breath was forced on us as we squeezed through some very narrow gaps! Mind you, the overhanging trees on parts of the route created consideration banging and clattering as the vehicle forced its way through! We recalled the days when councils used to cut these back and when some bus operators had their own open-topper buses for this task.

The route took us through Bocking and the Hedinghams with their range of colourful and ancient buildings which are reminiscent of the nearby Suffolk architecture, past Bulmer with its famous brickworks producing bespoke bricks and accoutrements for architectural restoration, then downhill into Suffolk itself and Sudbury.

The one-way system round Sudbury makes it seem that the bus station is miles from anywhere! As it happens, a very short but uninspiring walk takes one to the town centre where the range of shops, churches and facilities is fantastic. There is so much to see and do, another visit is always "on the cards".

Sudbury Town Council had gone to great efforts to dress the town for Christmas but even out of season, there is so much to do. Some of our group met with relations and spent the day with them, the rest of us went to Gainsborough's House, a very short walk away where we enjoyed hearty brunches and coffees before looking at the several exhibitions on display.

Hannah Brown, an East London based artist, was displaying a collection of hedgerow art. There was a group of paintings of Love and Landscape by Stanley Spencer and some of his close relations which were brilliant, or startling, sometimes both. Interestingly, the self-portrait of his badly treated ex-wife was better than those of the master! In my opinion! And of course, the spectacular regular display of Gainsborough's own paintings was there, enhanced by a few which had been loaned from other galleries on exchange.

Several of our group explored part of the Talbot Trail, consisting of fourteen small bronze statues marking a walking trail depicting key moments and events in Sudbury history. Josyane Casey photographed some of these which are attached.



We eventually gathered back at the bus station just as the temperature was dropping and there were a few drops of rain in the air. At three o'clock those drops became rather more persistent, just as forecast! So well done Met Office!

Our return bus was a few minutes late. The driver was steadier than our previous one and we were a little late getting to Hedingham School where we loaded with a crowd of incredibly well-behaved young people. What a contrast to some of those I have driven home in the past; they were a credit to their school and themselves.

We approached the outskirts of Braintree just as our connecting bus was due. But as we disembarked, that bus drew in just a few minutes late and we all got on. The driver was one of the first Polish drivers I had to look after, when I worked at First Essex, and he was delighted to see me. His lived up to his reputation of being one of the best drivers, but with the worst haircut and gave us a splendid ride home. As often happens, the bus filled up at Broomfield Hospital with NHS workers home going.

When I got off, my friend got out of his cab, shook my hand, reminded me that he had been in the UK now for twenty years, was settled with his girlfriend and would be having a lovely British Christmas.

There will be no Bus Pass Group outings in January or February 2026. I shall keep an eye on the forecast before I decide whether to organise a trip in March. If I do, it will be on Friday the 13th I will give you plenty of notice.

Bookworms

Leader: Marion Jenkins

This month the group read Convenience Store Woman by Sayaka Murata. A relatively short novel, the story gives you an insight into the workings of a small store in Japan through the eyes of Keiko. Keiko at 36 years old has worked part time in the shop for 18 years. Keiko has never had another job and defines herself as a "convenience store worker" whilst battling against a family who want to "cure" her.

From very early on in the book you realise that Keiko does not conform to the norms of Japanese society, that she struggles with parents who want her to get a better job and friends who wonder why at her age she has not married. Her family clearly think she is unusual at best.

Whilst not everybody in the group liked this book, one of the members who had been to Japan spoke about the convenience stores she had been too when she visit to Japan, and commented that they were exactly like the one depicted in the book.

Next month the group will be continuing our choose a books set over seas by reading Tracey Chevalier's The Glassmaker. If you would like to join us for this month's, only we will be meeting on 15th January at 2.30pm. Future meetings will be on the first Thursday of the month.

Future reads are as follows

January - The Glassmaker by Tracey Chevalier

February - The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

March - My Book of Treasures by Joanna Lumley

April - Moonrise by Sarah Crossan



IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons

The group met in December and the turnout was very low. It's a difficult time of year with many people busy with Christmas and so many colds and viruses about.

Based on this we have decided to cancel the IT Group meeting booked for January 14th.

I will remind everyone again about the meetings going forward in the February Newsletter.

A happy and healthy New Year to you all.

Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy

There is no meeting in December. The Garden Group Lunch at Litte Channels is on Thursday 22nd January 2026. The details and the menu choices will be emailed out shortly. Raffle prizes, unwanted Xmas gifts etc. welcomed.

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com

Deputy: Paul Chaplin paulchaplin@talktalk.net

A reminder our next event is the lunch on Thursday 29th January 2026 at Ivy Hill. For enquiries or information please contact Paul Chaplin at paulchaplin@talktalk.net.

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

Nuclear Fusion : Where We're At And Where We're Going

by Mike Bluck, Director of the Centre for Nuclear Engineering at Imperial College.

14 January 2026, 19:30

Anglia Ruskin University

Histotripsy : Incisionless Liver Surgery

By Dr Teik Choon See, Consultant Interventional Radiologist, University of Cambridge.

22 January 2026, 19:00

Anglia Ruskin University

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

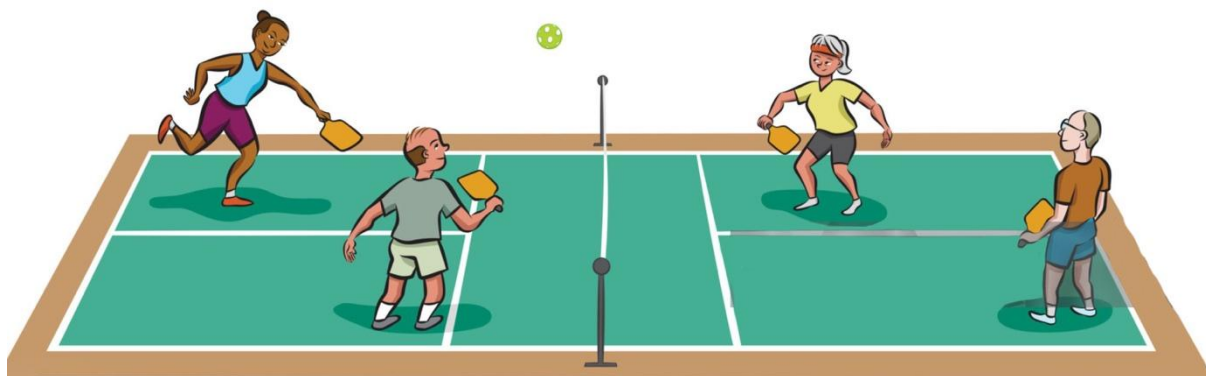
Pickleball Thursdays

Leader: Neil Carroll

Deputy: Caroline Boyd



Pickleball has proved really popular with our U3A members and we now have a Thursday group as well as the Monday and Tuesday groups. Pickleball Thursdays meets at 12 noon at Melbourne Leisure Centre and comprises a small group of members, most of whom had not played before joining in November 2025 when this group started. It is a really friendly group and all abilities are welcome to join.



The game is similar to tennis. The ball is much slower and less bouncy than a tennis ball. The net is slightly lower than in tennis and the court is smaller (the size of a doubles badminton court) – so it's suitable for us

third agers! Beginners to the game are welcome to borrow a bat, and balls are available to all when playing anyway. It would be great to welcome more members to our Thursday group, especially as the other two groups are now full and not able to take any more members.

Anyone interested in this group, whether you are a complete beginner or a retiree from squash/tennis/badminton, should contact us via the Pickleball Thursday group page at our website chelmsford.u3asite.uk or email us directly to pickleballu3a@gmail.com

Neil Carrol

Cycling For Fun Group

Leader: Tony Cox

Since our first ride in March we have been very fortunate with the weather, almost entirely dry with just a couple of rides where some rain got us on the way home and a few times when the wind made riding a bit challenging.

All that changed on Friday 14th November when the weather forecast was foul - it was heavy rain all day and definitely not cycling for fun weather. Everyone agreed that discretion was the better part of valour and so we cancelled the ride the day before. A correct decision.

So on Tuesday 25th November we did the ride we had already planned - from Central Park to Belsteads Coffee Shop in the Channels Hotel on the outskirts of Beaulieu. Twelve miles out for the longer ride, six miles out for the shorter ride and both groups combined for a six mile ride back to Central Park. The weather was excellent, dry and sunny but a bit chilly so warm clothing was necessary. Ian led a ride that got high praise from one of the riders 'he took us to places I never knew existed'. That's the spirit.



Friday 12th December was our group's Christmas lunch and a celebration of a very successful first year of riding together. We had lunch at The Two Brewers on Springfield Road and the pub was very welcoming. Thirteen people made lunch with others unable to make it due to other commitments. A group of valiant riders did a morning ride to earn extra bonus points.



Thanks to all our members for a splendid riding season where we had good fun and a few laughs along the way. It has been brilliant to see how many of our riders have gained confidence - and some extra stamina. It is a friendly and supportive group that lives up the Cycling for Fun name.

My special thanks to our valuable and hugely helpful Support Team - Mark, Roger, Ian, Eleanor, Jeff (and Geoff before he moved to Suffolk). The rides would not have been possible without their help and guidance. We are grateful.

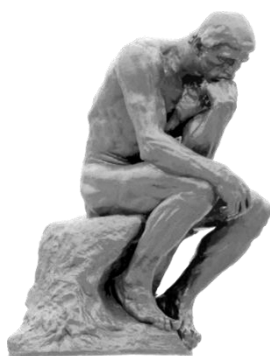
When the weather gets warmer we hope to see those members who haven't been able to join us much this year and are open to new members.

Happy New Year - our next ride is Friday 9th January - weather permitting.

Tony Cox

Reminder to Group Leaders
Please send copy for the February 2026 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 30th January 2026.

Philosophy & Religion



Voltaire: Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd.

Philosophy is not so much about coming up with answers to fundamental questions, as it is about the process of trying to find these answers. We use reasoning, rather than accepting without question conventional views or traditional authority.

There is no simple definition of the concept of religion that fully articulates all its dimensions. Encompassing spiritual, personal, and social elements, religion represents humanity's continuing quest for a spiritual dimension to the experience of life. The story of civilisation in our world is inseparable from the story of religion.

In the Chelmsford U3A group, our discussions are wide-ranging – from exploring the roots of western philosophy in ancient Greece, to the founding of Buddhism in India in the 5th century BC – and from the boundaries of *Free Speech* to the ethics of *Artificial Intelligence*.

We may focus on individual philosophers such *Friedrich Nietzsche* or on specific religious orders like the *Quakers*. We may even ask ourselves the question: *does God exist?*

U3A members all have significant experiences of life, and this puts us in a good position to approach these fundamental topics with reflection, reason, and with our own instincts.

Interested? Contact: jim88mackay@aol.co.uk

Interest Groups (as of 1st January 2026)

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	Marion Jenkins	
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus	
Bus Pass Group	2 nd Friday	varies	Maurice Austin	
Canasta/Card Games	1 st & 3 rd Mon	13.30	Julie Haggar	07511 629563
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	David Hall	
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	12.00	Neil Carroll	
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	Lindsay Whitehouse	0785 319 4093
Walking Group	1 st & 3 rd Fri	10.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
WYBIG	As & when		Mark Foster	07531 726417

The Group Leaders can be contacted by email from their group's page on the Chelmsford u3a website.

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






PLEASE NOTE THAT BECAUSE OF CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS MANY MEETING MAY BE CANCELLED OR REARRANGED.

Events in January 2026

MON		TUE		WED		THU		FRI		SAT		SUN	
29		30		31		1		2		3		4	
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure				👤 10:30 am: Philosophy 2		👤 9:45 am: Walking Group				👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 1	
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)				👤 12:00 pm: Lunch Club 3							
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi				👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday							
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday				👤 2:30 pm: Book Worms							
5		6		7		8		9		10		11	
👤 10:00 am: Philosophy & Religion		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 7:00 am: Fishing		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 Bus Pass Group					
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 10:30 am: Church Visits		👤 2:00 pm: Monthly Meeting - Wildlife photographers and conservationists		👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun					
👤 1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games		👤 2:00 pm: Local History						👤 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling					
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Mah-Jong											
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
12		13		14		15		16		17		18	
👤 All day Walks		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 10:00 am: IT Group		👤 10:00 am: Sewing and Crochet		👤 9:45 am: Walking Group				👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 2	
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 10:00 am: Short Walks					
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Discussion Group		👤 2:00 pm: Poetry		👤 2:15 pm: Science Group							
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											

19	20	21	22	23	24	25
<p>👥 11:15 am: Art Club</p> <p>👥 1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games</p> <p>👥 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday</p> <p>👥 2:30 pm: Book Group</p> <p>👥 7:00 pm: International Dining</p>	<p>👥 Mah-Jong</p> <p>👥 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: Tai Chi</p> <p>👥 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday</p>	<p>👥 10:30 am: Jazz and Blues Group</p> <p>👥 10:30 am: Spanish Conversation</p> <p>👥 12:30 pm: Lunch Club 4</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: Wonder of Words</p>	<p>👥 10:00 am: Quiz Group</p> <p>👥 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: Garden Group</p>	<p>👥 10:00 am: Birding</p> <p>👥 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling</p> <p>👥 12:30 pm: Luncheon Group 1</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: Family History</p>		
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
<p>👥 11:15 am: Art Club</p> <p>👥 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group</p>	<p>👥 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure</p> <p>👥 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun</p> <p>👥 12:30 pm: Lunch Club 2</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)</p> <p>👥 2:00 pm: Tai Chi</p> <p>👥 2:30 pm: Art Appreciation</p> <p>👥 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday</p>	<p>👥 2:00 pm: French Conversation</p>	<p>👥 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday</p>			<p>👥 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 1</p>

Categories

 Group Activity
  Holidays
  Monthly Meetings
  Outings
  Special Events
 All Categories

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