

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

Thursday 9th April 2026 Easter Social

Thursday 14th May 2026 Martin Oakin - The Story Of The Beatles part 1

See pages 18 and 19 for a list of the Chelmsford u3a Interest Groups, pages 20 and 21 for the Chelmsford u3a March 2026 Calendar.

Chelmsford u3a Membership - Renewal time is here again!



Thank you for your membership, our membership year begins on 1st March each year.

Please note that if your renewal is due you will receive a notification at the start of March, please look out for this email which will contain the details of how to pay.

View from the Chair

What a great turnout for this year's AGM, using the upstairs chapel made for comfortable seating and plenty of room to seat everyone. Thank you for your attendance, it was very much appreciated.

With the group leader's approval, we will continue to offer visitor members opportunities to join our teams. This promotes our u3a and has led to increase membership.

We will continue to run New Member meetings to help promote our groups and to provide opportunities for the formation of new groups.

I would encourage our group leaders, where it is possible, to support future “Meet the Groups” sessions. Your knowledge and expertise will provide encouragement for formation of new groups as well as recruitment for your own group.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Lesley for the tremendous job of being the chair for the last few years. She has moved us forward and helped to build an inclusive u3a where we have grown from 570 members when I joined in 2022 to over 750 members. I also want to thank Jan Parsons for her role as Secretary for the last year. I look forward to being your Chair and would encourage anyone looking to joining the committee in the future to come along, as observers you will be most welcome.

Committee Matters



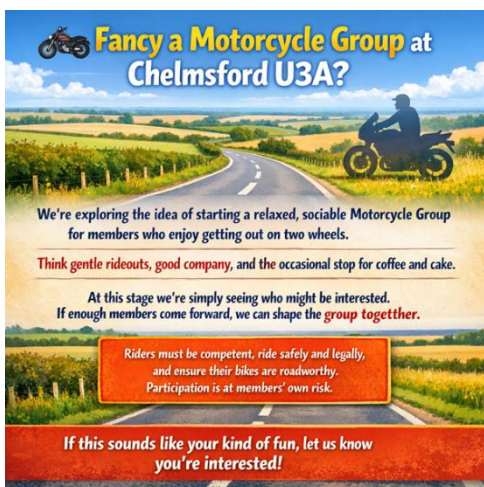
Our committee met on Wednesday 25th February and I can confirm that Wendy Hubbard will continue as Treasurer, Eddie Wood will continue as Speakers Organiser/Deputy Treasurer, Alan Mayo will continue as Membership Secretary. Mike Harmer will continue in his role of Marketing/Advertising. Brian Littlechild will continue in his role as Deputy Groups Coordinator & Printed Newsletter. Ann Bell is continuing in her committee role.

Sue Osbourn has volunteered to take over as the Secretary; John Burrow will fill my vacant role of Vice Chair. Lesley Wood has taken on the Group’s Coordinator role full time. Lynn Regan will continue as the Newsletter Organiser and take on an additional role as Minute Secretary. Karen Smallwood will be our Social Media/Digital Champion, a new role to propel us into a new arena. Ann Goodard will be Monthly Meetings Organizer/Support Groups Coordinator role.

A full list of committee members has been posted on the website and is **on page 16 of this Newsletter**.

Alan Caddy

Potential New Motorcycle Group



Fancy a Motorcycle Group at Chelmsford u3a?

We’re exploring the idea of starting a relaxed, sociable **Motorcycle Group** for members who enjoy getting out on two wheels. Think gentle ride-outs, good company, and the occasional stop for coffee and cake.

At this stage we’re simply seeing who might be interested. If enough members come forward, we can shape the group together.

A few essentials: riders must be competent, ride safely and legally, and ensure their bikes are roadworthy. As with all u3a activities involving personal transport, participation is at members’ own risk.

If this sounds like your kind of fun, let us know you’re interested.

Email: lesleywood54@yahoo.com

New Group Proposal: Chelmsford u3a Community Choir – Led by Professional Singer Deborah Aloba

We are delighted to share that Deborah Aloba, a highly experienced professional singer and singing teacher, is offering to lead a brand-new Chelmsford u3a Choir following her retirement.

Deborah brings three decades of professional performance and teaching, a degree in music, and a master's in vocal pedagogy. Her approach is warm, inclusive, and confidence-building, and she has worked with choirs on everything from Mozart to Queen, Gershwin to G&S, folk songs, gospel, musical theatre, and even a touch of rock and roll.



A Generous Offer

Deborah is kindly offering her time and expertise completely free of charge to Chelmsford u3a. The only cost to members would be a contribution towards hall hire, once a suitable venue is arranged.

What the Choir Might Look Like

Deborah's vision is to create a friendly, flexible choir where everyone—regardless of experience—can take part. Her suggested structure includes:

- Gentle warm-ups and vocal exercises
- Learning parts together, starting with accessible pieces
- A cappella singing if no accompanist is available
- Optional small solos or sectional singing for those who enjoy it
- More ambitious pieces as confidence grows
- Helpful practice resources (e.g., YouTube part recordings)
- And of course... a cuppa and a biscuit before heading home

Deborah's aim is simple: to make singing joyful, sociable, and open to all.



Pianists – We'd love to hear from you

If anyone in Chelmsford u3a can play the piano confidently enough to accompany the choir—even occasionally—Deborah would be delighted. An accompanist would broaden the musical possibilities enormously.

Interested in Joining?

At this stage we are simply gathering expressions of interest.

If you would like to be part of this new choir—or if you could offer piano accompaniment—please let us know. **Contact the Groups Coordinator: lesleywood54@yahoo.com**

Philosophy & Religion 2

Leader: Jim Mackay

The first meeting of Philosophy & Religion 2 was held on Wednesday 25th February. Subsequent meetings will be held on the 4th Wednesday of each month, 2 to 4 pm. For more information please contact Jim Mackay via the Chelmsford u3a website/

Sunday Lunch Group 1

Leader: John Tritton

Seven of us met for lunch on the first Sunday of the month, and this time it was Sandra Ray's turn to choose the venue, which was The Fox & Raven at Chelmer Village. It is right next door to another of our favourite venues, Miller & Carter. Like many other venues, they require an upfront deposit of £5pp.

There were seven of us, and the menu was quite varied with plenty of choice. All of us enjoyed our meal and there was plenty of banter and chat going around which was perfect for such a miserable day weather-wise outside. However, we did sometimes have difficulty in getting the attention of a waitress as they seemed extremely busy, but other than that another pleasant lunch was had by all.

John brought a Mitchell's & Butler voucher offering us all a 20% discount. However, this was only available on the whole bill, which meant a lot of arithmetic had to be done in order to work out our individual payments, not forgetting to subtract our £5 deposits! We got there in the end.

The Fox & Raven is a nice pub and we shall certainly eat there again. Unfortunately we forgot to get a group photo, so you will have to use your imagination.

Sandra Ray & John Tritton

Wonder of Words

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

We returned to meet this month at the Newspaper Room in the Library. We are committed to writing a script for an audio play and agreed a framework so that members will write individual scenes. We decided to defer any discussion around a performance until the script is written, and edited, to our satisfaction.

Our writing this month tested our descriptive and artistic capabilities. We were shown photographs by Elliot Erwit. He was a French/American photographer, who produced black and white photographs of absurd and ironic settings within everyday situations. One member at a time had the task of writing a description of a photograph. When that description was read out loud the rest of us had to draw what we thought the photograph showed.

This exercise showed that we have very little talent for drawing, but our writing skills were sharpened by the exercise. There were some moments of humour when we drew the legs of a camel, but we should have drawn the legs of a dog!

We finished with a very short exercise to write a few sentences about a particular character, real or imaginary. That exercise also had its moment of humour, but you really needed to be there to have understood it.

The group remains open to new members. Our room capacity is limited, but if anyone is interested please contact me via the contact link on the website and we can arrange for interested members to attend initially as a guest, to see if the group is for them.

Lindsay Whitehouse Group Leader

London - The City & its People Group

Leader: Berry Cornell

If you would like to join the London Group please contact the membership secretary Chris Rycroft for further information: Tel no. 01245 473047 email: c.rycroft123@btinternet.com.

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

- 23rd Mar Talk - Kensington & the Great Exhibition of 1851 - speaker Kathy Lancaster.
- 27th Apr Talk - Slavery in the City - speaker David Williams.
- 18th May** Visit - Stephens House & Gardens. **A flyer is on page 17 of this Newsletter.**
- 22nd Jun Annual walk in the City - Money Tour: coffee shops, Bank, Royal Exchange with City of London Guides. A flyer will be in the April Newsletter.
- 27th Jul Visit - Thames Barrier & Greenwich. A flyer will be in the May Newsletter.
- 24th Aug Talk - The building of St. Pauls - speaker Alison Woollard

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

Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout



Nine of us assembled in Chelmsford Library (for the final time – see the penultimate paragraph) for our monthly meeting on 18 February 2026.

Our members had participated in a variety of activities despite the continual wet weather. One had attended a light show at Canary Wharf. Another had been to a concert at the O2 Area where the lead soloist (a violinist) was only fourteen. On a separate visit to the O2 she had seen

the Strictly Come Dancing tour show. A third had been to Yorkshire and had visited the All Creatures Great and Small museum in Thirsk where James Harriott practised (his real name was James Wight).

One of our members caused much amusement when he described how his granddaughter had been picked to take part in a football tournament. Unfortunately, he used the word for grandmother instead of granddaughter, which had us all imagining a very elderly lady running around on a football pitch! Our member took it in good spirit when we pointed out his slip up!

After completing last month's test on Spanish culture and examining some colloquial Spanish phrases, we played our version of the radio show "Just A Minute", asking each of our members to talk for a minute on a random subject put to them. These included "which famous person from history would you like to be?" (our member chose Gilbert White, the 19th century botanist, an interesting choice); a recollection of a camping trip; and life in the Year 2100. Unfortunately, our member struck a rather gloomy note here, so we moved on quickly to lift the mood!

Our next meeting on 18th March 2026 will be in Room 2 in Christ Church, New London Road.

If you can hold a basic conversation in Spanish and are keen to improve your language skills, we will be happy to include you in our meetings. Please note that we limit the number of members to twelve and there are already eleven of us, so if you are interested, please contact us sooner rather than later!

David Gout

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590



For our talk on 3rd February we had two speakers for the price of one. We booked Mike Fogg to take us on a toe to top tour of the Moot Hall, Maldon, but Mike explained that he was simply providing the photos. He had originally taken them for a course, but had now collated them to illustrate a talk to be given by Penney McAvoy. Penney used to be a regular guide at the Moot Hall so definitely knows her way around the history and the features of the building.

The Maldon Moot is one of 15 Halls known to survive in England and dates to the 15th Century. The land was owned by Robert D'arcy who arranged the affairs of rich widows on behalf of the king. One such widow was Alice Fitzlangley who had her affairs arranged by marrying D'arcy. In 1420 he wished to impress and built a brick home using local bricks and Flemish bricklayers. Those bricks are evident in the spiral staircase which links the three storeys and leads to the roof. There are 63 steps from the ground floor to the roof opening.

The ground floor Committee Room has interesting graffiti relating to a ship from 1740 as many of those passing through were prisoners from the ships at the Hythe. They would have been held in cells in the cellar which opened on to the prison yard. The Courtroom was on the First floor, designed as a 'well court' and built by John Sadds. The brickwork here displays fancy trefoils over the fireplace which have been dated to prove that this is the oldest secular decorated brick building in England.

On the Second floor is a draw-leaf table from the 16th century which is so heavy it must have been built *in situ*. The D'arcy family sold the Hall in 1525 for £22, and in 1576 it was sold to the town Council for £55. Also in this room are a long-case clock made in Chelmsford, and a portrait of Thomas Plume, the benefactor of the school and library.

Inspired by the talk and photos, the Local History group have booked a visit to the Moot Hall for 6 October. I hope it isn't raining when we reach the roof so that we can see the views across the Hythe.

The next 3 items in our 2026 programme are:

3 rd March	Porridge revisited at Chelmsford Prison	Lindsay Whitehouse
7 th April	VISIT: guided walk around Gosbecks Archaeological Park, Colchester	Richard Bale
5 th May	A tale of fire, water and waste – Chelmsford City centre	Yvonne Lawrence

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

Jane Humphreys

Essex Branch of the Historical Association

The Mayas – Masters of Time: ancient Maya astronomy, calendars, prophecies and games.

By Ian Mursell Miranda Net Fellow, Institute of Educ. London University

2.30pm Saturday 21st March at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford CM1 2XB.

Visitors and prospective members warmly welcomed – £5. Booking not required

Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly

This month we went to Broomfield Church for a very enjoyable afternoon. We went there to see the work of the local artist, Rosemary Rutherford, who was the daughter of the vicar. Ros Mercer gave us a very interesting talk and slide show in the hall about Rosemary's life, before we went into the church to see the magnificent stained glass window, fresco in the tower, and some of Rosemary's paintings. Her portraits and flower pictures were outstanding.

Rosemary went to the Slade School and to Benton End where she developed her painting skills, and studied for a year to learn how to make stained glass. The resulting large window in the church with its vibrant colours of purple, green, red.... really stands out and, as it was a sunny day when we went there, the light reflection through the window showed it at its best. The fresco painted on the inner wall of the tower with Christ and the figures in the boat in the stormy sea was thought-provoking.



In the photographs we saw, she was always smiling and sadly Rosemary died at the age of 59 in 1972. .

Our afternoon ended with some great refreshments.

In March we travel up to the National Gallery to see the exhibition 'Joseph Wright of Derby' and the Annual Exhibition of the Royal Society of British Artists.

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

At our February meeting we discussed The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O' Farrell. The Marriage Portrait by Maggie O' Farrell is a 16th-century historical fiction novel which reimagines the life of Lucrezia de' Medici, who marries the Duke of Ferrara, Alfonso, at age fifteen. The novel is inspired by the historical mystery surrounding her sudden death at age sixteen. The story follows a dual timeline, beginning in 1561 at a remote hunting lodge where 16-year-old Lucrezia realizes her husband, Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of

Ferrara, intends to kill her. The narrative then flashes back to her childhood in Florence to explain how she reached this point.

As frequently happens the group was divided in their opinion about the book. With comments ranging from “I found the book rather tedious, the over description of clothes and decor was distracting and frankly boring. It made the book over long and difficult to finish”. To “The descriptions of surroundings and period features, as well as the status of women was vivid and memorable. The twist at the end of the maid being killed in bed instead of Lucrezia was a masterful touch”.

Our books for the next three meeting are:

Mon Mar 16 th	Brighton Rock by Graham Greene
Mon Apr 20 th	Sense and sensibility by Jane Austen
Mon May 18 th	The Predicament by William Boyd

Lunch Club – Group 3

Leader: Loraine Linard and Barbara Childs

We had booked for fourteen and fortunately everyone was able to join us for our lunch at the Rose & Crown, Great Waltham where most of us had visited before. As on previous occasions, the staff could not have been more accommodating, allocating a large section for us and arranging the tables into one large table so we were able to chat more easily.

The menu included Specials of the Day, the usual pub favourites, and the main menu where “Toad out of the Hole” and Skate Wings along with Lamb Hotpot and the usual pub fayre could be found. I discovered that most of the food was made from scratch on the premises and I for one totally enjoyed my meal and by the sight of the empty plates, it would appear most people did.

Unfortunately, we were so busy chatting that no-one thought to take any pictures – my apologies, perhaps next time!

Lynn Reagan



IT Group

Leader: Lyn Parsons

The IT Group will be meeting on 11th March 10.00-11.30 Christ Church New London Road Chelmsford.

If you are would like some support for your device, phone, tablet or laptop come along and speak to our support members. We have a wide range of skills for both Android and Apple

This is a drop-in group, no need to book, you may only need to come to the meetings once or twice to acquire the knowledge you need. There is no charge for joining or attending the sessions as the Chelmsford u3a committee have agreed to pay the room booking to support this valuable group for all members.

Tea/coffee are available, we ask for 50p donation for this to help buy further supplies. You might like to bring your own mug. Please come along if you need any IT support.

Bookworms

Leader: Marion Jenkins

This month the group read *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini. This 2003 novel set against the turbulent history of Afghanistan after the Russian invasion, follows the story of Amir as he grows up in a privileged family in Kabul. It continues as he moves with his father to start a new life in the US and concludes with a return to his home country to rescue the son of his best friend Hassan. The central theme of the story, Amir's guilt at his failure to rescue Hassan from a brutal attack in childhood dominates, although the book also explores the father-son relationship in reasonable depth. This is fundamentally a story of friendship, betrayal and ultimately redemption.

The book produced a number of different reactions from group members, including whether the main character was, or was not, likeable. There were also mixed views on the ending and whether Amir could actually be forgiven for the things that he did. All in all not a book without controversy and at times a difficult read.

Our next reads are

March - *My Book of Treasures* by Joanna Lumley

April - *Moonrise* by Sarah Crossan

May - *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding

Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex, Administrator: Michael Gray



This exquisite offering bag is one of many treasures housed in the uniquely interesting Black Chapel in North End. Rarely open to visitors – two Sunday services a month – it will be hosting our Church Visiting Group on June 3rd, the third of our visits this season. By the time you read this, we may well have completed our first visit on March 4th. The full season, unveiled in Bobbingworth that day, will be published to all our members with the visit report, and in this Newsletter's April edition.

New members are always welcome, you don't have to be a churchgoer to be a church visitor! There is no membership fee, and no commitment. Get in touch via the Chelmsford u3a website.

Bus Pass Group

Leader Maurice Austin

The Bus Pass Group does not go out in January or February, we stay snuggled under a collective duvet until the chances of being able to see out of misted-up bus windows has improved. For the sake of propriety, it had better be made clear that the snuggling is totally metaphorical!

It is not practical to set out a detailed programme for the year ahead as bus companies can, and do, change their timetables at fairly short notice to meet changing demands, contract changes, roadworks and so on. I have plenty of ideas for trips, but they are “pencilled in” at this stage.

Our usual format is for me to arrange to take you to an interesting venue and let you wander round on your own, or with friends. Occasionally I will suggest a few things for you to do, or perhaps a trip on an open-top bus, but that is optional. I suggest a collective time and route home as well as a few alternatives.

Some of our members do their own research on a venue and we have those who love visiting churches, bookshops, specialist food providers and so on.

The most common activity is to find a coffee shop or hostelry on arrival, we have “Spoons” aficionados, those who like greasy spoon cafes and some who are more refined! Most venues cater for all tastes!!

This year, I am going to try a couple of initiatives:

In the summer (date to be decided), we will go by train to Harwich and have the option of a walk round this delightful historic town or go on the ferry to Felixstowe and/or Shotley. Bus passes will not be accepted on the train or the ferry, but if there are enough of us, we can get a group travel ticket on the train. Logistically, this is a bit more difficult than the no-fuss use of bus passes, but we will see how it goes! This trip can be done by bus, but it would be difficult to get back to Chelmsford at a reasonable hour.



On 8th May, I have made arrangements with the National Trust for us to go to Coggeshall where we will have a private opening of Grange Barn where drinks and coffees will be available. Paycockes House will also be open, and we will be able to pre-book guided tours. Fuller details will be provided nearer the time.

There is an admission fee for these properties, unless you are already a member of the NT. For those not wanting to explore these lovely buildings, Coggeshall has a host of other period properties to explore, including a marvelous church, St Peter Ad Vincula.

There will be a trip each other month from March (see below), usually on the second Friday. There is normally no need to commit in advance or even to let me know. Just turn up. I look forward to seeing you.

The first trip of the year will be on Friday 20th March (NOTE NOT the 13th as I have a funeral to go to that day!). We will meet at Chelmsford Bus Station, stand 6 for the 10.12 First 73 to Heybridge Basin and Maldon. There will be several options. The bus is due at Heybridge Basin turning point (The Colliers) at 11.08 from where it is a short walk to the Basin, its sea-lock with the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation,

several pubs and a nice tearoom. From there, it is a pleasant walk of about an hour to Heybridge and Maldon which has numerous eateries and lovely shops, including one Essex's few independent bookshops. For those staying around the Basin, we can catch the 15.50 bus back to Chelmsford, due at 16.45. I will provide other bus times to those who are more adventurous!

Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499

On Friday 27th February, twelve members of the Birding Group met at Old Hall Marshes RSPB Reserve. We were met by the Reserve Manager, Keiran Alexander who gave us an interesting talk about the management of the Reserve, its history and proposed future development. I was very surprised to be told that the site was purchased mainly with money from Eric Morecombe's will.

From the car park, before we set off we could hear Song Thrush, Cettis Warbler and Robin. As the site and paths were particularly muddy from the rainfall this year we set off on the short walk. In the fields near the car park we saw Moorhen, Brent Geese, Crow, and a Marsh Harrier.

When we got to the river bank we were able to spot Shell Duck, Rooks, Starlings, Lapwing, Widgeon, Shoveller, Coot, Grey Plover, Redshank, Godwit, Teal and Mallard.

On the sea wall I was amazed to see on the opposite side of the river what must have been near 50-60 Avocet. This is a particular favourite bird of mine due to its colouration and elegance. I am used to seeing one or two but never before have I seen such a flock.



We moved on and saw Oystercatcher, Tufted Duck and Greylag Geese. At this point on the fields behind us we saw four Hares, two of which were standing upright on their hind legs apparently about to box. But the female of the group wasn't interested and loped off, pursued by the ardent males.

The Brent Geese now decided to take off and fly past us in our elevated position on the sea wall it almost felt that we were flying with them. We continued our walk and saw Swan, Pochard, Scaup, Pintail and last but not least a Skylark.

Our next meeting is due to be on 27th March at Wallsea Island. I will email members with full details soon.

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 10 am 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.

Birding Group Program

24th April: Wat Tyler Country Park SS16 4UM

The RSPB's offices in Wat Tyler Country Park are the hub for the charity's nature conservation works on the South Essex Marshes

22nd May: Fingeringhoe Wick Nature Discovery Park, South Green Road Fingeringhoe Colchester, CO5 7DN
Fingeringhoe Wick was Essex Wildlife Trust's first nature reserve (1961), some years later it was where the Trust opened their first visitor centre. Sixty years on visitors are still coming to see this magical place. Set in a spectacular position overlooking the Colne Estuary the reserve offers a sense of real peace and quiet and a chance to escape from it all.

26th June: Walton -on the Naze Old Hall Lane, Walton on the Naze CO14 8LE

The Naze is a unique coastal landscape of outstanding geological and biological importance. As the most easterly peninsula in Essex it is an important site for migrating birds and boasts a number of different habitats, both terrestrial and marine.

WBIG Group

Leader Mark Foster

There is a WhatsApp Group for u3a Members

Further to my message in previous News letter, the suggested u3a WhatsApp group specifically available to members of the Chelmsford u3a is now up and running and available to interested parties.

The intention is that it can be a notice board to see if like minded people would care to join in with a specific activity... (i.e. "Would You Be Interested in Going?" - shortened to "WYBIG")

For example, "There's a Pink Floyd Tribute act coming up soon - is anyone interested in going as a group?" or "I'm in town on Tuesday - would anyone like to meet up for a coffee at Bunego's Cafe in John Lewis at one o'clock? "

This isn't intended to replace any existing u3a activity. It's aimed at one-off situations that MAY be of interest to a handful. These functions would not need to be u3a activities and would be organised by the participants - so the u3a Chelmsford organisation would not be responsible if anything goes wrong.

Our activities can be seen on the webpage <https://markforster3000.wixsite.com/wybig>

If interested then please email me at markforster3000@aol.com.

Cycling for Fun Group

Leader: Tony Cox

As everyone will remember the weather in January and early February was horrible, cold, heavy rain and strong winds. So as the rides were intended to be fun we kept an eye on the weather forecasts and cancelled the planned rides on Friday 9th and Tuesday 27th of January. However there was a window of opportunity on Friday 13th February. Yes, you read the date correctly. What could possibly go wrong.

An interesting ride that morning on a number of levels. With the start of the New Year we were delighted to receive four new expressions of interest in the Group. Five riders turned up at Central Park Cafe for the

first ride of 2026. We welcomed new member Richard E and set off in chilly but dry weather. Our normal routine is to lead two rides, one shortish and the other longer to a cafe. Our destination was The Bakehouse Café at Cooksmill Green. My big mistake was that I got totally confused about the agreement we had made just 20 minutes before at the Central Park Cafe and instead of leading the shorter 6 mile ride I (stupidly) followed Roger and Richard on the longer 10 mile ride and by the time I woke up to what I had done we were past the point of no return. So Bev and Jeff followed me when they had wanted to do the shorter ride. Mega praise for Bev and Jeff for dealing excellently with this longer than expected distance and some rather serious hills. And minus points for me. A fair amount of good-humoured banter was my reward.



All of this put us behind the planned schedule. The combined group then rode together the 7 miles home. And lo and behold the weather was mild until.... we left The Bakehouse at 12 and the rain started and the wind blew but we all got home safely. My best wishes to everyone and huge apologies.....!

Our next ride was on Tuesday 24 February. We started as usual at Central Park Café and the weather was mild enough to have our morning coffee outside. We headed for one of our very favourite cafés, The Stores at Great Waltham. Roger led the longer ride of 11 miles and I managed to lead the shorter ride of 6 miles without foul ups. Seven riders started and we even managed to pick up Chris on the way. The Stores did a roaring trade in Almond Croissants and coffee. On the return journey of 6 miles the sun actually came out and even though we were in February a few of us had too many layers of clothes on. It was an excellent day out and made such a lovely change from being stuck indoors.



Garden Group

Group Leader: Chris Bellamy

Honey Bees - Thursday 26th February

The talk covered how honey bees live and operate, plus in addition to what you can do to help pollinators and other insects in general. During his illustrated talk Mike said there are 44,000 beekeepers in the UK, 270,000 managed bee colonies. Mike described the range of other beneficial insects, different types of bees and their life histories.

Before retiring, Mike Abel worked for a company called Agralan, who marketed beneficial insects for pest control to commercial growers and amateur gardeners. Prior to that he was a lecturer at Writtle Agricultural College.

2026 Garden Group Programme

26th Mar **Farm, fruit, factory and family** - the story of Wilkin & Sons of Tiptree by Nick Wickenden.

23rd Apr **Visit to Hampton Court** (sold out – contact Eddie Wood ejwood34@gmail.com to go on the waiting list)

Talks are held at 2pm at Boreham Village Hall, Main Road, Boreham CM3 TJD. You will find Boreham Village Hall in Main Road, Boreham CM3 3JD Parking is available. The hall can also be reached by the 371 Bus from Chelmsford City Centre, or Chelmer Village shopping Centre. Coffee/ tea biscuit prior to talk. £3 to cover Speaker fee and hall hire.

We welcome you to join us. To confirm your attendance please contact:

Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com

Deputy: Paul Chaplin paulchaplin@talktalk.net

Thursday 19th February 2026 Researching and Installing a Heat Pump in our own house by Paul Chaplin



Paul deputy leader of the Science Group gave an hour-long illustrated lecture with questions at the end which produced an interesting discussion.

Paul started by quoting several websites that say installing heat a pump is not a DIY job to which Paul responded 'Oh yes, it is!' He has had many years' experience of pipe fitting (or plumbing as it is commonly known) and is an engineer, the two coming together.

Paul started his lecture with some basic physics and giving a few definitions of Force, Joules and Watts with demonstrations. One small apple (mass 0.1kg) raised 1m in 1 second uses one Watt of energy. He attempted to get the audience to read crisp packets and other food wrappers to divide the kJ reading by the Kcal reading to get 4.18 the Specific heat of water. This is the amount of heat in kW to raise one kg of water through 1 deg C. A key in the calculations of establishing heat pump and radiator sizes.

Next, Paul did a comparison between gas boilers and heat pumps. The gas boiler provides the heating water at a constant temperature (once it has achieved a stable state) with more or less the same efficiency if it is mild or cold outside. The heat pump can behave very differently with computer control - it changes the output temperature depending on the outside temperature and its Coefficient of Performance (CoP) drops as the outside temperature drops. The CoP is the ratio of input energy/output energy. The heat pump works by absorbing energy from the air (or ground) via an evaporator in a refrigeration cycle. During this cycle the refrigerant is compressed which releases the heat to a heat exchanger through which the water passes that heats the home. If the CoP is 4 then 1kW of electricity is used to provide 4kW of energy to the house.

Paul was confident the heat pump would heat the house in a satisfactory manner because in 2020 he installed underfloor heating (UFH) to the whole of the ground floor. Paul watched a number of videos by 'Heat Geeks' and 'Skill Builder' as well as advice from a heating engineer all of which provided many ideas, hints and tips.

The conclusion from the videos and advice was keep it simple with minimal control and minimal night setback. To check that this concept was correct Paul monitored his gas boiler system for over a year and produced graphs and tables to prove this concept was correct. The tables showed that running the house at 19 deg C at night used less gas than a night setback of 16 deg C. The UFH was originally zoned and controlled by wall thermostats/timers for each room. The kitchen on from 6am to 9am, no flow in dining room and living room 4pm to 10pm each set to either 19 or 20 deg C. Then by reconfiguring the control systems to on all the time heating the whole ground floor and monitoring gas used v outside temperature showed no real difference in gas consumed.

Paul has been monitoring the heat pump in the same way and the CoP varies with the outside temperature for which he showed the graph. Finally, he compared the gas and now electricity bills which currently show a saving.

All this provoked an interesting and lively discussion particularly where do you place the HP? This can be a major stumbling block for a retro fit installation. Also, the larger radiators are required because the flow temperatures are so much less than that of a gas boiler.

Paul has started to prepare for his next project by visiting the Caravan, Camping and Motorhome Show with Chris Bellamy in order to gather ideas and observe the latest developments in campervan world order to design and fit out a small electric van (Nissen eNV200) as a micro campervan. Another talk in the future?

2026 Science Group Programme

Thursday 19th March TBA – members will be informed via email.

Thursday 16th April Medical Detection Dogs.

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

Made in Basildon. Sold to the World

by Maxim McDonald, Managing Director, Gerald McDonald & Co. Ltd
18th March 2026, 19:00 Anglia Ruskin University

Quantum Information

26th March 2026, 19:00 Anglia Ruskin University

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

National u3a Survey.

We'd like to invite you to take part in a national u3a survey that explores what u3a means to you and how being part of u3a has impacted your lives.

The feedback will be used to grow membership, demonstrate the impact of u3a and raise our profile.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/u3a-me>

To thank you for your time you will be entered in a John Lewis £100 prize draw. The survey closes on 31st March.

Thank you for your support.

Reminder to Group Leaders
Please send copy for the April 2026 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.
All copy must arrive no later than Friday 27th March 2026.

Chelmsford u3a Committee

Position	Name
Chair	Alan Caddy
Vice Chair	John Burrow
Secretary	Sue Osbourn
Treasurer	Wendy Hubbard
Membership Secretary	Alan Mayo
Speaker Organiser/Deputy Treasurer	Eddie Wood 01245 601359
Newsletter Coordinator/Minutes Secretary	Lynn Regan
Groups Coordinator	Lesley Wood
Deputy Groups Coordinator & Printed Newsletter	Brian Littlechild
Social Media/Digital Champion	Karen Smallwood
Marketing/Advertising	Mike Harmer
Monthly Meetings Organiser/Support Groups coordinator	Ann Goddard
Committee Member	Ann Bell

LONDON – THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE GROUP

**Visit to Stephens House and Gardens
18th May 2026**

Originally owned by the Bishop of London, the land on which Stephens House stands has passed through many hands from Knights Templars to Knights Hospitallers then seized by Henry VIII until finally being bought in 1874 by Henry Charles (Inky) Stephens, son of the inventor of the famous blue-black ink.



A small exhibition from the Stephens collection is on view in the house. The grade II listed building was gifted by ‘Inky’ Stephens for the ‘use and enjoyment of the people’ and includes extensive gardens designed by Robert Marnock said to be the best landscape gardener of his time. The gardens contain a unique collection of trees plus lush planting.

We will be having a tour of the House with plenty of time to explore the gardens.

A buffet lunch of salads, quiches, meat and dessert will be provided.

Coach times and pickup points

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

Cost £47.50 Covers Guided tour, lunch, coach and driver’s tip.

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

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***Please return tear off slip to Berry: mayberrynotes@outlook.com or address below
Visit to Stephens House including guided tour, lunch and coach:
18th May 2026 Cost £47.50 pp***

Ch. u3a mem. No/s _____ No. places required _____ Tel No. _____

Names/s _____ £ _____ Email address _____

*Please pay by BACs if possible payable to: The u3a Chelmsford A/C No 67361669
Sort code 08.92.99 Reference LGSH
Or by cheque payable to Chelmsford u3a and sent to:*

Berry Cornell, 24 Park Drive, Ingatestone CM49DT For confirmation please include email address or telephone no.

Interest Groups (as of 01/03/2026)

Group Leaders may be contacted by phone or by email via the relevant group page in our website

<https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/>

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
All Day Walks	2 nd Monday		Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Art Appreciation	4 th Tuesday	14.00	Brenda Kelly	01277 840621
Art Club	Mondays	11.15	Peter Anderton	07773 074105
Art for Pleasure	Tuesdays	9.30	Les Cooper	07976 292362
Birding	4 th Friday	10.00	Alan Alexander	07712 818499
Book Group	3 rd Monday	14.30	Andy Moir	01245 440007
Bookworms	1 st Thursday	14.20	Marian Jenkins	07986616748
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus	
Bus Pass Group	2 nd Friday	varies	Maurice Austin	
Canasta/Card Games	1 st & 3 rd Monday	1.30	Julie Haggar	07511 629563
Church Visits	1 st Wednesday	10.15	Brian Greatrex	01245 258833
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale	
Cycling for Fun	2 nd Fri, 4 th Tues	varies	Tony Cox	
Discussion Group	2 nd Tuesday	13.00	Brian Littlechild	
Family History	4 th Friday	14.00	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Fishing Group	Wednesdays		Alan Caddy	
French Conversation	2 nd & 4 th Wed	14.00	David Hall	01245 284409
Garden Group	4 th Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
IT group	2 nd Wednesday	10.00	Lyn Parsons	
International Dining	3 rd Monday	7 pm	Jennie Cappin	01245 358629
Jazz and Blues	3 rd Wednesday	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	Thurs 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240
Philosophy & Religion	1 st Monday	10.00	Jim Mackay	
Philosophy & Religion 2	4 th Wednesday		Jim Mackay	
Photos on Face Book	Online		Alan Mayo	07979 540053


Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
Pickleball Monday	Monday weekly	13.45	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Pickleball Tuesday	Tuesday weekly	15.00	Jayne Hughes	01245 495151
Pickleball Thursday	Thursday weekly	12.00	Neil Carroll	07964 386056
Poetry Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	14.00	Judith Boniface	01245 266316
Quiz	4 th Thursday	10.00	Laraine Linard	01245 475444
Rock & Pop Appreciation	2 nd Wednesday	15.00	Bruce Knight	07963 592328
Science Group	3 rd Thursday	13.45	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
Sewing, Knitting & Crochet	3 rd Thursday	11.00	Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517
Short Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245 466167
Spanish	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	David Gout	01245 268923
Summer Evening Walks	4 th Wednesday	4.30 pm	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Sunday Lunch 1	1 st Sunday	varies	John Tritton	
Sunday Lunch 2	3 rd Sunday	varies	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Tai Chi	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Caddy	
Ten Pin Bowling	2 nd & 4 th Fridays	10.30	Roger & Ruth Spall	01245 466486
Textiles (Fun with)	3 rd Monday	11.15	Chris McFarland	01245 263112
Theatre Outings	As and when		Lesley Wood	01245 601359
The Wonder of Words	3 rd Wednesday	14.00	Lindsay Whitehouse	01245 356363
Travel Group	See website		Anne Brereton	
Walking Group	1 st & 3 rd Fridays	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.

The Friends of Chelmsford Museums present

THE ANNUAL MUSEUM LECTURE

at Cramphorn Theatre (Studio), Civic Centre, Friday 20th March 2026 at 7.30 p.m.



LAYERS OF MEMORY:
THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE OF THE CHELMER VALLEY

Nigel Brown

Events in March 2026

MON		TUE		WED		THU		FRI		SAT		SUN	
23		24		25		26		27		28		1	
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation		👤 10:00 am: Quiz Group		👤 10:00 am: Birding		👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 1			
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun		👤 2:00 pm: Philosophy & Religion 2		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling					
👤 2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group		👤 12:30 pm: Lunch Club 2				👤 2:00 pm: Garden Group		👤 12:30 pm: Luncheon Group 1					
		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)						👤 2:00 pm: Family History					
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 2:30 pm: Art Appreciation											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
2		3		4		5		6		7		8	
👤 10:00 am: Philosophy & Religion		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 7:00 am: Fishing		👤 10:30 am: Philosophy 2		👤 9:45 am: Walking Group					
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 10:30 am: Church Visits		👤 12:00 pm: Lunch Club 3							
👤 1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games		👤 2:00 pm: Local History				👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday							
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Mah-Jong				👤 2:30 pm: Book Worms							
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
9		10		11		12		13		14		15	
👤 All day Walks		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 10:00 am: IT Group		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 Bus Pass Group		👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 2			
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation		👤 2:00 pm: Monthly Meeting		👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun					
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Discussion Group		👤 2:00 pm: Poetry				👤 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling					
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi		👤 2:15 pm: Rock & Pop Appreciation									
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											

	16		17		18		19		20		21		22
	👤 11:15 am: Art Club	👤 Mah-Jong		👤 10:30 am: Jazz and Blues Group	👤 10:00 am: Sewing and Crochet			👤 9:45 am: Walking Group					
	👤 1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games	👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 10:30 am: Spanish Conversation	👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday			👤 10:00 am: Short Walks					
	👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday	👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 12:30 pm: Lunch Club 4	👤 2:15 pm: Science Group								
	👤 2:30 pm: Book Group	👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi		👤 2:00 pm: Wonder of Words									
	👤 3:00 pm: Fun with Textiles	👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
	👤 7:00 pm: International Dining												
	23		24		25		26		27		28		29
	👤 11:15 am: Art Club	👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation	🎭 Moulin Rouge the Musical		👤 10:00 am: Birding						
	👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday	👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun		👤 2:00 pm: Philosophy & Religion 2	👤 10:00 am: Quiz Group		👤 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling						
	👤 2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group	👤 12:30 pm: Lunch Club 2			👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 12:30 pm: Luncheon Group 1						
		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)			👤 2:00 pm: Garden Group		👤 2:00 pm: Family History						
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 2:30 pm: Art Appreciation											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
	30		31		1		2		3		4		5
	👤 11:15 am: Art Club	👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 7:00 am: Fishing	👤 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)		👤 10:30 am: Church Visits	👤 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								



Friends of Hylands House

FRIENDS OF HYLANDS HOUSE

are delighted to invite you to a talk

CHELMSFORD IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Monday 20th April 2026 at 3pm

Speaker TONY TUCKWELL

Chelmsford was at the epicentre of a possible German invasion route. Evacuation plans were hastily hatched to move able-bodied Chelmsfordians to Oxfordshire via Dunmow and Welwyn. Meanwhile 6,000 soldiers from the Midlands were encamped in the area, many of them billeted in the town, others encamped at Widford, off the Roxwell Road and at Danbury with temporary tents in the town's parks. *Discover a great deal more plus Hylands House involvement on 20th April at 3pm Visitors welcome to...*

join us for Tony's talk in the Banqueting Room at Hylands House. Tea and coffee will be available from 2.45 pm after the Friends Annual General Meeting. There will be a small charge of £5 payable on arrival. Entry free to members.

Please email Berry Cornell (mayberrynotes@outlook.com) to let us know how many of your Group will be coming. Individual visitors welcome too. We look forward to meeting you.

Venue: Hylands House, Hylands Estate, Chelmsford CM2 8WQ

(To obtain free parking, please park in the main carpark and give your car registration in at reception as you enter the House. Limited mobility drivers may park in front of the House)

Registered Charity No 1059969



Book your u3a Festival 26 tickets now

u3a Festival 26 brings the movement together for fun, learning and new connections. Join us on Wednesday 1 July - Friday 3 July at The *University of York* for a celebration of everything that makes u3a so special.

There's a huge variety of activities on offer - here's a taster of what you can look forward to:

- Sparking new ideas at talks on a wide range of subjects.
- Getting moving at a fitness workshop or in a sports tournament.
- Exploring your creativity with hands-on craft workshops.
- Enjoying live performances by talented u3a musical groups - or have a go at making music yourself.

Places are limited - book your tickets and accommodation now to avoid missing out. Tickets cost £18 a day, or £50 for a three-day ticket.

For further information and details of how to book tickets and accommodation at the University of York see the u3a website

www.u3a.org.uk

