

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 10th September 2026 2:00pm – Andrew Baker - The Swinging Sixties

Thursday 8th October 2026 2:00pm – Bobbie Darbyshire - A Beginning, A Muddle & An End: Where Do Novelists Get Their Ideas?

Thursday 12th November 2026 2:00pm – Amanda Sutherland - Creative Hypnotherapy



Committee Vacancies

- Treasurer
- Website Content (Editor)
- Essex Network Steering Group – Beacon administrator

See page 25 for further details.

View from the Chair

The August social was very well attended despite the extreme heat we had over eighty members. Thank you all for coming along, it was a fun packed session with the music quiz being the highlight of the event. Thank you Ann and Bruce. We had cakes and savouries to enjoy with our drinks and a raffle with great prizes thanks to Eddie and Lesley. I would also like to thank all our members who helped with the smooth running of our social, without their help we could not run such a fun event.

We have over 60 groups who are active and are available for our members at Chelmsford u3a, and we are attracting many new members weekly. Our present membership level has increased again. We are over 800 and as I have already mentioned it is important that we continue to attract new members as this gives us the opportunity to start new activities. For example, our Rock and Pop Appreciation group. Again I would encourage you all to keep spreading the word about us and steer people to our website at Chelmsford u3a.



At next year's AGM a few members of our Committee will be stepping down having completed their time. This will create vacancies and offer opportunities to join the Committee. If you want to find out more about how our Committee works and would be interested in a role, please contact me at alan.caddy@btinternet.com or any Committee member.

If you are interested attending as an observer our next Committee meeting is on Wednesday 23rd September, at 10-00 am in room 2 at Christchurch, London Road.

Significant events from August 1926

On August 3rd 1926, Traffic lights were installed at Piccadilly Circus, London.

On August 18th, 1926, The first televised weather map was broadcast by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Washington, DC.

On August 27th 1926, The second Women's World Games (track and field competition for women) were conducted over three days at Slottsskogsvallen Stadium in Gothenburg, Sweden..

Alan Caddy



Proposed new group – Criminology

There is an ever-growing interest in crime. This is evidenced by the increasing amount of media attention devoted to criminogenic news stories and the law and order challenges facing our new Prime Minister. Additionally, more and more TV programmes feature compelling drama all about crime and crime fighting agencies.

If there is enough interest, I propose to set up a Criminology group. This will not be a dull academic study of crime, but we will try to get inside actual crimes and inside the minds of criminals and crime fighters.

CRIMINOLOGY

INVESTIGATION & ANALYSIS

Murder Club). We may set up our own appeal court with members taking on the roles of jurors, lawyers, and judges. Let's attempt a bit of criminal profiling as pioneered by the FBI at Quantico.

There is a vast range of potential activities and discussions we might cover. We could revisit old cases to determine if the guilty finding was sound (with a nod to the Thursday

There is an on-going debate about bringing back hanging. We would not dodge this difficult issue. There are many opportunities to explore hangings and executioners from our past.

We would not just be a discussion group. Visits would be an important part of group activities. There are many potential places to attract us, Crown, Magistrates and Coroners courts, museums of crime, prisons, victim support, probation, the Old Bailey.

We might have a lot of fun looking at various crime writers and TV/Film crime stories to determine their credibility.

The emphasis will be on having fun, learning new things, and taking in new experiences.

If this appeals to your inner Sherlock Holmes, please email me to express your interest. My email address is ljwhitehouse@mail.com

If there is sufficient interest, I will set up an initial meeting for us to discuss how to organise the group.

Lindsay Whitehouse

Strolling and Exploring Group

Leader: Chris Purse



See page 18 for a report of our walk on August 17th

The Strolling and Exploring group take short walks at an easy pace, stopping to look at historic sites, heritage, architecture, blue plaques, street art and anything else that make us pause, think and chat.

Our group is open to new members. Most of our walks will be in Chelmsford, but we may go further afield in future. Distances vary, typically two or three miles and no more than five, with a turnaround/bail-out point for anyone who wants to shorten the distance.

We plan and check routes on footpaths with good surfaces, avoiding steps and stiles where possible. When that isn't possible, we give notice in advance.

We usually start at Chelmsford Cathedral and finish at a café for a chat.

Even though the start and finish points may vary, they are usually close together and near public transport and parking.

Looking forward to seeing you strolling and exploring, but please note that the walks will be limited to a maximum of 15 people.

Upcoming walks:

September 18th 10.30 River Chelmer via a mortar emplacement, the Mill and Keith Harris & Orville.

October 16th 10.30 A Neolithic and Bronze Age fort, a Saxon cemetery and a giant arrowhead (or Spear)

November 13th 10.30 Crompton , Marconi, a Russian cannon captured in the Crimean war and the museum.

December 11th 10.30 The artwork installations of Newlands Spring

Philosophy Group (or Philosophy 2)

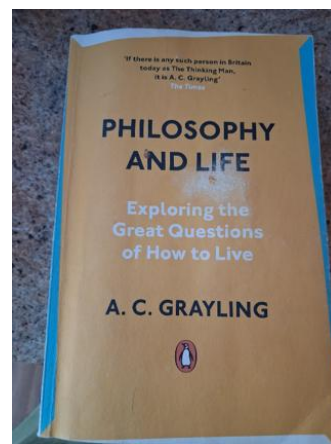
Leader: Julia McClure

A number of group members have sadly left the group over the last months, either because they moved from the area or due to family commitments. However, every dark cloud has a silver lining, so we now have the capacity to welcome new members who would be interested in joining the group. We meet on the 1st Thursday of every month, starting about 11:00 a.m., in a member's house.

We usually work our way through a book, using it to introduce new ideas and stimulate discussion. How fast we go depends on the group members present and their interpretation of the text and/or whether they agree or disagree. Perhaps surprisingly, there is always some laughter (we take it seriously, just not all the time...)

We are currently working our way through AC Grayling's "Philosophy and Life". The purpose of the book is to look at various teachings from the classical schools of philosophy on how we should live our lives and their application to the ethical challenges of living in our current time. There is a lot of historical and biographical background in the text, and, while the context it gives is relevant, we don't usually discuss that, but rather the ideas presented

Please contact me via the u3a website if you are interested.



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.

The committee are planning some special events to celebrate our 21st birthday next year including a return visit to Westminster Abbey to hear the Purcell Singers, a guided tour of St Pauls Cathedral, a visit to the new London Museum and hopefully a visit to the Thames Barrier – cancelled last year due to the impossibility of communicating with anyone reliable.

Our future programme now reads:

28th Sep Visit – The Roman Baths & The Roman Baths & The Pool of London area.

26th Oct Talk - London's Underground part II - speaker Tony Tuckwell

23rd Nov Talk - Historic Spitalfields – speaker Richard Pusey
14th Dec Film - Passport to Pimlico and refreshments

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

Sunday Lunch Group 1

Leader: John Tritton



Just three brave souls ventured out into the searing heat at The Cricketers, Mill Green. Actually, it was quite pleasant with all doors and windows open and a cool view of the woods opposite. A super venue for the hot weather.

The food was delicious and we enjoyed our separate choices. The roast chicken main and cheesecake dessert come highly recommended.

Elizabeth Salter (& John Tritton)

The next meal on 6th September will be organised by Alan Baker.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact John: tritton405@gmail.com

Wonder of Words

Leader: Lindsay Whitehouse

This month, our fun with words involved a quiz where we were required to work out the meaning of old and obscure words from the English Language, with the assistance of a short clue. We learned that Donald Trump is a good example of an ultracrepidarian, that Marilyn Monroe's callipygian was much admired, and that a doodle sack is an old word for bagpipes.

Our main writing task this week revolved around poetry, but first we all read out a favourite poem, and talked a little about the poet. In this way we learned that "To a Mouse" written by Robert Burns was also the inspiration for Steinbeck to write "Of Mice and Men". We discovered that Dale Wynbrow wrote about

“The Man in the Mirror” 54 years before a pop song of that title by Michael Jackson hit the charts. Now we know that Rudyard Kipling was named after Lake Rudyard in Staffordshire.

Our tasking required us to write a poem that incorporated seven words selected at random by each member before the meeting. It produced some strange results!

We have identified a possible alternative meeting place in Central Chelmsford which we will trial for our September meeting. This place would significantly increase our capacity. Therefore, now is the time for any potential new members to give our group a try. Click on the contact icon on the website to send me a message if you are interested.

Lindsay Whitehouse Group Leader

Lunch Club 4

Leader: Val Norfolk



On August 12th, our group of 14 gathered for a relaxing lunch at the Brewhouse & Kitchen, located directly opposite Chelmsford train station. We were delighted to welcome three new members (Helen, Sue, and Lance) who joined us for the occasion.

We were initially seated outside at a nice, shady table, but the bustling street noise prompted a move indoors. The team kindly relocated us to the beautiful, historic Anne Knight Room, which offered a lovely atmosphere and a refreshing, cool breeze.

The Main and Daytime menus had a great selection of food choices, complete with recommended drink pairings. Most of our group opted for the Daytime menu, leaving just enough room to indulge in dessert afterwards.

Catching up with friends and welcoming our newest members over a lovely lunch was the perfect way to spend the afternoon.

It was a fantastic opportunity to take a step back and pause from our busy lives.
So Hillsden

Book Group

Leader: Andy Moir

Our August book was [The Fire Court](#) by Andrew Taylor. It is a historical mystery novel set in 1667 London, just after the Great Fire. It is the second book in the James Marwood and Cat Lovett series, following *The Ashes of London* which we read in January 2025.

The story begins with James Marwood's elderly and confused father, Nathaniel, claiming he followed a woman into Clifford's Inn, where the Fire Court sits to resolve property disputes after the Great Fire, and found a dead woman. The next day, Nathaniel is run down and killed in the street. Desperate for answers, Marwood suspects his father's death was no accident. Marwood teams up with Cat Lovett, the daughter of a regicide, to investigate the truth behind these deaths.

The majority of the group really enjoyed the novel and said that they would like to read the next in the series. However options as usual were divided...

One member said "another gem this month. It was fun to reconnect with Cat, one of my favourite heroines, Cat was a little mellower this time, but still a little feisty. The story was very interesting, lots of unexpected twists, high paced, and utterly gripping. Add to that a thrilling finale, and what more could you ask for."

However another members said "I must admit I started it with some trepidation as I remember not enjoying the prequel but I did give it a go. However, after the first 7 chapters I had not been hooked on a story line, not particularly embraced any of the characters and was unenamoured by the style of writing - seeming to switch between old English and modern - so decided to give this one a miss. Not my cup of tea unfortunately."

Another interesting and good natured meeting.

Our books for the next three meeting are:

Mon Sep 21 st	The Guardian of Lies by Kate Furnivall
Mon Oct 19 th	Go Set A Watchman by Harper Lee
Mon Nov 16 th	Hitler's Peace by Philip Kerr



Spanish Conversation Group

Leader: David Gout

Nine of us gathered on Wednesday, 19th August 2026 for our regular monthly meeting.

Several of our members had been travelling, two to very distant locations. One had spent three weeks in South Korea including a visit to the heavily armed border with its unfriendly northern neighbour. Another had spent time in the Canadian Rockies before going on a cruise to Alaska. He was able to watch bears trying to catch salmon swimming upriver – amazing! Others had been less far afield – Spain, Center Parks, Wales, Devon – but nevertheless had enjoyed themselves. I told the members of my visit to a rather depleted Hanningfield Reservoir for an evening lecture on bats – this included watching them emerge at dusk in their hundreds!

Afterwards one of our members had prepared a quiz on various aspects of Spanish life including questions on its literature, geography, constitution and history. We also completed two crosswords. In the remaining twenty minutes we talked about our first memories as children – spending time in Grandma’s garden in Yorkshire, being chased by a dog, and so on!

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 16th September 2026 at 10:30am at Room 2, Christ Church, New London Road, Chelmsford.

David Gout

Church Visiting Group

Group Leader: Brian Greatrex, Administrator: Michael Gray

August 5th St Mary the Virgin Tollesbury and St Nicholas Tolleshunt D’Arcy

On a hot summer’s day the Church Visiting Group made its way to the first of two mediaeval churches on the Blackwater estuary, St Mary the Virgin Tollesbury.



After coffee and biscuits, kindly provided by Denise Davidson, the church warden, and an introduction to the building by Brian Greatrex we explored the church. The whole of Tollesbury is an ancient site dating back to the Mesolithic period. It is set on a navigable creek off the Blackwater in lush farming land. The church was massively restored in the nineteenth century but the structure dates from the Saxon/ Norman period, with some remnants of small very early windows in the north and south walls.

There are two items which are particularly fascinating in the church. The first is the font, “the quaintest in all Christendom”. In 1718 a new font was installed. Elizabeth Wood was the first to be baptised after the shocking incident when one John Norman drunkenly and abusively interrupted divine service. He was fined £5, a huge sum then. The inscription on the font reads ‘Good people all I pray take care that in ye church you doe not sware as this man did. The other memorable item is the beautiful Seafarers’ Window in the north wall. It partly commemorates the seamen of the village but also the relationship with the America’s Cup, the famous yachting race. In 1960 Fredrick Hasler, who was born in Tollesbury, wanted to celebrate the input by sailors from Tollesbury who were involved in the race over many years.



The largely Kentish ragstone building of St Nicholas Tolleshunt D'Arcy stands in its large churchyard and burial ground as it has since the fourteenth century. James Fairbairn welcomed us to the church and gave us the story of the life of the church and its village. The church was heavily restored in the Victorian period and though the roof on the chancel looks much earlier the decoration dates from the restoration. The D'Arcy Chapel on the north side of the nave is the site of some of the D'Arcy family burials including the Tudor memorial to Thomas and his wife Philippa. It also holds many of the early brasses saved from the floor of the church. Some of the Group may remember Nancy Briggs from the Essex Record Office who researched the brasses and her paper can be read at the Record Office. The interesting window in the chapel holds many fragments of early stained glass including the depiction of a tulip which was introduced into England in the fifteen hundreds.

Our thanks to Prue Jones for this report, and to Peter Cousins and Prue Jones for providing photographs.

Our next visit, on September 3rd, is our annual London adventure, a walk led by Alison Woollard: we visit St Vedast and St Mary le Bow.

Science Group

Leader: Chris Bellamy chrisallenbellamy@btinternet.com

Deputy: Paul Chaplin paulchaplin@talktalk.net

At our June meeting Paul Chaplin gave a talk on JCB DieselMax and the JCB HydroMax and the attempt to set world speed records for diesel and hydrogen powered cars. This was a very well timed presentation because on August 11th British engineering giant JCB set a new world land speed record of 406.320 mph with its hydrogen-powered JCB HydroMax.



The car recorded the average speed 400.623 mph in its first run in the morning across the Bonneville Salt Flats, and 412.135 mph on its second run, giving the average of 406.320 mph - the fastest a hydrogen internal combustion car has ever travelled.

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

The Paranormal

Most of us “know” that ghosts do not exist, that aliens have not contacted Earth, and that we do not possess psychic powers, yet a majority of people still believe that paranormal phenomena do occur.

How can science explain this dichotomy?

by Chris French, Emeritus Professor, Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London
23rd September 2026, 19:00 Anglia Ruskin University (Room QUE 101)

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

Tai Chi Group

Leader: Alan Caddy



Tai Chi Group - One year anniversary

This month the Tai Chi group celebrated its first anniversary. It seems like only yesterday that we started on our journey to learn Tai Chi and now we are celebrating our first anniversary.

From our list of 48 members we still have a group of 20 to 25 regular attendees including a few new beginners who have joined us over the last few weeks. Everyone tries extremely hard and gets on well together which makes the group a joy to teach.

We completed the full set of 108 moves a short while ago and have now started looking at the individual moves from the beginning again to best gain as much benefit and to help us improve our health.

The anniversary session included a brief period of Tai Chi practice followed by tea and cake, courtesy of Alan and Moira, and a quiz to test the groups knowledge on what they have learned over the last 12 months ... and to see whether they have been paying attention. The results were mixed but it didn't matter because we all had fun and a laugh.

Although learning Tai Chi is often referred to as a journey, it is not a sprint but more like a marathon. Just like when we practice the set when every move is performed slowly, so it is with the learning process. And so, as we commence the second year of the group, we are all looking forward to more practice and improvement and hopefully more fun.

Terry Griggs

Bus Pass Group Leader Maurice Austin

The "Annual Pilgrimage" to Southend-on-Sea took place on what was probably the hottest day of the year, Friday 14th August when eight of us met at Chelmsford Bus Station to catch the 09.27 X30. The nice blue double-decker left at 09.34 with a good load including a fair number of young people. There was a national scheme to allow youngsters to travel free in August, and I had been a little worried that there would be so many turning up for their freebies that the bus would be over full! Not to worry, we did all get on – just!

Several of our regulars had opted out because of the forecast heat which, to be fair, was intense even at that relatively early hour! And two others, David and Jessica (!) caught the next bus half an hour later.

One of our group was disappointed that his favourite front seat was already taken, so he was forced to sit further back with the rest of us! We noticed that that front seat was in direct sunlight and the occupant was being baked! You could almost see the steam coming off him! He gave up and moved back after a while and our member shot up front to take his usual and rightful place. We giggled and forecast he would soon be back to the cooler, slightly draughty seats. We were considering "running a book" on how long he would sit there. Good job we didn't, someone would have lost money as he sat it out to our destination!



The journey to Southend is always interesting, we particularly like to see how the new housing development at Wolsey Park is developing. The contrasting styles of mostly "executive" houses with the various materials is a far cry from the long rows of identical properties seen on some older estates. Then the little octagon Dutch House in Rayleigh is not only attractive, but it also always provokes discussion on the challenges in decorating and furnishing it!

Our driver drove steadily; traffic was such that he had little choice! There were a number of holdups due to road works costing a couple of minutes each time and we eventually arrived in Southend some quarter of an hour late.

We decided to forgo our usual scramble for a coffee and went straight to the pier to catch any coastal breezes. The diesel-powered pier train was in operating as there are still technical issues with the expensive new electric and electronic ones, i.e., they don't work! Still, it took us seamlessly albeit jumpily to the Pier Head where we split into groups, some for coffee, some for fish and chips and others just seeking respite from the sun!

Jocyanne suggested we adjourn to the Palace Hotel which has an air-conditioned lounge overlooking the pier and entertainment areas; we did, more coffee, more fish and chips and gorgeous coolness! And lots of historical pictures including some of Larel and Hardy who performed in Southend some while ago!

After a very long break, we split up again, some to a pre-arranged meeting with family, most on the open-topper to Leigh-on-Sea and Shoeburyness and other just exploring. Most had a very pleasant time and didn't get back to Chelmsford until after-eight!

There will NOT be a trip in September.

Maurice Austin

Short Walks Group

Leader: Robert Lloyd



On Friday the 21st August twelve members did a short walk in Witham. The weather was a very welcome much cooler day. Apart from in Witham itself we didn't meet many other intrepid people. Only nature. A very nice meander.

Anne Brereton

Travel Group

Leader: Anne Brereton

I have launched a new Travel Group holiday for our Travel Group members to Bristol and the Scenic west. If you are a Travel Group members you will have received an email about the trip. Details will be on the board at the next u3a General Meeting.

If you wish to join the Travel Group please email me at cu3atravelgroup@gmail.com

Birding Group

Leader Alan Alexander 01245 248030 Mobile 07712 818499



On Friday 28th August eleven members of the group attended Rye Meads RSPB. This was a change from the Groups published Program due to the imminent closure of this reserve.

At Draper Hide we saw Mallard, Woodpigeon, Magpie and star of the day, a Kingfisher. Numerous Egret in the trees and on the water. Little Grebe, Sandpiper, Black Headed Gulls already in their winter plumage. Moorhen, Coot, Lapwing, Snipe and a female Swan with two cygnets. After a while we moved on to Gadwall Hide. We saw Cormorant, Great Crested Grebe, Lesser Black Back Gulls, Gadwall, and Shoveler Ducks. Overhead we saw a Kestrel and Canada Geese.

Our next meeting is due to be on **25th September: Abbots Hall Nature Reserve Maldon Road, Great Wigborough, Colchester, CO5 7RZ**

A 700-acre nature reserve and the head office of **Essex Wildlife Trust**, situated on the Blackwater Estuary. The site demonstrates a successful coastal realignment project and is in the process of being 're-wilded' after a long history of being a working farm. I will email members with full details nearer to the date.

New members are very welcome to join us, please feel free to contact me on the numbers above, or by the u3a website email address.

We meet at 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.

Local History Group

Leader: Jane Humphreys 01245 259590

It was another warm day for our visit to Copped Hall on Tuesday 4th August. For some of us this was a first visit, and for others a return. Copped Hall is a remarkable story of what can be done by a group of committed volunteers determined to save the ruin of a Georgian mansion from housing developers.

John Conyers acquired Copped Hall and commissioned a Palladian mansion. The core was completed by 1758 on a site with prominent views. The Wythes family made some alterations in the Victorian period and

lived there until a fire gutted the house in 1917. The family moved to a different property, Wood House (recently the home of Rod Stewart), but maintained the gardens until the second world war. Death duties stressed the estate which was stripped of anything of value and sold in the 1950s. The shell of the house was clearly visible from the M25, and was subject to successive plans for redevelopment. The parkland was bought in 1992 by the Corporation of London and local champions formed the Copped Hall Trust in 1995 to save the mansion and walled gardens.

The Trust from the outset wanted to do more than stabilise the ruins. Outside one team have worked miracles to restore the 4 acres of Walled Garden dated to 1740, the largest in southeast England. The orchard of old apples includes Chelmsford Wonder. One greenhouse is being restored in stages with the unrestored structures currently left for comparison. Elsewhere in the grounds another team has adopted the rock garden populated with Old English plants and originally created in Georgian times in the cellars of the Elizabethan house which was demolished in 1748.



The Trust is aiming to restore the house to its Georgian form when it was occupied by the Conyers family. When I first visited (2015 I think) we could walk around the ground floor and see the evidence of the fire in the wall timbers. There were ambitious plans for the first and second floors – but only once there were weather-proof windows and roof. Now all the rooms on the ground floor and first floor are furnished, and it's possible to appreciate the housekeeper's room and adjoining servants hall, to go up the servants staircase to the family's living and entertaining rooms, and to enjoy the Saloon which is the one room with replastered walls. Elsewhere the policy is to leave the walls to tell their story of fire damage and evidence of tree roots. This time we were also able to go down to the cellar level to the astonishing kitchen. The Trust offer 'hard hat' tours to explore the second floor. Everything is funded by donations, filming and events, so that the Trust can develop their vision for this community asset and not feel controlled by the larger grant funders. What has been achieved so far at Copped Hall is amazing and the work goes on.

The next three items in our 2026 programme are:

1 st September	The Essex executioner: life and times of William Calcraft	Lindsay Whitehouse
6 th October	VISIT: Moot Hall, Maldon	
3 rd November	The Mildmay Almshouses	Roger Louth

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

Jane Humphreys

Essex Branch of the Historical Association

Persecution & Toleration in England 1400 - 1700.

By Professor Alexandra Walsham. University of Cambridge

2.30pm Saturday 19th September at Trinity Methodist Church, Chelmsford CM1 2XB.

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

See <https://essexbranchha.com/> for more information

Art Appreciation Group

Leader: Brenda Kelly

This month we travelled to Tate Britain to see the exhibition of the American artist James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903). He was born in America, spent much of his childhood in St Petersburg, returned home to America to join the army, which he left shortly and moved to Paris to paint. He was something of a dandy wearing eccentric clothes and a broad-brimmed straw hat.

He was trained as an etcher and there were a lot of very distinctive etchings on display. He was interested in painting river scenes of the Thames and we saw 'Wapping' - three people in the foreground set against an intricate river background of ships and masts. He created atmospheric paintings and his 'Nocturne: Black and Gold - The Fire Wheel' - depicting a display of fireworks - caused the art critic, John Ruskin, to accuse him of throwing a pot of paint in the public's face. Whistler sued, won his case, but it unfortunately made him bankrupt.



He was also a portraitist and there were some terrific full-length portraits on display. 'Symphony in White, No 1: The White Girl' was modelled by his mistress, Joanna Heffernan with a subtle range of white colour in her dress and the background and, needless to say, there was the famous painting of his mother shown in profile.

He also had decorative ambitions and there was a re-creation of the Peacock Room which Whistler created for the London home of Frederick Leyland. It was an amazing room with images of colourful peacocks on the walls, porcelain dishes and patterns. The original room is in the Freer Collection in Washington.

Altogether a fascinating exhibition with some great works on display and well worth a visit.

Garden Group

Group Leader: Karen Smallwood

There was a big turnout this month for the Garden group with Fourteen of us visiting Bassetts in Little Baddow. It was touch and go with the weather but we were lucky and the rain held off until we were about leave.



The garden was two acres and despite not being watered the grass was quite green due to the natural underground springs. There was a large pond with beautiful waterlily pads and a prehistoric looking gunnera.



As the cottage was fairly high up (for Essex) the view was far reaching. The house was beautiful and had a tennis court and pool! Our hostess, Margaret gave us a lovely talk about the house and garden.

I provided cakes which we took in one of the many seating areas dotted around the property.

Next month we will be going to Feeringbury Manor and it would be great to see you. If you want to sign up, please contact me.

Fishing Group

Leader: Alan Caddy



On Wednesday the 29th of July the Fishing Group had its second adventure of the season fishing on New Cuton Match Lake. The new lake is now more established with more greenery around its shores and steel netting to stop fish being washed away should the lake flood.

The weather was absolutely stifling the temperature was over 34 degrees and we had not expected the intense heat. We started at about 7-45 am when the temperature was around 22



degrees. Our expectation of catching any fish in the conditions was low. I caught a few fish early on, one Tench and four carp. Our other two fishermen Joe and Jim were not catching at all. We decided to compare fishing rigs and found that a few tweaks to their rigs changed their fortune. They both went on to catch eight fish a piece, along with the seventeen I ended up with to make our biggest catch of thirty-three fish. We were all amazed as the temperature increased during the afternoon, but we kept catching fish.

We are still looking to add new members even if you are novices or just want to try it, please feel free to drop me an email on alan.caddy@btinternet.com. all are welcome.

Reminder to Group Leaders

Please send copy for the October 2026 Newsletter to the editor, Andy Moir.

clem.moir@btinternet.com

All copy must arrive no later than Wednesday 30th September 2026.

Chelmsford Heritage Open Days 11th - 20th September 2026

**'B' = Booking essential via
www.chelmsfordhod.co.uk**


heritage open days

See page 26 for more information about the Heritage Open Day events

Strolling and Exploring Group

Leader: Chris Purse

A stroll through history and the Bunny Walks – Monday 17th August



The walk was from Chelmsford Cathedral to Riverside Leisure Centre via Tindal Square, the railway station, Marconi's, Hoffmann's, the Old Mill, Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) and the Bunny Walks.

We met at Chelmsford Cathedral and strolled across Tindal Square passing Shire Hall, built in 1791, the statue of Judge Tindal, erected in 1850, and the HSBC bank, which has a very Parisian style. We crossed Duke Street to Abbotts estate agents' contrasting brutalist late 20th century building. We enjoyed seeing the Brave Hearts mural painted on the side of the public toilets.

Wandering through Threadneedle Street we noticed the architectural detail on Essex County Council's walls. This is Block C, designed by J. Stuart. Building started in 1929. A foundation stone records that it was laid by J. H. Burrows in 1935. The building's stripped classical style, with friezes, heavy fluted piers and restrained Portland stone ornament, was typical of government buildings across the 1930s, seen in Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, and in Great Britain and the United States alike.

On the Threadneedle Street side of the building there are motifs with the head of a ram bearing an ECC monogram and an eagle-headed griffin bearing the date 1929. The ram symbolizes leadership, stubborn strength, sacrifice and fierce protection, while the griffin represents a majestic union of earthly and divine power, vigilance and the safeguarding of hidden treasures. Higher up, a frieze of reclining figures runs beneath the cornice, a form of decoration going back to Greek temple sculpture, like the Elgin Marbles.

The pilasters either side of the main wooden door carry a geometric pattern that looks like a line of swastikas. Before the Nazi Party adopted it the swastika had a long, mostly positive history, used for thousands of years across Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions, and fashionable as a good-luck motif in early 20th-century Western design, including on Coca-Cola memorabilia, Boy Scout badges and plenty of civic architecture. County Hall's version was likely carved without any political intent, though it is a striking coincidence given the timing. The British Union of Fascists was active in Essex in the 1930s, but there is no documented evidence linking that movement to the design of County Hall. Turning left onto Duke Street, the adjacent block, Block D, is the original ECC hall, designed by architect F. Whitmore and built in 1909.



We proceeded to the Brewhouse & Kitchen, where we crossed the road to the station. The railway bridge here has a sign requesting people to shout "duck" if they see a tall bus approaching. The railway station was constructed in 1885 by the Great Eastern Railway. It was a beautiful Victorian station "modernised" in 1985. To explain what may have induced such vandalism I suggested that it may have been bombed.

We went through the narrow subway under the railway to Market Square. Looking above the arches to the station, we discussed the

signal box, which has a preservation order on it but has not been preserved well — peeling paint and bird damage. Here as we passed into Mill Square there is an information board giving a brief history of the area and photographs of the railway station and the mill. The mill was a factory serving Ridley's brewery.

We followed the blue line through Cunard and Marconi Squares. Here there is an interesting mix of old and new. Contrasting modern apartment blocks with the oldest purpose-built wireless factory in the world. It was fascinating to read that it had separate ladies' and men's dining rooms and club rooms.



It was at Marconi's wireless factory that Dame Nellie Melba made the world's first professional radio broadcast on 15 June 1920. She arrived by special train from London and was driven around the town in a white Rolls-Royce, with crowds lining the route. She was paid £1,000, roughly £40,000 in today's money, and was served chicken and pink champagne — I like to think the dessert may have been Peach Melba. The performance itself took place in a disused packing shed rather than one of the grander rooms.

We went from Marconi Square to New Street passing the impressive Marconi New Street building — now converted into flats. Many buildings and roads carry the Marconi name here, leaving us in no doubt how important Marconi was to Chelmsford. We continued along New Street, passing Marconi Street.

The Hoffmann's building was an important manufacturing factory that produced high-precision products, including ball bearings. From 1941 to 1944, during the Second World War, the Luftwaffe bombed this area because Hoffmann's ball bearings and Marconi's wireless and radar were vital for the war effort. A V-2 rocket exploded near Hoffmann's on 19 December 1944 — the town's greatest single loss of life during the war, with 39 killed and 138 injured. The Hoffmann's building is now a gym and apartments.

We walked onto the ARU campus. John Ruskin (1819–1900) was a leading Victorian polymath who wrote extensively on art, architecture and society. He delivered the inaugural address at the founding of the Cambridge School of Art in 1858 (which eventually evolved into ARU). The institution was renamed Anglia Ruskin University in 2005 to honour his legacy and connection to the university's roots.

We went to the Old Mill. This is a peaceful area with lovely views of the woods, waterway and mill pond. All the water was covered with vegetation, including many bulrushes. The axle of the waterwheel is still in position and well preserved, but the fins of the wheel are gone.

Returning to the campus we saw that the buildings are named after famous Chelmsford people: Marconi, Tindal, Ashcroft, etc. Lord Ashcroft built a huge fortune, was treasurer and chairman of the Conservative Party and was Chancellor of ARU. We also spotted Hoffmann's café on the ground floor of the Marconi Building. We spent a while investigating the large globular artwork over the bridge, designed by students of the university, and took time to read each piece in the globe. A civil engineering student took a photograph of us there.

We returned to the path, turned right at the T-junction and crossed the bridge into the Bunny Walks. The Bunny Walks are part of the Chelmer Valley Local Nature Reserve. It features a rich mix of riverbanks, wild grasslands, hedges, and trees that support local wildlife near the city centre. Wildlife includes otters, water voles, common lizards, slow worms, kingfishers, herons, egrets, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies. The canopy is largely shaped by willows, hybrid poplars and grey poplars. Patches of oak, hornbeam and silver birch form the backdrop. Hedgerows consist of hawthorn, hazel, elderberry, dogwood and brambles with blackberries. Patches of mistletoe grow high up in the boughs. 30 different species of wildflowers line the trails, including cowslips, hairy violets, purple knapweed and St. John's wort.



We could have turned left for an extended walk up to Broomfield, but the planned walk turned right. The path meandered beside the River Chelmer. We stopped to rest at the weir, then continued along the path, passing under the Springfield Viaduct — only 3 arches, far fewer than the Station and Chelmsford viaducts, which have over 60.

We continued to follow the river, pausing to talk to a pair of girls showing off and splashing about in the weir. There is a building here with murals of a troll and bunnies (or hares). We finished the walk and had coffee, sausage rolls and cakes at the Riverside Leisure Centre. I had my first cruffin — I

was told that a cruffin is a muffin made from croissant dough. I thought it was more like a cross between a cookie and a muffin. Very nice though.

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
Marketing/Advertising	Mike Harmer
Monthly Meetings Organiser/Support Groups coordinator	Ann Goddard
Committee Member	Ann Bell
Committee Member	Susie Nankivell

Interest Groups List (as of 31/08/2026)

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	07986 616748
Bridge (beginners)	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Cardus	07962407748
Bus Pass Group	2 nd Friday	varies	Maurice Austin	01245 492328
Canasta/Card Games	1 st & 3 rd Monday	13.30	Julie Haggar	07511 629563
Choir Group	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday	14:00	Deborah Aloba	07940 384785
Church Visits	1 st Wednesday	10.15	Brian Greatrex	01245 258833
Coach Outings	Various		Malcolm Lonsdale	07849269397
Cycling for Fun	2 nd Fri, 4 th Tues	varies	Tony Cox	077588 17569
Discussion Group	2 nd Tuesday	13.00	Brian Littlechild	07860 826204
Family History	4 th Friday	14.00	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Fishing Group	Wednesdays		Alan Caddy	07894 702913
French Conversation	2 nd & 4 th Wed	14.00	David Hall	01245 284409
French Beginners	1 st Friday	10.30	Andrew Dronsfield	07940 388393
Garden Group	4 th Thursday	14.00	Chris Bellamy	01277 353481
IT group	2 nd Wednesday	10.00		
International Dining	3 rd Monday	19.00	Jennie Cappin	01245 358629
Jazz and Blues	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	Heinz Kassier	07843 800455
Local History	1 st Tuesday	14.15	Jane Humphreys	01245 259590
London City and its	4 th Monday	14.00	Berry Cornell	01277 355823
Lunch Club 1	Last Friday	12.30	John Heathcote	01245 380766
Lunch Club 3	1 st Thursday	12.30	Laraine Linard & Barbara Childs	07855 312752
Lunch Club 4	2 nd Wednesday	12.30	Val Norfolk	07500 444518
Mah-Jong	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday	14.00	Chris Paget	01245 474811
Motorcycle	4 th Wednesday		Dave Lambert	07908 895437
Philosophy	Thurs 4-weekly	11.00	Julia McClure	07941 480240

Name of Group	Day of Month	Time	Group Leader	Phone
Philosophy & Religion	1 st Monday	10.00	Jim Mackay	07452 988260
Philosophy & Religion 2	4 th Wednesday	14.00	Jim Mackay	07452 988260
Photos on Face Book	Online		Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Pickleball Monday	Monday weekly	13.45	Gillian Stimson	07856 203630
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	07855 312752
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 &	3 rd Thursday	11.00	Jacqui Norfolk	07714 258517
Short Walks	3 rd Friday	10.00	Robert Lloyd	01245 466167
Strolling & Exploring Walk	2 nd Friday of month	Flexible	Chris Purse	07484 121911
Spanish Conversation	3 rd Wednesday	10.30	David Gout	01245 268923
Summer Evening Walks	4 th Wednesday	16.30	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
Sunday Lunch 1	1 st Sunday	varies	John Tritton	07800 964652
Sunday Lunch 2	3 rd Sunday	varies	Lesley Wood	01245 601359
Tai Chi	Tuesdays	14.00	Alan Caddy	07894 702913
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	07710411418
Ukulele	Friday 10 July	2 pm	Alan Caddy	07894 702913
Walking Group	1 st & 3 rd Fridays	10.00	Alan Mayo	07979 540053
WYBIG	As & when		Mark Foster	07531 726417

Contact Groups Coordinator: Lesley Wood, lesleywood54@yahoo.com

Events in September 2026

MON		TUE		WED		THU		FRI		SAT		SUN	
	31		1		2		3		4		5		6
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 7:00 am: Fishing		👤 11:00 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		👤 10:30 am: French (Beginners)					
		👤 2:00 pm: Local History		👤 2:00 pm: Poetry		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 2:00 pm: ukulele					
		👤 2:00 pm: Mah-Jong				👤 2:30 pm: Book Worms							
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi											
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											
	7		8		9		10		11		12		13
👤 10:00 am: Philosophy & Religion		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		🚌 Theatre Trip - Arcadia		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 Bus Pass Group					
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 10:00 am: IT Group		🗣️ 2:00 pm: Monthly Meeting		👤 10:00 am: Cycling for Fun					
👤 1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games		👤 2:00 pm: Discussion Group		👤 12:30 pm: Lunch Club 4				👤 10:30 am: Strolling & Exploring Group					
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi		👤 2:00 pm: French Conversation				👤 10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling					
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday		👤 3:00 pm: Rock & Pop Appreciation				👤 2:00 pm: ukulele					
	14		15		16		17		18		19		20
👤 All day Walks		👤 Mah-Jong		👤 Craft and Chat		👤 10:00 am: Sewing and Crochet		👤 9:45 am: Walking Group				👤 12:00 pm: Sunday lunch Group 2	
👤 11:15 am: Art Club		👤 9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		👤 10:30 am: Jazz and Blues Group		👤 12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		👤 10:00 am: Short Walks					
👤 1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		👤 2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		👤 10:30 am: Spanish Conversation		👤 2:15 pm: Science Group		👤 2:00 pm: ukulele					
		👤 2:00 pm: Tai Chi		👤 2:00 pm: Wonder of Words									
		👤 3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday											

	21		22		23		24		25		26		27
	11:15 am: Art Club		9:30 am: Art for Pleasure		2:00 pm: French Conversation		10:00 am: Quiz Group		Motorcycle				
	1:30 pm: Canasta/Card Games		10:00 am: Cycling for Fun		2:00 pm: Philosophy & Religion 2		12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		10:00 am: Birding				
	1:45 pm: Pickleball Monday		2:00 pm: Bridge (Beginners)		2:30 pm: Theatre Trip - The Comedy About Spies		2:00 pm: Garden Group		10:30 am: Ten Pin Bowling				
	2:30 pm: Book Group		2:00 pm: Tai Chi						12:30 pm: Luncheon Group 1				
	3:00 pm: Fun with Textiles		2:30 pm: Art Appreciation						2:00 pm: Family History				
	7:00 pm: International Dining		3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday						2:00 pm: ukulele				
	28		29		30		1		2		3		4
	11:15 am: Art Club		9:30 am: Art for Pleasure				11:00 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		10:30 am: French (Beginners)				
	2:00 pm: London: the City and its People Group		2:00 pm: Tai Chi				12:00 pm: Pickleball Thursday		2:00 pm: ukulele				
			3:00 pm: Pickleball Tuesday				2:30 pm: Book Worms						

Event Categories

Group Activity
 Holidays
 Monthly Meetings
 Outings
 Special Events
 All Categories

Committee Vacancies

Treasurer

Our current Treasurer, Wendy Hubbard, will be stepping down from the committee in February 2027 having completed six years in this vitally important role. We are hoping to recruit a replacement for Wendy now, so that the successful applicant can be given full training, shadowing and a well-supported handover.

This is an excellent opportunity for someone who enjoys working with numbers, working with others, and wants to make a meaningful contribution to the smooth running of our u3a. You do not need to be a financial expert — confidence with basic financial tasks (spreadsheets, online banking), good organisational skills, an eye for detail and a willingness to learn are more important.

If you are interested please contact Wendy by email on treasurerchelmsfordu3a@gmail.com

Website Content (Editor)

Andy Moir is our website Administrator and Site Manager. He manages the overall functionality and efficiency of the website including website security, resolving any hosting issues, ensuring that links work correctly and monitoring plugins. He also ensures that the websites complies with GDPR regulations and other relevant standards including copyright.

Up until now we have also been relying on Andy to regularly update the content of the website, including adding/deleting photos, announcements, and ensuring that event details are current and accurately reflect what is happening in our u3a. He updates the group pages and keeps the events diary updated. He removes out-of-date pages and posts new notices as required. When a Group Leader wishes to learn how to update their own page on the website, Andy is the only person that can show them how.

I'm sure you will agree that this is a lot for one person to manage. So, we are looking for someone to train as a Content Editor, who at first will share some of the simpler tasks but eventually learn to be a back-up should Andy become unwell or simply needs to take a break. The website is written in WordPress and it would help if you have some knowledge of this. If you are interested in this role please contact Andy Moir at <https://chelmsford.u3asite.uk/contact/>

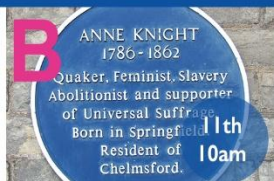
Essex Network Steering Group – Beacon administrator

The Essex u3a Network requires a volunteer to join the steering group with the express purpose of keeping the network's contact details up to date. It would be helpful if the person has experience of using Beacon but full training will be given. This opportunity would suit anyone who is interested in widening their horizons and gaining more insight into the u3a movement. If interested, please contact the Network lead: Lesley Wood by email on lesleywood54@yahoo.com

Chelmsford Heritage Open Days 11th - 20th September 2026

'B' = Booking essential via
www.chelmsfordhod.co.uk


heritage open days



The Women Who Rocked the Boat Walk



Marconi to O'Rahilly Talk @Patch



Chelmsford Black History Walk



Springfield Lyons Bronze Age Tours



Chelmsford Cathedral Open Day inc Tours



1960s Day in Tindal Square Dress in your 60s gear!



St John's Moulsham Street Open Day



St Mary's Church Broomfield Open Days



Hylands House Open Day



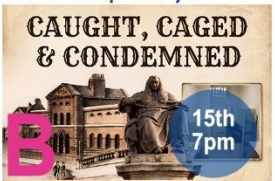
Mayoral Parlour Tours Civic Centre



The Essex Executioner Talk @Patch



Galleywood Heritage Centre Archives Tour



Caught, Caged & Condemned Talk @Patch



Galleywood Common Walk Galleywood Heritage Centre



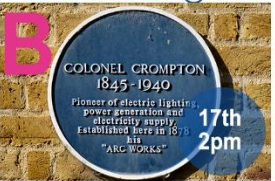
Chelmsford Star & Our Coop History @Patch



RDF to Radar Talk @Patch



Rise and Fall Chelmsford Star Co Op @ Patch



Blue Plaques Challenge Galleywood Heritage Centre



Chelmsford Miniature Railway Open Evening



Now This Lousy War is Over Talk @Patch



Canal History Walk - Meet in High Street



Chelmsford Witch Walk Bell Meadow



One City, Many Journeys @Patch 19/9



Galleywood Walking Tour Meet @ Library



The History of Beaulieu Walking Tour



Museum of Chelmsford Free Weekend



Museum of Chelmsford Collecting Our Future Wax



Museum of Chelmsford Screenprinting Treasure



The History of Drag Artists @ Patch



Museum of Chelmsford Treasures of the Museum



Galleywood Heritage Centre Photo Exhibition



Photograph Competition High Chelmer



History of Vinyl Records The Meadows



Chelmsford's Industrial Past Exhibition - Shire Hall



Virtual Events All Week

www.youtube.com/c/chelmsfordcivicsociety



Chelmsford
City Culture

PATCH

High Chelmer



in support of **National Trust**
Chelmsford National Trust
Supporter Group

CHELMSFORD
YOU

Councillor
Roy Whitehead

