

East of England Region u3a

July 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 7/26 Page 1



Distributed by u3a Eastern Regional Team to all u3as **Deadline for the August 2026 issue is by Friday 24th July 2026** laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

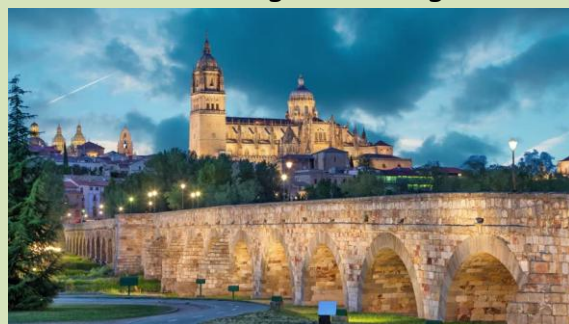
Chelmsford u3a Spanish Conversation Group Thrives!



The Chelmsford u3a Spanish Conversation Group has continued to flourish since its online beginnings during Covid. Now meeting in person on the third Wednesday of each month, the group brings together a wonderfully mixed range of members — from those who have lived or worked in Spain or Latin America to others who began learning online.

We are also fortunate to have a native Spanish speaker, whose insights into how Spanish is spoken in real life add huge value to every session.

Our meetings start with a friendly catch-up in Spanish before moving into varied activities such as crosswords, "Just a Minute"-style speaking games, and discussions based on newspaper or magazine articles brought in by members. Conversations often wander into unexpected topics, but as long as we're speaking Spanish, it all helps build confidence and fluency.



We also benefit from the support of the **National u3a Spanish Adviser** [u3a - Spanish](#), whose monthly newsletter offers ideas and good practice from Spanish groups across the movement.

A Taste of Spain in the Heart of Essex

When funds allow, the group enjoys a subsidised lunch at **El Chigre**, the Asturian tapas bar in Chelmsford — a lovely way to share Spanish culture together. Leading this lively and enthusiastic group continues to be a real pleasure.



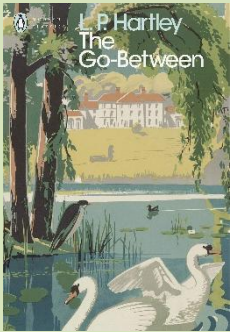
David Gout, Chelmsford u3a

Note from Lesley Wood, Chelmsford's Groups Coordinator:

The u3a has over 80 Subject Advisers and around 20 Subject Network Volunteers who support learning across a wide range of topics. To explore the subjects covered — or to find out about becoming an adviser yourself visit the Subjects page in the National u3a Members' Area. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/members-area/subjects>

A Case of Mistaken Identity - leading to u3a publicity

Ben Musgrave of UAE (University of East Anglia) had been researching the novel *The Go-Between* by L.P. Hartley, widely believed to have been inspired by the author's experience of Bradenham, Norfolk: its landscape, customs, and people. You may recall the film. [The Go-Between \(1971\) Original Trailer \[HD\]](#)



As part of this research, he had visited Bradenham, given a lecture locally and staged a public script reading of a new production in progress at Norwich Theatre Studio 2. He was now planning a free creative writing workshop in Bradenham, focusing on memories of the district,

and sought local contacts to help promote the event. The first I found out about this was when I was copied into an extensive correspondence chain between the Ben and St Andrew's Church. The relevant part of the conversation was thus:

But of particular relevance – is we have a UEA lecturer in Creative Writing = Laurene Henderson (long-term village-res; generally one of the regular coffee-group) – and I was strongly advised to put the two of you in touch.

Flattering though it was to be so exalted, I had to advise Ben that I was merely a Group Leader of Creative Writing for a local u3a, albeit with a first class honours degree in English (and Drama in Education). Nonetheless our conversation was very productive.

I advised Ben on suitable venues and who to contact. I suggested a way in which I could publicise it to my u3a Creative Writing Groups (we have 2) and Playscript Readers (again 2) via Beacon, and I put him in touch with other u3as in the immediate area. It will also go out on our newsletter and Facebook page.



As a result, Ben increased his bookings for the free course, and has alerted the Development Manager at the theatre company and his UAE department about the u3a movement and its potential.

There was also a link to a theatre company, Eastern Angles who are staging a production of *The Go-Between*, which I was also able to help publicise (see above).

In fact, I was a Go -Between for the u3a and UAE!

I will be attending both events. Ben and I hope that this will lead to future links between the u3a and his project – and possibly others in the future. And all because of a misunderstanding...

Laurene Henderson Swaffham & District u3a

holly@easternangles.co.uk

musgrave.ben@googlemail.com

Our Course on Canva is Still Bigger and Better

Our instructor Roger Carter has prepared a weekly offering that shows most of the range of creative products available on the software. And, if sessions have to be missed for whatever reason, he has opened his resources to allow participants to catch up on what has been missed.

Sessions are being held over Zoom from 10am to 11.30am.

The programme is:

June

4 ... Introduction to Canva

11 ... Templates

18 ... Images and Sharing

25 ... Apps and magic

July

2 ... Managing Your Projects

9 ... Presentations and Animation

16 ... Videos

23 ... Websites

30 ... Documents and Whiteboards

Space is available if others want to link in for any of the particular sessions. Links available from Ray Hardisty our PR and Media Adviser. His email address is

rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

Offer of FREE talks on war graves and memorials

ACROSS the East of England there are war graves and memorials maintained by the



Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Many are in small and intimate local churchyards where perhaps only one service person is commemorated.

Now the organisation is offering the opportunity to discover more about its work in our six counties, especially the connections your local community has to the

men and women commemorated there. The commission's Public Engagement Co-ordinators work with a network of volunteer speakers to offer free talks on a range of topics.

These include:

- The Commonwealth War Graves Commission - an introduction to its work;
- Gardening the Globe - horticulture of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission;
- Architecture and the Conservation of a Global Estate;
- The records and archives of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission;

The organisation can deliver these talks at times, dates, and locations to suit you. It also offers them virtually. If you are interested, visit: <https://www.cwgc.org/talks>

Introductory talk over Zoom for the region in September

A SAMPLE of the type of talk available is being offered by the regional team. It will be given over Zoom and be open to any u3a member interested but is of direct interest to speaker secretaries and family history groups. The presentation will cover the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and its educational charity, the Commonwealth War Graves Foundation. It takes place on Thursday September 10 from 10am to 11.30am. Book with Ray Hardisty : rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative

I would like to hope that the recent hot weather has not interrupted meetings, events and activities too much.



I do know that some u3as have reduced length of or even cancelled events and meetings

Hopefully there will be some climatic normality in the coming weeks.

Last month has seen me at an AGM with shortened agenda.

I have also attended a 20th anniversary celebration of my first u3a,

South Woodham Ferrers. This event was held at Stow Maries Great War

Aerodrome. If you are in the Chelmsford/Maldon area it's well worth a visit.

I have discussed with numerous u3as the finer points of constitutions with a view to amending. Although some time off, if any u3as are planning events for u3a week in late September please let me know as soon as possible so that I can begin to fill my diary.

Thank you to those attended the AI event, AI - What's all the Fuss about . I hope you enjoyed and hopefully learned more about AI. I will be planning another one in late September to tie in with u3a week. Stay tuned.

Finally, Ruth and I are here to assist with any issues arising with u3as in the region.

If the need arises our contact details are below. We are both also available for u3a visits.

So, if any u3a would like us to attend any network(cluster), committee or AGM meetings please let us know.

Best Regards, Ian Mathews,

East of England Council Representative

Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk

Mobile :- 07471 211347

From Ruth Freedman, our u3a Regional Council Representative



1. On June 2nd. I attended the Fenland Cluster group meeting at Huntingdon.

There were 14 attendees from the u3a's in the cluster:

Huntingdon, St.Ives, St.Neots, Ramsey, Wisbech.

The agenda covered:

Member research, Trips, Groups, Recruiting committee, GDPR, EDI, Honorary members.

All attendees joined in the discussions. The conclusion? We all have similar challenges!

2. I had an email from a u3a Chair asking for guidance on the suitability of venues.

3. I will be attending the Festival at York and will report back.

Ruth Freedman

East of England Council Representative

ruth.freedman@u3a.org.uk

Can you help research affecting older people?

TWO separate student researchers have been in touch looking for the experience of u3a members to help them.

The first is **Shannon Edwards a Trainee Clinical Psychologist on the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology programme at the University of Leicester**. She is currently conducting doctoral research exploring the experiences of adults aged 65 and over who have been affected by fraud or deception by someone they knew or trusted, such as a partner, family member, friend, or professional.



Her research aims to improve understanding of how these experiences affect older adults, inform clinical practice, and support the development of services and safeguarding strategies. Participation involves a confidential interview lasting up to 75 minutes, which can be conducted in person or online via Microsoft Teams.

All identifiable information will be removed to protect participants' identities.

Contact Shannon by email at se220@leicester.ac.uk

Second is **Kate McKeown, Counselling Psychologist in Training at the University of South Wales**. She is exploring people's experience of living with a partner who has depression when aged 65 and over.

Research suggests partners often feel overwhelmed in their roles when their partner has depression. Kate is interested in individual stories to gain insights that may lead to more effective support in the future.

She would like to hear from you if:

- You and your partner are both 65 or over and you live together;
- Your partner has depression. (This does not have to be professionally diagnosed and is not a part of Bipolar Affective Disorder or a psychotic disorder);
- Your partner is not currently in hospital for their mental health and is not a risk to themselves, you or others;
- You live in the UK and communicate fluently in English.



Kate's research involves a 60 to 90 minutes confidential recorded interview with herself talking about your experiences. It can be online via Microsoft Teams or face-to-face at the University of South Wales Newport Campus.

She adds: "There are no right or wrong answers. I am interested in your story and experiences. All comments will be kept confidential."

Contact Kate by email at 30115213@students.southwales.ac.uk

Regional opportunities for creative writers to publish their work
MEMBERS of creative writing groups of three of our counties are being offered the chance to have their efforts broadcast on local radio.



Poet and author Carol Carman runs Writing Club on BBC Radios Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk with the afternoon show presenter Louise Hulland every other Monday.

A member of St Ives u3a, she sets a prompt, then listeners write something to that prompt (or something else unrelated to the prompt), send it in and they read them and review them on air.

Carol says: "We're very encouraging and friendly, and it gives writers across the region a chance to get their work heard on the BBC."

If anybody would like to listen to the last session to hear the format, it's on this link:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m002vt8t> at about an hour and 22 minutes in.

The latest prompt (and all previous ones) can be found on this link:

<https://mccawmedia.co.uk/writing-club-prompts/>

Carol adds: "We're always looking for new writers to join in our little session, and I'd like to encourage the members of u3a writing groups in the three counties to have a go. It would be marvellous if we could get some new writers to join in with us."

There's also another opportunity for creatives to get their work on the BBC and that is via **BBC Upload**. Details are on the BBC Upload website. Search for Upload with Rob Jelly. [BBC Essex - Upload with Rob Jelly](#)

Local
BBC Radio



The weekly Upload programme runs on Thursday at 6pm with a repeat on Saturdays at 6pm and is available on BBC Sounds. Upload also takes in Essex, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
The u3a Festival Fringe Events from 25 June - 10 July Take part in the fun of u3a Festival 26 from home with u3a Festival Fringe. This series of online events will take place in the lead up to, and following on from, the Festival in York on 1-3 July. The programme includes a mixture of talks and interactive activities, giving all u3a members a chance to be part of our celebration of learning and fun.		
Wednesday July 1 11:30 AM - 1 PM u3a Festival Fringe	The technology built into modern cars and trucks John Butler from the u3a Let's Talk Tech team explores the technologies of modern vehicles, live from the u3a Festival in York.	The technology built into modern cars and trucks Tickets, Wednesday, July 1 • 11:30 AM - 1 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday July 2 2 PM - 3:30 PM u3a Festival Fringe	Mrs. Charles Dickens tells her story A powerful reimagining of Catherine Dickens' silenced voice, revealing love, betrayal, and truth behind Charles Dickens' marriage.	Mrs. Charles Dickens tells her story Tickets, Thursday, July 2 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Monday, July 6 10 AM - 11:15 AM u3a Festival Fringe	Watercolours with Tony Tony Burke runs watercolour classes with Huddersfield u3a. For this interactive painting session you will need materials. This interactive tutorial will help you learn and develop painting techniques whatever stage you are at.	Watercolours with Tony Tickets, Monday, July 6 • 10 AM - 11:15 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday, July 7 10 AM - 12 PM	On the Nuclear Edge: The F-111F at RAF Lakenheath RAF Lakenheath's F-111Fs helped deter Soviet aggression through readiness, realism, and credible nuclear capability. From 1987 to 1990, at the height of the Cold War's final chapter, the 48th Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath stood on the front line of NATO's nuclear deterrent. The Flight Inspirations u3a Aviation group is organised by Don Mobley of Stowmarket u3a and Barbara Cordina of Lea Valley u3a.	On the Nuclear Edge: The F-111F at RAF Lakenheath Tickets, Tuesday, July 7 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday 7 July 2 PM - 3 PM	Nature within: How connecting with nature supports our health and wellbeing Dr James Bashford explores how our brains benefit from the natural world and how we can overcome modern nature-deficit disorder. This event is part of the Future Lives series of talks. Find out more on the Future Lives webpage.	Nature within: How connecting with nature supports our health and wellbeing Tickets, Tuesday 7 July • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Wednesday, July 8 10 - 10:45 AM	Laughter Yoga with Judith: July Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a. <i>"We don't laugh because we're happy, we're happy because we laugh."</i> - William James	Laughter Yoga with Judith: July Tickets, Wednesday, July 8 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Wednesday, July 8 2 PM - 3 PM u3a Festival Fringe	The history of shoes Robin Taylor takes us on a journey of shoes, from historical styles to modern trends, sharing insights from his career as a shoe designer.	The history of shoes Tickets, Wednesday, July 8 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday, July 9 10 AM - 11 AM u3a Festival Fringe	Fusion Tai Qi Gong Discover calm, balance and wellbeing with Gordon's gentle Fusion tai chi & qi gong taster session on Zoom. Join Gordon for an opportunity to experience the benefits of a gentle yet powerful form of exercise.	Fusion Tai Qi Gong Tickets, Thursday, July 9 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday, July 9 2 PM - 3 PM u3a Festival Fringe	Artemisia- Vengeance or Vision? Join us for a presentation where we delve into the groundbreaking artistry of one of history's most amazing female painters, Artemisia Gentileschi. Catherine uses powerpoint animations to bring her words to life, if you do not like an animated presentation then this may not be to your taste.	Artemisia- Vengeance or Vision? Tickets, Thursday, July 9 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday, July 10 9:30 AM - 11 AM	Generative AI in academia and at home: practical lessons from research. Professor Rose Luckin shares with us what is really happening with AI in Education and shares some tips for using AI at home.	Generative AI in academia and at home: practical lessons from research. Tickets, Friday, July 10 • 9:30 AM - 11 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday, July 10 2 PM - 3 PM u3a Festival Fringe	The Role of Women in Ancient Egypt Join Neil Stevenson of Up Holland & District u3a, Subject Adviser for Egyptology, to explore the status of women in the Ancient Egypt. This talk explores the status of women in the Ancient Egypt. This includes deities, royalty, nobility and the working class.	The Role of Women in Ancient Egypt Tickets, Friday, July 10 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Monday, July 13 10 - 11:30 AM	Exploring World Faiths: Faith & humanitarianism World Humanitarian Day occurs in August. We will explore how 3 different faiths manifest humanitarianism in their beliefs and practice. - Islamic Relief, Christian Aid, and Sikh Aid International.	Exploring World Faiths: Faith and humanitarianism Tickets, Monday, July 13 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Thursday, July 16 2 PM - 3:30 PM	A few small nips: Frida Kahlo and the art of pain Professor Christopher Dowrick, member of Orrell Park and District u3a and Emeritus Professor at the University of Liverpool: Frida Kahlo is one of the most celebrated artists of the 20th century. She endured severe traumas during her lifetime, yet her art transcends a life of pain and disability.	A few small nips: Frida Kahlo and the art of pain Tickets, Thursday, July 16 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Monday, July 20 2 PM - 3:30 PM	Virtual tour of the Watts Gallery and Artists' Village Join u3a Farnham member and Watts Gallery guide, Alan Freeland as he takes us on a virtual tour of the Watts Gallery and Artists' Village..	A virtual tour of the Watts Gallery and Artists' Village Tickets, Monday, July 20 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday, July 21 3:30 - 4:30 PM	Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: July Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga - an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.	Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: July Tickets, Tuesday, July 21 • 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday, July 23 2 PM - 3 PM	Everything you need to know to get published Alysoun Owen, celebrating the 120th anniversary of the Writers' & Artists' Yearbook, editor at Bloomsbury, will offer guidance on the writing craft as well as providing insight into the world of publishing.	Everything you need to know to get published Tickets, Thursday, July 23 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday, July 24 2 PM - 3 PM	The History Man, Scoundrel (Dick Turpin) Join u3a York member, Richard Taylor, on one of his virtual walks based on historical times or events in the life of York. Turpin's life was certainly brutal and short. Yet in death he continues to cast a spell. Why is he celebrated as the romantic highwayman, when in fact he was no more than a greedy callous thug?	The History Man virtual walk, Scoundrel (Dick Turpin) Tickets, Friday, July 24 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday, July 24 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM	AI News July: AI futures AI is transforming our world—discover how AGI and future superintelligence could change society over the next 20 years.	AI News July: AI futures Tickets, Friday, July 24 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Monday, July 27 2 PM - 4 PM	Secrets of the human brain: vision This talk describes the visual pathway from the point when an image enters the eyes to the point when we actually 'see' something. Dr. Bob Pullen is a retired University Lecturer who has spent many years giving lectures on the brain to Medical, Pharmacy and Biology students.	Secrets of the human brain: vision Tickets, Monday, July 27 • 2 PM - 4 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Thursday, July 30 10 AM - 11:30 AM	The climate crisis & National Emergency Briefing On 27 November 2025, Brenda Ainsley and Eleanor Brooks from the u3a Climate Matters Online Interest Group attended the National Emergency Briefing (NEB) on the climate and nature crisis at Westminster Central Hall. Experts and academics spoke compellingly about the current trajectory the planet, and shared a vision of a hopeful and more resilient future for all sectors of society.	The climate crisis and the National Emergency Briefing Tickets, Thursday, July 30 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday, July 31 10 AM - 11:30 AM	Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A Keeping you safe in an electronic age: A repeat talk by Barry Linton of Thorpe Bay u3a. Please note this is a repeating talk that has been given previously. Barry regularly updates the talk with the most recent advice and new and emerging risks.	Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A Tickets, Friday, July 31 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday, August 4 10 AM - 12 PM	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: A special meeting, where we are honoured to host Flt Lt Colin Bell, now aged 105, former RAF Pathfinder Mosquito pilot who flew 50 missions in WWII. This is a rare opportunity to hear first-hand testimony from someone who played a vital role in one of history's most significant conflicts.	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: August Tickets, Tuesday, August 4 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday, August 11 2 PM - 3:30 PM	Digital hobbies for the third age Join AbilityNet, in partnership with BT Group, to help you to use technology to explore your interests. Whether you are interested in gardening, art, music, history, astronomy, or something else, find new ways to use technology to engage with your passions or discover new interests. We will use tools and fun apps, with a preference for things that are free.	Digital hobbies for the third age Tickets, Tuesday, August 11 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite

Could You Join Your u3a East of England Regional Team?

Why not join us? For a role description of this **East of England u3a Regional Team** volunteer role, contact Ray Hardisty:

Contact Ray Hardisty, Team Leader:

rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

For Groups News and Special Events,

Contact Laurene Henderson

laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

For contact details of the complete team:

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

