The East of England Bulletin is produced by the East of England Regional Team for ALL u3a members within the Eastern u3a Region.
Chairs and Secretaries, please share with your u3a members by placing it on your websites and by email attachment distribution to members.

East of England Region u3a

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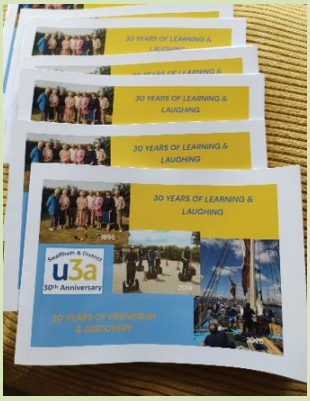
Deadline for November 2026 issue:Wednesday 28. 10. 2026 laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Swaffham & District u3a Celebrate 30 Years!











How do you celebrate 30th years?

We` ll tell you. You need the following:
A fabulous committee and membership; 160 guests; The Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk to attend; all the previous Chairs from 1995 onwards; a member of the East of England u3a Team; specially made cake and cupcakes for all; bubbly for a toast; eco re-useable decorations and tableware; a specially written comedy by Creative Writing 2, performed by Playscript Readers 1 on stage with hilarious sound effects; a quiz on How Well You Remember 1995/6; a musical performance by the Singing for Pleasure Group (with songs from the 90s); a commemorative booklet charting pictures and events over 30 years for each member; and finally EVERYBODY dancing a rave version of the Macarena - released in 1995 and remixed for the 2020s - including Lady Dannatt!





THAT'S how we did it!

Jan Hayes-Griffin Chair Swaffham & District

BEDFORD U3A FOCUS ON AGEING WELL!



About one hundred members of Bedford u3a gathered on a Friday morning, eager to discover how to lead a healthier, longer and fitter life as they age! On arrival each Member received a 'goody bag' filled with healthy treats like a bottle of water, a small tin of low-sugar baked beans, a health bar and a piece of fruit. Perfect for munching on while listening to all the speakers!



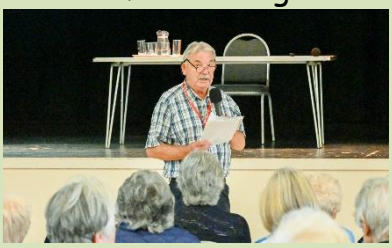
Colin Tucker, Chairman of Bedford u3a, gave a warm welcome to everyone including several local health organisations who had joined together to share information about their services and chat with Bedford u3a members about how they might be helpful. Four organisations gave presentations: the



Fire Service, the TIBBS Dementia Foundation, Sites Concern and Mobile Physio who got everyone up on their feet to try out simple exercises to keep a body mobile. Other organisations had stands where members could ask questions and pick up leaflets about the different services they offered. The Fire Service were delighted with how well their offer of free fire safety home visits went down.

With Music24 on guitar and Bedford u3a's very own Jim Newton led the audience in a karaoke singalong to two great hits from our generation, Sweet Caroline and Hi Ho Silver Lining, to end a very successful morning on a high note!





The National u3a celebrated u3a week with the theme Aging Well. Bedford and Swaffham & District certainly lived up to expectations! If your u3a has celebrated an anniversary or held a special event, we want to know! *Contact* laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative



September has been a busy month for both of us. I have attended committee meetings, AGMs and a u3a week activity.
The Zoom AI presentation on the 21st was well attended and I am grateful for the positive comments, meaning that we will hopefully be arranging another AI presentation, probably in March next year.
September is the month that 'u3a Week' is held. Both Ruth and I heard very little in the way of activities for that week, 19th to 26th September.
It is intended to put a proposal to the Trust to consider changing the month. Stay tuned for any developments there.
Ruth and I are both in the process of arranging on-line workshops. The first planned workshop will focus on ED&I. (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) a very pertinent subject in our organisation.
Just a reminder of our role as Council Representatives, Ruth and I are here to assist with any issues arising with u3as in the region. As Council Representatives for the region our role is to be the communication link between the region's u3as and the Third Age Trust.
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.
Thank you.
Ian Mathews, East of England Council Representative
Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk Mobile :- 07471 211347

From Ruth Freedman, our u3a Regional Council Representative



After a slow start this year I have been busy settling into my CR role.
I have visited some u3as and been so impressed with what they are achieving – the hard work the committees and volunteers are doing to provide a wide variety of activities for their members – thank you all.
I have received emails with questions on a variety of issues:
How to deal with members with dementia
Difficulty with the login to portals at TAT
Bank requirements
Holiday Insurance and payments
Upgrading the policies
Offering donations to other charities
Forming new groups
And I am sure that Ian has a similar list!
We can seek guidance from the staff at Third Age Trust, we can assist in searching the u3a website, we can provide useful links for you to do some research…..
We can only help if we know what the problems are – however small – there is no such thing as a stupid question!!
As Ian and I say in every bulletin – we are here for you!
Ruth.freedman@u3a.org.uk

Tiptree u3a Dabble Day 25th September

As part of u3a week Tiptree u3a held 2 days of events:

24th September

The new Local History group organiser led a history walk along Church Road, just covering the history of that road. Following this event all members were invited to a celebratory fish and chip lunch at the community centre.

25th September



Tiptree Dabble Day Wood Turning stand

Ruth and I attended the 'Dabble Day'.
This event was an opportunity for members and anyone not currently a member, but who wants to know more about us to come and try various activities.
Some of the activities on show were:- Flower arranging, reflexology, papercraft, crochet and knit workshop for beginners, hand-chime ringing, chess, photography tips for success, Tai Chi and Line dancing and not forgetting wood turning.

The event was well attended by both current and even new members were signed up. Ruth and I also had the opportunity to meet with some of the committee and we were pleased to meet up with Hattie Beck, a member of the u3a's Communications team at u3a Central.

Ian Mathews, East of England Council Representative

What a wonderful idea, and I love the "dabble day" description. Does your u3a do something similar? What do you call it? Contact laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

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Could You Join Your u3a East of England Regional Team?



Ian Mathews
East of England Council Representative
Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk



Ruth Freedman
East of England Council Representative
ruth.freedman@u3a.org.ukathews



East of England u3a Regional Team volunteer Ray Hardisty: rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

For Groups and Special Events, Laurene Henderson laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

For enquiries and a Role Description Ray Hardisty: rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

For contact details of the complete team: https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/

Braintree Area u3a Ukulele Group Strikes a Chord at Shalford Fete



The Braintree Area u3a Ukulele Group is one of the organisation's success stories. Beginning as a small gathering of enthusiastic players, it is a lively ensemble of seventeen musicians bringing a joyful energy to every event.

Under the guidance of group coordinator Dan Collis, members meet twice a month to rehearse, develop their musical skills, and enjoy a warm camaraderie. Their enthusiasm extends well beyond practice sessions — the group regularly performs at community events, sharing their upbeat sound with audiences across the local area.

In June, the Ukulele Group was invited to perform for the third consecutive year at the Shalford Fete. Despite wind and rain, the group's spirited performance helped lift the crowd's mood, drawing smiles from visitors and stallholders alike.
It was another proud moment. This group has become a cherished part of Braintree Area u3a's community outreach. A welcoming atmosphere and passion for music, means the Ukulele Group attracts new members and is a shining example of how to bring people together, spark creativity, and spread happiness through the community.

Christine Deal, Publicity Officer, Braintree Area u3a

Hullbridge u3a holds charity Bookstall and Open afternoon



Hullbridge u3a held an Open Coffee & Chat afternoon in September, where we also held a charity book stall on behalf of Prostate Cancer. We also had Photographic Display for our Photo Competition 2026. The afternoon was made complete by one of our members volunteering to provide some sing along musical entertainment.

Joan Williams Hullbridge u3a





Video recording for u3a regional forum on the cards

MEMBERS will not miss out on the chance to update themselves on ACTAsia community activities or the benefits of a plant-based diet.
Talk content given over Zoom to members was recorded.
It is currently being edited by the charity and, fingers crossed, a video recording will be available to play on our web site.
It is all a first for the support team and our guests so please be patient.

Delayed access to Canva training is available

MEMBERS are still contacting the regional support team asking for links to advice on Canva.
But sadly there are no plans to repeat the two months of weekly training sessions held earlier this year.
However the u3a Canva lead, Roger Carter, has said he is willing to accept Eastern Region u3a members on courses he is involved with elsewhere.
At the same time a regional Canva Peer Support Group is running on the first Thursday morning of every month.
Contact Press and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty on rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com for access details on both.

Free Compassionate Training Sessions

IPSWICH Hospice is offering Free Compassionate Training in October.
This two-hour workshop is designed to help individuals better support others through bereavement, serious illness, caring responsibilities, and other challenging life events.
October 13, at Ipswich Library, 10:00am to noon
Further details and booking information can be found by copying and pasting the following link into your browser.
https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/st-elizabeth-hospice-30716527042

Regional workshop to discuss digital services migration

CALLING all the regional u3as using both Beacon and Siteworks.
The regional support team has been asked to set up a workshop to discuss issues around migration of digital tools to a single platform.
Ray Hardisty, Press and Media Adviser, said: "Apparently National Council already has a project looking at the topic.
"But checks with the powers that be do not expect advice and suggestions to be flowi9ng from it soon.
"So the request is to hold a Zoom together to discuss the issue regionally, gather and share best ideas and share best knowledge."
We would start with one date and time in November and see where that takes us.
Expressions of interest to Ray by email please at rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com but he is unlikely to lead on this one.
A u3a tech volunteer will be sourced.
We look forward to hearing from you.

Ian Matthews Visits Benfleet at their AGM



September 29th was when Benfleet u3a had their AGM. The Hall was full of our members and the groups had displays of their activities which brought a lot of colour to the AGM. We were also joined by Ian Mathews East of England Region Council Representative.
Members actively contributed towards re-electing Committee Members and electing a new Chairperson. We were all delighted that Denise Phipps was elected our new Chairperson as we know she is passionate about our u3a creating friendships, fun, skills sharing and discovering new interests. We wish Denise well and enthusiastically support her as Benfleet u3a Chairperson.

Sue Quattrucci, Website Co-ordinator Benfleet u3a

Are You a Trust Volunteer?

u3a and Me Impact Report

Book your place onto next month's drop-in happening on Thursday 29 October at 10.30am-12pm, featuring guest speaker Dr Harriet Radermacher, Policy Manager at the Third Age Trust who will be sharing more about the newly-released u3a and me impact report based on over 10,000 u3a members surveyed.
October Trust Volunteer Drop-in Tickets, Thursday, October 29 • 10:30 AM - 12 PM GMT+0 | Eventbrite

Finance Matters Workshop

Call to action: please spread the word with your u3a committees about next week's free, Finance Matters workshop happening Thursday 8 October at 10am-12.30pm.
Finance Matters Tickets, Thursday 8 October • 10 AM - 12:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite

The latest Trust Volunteers meeting discussed the following resources : links below

u3a - Trust Volunteer Information
u3a - Network Link
u3a - Workshops
Training - Beacon
Social Prescribing
u3a - Keeping in Touch
u3a - Grants available for u3as
u3a - u3a matters

Thank you to our Team member Lesley Wood who passed on this information.

A Brief History of the Maldon u3a Maritime Group



The group started in September 2001 with the first 12 members meeting in my house. We discussed what the group hoped to achieve, decided on a format, a day and time 1st Monday in the month at 10:00. The group was initially called the Maritime History Group.

Subsequent meetings were in the River Bailiffs' rooms on the Hythe in Maldon, but as numbers increased, we had to move to The Little Ship Club also on the Hythe. Here we had the first Maritime dinner to celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar with a guest speaker and some 60 members, all in period costume. The group's second dinner was based on the theme of the 'Mary Rose', one of our members was the guest speaker, and again some 70 members came in period costume.By this time we were re-named the Maritime Group.

In 2004 we also started Maritime themed holidays with the first one being to the south coast. Since then, we have had a further 14 such holidays, including to Scandinavia (two trips) and Belgium. One took us to Liverpool to see the 'Three Queens' which were all in the port at the same time. Our last Maritime themed holiday, in 2019, was to North Wales. Numbers increased, so we moved to the Blackwater Sailing Club, and here we continue to have interesting speakers on various Maritime subjects. One talk was given by the Chief Officer of the 'Canberra' during the Falklands conflict, another was on sailing the world only using cargo ships. We also had a talk on the re-rigging of the Cutty Sark after the fire.

We have had many interesting day trips - to Felixstowe Docks, Shell Jet A1 Import Terminal on the Thames, Tilbury Docks, and Foxton Locks to name but a few, the latest being a visit to the Isle of Sheppey. We continued to have Maritime dinners, with a further three being held at the Blackwater Sailing Club - all well attended with members dressed for the occasion.



Since starting, we have had over 250 meetings with a variety of speakers, some being our own u3a Members: five Maritime themed dinners, fifteen Maritime holidays, and numerous day trips.

Looking to the future, we will have speakers on various subjects, such as Maldon's link with the Battle of Trafalgar, HMS Belfast to name a few.

Malcolm Case, Group Coordinator Maldon Maritime Group

What a special group, and I am envious that I do not live locally! Do you have any groups with a history to pass on? It can inspire other group leaders!

Contact laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Lessons with Kitty - Kitty Stewart



My name is Kitty Stewart - I'm a music educator, singer-songwriter and ukulele musician, and I run beginner-friendly ukulele courses online.

I'm currently running a 6-week Beginners Ukulele Course live via Zoom, starting 21st September, and I wondered whether this might be of interest to your members - particularly those looking to try a new hobby, build confidence, or connect with others through music, all from home.

A few details:

Live via Zoom, Monday evenings, 6-week course (small groups, up to 6 people)

No experience necessary

Includes 1-to-1 support and a free 100+ song PDF songbook

Sliding scale pricing from £120

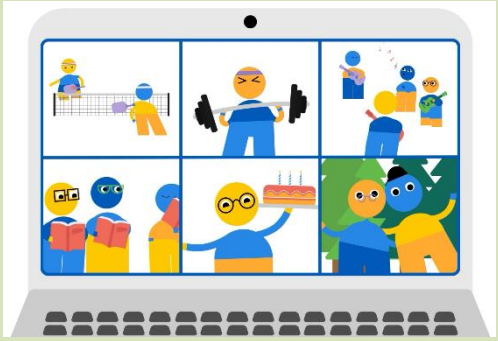
I can also set up another course at a more convenient time exclusively for your clients if there is enough interest.

I'd love to know if this is something you'd be able to share with members via a newsletter, noticeboard, or your Interest Groups Online community. I can send over a poster and for now you can find more information here:

https://musicalembers.com/courses/beginners-ukulele-course/

Thank you for your time — I hope to hear from you soon.

u3a Discovery Days



If you belong to a u3a, you don`t need us to tell you of the advantages and value that comes with membership. But do your neighbours/friends/relatives/delivery drivers know about the u3a? No? Direct them at this link!

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/u3a-discovery-day-tickets-199888052947?aff=oddtdtcreator

Our next u3a discovery day is on **Monday 19 October** at 11am. These informal online sessions are a great way to find out more about u3a and the benefits of becoming a member. laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

We hope you'll join us!

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Thursday, October 1 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Mods versus rockers: a 1960s 'moral panic'?** In the early 1960s, most young people defined themselves as either 'mods' or 'rockers'. This talk charts the development of this phenomenon.	Mods versus rockers: a 1960s 'moral panic'? Tickets, Thursday, October 1 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Monday October 5 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**A history of the world according to sheep** How sheep and the wool trade have shaped British history, built fortunes, influenced society and even helped win wars. Starring Flis and RonWith assistance from human: Alan Freeland	A history of the world according to sheep Tickets, Monday, October 5 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday October 6 10 AM - 12 PM	**Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: October** Discover how aviation learned to train pilots, from trial and error to structured flying schools in little more than a decade.	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: October Tickets, Tuesday, October 6 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday October 6 11 AM - 12:15 PM	**First light: the formation of the first stars, blackholes, and galaxies** Professor Stephen Wilkins takes us to space, describing the surprises of our universe being uncovered by the James Webb Space Telescope. Hosted by the u3a Science Network	First light: the formation of the first stars, blackholes, and galaxies Tickets, Tuesday, October 6 • 11 AM - 12:15 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Thursday, October 8 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Darkness on the edge of town: Bruce Springsteen and the American dream** Explore how Bruce Springsteen turned personal alienation into a musical mission to expose the gap between the American dream and reality.	Darkness on the edge of town: Bruce Springsteen and the American dream Tickets, Thursday, October 8 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Friday October 9 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**On the threshold of a dream: music, imagination and the late 60s-early 70s** Explore an exciting era of musical change, from the psychedelic sounds of the late 1960s to the rise and evolution of progressive rock.	On the threshold of a dream: music, imagination and the late 60s-early 70s Tickets, Friday, October 9 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Monday, October 12 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Introducing AI and AI in Scotland** Explore the world of AI: what it is, where it's found, how u3a members use it, and Scotland's role in AI. Hosted by Alan Freeland, u3a Subject Advisor for AI and Alan Blue from Forth Valley u3a.	Introducing AI and AI in Scotland Tickets, Monday, October 12 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday, October 13 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Guide to feeling connected in a digital world** Build confidence online, discover simple, safe ways to stay connected, make friends and communicate with others using technology. Feeling isolated or unsure about using technology? You're not alone. Join AbilityNet, in partnership with BT Group.	Your guide to feeling connected in a digital world Tickets, Tuesday, October 13 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Wednesday, October 14 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM	**Laughter Yoga with Judith: October** Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a. "We don't laugh because we're happy, we're happy because we laugh." - William James	Laughter Yoga with Judith: October Tickets, Wednesday, October 14 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Thursday, October 15 10 - 11:30 AM	**Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: October** Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones. These sessions are led by John, Mike and Ruth.	Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: October Tickets, Thursday, October 15 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Wednesday 21 October 2 PM - 3 PM	**Keeping warm and cutting energy bills: Practical advice and support** This session provides practical, easy to understand advice on managing energy costs and staying warm at home.	Keeping warm and cutting energy bills: Practical advice and support Tickets, Wednesday 21 October • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday, November 3- December 8 2 PM-3:30 PM	**Cryptic crosswords for beginners: six-session course (Nov/Dec 2026)** Join Henry Howarth, u3a Subject Adviser for Cryptic Crosswords, for a six-session course on how to solve cryptic crosswords.	Cryptic crosswords for beginners: six-session course (Nov/Dec 2026) Tickets, Tuesday, November 3- Tuesday, December 8 • 2 PM-3:30 PM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Thursday, October 22 11 AM - 12 PM	**David Hockney as I knew him** The world of David Hockney, a bright star of British art - a talk by Peter Webb. Peter Webb first met David Hockney when I invited him to lecture to his students at Coventry College of Art in 1968.	David Hockney as I knew him Tickets, Thursday, October 22 • 11 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Friday October 16 2 PM - 3 PM	**The u3a Essay Competition award ceremony 2026** Join us. The u3a Essay Competition award ceremony 2026 - The most incredible journey.	The u3a Essay Competition award ceremony 2026 Tickets, Friday, October 16 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Wednesday, October 21 1 PM - 2:30 PM	**Delivered to your door – the complexities of efficient parcel delivery** John of u3a Let's Talk Tech explores how supply chains, predictive algorithms, and boots-on-the-ground operations enable parcel delivery.	Delivered to your door – the complexities of efficient parcel delivery Tickets, Wednesday, October 21 • 1 PM - 2:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Thursday, October 22 2 PM - 4 PM	**The US constitution vs. unitary executive power**How is presidential power reshaping US democracy? Explore Project 2025, executive authority and the 2026 midterm elections. Don Mobley is a member of Stowmarket u3a and a former US Air Force pilot.	The US constitution vs. unitary executive power Tickets, Thursday, October 22 • 2 PM - 4 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Monday October 26 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Secrets of the Human Brain: Behaviour and Personality** This talk explores the way that parts of the brain influence behaviour and thinking.	Secrets of the Human Brain: Behaviour and Personality Tickets, Monday, October 26 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Tuesday, October 27 • 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	**Laughter yoga with Merrie Maggie: October** 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: October Tickets, Tuesday, October 27 • 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Thursday, October 29 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM	**Art deco days** Discover the glamour and innovation of 1930s Scotland through its striking Art Deco architecture, design and culture.	Art deco days Tickets, Thursday, October 29 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Friday, October 30 • 10 AM - 11 AM	**The history of pirate radio** Nick Bailey, Bingham u3a member, will be giving an illustrated talk about his time on board the original pirate ship Radio Caroline. Across the Waves - from Radio Caroline to Classic FM.	The history of pirate radio Tickets, Friday, October 30 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Monday, November 2-November 23 2 PM-4 PM	Preparing for an AI world Discover what AI can do for you in this practical four-week course, 2 November: AI overview, getting started with an AI chatbot and basic chatting 9 November: AI images – producing, editing and analysing images – and using documents 16 November: Advanced prompting and other AI tools 23 November: AI and ethics – societal implications and implications for personal use By popular demand, this is an updated repeat of the course held in February 2026.	Preparing for an AI world Tickets, Monday, November 2-Monday, November 23 • 2 PM-4 PM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Wednesday, November 4 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM	Laughter Yoga with Judith: October Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.	Laughter Yoga with Judith: November Tickets, Wednesday, November 4 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM GMT+0 | Eventbrite
Thursday 5th November, 10am to 11am. Friday 13th ,20th & 27th November 10am to 11am	1. From Movie Theatre to Hit Factory: The Birth of Stax (1957–1965) 2. Friday 13th November, 10am to 11am. The Sound of Southern Soul: Stax at Its Peak (1965–1968) 3. Crisis, Control, and Black Power: Stax in Transition (1968–1972) 4. Friday 27th November, 10am to 11am. Collapse, Legacy, and Afterlives of Stax	Soulsville USA series - The History and Legacy of Stax Records Tickets, Thursday, November 5 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+0 | Eventbrite

The clocks go back by one hour on Sunday, 25 October 2026 at 2:00 am,