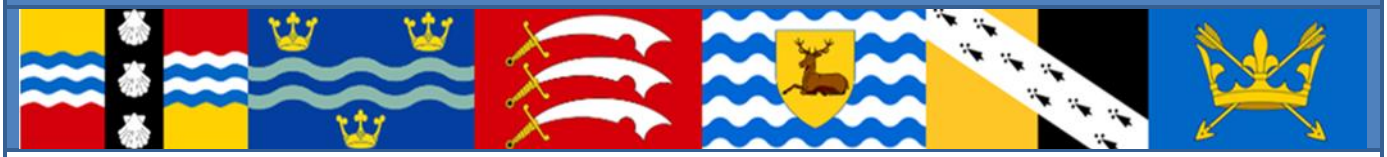
Chairs and Secretaries, please share with ALL your u3a members

East of England Region u3a

September 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 9/26 Page 1



Distributed by u3a Eastern Regional Team to all u3as **Deadline for the October 2026 issue is by Friday 25th September 2026. Send to** laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

40 Years of Welwyn Hatfield u3a



2026 marks the 40th anniversary of Welwyn Hatfield u3a, and the annual Garden Party, held in July, proved the perfect opportunity to celebrate. About 100 members gathered for an afternoon picnic, with entertainment from our ukulele group, the WelHat Ukes, and a quiz with questions from the 80s. We toasted the special occasion with fizz and soft drinks, and shared a celebration cake, ceremonially cut by one of our earliest members (and Chairman for several years) **Myrtle Pit-Keathly**.

Another member celebrating with us was **Val Feith**, whose work 40 years ago as a Community Activity Officer with the local borough council saw her initiate a u3a branch here. From a first meeting with about half a dozen people we have grown to a membership of almost 900 – who knows what the next 40 years might bring!

Jill Longman, Welwyn Hatfield u3a Programme Secretary www.u3awelhat.org.uk



From a membership of a dozen to 900 and 40 Years continuous presence in the community is a wonderful achievement. Congratulations from the East of England u3a Team.

Let us know about YOUR u3a celebrations – either an anniversary or u3a Week promotions. laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Playing with No Strings Attached!



Maldon u3a's Guitar & Ukulele group is going from strength to strength since its formation in November 2025, due in no small part to the enthusiasm not only of the groups coordinator, **Steve Collis**, but its very enthusiastic members.

As one of our u3a members put it, following a performance by the group at one of our monthly meetings: "This is what the u3a is all about - instilling inspiration and purpose into a retired generation who have come from all walks of life".

The group, now called **Strings Attached**, took to the stage at Maldon Town Hall to entertain at our Open Day in June and has played at local church concerts. They now have bookings for several local fundraising concerts.

There are now 19 members, playing guitars, ukuleles and drums plus two singers and a repertoire that contains over 80 songs ranging from rock n roll to Coldplay.

Kris Taylor, Maldon u3a Newsletter Editor



We featured this Group in April, and it seems they have had great success since their formation!

Has your u3a any examples of particularly successful groups or rapid growth? Perhaps it is a Group that has been going strong for years?

We would love to feature it – let us know.
laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Simply Strolling and Exploring with Chelmsford u3a…



I am a member of a group called "Would You Be Interested in Going…" (WYBIG). We post ideas for cinema, theatre, quizzes, gigs etc to get a group together for events that people would otherwise be going to alone or just in a couple.



I do a lot of walking and running and know many interesting places in Chelmsford, so I posted a poll in WYBIG asking if anyone was interested in a short walk from the Cathedral to Central Park Cafe, via Tower Gardens, some local history and some silly signs.



My aim was to offer accessible walks that could accommodate wheelchairs, with lots of pauses to look at or wonder about the things we find on the way. Sometimes someone in the group will know the answer, or we may be inspired to research it later, so we are maintaining our health and learning at the same time.



Walks are typically 3 miles (and no more than 5 miles), with turnaround or bail-out points. We minimise steps, roads and steep slopes, and there is always a cafe for a chat afterwards. Fresh air, walking and talking are excellent for our physical and mental health.
Several people were keen, so I set up 3 walks, and people asked if it could become a monthly event. u3a suggested it should be open to all Chelmsford u3a members and asked me to set up the group.

The initial membership decided we would meet at 10.30 in the morning on the second Friday of the month. We also decided to call it Strolling and Exploring, since we would be taking our time and looking for interesting things to see and talk about.
Everyone who has joined me for a walk has said how much they enjoyed it and is keen to do more.

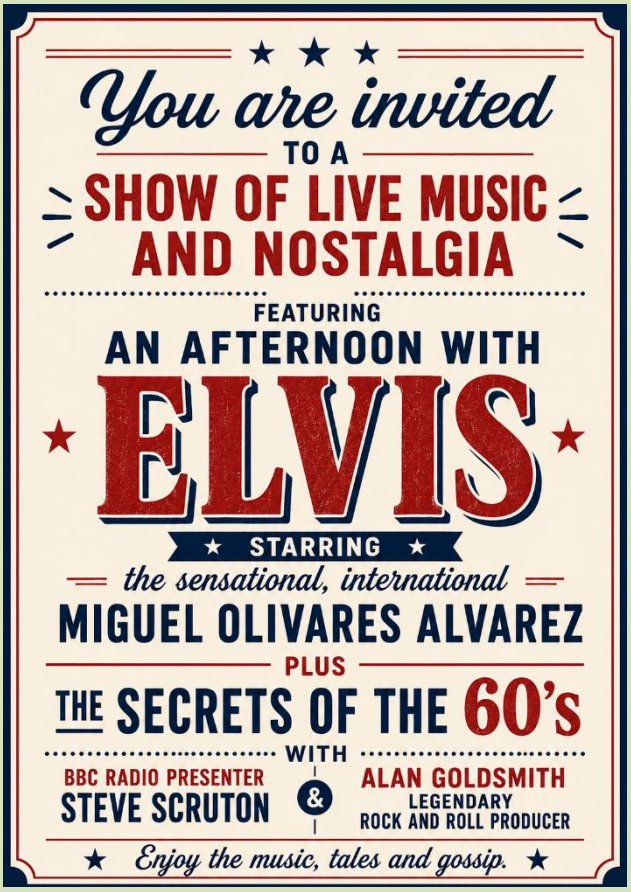
The group will have an article in the September Chelmsford U3A newsletter and also in a local free magazine called The Edge.

Chris Purse, Chelmsford u3a

Strolling and Exploring sounds like a splendid idea. My own u3a has a group called Let`s Go, which sounds very similar to WYBIG. Has your u3a had great success with a new group? Let me know! laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Elvis May Enter the Building!

Steve Scruton and Alan Goldsmith have been popular speakers for many years with u3a groups in Hertfordshire, Essex and London. They are putting on An Afternoon With Elvis which marks the 50th anniversary since his passing in 1977. It features all the big hits with top tribute act Miguel Olivares Alvarez. And showbiz chat and tales from Alan and Steve. Alan be talking about all the big names he's worked with and promoted from the 60s to today, and Steve will spill the beans on some of the 20,000 plus guests he's interviewed during 50 years on the radio, 35 of those years on the BBC.



As you would appreciate this is quite an expensive show to put on, but if any u3as could guarantee a group booking of around 50 people, we could offer it at a discount of £15.00 per ticket (rather than the standard price of £18.00 offered to the general public). The ticket price is the only cost to your members; we pay for the show, venue hire and other expenses.

If your members are interested we can book a venue of your choice in your area, from February onwards next year. We would liaise with you regarding a suitable date and venue.



Please let me know if you think this would work as a social outing for your members.

In addition, both Alan and Steve are available individually for bookings. Their fee starts at £150 plus travel. Alan talks about growing up in the 1950s and going on to promote big music acts in venues all around East Anglia and London. Steve talks about his life on the radio (50 years this year) along with some of the people he's met and interviewed along the way.

Contact numbers:
Ian Wyatt (Producer) 07970 633959.
Alan 07790 308258
Steve 07710 061063.

For a report on Alan and Steve as Speakers *Music and Memories: The Songs That Shaped Our Lives, with Steve Scruton and Ian Wyatt 24th Oct 2025 - Stanway in Colchester*

From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative



Well, at last the heat has dissipated and a sort of Autumnal atmosphere has emerged. It has been a relatively quiet month for me in my role as Council Representative, however there are one or two announcements I would like to make.

First of all, I would like to congratulate Melanie Lester, a member of **Sudbury u3a**. Melanie, 72, won gold in the over-70s British powerlifting championships in June after squatting 100kg.



Melanie says, "When I go to the gym there are people in their 20s and 30s and I just feel like one of them.If I can inspire one more person to start lifting weights, it will make my day." This is a link to a short Facebook video where Melanie introduces us to her Power Lifting group in Sudbury.

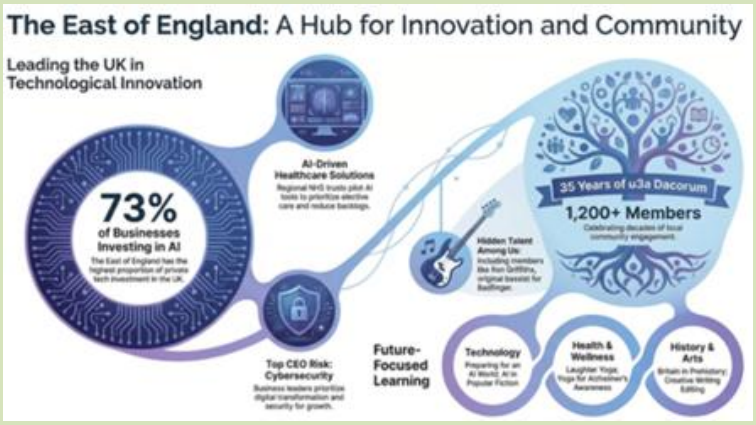
https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1BR6AKcGJS

The Sudbury u3a Power Lifting Group were featured previously as one of our Inspirational Groups.

AI - what's all the fuss about? Part 2

Secondly, I mentioned in last month's bulletin that following the success of the last **AI presentation**, I will be hosting another presentation later in September. Places are still available with registration details below.

AI - What's all the Fuss About. Part. 2 Tickets, Monday, September 21 • 10 AM - 12 PM | https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ai-whats-all-the-fuss-about-part-2-tickets-1995438270583?aff=oddtdtcreator&keep_tld=trueEventbrite



Register early to avoid disappointment

As a reminder, 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.

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



August is usually a quiet month for u3as – committee and volunteers have been taking a well-earned break.
I have been planning visits to celebrate with / get to know some u3as – a 30th. Anniversary, an Open Day and an informal coffee morning. There may be more invites for u3a week -

Today I attended the AGM at **Aylsham u3a** – for a very special reason. Jean St.Clair, founder member of this u3a, who has taken every role on the committee at some time, was given the honour of being appointed an Honorary President for her services to Aylsham u3a.



As Chair David said, "Without Jean's hard work we wouldn't be here today!".
It was good to meet the committee, too – please do remember that Ian and I are here to assist you all.

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

Seemingly tireless, Jean St.Clair has been a member of our East of England u3a Team for several years!

Does your u3a have a long standing u3a/committee member? We would love to feature them – contact laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com with details and a photograph.

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/

Forums on world compassion and Asian plant-based diets

TWO exclusive talks highlighting compassion in the world are being given to u3a members in the East of England this month.
Presenter is Pei Su, the founder and CEO of ACTAsia (Action for Compassion Together), a United Nations-award-winning charity celebrating its 20th anniversary this month.

Talk one

Meet the woman saving the world - one act of compassion at a time
Wednesday, September 16, from 10am over Zoom.
Pei Su is no ordinary 59-year-old. Born in Taiwan and now living in the Home Counties, the former trainee Buddhist monk has had a remarkable life in activism - from working undercover on bear bile farms and exposing exotic animal traffickers to helping abandoned children in rural China and setting up global sustainability programmes.

Talk Two

How an Asian plant-based diet can help you live a healthier life. Wednesday, September 23, from 10am over Zoom
Don't know your ginger from your miso, or how to make a decent stir fry?
Pei Su of ACTAsia will give you all the tips and tricks to incorporate Asian plant-based recipes into your diet.

There will be the one Zoom link for both sessions. So, book your place at both or either by contacting PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty on rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com





War Graves Commission forum assisting history studies

TIME is running out to book places at the regional Commonwealth War Graves Commission forum on September 10 from10am till 11.30am.

The charity maintains graves in most churchyards across the East of England. So, the session will be of interest to members of history groups, those researching family history and anyone finding out about the Second World War.

The presentation promises details to help those in all the relevant interest groups. Details will be given on how the organisation operates and how details on those in graves under its care can be accessed. The speaker also promises a question and answer session.

PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty is the facilitator.
Please book with him and he will send you the necessary Zoom link.

Contact: rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

Workshops for u3as – help and inspiration

Contingency and succession planning

What does it cover? Information to help you understand the difference between contingency and succession planning for your u3a and Committee, and their importance in running your u3a smoothly.

Date of next session(s):

- Wednesday 7 October 10.30-12.30 Book Now

"Very useful session - made me think about a number of things as a new trustee."

Helping your u3a grow

What does it cover? Ideas and information to help recruit new members, the benefits of which include more diverse interest groups and a bigger pool of potential volunteers. The conditions needed for growth will be explored and overcoming challenges.

Date of next session(s):

- Tuesday 8 September 10.00-12.00 Book Now
- Monday 12 October 10.30-12.30 Book Now

"I found it interesting, informative and thought provoking - it was very useful to hear other participants' experience & suggestions."

Motivating members to volunteer

What does it cover? Recognising the importance of volunteering within the u3a and identifying common challenges and finding workable solutions.

Date of next session(s):

- Thursday 24 September 10.00-12.00 Book Now

"This was a well-run workshop, a lot to take away and review with my committee. Thank you!"

Organising and running u3a interest groups

What does it cover? Information to help you understand the roles and responsibilities of Group Coordinators and Group Leaders, and to discuss ideas and good practice in running successful groups.

Date of next session(s):

- Wednesday 16 September 10.00–12.00 Book Now
- Thursday 22 October 10.00–12.00 Book Now

Regional peer support Sessions for Canva Underway

MONTHLY get-togethers over Zoom to discuss publication successes and issues over Canva have been launched.The first one at the beginning of last month concentrated on u3a publicity. In particular it showed how basic AI and Canva combined can produce videos and traditional flyers, etc for group promotions. Sessions are being organised on the first Thursday of every month from 10am to 11.30am over Zoom.Those in the pipeline are:

September 3, October 1, November 5, December 3 and January 7.

They are open to all those coming to terms with main replacement for Microsoft Publisher. If members attended the recent regional Canva Course they can use the same Zoom link. Others who need it should email PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty and he will pass it on. He can be contacted at: rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Tuesday September 1 10AM-12:00 PM	**Reaching for the stars: NASA's early days** Discover how NASA's early years and the Space Race led to the Moon landing and transformed science and technology.	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: September Tickets, Tuesday, September 1 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Wednesday, September 2nd 1 PM – 2:30 PM	**Email hosting and generic email addresses for your u3a** Mike Field from the u3a Let's Talk Tech team explains options for how u3as can manage their email hosting and lease a domain name.	Email hosting and generic email addresses for your u3a Tickets, Wednesday, September 2 • 1 PM - 2:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Friday September 4 10AM-11:30AM	**Wild Edible Seeds** Discover the fascinating world of wild edible autumn seeds, from identification and folklore to safe and practical uses.	Wild, edible autumn seeds Tickets, Friday, September 4 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Monday September 7 2:00-3:30 PM	**Triumph to Trauma (940 to 1042) – Danes before Normans: the Conquest before The Conquest!** Discover how Queen Emma of Normandy, Cnut and the Danish conquest reshaped England before 1066.	Triumph to Trauma (940 to 1042): the conquest before the conquest! Tickets, Monday, September 7 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Wednesday, September 9th 10 AM - 10:45 AM	**Laughter Yoga with Judith: September** Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.	Laughter Yoga with Judith: September Tickets, Wednesday, September 9 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Friday, September 11th 2 PM - 3 PM	**Drones, huh? What are they good for? - follow-up discussion** Join Dr Steve Bullock, Bristol Flight Lab, University of Bristol for a discussion on the growing and evolving role of drones in our skies.	Drones, huh? What are they good for? - follow-up discussion Tickets, Friday, September 11 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Monday September 14 10:00-11:30 AM	**World Gratitude Day** Explore how three faith traditions understand gratitude and discover the enduring value of thankfulness in everyday life.	Exploring World Faiths: faith and gratitude Tickets, Monday, September 14 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday, September 15 th 2 PM - 4 PM	**Introduction to Cryptic Crosswords** Try your hand at solving cryptic clues on this two-hour taster session with Henry Howarth, u3a Subject Adviser for Cryptic Crosswords.	Introduction to Cryptic Crosswords Tickets, Tuesday, September 15 • 2 PM - 4 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Wednesday Sept 16 -October 21 10:00 -11:30 AM	**Mindfulness and Meditation** We welcome back the six week course of Mindfulness and Meditation led by members of Sheffield u3a Mindful Ageing Group John, Mike and Ruth.	Mindfulness and meditation series Tickets, Wednesday, September 16-Wednesday, October 21 • 10 AM-11:30 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Wednesday, September 16 10 AM - 11 AM	**Life in your smallest rooms: the history of personal hygiene** Learn about the history and science of washing, shaving and personal hygiene, with David of Wrekin u3a and Wolverhampton u3a.	Life in your smallest rooms: the history of personal hygiene Tickets, Wednesday, September 16 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Thursday September 17 10:00-11:30AM	**Mindfulness and Meditation** Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.	Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: September Tickets, Thursday, September 17 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Thursday, September 17 10 AM - 11 AM	**"The Titanic Sails At Dawn" - punk in the 1970s** Join Lee Wellbrook to explore the origins, growth and legacy of punk in the UK in the 1970s.	"The Titanic Sails At Dawn" - punk in the 1970s Tickets, Thursday, September 17 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
u3a Week begins 19th September 2026		
Monday, September 21 2 PM - 4 PM	**Secrets of the human brain: sleep and dreams** The talk explains how different parts of the brain are responsible for keeping us awake and making us go to sleep. This event is part of u3a week which annually celebrates the learning and fun of u3a. This year our u3a week events are themed around expanding horizons.	Secrets of the human brain: sleep and dreams Tickets, Monday, September 21 • 2 PM - 4 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday, September 22 Starts at 2 PM	**The Enchanted Archipelago - a journey through the Galapagos** Join HX Ambassador Monty Halls as he tells the remarkable story of this most iconic of archipelagos. This event is part of u3a week which annually celebrates the learning and fun of u3a. This year our u3a week events are themed around expanding horizons.	The Enchanted Archipelago - a journey through the Galapagos Tickets, Tuesday, September 22 • Starts at 2 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Friday, September 25 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM	**AI news September: four years of AI chatbots** Join the u3a AI for Everyone team as we reflect on four years of AI Chatbots and how AI has been embraced by many u3a members.	AI news September: four years of AI chatbots Tickets, Friday, September 25 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Friday, September 25 10 AM - 11 AM	**Live cookery demonstration - try something new** Chef Alex from 'Vegetarian for Life' demos his delicious autumn recipes live on Zoom, especially for u3a members. This event is part of u3a week which annually celebrates the learning and fun of u3a. This year our u3a week events are themed around expanding horizons.	Live cookery demonstration - try something new Tickets, Friday, September 25 • 10 AM - 11 AM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday, September 29 • 11 AM - 12:30 PM	**Experimental brain research: from old suppositions to modern observations** Professor Itamar Ronen describes theories of how the brain works and modern experimental approaches focussing on neuroimaging. This event is hosted by the u3a Science Network with speaker Professor Itamar Ronen.	Experimental brain research: from old suppositions to modern observations Tickets, Tuesday, September 29 • 11 AM - 12:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
Tuesday, September 29 3:30 - 4:30 PM	**Laughter yoga with Merrie Maggie: September** 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: September Tickets, Tuesday, September 29 • 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM GMT+1 | Eventbrite
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

Saturday September 19th begins u3a Week

u3as all over our Eastern Region will be celebrating and publicising the u3a movement, with this year's theme

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Why not send us your photographs and a brief description of your u3a activities?

