

NEWS FROM THE EAST



February 2021

Your regional team keeping in touch with u3as across the six counties of the East of England

Helping you plan u3a Day

DATE of the year is u3a Day on June 2 but exactly what shape will it take?

The pandemic raises all sorts of questions about how we can tell everyone about u3a and what it means to us.

Traditional open days based around group and activity demonstrations in a hall are unlikely.

So we shall have to think outside the box to sell ourselves in whatever ways we can.

Sue Stokes the member charged with overseeing the event is holding a special meeting ... with Q and As for us in the East over Zoom on Monday March 15.

Committees are free to nominate who they would like to attend on their behalf.



Those planning the big day would seem to be the most likely choices.

And they can top up with help and support from our own PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty.

He also plans to be publishing ideas and suggestions on the East web site.

Getting set for 2021 relaunch

EVERYTHING possible is being done to ensure u3as hit the ground running when we are able to enjoy some sort of normality again.

The Government's February roadmap gave us indications of the future without real certainty of dates.

But it did show there is light at the end of the tunnel, hopefully in 2021.

So the East team of volunteers are asking u3as how they are doing at the moment and what support, if any, they feel is needed in the days ahead.

Member Link

Current conversations will be monitored together with the replies to last autumn's national survey, to understand just where we are.

The national web site already includes a section of very useful information specially compiled to meet current needs.

And more will be done to provide what extra backing u3as think they need. Regional support is not going away.

Diary date ...

Chief executive Sam Mauger is to attend an East regional forum on Friday, April 9 at 10am, to discuss constitution and other matters. Invitations soon.

Pam's New Year honour

CONGRATULATIONS to Chelmsford U3A member Pam Swaby, who has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the Queen's New Year Honours list.

The tribute was for services to the community in Chelmsford, recognising Pam's tireless and outstanding work with Chelmsford Civic Society, which she serves as membership officer.

As part of Essex 2020 Pam has had a pivotal role in organising events for the Marconi broadcast centenary celebrations and Heritage Open Days.

All by different links to normal thanks to COVID-19.

She was also instrumental in the anniversary campaign to fundraise for, and safely install a commemorative blue plaque in the city.



Pam Swaby and the commemorative plaque she fundraised for and installed during covid.

The Guglielmo Marconi plaque was mounted on June 15, 2020, (100 years to the day after Dame Nellie Melba's first broadcast) at The Garrison in Chelmsford, where Marconi formerly stayed.

.... while Val is all action at 80!

HOPEFULLY members spotted another Chelmsford U3A stalwart, Val Chiswell on the cover and page 5 of February's Third Age Matters.

She celebrated her 80th birthday with an assisted skydive ... sponsored mainly in aid of the charity she chairs, Helping Hands Essex, which helps people with alcohol addictions.

It was the latest in a range of challenges that have included wing walking and sleeping on ice in Antarctica.

Also a member of the Galleywood and Baddow U3A, she set out to raise £1,500 and, at the time of writing, had hit £1,260.



Helping her get over the line for Helping Hands, Sanctus and Mind is easy.

Simply visit <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/Valsskydiveal>

Add your donation and leave a message along with the 37 other supporters if you wish.

Meanwhile what next Val?

Trust chairman faces three Q and As



ALL the East u3as had the chance to question Third Age Trust chairman Ian McCannah at three special start-of-the-year forums run by the East volunteer team.

But those who missed the events can catch up on recordings of them all on You Tube. Here are the links.

January 19 <https://youtu.be/hds8K74PCDQ>

February 3 <https://youtu.be/p0C8YNBfzas>

February 16 <https://youtu.be/Y7nUT9HAcqY>

New shared learning project

AYLSHAM u3a is linking with other u3as in the north Norfolk cluster on an evacuees shared learning project.

They are appealing for those who were evacuees sent elsewhere in the country for safety to get in touch.

And those with memories of hosted evacuees sent out from London in a different part of the area.

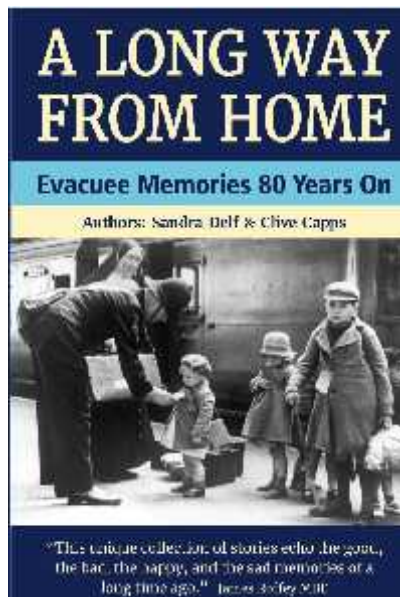
Meanwhile u3a members are also needed to assist with research.

The initiative follows publication of the book *A Long Way From Home*, co-written by former evacuee Aylsham member Clive Capps.

It detailed some first hand accounts but he now wants to record as many others as possible while individuals are still able to give them.

I am really excited that Aylsham u3a will be leading this shared learning project with other u3as in our cluster.

Jean St Clair



Member in the limelight

THE PROJECT is a race against time for Clive Capps who knows surviving evacuees will now be in their 80s and 90s.

But he also believes sons, daughters and grandchildren may be able to help.

His quest has thrust him in the spotlight of regional TV and radio as well as the local press.

“The stories are important and must be heard,” he says.

Walking groups special is on the way

ALL u3a walking groups should look out for news in the national newsletter on how they can get involved in a new u3a project with Slow Ways

The national organisation hopes to create a network of walking routes connecting all of Great Britain's towns and cities as well as thousands of villages.

Using existing footpaths, people will be able to use the Slow Ways routes to walk between neighbouring settlements or combine routes for long distance journeys.

This effort has led to the creation of 7,500 routes that collectively stretch for over 110,000km.



Slow Ways has delayed its launch until virus conditions improve.

Meanwhile, talks are being held on how the u3a ... and walkers ... can be involved.

At the very least the routes could help with walk planning. All of the route information collated will always be free to browse, search, view, share, download and enjoy.

No price rise ...

Cost of Beacon which, data shows, is being used more than ever during the pandemic is being kept at £1 a member from April.

Recruitment guides online

NATIONAL support comes in many ways and one of the most useful to u3as as the pandemic hopefully ends, is provision of a new toolkit on helping retain current members and recruiting new ones.

The retention and recruitment documents, now online as part of Sources, on the main web site, has already been tried and tested by Pathfinder u3as.

Documents include:

-] Using social media effectively
 -] Planning relaunching/recruitment
 -] Promotional materials
 -] Advice on retaining members
 -] Tips on recruiting new ones
 -] Enrolling, welcoming and inducting
- You can visit the pages and, look them over and decide exactly what you use.



And being on the web site means it can be visited at any time, seven days a week.

Your regional team has attended the briefings and feels you should find some useful materials whatever size you u3a is.

The documents relate to the fact there are lots of different ways of doing things.

Go the site, click 'learn', then 'Sources Online' and 'recruitment resources'

Free dementia awareness help

TWELVE members of Colchester, Stanway, Tiptree and Tendring u3as attended an online awareness session about Dementia Friends in a bid to better support any of our members who **are** living with dementia.

This is the biggest ever initiative to change people's perceptions of dementia.

It hopes to change the way people think, act and talk about the disease.

There are more than 10,000 volunteer Dementia Friends Champions and these people run free information sessions in their local community encouraging others to make a positive difference to people living with dementia in their community.

They do this by giving them information about the personal impact of dementia, and what they can do to help create dementia



friendly communities together.

Jacquie of Tiptree said: "The dementia information session was a short, but informative talk. It covered the types of dementia, dispelled some of the myths, and started the process of how you can turn understanding into action.

"For me it helped me think more about what we could do differently at our u3a that would assist communication for a member who was living with dementia."

Further information can be obtained at: dementiafriends@alzheimers.org.uk

Ruth Freedman

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