

Epping Forest u3a News Bulletin

Issue 2 February 2024

"Welcome to Epping Forest u3a's February 2024 web news bulletin. This month, the bulletin provides the latest news about meetings, events and other activities taking place at Epping Forest u3a.

As we said when introducing this new bulletin, while we hope our existing members will find it of interest, it is also designed to let visitors to our website who are not currently members know about what we get up to.

Epping Forest u3a is one of more than 1,000 local charities operating under the auspices of the University of the Third Age which was established in 1982 to provide retired and semi-retired people with things to do during their retirement. Its focus is on learning and one of its founding principles is that 'you are never too old to learn'.

At Epping Forest u3a, we offer a wide range of activities that include academic subject study, discussions, practical arts and crafts skills, playing board and card games, engaging in different types of exercise and sports, visits to places of interest, and social events with entertainment.

All our activities are run by our members. We are therefore especially interested in attracting retired people who would like to get actively involved in both supporting existing activities by taking part in them and in developing new activities that represent their personal interests with other members who share those interests.

This bulletin will, we hope, give you a flavour of what goes on within our charity. If you would like to find out more about what we do and about joining, please visit the Membership page on this website or get in touch with our committee via the Contact page."

Scenes from the Epping Forest Area

Goldings Hill Pond

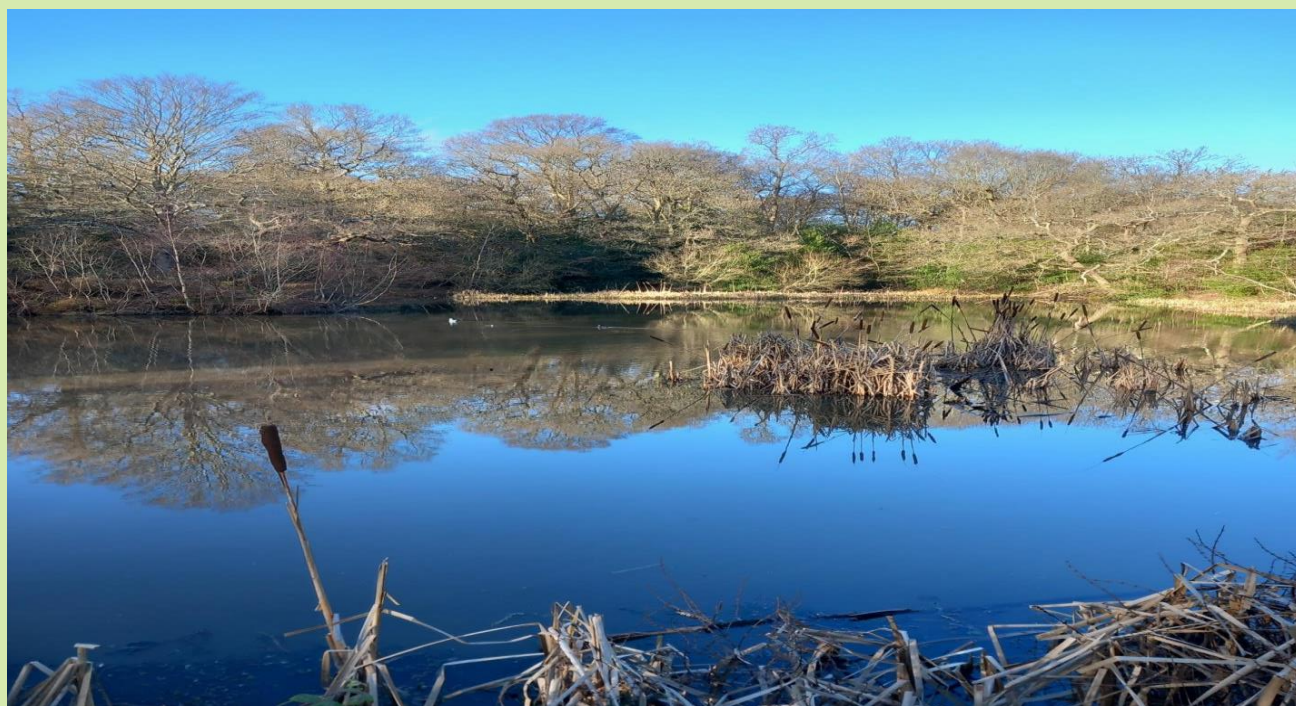


Photo provide by Janine Navarro

New Online Publication Announced by u3a

“u3a Friends”

The Third Age Trust – the national advisory body for the u3a movement – has announced a new online “gateway” called *u3a Friends* that will publicise u3a activities from across the country. This publication will keep u3a members informed about national u3a developments and the activities of local u3as, especially when these comprise new initiatives that local u3as around the country might learn from. Non-members will also be able to gain access to u3a Friends. One hope is that by showcasing the wide range of activities produced by u3as across the UK, new members will want to join. This online newsletter can be accessed via the national u3a website (go to: u3a.org.uk/newsletter).

Open Morning for New Members
27th March 2024
Theydon Bois Village Hall
From 9.30 am to Midday

Epping Forest u3a will be holding an Open Morning for new members on 27th March 2024. These are members who joined EFu3a after March 2023. Many of our Group Convenors will have displays promoting their interest groups and there will be opportunities to get more information about our groups from the people who run them.

There will also be opportunities to find out how members can volunteer for a range of different roles to support existing activities and work together with other members to develop new activities.

Refreshments will be served and members of the EFu3a Executive Committee will be on hand to provide further information about our charity and its activities.



Theydon Bois Village Hall

Groups News

Epping Forest u3a offers a wide range of interest groups and other activities to its members. All activities are run by the members themselves on a volunteering basis. Members are invited to come forward with ideas for new groups that they would like to introduce and help to run

Clothes Group

This lively group of ladies who love to talk about fashion – old and new – will meet this year to discuss different colour themes each month that match the mood of the seasons. Looking back at 2023, of course, the group enjoyed guest speakers who talked to them about ‘confident dressing’ and ‘accessories and body shaping’. The group intends to follow the convention established in 2023 of also going out for occasional lunches together.

Reading Groups

Our three reading groups are looking forward to 2024. We have our fortnightly Monday morning Reading Group that will read a new selection of classic and modern books. The Reading Together for Pleasure Group will continue to meet in the mornings of the first and third Tuesday of each month. From Classic Books to Modern Novels will meet fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons. Through an arrangement with a local bookshop, this group gets 10% discounts on book purchases. The last two groups currently have vacancies for new members. Anyone who is thinking of joining our u3a who not only like to read novels but engage in lively discussion with others about them, these groups might have something to offer to you.

Current Affairs

This lively discussion group meets every month in Loughton to review recent news stories and debate the issues around them. Members usually come armed with two stories that have interested them covered by the major news media and submit headlines written on slips of paper that are drawn at random from a bowl. If a member's story is drawn, they start the discussion and others then join in. A range of perspectives are usually generated by members and the etiquette adopted is to respect each member's viewpoint even when you may disagree with it.

Art History – New Group

This new group will cover different periods of art history. During its first year, it will focus on Italian Renaissance Art. Members will be led by the group convenor, an experienced art historian, through the lives of individual artists such as Verrocchio, Botticelli and da Vinci, an examination of the Medici dynasty and Renaissance cities. In two-hour meetings, members will view DVDs and then engage in discussion led by the convenor. The group is for beginners, those with some knowledge and those who already have a special interest in art history.

This course has now started but new members are welcome

Football Banter Group

Come and join our football banter group as things are hotting up. The second half of the football season beckons and domestic and European knock-out competitions and trophies galore are being competed for. The group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at a local pub. We also have a WhatsApp group that members can use to keep in touch and engage in online football banter. We make predictions for games and have a predicted league table chart too all for fun

Cricket Group

This relatively new group meets on the third Monday of each month to reminisce about memorable matches and players of yesteryear and to talk about the modern game. It meets in a local pub, always welcomes new members, and in 2024 hopes to attend some local and county-level matches over the summer.

Table Tennis

The Table Tennis Group meets fortnightly on Friday afternoons in Theydon Bois. There are players of mixed abilities and everyone competes in a friendly atmosphere. New players are always welcome.

Technology Support for Members

The EFu3a Technology Support Team offers basic-level advice and guidance to members on the use of everyday communications technologies such as smartphones, tablet and laptop computers focused on the skills members need to take advantage of online messages we send out about EFu3a matters. Increasingly, at EFu3a, we are contacting members electronically via email and our website. It is important that members know how to use these services.

Events News

Forthcoming Monthly Meetings for 2024

Held in Theydon Bois Village Hall

Starting at 10.30 a.m.

| Dates | Speakers | Subjects |
|-------------------|------------------|--|
| 5th February 2024 | Tony Tutton | My life in music coronation to coronation |
| 4th March 2024 | Nick Dobson | A Funny Thing Happened on My Way to the Potting Shed |
| 8th April 2024 | Siobhan Pierce | Clown to Corporate |
| 13th May 2024 | Andy Strange | History of WWII Airfields in East Anglia |
| 3rd June 2024 | Andrew Baker | Charles Dickens |
| 1st July 2024 | Philip Caine | The Silk Road |
| 12th August 2024 | Mark Butterworth | Make The Bold Move - Write That Book |

Reviewing Our Monthly Speakers

We have a small team of members who write reviews of our monthly speakers for the members' monthly Newsletter. We are always on the look-out for new contributors to join this team and devote a small amount of time to produce a summary and round-up of these talks. We are usually looking for 300-500 words of copy for each review. Anyone thinking of joining our club who enjoys writing and would like to be part of this team should contact the Vice-Chair via their contact button on the Contact page of this website.

Capital Ring Walks

This series of walks is gradually taking its members all the way around the outside of London. The March stage of this round London series of walks on 13th March 2024 will start in Hendon and end in Highgate. Walkers will meet outside Hendon Central Station at 11am and walk through Hendon Park, proceed along the River Brent footpath, passing under the North Circular to Lyttelton Playing Fields, along Mutton Brook, taking in Hampstead Garden Suburb and then on to Highgate.

Our January 2024 Speaker
Speaker's Corner: A Review of January's Speaker
DNA, Surnames and Family History by Dr Mark Carroll

Mark Carroll entertained and informed our membership at our monthly members meeting on 8th January 2024. His interesting and insightful talk was all the more impressive given that he was a late replacement for our originally billed speaker who was unable to be with us owing to transportation problems. Our gratitude goes to him for stepping in so effectively at very short notice.

Mark is an Epping Forest u3a member who has previously delivered a series of lectures to our former Science Talks about the human senses. On this occasion, however, he told us about his interest in genealogy. He has aligned this personal curiosity in family history with his professional expertise, as a former university biochemistry scholar, in human genetics. We learned that tracing your family history these days does not have to be restricted to looking up old family tree records via local analogue archives or digital, online genealogy databases.

By profiling our DNA, which leaves us with a unique genetic fingerprint, and traces of which precede us in our ancestors, it is possible to track down our family history to reveal secrets not captured by written records. An example of this would be so-called 'nonpaternity events' which reveal that the person you knew as your 'father' might not in fact be your biological parent. Since our genetic material is unique to us (except in the case of identical twins), commonalities in chromosomal patterns in our cells and those of someone else indicate the degree to which a real biological relationship exists. When parents or grandparents and children/grandchildren share no genetic 'fingerprint' patterns at all, this could indicate that the biological ancestors are unknown (perhaps because one parent has had an affair) and/or that children have been adopted by non-biological parents at some point in the family line.

We also learned that some genetic material such as mitochondrial DNA is passed on only by the mother and so this is especially relevant to tracing the maternal family line. Men and women are biologically differentiated by the presence of a Y chromosome in men (which derives from the male line, whereas women have only X chromosomes). Hence, there are two distinctive features inherited from the father – the surname (in most societies) and the Y chromosome. These features only cease being passed on in adoption cases or when illegitimacy or a change of surname has occurred.

Mark himself had used genetic profiling to track his own family tree, including his partial Indian heritage, which enables you to discover the geographic distribution of relatives you may and may not know about across the UK and around the world. He also informed us about how human DNA could be traced back thousands of years from human remains at archaeological sites. In this context, we learned that many humans, with most notably according to Mark your reviewer being a prime example, have Neanderthal biological remnants. Interestingly, a few days later your reviewer read a newspaper article confirming this with researchers at University College London finding that those with more Neanderthal DNA also had lower pain tolerance. You see, we Neanderthals are sensitive types.

u3a Festival 2024



This year the u3a is holding its first ever festival at the University of York between 18th and 20th July.

There will be a wide range of activities from sport to music and workshops.

Our national body, the Third Age Trust will be releasing further information on a dedicated festival webpage and video blog in the months ahead. You can visit its website to find out more - <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>