

NEWS FROM THE EAST



May 2022

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



Delegates gathering in the auditorium for the start of conference at Chelmsford.

May 19th conference was a huge success!

YOUR support for our regional conference on May 19th in Chelmsford was phenomenal and proof that our region is alive, well and kicking!

The pleasure of meeting each other again after all this time was evident on the faces and the enthusiasm of those with us.

It was great to see so many people milling around chatting and enjoying themselves.

Burnham-on-Crouch entertained us with their costumes reflecting the era of their archaeological dig and created a lot of interest.

The speakers in the morning were well received and Liz Thackray led the afternoon session which ended with a Q&A.

Liz herself was thoroughly delighted with the two days she spent with us.

The day before she visited some of the North East Essex Cluster, then Burnham Museum.

Lunch was with Burnham members and afternoon tea with the Maldon cluster before being escorted back to her hotel.

She spent the full conference day with us in Chelmsford before leaving by train for London for further meetings on the Friday.

A very busy lady!

Thank you to Chelmsford U3A and the regional team, without whom this event would not have taken place.

Watch this space for further events later in the year.

Best wishes to all.

Barbara Cordina
Trustee

**Another report and
more pictures inside**

*Selection of photographs on page two.
Thoughts from an attendee on page three.*

Regional Conference 2022 picture parade



Regional Conference 2022 personal view

An enjoyable event

WISBECH U3A members Chris Joseph, Sue Starr and myself made an early start on May 19th with the aim of getting to Chelmsford for the U3A East of England Regional Conference.

We had an uneventful journey and made our destination of Christ Church United Reformed Church, Chelmsford in good time.

The building appeared quite modern and once inside it was obviously an enviable facility for the local community - several rooms of differing sizes were available offering good facilities for hire - Chelmsford U3A being one of the groups taking advantage of the venue for their monthly meetings.

We did wonder if we were going in to the correct room when we were met by a Bishop and others in historical costume but we soon recognised the familiar blue and white u3a banners.

After a welcome cup of coffee and biscuits all became clear when we discovered those in costume were members of a u3a archaeological group.

We were asked to make our way to the Sanctuary where the Conference was to take place - the joining instructions had said the Sanctuary could seat some 400 people and was quite magnificent and it certainly was impressive.

At this stage it was not clear what format the conference was going to take as we had not received a formal agenda.

The meeting was chaired by Barbara Cordina Trustee for East of England u3a who welcomed everyone and went on to introduce Liz Thackray, the national Chairman.

We were then in for a treat!

Two excellent speakers providing plenty of opportunity for laughter.

First up was Patrick Forsyth, member of u3a Maldon and Co-ordinator of their Creative Writing Group talking about his journey getting into print as a travel writer.

Then followed by Gervase Phinn, published author, talking passionately about his time in education, as both a teacher and an



Ofsted inspector and latterly as a guest speaker on P and O cruise ships.

Time for lunch - and while covid had not stopped the Conference it's impact was still felt as there had been problems getting catering for everyone - so we were all presented with a lunch box containing home made sandwiches and nibbles and another welcome cup of coffee.

A prompt start for the afternoon session and now down to u3a business with Liz Thackray talking about the last 40 years and looking to current and future issues.

There followed a lively question and answer session - subjects included the new lower case logo (taking up a good deal of floor time), hybrid meetings, Facebook usage and age profiling to name a few.

Then back in the car for the journey home.

A long day but an enjoyable one.

Wendy Lyons
Wisbech U3A

Floral sprucing up

HITCHIN U3A gardening group has transformed a planter in the town's Waitrose car park in partnership with the council.

Maggie Killingbeck, of the u3a said: "The group was keen to do something practical to help mark the national 40th anniversary so it was great to be able to get our hands stuck into revamping this scruffy bed as part of our celebrations.

"I would like to express our gratitude to North Herts Council for their role in this accomplishment and to Waitrose and Savin's for their support.

"I am delighted to say that, despite the rain, the whole enterprise went very smoothly. "

North Herts Council's ground maintenance contractor John O'Conner prepared the bed ahead of the planting

In addition, again with the help of the district council, the u3a also planted 40 trees, a mix of rowan, silver birch and white cherry in William Arboretum which, happily, all appear to be flourishing.

Maggie Killingbeck



Looking good ... Hitchin U3A gardening group members and the freshly planted bed.

40th anniversary science special

THE July meeting of Science Network has been designated as the 40th Anniversary meeting over Zoom and is now available for booking on the national web site.

This is a science-based learning event on July 26 with three presentations of 45 minutes followed by questions after each, with a break for refreshments and for lunch.

The meeting will start at 10:30am (linking from 10:15am) and will end with a short summary and thanks session at 3pm.

Sessions for this event will all be led by u3a members with specialist knowledge.

John Marriage of Lyme Regis U3A will present on 'Blowing Hot and Cold in the 1980s.'

Mike Perry of Tring U3A will speak on 'The Carbon Imperative'.

While Leigh Edwards of Exeter U3A talks about 'Human Colonisation of Space'.

There will also be input from Michaela Moody and Jane Tietjen.

To book a place on this free event, go to Events on the u3a national website and click the registration option for the u3a Science Network anniversary meeting on July 26.

Recruiting picnic time

CHELMSFORD U3A is organising a 40th Anniversary picnic on June 1 to encourage people to find out more about the u3a as well as marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It's at Galleywood Heritage Centre from noon to 4pm with music and prizes scheduled.



Celebrating a milestone birthday ... Rickmansworth U3A at Rickmansworth School.

Rickmansworth 20th

RICKMANSWORTH u3a celebrated their 20th Anniversary in style. The committee invited members to join them for a cream tea with 'bubbles'.

The main hall in Rickmansworth School was hired and soon took on a look of celebration as it was decorated with u3a bunting, balloons and tables all in blue and yellow.

Members were able to meet, greet and circulate, as table places were not booked.

It was a delight to see so many smiling faces, with members chatting with one another.

Jean Paddick, Chairman of Rickmansworth took the stage to welcome invited guests: regional trustee Barbara Cordina, the Chairman of Three Rivers District council, together with his wife, and the Chairs of Chorleywood and Sarratt U3As.

Jean then gave a short history on the beginnings of Rickmansworth u3a.

She had also been looking back at old newsletters and found in the January 2002 edition names that were still current:

- ✦ Janet ... listed as being the leader of the Family History Group and continues to run the same group 20 years later.
- ✦ Bill ... on the committee back in 2002 who now brings news from the local Watersmeet Theatre.
- ✦ Brendon ... then organising Strollers, now co-ordinator for the Singing for Fun Group.

And Pat who was running the Gardening Group.

Success led to Rickmansworth having, first a waiting list and then assisting in setting up two more u3as in Sarratt and Croxley Green.

Today there are 405 members with 61 active interest groups (as they are now called).

Special thanks was given to the interest group leaders and the members of the technical team who keep monthly meetings running smoothly.

And, of course, all the members enjoying learning, fun and friendship.

Everyone was invited to enjoy the tea of finger sandwiches, homemade cakes and scones with cream and jam all laid out on the tables with, of course, Prosecco.

During the afternoon pianist, Rahul, entertained with background music.

The committee must be mentioned for giving unstinting support and time to the planning, and organisation.

On the day of the event they worked ceaselessly and were in attendance to make sure everything worked according to plan.

The u3a has since received an invite from Three Rivers District Council to give a ten-minute presentation at a Pensioners Forum in June.

Jean Paddick



Enjoying being together members making full use of the social event.

Musical celebration

LEIGH Belfairs U3A celebrated the 40th Anniversary with a fun musical afternoon. The delicious cake was made and decorated by our very own member Christine, who runs the Sugar Craft Group. Even the flowers were handmade by

her from sugar paste. To commemorate the occasion members have donated a hydrangea to be planted in church grounds. They look forward to its full beauty later.
Janet Monk



Celebrating ... members of the Leigh Belfairs committee and Christine's cake.

Guidance and advice over running u3as

HELP for existing ... and potential ... u3a committee members in both running their u3as and understanding charity trusteeship is available at the next Regional Forum. It's on Zoom on June 16 from 10am to noon. There is no charge but advance registration is needed. Queries to marilynw.east.u3a@gmail.com

Contacting the East of England U3A

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