

Newsletter December 2023



Merry Christmas 2023

Another year ending! Do all enjoy your festivities with friends and families, and Groups! See you all in 2024 (love from the Editor and Committee).

Important Notice on Membership Renewals

These will be taken from the January General Meeting and your Committee have agreed to keep the fee at £15 for the coming year. However, to achieve this we shall need to make a charge for any people wishing to order the TAM Magazines. In the past we have included this in the cost but now we are being charged from Central Office for this and the new charge will be £4 per year for anybody wishing to order TAM. This will be collected at time of renewal.

Payment Methods

The preferred method of payment is Bank Transfer which is easy for anybody on Internet Banking. *The only thing I ask is for those paying using this method is that they send me an email confirming the payment. Also please put in the information box when paying, your name and membership number.*

Alternative methods are of course cheque and cash, with this year an added option to pay by debit or credit card.

For those using Bank Transfer our bank details are Sort Code 20-34-69 Account Number 33122387.

Please email Paul Brice if you use this facility

Speaker at General Meeting on Thursday 14th December 2023

On Thursday 14th December we welcome vocalist, **Leanne Hollington**.

Leanne is a singer for all occasions, a seasoned and versatile performer, with musical influences across the genres.

Committee Chat

The Executive Committee (EC) met on 20th November to consider members' responses to the questionnaire posed at our September AGM. The EC's response is enclosed in this newsletter.

In our last Committee Chat, we referred to the 'Team' behind our u3a operation. Key members of the team are **our group leaders**. In your responses to the AGM questionnaire, some members suggested subjects for new groups. Our group co-ordinators met with 10 members to assist them form a singles lunch group. Also, Jean Jardine is organising a "Coffee and Chat Group", commencing in January at the Springhouse. Others who made suggestions for new groups are encouraged to contact our group co-ordinators who may assist those members start up their groups. **Remember, it only takes two to make a group.**



The final photo of our committee – Mick Miller who keeps us straight on the constitution.

The EC has a project plan which finalises at next year's September AGM. It is reviewed at each EC meeting to ensure key objectives are met. On 20th November, the EC agreed that written Officer's reports will be presented at future AGMs.

We have been notified that the hire of the hall at the Springhouse will increase by 25% from January 2024. In last month's Committee Chat, we announced membership fees being held at £15-00 per person for 2024/2025. The EC stands by **that decision, but it will probably need revision for 2025/2026.**

May 2024 will see the 10th Anniversary of Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a. Plans have been agreed to hold an Afternoon Tea in celebration on Thursday 2nd May 2024. Further details will be announced in the New Year.

The EC agreed in principle to hold a **Group Leaders' Coffee Morning** in 2024. The previous occasion was a success. We found it useful to discuss with group leaders any concerns they had, impart relevant news from the EC and provide a network for sharing ideas.

Over the past six months speakers at our u3a meetings have come from suggestions made by our members. If anyone has experienced a speaker, they think may suit our u3a membership, please drop an email to our Speakers Secretary

Please remember that everyone working on members' behalf to make our u3a work are all **volunteers**. As such, they deserve your respect. They are doing their jobs to the best of their ability. You can contact any EC member via email, but please ensure you use their u3a email address as shown in the newsletter. Do not use their personal email address.

More Committee Chat next month.

Please remember to mute your phone during the Meeting.

If you don't have your new card then get in touch with the Membership Secretary. You will need to register your new number with any Interest Groups that you belong to.

PROBLEMS WITH EMAIL. – recently there has been a problem sending emails to bt internet addresses and some others. It seems to think that any group emails are Spam. I will begin each email with 'u3a' and you may be able to allow these by going to settings or looking in the spam/ trash folder.

(If you do not receive advance notices then email Chris Henderson You could also add her email address to your email address book)

2024 u3a Diaries

Cheques, please made out to Stanford-le-Hope & District u3a. If you can place the cheques in an envelope and place your name on the envelope, this will be most helpful.

STOP PRESS

I have 1 (one) u3a diary remaining which can be purchased at the next General Meeting in December at price of £4.50. First come first served. Alternatively, should you email me first then I will reserve it for you at the Meeting. Treasurer Paul Brice.

Thursford

Our overnight trip to Thursford is on **Monday 18th December.**

Pick up times are **Lampits 7.45: Springhouse 7.55 and the Oaks 8.10.**

Please arrive at least 10 mins before pickup times.

RESPONSES TO 2023 AGM QUESTIONS POSED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ACTION REQUIRED

1. Could invite non-committee members to attend committee meetings. –

- In general, members are not permitted to attend Executive Committee (EC) meetings due to the confidentiality of some items discussed in committee*
- Any member interested in joining the EC can contact the Secretary and request to attend before committing to stand for election.*

2. Did not know EC meetings were open

- EC meetings are not open meetings*

3. Are committee meeting minutes available to all?

- EC meeting minutes are not available, due to the confidentiality of some items discussed in committee.*
- Committee Chat in the monthly newsletter provides key information about EC matters.*

4. Nominate a charity for a year, like a local one rather than a national one

- Under Charity Commission Rules, we can only work with Charities with the*

same ethos as us.

□ We are not able to donate money to a charity unless it shares our objective clause. However, collections could be undertaken as long as no money goes through the accounts.

□ The EC has agreed to raise this at a General Meeting to seek the views of members.

5. Use u3a as a base to volunteer for other organisations such as charity shops. Use the website?

□ Members are able to volunteer to any charitable organisations they may support without u3a involvement.

6. What happened to the survey you did some time ago? Nothing came of it.

□ COVID came along but the findings are still available to use although might be out of date.

7. Keep advertising more in local libraries.

□ With a membership in excess of 460, we have no need to advertise to attract additional members.

8. Facebook page? Many would need instruction

□ Our Facebook Group is, "Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a". It is a Private Group for SLH & District u3a members only.

9. Could we have a mid-month coffee morning either at The Springhouse else local (Some people non-drivers)?

Jean Jardine is organising a monthly drop-in coffee morning on the first Monday of each month, from 10.00 to 12.00, commencing on 8th January 2024. (1st January being New Year's Day).

10. If on trips/outings, etc. – if low on numbers/vacancies, could places be offered to friends/family, etc.

□ We have a procedure for this. If there are spare places for trips, spaces are offered to other u3as first. Any left can then be offered to other family members.

□ On the majority of trips, two coaches are now booked which leaves few, if any, spare spaces left.

□ Some destinations restrict the numbers that can attend. In such cases, additional dates may be offered.

11. Occasional difficulty in booking trips, due to bookings being taken prior to the stated arrival time at meetings of 1.30pm. Ballot selection maybe?

☐ Refer to item 10 above. Please don't arrive too early.

12. After the general meeting, may I suggest all different sections within the u3a have an exhibition of all projects (an open day)

☐ The contact details for all group leaders are provided in the monthly newsletter. Members can contact them to discuss what any group involves.

13. Why don't we start with tea and biscuits and then start the meetings?

☐ This is not practical due to other operational considerations.

MEMBERSHIP

14. Active membership enrolment. New members may have the expertise to start new groups. (I have previously raised this but was advised we could not expand membership.-not sure who told you that -we encourage new members)

☐ The EC agrees.

☐ A form has previously been available for new members to complete to identify their interests.

☐ New members will be asked to complete a Joining Form in addition to the current Membership Form to identify their interests which may assist in future u3a development

15. The only area that we seem to be falling down from our perspectives is with new members. There are many joining at meetings but we rarely see them joining the groups. Whether they are joining just for monthly meetings and the trips I don't know. It would be interesting to find out and whether we retain them after one year. One suggestion would be to try 3 monthly new member coffee mornings again where the committee or interested members could have the chance to sit down and talk to new people face to face about their interests, how they are finding their membership, what they have joined/not been able to join because its full, what they would like to see set up for them, what talents/expertise they have that could benefit u3a widely or the committee. Without knowing what the new members coming through could offer we are losing that new blood that the u3a needs. A lot of them feel it's a done deal and what is there is it. Those of us who came through at the beginning and set it all up know that new ideas are part of the fun.

☐ In addition to the response given in item 15 above, the EC will introduce a

questionnaire for new members to complete after a 3-month period to identify the activities they have become involved with since joining. We did try new members meeting but there was no interest.

GROUPS / TRIPS

16. All groups should be able to take couples and singles.

No.

17. Encourage members to come forward with regular newsletter articles and appeals – with perhaps some ideas for new groups, e.g cinema.

Any member can submit an article to the newsletter editor for their approval.

18. Some groups have waiting lists so it would be good to expand those groups.

Some groups cannot be expanded due to venue limitations.

All groups are encouraged to have waiting lists, which can be notified to the group co-ordinator. Waiting lists provide the opportunity for members from the list to form a new group.

19. Perhaps the cribbage/scrabble meet could include a board games group. I have various board games that I could bring.

No. Space is a consideration.

The EC can assist to help form a new group.

20. A "Bus pass" excursion group. Especially for those who don't drive

The EC can assist to help form a new group.

21. Antiques and collecting

The EC can assist to help form a new group.

22. Like to join London Walk

This group is over-subscribed.

Membership has recently been rationalised.

The London Walk Leader is happy to share information is assisting to start a new group.

23. Increase the number of theatre trips

Getting theatre tickets is not easy.

The costs can be prohibitive.

An alternative for members is to use Readers Trips. (Details can be provided)

24. The other alternative is to try another Groups Showcase meeting to talk to people. That was successful in kickstarting a few groups before – a lot of work but ultimately worthwhile.

□ The contact details for all group leaders are provided in the monthly newsletter. Members can contact them to discuss what any group involves.

25. Set up a singles lunch group for non-drivers.

□ Our Group Co-ordinators have met with 10 members who have agreed to start this group on a car-share basis.

26. More day rail trips please.

□ Speak to our Group Co-ordinators about starting a group.

GROUP LEADERS / COMMITTEE MEMBERS

30. We need more leaders to support the groups already in existence and start second groups

□ Agreed

31. If a short outline of what is required of a leader could be produced then members would be aware of what the commitment would involve.

□ Group Guidelines for setting up a new group are available on the web-site.

□ Our Group Co-ordinators can assist in setting up a group.

32. Not sure, as the average age of members may mean they don't feel able to take responsibility for a group

□ Disagree.

33. Without volunteers, progression is limited

□ Agreed

34. Set up a singles lunch group for non-drivers

□ Our Group Co-ordinators have met with 10 members who have agreed to start this group on a car-share basis.

35. The biggest problem the U3A has is that the majority are content to sit back and let the minority do all the work. That is not only at committee level it is happening in the groups which is hard to maintain as we are all getting older, letting the same people take the load. Maybe we need a conversation about spreading the work around. –

□ Acknowledged

36. Does the u3a still produce short guidelines on how to run an interest group and is the list of halls and other places available to hire still in existence and up to date? I notice a member suggests a document explaining the responsibilities for group leaders, but that could be discouraging, whereas simple guidelines which mention responsibilities in passing but also suggest solutions, would alleviate concerns and gives a more positive message.

□ Group Guidelines for setting up a new group are available on the web-site.

□ Our Group Co-ordinators can assist in setting up a group.

37. Do we have any helpful suggestions on how group leaders can help members who have some memory loss? I think I am probably doing the right things for the member who acknowledges the situation she is in, but there might be some tips I haven't thought about

□ This is not in our remit. Professional help should be advised.

38. Why is there a shortage of Group Leaders and Committee Members when we have a membership of over 400? How do we encourage members to take an active part?

□ Acknowledged. All ideas welcomed.

SPEAKERS

39. Suggestions for future speaker: a. Dialect man was very interesting.

b. Giggly Pig owner- A former prison inmate now a speaker as well as shop owner. Fire Brigade. Coast Watchers

□ Over the past six months, a number of members have suggested speakers who have been invited to speak at our general meetings. All suggestions from members are considered.

40. Have a comedian at monthly meetings. Our u3a is pretty humourless.

□ Are you having a laugh?

GROUP NEWS

From the questionnaire completed at the AGM we have had the following suggestions for new groups.

Cinema, Day rail trips, Singles lunches, Antiques and collecting, Bus pass excursion trips, Board Games.

We also have a member willing to start a gardening group.

If anyone is interested in any of the above, please send email to the group Coordinators

French Basic Conversation now have one space if anyone is interested. Also anyone who would be interested in Advanced French Conversation please contact **Diane Wallace**.

Drop in coffee morning to be held at Springhouse club starting in January. Due to New Year holiday the first session will be 8th January 10-midday; all future sessions will be 1st Monday of the month between 10am - midday. Please contact Jean Jardine if interested.

Singles lunches will hopefully start in January, just organising final details.

One of our members would like to start a **history group**. This will be **general history** as we already have local and family history groups. Exploring our Island's History with an open invitation to grow the group focus once we meet ! FIND out our interests by examples of what each of us know about or want to explore. Come and share books, paintings of Royals, Buildings ! Hope you find this interesting.

Please contact group coordinator - Sandra Isaacson if interested.

Thurrock libraries are offering **FREE e-learning courses** at Corringham library. These will be once a week for 5-6 weeks. Covering internet use, email and social media. There is a private room available for this. We could also do this as a u3a session group.

If interested please contact Sandra Isaacson, group coordinator or contact the library direct.

Interest Groups

Please Note. Keep us all safe by not attending Group Meetings when you have a temperature or other symptoms of illness.

Groups may be found in alphabetical order in this Newsletter.

Amblers

Tessa Duggan 01375 670212

Jenny Radford 01375 676338

The torrential rain forecast for the morning of our November amble didn't arrive, despite a yellow weather warning. Westley Heights was considerably quieter



than usual as we walked the paths, probably because the dog owners expected bad weather too. It was a pleasant walk with autumn coloured leaves falling, covering the paths and green parakeets screeching above us in the trees. We took a detour to see the pigs, Peach and Humbug, who were in a deep slumber as

usual, although I was told they have been seen up and about other times. By the look of their leftovers, they've been feasting on pumpkins since Halloween.

Photo by Jenny Radford

The last amble of the year is on **Thursday 21st December** and we'll be going to **Mucking (Thameside Nature Park)**, Mucking Wharf Road, Stanford le Hope, SS17 ORN. We'll be meeting in the car park up at the Visitor Centre at our normal time of **10.30am**. Look forward to seeing you there.

Art Group

Jim Westgarth 01375 859432

Sally Taylor

The last meeting at Mucking Centre on the 21st November was slightly marred by a power cut in the building but nevertheless, we still managed to do something in spite of this, as the daylight in the room held until around 3.20pm, which gave us a couple of hours.

Two new members to the Art Group, Helen and Davina, turned up in addition to Keith and Ray and we decided to spend the session on drawing basic shapes ie; Cubes, cylinders and spheres. Careful studies of these shapes will help to improve drawing and the understanding of light and shade when interacting with the things that we see.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 19th December from 12.45 to 3.30pm. Please feel free to come along although I do understand that this may be an awkward time for some people to make.

Bird Watching

Dave Snow 01375 461885

This month we visited Hanningfield Reservoir on a cold and windy morning. Despite the recent rain falls that we have had recently the water level was very low and this, in turn, impacted on the number of water birds that were using the reservoir. We saw **cormorant, mallard, tufted duck, teal, little grebe, lapwing and a lone grey heron.** We moved on to a second hide and saw several **pie wagtail, swans with their cygnet and many geese both canada and greylag.** As we were preparing to leave a **kestrel** made its appearance, hovering static in the air waiting for its lunch to move. Just as we returned to the Visitor Centre we were lucky to see a **wren** flitting about in the undergrowth. **This was our last meeting of the year. Our next visit will be on the last Friday of January.**

Book Group

Ann Bailey
Dawn Lloyd-Warne 01375 461885

There was a very positive feedback from our meeting. We had all read different books by 2 authors – Rachel Hore and Jodi Picoult. This month is *The Chilbury Ladies Choir* by Jennifer Ryan. Her other 2 books are a good read as well. We'll meet at Dawn's in December, then, fingers crossed, we will enjoy an Afternoon Tea in January.

Wednesday Boules

Dave Jardine 01375679410

We meet **each Wednesday at 10.15 for 10.30 start at the Springhouse.** We are a friendly group that enjoy a fun game followed by coffee and biscuits. After lunch the afternoon group start at 1.30. You are welcome to join either group or

both cost of £2 all day **Our last meeting before Christmas will be on Wednesday 6th December when we will have coffee and mince pies. Instead of sending Christmas cards to each other would you like to donate to a local charity of volunteers that responds to medical calls (Stanford -le- Hope first responders) There will be container for your donation.**

Our **New Year Lunch** will be on **Wednesday 31st January 12.30 for 1pm sit down at (Top Meadows Function Suite) top floor.** The cost is £20 for a three course lunch with tea and coffee and tip. Your weekly sub of £2 has paid for a DJ £250 and the hire of the suite £150, just to let you know where your funds go.

Boules will start again on Wednesday 7th February 2024

Wednesday afternoon players

Paul Brice 07788452852

Wednesday Afternoon Boules continue **every week starting at 1.30pm.**We play behind The Springhouse Club at a cost of £2 per week. This includes Tea, Coffee and biscuits. We are a growing-in-numbers group but everybody is welcome to join us. We also have spare Boules for people to use if you are just starting out. If you are unable to come along on the afternoon you would be welcome to come along to the morning instead. The 2 Groups are interchangeable.

We are planning our Christmas break from early in December until February. See the morning group information.

PÉTANQUE/Boules

Colin Munro 07770 854318

Carol Munro

Ring to see if we have room. We meet every Friday at 9.45 for a 10.00 start.

Canasta

Pauline Kerridge 01375 462232

Every Wednesday at the Springhouse Club at 2.00. Everyone welcome.

Our Welfare Officer is Colin Munro.

Please email Colin or call Mobile: 07770 854318

Contact Colin if you know of any member who is in need of our thoughts and best wishes, due to bereavement or serious illness. Please give their name and the reason for the need.

It is most helpful if you can include family member names where necessary.

Couples Lunch

Dave & Jean Angus

07711 359127

Although it was a bright but very chilly morning for our November Couples Lunch it soon warmed up when we got inside and started our chatting. The November lunch was held in the Watermill Basildon and we were joined by new Members Vee and Arthur who quickly joined in the order of the day that is laughter, a good chat and a nice meal catching up with each other. We did not have to pre-order our food for this lunch or pay a deposit but the waitress did not make it easy for us to pay our own bills, – we got there in the end not as difficult as she thought easy when you know how! Everyone enjoyed their food and those of us who had fish and chips got Haddock and that made a nice change as Haddock is not easy to come by we have found.

It was a bit dark inside the Watermill and so Jean asked for one set of blinds to be opened to let a bit of natural light come shining through, hence the shady photograph (*Ah, I managed to change that Jean-Editor*). But as Members will see there were lots of smiling faces around the table.

This time Dave Angus helped out with the jokes reminding us all of the late and great Dave Allen with “A friend wanted to be buried at sea but ten people drowned trying to dig the hole for him.” Plus “someone got given water skis as a gift but could not find a lake with a slope so that he could use them.” Michael had a number of jokes to share with us all as well.



Photo by Jean Angus
We meet on the last Thursday of each month and we had to “book early for Christmas” returning to an old favourite and booking in early October, as Members wanted a Christmas Couples Lunch again this year. As Members know we don’t pre-advertise where we are going to eat to all Members just the

Couples Lunch Group.

We are taking the opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2024. We saw Stuart Lowe recently, a co-owner of Springhouse Club, and he thanked the Couples Lunch Group for thinking of him with a Get Well Card as he has been seriously ill but on the slow road to recovery now. Well, here’s to the next time.

Cribbage

John Green

By the time the newsletter comes out, we will have held our last Cribbage session for this year. We will be looking to restart on **Tuesday January 9th 2024 same time, same place ie. 1.30pm at Gardner Hall**. It has been a good year, numbers wise; if everybody turned up we would have 16 players! It's good to see it growing in popularity. An enjoyable social afternoon. Look forward to seeing everyone next year.

Can I take this opportunity to thank all for their support, and to wish all a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Family History

Sue Green 01375 676441

Peter Craggs

Our November meeting looked at sources for children's institutions like orphanages, industrial schools etc. It was well attended and many members brought along items from their own research to share and discuss. We looked at examples of children found in orphanages, Barnardo's, the Waifs and Strays and a couple of examples of those sent to Canada for a new life called "Home Children". Sharing this information makes such a difference to the meetings as it brings the subject alive and we all learn more about social history. Most of us go home fired up to find out more. Thank you to all those that have made an effort to dig through their archives this year to make our sessions more enjoyable.

Our December meeting is very close to Christmas being Wednesday 20th at 2pm in the Evangelical Church Hall. The majority of us voted to go ahead with it and have a drop in Christmas nibbles session. We are going to just sit and chat about any problems we have with research, any ideas for future meetings, and items anyone brings in to show and share. A nice round up to a busy year. All welcome, even if you have not been for a while.
Happy Christmas and New Year to all our u3a.

Flower Arranging

Christine Lambert 07972 879173

Linda Tilbury 07928 221626

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month at the Gateway Centre, from 10am to 12noon. (The cost is £2.00) We are a friendly group and you are very welcome to join us. There is a cafe where you can purchase a cup of tea or coffee. Just ring or turn up if you want to know more.

This month it was nice to see the **Nerine Lily** in the garden. They are so delicate and flower for a long time. There is an abundance of berries on the pyracantha, if it is a harsh winter, the birds will strip the bushes; in icy weather we get the redwings in flocks from Europe and the Arctic, and they can clear the bushes in a short time too.





Our first meeting the theme was artificial flowers, a lot of us brought poppies as it was near to Remembrance Day; we were all pleased with the results, and made some nice tributes.

The third week is always our own choice and we had lots of different arrangements. They included a lantern with flowers inside and a tree decorated, all so different. When we have finished we always have a nice cup of tea or coffee made for us by one of the Gateway ladies, Valerie, and a nice chat, planning what we will be doing next. It will of course be Christmas theme next month



Photos and text by Brenda Osborne

French Basic Conversation

Diane Wallace

Sally Taylor

This is a small group by choice, because it allows every member a chance to speak. We meet on Thursday afternoons, apart from the day the u3a General Meeting takes place, and each member takes it in turn to host in their home. We have some existing knowledge of French vocabulary and grammar and this is put to use to form sentences in order to speak to one another. The format for the meetings can change from one session to another, for example general chat, discussing a prearranged topic, a listening exercise, reading through an email from France, and exploration of some grammar points or relevant vocabulary if required.

In mid-November, the group celebrated Christmas early by going for an enjoyable meal at the Dukes Head near Billericay.

We still have a space available in the group. If you are interested in joining us, contact Diane or Sally and we will arrange for you to attend a meeting as a taster session to see if it is suitable for what you want.

Gallery Visits

Jenny Lees **01375 360786**

Chris Henderson

From now until 28th of January 2024, the *Capturing the Moment* Exhibition will feature at the Tate Modern and is classed as, 'A journey through painting and photography'. Do get in touch.

Gardening Allotment News

Michael Farman

December Allotment News

I wished for rain and it rained. Now I wish for a drier spell. The rain makes it very muddy at the allotment particularly with weeding. Pulling up weeds, which are mainly grass with lots of soil sticking to the roots. Being wet, it is not that easy to shake off the soil. Whilst weeding the strawberry bed I wondered why so many individual grass plants rooted around and within the strawberry plant. Possibly the grass and weed seed that blows around the allotment site eventually touches a plant leaf, falls to the ground and germinates when conditions allow.

The grass roots can easily grow down into the strawberry plant making the weeds difficult to remove. Just a thought with no scientific proof! I have often had to dig up the whole strawberry plant remove the weed and plant back into the soil. Not good to disturb the plant but often I have no choice. The strawberry plants have produced runners so I thought it would be good to weed the bed so I could easily see what was a growing strawberry and what had died. Has taken a while to complete the weeding but now the weather has turned wet, cold and frosty. I will not transplant the small plants until the spring when conditions may be more favourable to them establishing and growing.

Back to the Blackberry bramble pruning. Very prickly even with leather gloves. Possible done around half the bramble at present. It looks a bit of a mess while I am doing it as I find it easier to cut out all the old wood and then trim and tie in the new. Where some of the new growth laid on the ground, it has found soil at its growing tip it and has grown roots to establish a new plant. Left alone the whole allotment could become covered in brambles which are difficult to dig up to get all the growing root out. A bit of root left in the ground will continue to grow in the spring into a new plant.

Have planted two double rows of Broad Bean seeds with all the usual safeguards against the mice stealing the seeds, still had a few spare seeds so I planted them in pots and are growing in the greenhouse to replace any at the allotment site that do not grow. So far, no sign of growing beans at the allotment. A recent BBC tv gardening programme, BEECHGROVE, has George Anderson from Joppa (that is near Edinburgh) describing how mice love broad beans seed and dig them up as I have previously described. Doesn't matter whether they are Essex or Scottish mice, they all like Broad Beans!!

As I said before, I did not plant the Gladioli corms very deep this year so have been lifting a few at a time and drying in my greenhouse at home ready for storage. Removed all the dried soil and trimmed the shrivelled roots Should prevent them from rotting. Many have clumps of very small corms which in a few years may produce another corm and flower.

I also planted a few Sweet Pea seeds in deep root trainers and placed them in the greenhouse. This is unheated, so germination will be slow but will give the plants a good start for next spring.

Finally sorted through my box of seeds discarding any that are out of date. Some seed suppliers had discounts over the Black Friday weekend so I quickly

updated the spread sheet and ordered new seeds. May have saved a few pounds or not!! Unfortunately I found a few Cauliflower seed in date so will try and grow the coming year. Not sure of any success.

Let me wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy Growing Year for 2024

Take care.

Gifting Items

Reg Edwards

Three golfing books: Golf Rules (illustrated), Faults and Fixes, Improve your Golf.

J. Baker. 01375 674714.

Get in touch about your items – not a selling page. This page will show unwanted gifts.

As there doesn't seem a great deal of interest in this idea, we will give it another month until February before we close this page.

Golf

Paul Brice 07788 452852

The Golf Group meets every **Monday at 10.15am for a 10.45am start**. We play at **Dunton Hills** on the Par 3 course which is currently charged at £9 for 18 holes. Standard of play is varied so anybody should be able to fit in.

We occasionally play on full courses so please make your interest known if you wish to join us on these occasions.

All players at playing at their own risk. Also we are now playing from Winter Tees.

The only thing we ask is if you do plan to come along then please let me know as we occasionally change to start times to suit the course and ourselves.

We also have a **What's App group** so if you wish to join that and receive updates, then let me have your Mobile number.

Holiday Travel

Carol Smith 07845 233640

Mel Fox

Italian

Verena Carter 07808513453

This meets on the **1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month.**

The venue is the Evangelical Church Fobbing Road from 2 till 4 o'clock.

We are progressing well with our group trying to expand our vocabulary and grammar in a fun way. We can only take any new members if they have some knowledge of basic Italian.

The book which we use is **BBC Talk Italian 1** which is available on Amazon if any new members wish to get it.

Line Dancing 1

Susan Moss 07905314987

Beverley Brice 07522368810

Christine Hartnell 07771554174

At Horndon Village Hall every Wednesday 10.15–11.45

We have spaces in the group now. We do not do complicated advanced dances so whether you have some experience or would like to try something new come along and join in the fun. We all end up facing the wrong way at sometimes!! Contact Sue or Bev for further details.

Line Dancing 2

Carol Munro 07766 035554

Sue Moss 07905 314987

Every other Tuesday starting at 10.00 – 11.00 at the Methodist Hall in Horndon-on-the-Hill. As our numbers have now grown at our line dancing group, we are sorry to advise that we have now had to close our group, due to the size of our hall.

Local History Group

Barbara Ward

We will be at the **Evangelical Church Hall** on **4th Monday of the month at 2.00 pm**. Please get in touch if you are interested.

My phone number for queries about the Local History group is 07748 151735, please do not just turn up at a meeting but ring or email me first to ensure there will be space.

Local Research Projects

Diane Wallace

Sue Green 01375 676441

London Walks

Dave Snow 07490 069740

Brian McDonald

Our walk in October took us to one of the more affluent areas of London, – Mayfair. We started at **Piccadilly Circus** where we saw the statue of Eros, although we found out that it should be called Anteros, the Greek god of unrequited love.

The walk then took us along Piccadilly passing on the way **Fortnum and Mason's**, established in 1707. Although it is somewhat exclusive it was originally founded by a footman in the court of Queen Anne. They claim to have invented the Scotch egg in 1738. We passed by **The Royal Academy of Arts**, the oldest art school in England and continued on to see the famous **Burlington Arcade**.

Our walk then took us down Albermarle Street where the oldest hotel in London is situated, **Brown's Hotel**, founded 1837. Such famous people as Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt have stayed there. We continued on our walk to pass **The Royal Institution of Great Britain**, where the popular Christmas lectures are held.

Our walk then took us through several streets lined with fine Regency dwellings to reach **Shepherd Market**. Although no longer a market it was here that an annual fair was held, this gave the area its name of **Mayfair**.

After lunch we made our way via **Down Street**, were there is a disused underground station that in WW11 was often used by Churchill and other

members of the cabinet when the War rooms were unavailable. He called it the "burrow". We carried on to pass the Hilton Hotel facing Hyde Park and on to Pitt's Head Mews and into Curzon Square. It was here in her flat that Mama Cass Elliot, of the Mamas and papas died in 1974 and four years later Keith Moon, drummer with the Who, died in the same bed.

Our next stop was at **Berkley Square**, which was the home of Clive of India. Number 50 is said to be the most haunted house in London. The next square we entered was **Grosvenor Square**, once the site of the American Embassy. We walked along **Duke Street**, now famous for the tv programme "Duchess of Duke Street". As we neared the end of our walk we saw the **Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral**, designed by Alfred Waterhouse who designed the Natural History Museum. We ended our walk at Bond Street station to take the Elizabeth Line back to Tower Hill via Liverpool Street.

Lunch and Chat

Chris Brown 01708 852023

Lunch and Chat meets on the first Friday of the month 11-00am at the Langdon Hills Golf Club, Lower Dunton Road RM14 3TY

Do ring if you are interested.

Memory Lane

Sue Green 01375 676441

Jennifer Freeman

The first meeting of the Memory Lane Group was held last October and since that time, the group have been meeting monthly, with only a short break in August and September 2023.

Although thirteen months have now passed, the enthusiasm and enjoyment in both our subjects and in the pleasure of all meeting up, is still continuing strongly.

In this session three members shared the memoirs of their fathers whilst another member shared details on her grandmother which because of the period in question being one generation back, was not as detailed as the father's stories, whereby many photos and memorabilia were provided to the group. This included local newspaper articles on their father's cricket prowess, military records and where stationed, where they were employed both locally and

further afield and how and where their mother and father met. Further details that were discussed was just how large families were in bygone years and the extensive period of childbearing years of their grandmothers that involved babies being born to their grandparents from their early twenties to well into their early forties.

Additionally discussed was the family dynamics and how their parent sat within their respective families and the expectations and responsibilities that was placed upon our descendants and the impact that this had upon them.

The next meeting will be on **Monday 11th December** which will start a little earlier and we will be discussing our memories of our Christmases and also the phrases used by our parents and grandparents.

Mixed Craft Group

Marilyn Edgings 01375 677425

Barbara Purser 01375 677095

If you would like to come and join the group you would be most welcome, we have always got room for more members as we **use a large hall at The Baptist Church in Corringham. You can just turn up on the first Tuesday of the month at 2.00 pm** or get in touch with either myself (Marilyn) or Barbara.

Here are some of the crafts which the group have completed during the course of the year. More can be viewed in colour on our u3a website under Mixed Craft





photos by Marilyn Edgings

Music Makers

Mo Wakeling 07902 649122

The new folk music group is up and running. We have ten members who play a range of instruments including small pipes, piano accordion, penny whistle, ukulele, guitar and percussion. Our first two sessions have allowed us to practise arrangements for some old Scottish and Irish songs and a couple of sea shanties. We are starting to introduce harmonies in our singing too. We are looking forward to expanding our repertoire over the next few sessions to include a wide range of folk and traditional songs.

We now meet on the 2nd and 4th Fridays in the afternoons.

Old British Motor Cycle and Car Enthusiasts

Graham Edgings 01375 677425

Our last trip of the year was to the **London Canal Museum at Kings Cross.**

We saw two huge commercial wells which were built in the 1850's and 1860's to store natural ice which had been imported by sea and canal from Norway. Imported ice and later man-made ice were used to make ice-cream as well as for chilling fresh food.

The ice-cream cycle, as seen in the picture, was a common sight on London streets.



After the cargo area of the narrowboat would be a small cabin where the family lived. The cabin and equipment would be adorned with the traditional painting of roses and

castles and also a display of lace plates and pottery could be seen. Horses were the mainstay of canal and local transport until the 1920's. These towing horses were known as ice-cart horses. We were all very surprised to see a heron fishing next to Kings Cross Station!



Photos by Marc, Colin and Museum volunteer.



Photography Group

Jenny Lees 01375 360786

Chris Henderson

On Friday 9th November 5 members of the group led by Brian MacDonald boarded the 10.05am train from Stanford station to Fenchurch Street.

After a very welcoming cup of coffee in Weatherspoons (The Goodman's Field) we set off to explore parts of the East End of London around the Tower Hamlets area, passing by Waltons Music Hall and onwards to Tobacco Dock taking in the new buildings and the old.



After a very enjoyable lunch in the Captain Kidd pub we proceeded on towards the St. Katherine's Dock and then homewards.

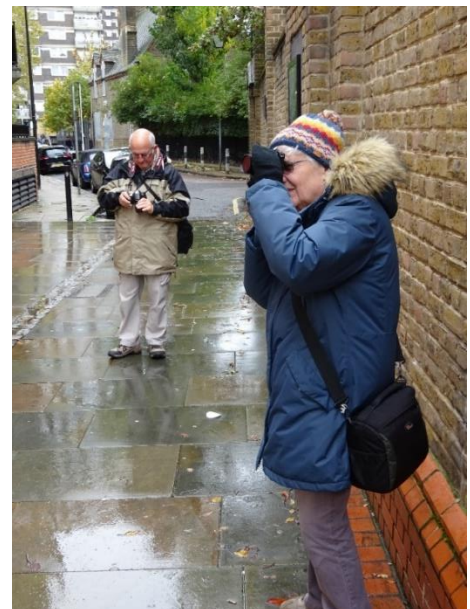


A very enjoyable day was had



and our sincere thanks to Brian.

Photos by Dick Fox and Brian McDonald



Pictures by Brian McDonald

Play Reading 1

Beryl Woodcock

We meet on the last Friday of each month but we are full at the moment but if anyone would like to make another group, we would help you to get it up and running.

Play Reading, Beverage and Cake! (Tea , sticky nut cake , playreading and tears of laughter)

Deb Foster

01375 677971

Last month we read *The Boundary* by Tom Stoppard. This was a very short play originally written for television. Johnson, who was working on his dictionary, arrived to discover the whole place had been ransacked. He and his colleague concluded that the vandalism was the spiteful work of his wife, scorned for her lack of talent as a lexicographer.

At first, the play seemed to be a lot of irrelevant, confusing words but it was in fact very clever word-play with plenty of double entendres.

As one of our group, remarked they thought it would be terrible but it was actually hilarious. Although, I think this was down to the random casting of the two readers of the main parts, who had us laughing so much as they interacted, that the next lines couldn't be read as there were so many tears.

It seemed quite fitting that we finished with eating a sticky nut cake!

Unfortunately, both playreading groups are full.

Recently I've had an enquiry from a gentleman interested in joining either of our groups and I know that there are others of you who've expressed interest in the past.

When Stanford u3a first started another lady and I were disappointed that we couldn't join the playreading group as it was already full. I hadn't a clue about how to start my own, but dear Julie Coker willingly helped me and after asking around if anyone would be interested in joining me, I got my successful group together.

Why not, with our help, start up a 3rd group?

It's great fun and I've made some lovely friends.

Quilting

Carol Smith 07845 233640

The Quilting Group meet on the **first Monday in the month,**

Starting time 2 o'clock until 4 o'clock. We do a lot of talking and laughing, as we are a very friendly group of like-minded people, with Tea and Coffee a must, and also Cake or Biscuits.

If you are interested why not come along and see what we do get up to.

No pressure will be put on you, if it's not what you want OK.

Please ring me on 01375 675998 and I will tell you where I live and how to find us.

Quiz

Sue Green 01375 676441

The Quiz group have done very well in the autumn quizzes. Well done to all! We are getting an enthusiastic attendance at some of the quizzes with our biggest yet at the St Lukes quiz at the Springhouse with 39 people attending over six teams. Its lovely seeing so many of you out and about, and up for a challenge.

We have a couple of outings to go in December with Christmas quizzes then we will be on the lookout for anything that comes up in the New Year. If you see any quizzes advertised or want to join in, get in touch with either Ann or I. Have a happy and healthy Christmas.

Ann Bailey - How Many ?

1. How many deadly sins are there?

2. How many in a baker's dozen?
3. How many years of marriage is a Sapphire Anniversary?
4. How many miles is it round the M25?
5. How many ships sailed by on Christmas Day?
6. How many animals took part in the film The Incredible Journey?
7. How many Prime Ministers have there been so far this century?
8. Advent Sunday is the ? Sunday before Christmas?
9. How many rings are there on the Olympic flag?
10. How many Pillars of Islam are there?

Answers on page 33

Ramblers

Chris Gomm

07905 117622



A fabulous turn out for our November ramble. We started at the Heron Golf club and walked four miles in a loop via Thorndon park South with well-deserved refreshments afterwards in the Heron Club house.

December Ramble Rainham Marshes Reserve Loop

Let's finish the year off with this interesting walk starting at the RSPB Reserve, Rainham Marshes and following the river Thames, returning via Cold Harbour Lane. The walk is around 5 miles long and is on fairly level and firm ground. We will meet in the Car Park of the RSPB visitors Centre on **Thursday 28th December** at **10:30** to commence our walk.

The address and Postcode is **:RSPB, New Tank Hill Road, Purfleet, RM19 1SZ**
Hopefully we'll be able to experience some lovely views of our river and the reserve.

At the end of the walk refreshments will be available in the Visitors Centre. I'll look forward to welcoming anyone that would like to join us.

If you have any further enquiries please feel free to contact me, Christine Gomm

Scrabble

Magda Norris

Our Scrabble group is **meeting fortnightly at the Gardner Hall in Fobbing**
We start at 1.30 pm for about 2 hours.

See Cribbage for our next meetings.

We always welcome new members of all abilities. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided. The cost is £2.

Singing for Fun

Barb O'Grady 01375 670461

A fun-filled afternoon singing a wide range of songs. We now sing some with music accompaniment. We meet on the **third Monday of the month at the Evangelical Hall, Fobbing Road, Corringham, at 2pm.**

Please contact me for more details if interested, or just turn up!

Ten Pin Bowling

Jean Jardine 01375 679410/ 07551 0952211

Our first meeting of the New Year will be on **Friday 5th January at the Hollywood Bowl Lakeside. We meet at 10.00 for coffee and start playing 10.30.** It's a good idea to pick up a coffee from M&S as the coffee machine isn't always working at the bowling alley. Please wear flat non slip shoes; the cost is £3.78 for two games

Ten Pin Tuesday

Kevin Brice 07973349288

The Ten Pin Tuesday interest group meets on the third Tuesday of each month, other than during school holidays.

The group meets at the Hollywood Bowl, Lakeside for its ten pin bowling sessions. We have two games per session.

There is no Ten Pin Tuesday in December due to school holidays.

Our next Ten Pin Tuesday Bowling session is on **Tuesday 16th January 2024.**

Meet for tea and coffee at 10.00am with bowling commencing at 10.30am.

New members welcome, *please email or ring first.*

Merry Christmas to All

Trips – Day

Chris Gomm 01375 406285/07905 117622

Jean Jardine 077551 952211

The details for all trips shown in the Newsletter are available on our website.

'Stanford Le Hope u3a' and a handy form is at the back of this newsletter.

Theatre Visits

Tina Smith 07899915184

Carol Lindsell 07906436445

Theatre Trip Peter Pan

Please note pick-up times for the pantomime on Wednesday 10th January are Lampits Hill: 9.30am, Bus stop near Springhouse Club: 9.45 and The Oaks Grays: 10.0am.

*Could all outstanding money owed for **Tina The Musical** be paid at the January meeting at the latest.*

*Merry Christmas everyone and thank you for your continued support
Tina & Carol.*

UKE3A

Madeline Beesley 01375678576

The Ukulele Group had an afternoon entertaining the Fobbing and Corringham WI at their last meeting in the Corringham Baptist Church. We had a very



enjoyable time playing 50's, 60's and 70's music and the ladies of the WI sang along with us as they knew most of the songs. We all enjoyed tea and cake afterwards.
photo by Linda Farman

We are now rehearsing for our next booking on the 13th December at St Peter and Paul's Church in Horndon on the Hill. We have been invited back to help entertain the Gardeners Club and Forum at their Christmas Party.

Quiz Answers

- | | | |
|--------|-------------------|-------|
| 1. 7 | 2. 13. | 3. 45 |
| 4. 117 | 5. 3. | 6.3 |
| 7. 7 | 8.4 th | 9. 5 |
| 10. 5 | | |

Wine Appreciation

Graham Hodgson 01375 675588

Jean Jardine 077551 552211

The Wine Appreciation group held its last meeting of 2023 in November, the due date for December is too close to Christmas.

We are having our festive dinner in January so we shall next meet in February.

In November we enjoyed wines from South America as well as testing our knowledge with a general quiz on Argentina. We learnt quite about the country.

SANTA ELENA ACONCAGUA, CHILE SAUVIGNON BLANC 2022 WHITE.—A zippy Sauvignon Blanc lively, fruity and crisp, from the Aconcagua wine growing region

of Chile. The mandarin, grapefruit, lime and gooseberry flavours make a wonderful match with seafood, seasonal salads and grilled halloumi. Should be served lightly chilled. 12% volume.

NORTON, ARGENTINA M & S SPECIAL SELECTION MALBEC 2022 ROSE.—A fruity dry rose with inviting flavours of red fruits, cherries and raspberries. Made with Malbec grapes grown under the warmth of the Argentine sun. Ideal as a summer treat served chilled as an aperitif, or with salads, grilled fish or spicy food., 13% volume.

LOS CHACAYES, UCO VALLEY, ARGENTINA MENDOZA MALBEC RED 2022—This Malbec is made by pioneering Argentinian winemaker Susana Balbo. The grapes are from a unique subregion of the Uco Valley called Los Chacayes, where they grow at high altitude and ripen with excellent balance and mineral freshness. This wine can be enjoyed with grilled steaks in spicy rubs or with mature cheeses.. 14.5% volume.

May I wish you all, on behalf of the Wine Appreciation Group, a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Ann's Column

Ann Bailey

The beetle drive was good fun, – there was even a prize for the best drawn beetle. One of the highlights of the weekend was going to Lea Valley and seeing a bittern. The heavens had opened so we'd taken shelter in a large hide. The binoculars were trained on said bird. From another window we watched a great-crested grebe fishing then swallowing his catch whole, headfirst. One more trip to Longstanton before Christmas for birthday celebrations. We both have Amazon book lists so it makes shopping easy. I'm tossing up whether to go a day early and go into Cambridge, but might get carried away in the shops.

It was an interesting journey home from the Cruise Terminal on Sunday. We had been to the craft fair, having got lost in Tilbury Town first. We left the carpark and decided to take the scenic route home and almost immediately encountered 5 pigs,–2 adults and 3 youngsters– wandering across the road. It was a bit worrying when a youngster approached the car and disappeared from view, but I had already stopped and he re-appeared on the other side. There were still 5. We're used to seeing horses roam but pigs were a first.

So what will next year bring? Peace I sincerely hope, but who knows. However let me wish a very Merry Christmas and peaceful New Year to you all.

Group Timetable				
	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
Monday				
am	Golf	London Walks Golf	Art Group Golf	Golf.
pm	Quilting. O.B.M.& Car Uke3a Memory Lane	London Walks	Singing for Fun. Uke3a	Local History
Tuesday				
am			10 Pin Tuesday Art at Mucking	
pm	Mixed Craft. Italian Beginners.	Scrabble/Cribbage	Italian Beginners.	Scrabble/Cribbage
Wednesday				
am	Flower Arranging Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Flower Arranging Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1
pm	Canasta. Boules pm	Canasta. Boules pm	Family History Canasta. Boules pm	Canasta Boules pm
Thursday				
am			Ambling	Rambling
pm	French conversation.	SLH & District u3a General Meeting	French Conversation Wine Appreciation	T.C.& Play Reading French Conversation. <i>Couples Lunch</i>
Friday				
am	PÉTANQUE Ten Pin Bowling 1 Lunch & Chat.	PÉTANQUE Photography	PÉTANQUE Gallery Visits	PÉTANQUE Birdwatching Playreading 1
pm	Lunch & Chat.	Music Makers Photography	Gallery Visits	Music Makers

LINE DANCING 2 meets every fortnight on Tuesday morning

Contact Details for Interest Groups

Groups with NO spaces have been highlighted. Please check with the leaders if you would like to join a group. Bk - need to book a place.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Leader</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Ambling	Tessa Duggan	01375 670212	
	Jenny Radford	01375 676338	
Art	Jim Westgarth	01375 859432	
	Sally Taylor		
Bird Watching	Dave Snow	074900 69740	
Book Group	Ann Bailey		
	Dawn Lloyd-Warne	01375 461885	
Boules (Wed.am)	Jean&Dave Jardine	01375 679410	
Boules (Wed pm)	Paul Brice	07788 452852	
Boules/Pétanque (Friday)	Colin &Carol Munro	07770 854318	
Canasta	Pauline Kerridge	01375 462232	
Coffee, Cake & Chat	Jean Jardine	01375 679410	
	Beryl Smith	07486 020009	
Couples Lunch (bk)	Dave & Jean Angus	07711359127	
Cribbage	John Green	01375676441	
Day Trips (bk)	Chris Gomm	07905 117622	
	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	
Family History	Sue Green	01375676441	
	Peter Craggs	01375 643749	

Flower Arranging	Christine Lambert	01375 678131	
	Linda Tilbury	07928 221626	
French Conversation	Diane Wallace		
	Sally Taylor		
Gallery Visits (bk)	Jenny Lees	01375 360786	
	Chris Henderson		
Golf	Paul Brice	07788 452852	
Holiday Travel (bk)	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	
	Carol Smith	07845 233640	
Italian	Verena Carter	0708513453	
Line Dancing 1 (Wed)	Susan Moss	07905314987	
	Beverley Brice	07522368810	
	Christine Hartnell	07771554174	
Line Dancing2 (every other Tues)	Carol Munro	07766 035554	
	Sue Moss	07905 314987	
Local History	Barbara Ward	07748 151735	
Local Research	Diane Wallace		
	Sue Green	01375676441	
London Walks Bk	Dave Snow	07490 069740	
	Brian McDonald		
Lunch and Chat (bk)	Chris Brown	01708 852023	
Memory Lane	Sue Green Jennifer Freeman	01375 676441	
Mixed Craft	Marilyn Edgings	01375 677425	
	Barbara Purser	01375 677095	
Music Makers	Mo Wakeling	07902 649122	

Old British (bk) Motorcycle & Car Enthusiast	Graham Edgings	01375 677425	
Photography	Jenny Lees	01375 360786	
	Chris Henderson		
Play Reading 1	Beryl Woodcock		
T. C. & Play Reading	Deb Foster	01375 677971	
Quilting	Carol Smith	07845 233640	
Quiz bk	Ann Bailey		
	Sue Green	01375 676441	
Ramblers	Chris Gomm	0790517622	
Scrabble	Magda Norris		
Singing for Fun	Barb O'Grady	01375 670461	
Sunday Singles			
Ten Pin Bowling (bk)	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	
Ten Pin Tuesday (bk)	Kevin Brice	07973349288	
Theatre shows (bk)	Tina Smith	07899915184	
	Carol Lindsell	07906436445	
UKE3A	Madeline Beesley	01375 678576	
Wine Appreciation	Graham Hodgson	01375 675588	
	Jean Jardine	077551 952211	

Contact details for Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a

Chair – Bernie Smith

Vice-Chair – Kevin Brice

Treasurer – Paul Brice

Secretary – Janet Deeney

Membership Secretary – Richard Fox

Newsletter Editor – Chris Henderson

Interest Groups' Co-Ordinator – Sandra Isaacson

Assistant Group Co-ordinator – Marilyn Edgings)

Welfare and Disabilities Co-Ordinator – Colin Munro

Policy Documents Administrator – Michael Miller

Advance Notice Email Co-Ordinator – Chris Henderson

Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a Website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/slh>

National u3a Organisation

www.u3a.org.uk

Tel 020-8466-6139

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Stanford-Le-Hope and District Event Booking Form

Event (Trip/visit/show)	
Date of Event	
Your name	
Membership Number	
Contact Telephone number - Essential	
Mobile Number to be used on day of the Trip	
Email address	
Cheque/Cash value* (Indicate if it is cheque or cash)	

*Separate payment required for each event

If you are booking for more than one person, please list clearly their names and membership numbers here.

Pick up point (If travelling by coach please indicate which pick up point you prefer)

Lampits hill (Opposite Working Men's club)	Springhouse Club Corringham	The Oak (By the bus stop) Grays
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