

NEWS FROM THE EAST



April, May, June and July 2023



Your regional team linking with u3as across the six counties of the East of England

Sorry, sorry, sorry!!! Our newsletter has been missing for too long and we can only apologise for circumstances beyond our control.



Last week we issued the first of our brand new Bulletins which will be sent out in the first week of each month and will concentrate on up and coming events and urgent notices.

Our thanks to Laurene Henderson for her work on this. So far reactions from you all have been very positive and you have found our first edition very useful in helping keep your members up to date.

Brand new shape makes this publication easier to read

WELCOME to the first edition of News From The East in its new friendly layout, especially designed to make life easier for you. Open the file and scan the pages so you can pick out the material you wish to enjoy quickly and easily.



Pages are numbered across the bottom of your screen and you can slip between them with a single click of the mouse. Or, if you prefer, go through the newsletter a page at a time. Whichever way you choose to go enjoy and find it interesting and useful and make sure to circulate it to your members so that they are aware of what is happening within their region.

We're looking for the unique and unusual groups in our region for our 2023 project!



East of England Regional Project

We're a pretty creative, energetic and imaginative bunch in the u3a, so the Regional Team have chosen the **Most Unique and Unusual Activity Groups** as our focussed project for 2023. Laurene Henderson's idea this year.

What activity group in your u3a will spark curiosity, give inspiration to others and make us gasp in admiration?

Here's a few prompts:

Does your u3a offer a Harley Davidson u3a Chapter?

Locked Room Mystery Group?

Xhosa for Beginners?

If so, we want to know more!

Entry is **open to all u3a groups in Cambridge, Essex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, that means everyone in our region!!**

In order to be able to showcase your unique activity group as widely as possible, please submit your information, as follows, between now and November 30:

- Title: Name of your activity Group and u3a
- Single photograph* or collation of up to four images* saved as one picture*;
- Brief description of your u3a group, how, when, where and why it was founded, and a memorable moment (or incident) from this year - maximum 250 words.

ALL PEOPLE IN THE ACTIVITY GROUP PHOTOGRAPHS MUST GIVE THEIR CONSENT FOR THE IMAGE TO BE DISTRIBUTED.

[Send submissions to - laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

All submissions will be included in an electronic book to publish on your websites. They will also be available on the Regional u3a website and sent to the Third Age Trust national office communications team for possible publicity purposes.

Our Regional Support Team are recruiting for more helpers!



The **East of England Region Support Team** currently has several vacancies. These roles would be ideal for former or existing u3a committee members, but **all are welcome**. You can choose your own time commitment and we warmly welcome fresh ideas and new approaches. You will be fully supported by the existing team. This really is a great way of meeting lots of new u3a members and getting and sharing great ideas.

We offer help and support to all 140 u3as across the region.

Interested? Contact our trustee - barbara.cordina@u3a.org.uk

URGENT VACANCY FOR REGIONAL TEAM COORDINATOR

After 3 years of excellent support our team coordinator, Hilary Holt, is leaving the team. She joined us at the very start when the team was first set up and will be sorely missed.

A good range of IT skills is needed for this busy role. Communicating by email with all 140 regional u3as comes foremost, as well as setting up events, sending out invites with googleforms and keeping our database current. A knowledge of zoom would also be very useful as we run our own zoom presentations.

If you are at all interested please send me an email and we can have a chat. Very suitable for former secretaries who I am sure would enjoy the role.

Flying high with region aviation groups

ARE you involved with an aviation group within your u3a? A group with similar interests across the East of England are hoping to set up a sharing arrangement with other similar groups in order to perhaps share presentations, discussions on zoom, and join up for visits to local airfields, etc. If you are interested, please contact me and I shall put you in touch with each other – barbara.cordina@u3a.org.uk



Building on the King's volunteering initiative



Encouraging help at your own u3a

NEW recruits provide a wealth of enthusiasm and ideas, so committees need both experienced and fresh new members. The u3a groups, committees, networks, Trustees and East of England Region would not exist without a ready supply of volunteers and **we thank them wholeheartedly.**

Volunteering is also close to our new King's heart. He initiated **The Big Help Out** (a Coronation Celebration) which took place on May 8 with thousands of charities planning activities for volunteers the day.

But, we, of course, run on volunteers the whole time. So, with volunteering still very much in the press and media, this is an excellent time to seek candidates for your u3a committees.

There is wealth of advice and guidance on the u3a website at this link:

<https://sources.u3a.org.uk/recruitment>.

And a list of recruitment resources, that have been developed by u3a members themselves, is here: <https://sources.u3a.org.uk/component/tags/tag/recruitment-toolkit>

For more on The Big Help Out: <https://thebighelpout.org.uk/>

Laurene Henderson, Regional Support Team



Newsletter
links info

All the underlined blue text links in this PDF newsletter are hyperlinks Highlight them with your cursor, hold down the control key and click link to activate. If no response, simply copy the text and paste it into your browser.

Mutual aid behind a volunteer appeal

THIS successful appeal was circulated to members of an Eastern Region u3a by its chair.

Dear Members,

I am sorry to have to bring this up but we do need your help.

When you sign up you agree to abide by the principles of the u3a.

One of these is the Mutual Aid Principle, meaning it is an organisation run by its members for its members.



This has been brought to a head recently by an appeal for volunteers to help make the tea at monthly meetings once a year, we had one volunteer.

I put an appeal in the last newsletter for volunteers to help at monthly meetings on the odd occasion it is called for, not a single offer was forthcoming. I appealed at the November meeting for more help for the December meeting, which is the start of the renewals and therefore will be busier than normal. We had one volunteer. I know that it is a busy time for us all, but sometimes we do need extra help.

I appreciate that having retired you feel that work is in the past and I will say at this point that there are many hardworking members within our u3a, namely the Group Leaders, their deputies and the Committee, but there a whole host of members who could do more. This help may come in the form of helping within your group, stepping up to be a Leader if required, becoming a Group Leader of a new group with support from the Group Co-ordinator, to volunteering for the tea rota, helping at the monthly meeting by covering the sign up table, checking membership cards, directing members to the renewals table or manning the raffle.

I would ask you to please consider offering your help if you can, to help create a healthy and thriving u3a. One that we all can enjoy.

Comment from Trustee Barbara Cordina Liaising directly with members is one of the best ways of finding volunteers. A personal approach beats any other. Members' involvement in their u3a starts from the day they enrol and the fact that every member is a volunteer needs to be reinforced whenever possible by the committee. It is very rare that I hear members being reminded at general meetings that contributions are appreciated from everybody. Often newsletters do not cover this aspect either. A new approach from the day of enrolment is required to ensure that all members are aware of the contribution they can make to this unique organisation.

Bishop's Stortford u3a

Visit by Barbara Cordina – Trustee – 13th March 2023

I was very much looking forward to my visit to Bishop's Stortford u3a in Herts for their AGM. Many years ago I lived in the vicinity and spent many afternoons walking around the shopping area with our young son and enjoying the park and facilities.

I was actually married there in the Registry Office in 1975 so this visit on March 13 would bring back fond memories.

In the event I became very lost when navigating the streets – so many changes – which of course, I should have expected.

Two distress calls to the chair later I arrived at the Methodist Hall and met up with the delightful members. I had been asked to give a short presentation on the u3a movement as a whole and worked through my PowerPoint presentation, prior to the AGM. I was pleased to see how interested the members were.



During refreshments following the AGM, many said how informative my talk had been and that they had learnt a lot about the movement which they did not know before.

The AGM proceeded professionally and quickly. Chair, Jim Paterson, was stepping down and new chair, Dr Sue Rayner Jacobs, spoke to the meeting briefly and was generously received by the members. A new treasurer has also been recruited, Dr Alice Dain, so Bishop's Stortford u3a can confidently move forward.

I look forward to joining the members again in the not too distant future and know I can look forward to friendly conversations.

Limebrook u3a (Maldon)

Visit by Barbara Cordina - Trustee – 17th April 2023

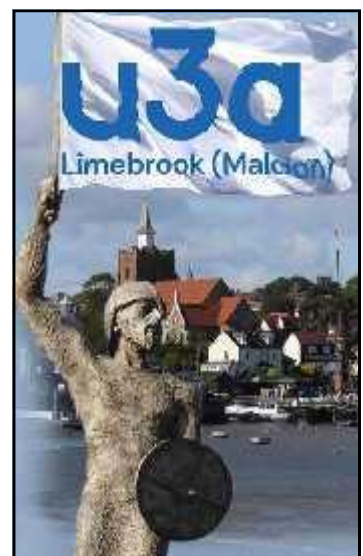
I was delighted to spend an afternoon with the members of Limebrook u3a, together with team member Marilyn Walker.

We received a warm welcome to a very crowded hall in Maldon and very much enjoyed speaking with the members, joining them for coffee and listening to their speaker on April 17.

This is definitely a very successful, proactive and well organised u3a, led by chair Brian Harris and the committee, and clearly the members are very proud of their achievements.

There is a big demand from prospective members wanting to join and become part of Limebrook u3a.

Brian has worked tirelessly with me on several national issues and has given considerable time in assisting the movement generally. Best wishes to everyone at Limebrook from Marilyn and myself.



Harpenden u3a

Visit by Barbara Cordina – Trustee – 4th May 2023

I was pleased to be able to join Harpenden u3a for their Coronation Tea on May 4.

The main topic of conversation was of course the last Coronation of Elizabeth II and some members were able to recount amusing stories of their experiences on that day.

Memorabilia from the 50's belonging to members, was displayed in the hall and we all took part in a Coronation Quiz. The questions were well selected but some of us of course were far too young to remember - it was fun!

Members provided a lovely selection of cakes with plentiful tea. A great way to meet members.



HARPENDEN u3a celebrated the coronation with a special Coronation Tea. We held a quiz and a raffle and the occasion was organised by our committee members Jan Warr, Judith Moseley and Barbara William who did a really splendid job. A great big thank you to them and also to everyone who made such delicious savouries and cakes.

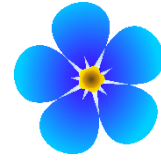
I think everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves and we were delighted that Barbara Cordina, our East of England Trustee, was able to join us.

Viv Chandler – Chair – Harpenden u3a

Ramsey & District u3a

Visit by Barbara Cordina – Trustee – 12th May 2023

“Talking about things we like to do” – South Pacific



ON my way home from a lovely afternoon with Ramsey and District members, the words of this song from South Pacific were going through my mind. This is exactly what we had spent the afternoon doing – talking about things we like to do!

I was invited to join Ramsey for their Group Leaders and New Members meeting on May 12.

Ramsey is on the Cambridgeshire Fens, a beautiful part of the world. New members were there to hear about available groups and Ramsey have devised a great way of identifying new members – they are issued with a name badge printed on peach card and known as ‘the peachies’. When they feel ready to move on from being a peachy, they merely turn their name badge over and lo and behold – that is a different colour. This appears to work extremely well and helps everyone realise who is new and who is not. An important point when welcoming new members.

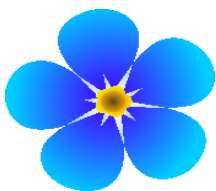


Following a reminder of the benefits of u3a membership by Bruce McDowell, and an interesting review of all the available groups, we moved on to tea and biscuits, efficiently organised, and an opportunity to chat.



After the refreshments and a guided tour of the Ramsey & District website, several group leaders spoke about what their groups do, whether they had any vacancies, etc, adding some welcome humour to their descriptions. The informality of these brief talks was a real boost to new members with questions and contributed to a very friendly atmosphere generally.

I left with positive thoughts of Ramsey and District u3a, one of our smaller groups and a very vibrant and proactive one. It had long been on my list for a visit – and I may well return if invited.



Happy talk, keep talkin' happy talk,
Talk about things you'd like to do.
You got to have a dream,
If you don't have a dream,
How you gonna have a dream come true?

Maldon and District u3a

Visit by Barbara Cordina – Trustee – 17th April 2023

I was very lucky to be invited to share with Maldon and District their 25th Anniversary Celebration on April 17.

The tea and cakes were delicious and we were royally entertained by a local group of singers who were really excellent.

It was an opportunity to meet many members of this very successful u3a and to share their experiences.



Crafting for Fun at Yarmouth u3a

CRAFTING For Fun is a very new group at Great Yarmouth u3a.

We are learning from others and passing on skills as well as exploring things that none of us have done before.

Although we haven't had many meetings we are very friendly group and have enjoyed an introduction to quilling to decorate cards, diamond craft making very elegant book- marks, stone painting and crochet.

We are not without ideas and look forward to exploring many more new crafts in the future. **Viv Sprason, Great Yarmouth u3a**



Members with their diamond bookmarks

Ian creates national word game success

THOUSANDS of attempts have been made to solve Aileen's Game created by East Suffolk u3a member Ian Clarke. He is sharing it online after a labour of love that he estimates took him between 400 and 500 hours to perfect. It is on the national u3a website and free to all members and the public ... to enjoy.

But the original concept of creating as many words as possible within a grid came about a long time ago. The origins stretch back more than half a century to when Ian was a teenager spending his summer holidays in America, but stayed within the family till Wordle exploded in popularity.



Ian Clarke and mum Aileen in 2014.

He explains, "The game came about back in 1965. Mum and I had been visiting her sister in Canada and were taking a greyhound bus from Thunder Bay to Cleveland, Ohio to see her uncle. "My mum loved word games, loved them – even in her 90s, she was a mastermind at scrabble. We were just on the bus, playing with word games and a piece of paper. "Somehow we came up with this game – we had a grid of 5x5, and we each came up with alternate letters. And we liked it."

Over the years, the game has become a regular source of entertainment for family and friends but Ian always assumed that, without technical developer skills, that was the furthest he could take it.

Ian continues, "I thought it would make a good app. But I didn't know how to make an app." And then another word game sensation came along; Wordle.

On discovering that it was written in Javascript, Ian realised that he might be able to use a similar basis for his game, creating it as a webpage.

It re-sparked his dream of making the game available for anyone to play.

Ian says, "It became last winter's project. I don't know how long it took me – between 400 and 500 hours. Most of that was me on Google was saying, how do I...?"

"Then finding a bit of code and trying to figure out how to make it do what I wanted it to do.

"It's quite simple but I didn't know how to do anything so that's why it took me so long."

Being on the national website he sees as fair reward for all his efforts.

He says, "This is the reward. I've created this thing and it just feels so great that people are enjoying playing it.

"That feels really fantastic. For months until I was confident it worked, it has just been family and friends testing the online game and sharing their scores with each other. It's a very exciting time."

The game is free and available to anyone.

To find out more and play, visit the learning pages on the u3a website -

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/national-programmes/aileens-game>

Ray Hardisty, East PR and Media Adviser

How our region marked Off The Wall



FIVE days of wall study was enjoyed through a study trip organised by Sudbury and District u3a. Trips, tours and talks were enjoyed from the Monday to Friday of the special week.

There was input from archaeologists on their first hand digs and guided experiences of forts.



Roman
Circus

Enjoying Roman sites in Essex

BURNHAM on Crouch u3a led the Maldon cluster to enjoy an Essex link to the national Roman wall celebration on the Wednesday it all happened.

With Colchester housing remains of the greatest Roman city in the UK, they organised a trip for a day of culture, fun and friendship, taking in tours of both the Roman Circus and the castle. The circus is the only chariot racing circus ever to be found on this island, and is one

of a kind north of Rome.

An example of what a chariot would have looked like was in the Roman Circus House for them to see.

The castle still stands on Roman foundations and was built largely by William, starting in 1076.

It has one of the largest intact Norman keeps anywhere in Europe.

Jo Gray, Burnham u3a

Recording Roman links in the East

I AM compiling and documenting the Roman sites in our region with the aim of preparing a reference list.

This involves, contacting local museums and asking them to identify sites in their area.

I want them to indicate whether they include remains or items of visible or concealed archaeology.

I am also putting together a talk that could be delivered online or in person based on my having been brought up very close to the Wall and having walked its length.

Finally, if u3as are interested, I could offer activity sessions based on material I generated several years ago for schools



Vindolanda
tablets

using boxes of Roman artefacts from the Ware Roman digs.

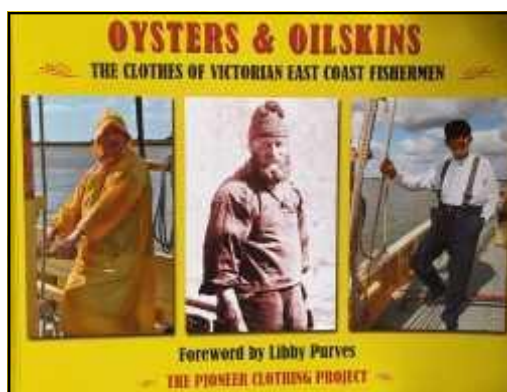
These include artistic interpretations of the archaeology and the Vindolanda tablets.

John Wing, Ware u3a



Members wear some of the gear from their studies.

Brightlingsea celebration



TEN years partnership with the Pioneer Sailin Trust have ended in celebrations at Brightlingsea u3a. It all started with a monthly talk in 2012 and a suggestion that members help in exploring what clothes hardy fishermen would have worn during North Sea winters.

A group formed and recreated underwear, shirts, ganseys, slops, waterproof doppers, stockings, caps and gloves and sea boots.

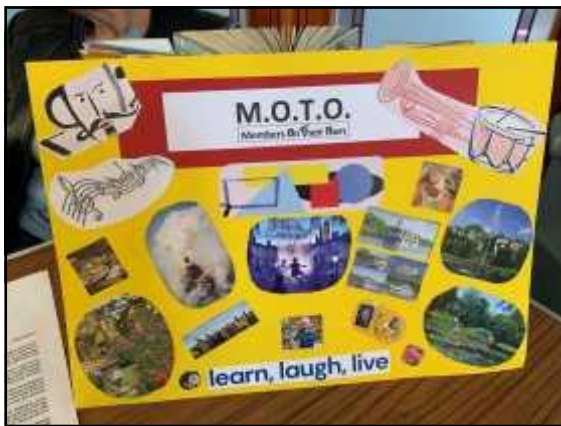
There's a display in Brightlingsea Museum and a book.

Ray Hardisty, PR and Media



Wissey u3a goes royal

MEMBERS of Wissey u3a showed baking skills as they marked the coronation of King Charles.



A sample of the group display boards attracting interest.

Diss u3a open day event

I VISITED Diss u3a for their first 'open day' and they made me very welcome. Diss u3a was formed in 2003.

They are approaching 300 members and currently achieve good numbers to their monthly meetings.

The Open Day showed a range of eclectic groups including -
 Armchair Travel
 Hand Bell Ringers
 M.O.T.O. (members on their own)
 Looking at Buildings
 Metal Detecting
 Medieval History
 Crime Fiction

Podcast Documentaries

Ancient History

To name but a few.

The meeting appeared well attended, with lots of conversations and tunes from the bell ringers.

Their AGM saw chair Tony Callender stand down and vice chair Fanny Grey taking over. They have a full committee which in these times is good.

Jean St Clair,
Member of Regional Support Team

Flying high with aviation talks

OUR latest forum on aviation in the region is another talk by Don Mobley, a former member of US Military Aviation.

It's on July 11 over Zoom and will discuss a range of the latest near miss incidents. Details with chairs and secretaries.

Harpenden support a seniors' fair

HARPENDEN u3a held a promotional stall at the Harpenden Seniors' Fair.

This annual event for the over 60s in the town is held in our Eric Morecambe Centre.

There were over 30 stalls there representing the local Bowls Club, the Arts Society, the Lions Club, the Stroke Society, the Library, the Police etc, etc.

The WI provided coffee and cakes.

It ran for three hours, and our stall was extremely busy and manned by the committee in shifts.

We handed out many leaflets, flyers etc.

It was very hard work and I was exhausted at the end but it was well worth it.

We expect a good number of new members in the following weeks.



Promoting the u3a and its offer

Vivien Chandler, Harpenden u3a

Yarmouth launch year of promoting

MAY saw the u3a Great Yarmouth recruitment team out in force.

Armed with advertising material and a new patch-work banner, made by members of the Needlecraft Group, they set up their table in Market Gates, Great Yarmouth, shopping centre to promote the u3a virtues of teaching and learning from each other for pleasure.

The day proved to be a success prompting responses from passing shoppers.

They were also delighted to meet active members from other u3a Groups who were holidaying in the town.

This was the first of the pop-up events scheduled for this year and it is hoped that by making people aware of what u3a has to offer, we can promote health and wellbeing as we age, offering potential members new and exciting opportunities in their silver years.



Terry Wing, Great Yarmouth u3a

Help, advice and support for u3as across the East

Trustee Barbara Cordina barbara.cordina@u3a.org.uk

Team Co-ordinator Hilary Holt hilaryholt.east.u3a@gmail.com

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