

East of England Region u3a

August 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 8/26 Page 1



Distributed by u3a Eastern Regional Team to all u3as **Deadline for the September 2026 issue is by Thursday 27th August 2026. Send to laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com**

Harlow Harmony!



Harlow u3a Choir's July Concert at St Paul's Church Harlow, led by Musical Director Roisin Quinn, proved to be a wonderful way to spend a warm, summer evening. Old favourites such as Que Sera were popular with the audience, as was an interesting "mash-up" of pop songs arranged with Pachelbel's Canon instrumental.

The choir showed off its vocal ability with the more complex Bohemian Rhapsody and Toto's Africa and in its rendition of Bob Dylan's Forever Young - which could be an anthem for the u3a with its mission for positive ageing - demonstrated some beautiful harmonies. Guest choir, Voices of Harlow, delighted everyone with its programme, of particular note was its rendition of Streets of London which was beautifully arranged and sung. It was a lovely event, well supported, and with all profits donated to local charity Streets2Homes. *Imelda Gunn, Harlow u3a*



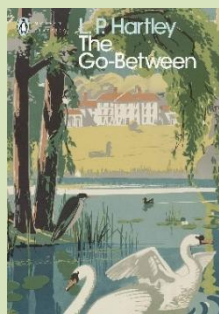
More details of the Choir [Groups](#)

More details of Harlow u3a [Harlow](#)



Bradenham u3a and the Go-Between

Author Ben Musgrave of UAE (University of East Anglia) led a group of Creative Writers from Swaffham & District u3a in Bradenham Village Hall on Friday July 17th. The hall overlooks the village green, which is the actual site mentioned in the novel *The Go-Between* by L.P. Hartley. The Village versus Hall cricket match is one of the famous scenes.



Ben encouraged the writers to bring an artefact from their past and reflect on the memories of time and place that handling then evoked. Ben offered tickets to a performance of the new play adaptation touring the East Anglia area. A resounding YES!



Laurene Henderson Swaffham & District u3a

Ben will be running further free writing workshops in the Eastern Region. For more details:

[The Go-Between: Creative Writing Workshops for Over-50s - Eastern Angles Theatre Company](#)

And for drama workshops with Eastern Angles theatre Company :
[Home - Eastern Angles Theatre Company](#)



The Go-Between
Start Date: 13 Aug 2026
Last Date: 19 Sep 2026

Luton u3a Celebrate 30 Years

Appearing in the Summer issue of u3a Matters: Luton's 30th Celebrations took place on the **18th April 2026**. at Christchurch, Bushmead, Luton. It was an amazing day with lots of groups showcasing their activities with marvellous exhibitions. His Majesty the King's representative **The Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire** gave a very interesting speech and cut the cake. All in all, a very enjoyable day.



Bedford u3a Thank their Volunteers with Tea and Cake!

We thought it was time to express our sincere gratitude to our wonderful band of volunteers, who are always going above and beyond to keep Bedford u3a running smoothly all year round. The "Volunteer Thank You" was organised to coincide with the national Volunteer Week held annually in June.



All 103 Bedford U3A volunteers were invited to an "Afternoon Tea" at a local Mercure Hotel, where they could enjoy tea and cake and excellent company at a long-awaited social event to recognise and thank them for their continued support.

Sadly, only 47 volunteers could make it on the day. However, all agreed that the event was a fabulous opportunity to meet other volunteers, share stories and experiences, in a very convivial setting. For ease of identification red volunteer lanyards were distributed for use during any Bedford U3A events or group meetings to enable our volunteers to be easily identified by any other member needing support, guidance or have a question needing an answer.

Alan Wooding, a volunteering stalwart and very creative member of the guitar group, was so touched by the Volunteers Thank You that he went home and composed a song about the afternoon using the latest AI technology!. Alan said "Following on from the recent U3A Volunteer's Day tea at the Mercure Hotel in Bedford, as a member of the U3A guitar club, I regularly write song lyrics, I've finally got round to putting a tune to something I wrote the following day about the afternoon tea, aimed in a 1930s-style of music. Please [have a listen to It's TeaTime](#)" Gayl Holliday Co-Secretary, Bedford u3a

Peer support sessions for Canva following on from regional course



THOSE who attended the special regional course on Canva and the way it works have asked for a peer support group to be setup as they get to grips with the publishing software.

So, sessions are being organised on the first Thursday of every month from 10am to 11.30am over Zoom. Those in the pipeline are: August 6. September 3, October 1, November 5,

December 3 and January 7.

PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty, who organised the tuition, says:

"Mutual help is a great way forward even though we might not be using Canva for the same publications.

"We have seen in the course that newsletters, posters, websites, videos, presentations and animation can all be involved.

"So peer support can mean those who are strong in areas can assist weaker members.

"Or we can all agree to find something out for the next month."

Details of the sessions and Zoom link will be sent to all those who attended the course.

But the new peer support could also help those who missed it or did not attend as they are already working with Canva.

Simply email Ray and he will add you to the list. He can be contacted at:

rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative



Again, another hot few weeks and hope there has not been too much disruption to your activities and meetings. Hopefully there will be some climatic normality in the coming weeks.

For me, it's been a quiet month with assistance in setting up committees and also dealing with constitution issues.

Just a reminder, if any u3as are planning events for u3a week 19th to 27th September please let me know as soon as possible so that I can begin to fill my diary. Ruth's diary is also filling for September, so please do let her know if you are planning something special.

Following my notes last month, and June's successful presentation, details of **Part 2** of the **AI presentation** is being delivered in u3a week by Zoom, **Monday 21st September**. If you're interested, register early to ensure you get a place.

We are planning a talk on **Positive Ageing by Christine Webber** - your websites show that she will be also visiting some u3as in the autumn/spring. She is a superb speaker and the subject is one of great interest. More details to follow.

We are also planning to hold a **One-day Conference in November** - this will comprise a workshop delivered by the training team at Third Age Trust (topic to be finalised) along with time to network and share. The regional team are considering suitable venues and we will be in touch with the details soon.

Ruth and I are here to assist with any issues arising with u3as in the region. As Council Representatives for the region our role is to be the communication link between the region's u3as and the Third Age Trust.

If the need arises our contact details are below. We are both also available for u3a visits. So, if any u3a would like us to attend any network(cluster), committee or AGM meetings please let us know.

Best Regards

Ian Mathews East of England Council Representative

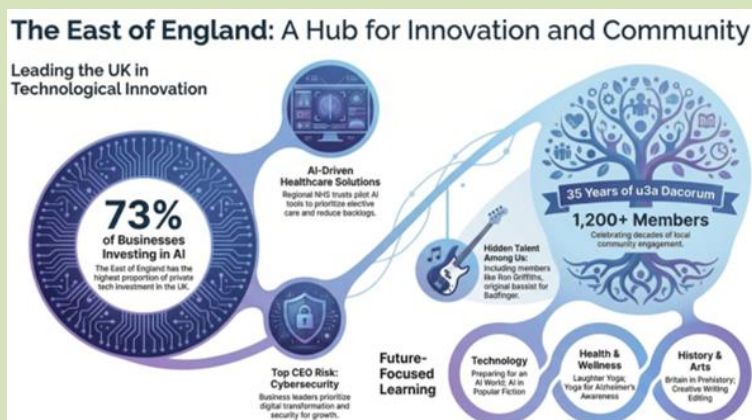
Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk Mobile :- 07471 211347

AI - what's all the fuss about? Part. 2

The AI team and members of the region will help you improve your AI Literacy.

The East of England Region - AI event, **Monday 21st September 2026, 10am – 12pm**

Register here: [AI - What's all the Fuss About. Part. 2 Tickets, Monday, September 21 • 10 AM - 12 PM | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ai-whats-all-the-fuss-about-part-2-tickets-1995438270583?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true) https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ai-whats-all-the-fuss-about-part-2-tickets-1995438270583?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true



From Ruth Freedman, our u3a Regional Council Representative



u3a Festival 2026

From 30th June to 3rd July the University of York was taken over by over 1,000 u3a members for the national u3a Festival 2026. I had the pleasure of attending, along with Ruth Freedman, now an East of England representative on the u3a Council. We stayed directly on campus in the university accommodation

which proved to be perfectly adequate, comfortable, and incredibly handy for reaching many of the talks, workshops, and events.

The festival got off to a great start with Johnny Ball performing the opening ceremony. He gave a short speech about the importance of our age group remaining engaged and active in society.

One of the great highlights of the festival was the opportunity to socialise and meet fellow u3a members who had travelled from all over the country. We also met some Sudbury and Bury St. Edmunds members.

The festival programme was very varied. On the first day I attended a fascinating astrology talk, followed by a brilliant, guided walk through York's famous "snickelways"—the historic city's narrow hidden alleys and footpaths. The following day I visited the chocolate museum, which was a delicious highlight, as we received several free samples and of course I also had to splash out on some very expensive handmade chocolates.

Meanwhile Ruth enjoyed a lively handbells workshop, run by our very own Hilary Holt from Bedford u3a, a singing group, and tried her hand at jewellery making. She also attended some 'meet the Board and Council' sessions which gave members the opportunity to ask



questions and find out for about the 'Fit for the future' initiative.

There was also plenty to do in the evenings. - in fact, too much as we had to choose between live music at different venues or to play Triominos and Rummicub at a board games evening. We also put our trivia skills to the test in a quiz based on Richard Osman's House of Games. There

was also plenty of time to chat to other U3A members over a drink or two (student bar prices!)

The entire festival was exceptionally well organised from start to finish. It was a great showcase of what U3A is all about. I will definitely be going to the next one and highly recommend it to other members.

Jean Duckworth/ Ruth Freedman Colchester July 2026

Ruth Freedman

East of England Council Representative

ruth.freedman@u3a.org.uk



Book your place on War Graves Commission forum



BOOKINGS are now open for the regional Commonwealth War Graves Commission forum on September 10, 10:00 - 11:30 .

The presentation will be of interest to members of local history groups, those researching family history and anyone finding out about the Second World War. The charity

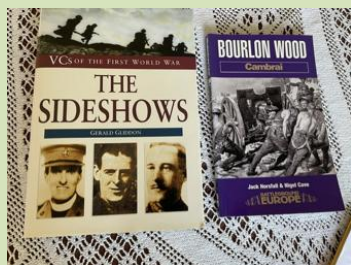
maintains hundreds of graves in churchyards across the East of England.

But how they manage this is not widely known, nor is the way to discover details of the armed forces personnel whose resting places they are looking after. PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty is the facilitator.

Please book with Ray and he will send you the necessary Zoom link

rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

Research materials of two world wars being offered for studies



CALLING all First and Second World War history buffs across the East of England. A u3a member in Suffolk has a pile of research documents you could find very useful.

She is disposing of her late husband's documents and has collated a large amount of posters, maps,



photos and military award details. Not only that but she is prepared to let u3a enthusiasts have them for free if they can arrange collection. At the same time, she has full sets of pristine books like the Battle Ground Europe, VC's of the First World War, and VC's of The Great War she wishes to sell. Those interested, contact Regional Team Facilitator Ray Hardisty. rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

Victims of fraud from someone they trusted being sought



HELP from members on yet another university research project has been requested.

This time it is from Shannon Edwards, a Trainee Clinical Psychologist on the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy) programme at the University of Leicester.

She says: "I am currently conducting doctoral research exploring the experiences of adults aged 65 and over who have been affected by fraud or deception by someone they knew or

trusted, such as a partner, family member, friend, or professional.

"This research aims to improve understanding of how these experiences affect older adults, inform clinical practice, and support the development of services and safeguarding strategies. Participation involves a confidential interview lasting up to 75 minutes, which can be conducted in person or online via Microsoft Teams. All identifiable information will be removed to protect participants' identities. In addition, all participants will receive a £20 Love2Shop voucher as a thank you for their time."

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of Leicester Research Ethics Committee, and a distress protocol and safeguarding procedure are in place, in line with University policy.

Anyone willing to help should contact Shannon direct at: se220@leicester.ac.uk

Workshops for u3as – help and inspiration

Contingency and succession planning

What does it cover? Information to help you understand the difference between contingency and succession planning for your u3a and Committee, and their importance in running your u3a smoothly.

Date of next session(s):

- Tuesday 4 August 10.00-12.00 [Book Now](#)
- Thursday 3 September 10.30-12.30 [Book Now](#)
- Wednesday 7 October 10.30-12.30 [Book Now](#)

"Very useful session – made me think about a number of things as a new trustee."

Helping your u3a grow

What does it cover? Ideas and information to help recruit new members, the benefits of which include more diverse interest groups and a bigger pool of potential volunteers. The conditions needed for growth will be explored and overcoming challenges.

Date of next session(s):

- Wednesday 12 August 10.00-12.00 [Book Now](#)
- Tuesday 8 September 10.00-12.00 [Book Now](#)
- Monday 12 October 10.30-12.30 [Book Now](#)

"I found it interesting, informative and thought provoking – it was very useful to hear other participants' experience & suggestions."

Motivating members to volunteer

What does it cover? Recognising the importance of volunteering within the u3a and identifying common challenges and finding workable solutions.

Date of next session(s):

- Friday 31 July 11.00-12.30 [Book Now](#)
- Monday 24 August 10.30-12.30 [Book Now](#)
- Thursday 24 September 10.00-12.00 [Book Now](#)

"This was a well-run workshop, a lot to take away and review with my committee. Thank you!"

Organising and running u3a interest groups

What does it cover? Information to help you understand the roles and responsibilities of Group Coordinators and Group Leaders, and to discuss ideas and good practice in running successful groups.

Date of next session(s):

- Tuesday 18 August 10.00-12.00 [Book Now](#)
- Wednesday 16 September 10.00-12.00 [Book Now](#)
- Thursday 22 October 10.00-12.00 [Book Now](#)

"The workshop covered everything that I needed to know, it was comprehensive – the sharing and networking was useful – thank you."

And don't forget Beacon Training [Training - Beacon](#)

Free Compassionate Conversation Sessions



IPSWICH Hospice has shared details of Free Compassionate Conversation sessions. These workshops are designed for anyone interested in building the confidence and skills needed to have sensitive conversations about loss, bereavement, and supporting others. Open to adults, these sessions encourage open and honest conversations while providing practical guidance on how to support people in your community, work, and personal life.

Online they are:

- 11 August 10:00am-12:00pm
- 25 August 7:00pm-9:00pm
- 8 September 10:00am-12:00pm
- 24 November 10:00am-12:00pm
- 2 December 10:00am-12:00pm
- 9 December 10:00am-12:00pm

Or In-Person

- The Hold, Ipswich, IP4 1LN - 15 October 2026 | 10:00am-12:00pm
- KingsGate Community Church, 30 Queen Anne's Road, Great Yarmouth, NR31 0LE - 10 November 2026 | 10:00am-12:00pm
- Sutton Hoo, Woodbridge - 27 November 2026 | 10:00am-12:00pm

Attendance has to be booked through registering by copying and pasting the following link into your browser:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/st-elizabeth-hospice-30716527042>

Two special forums highlighting compassion in the world



IF there's one thing lacking in today's increasingly-divided world, it's compassion.

But one woman may have just the answer.

Pei Su is the founder and CEO of ACTAsia (Action for Compassion Together) - a United Nations-award-winning charity with the aim to teach children, professionals and consumers to be kinder to people, animals and the planet.

Now, with the charity celebrating its 20th anniversary in September, Pei is joining us to host two exclusive talks for East of England u3a members.

She'll be sharing a lifetime of stories from her years as a global activist - from her time undercover exposing animal abuse to her work helping "left-behind" children in rural China.

She'll also be explaining the ideas behind the charity's "Caring For Life" courses - and the lessons we can all learn from them as well.

"Like u3a, ACTAsia believes in challenging the definition of traditional education," says Pei. So far we've helped more than half a million children, 4,000 vets and an untold number of consumers. We're changing the world through education. And I'm hoping that by sharing our stories, we can inspire others to think about the acts of compassion they could do too."

Two special forums highlighting compassion in the world

Pei will also be leading a session on plant-free Asian-inspired dishes and how they could boost your health this winter.

Talk one

Meet the woman saving the world - one act of compassion at a time
Wednesday, September 16, from 10am over Zoom.

Pei Su is no ordinary 59-year-old. Born in Taiwan and now living in the Home Counties, the former trainee Buddhist monk has had a remarkable life in activism - from working undercover on bear bile farms and exposing exotic animal traffickers to helping abandoned children in rural China and setting up global sustainability programmes. Pei will be sharing the triumphs, tragedies and joys of being a female charity boss and discussing the charity's ultimate goal: to increase society's compassion for animals, the planet and each other.

There will also be plenty of time for questions.



Talk Two

How an Asian plant-based diet can help you live a healthier life.

Wednesday, September 23, from 10am over Zoom

Don't know your ginger from your miso, or how to make a decent stir fry?

Pei Su of ACTAsia will give you all the tips and tricks to incorporate Asian plant-based recipes into your diet.

Considered one of the best ways of eating for your health - as well as for the planet - listen as Pei talks you through the plant-based meals which will boost your body's defences as we head into the colder months.

And don't worry if you're confused by some of the newer Asian ingredients making their way onto our supermarket shelves of late.

Bring any mystery veg and spices which have sparked your curiosity to the session and Pei can answer all your questions through the wonders of screen cameras.

There will be the one Zoom link for both sessions. So, book your place at both or either by contacting PR and Media Adviser Ray Hardisty on rayhardisty.easr.u3a@gmail.com



National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Tuesday, August 4 10 AM - 12 PM	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: A special meeting, where we are honoured to host Flt Lt Colin Bell, now aged 105, former RAF Pathfinder Mosquito pilot who flew 50 missions in WWII.	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: August Tickets, Tuesday, August 4 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Wednesday August 5 1:00-2:30 PM	John Butler from the u3a Let's Talk Tech team explores the complex and surprising technical aspects of modern airliner construction.	Building the world's most advanced airliners Tickets, Wednesday, August 5 • 1 PM - 2:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday, August 11 2 PM - 3:30 PM	Digital hobbies for the third age Join AbilityNet, in partnership with BT Group, to help you to use technology to explore your interests.	Digital hobbies for the third age Tickets, Tuesday, August 11 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Wednesday August 12 10:00-10:45	Laughter Yoga Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.	Laughter Yoga with Judith: August Tickets, Wednesday, August 12 • 10 AM - 10:45 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday August 14 2:00-3:00 PM	Deep Fakes Artificial intelligence can now fabricate video, audio and images convincingly enough that most people can no longer tell real from fake by eye alone. This session, led by Ashmita Rajmohan of the Deep Truth Project (deeptruthproject.org), is a clear and practical guide to what that means.	Deepfakes demystified: understanding the risks and staying safe Tickets, Friday, August 14 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday August 18 2:00-3:00 PM	Cryptic Crosswords Their history, how they work, who does them and why - a talk by u3a Cryptic Crosswords Subject Adviser Henry Howarth.	Cryptic Crosswords in Context Tickets, Tuesday, August 18 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday August 20 2:00-3:00 PM	The Scottish Colourists Dudley Clark takes us to the beautiful island of Iona to see how light and colour inspired the work of Scottish artists.	The Scottish colourists on Iona Tickets, Thursday, August 20 • 2 PM - 3 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday August 25 3:30-4:30 PM	Laughter Yoga Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.	Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: August Tickets, Tuesday, August 25 • 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Tuesday September 1 10AM-12:00 PM	Reaching for the stars: NASA's early days Discover how NASA's early years and the Space Race led to the Moon landing and transformed science and technology.	Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: September Tickets, Tuesday, September 1 • 10 AM - 12 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Friday September 4 10AM-11:30AM	Wild Edible Seeds Discover the fascinating world of wild edible autumn seeds, from identification and folklore to safe and practical uses.	Wild, edible autumn seeds Tickets, Friday, September 4 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Monday September 7 2:00-3:30 PM	Triumph to Trauma (940 to 1042) - Danes before Normans: the Conquest before The Conquest! Discover how Queen Emma of Normandy, Cnut and the Danish conquest reshaped England before 1066.	Triumph to Trauma (940 to 1042): the conquest before the conquest! Tickets, Monday, September 7 • 2 PM - 3:30 PM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Monday September 14 10:00-11:30 AM	World Gratitude Day Explore how three faith traditions understand gratitude and discover the enduring value of thankfulness in everyday life.	Exploring World Faiths: faith and gratitude Tickets, Monday, September 14 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Wednesday Sept 16 -October 21 10:00 -11:30 AM	Mindfulness and Meditation We welcome back the six week course of Mindfulness and Meditation led by members of Sheffield u3a Mindful Ageing Group John, Mike and Ruth.	Mindfulness and meditation series Tickets, Wednesday, September 16-Wednesday, October 21 • 10 AM-11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite
Thursday September 17 10:00-11:30AM	Mindfulness and Meditation Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.	Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: September Tickets, Thursday, September 17 • 10 AM - 11:30 AM GMT+1 Eventbrite

Could You Join Your u3a East of England Regional Team?

Why not join us? For a role description of this **East of England u3a Regional Team** volunteer role, contact Ray Hardisty:

Contact Ray Hardisty, Team Leader:

rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

For Groups News and Special Events,

Contact Laurene Henderson

laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

For contact details of the complete team:

<https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/>

