

Newsletter for May 2026

A tip-toe through the tulips worth taking! *By Sue Moss- one of the Trip Organisers,*

The trip to Tulley's Tulip Fest was a delightful day out for us in April. The morning began with overcast skies and a chilly wind the sun soon brightened our day but, unfortunately, we didn't lose the bracing breeze.

The tulips and hyacinths were magnificent as we made our way along the woodland walk. There were floating tubs of flowers on the lake, windmills, little dingly dells where they made very colourful



displays with plenty of information regarding the origin of tulip bulbs and



how to look after them I believe Michael Farman took a keen interest in the info as he is already a knowledgeable gardener – so anything you need to know about tulips,

Michael's your man!

Eventually our walk brought us out into the fields where there was row upon row of so many different colours and varieties, It was quite a splendid sight!

There were many food and drink outlets around the farm so we did not go hungry that day.

As we made our weary way back to the coach many people were clutching pots of tulips and hyacinths which were in full bloom but ready to store the bulbs for a lovely display in their gardens next year.

photos by Dave Angus

Our speaker for 14th May 2026 is Lindsey Barrell.

Lindsey gave a talk at last June's general meeting entitled, "Burlesque, I and the WI"

Lindsey returns to present her talk, "Ant, Dec the WI and me, as seen on TV".

In this fabulously funny, heart-warming and interesting talk Lindsey will tell you all about how she appeared on primetime TV shows and won, not one, but 2 fabulous free holidays! Yes, it does happen to 'normal' people. And neither would probably have happened if she hadn't been part of the WI! Have you ever wondered how people get chosen to go on the telly? Or whether the people who win things on telly are even 'real' people? Or what goes on 'behind the scenes'? Are the TV hosts as nice as they seem? Do you wonder if the whole thing is fake and made-up just for the cameras? Well, wonder no more! This is a humorous talk that illustrates that if you want to win it, then you definitely have to be in it!

Thursday 11th June 2026

Our speaker for 11th June 2026 is Aiden Hynes, a commercial artist and sculptor. Aiden been the managing director of his own business, Sculpture Studios, in Basildon for almost 40 years.

The work commissioned at his studio is predominantly for the Film, Television, Theme Park, Theatre and Exhibition industries. Anything from an opera performance, public art, and large scale art installations, to personal art and back garden pieces, the scale of what they create varies greatly. His forte is large scale polystyrene carving, whereby they often create production moulds and runs in glass fibre, with each project tailoring to an individual brief, some pieces only required to last a day, with others being installed permanently for years. The majority of his work is naturally UK based, but many of his pieces have been installed in numerous countries around the world.

Aiden's talk starts with his younger years, family, the challenges of early schooling with dyslexia, others around him tackling education with apparent

ease, and where his initial inspiration and pivotal moment to pursue art and my career came from. He traces his movement from a foundation college to studying BA honours degree in sculpture fine art at uni. That path took him on a journey from being 7 years freelance to eventually deciding to set up his own studio in his home town of Basildon, whereby, for the past 40 years, he now creates 3D commercial sculptures for well recognised locations, brands, shows, commercials, and companies.

He highlights the pitfalls, trials and tribulations of running his own studio, plus combining bringing up a young family at the same time, showing it is possible to do both in equal measure. Aiden concludes by showing a sample of his work, and talking through some of his more notable projects, and where he is today moving forwards with his wife and business partner, Sue.

COMMITTEE CHAT Here we are in May. Where has dancing around the Maypole gone? Another tradition shelved in the name of “woke”? What is “woke” anyway? It originated in African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) to mean being alert to racial prejudice and social injustice, famously phrased as “Stay woke. It has evolved into a highly contentious term, used by some as a badge of pride for social awareness, while others use it as a derogatory label for progressive, politically correct ideologies. Well, that’s clear enough!!!!

But still the question remains, where has dancing around the Maypole gone?

In response to a query, seeking clarification about carers attending interest group activities, the National u3a Accessibility Policy for u3a’s in England, Scotland and Wales states:

– “(The named u3a) will encourage and may require members to bring carers with them to u3a activities, as needed with no additional cost for the carer. The carer will fall under u3a liability insurance unless they are a professional carer, in which case the individual will be covered by their employer’s insurance cover.” In addition, the committee agreed to carers attending fee-paying events (e.g. trips, Christmas functions, etc.)but they **MUST** pay the applicable fee.

We currently have 465 registered members. .Since January 2026, 37 new members have joined our u3a. Thank you all for helping our u3a to thrive. Members are reminded that if paying membership fees by Bank Transfer, they

MUST put their name in the "Reference Field" on their bank's system and MUST send the Membership Secretary an email to advise payment by Bank Transfer.

If you are considering going on the Elton Hall trip on 17th July, our Trip Organisers have stressed that attendees using any mobility aids (walking sticks, walkers, wheelchairs) will NOT be allowed access to the house for health and safety reasons, as the wooden floor is very uneven.

Staying with Trips, if you have booked on a trip and find that, for whatever reason, you are unable to attend, you MUST inform the Trip Organisers as they will normally have a reserve list. On the Tulley's Tulips trip on 16th April, a member was unable to attend and gave their ticket to another person who was a non-member. There were no contact details or ICE number provided for the substitute and they would not have been covered by the u3a liability insurance. The Trip Organisers had a reserve list and should have been notified.

Our investment in Beacon is proving to be beneficial in a number of ways. Sending out the Advance Notice via Beacon is saving our Newsletter/Advance Notice Editor 2 to 3 hours per occasion. Using Beacon is helping our Trip Organisers to be more efficient.

One of our members recently had a physical problem and needed a wheelchair. We used Beacon to circulate members a request from the member for a wheelchair to borrow. This proved successful. Within 24 hours the member was loaned a wheelchair by another u3a member.

Plans for our next AGM in September continue. The Nomination Form is now available for members to nominate individuals for the 2026/2027 committee. Remember, you must ask the individual for permission to propose their name and also provide a seconder. Nominations close at our July general meeting. Nomination Forms may be downloaded from our website and will also be available at our May, June and July general meetings.

More Committee Chat next month

Interest Groups

- Please contact the people at the head of each article – all details are also at the back of this newsletter or on the website. **Sandra Isaacson and**

Marilyn Edgings are also available to help support and set up new groups and need to know details before a new group starts.

- If you are unable to go to a group for some time, please let them know as they could give away your space. **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.*

Our trip in May was to the Royal Hospital Chelsea where we were welcomed by a young man called James who we discovered came from Seattle USA what he was doing there, well we never did find that out. We arrived around 11 o'clock and some people made their way to the Army Museum which is just along the road from the hospital as everyone needed to be back for lunch at 12.30. Most of us stayed outside the cafe in the old stable courtyard drinking tea or coffee in the hot sunshine until lunch ,which they served al fresco. There was plenty of excellent quality food served with beer or wine or soft drink if you preferred.

Then on to the tours in the afternoon which were led by two Chelsea pensioners Roy and Ray. Roy was 87 and a real character. Ray was younger he never did tell us his age but he had only been there a couple of years. They were both so full of fascinating facts and information about the history of the Pensioners and of the buildings and estate which is much larger than you might think.

The tours lasted for just over two hours.

We found out you have to be over 65.

No dependant spouse or children, give up your army and civilian pension, have served in the Army (not Navy or Air Force)for 20 years.

They do get to keep their State pensions. I can't fit everything in it was a stream of interesting information ,beautiful buildings and grounds so if you would like to know more book yourself on one of their tours it is well worth a visit.

Brighton awaits us next month. **By Sue Moss – Trip Organiser**

Amblers

Tessa Duggan 01375 670212

Jenny Radford 01375 676338

****Our group is full now. If you wish to join the group, please don't just turn up on an amble, contact Tessa or Jenny and we will put your name and details on our waiting list. Thank you.****



On land beside the car park at Coalhouse Fort, East Tilbury, archaeological digs and ground investigations were being carried out in preparation for the new Lower Thames Crossing. Despite the noise and activity on the site, it didn't interfere with our April amble at all. The weather was lovely and we enjoyed the walk, taking in the views across the river and surrounding area. The Engine House cafe was busy and bustling and some of us sat outside in the sunshine, on the picnic benches with our teas and coffees.

Next month our amble will be at **Plotlands**, Langdon Nature Reserve, Lower Dunton Road,SS16 6EB, on **Thursday 21st May**. Meet up outside the Visitor Centre at **10.30am**. Look forward to seeing you there.

Bird Watching

Dave Snow

07490 069740

This month the group went to Fingringhoe Wick, a large wildlife reserve on the River Crouch estuary. The weather was very good for us and enabled us to walk around the reserve in comfort. We were hoping to see some Nightingales that nest in the area at this time of year. As soon as we started walking we could hear the song of several nightingales, but due to their elusive nature we couldn't spot them in the foliage of the trees. It was only later that some of our group managed to spot one in the trees. Then as we went further into the reserve we encountered many types of bird including shelduck, cormorants, and little grebes along with their young chicks. We were treated to a display of aerobatics by a kestrel, which was hunting for prey almost overhead.

After lunch we drove to a causeway across the Abberton Reservoir and were rewarded with the sight of herons, egrets and spoonbills in their nests with their young broods looking like they were getting ready to fly the nest. All in all a very pleasant day.

Book Group

Ann Bailey

Dawn Lloyd-Warne

01375 461885

Board Games

Margaret Lambert **07811 235274**

Just to let you know the Board Games Group meets twice a month – **the first Thursday and third Friday of each month in Corringham Library 2.00pm to 4.00 pm.**

Wednesday Boules

Dave Jardine

07551 952211

In full swing again since our break in January and February! We hope the sun will come out so we can get back to playing boules each Wednesday at the

Springhouse Club meeting at **10.15 to play at 10.30 and the afternoon group starting at 1.30 the cost is two pounds for either group** or both including tea coffee and biscuits. We have spare boules if you would like to give it a try

Wednesday Afternoon Boules

Paul Brice 07788452852

The same as Morning Boules.

Boules/ Pétanque (Friday am)

Colin & Carol Munro 07770 854318

Our Friday morning group is **open to new members** and we play at the Billet Recreation ground in Stanford.

Carol and Colin Munro

Please contact Carol or Colin if you wish to join us at the Billet Rec. Friday Pétanque.

Our annual meal as a group was saved until the brighter weather and that meant Wednesday April 15th April. We met at a u3a favourite, The Ship at East Tilbury at

5:0'clock was a lovely sunny evening and the new pub restaurant made the most of the bright evening. With our meals pre-ordered we were served piping hot



meals on hot plates, a joy for us all.

Without exception, everyone enjoyed their meals.

As we look forward to the warmer weather our weekly competitions have recommenced with both singles and

doubles getting underway. We play at Stanford Rec, meeting at 9:45 every Friday. New members are welcome, just contact Carol or Colin Munro. Details in this newsletter.

Canasta

Pauline Kerridge 01375 462232

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

Chess

Rob Morrison

The Chess Group meets on the first and third Monday of each month at Corringham library between 10am and 12 noon. All levels of ability welcome, including beginners. Tuition can be given, so if you've never played before but always wanted to, come and give it a go! If interested, please contact Robert Morrison by email in the first instance.

COUPLES LUNCH

Dave and Jean Angus 07711 359127



From time to time, not often, we revisit some restaurants where our Couples Lunch Group have enjoyed a delicious lunch previously and for the 23rd April 2026 lunch we decided to revisit **The Kings Arms at Baker Street, Orsett** as Couples Lunch Group has been going for nearly four years now so good restaurants get another visit. Once again, the food

at The Kings Arms was delicious chosen from a wide ranging menu with lots of options that included a Lunch Special Menu as well as their Full Menu, everything very nicely presented and reasonably priced and the Service was excellent. Dave and Jean always try to get one long table for the whole of the Couples Lunch Members to sit together so we can all chat and join

conversations while having a good laugh with everyone and this lunch was no different as you will see from the two photographs taken, one from each end of the table. The Kings Arms have a separate room where they can set up a long table enabling a good chat



and laugh not disturbing others using the restaurant. We swap suggestions for the places we have all visited separately that are worth sharing the details of particularly with the summer here now so days out are a pleasure especially if there are good restaurants at the places suggested to visit.

It may sound strange but a good place to visit for a good meal that is well-cooked and presented is Thurrock Garden Centre where we can purchase plants too at the end of our meals, similarly Alton's Garden Centre is worth a visit . Well back to the drawing board as we decide where to book for our May lunch ... so until the next good time With kind regards Dave and Jean Angus

Cribbage

John Green 01375 676411

The next meetings of the Cribbage Group **on Tuesday afternoons 1.30–3.30 will be on 12th May and 26th May at Gardner Hall Fobbing.** Cost £2 to cover hall hire and refreshments. All welcome.

Curry Night

Tina Smith 07899915184

Carol Lindsell 07906436445

Last night (Thursday) 25 of my fellow members went to Kongs Chinese Restaurant in Lampits Hill. We took over almost the whole restaurant and had a great evening full of laughter, fun and delicious food. Thank you to all who came and I look forward to our next



Photos by Tina



NEW GROUP – Disabled Amblers

Dave and Jean Angus 07711 359127



Disability Amblers Walking

Group - we're off: This new Group to Stanford u3a got underway on Wednesday 8th April led by Dave and Jean Angus and will continue on the second Wednesday of each month at a different location every month, the details of which will

be sent direct to Members of the Group. The new Group came together at Wat Tyler Country Park for its initial start and consisted of a nice Amble down to the river's edge. Starting along the Explosive Trail we marvelled at the meaning of the park's mysterious grassy mounds on a trail that takes you back to the days of dynamite and the Pitsea Explosives Factory before leading on to the WWII Trail. Up a muddy creek just up the Thames from one of wartime Britain's most important oil refineries, the Wat Tyler site, home to the Sea Transport Stores was strategically important in World War II and led us on to some interesting conversations about the area in which we live and its history. After an Amble along and sitting on a seat at the water's edge we were able to take in the scenery while having a lovely chat together. Then it was off back to the Wat Tyler HQ where we headed for the Cafeteria for some delicious refreshments. The Group of Members had never really met before and came together for the first time thoroughly enjoying each other's company. It was very nice to sit and chat over coffees etc discussing where the Group might go for future Ambles, so lots to look forward to. One of the Members suggested we keep going over the winter months, Dave and Jean had announced they would not be meeting during winter months out walking in the rain and all weathers, but come together in Cafeterias keeping warm and dry while continuing to enjoy each other's company and keep the nice momentum going so that is what we will be doing.

Family History

Sue Green **01375 676441**

Peter Craggs **07759 817821**

We spent an enjoyable afternoon in April looking at Wedding photos and Wedding related items. I am always amazed what our members bring in. This time we saw many members own albums, their parents and grandparent's celebration photographs. What a smart lot we all are.

How young the brides and grooms looked! We also admired a wedding dress one member made for her daughter, a fox fur jacket, and Peter's memorabilia from his attendance at Prince William's and Katherine's wedding in Westminster Abbey.



We saw the souvenir brochure with a picture of the congregation and the Bride and Groom kneeling at the altar. Peter is in the picture about 10 ft away with a better view than the Queen in his capacity as a verger. He showed us his souvenir tin with a piece of the wedding cake still in it and the newspapers in which he can be seen in the photographs in the Abbey. Wonderful! Lots to talk about and look at.



Peter also talked to us about his latest project transcribing St Michael's of Fobbing burial records. St Michael's is one of the few churches that still has half a dozen plots left in the churchyard so has hung on to its register. Most other churches have deposited these at Record Offices so this one is missing as being available for family historians. A lot of work.

Next month we are having our annual bring an object or document session. It could be something inherited or a precious document/photograph/letter to show and talk about to the group and explain why it means something or has helped in research. This is always popular and we never know what will show up. Meeting is on Wednesday May 20th in the Community Church hall at 2pm.

****Date for your diary****

On Wednesday **July 15th** we will be having a speaker at our monthly meeting—Mark Carroll will be giving a talk on **life and death in the Workhouse**. This will be **open to all u3a members at our usual fee of £1 including tea and cake.**

Flower Arranging

Christine Lambert

07972 879173

Linda Tilbury

07928 221626

We meet on the first and third Wednesday of the month at the Gateway Centre, from 10am until 12 noon. 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 just turn up if you wish to know more.

Photos and report by Brenda Osborne



These are my forget-me-nots Each person was given a packet of seeds at a friend's funeral: once they are in your garden they appear every year. They have a long history of being linked to love and remembrance, the flower still appears in remembrance symbols and keepsakes, from Victorian tokens to the modern day dementia awareness campaign



Our first week the theme was Easter. There were some very pretty arrangements, all Easter

themed with daffodils, baskets and, of course, eggs.



The third week was our choice, we were in new surroundings, the food bank has got larger, so they have moved us into a smaller room in the Gateway but very suitable for us. There is never so many of us on the 3rd week but we managed to create some pretty arrangements, many of us used flowers out of our gardens which is nice, we finished with a nice cup of tea or coffee and a chat.

Gardening Allotment News

Michael Farman

May Allotment News

The Spring Equinox marks the start of astronomical spring. The Spring (or Vernal) Equinox took place on 20th March at 09:01 GMT.

Wherever you are on our planet, the Equinox occurs at the same moment. For those south of the equator, where the seasons are reversed, the event will mark the first day of autumn. It happens twice a year – in March and in September. The date is determined by the Earth's tilt on its axis as it travels around the Sun.

At the Equinox, the Earth's axis is tilted neither towards nor away from the Sun, making day and night nearly equal in length. That's the educational bit!!

All very interesting and informative but the 20th March is significant. April showers are supposed to bring forth May flowers. We did have rain in January and then a few odd days since, but since the 20th March it's been very sparse particularly in our south eastern corner. Been suggested it's around 1% of our normal expectation. Just a few spots and barely wets the ground. It is warm in the sunshine but often a cold northerly wind blows and we have had the occasional low night time temperature. A couple of my early potatoes are just above the soil surface. However, I did manage to continue a bit of digging over the past few weeks. The top surface is like concrete so I water and cover for a couple of days to soften the crust, enabling digging.

Planted 161 potatoes. Took 5 mornings over the Easter weekend and won another 5 in a raffle last week. 166 potatoes planted in total.

Despite no rain, the grass is growing fast and producing seed. It's coming up around the strawberry plants which have a good quantity of flower which I hope will result on a good strawberry crop. I did weed a few plants after I had watered them. A bit mucky but they do look better.

Pulled a few more sticks of rhubarb and cut out another flower spike.

Watering the Asparagus resulted in a couple of cuttings of the spears. All very tasty.

The Red onion and White onion sets are growing as well as with the Masterpiece Broad Beans. I will admit to watering them as well to get them going. No sign of the Parsnip, Carrot and Spring onion seed showing. Water most days to encourage germination. Need more rain!!! Gentle and at night would be good.

Did you go on the u3a trip to Tulleys' Tulip fields near Crawley? Maybe not as large as the Dutch version but very impressive to see so many varieties, sizes and colours of tulips growing in rows in the fields. Would suggest some of the tulip flowers are twice the size of some growing in our garden. Did you buy a pot of Tulips? We did and they are still flowering. When the flowers finally die, don't

cut off the green foliage but allow it to die back naturally to feed into the bulb. Continue to water occasionally but add a bit of feed (A squirt of Tomato feed is fine) to the water to aid the bulb regeneration. You can cut off the old flower stem or you can leave it and see if you have any seed in the pod. Not sure how long before the seed turns into a bulb and flowers. When the foliage is dead you can tidy up the pot or dry the bulbs for planting next year. Incidentally we were told at the Tulip Fields, Tulleys' dig up all the tulip bulbs each year, sort out the larger ones and compost the rest! They do need to put on a reliable good display for their visitors each year.

The Pepper and Chilli seeds I grew in the propagator have now been transplanted into individual cells to grow on before planting at the allotment. Wait until all risk of frost has passed.

Have planted the Sweet Peas out at the allotment. They are frost hardy.

We are having a Sunflower and Pumpkin growing competition at the allotment site, so I have set a few seeds of both.

I think a rain dance would be a better idea.

Enjoy your gardening. Keep well covered in the sun. Don't want to get burnt

Take care. Photo by Linda Farman



Golf

Paul Brice

07788 452852

The Golf Group meets every Monday at our new venue of Noak Hill Golf Course on the way to Billericay. It is a similar distance from Stanford-le-Hope as our previous venue. As people may be aware, the Dunton Hills Course is now a potential housing development so is closed pending work to start in the near future.

Anybody wishing to join us, please get in touch and join our What's App Group where we display times for the meetings.

The cost at Noak Hill is £10 for 18 holes. The course is family run and includes a room where you may wish to purchase teas, coffees, soft drinks and some alcoholic drinks. It is also famed for homemade cakes as well as bacon rolls, etc.

We normally start at 9.30am but some times vary dependent on weather conditions or availability.

Holiday and Cruises

Carol Smith 07845 233640

Mel Fox 01375 679643

Cabins are still available for this Cruise. Deposit £200.

Sailing from **Tilbury on 9th Sept 2027**. Calling at St Marys , Cobh, Liverpool, Belfast, Tobermory, Lerwick and Invergordon.

If you are interested, could you please email me Mel Fox

Romantic journeys North Yorkshire – Week beginning 28th Sept 2026

This is a 5-day trip taking in some of the beautiful scenery of Yorkshire. • The trip includes a diesel train ride on the Settle and Carlisle railway, passing through spectacular scenery and crossing the Ribbleshead Viaduct. • A trip on the Wensleydale Railway which is an authentic heritage railway. • A steam train ride along the Worth Valley. The railway has appeared in many films the most famous being The Railway Children. Other places included are Dent, Hawes, the historic town of Skipton, Bolton Abbey and Grassington. A charming market town with cobbled square, shops, cafés, restaurants and hotels. It is also the location of the fictional Darrowby in All Creatures Great & Small, a popular TV series.

Hotel The Cedar Court Hotel Leeds/Bradford is situated just off Junction 26 of the M62 . More information on the SLHU3A website events column.

Cabins are still available for this Cruise. Deposit £200.

Sailing from Tilbury on 9th Sept 2027. Calling at St Marys , Cobh, Liverpool, Belfast, Tobermory, Lerwick and Invergordon.

If you are interested, could you please email me 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 – cost £2. All very welcome.

Line Dancing 2

Carol Munro 07766 035554

Sue Moss 07905 314987

Our group are now dancing every Tuesday, instead of every other week, starting at 10.00 – 11.00 at the Methodist Hall in Horndon-on-the-Hill.

Local History Group

Diane Wallace

Sue Green **01375 676441**

14 members gathered to discuss the 1953 floods. We were joined by two local visitors who lived through the experience while living in Tilbury.

Members read out a broad overview of the flood or storm surge, its causes and the wider impact across the North Sea coastlines.

Wendy Carter at the time lived in Felixstowe, close to the shore, and she gave us her recollections of having to evacuate to the top floor as the ground floor flooded, and the surreal silence once the storm abated. The following day her uncle managed to evacuate Wendy and her family.

Marjorie Stockley lived in Benfleet overlooking Canvey. She recalled her mother getting her come to the window because Canvey had disappeared under water. As a Sea Ranger, she volunteered first helping out entertaining evacuated children at schools and then went to Canvey to assist the local doctor giving emergency inoculations, having first gone through strict checks by the army to ensure they weren't looters.

Pat Dines lived in Tilbury with her grandmother at Toronto Rd. She and her father rescued her aunt from her ground floor flat next door. She vividly recalled a massive wave smashing into the houses as it progressed down the street. "This enormous wave gathered momentum, as it plunged down the street and smashed into the front of the houses. The whole house shook. The worried looks between my mother and father needed no explanation. This was no game any more – I was frightened!" Quote from Pat's description.

The following day she and her aunt were evacuated via the upper floor window.

Her school friend, **Christine McFarlane** also lived in Tilbury, and she recalled her father refusing to be evacuated due to the threat of looting and surviving for the first three days on only her father's home-made brawn. "Father would not let us go to Chadwell, so we stayed upstairs sometimes in bed or playing games. The Americans also brought some food supplies which were pulled up by a rope. All through the six weeks my father collected coal in a bath that floated by. When we went to bed, we were very frightened of high tides that would drown us."

Quote from Christine's recollections. She and her sister later were escorted by relatives along the railway line on foot to the safety of an aunt's house and a warm welcome.

There will be no meeting in May as it is a Bank Holiday and we resume on June 22nd at the Community Church Hall, Fobbing Road at 2pm.

A big thank you to the 2 members and 2 visitors who gave us vivid, but very different descriptions of their flood experiences in the April meeting.

Afterwards Christine McFarlane (one of the visitors), contacted us to say how much she and her friend Pat had enjoyed themselves. They were made very welcome by our members and learnt more about the event from other perspectives.

June 22nd – Kynoch factory on the Thames marshes (not the hotel or village)

July 27th – Thames defences

Before each session, all members are requested to tell Diane if they will be attending, as this helps with planning the layout for the meeting.

Written by Graeme Peavot

London Walks

Dave Snow 07490 069740

Brian McDonald



Brian giving lots of information to his walking group near Buckingham Palace.

Following the route of the River Tyburn – which is mostly underground in sewers now. Even used to go under the Palace.

Now viewing the Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace at one end of the Mall.

Starting at Baker St with Dave. Claridges with top hats' ragged urchin in pensive



mood and Westminster Cathedral – all interesting landmarks,

Where did the article about the London walk disappear to? It's been swallowed by my computer? Luckily Chris Gomm and John Turp sent these photos.

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.

****Unfortunately we need to close the group to new members as we are guests at the golf club and cannot ask for additional tables. However I'm happy to create a waiting list and if there are sufficient numbers look at starting a second group if people are interested.****

Lunch Bunch (Tuesday)

Lynn Lawson 07422 541606



We tried a new venue, The Foxhound in Orsett, as suggested by Anne W. All agreed it was a great success. Plenty of atmosphere in the bar and an extensive menu including a set one for "oldies" that included a drink – alcohol or a soft drink. We stayed longer than usual with plenty of chatting and laughter. All agreed to visit again soon.

Photo by Jenny Lees

Mixed Craft Group

Marilyn Edgings 01375 677425

Barbara Purser 01375 677095

If there are any new u3a members who would be interested in trying out the craft group, come along to The **Baptist Church in Corringham on the first**

Tuesday of the month and see for yourself or get in touch with either Marilyn or Barbara.

Music Makers

Mo Wakeling 07902 649122

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

Old British Motor Cycle and Car Enthusiasts

Graham Edgings 01375 677425

Purfleet Heritage and Military Centre has a varied history and is a registered charity run by volunteers and is situated in Magazine No 5 of what was the Royal Purfleet Gunpowder Magazine. On our pre-arranged guided tour we were told that Chinese monks invented gunpowder looking for the elixir of life, obviously they didn't find it!!! As some of you will remember from your schooldays, gunpowder is made from carbon sulphur and saltpetre. The saltpetre was made from well matured urine collected from dung heaps often from nearby farms. The Gunpowder Magazine had to be removed from Greenwich after a petition and because of "showing the danger of permitting such quantities any longer so near the Metropolis and within a few yards of the



magnificent hospital".

So in 1751 Purfleet was suggested as there were only a few cottages and a mill next to the Mardyke and the chalk soil would help in preserving the gunpowder. In December 1754 a plan, including barracks and buildings was submitted to the House of Commons at a princely sum of £36,800. An Act of Parliament finally passed these plans and in 1761 construction started and was completed in 1773.



The cost had now risen to £60,000. There is plenty more to learn about the history of the Purfleet Heritage Centre, so go along for an interesting talk as it is well worth a visit. Here are a couple of photos taken by John and Graham.

"Paws on the Go"

Eileen Drewer 01375 403315

It was a slightly depleted group this month that started out from Coalhouse Fort heading west along the Thames coastal path for a circular walk ending with refreshments at the Engine Room cafe, which thankfully is dog friendly.

The day was a beautiful sunny one as 5 people and their dogs set out at 10 am to enjoy the clement weather and good company.

Unfortunately our illustrious leader, Eileen, was one of the members who were unable to attend on that day so it was left to me to lead the group. What we didn't know was that over the winter, work had already begun on the Lower Thames Crossing and a small section of the footpath was closed so we had to find a way around it, which was a little more difficult than we thought (oh for a good recce and a competent leader)

We eventually overcame all obstacles and a fun walk was had by all, humans and

Doggos with a well-deserved rest in the cafe at the end of our adventure.

Sue Moss (sorry no photos).

For the May walk we will meet at Nature Reserve car park at Mucking at 10am. I know a few of our regulars will be missing for various reasons. The walk around the footpath (dogs on lead because of the nesting birds) and finish at the visitors centre for refreshments

Photography Group

Jenny Lees 01375 360786

Mel Fox

On Friday 10th April, 7 amateur photographers set off on the 9.35am train from Stanford-le-Hope station to London.

Our first port of call was the Liberty Bounds (Wetherspoons) for coffee.

Having refreshed ourselves we then set off led by the intrepid London Walker Brian McDonald.

The next stop was St. Olaves Church in Hart St. which is the place where Samuel Pepys is buried,



From there onto 120 Fenchurch St and the lift up to the roof garden with its views of London. After spending some time taking photographs of the city from the Roof garden we then proceeded onwards to Leadenhall Market, by this time it was lunch time and the nearest Wetherspoons

which was the Crosse Keys in Gracechurch Street.

After lunch we made our way towards the river and arrived at the Monument,



then on to St. Dunstan in the East Gardens.

Finally, we made our way back to Fenchurch Street Station and our train back to Stanford-le-Hope.

A very enjoyable day was had by all and many photographs taken.

Our thanks go to Brian McDonald for leading us and for his knowledge and direction in London.

If any member is interested in joining our group please contact either Jenny Lees or Mel Fox for more details,

Text and photos by Dick Fox

Play Reading 1

Beryl Woodcock

We meet on the last Friday of each month and have room for a couple more.

Tea, Cake and Play Reading

Deb Foster

01375 677971

For our last few meetings, we've been reading Alan Ayckbourn's *The Things We Do For Love*. This was his 52nd play first performed in 1998 and at the time

reviewed as one of his best. One of his darker play, a humorous caricature of human relationships with uncomfortable portrayals of obsession and passion.

There were not enough parts at times for everyone to read, but it was the sort of play that flowed and you could enjoy sitting back and listening. Especially to the few raunchy, intimate scenes which had us all in fits of giggles. The dialogue was interspersed with strong blaspheming which put some of us in a dilemma whether to beep or let rip! One of our readers certainly entered into the spirit of how the play was originally performed and read these bits with surprisingly wonderful intonation.

A great way to spend an afternoon!!

Quilting

Carol Smith 07845 233640

The Quilting Group meet on the first Monday in the month, starting time 2 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 Group

Sue Green 01375 676441

Ann Bailey

There are not many quizzes about at the moment, hence 8 of us trialing a new one at the Wyldecrest Club for the East Thurrock Football Club. It turned out to be a very noisy quiz with one team of lads having a wonderful time especially after winning a lot of booze in the raffle. It was fun watching their antics and listening to the football chants—all in good humour—but made it challenging. Our team "the old codgers" won though, even with the struggle to hear the questions, so not all bad. I am not sure we will be back though or how the football team will perform in the next day's fixture! If you hear of any quizzes in the local area, let us know. If you want to join us and find out where we will be going next, get in touch to join the mailing list. You may get a very different night out!

Ann's Quiz

1. Which newspaper is known as The Thunderer?
2. What number links Musketeers and Men in a Boat?
3. Where is The St. Leger run?
4. How many nails does a cat have?
5. What is the county town of Cumbria?
6. What river flows through Edinburgh?
7. Where would you find the SS Montgomery?
8. Which bird is the symbol of the RSPB.?
9. Which motorway links Edinburgh and Glasgow?
10. Where would you find the Laxey Wheel?

Answers on Page 31

Ramblers

Chris Gomm 07905 117622

Ramble - Benfleet Station to Leigh on Sea - 21st May'26

We will meet outside the ticket office of Benfleet Railway Station on Thursday 21st May '26, commencing our walk at 10:50

For those wishing to travel by train we will meet at Stanford Le Hope Station at 10:15 to catch the 10:30 train. This train arrives in Benfleet at 10:42.

Anyone that has previously done this walk will know how very pleasant it is with views over Two tree Island and Hadleigh Castle.

There are several nice pubs in Leigh where I'm hoping you will be able to join me for lunch. Once we've been fed and watered, we'll head to Leigh-On-Sea station and catch the train for our return home.

Contact : Christine Gomm for further information

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 dates** our next meetings.

Singing for Fun

Mo Wakeling 07902 649122

Singing group now has eleven members and Mo Wakeling has had to close the group as it is held in her house.

Singles lunch

Christine Codd

Meetings will be Wednesday on week 2. Do get in touch.

In March we went to The Dog and Partridge in North Stifford we all had a nice time and we enjoyed the food they have done the pub up recently and it looks good

In April we are going to The Harvester at the Five Bells I don't think the we have been there as a group.

It is with sadness we have lost one of our ladies Rosemary Mathewson; she was always a happy cheerful lady and funny. She always enjoyed coming to the single lunch group; she will be missed!

Sunday Singles

Margaret Lambert- 07811 235 274

Chris Brown- 01708 852023

Just wanted to let you know that the Sunday singles lunch group is going well.
Our next lunch is on Sunday 12th April at The Fox Hound ,18 High Road, Orsett, RM16 3ER at 1pm.

We have 1 available space in the group if anyone would like to join.

Ten Pin Bowling

Jean Jardine

07551 952211

No Ten pin bowling in April as it's Easter and the children are on Holiday. **Back on May 7th May at Hollywood bowl Lakeside** meet for coffee in M&S at 10.15 and playing at 11.00 – cost £4 for two games

Ten Pin Tuesday

Kevin Brice

07973349288

Ten Pin Tuesday interest group meets on the third Tuesday of each month, other than during school holidays. Our next session is on **Tuesday 19th May 2026**. The group meets at the Hollywood Bowl, Lakeside for its ten pin bowling sessions at 11.00. We have two games per session. We suggest getting a tea/coffee in M&S Café around 10.30 am and arrive at the Hollywood Bowl by 11.00am, ready to commence bowling asap New members welcome, ***please email or ring first.***

Answers

1. The Times

2. three

3. Doncaster

4. 18

5. Carlisle

6. The Water of Leith

7. In the Thames estuary.

8. The avocet

9. M8

10. Isle of Man

Trips

Susan Moss

Our trip in May was to **the Royal Hospital Chelsea** where we were welcomed by a young man called James who we discovered came from Seattle USA what he was doing there, well we never did find that out.

We arrived around 11 o'clock and some people made their way to the Army Museum which is just along the road from the hospital as everyone needed to be back for lunch at 12.30. Most of us stayed outside the cafe in the old stable courtyard drinking tea or coffee in the hot sunshine until

lunch, which they served al fresco. There was plenty of excellent quality food served with beer or wine or soft drink if you preferred.

Then on to the tours in the afternoon which were led by two Chelsea pensioners Roy and Ray. Roy was 87 and a real character. Ray was younger he never did tell us his age but he had only been there a couple of years.

They were both so full of fascinating facts and information about the history of the Pensioners and of the buildings and estate which is much larger than you might think.

The tours lasted for just over two hours

We found out you have to be over 65 with no dependent spouse or children, give up your army and civilian pension, and have served in the Army (not Navy or Air Force)for 20 years.

They do get to keep their State pensions. I can't fit everything in it was a stream of interesting information, beautiful buildings and grounds so if you would like to know more book yourself on one of their tours it is well worth a visit.

Brighton awaits us next month.

Sue Dunn

Sue Moss

Dates for your Diary

These trips will be on sale at the following General Meetings

General Meeting Dates Trip date

14th May Elton Hall 17th July

11th June. Audley End 17th August

9th July. Deben river cruise 17th September

13th August. Hever Castle Xmas lunch & Lights 4th December

10th September u3a Xmas lunch at Stifford Hotel on 14th December

New Trip being sold at May Meeting. At the next General Meeting on Thursday 14th May tickets for Elton Hall & Gardens will go on sale. Elton Hall is situated in Peterborough and has been home to the Proby family since 1660, where every room contains many treasures. In the library you can find Henry VIII's prayer

The wines were from Morrison's "The Best Winemakers" this month. What a bargain! Saving us an amazing £44.90.

Sparkling – The Best Marques de los Rios Cava Brut. Spain 2025 11% volume. £9.50. With More Card £8.00. With multibuy 30% discount £5.60. Fresh and zesty citrus palate with hints of almond and brioche. Ideal as an aperitif or served with seafood and tapas dishes.

White – The Best Block Series 012 Riesling. From Ancient Lakes, Washinton State, USA. 2023 12.5% volume. £16.50. With More Card £9. With multibuy 30% discount £6.30. This Reislng has aromas of lime and white peach, mouthwatering salinity and flavours of citrus and pear. Reisling wine pairs well with a wide range of foods including spicy dishes, seafood, pork and even desserts, making it one of the most versatile wines available.



Rosé – Morrisons The Best Cotes de Provence rosé wine. France 2024. 12.5% volume. £10.50. With More Card discount £9.00. With multibuy 30% discount £6.30. A full round and crisp wine for the palate and good length on the finish. This wine easily pairs with seafood, salads and lightly spiced Asian food.

Red –Morrisons The Best Douro red wine. Vinho Tinto. Portugal 2023 13% volume. £9.75. With More Card £8.00. With multibuy 30% discount £5.60. Flavours of ripe plums with a hint of black pepper. This wine is delicious with sausages and roast meats.

This month's lesson was about the Douro wine region in Portugal. The wine quiz was won by Nicola. Enjoy your Easter Egg. Next meeting: 18th May 2026.

Ann's Column

It's almost a month since Easter We had a couple of lovely walks at Mucking where we saw one solitary curlew. and at Coalhouse Fort there was a

real froth of blackthorn bordering the path leading down to the river, hopefully a good year for sloes. At Wat Tyler I was reading some of the boards telling about the rebels. It was very interesting to read that one lady had avoided a prison sentence because of legal technicalities.

I'm looking forward to my holiday in Northumbria, we're staying just outside Alnwick, so a visit to the castle gardens will be a top priority. I remember the last visit there; we had to avoid stepping on the ducklings. Also, there will be another visit to Barter's secondhand bookshop, set in the old railway station. We have yet to come away empty handed.

I've been clearing out a couple of bureaux and a sideboard, and now I can't find anything. It's been so easy to just open a drawer and throw things in. I really shouldn't hoard but it might come in useful!

Ann

*****If you don't receive the advance email, do get in touch by using the email from the committee list for advance email *****

Apologies – If the computer is working I can manage – but this month I struggled! Lost some articles, hopefully not yours – then suddenly had a very muddled newsletter with 80 pages ---- IMPOSSIBLE --- so had to start again.

One very frustrated editor – and the clever grandson was in the middle of exams so I didn't even bother him! Hopefully it has come together – please forgive any mistakes!

Group Timetable					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1					
am	Golf	Line Dance 2	Boules(Springhouse) Line Dancing 1 Flower Arranging.	Ten Pin Bowling	PÉTANQUE/BOULES (Billet). Lunch and Chat
pm	Golf Quilting O B M UKE3A(Ukulele) Memory Lane. Bridge	Mixed Craft. Italian Beginners	Canasta. Boules pm (Springhouse)	Board Games	Lunch & Chat
Week 2					
am	London Walks Golf	Line Dance 2	Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1		PÉTANQUE/BOULES (Billet) Photography Paws on the Go
pm	London Walks	Scrabble/Cribbage Every two weeks	Canasta. Boules pm (Springhouse) Singles Lunch	SLH&District u3a General Meeting	Music Makers Photography
Week 3					
am	Golf	10 Pin Tuesday Line Dance 2	Flower Arranging Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Ambling	Gallery Visits PÉTANQUE/BOULES (Billet)
pm	Golf UKE3A (Ukulele) It's Wine O'Clock (Evening)	Tuesday Lunch Bunch Italian Beginners. <i>Art at Mucking</i>	Family History Canasta. Boules pm	Wine Appreciation	Board Games Gallery Visits Book Club
Week 4 Last					
am	Golf.	Line Dance 2	Boules (Springhouse) Line Dancing 1	Rambling	Birdwatching PÉTANQUE/BOULES (Billet).
pm	Singing for Fun Local History.		Canasta Boules pm. (Springhouse)	T.C.& Play Reading <i>Couples Lunch</i>	Play Reading 1 Music Makers.

Sunday Singles

Quiz – get in touch; often a Saturday.
book a place.

Curry Club – get in touch to

Contact Details for Interest Group Leaders

Groups with no spaces are highlighted.

Ambling	Tessa Duggan Jenny Radford	01375 670212 01375 676338	
Bird Watching	Dave Snow	07490 069740	
Board Games (Thurs. & Fri)	Margaret Lambert	07811 235274	
Book Group	Ann Bailey Dawn Lloyd-Warne	- 01375 461885	
Boules (Wed.am)	Dave & Jean Jardine	07551 952211	
Boules (Wed.pm)	Paul Brice	07788 452852	
Boules /Petanque(Fri am)	Colin & Carol Munro	07770 854318	
Canasta	Pauline Kerridge	01375 462232	
Chess	Robert Morrison	-	
Couples Lunch	Dave & Jean Angus	07711 359127	
Cribbage	John Green	01375 676441	
Curry Night	Tina Smith Carol Lindsell	07899 915184 07906 436445	
Day Trips	Sue Moss Sue Dunn	07905 314987 07891 019907	
Family History	Sue Green Peter Craggs	01375 676441 01375 643749 07759 817821	
Flower Arranging	Christine Lambert Linda Tilbury	07504 238154 07972 879173 07928 221626	
Gallery Visits	Jenny Lees Chris Henderson	01375 360786 -	

Golf	Paul Brice	07788 452852	
Holidays & Cruises (bk)	Carol Smith Mel Fox	07845 233640 01375 679643	
It's Wine O'clock	Paula Mullooly	07754 727011	
Basic Italian	Verena Carter	07808 513453	
Line Dancing 1 (Wed)	Susan Moss Beverley Brice Christine Hartnell	07905 314987 07522 368810 07771 554174	
Line Dancing 2 (alt. Weds)	Carol Munro Sue Moss	07766 035554 07905 314987	
Local History	Sue Green Diane Wallace	01375 676441 -	
Local Research Projects	Sue Green Diane Wallace	01375 676441 -	
London Walks BK	Dave Snow Brian McDonald	07490 069740 -	
Lunch and Chat	Chris Brown	01708 852023	
Mixed Craft	Marilyn Edgings Barbara Purser	01375 677425 01375 677095	
Music Makers	Mo Wakeling	07902 649122	
Old British M/C & Car Enthus't (bk)	Graham Edgings	01375 677425	
Paws on the Go	Eileen Drewer	01375 403315	
Photography	Jenny Lees Mel Fox	01375 360786 01375 679643	
Play Reading 1	Beryl Woodcock	-	
T. C. & Play Reading	Deb Foster	01375 677971	
Quilting	Carol Smith	07845 233640 01375 675988	

Quiz Night	Ann Bailey Sue Green	- 01375 676441	
Ramblers	Chris Gomm	07905 117622	
Scrabble	Magda Norris	01375 360355	
Singing for Fun	Mo Wakeling	07902 649122	
Singles Lunch	Christine Codd	07594 948003	
Sunday Singles Lunch	Margaret Lambert Chris Brown		
Ten Pin Bowling	Jean Jardine	07551 952211	
Ten Pin Tuesday	Kevin Brice	07973 349288	
Tuesday Lunch Bunch	Lynn Lawson	07422 541606	
Theatre Trips (bk)	Tina Smith Carol Lindsell	07899 915184 07906 436445	
Uke-3a	Madeline Beesley	01375 678576	
Wine Appreciation	Graham Hodgson Jean Jardine	01375 675588 07551 952211	

Contact details for Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a

Chair – Kevin Brice

Vice-Chair (& Beacon Organiser)–Danni Tate

Treasurer –Mel Fox

Assistant Treasurer – Sue Green

Secretary& Policy Documents –Janet Deeney.

Membership Secretary – Richard Fox

Newsletter Editor – Chris Henderson for items for the newsletter.

Interest Groups' Co-Ordinator –Sandra Isaacson

Assistant Group Co-ordinator –Marilyn Edgings

Welfare and Disabilities Co-Ordinators – Eileen Drewer

Advance Notice Email – Chris Henderson problems with Advance Email

Stanford-le-Hope and District u3a Website Managers–

Michael Farman & Chris Gomm

Suggestions Box – Jean Angus

Committee Members – Pam Tate, Sue Dunn,

Website *<https://slh.u3asite.uk>*

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