

Chairs and Secretaries, please share with ALL your u3a members

East of England Region u3a

January 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 1 Page 1

This monthly bulletin was compiled on 19.12.2025 and sent to National Office for distribution. It should arrive by the first week of January 2026.

Deadline for the January 26 issue is 18.01.26



Our Featured Interest Group for January 2026



Churches and Interesting Buildings - Chatteris u3a

Chatteris u3a has started a group to visit "Churches and Interesting Buildings". On a regular basis, we get to have a visit to a church or other ancient building with a knowledgeable local guide explaining the history of the building and its peculiarities.

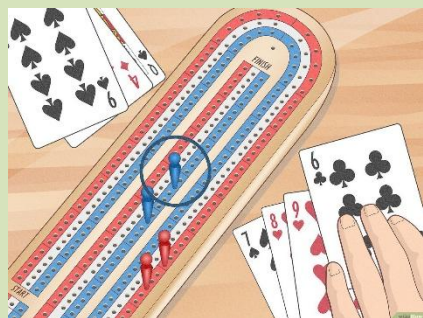
This group is open to all and is free to attend; a donation towards the guide or the building are appreciated.

*Peter Leeson Chatteris u3a
Chair*

Thank you, Peter. Beautiful and stately is just what we need after the frenzy of Christmas! Laurene Henderson

Our November/December issue asked the following: u3a Interest Groups: "How did we start? Funny you should ask me that..." We love to read about your activities and see examples. Don't be shy – we are waiting...

Contact Laurene Henderson laurenehenderson1.eastu3a@outlook.com **Here is our first example!**



SUDBURY CRIBBAGE GROUP GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH!

Back in 2000, when Covid lockdowns were starting to relax, my friend Richard Thomas persuaded me to join the Sudbury u3a Snooker Group.

One activity missing from the wide variety of local groups was Cribbage. We both played in the popular local Crib League, which had not re-started at that time.

When I mentioned this, Richard promptly arm-twisted me: "Well, you could start a u3a Crib Group..."

It seemed a good idea at the time! It would allow new and experienced players somewhere to play during the day while Covid rules still affected pubs & clubs. And encourage more interest in this complex and subtle card game.

All I had to do was to decide day & time, find a venue, do a risk assessment, recruit players, set up contact lists, and get some cards and scoreboards! But after three months, largely by word of mouth, we had a thriving and growing Friday u3a Crib Group with around 20 participants. A u3a start-up grant provided cards and scoreboards, and the Snooker Club had an ideal venue room - quiet and spacious.

I wanted to make the group as friendly and rules-free as possible. So we do not 'organise' the sessions as such; rather it enables crib players of all abilities to get together and play, learn and improve, and of course make some new like-minded friends. We operate on a 'turn up when you can' basis, and rotate partners and opponents to make for a more sociable group.

I am delighted we have largely achieved our aims. Our group, now over 30 strong, includes regular cribbers, others who had not played for years, and beginners who we are teaching as we go along.

And there is another success story attached. In the depths of Covid, it was not clear if the established local cribbage league could survive at all. Happily it has, with most of the original teams re-formed, though with fewer active players. I am pleased to say that our Sudbury u3a Cribbage group has introduced several players to league teams, including some who were novices when they joined us. I feel we are helping to keep this fascinating and ancient game alive in the local area.

Venue: the function room at Sudbury Snooker Club, CO10 1RE. We meet twice monthly on the second and fourth Fridays, from 3-5pm. Fee: £3.50 per session - refreshments are available. All u3a members are welcome - no pre-booking is needed. Just turn up, or for more info contact me, Mark Mathieson, on the group's email address:

su3acrib@gmail.com

Thank you, Mark. I wonder how many Interest Groups start with a casual conversation - and then grow?

We need more Interest Groups to Feature!

If you have been inspired, like me, to start a group after reading about one here, maybe your group could do the same?

Each month we feature a u3a interest group from one of our East of England Region u3as. Find them here: [Inspirational-Groups-Jan-2025.pdf](https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Inspirational-Groups-Jan-2025.pdf) <https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Inspirational-Groups-Jan-2025.pdf> **We want to hear about your groups.** Please send photographs and a brief write up. Don't forget to mention your u3a and please make sure that any photographs featuring u3a members have the participants permission to appear. Send submissions to laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

Thank you to the many groups who have contributed so far.



National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2026	Event	Link
Jan 6 10am to 12pm	Flight Inspirations Aviation: Miracle on the Hudson, A Pilot's Perspective	Flight Inspirations Aviation: Miracle on the Hudson, A Pilot's Perspective Tickets, Tue, Jan 6, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Jan 7 from 10am to 11:30am GMT	How do your medicines work? An Introduction Mike Trevethick explains how medicines get to where they need to be and how they work, exploring pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics.	How do your medicines work? - An Introduction Tickets, Wed, Jan 7, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Jan 12 from 10am to 11:30am	Exploring World Faiths: January The Effect of a Mother Language in Shaping and Understanding Faith International Language Day is on Saturday 21 February 2026	Exploring World Faiths: January Tickets, Mon, Jan 12, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Jan 9 from 2pm to 3:45pm	Mindfulness and Compassion meets Poetry 2 A meeting of mindfulness and inspiring poetry to support our wellbeing. This is the second event in which Mindfulness and Compassion is offered alongside poetry and expressive prose.	Mindfulness and Compassion meets Poetry 2 Tickets, Fri, Jan 9, 2026 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
Jan 13 from 2pm to 3:30pm	Understanding Online Content and Misinformation Helen McGuigan offers practical guidance to help people recognise, understand, and confidently navigate online misinformation.	Understanding Online Content and Misinformation Tickets, Tue, Jan 13, 2026 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2025	Event	Link
Jan 14 from 10am to 10:45am	Laughter Yoga with Judith: January Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.	Laughter Yoga with Judith: January Tickets, Wed, Jan 14, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Jan 14 from 2pm to 3pm	How to build confidence in later life Join Rebecca and discover practical, doable strategies to strengthen your self-belief, resilience and boost your confidence after fifty	How to build confidence in later life Tickets, Wed 14 Jan 2026 at 14:00 Eventbrite
Jan 15 from 10am to 11:30am	Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: January Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones. These sessions are led by John, Mike and Ruth.	Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: January Tickets, Thu, Jan 15, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Jan 15 from 10am to 11am	When numbers turn nasty... In this talk, Dr Octavio Dominguez will reveal the story of a mysterious number that has occasionally proved troublesome in the real world.	When numbers turn nasty... Tickets, Thu, Jan 15, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Jan 15 from 2pm to 3:30pm	From Roman Britain to the Dark Ages A deeper dive into Britain's history After captivating audiences with his survey of England's 10,000-year journey since the last Ice Age, author Charles Boundy is back by popular demand with his next talk	From Roman Britain to the Dark Ages Tickets, Thu, Jan 15, 2026 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
Jan 21 from 10am to 11:30am GMT This is the second talk of four on 'How do your medicines work?'	How do your medicines work? - Asthma Mike Trevethick explains the science behind how drugs to treat asthma work and how were they discovered. Drugs to treat asthma either open up the air ways or control the inflammatory response - but how were they discovered and how do they work?	How do your medicines work? - Asthma Tickets, Wed, Jan 21, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Jan 21 from 1pm to 2:30pm GMT	Smart Cities with u3a Let's Talk Tech David Martin of u3a Let's Talk Tech discusses urban areas using digital technologies to collect and analyse data to improve quality of life.	Smart Cities with u3a Let's Talk Tech Tickets, Wed, Jan 21, 2026 at 1:00 PM Eventbrite
Jan 21 at 3pm	The World's Most Enchanting Archipelagos - Through the Scottish Hebrides Join us and Monty Halls, Brand Ambassador for HX who will guide us on an inspiring voyage of discovery through the Scottish Hebrides.	The World's Most Enchanting Archipelagos - Through the Scottish Hebrides Tickets, Wed, Jan 21, 2026 at 3:00 PM Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2025	Event	Link(Control&click)
Jan 23 from 10am to 11:30am	<p>Artificial Intelligence News: January - AI in Healthcare From Diagnosis to Prediction: How AI Is Changing Primary Health Care? Dr Simon Rudland, visiting professor at the University of Suffolk, was the lead author of a study evaluating a test which uses AI (artificial intelligence) to determine if patients have cardiovascular disease.</p>	<p>Artificial Intelligence News: January - AI in Healthcare Tickets, Fri, Jan 23, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite</p>
Jan 23 from 2pm to 3pm	<p>The Calendar, Time and the Cosmos part 1 Accounting for time has numerous purposes. Part 1 - The Calendar Irene Kyffin Accounting for time has numerous purposes and there are numerous ways of keeping time.</p>	<p>The Calendar, Time and the Cosmos part 1 Tickets, Fri, Jan 23, 2026 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite</p>
Jan 26 from 10am to 12:30pm See link for details	<p>Wellbeing Taster Morning with u3a Subject Advisers Come along to try out a range of well-being activities to start off the new year. Throughout the session, you'll be able to try Tai Chi and Qigong, seated yoga, mindfulness, meditation, and reflective wellbeing practices—all guided by experienced advisers who are passionate about sharing their expertise.</p>	<p>Wellbeing Taster Morning with u3a Subject Advisers Tickets, Mon, Jan 26, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite</p>
Jan 27 from 11am to 12pm	<p>Why snails might hold some answers to age-related memory loss Explore how molluscs can help us to understand how we learn and remember, and how they can be used for studying age-related memory loss. This event is hosted by the u3a Science Network with speaker Professor Mark Yeoman.</p>	<p>Why snails might hold some answers to age-related memory loss Tickets, Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 11:00 AM Eventbrite</p>
Jan 27 from 3:30pm to 4:30pm	<p>Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: January Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga - an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.</p>	<p>Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: January Tickets, Tue, Jan 27, 2026 at 3:30 PM Eventbrite</p>
Jan 30 from 2pm to 3pm	<p>The Calendar, Time and the Cosmos Accounting for time has numerous purposes. Irene has traced the progress of this accounting from pre- and early history up to the present. Part 2 - traces the technical development of the clock With Irene Kyffin</p>	<p>The Calendar, Time and the Cosmos part 2 Tickets, Fri, Jan 30, 2026 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite</p>

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2025	Event	Link(Control&click)
Feb 3 from 2pm to 3pm	After Alzheimer: Memory, Ageing and What Comes Next Join Dr. Mike Bender, retired consultant clinical psychologist and nationally recognised expert in memory and ageing, as he walks you through the history of dementia and ways of slowing memory decline.	After Alzheimer: Memory, Ageing and What Comes Next Tickets, Tue 3 Feb 2026 at 14:00 Eventbrite
Feb 4 from 10am to 11:30am	How do your medicines work? - Mike Trevethick discusses hypertension, the drugs used to treat this condition, and the science of how they work in the body.	How do your medicines work? - Hypertension Tickets, Wed, Feb 4, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite

Full details of learnings events can be found at the link below.
Late booked events may not be on this list.

[u3a - Online Learning Events](#)



Harlow's festive concert for charity



RAFTERS were ringing at St Paul's Church, Harlow on December 12 when Harlow u3a Choir hosted its annual Christmas Concert joined by Voices of Harlow Community Choir and Performing Arts students from Harlow College. The appreciative audience was treated to a wide range of Christmas related songs ranging from traditional carols and pop songs to sea shanty and Gospel.



Although the audience may have stolen the show with its enthusiastic participation in the Twelve Days of Christmas! Co-ordinated by Musical

Director Roisin Quinn, it was a joyful evening leaving all involved full of festive spirit and with all profits going to local charity Streets2Homes.





The Search is on for a second regional member of u3a Council



IN their first year Regional Council Representatives have been getting to know their new role - and getting to know their regional u3as.

We are now starting the second year ... a year which I have decided to continue in my role as East of England Council Representative. I am currently the only representative in the East of England Region, covering 140 u3as.

But we are allowed two. So, u3a is now seeking an **additional representative to serve with me.**

Nominations open on Thursday, January 8, and close on Tuesday, February 3.

If you are interested in receiving the Council Representative Candidate pack, please get in touch. The full role description and requirements are on the national web site elections page.

The creation of the u3a Council is a significant move towards putting u3a members and the issues that matter to them at the heart of everything the Third Age Trust does. Key to the success of the council will be having the right people come forward to be Council Representatives.

The role is to ensure that the voice of local u3as in the Eastern Region is heard.

If successful, the member will act as a conduit between the Trust and u3as in their area, ensuring that their views help to shape the strategy of the Trust.

Being a Representative on the u3a Council will be a rewarding role.

If you are a 'people person' and interested in putting yourself forward for this role, please get in touch with me either by email or **call me for an informal chat on 07471211347.**

I look forward to hearing from you,

Best Regards,

Ian Mathews
East of England Council Representative



First Meeting of the new u3a council April 2025. Can you spot Ian?



u3a member suggests Mindful course for carers

I HAVE volunteered with The Mindful Life Group for the last two years and have heard from participant feedback of the positive impact its course for carers has had on their lives. I am a member of the u3a Interest Groups online - What are you Reading? and have participated in group meetings. I have enjoyed very much listening and learning from others about the books they are reading - a great group of people based around the UK!

The course ... Mindfulness for Older Adults who Care ... is a free six-week online program for Essex residents. And the next one starts at the end of this month, January.

Caring for a partner, family member or friend can have a significant impact on a person's emotional and physical well-being. The Mindful Life Group Mindfulness for Older Adults Who Care program is designed specifically for people aged 65 plus who would benefit from some protected time to focus on their own needs - reducing stress and isolation, improving sleep and supporting low mood or anxiety.

Sessions are designed by Clinical Psychologists and are delivered by BAMBA-Registered Mindfulness Teachers live through Zoom. Sessions offer a calm, accessible and supportive space for carers who may find it difficult to attend in person groups.

To find out more and to apply for a visit

The Mindful Life Group website www.the-mindful-life.com Janice Birrell

Swaffham & District u3a does Christmas with bells on!



YANA u3a Xmas Tree

We are only a modestly sized u3a, but this Christmas we seem to have been everywhere! An entry for the local Church Christmas tree festival raised over £90.00 for YANA, which supports rural workers mental health and wellbeing.

A Jolly Day Out (shared with Dereham u3a members) arranged a coach for the end of pier Cromer

Christmas Show. A Christmas lunch at the local George Hotel was attended by many of our new members, we had a stall at the local Rotary Charity Christmas Fair - and finally a Christmas party for over 130 with live music, food (SO much food...) and carols!

Laurene Henderson, Secretary Swaffham & District u3a



Senior Momento



Singing for pleasure u3a Group



Rotary Club XmasCharity



A Brief History

Founded in France in 1973, the University of the Third Age is an international organisation which encourages people to lead healthy and interesting lives. The term "University" is used in its original sense to describe a group of people sharing knowledge together. In U3A, there are no entry requirements and no qualifications are awarded. The term "Third Age" simply refers to our later years in life. Anyone 50+ years of age can join.

U3A Moonee Valley

U3A Moonee Valley Inc. is a not-for-profit organisation. We offer social interaction, intellectual stimulation and meaningful engagement within the local community. We are grateful for the support received from Moonee Valley Council, local MPs and U3A Network Victoria.

Our "tutors" and organisers are volunteers and may not necessarily have formal qualifications. Whilst all of our members enjoy participating, some also share their interests and knowledge by facilitating or co-hosting activities.

If you have skills or passion for a particular activity, please consider sharing these with others in our relaxed and supportive environment.

u3a across the (Moonee) Pond

On a recent visit to Melbourne to visit my daughter, we attended a Senior's Festival in Moonee Ponds, in Victoria. It was organised by the local council, Moonee Valley.

One afternoon there was a display of various leaflets giving advice to the elderly, but I was very interested to see a display board about the local u3a, so had to have a chat with a lady, to find out more. She was a member and in the u3a ukulele group.

They have quite a lot of groups, but not as many we have in Dacorum. My favourite ones were circle dancing, scrabble, folk singing and ukulele.

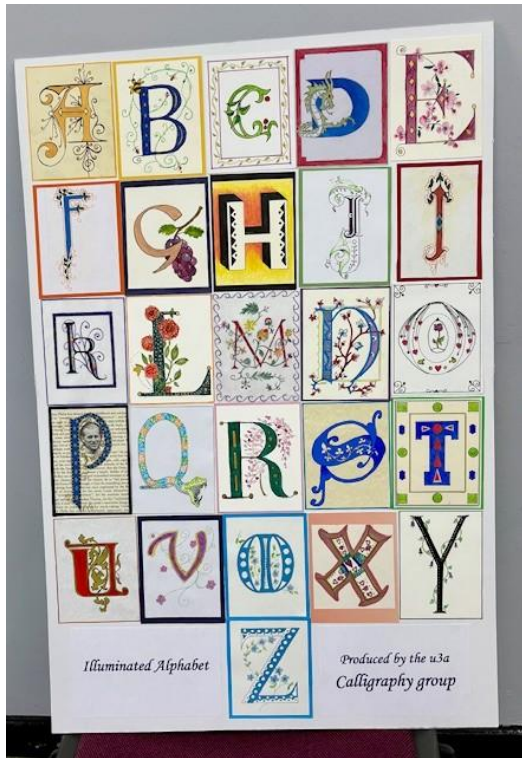
I also learned that the u3a actually originated in France in 1973.

Jean Hunter, Member no. 0474 Dacorum u3a

Has anyone else come across u3as in their travels? We would love to hear about it. Laurene Henderson

And finally...

Dacorum u3a Calligraphy Group Does It Again!



I thought you might like to include the latest project from the Dacorum U3a Calligraphy Group, run by our wonderful Convenor **Diana Knapp**. With Diana's depth of knowledge & experience, she has led us, from Novices to quite competent Calligraphers. Her patience, encouragement & wonderful sense of humour, has resulted in this Magnificent display.

We all truly value our twice monthly meetings, made even more wonderful, by the lovely Jean, who bakes us something delicious, to go with our Coffee/Tea. The whole group supports each other, sharing ideas & tips. We are so fortunate to have u3a & the many interest groups.

Lynne Delph, Dacorum u3a

We have featured the intricate work of Dacorum Calligraphy Group before - and hopefully will again in the future. Inspirational!
Laurene Henderson

Your East of England Team :
East of England Region



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