

# East of England Region u3a

April 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 4/26 Page 1

This monthly bulletin should arrive by the first week of April 2026, distributed by an Eastern Regional Council member. **Deadline for the May 2026 issue is by Friday 24th April 2026.** You can receive this Bulletin directly: Email: [laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

## MALDON & DISTRICT u3a UKULELE GROUP



A new group at Maldon & District u3a is going great guns.

Steve Collis, a keen guitar and ukulele player, decided in November 2025 to try and start a new group of like minded members. With the aid of his brother from Braintree u3a, they started meeting in Steve's home and very quickly the number of members increased and they had to look for larger premises. They now meet twice a month at the West Maldon Community Centre and have an active group membership of 18 players. Still growing, they will be entertaining us at our August monthly meeting.

They work on new material while also playing their favourite songs, with each person choosing the songs they would like to play from their growing playlist. It's all about having fun, laughing and making music.

*Kris Taylor, Maldon & District u3a Newsletter Editor 07785 998173*

## HULLBRIDGE u3a WINE GROUP - better late than never!



There are those of us who think that Christmas events might be even better if they could be spread throughout the year. Members of the Wine Group 1 from Hullbridge u3a, put this into practice, celebrating a belated Christmas meal at a local Italian restaurant.

Hullbridge u3a has two wine groups, and we can see why they are popular.

*Joan Williams, Secretary Hullbridge u3a*

If you have a u3a group that has recently started or done something out of the ordinary, please tell us and include a photograph. (Make sure subjects give consent.) Send to Laurene Henderson: Email [laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

## Hullbridge u3a Historic London Group

Visit to Spencer House & St James Place on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2026



We were welcomed into Spencer House by our guide who explained the history of this widely admired London home.

John Spencer acquired a lease on a plot in St James Place in 1755 and construction of Spencer House began the following spring. Work was completed in 1766. Over the years it has been home to many organisations with consequent alterations.

In November 1990 the newly restored Spencer House was opened by Diana, Princess of Wales, a direct descendant of the First Lord and Lady Spencer. Today this magnificent house is maintained with funds from rented offices, functions and guided tours.



After lunch, we went to Westminster Cathedral, the largest Catholic Church in England and Wales.

It is the seat of the Archbishop of Westminster. Construction took place from 1895 to 1903. The cathedral's distinctive striped brick design was much admired by Sir John Betjeman. It received Apostolic visits from [Pope](#)



[John Paul II](#) on 28 May 1982 and from [Pope Benedict XVI](#) on 18 September 2010.

*Thank you to Carol and Paul Ogden for organising a very interesting day out in great company.*



*Phil Perry*

*Hullbridge u3a Web Manager*

## Chelmsford u3a Rock & Pop Music Appreciation Group's Joyful Start



In our February bulletin we shared news of Chelmsford u3a's inspirational new Rock and Pop Music Group. We can now report that the group continues to thrive and has quickly become a warm, lively space where members explore music, share memories, and enjoy each other's company.

Bruce Knight explains that each session is built around a simple theme, and every member contributes one or two song choices.

To everyone's amusement, the

chosen theme for the group's 3rd meeting was: "Songs To Be Played At My Funeral." The more we thought about it, the more creative and thoughtful the suggestions became — even if "Going Underground" by The Jam pushed the boundaries of taste just a little! We ended up with a wonderfully varied and heartfelt playlist. The session opened with John Lennon's Imagine, after which each member said a few words about why they had chosen their song. Other examples included Elton John's "Funeral For A Friend"; "Enjoy Yourself" by The Specials; "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" By the Clash; and "Turn! Turn! Turn!" by The Byrds.

One especially touching moment came with George Ezra's Green, Green Grass. Its nominator shared that she hoped her grandchildren would be dancing in the kitchen during the post funeral gathering — and if you know the song, you'll understand why it brought both smiles and misty eyes.

Then, unexpectedly, came The Laughing Policeman by Charles Penrose. The story behind the choice was moving: Tommy Cannon once presented a documentary about his late comedy partner Bobby Ball, who in his final days told friends, "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened." That spirit certainly resonated with the group.

Then Jeannie's contribution of Jerry Lee Lewis's Great Balls of Fire raised the decibel counter and mood. We closed with Andrea Bocelli's beautiful "Time to Say Goodbye". It proved to be a session filled with music, reflection, laughter, and new friendships — everything the members hoped the group would offer.

Bruce said "It's wonderful to see everyone coming together, enjoying the process of creating this new group, and bonding over our shared passion for music. We're fortunate to have such a positive, creative, and like-minded group, united by music that not only inspires us but also brings back cherished memories. I'm already looking forward to our April session and the wide variety of music it will bring."

For any u3a considering a similar group, it really does take very little effort: choose a theme, invite members to suggest songs, and create space for stories and conversation.

The joy, connection, and memories follow naturally.

*Lesley Wood, Chelmsford u3a*

What a wonderful group! Check out "The Still" by Esoterica - my funeral choice. [Esoterica - The Still \(Live at Abbey Road\)](#) Laurene Henderson

## From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative

### Council Representative Elections



Following on from my March Bulletin Notes regarding the Election of a 2nd Council Representative for the East of England, I am pleased to announce that Ruth Freedman has been elected as the second Council representative for the East of England. I wish Ruth much success in her role and I look forward to working with her in the region.



Ruth Freedman

I would like to thank Jeanne Sole for putting herself forward as a candidate and wish her well for the rest of her u3a journey.

### Forum Meetings

I have already commenced my forum meetings with u3as from Beds, Cambs, Suffolk and Norfolk. I will shortly be including Herts and Essex in those forums. I will be copying minutes from our Council meetings which will show the region what the council does and what they have achieved.

### Recent Survey

I hope region u3as took part in the recent survey. Once results are to hand they will be circulated.

### AI - What's all the Fuss About? 22.4.26

I am organising an AI presentation entitled AI - What's all the Fuss About? for the 22nd April. Details of this event are published in this issue (page 5). Registration opens on 1st April.

### Here to Help

Finally, I am here to assist with any issues arising with u3as the region. I have been recently dealing with constitution, committee structure and general advice.

If the need arises my contact details are below. I am also available for u3a visits. So, if any u3a would like me to attend any committee or AGM meetings please let me know.

Best Regards,

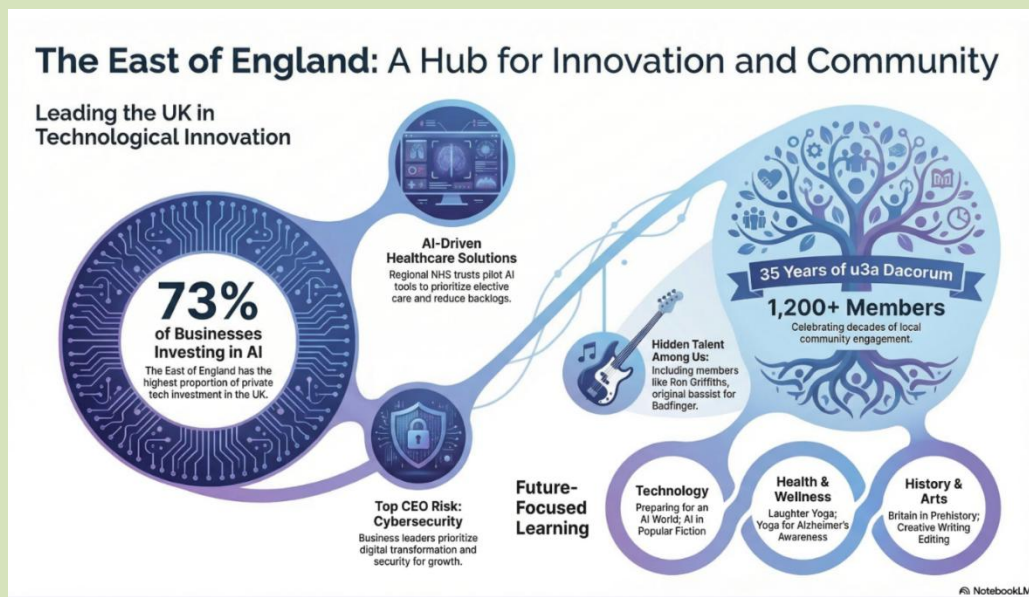
*Ian Mathews*  
East of England Council Representative  
Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk  
Mobile :- 0747121347

### We need more Interest Groups to Feature!

Each month we feature a u3a interest group from one of our East of England Region u3as. **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](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

[Thank you to the many groups who have contributed so far](#)

## AI - what's all the fuss about?



### You've learnt to use the Internet, Smartphones, Online Banking, Online Shopping. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the next Digital Tool!

This online session will explain: What AI is and is not. Why it is suddenly everywhere. How it can help you in everyday life. How to use it safely. Remember the early days in the internet? Or getting your first smartphone? Online banking? Online shopping? You've successfully navigated and embraced countless technological advancements. AI might sound daunting, but it's just another digital tool to understand and use. Join our online u3a event to demystify Artificial Intelligence (AI) and see how it can enhance your daily life, just like the internet did.



The East of England Region - AI event, Wednesday 22nd April 2026, 10am - 12pm  
Please register for the event from 1st April on:-

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ai-whats-all-the-fuss-about-tickets-1985500541568>

Are you using AI? Barry, the u3a AI Subject Adviser would like to hear from you.  
[barry.claydon@subjectadviser.u3a.org.uk](mailto:barry.claydon@subjectadviser.u3a.org.uk)

### Reminder: Special forums organised for Eastern Region u3as



**Canva National Subject: Adviser Roger Carter** (it replaces Publisher which Microsoft stops supporting this year.)

An introduction will be from **10am to 11.30am on Wednesday, April 8.**



**Vice Chair of the u3a, Sheila Crawley**, explains all about the recruitment benefits of **Outward facing Facebook.**

This is on **Wednesday, May 13, again 10am to 11.30am.**

**Sign up by** Contacting Ray at [rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com)

## National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

| Date 2026  | Event   | Link   |
|--|---|--|
| Wednesday<br>1st April at 10am                       | <p><b>Mindfulness and Meditation Series</b><br/>In this series, Dr John Darwin, Mike Pupius, Ruth Lees and members of the Sheffield u3a Mindful Ageing Group will introduce mindfulness and meditation, using 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' as a basis.</p>  | <p><a href="#">Mindfulness and Meditation Series Tickets, Wednesday, Feb 25 at 10 am to Wednesday, Apr 1 at 11:30 am GMT   Eventbrite</a></p>          |
| Wednesday,<br>1 <sup>st</sup> Apr<br>1 pm to 2:30 pm | <p><b>Can augmented &amp; virtual reality really enhance our lives?</b><br/>John Butler explores how virtual reality can be utilised in education, training and beyond in this talk with u3a Let's Talk Tech.</p>   | <p><a href="#">Can augmented &amp; virtual reality really enhance our lives? Tickets, Wednesday, Apr 1 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p> |
| Tuesday,<br>April 7<br>10 am to 12 pm                | <p><b>Flight Inspirations Aviation: The British Airman of the First World War</b><br/>From WWI's final aerial combat to the global legacy of air warfare: pilots, training, and life in the First World War skies.</p>  | <p><a href="#">Flight Inspirations Aviation: The British Airman of the First World War Tickets, Tuesday, Apr 7 from 10 am to 12 pm GMT+1  </a></p>     |
| Wednesday,<br>April 8<br>10 am to 10:45 am           | <p><b>Laughter Yoga with Judith: April</b><br/>Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.<br/>"We don't laugh because we're happy, we're</p>   | <p><a href="#">Laughter Yoga with Judith: April Tickets, Wednesday, Apr 8 from 10 am to 10:45 am GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>                            |
| Friday,<br>April 10<br>10 am to 11:30 am             | <p><b>Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&amp;A</b><br/>Keeping you safe in an electronic age: A repeat talk by Barry Linton of Thorpe Bay u3a. Please note this is a repeating talk that has been given previously. Barry regularly updates the talk with the most recent advice and new and emerging risks.</p> | <p><a href="#">Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&amp;A Tickets, Friday, Apr 10 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>         |
| Friday,<br>April 10<br>2 pm to 3 pm                  | <p><b>Adventures in science with u3a</b><br/>Join Nick Doll to hear all about the thrills and spills of four years in the Chichester u3a practical science group. Nick Doll talks through the formation, evolution, and principal experiments and projects carried</p>  | <p><a href="#">Adventures in science with u3a Tickets, Friday, Apr 10 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>                                     |
| Thursday,<br>Apr 16<br>10 am to 11:30am              | <p><b>Mindfulness and meditation</b> continuation session: April<br/>Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.</p>   | <p><a href="#">Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: April Tickets, Thursday, Apr 16 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>      |
| Thursday,<br>Apr 16<br>2 pm to 3pm                   | <p><b>Richard Nixon- a truly complex man</b><br/>Paul Carter looks at Nixon's political life and travels across the landscape of post-war US and the world</p>  | <p><a href="#">Richard Nixon- a truly complex man Tickets, Thursday, Apr 16 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>                               |

## National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

| Date 2026  | Event  | Link   |
|--|--|--|
| Friday,<br>Apr 17<br>2 pm to 3 pm                                      | <p><b>The Magic of Magic Squares</b><br/>In this talk, Alison Eves reveals an intriguing link between a 16th Century Durer etching and a 20th century carving on the Sagrada Familia</p> <p>Magic squares have fascinated mathematicians for centuries. Magic squares are rich in history, appear in some surprising places, and have astonishing patterns within them.</p>  | <p><a href="#">The Magic of Magic Squares Tickets, Friday, Apr 17 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>   |
| Tuesday,<br>Apr 21<br>2 pm to 3:30 pm                                  | <p><b>Anglo-Saxon England - from the dark ages to the Viking age</b><br/>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: Anglo-Saxon England - from the Dark Ages to the Viking Age</p> <p>This is the third of the more detailed talks by Charles based on his book 'Ice to Athelstan - The Emergence of England'</p>                                      | <p><a href="#">Anglo-Saxon England - from the dark ages to the viking age Tickets, Tuesday, Apr 21 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>                                   |
| Wednesday,<br>April 22 at 10 am<br>to Wednesday,<br>May 27 at 11:30 am | <p><b>Cryptic crosswords for beginners: six-session course (April/May 2026)</b><br/>Join Henry Howarth, u3a Subject Adviser for Cryptic Crosswords, for a six-session course on how to solve cryptic crosswords. Please note registration closes on Monday 6 April 2026. You will need the course book detailed in the link to participate.</p>  | <p><a href="#">Cryptic crosswords for beginners: six-session course (April/May 2026) Tickets, Wednesday, Apr 22 at 10 am to Wednesday, May 27 at 11:30 am GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p> |
| Thursday,<br>Apr 23<br>2 pm to 3:30 pm                                 | <p><b>The Missing Pieces project: connecting people and place</b><br/>Learn how you can help uncover hidden stories of England's historic places through Historic England's Missing Pieces project. The talk will introduce the Missing Pieces project, which invites the public to share photographs, memories and insights about the unique places recorded on the National Heritage List for England. Gareth Powell is the Missing Pieces Project Officer at Historic England</p> | <p><a href="#">The Missing Pieces project: connecting people and place Tickets, Thursday, Apr 23 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>                                     |
| Friday,<br>Apr 24<br>10 am to 11:30am                                  | <p><b>AI News April: AI and geopolitics</b><br/>President Putin has said " The nation that leads in AI will rule the world." He could have said: "will have prosperity, wealth and happiness" but he chose not to. AI is clearly important to Russia - as it is to every other country. It will define at least the next 25 years.</p>   | <p><a href="#">AI News April: AI and geopolitics Tickets, Friday, Apr 24 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT+1   Eventbrite</a></p>   |

## National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

| Date 2026                                 | Event   | Link   |
|---|---|--|
| Tuesday,<br>Apr 28<br>3:30pm to<br>4:30pm | <b>Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: April</b><br>Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga - an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.  | <a href="#">Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: April Tickets, Tuesday, Apr 28 from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a>                  |
| Thursday,<br>Apr 30<br>2 pm to 3:30 pm    | <b>Oi! Mind yer language!</b><br>Oi! Mind yer language!: exploring the English Language: history, structures, usage, mysteries, magic.. and more.<br>Join three u3a group conveners (including Pam Upton, u3a's National Subject Advisor) to explore some delights and secrets of the English language. We'll see how engaging and rewarding that can be - and how you can get involved through u3a groups. | <a href="#">Oi! Mind yer language! Tickets, Thursday, Apr 30 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a>                                     |
| Tuesday,<br>May 5<br>10 am to 12 pm       | <b>Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: the Spruce Goose</b><br>The "Spruce Goose" was the affectionate nickname given to the Hughes H-4 Hercules, a giant flying boat transport constructed almost entirely from laminated timber sourced in the Northwestern United States.  | <a href="#">Flight Inspirations Aviation Group: the Spruce Goose Tickets, Tuesday, May 5 from 10 am to 12 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a>          |
| Friday,<br>May 1<br>2 pm to 3:30 pm       | <b>Kingsmeadow House:</b> the inside story of a modest country house<br>Not all country houses are on the grand scale. But their influence can spread just as far and wide as their grander neighbours.<br>Kingsmeadow house, Peebles is one of those houses. Its social history speaks to us not just bygone glories, but the changing face and challenges of our society.                                 | <a href="#">Kingsmeadow House: the inside story of a modest country house Tickets, Friday, May 1 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm GMT+1   Eventbrite</a> |
|   | <b>Full details of National u3a learning events can be found at the link on the right. Late booked events may not be on this list.</b>  | <a href="#">u3a - Online Learning Events</a>   |

## 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](mailto:rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com)

For Groups News and Special Events,

Contact Laurene Henderson

[laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com](mailto:laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com)

For contact details of the complete team:

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

