

ASHINGDON & ROCHFORD



Charity No: 1180576

Newsletter

August 2026

The deadline for contributions to the next Newsletter is Wednesday 26 August 2026

Please send items for publication to the Newsletter Editor

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Welcome to the August Newsletter. Well, the hot weather continues, we are now on, what our 4th heatwave? The grass is brown and we are lucky that at the time of writing this, that we don't have a hosepipe ban like many areas around us.



Us Gardeners will have to rethink our garden displays if we continue to have such dry summers in future. The garden visit group has previously visited Beth Chatto Gardens which is a good example of planting for a dry landscape, perhaps another visit there would be good for ideas.

We have some new members on the committee so it will be good to see new ideas coming forward for our u3a. If anyone has an idea which they think will work for us or would improve our monthly meetings, please let one of the committee members know.

6th August Summer picnic

FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

*3rd September
Richard Bale
Boudica – Myth or Legend*

*1 October
Fran Sandham
Stanley & Livingstone*

*5 November
Tony Harris
Donald Trump*

Our local u3a is supported by other parts of the organisation and one of those is the East of England Region u3a. Their monthly Bulletin is sent out to all of you and offers lots of information and online learning activities. Take a look to see if there is something you would like to take part in. Artificial Intelligence is here to stay whether we engage with it or not, and they have an interesting online learning event in August called "Deep Fake|" which provides a practical guide to understanding the difference between what is real and what is fake online.

Don't forget the August meeting is replaced by the August picnic and is being held at the Life House (community church) on the corner of Ashingdon Road and Fambridge Road, and we have the same entertainer as last year who was very good, along with the ice cream van, which will be great if this hot weather continues. Unfortunately, I have a family event so won't be able to attend, but I look forward to seeing you all at the September meeting.

GROUP MEETINGS CALENDAR			
MONDAYS			
Walking	Weekly	9.45	Richard Paternoster, Anne and Ray Hill
Are you Curious	4 th Monday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Carol Collins
Beer Appreciation	2 nd Monday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Terry Lake
Bird Watching	2 nd Monday of the month	TBA	Paul Nice
Card and Paper Craft	3 rd Monday of month	1:30 pm	Wendy Paternoster
Discussion	3 rd Monday of month	2:30 - 4:30	David & Barbara Hine
Knit and Chat	4 th Monday of month	2:30 - 4:30	Barbara Hine
Petanque (Boules)	2 nd and 4 th Monday of month	10:00	Linda Deadman
Rummikub	Weekly	2:00 – 4:00	Pam Leys
Supper Club	1st Monday of month	6:00 pm	Val Stenson
TUESDAYS			
Book Club (2)	3 rd Tuesday of month	10:30	Maureen Pointer
Cross-Stitch	Every other Tuesday	10:00	Anne Hill
French Conversation	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday of month	2:30 - 4:00	Carol Clifford
Knit & Sew	4 th Tuesday of the month	2:30	Katherine Lake
Local History (2)	2nd Tuesday of the month	2:00	Graham Collins & Carol Collins
Petanque (Boules)	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday of month	2:00 – 4:00	Beryl Horrex/Janet Toms
Snooker (2)	3 rd Tuesday of the month	11:00 – 1:00	David Hine
Short Mat Bowls	Every other Tuesday	2:00 – 4:00	John Stenson
Ten Pin Bowling	Fortnightly	11:00	Jacqui & Keith Baker
WEDNESDAYS			
Line Dancing	2 nd and 4 th Wed of the	2:00 - 3:00	Jill Nettleship
Local History (1)	2 nd Wednesday of month	p.m.	Sandra Dawson
Table Tennis	Weekly	7:30	John Owen
THURSDAYS			
Cribbage (cards)	4 th Thursday in month	10:00 - 12:00	Keith Baker
Gardening Group	2 nd Thursday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Paul Nice & Marion Cain
Knitting (2)	Fortnightly	2:00 - 4:00	Sue Dodkin
Serendipity	Monthly (Normally a Thursday)	All day	Serendipity Team
Snooker	2 nd Thursday of month	11:00 - 1:00	David Lazell
FRIDAYS			
Canasta	2 nd Friday of the month	2:30 - 4:30	Ian Foster/Pam Foster
Book Club (1)	3 rd Friday of month	2:00	Pat Wilkinson
I.T.	4 th Friday every two months - Jan, Mar, May, July, Sept, Nov	2:00 - 4:00	Robert Nickless
Local History (3)	1 st Friday of month	10:00	Sue Morris. Sue Mitchell & Karen Hunter
Photography	2 nd Friday of month - Inside - Outside	2:30 - 4:30 2:00 - 4:00	Roger Young
Ladder Golf	Alternate Fridays	6:00- 8:00	Anne & Rae Hill
Solo/canasta	4 th Friday of the month	7:00 - 9:00	Ian Foster/Pam Foster
Walking	2 Fridays per month	Mid	Phil Kelly
SATURDAY			
Petanque (Boules)	2 nd & 4 th Saturday of month	10:00 - 12:00	Rosemarie Barrows
SUNDAY			
Sunday Lunch Club	Monthly, various dates	1:00 - 3:00	Carol Collins
Other Various Dates			
Garden Visits			Janet Arrowsmith
Theatre Trips			Claire Ham

GROUP VACANCIES - At the moment the following groups from the above list are full but please let group Co-ordinators, Carole Edwards/Rae Hill know if you want to go on a waiting list

BEER APPRECIATION
SUPPER CLUB
CANASTA

PETANQUE GROUPS 1 (Mondays)
BOTH SNOOKER GROUPS
SOLO

RUMMIKUB
SHORT MAT BOWLS
SUNDAY LUNCH

DISCUSSION
CRIBBAGE
LADDER GOLF

Dates for your diary

Theatre Group

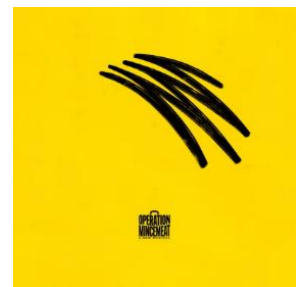
Everyone is welcome to join us - the more people the lower the price for all!

We are a friendly bunch, and you are very welcome to come alone or with friends. If there is anything you spot and are interested in, please let us know as we may be able to make up a group and make the most of reduced price tickets.

On theatre days, we will be in the foyer early, so please come and see us so we know you have arrived. Also, if you have forgotten your tickets or have a last-minute issue, we have time to resolve it. Please note, we cannot guarantee a particular performer will be on at the show we will be going to, but fingers crossed.

***Operation Mincemeat – Wednesday 2nd September 2026 14:30pm
Cliffs Pavilion Tickets £62 – Payment June 2026 Meeting***

*The Olivier Award-winning Best New Musical. In 1943 and were losing the war and we about to gamble all our futures on a stolen corpse! A fast-paced, hilarious and **unbelievable true story** of the twisted secret mission that won us World War II. Bursting at the seams with chaos you couldn't invent, the question is: how did a dead body, a fake love letter, and - of all people - Ian Fleming come together to wrong-foot Hitler?*



Limited tickets remain – so please book asap



***The Choir of Man – Friday 18th September 2026 4:00pm
Cliffs Pavilion Tickets £42 – Payment July 2026 Meeting***

The Choir of Man, the best pub in the world ... Come ready to drink in the excitement! A wildly talented group of incredible instrumentalists, world-class wordsmiths, and sensational singers, this cast of nine (extra)ordinary guys serve it all... live! An uplifting celebration of community and friendship where everyone is welcome. Don't miss this feel-good night of foot-stomping entertainment, so good you'll want to see it again and again.

***Myra's Story – Sunday 11th October 2026 7:30pm
Palace Theatre Tickets £35 – Payment August 2026 Meeting***

Direct from London's West End and the four-time smash-hit at the Edinburgh Fringe. Myra (played by acclaimed actor Fionna Hewitt-Twamley), has fallen on hard times and is now homeless living on the streets of Dublin. Hewitt-Twamley plays a variety of over 15 unforgettable larger-than-life Dublin characters, recounting the hilarious and heart-wrenching events that have led her to this point in her life. Hailed as an "outstanding play", this remarkable story will make you laugh, cry and above all, ensure you'll never forget Myra.



Claire Ham & Noreen Bishop

Walks with Phil

On Friday 7 August lets meet at John Burrows sports ground car park opposite junction of Dawes Heath Road and Poors Lane ready to walk by 9.45 am. (There is a short cut via St Michaels Road off A127 soon after Progress Road junction, but if you don't know it continue to Rayleigh Weir, turn left, continue to the Woodmans Arms and turn left again. Then follow Daws Heath Road for over a mile keeping lookout for tennis courts on the right, Car park is just after tennis courts; if you get to some traffic lights you have gone a short distance too far.) This time we will walk in a clockwise circuit through the open spaces and woodlands of the Dawes Heath area to eventually emerge in Poors Lane opposite the car park. Fairly level, mainly wooded, some bits of minor quiet roads. Pleasant scenery. Less than 2 hours walking with breaks.

On Friday 21 August lets meet by the eastern main entrance to St Nicholas Church in Canewdon ready to walk by 10.15 am. NOTE later start time. Parking nearby in High Street or Canewdon Hall Close is usually possible. We will walk in a circuit via Pudsey Hall, and Upper Raypits Farm before returning uphill back into Canewdon. Some downhill to start and uphill to finish but nothing excessive and with plenty of open scenery and views across the Crouch valley. Should not take more than 1 hour 45 minutes with breaks. The Anchor in Canewdon has a beer garden. Perhaps we could have a glass of lemonade or cup of coffee, as it opens from 12 noon.

All members who can walk with breaks for up to 2 hours are welcome on these walks. There is no charge or registration; just turn up in time with sturdy footwear and a bottle of fluid. But any concerns text me

So, see you on Friday 7 and/or Friday 21 August.

Phil Kelly

Serendipity

Boat trip to Rochester - Date. Sunday August 16th

Please meet at the pier entrance at 10:15.

Time. Boat departs 10:45 from the pier head.

Train departs 10:30 and arrives at 10:38 ready for prompt boarding. There will not be time for a comfort break beforehand but there are facilities on the boat.

Anne Hill

Serendipity Organising Group.

Group News

Garden Visits

Our Garden Group visited Bassetts in Little Baddow on Friday, 24th July. Another hidden gem tucked away down the narrow country roads of Essex where you wouldn't want to meet a car coming in the opposite direction or for that matter a tractor. Luckily, we didn't meet these obstacles although a couple of our drivers did get lost.



Bassetts is over 400 years old surrounded by a two-acre garden, a very well-kept tennis court, less so swimming pool, orchard, lake and well. The owner apologised for the dryness of the garden, after all the heat we have had over the last couple of months, although apparently there are springs which appear quite by surprise all over the garden and keep the lake at the bottom of the garden topped up with fresh water. The lake is very healthy with an abundance of fish; lily leaves and baby moorhens.

All being well, our next trip is planned for Friday, 28th August to another NGS garden called Mayfield Farm in Ardleigh.

Thank you once again to our drivers. If new members can be accommodated they will but we could do with some more drivers.

Janet Arrowsmith

Colchester Castle visit 18th June 2026

On Thursday 18th June twenty U3A members ventured to Colchester Castle by train. We had a self-guided tour of all the historical exhibits on display at our leisure, and some of us took advantage of two short guided tours, one into the underground vaults that had been part of an early Roman temple that the castle was built upon once the Romans had been driven out of Colchester by local Anglo-Saxon tribes. The second tour took us part way up one of the castle towers, built by William the Conqueror following the Norman Conquest of 1066ad.



Following our visit to the castle we adjourned for a late lunch, early dinner, at The Playhouse, one of Colchester's old theatres that has been repurposed by Wetherspoons into a quirky pub.



Rae Hill



Technology often appears to have a mind of its own and will do the strangest things for no apparent reason. The truth is that it is probably doing exactly what you told it to do, but not what you intended. The IT Group meets in the Lion Room at the Life House Church in Ashingdon, opposite Ashingdon School every two months at 2pm on the 4th Friday of the month (Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov). Our next meeting will be on **Friday 25th September**.

We are a discussion group that talks together about any subject that interests us. None of us are experts in any area but if one of us is having a problem with something then someone else may know how to solve it or know where to find help. If we cannot think of an answer immediately, we can try to find an answer for the next meeting. If all else fails we can at least make sympathetic noises.

We really need more members. Anyone is welcome to join and if you have some knowledge of anything remotely techie and are willing to help others you will be particularly welcome. Our meetings are very informal, we never stick to any plan and usually discuss anything that takes our interest as we go along.

If you think you may be interested in joining us then please contact the Group Coordinators. Whether you have extensive knowledge to share or just want to chat we will be very pleased to see you at our next meeting.

Robert Nickless



U3A Photo Group June 2026 Up in the Clouds



June Up in the Clouds — Published Slightly Late



A small calendar mix-up means this June newsletter is arriving a little later than planned — but the skies were far too good to skip. June gave us a superb variety of clouds to enjoy and photograph, with high, elegant formations and that classic contrast we all love: bright white against deep, confident blue. Perfect conditions for anyone who enjoys looking up — and our members certainly have.

As always, everyone has their favourites. Some of you are drawn to the little cauliflower Cu's bubbling away just a few thousand feet above the fields. Others prefer the lofty grace of wispy cirrus, made of ice crystals drifting 8,000–12,000 metres above us. That's also the height where most passenger aircraft cruise today — and up there it's a bracing -50°C to -60°C , cold enough to freeze moisture instantly into those delicate streaks we've been capturing.

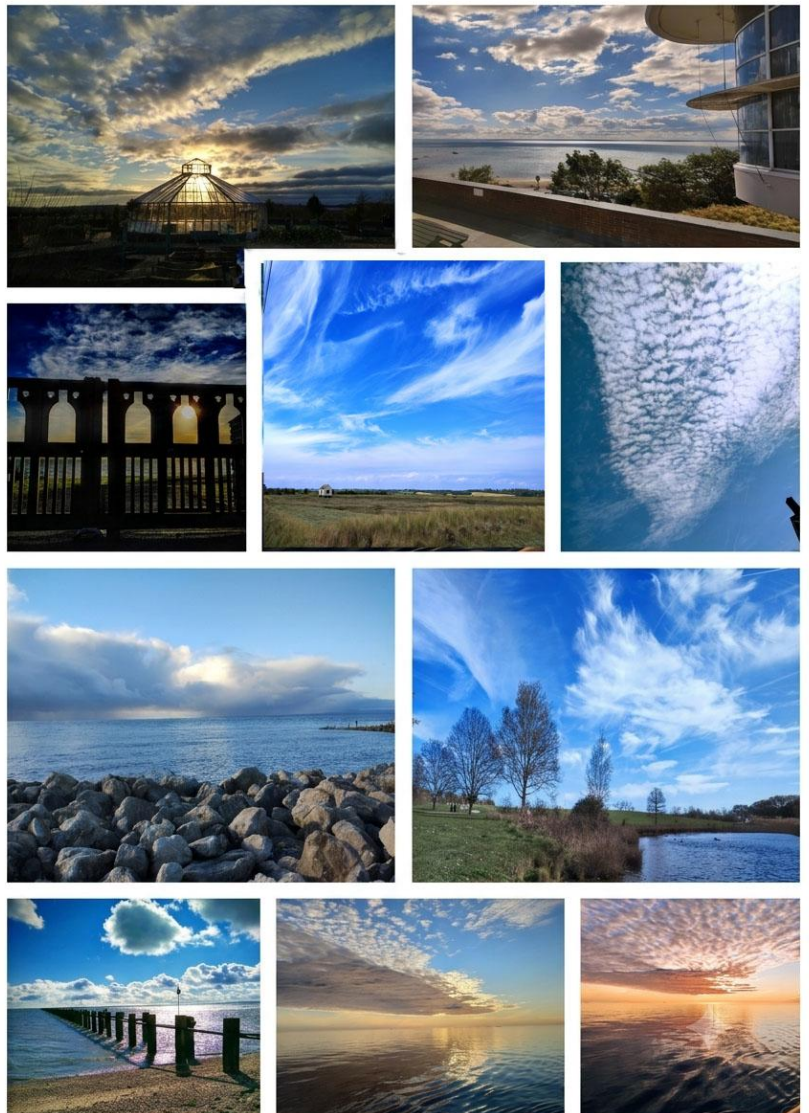
Our ten chosen images capture June's full cloudscape — from delicate high cirrus to glowing altocumulus and bold sunset layers. A varied, atmospheric set that shows just how dramatic the sky has been this month.

And with the heat we've had at ground level, don't be surprised if we soon see some towering Cumulonimbus building — great anvils punching up to 12,000–18,000 metres, where the gods keep their thunderbolts polished and ready. Airline pilots are rigorously trained to steer well clear of those violent tops, knowing they're no place for any aircraft to wander.

With the hot weather set to linger, keep cool, drink plenty, and enjoy this month's wonderful cloud photos.

July Photo Group

Roger Young



Card and Papercraft Group

We have been a little busy recently and have fallen slightly behind in terms of newsletter updates. So, this month we are updating you on both our June and July meetings.

June 2026

As you can see below, in June we made some very pretty cards for all those summer birthdays. Wendy showed us several techniques to blend inks and stamp images on our cards and envelopes. Some beautiful cards were produced by the group, and we had lots of laughs along the way.



July 2026

This month Maureen and Denise decided to test our skills (and our patience!) with some twist pop-up cards. I think it is fair to say it took us a while to work out the mechanism, but once we had cracked it, a selection of fun and beautiful cards were created. Thank you, Maureen and Denise, – you certainly challenged us with this design, but we had so much fun!



Noreen has kindly 'volunteered' to demonstrate a different card design in August, which we are really looking forward to.

Opportunity

Finally, we now have space within the papercraft group, so if you like the look of our creations and fancy giving it a go, you are warmly invited. We have an 'Open Meeting' scheduled for September, where you can see first hand what we get up to and even give it a go yourself. Absolutely no pressure and no prior creative skill or knowledge needed. This is a great opportunity for you to learn a new skill whilst having a good old giggle along the way! Further information will be provided in the next newsletter, and we would love you to join us (we may even be able to rustle up some biscuits).

Please contact Wendy, Claire or one of the group coordinators if you fancy joining us at our September "Open Meeting". This is a very fun and popular group, where we share ideas and have lots of fun. It would be lovely to see you in September.

Best wishes

Wendy Paternoster and Claire Ham

Committee Members Contact Details

Chair	Marion Cain
Vice Chair	Rae Hill
Treasurer	Ian Foster
Secretary	Katherine Lake
Membership	Val Stenson
Joint Group Coordinator	Carole Edwards
Joint Group Coordinator	Rae Hill
Committee member	Anne Hill
Committee member	Terry Lake
Committee member	Chris Campbell
Committee member	Patrick Waters
Committee Member	Monica Weston
Exofacial/Mins & Website	Janet Berry
Beacon Admin	Pam Foster