

ASHINGDON & ROCHFORD

Newsletter



Charity No: 1180576

October 2026

The deadline for contributions to the next Newsletter is Wednesday 28 October 2026

Please send items for publication to the Newsletter Editor

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Welcome to the October newsletter and isn't it amazing what a little rainwater has done for the garden. Most of us have had to get the lawnmower out again. A welcome reprieve from the hot weather. Those bedding plants that have survived the heat have now bounced into life and look better now than they have all summer.



We have joined a cluster group which consists of several other u3a's in the area to share our experiences and help one another with ideas on running our u3a's. One of those examples was a recent invite to a country and western evening at the Hockley community centre on the 10th October. We have sent details out through beacon but if you're interested let us know at the meeting and maybe we could get a group together to go.

NEXT MEETING

1st October 2026

Doors open at 1:15 pm
Meeting starts at 1:45 pm

FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

*1 October
Fran Sandham
Stanley & Livingstone*

*5 November
Tony Harris
Donald Trump*

The core basis of the u3a is about providing opportunities for people in their third age of life to engage in learning. Our u3a has been going for over 10 years and some of our groups have been run by people who have been members since it started and inevitably, they run out of ideas for what to organise when it involves trips or places to visit. So maybe it's time to review the group activities we offer and see what needs to change. To do that and ensure our u3a continues to thrive, the committee needs your help, so come and have a chat with any of the committee members on how we can help. Details of the committee are at the back of the newsletter. We have socials booked for the remainder of the year, details later in the newsletter.

The social group who organise the socials are keen for new people to join them and helps to ensure events organised are what you are interested in, so please have a think about it and let Beryl Horrex or Val Stenson know if you would like to become involved.

I look forward to seeing you all at the next 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			
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
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
Local History (2)			Graham Collins & Carol Collins
Theatre Trips			Claire Ham
Cheese, Wine & Pudding Club	Every 3 months - 6 pm -9 pm St Andrews Church Hall		Anne Hill, Chris Campbell, Ann King
The Golden Groovey's 60's & 70's music.	Every 2 to 3 months - 2 pm – 4 pm St Andrews Church Hall		Monica Weston

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
CROSS STITCH

PETANQUE GROUPS 1 (Mondays)
BOTH SNOOKER GROUPS
SOLO

RUMMIKUB
SHORT MAT BOWLS
SUNDAY LUNCH

DISCUSSION
CRIBBAGE
LADDER GOLF

Noticeboard

We are thinking of arranging **Tai Chi classes**.

The classes will be of a wellbeing nature concentrating on relaxation, calm, stretching and strengthening your core. Both standing and chair Tai Chi will be included.
This is in its infant stage but will be looked into if there is enough interest.

Please register with Rae and Carole at the Co - ordinators desk to gauge interest

Dates for your diary

REMINDER - The Golden Groovey's - 60s and 70s music get together St Andrews Church Hall
Monday 2nd November - 2pm to 4pm

Please bring your own drinks and nibbles

Pay £5 on the day and a bring a friend if you wish for this inaugural event

*Subsequent events in 2027 are for **U3A MEMBERS ONLY** - Then pay £3 on the day*

This is a day for fun. dance, sing, clap, listen or just socialise - Enjoy!

You can register your interest with Rae and Carole at the Co-ordinators desk

Forthcoming social events

On the **14th of October** we are having another crazy golf morning. This will be at Garons adventure golf. The price will be £7 per person and Rosemarie will be taking names of people wishing to take part. At the moment the maximum we can take is 20 so if you're interested, please say Rosemarie as soon as you get to the meeting. after putting your name down with Rosemarie please pay the treasurer Ian.

Wednesday, the **25th of November** we have another beetle drive. It will be at the Hawkwell Baptist Church starting at 2 pm. Please put your name down with Carol Edwards at the next meeting the price for this Will be £5 which will include coffee tea and cake.

10th of December is the Saxon Hall Christmas lunch. If you have put your name down for the lunch and paid your deposit, please see Beryl at the meeting and make your menu choice. The balance for this needs to be paid by the end of October.

The **3rd of December** is an annual Christmas get-together. This will be at the Ashingdon Memorial Hall more details of this event will be given at the November meeting

Walks with Rae and Anne

Rae and Anne invite any of our u3a members to join us on our weekly, Monday walks from Magnolia Park. We start walking at [10.am](#) so meet at [9.45.am](#) to enable a prompt departure at 10 am. Walk distance is about 2 to 3 miles at a pace to suit the ability of the slowest walker. Please use suitable foot wear for unmade, sometimes muddy footpaths and bring suitable rainwear etc for our changeable weather.

Walks with Phil

On **Friday 9th October** let's meet ready to walk at the recreation ground car park in Pooles lane Hullbridge ready to walk by 9.45. (Drive half a mile along Pooles Lane. **Don't park** in Ferry Road). We will walk in a misshaped figure of 8 up towards St Peter and St Paul church and back, taking about 1 hour 45 minutes. Varied pleasant terrain, one or two views, some ups and downs. We can tarry awhile at the Riverside Cafe with outdoor seating overlooking the river Crouch at the end if people want to join me.

On **Friday 16th October** let's meet ready to walk by 9.45 at Hockley Woods car park. (Charge something like 65p for two hours, 85p for three hours). Maybe this time we will walk up through the woods, out and downhill towards the river Roach (just a stream) then swing east and eventually north back to Hockley Woods and returning to the cars via a more easterly path. A mix of pleasant terrain with one good vista, and gentle ups and downs. The Bull pub external garden near the end of the walk is quite a pleasant place to relax with refreshment of some kind, if you care to join me.

On **Friday 30th October** we are going on an urban walk in the historic area of Greenwich. I will provide "worksheets" for you to find information from landmarks we pass to provide added interest! Catch the 9.37 train from Rochford. Get in third car from the front. We are going to Island Gardens and returning from Cutty Sark which are on the same DLR line. I think a Zone 2 off peak return with senior rail card costing about £21 should do it. Kathy and I will join the train (car 3) at Hockley Station. We will be there! We will change at Stratford onto the DLR (itself quite an interesting ride in places) getting off at Island Gardens. We will take in a slightly surprising landmark there, and then walk through the foot tunnel under the Thames which has a history and design features of interest. Emerging on the south bank we will look at the exterior of the Cutty Sark, and then walk eastwards along the south bank of the Thames. We will pass other landmarks and reach the River Gardens Cafe where we will tarry awhile for refreshment. Then we will head uphill in Greenwich Park to admire the view and see what landmarks we can see without paying admission. After that we will head to a pub near the Cutty Sark for lunch with a Weatherspoons pub being one option.

The walking itself might only be two or three miles, but it will be unhurried with various stops to learn or admire, additional to the planned refreshment break by the river and the pub at the end. We will use Cutty Sark DLR station to commence our return journey, changing at Stratford.

These walks are open to all members. If you can walk for up to two hours for the first two walks, or can manage the itinerary for Greenwich you are very welcome. Just turn up with sturdy footwear and maybe a bottle of fluid if the weather is hot. But any concerns text me.

Hoping to see you one or more of these walks.

Phil Kelly

Serendipity

Thursday, November 19th.

Horniman Museum and Gardens.

Admission free.

Please register at the Serendipity Desk.

Step in and explore the world from global cultures to natural wonders.

Explore 16 acres of gardens with stunning views across London, spotting architectural treasures and wild life.

If you would like to visit the Aquarium or Butterfly House, please book your tickets independently on line before the visit.

Aquarium £6.50

Butterfly House £9.90

We will take the 09.37 train from Rochford to Stratford.
The Elizabeth Line to Whitechapel, then the Windrush line to Forest Hill.
It is a 5 to 10 minute walk to the museum.

Cafes are on site.

Anne & Rae Hill
Serendipity Organising Group.

Kensington Palace Thursday 25.10.26

We will take the 9.37 train from Rochford to London Liverpool Street and then the Central Line (Westbound) to Queensway Station.

There is a coffee shop here opposite the Park Gate. Our time of arrival at Kensington Palace is 12 noon.

*We are organising a visit to the **National Army Museum Chelsea** on **Thursday 17th December**.
Anyone interested in going please add your name to the list at the October U3A meeting. This is a free visit.*

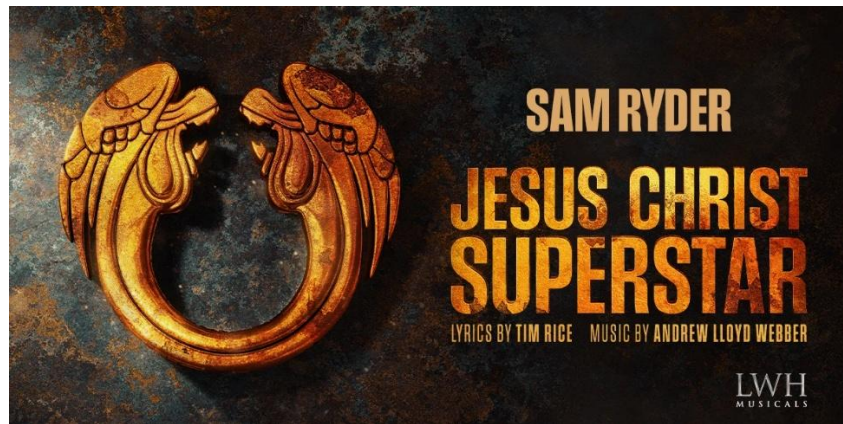
Further information to be given nearer the time.

*Ann & Jeff King.
Serendipity group organisers.*

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

Jesus Christ Superstar
Thursday 29th April 2027 – 2:30pm

(Sam Ryder IS scheduled to play Jesus at this performance, although nothing guaranteed)
Cliffs Pavilion Tickets £52 & £56.50 – Payment January 2027 Meeting



The record-breaking West-End production of Jesus Christ Superstar, starring Sam Ryder in the iconic role of Jesus! This production follows the events of the last days of the life of Jesus Christ, as seen through the eyes of Judas. Reflecting the rock roots that defined a generation, the legendary score includes “I Don’t Know How to Love Him”, “Gethsemane” and the iconic title number “Superstar”.

Only a few tickets remain!

Claire Ham & Noreen Bishop

Group News

Choir of Man – Review

A small group of us went to see this show in September. We were only small in number, so maybe people didn’t know what it was, but it far exceeded anything we thought it would be. If you get a chance to see this show, don’t miss it! If it tours again, we will certainly make another group booking.

A couple of our group got to sit at the on stage bar sipping, iPAQ and chatting to the performers, before the show started. This musical is an uplifting celebration of community and friendship where everyone is welcome. The cast are a wildly talented group of incredible instrumentalists, world-class wordsmiths, dancers and sensational singers, the cast of nine (extra) ordinary guys serve it all... live! They even bring beers out to the audience, who are fully engaged throughout the show. Great songs, great voices, great dancing and they all played a variety of musical instruments. Such a fun show, we loved it!



Claire Ham

Serendipity visit to the Postal Museum

On the 17th of September 14 members visited the 'Postal Museum' Mount Pleasant London WC1 to experience the past of post delivery since 1889!

1887: 'The Post Office' occupied parts of the former 'Coldbath Field Prison' of Phoenix Place London.

1889: the 'Mount Pleasant' mail centre was officially opened.

1890: 30th August the building was completed but the remains of the Prison remained until 1929.

1905: there was only 93 staff and female.

1906: 375 male staff was added.

1927: The 'Mount Pleasant Underground' started between Mount Pleasant and Paddington and the service expanded over the next 76 years.

1960: Mount Pleasant Post Office processed 20 million letters also 1 million parcels every week, which made them the largest sorting office in the world!

2003: Mount Pleasant Post Office closed.

2017: Reopening of Mount Pleasant Post Office as a tourist attraction with new trains and a museum.



STAR ATTRACTION of the now tourist attraction was being able to experience the life of the original working tube trains and employee practices!

The new 'rolling stock' was now for passengers and not mail sacks. The tube train was for sitting passengers only and had a transparent roof for viewing. The train was fully automatic (and again driver less) and transported us to another dimension of twisting low narrow tunnels with an added bonus of stopping at two 'stations' to view projected images on the walls of working life then also with sounds of then making the experience very real!

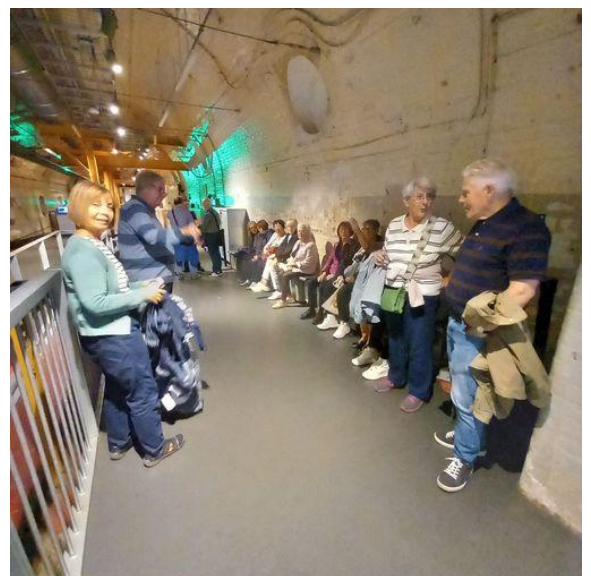
On arriving back at the Mount Pleasant station, we alighted into a large (still underground) area of old machinery, rolling stock, lots of artifacts to try out including a simulation of a sorting office on a moving train (not a good idea to try if just eaten!)

Another part of the Museum was in another building across the road.

This building housed a very welcome cafe together with many more items from the past Post Office history.

HAS THE POST OFFICE SYSTEM IMPROVED?

I'm not sure but was hoping to ask 'Postman Pat' but he was on the night shift and fast to sleep on some old mail bags! Night night all, sleep tight until the sound of the letters arriving through the letter box wakes you up!
Another sound of the past?



Compiled by Ann & Jeff King

Card and Papercraft Group: October 2026

Claire organised an open afternoon this month inviting interested members to come along to see what we do and to join in the session if they wished. We were really pleased to welcome Iris Bain, Sylvia Spooner and Jan Riley who made some lovely cards. Jill Patrick was unable to join us this time but we hope to see her in October.

Claire also undertook the demonstration this time and we learned some new techniques which is always enjoyable. As some of our regular members were unable to join us Claire plans to do a repeat session in 2027! Thank you Claire for all your support at a time that has been personally challenging for me.

For our first technique involved double stamping with Andy Skinner stamps. How fantastic do these look?



We then did some fun but messy play, to produce a wonderful array of abstract art ready to mount onto cards. This is just a small sample of the lovely work completed. Look at those colours!



Our next meeting will be on October 19 when Denise has offered to lead the session!

If anyone reading these fancies coming along, please contact me on or contact the group coordinators. You will be very welcome. It really is a very friendly group and you certainly don't need to be "arty" to enjoy it!

Hope you like the photos and we see you soon.

Wendy Paternoster

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
Ex officio/Mins & Website	Janet Berry
Beacon Admin	Pam Foster