

East of England Region u3a

November/December 2025

Monthly Bulletin and News

Issue 11 Page 1

This monthly bulletin was compiled on 26.10.2025 and sent to National Office for distribution. It should arrive by the first week of November 2025. **Deadline for the January 26 issue is 18.12.25**

Our Inspirational Featured Group for November 25

Hunstanton Rock Music Appreciation Group



By late 2017, after a year as Chair and leader of a Climate Group, I was looking for a new challenge. I fell into conversation with another member (Tony) about setting up a Rock Music Appreciation group. We put out a circular:

For those who prefer Pink Floyd to Paganini, Beatles to Beethoven, Hendrix to Holst. On the afternoon of the first Tuesday of each month, the Rock Music Appreciation group meets at a member's home to enjoy music classics of the kind that are best played loud.

Encouragingly, we started with a group of eight members, happy to invite more rock music into their lives and to learn more about it. Tony has a large open-plan living room which could accommodate our number, with a large smart TV with a long soundbar which gave great sound. We are able to show YouTube videos and members have something to look at while they are listening. Occasionally we use another home, linking a TV to a laptop.

When Covid arrived, we held our meetings via Zoom, using Youtube videos. Using earphones, attached to their PC or tablet, gave a great sound experience. I did a meeting featuring Pink Floyd's music using Powerpoint so that members could look at information about the tracks on screen while the music was playing. Zoom allowed us to open out membership of the group and it grew to fourteen.

In eight years we have covered a vast range of themes and we now mix familiar rock and pop tracks with the unfamiliar. Where appropriate, members introduce the tracks and artistes. This can require online research, so it is entertaining **and** educational for all.

There have been **many** highlights, but I strongly recommend the following link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk7RVw3I8eq> to see and hear the most amazing cover of a classic Simon and Garfunkel song.

The music of James Bell, a guitarist who played remarkable covers of some of the great rock songs from a very young age, also enthralled us. Here he is winning Young Guitarist of the Year in 2011 at the age of twelve or thirteen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNIszeCJOVI>; and here he is a couple of years later covering a great Eric Clapton song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9d4OLFxaUNw>.

I can heartily recommend setting up or joining a Rock Music Appreciation group. It is a highlight of the month for fourteen Hunstanton u3a members! If you would like any more information, including an idea of the themes that we have covered, then please contact me via the Rock Music Appreciation page of the Hunstanton u3a website: https://hunstanton.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/rock-music-appreciation/.

For more on another Rock Music Group see page 2...

Let's Rock! Group Swaffham & District u3a



While creating the Swaffham & District website (thank you Siteworks!), my research happened upon The Hunstanton Rock Music Appreciation Group. Inspired by their webpage, I decided to test interest with a message on our Newsletter and a display at our Showcasing Event. The result? The Let's Rock! group which is up and running, currently with 6 members, but increasing. We meet once a month at my house, using our soundbar, woofer and TV.

We have all learnt from each other and discovered new sounds, particularly on a recent "Cover versions" theme. We are all keen fans of a new band called Esoterica [Esoterica - Official website of the rock band from London England](#) (see picture of me at the Shephards Bush Empire with two Esoterica Androids) and have discovered some cover versions we like: [bad romance](#) [halestorm - Google Search](#) [breed 77 zombie - Google Search](#) [Infected Mushroom - Riders on the Storm \(Remix\) \[HD\]](#) and the most famous rock cover version [The Jimi Hendrix Experience - All Along The Watchtower \(Official Audio\)](#) More details here : [Let's Rock! - Swaffham and District](#) Laurene Henderson

We need more Interest Groups to Feature!

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> **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 2025	Event	Link
Tuesday November 4 10:00am - 12:00pm	Flight Inspirations Aviation: The Origins of Flight This talk charts the evolution of aviation, highlighting the Wright brothers , Blériot , and the first transatlantic flight.	Flight Inspirations Aviation: The Origins of Flight Tickets, Tue, Nov 4, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Wednesday November 5 9:30 - 11:00am	u3a Yoga Network: Subject Surgery Our Q & A session is an opportunity to meet others, find out more about Yoga in the u3a and share common issues in a friendly environment.	u3a Yoga Network: Subject Surgery Tickets, Wed, Nov 5, 2025 at 9:30 AM Eventbrite
Wednesday November 5 1 - 2:30pm	Is Hydrogen the Fuel of the Future? or should we focus on alternatives? John Butler from u3a Let's Talk Tech will look at the Green Hydrogen Clean Energy Revolution, discussing its progress and the hype around it	Is Hydrogen the Fuel of the Future, or should we focus on alternatives? Tickets, Wed, Nov 5, 2025 at 1:00 PM Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2025	Event	Link
Thursday, November 6 2 - 3pm	The Talking Drums of Africa John Baxter, Subject Adviser for Climate Change and Environment, to explore the talking drums of the Congo basin.	The Talking Drums of Africa Tickets, Thu, Nov 6, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
November 7 to December 12 2:00 -3:30pm	Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners: Six-Session Course (November 2025) Join Henry Howarth, u3a Subject Adviser for Cryptic Crosswords, for a six-session course on how to solve cryptic crosswords.	Cryptic Crosswords for Beginners: Six-Session Course (November 2025) Tickets, Fri, Nov 7, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
Friday November 7 2 - 3:30pm	The UK and the US constitutions part 2 The UK and the US constitutions are quite different and generate the nature of the politics we see every day.	The UK and the US constitutions part 2 Tickets, Fri, Nov 7, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
Monday November 10 10 - 11:30am	Exploring World Faiths: Interfaith week - More in Common Speakers from different faiths explore the idea that we have more in common than that which divides us.	Exploring World Faiths: Interfaith week - More in Common Tickets, Mon, Nov 10, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Monday November 10 2 - 3:30pm	Catherine the Great Join Alan Freeland as he uncovers how Catherine the Great's vision and ambition reshaped Russia into a European political power.	Catherine the Great Tickets, Mon, Nov 10, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
Tuesday November 11 2 - 3:30pm	Making your smartphone easier to use - Android AbilityNet Digital Skills Trainer, Steve Mersereau, presents an online workshop to help you get the most out of your Android phone or tablet	Making your smartphone easier to use - Android Tickets, Tue, Nov 11, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
Wednesday November 12 10 - 10:45am	Laughter Yoga with Judith: November Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.	Laughter Yoga with Judith: November Tickets, Wed, Nov 12, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Thursday 13 Nov 2025 14:00 - 15:00pm	What Next? From Retired to Redefined Jane Moffett explores six potential challenges that people might face at this unique time and how you can draw your own map for your future	What Next? From Retired to Redefined Tickets, Thu 13 Nov 2025 at 14:00 Eventbrite
Friday November 14 10 - 11:30am	Adapting to Climate Change Ian Hawker examines attempts to minimise the negative impacts of climate change.	Adapting to Climate Change Tickets, Fri, Nov 14, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2025	Event	Link(Control&click)
Monday November 17 10 - 11:30am	Tiny Algae with Big Impact: The response of micro-algae to river pollution Isabelle Fournier of the British Phycological Society discusses the importance of micro-algae and how it can be impacted by pollution	Tiny Algae with Big Impact: The response of micro-algae to river pollution Tickets, Mon, Nov 17, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Wednesday November 19 1 - 2:30pm	The Mind of Your Microwave, with u3a Let's Talk Tech John Davies of Bearsden and Milngavie u3a reveals the hidden computers that control almost every electrical appliance in your home.	The Mind of Your Microwave, with u3a Let's Talk Tech Tickets, Wed, Nov 19, 2025 at 1:00 PM Eventbrite
Thursday November 20 10 - 11am	Take Ten Songs 1: How Pop Songs Work Join Lee Wellbrook, Ilkley & District u3a, to listen to and dissect ten popular songs to see what makes them work.	Take Ten Songs 1: How Pop Songs Work Tickets, Thu, Nov 20, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Thursday November 20 10 - 11:30am	Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: November Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.	Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Session: November Tickets, Thu, Nov 20, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Friday November 21 10 - 11:30am	AI News November: Your Personal AI Assistant has Arrived Exploring interesting and innovative uses of AI Chatbots.	AI News November: Your Personal AI Assistant has Arrived Tickets, Fri, Nov 21, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Monday November 24 10 - 11:30am	Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A Keeping you safe in an electronic age: A repeat talk by Barry Linton of Thorpe Bay u3a.	Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A Tickets, Mon, Nov 24, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Tuesday 25 Nov 2025 2:00 - 3:00pm	Are you Influential? Get your voice heard in the UK Parliament Join Damien, UK Parliament's Outreach Officer, to discover how you can get your voice heard in Parliament	Are you Influential? Get your voice heard in the UK Parliament Tickets, Tue 25 Nov 2025 at 14:00 Eventbrite
Tuesday November 25 3:30 - 4:30pm	Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: November Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga - an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.	Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: November Tickets, Tue, Nov 25, 2025 at 3:30 PM Eventbrite
Thursday November 27 2:00 - 4:00pm	Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Ten - The Blood-Brain Barrier Dr Bob Pullen examines the unique barrier between the contents of the blood and the brain nerve cells.	Secrets of the Human Brain: Talk Ten - The Blood-Brain Barrier Tickets, Thu, Nov 27, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

Date 2025	Event	Link(Control&click)
Thursday November 27 2:00 - 3:30pm	The Geology of Britain in the Mesozoic, the Era of Middle Life A regional look at the history of Britain 250-65 million years ago, how the rocks formed and the evolution of middle life.	The Geology of Britain in the Mesozoic, the Era of Middle Life Tickets, Thu, Nov 27, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite
Friday November 28 10 - 11am	Take Ten Songs 2: How Pop Songs Work Join Lee Wellbrook, Ilkley & District u3a, to listen to and dissect ten popular songs to see what makes them work.	Take Ten Songs 2: How Pop Songs Work Tickets, Fri, Nov 28, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Monday December 1 10:00 - 11:30am	Safes and Safebreaking Investigating the struggle between safe-makers and criminal safebreakers.	Safes and Safebreaking Tickets, Mon, Dec 1, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Tuesday December 2 10:00am - 12:00pm	Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: The Battle of the Beams In WWII, German beams enabled devastatingly accurate raids, but British scientists learned to disrupt them by adapting the same technology.	Flight Inspirations Aviation Meeting: The Battle of the Beams Tickets, Tue, Dec 2, 2025 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite
Tuesday December 9 2:00 - 3:00pm	The Importance of Fungi for the Environment and Humans Explore fungi, including their evolution, symbiotic relationship with plants, and value as a food and their medicinal uses.	The Importance of Fungi for the Environment and Humans Tickets, Tue, Dec 9, 2025 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite

For further updates until our January 26 issue [u3a - Online Learning Events](#)



u3a Interest Groups: "How did we start? Funny you should ask me that..."

We need to hear from Group Co-ordinators about any particularly successful, or unusual, amusing or inspirational groups in your own u3as. My own u3a has recently started two groups loosely inspired by reading about other u3a groups and thinking, "That's a good idea!" And we have more in the pipeline.

We love to read about your activities and see examples. Don't be shy – we are waiting...

Contact Laurene Henderson laurenehenderson1.eastu3a@outlook.com





Visit by Allan Walmsley, National Chair of u3a, To East of England Region

Allan accompanied by Pauline Green, u3a board trustee, visited our region at the end of September. Ian Mathews, our regional Council Representative, escorted Allan and Pauline to numerous events.

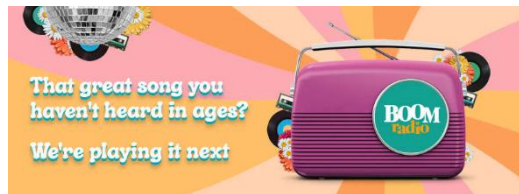
The events visited were, 'Groups Showcase' in Sudbury and a monthly meeting in Thetford followed by an informal breakfast meeting with members of the Thetford committee.

In respect of the Groups Showcase at Sudbury, both Allan and Pauline were both impressed by the organization and 'buzz' at the event which was aimed at introducing Group activities to the current members.



Left to Right, Allan Walmsley, Pauline Green, Lyn Gray Sudbury Groups Coordinator and Ian Mathews.

Boom Radio!



Do you love music and listen to the radio? If you do, then like me, you may listen to Boom Radio. Boom Radio is a station that caters for "boomers" (born between 1946-1964) and plays music for "our generation". Boom Radio was the brain child of radio veterans David Lloyd and Phil Riley, who saw a

gap in the market overlooked by mainstream radio. Boom, as it is affectionately known, plays a mix of music from the 1950's to 1970's, alongside some recent hits. The presenters are experienced "jocks", many of whom came out of retirement for the launch of the station on Valentines Day 2021. The station, which, broadcasts online and on DAB digital radio, is independent and many of the presenters broadcast programmes from their homes.

Advertising is obviously targeted at a specific demographic, with advertisements for retirement homes, holidays, health products, insurance and entertainment to name just a few products. The station reaches 711,000 listeners a week (Rajar W2 2025) and the average age of listeners is 55. So it shouldn't have been a surprise when the other week I heard an advertisement for u3a. Fellow members talk about how they first came to hear of u3a, about their positive experiences since joining and how they have made new friends, learned new skills and of the many benefits of being a member. Advertising in this way means we are reaching a bigger audience and hopefully growing our numbers!

So if you fancy a change from your usual radio station, tune in to Boom Radio. You can listen via DAB+ across the UK, through the official Boom Radio UK app on you phone or tablet, on the Boom Radio website, via smart speakers such as Alexa or on TV by checking Channel 277 on Freeview.

Happy listening!

*Lyn. Publicity Officer for
Basildon & Billericay u3a*





Dereham u3a went quizzical



DEREHAM u3a celebrated u3a week 2025 with a Big Quiz and a cream tea. The u3a quiz master produced an entertaining quiz and the enthusiasm was brilliant from members and enjoyed by all.

Dereham u3a continued to Learn, Laugh and Live!

Lea Valley u3a's town centre promotion



LEA VALLEY u3a had two days of advertising and promoting u3a in Hoddesdon town centre during u3a week 2025.

Volunteers had some very good conversations engaging with members of the public on both days and introducing them to the activities and meetings that are run.



On the Thursday they were in the High Street when even the Town Crier announced their presence! On the Saturday they had a stand in the foyer of Hoddesdon Library. It was a great opportunity to advertise and, hopefully, encourage some new members.

Swaffham & District Hold Their First Community Event



SWAFFHAM & DISTRICT u3a threw caution to the winds on 25th October and held a community event, for the first time, to raise the profile of our u3a and show what we offered.

Common phrases were, "How have we not heard of the u3a before?" and, "You offer **all this** in the price of membership?"

Our Committee, Group Coordinators, and member cake makers

worked tirelessly and cheerfully to make this event a resounding success. We signed 23 new members there and then, with more to come, we suspect! Huge thanks to all concerned. And the banner and balloons survived the weather, despite it *blowin' a hooley* as we say in Norfolk. (Phew!)





Celebrating u3a groups with a difference at Lowestoft



ROYAL Mail postboxes across Lowestoft sported a colourful new look in u3a week 2025, thanks to the talented members of Lowestoft u3a Mixed Crafts Group.

These handcrafted postbox toppers were not just a feast for the eyes - they were also a celebration of the many vibrant interest groups that make up Lowestoft u3a. Each topper had been lovingly designed to represent a different u3a group, from art and history to walking and creative writing.

The initiative aimed to raise awareness of the wide range of activities available to retired and semi-retired. The toppers (all 17 of them) were on display throughout u3a week and locals (via social media) have been

encouraged to explore the town and see how many they could spot. As part of u3a week celebrations, Lowestoft u3a also attended a very popular local tabletop sale to encourage new membership and answer any queries and questions.

A selection of items created by the Art Group and Mixed Crafts Group were on display. Cupcakes with the u3a logo and small craft items created by our Mixed Crafts Group were also on sale.



Harlow u3a try something new



HARLOW u3a used u3a Week 2025 to celebrate positive ageing by accepting the challenge to "Try Something New". Members tried some fresh activities such as canoeing, singing in a choir, cruising in a barge along the River Stort and playing the ukulele.

They also visited local landmarks they hadn't ventured to before - which included guided walks of the Green Flag Award-winning Town Park and the Gibberd Garden, designed by renowned architect Sir Frederick Gibberd,

Master Planner of Harlow New Town in 1947, as his home. Members also appreciated local history and culture with visits to Harlow Museum and its Green Flag Award-winning Walled Garden and also the Grade 2 listed Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church where they enjoyed an interesting talk about the church's architecture and magnificent dalle de verre glass windows.

It was a highly successful week, with the planned activities enhanced by glorious sunshine, and participants thoroughly enjoyed it. As a bonus, it resulted in new members for some of the groups and new

members for our local u3a. Many thanks must go to Ann Flint, Special Events Co-ordinator for Harlow u3a, who was the driving force to Try Something New.





Care4Calais visit Bury St Edmunds u3a



PHOTO: [L to R] Alan and Maggie Pearson with David Dawson loading donations into the charity's camper van.

TEA TIME TALKS, organised by u3a Bury St Edmunds, have been a popular addition to its 80 interest groups.

Run by David Dawson, these Tea Time Talks are smaller and more informal than the regular monthly talks which attract audiences of around 200 members. In a smaller group, there is a chance to talk to the speaker and join in a discussion of the topic.

The September Tea Time Talk was about Care4Calais. This charity has worked for many years to support people in Boulogne and Calais, who are hoping to cross the channel into the UK.

Care4Calais focuses on providing humanitarian aid of non-food items, ministering to the practical needs of the people, many of

whom are families and unaccompanied youngsters.

Speaker Jane Basham talked about the polite and respectful demeanour of all the refugees she met, of their spirit of positive hope and their endurance of unimaginable hardship.

The Charity has an informative website <https://care4calais.org/> and opportunity to donate.

Gale Wade Bury St Edmunds u3a

And Finally for 2025...

THANK YOU from Ray, Ian, Laurene, Lesley, Brian and Jean - The East of England Team - for your news, photographs, contributions and response to our Bulletin and Newsletter.

It is greatly appreciated. If you would like to consider joining our team in 2026, please contact Ray Hardisty below:

Your East of England Team :

[East of England Region](#)



[Ian Mathews](#)

[Ian Mathews](#)

Council Representative

07471 211347

ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk

[Ray Hardisty](#)

rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

[Laurene Henderson](#)

laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

