

East of England Region u3a

March 2026 Monthly Bulletin and News Issue 3/26 Page 1

This monthly bulletin should arrive by the first week of March 2026, distributed by your Eastern Regional Council Member. **Deadline for the April 2026 issue is by Friday 27th March 2026.** You can receive this Bulletin directly: Email: laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

ELY AND DISTRICT CELEBRATE THROUGH GROUP ACTIVITY

Ely and District u3a hosted a Celebration Weekend for its members in November. Pulled together by Chair, Steve Merrell and a working party, there was a lively programme of activities. Members could compete in Bridge and Pickleball competitions and there was a well-attended Quiz Evening with over 100 participants.

There were talks on History, Crime Fiction and medical matters from guest speakers and six very popular guided tours of Ely. Members also had opportunities to try Needlecraft, Photography, Pickleball and Ballroom Dancing. The majority of events were free and attracted a large number of the group's 900 membership.

Steve Merrell Ely & District U3A Chairman



Showcasing your Interest Group activities as part of a celebration is an excellent idea. Clearly a lot of hard work went into this for the membership of Ely & District!

If you have had a recent celebration or event, we would like to hear about it.

Contact Laurene Henderson laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

DACORUM U3A GENEALOGY GROUP'S SURPRISE DISCOVERY!



Our group is very active with enthusiastic members always willing to share their stories and successes in their family research.

In an article In the August 2025 issue of Family Tree Magazine, our member Mavis Tilbury tells how, in her search for her maternal grandfather, she made a connection with another relative who had her own starry tale to tell. It is truly a "long lost family" story. Mavis had never known her maternal grandparents as her grandmother had died tragically in a fire in 1917 and her grandfather had not returned to his daughter after WW1. Mavis' Mum was effectively made an orphan at the age of 5.

In 2008, Ancestry website led Mavis to successfully finding her grandfather's family, although it was sad to learn that her grandfather had died in 1928. This family discovery led to her meeting a first cousin of her Mum and with whom Mavis formed a very close relationship.

Marguerita (Rita) had her own wonderful story to tell. She had been a huge fan and friend of the actress Vivien Leigh. Over many years, they exchanged letters and gifts and Vivien always sent postcards to Rita from her world travels. All these letters and postcards (plus scrapbooks, programmes and other memorabilia which Rita had kept) are now in the V&A archives.

On Vivien Leigh's death in 1968, Rita formed the Vivien Leigh Circle with the aim of funding a memorial. This was achieved and a French clock was presented to Denville Hall, a retirement home for professional actors, actresses and other theatrical professions.

The Vivien Leigh Circle was reformed in 2013 with Rita appointed as the President. The Circle produced a book about this amazing friendship and included many of the letters and cards, along with photos. The book is called "Dear Marguerita, Yours Affectionately, Vivien Leigh". A true legacy, which was presented to Rita on her 90th birthday.

Rita died on 7 July 2024, aged 91, coincidentally on the anniversary of the passing of her beloved Vivien Leigh. An interesting story about family research and where it can lead. The very close bond between the two cousins is evident and the full 4 page article, along with photographs, is the middle spread of the Family Tree magazine August issue. Copies can be obtained here:

[Buy Family Tree magazine](#) | [Latest issue](#) | [Monthly family history publication](#) | [Family Tree Back Issues](#) - [Family Tree](#)

Many thanks to Mavis Tilbury, of Dacorum u3a (who have submitted several articles to us recently - thank you!) for sharing this fascinating insight to the discoveries that can come from tracing your family. There is an online learning event on 2nd March here: [How AI can save you hours when researching your family history Tickets, Mon, Mar 2, 2026 at 2:00 PM | Eventbrite](#) Do any other u3as have Family History Groups? Any surprising discoveries? Let us know! Contact Laurene Henderson laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com





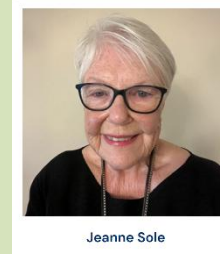
From Ian Mathews, our u3a Regional Council Representative

Council Representative Nominations/Elections

I am pleased to advise that 2 candidates have come forward for the 2nd Council Representative in our region. They are Jeanne Sole - Lowestoft u3a and Ruth Freedman - Colchester u3a.

I hope those u3as who have a vote will ensure they use it prior to the closure on

24th March. Prior to the closure, **Hustings will take place on the 2nd March to enable the 2 candidates to introduce themselves.** Personal introductions are available on [u3a - Elections](#) and notification of access to the Hustings will be sent in due course.



Jeanne Sole



Ruth Freedman

How to vote

The registered voting representative for your u3a was sent a voting link on Tuesday 17 February by email. You have until Tuesday 24 March to cast your vote. Results will be announced w/c 30 March.

If your u3a is registered to vote and you haven't received a voting link, please email council@u3a.org.uk.

The registration deadline has now passed, so you can no longer register to vote in these elections. If you have any questions, please email council@u3a.org.uk.

Future Forums

I have been working on Forums on a regional/county basis and so far the vast majority of responses have been for county wide rather than regional. I will therefore be arranging Zoom forums initially for Suffolk/Norfolk u3as and then Beds/Cambs u3as, which are the smallest counties in our region. More details on the topics will follow.

Ian Mathews 19.2.26

East of England Council Representative Ian.mathews@u3a.org.uk

Mobile :- 07471211347



A Reminder About The Survey...

As a reminder, all East of England u3a Chairs and Secretaries were emailed regarding a survey u3a are undertaking. Details are below:

We'd like to invite your members to take part in a national u3a survey that explores what u3a means to them and how being part of u3a has impacted their lives.

This survey is open to all members so please take a moment to fill it out yourselves as well. It is a great opportunity for members to share their experiences and support their u3a to thrive into the future. The feedback will be used to grow membership, demonstrate the impact of u3a and raise our profile.

Please share the survey with your members and encourage as many people as possible to take part: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/u3a-me>

To thank members for their time, they will be entered in a John Lewis £100 prize draw. The survey closes on 31 March.

Thank you for your support.

Ian Mathews, u3a East of England Regional Council representative

Chelmsford u3a: A Year of Growth and Engagement

Chelmsford u3a has achieved remarkable progress in 2025/26, with a 24% increase in membership—from 643 to 796—thanks to a focused drive on member retention and engagement.

Here's how we made it happen:

New Interest Groups: Eleven new groups launched, ranging from Canasta and Pickleball to Rock & Pop Appreciation and Tai Chi. Two existing groups (French Conversation and Bookworms) were revitalised and are now thriving.

Expanded Opportunities: Our Interest Group offer grew from 43 to 52, with nine members stepping forward to lead new groups.

Committee Strength: Four new committee nominations received, ensuring strong leadership for the future.

Digital Transformation: Members can now join and renew online, thanks to the launch of a Pay Pall account via the Beacon Members Portal.

Community Presence: A new public-facing Facebook page was established, helping us reach and attract new members.

How We Achieved This:

Welcoming Events: 'Getting to know you' induction meetings and a Volunteer Engagement Questionnaire helped new members feel at home and encouraged volunteering.

Showcasing Groups: Interest Group events and Group Leaders meetings fostered collaboration and inspired new ideas.

Effective Communication: Engaging newsletters and a 'What's On' website calendar kept members informed and involved.

Social Media Outreach: Our Facebook page and regular updates attracted potential new members and showcased our vibrant community.

Fun and Inclusive Events: Social gatherings for Easter, Mid-Summer, and Christmas, plus special events such as a VE Day indoor street party, summer concert, Golden Games sports session, and Tai Chi demonstration, boosted participation and brought in new members.

Lesley Wood Chelmsford u3a



Many excellent ideas here with proven results! Thank you for sharing them, Lesley.

How have other u3as gained members? What works - and what doesn't?

We would love to share your good practice and success.

Contact Laurene Henderson laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

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



National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

| Date 2026 | Event | Link |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday Mar 2 2pm to 3:30pm | <p>How AI can save you hours when researching your family history</p> <p>Steve Doyle shows how, using simple non techie approaches, you can use AI to vastly increase the effectiveness of family history research.</p> | <p>How AI can save you hours when researching your family history Tickets, Mon, Mar 2, 2026 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite</p> |
| Tuesday Mar 3 10am to 12pm | <p>Flight inspirations aviation group: the new space race</p> <p>The new space race, led by private companies like SpaceX, is transforming exploration through reusable rockets and commercialization.</p> | <p>Flight inspirations aviation group: the new space race Tickets, Tue, Mar 3, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite</p> |
| Wednesday, Mar 4 1 pm to 2:30 pm | <p>Me and my carbon footprint</p> <p>John Davies from Bearsden & Milngavie u3a describes how he measures his household's carbon footprint, and how you can too, in this talk with u3a Let's Talk Tech.</p> | <p>Me and my carbon footprint Tickets, Wednesday, Mar 4 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Thursday Mar 5 10am to 11:30am | <p>Beyond the beam: what we do with lasers</p> <p>How beams of light are reshaping science, medicine, and our understanding of the universe.</p> | <p>Beyond the beam: what we do with lasers Tickets, Thu, Mar 5, 2026 at 10:00 AM Eventbrite</p> |
| Friday March 6 2pm to 3pm | <p>Novel writing with Jenny Newman</p> <p>This workshop is about becoming a novelist: your sources of inspiration, skills and techniques to develop and how to sustain your writing.</p> | <p>Novel writing with Jenny Newman Tickets, Fri, Mar 6, 2026 at 2:00 PM Eventbrite</p> |
| Monday, March 9 10 am to 11:30am | <p>Exploring World Faiths: March</p> <p>An International Women's Day event exploring the role and experiences of women across three different faith traditions.</p> | <p>Exploring World Faiths: March Tickets, Monday, Mar 9 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Tuesday March 10 10 am to 11:30am | <p>Spring-clean your vitality with qigong</p> <p>Paul of u3a Brighton will guide us through an hour of Qigong, an ancient Chinese meditative movement, to refresh our vitality and help us move into spring with more energy. Spring-clean your vitality with qigong.</p> | <p>Spring-clean your vitality with qigong Tickets, Tuesday, Mar 10 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Wednesday, March 11 10 am to 10:45am | <p>Laughter Yoga with Judith: March</p> <p>Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.</p> <p>"We don't laugh because we're happy, we're happy because we laugh." - William James</p> | <p>Laughter Yoga with Judith: March Tickets, Wednesday, Mar 11 from 10 am to 10:45 am GMT Eventbrite</p> |

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

| Date 2025 | Event | Link(Control&click) |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, March 11 2 pm to 3 pm | <p>The evolution of AI and our changing world Barry is demystifying AI: the noisy new kid on the block. Learn what it can do, what to watch out for, and talk about it with confidence</p> | <p>The evolution of AI and our changing world Tickets, Wednesday, Mar 11, 2026 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Thursday, March 12 10 am to 11 am | <p>The Match Girls' Strike and how it changed British labour history Hosted by British History Subject Adviser, Ian McCannah. Our speaker for this event is Michael Astrop of Todmorden u3a. describes the action of 1888, when 1,400 women and girls walked out of an East End match factory and into the history books.</p> | <p>The Match Girls' Strike and how it changed British labour history Tickets, Thursday, Mar 12 from 10 am to 11 am GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Thursday, March 12 11:30 am to 12:30 pm | <p>The Lancashire Witches Join Tina Naples, of Durham and District u3a, to learn about these famous witchcraft trials of 1612, how they came to take place, and how the verdicts were reached This event is part of the u3a British Women's History Day series of talks, hosted by British History Subject Adviser, Ian McCannah.</p> | <p>The Lancashire Witches Tickets, Thursday, Mar 12 from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Thursday, March 12 2 pm to 3 pm | <p>Katherine Swynford: myth and reality Who was Katherine and what do we know of her true story? Baz Aveyard, of Lincoln Bailgate u3a, and a direct descendant of Katherine and John of Gaunt, tells us about her life. This event is part of the u3a British Women's History Day series of talks, hosted by British History Subject Adviser, Ian McCannah.</p> | <p>Katherine Swynford: myth and reality Tickets, Thursday, Mar 12 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Thursday, March 12 3:30 pm to 4:30pm | <p>Empress Matilda: the first queen England never had Take a look at the life of Matilda, Henry I's daughter and heir to the English throne. Why did she not become queen? This event is part of the u3a British Women's History Day series of talks, hosted by British History Subject Adviser, Ian McCannah. Our speaker is Chris Simmons of Chiltern u3a.</p> | <p>Empress Matilda: the first queen England never had Tickets, Thursday, Mar 12 from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm GMT Eventbrite</p> |
| Monday, March 16 10 am to 12 pm | <p>u3a Yoga Network: subject surgery Find out more about u3a yoga in our discussion session, followed by a relaxing Yoga Practice.</p> | <p>u3a Yoga Network: subject surgery Tickets, Monday, Mar 16 from 10 am to 12 pm GMT </p> |
| Tuesday, March 17 2 pm to 4 pm | <p>London Thames Bridges Brian Cookson will take us round the bridges in London from Tower bridge to Westminster Bridge and learn about their history and design.</p> | <p>London Thames Bridges Tickets, Tuesday, Mar 17 from 2 pm to 4 pm GMT Eventbrite</p> |

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

| Date 2025 | Event | Link(Control&click) |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, March 18 1 pm to 2:30 pm | Is tidal and wave power a viable electricity generation source? John Butler of u3a Let's Talk Tech looks at the technological challenges of tidal and wave power, and how it compares to wind technology. | Is tidal and wave power a viable electricity generation source? Tickets, Wednesday, Mar 18 from 1 pm to 2:30 pm GMT Eventbrite |
| Thursday, March 19 10 am to 11:30 am | Mindfulness and meditation continuation session: March 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: March Tickets, Thursday, Mar 19 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT Eventbrite |
| Friday, March 20 10 am to 11:30 am | AI news: March: AI and education Explore how the Thames Valley AI Hub connects education, industry and research to shape responsible AI across the region. | AI news: March: AI and education Tickets, Friday, Mar 20 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT Eventbrite |
| Friday, March 20 2 pm to 3 pm | The Truth in Ten With recent updates and additions, Brenda Ainsley will take you through the science behind the climate crisis and some solutions. | The Truth in Ten Tickets, Friday, Mar 20 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT Eventbrite |
| Tuesday, Mar 24 11 am to 12:30 pm | The cancer research revolution and reasons for optimism How biological, technological and cultural innovations are accelerating our understanding & treatment of cancer. This event is hosted by the u3a Science Network with speaker Professor Tim Humphrey. | The cancer research revolution and reasons for optimism Tickets, Tuesday, Mar 24 from 11 am to 12:30 pm GMT Eventbrite |
| Thursday, March 26 2 pm to 3:30 pm | Deafness and beyond: the tribulation and triumph of Ludwig van Beethoven. About the series: A series of talks by Professor Christopher Dowrick, illustrating how the creative arts, including literature, poetry, classical music and contemporary folk/rock, can enhance our wellbeing. | Deafness and beyond: the tribulation and triumph of Ludwig van Beethoven. Tickets, Thursday, Mar 26 from 2 pm to 3:30 pm GMT Eventbrite |
| Spring forward | Clocks change March 29th | +1 |
| Tuesday, March 31 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm | Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie: March 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: March Tickets, Tuesday, Mar 31 from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm GMT+1 Eventbrite |
| Tuesday, April 7 10 am to 12 pm | Flight Inspirations Aviation: The British Airman of the First World War From WWI's final aerial combat to the global legacy of air warfare: pilots, training, and life in the First World War skies. | Flight Inspirations Aviation: The British Airman of the First World War Tickets, Tuesday, Apr 7 from 10 am to 12 pm GMT+1 Eventbrite |

National Office u3a onLine Learning Events

| Date 2025 | Event | Link(Control&click) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Friday, April 10 10 am to 11:30 am | <p>Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A</p> <p>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>Staying Safe Online - A u3a Presentation with Q&A Tickets, Friday, Apr 10 from 10 am to 11:30 am GMT+1 Eventbrite</p> |
| Wednesday, April 8 10 am to 10:45 am | <p>Laughter Yoga with Judith: April</p> <p>Laughter Yoga combines hearty laughter exercises with deep yoga-style breathing (pranayama). Hosted by Judith Anne Walker of Edinburgh u3a.</p> <p>"We don't laugh because we're happy, we're happy because we laugh." - William James</p> | <p>Laughter Yoga with Judith: April Tickets, Wednesday, Apr 8 from 10 am to 10:45 am GMT+1 Eventbrite</p> |
| Friday, April 10 2 pm to 3 pm | <p>Adventures in science with u3a</p> <p>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 out by the Chichester u3a practical science interest group. They explore all basic science areas, from mothing and botany, to cryogenic science and cloud chambers.</p> | <p>Adventures in science with u3a Tickets, Friday, Apr 10 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT+1 Eventbrite</p> |
| Friday, Apr 17 2 pm to 3 pm | <p>The Magic of Magic Squares</p> <p>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>The Magic of Magic Squares Tickets, Friday, Apr 17 from 2 pm to 3 pm GMT+1 Eventbrite</p> |
| Wednesday, April 22 at 10 am to Wednesday, May 27 at 11:30 am | <p>Cryptic crosswords for beginners: six-session course (April/May 2026)</p> <p>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>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</p> |
| | <p>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.</p> | <p>u3a - Online Learning Events</p> |



Regional Forums on Canva and Outward Looking Facebook

BOOK a couple of dates in your diary for special forums being organised for **Eastern Region u3as** on the best ways of running outward facing Facebook and an Introduction to Canva.

Both will be held over Zoom and be led by those with plenty of experience in both topics.



First is the **Canva National Subject Adviser Roger Carter** introducing us all to **Canva**, the favourite programme to replace Publisher which Microsoft stops supporting this year.

It will be from **10am to 11.30am on Wednesday, April 8**. He is prepared to follow up the talk with a u3er training programme if enough members sign up to make it worthwhile.



Then the new **Vice Chair of the u3a, Sheila Crawley**, explains all about the benefits of **Outward facing Facebook** on **Wednesday, May 13, again 10am to 11.30am**.

She has presented on the topic elsewhere to acclaim.

"Both topics have been requested so the Regional Team expect a good turnout for both," said Ray Hardisty wearing his PR and Media Advisers hat.

"I look forward to hearing from all those interested in attending."

Contact Ray at rayhardisty.east.u3a@gmail.com

u3a Luton Plans 30th Anniversary Celebration

On 18th April 2026, u3a Luton will be 30 years old. We have been planning this event for a year because it takes much organisation and cajoling of members! **Everyone** is invited to our free event at Christ Church, Bushmead Luton from 10am - 4pm.



We missed our 25th because of Covid, so we needed to do something for members and the local community for our 30th. After all, this would be a big milestone for us.

The event will be social and also good public relations, showcasing our groups and hopefully recruiting new members. The Church hall always gives a good turnout, however I had a panic when I went to check on the layout. The Church did not have our event in their diary! Still vacant, luckily - it could have been a major disaster as our guest and date were publicised everywhere. The moral of this story is keep checking everything!

We have invited the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, the King's representative, to open our celebration and to cut out celebration cake at 11am. Many of our groups are showcasing their activities, along with a membership and marketing table in the hope that some visitors will sign up for membership on the spot!

One of our members has also created a wonderful film of our sports and games groups in action. We will have a bookstall, our art group putting on some activities to try out and free tea, coffee and celebration cake for everyone.

I want to thank the TAT office for providing some u3a Matters magazines for us to hand out to visitors which will help to promote the organisation. I hope visitors will enjoy the day and I hope that we can convert some of the enquirers into members. I want to thank all those members who are helping to organise the day and for their hard work and enthusiasm. *Gina Indge Chair u3a Luton*



Essex historian offering to run u3a study days

ANDREW Baker is an Essex-based historian, a published author, a former headmaster and now a freelance lecturer around the country and on cruise ships.

He is offering three full study day programmes on:

Britain's post-war Prime Ministers from Attlee to Sunak

Russia's story before and after the Revolution of 1917

The American Dream and Beyond

Each study day would have a suggested three units. Each unit will be opened with a 45 minute presentation supported by PowerPoint imagery and an extended discussion.

A. **Britain's post-war Prime Ministers from Attlee to Sunak.** Here, the opening presentation would offer an overview of our post-war prime ministers before, provocatively, suggesting a rank order. The two further units would consider two Prime Ministers in depth.

1. Who is our Greatest post-war Prime Minister? Anecdotal and amusing character portraits can help us understand how 17 different occupants of No 10 since 1945 have played the role. What are the characteristics of a great Prime Minister and what kind of rank order emerges?

2. Little Clem. How, despite his personal lack of charisma, did Clement Attlee's Government shape a new direction for Britain after the war at home and abroad? How did that agenda come to form a new cross-party consensus?

3. Maggie: The Iron Lady. What kind of woman was Mrs Thatcher? What shaped her instincts, beliefs and style? What challenge did she bring to the post-war consensus? How much did she change; why was her fall so abrupt and dramatic; was her legacy enduring?

B. **Russia's story from the Tsars to Putin.** The opening presentation would offer a portrait of Russian history and culture before the revolution showing how what happened after 1917 drew heavily on Russia's past. The second unit focuses on Stalin's concentration camps - the Gulag - again linking past with present. The third looks specifically at Putin's Russia today while drawing parallels with the first two units

1. Winston Churchill described Russia as, 'a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma'. How can an understanding of Russian history and culture before and after the 1917 revolution enable us better to understand Putin, his acolytes, Russia today and, not least, the war in Ukraine?

2. Russia: The Forgotten Holocaust. Between 1924 and 1953 millions, perished in the Soviet Union's network of concentration camps - the Gulag. This is the searing story of the 'crimes', humiliation, suffering and death of these 'Enemies of the People'.

3. The Reality of Putin's Russia Today. The scarcely believable story of how Vladimir Putin and his KGB acolytes captured the Russian state while enriching themselves, cast democracy aside and through serial corruption, expropriation, assassination and judicial and ecclesiastical skulduggery, reconnected with Russia's autocratic past before taking on Ukraine and the West to become the world's pariah nation.

C. **The American Dream and Beyond**

1. What was and is 'the American Dream'? How did the Founding Fathers first conceive the 'Dream' and how has it been interpreted and developed by different generations of Americans? Has the 'Dream' ever been made a reality and is it still alive for all Americans today?

2. The Donald Trump Phenomenon (I): A vivid and humorous portrait of the 45th and 47th USA President who is like no other; the dealer and celebrity turned politician: his ego, past and style.



Continued from page 10

How can he best be understood? To whom has he appealed and why? What did those who worked most closely with him during his first term think of him?

3. The Donald Trump Phenomenon (2): The Second Coming: What did Trump achieve in his first term and, as the pace quickens in his second term and with the policy thrusts seemingly erratic, what does that mean for America and the world? What is Trump's reading of today's world and of the place of America within it?

Andrew J Baker

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Organisation offering u3as river cruises



DEBEN Cruises offer u3as a gentle river treat filled with scenic views, fresh air and good company.

Whether you're spotting wildlife, soaking up the peaceful surroundings, or enjoying a cup of tea onboard, we believe it's the perfect way to unwind.

What's Included:

- Tea and coffee onboard served by our friendly host
- Easy access for all - wheelchairs and walker access on the pontoon right to the boat with just three steps to navigate down into the boat with help from the skipper.
- Toilet facilities on shore and on board.

- Comfortable and safe river boat ride
- Knowledgeable local skipper with stories and history of the Deben's history



Refreshment upgrade can include afternoon tea and scones or ask for local lunch or meal recommendation for before or after river trips. Ideal for group outings. Deben will be delighted to welcome u3as for a private group booking or help organise a special day out for members. To find out more or reserve a cruise, contact Deben at jahan@debencruises.co.uk or visit the website www.debencruises.co.uk

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

For Groups News and Special Events,

Contact Laurene Henderson

laurenehenderson1.east.u3a@outlook.com

For contact details of the complete team:

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

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|  <p>Ian Mathews East of England Region Council Representative</p> | | |
|  <p>Ray Hardisty Team Leader Trust Volunteer Media and PR Adviser Newsletter Essex</p> |  <p>Brian Lowes Trust Volunteer Website Beacon Adviser EDM Adviser Bedfordshire</p> |  <p>Jean St Clair Trust Volunteer Norfolk</p> |
|  <p>Laurene Henderson Trust Volunteer Bulletin & News Norfolk</p> |  <p>Lesley Wood Trust Volunteer Essex Network Essex</p> | |