

OCTOBER 2025



EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!
U3A WEEK SPECIAL!
REPORTS ON PAGES 6-10

CHAIR'S REPORT

Welcome to autumn; it is my favourite time of the year, the trees delight me every time I go out. We hear about autumn in America but ours is wonderful too, just going around Harlow is a pleasure.

We have had a successful Try Something New week. Those brave souls who went canoeing had a great time and those who came on the Canalability boats had a restful day, with some enjoying steering the boat or helping at the locks. The Choir welcomed some new folk, some of whom have joined permanently; my play reading group welcomed a new member and I hope other groups managed to welcome some new faces. Many thanks to our Special Events Co-ordinator, Ann Flint, who organised the week, we're very grateful for her time and efforts.

Our Visits and Outings team is continuing to give us super days out; I am really looking forward to our trip to Thursford for the Christmas Spectacular next month. Do enjoy the outside while the weather is still mild. **Jane Winterbotham**



Photo taken on the guided walk of the Town Park.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Here's advance warning of our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** which will take place on **Monday 26 January 2026 at 10.30am**, so please put it in your diary. You will receive more detailed information nearer the date.

We hope some of our members will come forward at the AGM to volunteer as Trustees. Helping to manage our organisation is a very rewarding role and important for future proofing our u3a. In 2027 a number of our trustees will be retiring so it would be ideal if new volunteers came forward in 2026 to "learn the ropes" under experienced members and be ready to carry on the good work. Do speak to Jane Winterbotham, or any of our committee, to find out more.

NEW MEMBERS' WELCOME MEETING 21 NOVEMBER 2-4PM AT THE LINK
MEET THE COMMITTEE AND GROUP FACILITATORS

SEPTEMBER'S SPEAKER: BOBBIE DARBYSHIRE



Bobbie said that writers often get initial inspiration for a book from something they personally find problematic, so the story takes both reader and writer on a journey of discovery. Most good novels are fiction though, not thinly disguised autobiography, because for a novel you need structure, a narrative journey, suspense and surprise, character growth, and an author who can see beyond their own point of view.

She explained how questions and answers are the key to getting from the initial idea and a first tentative sentence to a whole complex, detailed novel.

Anything you write raises questions, and the ideas come gradually from trying to answer them. Her writers' group is a valuable source of questions she hasn't thought of or has been dodging.

Some writers rush to write a first draft without planning. Others plan in detail before writing a single word. Both methods have drawbacks, so instead she, and many novelists, form a rough idea of characters and story, notions of a few key scenes and a sense of how the story will end, and then start writing, guided by the sketch but not pushing the characters to follow it, observing how they act naturally, and continually asking questions about them. Stimulated by the invention, more invention follows. Bobbie recommended having a notebook at hand for when inspiration strikes at the supermarket checkout or at three in the morning.

Bobbie used to do Saturday book signings in Waterstones, where she would introduce herself to customers as a visiting author. She recounted a time when a man bellowed, 'No!' at her and later apologised for mishearing that she was a visiting orphan.

She briefly described her five novels, and read a short extract from one of them. In her latest 'The Third Bus', an unappreciated man walks out of his dispiriting 42-year marriage with no destination in mind. At Victoria coach station, he boards a coach to Norwich in search of a new start. Her earlier novels are 'The Posthumous Adventures of Harry Whittaker', 'Truth Games', 'Love, Revenge & Buttered Scones', and 'OZ'. Bobbie brought along copies of her books, and several members bought copies.

FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS

27 Oct.	Road Safety for Seniors	Liam & Tanya	The Link
24 Nov.	The Inn At The Top: Neil talks about his life as landlord of the most remote country pub in the Yorkshire Dales; an entertaining ramble around the inn, the Dales countryside and a remarkable array of local characters.	Neil Hanson	The Link
15 Dec.	Christmas Social		The Link

VISITS & OUTINGS

My first announcement is that there will be [no card machine at the October meeting](#); my apologies but I will be unavailable so any payments made will need to be cash or cheque.

The team will be available to take payments (cash or cheques only) for the following trips at the meeting on Monday 27 October at The Link, Parsloe Rd from 10am.



Our trip to [Battersea Power Station](#) proved to be very popular and we had a very long waiting list, therefore, a second coach has been organised for [Thursday 13 November for £13pp](#). Hopefully, this additional date will appeal to people and we get enough to run this second coach.

We also have on offer a [Tea Dance in Canary Wharf](#) featuring Gold with Jason Alan, who will be singing popular hits from the 70s and 80s, on [Tuesday 16 December](#), this includes a meal, dessert and hot drink, all for [£58pp](#).

[Coach times for Thursford on 11th November 2025](#) are:

9.15am: The Link

9.20am: back of Wetherspoons Town Centre

9.30am: Domino's Old Harlow

There will be a stop for lunch and you will arrive at Thursford with time to explore the shops, steam run displays and other entertainments on site. **Hazel Sugarman**

[INTRODUCTION TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE \(AI\) FOR HARLOW u3a](#)

Introductory talks about AI, which took place at Harlow Study Centre this month, were very well attended by our members. Presenter, Stephen Tew, and his colleague, Nicola, gave an interesting and informative presentation on this fascinating technological advancement which will have a significant impact on our lives and the future. Knowledge is power, and knowing how the technology works,

the positives and the negatives, can only help us to be prepared for the inevitable changes AI will have on our world.

There was a great deal of

interest shown by the attendees, who had varying degrees of understanding of AI, and a range of queries and observations were shared.

Stephen plans to offer a follow up session to build on this introduction, dates of which will be shared with members. He has prepared an information sheet for members which can be found in Documents on the [Quick Links](#) page of our website: [QUICK LINKS](#)



CONTACTING FACILITATORS: To contact facilitators regarding group activities, follow the link below which will take you to a list of the groups and their facilitators; by clicking on the facilitator you wish to message you will open a Contact page to complete. <https://harlow.u3asite.uk/group-facilitators-email-contact/>

NEW MEMBERS' MEETING FRIDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2-4PM AT THE LINK SOCIAL CLUB

New members to Harlow u3a are warmly invited to attend a Welcome Meeting next month where they can meet the Committee, chat to group facilitators and share a cup of tea or coffee. We hope to see many of you on the day and if you have any friends interested in joining Harlow u3a, bring them along too. **Group Facilitators are asked to arrive at 1.30pm.**

COULD YOU BE THE WELCOMING FACE OF HARLOW u3a?

Our "Meet and Greet" team provides the friendly faces that meet members at the door of our monthly general meeting. It is important for new members, particularly, that there is someone to guide them through the building, talk about their interests and make introductions to facilitators and members.

Please consider joining the team and helping out at our October meeting, or future meetings, just introduce yourself at the door. New ideas for the way we greet and involve members are always welcome. To know more or to volunteer, email me via the website link mentioned above; scroll down to Meet and Greet. It's a very rewarding role and a highly important one for Harlow u3a. **Geoff Longster**



MUSICAL MEMORIES: PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.....

Do you like singing? Do you like chatting? Do you like being with people?
Do you like bringing pleasure to others? Do you have an hour to spare once a month?

If you answered **Yes** to any of the above you might enjoy **Musical Memories**. We visit care homes and day centres about once a month, for an hour, but not always on the same day. We take in musical instruments and balloons and we encourage the residents to join in with songs from the 50s onwards. You don't need to know the words but join in with the CDs which are played. If you don't return home with a smile on your face this group is probably not for you. Contact me via the Groups List: Arts In And Around Harlow. **Ann Flint**

GARDEN GROUP VISIT TO FURZELEA, DANBURY , ESSEX

On the 23 September the garden group visited a lovely, private garden owned by Avril and Roger Cole-Jones who have opened their garden on behalf of the National Garden Scheme for many years and, though late in the gardening season, it was filled with colour!

The garden is about one acre and has been planted and maintained for over twenty years allowing it to be filled with colour, scent and form. Paths

lead through archways to lawns and flower beds with many dahlias, asters and ornamental grasses shown off at their best.



The garden is south facing and on a gentle slope which allows for a number of slightly tender plants to be grown: campsis radicans scrambles over an arbour in a small courtyard with abutilons, canna lilies and salvias - the perfect place for tea and cake.

This was the final garden visit for 2025 and certainly, in my opinion, one of the best! **Maria Miola**

WORLD FAITHS GROUP

A group of u3a Members had a most interesting visit to the Islamic Centre in Harlow recently. Imran Asif travelled from Oxford to give the talk which was informative and generated a number of questions.



We learned that many religions, including Christianity and Judaism, share many of the principles of Islam which, ultimately, developed and diverged. All religions have their own traditions and dress which we need to acknowledge and respect; if this was possible maybe we could all live in harmony a little better. **Ann Flint**

u3a Week 2025: Try Something New

Our u3a week proved to be a great success with many members accepting the challenge to "Try Something New". It was an enjoyable week for those who participated and resulted in increased membership for some groups and for Harlow u3a as well.

A huge vote of thanks must go to our Special Events Co-ordinator, Ann Flint, who was the driving force behind the week. Well done, Ann.

MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER: TOWN PARK WALK & FUN SING-ALONG WITH THE CHOIR



Harlow Town Park is Grade 2 listed and a Green Flag Award-winning park. We were taken round by Archie, a volunteer gardener.

The Miyawaki Forest looked like a jungle but it was explained that native trees are planted, improving diversity, and it was how a natural forest would develop if left alone.



The autumnal colours were beautiful, the specimen trees were fascinating and the quinces, that we had never noticed before, were growing in abundance. Certain trees smelt of pineapple if rubbed between your fingers and even a badger sett was remarkable as it had been taken over by bees. There was so much to see which we had never noticed before. Brilliant! **Ann Flint**



Visitors enjoyed the Fun Sing-Along with [Harlow u3a Choir](#) as they belted out popular Beatles songs and an autumn "round". Some enjoyed it so much they decided to join the choir. **Imelda Gunn**



TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER: CANOEING AT ESSEX OUTDOORS



The sun shone on Harlow Outdoor Centre when nine sprightly u3a members embarked on their canoeing adventure.

After listening carefully to the safety instructions from Aaron, they were soon in their canoes and paddling away, although some went into the bank first or round in a circle.

The wildlife was beautiful and a kingfisher, falcon and buzzard were spotted. It was a time for mindfulness as the canoeists gently paddled along a very peaceful River Stort.

There was a sprint race at the end which probably accounted for the aching limbs that ultimately shuffled up to dry land hoping for a well-earned rest. Maybe a bridge too far? Possibly, but everyone said they had a grand time and some would certainly do it again! **Ann Flint**

WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER: GUIDED TOUR OF THE GIBBERD GARDEN

A very pleasant tour of the gardens was had by all. Lin Hilton hosted the walk sharing plenty of interesting information. Lin had known both Sir Frederick and Lady Patricia Gibberd and therefore had much to tell. Quirky stories, many sculptures - each with their own story- facts and, overall, a great history of the gardens. It was fascinating to learn that one of the pathways was laid at the same time the M1 was started and thus referred to as the "M1 pathway" by Sir Frederick himself; how lovely is that?

Plenty of refreshments were served, with delicious cake, at the end of the tour and it was a great trip organised by the u3a. A visit to the house and gardens is well worth an afternoon out and highly recommended. **Paula Howells**



THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER: CANALABILITY

We had a wonderful trip on the Canalability boats, generously sponsored by Harlow Tye Rotary Club. Many of our members, including a number with mobility issues with their carers, enjoyed a mild, sunny day on the River Stort, with some helping with locks and steering the boats. We had a bring and share lunch and it was a great day out. **Jane Winterbotham**



HARLOW MUSEUM AND WALLED GARDEN



Did you visit the Museum during Try Something New Week? There's always something to see, a place to meet your friends and a friendly face to greet you at the door.

The bicycle section is always worth investigating and what about the "still" that was once part of Gilbey's Gin?



There are plenty of places to sit and gather your thoughts, a rose garden and sculptures.



The Museum is located in the stable block of the former Mark Hall Manor House – visited on three occasions by Queen Elizabeth 1. It is surrounded by the beautiful 16th century Walled Gardens which make a perfect picnic spot in the spring and summer. There are four main galleries telling the story of Harlow over four periods: from the designing of the New Town, through the Victorians, Stuart and Tudor times, reaching back to the remarkable local Roman finds. The Museum is open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, 9.30am to 3.30pm. **Ann Flint**



FRIDAY 26 SEPTEMBER: OUR LADY OF FATIMA CATHOLIC CHURCH



The beautiful windows in Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Harlow, never fail to be inspiring and a group of u3a members were genuinely impressed by their uniqueness.

The coloured-glass slabs, are Dalle de Verre and not stained glass. The process involves glass pieces being arranged on a bed of sand and then concrete, not lead, poured between and around them.

Guide, Helen Gaize, gave a fascinating talk about the windows' creator, Dom. Charles Norris, a monk from Buckfast Abbey in Devon, plus the story of Our Lady Of Fatima, as told through the characters in the windows.

We all enjoyed the tour enormously. **Ann Flint**

MONDAY 29 SEPTEMBER: UKULELE GROUP DROP-IN SESSION



After a brief introduction about the origins of the ukulele, Group Facilitators, Richard Adams and David Croft, soon had visitors strumming away on this charming instrument, playing chords and having fun. Ukuleles come in different sizes - such as soprano, tenor, concert – and in different price ranges – you can pick up one from Aldi for

£11.99 but prices rise up to £1000+.

There has been a big increase in enthusiasm for this instrument with hundreds of ukulele bands now in existence; follow this link to the very entertaining Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain to hear its rendition of [The Good The Bad and The Ugly](#) .

For more information about joining Harlow u3a ukulele groups (Beginners/Intermediate), which meet at Great Parndon Library, Staple Tye, follow the link: . <https://harlow.u3asite.uk/group-facilitators-email-contact/> and scroll down to Ukulele. **Imelda Gunn**



Group member, Susan, (pictured above) loves the sound when everyone is playing together; it makes her feel happy.

COFFEE-TIME QUIZ

BACK TO SCHOOL



Match these Latin phrases to their meaning

1. Ad nauseum	A For the good/for free
2. Bona fide	B. The position is reversed
3. Carpe diem	C. My fault/I'm to blame
4. Caveat emptor	D. To be sick/fed up of something
5. De facto	E. Seize the day/live life
6. Et cetera	F. The stiffness of death
7. Mea culpa	G. In good faith/ to be trusted
8. Pro bono	H. Let the buyer beware
9. Rigor mortis	I. In fact
10 Vice versa	J. And the rest

ANSWERS ON PAGE 13

U3A FRIENDS COMMUNITY

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN WITH U3A INTEREST GROUPS ONLINE? Join fellow u3a members who share your interests, or discover something you've never tried before, with *Interest Groups Online (IGO)*. This initiative offers groups that may not be available in our local u3a. Adding to the huge variety already on offer, this month's new groups include *Italian: Practise your Language Skills* for fortnightly conversational sessions, and *Fusion Tai Qi Gong* for those looking to enhance both mind and body wellbeing. All groups are run by enthusiastic IGO members. Annual membership is £12. Follow this link to find out more: [INTEREST GROUPS ONLINE](#)

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. A **FREE, ONLINE** talk on **Monday 10 November 10 - 11:30am** The late Jo Cox MP said that we have more in common than that which divides us. We will explore with members of different faiths, the extent to which that is true. Follow this link to book your place: [WORLD FAITHS](#)



LOCAL HARLOW NEWS



CARE WORKSHOPS



Join Rhiannon Faith Company and Mind in West Essex for a 6 week course of free creative wellbeing workshops!

- Workshops are completely free and open to everyone aged 18 and above - no experience needed!
- Explore your creative side and make new friends in a relaxed environment
- Build long term positive wellbeing and mental health
- Use creative writing and movement to explore personal experiences of living with and without care
- Weekly 'care cafe' after each workshop - an opportunity to socialise and discuss mental health over a cup of tea, supported by a Mind in West Essex Mental Health Facilitator
- Created by award-winning choreographer Rhiannon Faith

Courses run regularly from November 2025 to March 2026 and take place on at Harlow Playhouse, Playhouse Square, Harlow CM20 1LS.

Get in touch for specific dates and times.

To join, or if you have any questions, email Anna on info@rhiannonfaith.com or call / text 07763 255324.

Please let us know about any access requirements at time of booking, so we can support you in the best possible way.



To access this poster in large print or audio file, please scan the QR code or visit rhiannonfaith.com



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

27 Oct.	General Meeting	The Link CM19 4RT	10am-12pm
10 Nov.	Committee Meeting	St James's Church	10am
11 Nov.	Trip to Thursford		
13 Nov.	Trip to Battersea Power Station		
14 Nov.	Deadline for November's Newsletter		
21 Nov.	New Members' Welcome Meeting	The Link CM19 4RT	2-4pm
24 Nov.	General Meeting	The Link CM19 4RT	10am-12pm
26 Nov.	Trip to Milton Keynes Shopping Centre		

SAVE THE DATE: FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER

U3A CHOIR CHRISTMAS CONCERT

ST PAUL'S CHURCH HARLOW 6PM

Free entry: retiring collection (All profits to local charity)

GET IN TOUCH

You can contact **Committee Members and Facilitators** by email through links on the website. harlow.u3asite.uk . Using this method keeps personal information out of the public domain. The **Harlow U3A Newsletter** is published by Harlow U3A, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Registered Charity Number 1197680. The registered office of the CIO is in England, at 2 Wych Elm, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1QP. **Contact the Editor** with comments and contributions at: harlowu3anewsletter@gmail.com

COFFEE TIME QUIZ ANSWERS

1 Ad nauseum D To be sick /fed up
2 Bona fide G In good faith/trusted
3 Carpe diem E Seize the day
4 Caveat emptor H Buyer beware
5 De facto I In fact

6 Et cetera J And the rest
7 Mea culpa C My fault
8 Pro bono A For the good/free
9 Rigor mortis F Stiffness of death
10 Vice versa B Position reversed

Christmas Starts Here...Coach Trip Sat 20th-Sun 21st Dec 2025

-Ashford Designer Outlet—Folkestone Harbour Arm Market—Canterbury Christmas Market
Inc. Coach Travel, Overnight Accommodation, Evening Meal/Breakfast and Entertainment
Including 80's Papa Don't Preach Tribute ft. Nancy Ann Lee

Back for the 5th year in a row, this popular pre-Christmas trip is sure to get you in the Christmas mood. Last minute shopping, magical festive destinations and a relaxing night away. This trip is suitable for all.

Only £95 per person (£90 for over 65's)

Under 12's £75—Under 2's or groups— please contact us

(Prices are based on 2 people room sharing, for solo travellers a supplement will apply)



To book or for more info call Barker Bus on
01279 793800 or email contactus@barkerbus.co.uk