

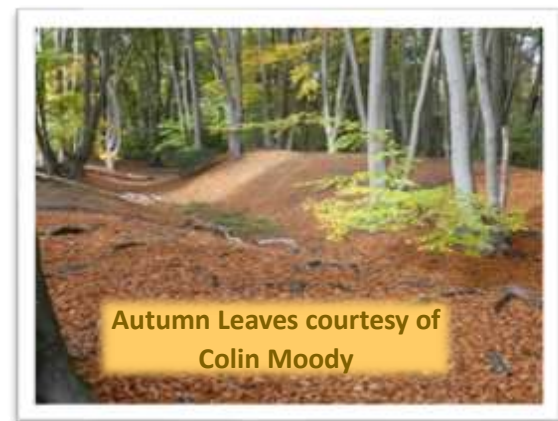
## NOVEMBER 2025

## CHAIR'S REPORT

Welcome everyone. The weather has certainly changed this week from our previously very mild autumn! I have recovered from a nasty chest infection and many of you, too, have had coughs and colds. We were very happy to go to the Thursford, Christmas Spectacular recently- a wonderful way to start the Christmas season. Many thanks to our brilliant Visits and Outings team for organising the trip. I hope those who “tried something new” last month are continuing in their adventure: my Playreading group has had three new members who felt this was a good group to try.

We have our [New Members Meeting on the 21 November, 2-4pm at The Link Social Club](#), so do come along if you have joined Harlow u3a in the last year, to meet your committee and some of our facilitators.

The autumn colour has been wonderful this year, we have enjoyed strolling along the river and walking in the park, as well as venturing out to National Trust Anglesey Abbey and our local garden centres. It is good to get out in the fresh air and enjoy our town.



I'm pleased to tell you that we now have a presence on Facebook: look out for [Harlow Third-Age](#) where we hope to post information and updates about our u3a group. I look forward to seeing you at our monthly meeting on Monday 24 November at The Link Social Club 10am-12pm.

Jane Winterbotham

## 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**

## SAFER ESSEX ROADS PARTNERSHIP

Safer driving was the focus of our guest speakers from the Safer Essex Roads Partnership at October's General Meeting at The Link. It was very interesting, informative and well received by u3a members. It recognised that we Third Agers have accrued years of valuable driving experience but cautioned that as we age, we do need to reflect on our driving practice.



We were told of the **FATAL FOUR** - the main causes for death on the road: distractions eg mobile phones; driving at an inappropriate speed; drink/drug driving impairments- including prescription drugs; not wearing seatbelts. Sadly, as we advance in age, we are more likely to be involved in road traffic accidents due to declining vision/hearing/mobility, slower reactions, difficulty adapting to complex traffic situations and also night driving - with so many of those present complaining about the ultra-bright headlights which can be blinding. ( Did you know it takes our eyes nine seconds to adjust from the glaring lights – a long time when you're driving in traffic?)

### What can we do to reduce the risks? What can be changed? Suggestions included:

Tinted glasses with polarised lenses, which reduce the glare, for night driving.

Avoid the most busy times of the day if possible and allow plenty of time for our journey.

Make sure the windscreen and mirrors are clean and that the window washer liquid is topped up, and wearing appropriate footwear– not flip flops or furry slippers – is also a good idea.

Medication can affect our driving ability so check with the pharmacist/GP that it's OK to drive if prescribed new drugs.

Is our eyesight sufficiently good for us to drive safely? Have we had our free eye test recently?

Is our car seat and steering wheel in the right position? Both can be adjusted to suit.

Have we checked our lights are all working or do we need to replace bulbs to ensure we can see and can be seen by other motorists?

With the bad weather coming, it is advisable to keep blankets, a pre-charged mobile phone power bank and a shovel in the car. Even if we don't need it, we may be able to help another motorist who does.



u3a Members were interested to find out more about the Driving with Confidence course.

### DRIVING SAFER FOR LONGER. HOW SAFER ESSEX ROAD PARTNERSHIP CAN ASSIST.

**On offer for drivers 70+ is a free "Driving With Confidence" course.** If you are resident in Essex you can request an experienced driving coach contact you to organise a driving course. Starting at your home, in your car, you will go for a drive ( 45 minutes) and be able to address any areas of your driving where you feel you lack confidence. For more information, and to book a place, follow this link: [DRIVING WITH CONFIDENCE](#)

## FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS

<b>15 Dec.</b>	Christmas Social: Christmas Quiz; u3a Choir leading festive songs. Come along and get in the Christmas spirit and enjoy complimentary mince pies and stollen cake with your tea and coffee.	10am-12pm	The Link
<b>26 Jan. 2026</b>	Harlow u3a AGM	10.30am	The Link
	Guest Speaker: We are delighted to welcome back Nicholas Henderson; this will be his third visit and although he will be delivering the next instalment of his talks on the history of English churches, each one "stands alone" so if you didn't attend previously it won't matter. Past talks have been a great success.	11am-12pm	
<b>23 Feb.</b>	My TUTU Went AWOL! A trained opera singer, Iestyn's talk includes excerpts from his West End shows and tells how he accidentally went on tour dancing Sugar Plum around the war-zones of Iraq and Afghanistan, raising the morale of British troops - in a tutu!	Iestyn Edwards	The Link
<b>23 March</b>	The Music and Satire of Gilbert & Sullivan	Bernard Lockett	The Link
<b>27 April</b>	Spring Social		The Link
<b>18 May</b>	Back to Reality. We welcome back Anne with her follow up talk on returning to the UK after her years as an ex-pat wife, which we heard about in 2025.	Anne Small	The Link
<b>22 June</b>	Adventures of a helicopter pilot	Duncan Bickley	The Link
<b>27 July</b>	Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre	Stephanie Disch	The Link

## VISITS & OUTINGS

We have good news from the V&O Team, the trip to [Milton Keynes, on Wednesday 26 November](#), is now full. The coach pick up times are:

**9.15am:** The Link

**9.20am:** Town Centre - rear of Wetherspoons

**9.30am:** Old Harlow, Domino's

The [Tea Dance in Canary Wharf](#), featuring Gold with Jason Alan, on [Tuesday 16 December](#) also has enough people for it to go ahead, so those of you lucky enough to be on the trip, start putting a shine on those dancing shoes - the tickets have been ordered and paid for!

The team has been busy discussing next year's programme, looking at dates and trying to tie up coach bookings. We are also starting to think about next year's late Spring break, as we have an appointment with our friendly travel agent very soon. Our priority is to try to secure a high number of single rooms to accommodate our members. We look forward to seeing you on our upcoming trips. Best wishes, **Hazel Sugarman**.

## THURSFORD CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR: WHAT A WONDERFUL SHOW!



After a yummy, scrummy lunch-break in Swaffham en-route, our happy driver, Patrick, took us to Thursford where we all had the most magical time at the Thursford Christmas Spectacular show.

Glitz, glamour, sequins, sparkle, dazzle, singing, dancing, beautiful dresses, choir singing, balancing, very clever hooping .....the list is never ending! There was truly something for absolutely everyone in this show. All Christmas themes were covered, from Santas dancing and prancing, to Walking in the Air with snowmen. What more can one say? I loved every moment of this show and even bought a programme - which is something I never do usually! Would I go again? You bet I would!

Oh I love my days out with the u3a! Thank you all and I look forward to the next one. Roll up, roll up..... I'm ready and waiting.

**Paula Howells**



## 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/>



## STROLLERS

*Vipin led us on a walk along the River Stort in October. We had a few showers but the autumn colour was lovely and it was great to share time and chat in the great outdoors.*  
**Jane Winterbotham**

## BIRD WATCHING GROUP

In September, a small group of us went to Walthamstow Wetlands nature reserve. None of us had been there before and it was quite impressive. The site covers 520 acres and has a modern history as a source of water for London stretching back to 1852, although there were mills on the site from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It only opened as a public space in 2017 and consists of working reservoirs, old waterways and woodlands. Although partially surrounded by modern high rise housing developments, it is an internationally important haven for wildlife.



Due to engineering works we were not able to see some of the quieter ponds but nevertheless we saw fifteen species of birds including Tufted Duck, Egyptian geese, (pictured left) Mute swan, Lesser black backed gull, Little Grebe, Cormorant and Canadian geese. I am sure we would have seen more but the weather was oppressively hot. In the end we retired to the old engine house: built in 1894 it is now a very welcome café with a gift shop and toilet facilities etc. We went there by car but on reflection a train would have been better as it is only short walk from Tottenham Hale Station. We shall return in 2026. **Glyn Beard**

## A GOLDEN WALK ( all images by Colin Moody)

The Wednesday Long Walks Group's November route took them through Epping Forest to savour the autumn colours as the trees turned golden, and also to see some of the wildlife and fungi that are so prevalent at this time of year.

Starting from Copthall Green, the walk went through fairly open fields of the Copped Hall estate, before entering the forest near Epping; the colours in the sunshine were as special as we could have hoped and we saw a few fallow deer. We made our way through the ditch, ramparts and inner part of the iron age fort at Ambresbury Banks then weaved our way onwards, and also up and down, through the forest, crossing a few busy roads and eventually to the Conservation Centre near High Beach where we ate our lunch. Then it was back to Copthall Green to complete our nearly nine miles walk.

And yes, we did see some spectacular fungi. **COLIN MOODY**



Parasol Mushroom

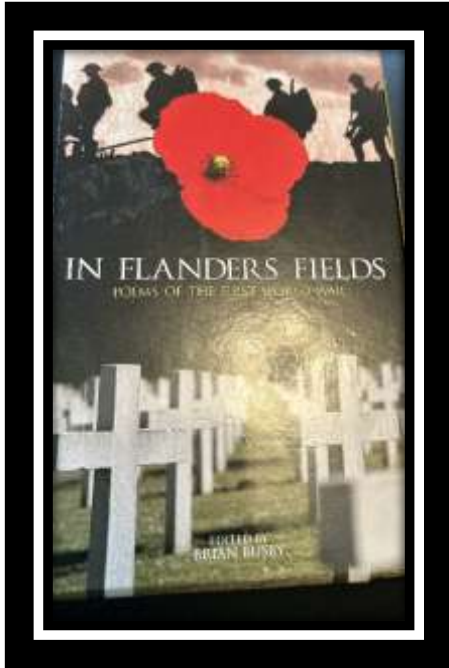


Shaggy, scalycap mushroom



## PLAYREADING GROUP

As our meeting was on the 11 November, Remembrance Day, we decided to make the meeting about remembrance.



Group members brought along poems and personal memories of their families' experiences of the First and Second World Wars.

The poems ranged from Wilfred Owen and other WW1 poets to modern poems about war and remembrance.

Some members brought medals, photos and letters and recounted anecdotes from their family history. It was very interesting, emotional and uplifting. **Pat Ruder**



## u3a Harlow Choir 2025 Christmas Concert

JOIN US!  
For a seasonal celebration of singing  
and community  
Pop, gospel, classical & traditional  
SPECIAL GUEST PERFORMANCES  
Audience singing  
ALL WELCOME

Friday 12th December  
6pm

St. Paul's Church  
Harlow CM20 1LP

FREE entry

No booking required, just turn up!  
Retiring collection: profits to Streets2Homes

## WE'RE IN THE NEWS!

Follow this link to the Eastern Region u3a Bulletin where you will find information about upcoming online talks and on page 8 a report on our Try Something New Week: [EAST OF ENGLAND BULLETIN](#)

## u3a FESTIVAL 2026 SAVE THE DATE

After the success of Festival 24, the u3a is delighted to announce that Festival 26 will be taking place between Wednesday 1 July to Friday 3 July 2026 at the University of York. u3a member, Margaret Fiddes is part of the team organising the Festival. She says, "We're aiming to make this a bigger and better festival with even more members taking part, bringing us their enthusiasm and knowledge to lead workshops, music groups, talks, sports and performances." If you'd like to volunteer at u3a Festival 26, please get in touch via [festival@u3a.org.uk](mailto:festival@u3a.org.uk). It is expected that bookings for accommodation and tickets will be open from late autumn 2025.

To stay updated with u3a Festival Updates, sign up to the u3a Friends Newsletter and tick that you would like to receive Festival Updates. If you are already subscribed to the newsletter, you will need to update your preferences – this will send you an email with a link to change your preferences. Use this link to sign up for the newsletter: [u3a - u3a Festival 2026](#)

## JUST TO MAKE YOU SMILE: REFLECTIONS OF A BOOMER written anonymously by Uncle Joe

I've seen fire and I've seen rain. I've been through the desert on a horse with no name.  
Like a rolling stone, I've given peace a chance.  
I've put a camel to bed and danced the last dance.  
Mr. Tambourine man played a song for me, I've whispered words of wisdom, let it be.  
I've fallen into a burning ring of fire and walked the line,  
To all the girls I've loved before, you were always on my mind.  
I've been everywhere, I've been so lonesome I could cry,  
I've driven my Chevy to the levee when the levee was dry.  
I've been to Itchycoo Park in a yellow submarine. I've made the scene in a time machine.  
I've done the Hokey Kokey and turned myself around.  
I've welcomed baby back to the poor side of town.  
I've followed the tracks of my tears down a long and winding road.  
I've kept on searching for a heart of gold.

**GROOVY**

**BABY!**

I've sought shelter from the storm, I've sat on the dock of the bay.  
I've rocked around the clock, on a sunny day.  
I've gone to Kansas City, I sang in the sunshine.  
I've been on the road again, with Georgia on my mind.  
I've knocked on heaven's door, while blowing in the wind.  
Joy to the world, those were the days, my friend.  
Lay lady lay, in crimson and clover.  
It's been a hard day's night, the party's over.



## ASDA CAFÉ WINTER WARMERS

Until the end of February, over-60s can enjoy soup, a roll, and unlimited tea and coffee for just £1 in any of Asda's 212 cafés, without needing to make any other purchases. The offer is available all day, every day from 1 November to the end of February.



## HARLOW TOWN PARK VOLUNTEERS

If you can spare a few hours on Tuesday or Thursday and enjoy working outdoors, come and join the Town Park Volunteers, you will receive a very warm welcome. Volunteers help keep the park tidy by carrying out gardening and horticultural work whilst having a laugh along the way.

The park holds the prestigious Green Flag Award and the volunteers' work contributes to retaining that accolade. All tools and equipment will be provided, no gardening experience is necessary as training will be given, and tea breaks provide an opportunity to meet new friends. For further information please email Tom Smith the Town Park Manager – [tom.smith@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:tom.smith@harlow.gov.uk) or chat to Tom about volunteering whilst enjoying a stroll around the park on Friday 5 December, then every other Friday. The strollers meet in The Greyhound car park at 10am.

## CHRISTMAS SPARKLE IN HARLOW

The town's festive celebrations will kick off in spectacular style on [Saturday 6 December with Light-Up Broad Walk](#), followed by the launch of the [Christmas Market on Saturday 13 December](#) – which will run until Sunday 21 December. Visitors can expect a dazzling display of lights, glittering Christmas trees, enchanting performances including magical drummers, and a heartwarming community atmosphere as families gather to start celebrating the season.

On [Friday 12 December](#), Harlow u3a Choir will be performing its Christmas Concert at 6pm in the town centre church: St Paul's in College Square. They will be joined by guest choirs Voices of Harlow and Fawbert and Barnard Primary School. From [13 to 21 December](#), Harlow town centre will be transformed into a magical Christmas market bursting with festive cheer. Broad Walk will be lined with traditional wooden cabins twinkling with lights, each offering a charming mix of handcrafted gifts, seasonal treats, and delicious food and drink.



The scent of mulled wine, roasted chestnuts, hot chocolate, will fill the air, while families can join in creative workshops such as wreath-making, bauble painting, and gingerbread decorating. On weekends, the festivities will grow even livelier, with immersive cabins to explore, enchanting wandering characters, and a programme of live entertainment bringing the spirit of Christmas to life in the heart of Harlow. More details can be seen at [www.harlow.gov.uk/christmas](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/christmas)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

<b>24 Nov.</b>	General Meeting	The Link CM19 4RT	10am-12pm
<b>26 Nov.</b>	Trip to Milton Keynes		
<b>1 Dec.</b>	Committee Meeting	St James's Church	10am-12pm
<b>5 Dec.</b>	<b>Deadline for reports for December's Newsletter</b>		
<b>12 Dec.</b>	Harlow u3a Choir Christmas Concert	St Paul's Church	6pm
<b>15 Dec</b>	Christmas Social	The Link CM19 4RT	10am-12pm
<b>16 Dec.</b>	Afternoon Tea Canary Wharf		
<b>12 Jan. 2026</b>	Committee Meeting	St James's Church	10am
<b>26 Jan.</b>	AGM and General Meeting	The Link CM19 4RT	10am-12pm

## GET IN TOUCH

You can contact **Committee Members and Facilitators** by email through links on the website. [harlow.u3asite.uk](http://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](mailto:harlowu3anewsletter@gmail.com)