

JULY 2026

CHAIR'S REPORT

Hello Everyone,

The summer has arrived and it has been so hot! I hope you are managing to enjoy the sunshine - we have waited a long time for it. Sadly, a number of groups have had to be cancelled because of the weather but some, thankfully, have been able to find cool venues in which to meet.

Our choir has held two wonderful summer concerts: at the first, in Harlow Museum's walled-garden, they were joined by our Ukulele Band and at the second one, held in St Paul's Church, by guest choir Voices of Harlow. I was only able to attend the second concert, but it was a really lovely evening of cheerful singing and both choirs were enjoyed by the appreciative audience.

This month, my playreading group enjoyed "After The Ball Was Over", a play by William Douglas Hume.

Looking ahead to National u3a Week in September, your committee invites all facilitators to offer trial sessions during that month so members can "Try Something New". It may lead to new group members or even result in a completely new group being formed. Facilitators are asked to inform Group Co-ordinators of the details of their offer.

A warm welcome to our newest members:

Ann N.	Denise M.	Elaine L.	Gerald HB	Ginny S.	Graham L.	Ian M.
Janet M.	Jean P.	Lesley S.	Linda J.	Meena G.	Scott G.	Sharon HB

We hope that all our members enjoy being part of Harlow u3a to the full and share their talents with everyone.

Jane Winterbotham

SECRETARY'S NOTES

COMMUNITY FÊTE HARLOW MUSEUM 15 AUGUST

Members of the committee will be representing Harlow u3a at this annual event next month, which promotes the volunteer sector in Harlow. Music, refreshment, stalls – do come along and support it.

We look forward to seeing you there, make sure to stop by and say Hello!



NATIONAL u3a WEEK SEPTEMBER 2026

Harlow u3a will be participating in this national event again this year but, to allow more access to groups and events, rather than limiting it to one week, we intend to run the event throughout the month of September – and maybe beyond! The programme will be shared next month.

GROUP FACILITATORS who would be able to welcome members for a one-off taste of their activity are asked to inform Chrissy Williams, Events Co-ordinator, Groups Co-ordinators or reply to the newsletter address with details of what and when please. It'd be fun for members to be able to try something new.

FLYING HIGH WITH CAPTAIN DUNCAN BICKLEY(Rtd)

It was puzzling to see a dustpan and broom and a couple of wooden sticks, joined with an elastic band, on the stage of The Link at June's General Meeting; what would they have to do with the life of a helicopter pilot? Well, they were used as visual aids by Duncan Brinkley and I'll tell you a little more about them later. Mainly flying out of Cambridge Airport, Duncan is a highly experienced helicopter pilot who also trains novice pilots. Designed to get in and out of tight spaces, often where fixed wing aircraft are unable to land, helicopters serve a wide range of purposes.

Duncan took us on a number of "journeys" via film and photographs, including the prescribed routes of helicopter flights - at an average of 1300 feet - over London, mainly following along the River Thames from London City Airport. He pointed out that the Shard posed a significant problem to the pilots, as its glass facade reflects the sky, camouflaging the building. In the summer season he might fly this route ten times a day for pleasure trips. Another "journey" we experienced was over the

French Alps – helicopter pilots have to undertake Altitude Appreciation training and Duncan uses the Alps when teaching his trainees to understand the problems of flying in mountainous regions: obstacles such as 1500foot granite rock, weather changes, altitude, optical illusions.... He showed us a film of him flying over Mont Blanc; the views were spectacular!

We heard of some of the celebrities he has flown eg. singer Katherine Jenkins and actor Ray Winstone and of one flight he is particularly proud of, when he flew

around the UK in his helicopter with a friend who had invented a satellite-system tracker which needed to be tested. Taking ten days, every evening, wherever they spent the night, they promoted their Pledge A Pint campaign, encouraging people to become blood donors and to pledge a pint of their blood.

Now, the dustpan, broom and sticks? Where do they come in? Duncan used them to rig up a crude example of how the controls and blades of a helicopter function. He explained the numerous tasks that helicopter pilots have to carry out simultaneously and it was mind boggling! No wonder there is a limit on how many hours a day a pilot is allowed to fly.



Duncan explained that the average time it takes to learn to fly a helicopter is one hundred hours of training at £400 per hour; it takes an additional forty-five hours to gain a licence. To obtain a commercial licence, a further two hundred and fifty hours are required.

We were told of the current concerns the industry faces. One being the surge in drones which are a danger to the pilot as they fly across their routes and can fly through the rotor blades causing fatal crashes. Another threat of the drones is that they are increasingly being used to film and photograph landscapes which is reducing the opportunity for pilots to earn from photographic work.

However, Duncan also told us of a major benefit of being a helicopter pilot – it impresses the girlfriend, especially if you fly her to Paris for a date night! We also learnt that helicopters can still land if the engine fails – it's all part of the training – which is hugely reassuring.

FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS

27 July	Dogs Trust Rehoming Centre Stephanie Disch will be talking about the work of the UK's leading dog welfare charity.	The Link
24 August	Summer Social: Annual Quiz . Form a team of 8 or just come along and join a table with other members.	The Link
28 September	Chris Vince MP for Harlow and the villages	The Link

VISITS & OUTINGS

FUN IN FELIXSTOWE



The sun shone and the sea was glistening as it went back and forth on the shores of Felixstowe. As we arrived, Patrick our driver gave us the choice to get off along the sea front promenade or to go to the town centre by coach up Convalescent Hill, which is very aptly named; it's not long but it's very steep. The town had several high street and independent cafés and shops as well as charity shops - something for everyone.



The walk down through the gardens was a lot easier than attempting the hill up. Down on the promenade, the beach is in two halves either side of the pier, one side stony and good for swimming the other sandy for paddling, which several members couldn't resist the temptation to do.

All the traditional seaside delights were on offer and many of us managed fish and chips and an ice cream. Feeling

very content, we boarded the coach for the journey home and everyone appeared to have had a good time. **Hazel Sugarman**



Oh we do like to be beside the seaside!



Oh we do like to be beside the seaside! And members who went on the Harlow u3a break to Blackpool certainly enjoyed their holiday by the sea. They took in the sights of Blackpool and made the most of the programme offered by their hotel on the seafront.



A day trip to Liverpool saw visits to the museum, some followed The Beatles' trail as well as enjoying iconic sights such as the Liver Building.

Thank you to the brilliant Visit and Outings Team for organising a great trip which was full of fabulous fun and friendship.



VISITS AND OUTINGS ON OFFER FOR AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER

This month, the V & O team will have three outings on offer at the monthly meeting at the Link on Monday 27 July. [The trips desk will open at 9.45am](#) this month, as I'm introducing this month's speaker who is from the Dog's Trust.

Our first offer is for the remaining seats for [Knebworth House and Garden on Thursday 27 August for £33.50pp](#) which is £12.50 return coach & £21pp for a private, small-group tour of the house; we will be split into a minimum of two groups so that everyone has the opportunity to hear the guide and ask questions, you will also have time to visit the exhibition. There is a café on site where you can get refreshments, as well as formal gardens and a gift shop. This will be a full day visit to the Knebworth Estate, there are now only thirteen places available.

Our second trip is to the popular seaside town of [Southwold in East Suffolk Thursday 3 September](#), at the price of [£16pp](#). If you have never been, the pier alone makes this a worthwhile visit in my opinion, the water clock and handmade amusements are always a wonder to watch. Thursday is market day - although it is a very small market so don't get too excited - there is generally a good selection of plants available on one of the stalls.



Our third, and last, offering this month is to the port town of [Woodbridge, also in East Suffolk, on Thursday 24 September at the price of £16pp](#). Woodbridge lies eight miles from the sea, at the mouth of the River Deben. Market day is Thursday which is why we are once again offering a Thursday trip. The outdoor market is open until 2pm offering stalls with fresh fish, baked goods, fruit and veg and local preserves. The town is described as a vibrant historic market town famous for its independent boutiques and Anglo-Saxon history. Nation Trust's Sutton Hoo is nearby and so is the fully operational Woodbridge Tide Mill museum.



The outing to Knebworth was on offer at the June meeting, if interested, you can contact Barbara Abbott, via the Visits and Outings link on the website, prior to the meeting. (Link top of page 7)

The two East Suffolk trips are, initially, only available at the meeting on Monday 27 July. Payment can be made by cheque payable to Harlow u3a, cash or card machine. Please have

your payment ready with your membership number, name and mobile number (this is not an option), we need this to advise you if anything untoward happens on the trip and your pick up point. (Options are: The Link, the back of Wetherspoons town centre, or Domino's Old Harlow). If you are unable to make the meeting and wish to go on the waiting list, please contact Barbara Abbott AFTER the meeting on the aforementioned details.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting. **Hazel Sugarman Vice Chair. For the V&O Team**

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/>

"I DON'T SING BECAUSE I'M HAPPY; I'M HAPPY BECAUSE I SING." – WILLIAM JAMES



This inspirational quote certainly applies to The Music In Mind group who visited Rainbow Services, Young At Heart, at St Mary at Latton Church Hall recently. As always, we had as much fun as the visitors, singing songs from the 60s and 70s. Jan and Elaine, who are MinM members, certainly enjoyed themselves.

So, if joining this group appeals to you, please get in touch with Ann Flint; we visit day centres and residential homes on an ad-hoc basis so it is never a regular commitment. **Ann Flint**

GARDENING GROUP

Ann arranged for our Gardening Group to visit Audley End House, Saffron Walden, during June; the weather was 29° C so we paced ourselves.

We had an interesting talk on the history of the house before adjourning for lunch then we visited the parterre at the back of the house, which is the very attractive, formal flower-garden designed by William Gilpin in 1832. It was being tended by hardy volunteers working in the heat. The park grounds, designed by Capability Brown, looked beautiful in the sunshine.

Returning to the house, we explored the ground floor, the Great Hall and a beautifully restored Adam room, celebrating Robert Adam the renowned Georgian architect and designer.

Later, we were pleased to retreat to our air-conditioned car; it was a short visit because of the heat but very enjoyable. Thank you to Ann and Maria for arranging the day. **Jane Winterbotham**



HARLOW u3a CHOIR

Harlow u3a Choir's July Concert at St Paul's Church Harlow, led by Musical Director Roisin Quinn, proved to be a wonderful way to spend a warm, summer evening.



Old favourites such as Que Sera were popular with the audience, as was an interesting "mash-up" of pop songs arranged to the instrumental of Pachelbel's Canon. The choir showed off its vocal ability with the more challenging Bohemian Rhapsody and Toto's Africa, and in its rendition of Bob Dylan's Forever Young – which could be an anthem for the u3a's mission for positive ageing - demonstrated some beautiful harmonies.

Guest choir, Voices of Harlow, delighted everyone with its programme, of particular note was its rendition of Streets of London which was beautifully arranged and sung. It was a lovely event, well supported, and with all profits donated to local charity Streets2Homes.



If you're a Facebook user, check out Harlow u3a's Facebook page [HARLOW THIRD-AGE](#) where you'll be able to view recordings of some of the songs from the night. [If you're interested in joining the choir when it reconvenes on 7 September, contact Imelda Gunn, Choir Facilitator via the Groups list. See link Page 7.](#)



A NEW ADDITION FOR HARLOW SCULPTURE TOWN



I attended the unveiling of a new sculpture, entitled Together With Hands, at River Way Car Park last week.

It was designed and built by Harlow Fields School and College students aged 16 to 19 as part of a collaboration with Ore Projects and Harlow Art Trust. Pupils from Eagle Class, Harlow Fields, and Deputy Headteacher, Chris Donno, attended the event.

The sculpture represents community and working together. **Jane Winterbotham**

LOTS IN COMMON!

1. What's the most common **HAIR COLOUR** in the world?
2. What's the most common **SONG** sung in the world?
3. What's the most common **PET** in the world?
4. What's the most common **TREE** in the world?
5. What's the most common **BIRD** in the world?
6. What's the most common **FRUIT** in the world?
7. What's the most common **VEGETABLE** in the world?
8. What's the most common **RELIGION** in the world?
9. What's the most common **DISEASE** in the world?
10. What's the most common **BLOOD GROUP** in the world?

u3a FRIENDS COMMUNITY

GET AWAY WITH THE u3a

Join u3a members from around the country on a range of bespoke holidays exclusive to u3a members and their friends. This exciting partnership opens a new chapter in discovery, fun and shared experience. Look forward to a continually evolving collection of unique itineraries such as:

The Agatha Christie Story 14 September 4 nights

Yorkshire Festive Treats 18 November 2 nights

Click on this link to discover more...[u3a BREAKS](#)



BUILDING THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED AIRLINERS: Led by John Butler from the u3a's Let's Talk Tech team, this **FREE, ONLINE**, talk takes place on **Wednesday 5 August 1 PM - 2:30 PM**



John explores the complex and surprising technical aspects of modern airliner construction. Airbus and Boeing construct the world's most advanced airlines by relying on massive, globally distributed supply chains.

They synthesise millions of parts across continents to assemble flagship models like the Airbus A350 and Boeing 777X. These aircraft push the boundaries of aerospace engineering with advanced composites, aerodynamic efficiency, and digital flight controls. In this video-facilitated session, John will share information about the complex and surprising logistical and technical aspects of modern airliner construction. To book a place follow this link: [AIRCRAFT](#)

HARLOW TOWN SHOW

The [Town Show](#) returns to Harlow Town Park from [Friday 28 August to Sunday 30 August](#), promising a packed programme of live music, family activities, and arena entertainment. The event will feature performances, displays and attractions aimed at all ages, as well as celebrating the town's community spirit.

The entire weekend, including all headline acts, is completely FREE for everyone to enjoy however, to ensure Harlow residents are given priority, you do need to book tickets. [Every resident can book one free ticket for the daytime and one free ticket for the evening, using your Harlow address. These become available from 8am on 24 July via this link: \[HARLOW TOWN SHOW\]\(#\) or phone 01279 446655.](#)



PROMS IN THE PARK

Harlow Council has announced that the postponed [Proms in the Town Park](#) will now take place on [Saturday 19 September](#). The historic outdoor concert, the first of its kind to be held in Harlow, will feature a headline performance from the world-renowned Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra who will be joined by Harlow Chorus for a vibrant evening celebrating British musical tradition. Entertainment will begin at 5pm with performances from Livewire Vocal Collective, Harlow Brass Band and the London Tango Quintet. The main concert starts at 7.30pm, culminating in a fireworks finale at approximately 9.25pm. The [FREE](#) event, which requires no tickets, is expected to attract families, friends and visitors from across the town. Food and drink outlets will also be available.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



[St Clare Hospice](#) is bringing its roar-some new public art trail, Lions on the Loose, to Harlow, Epping and Loughton this summer - and they are looking for an incredible team of volunteers to help make it truly un-fur-gettable!

Whether you can spare a few hours or a few days, your time and enthusiasm will help create a magical experience for trail-goers of all ages, while supporting the vital care St Clare Hospice provides to patients and their families. Find out more at [Lions on the Loose](#)

FREE OUTDOOR GYM SESSIONS

Changing Lives in Harlow is offering free outdoor gym sessions in Harlow Town Park from July to September, helping residents of all ages get active during the summer. Led by a Team GB athlete, adult sessions will take place [every Tuesday from 10am to 11am](#). Suitable for all fitness levels, the structured sessions are free to attend thanks to funding and support from Active Essex and Harlow Council. Find out more at [Changing Lives Community Services](#)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

27 July	General Meeting	The Link Social Club	10am-12pm
5 August	Trip to "CATS" Regent's Park		
10 August	Committee Meeting	St James's Church	10am-12pm
14 August	Deadline for September's Newsletter		
20 August	Theatre trip to Oliver		
24 August	Summer Social: Quiz	The Link Social Club	10am-12pm
27 August	Trip to Knebworth House		
3 Sept.	Trip to Southwold		
24 Sept.	Trip to Woodbridge		

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 Black | 2 Happy Birthday | 3 Dog | 4 Pine | 5 Chicken |
| 6 Banana | 7 Potato | 8 Christianity | 9 Dental Caries | 10 O Positive |

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Harlow Third-Age**

