

**October
2026**

www.halstead.u3asite.uk
halsteadu3athelink@gmail.com



Introducing u3a Rewind

Share your memories of the music and youth cultures that shaped your younger years in u3a's new learning activity.

What songs got you dancing? Which pop stars and groups of the day did you see live? What did you wear – mini skirts or flared trousers? Who inspired your style? Were you a hippie, a mod or a rocker? Did you listen to Radio Luxembourg or Radio Caroline on a £5.00 transistor radio from Woolworths? Help us to create a unique collection of u3a members experiences for everybody to reminisce and enjoy.

How to take part

Write down your memories – of the concerts, dances, songs, fashions, records, radio stations that defined your youth.

Submit any photographs that help tell your story – perhaps of yourself, an outfit, a concert, a favourite record, memorabilia or a place connected to your musical memories.

Suggest a song for the new u3a Rewind playlist now available on *Spotify* or *YouTube* and tell us why it matters to you. This could be a defining song of your youth, or just one that means a lot to you.

Submit your stories and photos, and suggest a song for the u3a rewind playlist

www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities/u3a-rewind.

When digging out those old photographs we would love you to share them with our members in a future issue of thelink
halsteadu3athelink@gmail.com



Christmas at our u3a
Full details of this year's celebrations –
lunch, party and outing – inside

Monthly Meeting

Child Gambler Wins Life Back!



As a ten year old school boy, our guest speaker at our October meeting, Paul Isherwood was lured by the magnetic pull of a four year gambling addiction but thankfully had a light bulb moment to seek help.

Now in his fifties, Paul Isherwood describes what it was like to be trapped into such a gambling addiction and how he managed, with help, to get rid of it – never having gambled again ever since.

A story which is both a warning, but also provides an uplifting message of hope for others, and comes highly recommended by many other u3as Paul has spoken at.

Doors open at the Queen's Hall at 10.00am. Please do not enter the hall until then in order to give our committee and helpers time to prepare the hall ready for the meeting.

IMPORTANT – CAR PARKING

Restrictions regarding car parking at the Queen's Hall mean that there are only limited spaces available. Unfortunately, all of these will be taken by the guest speaker, members of the committee and helpers who need to park at the hall as they have equipment to unload.

Except for a disabled space, regrettably this means that there will be no available spaces for members to park their cars. The nearest public car park is behind Sainsburys for which a pay and display ticket will be required. Alternatively, car parking for two hours is still free at Tesco in Weavers Court. However please note that your entry and exit times are now recorded on camera.

From our Chairman

Welcome to October!



Once again, we say "Where is the year going?"

The answer came to me rather rudely at the weekend when I was shopping with my grandchildren. It's heading towards Christmas and another year! The shops are full of Christmas clothes, cards and everything else that reminds us just how fast time passes. They wanted to buy Christmas pyjamas!

I hope you have had a good summer. I must admit that the temperatures were just too much and I found myself, for the first time ever, wishing for an end to summer.

We have had some very interesting speakers so far this year, again arranged by Patricia Bouchier. She is now working on next year's programme, so if you know anyone who you think would be a good speaker for our u3a please contact Patricia or any committee member.

I hope that those of you who joined us for our cream tea in June enjoyed yourselves. Our next event is the Quiz Night on Friday 30th October. Then our u3a gets into the Christmas spirit – we just can't get away from it, can we? Christmas outing on December 7th, Party on 11th and Lunch on 17th. Full details in this issue of **thelink**.

I would also like to remind you that if you know of any fellow member who is celebrating a BIG birthday or anniversary, or is currently unwell, please contact Christine Thomas or any committee member.

I hope to see you at our monthly meeting on 6th October

Well- could I resist? Especially knowing that if I asked them to wait till nearer the time that the shops would be sold out of everything they liked!



Christmas at our u3a

Celebrate the festive season with us!



For our seasonal trip this Christmas we are visiting Hever Castle in Kent, where you will step into the magic of Christmas as the enchanting story of the Nutcracker comes to life. Included in the day is entrance to the Castle and gardens, the Festive Trail at dusk plus an optional Christmas lunch in the Pavilion Restaurant.

Once you can tear yourself away from the attractive drawbridge (photo opportunity!), and the festive courtyard, inside the Castle you will find beautifully decorated wood panelled rooms with welcoming log fires, twinkling Christmas trees and displays enhanced by the Nutcracker theme. You will also experience a Tudor Christmas in the Boleyn Apartment.

The Christmas Lights and Trail start at dusk – around 4.00 pm. Experience the Castle, gardens and lake festooned with fabulous colours and twinkling lights. The trail begins in Drosselmeyer's workshop where the Nutcracker comes to life. See the Nutcracker and Clara battle the Mouse King before celebrating in the Land of Sweets with the Sugar Plum Fairy. Plenty of opportunities to photograph your favourite characters along the way!

There will be time to complete the day with a visit to the shop and a cup –of tea in the Moat Café before the journey home. In the grounds are a display of miniature model houses, accessed via the Hever shop, and a Military Museum.

Friday 4 December – Christmas At Hever Castle The Nutcracker Christmas

The cost for the coach, entrance and two-course meal in the Pavilion Restaurant is £60.00. Please state any dietary requirements at the time of booking. The Pavilion Restaurant is for pre-booked lunches only and includes a glass of mulled wine on arrival and tea/coffee after the meal. Guests are seated at large round tables, so many of our u3a friends can dine together. Alternatively, if preferred, lunch can be bought independently in the self-service Moat Café reducing the the cost for coach and entrance to £35.00 for seniors or £36.00 for adults.

Please note there is a 10–15 minute walk from the coach park to the restaurant, but buggies run some of the way, for those who prefer and only the ground floor is accessible to manual wheelchairs.

We will be leaving Butler Road, Halstead at 9.30am and travel direct to Hever arriving around 11.30am. Lunch is booked for 12.30pm in the Pavilion Restaurant leaving plenty of time to explore the Castle, grounds and trail before leaving at 5.00pm arriving back in Halstead between 7.00 and 7.30pm. Because of insurance restrictions the outing is only available to u3a members

Names and deposit will be taken at the October meeting and full payment must be paid at the November meeting either by cash or cheques, made payable to Halstead and District u3a.

Friday 11th December – Christmas Party

If you enjoyed our Cream Tea in June then make sure you come along to our Christmas Party – this time the caterers will be back with a scrumptious Christmas feast! Besides the food there will be seasonal entertainment plus the chance to pass on your Christmas greetings to fellow members

Full details including cost and time will be confirmed at the October meeting and in the November issue of **thelink**

Thursday 17th December

Christmas Lunch -1.00pm - Colne Valley Golf Club

As we had such a lovely time last year, we have once again booked our Christmas lunch at the Colne Valley Golf Club, Earls Colne. Booking will be taken at the October and November meetings together with a £10.00 deposit per person. This can be paid by cash, cheque or BACS. - details as follows:

Sort code: 20-97-40 Account no: 03988724 Account name: Halstead & District u3a **Reference:** Xmas lunch

Members will be able to sign up and pay the deposit at the October and November meetings. Menu choice and balance will be required by 30th November.

If you need to contact me my email address is maggie.butcher1@gmail.com or by phone 07525 465063



u3a QUIZ NIGHT

Friday 30th October
Queen's Hall
7.00 for 7.30pm start

Already over half the tables have been booked for our annual Quiz Night, but there is still room for members to form a team and Interest Groups to reserve a place for what should be a fun evening

We try and make the questions reasonably easy, covering a wide range of subjects from post codes to tv adverts! However the titles of the individual rounds can be a bit misleading – so take care when using your Joker to double your score!

Teams can consist of six or eight people and members are more than welcome to bring along non member friends and family (over 16 years of age). Where necessary Interest Groups can make up their team numbers with other u3a members or non members. Cost per team member is £5.00 which is collected from the tables at half time. Bring along your own drinks (alcoholic or otherwise) and nibbles, and don't forget to buy your raffle tickets.

Because of the number of people involved we can only accept entries from teams and regret that we no longer cannot accept entries from individual members – so form a team of your own either with other members or friends and family*

Make sure you register your team details including team name (which can be confirmed or changed on the night) plus contact name and telephone number at the October meetings or by email: halsteadu3athelink@gmail.com

All entries must be received by Friday 16th October

* *Christine Thomas has a spare place on her team, so contact her (01787 827593) if you would like to make up the numbers*



What a difference being a member of the u3a makes!

The Third Age Trust (u3a) has recently conducted a survey "u3a and me" which confirms that being a member of a u3a makes a big positive difference, and enriches our later lives especially as we "positively age".

Over 10,000 members were surveyed and confirmed that the u3a had improved their life (95%). Gave them opportunities to keep learning and stay curious (90%). Expanded their social connections (79%) and improved their wellbeing (77%). Members also reported that by joining a u3a it helped them stay physically and mentally active (66%) and had reduced the feeling of loneliness or isolation (45%).

The findings confirm that the u3a is already having a substantial impact on later life. Across the movement, members report continued learning, wider social connections and improved wellbeing.

Our u3a is now one of the largest organisations in the Halstead in the area. We live up to the theme of learn, laugh and live, with over 30 interest groups, social events and outings, and monthly meetings. However we still need to attract new members by explaining to them how joining can feel and what place it might have in their life – continued learning, wider social connections, improved wellbeing plus, if they wish, opportunities to contribute.

We should also make the first steps clearer – whether they can attend alone, whether they need previous knowledge and have to join an interest group, or what happens at the monthly meeting. The best people to explain all this are our members – especially you! Why not invite a friend or neighbour to come along to our next monthly meeting or be a member of your quiz team!

About the survey

The u3a and me survey was open for six weeks in early 2026 and received 10,485 responses. Respondents were asked about the impact of u3a on their lives, how they were involved, barriers to greater participation and what might encourage further involvement. For more information about the survey, contact: impact@u3a.org.uk

Ageism?

Jane Giffould on NOT growing old

What is this ageism thing? It seems to work on chronological age from the moment we pop out/get pulled out etc irrespective of the previous nine months. Yet it is scientifically shown that chronological age often does not tally with biological age. Just like cars 'age' at different rates, so do people. The education system works on age rather than capability. So children are lumped together and expected to learn at the same rate because they were born between certain dates. Someone born on 01 September is considered to be 1 year older than someone born on 31 August despite there being a day or less between them. Consider twins, first born on 31 August at 23.59 and the next on 01 September at 01.01. Two minutes difference but educationally 1 year difference.

Then in childhood the age requirements for different activities irrespective of the child. A bell ringer was telling me that 10 is the lowest age allowed for bell ringing, his 5 year old was very capable. In years gone by we were told that children would not be capable of CPR. My 5 year old was my demonstrator on an adult Ressuci-Annie showing it was possible for a 5 year old to do it well. Not all children want to rush ahead to be 'grown-up'. I did not want to be 10, into double figures and so expected to be more 'grown-up'. I loved being a child with my trains all over my bedroom floor interspersed with farm scenes and books. Why should I have to clear it up.

Teenagers are expected to be unruly, although the majority are not. I read an article to my teenage son which said that teenagers in single parent families seemed to be expected to do things such as smashing cars up. His response was to ask where the heavy mallet and the axe were. I kinked my finger over to the tool store in the hall. As he went there he decided that English homework was actually a priority. Although at the age of 20 he complained that now he was in his 20s he had to be responsible and not be unruly any more!

Birthdays being significant points have never bothered me. I ignored 21 because at the end of term at Uni my funds did not have enough for the required round of drinks for all. For my 40th apparently there had been a party arranged for that and for some group with which I was involved. However at that time I was busy with

the local drama group dealing with scenery and the Pied Piper's large number of rats. 20 years later a friend offered to take me out for a meal and I was checking my diary finding that a meeting on that date had been cancelled. He asked me if I knew the reason for taking me out, no I did not, he pointed out that date was my 60th birthday. My contribution was 'So what but am happy to have the meal!'

What does chronological age matter? At 70 my mother was upset that she could no longer be a magistrate yet she felt at the top and ready to do more years. 70 is also a time when we start having our driving licences reviewed. Yet as pilots this is done every two years irrespective of age. As our late Queen said: 'One is as old as one feels'. Having not been older than I am now so I do not know what it is like to be old! Plus 5 years ago my son gave me another 40 years to live and has not changed that 40!. Neither of us want to clear out my loft. He also comments that despite my range of cancers I am fitter than some younger people. Whilst when having a swollen foot, due to medication, the doctor had the cheek to say what did I expect at my age. The nurse, knowing me, looked worried! I pointed out to the doctor that he should compare both feet and that I was used to going out on my bike most days and that the swelling was a side effect of the medication and I needed something to deal with the side effect. He did back down!

Chronological age is merely an indication used to try and show what is expected and I am too busy to take any notice of it.



Jane on her 1,000 mile bike ride in the summer of 2021 raising money for Cancer Research UK