

U3A Harwich Peninsula

April 2026



A big thank you to everyone who has sent in articles, photographs, information, etc.

Please forward articles etc for the April newsletter by around 18th April. To Rita Rossini at Kramermarzulu@aol.com

Meetings

Speakers 2026 - Don't forget the meetings from January will be at the United Services Club, at the usual times.

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|-----------------------------|--|
| May 12th | AGM - 20th Anniversary of Harwich Peninsula U3A branch |
| June 9th | Eleanor Jenkins – The Life of a Tudor Housekeeper |
| July 14th | Naresh Jhali, Daine Boyd – Stroke Awareness Presentation |
| Sept 8th | Frances Boardman – Soldier, soldier, won't you marry me. |
| Oct 13th | Cherry Mullins – A Welsh Labour of Love |
| Nov 10th | Graham and Mary Brace -Wildlife of Brazil |

From the Chair

In May of this year, our U3A will celebrate its 20th Anniversary. We will celebrate this event at the AGM on 12th May. In order to involve as many members as possible we thought it would be nice if Group Leaders and members would tell us about their activities and their thoughts about our U3A. Just a few sentences or pictures would be lovely. There is plenty of time to prepare before the meeting. Please take part if you can. **Pauline Gronpw**

Please remember that subscriptions for the year are £25.00 and now due. If you have a standing order, you will need to change the amount with the bank. Cheques to Harwich Peninsula U3A, or bank transfers to Sort code 30-92-72 a/c 00679283. Your reference is your name.

Sheila Allen

Subscriptions: Paying by Cheque? Please print 'HARWICH PENINSULA U3A' and please also **print the date in numbers**. This is very helpful for processing the cheques, which need to be clearly readable. Many thanks **Moira Arthy**

Emergency Contact Details: Please provide your emergency contact details to Sheila Allen if you have not already done so. Or let Group Leaders aware of your emergency contact tel no. I have spare cards. **Sheila Allen**

HARWICH PENINSULA U3A AGM

NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE COMMITTEE FOR 2026

The following committee positions will be proposed and seconded at our Annual General Meeting on May 12th.

If you would like to nominate yourself, or another person, for any of these positions, please complete the Nomination Form, and hand to any current committee member before, or at the AGM on 12th May 2026

The current committee members have all agreed to stand again if required, but new volunteers are needed with fresh ideas. If you need further information before suggesting a nomination, please speak to any of our current committee.

Chairperson	(Pauline Gronow)
Vice Chairperson	(Carl Allen)
Treasurer	(Moira Arthy)
Membership Secretary	(Sheila Allen)
Secretary	(Jean Curtis)
Groups Co-ordinator	(Sue Stanley)
Newsletter Editor	(Rita Rossini)
Publicity	(Lynne Shelley)
General Committee Members	(Richard Flatt; Jill Riches)

HARWICH PENINSULA U3A

NOMINATION FORMS FOR ELECTION TO THE COMMITTEE 2026

I, (print name)

Volunteer to stand for election to the committee of Harwich Peninsula u3a from 12th May 2026.

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Scrabble Group

We meet every first and third week in the month, 2 – 4pm, at members' houses for a friendly game, we usually manage two games, a cuppa and a biscuit in the break. Between us we have three boards, and several dictionaries including those trixy two letter words.

You can email me at jeancurtisharwich@outlook.com, or via Sue Stanley.

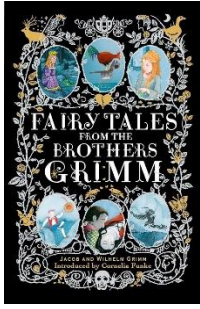
Jean Curtis

History 3 Update by Group leader Lynne Shelley

We have been looking at countries as a whole, covering a wide range of subjects & so far have done France & Spain. Last meeting we started looking at Germany. When we start a country, we have a free choice to pick any subject we fancy; could be a person; a city/town; building; food; clothes; traditions or celebrations. It was our first meeting on Germany & what a span of subjects we covered from x-rays to fairy tales! Here is a roundup of the facts which I hope you will find interesting – how many did you know about?



German physicist Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovered X-rays on November 8, 1895, at the University of Würzburg in Germany. While experimenting with cathode rays (via a Crookes tube) covered in black cardboard, he noticed a faint, green, fluorescent glow on a nearby screen, leading him to identify a new, penetrating, and previously unknown type of radiation.



The Brothers Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm, published *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales) starting in 1812, featuring over 200 German folklore stories. Famous tales include "Cinderella," "Snow White," "Hansel and Gretel," "Rapunzel," "Rumpelstiltskin," and "Little Red Riding Hood," often noted for being darker than modern versions.



Wartburg Castle is a medieval fortress in Thuringia, Germany, famously known as the refuge where Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German. Perched on a 410-metre precipice overlooking the town of Eisenach, it was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999 for its outstanding feudal architecture and historical significance.



Prince Albert (1819–1861), the husband of Queen Victoria, was born to Ernest I, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1784–1844) and Princess Louise of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1800–1831). His parents had a turbulent marriage, leading to their separation and divorce in 1826, after which his mother was exiled and never saw her children again.



Johannes Brahms was a German composer and pianist of the Romantic period, but he was more a disciple of the Classical tradition. He wrote in many genres, including symphonies, concerti, chamber music, piano works, and choral compositions, many of which reveal the influence of folk music.

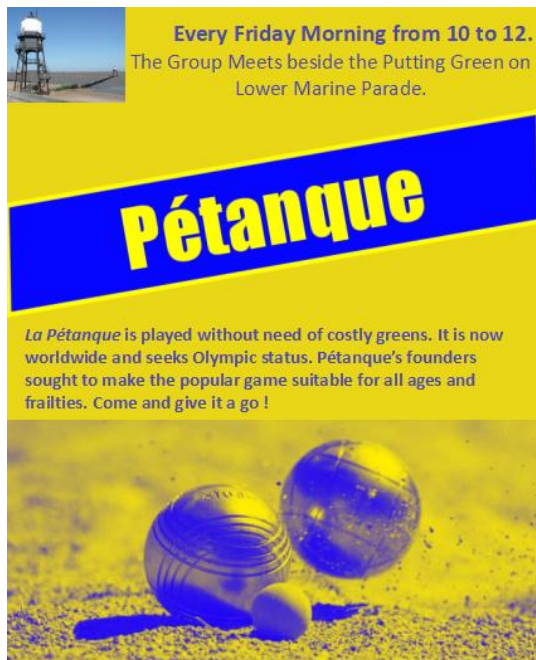


Saarland is Germany's smallest non-city state, tucked in the country's southwest corner on the borders with France and Luxembourg. The capital of Saarland, Saarbrücken, is a lively university city with a mix of historic charm and modern

flair. Highlights include the Ludwigskirche, a stunning baroque church, and the Saarbrücken Castle.

Lynne Shelley

U3A Boules Group



Stuart Smith

Walking the Cuckoo Trail

This is another 'Beeching Bonus' former railway line that is now a well maintained and accessible hard surfaced cycle, horse riding and walking trail. Running 14 miles between Eastbourne and Heathfield, the original railway line then continued on to Tunbridge Wells.

I discovered the walk whilst idly scrolling through the Ordnance Survey map app. and finding what looked like a possible former railway decided to investigate. I'm very pleased that I did, as the walk was a real joy. Along with most people, I began my walk at Polegate as the 3 miles from the start are not so pleasant walking alongside the busy A22.

Spending some time in Eastbourne in early spring I planned a series of walks to enjoy the South Downs National Park, and to start the Wealdway which is another long distance walk across both the High and Low Weald.

Starting near Hampden Park in Eastbourne the Cuckoo Trail winds its way through Polegate, Hailsham, Horam and north towards Heathfield. The railway was built to

join these communities, and local farms and businesses together. It was well used until the 1950s, when road haulage and private cars became more popular and the inevitable happened.

The railway was informally called the 'Cuckoo Line' after the annual Heathfield Cuckoo Fair. When building the Heathfield Tunnel (now closed) the railway company discovered the country's first natural gas deposit and soon put it to use to light the newly built railway station buildings. The find was eventually exploited commercially until it ran out in the early 1930s. The trail is popular with both local and through walkers and riders, and is mainly lined on both sides with trees which could have been a 'green tunnel,' but the day I walked the branches were still relatively bare. However, there were lots of early spring flowers and blossom including the unmistakable smell of wild garlic coming through and beyond the trees beautiful views across the Sussex countryside.



Fortunately there is some of the original railway infrastructure still remaining, including several beautiful old brick bridges, and a couple of former station houses and platforms. More recent introductions are 'art work', and outdoor gym and playground equipment along part of the route. The signage and mile marking are very good, as are the safe crossings where the trail crosses roads. I have

already earmarked the Cuckoo Trail for a possible winter walk when the fields are too wet and muddy.

Liz Smith

Lost and Found

It's not unusual to hear on the news of archaeological finds these days. In fact these discoveries are becoming quite frequent because of the need for SPPRPs. Have you heard of them? No?

You will have heard that the country is short of housing- too many people, too few homes. Well nowadays before you start a housing development you have to go through the Standard Planning Process for Residential Properties. Such a process was being carried out by a company called PRE-CONCEPT ARCHAEOLOGY near Thetford in Norfolk prior to the building of a new housing estate.

It was announced in January 2026 that they had discovered a major hoard. Representatives from Historic England, the Norfolk Museum Service and National Museum Scotland were working with PCA and were amazed by the find. So much so

that they dare not risk being too invasive. A large block of soil was removed and taken in a box to a nearby hospital for an X-ray and then for a CT scan before anyone was let loose with trowel or paintbrush to reveal the contents of the packed earth. The shapes on screen showed the fine details of a boar's head flag standard and a carnyx, along with a number of round boss shields dating back to the Iron Age, 2000 years ago. The carnyx is one of only three found in Britain and the flag standard the first ever to be found in Britain.

So what is a carnyx?

It's a large S shaped trumpet, the bell of which is like the open-mouthed head of a wild boar or other animal. It has a long angled tube designed to produce loud, harsh battle sounds. At 12 feet in height it would rise above the heads of the soldiers it was intended to motivate. Those closest to it would see a movable tongue inside the boar's mouth. Being played vertically the sound of the carnyx would carry far and wide.

The boar's head flag standard would carry the colours of a tribe. Alongside each other the carnyx and the flag standard would be seen and used to rally troops into battle. The presence of these objects near Thetford is very significant since the area was an important base for the Iceni people whose kingdom covered a large area of East Anglia spreading from North Norfolk to North Suffolk. Before the arrival and takeover by the Romans, Britain was ruled by a number of kingdoms. When the Romans conquered the majority of Britain in AD43 the Iceni kingdom was ruled by King Prasutagus. It became a Roman province and the king was allowed to continue his role. They were offered loans by the Romans but they were also taxed like Roman citizens.

This system operated until the death of King Prasutagus in AD59. The king's plan had been to split his kingdom between his wife Queen Boudicca and their two daughters and the Emperor Nero. However, under Roman law, women had no right to inherit their husband's property and the Romans refused to accept the king's plan and decided to rule the Iceni directly, to confiscate all the kingdom including the land belonging to the aristocracy. Furthermore, Queen Boudicca was publicly flogged and her two daughters raped to emphasise the power and superiority of the Roman Empire.

Detailed accounts of this period of history were published initially by Tacitus, a well known Roman historian, orator and senator, born in AD56. He was known for his sharp analysis of imperial power and the moral decline of the Roman Empire. He aimed for impartiality in his writing - his motto claimed that he wrote 'without anger or bias.'

In later years, another Roman, Cassius Dio, born in 165AD, wrote his account of the period in one of 80 volumes on the history of Rome. The two historians chronicle the events with some differences that may not be verified entirely.

Going back to my days in junior school, I remember the well-worn history textbook which we read through in class. There was a line drawing of Queen Boudicca, or Queen Boadicea, standing in her chariot with an arm raised in the air with troops around her. It was another fairy story. The statue on Westminster Bridge close to Big Ben would have impressed me more had I seen it in those days.

Nonetheless, Queen Boudicca was a heroine and Cassius Dio, wrote about this wild and clever woman who was tall, with waist-length tawny hair flying free, dressed in an outfit of 'divers colours.' She travelled around addressing her people. She challenged them with the choice

between freedom and slavery. Did they want their freedom back? Did they want to repay their loans to the Romans? It was time to strike back from Roman repression. In addition, she insulted Emperor Nero calling him as Dimitia, the female version of his true name Dimitius. She gathered support from the Iceni aristocracy who resented their obligations to Rome and formed a huge fighting force against the Romans.

There must have been an effective communication system because the revolt which took place between 60-61 AD occurred as Suetonius Paulinus was away from the area intent on expanding Roman territory to include Wales. He was so to speak Rome's Head of the Armed Forces.

Boudicca's number 1 target was Camulodunum or Colchester as we know it now. It was then an official Roman colony full of veteran soldiers who had pillaged the Iceni kingdom. There was a population of around 4,000 people at the time and there was no city wall. The Roman soldiers, the Legio 9th Hispanum were sent to defend the town but were overwhelmed by Boudicca's army. They holed up in the Temple of Claudius, the grandest and strongest building available to them. This would have enraged the Iceni who saw this ostentatious building as a reminder of Roman domination. Boudicca's army devastated the town.

Boudicca's number 2 target was Londinium which again had no fortifications and fell to the ferocity of Boudicca's attack.

The third target was Verulamium, now known as St Albans. Further destruction followed.

No doubt flushed with success, the Britons headed for Watling Street. By this time Suetonius Paulinus, Head of Armed Forces, had returned from the Isle of Anglesey. His army of 400 professional soldiers seemed inadequate to face Boudicca's army of an estimated 80,000 but his experience in battle was incomparable and the soldiers highly trained and equipped. A cleverly chosen battleground had the Romans on higher ground backed by thick forest. The Britons had to approach uphill with woodland on either side. The Romans were waiting at the top of this narrow stretch. Each Roman soldier had two javelins, one long, one short. These were used to devastating effect, first the lighter longer javelins were aimed at the Iceni then the shorter heavier ones. Those who survived the onslaught were finished off by the short swords which the Romans held to hand. The revolt was contained.

Tacitus claimed that Boudicca committed suicide after the defeat of the Iceni and Cassius Dio wrote that she became ill and died. Some accounts say she was buried secretly others that her funeral was known. Was she given a special funeral? Probably not since the Romans had quelled the revolt and could bring in their legions from other areas to overcome further resistance.

I wonder, could these remains found in 2026 have been used in the overthrow of Roman rule in Colchester, London and St Albans.

Were the soldier who blew the rallying sound of the carnyx and the standard bearer who waved the flag standing alongside Boudicca in the battles?

Were these symbolic objects buried in her honour? Were they buried as a tribute to the legendary heroine, Queen Boudicca?

We'll never know.

Jill Riches, January 2026

The Mirror.

Our sitting room becomes a place of magic for the day when our grandchildren arrive. When I open the front door after our bell has tunefully informed us a siege is about to occur, Lewis stands to attention dressed like a knight complete with one of his many swords. Grace stands shyly behind him resplendent in a pink sparkly long silk like dress, with a silver crown on her flowing blonde hair. Attached precariously on her back is a pair of feathery wings.

What wonderful outfits parents can buy these days for their young children. In my day I had to get the singer sewing machine out, and rummage through all my old materials and use my imagination and limited sewing skills. On Grace's small feet are high heeled pink shoes, she is holding a wand with a star covered in diamonds. How cute I thought

"Welcome oh knight and your princess to your kingdom. Enter the way is safe. The drawbridge is up". I curtsy. I soon get into the pageantry and theme for the day. I had always aspired to be an actress. Not to be! Lewis is wearing a pair of replica chain mail gloves; he has always had a penchant for gloves. Spider man gloves, gloves for riding his bike. A pair for every occasion. I get into their world of imagination and make believe with ease.

Lewis or should I say Sir Galahad lifts his princess up and carries her into our sitting room and places her gently onto a chair.

"Grace this could be your throne. Can you help me build our castle, take your shoes off first or you will fall over".

The sofa is dismantled; heavy feather filled cushions are lifted by Grace and Lewis to become the side walls of their castle. Throws are carefully placed on top of the walls to create the roof - what inventive architects they were, Thomas Telford the Scottish civil engineer would have been proud of their organisational skills.

"Gran, can you get your clothes horse please we need the roof higher so we can both get into our castle".

I jumped to attention and scuttled off to get my clothes horse which at the moment was full of my drying washing, it used to be repurposed for all manner of building constructions when my children were young. Mainly tents and wigwams.

How lucky am I to behold this scene once more. In front of our sofa now the castle is a large padded chest upholstered in the same material. This has now become the ramparts of the castle. Lewis is atop of it and swinging his sword from side to side to stem an onslaught of soldiers determined to invade his castle and harm his princess. He watches himself in the mantelpiece mirror that hangs on the wall behind the sofa, trying to keep his balance but still looking at himself in an appreciative manner.

Sir Galahad wins the day and asks his princess to dance with him to celebrate his victory. Princess Grace joins Sir Galahad on the ramparts her wings fluttering, and her crown dropping to the ground as Sir Galahad lifts her off her shoeless feet swinging her around in circles. I clap with such exuberance.

“Three cheers for Sir Galahad. Are you ready for your feast in the grand hall?”

“Yes please, can we have vienetta too?”

The smell of burgers and onions percolate the kingdom of make believe.

I kiss the princess on her forehead she tastes of marshmallows and Dove soap. The knight tastes of his Dad’s aftershave. The mirror has watched them over the years grow up and celebrate Halloweens, Easters and birthdays. Spying always unnoticed on their unfolding lives. Galahad has today become engaged to his very own Princess. Lewis still cannot resist a glimpse in the mirror even in his 20’s, adjusting his head of lovely thick hair.

Grace laughs as I recall their theatrical plays in bygone days. The bond between the 2 siblings is still as strong, and if anyone was to hurt his sister he would be straight back into Sir Galahad mode.

They say a mirror doesn’t lie, “but who is this old girl I see before me?”

Jenni Whitmarsh September 2025.



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