

TIPTREE BULLETIN

News on all aspects of our u3a plus a bit more

October/November 2025



Somewhere over the rainbow - early autumn on Grove Road

From the editor

Dear Members

Welcome to the October/November edition of your Tiptree u3a newsletter: Tiptree Bulletin! You have probably noticed that you haven't been getting a Bulletin lately. Hopefully, we have now solved our technology and editorial difficulties and normal service has been resumed. Many, many apologies to anyone who has submitted material for the newsletter over the past year, but which you have not seen being used. Some of this material is unfortunately not recoverable, but if I can get any back, I will try to include it. In this edition of your newsletter, we have news of our Annual General Meeting with a message from our retiring Chair: Peter Ballard, news from some of our interest groups, some information from our national u3a body and notices for members - especially useful for those of you who cannot get to our monthly branch meetings. On top of that, we have some items of more general interest and some photos of members out and about doing what they do in their groups. Don't forget, this is your newsletter and it would be lovely to hear from you. If you have anything you want to put in - from letters to the editor, jokes and recipes, photos, suggestions for our branch, celebrating and announcing a special birthday or the arrival of a new family member to sharing knowledge of an upcoming event of interest to our members - please do get in touch and email me your item at tiptreeu3amsec@gmail.com The deadline for contributions to the next edition (which will be the December/January edition) is **1st December 2025**.

Best wishes

Alison

Members attending our 2025 AGM



News of the AGM and October monthly meeting:

Message from our retiring Chair - Peter Ballard:

I have been a committee man for years and in that time, I have sat on big committees and small committees, been a trustee of charitable committees and seen a wide range of committee types. Most recently, I have enjoyed being Chair of Tiptree u3a this year, although I have not been able to do as much as I wished, so now I feel that it is time for me to retire from committee life and pass the baton on to new people. I want to say a thank you to the members of our committee and in particular to my Vice Chair David who has been a rock this year. I also want to thank the unsung heroes who help the smooth running of our meetings here - without them, we wouldn't have the PA technology, the hall set up for us and the tea we enjoy at the end. I will still be a member of the u3a, but will be able to sit back and relax. Finally, thank you to all our lovely members.

- *I'm sure that I am not the only member who wishes to thank Peter for his work as our chair this year and wish him well, ed.*

October branch meeting:

Membership of our branch runs from the beginning of October to the end of September each year and our AGM is always held on the 3rd Thursday of October as part of the monthly meeting and is open to all current members. This year, 86 members attended the AGM. That is just one in five members which is a little disappointing, but thank you to all those who did come along and vote for your new committee members. A list of who's who on the new committee is at the end of this edition of Bulletin; if you are looking at those names and thinking "I don't know who that is," then do come and say hello at one of our meetings. We are the ones wearing the lanyards with our names attached -it's always nice to put a face to the name. Minutes of the AGM will be available once published.

Incoming Chair, David Keiller, welcomed members to the meeting and gave announcements for the month, including fire evacuation information as requested by the hall staff. David then introduced the speaker: Judith Hood, who spoke about her lived experiences as a medium and the types of spirits she has encountered over the years. Her talk was enjoyed by most of her audience, and many of the members also enjoyed speaking to her one to one at tea-time.

Details of our next branch meeting together with upcoming events can be found on the events page below and also on our website <https://tiptree.u3asite.uk/>

News from the groups:

Local History Group

The Local History Group has over 100 members with an average of 48 members attending the meetings. Indoor meetings involve a u3a member or visiting speaker talking about an aspect of the history of Essex and its people.

Forthcoming meetings:

Thursday 6 November 2pm St Luke's Hall

Tim Howson - 'Timber-framed houses in Essex: 1270-1840'.

Tim is an architectural historian and Principal Conservation and Heritage Officer with Maldon Council. He will give an overview of how the design of timber-framed houses changed over time and take us through some local case studies.

Thursday 4 December 2pm St Luke's Hall

Patrick Denney - 'Life in Edwardian Colchester'.

Local historian and author Patrick will give an illustrated talk on Colchester's Edwardian past. An expert on the history of the city, Patrick's talks are always full of carefully researched interesting facts and stories.

For more information, or to join the group, please contact the group organiser Phil George. philgeorge@btinternet.com

Short walks:

Over the past year, we have walked routes around the immediate area of Tiptree and ventured further afield to Heybridge Basin, Hanningfield Reservoir and Abberton Reservoir. Members enjoy a walk in the fresh air on the 4th Thursday morning of each month, while chatting and catching up on the latest news with friends. We often pause along the way and take photos or stop for a quick cup of coffee. If you would like to join the group, please contact Mike Pattenden on pattendenm@hotmail.com

News from the groups:

Knitting and Crochet Group

The Knitting and Crochet Group welcomes those who want to get back into knitting and crochet or wish to learn from scratch.

We are a friendly group who normally meet at Perrywood's Restaurant. This gives an opportunity to order a drink and cake while meeting! The group is split into two. One meets the 2nd Monday at 2pm, the other the 4th Monday at 2pm. It is not possible to attend the other group if you happen to miss your group that month.

You can make items for yourself or perhaps, as some members do, donate them to a charity or hospital. Recent donations include 30 blankets and 7 hats sent to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Southampton Hospital, and 36 blankets, 77 bonding squares, and 5 matinee coats to Addenbrookes Hospital. Here are some of the items we made:



The Knitting Group has room for more members. For more information contact the group organiser Carolynn George philgeorge@btinternet.com

News from the groups:

Tai Chi:

The Tai Chi group goes from strength to strength. Currently, we have 86 members across three groups meeting at St Luke's Hall. We celebrated u3a week at the end of September by doing a half an hour "flow" of moves on the green by the duckpond on a bright Tuesday morning. It was lovely to exercise on the green in the fresh air with the ducks quacking in the background.

Tai Chi is a very gentle form of exercise for both your body and your brain: the moves we do use both arms, legs and body and learning each set of actions helps your brain to form new neural connections, which are strengthened every time you practice a move. The music we use helps to keep the pace slow and measured, so as you concentrate on what your body is doing, you can let go of the usual stresses of your daytime schedule (did I remember to send that birthday card? Get something out of the freezer for dinner? Tell my son that I got his message?). So Tai Chi also provides you with a bit of relaxing "me time" in your day. If you want to come along and give it a go, please contact me at alijanlaw@gmail.com or just turn up at one of the sessions - you will be very welcome.



Tai Chi by the duckpond

News from the groups:

Long Walks:

The Tiptree U3A Long Walking group celebrated u3a week by doing a walk around Tiptree on 25th September 2025. This was a guided tour led by our local historian Elaine Bamford. We started at the centre of Tesco's walkway and set off towards our first stop along Church Road looking at photos of various shops past and present. We moved on via Tiptree United Reform church then on through Wilkins estate towards Tiptree playing fields. We then moved on towards Maldon passing Tiptree duck pond and finally finishing up at The Ship where we had lunch.

Here we are at Grove Road playing fields.



And ready for our lunch:



National u3a information: u3a.org.uk

Your £15 membership fee gets you much more than just a monthly meeting and access to a range of groups. The u3a is a national organisation and browsing around the website (address above) shows you how much more there is. Here is a brief round-up of what's going on nationally this month:

- ❖ u3a has won an award! The Third Age Matters magazine, which many of us have delivered regularly, was runner-up and won a "Highly commended" award in the recent Memcom awards. If you don't get the magazine and would like a copy, contact Alison tiptreeu3amsec@gmail.com and if you want to read the magazine but don't want all that paper through your letterbox to recycle later, you can read the magazine on the u3a website. Go to the address from the banner at the top of this page and follow the links.
- ❖ The annual short story competition is now closed but look out for next year's competition to get planning for that. And you can still read the winning and shortlisted entries from this year's essay competition. *(I'm not blowing my own trumpet here, but mine is one of them! I was thrilled and totally surprised to be shortlisted. Just goes to show, if you give it a go, you never know what might happen - ed)*
- ❖ The "Still got it" Photography project is still accepting submissions for the gallery and the Art Gallery welcomes themed submissions each month. Look on the website for the next theme.
- ❖ November's free online courses ranging from Geology to AI, Yoga to How to use your Smartphone better are available for booking. See the website for details.
- ❖ 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." Bookings for accommodation and tickets opens soon, and if you'd like to volunteer at u3a Festival 26, please get in touch via festival@u3a.org.uk

Two terrible jokes from my youngest son:

When is it bad luck to see a black cat?

When you are a mouse

What's black and white and eats like a horse?

A zebra

Local information:

- From the parish council: Isabel Weeks-Hankins is the Tiptree Parish Council Communication Officer. You can contact her with comments, views or anything for the community of Tiptree on commsofficer@tiptreeparishcouncil.gov.uk
- Don't forget to book your flu jab if you have not already had it and if you are over the age of 75, you are also eligible for a free Covid jab. Some of us are entitled to a Shingles jab too - the surgery can book these for you.
- Essex Sight is an organisation offering support for those living with sight loss. They can help with day to day problems which arise when your vision is poor and they run events and meetings to help the visually impaired feel less isolated. You can contact them on 01206 548196 or by email at: services@essexsight.org.uk if you or a loved-one would benefit from their support.
- Tiptree library is undergoing some major works this autumn, designed to make the library a more comfortable place for visitors while also becoming more environmentally sustainable. The library will remain open but the opening hours will be changed for about 8 weeks. During November and December, the library will be open on Mondays 9am-7pm and Saturdays 9am-5pm.
 - Please do use your library - so many communities have lost their library facilities because fewer people go there - if you don't use it, you lose it!

We all know about the dangers of scams and are often worried about the possibilities of identity theft, loss of money or viruses in our computer. These are going to be so varied and become so much more common that the best way to deal with them is to develop resilience and recognise when something isn't quite right. Don't answer phone calls on your mobile that start with an offshore number (unless you are expecting a call from abroad). Don't open attachments, random requests or unsolicited videos that you were not expecting. Do learn to use digital ID and biometrics for ultimate unique access as these safely encrypt your data. **Age has absolutely nothing to do with being tech savvy or not** and if you think you ought to brush up your tech skills, look at some of the courses offered by national u3a to help you tackle these worries with confidence.

Social events and branch meetings:

The social events team organised a celebratory Fish and Chip lunch for members at the end of u3a week. This proved very successful with 88 members attending and enjoying lunch together. Here is just one of many photos of members at the event:



By the time you read this, we will probably be about to meet for our wonderful Quiz of the Decades on 30th October, organised by Phil George and a sell-out as usual.

The November meeting will be on Thursday 20th November, when the speaker will be osteopath Dan Trussler on the issue of arthritis and living in a strong and healthy body.

After that, our next celebration will be at the regular branch meeting in December. This will be our Christmas party with entertainment and party food. Set to be bigger and better than ever before, this event is free to all members, so make a note of the date on your calendar now: Thursday 18th December. Doors open at 1.30pm.

Of more general interest...

We all know the importance of keeping our minds active in the “third age” of life and you might also know that we are as good at learning new things now as we were in our youth - you can actually teach an old dog new tricks! This section of Bulletin is all about that and we welcome any contributions to this page, so get your ideas coming in. Meanwhile, here are a few bits and pieces chosen by your editor to get you started.

Local places:

Find the names of the 8 towns and villages hidden in the grid

T	O	L	T	H	T	B	R	I	N
O	O	I	P	A	O	I	M	H	L
L	C	T	I	P	T	R	E	E	L
L	I	T	H	M	M	C	S	P	A
E	E	S	M	A	H	H	S	A	H
S	U	N	A	L	M	A	I	L	N
B	A	R	R	D	A	S	N	F	E
U	B	F	R	O	H	U	G	R	V
R	I	V	N	N	C	M	O	E	I
Y	F	E	E	R	I	N	G	A	R

Puzzle to solve:

A farmer goes to town and buys a hen, a sack of grain and a hunting dog. On his way home, he has to cross a river and he keeps his little boat tied up ready to cross. Unfortunately, the boat can only carry one of his purchases at a time across the river, and he has a problem. If he takes the dog and leaves the hen with the grain, it will eat all his grain. If he takes the grain first, the dog will eat the hen. If he takes the hen first, the other two will be fine together, but what after that? He will have the same problem: take the dog next and the hen will be eaten, take the grain second and the hen will eat that while he fetches the dog. Work out what he needs to do to get all three of his purchases safely across the river in his boat.

Answers are on the back page

Season's Eatings

As the autumn got under way, I watched pumpkins being harvested in a field near Heybridge. I'm sure that the minds of many said "Hallowe'en" when they saw the trailers full of vivid orange globes, but I have to say that my mind thought "Yum! Soup". The best pumpkin soup ever was made for me by my wonderful husband, Malcolm. He used to make this soup every autumn, especially in November when everyone else ignored the pumpkins still in the supermarket, and some of this nectar went into the freezer to get us through the winter months with something warming at the end of chilly days on the coast of North Wales. So here it is:

Malcolm's Pumpkin and Ginger Soup

You need: a pumpkin of any size, an inch of fresh ginger root, some ground ginger, vegetable stock, salt and pepper to season, a bit of double cream or milk.

Scoop out the flesh from a pumpkin and chop it into small chunks (keep the seeds so that next year, you can grow your own pumpkins).

Put the pumpkin chunks into a large saucepan with enough stock to just cover it. If you don't make your own stock, use water and a stock cube. Heat very gently over the lowest possible heat, and simmer until soft but not mushy, stirring occasionally. Don't let it boil.

When the pumpkin is tender, add an inch of peeled chopped fresh ginger root and blitz it with a stick blender or in a food processor. Alternatively, mash it with a potato masher, until smooth. Taste your mix and season with salt and pepper. You might want to adjust the amount of ginger now too according to the size of your pumpkin and you can add ground ginger to help develop the flavour at this point. How gingery it tastes is completely up to you. If you have too much liquid, drain some off, if you have too little liquid, add a bit, but you want this soup to be thick rather than runny. Re-heat when you want to eat it and swirl in a bit of double cream - or milk if you don't have any cream in the fridge - to make it extra luscious and indulgent. Get cosy and eat your soup with freshly baked bread.

Bon appetit!

Fun fact: did you know that there are more than 200,000 species of fungus already identified by scientists and they reckon that there are more than 2 million yet to be identified. 15,000 different types of fungus can be found in the UK.

Why was the mushroom invited to so many parties?

Because he is a fun guy to be with.

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Members' page: email your contribution to tiptreeu3amsec@gmail.com

A very warm welcome to our newest members: Maggie, Bob, Jo, Heather, Gill, Emma and Val all joined us in October. Hope you are enjoying your membership and have found some fun at group meetings.

Goodbye and thank you for all that you did for Tiptree u3a to Debbie and Silvan - we will miss you and wish you all the best in your new home.

Hope you are on the mend now, Mike, and we look forward to seeing you back among us soon.

If you want to send wishes, congratulations, thanks or kind thoughts to one of our members, email me and I'll put them in the next edition.

We have been out and about asking members to tell us what they think is the best thing about being retired. Here are a few of their replies:

Not having to go to work 🤗 time now is my own and how I wish to use it. *Peter*

Flexibility, I meant in terms of time, but now I come to Tai Chi, I'm more physically flexible too! *Ray*

Time - although there is never enough of it to do all I want. How did we find time to fit in going to work too? *Ann*

Time to live your life. *Emma*

Not having to get up early to go to work. *Jan*

Not having the long, annoying commute every day. *Fran*

Meeting new people. *Sue*



In the next edition of Bulletin, we are asking: **what is your earliest memory?** Send your answers to me at the email address at the top of the page, and I'll put some of them on this page.

A few more pictures of our members having fun:



Long Walks group out in Tiptree

Members enjoying the fish and chip lunch



The Sewing and Patchwork group get to grips with Christmas fabric to make a patchwork Father Christmas. Here's the work in progress. Finished item in a future edition to admire!



Short walk to Pod's wood in the warm spring sunshine happily remembered!

Send in your photos for inclusion in our next edition - it's great to see what we are all up to in the different groups.

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Hold the back page:

Who's who on the committee:

Chair - David Keiller tiptreeu3achair@gmail.com

Treasurer - Jill Pankhurst tiptreeu3atreas@gmail.com

Secretary - Jan Elliott tiptreeu3asec@gmail.com

Publicity and IT - Carole Harvey tiptreeu3aweb@gmail.com

Assistant Treasurer - Peter Outen tiptreeu3aatreas@gmail.com

Membership Secretary - Alison Lawrence tiptreeu3amsec@gmail.com

Groups Co-ordinator - Mike Pattenden tiptreeu3agroups@gmail.com

Social Secretary - Carol Davis tiptreeu3asocsec@gmail.com

Speaker Finder - Doreen Monk

Members without portfolio - Les Long, Maddie Thompson

u3a phone number 07801 684915, answered by Alison and available Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Quiz answers:

T	O	L	T	H	T	B	R	I	N
O	O	I	P	A	O	I	M	H	L
L	C	T	I	P	T	R	E	E	L
L	I	T	H	M	M	C	S	P	A
E	E	S	M	A	H	H	S	A	H
S	U	N	A	L	M	A	I	L	N
B	A	R	R	D	A	S	N	F	E
U	B	F	R	O	H	U	G	R	V
R	I	V	N	N	C	M	O	E	I
Y	F	E	E	R	I	N	G	A	R

The farmer takes the hen across and comes back. Picks up the bag of grain and takes it across, bringing the hen back with him. He picks up the dog, leaving the hen behind and takes the dog across. Comes back to pick up the hen and finally takes that across. All three safely across the river.



u3a
Tiptree

learn,
laugh,
live

No longer working full-time or raising a family?
Now's the time to make the most of life. **u3a**
gives you the chance to develop your
interests, make new friends and enjoy yourself.

Contact Tiptree u3a
w: <https://u3asites.org.uk/tiptree>
e: tiptreeu3asec@gmail.com
t: 07801 684 915
facebook.com/groups/TiptreeU3A

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