

South Woodham Ferrers



Quarterly Newsletter - Winter & Spring Edition



Flower Arrangement from Gardening Groups December Meeting

Newsletter N° 191

From the Chair

I hope you are all doing well and now we are into 2024 and we can already see the days getting (slightly) longer, I think it does make a difference.

As we go into February, just an observation that 2024 is a leap year, and, did you know that February 29th is also known as "Bachelors Day" or "Ladies Privilege" The tradition that a woman could propose marriage to a man on that date is based on the legend of St Bridget and St Patrick from the 5th century in Ireland. (More info available from the ever-present Google).

Some of our new groups have already had their first meetings and I'm informed that they show a lot of promise. It's not too late to join them (or our other groups). There's more information on all the groups in this newsletter, but you can also ask Allen, our Groups Coordinator, or look at the info on our website.

At our meeting this Wednesday, (February 6th), the talk will be about Theatrical Costumes by Amanda Southerland, which should be very interesting. I'm assured that there will be no pressure to try dressing up, but I'm sure it will be very interesting, and I look forward to seeing you there.

The full list of speakers and topics for the year is on our website under events: <https://u3asites.org.uk/sth-woodham-ferrers/events>

As well as Amanda, we have invited representatives from Barclays bank to give a short presentation before the break about staying safe online. This will be before the tea-break, and they will be available for one-on-one questions over tea. **NOTE**, this is not about closing their branch or cashpoint in SWF so please, no questions about that. They will obviously be focused on what Barclays are doing, but I'm sure it applies to all the banks.

If you have any questions, comments, or observations about our U3A and how we, the committee are doing, please do let us know. Our email addresses are on our website or come and chat to us at the meeting - we're the ones wearing the blue Lanyards. There's more information in the newsletter about how we're trying to make the committee meetings more transparent.

David Hayes, Chair SWF U3A

Useful contacts:

The **Silver Line** is a free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This is run by Age UK. www.thesilverline.org.uk 0800 470 8090 (free call)

From the Committee

We plan to make the committee news item a regular part of the quarterly newsletter to keep you informed about what is happening in our u3a and to give you more of an idea about what we do. We are often asked what is involved in being a committee member. In order for the safe, smooth and efficient running of our u3a, there are many interesting and rewarding jobs that have to be undertaken by members of the committee. All committee members are trustees of our u3a, responsible for ensuring the u3a is managed in a responsible way, acting in the best interests of the u3a and in a way which supports its charitable status. That might sound a bit daunting, but we all work together and support each other, and national u3a are there to provide advice and training.

From April, we will be opening the committee meetings to members who may be interested in how the committee works and what we do. You would not be able to participate, it would be just to see how we do things. Because of space limitations, we are limited to 4 members per meeting. Please let one of the committee know if you are interested. We meet on the 3rd Friday of the month from 2-3.30pm in CMH.

The main focus of the last quarter, in addition to our regular monitoring of finances, how the main meeting went, membership, the website, to name a few of the regular agenda items, has been to expand the number of interest groups. The Groups Co-ordinator has been busy facilitating the setting up of three new groups, Dog Walking, Gin 2 and the Ukulele group and restarting the Photography and Science and Technology groups. It is good to see more groups for our members to enjoy.

Our Social Secretary, Mary Brindley has done a brilliant job organising events, but it is a lot of work for one person. We would like to form a small social committee to organise social events, so we are asking for volunteers to join Mary. Please speak to Mary or another committee member if you would like to be part of that.

If you have any ideas, want to observe our monthly committee meetings, want to join the social committee, or want to set up a new interest group then please let us know. All committee members wear a blue lanyard and badge at the main meetings so we should be easy to find or you can find our contact details on the website.

The Committee

New Facebook Group - South Woodham Ferrers u3a

If you are on Facebook do come and join the group and add comments or photos. Please make sure that you have permission from people to share the photo on social media.

Ann Woolley

Remaining Speakers for 2024

February	Amanda Sutherland - Theatrical costumes
March	Terry Hiscock - The history and influences of popular music up to and including the 50s and 60s. ***
April	Lindsay Whitehouse - A line of duty
May	Peter Guide - Changing Rooms
June	Andrew Baker - Greatest post war leader?
July	Fran Sandham - Solo walk across Africa
August	Douglas Gee - Mister Gees
September	Sue Coleman - Snakes aren't sneaky
October	Lucy Allen - Witches
November	Commonwealth war graves commission
December	Eve Regelous - It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

*** Chage from any previously published list.

Cluster Group

Don't forget that our u3a is a member of the Maldon and District Cluster Group and that it allows you to join any of their activity groups not offered by our u3a, provided there are vacancies. To see what activity groups are being run by the u3as in the cluster group follow the link given below:

<http://www.maldonu3a.co.uk/activitygroups/ClusterGroupActivitySchedule.pdf>

Social Activities

Plans are underway for our Summer Social Event to be held on Tuesday June 25th. Please put this date in your diaries.

The plan is for a coach to pick us up and take us to Lodge's Coaches at the Easters. Here we will be given a talk and shown around the Museum and have a Ploughman's Lunch. After this we will be given a ride in a Vintage coach. I will confirm details as and when I get them.

For a visit to the Lodge Coaches website please take the link below.

<https://www.lodgecoaches.co.uk/museum-tour>



Lodge Coach Museum

Mary

News from the Groups

Bowling Group

Hi everyone, may I start by wishing you all a safe, healthy, and happy New Year from everyone in the U3A bowling group. We have had a very eventful year but not all of it positive. Some of our members have experienced illness during the year but thankfully most of them have made a good recovery. Long may this continue. Despite this, most of us have managed to improve our game and some of us have reached quite impressive scores. Jean West got her very best score of 143 and my husband Brian Hurrell achieved a fantastic 161. I, myself, also managed my best score ever of 185, of which, I was rather proud! Even our newest

and least experienced members have all improved, even when we have had a bad game it matters not, as everyone is always so supportive and has such fun! There is always lots of cheering and laughs. In fact, I sometimes wonder that we are not asked to keep a bit quieter! Our year culminated in our Christmas lunch, which was held at the bowling alley and was a great success. I made mince pies to share with the group at coffee time, and our Christmas meal was absolutely delicious! I also wrote a bowlers Christmas poem in which I gave every group member, a jovial name to summarise their Bowling styles, and this went down very well - rather like the food! We finished off by awarding our annual trophy for the most improved bowler. Everyone sends me their private nomination and the person with the most votes wins. I was highly embarrassed to discover that this year the award went to me! However, I was very touched and grateful for the support of all the other group members. This was especially the case when they presented me with a thank you present for my efforts during the year. Totally unnecessary as it is such a pleasure to run this group and I look forward to more laughs and improved scores this year.

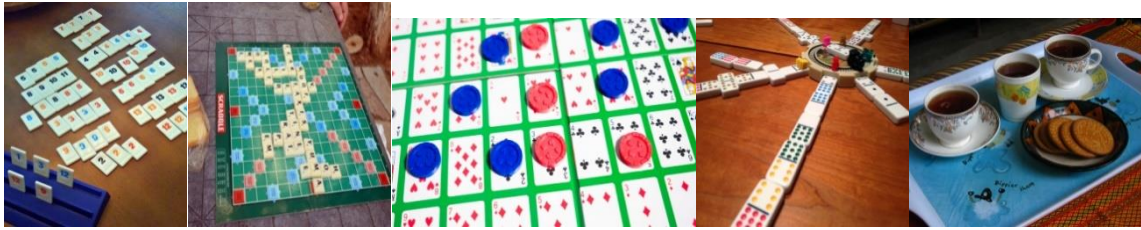


Christmas Lunch

As always, I would love to have new members to the group, but unfortunately, I am full at the moment. However, if you are interested in joining us, please let me know and I can add you to my waiting list.

Diane

Cards and Games



Firstly, Happy New year to all.

The Cards and Board Games are a friendly group who enjoy getting together to play a variety of games, there is a lot of laughter amid the competitiveness and concentration of whatever game is being played.

For our Christmas get together we changed the format to a Christmas Quiz which was put together by our resident Quiz Master Eileen who I must say did a wonderful job.

We sampled a couple of new games last year including Mexican Train and Linkee. We are always looking for new and interesting games to play so I imagine 2024 will produce a few new surprises. I already have a couple to take to the group when we meet in January.

So, from numbers, words, strategy and brain teasers and not forgetting refreshments an afternoon of fun is had by all.

If anyone wishes to join us on the 4th Wednesday of each month then please give me a call on 01245 401015 or 07931 559909

Kay Miles

Eco Group

Our group meets on the 4th Monday of the month. Last year we found out about a lot of different topics - solar panels, electric cars as well as enjoying some plant-based foods. This year we want to do things! I have applied for funding from Mister Gees Foundation for some recycling boxes to enable us to recycle medicine blister packs. We wait to hear if that is successful. We are compiling a list of shops or other outlets where there is a public recycling point for instance contact lenses at the Observatory and Bayfields, crisp packets at the Co-Op, printer cartridges at Ahead4, as well as the recycling offered by the big supermarkets and our recycling centre (please see details of recycling at Sainsbury's below). If anyone knows of anything either in SWF or locally (Wickford, Chelmsford, Maldon) please drop me an email. I will also start

recycling Marigold gloves and their plastic packaging from March. Note that it can only be Marigold gloves.

Recycling at Sainsburys (in plastic bag bin to the left of entrance doors)

All items should be clean and free of food.

All sticky labels removed where possible.

All sticky labels removed where possible

Yes please

- ✓ **Dry food flexible plastic**
Bread, Cereal, Rice & Dry food bags
Confectionery, Biscuit & Cake wrappers
Crisp & Snack packets
- ✓ **Other food flexible plastic**
Cheese wrap, Peelable film lids & Frozen food bags
Fruit, Vegetable, Salad bags & Flower wrapping
Multipack film wrap, Clingfilm & Sleeves on bottles
- ✓ **Pouches & Sachets**
Coffee, Confectionery, Homecare, Sauce pouches
Baby, Pet food & Microwaveable food pouches
Toiletries refill pouches, packets & sachets
- ✓ **Non-food flexible plastic**
Carrier bags, Clothing bags, Bubble wrap
Magazine & Newspaper wrappers
Toilet roll & Kitchen roll wrapping

No thanks

- ✗ Disposable gloves or masks
- ✗ Compostable or biodegradable bags & wrapping
- ✗ Foam or polystyrene of any kind
- ✗ Medical blister packs
- ✗ General litter or rubbish

Recycle at Home

- ✗ Rigid plastic bottles, pots, tubs or tray packaging
- ✗ Glass, paper, cardboard, metal packaging

We are hoping to organise something for Great Big Green Week, a national event which is being held from 8th-16th June. More about that when we know what!

Tip for the month:

- Wash your hands under the cold tap! Quite often the hot and cold pipes are next to each other and the water in the cold pipe will come out warm to start with.

Ann Woolley (ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com)

Find Your Voice

On Wednesday 13th December, the choir was invited to sing with the pupils at Elmwood Primary School. Despite various illnesses, a few of us enjoyed the morning performing Christmas music. The children were very polite and complimentary and Mrs Maidment, the head, invited us back in the summer.

If anyone would like to join this group, there is no audition and we'd be pleased to see you at the Village Hall on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 10am.

Shirley

Gardening

On Monday 11th December we were lucky enough to have Kate Smith come and demonstrate how to create floral arrangements suitable for the Christmas table.



Two Arrangements from December Meeting

Our gardening event in January was once again held at Champions Manor Hall. Roger Hance showed pictures and told us about wildflowers and orchids. Afterwards we enjoyed cakes provided by the members.

The following events have been booked for 2024:

February 12 th	Champions Manor, Ed Hughes. The 3 history of the National Garden Scheme £5
March 11 th	Blunts Hall. Braintree £10
April 8 th	Cedar Avenue, Wickford £8
May 13 th	Coach trip to Eltham Park £21 or £31 for non English Heritage members
June 10 th	Allways, Rochford £10
July 8 th	59 East St, Coggeshall £10

August 12 th	207 Mersea Rd, Colchester £8
September 9 th	Rhona's garden
October 14 th	Saling Hall, Dunmow £10
November 11 th	Garden Centre and Lunch
December 9 th	Indoor meeting at Champions Manor

Shirley and Mary

Gin Appreciation Group 1

We rounded off our year with a very enjoyable evening at Bar Vino with Gin tastings and cheese and meat platters. We were our usual noisy selves.

Alas the New Year did not start well as Storm Heck crashed in and we thought it too dangerous to go ahead. Gin legs and Gale force winds were not to be reckoned with.

I am delighted to say that a second gin group is now starting up as I had a waiting list and I hated saying no to people who requested to join. We are hoping perhaps, to be able to do a few outings together.

A Happy and Healthy New Year to you all.

Mary

Gin Appreciation Group 2

Just to let you know the Gin Appreciation Group 2 had their inaugural meeting Tuesday 9th January. Ten members braved the cold to enjoyed three different gins with varying opinions. It was a fun night and proved very popular with the ladies who attended. Our next meeting is on Tuesday 13th February with spaces still available.

Tracey

Local History Group

We have four confirmed dates for our 2024 programme so far.

Thursday 29 February, we welcome back Stephen Nunn for a talk titled Barges on the Blackwater. The cost will be £5, starting at 1.50pm at Champions Manor Hall.

Tuesday 12 March, we welcome the Burnham on Crouch u3a Archaeological Group who will be talking about their archaeological dig and finds at Southminster Hall. They will be bringing some of the finds from the dig. The cost will be £5 starting at 1.50pm at Champions Manor Hall.

Tuesday 14 May, coach trip to Eltham Palace, see details below. This is a joint trip with the Gardening Group and Art and Architecture, who will also be sending out details of the trip. We will have one joint sign-up sheet.

Tuesday 9 July an afternoon visit to Creeksea Place with a guided tour followed by a cream tea.

Sign-up sheets for the two talks and coach trip will be out at the main meeting in February.

Coach Trip to Eltham Palace - Tuesday 14 May 2024 details:

The Local History, Gardening and Art and Architecture Groups are planning a joint coach trip for 2024 to Eltham Palace.

Eltham Palace has a lot to offer with its Art Deco House, gardens, and Medieval Great Hall. Once a Medieval Palace and Tudor residence it was transformed in the 1930s by Stephen and Virginia Courtauld into a lavish home with Art Deco architecture. Our visit includes a guided tour of the Art Deco house and time to explore the 19 acres of gardens and Medieval Great Hall. There is an onsite café for lunch and refreshments and a picnic area if you wish to take your own lunch.

The cost for the trip will be £21 for English Heritage members and £31 for non-members.

This covers entrance, the cost of the coach and the guided tour of the house; refreshments are at own cost.

The trip is open to members of the Local History, Gardening, and Art and Architecture groups.

If you would like to come, we will be taking names and a payment of £21 (full cost for English Heritage members deposit for non-members), we will have a table separate from the group tables for signing up to make it easier.

If you are paying by cheque please make it payable to South Woodham Ferrers u3a, if by cash it would help if you had the correct money.

We hope you will enjoy the events we have planned so far.

Best wishes Kate, Mary and Allen

London Walks

We meet mainly on the third Wednesday and fourth Thursday of each month where we meet a guide in London who takes us on a two-hour tour of an area agreed in advance. You will find it amazing how much you learn of an area that you think you know all about. If you are interested in hearing more about these walks please come and see me at the desk at the main u3a meeting.

The walks for this coming year are listed below so please put in your diaries.

Thursday February 22nd	Talk at Champions Manor " The City of London from the Romans to Modern Times" Starts 1 o'clock
Wednesday March 20th	The Quack Doctor with Rick Jones. Meeting place Southwark Cathedral at 11am
Thursday March 28th	The Quack Doctor with Rick Jones. Meeting place Southwark Cathedral at 11am
Wednesday April 17th	Matthew Shardlake's London with Andy Hallett. Meeting place Temple tube station at 11am
Thursday April 25th	Matthew Shardlake's London with Andy Hallett. Meeting place Temple tube station at 11am
Wednesday May 15th	London, A Heart of Stone with Philip Nelkon. Meeting place Temple tube station at 11am
Thursday May 23rd	London, A Heart of Stone with Philip Nelkon. Meeting place Temple tube station at 11am
Wednesday June 19th	Highgate Village with Richard Roques. Meeting place Highgate underground In the ticket hall at 11am
Thursday June 27th	Highgate Village with Richard Roques. Meeting place Highgate underground In the ticket hall at 11am
Wednesday July 17th	The Monopoly Walk with Steve Szymanski. Meeting place Embankment underground Villiers St exit at 11am

Thursday July 18th	The Monopoly Walk with Steve Szymanski. Meeting place Embankment underground Villiers St exit at 11am
Wednesday August 21st	A Soho Saunter with Peter Glancy. Meeting place Leicester Square underground exit 1 by Wyndham's Theatre 11am
Thursday August 22nd	A Soho Saunter with Peter Glancy. Meeting place Leicester Square underground exit 1 by Wyndham's Theatre 11am
Wednesday September 18th	Publish And Be Damned with Adam. Meeting place Temple tube station at 11am
Thursday September 26th	Publish And Be Damned with Adam. Meeting place Temple tube station at 11am
Wednesday October 16th	The Nell Gwyn Special with Rick Jones. Meeting place outside the defunct underground station Aldwych/Strand at 11am
Thursday October 24th	The Nell Gwyn Special with Rick Jones. Meeting place outside the defunct underground station Aldwych/Strand at 11am
Wednesday November 20th	Eating Christmas with Ann Jones. Meeting place Bank underground station exit 3 by the Royal Exchange at 11am
Thursday November 28th	Eating Christmas with Ann Jones. Meeting place Bank underground station exit 3 by the Royal Exchange at 11am
Tuesday December 17th	The Christmas Music Tour with Adam. Meeting place Tottenham Court Road underground exit1 at 3.30pm This is a repeat for those who missed it last year through Covid

We finished off the year with a great Christmas meal at the Lodge in Rettendon.

Have a Happy and Healthy New Year everyone and I really look forward to seeing many of you on these walks.

Mary rbmb4546@yahoo.co.uk

Paint and Pastels Art Group

Paint and Pastels is a small Art Group that meets on the 3rd Monday of the month at 10.00am. We aim to have a topic for each of our sessions although group members are always free to 'do their own thing' at the meetings - there may be a painting or drawing that you have started that you would like to spend time on or perhaps discuss with the group.

The topic for our meeting in February 2024 will be Caricature. Other topics identified for future meetings include:

- Watercolour effects - wax resist, salt, splattering
- Still Life
- Portraits
- Self Portraits
- Figure Drawing
- Light and Shadow
- Pastel Techniques
- Pen and Ink (Line and Wash)
- Working outdoors

If you would like more information about the group or, indeed, would be interested in joining please feel free to call Chris on **07946 024302**. If you are interested in joining, there is the option of joining us one month for a free 'taster session'.

Beginners and more experienced artists are welcome.

Pics and Bricks (Art and Architecture Appreciation)

Pics and Bricks arrange visits to places with an Art or Architectural interest. This will include Art Galleries and buildings with an architectural or historic interest. Typically, we will arrange for an expert guide to help with the enjoyment of the visit by explaining what we are seeing.

In general, our events are open to all members of SWF u3a. If the number of places is limited by the venue priority may be given to Pics and Bricks Group Members but we would aim to accommodate all u3a members who may be interested. If you would like to become a Pics and Bricks member and be added to our email circulation list either contact Chris Miles (contact details below) or come to see us at our table at one of the monthly meetings at Champions Manor Hall.

Our programme for 2023 completed with a guided visit to the Turner Galleries at Tate Britain. Below is one of Turner's most iconic paintings. Norham Castle, Sunrise on the River Tweed. Turner returned to this place a number of times during his life, and it was the inspiration for one of his greatest paintings of light and atmosphere.



Norham Castle, Sunrise. J.M.W. Turner (c. 1845-50)

2024 programme

We have an initial two dates arranged for 2024's programme. Firstly, on the **afternoon of Wednesday 27th March**, we have invited Maggie Piper to return to give Part Two of her Street Art Talk that opened our programme last year. This will be held in the multi-purpose room, Champions Manor Hall. Secondly, we have linked up with the Local History and Gardening groups for a coach trip to Eltham Palace. This will be on **Tuesday 14th May**.

In addition, we are looking into the possibility of arranging trips to the following:

- The Drapers Hall, London

- The Royal Institution, London
- City of London Churches
- The Inns of Court, London and
- Cressing Temple Barns, Essex

If you are interested in joining the Pics and Bricks group either contact Chris Miles directly or come to see us at our table at one of the monthly meetings at Champions Manor Hall.

Chris Miles (chrismilesu3a@gmail.com - 07946 024302)

Walking Group

The group meets on the first and third Friday of the month at 10 am at the starting point of each walk. Most of the walks are of approximately 6 miles in length with the occasional 7 mile one. Normally we will have one stop midway through the walk to take on refreshments and at the end of the walk, those who want to will often visit a nearby pub. If you like walking and would like to join us feel free to just turn up, you will be most welcome. Remember to wear appropriate footwear and clothing especially at this time of the year when conditions can be muddy, wet, and cold.



Our walks for the next three months are:

February 2nd - Bradwell Walk - 6.5 miles - Meet in St Peters on the Wall car park in Bradwell just before 10am.

February 16th - Stock/Margaretting Walk - 6 miles - Meet in Stock Village Hall car park for 10am start.

March 1st - Crondon Park Golf Course Walk - 7 miles - Meet in Gallywood car park which is just off Margaretting Road. The walk will start at 10am.

March 15th - Paper Mill Lock Circular Walk - 6 miles - Meet in The Generals Arms Public House car park just before 10am.

April 5th - Bicknacre/Cock Clarkes Walk - 6.5 miles - Meet in the sport field car park, which is adjacent to Bicknacre School, for 10am start.

April 19th - Danbury Thrift Wood Walk - 6 miles - meet in Mayes Lane car park in Danbury just before 10am.

Bob Tyas (robert.tyas82@gmail.com or 07889949685)

Wine Appreciation Group 2

This quarter we have had our once-a-year members Christmas outing with partners at the Hawk in Battlesbridge. This year there was a magician during the meal who succeeded in fooling us at the table (see photo).



We also organised a 3-night tour to Porto in Portugal, in October where we had a full wine tasting tour, a super open-air lunch with wine at a winery (of course), and a short trip on the Douro river. The following day we had a $\frac{1}{2}$ day tour of Port tasting at 3 different Port houses. This visit of 9 people from our group enjoyed tremendously, the trip and we are now planning our next trip for 2024 (more photos below)



Portugal Trip

We continue going forward with our quarterly subs now at £25 per person which provides cheese and crackers and tasting of 7 different wines (split between red and white wines).

Our group is currently 19 and we meet monthly on the second Friday afternoon of the month in the small rear hall of the SWF village hall.

We conducted a review of our last 20 monthly Friday tastings and found that we have tried 152 bottles of wine with 37 white and 35 red wine different grape varieties, but with over 10,000 grape varieties in the world we have a long way to go. Including wine grape blends they came from 22 different countries around the world.

This coming first quarter, we are targeting wines from Portugal and more grape varietals including sweet wine and a blind comparison of a single grape variety but with a wide difference in price.

We have small amount of tuition information combined with a large amount of tasting and friendly chatter at each of our gatherings.

The knowledge within the group is very diverse and that is what makes it enjoyable for us all, there are not any right answers in wine tasting, just what you like.

We have a full group (19 members); we could take perhaps one more person should you wish to join or take a name for a vacancy should it arise.

Just contact me -Jeff Body if you are interested and I would be happy to discuss further detail.

Jeff Body

Wine Appreciation Group 3

Our January meeting saw the end of an era. Sheila and Brian Chilton who have been running the group for very successfully for 13 years have taken a well deserved retirement. As the new group co-ordinator, on behalf of the members of the group extend our wholehearted thanks for education and enjoyment membership of the group has provided over the years. Many thanks Sheila and Brian.

During last year Sheila introduced a scheme where the responsibility for choosing and presenting the tasting wines would be on a rotation amongst the members. For the first meeting of 2024 it was Barbara and me. We chose the extremes of Italy with whites from the southern tip and reds from the top of the boot that provided some surprises for the group.

Our next meeting is February 9th where the presentation will be made by Sheila and Jean.

Gerry Davis - Wine Group 3 Co-ordinator.

Groups Monthly Meeting

Days of the week		Weeks of the Month			
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Monday	AM	Golf Book Group	Golf	Golf Paints & Pastels Art Group	Golf Strollers
	PM		Gardening		Eco Group
Tuesday	AM				Picks & Brick (Art & Architecture)
	PM	Gin Appreciation 1	Local History Tai Chi Gin Appreciation 2		Picks & Brick (Art & Architecture) Tai Chi
Wednesday	AM		Fine Your Voice	London Walks 1	
	PM	Monthly Meeting			Cards and Games for Fun
Thursday	AM				London Walks 2
	PM		French		
Friday	AM	Bowling Walking	Bowling	Bowling Walking	Bowling
	PM		Wine Groups 1, 2, &3		Whisky Appreciation
Curry Clique 4th Monday of odd months, Singles Social & Dining as arranged					

For more details on any of these groups please contact the Group Coordinator Allen Surrey 01245 320743

Deadline for Inclusion in Next Newsletter

Please send your contributions to the next Newsletter by Wednesday March 20th, to Bob Tyas at robert.tyas82@gmail.com or deliver to 55 Clements Green Lane, SWF. Alternatively, you can ring him on 07889949685.