

South Woodham Ferrers



Quarterly Newsletter - Spring & Summer Edition



Taken on our South Woodham/Stow Maries Aerodrome Walk

Newsletter No 192

From the Chair

What a difference a couple of weeks make - with it staying light now well past 8pm.

I'm sorry that the sound system played up at our last meeting which I know from the emails spoiled it for some of you, hopefully, we've now fixed that issue. At our meeting this **Wednesday, (May 1)**, the talk will be Peter Guide talking about Changing Rooms, which promises to be very interesting.

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

I think that the June outing by coach to Lodges Museum is almost fully booked, if you're interested in coming along for what promises to be an interesting and fun day out, please see Mary Brindley at our meeting this month.

Remember you are invited to come and observe our committee meeting. Our next meeting will be Friday May 17th at 2pm at CMH. If you'd like to come along, please let Angela Weaver, our Vice-Chair, know.

Our new look website is now up and running, do take a look at: <https://swf.u3asite.uk/>
Our webmaster is still looking for an understudy - if you're interested, please let Bob Tyas know.

If any of you are interested in taking over the role of Social Secretary from Mary Brindley, please let Mary or myself know. Without someone to carry out this role, we will not be holding any social events during the year, which will be a shame. You won't have to start from scratch as Mary will be available to do a proper handover and I know there are people willing to help you.

The same offer is open to anyone who would like to join the committee at the AGM in July. Please let me or another committee member know.

We will be collecting (empty) medicine "blister packs" for recycling by a specialist company again at our next meeting.

Note: that our monthly meetings start at 1.50pm, with "doors open" at 1.30.

See you on May 1st.

David Hayes, Chair SWF u3a

From the Committee

We have met twice this quarter, in February and April. Our March meeting date was used for a meeting for all Group leaders. This is an annual meeting to update leaders on any changes they need to be aware of and for them to meet other leaders and ask any questions they have about running their group.

This quarter has seen the launch of our new web site. The web master has worked long hours to set this up, we hope you agree it is much easier to navigate than the previous one, if you haven't had a look at it yet then do have a look, you can find it at <https://swf.u3asite.uk/>

In February we approved the budget for the 24/25 financial year; with the current level of members we will not need to put up membership fees this year. Our financial year ends on 31 March, the Treasurer has prepared the year end accounts, which are currently being audited and will be presented at the AGM in July.

Upcoming events are the coach trip on Tuesday 25 June to Lodges coach museum, which should be a good day out and the AGM in July.

There will be some vacancies on the Committee this year so if you are interested in joining the committee but want to find out more before you commit, then you can come along as an observer to either our May or June meeting. 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.

More details about the AGM can be found in this newsletter.

We have had four new groups start this year so far, Ukulele, Gin 2, Photography and Science and Technology. If you have an interest and would like to start a new group please speak to one of us. 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

Notice of Annual General Meeting 2024

We are pleased to give advance notice that our AGM (Annual General Meeting) this year will be held at Champions Manor Hall on 3rd July at 13.50. Please note the date in your diary.

The AGM will give a report from the Committee on the past year, a Treasurer's report and accounts for twelve months ending 31 March 2024; receive any resolutions proposed and carry out the election of any Officers as appropriate and Committee members. Our speaker following the AGM will be Fran Sandham who will speak about her solo walk across Africa.

Timetable

- Closing date for nominations for Committee members and for any motions for consideration at the AGM - 7th June 2024.
- Formal notice of the AGM with agenda; details of voting arrangements; accounts for 2023/24 to be sent out on 28th June 2024.

Nominations for the Committee

All the officers (Chairman, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer) are prepared to stand for a further year although this will be the Treasurer's final year. One of our committee members - Elaine Turner has had to stand down and Allen Surrey has reached his maximum period of service. We need a full Committee to share the work and the satisfaction of running a successful u3a. In particular if we want to continue to enjoy social activities for the whole u3a we need a social secretary (which doesn't necessarily have to be a committee post) or a small social committee as Mary Brindley is stepping down from this post although she will continue to be on the committee.

If you wish to stand, please complete the nomination form available on our website stating the role you are applying for. Committee members are responsible for vital activities in our organisation, such as membership, co-ordinating group activity and keeping our u3a active. You do not need prior experience of committees; your enthusiasm is the most important asset and there will be plenty of support from the existing members of the committee. Do speak to any of the Committee members to find out more about what they do or attend a committee meeting as an observer.

Only paid-up members can stand for the Committee, propose or second nominations.

Please make sure that any person you nominate has agreed and is a paid-up member.

If you require any further information about the roles or to discuss any specific positions or further information on the AGM please contact the Secretary, Ann Woolley on email ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com or phone 07956 918521.

From the Webmaster

The new web address is <https://swf.u3asite.uk/> which is much easier to remember than the previous, and I hope you are finding the new website easy to navigate.

If you haven't had a reason to view the site, please do, it was put together quite quickly so if you find any mistakes, particularly with spelling and grammar, please let me know so that it can be corrected. If you have any suggestions for improvements or additions, I would also be pleased to hear what they are.

Currently I'm the only person with access to the site to make changes and undertake updates. I would like to find someone interested in shadowing me. It would be useful if the person has an interest in web design and some knowledge of WordPress, but that's not essential. You can contact me at robert.tyas82@gmail.com.

Social Update

The trip to the Lodges Coaches Museum on Tuesday 25 June is now finalised. The coach will pick us up from either Asda or the Village hall at 11.20 to take us to the Museum at High Easter. Here we will be given a Ploughman's lunch and then a talk and look around the museum. We will then be taken out for a drive in one of their vintage vehicles and given refreshments before being driven back to South Woodham at 4pm.

This looks to be, hopefully, an interesting and enjoyable outing.

Mary

Notice Board

A little reminder that there is a notice board in the small hall at the main meetings. Group leaders will give updates on all the month's activities on here but it is also open for anyone to use.

Mary

Ann's Big Hike

On Saturday 8th June I shall be undertaking a 26 mile marathon hike in a day in the Peak District in aid of Cancer Research. This will be a challenge for me as I mainly walk on the flat so I have been getting in some uphill practice. Each week of training leading up to the Big Hike I have dedicated to someone I know who is a cancer survivor, or undergoing treatment or who has unfortunately succumbed. Week 11 of training, week commencing 29th April I am dedicating

the week to any u3a members who are undergoing treatment, are cancer survivors or know someone close to them who is in that situation or who has lost their battle. If you would like to support me and raise money for this worthwhile cause I would be very grateful. Thank you for reading this.

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/anns-big-hike-7>

Ann Woolley

Visits to the Dogs Trust

Three visits to the Dogs Trust have recently taken place, resulting in £125 being donated by our members.

If anyone is interested in a "behind the scenes" tour at Dogs Trust, please contact Elaine.turneruk@btinternet.com. There is no charge for the tour, but donations are very welcome.



Members at Recent Visit

Remaining Speakers for 2024

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

News from the Groups

Book Group 2

There is some interest in restarting Book Group 2, however, to make it viable it need a few more potential members. If you are interested, please contact the Groups Coordinator Allen Surrey.

Bowling Group

Well, lots to celebrate from my group this quarter. Firstly, our lovely Sue has finally had her replacement hip operation completed successfully and is well on the way to recovery. She is now attending our weekly gatherings as a spectator and general cheer leader for all of us, but it should not be too much longer before she is back playing and showing the rest of us how it's done! Unfortunately, she has been joined on the sidelines by our equally wonderful Phil who has suffered a torn tendon and has been instructed to rest until it recovers. Thus, we have had plenty of support for our efforts which, strangely enough, appears to be paying off! Many of the group have been reaching really good scores of late. Peter excelled himself with a 'Yahtzee' or '5 bagger' (this means 5 strikes in a row), a couple of weeks ago and even Chas, who would admit himself, has good and bad weeks, got two, consecutive strikes last week! However, these achievements have been put into shade by our Graham, who attained entry into the '200 hundred club' scoring 203! Very well done to them all! I hope I may have been some help in keeping moral up as I provided the team with homemade hot cross buns for our Good Friday meet. These disappeared at a rate of knots with our morning coffee, so I think my efforts were appreciated. All in all, a very successful quarter. Very much looking forward to some better weather and continuing success to com



Coffee Break

Bridge Club

Currently we don't have a Bridge Club but there are a couple of members who are interested, with one willing to run the club. Obviously, we need several members to make it viable, so if you are interested and would like to join a bridge club and exercise your mind, please contact our Groups Coordinator Allen Surrey for more details.

Eco Group

We were successful in obtaining funding from Mister Gees Foundation for a couple of boxes to recycle empty medicine blister packs. We will collect these at our monthly meetings. Please make sure the blister packs are empty and if you could try and squash them down as much as you can so we can get more into the box! I will also have a collection box for Marigold rubber gloves and packaging but please note it is only for that brand.



The SWF Town Council are planning to run a SWF Green Week during w/c 24th June so it will be after the national Great Big Green Week. I haven't heard what sort of events they are planning but we are hoping to do something u3a based during that week. We would like group leaders to put their thinking caps on and think about whether you could be involved in some way. The theme is "let's swap for good" and is about swapping the way you do things to more sustainable ways e.g. swapping plastic water bottles for refillable flasks, or a nicely mown lawn for a wild corner for wildlife. I'm sure the Digital Photography group and Paints and Pastels could do some wonderful pictures for a display. Please let me know if you can come up with any other ideas. I shall be posting updates on the website and on our Facebook page in due course.

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

Cards and Games

Our group is still going strong, and we have now acquired a couple of new games so alongside Rummikub and Sequence we now have Mexican Train and Qwirkle. We also have a little 30-minute quiz at the end of our session that is put together by our resident Quiz Master who challenges our little grey cells, all this plus tea and biscuits makes for an enjoyable afternoon.

If anyone is interested in joining us every 4th Wednesday of the month, please contact Kay Miles on [07931559909](tel:07931559909) or [01245 401015](tel:01245401015)

Gardening

On Monday 11th March, our Gardening Group visited Blunts Hall Garden in Witham. On arrival, the friendly owners served us hot refreshments which were well received as it was a bitterly cold afternoon. We then had a guided tour of the outside of the Hall, parts of which dated back to the 1400s. There was also a mound and remains of a moat. Several members climbed to the top for a good view over the Gardens.

The owners bought the Hall and Gardens in 2013 and cleared many overgrown areas to reveal Victorian walls, beds, and steps. Most of the work was done entirely by themselves until fairly recently.

We enjoyed our walk round the garden and lake. Sculptures could be found, and daffodils were in full bloom. We plan to return in the Summer of 2025 so we can appreciate other aspects of the Gardens and hopefully better weather!





Some of the Sculptures

Shirley

Local History

Our 2024 Programme started with two very good talks. In February Stephen Nunn came to talk about 'Barges on the Blackwater'. As well as talking about the history and types of barges, their commercial use and close connections with the Maldon coastline trades, Stephen spoke about his family connections to the boats, which still continues today.

In March the Bishop of London, the Lady of the Manor and Friar Tech, also known as the u3a Burnham Archaeological Group, came to talk to us about their dig at Southminster Hall. After some initial work on the site, it was clear the project was much bigger project than they had anticipated and was an historically significant excavation. They had to be professionally trained to do the work, and after a lot of meticulous digging and recording, they discovered one of the medieval palaces of the Bishop of London. A display of their finds and details of the dig are on display at Burnham Museum.

Our May visit is the coach trip to Eltham Palace on 14 May. If you haven't already paid the £10 balance, told me where you will be joining the coach or whether you would like refreshments on arrival, please could you do this by the 1st May, the date of our next main meeting.

Our June visit to Stow Maries Aerodrome is not on our usual day, it will be a morning visit on Friday 14 June. We have arranged to have a group tour at 11.30, which lasts about an hour, starting at the Officer's Mess building. You can choose your arrival time, either looking around the museum before or after the tour. The site opens at 10am and closes at 3.30, entrance costs £8, the Officer's Mess is open for refreshments during that time. Allen and I will be there from

10am to show you where the Mess is for refreshments, if you haven't been there before.

We will not be collecting payment in advance for this visit, anyone coming will pay their own entrance on arrival. We do need to know numbers, so if you would like to come, please come and see us to sign up.

Tuesday 9th July we will be visiting Creeksea Place. We will have a guided tour followed by a cream tea. The cost is £20 pp, start time 1.30pm.

Sign-up sheets for June and July will be out at the May main meeting.

If you have any questions about either of these visits or would like to know more about the group, please come and speak to us at the main meeting.

Kate, Allen and Mary.

London Walks

We started our walking year with a talk in Champions Manor about the City Livery Companies. It was good to learn just how much money they raise for deserving charities. This replaced our planned talk due to the speaker being ill.

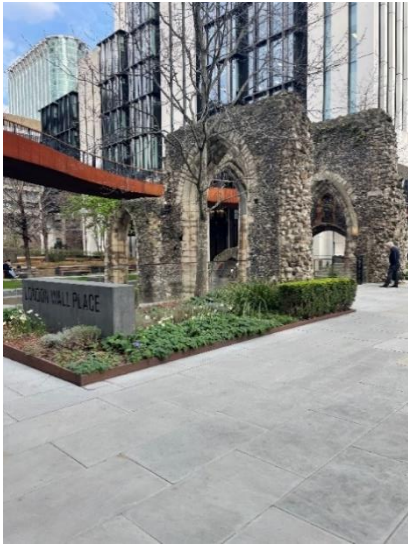
In March we set out for our first walk entitled 'The Quack Doctor' and it was both educational and entertaining.

April, this month, we followed in Matthew Shardlake's footsteps through the city. Another excellent walk, even more so if you have read the books. Our next walk in May is entitled 'A Heart of Stone' which will point out many architectural sights that we may not be aware of.

Walks take place on the 3rd Wednesday and the 4th Thursday of each month. Please look at the notice board in the small hall for updates.

A few photo from a recent walk are shown below.

Mary rbmb4546@yahoo.co.uk



London Wall, Barbican



Corn Hill



Southwark Cathedral



Southwark Cathedral

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.

Topics that we plan to cover in the coming year include:

- Watercolour effects - wax resist, salt, splattering
- Still Life
- Portraits
- Self Portraits
- Figure Drawing
- 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.

Our topic for February was Caricature and the following are some examples of what members of the group produced on the day. These ones are all people you may see in films or on television.

Can you identify who they are? Have a try. The answers are included at the end of this Newsletter.



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)

Photographic Group

This new group that replaced the previous Digital Photography Group is up and running and has had its first two meetings and is currently preparing future programmes.

This group meets on the first Tuesday in the month from 9.30am to 11.30 in Champions Manor Hall upstairs Committee Room.

If you are interested in this group, please contact Alex Leong (aleong@post.com) or Janet Kelly (janet.kelly49@aol.com).

Singles and Dinning

We are a group of single people, both ladies and gentlemen who meet once a month for lunch. We only eat at venues in Woodham as my wheelchair will not take me elsewhere.

We are a friendly, supportive group who enjoy a good chat with our food.

Lyn Kear

Science and Technology Group

The new Science & Technology Group had their first meeting at Champion Manor Hall on 11th April. The group of currently 6 members have a variety of interest, skills and knowledge. There are no experts. We share what we have discovered from our own research into subjects that interest us.

We were fortunate to have Richard start us off with a fascinating presentation he had researched, about an incident that took place in 1961. A huge American aircraft carrying two nuclear bombs, had broken up in the air over North Carolina resulting in the bombs falling to the ground. This resulted in a plethora of questions, answers and discussions throughout the presentation! It was a very informal, relaxed and informative session.

A much-deserved refreshment break allowed the discussions to continue, together with an opportunity to chat with others.

This was followed by a few video clips of inside the cockpit of a similar aircraft and a few take offs and landings. A final discussion planning future presentations, video clips and research projects took place.

For our next meeting Richard will bring another topic to share and some members were preparing material for future meetings. This was a friendly, interesting, informative and enjoyable morning. We meet the 2nd Thursday morning each month. For further information contact us on the website or at a main meeting.

We are a nice bunch - why not join us?

Eileen Drane

Strollers

This group is now led by Larry Ladbrook (larry.ladbrook@btinternet.com), taking over from Jill Hiskett. It still meets on the same day as previous, the fourth Monday of the month in the morning at various locations.

April's meeting of the group took place in Maldon with a stroll along the promenade.

Please contact Larry for more details if you are interested.



Nice day for a stroll along the prom

Walking Group

The walking group continues to walk regularly on the first and third Friday of the month. Numbers on walks have dropped off a bit during the winter month and of course the extremely wet weather has not helped, so we could do with a few new members. Walks are between 5 and 7 miles with the distance been published in advance. If you think you might be interested, you can just turn up or have word with me and I can give you more information. Do remember though that our walks can be muddy, so proper walking boots are essential.



Recent Bicknacre/Cock Clark Walk

Walls for the next three month are:

3rd May - Danbury/Sandon Hall Walk - 7 miles - Meet in Mayes Lane car park in Danbury for 10am start.

17th May - Bicknacre/East Hanningfield Walk - 5.5 miles - Meet in the Brewers Arms car park in Bicknacre just before 10am,

7th June - Bicknacre Walk - 6 miles - Meet in the sport field car park adjacent to Bicknacre School for 10am start.

21st June - Paper Mill Lock Circular Walk - 6.6 miles - Meet in the Generals Arms in Little Baddow just before 10am.

5th July - Crondon Park Golf Course Walk - 7 miles - Meet in Galleywood car park which is off the Margaretting Road on your left, just before 10am

19th July - Goldhanger/Blackwater Circular Walk - 6 miles - Meet in The Chequers Inn car park in Goldhanger for a 10am start.

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

Wine Appreciation Group 2

This last quarter we have had 3 tasting sessions.

January, we concentrated on French wines, a Hungarian wine from the Furmint grape, plus a Tawny port brought back from the Porto trip to finish. In February we had several Portuguese wines of grapes none of us were familiar with, and a blind comparison of two Carménère wines from Chile one at £6.49 the other at £19 which was rated better by the group BUT nearly 3 times the price?

In March we followed the theme of trying unusual grape varieties from 5 different countries. The group ranks each session with the red and white they liked the best, 1,2, &3.

Following on from our successful organised 3-night tour to Porto in Portugal, last October, we have now organised a tour in France for 4 nights this coming October based in Avignon with 15 people (including spouses) including a 2 day tour during this trip with a French Guide who used to work as a Sommelier for the Roux brothers in U.K to show us Chateau Neuf du Pape vineyards and two other French appellation areas plus hopefully an olive oil tasting (see picture below)



We continue going forward with our quarterly subs now at £25 per person which provides cheese and crackers and tasting of 7 different wines, with different price points (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.

This coming second quarter, we are targeting wines from South America, some more unusual grape varieties from Italy and a French Cremant de Loire as the very acceptable fizz made in the Champagne method BUT not nearly as expensive.

We continue to have a very 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 so enjoyable for us all, there are not any right answers in wine tasting, just what you like.

We have a full group (19 members) should you wish to join we would be very happy to 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

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 Curry Clique (odd months)
Tuesday	AM	Photographic Group			Picks & Brick (Art & Architecture)
	PM	Gin Appreciation 1 Ukulele Group	Local History Tai Chi Gin Appreciation2 Ukulele Group	Ukulele Group	Picks & Brick (Art & Architecture) Ukulele Group
Wednesday	AM		Fine Your Voice	London Walks 1	
	PM	Monthly Meeting	Singles & Dining		Cards and Games for Fun
Thursday	AM		Science & Technology		London Walks 2
	PM		French		
Friday	AM	Bowling Walking	Bowling	Bowling Walking	Bowling
	PM		Wine Groups 1, 2, &3		Whisky Appreciation

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 July 24th, to Bob Tyas at robert.tyas82@gmail.com or deliver to 55 Clements Green Lane, SWF. Alternatively, you can ring him on 07889949685.

Answers to the caricature competition:

1. Brian Cox
2. Helen Miren
3. Alan Titchmarsh
4. George Cloney
5. Monty Don
6. Kier Starmer