

South Woodham Ferrers



Quarterly Newsletter - Summer and Autumn Edition



River Crouch by Alan Harper

Newsletter No 193

From the Chair

August already, where is the year going? After a bit of a wet start (it was Wimbledon after all), July has shown that summer is here. Hopefully, August will continue like that and maybe an Indian summer into September and October?

We did discuss the sound system at our committee meeting this month and we're going to give the CMH system a go. It should also be better for our members with hearing aids as they can tune into the hearing loop.

At our meeting this **Wednesday, (August 7th)**, the talk will be by Jan Rook - from Banker to Extra and all things on Set. Maybe of particular interest to those of you who are budding thespians and have joined the Chelmsford u3a AmDram group. (I understand that by joining that group, you become a visitor member of the Chelmsford u3a at no charge).

On that note, (pun intended), Linden, who leads our Ukulele group will be playing with the Maldon Ukulele Group (MUGs) at the SWF Village Hall on August 24th - I saw them playing in North Fambridge recently, they are very good.

As a 'heads-up', Kate Smith, our Treasurer, has to stand down next year having completed the maximum time she can serve on the committee. If anyone is interested in taking on this vital role, please let Kate or I know, and she can help you ease into the position over the next 12 months. Meanwhile, Bob's, (our webmaster), search for an apprentice continues.

We will be collecting (empty) medicine "blister packs" for recycling by a specialist company again at our next meeting. I understand from Ann, our Eco Group leader, that we've almost filled the boxes already - I don't know whether to be pleased that we're doing our part or concerned that we are using so much medication!

There is no news from our cluster group this month, other than the Dengie u3a now has a new Chair. If you do want to go to another u3as group, please contact them first, and they may want to see your membership card, which is available from our Membership Secretary - Janet Kelly.

To our helpers who set up and tidy away the tables and chairs, Champions Manor Hall, (CMH) have instructed us that chairs are not to be stacked at the back of the hall, but either by the tables (front right) or the anteroom behind the main hall. Many thanks for your help.

Finally: "The man that says his wife can't take a joke, forgets that she took him", (Oscar Wilde).

See you on August 7th

David Hayes, Chair SWF u3a

From the Committee

We had our first meeting of the new Committee year on 19th July when we welcomed Tracey Dowling, who is taking on the role of Social Secretary. Tracey was co-opted onto the Committee at the meeting, she is currently planning the Quiz night for later this year with the help of Mary, who remains on the Committee as an ordinary member.

This year we plan to profile the various roles on the Committee, our first piece in this quarter's newsletter is from Eillen Drane who is our new Groups Coordinator.

If you have any questions for us, then you can speak to us at the main meeting or contact us via the website. All committee members wear a blue lanyard and badge at the main meetings so we should be easy to find.

The Committee

From the Groups Coordinator

At the annual Group Leaders meeting we were asked: **What is the best thing about being a Group Leader?** The answers included:

*Doing something you love

*Being in charge

*I love seeing the satisfaction in people's faces

*Involving your members in what they want to do - not being a dictator

*It gives you the chance to share and enjoy an interest with like-minded people

Our Group Leaders are the backbone of our u3a. Without them there are no groups - and without the groups - there are no members!

Many groups have more than one leader and they share the responsibilities. Some groups meet in a private home, several hire meeting rooms or halls and others

only make visits and do not require a regular venue. Generally, groups meet once a month.

It is not an arduous task to be a Group Leader. The role includes keeping a simple register, collecting money from your members to cover costs (i.e. hire a hall if required), recording any income and expenditure and communicating with your members by email. There is even a Group Leaders handbook available that gives a comprehensive view of how to run your group. Our u3a offers advice and assistance whenever needed.

If you have an interest not currently covered by our u3a groups, why not start one? We will help you.

For further information contact our Groups Co-ordinator via our Website at swf.u3asite.uk or any Committee member. At the main meetings we all wear a blue lanyard and name badge - easily identifiable.

Eileen

From the Secretary

Thanks to everyone who attended the AGM and for those that didn't the minutes are now on the website.

I should also like to give a personal thank you to all those members of the u3a who supported me in my Peak District Marathon Hike of 26+ miles in June. It was a challenge, and I was very pleased to get to the finishing post. My daughter and I between us raised over £3,700 including gift aid for Cancer Research so it was worth the pain. I miss all the walking now but won't be doing another challenge just yet.

Ann

Social Update

Coach Trip

What a wonderful trip we had at the Lodges Coaches Museum. We were picked up from South Woodham in a modern coach and taken to their depot at High Easter where we were greeted with a delicious Ploughman's Lunch.



After this we were given a talk on the family history of the museum with the aid of slides and videos. We then divided into two groups and boarded a vintage coach to be driven around the surrounding rural Essex countryside returning to the depot to swap coaches and see a little more countryside.



Some of the museum exhibits

After this we had tea and cake waiting for us and a very interesting look around the well-stocked museum before being driven back to South Woodham.

Quiz Night

Plans for Quiz Night, which will be on Saturday 9th of November, are now well underway. Doors open from 7.15 for 7.30, bring your own food and drink.

I feel the time has come now to stand down and hand the Social Secretary reigns over to someone younger who will always have my help and support. To that end I can now announce that Tracey Dowling is now our new Social Secretary.

Thank you all for your support over the last few years.

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

Town Council Photo Competition Winner

Congratulations to one of our members, Alan Harper, who recently won a photographic competition held by the Town Council. His winning photo is shown on the cover of this newsletter, and Alan with his trophy is shown on the right.

Alan is a member of our u3a Photographic group and I'm sure we can look forward to some interesting photo from the group in future editions of the newsletter.



Remaining Speakers for 2024

August	Jan Rook - From banker to extra and all things on set
September	Sue Coleman - Snakes aren't sneaky
October	Lucy Allen - Witches
November	Commonwealth war graves commission
December	In-house Entertainment

News from the Groups

Bowling Group

Hi everyone, hope you are enjoying your summer. However, not sure you could call it summer with all this rain! Never mind - we in the ten-pin bowling group always manage to raise a smile whatever the weather. In fact, we have had a lot to smile about this last couple of months. Firstly, our dear Sue Cole is back to playing after her hip operation and improving every week! Lovely to see her smiling face and ever-increasing scores but I have banned her from performing her 'pogo jump' when she gets a strike until at least six months of recuperating has elapsed. Instead, she just glides elegantly across the lane as we applaud! However, she is not the only one of our number who has improved. May saw my own dear husband Brian attain his best ever score of 177. This was closely followed by Chas who got 148 in June! Even Chas, himself, was astonished but it just goes to show that practise makes perfect or at least better. Well done Chas! However, even these fine scores were overshadowed by our Bob who scored a brilliant 211 later that same month. Congratulations Bob - we don't call you 'King Pin' for nothing! Despite all this success, the scores are only a secondary consideration as we all only really go for a bit of fun, and we certainly get that!



Brian



Chas



Bob

Unfortunately, one of our number has decided to stop attending due to a nagging shoulder injury which her bowling makes worse. So sorry to see you go Sue, we totally understand but we will miss you. On the plus side, this has left a space for a new member. So, if anyone would like to join our group, please contact me directly and we will arrange for you to come and have a go. We meet every Friday morning at Madison Heights in Maldon at about 9.45am for a 10am start. The cost is about £8 for two hours of bowling and includes shoe hire and a coffee/tea and biscuit. In the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer and let's hope the sun does make an appearance soon! Best wishes, Diane Hurrell (group leader) contact me on 07969 01245

Eco Group

Unfortunately, the Great Big Green Week initiative in June didn't quite get off the ground although we did have a table at the main u3a meeting with various ideas for being greener. I also visited all three of the Brownie groups in SWF and talked about what they do at school or home to be more eco-friendly. They coloured in posters and then made plant pots out of newspaper which they planted up with wildflower seeds - there was an article in last week's Focus (19 July).



The same week Tony Weaver had organised a visit for our Eco group to the allotments near Marsh Farm. It was a very hot day, but we enjoyed having a look at the variety of fruit and veg that is grown there and finding out how the allotment system operates.

We decided that we would take a break over the summer so our next meeting will be on Friday 28th October when we plan to have someone from the Town Council

to talk to us. I am also organising a talk about recycling plastics so that will be very illuminating!

I think the box for medicine blister packs will probably be full after the August meeting so unless we can get further funding the scheme will have to cease. Roger is working with me to see if Rotary Club will provide some and has also re-applied to *Mister Gees* so watch this space.

Do think about alternative modes of transport when planning your holidays - rail journeys are much more environmentally friendly and scenic than flying!



Ann Woolley

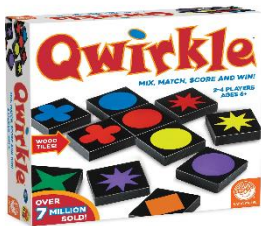
Ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com

Cards and Games

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 as can be seen below.



We have a couple of new games this year including Mexican Train and Qwirkle.



As well as the old favourites Sequence and Rummikub.

So, from numbers, words, strategy and brain teasers and not forgetting refreshments of Tea and biscuits an afternoon of fun is ready to be 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

Gardening

The Gardening group are a friendly group who enjoy visiting gardens, chatting and eating cake. We like to visit gardens within Essex that are usually part of the National Garden Scheme. Our visits include a guided tour of the garden with time to explore on your own followed by tea and cake. We aim to arrive at the gardens by 2pm and we try to car share as much as possible. The following photos were taken during our last visit which was to a garden in Coggeshall.



We visit gardens from March until October and in the winter months we have our meeting at Champions Manor Hall from 2pm until 4pm.

Sue, Shirley, and Janet

Gin Appreciation 1

Gin Appreciation group 1 is thriving and completely full but there is now a second group that can take more members. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month in the games room at the village hall. We taste three gins per evening and then give our verdict on the taste. It's surprising how tastes can differ. We try it neat, then with ice adding tonic and bits and pieces of fruit or herbs to see how the taste improves or not as the case may be. It is interesting to see how interesting some look. I am adding a photo to show you what I mean.



The evening always starts off with a lot of chatter but seems to finish in a crescendo of excitable voices and contagious laughter.

Mary 🍸

Gin Appreciation 2

Gin Appreciation 2 was formed early this year. We are a friendly group that meets on the second Tuesday of the month at the Village Hall.

Each month we taste a selection of three gins ranging from well-known brands to unique small batch gins and the odd holiday purchase.

If you have a liking for gin, why not join us, call Tracey on 07913 978630



Cheers



Recently Tasted Gins

Local History

Hello everyone

The first three visits in our programme of this year has been well supported, we hope you have enjoyed them.

In May we had our coach trip to Eltham Palace, which was a joint visit with the Gardening Group and Pics and Bricks. As we set off from South Woodham it was pouring down but by the time we arrived at Eltham it was dry but overcast. The grounds at Eltham looked beautiful even under dull skies, our guided tour of the House and Medieval Great Hall was excellent, hearing about the history of the buildings and the Courtaulds who transformed the house in the art deco style.

Our June visit was to Stow Maries Aerodrome. A fine day this time to walk around the World War one site and hear about its history, the planes and the young pilots who flew from here in the First World War.

Our July visit was to Creeksea Place, another rather damp day but it did stop raining shortly after we arrived for our guided tour around the grounds and house, which was followed by a cream tea on the lawn.

Tuesday 13 August is our next visit for a guided walk around Bradwell on Sea. Our visit to the church last year was very good, we have the same guide this year so it should be a good talk on the history of the town.

This is an afternoon visit, meeting at St Thomas Church Bradwell at 1.50pm for a 2pm start. We will have refreshments in the church after the guided walk. Cost £5pp. A sign up sheet will be out the main meeting.

There are no visits in September.

If you would like to know more about our group, please come and speak to us at our desk at the main meeting.

Kate, Mary and Allen

London Walks

The London Walks group meets mainly on the 3rd Wednesday and 4th Thursday of the month. We have just done The **Monopoly Walk** guided by a real Monopoly fanatic who told us of its history from the States to the many versions of present day. On our walk we saw many of the places you find on a monopoly board with the reasons behind their price in the game. Very interesting.



Mr Monopoly Man



Regent Street



Nelsons Column (about to topple)
Trafalgar Square



Churchill and Rosevelt Sculpture
Bond Street

Our next walk in August is A Soho Saunter which should also be very interesting. If anyone is interested in these walks please come and see me at the desk at the main meeting. We especially need more people for the Thursday Walk.

Mary 07941302947 or 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. Beginners and more experienced artists are welcome subject to availability of space in the hall that we use.

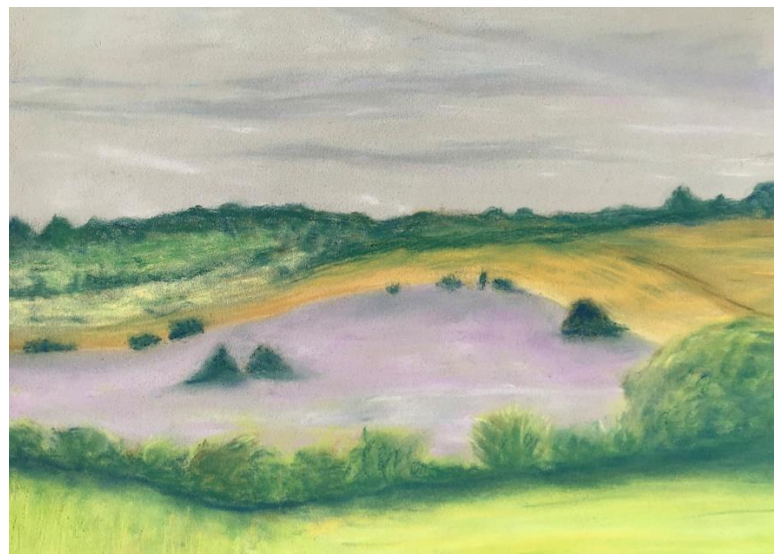
Recent topics that we have covered or plan to cover include

- Watercolour effects - wax resist, salt, splattering
- Still Life
- Pastel Techniques
- Pen and Ink (Line and Wash)
- Caricature
- Figure drawing
- Working 'on location'

The group is currently at capacity, and we are operating a waiting list but if you would like more information about us please feel free to call Chris on **07946 024302**.

For our July meeting we met at Hyde Hall and worked outdoors. Below are examples of work created on the day.





Photographic Group

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

Pics and Bricks (Art and Architecture)

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.

2024 programme

We have two visits remaining in our 2024 programme as follows:

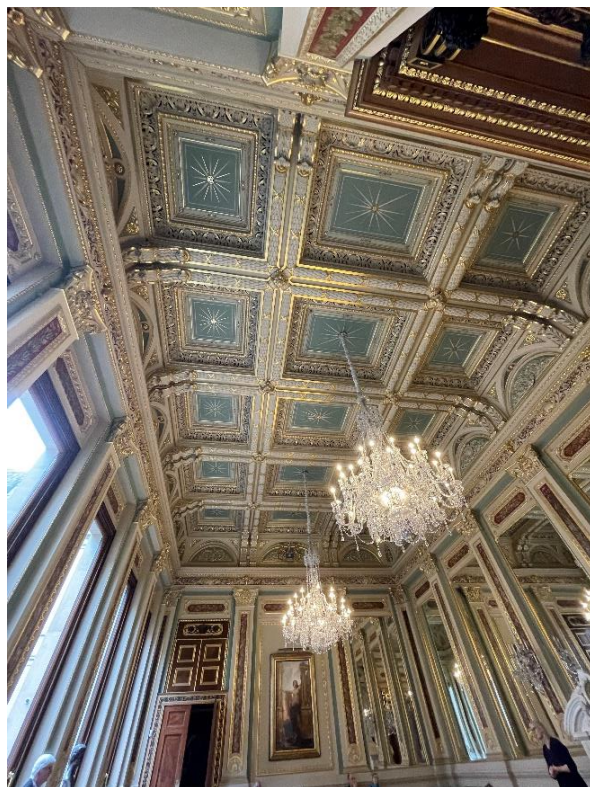
- City of London Churches on Tuesday August 27th
- Cressing Temple Barns, Essex on Tuesday September 24th

The Future

Roy and I are stepping down from running the group when our programme for 2024 ends and we would like to thank everyone who has supported the group over the last 13 years or so. It would be nice to think that the group could continue with someone else/others 'at the helm'. If you would consider taking the group forward Roy and I would be pleased help a new leader(s) get started.

Drapers' Hall

A highlight in this year's programme was our visit to Drapers' Hall in London. As well as learning about the history of the Worshipful Company of Drapers we had the pleasure of seeing the sumptuous interior of Drapers' Hall that is just a 10-minute walk from Liverpool Street. The photos below give a flavour of the grandeur of what we saw.



Chris Miles (07946 024302)

Science and Technology Group

This relatively new group currently has eight members with a variety of interest, skills and knowledge. There are no experts. The group discusses all topics that members are interested in. Some members also do presentations, and the group will consider what other topics will be explored. We hope that everyone will contribute but no one should feel compelled to do so. We recommend that people do some research in advance of the meeting to encourage discussion and question - and - answer sessions. We meet on the second Thursday of the month 10am to 12 noon. We are not a bad bunch - why not join us! Contact Richard Peach or Eileen Drane.



Some members of the Science & Technology group enjoying a break from their discussions. We were putting the world to rights after a presentation!

Strollers Walking

Our friendly group of strollers meet on the 4th Monday of the month from March to October and the walks start at 10:30.

We meet at or near a garden centre or pub within 10 miles of South Woodham Ferrers and we try to share cars.

Our walks are between 2 and 4 miles, about an hour and a half at a leisurely pace and are ideal for people who:

- Are new to walking.
- Want to do short walks.
- Want to explore the local area.
- Like the outdoors.

- Share laughs.

Walking can reduce stress and improve wellbeing and fitness.

At the end of the walk, you have the option of coffee and cake or something similar!!

If this sounds of interest to you, we would love to hear from you. Contact Larry Ladbrook, lead walker or Janet Kelly (janet.kelly49@aol.com)



Strollers Walk in June - Maldon

Ukulele Group

The ukulele group has been running for only a few months so far and everyone thoroughly enjoys the sessions. We're learning basic chords and already have a load of songs to play and sing. If anyone would like to join us or requires further information, please do not hesitate to contact me

Linden Rosam

Walking Group

The walking group continues to meet twice a month on the first and third Friday. We meet just before 10.00 at the start of the walk and tend to finish the walks between 12.00 and 12.30, giving group members plenty of time to do other things they might have planned during the afternoon.

During the last quarter some of the walks were quite muddy, but in no way did it put off my intrepid group of walkers. However, without mentioning any names, it did lead one of the group to compete a number of the walks in wellies. Now that we are into the summer period and the ground is much harder, walking has become much more pleasant.



If you would like to join the group on any of the walks, please feel free to just turn up. Details of our next walks are given below together with where they start.

Walks for the next three months are as follows:

August 2nd - Danbury/Sandon Hall Walk of just over 6 miles. The walk starts at 10 am from Mayes Lane car park in Danbury.

August 16th - Goldhanger and Blackwater Walk of about 6 miles and starts at 10am from the Cheques Inn car park in Goldhanger.

September 6th - Maldon/Langford/Beeleigh Walk. This is a walk of about 6.5 miles starting from the Maldon Tesco car park at 10 am.

September 20th - Burnham on Crouch Walk of about 6.5 miles. Meet in the Marina car park just before 10 am

October 4th - Danbury Circular Walk. This is a walk of about 7 miles, and we meet just before 10 am in Mayes Lane car park in Danbury.

October 18th - Blake Wood Walk of about 5.5 miles. Meet in Mayes Lane car park in Danbury for a 10 am start.

For any more information about the group please contact me on (07889949685 or robert.tyas82@gmail.com)

Bob Tyas

Wine Appreciation Group 1

Wine group 1 continues to meet in the upstairs committee room at Champions Manor Hall. We are a friendly bunch and enjoy a good deal of chatter as we taste 6 or 7 wines each month. In the last quarter we have had a blind tasting of one member's favourite wines, tasted M+S classic wines when they were 25% off and New Zealand wines including a bottle of Feijoa, brought all the way home from down under. Members enjoy tasting the wines rating them and deciding if they would buy at the price. We have occasional trips out, a summer BBQ, and festive meal out in January

We have space for 1 or 2 members who would like to explore a range of wines from best quality supermarket wines to trying something a bit more up market in a very sociable atmosphere,



Janet Tipping

Wine Appreciation Group 2

This last quarter we have had 3 tasting sessions.

In April, we concentrated on mainly Italian wines and the one most liked was a white wine recommended by the Sunday Times from a Grape called Inzolia. Italy produces more wine than any other country and from more than 1000 different grapes under commercial culture.

In May we tasted wine from Chile but also an excellent white Pinot Gris from New Zealand that came from Aldi. In fact, there were 11 different grape varieties in the tasting we enjoyed.

In June we concentrated on Island wines, tried out another "call my bluff wine" where a covered-up bottle of wine with three explanations (of which only one is right) as to the grape variety is sampled by the group and invited to guess which was the grape (It was Sylvaner).

We also tried a Tannat grape grown mainly in France and Uruguay which was very much enjoyed, and the group preferred the Uruguay wine, but it was £29.50.

We have a large group, and our quarterly subs allow us to try some more expensive wines that otherwise we, as individuals would never purchase. Although all wine is rated differently by the taste of each of us because there is no right or wrong answer, often, like everything else in life you get what you pay for.

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 third quarter, we are very much looking forward to our Wine in the Garden event which we have every August and hoping the weather is kind.

We continue to have a very small amount of educational information combined with a large amount of tasting and mostly 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.

We have a full group (19 members) BUT should you wish to join we would be very happy to take a name for a vacancy should it arise or try a sample meeting for more information. Just contact me -Jeff Body if you are interested and I would be happy to discuss further detail.

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 Eileen Drane 07719789929

Deadline for Inclusion in Next Newsletter

Please send your contributions to the next Newsletter by Wednesday October 23rd, to Bob Tyas at robert.tyas82@gmail.com or deliver to 55 Clements Green Lane, SWF. Alternatively, you can ring him on 07889949685.