



Quarterly Newsletter - Autumn & Winter Edition



Riverside View of Maldon taken by Photography Group Member

Newsletter No 194

From the Chair

Now it's November, where has this year gone? Our weather this October lived up to its reputation for being 'interesting' - warm, cold, wet - not sure what season we're in.

I'm writing this before the budget by our new, beloved Chancellor, which I'm sure it'll be fair and balanced, however I will repeat what I said last month, please do check if you are eligible for pension credits, seems that there's about 1 million people eligible who are not claiming. BTW - this is a "Gateway" benefit that may allow you to claim other benefits including housing allowance and council tax credit.

What can I say about our speaker, Lucy Allen at our last meeting talking about witches? Those of you who couldn't make it missed a treat. Lucy is an actress - sorry, actor and is a stunt-double as well. She was very entertaining, dressing up and even treated us to a song. I think one or two members even had a spell cast on them. Unfortunately, while she was 'acting' she was unable to use the mike so some of our members sitting at the back did have difficulty hearing all she was saying.

At our next meeting on November 6th, the talk will be about the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. I know a little about this organisation and the great work they do and am looking forward to learning more - do come along.

You will see on our website that the topic for our December 4th meeting is "To Be Advised". Well, I won't say too much but we do have something planned that I'm sure you will all enjoy. All I will say at present is that the meeting will showcase the activities of two of our groups - you won't be disappointed - you may even be inspired to join one or both of them.

There are still some tickets available for our Quiz Night (November 9th), please see Tracey at the next meeting, it promises to be a very good evening. For information, doors will open at 7.15 for a 7.30 start. We will have some people there a bit earlier to set the tables and chairs out, but we cannot have people wondering around the hall while we do this.

I do look for interesting things on the internet and found there was a study conducted by the Universities of Maimi and Yale in 2000. They interviewed 600 people over the age of 50 and found that those with a positive attitude to growing older lived longer than those who didn't - an average of 6.5 years longer! This

remained true even when considering, gender, race and economic situation. So maybe the u3a is onto something when they say "learn, laugh, live"!

So: "You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing." George Bernard Shaw

David Hayes, Chair SWF u3a

From the Committee

We are now four months into the new Committee year, Eileen Drane and Tracy Dowling have settled into their new roles of Groups Coordinator and Social Secretary, repetitively, and with the other roles unchanged the committee year has got off to a smooth start. We are pleased to see our u3a membership increasing and welcome those who have joined recently.

If you have any questions 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.

Our plan this year is to profile the various roles on the Committee, last time it was the turn of the Groups Coordinator, this time it is our Webmaster. This is to set out what we do and get others interested so we share the knowledge and have some back up. You can get involved without joining the committee so if you are interested, we would like to hear from you.

The Committee

Webmasters Role

I have been asked to write something about the role of the webmaster, so here goes.

Now that our new site is up and running my job as webmaster is very minimal and in the main involves adding photos, adding information from group leaders to their group page, and correcting the odd error, which is still occasionally found.

I'm quite happy to continue as webmaster, the role is something that I very much enjoy, however the committee would like to see someone in place who could edit and update the site alongside me so that we have a backup for the role.

The site is developed around WordPress however knowledge of WordPress is not essential. National u3a have produced a training package for such a person and I would be there to help and guide you through the training. If you might be interested, please get in touch with me either at a monthly meeting or by phone or email (07889949685, robert.tyas82@gmail.com)

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

Remaining Speakers for 2024

November	Commonwealth war graves commission
December	In-house Entertainment

News from the Groups

Bowling Group

Hi everyone, I hope you all had a lovely summer. The sun took its time to shine but did come out eventually, so I hope you all took full advantage.

Speaking about taking advantage, our bowling group was offered some free tuition from a bowling coach at Maddison Heights a few weeks ago, so some of us took up this generous offer. This chap really knew his stuff and gave us lots of good pointers to improve our individual styles. Unfortunately, as is often the case when trying to change your technique with something, some of us got worse rather than better! However, some really did seem to make improvements. Phil is now aiming to join the 200 club (scoring 200 or more in a game) and has not been too far away on a couple of occasions. John also did very well this week and managed to join the 175 club with a 4 bagger (4 strikes in a row), on his last game. Me, well I seem to be going downhill rapidly but I put that down to a sore elbow which has meant I have needed to amend my grasp of the ball - any excuse ha ha! One good piece of news is that the lovely Sue Cole has fully recovered from her hip operation and is back to brilliant bowling ways. This, of course, means that the cherished one-pound coin that Phil and Sue wager every week against their scores, is back on in earnest. All square this week between them but watch this space....

Diane

Cards and Games

Do you fancy an afternoon of competitive fun? then why not give the Cards and Games Group a try.

We are a very friendly group that meets every 4th Wednesday at South Woodham Ferrers Village Hall at 2pm till 4pm we have games such as :

Rummikub, Mexican Train, Quirkle and Sequence to name but a few.

We also have a little quiz at the end of the afternoon and it's amazing the things we find out that we never knew.

Not forgetting the tea/coffee and biscuits.

If you are interested, please contact me on [07931559909](tel:07931559909).



Many Thanks

Kay Miles

Gardening Group

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 usually aim to arrive at the gardens by 2pm and we try to car share as much as possible.

Our latest visit was to Saling Hall on October 14th and despite heavy morning rain the brave few who attended were treated to some early Autumn colour and views of a Muntjac deer. We were accompanied by the head gardener who was very knowledgeable and friendly and are keen to return in a few years and see how the owners develop their ambitious plans for this large period garden.



Photos from Saling Hall

The remaining meetings of the year are a short trip to Hyde Hall followed by lunch at Taz and a Christmas social on December 9th. January and February will see speakers at Champions Manor Hall. Garden visits resume in March. The programme for next year will be available shortly on the website.

Janet, Sue and Shirley

Gin Appreciation 1

This group is still thriving. We meet on the 1st Tuesday of each month in the Games room at the village hall where we sample and give our verdict on 3 gins. Trust me, we rarely have repeats. There are so many gins out there to choose from.

It is a very social group, often seems like a very lively discussion group where we put our views to many topics. It can be hilarious and extremely noisy but great fun.

This year we have had Zane, from the Chelmsford distillery, come to give us a talk with tastings, of the history of how he set the business up in his grandmother's garage during Covid lockdown. He can be found now in the arches by the Chelmsford Bus Station. Please give him a look up.

A group from both groups 1 and 2 enjoyed a fun time at the Gin and Rum festival at Colchester Charter Hall. There were plenty of tastings and live music. Many of us threw our inhibitions to the wind and took to the dance floor.



Summer Gin tasting

Mary 🍸

Gin Appreciation 2

Gin Group 2 meet on the second Tuesday of the month 7-9. If you are interested in joining our small group, please get in touch on 07913 978630.



This summer we tasted some excellent gins and some that we would rather not drink again. Our top bottles were:

Rockland Dry Gin, distilled in Sri Lanka by Rocklands Distilleries founded in 1924 in the midst of colonial rule.

Tarquine's Black Cherry Gin, crafted on the wild Cornish coast. Infused with fresh pressed black cherries and a touch of orange zest to create a delicious zingy sipping gin.

Playwright Gin, distilled in London. The main botanical is cerasus (acid or sour cherry) which dates back to Henry VIII who brought it into the country and began growing them throughout London.

The highlight of the summer was a joint outing with Gin Group 1 to the Gin and Rum Festival in Colchester where members could choose from a large selection of gin, rum, tequila and cocktails dancing away to the live music.

Tracey Dowling

Local History

Our October visit to St Mary with St Leonards Church in Broomfield was the last visit in our programme for this year. It was a very interesting and enjoyable

afternoon, with talks on the history of the church and the Life and Works of Rosemary Rutherford, a local artist who had completed a fresco in the Norman church tower and four stained glass windows in the church. We were taken around the church to see the fresco and windows and enjoy the exhibition celebrating Rosemary's life and her art work.

For those of you who were unable to come on the visit you can see the exhibition and fresco on Tuesday's and Thursdays between 10.30 and 12.30. There is parking next to the church, it is a very well-presented exhibition and well worth a visit.

Our August visit to Bradwell was very good, our guide took us around the village pointing out the buildings of interest and giving us a glimpse of life in the past in the village, The two highlights were being allowed into the now privately owned grounds of the former Rectory, a beautiful Georgian house which had been built adjoining a Tudor house, and one of the gardens of another Tudor House which had a Georgian front. Around 75% of the buildings in the village are listed so there are plenty of interesting buildings to look at as well as the Church.



En route to the Rectory - Bradwell



Local Jail - Bradwell

We will be starting to organise our programme for next year soon, if you have any ideas then please let us know.

Thank you for your support this year we hope you have enjoyed the talks and visits we have organised.

If you are new to our u3a and interested in joining the group, please come and see us at our table at the main meeting to find out more about the group.

Kate, Mary and Allen

London Walks

This group is still thriving and since the last newsletter we have done:

London, A Heart of Stone - May

Highgate Village - June

The Monopoly Walk - July

A Soho Saunter - August

Publish and be Damned - September

The Nell Gwyn Special - October



London A Heart of Stone - Law Courts



Highgate Village - View towards the City



Monopoly Walk - Piccadilly Circus



A Soho Saunter



Publish and be Damned - Fleet St



Nell Gwynne Pub in the Strand

In November our walk is entitled Eating Christmas which will give us an insight of Christmas food past and present.

We will end the year with a lunch at the Lodge.

The walks are mainly on the third Wednesday and the fourth Thursday of each month and are the same walks. We travel to London by train and meet our guide at a designated place depending on the location of the walk.

I cannot believe that it's almost time to start thinking about next year's walks. Where has this year gone?

I bid you all a Happy Christmas)

Mary. 07941302947

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

- Still Life
- Pastel Techniques
- Pen and Ink (Line and Wash)
- Caricature
- Figure drawing
- Working 'on location'
- Atmospheric Perspective

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.

At our September meeting we covered Atmospheric Perspective, the illusion of depth moving back into space. That is, objects closer to the viewer appear more detailed and higher in contrast. Objects further back in space are blurrier, lower in contrast and have little detail. Examples of this effect by group members are included below.



All are examples of Atmospheric Perspective

Photographic Group

Our South Woodham Ferrers u3a Photography Group meet on the first Tuesday of each month, in the Conference Room at Champions Manor Hall from 9:30 - 11:30 am.

Generally, we have chosen a topic, and members bring their photos to share and discuss. Whether you use top of the range equipment, "point and shoot" cameras or mobile phones - everyone is welcome, from the very experienced to total beginners.

Some of our members are excellent photographers who, in the true spirit of the u3a, are happy to share their expertise. They will explain and demonstrate anything from the very basics to quite advanced techniques.

Our meetings are always very friendly, interesting and enjoyable - with much light-hearted discussion over refreshments.

We are having an open session in the Conference Room at Champions Manor Hall on 5th November from 9.30 - 11.30, all are welcome.



Recent photos taken by the group

Pic and Bricks (Art and Architecture)

This group arranged visits to places with Art, Architecture or Historic interests. This would include Art Galleries such as The Tate Britain and buildings such as Westminster Abbey - usually with an expert guide to enhance the visit.

Other events have included visits to:

- A guided visit to the Alexandra Palace
- A guided visit to the recently renovated Gainsborough's House and Gallery in Sudbury, Suffolk.
- Islamic Art at the V&A
- Fry Gallery Saffron Walden

To name just a few!!

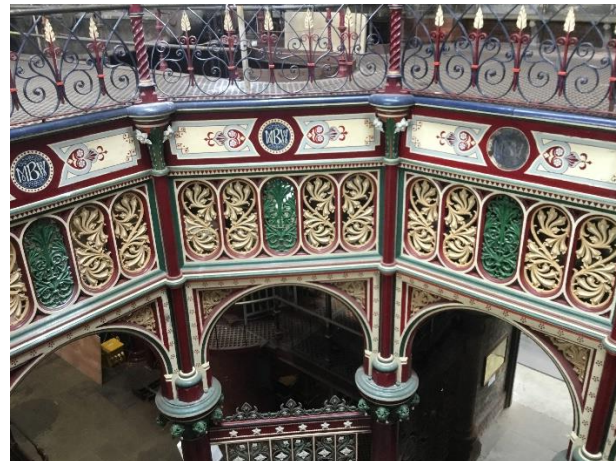
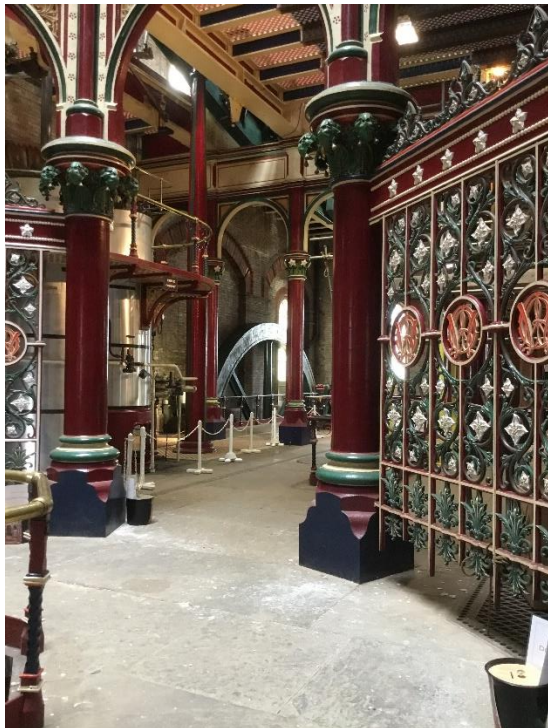
After 13 successful years of being the Group Leader for Pics and Bricks, Chris Miles is unable to continue, and the group are looking for a new Leader(s). Chris and Roy Brindley are both happy to help anyone who is interested in taking over and setting up this group again.

Perhaps two or three of you could consider doing this together, many groups have more than one Group Leader. Someone to organise the visits, someone to manage the money and maybe another to do the emails and general admin?

If you want any further information, please contact me.

Eileen Drane - Group Co-ordinator - eileen.drane@googlemail.com

The photos shown below were taken at some of the previous visits



Science and Technology Group

The new Science & Tech Group have had just a few meetings at Champions Manor Hall this year and each has been interesting, informative and often thought provoking. The group of currently 8 members have a variety of interests, skills

and knowledge. There are no experts. The group will discuss all topics that members are interested in. Several members offered to do presentations, and the group will also 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 from 10am to 12 noon.

If you would like more information, please contact [Richard Peach](#) or [Eileen Drane](#).

Walking Group

The walking group will continue to walk during the winter on our usual first and third Friday of the month. Walks always start at 10am, where we meet will depend on the walk.

A list of the next three months walk can be seen below. If you would like to view any of the walks in advance, you can view and print them off from my walks catalogue. To access the catalogue, you will find a link to it in the Walking Group area of our website.



Winter Walk on a Bright Frosty Morning

November 1st - Danbury Circular Walk of about 6.5 miles - Meet in Mayes Lane car park.

November 15th - Woodham Ferrers/Hyde Hall Walk of about 6 miles - Meet in the Sports Field car park in Lodge Road.

December 6th - Paper Mill Lock Circular Walk of about 6.5 miles - Meet in The Generals Arms car park.

December 20th - Bicknacre/East Hanningfield Walk of about 5.5 miles - Meet in the Brewers Arms car park.

January 3rd - Bradwell Walk of about 6 miles - Meet in the St Peters on the Wall car park.

January 17th - Danbury Thrift Wood Walk of about 5.5 miles - Meet in Mayes Lane car park.

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

Bob Tyas

Weekenders Group

This is a new group for members who do not have partners. Many of us are busy during the week but often didn't see anyone on Saturday or Sunday.

We meet for coffee or lunches, and we have discussed places to visit e.g. theatre, cinema, walks, visits to London, quizzes etc.

So far, we've had breakfast at the Ferry Boat and coffee at Club Woodham.

On 24th November we are having lunch at BHN.

Contact Shirley Masterson if you want to join us.

Wine Appreciation Group 1

Wine group 1 meets at Champion's Manor Hall on the 2nd Friday afternoon of the month. We enjoyed a BBQ in Janet and David's garden in August on a beautiful sunny afternoon. In September we tasted Fairtrade wines from the Co-op and were surprised at the quality and value of the majority. In October we tasted 6 of Majestics best sellers including 'The Guvnor' a favourite with most of the group. We are returning to our best rated wines of the year for the December meeting and look forward to starting the new year with a meal at the Hawk.



Few pictures taken at Summer BBQ

Janet Tipping

Wine Appreciation Group 2

This last quarter has been a rather energetic time for the group. In August we had our annual wine tasting session in a member's garden, with good weather and 13 bottles of wine to consume! We have had 2 more monthly tasting sessions, where we concentrated on Island wines and in this case, it was Sardinia and Corsica.



Summer Wine Tasting

However, the highlight of this quarter was a trip we planned back in February to visit Avignon in France, by train for 4 nights which included 2 full day wine tours with a French Guide. She had worked as a sommelier in England for the Roux brothers.

Day 1 was a visit to two vineyards in Vacqueyras, and Gigondas, where we also had a lunch in a small family restaurant (see photo).

Day 2 was to the famous Chateauneuf du Pape appellation area (the first to be recorded in France) where two more family run vineyards were visited and the wine tasted of course. Another lunch in a Chateau this time.

We had a free day in Avignon and for most of the time we had superb sunny weather, and from the 15 people group who travelled, the feedback was excellent, with a request for another trip next year this would represent the third for this group.

This year the group arranged for us all to have SWF wine group Polo shirts which you can also see in the photos with this article

The large group we have, which with our quarterly subs allow us to try some more expensive wines that otherwise we, as individuals would never purchase. (Indeed, some of the French wine we tasted on the trip was over £50 a bottle).

Although all wine is rated differently by the individual taste of each of us, there is no right or wrong answer, often, although 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).

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.

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 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.



The Lunch in Gigondas



Wine guide preparing tasting



The group Photo in Vaqueyras

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 & Tech		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 22nd January, to Bob Tyas at robert.tyas82@gmail.com or deliver to 55 Clements Green Lane, SWF. Alternatively, you can ring him on 07889949685.