

South Woodham Ferrers



<https://swf.u3asite.uk/>

Quarterly Newsletter - Summer & Autumn Edition



Photograph taken by a member of the Photographic Group

Newsletter No 197

From the Chair

We've had some great weather in July, hot sunny days, what summer should be, just remember to use sun cream and stay hydrated.

Our AGM went well, and while I'm sad that Kate had to stand down having reached her term limit, I am very pleased to welcome our new Treasurer - Linden - who I'm sure will be a worthy successor. I'm also very pleased that Lynn Perham will be joining the committee. It's great that so many members are willing to help on the committee. It's not hard work, but it is rewarding.

I thought the talk by Georgina about the work of the Dogs Trust was very interesting and informative - I was surprised by the amount of work they do and pleased that they have a system for caring for dogs when their owners pass away. I know at least one of our members who has that concern. In August we'll be joined by Paul Hatfield who will be telling us about the "Undersea World of Indonesian Borneo", which promises to be very interesting.

We're finalising the arrangements for our Quiz Night and Christmas event - more on both from Tracey later in this newsletter. All I'll say is if you are interested, please book early as there are a limited number of tickets available.

Remember, our website has up-to-date information on everything that is happening at our u3a, and links to cluster group and the national u3a's: <https://swf.u3asite.uk/> We are also active on Facebook, for those of us who use it, which Ann regularly updates: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/u3aswf> .

A bit of 'housekeeping':

- Emails from myself and the Group Leaders are via the u3a membership system, "Beacon", which allows us to email all the members without showing individual email addresses to anyone else. The system also personalises the emails, so they all start with 'Dear David', or 'Dear Ann'.
- All messages and information from your u3a are by email and via the website. There is a printed copy of the newsletter available on the noticeboard at the monthly meetings. For cost reasons, we do not post the newsletter to individuals.
- We have received the following request from SWF Town Council: "we would like attendees of the various groups that use CMH to use our car park when possible and if it is full to please ensure that parking on the road is done safely and in accordance with the law and The Highway Code. Please ensure

that our driveways and those of our neighbours are not blocked and that parked cars are at least 10m from any junction." I understand that this has been sent to all users of CMH.

And a message for our gentlemen members, "Women are made to be loved, not understood", (Oscar Wilde). Worth remembering.

David Hayes, Chair SWF u3a

From the Committee

At the AGM on Wednesday 2nd July, Kate Smith stepped down as Treasurer having completed 6 years in that role, and Linden Rosam was elected in her place. Lynn Perham was also elected on to the committee without a specific role. Kate was presented with a gardening voucher by the committee and a bouquet of flowers at the AGM.

A social media policy was agreed at the last committee meeting and will be uploaded to the website shortly. This covers the use of our Facebook u3a South Woodham Ferrers page which should only be used for u3a postings not other related SWF postings.

The Committee

Committee Membership 2025 - 2026

Chairman	David Hayes
Vice Chairman	Angela Weaver
Secretary	Ann Woolley
Treasurer	Lin Rosam
Membership Secretary	Janet Kelly
Groups Coordinator	Eileen Drane
Speakers Secretary	Shirely Masterson
Webmaster & Newsletter	Bob Tyas
Publicity	Roger Gatford
Social Secretary	Tracey Dowling
Member	Mary Brindley
Member	Lynn Perham

Social

Plans are well underway for our two forthcoming events.

Quiz Night, Saturday 4th October - tickets are £5 each and will be on sale prior to the main meeting on 6th August.

Christmas Lunch, Wednesday 17th December - If you would like to attend this event, I will be taking £10 deposits on 6th August.

Tracey 07913 978630

Report Recently sent to u3a Matter

THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK



The South Woodham Ferrers u3a Eco Group held a successful "Let's Get Green" event on 14th June at Champions Manor Hall as part of the national Great Big

Green Week. The Town Mayor, Cllr Alan Shearring opened the event for us and spoke about how the Town Council is becoming greener with an electric van and solar panels. He then visited the various tables and chatted with people there.

As well as a variety of displays on electric vehicles, recycling and plastics, eco-friendly household goods, vegan recipes, green travel and holidays we also had a slideshow of photos on green issues taken by the u3a Photography Group and paintings done by the u3a Paints and Pastels group. Children could give us their thoughts on climate change and also make paper plant pots and plant wildflower seeds. We were also joined by the Men's Shed lads who had made bird boxes, bird tables, and planters for people to buy, Sue with her Open Gardens fundraising for Farleigh Hospice and Kelly from Kinder Essex. Refreshments were served during the afternoon.

During the afternoon, Byron gave a talk on what you can do for hedgehogs in the garden, such as holes under fences, providing water and places where they can hide. South Woodham turns out to be a good location for hedgehogs. We also watched a blog of our Cllr Terry Sherlock, Chelmsford's Climate Ambassador, cycling round the cycle routes in South Woodham, a video about plastic recycling and one about Climate Justice. It was a very sociable and informative afternoon.

Ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com

Ann's Big Hike

Thank you so much to the u3a members who supported me on my Big Hike Challenge. On Saturday 12th July, in temperatures of over 30C, I managed to complete well over 26 miles in the Cotswolds as part of the Cancer Research UK Big Hike challenge. It was pretty hard going but I had the support of two of my sisters and a bellringing couple, one of whom is a diabetic. I'm hoping to get to £1000, at the time of writing at £870, so if you could contribute a fiver that would be great - either online or at the next u3a meeting!

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/anns-big-hike-12>

Speakers for 2025

6th August

The Undersea world of Indonesian Borneo: Paul Hatfield describes his journey from the UK to Malaysia and then on to Borneo. He talks about the diving and the very diverse creatures that he saw.

3rd September

Essex Girls: Don't get the wrong idea! Jane Piper tells us about the famous women of our county and their achievements.

1st October

Mister Gees: Douglas Gee will tell us all about his charity based in South Woodham Ferrers.

5th November

Polydactyl Cats and Interesting Facts: Whilst researching multi-clawed cats, Peggy Griffin discovered some fascinating facts about Anne Boleyn, Essex witches, Marie Antoinette and much more.

3rd December

Love is in the Air: Mike Grillo will entertain us with his music based on this theme.

News from the Groups

Bowling

Hello everyone, another three months have passed us by in a flash, and it has been a great one for the tenpin bowling group. Again, we seem to be outdoing each other with scores lately. We used to be happy if we got over 100 but that seems to be the norm now so most of us are hoping for 120+ and miraculously we are achieving that! Graham and Bob have both reached the 200 marks in a couple of games and many have reached 150 or more. Well done to them all! Must be something in the coffee! As my husband Brian and I moved house about four months ago and many of our members have been asking us how we are getting on, I decided to combine a housewarming with a bowler's summer lunch. Everyone came back to our new abode after our Bowling session, and I laid on lunch for everybody. It turned out to be a beautiful day weatherwise, so we were able to

eat outside, and a good time was had by all! I hope everyone enjoys the rest of this glorious summer.



Best wishes. Diane Hurrell (Tenpin Bowling leader).

Gardening Group

The Gardening group meet up on the 2nd Monday of the month at 2pm. We try and carshare as much as possible and visit NGS gardens and sometimes RHS gardens Essex from March until November. In the winter months we have our meetings at Champion Manor Hall.

In May we visited The Mount in Roydon near Harlow. This was a spectacular garden with around 400 hundred statues and sculptures. Our hosts were very welcoming with refreshments on arrival, a tour of the garden, then plenty of time to explore and more refreshments and plenty of places to sit. Everyone agreed it was a fantastic garden well worth the long journey.

In June we visited Blunts Hall, another beautiful garden. Many of us had visited in Spring last year when it was a bitterly cold day. It was lovely to see it at its best and to see all the changes that had been made since our last visit. We were split into two groups and taken on a tour of the garden. They had two very large

tulip trees in flower. Afterwards we enjoyed an afternoon tea with sandwiches, scones, jam and clotted cream followed cake. This garden is one of our favourites!

Our July visit should have been to Isabella's Garden at Leigh on Sea at the earlier time of 11am because of parking restrictions. We had booked The Grove restaurant for lunch afterwards. Unfortunately, Isabella's Garden was cancelled with only 24 hours' notice due to their cat being poisoned. We managed to contact everyone to let them know of the situation.

We decided to go ahead with the lunch at The Grove. We sat under the canopy in the sunshine overlooking the Thames Estuary and enjoyed a delicious leisurely lunch.

We are hoping to rebook Isabella's Garden for next year but as they are having an NGS Open Garden on the 26th and 27th July we may try and squeeze in a visit.

If you have a love of visiting gardens and eating cake and would like to join our group, please come and see us at our table at the main meeting.

Here is a programme of our next few outings.

On the 11th August we have a visit to Rhona's Garden at Stow Maries, this has become a tradition and is very popular with our members. We do not charge for this garden but many of our members make cakes and bring along plants for the plant stall.

On the 8th of September are having a visit to Oaks Farm at Wakes Colne near Colchester. This garden has stunning views across the Colne Valley and should have plenty of autumn colour. The cost of this visit is £10 and includes refreshments.

On the 13th of October we will be visiting ' The Place for Plants' in East Bergholt Place, Suffolk which is a plant centre and garden. The £10 is for entrance only. There is a cafe that will be serving refreshments.



Some photos taken on recent visits

Sue and Shirley

Gin Group 1

Our very social meetings continue to thrive with us still being able to taste three different gins each month. It's truly mind blowing how many different gins are on the market these days.

We are looking forward to our annual meeting in my garden at the end of this month and in July a few of us are joining with Group two to go to the Bradwell on the Wall Distillery for an Afternoon tea with three Gin tastings.

This group is still full to new members I'm afraid.

Mary

Gin Appreciation 2

The group have enjoyed some particularly good gins this quarter. Penrhos Wonky Raspberry Gin, Hendricks Grand Cabaret and Brewdog Zealot's Heart to name just a few.

Our next meeting is 7:00 on Tuesday 12th August at the Village Hall. If you would like to know more about the group or you would like to join us please get in touch.

Tracey 07913 978630

Local History

We have enjoyed three visits since the last newsletter update.

In June we visited Southchurch Hall in Southend; a rare medieval, moated manor house which was built between 1321 and 1364. The Hall was home to farming families until the 1920s. In 1930 it was extensively restored and presented to the town of Southend, serving as the local library until the mid 1970s when it became the museum. We had a guided tour around the house and time to explore the gardens. If you missed the visit, it is open Wednesday to Sunday, 11-4.



The main Hall at Southchurch Hall

July took us to the Moot Hall in Maldon, the Hall building is the only remaining part of the mansion dating back to 1420. We had an excellent guide who took us through the history of the building as we explored the three floors, finishing on

the roof. The climb up the steep, spiral, stairs was well rewarded with the views over Maldon from the roof.



Maldon from the Roof - Moot Hall

July was our coach trip to Ely. We had perfect weather for the day, Ely looked its best in the July sunshine. After refreshments in the Almonry, with its garden and views of the Cathedral, we headed to the Cathedral for our guided tour, learning about the history and architecture of the building. The most impressive parts being the Norman nave, the Lady Chapel and the impressive Octagon Tower. The afternoon was free to explore Ely.



Ely Cathedral and Octagon Tower

We have a break now; there are no visits in August and September.

Our next visit will be to the Old House in Rochford on Tuesday 14 October at 2pm. Parts of the house, which I set over two floors, date back to 1270. The cost will be £4 pp. Booking sheets will be out at the August main meeting.

If you are interested in joining our group please come and speak to us at our table at the main meeting or you can contact us via the link on the u3a web site.

Kate, Mary and Allen

London Walks

This thriving and much loved group meets on the 3rd Wednesday and the 4th Thursday of each month.

In May on our Darkest Victorian London Walk one of the places we visited was the very interesting and bustling Borough Market.



In June we enjoyed Rock n Roll London which took us back to the Swinging 60s. A much loved time for many of us.



In July we visited The Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf. A very interesting walk comparing the two areas.



In August we have a tour of Maggie Thatchers Chelsea.

In September we have Pirates, Press Gangs and Execution Dock.

In October Spies and Special Forces

If you are interested in joining any of these walks please come and see me at the desk at the main meeting.

Mary. 07941302947 rbmb4546@yahoo.co.uk

Needle Felting

The group has been meeting since February and the member's skills and confidence have noticeably improved over the months. We have 10 members in the group which is quite large for a group of beginners to needle felting.

This month's project was woolbuddy owls which were fun to make, and everyone enjoyed making individual characters.

Next month is 2D pictures and then in September we move onto pumpkins and autumn leaves before we start making Christmas tree ornaments.



Some of the work we have recently produced

Lorraine Hayward

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

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**.

In May our topic was The Environment / Green Issues when members of the group produced artwork to highlight the importance of the Environment to human health and well-being but also some of the effects and dangers posed by climate

change. A selection of paintings were on display at the Green Event on June 14th. A sample of those images are included below.

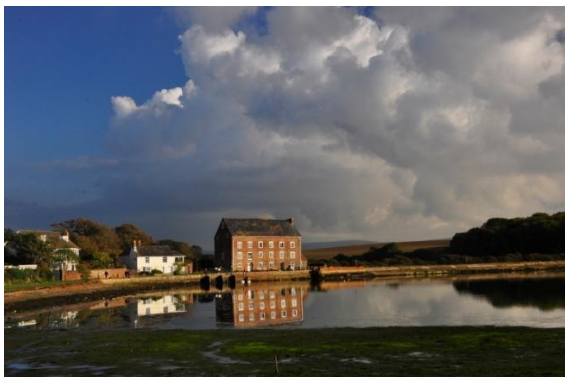


Chris Miles

Photographic Group

The photographic group meet on the first Tuesday of the month during the morning.

Below are photos of street scenes, holidays, green matter, skies and the moon - a varied set of photographs form a varied set of members (?) using varying cameras - even mobile phones - is there any end to our talent!



Examples from the Photographic Group

Alan

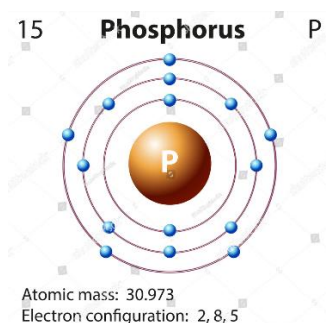
Science and Technology Group

At our June meeting we were initially treated to 'A way of Life' by Paul, a very amusing and entertaining presentation of his life as a Vet.



Photos from Pauls Presentation

Thank you also to Richard for his excellent presentation about Phosphorus. Its main function is in the formation of bones and teeth. (Remember, do not wash your mouth out completely after cleaning your teeth). For such a poisonous substance we need a lot of it!



Jenny then shared information about some current cancer trials, and also in connection with *Ginger* cats, the unknown orange gene (a missing section of DNA). Then followed these with an explanation about Chromium - and Antimony, both from the Periodic Table.

We have covered a number of elements from the Periodic Table now including arsenic, titanium, magnesium, indium, sulphur, lithium, zinc, americium, plutonium, copper, helium, iron. Alex is preparing carbon, Chas hydrogen and Paul Calcium - all to be shared at a future date.

We are a discussion group of approximately 14 members, happy to share and discuss anything our members are interested in. We research a variety of subjects then share our findings with the group. We meet on the 2nd Thursday

morning of the month at Champions Manor Hall. For further information contact Eileen Drane at: eileen.drane@googlemail.com

Walking Groups

Our U3A group has a variety of walks available. The **Strollers Group** has been in existence for about 15 years and are normally flat walks of 2 to 3 miles in length and last about an hour and a half, walking at a leisurely pace. They are normally quite local but sometimes in the Brentwood or Burnham on Crouch area. The walks are on the Fourth Monday of the month.



Strollers in Maldon

We also have the **Striders Group**. Striders walks are 4 to 5 miles in length and last about 2 hours walking at a slightly brisker pace than the strollers group and can include stiles or a moderate incline however, some U3A members walk with both groups. Striders walks are normally within Ten miles of South Woodham Ferrers.



Striders in Burnham

Both above groups end at or near a garden centre or pub with the opportunity to chat in case we didn't talk enough on the walk.

Both groups are ideal to keep fit and enjoy our local countryside.

Both groups' walks are March to October depending on weather conditions and we do try to share cars.

For more details of the Stroller or Striders walks please contact Larry Ladbrook.

For the more serious walker there is a **Walking Group** which walk twice a month throughout the year. More details of this group may be found below.

The Walking Group meet on the first and third Friday of the month at 10 am with the meeting point being dependant on the walk. The length of the walks varies with most being in the order of 6 miles and we tend to walk whatever the weather.

For even more details visit our webpage:

https://swf.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking/



Walking Group in Blake Wood

Walks for the next three months:

August 1st

South Woodham Ferrers/Stow Maries Aerodrome Walk - 6.5 miles - meet in Compass Gardens car park.

August 15th

Bicknacre/East Hanningfield Walk -5.5 miles - meet in The Brewers Arms car park in Bicknacre.

September 5th

Stock/Magaretting Walk - 6,5 miles - meet in Stock Village Hall car park.

September 19th

Bradwell Walk - 6.5 miles - meet in St Peter's-on-the Wall car park.

October 3rd

Danbury Thrift Wood Walk - 6 miles - meet in the National Trust car park opposite The Cricketers Pub

October 17th

Paper Mill Lock Circular Walk - 6 miles - meet in The Generals Arms Pub in Little Baddow.

Bob Tyas (robert.tyas82@gmail.com)

Weekenders Group

Here are some activities that the Weekenders have been up to:

On 23rd February some of us took part in a quiz followed by a buffet lunch at Barbara Willsmer's. We all had a really good time and hope to have another quiz soon.

We've had lunch meetings at Shaw Farm and Clayhill Vineyard where we planned future events.



We are interested in going to Beeleigh Abbey, a walk round Burnham followed by tea and the Stow Maries Air Show, all in August.

Shirley

Wine Appreciation Group 1

Wine group 1 visited New Hall Vineyard on Friday 25th July and were treated to a very interesting and informative afternoon. We sampled two styles of sparkling wine as well as two still whites a rose and red blend all, of excellent quality.

We learned a lot about the history of their grapes, going back to 1969 and how they adapt to the excellent local growing conditions. Our area of Essex, CM3 postcode, has the highest concentration of vineyards in the country.

We admired their unique grape harvesting machine the only one of its style in the country.

We had a fascinating tour of wine production area and learned how much embracing new technology and science has improved the quality of their wines.

We all agreed a fascinating afternoon and would thoroughly recommend a visit.

Our next meeting is a BBQ in a member's garden then in September a few of us are visiting the vineyards of Languedoc and Roussillon .



New Hall Visit

Janet Tipping

Wine Appreciation Group 2

July 2025

This is about our activity for the last three months, since all the specific arrangements of our wine group, e.g. when we meet, our quarterly subs, etc. can now be found on the SWF website: -

https://swf.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/wine-appreciation-2/

MAY Here we tried wines from unusual grapes from 6 different countries. The group found that a 100% Malagousia grape wine from Greece was the best of the 4 white wines and the three red wines from Georgia, Lebanon, and France were all equally No. 1 The Georgian red wine was a 100% Saperavi grape and this demonstrated that the traditional Grape varieties that we all know, are not necessarily a guarantee of taste

JUNE In this tasting we tried a famous traditional wine region of France where 6 of 7 were from the Rhone region of France a Grenache Blanc grape came out first , and two of the reds again had a split vote for the best wine both priced at £18 and again the prominent grape in both wine blends was Grenache Noir Interestingly the same winemaker had produced both the white and the red the group liked the best

Lastly For **JULY** we tried mostly wines from Portugal, famous for PORT but also tremendous value and quality for both red and white wines and from grapes that are almost unique to the Portuguese wine makers. We also Ahad a sauvignon Blanc wine from NZ from Hans Grey universally liked by the Group. 2 of 3 reds from Portugal as blends came out joint top

In **AUGUST** we have our annual get together in a member's garden. (a session that takes at least 4 hours!) and includes members partners and more of this next publication.

In **September** we are scheduled a visit from Nethergate Wines of Bury St Edmunds who will carry out the tasting for the group and organize a "Call my bluff" where we will taste the first wine and be invited to pick from 3 options as to what it is, where only 1 of the three is correct.

Each month we search for wines of value, with some new grape varieties, and different countries of production. We source the wines for the group from individual wine suppliers across the U.K, and the Wine Society, rather than supermarket wines. The volume of production required to supply them and even M&S and Waitrose means small winemakers, however, good or bad can never appear on their shelves. Similarly, a small independent wine supplier cannot match the big retailers, on price for their volumes. So small independent wine retailers, to stay in business, must search out mainly these smaller producers, who score either on price or taste and often both.

We have a full group at present, but any prospective new member is welcome to give us a try for one off session to come along for £8 to see what we are like as a group and what we provide, which is 7 different wines each tasting session, much chat, and a little informative knowledge of what we are tasting and where and how it was produced

If you have an interest, please feel free to contact me for further information

Jeff Body Group Leader for SWF 2 wine group

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	Ukulele Group Tai Chi
Wednesday	AM		Fine Your Voice	London Walks 1	Needle Felting
	PM	Monthly Meeting	Singles & Dining		Cards and Games for Fun
Thursday	AM		Science & Tech		London Walks 2
	PM		French Intermediate		French Beginners
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 October 22nd, to Bob Tyas at robert.tyas82@gmail.com or deliver to 55 Clements Green Lane, SWF. Alternatively, you can ring him on 07889949685.