

# South Woodham Ferrers u3a

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

Quarterly Newsletter - Summer & Autumn Edition



Newsletter No 201

## From the Chair

Hello, my name is Lorraine Hayward, and I took over the role of Chair from David Hayes on the 1/07/2026.

I would like to thank you for your warm welcome at the meeting and look forward to meeting more of you in the future.

I joined the u3a 12 years ago, spending the first 9 years at Crouch Valley u3a joining as many groups that I could fit in, and relishing my freedom from work. After lockdown my lifestyle changed as I had to look after my husband. I joined the South Woodham Ferrers u3a about 3 years ago where I'm now trying to give something back. Firstly, with my needle felting group and secondly as a committee member. I was just about to join the Committee when I was persuaded to volunteer to be Chair.

The aim of the University of the Third Age is to enable and support you to enjoy life and make the best use of your time. There is something for everyone, however if you can't find what you need, ask if there are others who would like to join you in forming a new group or alternatively check out the other u3a's in the cluster. Or if you're like me and have limited free time, check out the online courses and groups available to you.

My role as I see it is to support the committee, and their role is to enable and support you while ensuring that as u3a trustees, all regulations are followed. It will be interesting to see how my role as Chair works out over the next few months.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the August meeting.

Lorraine Hayward

Chair SWF U3A

## Committee Membership 2026 – 2027

Following on from the July AGM we now have a new committee in place as detailed below.

### Executive Officers

Chair - Lorraine Hayward

Vice Chair - Angela Weaver

Treasurer - Martin Townhsend

Secretary - Ann Woolley

### **Members**

Membership - Janet Kelly

Groups - Eileen Drane

Recruitment - Roger Gatford

Meeting Coordinator - Shirely Masterson

Social - Tracey Dowling

Gift Aid - Sharon Bartlet

Mary Brindley

Lynn Perham

### **Co-opted Members**

Angela Ellis

Karen Kemp

Roger Hurrell

## From the Committee

David Hayes and Ann Woolley attended the open event before the Town Council AGM at the beginning of May. There were several groups represented and although there were not many members of the public it was useful to chat to the other groups and to the town councillors.

At the AGM in July, Lorraine Hayward was elected as Chair, Martin Townshend as Treasurer and Sharon Bartlett to the committee. David Hayes, Linden Rosam and Bob Tyas were thanked for their work on the committee and presented with gifts. We now have a fully elected committee of 12 members - Angela Weaver, Ann Woolley, Mary Brindley, Tracey Dowling, Eileen Drane, Roger Gatford, Janet Kelly, Shirley Masterson and Lynn Perham.

Angela Ellis, Karen Kemp and Roger Hurrell were co-opted on to the committee for one year.

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary social event at Stow Maries was very successful and is reported on elsewhere. Thanks to Tracey Dowling and Lynn Perham for their hard work organising it.

The committee was saddened to hear the news of Allen Surrey's untimely death on 6<sup>th</sup> June in a car accident whilst driving to his holiday home in Spain. Allen joined the u3a in 2009 and was a member of the golf, wine appreciation, whisky appreciation, London walks and walking groups, as well as leading the local history group for many years. He was elected on the committee in 2012, firstly serving as treasurer for six years and later groups co-ordinator for a further two. The funeral will take place on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August at 12.30 at Maldon Fields Crematorium followed by a wake at the Prince of Wales, Stow Maries. Please let me know if you are planning to attend for catering purposes."

Ann Woolley ([ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com))

Secretary's Role

I shall be standing down as secretary in July next year after 5 years in post. I have enjoyed my time in post but with another grandchild on the way I want to

be able to go up to Nottingham without worrying about committee meetings!! A summary of the role would involve

- familiarising yourself with the various policy documents that the u3a has
- liaising with the executive committee and committee as appropriate
- preparing and sending out papers ahead of the monthly committee meetings, and annual AGM, minuting the meetings
- distributing information to the committee or membership as appropriate
- follow up any actions that need to be taken as appropriate
- general administration, dissemination of information, and maintenance of records

I am happy to have a chat with anyone who would like to know more about the role, and it is also possible to attend a committee meeting as a visitor.

Ann Woolley ([ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com))



## Social News

Members visited Stow Marie's Great War Aerodrome to celebrate 20 years of South Woodham Ferrers u3a.

We were treated to a tour of the site by some very knowledgeable guides learning about life on the site during WW1 for the airmen.



A picnic lunch was served in the Mess Hall followed by our very own Find your Voice who entertained us with some very topical songs. Members also had the opportunity to "have a go" at needle felting and were amazed by the figures on display.



The afternoon ended with tea and cake and free time.

I would like to thank all members for their contribution in making this a successful day.

Tracey

If you would like to view more photos taken at the event and a YouTube video of Find Your Voice, singing a range of songs take this link:

<https://swf.u3asite.uk/20th-anniversary-collection-june-2026/>

## Remaining Speakers for 2026

### **5<sup>th</sup> August**

More Anecdotes From Karen's Coach Holidays - Karen Kirby.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> September**

u3a Ukelele Group and a Historic Talk - Entertainment by the u3a Ukelele Group

### **7<sup>th</sup> October**

Deadly Victorian Fashions - Jane Piper.

### **4<sup>th</sup> November**

Explaining The Inexplicable - Nicholas Henderson - Spooky!

### **2<sup>nd</sup> December**

A Scandinavian Christmas - Andrew Baker.



## News from the Groups

### Eco Group

The Eco Group has hosted two screenings of the People's Emergency Briefing with about 60 people attending altogether. It was a bit disappointing that not more people attended especially after the Town Council were so generous in allowing us to use the hall free-of-charge. If you went and want to know what to do next, visit the National Emergency Briefing website - [www.nebriefing.com](http://www.nebriefing.com) - you could consider showing the film to a group yourself! If you didn't go and would like to know more then visit the same website and find out where the nearest briefings are. I still have the film and can show it again if there is sufficient interest.

### Personal Thanks

Thanks to everyone who generously supported me on my Cancer Research 26-mile marathon hike in the Lake District. I successfully completed the hike in just under 12 hours - no blisters but aching thighs for a couple of days afterwards! I think everyone who signed my form gave me the money at the same time, but if not, I shall be at the main meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August to collect any remaining donations. I have currently raised £864 plus gift aid.

Ann Woolley ([ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:ann.woolley.u3a@gmail.com))

## Gardening Group

The gardening group visited Isabella's garden in Leigh in July. The garden was packed with a large variety of plants and ornaments with a pond.

The afternoon was glorious and the cream tea was delicious. This garden is part of the National Garden Scheme, and all money goes to charity.

Sue Crann and Shirley Masterson



## Local History

We have enjoyed two visits in May and July this quarter.

In May we had an excellent guided tour of Colchester with Anrew Mobray, who gave us a talk last November. Starting at the Firstsite Gallery in Lewis Gardens we were taken on a tour of the key buildings and areas of Colchester which illustrate its rich history since Roman times. He had organised access to the room where parts of the Roman Amphitheatre had been discovered, it would have been an impressive building in Roman Colchester.

Our July visit was to All Saints Church in Purleigh, a lovely local church dating from medieval times. We had a tour of the outside of the building, where the different styles of architecture, and materials used for of each part of the church as they were added were explained. Back in the cool of the church, we had a guided tour of the key features in the church. If you haven't visited Purleigh Church it is well worth a visit, the tower will be open on Bank Holiday Monday, 31 August from 2pm - 4pm. You can go to the top of the tower and take in the view from the ramparts.



Purleigh Church

Most of you will have heard the very sad news about Allen Surrey. Allen had been a member of the Local History Group since it started, he was on the organising committee from the start, taking over as Group Leader in 2009. He stepped down as Group Leader in 2018, but stayed on the organising committee, continuing to plan many of the visits we have all enjoyed. He made a huge contribution to the success of the group; we will all miss him.

There are no visits planned for August and September, so there will not be a sign-up table at the August main meeting. I will be in touch about plans for the rest of the year in September.

Best wishes

Kate

## London Walks

We have had several enjoyable walks this year, the most recent being "The Beatles Magical Mystery Tour" in July with our favourite guide Adam. This tour finished at the famous Abbey Road Studios in St Johns Wood and of course we all took the obligatory zebra crossing photos!



In August we have two different walks to look forward to. "The Blitz" on Wednesday 19th and Thursday 27th with Simon another one of our favourite guides

On Friday 28th we have an additional walk "Secret Palace of Downing Street". Our guide for this walk is Dan Parry, the excellent ex-BBC journalist with whom we had two very interesting walks last summer.

September our walk is "A Village in Piccadilly" on Wednesday 16th and Thursday 24th, whilst in October we have another walk with the excellent guide Ulrike who we met earlier in the walk. "Seven Deadly Sins in the City of London". This walk is Wednesday 21st October and Thursday 29th October.

Our Wednesday walks are very popular but we need more people for our Thursday walks ! The numbers for Thursdays are very low and we really need a minimum of 18 people to be cost effective, so if you are interested please come and see us at the next meeting for any further information.

We are a very friendly group and all the walks are arranged with London Walks with their qualified professional guides. The walks last around two hours and cover approximately a couple of miles. Cost is £12 per person, cash only please !





Di Bjorck and Elaine Turner

[elaine.turneruk@btinternet.com](mailto:elaine.turneruk@btinternet.com) & [di.bjorck@btinternet.com](mailto:di.bjorck@btinternet.com)

## Needle Felting

Some of the members attended the 20th Anniversary celebration at Stow Marie's Aerodrome on the 25th June where we had been invited to make a display of items made by the group. Everyone was impressed with standard of the items on display, and the group members should be proud of how far they had progressed since it started in January 2024.



They also ran a table to allow people to have a try at needle felting. It's not for everyone, but we had a couple of people who wanted to join us. It's a good time to join at the moment as we are making simple items like leaves, pumpkins and toadstools in order to make autumn wreaths.

Some of the members are happy to share their skills which is why group numbers can slowly increase.

Group details can be found on the website, so please contact me if you're interested in joining.

[https://swf.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/needle-felting/](https://swf.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/needle-felting/)

Lorraine

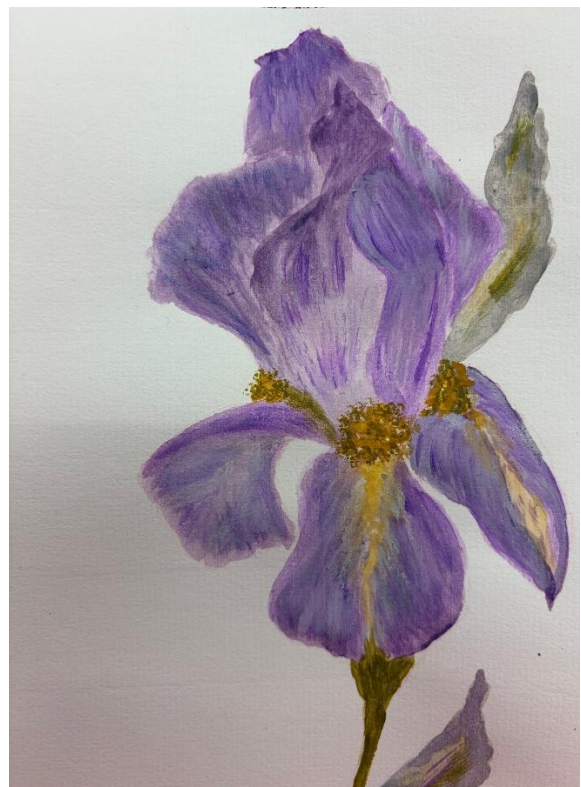
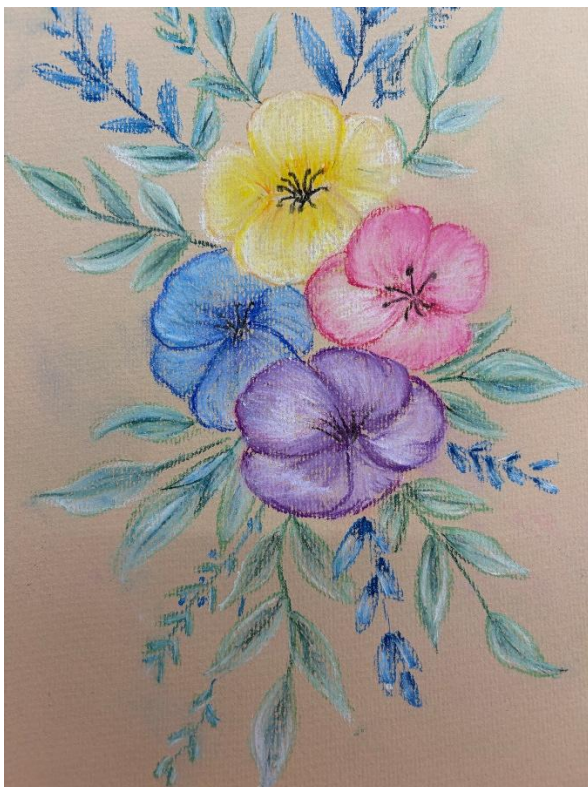
## Paint and Pastels Art Group

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.

If you would like more information about us please feel free to call Chris Miles on 07946 024302.

Some examples of work created by members of the group at the class are included.





Chris Miles

## Science and Technology Group

Our discussion group is a great place to explore fascinating ideas, discover new innovations, and learn from others. This group offers a fun way to share ideas, ask questions, and meet people who enjoy exploring how the world works.

In recent months, among the countless subjects we have covered, we included: Wind Turbines and the enormous aircraft needed to transport the HUGE blades. Zoonoses - various ways animals infect humans and how easy it is for infections to be passed over. Rainbows - well rain drops really - learning that everyone sees the same rainbow differently! What's more AI got it wrong and Richard proved it too.



Did you know the Wright brothers plane wingspan is bigger than the distance they flew! Tarantulas are honing their hunting skills; they understand memory now. Giraffes never lie down and only sleep for 20 minutes a day.

The Science and Tech group meet monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday morning of the month at Champions Manor Hall from 10am to 12 Noon. We are currently a mixed group of 12. For further information, contact Eileen Drane or Richard Peach.

Eileen Drane

[eileen.drane@gmail.com](mailto:eileen.drane@gmail.com)



## Striders

Striders walking group have continued walking through this hot weather by wearing the right clothing, drinking plenty of water, shortening the walks and spending more time in the recovery hostelry after the walk and it can only get better as the weather gets cooler. Only Three more walks before we stop for the winter, join us before it's too late!!!



Refreshments break by the  
Chelmer on a Maldon walk



Counting the styles on  
Hanningfield walk

## Walking Groups

We are a small, friendly group of walkers who enjoy walking and meet on the first and third Friday of every month. All walks start at 10am and take between 2 and 2½ hours to complete depending on the length of the walk. New members are always welcome and if you think you might be interested, and want to find out more, just give me a call on 07889949685, alternatively, you can just turn up. You can also get more details of the group and view our walks catalogue by following this link [https://swf.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/walking/](https://swf.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking/)

Walks for the next three months:

### August

7<sup>th</sup> - Hockley Wood Walk of approximately 6.5 miles. This is a new walk starting from Hockley Woods car park, the entrance of which is on the right, just past the Bull Public House (SS5 4RQ). There is a charge for the car park which is 85p

for three hours. This can be paid by card or phone. However, I will contact The Bull to see if we can park there and let you know just before the walk.

21<sup>st</sup> - Bicknacre/East Hanningfield Walk of approximately 5+ miles, starting from the Brewers Arms car park in Bicknacre.

### **September**

4<sup>th</sup> - Dismantled Railway Line Walk of approximately 6 miles. This is a new walk starting from the Prince of Wales Public House in Stow Maries.

18<sup>th</sup> - Goldhanger/Blackwater Walk of approximately 6.5 miles, starting from the Chequers Inn car park in Goldhanger.

### **October**

2<sup>nd</sup> - Bicknacre/Cock Clarkes Walk of approximately 6.5 miles, starting from the Sport Field car park adjacent to the Bicknacre School.

16<sup>th</sup> - Danbury Thrift Wood Walk of approximately 6 miles, starting from the National Trust car park which is across the road from the Cricketers Pub in Danbury.

Bob Tyas

### **Weekenders and Holiday group**

In June, a group of us visited Brighton for the day

Rather a disaster as it poured! Can you remember rain?

Later in the month, we had lunch at the Cricketers in Danbury.

In July, we had lunch in the Orangery at the Prince of Wales in Stow Maries. Very nice but the portions were huge!



Lunch at the Prince of Wales

Afterwards we listened to an orchestra playing in the marquee. Just right for a sunny afternoon.

Shirley

### Wine Group 1

We continue to taste a variety of wines in our meetings.

In May 6 members brought a wine that had special significance for them and then shared this with the group. It was interesting that 5/6 wines were red and the majority of these Zinfandel.

In June we tasted Australian wines from Sainsbury's.

July was a summer celebration with a longer meeting including a shared buffet. Mark sourced a range of quality wines from The Wine Society although our favourite was some delicious Champagne from Majestic.



August is BBQ time and September sees 6 of us returning to Carcassonne for a guided tour of some vineyards in Corbieres, Furey and Roussillon.

Janet Tipping

## **Wine Group 2**

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

### **April**

We tasted our usual 7 wines; 3 white, 1 rose, and 3 reds mainly from Italy, however the one South African white, a blend of 6 different grapes was voted the best by the group. The rose sourced from Italy was also highly rated but was £18 a bottle. Of the three reds the last southern Italian red with a Vivino rating of 4.3 was the outstanding winner of the day, an equal blend of Negroamaro/Primitivo. The Primitivo grape is always a hit in our group

### **May**

The schedule in May was from 6 countries and unusual grape varieties, here a grape called Vermentino was judged the best white, a grape almost exclusively from Italy, but this bottle was from Australia. The best red was a Nebbiolo from Lombardy Italy

### **June**

The options in June were again the 3 white, 1 Rose, and 3 red formulae mostly from South Africa and Italy again. These two countries are often to the fore, the South African wines are better value than elsewhere, and the Italian's have over 1000 differing grape varieties under cultivation, so we have a VERY long way to try them all. The best white was a French Rhone blend, but from South Africa, and the red was a 4.5 Vivino red from Abruzzo in Italy, an outstanding wine but it did cost a little over £30!

We are currently at full membership, but prospective members are very welcome to try one session and if a place becomes available, they can join the waiting list for future opportunities.

Jeff Body Group Leader

## Groups Monthly Meeting

| Days of the week |    | Weeks of the Month                     |                                                                   |                                       |                                        |
|------------------|----|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
|                  |    | 1st                                    | 2nd                                                               | 3rd                                   | 4th                                    |
| Monday           | AM | Golf<br>Book Group<br>Striders         | Golf                                                              | Golf<br>Paints & Pastels<br>Art Group | Golf<br>Strollers                      |
|                  | PM |                                        | Gardening                                                         |                                       | Eco Group<br>Curry Clique (odd months) |
| Tuesday          | AM | Photographic Group                     |                                                                   |                                       |                                        |
|                  | PM | Gin<br>Appreciation 1<br>Ukulele Group | Local History<br>Tai Chi<br>Gin<br>Appreciation2<br>Ukulele Group | Ukulele Group                         | Ukulele Group<br>Tai Chi               |
| Wednesday        | AM |                                        | Find 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 Improvers                       |
| Friday           | AM | Bowling<br>Walking                     | Bowling                                                           | Bowling<br>Walking                    | Bowling                                |
|                  | PM |                                        | Wine Groups<br>1, 2, &3                                           |                                       | Whisky Appreciation                    |

For more details on any of these groups please contact the Group Coordinator Eileen Drane 07986935359

## Deadline for Inclusion in Next Newsletter

Please send your contributions to the next Newsletter by 21<sup>st</sup> October, to Bob Tyas at [robert.tyas82@gmail.com](mailto:robert.tyas82@gmail.com) or deliver to 55 Clements Green Lane, SWF. Alternatively, you can ring him on 07889949685.