

u3a Annual Outing to Audley End House and Gardens, 18 June 2025

There was a good turnout for our trip, this year. The weather was kind to us and sunny throughout the day. As well as investigating the extensive and interesting attractions of the house itself, many enjoyed a walk through the gardens and extensive parkland bordered by the river Cam before a quiet sit down beneath one of the beautiful trees that were abundant.

Audley End was once one of the greatest houses in England

but is now only a third of its size. Its previous owners include: the **Howard family** and **King Charles II**. During World War II Polish soldiers of the **Special Operations Executive** were secretly trained here and there is a monument to their fallen in the park.

At home time, everyone seemed to have enjoyed the day and many declaring that they would return.

Glenda Taylor



STOWMARKET u3a MEMBERS' SURVEY RESULTS

We received **52** responses out of a membership of **241**. Although this may seem to be a low response, it is in fact just about average for this type of survey. What is interesting is the spread of responses; the main contributors were members of the walking groups, the history group and to a lesser extent the quiz group. Some smaller groups were completely unrepresented. A high proportion of respondents attends and enjoys the monthly meetings.

Any weekday is generally acceptable for activities. Wednesday is the most popular but that could be influenced by the established habit of the monthly meeting.

Weekends are generally not popular.

The stand-out feature of the survey was the desire for more trips away. Over 70% want whole-day trips and 60% guided tours with walking.

"Bring a Friend" was moderately popular - perhaps we can encourage this through attendance at the monthly meetings.

There seems to be a general acceptance that the range of activities satisfies most people's needs – but there is always room for more.

Thank you everyone who responded to the questionnaire – it was most useful for the committee.

March: "Strange but True?" with Sarah Doig

Our March monthly meeting proved to be an entertaining and thought-provoking afternoon, thanks to our guest speaker, Sarah Doig.

In her talk, titled "Strange but True?", Sarah took us on a fascinating journey through Suffolk's curious past. Blending historical fact with local folklore, she shared remarkable tales of dancing fairies in Stowmarket, unseen smugglers in Hadleigh, and other mysterious legends that have shaped Suffolk's identity.

Sarah's engaging storytelling kept us enthralled — from curious coincidences to spine-tingling tales that had us wondering just how much truth there might be in these old stories!

A heartfelt thank you to Sarah for her informative yet light-hearted talk, which combined historical detail with amusing anecdotes.

If you missed the talk — or simply want to learn more — Sarah's book [The A to Z of Curious Suffolk](#) is well worth a read.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the afternoon such a success.

April:

In a fortuitous follow up to the March meeting, this month we were treated to an afternoon of storytelling by the

esteemed **Carl Merry**. With over 25 years of experience, Carl transported us into the heart of East Anglian folklore, sharing tales that ranged from the whimsical to the wondrous.

The session featured a delightful mix of stories, including humorous anecdotes, legendary dragons, formidable Vikings, and the intriguing true tale of a young woman who navigated life with two husbands. Carl's engaging narrative style and deep knowledge of regional folklore left the audience both entertained and enriched.

Members expressed their appreciation for Carl's ability to bring stories to life, noting that his tales provided a fascinating insight into the cultural heritage of East Anglia.

For those interested in learning more about Carl and his work, further information can be found on his website



(click the image above).

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Carl for sharing his time and talents with us and to all members who attended and contributed to the atmosphere of the event.

May: "Music Hall Memories" with Bryan Thurlow.

This was a delightful journey into the golden age of British entertainment, as we welcomed **Bryan Thurlow** for his engaging presentation, "Music Hall Memories."

Bryan, a seasoned performer with a background in professional theatre and drama, brought the bygone era of Music Halls to life. His talk (or maybe best described as performance) was a light-hearted yet informative exploration of the history of Music Hall, enriched with songs, monologues, and anecdotes that highlighted the performers and acts that defined this vibrant entertainment era.

Attendees were treated to a series of performances that paid homage to iconic Music Hall stars such as Marie Lloyd, Vesta Tilley and Gus Elen. Bryan's storytelling, enriched by his theatrical background, often incorporated character voices and period-appropriate accents, immersing the audience in the world of Music Hall.

The afternoon was filled with laughter and nostalgia, as Bryan's presentation style ensured that the talk was both educational and entertaining. His passion for preserving this cultural heritage was evident, making the session a memorable experience for all. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Bryan for sharing his time, talents, and insights with us.



Group News



From the Groups' Coordinator

New Groups are starting all the time and regular ones are all running well. The new **Art & Galleries Group** has been particularly popular, combining visits with discussions.

Stand & Stare Walking Group has now had 2 walks, which have both proved popular with photographers and those

who want more time to look around during a walk.

Of course all the groups need a leader, or two, to succeed, although it shouldn't be up to the leader to do all the work! Most groups take turns in deciding where to go and what to do. We can all make a contribution to our groups. Maybe giving a brief demonstration of your particular

interest, leading a walk or visit. Even offering to take the register or arranging and making refreshments. Every little helps!

As always a huge **Thank You** to all the Group Leaders for keeping the groups going and making Stowmarket u3a a success.

Barbara Cutting

groupscoord@u3astowmarket.org.uk

History

February/March: Exploring the Life and Legacy of Thomas Paine

Words That Stirred Nations

Our February meeting transported us into the world of revolutionary ideas as Keith introduced us to the life and enduring influence of **Thomas Paine**. Through a captivating video, we explored how Paine's landmark works — *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man* — championed the cause of equality, individual rights, and the power of ordinary people to reshape their world.

The film highlighted Paine's remarkable journey from his birthplace in **Thetford** to his pivotal roles in the American and French Revolutions. It also underscored the narrow escapes and sheer luck that placed him at the heart of political upheaval.

Following the screening, members engaged in a lively discussion about the relevance of Paine's ideas today — particularly in the context of ongoing debates about democracy and social justice, including in the current US political landscape.

The meeting concluded with anticipation for our March outing — a special visit to Thetford, where we would further explore the life and legacy of this revolutionary thinker.

A Step Back in Time: Exploring Thetford

On Wednesday 5 March 2025, the Group enjoyed a rewarding visit to **Thetford** — a town rich in heritage and national significance. The trip built perfectly on our February meeting, offering an opportunity to walk in the footsteps of [Thomas Paine](#).

We began with a warm welcome at the **Thomas Paine Hotel**, where coffee and cake provided the perfect start to the day. **Stewart Dorward**, a former Mayor of Thetford, then delivered an engaging talk on both Paine's life and the town's fascinating history.

Our visit continued with a stop at the **Thomas Paine Museum**, located within the hotel, where we viewed artefacts and exhibits that brought Paine's



revolutionary ideals to life.

A guided walk through the historic streets of Thetford followed — with the weather thankfully on our side. Our guide provided insights into the town's landmarks and stories, enriching our understanding of the environment that shaped Paine's thinking.

We rounded off the visit with a convivial lunch back at the hotel — sandwiches, chips, and plenty of conversation — giving members time to reflect and enjoy each other's company.

More than just an educational outing, this trip was a powerful reminder that history is not confined to books and lectures; it lives on in the buildings, places, and people that continue to inform our understanding of the past and inspire us today.

April: 'Beneath the Surface'

In April, the Group took a fascinating step into recent history with a visit to the [Secret Nuclear Bunker at Kelvedon Hatch](#), near Brentwood in Essex.

Hidden beneath a modest countryside bungalow is a vast underground complex, built in the 1950s as part of Britain's Cold War civil defence strategy.

Kept secret for decades, the three-storey bunker was meant to function as the **Regional Government Headquarters** during a nuclear attack, housing up to 600 personnel including ministers, civil servants, and military staff. It featured its own communication systems, broadcasting studio, dormitories, and

decontamination rooms.

After locating the hard-to-spot entrance along the A128, the group explored the bunker using individual audio guides, which revealed its chillingly functional layout—from the radio room to the operations centre. The tour offered a sobering yet compelling look into Cold War-era government preparedness.



The visit concluded with a relaxed lunch at The Shepherd pub, where participants reflected on what they'd seen. For some, it stirred memories of living through the Cold War; for others, it was a revealing look at a lesser-known part of Britain's post-war history. Thanks to everyone who attended and helped with coordination.

May: Voices That Lit a Spark

The Group gathered once again at Red Gables for an afternoon of insight and inspiration. This month's talk, delivered by **Stewart Dorward**, focused on a pivotal moment in British social history: [The Matchgirls' Strike of 1888](#).

Stewart — returning for his third talk with the group — brought his trademark blend of thorough research, clear storytelling, and warm Scottish humour to the subject. He shed light on the courageous actions of young women working in the **Bryant and May** match factory in East London, many of them teenagers, who bravely stood up to exploitative conditions, long hours, and the health hazards of working with white phosphorus.



(cont) The strike, which began with just 200 women and girls walking out, quickly grew into a movement that caught the attention of the national press and social reformers. It marked a significant early victory for organised labour and women's rights, leading to improvements in working conditions and wages – and inspiring future campaigns for justice and equality.



The talk generated heartfelt discussion and admiration for the Matchgirls' courage.

A warm thank you to **Stewart** for his inspiring presentation, and to all who attended for making it another successful gathering.

June: Laxfield, stepping through time

This month we enjoyed an enriching visit to the historic Suffolk village of Laxfield. The day began with coffee at the Royal Oak pub, which also served as the group's lunch venue. The first stop was the [Laxfield Guildhall Museum](#), a beautifully preserved medieval timber-



framed building. Guided by a knowledgeable volunteer, the group explored exhibits spanning local agriculture, domestic life, wartime memorabilia, and parish records.



Next, the group visited **All Saints' Church**, one of Suffolk's most remarkable parish churches, dating from

the 15th century. Its soaring nave, intricate oak hammerbeam roof, carved pews, and centuries-old graffiti offered a fascinating window into the village's past.

After a sociable lunch, members embarked on a self-guided **Listed Buildings Trail** along Laxfield's High Street. With a printed guide in hand, we explored the stories behind 20 of the village's 50 listed buildings, ranging from medieval hall houses to Georgian façades and 18th-century cottages — all contributing to the living history of the community.

The visit highlighted Laxfield's rich historical tapestry, from its Domesday Book entry and medieval market charter to its former railway station. Today, Laxfield thrives as a rural village of around 1,000 residents, proud of its heritage.

Special thanks were extended to **Anne Webb** for organizing the day, which provided a vivid reminder of how history comes alive through shared experiences, storytelling, and a strong sense of place.

(make sure to follow all links, bold underlined, for more detailed information—ed.)

French Conversation (1&2)

Both French Conversation groups have been meeting regularly. The format tends to be a mix of listening to French, translating articles and sharing individual news. This doesn't need to be anything very exciting, the main thing is to gain confidence speaking French and start conversations. Levels of spoken French are mixed but I think it's fair to say that over time there have been some significant improvements

Group 1 currently has six members, which works well although we might be able to increase numbers slightly; however, **Group 2** is relatively small at present and would definitely welcome some new members

Helen Mead

07827 814 819

Poetry Reading - Invitation

*I dreamed in a dream I saw a city
invincible to the attacks of the whole of
the rest of the earth,*

*I dreamed that was the new city of
Friends.*

Walt Whitman 1819-1892

Well, we need some Friends!
Never mind a city, a tiny hamlet
would do!

Our group is dwindling as we age, so we invite you all to consider us. Poetry is the quickest, easiest way to a lively discussion on anything in life you can think of, and we share and listen and discuss whatever turns up.

In July we are taking [Walt Whitman](#) as our subject, and you can find him easily online. We bring two or three pieces or

extracts that take our fancy to read aloud and share, and off we go.

Tea and biscuits in our comfy room at Red Gables, then round we go again, sharing aspects of our lives that have come to light through hearing a poem. That's what poetry is all about, really.

So please, you are invited just to see if you like the idea. Come, even without a poem, and join in the chat. It's a superb opportunity to socialise.

Please join us! **Thursday 24th July** Red Gables 2pm.

Hilary Plummer

07542 945 725

Walk and Talk

Spring provided the Group with some wonderful walking weather, the countryside bursting into full bloom. A perfect time of year to enjoy the best of what England has to offer.

The first walk in **March** was around **Bacton**, taking in the outskirts of **Finningham** and **Westhorpe**.

The next outing was from **Sicklesmere**, through **Nowton Park** where the daffodils were in full bloom, then on past **Nowton Church** with its magnificent views over the Suffolk countryside.

April saw walks at **Ixworth** which took us past the remains of the Abbey and the **Pakenham water and windmills**.

At the end of the month we had a very enjoyable mainly wooded walk around **West Stowe** and **Culford**.

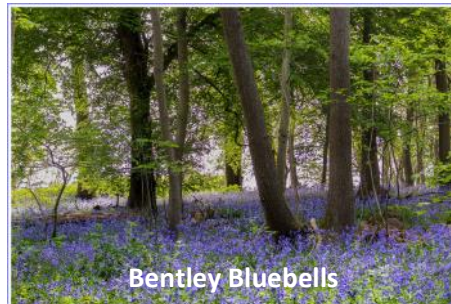
May was another month full of flowers with the first walk of the month at **Bentley**, where we went through two **Bluebell woods** which were in full bloom.

The end of May was in a very different environment. Starting at **Levington** the walk followed the river to the marina, then went inland finishing at the pristine village Church.

Only one walk in June, along the river Gipping from **Sproughton** to **Bramford**. Excitement was added by needing to negotiate a fallen tree across the river.

As always a lot of talking at lunchtime. A big thank you to those who have come forward to lead walks. Without you we would not enjoy our regular Friday outings.

Phil Webb & Keith Shelton



Bentley Bluebells



The Cake Walk

The year started with our "Cobwebs" walk along **Felixstowe** promenade, blowing away the excesses of Christmas and the New Year. It was chilly but otherwise fine weather and we refuelled at the **Alex café**, a very friendly restaurant which merits a visit at any time. We have also visited **Rougham** (interesting church), **Onehouse** (dodging flying balls on the golf course), **Burnthouse vineyard** (only three miles from Stowmarket and

producer of a very pleasant white wine) and **Bacton**. By the time this goes to press we will have visited another vineyard at **Shotley** and taken in the beautiful views over the [AONB, Harwich](#) harbour and out to sea.

All our walks are easy-going and taken at an even pace over gentle ground. They are between two and three miles and invariably end somewhere where coffee and cake can be taken (and sometimes a little more).

Robert Bradshaw 01449 745829



Italian Conversation

The Italian group continues, although member numbers have fluctuated; first up, and currently down!

Our objective is to be able to listen and comprehend Italian conversation and to make conversation in return. As group leader, I believe that considerable progress has been made to this end.

We continue to use an intermediate book as stimulus, as well as occasional website articles from Italian newspapers and other online offerings. Above all, we share our news and experiences, both in Italian and otherwise, and enjoy a pleasant afternoon of good company!

Pam Lore 07784 540 419

Singing Group

This group is all about singing for pleasure, with no need to be a 'good' singer or to read music. Songs

are learnt gradually, making it accessible and welcoming to all. Most singing is in unison, though rounds are included. The repertoire covers 60s and 70s pop, musical theatre, world folk songs, sea shanties with accordion, gospel, and art songs with beautiful accompaniments.

In addition to piano, a member often plays the piano accordion, and when the leader is unavailable, others step in to keep sessions running—it's a truly collaborative group. If your favourite song style isn't included, suggestions are welcomed!

New members have joined recently, adding volume and expanding the repertoire. Many return for the sheer joy of singing, which is known to boost mood through endorphins. Sessions are held on the **first and third Monday of each month, 2:00–3:30 p.m. at the Salvation Army Hall on Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket.** There's easy access and ample parking.

We're a really friendly group of people and even meet in August and December, when we take a break from singing, and enjoy a lunch or afternoon tea together instead.

If you're interested, contact **Hilary** at 07842 189 794 or grenandhil@gmail.com.

Spanish Conversation

The Spanish Conversation Group meets on alternate Tuesday mornings Stowmarket.

We are a friendly group of mixed ability but we all help each other with the aim of speaking Spanish so that we are understood. We also have some fun along the way. There is still space for new members so if you're thinking you'd like to learn or improve your Spanish, feel free to come for a taster and see how you get on!

Nancy Dickson 07856 584 176

Aviation Group

VE Day marks the triumph of good over evil, freedom over tyranny. It honours those who gave their lives to secure liberty for future generations, reminding us of the profound cost of peace and the enduring value of their sacrifice.

The 34th Bomb Group flying from **RAF Mendlesham** during WWII played a significant role in the fight against tyranny. On 8 May this year the **Mendlesham Airfield Association (MAA)** planted an apple tree at the **Mid Suffolk Light Railway (Middy) Museum** to honour the legacy of 34th bomb group airmen as a reminder of the price they paid for freedom.

MAA Chairman Phil Webb shared the following during the ceremony, which was attended by the MAA, Middy Staff and the **u3a Aviation Group**:

"Today, we honour the remarkable courage and valour of the 34th Bomb Group, who launched daring combat missions from RAF Mendlesham during World War II. Each flight demanded extraordinary bravery as these airmen faced relentless danger in the skies. Many paid the ultimate price, their sacrifice forever etched in the legacy of freedom they helped secure.

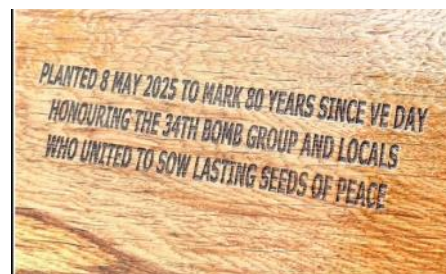
We pay tribute to those who fought with an unyielding spirit, which ensured that future generations could live in a world free from oppression. Along with the 34th Bomb Group exhibition, this tree celebrates human resilience and a solemn pledge to remember and cherish the sacrifices made for peace and liberty.

Equally heroic were the local British citizens, including those of the Mid Suffolk Light Railway, whose unwavering support and solidarity gave strength to

the aircrews. In the midst of war, they stood shoulder to shoulder, forging bonds of friendship and resilience that transcended national boundaries.

As we plant this apple tree to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day, we do more than remember. We reaffirm our gratitude for the shared courage of all who endured. This living tribute stands as a symbol of their unity, sacrifice, and the abiding hope they gave the world."

Don Mobley 07398 300 952



Click the picture to see a video of the ceremony.

Stand and Stare Walking Group

April. We had our first outing with the new u3a Stand and Stare walking group took us to **Bradfield Woods**. A leisurely stroll with time to take in the beautiful surroundings, photograph flowers including wood anemones, bluebells, primroses, **wild garlic** and the 'Flower of Suffolk' while listening to birdsong and enjoying the sunshine.



May. We started from **St Mary's church** at Combs. We were lucky to have the church opened especially for us. We were fascinated by the unusual bench ends, including a rare one of the '**Hairy Man**'. We then continued by crossing a couple of fields to Combs Woods, where we saw cuckoo flowers, stitchwort, field roses, etc. Returning to the church, we enjoyed a picnic lunch in the churchyard.



June. We went to **Lackford Lakes Nature reserve** which is managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Walking around the lakes we saw, damsel flies, butterflies, yellow and black stripes caterpillars and different wildflowers. On route we visited a few hides that overlook the lakes to see wild birds, including coots, swans with cygnets, ducks, the odd egret and even a muntjac! Back at the visitor centre a picnic was enjoyed by all in the sunshine.



Thank you to everyone who have supported and joined this new walking group, we hope to see you on future walks. If you would like to join the **Stand and Stare** walking group, or require more information, please contact either.....

Glenda Taylor on 07549 167 313

or

Barbara Cutting on 07721 188 053

Quiz Group (now Defunct)

Unfortunately, and in spite of his best efforts, **Jim McMillan** has had to close the group.

He has prepared this **mini quiz** for your amusement....

1. In what year did the Stowmarket branch of Woolworths close?
2. What was the name of the storm that caused flooding in Needham market in October 2023?
3. If you dug a hole from Stowmarket through the centre of the earth to the other side, what country would you come out closest to?
4. When Ipswich Town won the FA Cup in 1978 which member of the Royal Family presented the trophy to their captain Mick Mills?
5. What happened to the Stowmarket u3a Quiz Group? (Answers on page 9)

The Sunday Lunch Club

We continue to meet every month, generally the third Sunday. Recent venues have included the **Six Bells** pub in Preston St Mary; very tasty food in a pleasant setting.

The Trowel and Hammer in Cotton has re-opened under new management and we visited in April. Nice pub, decent food, but perhaps a bit overpriced. And of course, our favourite standby, the **Cretingham Bell**, always good

One of the members suggested we try a restaurant in Stowmarket, just for a change of pace, so that will be our next destination. Stay tuned...

We continue to lose and add members. Feel free to visit us any time; Don wouldn't mind having some men join!

Val Fazzari vafazzari@yahoo.com

Liz Power elisabethz252@gmail.com

The Discussion Group...

Continues to meet at a members' house every **2nd Tuesday** of the month from **10.00 – 12.00pm**.

We recently discussed **AI**, its implications, uses, abuses; but we barely scratched the surface and will come around again. **Greed** was another interesting topic. It seems to drive society, the corporate world putting the almighty dollar ahead of consumer safety for instance. And our insatiable thirst for '**stuff**'. Does it make us happier. Hmmm, don't think so but that's open to debate...

If you would like to come along for a **taster session** please feel free to contact me. Similarly, if you have any questions. It's all very informal, not too serious and there's always a cup of tea/coffee on offer.

Liz Power 07799 761 336

Photography.

In March our subject was **'AI Free for All'** - we decided to devote the whole session to AI pictures on any topic

This was a 'one off' session to allow us to explore the potential of this new art form.

Whilst there had been some justifiable reservations on whether this matched our raison d'être, nevertheless we decided it would be fun to have a go!

In the event we were agreed that it was extremely successful. Thanks to all for this entertaining and mind provoking session. Some examples alongside.

We then followed on with **'Working'**, **'Leisure'** and in June **'Sunny'**

Make sure to visit our [website](#) gallery where examples of all our pictures since we started the group in 2013 are displayed.

If you are interested, we currently have one vacancy in our group....

Peter Dakeyne

01449 781 562



u3a Matters Magazine, Summer edition

I've extracted four pages from a taster version of the magazine.

This is a useful article containing many tips for those who like to take photographs on their mobile phone.

Just click the picture to get it,



There are many links in this Newsletter which provide more information on the topics discussed.

If you are reading the print version and would like to know more, please go to our web site 'Newsletter' tab at

<https://u3astowmarket.org.uk/newsletters/> where you will find this digital issue (plus many more) and where all the links are live.

Alternately, scan here for the whole site.



Acoustic Guitar

Our group was set up earlier this year and we held our first session on 25th February. Since then, we have had 4 further get-togethers with the next session scheduled for Tuesday 22nd July.

Currently, there is a membership of 7 with a regular attendance of 4-5 each meeting.

We have covered a diverse range of songs from artists such as The Troggs, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Van Morrison, The Eagles, Beatles, Stones, Albert Hammond, Peter Paul and Mary,

Bob Dylan, Eddie Cochran and Pink Floyd.



Song versions are adapted so they can be played relatively easily on acoustic guitar with either strumming or fingerstyle. There is no particular genre

we follow and we are happy to try folk, pop, rock and traditional.

The group provides an opportunity not only to play music with other enthusiasts but also to have a chat over a cup of tea/coffee *and have some fun!*

All standards are welcomed from novice to advanced. Not to be taken too seriously and is mainly for enjoyment and socialising although there is every chance of improving techniques. If you want to give it a go, contact me....

Steve Sharp on 07780 371 429, or email stevesharp2002@msn.com

Play Reading—Virtual

The Group continues to meet twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Monday, 11.00 am – 12.00 noon.

Following reading “**The Seagull**” by Anton Chekov, “**A Chip in the Sugar**” by Alan Bennett, “**A Thwarted Vocation**” by Jean-Pierre Martinez, we have just commenced reading “**Life Begins at Seventy**” by David Muncaster. We will follow that play by reading “**The Constant Wife**” by W. Somerset Maugham.

I anticipate that the Play Reading Group will continue as a Virtual Group for the foreseeable future. If anyone is interested in joining the Virtual Group or interested in joining the Group once we return to live meetings, please contact me and I will keep you informed if/when the situation changes.

Maureen Wingham-Eaton

01449 771200 or email:
Maureen.wingham@mwmedia.uk.

The Book Group

Our Group was founded by Mary Bradley and after she sadly passed away in 2020 I took over the running.

We meet once a month where each member takes a turn in selecting a book. This leads to a literary diverse cross section. Discussion about the read at the meeting leads on to creating a nice social gathering.

What we are experiencing now is due to the ever increasing book groups, it is sometimes difficult to obtain our first choices of titles and the number of copies.

Long may this lively group continue

Finally we would like to thank the library staff for all their help.

Sylvia Downs 01449 612 661



Art and Galleries

Launched in May this year, we managed not to blow up on the launchpad!

Instead. - - - we had a very enjoyable first meeting. All members engaged with the idea of visiting galleries and discussing the artwork displayed.

A visit to **Christchurch Mansion Ipswich** was planned ([click the picture below to see all that's on offer](#)). This duly took place in June and many of the group members made the visit, (many for the first time). The gallery is not too intimidating and together with the **Wolsey Gallery** made for an exciting visit.

We have our discussion meeting in early July. I'm sorry, the group cannot take any more members at the moment.

Anna Bradshaw



Mini Quiz answers: 1. 2008 2. Storm Babet 3. New Zealand 4. Princess Alexandra 5. Closed, as there was not enough interest in Saturday afternoon quizzes and weekdays were not possible.

Jim McMillan

Table Tennis

Scientific evidence and medical experts around the world acknowledge that recreational table tennis increases concentration and alertness, stimulates brain function, helps with the development of tactical thinking skills, hand/eye coordination, provides aerobic exercise and **social and recreational interaction**.

Our group was established in **2019** and we've seen these benefits manifested in

our players over time. Currently we have about 25 registered, but **we can always accommodate a few more**. Get all the details from our information sheet on the web site [HERE](#)

Qualification to join—be a Stowmarket u3a member! You will be made very welcome *irrespective of past experience*.

Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562



Computing & Technology

Just to remind you, we are keeping the WhatsApp C&T helpline going so you can post questions at any time and be sure that one or more of us will respond. *This is for all Stowmarket u3a members* — for those who have not yet joined, here is the [Invite Link](#)

Advice on scams and the like. Can I also draw your attention to our website where there are listed many resources to help you avoid being scammed. Just follow this [LINK](#) which will take you straight there.

Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562



September - [Bletchley Park](#) by coach (*if enough interest*). Admission is **£22** and includes an hour guided tour.

Depending on how many sign up the coach will be at least **£30**. We will require a non refundable deposit of **£30**. There is a coffee shop & cafe.

Please contact either of us if you're interested in any of these outings (or have suggestions for other trips), ASAP. We would appreciate contact details included with your reply. .

Val Fazzari vafazzari@yahoo.com

Liz Power elisabethz252@gmail.com

Geology

The group had an interesting day at Felixstowe in April

Pictures, **Glenda Taylor**



Gardens & Things Group (G&T)

Our first outing this Spring was to [Pakenham Water Mill](#), the oldest functioning mill in Suffolk. The weather was glorious and the tour was most interesting. The Mill is staffed by volunteers, including the miller who grinds the grains to produce flour. The Mill is in a beautiful setting and the cafe and seating both take advantage, providing delicious scones and coffee/



tea.

Our second planned trip to [Newmarket Race Course](#) was cancelled due to lack of interest. Val and I went a few days later as neither of us had previously visited. Again, a most thought provoking venue, even for those with no interest in horses or horse racing. Highly recommended if you've never been.

July - [Wyken Gardens](#), visit, Thursday **17 July**, 3-5pm. Entrance fee is **£6**. No tour provided. If you'd like to have lunch, coffee or tea, pre booking at the cafe is required.

August - 90 minute historical walking tour of [Ipswich waterfront](#), tentatively **21 August**. This will be in the morning, around 11ish, but yet to be confirmed. **£5** per person with 10 people minimum, 20 maximum.

U3a Learning Events

Just a reminder that u3a members can join a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free with their membership!

Most of these opportunities are presented by members themselves; sharing their knowledge or skills with others across the movement. There is also a wide range of talks on offer from well-known speakers and organisations, plus in-person events at venues like the Royal Institution.

The full list of courses for July and August can be found by following this [LINK](#). Just click on any of the pictures for information and reserve a spot via **Eventbrite** (Zoom).

While you are there, look out for **Don Mobley's** talk on **August 5th**. "Flight Inspirations: The History and Future of Drones". Here's the [LINK](#) to find out more and book the event.

Also, of interest to our **Art and Galleries Group**, a presentation on "**Turner's Timeless Treasures**" - an exploration of Turner's masterpiece, 'The Fighting Temeraire', **July 17th**.

If you are considering offering a talk or workshop please get in touch at events@u3a.org.uk - the u3a would love to hear from you.

Don't forget u3a also runs many [projects, initiatives and competitions](#) available for all members to get involved in too. Of particular interest to our several walking groups is the '[Walking and u3a Walking exchange](#)'.

Interest Groups On Line

Interest Groups Online offers a variety of peer led, online learning opportunities for its subscribers.

As part of the u3a movement, members generously volunteer their time and share their knowledge, skills and experience with the members in their groups. Some groups

are more interactive than others, with an expectation that all members take it in turns to present their knowledge. If in doubt, give it a go. The more groups you try, the more likely you'll find the one you love.

To join a group you must already be a paid up member of Interest Groups Online. **It costs £12 to join for the year**, which runs from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. Follow this [LINK](#) to find out more.

"Third Age Matters" Screen Reader Editions

Just a reminder that you can access all editions of the 'Third Age Matters' magazine on line. *Unlike the printed versions this is at no cost to Stowmarket u3a nor yourself!*

You can browse all recent editions (no pictures, though) and find any particular topic that interests you from the menu at the beginning.

Find it all [HERE](#).

The u3a Friends Newsletter

Have you signed up yet? The u3a publish a monthly Newsletter in which you may be interested. Follow this [LINK](#) where you can sign up to receive a copy by email each month, or just read the archive for 2025 so far.

u3a 'Friends Extra Offers'

You can save a lot with this recent innovation, anything from 4% to 11% on a wide range of goods and services - food, travel, and fashion. Just follow this [LINK](#) to find out more...

u3a Radio Podcast...

Is definitely worth a look at, YouTube channel [HERE](#). Created by a team of u3a members with radio experience, the podcast (which has been running for 3 years) comes out on the 17th of each month. It showcases the amazing things happening across the u3a movement. Fascinating stuff!

Stowmarket u3a Committee Members 2024/2025

Chair	John Dickson	07976 541 021	chair@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Vice Chair	Jackie Durrant	01449 672 690	vicechair@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Secretary	Neil Instrall	01359 352 104	secretary@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Treasurer (+ Beacon Admin)	Ann Weedon	01449 771 947	treasurer@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Robert Bradshaw	01449 745 829	membership@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Programme Organiser	Keith Shelton	01449 768 744	programme@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Groups Coordinator	Barbara Cutting	01449 615 346	groupscoord@u3astowmarket.org.uk
Committee Members	Stew Dorward	01449 774 213	
	Nancy Dickson	07856 584 176	
	Barbara Gort	01473 834 027	
	Glenda Taylor	07549 167 313	
	Mike Taylor	01449 678 638	

ACOUSTIC GUITAR (New)	Monthly: 4 th Tuesday	ITALIAN CONVERSATION	Alternate Wednesdays
Steve Sharp 07780 371 429	10.00am – 12.00 noon	Pam Lore 07784 540 419	2.00pm – 4.00pm
ART & GALLERIES (New)	Monthly: 2 nd Wednesday	LUNCH CLUB (Sunday)	Monthly: 3 rd Sunday
Anna Bradshaw 07714 092 706	2.30pm	Liz Power 07799 761 336	By arrangement
		Val Fazzari 07720 391 443	
AVIATION	Monthly: 3 rd Thursday	## MUSIC – various	2/Month: 2 nd , 4 th Tuesdays
Don Mobley 07398 300 952	2.00pm	Ian Hooper 01449 770 179	10.00am – 12.30pm
BOOK CLUB	Monthly: 4 th Thursday	PATCHWORK	Monthly: 4 th Wednesday
Sylvia Downs 01449 612 661	2.30pm	Jean Roche 01449 675 984	2.00pm
BRIDGE INTERMEDIATE/IMPROVERS	Weekly: Friday	PHOTOGRAPHY (Video Conference)	Monthly: 3 rd Tuesday
John Hunter 0783 2063 550	2.00pm – 5.00pm	Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562	3.00pm – 5.00pm
CAKE WALK (Short walk)	Monthly: Last Friday	PLAY READING (Video Conference)	2/Month: 2 nd , 4 th Mondays
Robert & Anna Bradshaw 01449 745 829		Maureen Wingham-Eaton 01449 771 200	11.00am – 12 noon
CANASTA (1)	Weekly: Wednesday.	POETRY READING	Monthly: 4 th Thursday
Hazel Burl 01449 615 581	10.00am – 12.00 noon	Hilary Plummer 07506 761 199	2.00pm
CANASTA (2)	Weekly: Tuesday	SCRABBLE (Bacton)	2/Month: 2 nd , 4 th Wednesday
Carol Gibson 07918 743 154	2.00pm – 5.00pm	Zena Dakeyne 07542 945 725	2.00pm
COMPUTING & TECHNOLOGY	WhatsApp Q&A Group only	SINGING	2/Month: 1 st , 3 rd Mondays
Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562		Hilary Foster 07842 189 794	2.00pm – 3.30pm
CROCHET & YARN (New)	Monthly: 3 rd Thursday	SPANISH CONVERSATION	Alternate Tuesdays
Elaine Bailey 01449 677 206	10.30am – 12.30pm	Nancy Dickson 07856 584 176	10am – 12.00pm
DISCUSSION	Monthly: 2 nd Tuesday	STAND & STARE (Leisurely walks)	Monthly: 4 th Friday
Liz Power 07799 761 336	10.00am	Glenda Taylor 07549167313	
		Barbara Cutting	
FRENCH CONVERSATION (1)	Alternate Tuesdays	TABLE TENNIS	Alternate Mondays
Helen Mead 07827 814 819	10.00am – 12 noon	Peter Dakeyne 01449 781 562	2.00pm – 3.30pm
FRENCH CONVERSATION (2)	Alternate Wednesdays		
Helen Mead 07827 814 819	11.00am – 1.00pm		
GARDENS & THINGS	Monthly: 3 rd Thursday	WALK and TALK (Longer walks)	2/Month: 1 st , 3 rd Fridays
Liz Power 07799 761 336	9.30am (variable)	Phil Webb 01449 614 616	9.30am (variable)
Val Fazzari 07720 391 443		Keith Shelton 01449 768 744	
GEOLOGY	Monthly: 3 rd Tuesday	## WALKING TENNIS	Weekly: Monday
Linda Reynolds 07880 516 926	2.00pm	Robin Loxley 07896 543 642	1.30 pm
Roger Crouch 07925 262 742			
HISTORY	Monthly: 1 st Wednesday	## For information only. Whilst open to u3a members, others can join so these are not authorised u3a groups and carry no u3a benefits	
Keith & Lorraine Shelton 01449 768 744	2.00pm – 4.00pm		

Stowmarket u3a

35th Annual General Meeting

NOTICE

Notice is given that the Thirty Fifth Annual General Meeting of Stowmarket u3a will be held in the United Reform Church, Ipswich Street, Stowmarket on Wednesday 17 September 2025 at 1.30 pm

AGENDA

- Welcome & Introduction
- Apologies
- Approval of the Minutes of the Thirty Fourth Annual General Meeting
- Chair's report on behalf of the Committee
- Treasurer's report and Financial Statement 2024-2025
- Appointment of a suitable qualified examiner of the Financial Statement for the 2025 – 2026 year
- Election of Officers of Stowmarket u3a (until the conclusion of the 36th AGM.)
 - Chair
 - Vice Chair
 - Honorary Secretary
 - Honorary Treasurer
- Election of Committee Members
- Any other business

By order of the Committee

AGM.

Nomination forms will be available at the July and August meetings.

Please note: There will be two vacancies on the committee and a vacancy for Vice Chair as Jackie Durrant will be standing down from that role. Jackie is willing to remain a member of the committee.

Coming up....

August 20th. "The Real Basil Brown: From Rickinghall to Sutton Hoo and back". Sarah Doig

September 17th. (After the AGM) "How to become a Roman Emperor" Ralph Jackman

October 15th. "Overlanding the Americas, Part 2" Glenda Taylor

November 19th. "Minsmere Past and Present" David Staff

December 10th. Christmas Meal (note 2nd Wednesday)

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Next Issue: Autumn 2025 Last date for Copy 31/10/2025
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