

Southend U3A

Charity No. 1030682

Visit our website: <http://u3asites.org.uk/southend/home>



Southend-on-Sea
U3A 2011

Newsletter

Winter
2024

❑ Each U3A is essentially a co-operative of men and women who meet to share common interests and a desire to learn for its own sake

'The Importance of Being Earnest(ly) Engaged with your AGM!'

Please note the date/time for your Annual General Meeting which is:

Tuesday 13th February 2024 from 14:00 – 15:00 pm

No guest speakers have been arranged for that day although we will still be enjoying our usual tea and coffee prepared for us by our wonderful volunteers!

Our U3A Constitution requires that the four main Officer Posts be re-elected every year, so this is your opportunity to offer your services / expertise in the roles of: **Chair, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Business Secretary.**

Existing officers are *usually* willing to be considered for continuing their roles but, the constitution provides an opportunity at the AGM to obtain fresh views and inputs or for an officer to stand down should they so wish.

Also, although members of the Committee can be co-opted by the serving Committee Members at any point during the year, the AGM is where they are 'officially' elected as Committee Members. Therefore, if you would be willing to contribute to your branch by serving on the Committee, this is an excellent option for you.

The Agenda and Nomination Slips will be sent out at the beginning of January to allow time for members to inform themselves of the Agenda and also to obtain support from other members should they wish to be nominated for any of the four Officer Posts or for the Committee – ***we DO need a few more Committee Members, by the way.***

Completed Nomination slips should ideally be returned by the **6th February 2024** to the Vice-Chair/Business Secretary either by post or by handing in at weekly meetings. However, late nominations will certainly be considered at the AGM itself.

Alan Stevenson

Art Appreciation2

We are a very small but keen group. We have finished our research on American Artists and used some of this information on our display board. We also filled a board for Open Day with the theme Nature in Art.

We are now starting on our new research looking at artists alphabetically. We have done A and B. We have space for new members interested in art.

Diane Silverston

Arts and Crafts

We are a lively group who enjoy improving their skills and learning new ones. We enjoyed painting our pebbles.

We hope you enjoyed our exhibition table at the Open Day theme of Nature. We have arranged a display board for January and February.

We have space if anyone wants to try out their skills.

Diane Silverston

Book Exchange

We are a small group who enjoy discussing books they have read.

On the table is a box of books to borrow. We have found new titles and authors to try.

We do have spaces for new members.

Diane Silverston

Discussion

We are a group of members who enjoy discussing various topics. We have kept to local concerns so far, covering flats being built, road surfaces, repairs to the sea wall and fly tipping.

Our display board for Open Day was on how Nature in our area was being affected.

We have room for more members.

Diane Silverston

Easy Listening

We are a small group who love listening to music. We all bring CDs of our choice along. During the afternoon we listen to a good mixture of music, often pieces we know but haven't heard for some time, then occasionally we listen to a new piece. A lovely way to spend an afternoon.

We have room for a few more to join us.

Diane Silverston

Meetings and study groups

Meetings of Southend U3A are held each Tuesday at Westcliff Free Church in London Rd, Westcliff. The church is near Westcliff Library, on the corner of Ronald Park Avenue.



Doors open at 2pm, notices are read at 2:20pm, listen to our speakers from 2:30pm. Study groups meet at leader's homes, the church and other venues. Details available at Tuesday meetings on request.

Knit and Natter

We are a lively group who do a lot of nattering and some knitting!! We are still knitting our blankets (now over 140). Also, we knitted little elephants for Herd in the City (about 30) 2 of which were amongst our other aspects of Nature for the Open Day.

Members have also been knitting for friends and family. We have arranged a display board for January and February. We have room for some more members. **Diane Silverston**

Weekenders

Unfortunately, we haven't managed to get out much (my fault) but a group of us did meet at my house for our December Special - Soup, rolls and nibbles. Great fun, food and company.

Hopefully we will be able to start going out for visits early next year. There are always spaces for new members.

Diane Silverston

Bridge Group

Our Bridge Group is an extremely informal group who meet mainly for fun. We do not use any formal 'protocol' for the bidding process – just the point-count and make up of your hand, but we have great fun trying to 'make our bids'!

We meet at a member's house - who generously provides tea and coffee (we provide the biscuits and cakes!) - on the **third Thursday** of every month between 10:30 am – 12:30 pm except the August break. At present, with only five in the group, there is room for a few more members.

Alan Stevenson

Wine Tasting Group 2

We decided to change our usual routine in November and visited a local wine bar in Leigh.

We had a very enjoyable pre-Christmas evening there trying several different wines, which were all new to us and suggested by the staff. The overall winner of the evening was a South African red Promondial.

We had delicious charcuterie and cheeses platters to complement the wines and we all decided it would become an annual event.

We will be returning to our usual wine tasting evenings in December. Unfortunately, this group is full. **Kay Odey**

Dear Aging Pals

Since youngsters of today have their texting codes: (LOL, OMG, TTYL etc) we oldies decided not to be outdone by these kids, so now we have developed our own codes too!

ATD at the dentist

BFF best friends funeral

BTW bring the wheelchair

BYOT bring your own teeth

FWIF forgot where I was

GGPBL gotta go, pacemaker battery low

GHA got heartburn again

TFT texting from toilet

From a friend of mine in Germany. Thought you might enjoy.
Diane Silverston

Poets Corner

A group meeting just for one
Turns out not to be much fun.
It's difficult to discuss and chat
Forms of poetry, this and that.
Reading a poem out to just you
Too often is a strange thing to do.
So it was with regret I had to propose
That Poets Corner had to close.

Diane Silverston

History/ Military History

This Group has 9 members. That's unfortunate for any U3A members considering joining, as the venue is of limited capacity, that is: 'My Lounge'.

Group members gave a very varied and interesting selection on the boards for Open Day, covering both the year's subject 'Nature' and 'Formidable Women', which was the group's subject for September.

In November we covered some of the Victoria Cross recipients from the battle at Rorke's Drift. Those who have seen the 1964 film 'Zulu' will be familiar with some of the characters. We also discussed historical inaccuracies in the film.

For January's meeting, group members will be presenting their allotted research on various civilisations and peoples including Dorian (nothing to do with Birds of a Feather), San and Frisians. Most importantly we always learn, always laugh and live for the next meeting.

If it's happened, it's history.

Wally Bones

Whist Group

The Whist group has now increased to six members but there is plenty of room for new members. We play in a very relaxed manner and simply announce the highest scoring woman and man at the end of each meeting but there is no 'League Table' or anything!

We meet on the third Monday of the month (except for the August break and occasional Bank Holidays) at the Novel Coffee Shop in Southend between 14:00 and 16:00 pm.

There is no charge for use of the very nice room - we are just expected to buy a coffee and/or cake to contribute towards the MENCAP Charity who run the shop. So, a nice, social meeting – with cake!

Alan Stevenson

Canasta Group

We meet at my house on the second Thursday of the month from 2 until 4.

We are a friendly group, very light-hearted and have fun and a good laugh.

Fortunately, Canasta is a game which can accommodate a varying number of players so if you would like to join us, please contact me.

Anne Sorrell

Photography Group

Our current venue is at Diane's home, on the morning of the first Thursday of the month.

We set monthly projects and print the resulting photographs to show on a board at the back of the hall at our weekly meetings.

In September we showed the pictures taken at our July outing.

The October meeting was cancelled due to the appalling weather.

In November we set out to photograph the colour YELLOW and December brought us to pictures of MONUMENTS.

In December Diane provided a spread of tasty treats to eat. Chris Hey uploaded photographs to a memory stick and showed them on Diane's TV. Anne organised a short Christmas quiz.

Southend u3a had an open day in October on the subject of NATURE and the photography group showcased some of the pictures we had taken over the months.

Anne Sorrell



Walking Group

Jenny and Joan recently took over the organizing of the walks and, after a wet October, had a good walk along the seafront in November, stopping at Rossi's for coffee. December saw our Christmas meal at the Toby after a bracing walk at East beach. It was well supported and 16 of us enjoyed a nice meal.

We are hoping to arrange some new routes in the new year including a walk or two in London.

We would like to say a big thank you to Lois for all her hard work arranging previous walks.

Jenny Poet and Joan Outten

Wine Tasting Group 1

On 14th May 2014 the group started with 8 people with no idea where to go.

Since then we've had 111 meetings, 9 meals out and 5 bbqs.

206 bottles of white

206 rose

206 red

Plus other drinks to sample

1644 plates of refreshments

6876 portions of cheese

222 French sticks

Bacchus was the unrestrained Roman god of wine and revelry, religious ecstasy and frenzied creativity.

The Romans believed that Bacchus inspired his worshipers in their drunken state, freeing them to think and act in new ways.

He was accompanied by satyrs, (who represented Lust)

and Maenads (dancing girls or nymphs). He was taught by Silenus, who is often shown in Bacchus entourage as old, fat and riding on a donkey.

The object of the meetings is to SAMPLE and record wines and compare with the opinion of many of the experts in the wine trade, and magazines.

We have fun and laughter with good company and in no way does this detract from the learning ethos of the U3A.

If this is for you, why not start another group?

Mick Horner



Art Appreciation 1

We are still working our way through the alphabet and are currently studying artists whose names begin with L. I and J tested us somewhat but we all came up with something. We have changed our day and time for meetings - they are now 4th Thursday in month @ 10.30.

Anyone interested in joining us would be very welcome.

Lois McClory

Writing For Fun

When I first joined the u3a - which was in Maldon, not Southend - the first group I joined was 'Writing For Fun'. This group was run by a lovely lady - Pat Sizer, who, in her lovely West Country accent, explained why the group was so titled. She said that the term 'Creative Writing' implied that we would be formally instructed, with regular exercises to improve our writing skills.

She preferred that we wrote purely for the fun of it, in our own way, in our own style and to enjoy doing so.

Of course, when we read out our stories to the group and listen to the stories of the other members each month, we learn subtly, 'by osmosis' and, thereby, over a period of time, our writing improves.

When I moved to Southend in 2011, I joined Southend u3a where I started a Writing For Fun group here.

This group has run successfully since then, although the membership has changed somewhat as the years have passed. (All of our stories since 2011 are available on the Writing For Fun group page of the Southend u3a website.)

In the last quarter we have written on 'The Key', 'Full Moon' and 'Twas the Night before Christmas,' one of which is available on the next page for your pleasure. **Pete Norman**

'Twas the night before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas
 And all through the house
 No creature was stirring
 Except Vera's spouse.

He crept down the hallway.
 He tiptoed downstairs
 Into the kitchen
 And slumped on a chair.

A man of few words
 Was Vera's old man.
 His full name was Stanley
 But answered to Stan.

He sat there with deep thoughts
 Churning round in his head.
 While Vera was sleeping
 Upstairs in their bed.

Each year was the same thing
 Since he was a lad.
 Would the gift he had chosen
 Make his Vera glad?

And this year was no different
 Or so it seems.
 He hoped he had ordered
 The gift of her dreams.

But now was the eve
 Of Christmas Day night
 And her main Xmas present
 Was nowhere in sight!

From kitchen to window
 He wandered forlorn
 Wishing over and over
 That he'd never been born.

The snow it was falling
 And drifting once more.
 Heaping and piling
 Against his front door.

Oh why had he trusted
 To Amazon Prime?
 Oh why was the phone line
 Engaged all the time?

Just then in the distance
 The sound of a bell

Interrupted poor Stanley's
 Own personal hell.

A man dressed in green
 Jumped out of a van.
 And joy of the season
 Had a box in his hand.

Up Stan's snowy pathway
 He carried his stock.
 Stan opened the door
 Before he could knock.

"Hello Sir, I'm Elfred
 Your order I've brought.
 The label was damaged
 So your address I have sought

For hours and hours
 Fearing I might not succeed.
 Then I noticed your light
 Which gave me a lead."

Being so grateful
 Stan nearly cried.
 He grabbed the large parcel
 And took it inside.

He shook Elfred's hand
 And waved him away
 Making it known
 He had saved Christmas Day.

He promised the best
 Of reviews ever seen.
 Filled with words like 'amazing',
 'stupendous', 'supreme'!

He opened the box
 With the greatest relief
 Placing the present
 The lit tree beneath.

Then creeping with stealth
 He climbed up the stair
 To make sure dear Vera
 Was left unaware

Of all of the hustle
 And bustle below.
 He thought it was best
 That Vera won't know.

But just as his head

On the pillow was laid
 A niggling worry on his
 Thoughts gently played.

What if the box
 Wasn't his all along?
 What if the contents
 When opened were wrong?

But shaking his head
 These thoughts he dismissed.
 Turned over in bed,
 Crossed his fingers and wished.

Next morn saw a sparkling
 New Christmas Day.
 That greeted the couple
 As they made their way

Down to the living room
 To sit by the tree.
 His present he gave her
 Said, "This is from me."

Then just as she started
 unwrapping the box
 The door shook with loud
 And continuous knocks.

"Hello," came a voice
 From outside the door.
 Stan recognised Elfred
 From the night before.

"Please don't open the box.
 It was a mistake.
 Its contents will not
 A great Christmas Day make!"

Too late Stan turned
 And saw Vera's grimace.
 Then felt something slimy
 Hit him full in the face!

The moral at Christmas
 Is do your own shop.
 Please don't trust Amazon
 The right parcel to drop!

'Twas the day after Christmas
 And all through the house
 The silence was deafening.
 Stanley's in the dog house!

Marie Day

These are your committee members

Chair: Alan Stevenson, **Vice-Chair:** Lois McClory, **Treasurer:** Anne Sorrell, **Membership Sec:** Mike Lamb,
Group Coordinator: Diane Silverston, **Reception Desk:** Kay Odey, **Tech & Banner Team:** Wally Bones, **Programme Co-ordinator:** Barbara Cohen, **Meet & Greet:** Jo Hedley, **Newsletter Editor:** Pete Norman, **Summer/Christmas lunches:** Betty Boote

Anything to share? News, photos or ideas for the Newsletter? then please contact: **Pete Norman**
 The next Newsletter is due in April 2024