

WHAT'S ON

26th June – Social Xtra our Summer Concert with The Abbeygate Concert Band.

10th July - Karen Turnbull – Talk 'Leather: Legacy not Landfill'

There will be no Social Xtra in July or August this year.

11th September - Christine Webber -Talk 'Positive Ageing'

19th September Mercury Theatre CO2 production 'We Will Rock You'

25th September Social Xtra Talk- Lucy Lewis 'The first bomb disposal officer'

'LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL'

Why not enter Stanway u3a Summer short story Competition details inside see page 3

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR

LINDA ANDERSON

My late mother had a favourite saying...there's only two things in life that are guaranteed and they are death and taxes. She obviously didn't know or wasn't able to appreciate a third one our AGM.

Although it is not scheduled to take place for another few more months, there is a lot of behind-the-scenes preparation required in order that it can happen. So, I would like to pay tribute to everyone who is involved in this hard work to ensure a successful outcome is achieved. Thank you one and all.

Without the AGM, members voting and decisions being made, actions being undertaken, Stanway u3a would be a different entity to the thriving, organisation we see today, if it existed at all.

But unfortunately, such organisations don't just simply run themselves. It takes a willingness from members to offer to volunteer across the board. Ranging from helping with the refreshments at our monthly meetings etc., to becoming a group leader of one of the activities you participate in and enjoy, to serve on the executive committee and/or any of the sub-committees.

To keep our u3a thriving and vibrant, we need to do forward planning especially in the roles within the executive committee. Our constitution stipulates that each role has a particular length of time that it can be held by a member and how long a member can be a member of the committee in whatever capacity. This is notwithstanding any vacancies that may already exist. Therefore, we need to think ahead and get people familiar with how the committee works before they take on a specific role.

I am drawing your attention to this now because, I have a sneaky feeling that there will be a fair few of our members glued to the TV, perched on the edges of their seats, over the summer watching a certain football team, playing in a certain international tournament and won't be overly concerned with very much else.

So, please, give some serious consideration to what role you would like to have to keep Stanway u3a a thriving, vibrant, well organised charity that it is.

Have a wonderful summer. 🍷 that the World Cup finally 'comes home': o)

Great things have small beginnings.

(Sir Francis Drake).

Now that we are almost at the end of June, any member who hasn't renewed their membership has been removed from our current database and archived, removed from the magazine database (where applicable) and removed from the Postal and email Newsletter database.

IMPORTANT If at during the year you change your address, email address or phone number/s please ensure you advise me.

If at present you Gift Aid but your financial circumstances change at any time and you become a non-taxpayer, please advise me to enable our Gift Aid records to be updated.

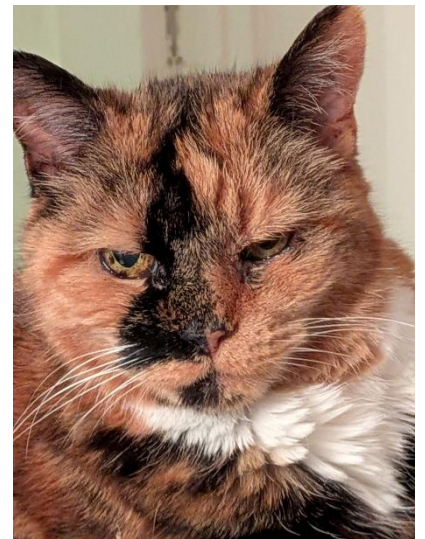
We continue to gain more new members each week which is very encouraging however to enable these new members to join groups it could be necessary to create further groups in each category. This means new group leaders, please consider if you would like to do this, it's not an arduous task, more a case of keeping attendance records up to date and if a venue is hired, ensuring enough funds are collected and banked to enable payment to be made to the Venue.

Finally, if you would like to help out at our Monthly Members Meeting and/or Social Xtra Meeting why not become a volunteer. We have a very friendly group of existing volunteers who ensure there is enough tea, coffee and biscuits available and it's also a place to make new friends. It would also be useful to have a few more men available to help set up the chairs at our meetings. Have a think about it !!

I can't believe we have now passed midsummer and the longest day already, but let's hope for lots of sun and warm weather during July and August and maybe into September.

Have a happy and enjoyable summer, whether you are going on holiday abroad, having a staycation or even staying at home to enjoy your garden (like me).

Today, as I proofread this Newsletter, it has been 35.5C in Colchester - far too hot if you have no aircon or a swimming pool.



*Best wishes from
Jean and Meg*

Alec Anderson**TECH Support, IT and Data Security Officer**

Members reporting spam

I've had a few reports from members recently that are worth circulating so others can be aware and avoid becoming the victims of potential fraud.



Phone calls received from unknown numbers with recorded messages alleging to be from the "Inland Revenue" (HMRC), threatening to sue for unpaid tax etc. Similar calls are known to have been circulating supposedly from other organisations where you may hold an account, for example broadband provider, online shopping etc.

Recommended action:

- Pick up the call but don't say anything, wait until the other person speaks. If it is an automated call the line will clear after a few seconds. The same will apply if you let your calls go to an answerphone for example if you have this set up on your landline.
- If a person starts talking and you don't know them and you aren't expecting a call, treat the call with suspicion. Don't allow yourself to be pressed into giving out any personal information. Banks will not call you to move your money due to "suspected fraudulent activity on your account" or to ask for your PIN.

- c) If you hear an automated message that asks you to “press 1” to resolve the alleged issue, do not do this. Treat the call with suspicion and put the phone down.
- d) If you are worried that there may be some truth in what the caller says, end the call and wait a few minutes. Check the line has cleared or use another phone and call the organisation on a known number such as that on the back of a bank card to check if there is an issue with your account.
- e) Contact a friend or relative to let them know about the call. They may be able to reassure you it is a scam or help you while you deal with the alleged issue.



Emails or texts apparently from a friend or relative alleging they have fallen into some form of difficulty, this quickly escalates into asking for money. If a member has their phone or email hacked it often results into such messages appearing to come from that member, especially if you are on their contact list.

Alternatively, it may claim to be from a friend’s mobile as they have “lost their phone”.

Recommended action:

- a) Don’t fall for the sob story without contacting the friend or relative directly by another means to check if the situation is true. Most of the time they will already be aware of the scam circulating in their name.
- b) Again, if you have concerns, share with another friend or relative. Better to be safe than sorry.
- c) **If you receive a suspicious text, report it by forwarding the message to 7726.**
Stay safe!

Alec Anderson, IT and Data Security Officer

Stanway u3a Summer Short Story Competition

Doreen Willers - Editor

It’s hard to believe, but it’s been around five years since we last held a Short Story Competition. In that time, our u3a has grown, changed, and welcomed so many new faces. We know how much talent lives quietly among our members — creativity tucked away in notebooks, memories waiting to be shared, stories that deserve to be heard.

So, this is your moment. Don’t hold back. Pick up your pen, or open your laptop, and let your imagination wander.

Every one of us carries a story inside — sometimes a whole book’s worth. Perhaps it’s a vivid childhood memory, a moment of triumph or mischief, a travel adventure that went delightfully wrong, a brush with fame, or a tale that’s simply been waiting for the right time to be told. And if you feel like bending the truth a little... well, that’s the magic of storytelling.

There are no limits on theme, genre, or style — only that entries remain respectful and non-offensive. Beyond that, the page is yours.

The competition is open to all members of Stanway u3a. Entries must be your own original work and previously unpublished. Please submit your story — up to **1000 words**, typed, and saved as a Word document — by emailing it to **u3agen57@gmail.com**. Use **Short Story** and your **membership number** as the subject line and include your full name in the email. **Closing date: 31 August 2026**

Every entry will be featured in future editions of *Stanway u3a News*. Judging will be carried out anonymously by volunteers from the Executive Committee and Social Squad. The story receiving the most votes will be awarded **First Place** — along with a **£10 Amazon Gift Voucher**.

We can’t wait to read your stories. Truly — bring them to life for us., Best Wishes *Doreen*

Tom Malcolm in Conversation with....Marion Smith

If you are of a certain age, then the names Roger Bannister and Victor Sylvester will be quite familiar. Bannister was the first athlete in the world to run a mile in under four minutes, and Sylvester was the legendary UK dance champion and, later, dance band leader in the pre and post second world war years.

The subject of this month's *"In Conversation With..."*, Marion Smith, is more familiar with their names than most. When a pupil at the Kennylands School in Berkshire, a public-funded boarding secondary school then run by Essex County Council, Marion discovered that the school's sporting ethos was well suited to her own competitive nature and natural athleticism. "I was very good at sport and on one occasion I competed in a hurdles event on the same track on which Bannister would set his world record years later," she explained. "Funnily enough my efforts didn't attract the same amount of attention as his did!"

And Victor Sylvester? "Our headmistress was really into ballroom dancing, and she did her best to enthuse us with her love of dancing. It worked on me. On a couple of occasions, when going through our paces at grading examinations, the examiner was Victor Sylvester's daughter."

In attending Kennylands, Marion was following in the footsteps of her older sister Betty. When Betty attended the school the county council would only provide funding for one term. When Marion had the opportunity to follow in her sister's footsteps the policy changed and she was able to stay for four years and left when she was 16 (her younger sister Jane also went to Kennylands).

"I loved being a pupil there. It was a wonderful community drawn from across all of Essex including Dagenham, Ilford and Romford. Even today, all these years later, those of us who were pupils keep in touch even though a lot have settled in far flung parts of the world."

Marion has been a member of Stanway u3a "for a very long time." Hers is a familiar face at the



Crocheting for Great Tey community initiatives is very important to Marion.

members' monthly meetings in Stanway Village Hall where, with long-time friend Margaret Meen, she looks after the very popular books and jigsaws sales table. She is also on the Social sub-committee which, among other things, arranges the SocialXtra meetings held each month. "I used to do a lot more, including line dancing and pétanque, but I gave them up when I had to have a hip replacement."

Being an active part of the community in Great Tey is very important to Marion. Just before I arrived for our chat, she had been busy crocheting some decorations in advance of the upcoming village fete. "There are two craft groups in our village. The Tey Hookers (yes, really) is me and three friends who meet up in my home for crochet and a chat. We started up after Covid and the socialising at our weekly get-togethers has helped all of us get over some sad times and health issues.

The other group of knitters and crafters are 12 plus in number, and we meet in the village pub"

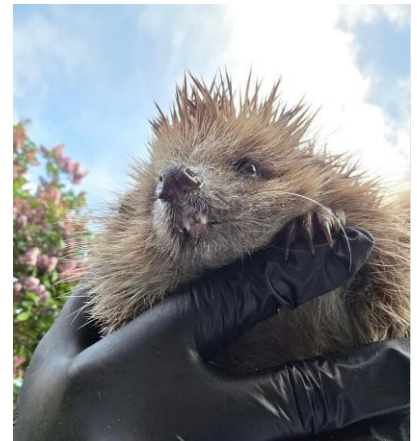
She also assists others in the village with looking after sick hedgehogs and at the time of this interview, Sarah and Spikey were about to be released back into familiar territory after a lot of TLC from Marion and her friends.



Left: This is Spike who just loves kitten food.

As does Sarah (smiling Right)

. She and Spike have now been returned to the home range in Great Tey where they were found when ill and undernourished.



Born in Braintree and raised in Halstead, when it was time to make a career choice after her schooling at Kennylands finished, Marion was sure that she wanted to be a florist. Flowers fascinated her and she could think of no better way of earning a living than surrounding herself with flowers and all the wonderful scents they gave off.

Her mum had other ideas. She was equally sure her Marion would make an excellent hairdresser. After all, Marion's eldest sister Betty was a hairdresser, and Marion would be able to learn a thing or two from her.

So, it was arranged that Marion would have an interview as a trainee hairdresser in a salon in Braintree. It just so happened that on the floor below the hairdressers was a florist's shop. They too had a vacancy for a trainee, so Marion arranged to have an interview there on the same day as she was at the hairdressing salon.

"In the end I chose the hairdressers as the florists was so cold that I couldn't imagine working there," she chuckles. "It wasn't a bad decision at all. The owner also had a salon in Chelmsford, and we somehow got a London allowance added to our wages! My mum called it the 'posh hairdresser' because of its clientele. They included Lady Crittall and a lot of the women from the nearby US air force base which was still operational in those days.

"The clientele may have been 'posh' and the wages more than other hairdressers in the town, but when I announced a few years later that my husband and I were going to be parents, I was dismissed. That is how it was in those days. No sentiment at all."

Move forward a few years and Marion is living in Great Baddow near Chelmsford, with her husband and now with two daughters, Joanna and Lynette. It was a busy time for the family. "As if looking after the horses, goats and sheep on our small holding and training gun dogs wasn't enough, suddenly the girls got into competitive swimming. It seemed then that there wasn't time for anything else other than their swimming training. But I still managed to go into a local authority care facility nearby a couple of times a week and do the hair of the adults who lived there. They loved it when I took the goats in for a visit!"

Training her daughters encouraged Marion to take a number of courses and qualify as a swimming teacher and coach. Her work at the Bramston sports centre in Witham eventually led to her being approached to develop and lead swimming courses for those suffering from asthma, which proved highly popular. Something of which she is rightly proud.

A couple of more house moves followed and about 30 years ago Marion, now single and with her daughters having lives of their own, bought the house in Great Tey in which she still lives.

After a spell working on the reception desk at Colchester A&E, Marion joined Essex police as a civilian worker. While working at Braintree police station her photo appeared on the front page of the *Braintree and Witham Times* newspaper. They had picked up on a story in an Essex police force magazine. At this time the police took in stray dogs, but not cats. That didn't stop a particularly cute little abandoned kitten turning up in a cardboard box at Braintree police station one day.

No-one there had the heart to reject it, so an appeal was made in the police magazine for someone on the force to offer it a new home. Marion was photographed holding the kitten and it worked! The little cat was soon off to its forever home – with Marion!

An eight-year stint as activities co-ordinator at the Chalkney House retirement home in White Colne followed her Braintree police adventures and even though the facility won awards for its innovations in making it a happy place for all the residents, Marion and other members of staff were made redundant during the Covid pandemic.

The biggest smile on Marion's face appears when she talks about her family. "I have nine grandchildren, all boys. Eldest daughter Joanna lives in West Sussex and has three sons. Lynette, in Essex, has six sons and has recently welcomed another boy into the family under a Kinship Care scheme. By my reckoning that means I now have 10 grandsons! And they are all wonderful. I think the world of them."

And no doubt they think the world of you Marion.



Having fun with her nine grandsons



Ladies and Gentlemen,

Unfortunately, Linda was unwell on the day of our June meeting and couldn't attend, but Vice Chair Jean and Alec stepped forward with calm confidence, ensuring the afternoon unfolded without a hitch.

We were delighted to welcome **Simon Waterfield**, who immediately captured the room with a gripping dramatized monologue. His story centred on a young, newly married Derbyshire farmer suddenly swept into the army of King Henry V — our last warrior king — as the campaign to secure English territorial claims in France gathered pace.

Simon didn't just *tell* the story; he brought it with him. He laid out pieces of late-medieval armoury, explaining the punishing training regime and the remarkable skill of the English longbowmen, whose relentless practice produced the extraordinary accuracy that would soon shape history.

By October 1415, Henry V was leading around 6,000 Englishmen across the Channel — roughly 1,000 knights and 5,000 archers. Simon described the gruelling march through France: the diversions, the shortages, the sickness. Many soldiers were weakened by dysentery, exhausted long before they reached the battlefield.

Waiting for them near the village of Agincourt was a vast French force. Academic estimates suggest that on 25 October 1415 — St Crispin's Day — the English were outnumbered five to one.

Simon peeled away the cinematic sheen we often associate with medieval warfare. Instead, he revealed the chaos, misjudgements and misunderstandings that shaped the battle. Poor positioning and tactical errors on the French side helped turn the tide, allowing the smaller English army to claim an astonishing victory. Casualty estimates vary, but the contrast is stark: around 400 English losses compared with roughly 6,000 French.

After the battle, Henry and his noblemen marched on to Calais for a triumphant return to England, while the archers were left to find their own way home.

Simon closed his presentation with Shakespeare's stirring St Crispin's Day speech from *Henry V*, Act IV, Scene III — a powerful finale to an already captivating afternoon.

Thank you, Simon, for bringing history so vividly to life.

Friday 10th July at 2pm Stanway Village Hall (doors open 1.30pm)

Karen Turnbull – talk 'Leather : Legacy not Landfill'.

Browse our book and puzzle stall.

Join us for Tea, Coffee & Biscuits and chat to friends after the talk.

Admission & refreshments free!

For our final Monthly Meeting before the Summer break, our guest speaker on the 10th of July is Karen Turnbull



Karen has lived in North-East Essex all her life, working in marketing in different industries and, in recent years in economic development in local government.

Over the years her work has led her to meet many inspiring people from all walks of life which she continues to find hugely enjoyable.

She took up leathercrafting in lockdown and has been delighted to re-discover her creativity which she lost somewhere along the way.

She is going to give a talk and demonstration of her leather work entitled 'Leather – not Landfill'

Colchester u3a Monthly Meetings

Highwoods Community Centre 1:45pm Wednesdays (talks start at 2:00pm)

Wednesday 15 July Siobhan Pierce - Confessions of a Clown

THE SOCIAL SQUAD

News from the Social Sub-Committee

Please remember there will be no Social Xtra Afternoons in July or August this year. We will be back in September, when we'll start work on putting together our programme for the 4th Friday of the month in 2027. If you have an idea for an afternoon, you think other members would enjoy, please email me on: doreen.willers@btconnect.com. In the meantime, enjoy the Summer, and look after yourselves. Why not enter our short story Competition? Details on page 3 of this newsletter.

Doreen

For our Social Xtra Afternoon in May, we were joined by Kate Evans who serves as the Modern Slavery Community Coordinator for Colchester, based at the Safer Colchester Partnership Hub at Colchester Police Station

. Her role focuses on raising awareness, increasing community resilience, identifying potential victims, and improving victim protection, leading community efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking in Colchester. With a background in social work, Kate has experience of working with women and young people affected by sexual exploitation and has delivered training across multiple sectors

. She is skilled in multi-agency collaboration, which is essential for safeguarding and tackling modern slavery effectively.

Many members were shocked to hear of the reality and extent of slavery currently in the UK. Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced labour, and human trafficking, where individuals are exploited and controlled for another's gain, often through coercion, deception, or abuse of vulnerability

In Essex and Colchester, the most common forms include county lines and forced criminal exploitation, followed by labour and sexual exploitation. The majority of the people controlled in this way are British Citizens

After the talk, quite a few members told us they'd found it interesting and eye-opening — though also a bit worrying, given how close to home the issue is...

Very little news from our Group Leaders to report this month, but it's that time of year.

Writing from the Heart one of our creative writing groups, has a couple of vacancies. This is a rare opportunity to join this fun and friendly group who explore all forms of creative writing, whilst working together Group Leader, and published author Jackie encourages the development of characters, settings and plot through discussion, drama and art.

The group meet in Stanway in the morning of the 2nd Monday each month, except August.

If you are interested or would like more information, contact Jackie via the link on the Groups webpage: [Writing from the Heart - Stanway in Colchester](#)

DAY TRIPS

We have a selection of day trip opportunities for you this month, but please note none are organised by Stanway, so please ensure you contact the person mentioned in the ad below with any questions or to book.

The first is from Colchester u3a who have a few vacancies remaining for their trip to Southwold, but please be quick and contact Anne Long asap as this is a popular trip.

Also, please note that you pick up the coach for this trip from Highwoods Community Centre

COLCHESTER u3a TRIP TO SOUTHWOLD AND DUNWICH THURSDAY 10TH SEPTEMBER 2026

Kings Coaches will pick us up from Highwoods Community Centre at 10.00 am and take us first to Southwold to spend time browsing in the shops, have a coffee etc. We will then travel to Dunwich for lunch at 2 pm. Please see Menu and let me know your choice. The coach seats 53 people. The price for this trip is £32.40 (no tip for the driver is included). Please let me know whether you require parking at Highwoods Community Centre

Please pay by bank transfer, if possible, to the following account.

Colchester U3A NO. 2 ACCOUNT RC1034354

SORT CODE 08-92-99 ACCOUNT NO. 65275579

Cheques will be acceptable but no cash payments.

Please put DUNWICH as a reference to your payment

Please let me have your confirmation and all requested information by email at ann.long@colchersteru3a.org.uk if possible

Name.....

Contact number (preferably mobile).....

Emergency Contact Name and number.....

Please make your own risk assessment as to whether this trip is suitable for you. It would be helpful if you can let me know of any medical conditions in case of an emergency. This information will be confidential

You must be a member of Colchester or Stanway u3a at the time of the trip, **BOOKING CLOSES ON 31st JULY**

MEAL CHOICES for Southwold

COD AND CHIPS

HADDOCK AND CHIPS

PLAICE AND CHIPS

SCAMPI SALAD AND CHIPS

CHEESE SALAD AND CHIPS

HAM SALAD AND CHIPS

PRAWN SALAD AND CHIPS

ALL SERVED WITH EITHER COFFEE OR TEA BREAD AND BUTTER AND FOLLOWED BY HOMEMADE FRESH FRUIT SALAD AND ICECREAM

The following trip is organised by Heather Wragg for SMAC

If you don't fancy Southwold or all the seats have gone, you may enjoy the following trip, also on 10 September.

Please note this time there is no coach, it's make your own way there.

Thursday 10 September MALDON SAILING BARGE TRIP, with cream tea -

we arrive on board for 10.30am for morning coffee and get to meet the crew

11.30 m - 1.30 pm we have a two-hour sail with commentary of what we are passing.

when we return, we will have an afternoon cream tea (scone, with cream and jam (should that be jam or cream first) with a cup of tea or coffee.

The barge is ours for 6 hours, therefore you can stay on board or decide whether you wish to make your way home.

There is no coach, so we make our own way and use local car parks, which of course these days there is always a charge - nothing is free.

Cost is £42.00 per person.

Need to confirm final numbers by 31 August

For all SMAC trips, please contact Heather Wragg, Secretary,SMAC - email smac.wragg@btinternet.com

If you have something you think other members would enjoy, a poem, story or tell us about an interesting hobby or something you are passionate about please share it with us.

Please send contributions for inclusion in the AUGUST newsletter to the editor at email: u3agen57@gmail.com by latest 15th JULY(earlier if possible).

Any contribution should be in *Word* and photos/illustrations sent as jpeg. THANK YOU