

U3A Harwich Peninsula

June 2026



A big thank you to everyone who has sent in articles, photographs, information, etc.

Please forward articles etc for the July newsletter by around 10th July to Rita Rossini at Kramermarzulu@aol.com

Meetings

Speakers 2026 - Don't forget the meetings from January will be at the United Services Club, at the usual times.

- July 14th** Naresh Jhali, Daine Boyd – Stroke Awareness Presentation
- Sept 8th** Frances Boardman – Soldier, soldier, won't you marry me.
- Oct 13th** Cherry Mullins – A Welsh Labour of Love
- Nov 10th** Graham and Mary Brace -Wildlife of Brazil
- Dec 8th** "Lost Direction" Entertainment with songs from 50s,60s and 70s with a



Christmas flavour. Lost Direction is Mersea Islands own "Boy Band". Eight retired characters from different backgrounds, who sing to raise money for Mersea Lifeboat. Their repertoire is varied but tends towards humour.

From the Chair

Subscriptions: Paying by Cheque? Please print 'HARWICH PENINSULA U3A' and please also print the date in numbers. This is very helpful for processing the cheques, which need to be clearly readable. Many thanks **Moira Arthy**

Emergency Contact Details: Please provide your emergency contact details to Sheila Allen if you have not already done so. Or let Group Leaders aware of your emergency contact tel no. I have spare cards.

Sheila Allen

Car Sharing

Now that the better weather is arriving, more groups may be going out on trips, so this is just a gentle reminder that the cost of fuel has risen recently, and it would be polite to offer the driver something towards the cost. A suggested amount is £3.00 for local trips and £5.00 for longer trips.

Pauline Gronow



SWARM (Play)

Tue 23 Jun 2026 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM Harwich Arts & Heritage Centre, CO12 4AH

[Select tickets](#)

A short play triggered in response to the WASPI women, a campaign group for 1950s-born women who saw rapid and steep increases to their State Pension age without adequate notice. Written and directed by Rose Lawes and performed by members of Walton on the Naze singing group Women in Harmony. This is a script read performance. Music by Lisa Strong.

AI Group

The response to our presentation at the AGM was positive. The presence of AI in many news items as well as documentaries awakens curiosity and fear about this new phenomenon in our world.

It makes me feel it's time to ask if there is an appetite for another AI familiarisation session in the autumn, part of the national U3A AI strategy.

Let me know through the u3a website email if you are interested in a Wednesday afternoon of shaking hands with an AI (on your phone, tablet or laptop) and even getting into a

conversation. Probably 1st WEDS In October. If the response is high we can find a better venue & date.

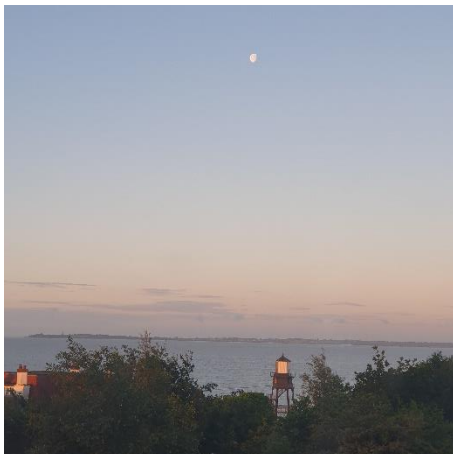
AI is changing rapidly through vast investment globally. The AI portals most of us may use to engage directly are changing rapidly too.. Over the summer the AI group will be setting group challenges and for homework (which I love, but some don't engage: we contribute as we feel motivated) we'll engage with various AI using a variety of PROMPTING and compare results at the next meeting. This, we hope, will get us up to speed with the innovations. We only use AI available free for group work.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Geoff

Astronomy Group

In May members looked at these photos as the popular press made overexcited claims about supermoon's and the Blue moon. Let's be clear supermoons are about 5% brighter than most nights, a difference not noticeable to the unaided human eye.



Secondly, Blue moons, like blood red moons, have zilch to do with the visible colour of the moon. The namesake is to do with the lunar cycle and the way those match up with our daily use calendar. However, anything that encourages to wonder at the universe is positive

Astronomy doesn't stop with night sky observation. At the June meeting Stuart shared a slide show presentation on String Theory. The whole universe, and perhaps more, is made of energy vibrating like strings on a musical instrument. The vibration may have been there before matter, if we follow the Big Bang theory.

Unlike the physics some of us learnt at school understandings are moving on apace. Quantum Physics is changing the human understanding of the universe. Dark energy and Dark matter account for 90+% of the universe which we inhabit. That's a lot of matters unaccounted for.

We meet the 1st Thursday of each month 7-9 pm

Vacancies in this group. Contact Stuart via the web site

Happy moonwatching,

Geoff

Shakespeare Group

The Shakespeare group visited the Manifest Theatre in Mistley last week to see 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. This was an excellent production, with a visually engaging set,

and beautiful costumes and make-up. You could struggle to see actors as good as those we saw in a commercial theatre.



Puck's acting and dance moves were incredible, and the lovers' muddles in the woods were brought to life with gusto. 'Pyramus and Thisbe' the play within a play was depicted with much drollery. The theatre is not easy to find, but well worth a visit!

Rita Rossini

A bit of Felixstowe History

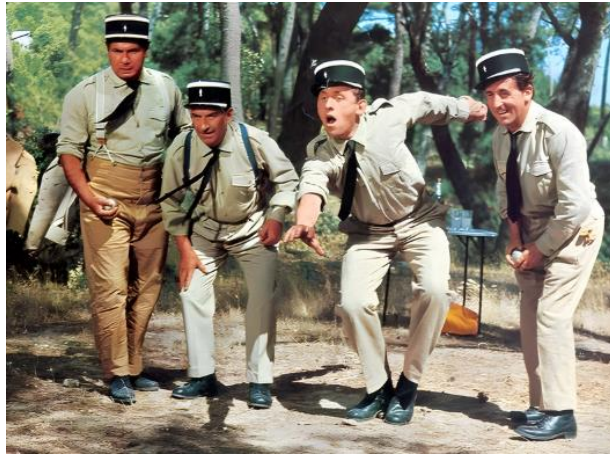
There had been a settlement on the site of Felixstowe, north of Landguard Fort, since Anglo-Saxon times though by mid-nineteenth century it was still only a small village: 673 inhabitants according to the 1861 census. Close by was the ferry at Walton's Colneis Creek where coal was unloaded There was also a tavern, the Dooley Inn, which had reputedly been an infamous hangout for eighteenth century smugglers. Yet, despite being at the mouth of the Orwell, Felixstowe had never made the most of its location, being totally overshadowed by the bustle of Harwich on the other side of the haven. The cart track from Felixstowe to Ipswich was of particularly poor quality, indicative of the reality that there was not much at Felixstowe that merited making a journey.

Yet in 1867, Colonel George Tomline saw Felixstowe's possibilities as a location for a new town. Serviced by rail and steam ferry, he believed it could finally benefit from its proximity to the haven. To this end he began buying the surrounding land from the Duke of Hamilton. In 1875, Tomline formed his own Felixstowe Railway and Pier Company, intending that it should build a single line track that would pass through Ipswich and connect Felixstowe with the GER mainline at Westerfield. Station stops along the way would include one conveniently close to his own stately home at Orwell Park but purposely avoid serving the Ordnance Hotel, which was owned by Tomline's political and railway rival, John Chevalier Cobbold, local brewer and former Conservative MP for Ipswich.

(Extract from Time and Tide by Graham Stewart)

Pauline Gronow

Boules/Pétanque Group



Even Gendarmes play Pétanque !

Did you know that your very own Harwich Peninsula U3A has a pétanque club which meets at 10am each Friday at the putting green area between The Drive and The Waterfront in Lower Marine Parade.

We Harwich folk seem to enjoy nowadays the weather of *Le Midi*, so why not pop along and beat the southern French at their own game by giving pétanque a shot?

Stuart Smith.
Group's Co-ordinator.

In Praise of Interest Groups

Meet, talk, give, learn, laugh and live
That's what we do in U3A.
There's walkers, talkers and strollers,
Watchers, movers, and shakers.
Players of games, indoors and out
Scrabble, Crib, Bridge, Boules, Pétanque.
Recorder players air their tunes
Music soothes the ear for others.
For readers Shakespeare's plays appeal,
The Book group delve into novels
Casting their critical eye.
The Poetry group will pursue
Verse, blank, rhyming, sonnets and more.

Creative writers tax their brains,
Scribes of stories romance and crime.
The walkers plan their route with care
Dressed for the weather foul or fair.
Birdwatchers search forest, field and sky
Binoculars at the ready.
And our Astronomers study
Through their 'scopes the heavens above,
Looking back through millennia
Like the Geologists with their rocks.
The History lot look back to times
Gone by, researching in the past,
Like the Family History group
Whose personal past is special.
The Architecture group look at
Buildings, ancient through to modern.
Artists sketch and paint for pleasure.
The Quiz group test their memories,
Compete with others for good causes.
New group, AI, like to question
How it will help in the future.
The transport group love their systems.
Wheels, cogs and engines float their boat.
And finally, the last not least,
The group that says it all
In our U3A, Anything Goes.
We wrestle with technology,
Computers, memory sticks, screens,
Projectors and microphones,
Powerpoints and presentations.
Old Google is our greatest friend.
Our groups are dynamic, they change
With time, they change us, challenge and
stimulate us, bring new faces,
Create friendships for all because
We Meet, We Talk, and We Give,
We Learn, We Laugh and We Live .
Minds are stretched, Spirits are lifted
That's what the U3A has gifted.

Jill Riches

Following the Annual General Meeting, the Committee for 2026/27 is confirmed as:-

PRESIDENT	Sheena Parsons
CHAIR	Pauline Gronow
VICE CHAIR	Carl Allen
TREASURER	Moira Arthy
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Sheila Allen
SECRETARY	Jean Curtis
GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR	Sue Stanley
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	Rita Rossini
PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE	Lynne Shelley
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Richard Flatt
	Jill Riches
	Gwyn Rapsey
PRESENTATION COMMITTEE	Ann Jones Carl Allen Pauline Gronow

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