

Stratford-upon-avon u3a Newsletter

August 2025

[Stratford-upon-Avon u3a: Home \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://Stratford-upon-Avon u3a: Home (u3asites.org.uk))

Founded 2000—

Celebrating 25 years, were you there at the beginning?

Deadline for copy for this newsletter is 17th of the month, it never varies, except December when we don't publish a newsletter. Please send items to me at this address: newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk

This month

Wednesday 27 August

2 p.m. at the Methodist Church

Sarais Crawshaw will be talking about her work as a wildlife artist (an award winning one), the picture on the left is one of hers



Members and Visitors welcome, join us for a cuppa afterwards.
Do join the Chatting table if you are new, on you own or just fancy a chat.
We look forward to seeing you.



Next Month

Wednesday 24th September

2 p.m.

At the Methodist Church

Jo Worthy-Jones will be talking about
Gardening with Wildlife in Mind

Stratford u3a talk report, Wednesday, 30 July 2025.

TWAM – Tools with a Mission – Heather Potts.

TWAM's mission is to send old tools and machines, refurbished, to people in Africa. Training in a trade and having good tools can be life changing for poor and homeless people. Its focus is on the ultra-poor and vulnerable, especially women and children, who may be forced into living on the streets and prostitution, and boys and men, who may end up in gangs and dealing in drugs. It is a Christian organisation and is motivated by compassion.

Heather went to Africa in 1985 for a gap year between school and university. She worked to accumulate the money for the flight to Kenya, and then she worked as a teacher in a school. Unfortunately, she caught Malaria and became very ill. After her recovery she went to Warwick University, where she met her future husband. She has returned to Africa many times and, on her travels, she has caught Malaria again and received a number of different powerful drugs. She found out in 2000, when working at National Grid, that one treatment with Quinine had led to some hearing loss.



TWAM has two refurbishment centres, in Ipswich and Rugby. There is also an engineering centre in Halstead. The people in the centres repair the tools and make them into kits for the recipients. The process is as follows: donation - collection from the donor by a Tools Ambassador; collection of various lots by a van driver; unloading and sorting at the refurbishment centres; refurbishment; sorting out the destination; shipping to Africa, where training centres and church communities manage various sorts of projects. Zambia is the biggest centre.

There is collaboration with other charitable community organisations – Holton Pits, Groundwork East and Lofty Heights, for example. TWAM also sells items to raise funds if they are not suitable for its recipients. There are 9 staff members at TWAM, and 550 volunteers in the UK, doing fund-raising, marketing etc. as well as refurbishment work. 375 tonnes of tools and machines are saved every year! Sewing and knitting machines make up the majority. Re-cycling tools also saves 141,000 kilos of carbon dioxide each year too!

Volunteering also offers companionship and purpose to the lives of the volunteers too. Heather named Tim and Alison at the Rugby centre – he works in telecoms and she is a teacher. He refurbishes computers and she fund raises.

Heather also featured some people in Africa helped by TWAM:

Kelvin in Zambia had a tragic story. His parents died when he was 12 so he left school. He and his sister had no home and no money. He did piece work in agriculture rather than join a gang and deal in drugs. His sister's option was mainly prostitution. TWAM gave him the tools for training in construction work. It took £45 to kit him out. Now he earns good money and has his own business.

Kay in Zambia lives in a poor rural town. He obtained an apprenticeship with an electrician, and in 2019 TWAM supplied the tools for him to work. Now he has a shop of his own with 4 employees.

Continued from previous page

Levina in Uganda, with her husband, did hard piece work and they were very poor. She heard about a training centre at the local Baptist church. She learned tailoring and it changed her life. She set up a business making and repairing clothes, with a stall, and she employs 3 people. She can now afford to send her children to school.

TWAM's contribution changes the lives of more than just one person. It supplies 18,522 tools a year. No tools are refused even if they are a bit rusty. They can also be used for parts. Although TWAM is a Christian organisation, recipients do not have to be Christian. TWAM works through other organisations – "country partners". More volunteers and partners are always needed. Accessories like nails and screws, wool, thread etc. are also needed. These items complete the kits, and the haberdashery team makes the bags that the tools go into. TWAM has a list of wanted items and also items that are not possible to take.

Heather gave out leaflets with information and there is full information at <https://www.twam.uk/>

The talk was very interesting, provoked a number of questions and we learned a lot. Afterwards, several people intended to search in their garages, attics and sheds for donations!

(Helen Elliott, Speaker Secretary)



PS. The day after the last meeting my mum rang TWAM to see if they would like some of my dad's old tools. Two people came from the charity almost immediately and were really grateful. Mum was pleased to think that Dad's old tools were going to be put to good use. I think he would have liked that too. Your editor

REPORTS FROM OUR INTEREST GROUPS

Brush up your German

After a lot of very interesting and useful general chat, Jo entertained us with tales of her family's hotel accommodation in rural Wales when she was young, and Margaret talked about her passion for wordplay and slogan competitions and their rewards.

French for the Terrified

We revised the weather and seasons through another Grammaire en Dialogues conversation - and coincidentally learned that a well known French nursery song was used as a warning to Marie Antoinette after the fall of the Bastille. We also looked at a range of easy French lessons offered by the likes of Alexa and Géraldine, available free on YouTube.

Improve your French

Our usual news items all touched on family celebrations and aspects of married life. As one of us will be involved soon in a French wedding, we looked at some relevant vocabulary and then read the amusing account of Le Mariage de Martine as related by le petit Nicolas.



Piano Group

Our August meeting is yet to happen. We are eager to hear from two of our members who have booked a day trip to Steinway Hall in London to try out some of their super pianos.

Stratford History Group

As our booked speaker was ill, Margaret led a walk about the streets of Old Town. We concentrated on shops and businesses of former years but also took in the architectural treats of gentlemen's residences between Holy Trinity and Church Street on land formerly occupied by the college of the chantry priests. On the corner of the 'four-penny end' of Ryland Street and New Street was Vaughn's, one of Old Town's three bakeries, with its *BAKING EVERY DAY* sign still discernible. An interesting upper floor entrance on Cherry Street led to lots of suggestions; clearly something heavy was hoisted up there from the street. (Thanks to Helen Elliott for these two photos.)



Whitfield Pension 1910. County Record Office

We finished our walk opposite the delightful curve of nos 17-19 Old Town. No 18 was once the home of Andrew Faulds, RSC actor from 1944 to 1956, now buried at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Paul Robeson, to whom he gave a home and support during his turbulent time here playing Othello, encouraged Faulds in his second career as a politician. This began badly when he failed to win a parliamentary seat for Stratford, but he was later MP for Warley and Smethwick for over 30 years. In the 1950s he campaigned to save the 17th century almshouse known as Whitfield Pension at no 10 Church Street from the bulldozers. His wife's family were Whitfields. Sadly he lost the fight and it was demolished in 1957 for the second huge expansion of the NFU building, now Elizabeth House, Stratford District Council offices. It was an interesting walk!

Current Affairs One

As someone once said, news of our demise has been grossly exaggerated. We continue to meet once a month in the Rose and Crown in Sheep Street and discuss current affairs. This month we discussed the worth of PE A level, can it really be academic? With the rise and rise of Sports related degrees it seems that, yes, PE can be an academic subject.

Our other topic was 'should 16 year olds get the vote?' The consensus was no. However our discussion covered the importance of politics in our lives and the history of why the franchise is so important. Our conclusion was along the lines of 'things aren't what they used to be.' Nothing to do with our members being of a certain vintage!

The group is now back to capacity as two of our members have returned after long term illness.

Your editor newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk

A Winter's Tale

Thank you Maureen for organising another successful theatre trip. This time to see the current production of A Winter's Tale at the RSC. As we have come to expect it was thought provoking, with not a little 'new text' - for instance, the early entrance of Time. If you want to know more, go and see it.



Thank you to Sue Crowley for her interesting talk about the plot and its characters the previous weekend; it was thought provoking and made the final revelations all the more surprising (no spoiler alert).

Not everyone gave the play excellent reviews, but I was fascinated and absorbed throughout.

Your editor, newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk

This month's humorous effort, (also known as jokes)

Why did you decide to get rid of your vacuum?It was just collecting dust

This is my step-ladder...I never knew my real ladder

I'm friends with 25 letters of the alphabet...I don't know why

I was going to take a bath...But then decided I was going to leave it where it was

A bossy man walked into a bar...And ordered everyone a round

You know where to send the better ones: newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk

Silver Jubilee

Stratford-upon-Avon u3a will be 25 this year

This even will be on 10 December, please put the date in your diary. Our Christmas meeting will also be our silver jubilee celebration. Watch this space, as they say, more information coming soon. Please get in touch newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk

Helen Elliott and I are going to meet Jackie Checketts later this month. She is our founding mother(?); with her help we are going to put together a display of the last 25 years. Do share your stories of our early days, send them to me newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk



STRATFORD-UPON-AVON u3a - SPEAKERS FOR 2025

Our monthly meetings are on the last Wednesday of the month, except in December when the meeting is earlier to avoid the Christmas rush. We have an interesting and varied programme of talks and entertainment for you. Please come along, and tell your friends!

DATE	NAME/ ORGANISATION	SUBJECT
30 July 2025	Mike Luck– TWAM	Tools with a Mission – tools refurbishment charity project
27 August 2025	Sarais Crawshaw	Life as a Wildlife Artist and demonstration
24 September 2025	Jo Worthy-Jones	Gardening with Wildlife in Mind
29 October 2025	David Fry	Early Photographers in Warwickshire
26 November 2025	Richard Churchley	English Countryside in Poetry and Song
10 December 2025	SILVER CELEBRATIONS	Celebrating 25 years of our u3a



COFFEE MORNING

You are invited to join our members' regular
coffee morning chit-chats

2nd Saturday of the month 10 till 12

The Town House Hotel, Church St



Next get together 13 September



Next coffee morning

on **Saturday 13 September.**

There is a room behind the bar at the back of the ground floor where
we gather.

All are welcome, it would be lovely to see you.

*It's a lovely chance for a get together. The coffee is good and the
Conversation is even better, do join us. Ed.*



TEA ROTA

Please make sure you know what to do when it is your turn. The task is not onerous. Put out the mugs and biscuits, pour the tea and coffee. Oh and of course wash up. Everything is provided.

You are always welcome to join us after meetings for a drink and a natter. We value your voluntary contributions, towards the cost of the refreshments. Thanks.

MONTH

August

September

GROUP

French for the Terrified

Friendly French conversation

Vacancy

We are looking for a member to take on the role of 'Catering Manager' aka Tea Lady/Man. If you could sort out a rota of groups to do the teas each month, and give them a gentle reminder; as well as keeping us stocked up with tea and coffee then please do come and help. Send me an email at: newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk or talk to a committee member. Please don't be shy.

Here is this month's corny collection, please smile if only at my vain attempts at humour

Why did you decide to get rid of your vacuum? It was just collecting dust

This is my step-ladder...I never knew my real ladder

I'm friends with 25 letters of the alphabet...I don't know why

I was going to take a bath...But then decided I was going to leave it where it was

A bossy man walked into a bar...And ordered everyone a round

Please do send me some better ones: newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk

Here is the tea rota for the next year. Please make sure you know when it is your group's turn and come to help if you can.



Stratford-Upon-Avon U3A Tea Rota October 25 to September 26	
MONTH	GROUP
October 25	Italian Improvers
November	Piano Group
December	Committee
January 2026	Playreading
February	Refresh your German
March	AGM
April	Rummikub Club
May	Spanish Intermediate
June	Stratford History Group
July	Sunday Morning Walkers
August	Tai Chi Yoga
September	Wine Appreciation



That is all for this month. Thank you for all your contributions. This newsletter aims to reflect all the activities of our u3a, so please do send your contributions to me.

Your editor,

Anne Foster newsed@stratfordu3a.org.uk