



Chair's Report From Jan Hayes-Griffin

On 3rd September we celebrated our 30th birthday with a fabulous party at Holme Hale! Over 150 attended and were treated to a morning of memories, a play, a quiz and singing and dancing. And of course cake!

We were delighted to welcome Lady Dannatt Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk to open our proceedings. She was received by myself and then introduced to past Chairmen David Moncaster, Ian Clews and Ruth Battams (representing her husband Mick who was unwell). She also met Michael Buttolph the Chairman of the Holme Hale Pavilion committee - our ever helpful landlord and refreshment team organiser.



In her speech Lady Dannatt spoke about the value of the u3a in bringing people and communities together and the importance of lifelong learning and friendship to support our emotional and physical wellbeing as we get older. She said she was delighted to see such a thriving organisation with so many members who clearly knew how to enjoy themselves. She recognised the commitment of all the volunteers involved in keeping our u3a on the road - especially our group leaders and committee members.



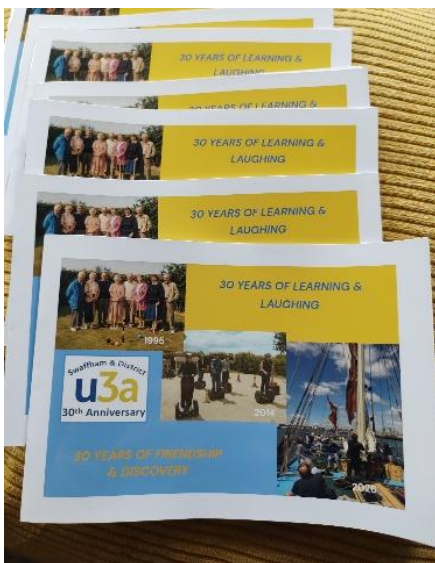
We then cut a large birthday cake.



The cake (thank you to my friend Susan for the icing!) was handed out, together with 150 beautifully decorated individual cupcakes (thank you to Poppy - Ann's granddaughter! And thank you to our stirring band of bakers!).



With glasses of chilled Nonsecco to everyone, we toasted the occasion and the continuing health of Swaffham & District u3a and its members.



We are very fortunate to have a huge archive of historical information about the Wissey (and recently Swaffham & District) u3a. Laurene and I spent many happy hours over the last few months looking at photos, articles, correspondence and committee minutes to piece together a timeline of the most significant milestones of our organisation. I interviewed past chairmen and other members to capture their memories as well.



By the wizardry of AI and creative technology, Laurene our very talented Secretary and webmaster had produced a wonderful commemorative booklet which was given out to everyone present.



In my presentation I charted the evolution of the Wissey u3a starting with our founder the indomitable Betty Evans, whose catchphrase was Enjoyment, Enjoyment, Enjoyment right up to the present day and our recent name change. It tracked the increase in membership from 45 members to the 350 we have today and the development of now over 35 different activity groups.



We were then treated to a play performed by the Script Reading group. Written by Laurene (a woman of so many talents!) especially for the occasion. Set in a doctors waiting room, four patients are grumpily and anxiously waiting to see the doctor discussing their frustrations and ailments together with a receptionist grappling with the idiosyncrasies of the IT system!

With hilarious references to the u3a, various activity groups and sound effects, the group had us laughing out loud!



This was followed by a quiz - where were you in 1996? This was a test of the popular culture and events of the time and a test of memory for most of us! I got Dolly the Sheep, Wannabe by the Spice Girls and John Major but anything sporty was a mystery!

Thank you to Pam and Pat for putting together 20 questions of things we thought we'd forgotten and [congratulations](#) to the team who won.

Hope you shared the chocolates!





Our thriving Singing for Pleasure group had been practising for weeks and their hard work culminated in a performance with three songs from 1995/6 - Unchained Melody by Robson and Jerome was top of the charts that year, together with Don't cry for me Argentina from Evita and You've got a friend in me from Toy Story. With Julia on the key board and Liz conducting from the front, the group did a great job in encouraging us to sing along.

And finally we leapt to our feet (hips and knees permitting!) to take part in the Macarena. All the

rage on the dance floor in 1996 we attempted to follow the moves on the screen. Some of you had obviously been practising hard and had 'got it', some like me revealed their total inability at hand:eye coordination and others of you just looked totally bemused! It was a bit of fun and burned off a few of those cake calories!



Of course these events don't just happen. A huge amount of planning and doing goes on behind the scenes. I am very fortunate to have a great committee of varied talents who bring it all together on the day. A huge thanks to all the cake makers, sausage roll and snack providers and Non Secco servers and of course the Holme Hale refreshment team. Thank you to everyone who helped to set out and decorate the hall the night before including various husbands and partners and especially Carole's daughter who went up the ladders to

hang up the bunting and lanterns. To Laurene and David for the sound and screen system and acting as compère and continuity announcer on the day. And everyone who helped clear up afterwards. I think we all collapsed in a heap and had the weekend off to recover. Oh and a bottle of real Prosecco!

So how do we follow that?... Read on!



Next Speaker Event

1st October: Nelson's Journey

Our speaker will be from this Norwich based organisation that supports children who are bereaved through loss of a parent, grandparent, siblings or other loved ones. More on our website:

[The work of Nelson's Journey - Swaffham and District](#)



5th November: Behind the Scenes at Waitrose!

[Behind the Scenes at Waitrose 5th November 26 - Swaffham and District](#)

3rd December: Our Members' Christmas Party details to follow...

Jolly Days Out



We are coming to the end of our 2026 programme

There are still spaces available for the trip to Henry Moore museum on 7th October [Henry Moore Museum & American Military Cemetery](#)

- [Wednesday 7th October - Swaffham and District](#) and Ely Christmas Fair on

19th November [Jolly Day Out: Ely Christmas market - Swaffham and District](#)

The Christmas Extravaganza at Great Yarmouth on 9th November has proved very popular - so much so we're putting on a second coach. So if you fancy a Christmas Spectacular which everyone says is thrilling then book your place here [Jolly Day Out Circus and Water Spectacular - Swaffham and District](#)

Please remember! You must complete the booking form on-line in the links above and pay before your booking is confirmed. You may also book through Dereham u3a <https://dereham.u3asite.uk/outingsjolly-days-out/>

Christmas!

At our **October** and **November** meetings **Ian Clews** will be taking bookings for the **Christmas lunch** at the **George Hotel** on **Thursday 10th December 2026**. Always a sell out so book early to avoid disappointment and having to go cold turkey!



Swaffham & District u3a Christmas Lunch

GEORGE HOTEL, SWAFFHAM

Thursday 10th December 2026 12.00 for 12.30pm

**£30.00 for two courses or £35.00 for three courses
(raffle included)**



Please do make us aware of any allergens or dietary requirements (v) = Vegetarian

To book your places, contact:

Ian Clews t: 01760 721247 m: 07880627959 e: iclews@btinternet.com

Ian and Maggie will take orders for Xmas lunch at the **October** and **November** meeting

(see page 6 for menu choices)

Christmas lunch Menu

STARTERS

- A **Leak and Potato Soup**, with Freshly Baked Bread (v)
- B **Creamy Garlic Mushrooms**, with Onion Toasts & Parsley (v)
- C **Hot Smoked Salmon Pate**, Warmed Granary Roll, Gherkins, Red Onion & Leaves
- D **Piri Piri Chicken Salad**, Pimento & Croutons

MAINS

- A **Grilled Sea Bass Fillet**, on Spinach Parmentier Potatoes with Crab Butter
- B **Roast Norfolk Turkey**, Maple Bacon Pig in Blanket, Stuffing & Pan Gravy
- C **Sauté Loin of Pork**, finished in a Creamy Woodland Mushroom Sauce
- D **Roasted Roots Crumble**, with Mature Cheddar Cream Sauce,
Baked under a Walnut Crumb (v)

All served with Fresh Seasonal Vegetables

DELICIOUS DESSERTS

- A **Christmas Pudding**, with Brandy Sauce
- B **Raspberry Pavlova**
- C **Mince Pie Crème Brûlée** with a Shortbread Star
- D **Black Forest Cheesecake**

COFFEE AND MINTS

Swaffham & District u3a Interest Group News

New groups starting this month

Bird Watching - **Waiting List**



Jan Foster Bartlett and Mary Lejeune's bird watching group met on September 8th with a visit to Boughton Fen. The group has 14 members and is now full, but taking names for a waiting list.

See link: [Birdwatching: nature, fresh air, gentle exercise and enjoyment - Swaffham and District](#)

Poetry Writers : **A Brand New Group with Spaces**



On 21st September James Knox Whittet will hold the first poetry writing group at his home in Beachamwell. To find out more go to the Swaffham and District website, click on the groups tab and then on to the Poetry Writing group entry. [Poetry Writing Group - Swaffham and District](#)

Board Games and Cards - Brand New Group Spaces

Free Taster session Friday 18th September



Fancy a game of Scrabble, Rummicub, Othello, Chess, Draughts or Uno including Uno No Mercy? Maybe you just want a game of cards? This could be the group for you...

A FREE boards game taster session will be arranged on Friday 18th September at North Pickenham Hub (the old North Pickenham school) where drinks and snacks are available in the Pickenham Pantry - great for an after Games lunch perhaps?

Perfect for Autumn and Winter activity!

More details [Board Games - Swaffham and District](#) or ring Laurene 07942 820590 How to find the North Pickenham Hub? [North Pickenham Community Hub - Swaffham and District](#)

New Group Leaders wanted

New AI Group?



The AI group is full and has **4 people on the waiting list**. Would anyone be interested in acting as leader of this group? Mike Slater is willing to give advice and as he has already been running the AI group, so I'm sure you can follow his lead. Contact Pat [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#)

New Table Tennis Group?

Both table tennis groups are now full but the Swaffham Community Centre currently has a vacancy on a **Tuesday afternoon** for a third group, if there is sufficient interest and someone would be willing to act as leader. Please contact me, (Pat Weir groups coordinator) if you would be interested in either joining a third group or acting as a leader. Contact [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#)



New Group Leaders wanted



New Ten Pin Bowling Group?

A while ago 4 people expressed an interest in forming a ten-pin bowling group to be played at Strikes in Dereham. The person who ran the Dereham group says it does not involve much work as Group Leader, so who would be willing to give it a go?

Perhaps we can challenge Dereham to a match!

Contact Pat [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#)



New Pub Lunch Group

The two successful pub lunch Groups are currently full. Would there be anyone interested in belonging to a third group, if we can find a suitable venue and leader?

Interested?

Contact Pat [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#)

Established Groups with Spaces - Recruiting New Members



Art Group - has spaces

The [Art Group - Swaffham and District](#) is setting up a display of their recent work at All Saints Church, Necton. They are very keen to attract new

members, so come along to see their work or contact:

Trevor Lewis [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#)

Established Groups with Spaces Recruiting New Members

Cribbage has Spaces



Cribbage - new Group! - Swaffham and District

The Cribbage group has proved very popular! There are still spaces. Contact Garry Fuller [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#) or Paul Hayes-Griffin [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#) if you're interested.

Creative Writing 1 and 2 - both have spaces



Many writers from **Creative Writing 1 and 2** attended the FREE writing workshop based on the novel *The Go-Between* in Bradenham Village Hall on Friday July 17th. All who attended were offered free tickets to attend a performance of the new play at Norwich Theatre.

If you enjoy writing or wish to improve it, either writing group could be for you. One meets in Great Dunham, one in Bradenham.

[Creative Writing Group 1 - Swaffham and District](#)

[Creative Writing 2 - Swaffham and District](#)

Group with New Venue and Change of Name



Please note that in October Nikki Smith's lunch group, previously called Lunch At The Ploughshare, is changing its name and moving to Dereham.

The new name for the group will be **Nikki's Pub Lunches** and from October they will be held at **Dereham Golf Club**.

Contact Nikki for details here [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#)

Find out more about Dereham Golf Club here [Home - DEREHAM GOLF CLUB](#)

Hate Waiting? Have a chat with Pat!



Several groups are now full, and you are welcome to add your name to a waiting list.

We don't want you to have a long wait - so **we are looking for people who would be interested with others to start second groups.**

It's a lot of fun, and help is available to get you started.

Contact Pat Weir Groups Coordinator. [Contact Us - Swaffham and District](#)