

Reflections on working lives – through our speakers' stories.

One of the unexpected treats of our monthly meetings is discovering what everyone used to do before we all became highly skilled tea-drinkers and professional meeting attendees. One of the quiet joys is the glimpse we get into the working lives of others. Through our speakers, we've travelled far beyond Warsash—into The Falkland Islands, Africa, classrooms, boardrooms, the stage, workshops, and even a few places that sound far too exciting to have been called "work" at all.

CHAIR'S CHAT

Thanks to our speakers, we've had a backstage pass to all sorts of working lives—some impressive, some unusual, and some that leave us wondering, "*How on earth did you end up doing that?*" We've heard about careers that were mapped out from the age of five... and others that began with, "*Well, I only went in for the interview because it was raining.*" What's striking isn't just what people did, but how varied the journeys were. Some careers were carefully planned; others seemed to happen by accident, opportunity, or a well-timed cup of tea with the right person. There are tales of ambition, resilience, reinvention—and occasionally of jobs taken simply because "it seemed like a good idea at the time" (we've all been there).

Perhaps the real takeaway is this: it's never just about the job. It's about the people met along the way, the skills picked up (sometimes unexpectedly), and the stories we carry with us into retirement—and into rooms like ours, where they continue to inform, entertain, and inspire. So next time you hear a speaker, listen closely—you might just recognise a piece of your own story in theirs... or be grateful you didn't choose their career path after all! What becomes clear is that very few careers follow a straight line. Most zigzag, detour, and occasionally reverse at speed. And thankfully so—because that's where the best stories come from.

And that's the point... sitting in our audience are decades of experience, mishaps, triumphs, and "*you couldn't make it up*" moments. So—do you have a story to tell? It doesn't have to be grand or glamorous. If you've ever had a job, a challenge, a funny moment, or a lesson learned the hard way... you've got something worth sharing. Come on—your past could be our next great speaker (and give the rest of us something to talk about over biscuits).

CATHERINE

GROUPS NEWS

ART GROUP

The Art Group's latest workshop was Fruit in still life. Here are some of the efforts. The next meeting is Monday 11 May when the subject will be Landscapes in two colours. (picture on next page).

KEN BERRIDGE

BREAKAWAY GROUP

The Breakaway Group at The Manor and Ashbury Resort near Okehampton in March (picture on the next page).

ROSEMARY SCOTT

UKULELE

Another change in date for ukulele in May as there are 2 bank holidays and Jenny is away from 11 - 18th, which means that we will go from April 27 until June 1 and 15, unless anyone feels we can

find an alternative morning to get together.

Jenny is pleased with the progress of those that come, and we are looking for more songs with fewer chords, until we all put time aside for more practice. Enjoy your holidays, those that are also going away.

JENNY WRIGHT

BUS TRIP GROUP

Our May bus trip on Wednesday May 13 will be a tour of Bursledon Brickworks followed by lunch at The Old Ship. If you're interested in joining us - get in touch with Rosemary. **ROSEMARY SCOTT**

MAYFLOWER THEATRE

At the beginning of April, forty-two of us enjoyed an afternoon of music, dance and beautiful costumes, as we watched *Top Hat* at the Mayflower.

We will be seeing *The Buddy Holly Story* in May and *Moulin Rouge* in October. Both of these are sold out, but do let me know if you'd like to go on the waiting list, in case someone cancels.

I have reserved seats for *Operation Mincemeat* on November 19 at 2pm. Seats are £35.50 each. This is a hilarious highly acclaimed musical, based on a true story about how we outwitted Hitler. Payment is required to the u3a bank account by May (The Mayflower require full payment in May)

If you are interested in any of these productions, or future ones you would like to see, at the Mayflower, please contact me. **JUDITH SIMS**

MEDIUM WALKING GROUP 2

The Walking Group had a very enjoyable four mile walk on Monday 20 April at Otterbourne, walking along the Itchen Way. There was variation with woodland walking and bluebells, part of the route alongside the River Itchen, meadows country lanes. Refreshment of tea and cake or lunch was enjoyed after at the Brambridge Garden Centre (photo on next page). **LAURIE PAGE**

MEDIUM WALKING GROUP 1

The medium walking group had their biggest attendance of twenty-nine on Easter Monday for a stroll along the Itchen river from Mansbridge to Cobden bridge and back. Before embarking on our stroll

Next meeting
Friday 8 May
Fran Sandham
will be talking
about
Dr Livingstone.

we had a detour to see an old reservoir and the remnants of the Itchen navigation canal that met the river at Mansbridge, before crossing the river over the old stone bridge to reach a paved path. Unfortunately, our planned coffee stop was overflowing, so we had to give it a miss, although some managed to get parked at Haskins for a cuppa afterwards.

KUMI COULTHARD

WEEKENDERS CHILL AND CHAT

Twenty one members came along on Saturday, 18 April, to Stewarts Abbey Garden Centre and enjoyed an hour or so for a chat and light refreshment. It was so nice to see new members joining us and are most welcome.

Our next Chill and Chat will be on Saturday 16 May at Hillier Garden Centre Botley, Woodhouse Lane, SO30 2EZ meeting at 11.00 in the Mulberry and Thyme Restaurant.

LORRAINE SEXTON



Just swanning along. One of the Fine Dining group was enjoying her poached salmon lunch but decided it was a bit too much and asked if half of it it could be wrapped up to take home. Everyone was surprised to see the salmon turned into a delightful tin-foil swan.

GROUPS PICTURE PAGE



above The art folk had a fruity paintingtime at their last session.
below The Itchen can just be seen in the background as the Medium Walking group (plus pooch) enjoyed a four mile stroll along the river starting at Otterbourne.

