

News from the Chair

I'm delighted to say that we have a volunteer for the Membership Secretary role at last. Julie Rogers has very kindly stepped forward, and has now been co-opted onto the Committee. We all look forward to working with you in the future, Julie.

I've recently been approached by Square One Padel and Social Club to see whether any of our members would be interested in playing Walking Padel at their new centre in Sittingbourne. So last week, Penny, Sarah, Ellen and I went along to find out more (*see page 3*).

[u3a's annual festival](#) is taking place on 1st-3rd July, and over 1,000 u3a members will be gathering in York to enjoy this 'celebration of fun, learning and the community'. There is a good contingent of Fadu3a members attending this year; and Angelika and Gillian have volunteered to assist with the badminton and pickleball groups, respectively. For those unable to attend in person, you can still take part in the fun at the [online u3a Festival Fringe](#), a mixture of talks and interactive activities.

Our second Racquets Festival takes place on 12th July. I wish Angelika, the organiser, and all the other helpers and participants a very enjoyable day, and hope to see you all there (*see page 2*).

A final reminder that the July meeting will be held on Wednesday, 22nd July, rather than the usual third Wednesday. Jacquie's talk will be on the history of the magistracy and the magistrate's current role.

Best wishes,

Jenny

Racquets Festival 2026

A final reminder that this year's Racquets Festival will be held on Sunday, 12th July, from 1-4pm at the Abbey School Sports Centre, London Road, Faversham.

The event is open to all members of Fadu3a and is an opportunity to play and/or try out Table Tennis, Badminton and Pickleball. There are still one or two places left, available on a first come, first served basis. The cost is £6 per person. Refreshments are provided.

No experience or knowledge of the rules are required, as you will be supported by more experienced members.

We do ask you to consider your own physical fitness to participate to ensure your health and safety, and you'll be asked to complete a Risk Assessment on the day.

All play equipment is provided.

I'm sure it will be great fun, and an opportunity to try a new sport and meet new people!

To secure a place please phone/text 07568 572961 or email angelikasimpole@icloud.com

Angelika, Festival Organiser

Anyone for Padel?

Last week, as Jenny mentioned in her Chair's Report, we went along to [Square One Padel and Social Club](#) in Sittingbourne, at their organiser's invitation, to discuss whether Fadu3a members would be interested in playing Walking Padel Ball.

Ashford u3a has already formed a Walking Padel Ball Group that plays weekly at the Club's sister centre in Ashford.

[Padel](#) is a racquet sport that combines elements of tennis and squash, and is usually played in doubles on a small enclosed court with glass and mesh walls that are part of the game.

Anyone who has played or watched Padel will get that it's a fast game, more like Squash than Pickleball. So when we heard about Walking Padel, we were curious and perplexed in equal measure.

What the Padel rep explained to us is that this is a form of the Padel game made accessible for inexperienced players of our age group. Basically, we're allowed two bounces of the ball instead of one, which slows the game down. So there's less dashing and leaping about, and more brisk ambling.

The Sittingbourne venue is offering taster sessions for those of us who are interested, and Jacqui, Ashford's Group Leader, has said that we're more than welcome to come along and watch them play. She did stress that it's a big commitment by the participants, and they have to book the courts in advance. She also said you need to be reasonably fit, even though it's walking.

The club membership fees at Sittingbourne are £20pm which allows gym and facility access, and court hire is £32 per hour, so quite reasonable if there a small group of about 6 people.

If anyone is interested in coming to Ashford to watch the game, please contact Penny GroupCoFavU3A@hotmail.com

Ellen, Penny and Sarah

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday 22nd July, Monthly Meeting - Please Note Change of Date!

Jacque Dabnor: What Exactly is a Magistrate?

Jacque, a Fadu3a member who was a magistrate for over 20 years, will talk about the history of the magistracy and the magistrate's current role.

Wednesday 19th August, Monthly Meeting

August Quiz!!!

A visit to Chatham Dockyards

The Fadu3a trip to Chatham Dockyards in June was my first visit to the Dockyards. And what a feast of nautical history it turned out to be.

We started at the museum which had some fun interactive and informative displays – who knew that sandglasses and lengths of knotted rope were used to measure a ship's speed?

Onwards we walked, past the detailed model of the *HMS Victory* with its complexity of masts and ropes and gun ports, through the ghostly ships' cemetery and out to where the grand old girls (all ships are She) HMS Gannet, HMS Cavalier, and the HM Submarine Ocelot are berthed.

For me, the highlight of the day was getting to experience the inside of a submarine.



The Ocelot was launched in 1962 and commissioned in 1964. She was a spy ship during the Cold War; her silent sorties lasted for several weeks at a time, often staying submerged for the entire tour. Our guide said that although Ocelot could carry up to 60 personnel it was more practicable to set off with 20 men and 6 or more officers.

Every man had a bunk. Once on board they changed out of their uniforms, placed them under their mattresses and wore civvies or 'pirate kit' for the entire duration, never changing or washing as fresh water was precious. Eeugh!

No doors in a sub, just hatches separating each area that you leap through feet first. Apart from the sleeping quarters, every bit of the interior is crammed with dials, lights, switches, gauges and, for its time, sophisticated sonar equipment.



Large tins of food were packed into every available space, even under the men's bunks. Unlike what you see in movies, Ocelot was a cramped, no-frills, noisome vessel. Unwashed bodies, diesel fumes and cigarette smoke competed with the bags of festering rubbish and sewage which could not be gotten rid of in case it gave away their position.



Ocelot was fully war-ready, she carried a total of 24 Mark 8 torpedoes, four tubes facing fore and two, aft.

I came away with huge respect for the bravery and fortitude of the crewmen, doing their duty in dark, cold waters, knowing their chances of surviving any engagement were extremely slim.

Ellen Taylor

Photo of Ocelot from outside by Penny

Photos of Ocelot from inside by Ellen

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' CONTACT DETAILS

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WEBSITE: [FADU3A home page](#)

FADU3A FACEBOOK: Now has 106 members. If you're not a member of the group yet, why not join us today using the link below?

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FavershamU3A>