



Our village visits have proved very successful over the last eight years and still do. Ever more villages are requesting and receiving visits but we wanted to find a way of reaching even more rural residents and put them in direct touch with the agencies which are there to help them.

People passing retirement age can often feel isolated, left behind, a gradual detachment from being part of today's society. In rural areas poor transport links can make this worse. Organisations and agencies find it hard to reach these people, so it can be very difficult for people of a 'Golden Age' to know what services are there to help them. So..... we decided to have our first 'Golden Age Fair'

The first Golden Age Fair organised by The Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project, was held at Woolpit Village Hall on 1st April 2011.

A full report of the event and its outcomes is available on this website, but on the next few pages are some photos highlighting what was going on during the day.



The camper heading to the Fair was seat deep in essentials for our first ever Fair! 200 goody bags had to be filled with freebies, special Golden Age Fair banners were made to hang on the hall, and boxes of sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee were piled in the back. This being our first Fair we did not know whether we would be expecting 30 or 300 guests, so we came prepared.

Right- Chair of the Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project Sally Fogden outside shortly after the opening of the Fair. Sally was hard at work all day in the kitchen serving up the free refreshments, making tea and coffee and clearing tables along with the superstar Women's Institute team from Woolpit. Also pictured, Kerri Leach from Forest Heath District Council. She is taking a peek because if these Fairs become successful we will, of course be doing one in the Forest Heath Area.





Some agencies exhibited outside the hall from the vehicles they use to deliver their services. Pictured left is the eye catching stand from Suffolk Circle. They managed to sign up 3 new members on the day and take details for 2 possible others.

The Maintenance team from Orbit Handy Help were displaying their mobile maintenance handy help service van. They advised many people of their subsidised handyman scheme and soon after the fair 3 houses in Woolpit were visited by the scheme.



The mobile Digital Switchover unit equipped with technology and advisers was helping everybody with advice and literature about the upcoming Digital Switchover in South Suffolk.

Of course we were present with our campervan to enable an outdoor seating area. Many people browsed through all of our info during the day and brought their refreshments outside to enjoy the gorgeous spring sunshine.





Live singing was provided from the "Keep On Rocking" singers from the Town And Bridge Project based In the Stoke and Bridge wards of Ipswich.

Members of the Gipping Valley Model Boat club brought along 20 highly detailed working model boats. Their makers were happy to chat to visitors about their hobby and reported that the boat provoked many memories.



The Woolpit Health Centre stand was packed all day and provided 40 mini health checks to visitors including blood pressure checks as pictured on the left. They also provided advice on the best way of storing and taking prescription medication.



Above on the right, the British Heart Foundation stand at the Fair. 20 people took their free magazine with a view to subscribing and details were taken from 2 other people to provide them specialised information.



A very busy day with lots of organisations offering their services to Rural Suffolk.

Numbers

210 visitors

32 organisations present

175 free goody bags given away

268 people linked in on the day and as a result of post fair appointments

12 Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project staff and volunteers

1 very relieved Project Manager!

Right

The Suffolk Hearing Support Service was overwhelmed by the hard of hearing.

30 peoples details were taken and added to database.

Around 20 of these had a hearing aid cleaned.

1 gentleman received support after event for concerns he had about hospital matters.

Below

Financial and consumer advice on offer too from the CAB and ISCU.

Census 2011 and Trading Standards were there too.





Above. Chair Based Exercise taster lessons took place in a side room, and a wheelchair bound lady signs up for the invaluable and free Suffolk Library at Home Service.



Free refreshments served all day by our wonderful volunteers and the Woolpit Women’s Institute. And a table full of adaptive aids was here to help the blind and partially sighted. This was provided by the West Suffolk Voluntary Association For The Blind.



Meanwhile, elsewhere in the county



Prior to the Digital Switchover in south Suffolk Garry has been out and about conducting special drop-in mornings, and doing informative presentations regarding all aspects of the switchover. Here in Westleton they asked lots of questions after the session and asked him back for another visit later to inform other visitors.

More stunning pics of Suffolk, this is a July Sunset near Norton.



Success after Stroke Clubs are run across the region by the Stroke Association and other groups. We attended the one at Hartismere Hospital and the club members (referring to themselves as "S Club") browsed the information and listened to a talk about services in Suffolk from Garry. They also made Easter bonnets and decorated egg shaped gingerbread biscuits.



More pictures of our exceptionally early (and pretty) summer taken on the travels of the Coffee Caravan.

Below- our first visit to Barton Mills, as a rest stop for voters at the local elections!

Right- Redgrave has a recently opened community shop. It is tiny but well stocked and also sells locally grown vegetables.



The shop at Redgrave had a free community tasting day for the village. This aimed to make more villagers aware of what it sells and raise its profile, until recently there was no shop, Thanks to some lottery funding for rural communities this has re-opened in a tiny part of the original old shop from years ago.



Below left- The early summer saw Mid Suffolk in a drought with many farmers and rural communities worried, here the village pond has totally dried up and cracked! Below right- The Ashbocking meetings continue on a monthly basis in a resident's garden as they have no hall or village green.



More Digital Switchover information with us at the Suffolk Show! Below the Project Officer Garry recruits his nephew who helps out in the best way he can by sitting there looking cute!



At our first visit to Cavenham and their award winning village green. Many mums and tots were about and lots of them took info for children, such as car seat safety guides, Primary Times school magazine, Parentline, healthy eating kids' recipe books etc. Right- Sarah one of our volunteers hands out the cakes.