



Hello members,

Firstly, a Happy Christmas and New Year to you all from the Committee. Included in this last newsletter for 2019, there is an update on group activities from January, information on the first two trips for next year, and a report on both the trip to the Tower of London and the Christmas Lunch trip to Faversham and Canterbury.

Now could we make a plea for volunteers to help set up Repton Hall for coffee mornings? If you feel that you could offer your services, please contact Christine Heather, who has been good enough to take on the role of co-ordinating this task, either by email: u3acoordinatorashford@gmail.com, or come and find her at a coffee morning, she will be very pleased to hear from you!

Spread the Word

Our U3A has been growing steadily over the years, but there is still room for more, so please tell your friends and family about our organisation and how fabulous it is.

A LITTLE HOUSEKEEPING

The current fee for annual membership is £20, but there are still a number of members who have not updated the standing order with their bank from £15 to £20. Could we please ask all who pay by this method to check and make sure that they are paying the correct amount. Also, if your contact details have changed, please advise the Membership Secretary. If you were previously receiving communications by post and now have an email address it is important to tell us to avoid the unnecessary expense of printing and posting newsletters to you.

Programme Update January to April 2020

Every member has a printed copy of the main Programme booklet for the year. Members should continue to refer to this as the Master Document. Where there are changes, updates or courses about to commence, these are listed below.

NB Where there is a course fee, members should make a cheque payable to "U3A Ashford, Wye and District" and send it to Marion Dinwoodie, 14 Hither Field, Charing, Ashford, TN27 0HZ. This should be paid in a timely way at the beginning of the term. Members should make clear the course for which they are paying.

In this update, I draw your attention to the Dickens course which this year will focus on "Bleak House". I am pleased to inform you also that the Table Tennis group is now up and running and would welcome new members; no previous experience is required. There is the potential to start up a new Art Group as one of our members has offered to run this at her home on Friday mornings.

Arts and Literature

U3A Art

This course runs all year round (except Christmas) on a weekly basis, divided into terms of 17 weeks.

Course Leader: Ursula Peters (01233 331583)

Venue: Iron Room (Village Hall) Boughton Aluph

Dates: Weekly on Thursdays starting on 2 January and runs to 23 April.

Time: 9.00am to 12.00 noon

Course Fee: £17

Possible Friday Art Group

Members are invited to consider coming to start up a small Art Group on Friday mornings.

Whatever stage you are at, please contact Maureen Leather if you are interested.

Course Leader: Maureen Leather (01233 713561)

Venue: Charing

Dates: Fridays

Time: 10.00am to 12.00 noon

Play Reading

This group continues to meet on the last Monday of each month (other than when it falls on a Bank Holiday). The group has fun, please consider having a go. Knowing the number of males and females we will have next term will make it easier for Maureen to source the right plays.

Course Leader: Maureen Andrews (01233 632317 or maureen.grassals@outlook.com)

Venue: Ashford Community Church Hall, Francis Road, Ashford, TN23 7UR

Date: Last Monday of each month (other than when it falls on a Bank Holiday when it is brought forward one week). The winter term (term 2 of this course) will run for five months starting on 27 January and continuing until 18 May.

Time: 2.00 to 4.00pm

Course Fee: £15.

Singing for Pleasure Choir

This group continues to go from strength to strength, attracting new members and performing to a number of groups, including outside the U3A.

Course Leader: Wendy Heaton (01233 631770 or wendyheaton@talktalk.net)

Venue: Ashford Community Church Hall, Francis Road, Ashford, TN23 7UR.

Dates: The new term will start 10 January and will run for 10 weeks.

Time: 2.00 to 3.00pm

Course Fee: £10

Dickens

John Ingram will run a six week course. This term the focus will be "Bleak House", using the Penguin Classics edition, edited by Nicola Bradbury. Please read all, or at least most, of the book before the start of the course.

Course Leader: John Ingram NB If you are interested in registering for this course please contact David Mann (01233 623051 or davidmann.u3a@gmail.com)

Venue: Kennington

Dates: Tuesdays, 10, 17, 24 and 31 March and 7 and 14 April

Time: 2.30 to 4.30pm

Course Fee: Members will share expenses; David Mann will determine this when numbers are known.

Practical Courses

Yogafit

This group will continue next term. It is extremely popular: places are limited and registration will be on a first come, first served basis. If anyone would like to volunteer to run an additional group, or knows someone who would, please let Marion Dinwoodie know.

Course Leader: Katherine O'Donovan (kathodon@hotmail.com): please contact Marion Dinwoodie for registration purposes

Venue: The Iron Room, Boughton Aluph

Dates: Mondays, there will be 11 sessions starting 6 January and running to 30 March. There will be no class on 27 January or 17 February.

Time: 10.00 to 11.00am.

Course Fee: £22

Possible Yoga Group

Members are invited to consider coming to start up a new Yoga Group on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday mornings. This would be suitable for beginners. Please contact Lorna Tierney if you are interested so that Lorna can assess the viability of the course.

Course Leader: Lorna Tierney (07854 062035 or contact@ashfordyoga.co.uk)

Venue: tbc

Dates: Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, tbc

Time: mornings, tbc

Course Fee: tbc

Guitar Chords

This course runs every year in the winter term. You will need an acoustic guitar but no previous knowledge. Participants will learn at their own pace within the group and have ample time to practise what they learn between sessions. This is a fun group and new members would be welcomed. Please contact Janine Hardwick in advance.

Course Leader: Janine Hardwick (07890 426291 or janinehardwick2@gmail.com)

Venue: Wye Methodist Church, upstairs in the Thomas Hall, 124 Bridge Street, Wye, TN25 5DP.

Dates: Fridays for 12 weeks starting 10 January and running to 27 March.

Time: 5.00 to 6.30pm

Course Fee: £36

Computer Share and Learn

When there are no family members or work colleagues to ask, technology can be daunting. The idea is that members of the group will share their knowledge. Members should bring their own laptop, tablet or mobile phone to achieve something they would like to try. For new members there should be equipment available.

Course Leader: Janine Hardwick (07890 426291 or janinehardwick2@gmail.com)

Venue: Tesco, Crooksfoot in Willesborough (back right of the stairs by the lift or the stairs)

Dates: Mondays on specific dates between March and June: 30 March, 6, 20 and 27 April, 11 May and 1 June.

Time: 6.00 to 7.30pm

Games of Skill

Bridge

This group will continue to meet on Mondays in the winter term.

Course Leader: David Harper (01233 813534)

Venue: Wye Methodist Church,

Dates: Every Monday from 6 January to 9 March

Time: 2.30 to 4.30pm

Course Fee: £10

Golf

This course is for those members who would like to have lessons by a professional on a group basis. The initial six week course was so popular that members are now continuing the group on almost a rolling basis of blocks of six lessons at a time. The current six week course has been arranged for three weeks in December and three weeks in January.

Course Leader: Steve Herron (07583 841788)

Venue: Ashford Golf Club, Sandyhurst Lane, Ashford, TN25 4NT

Dates: Thursdays, six weeks at a time.

Time: The usual time of 1.00 to 2.00pm has been brought forward due to the clock changing, please check with the course leader for more details.

Course Fee: £30 per six week course

Table Tennis

The Table Tennis group has got off to a good start with a nucleus group of members. There are four tables available which will allow us to grow the numbers: people who have never played before will be welcomed. Coffee and tea facilities are available when playing is finished. The more who join, the social benefit of the group will be improved and the share of the costs in future terms will make the course fee per person cheaper. Graham Deal is keen to hear from members who would be interested.

Course Leader: Graham Deal (07990 581955 or grahamtdeal@gmail.com)
Venue: Repton Connect Community Centre, Repton Avenue, Ashford, TN23 3RX
Dates: Tuesdays for ten weeks from 7 January to 10 March.
Time: 09.45 to 11.30am
Course Fee: £29

The World Around Us

Walking Groups

Wednesday Group

Course Leader: Judy Hargroves (01233 811628)
Venue: Various
Dates: First Wednesday of every month except January when it will take place on 8 January
Time: 10.00am

Thursday Group

Course Leader: Ann Mumford (01233 633551)
Venue: various
Dates: Third Thursday of every month, March to October
Time: 10.00am

Languages

Spanish Conversation

This group is for both beginners and those continuing to improve their Spanish speaking. Members read Spanish stories, listen to CDs, go through some exercises and have conversations. Please contact Maureen Leather to discuss what you would like to achieve from attending.
Course Leader: Maureen Leather (01233 713561)
Venue: Charing
Dates: Thursdays, for six weeks starting 9 January
Time: 6.00 to 8.00pm

Advanced French Conversation

A group of members meet regularly to speak French and to help each other to improve their language skills.
Course Leader: Beverley Jarvis (01233 663344)
Venue: mostly at Great Chilmington Farm House, Chilmington Green, Ashford, TN23 4DP
Dates: Every other Wednesday afternoon: the first session of the new year will be Thursday 2 January following which it will revert to Wednesdays from 15 January.
Time: 2.00 to 3.30pm

Suggestions for more courses

It is always good to keep our Programme dynamic and varied. If anyone would be interested in setting up course in any one of our current topics or new ones, or if you know someone who would, then please contact: Marion Dinwoodie, Programme Manager (01233 712228) or mariondinwoodie.u3a@gmail.com)

Mugs & Muffins!
Wednesday 5th February 2020, at the Scout Hall



In February this year, a 'Mugs and Muffins' (tea, coffee and cake) morning, was held to which members who had joined during the past year were invited. This event was a great success and will be repeated on Wednesday 5th February 2020. Some of the Group Leaders and members of the committee will be present to explain the background and ethos of the U3A, with information

on groups you may wish to join and discuss ways in which we can all help to make our U3A even better.

Invitation letters will be sent out to new members in early January, and we very much look forward to meeting you, so please save the date!

BACKSTAGE TOUR OF THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE APRIL 2020

It is still not possible for us to issue a booking form for this trip at the present time and we do not anticipate being able to do so until early in 2020.

This is because the Royal Opera House only releases dates for tours a couple of months in advance.

As soon as we are in a position to do so the booking form will appear on the website and will be available at coffee mornings. Keep watching the website!

Carol Clay
Day Trips Organiser

Christmas Trip to Faversham and Canterbury Cathedral On Tuesday 3rd December 2019

The weather felt absolutely right for a Christmas trip when we boarded the coach – cold, frosty, clear and sunny. We arrived in Faversham at approximately 10.45am and had coffee at our lunch venue, the Sun Inn, in the centre of Faversham. After this, those who wanted to take advantage of wandering around the historic and very attractive town could do so while others ordered more coffee and enjoyed the roaring fire in the Sun Inn. There are many quirky little shops and the market to explore which brought us up to lunch time.

We had reserved the lower floor so that we could all enjoy a meal together. The food was excellent and the service friendly so by the time we had to re-join the coach for our short journey into Canterbury we were feeling full and happy – and fighting hard not to nod off!

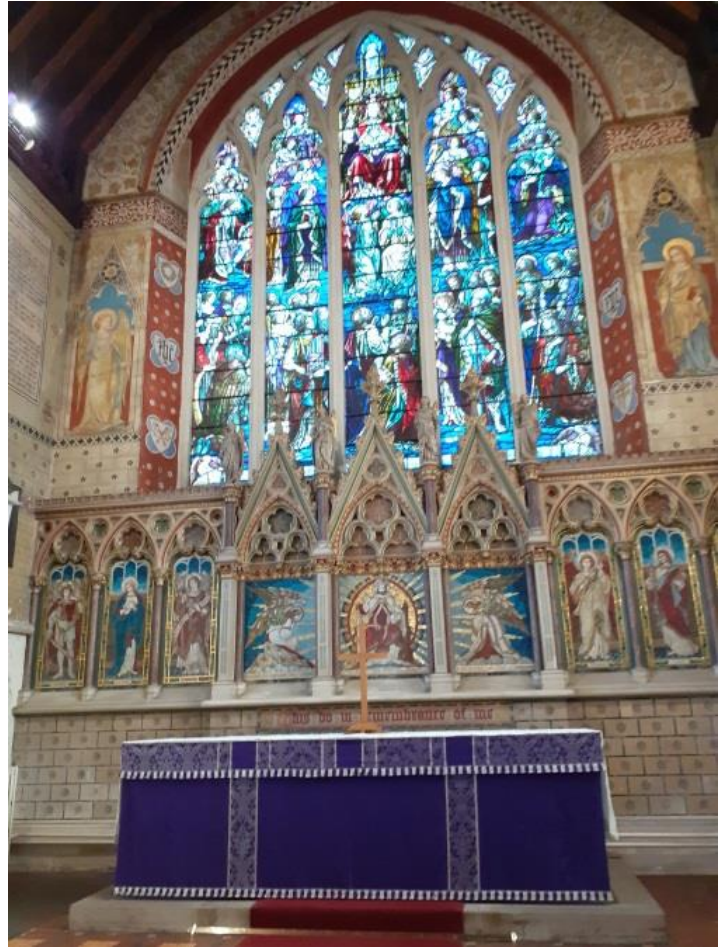
*Lunch underway at the Sun Inn
Faversham*



We were dropped at the bus station and had ample time on our walk up to the Cathedral to enjoy the Christmas lights and even to do a bit of last minute shopping. The Cathedral is, unfortunately, still covered in scaffolding and has been for some time. Nevertheless, there is a stunning lighted tree and a full scale nativity scene to welcome you into the grounds. Inside the Cathedral there are more lighted trees and it felt warm and welcoming.

We attended an Advent themed Evensong and I'm sure that everyone will agree that the choral singing was superb. It was a wonderful opportunity to absorb the atmosphere of the Cathedral and to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

Another walk through the City's Christmas lights brought us back to our coach and the return to Wye and Ashford. A thoroughly enjoyable start to the Christmas season.



Visit to the Tower of London on Wednesday 11th September

We arrived in good time, thanks to the driver's extensive knowledge of the back streets, so managing to miss the worst of the traffic jams as we got nearer to the city.

After the journey my first thought was coffee, after which I headed straight for the Jewel House to see the Crown Jewels, being my primary reason for coming on the trip, and I was not disappointed. They dazzled and sparkled in the display cabinets and included The Sovereign's Orb, the Sovereign's Sceptre and Sir Edwards Crown, which Queen Elizabeth II wore at her coronation and the magnificent Imperial State Crown. The guide book tells us that in 1669 visitors were allowed to touch the jewels after handing a small donation to the Jewel House Keeper – needless to say they are now protected by plate glass, thick steel doors and a warder keeping a beady eye on everyone and telling off any visitor trying to sneak a photograph!



The famous White Tower, built as a royal fortress in the 1070's, now contains breath-taking displays of arms and armour, some on life sized wooden horses to illustrate English history through mounted figures of important monarchs.

It was a surprise to learn that there used to be a menagerie at the Tower, which started when medieval monarchs exchanged rare and strange animals as gifts. In 1235, Henry III was presented with three wildcats by the holy Roman Emperor Frederick II; these inspired the King to start a zoo at the Tower.

There are no animals today, but they are represented by some life sized models made from wire, including an elephant, polar bear and monkeys. There are, of course, the famous Tower ravens that strut about having their photographs taken and attempt to steal children's lunches!



I visited the Medieval Palace, which was presented to give a glimpse of life during the reigns of Henry III and his son Edward I. This residential area was richly decorated and grand enough for any medieval monarch, giving a vivid picture of 13th century life.

I managed to catch most of one of the Yeoman Warder's famous guided tours; he told us lots of interesting facts, interspersed with a few bad jokes!

There was so much of interest to see and learn, I shall definitely pay a return visit at some time in the future and can recommend it to anyone interested in our history.



U3A Ashford, Wye & District

Visit to Arundel Castle on Tuesday 16th June 2020

Arundel Castle is situated in magnificent grounds overlooking the River Arun in West Sussex and was built at the end of the 11th century by Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Arundel.

We will have Gold Ticket access, which means we are able to visit everything bar the bedrooms.

We will be able to wander around at our leisure and there are guides in each room to answer questions. The gardens are a delight whether you are enjoying the tranquillity of the Rose Garden or the quirky design of the Stumpery.

You can also explore the shops, galleries and streets of historic Arundel town which is only 500m from the Castle's gate and re-enter on your ticket as many times during the day as you like.

The Coffee Shop in the Old Kitchen serves hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, cakes and scones etc. while the licensed restaurant in the Castle Servants' Hall serves hearty lunches and light meals.

Total cost for the day is £35.00

All monies are non-refundable

The coach will pick up from Wye Church at 7.45am and Ashford Rugby Club at 8.00am.

We will leave Arundel at 4pm.

Booking forms for Visits in 2020

Visit to Arundel Castle on Tuesday 16th June 2020

Booking forms to: Mrs Teresa Clark (U3A Trips), 2 Dragonfly Close, Ashford TN23 5GH

Tel: 01233 639375 (between 5 and 6pm)

Carol Clay Home: 01233 623732 mobile: 07721 850913

NAME(S) (CAPITALS) 1.....

2.....

Tel..... E-mail.....

I will get on at: Wye at 07.45 / Ashford at 08.00 Please ring your choice.

I attach a cheque made out to U3A Ashford, Wye & District for £35.00 per person.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

PLEASE NOTE THAT TRIPS ARE OPEN TO MEMBERS ONLY, UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE

If you want confirmation by post, please include a stamped addressed envelope or give an e-mail address to get a confirmation of a place booked.