



September 2022

www.u3asites.org.uk/Ashford-Wye

Registered charity number 1172873

Judges choose winning photos



Alan Cross takes first prize of £50 for his photograph of the u3a choir



Second place wins a £30 prize for Malcolm Jarvis – the French Conversation group photo was taken using an Apple iPhone 11

FOUR judges had the challenging task of choosing the top photographs from the 46 entries in the 2022 Photographic Competition open to all the u3a district members.

Narrowing it down to three winners was not an easy task but the judges felt the ones chosen reflected the ethos of the organisation, Live, Laugh and Learn. Judges were Barry and Maureen Andrews, Carol Clay and Clive Wren.

Thanking participants for their valiant efforts they wish them all the best for the next competition.

Additionally, entries will be added to a library of up-to-date photos for use on our website <https://u3a.sites.org.uk/ashford-wye/groups> and for general publicity purposes.



Submitted by Astra West, the photograph of the Yoga Fit group takes the third prize of £20

"The Third Age Trust and Members of this u3a Branch pay our deepest respects to Queen Elizabeth II. Our thoughts are with her family and those close to her at this time. Her integrity, strength, public spirit and belief in the unifying force of living and working together will be missed by us all."

Ashford, Wye & District u3a –committee members

Chairman – Barry Andrews	Vice Chairman Carol Clay
Treasurer - Richard Wadey	Business Secretary Maureen Andrews
Membership Secretary - Aileen Dickson	Programme Manager - Bernie Rogers
Systems/website administrator (SA) Clive Wren	Newsletter Co-ordinator – Adrienne Lowing
Speaker Secretary Tina Holden (From March)	Trips Liaison – Ieda Hogarth

Looking ahead to a bright future – *chairman*

The way our monthly Coffee Mornings have become re-established and really well attended is amazing and very comforting.

Although much of what we previously called “normal” had to change or be considered differently, the new Programme of Speakers for monthly meetings is again covering a wide range of interesting subjects.

Anne Fuggle, who arranged the programme for three years, engaged very interesting speakers and I want to pay tribute to her for liaising with speakers and making them feel welcome.

Tina Holden, who has taken over from Anne, has arranged the subjects in the latest printed Trifold programme and we look forward to enjoying the programme over the next year. The 12th Anniversary

Tea on October 13 (*more details on page 4*) will celebrate the founding of this Branch of the u3a and coincides with the 40th Anniversary of the inauguration of the national organisation. There are still tickets available for our local event which includes afternoon tea, entertainment and some surprises.

The 120 tickets are going quickly. To book send your name and address with a cheque for £5 (payable to u3a Ashford, Wye & District) to me c/o Repton Community Centre, Repton Avenue, Ashford, TN23 3RX and I will send you tickets. Tickets also available at the next Coffee Morning on September 28. Don't miss out on this joint Anniversary Celebration and come along for an enjoyable afternoon.

Barry Andrews

Learning and laughter added

Tina Holden, (pictured) the new Speaker Secretary, continues the tradition of offering varied and interesting subjects to entertain and inform members attending the monthly Coffee Mornings at Repton Park Community Centre. Choices include the eccentricities of the speaker Christine



Adams' Auntie May and valuable insights from Gaye Illsley on Lasting Power of Attorney.

Solving payments made to branch bank account in error

As in previous years, our Treasurer and Membership Secretary have spent a great deal of time identifying and refunding double-payments of membership fees. Sometimes because a member has made duplicate bank transfers by mistake, A notice sent out in September 2021 stated subscriptions would be paid/received on June 1 instead of previous December 1. Some members are still paying in December and may also try to pay again in June. In future, we will assume each member is taking responsibility for monitoring their standing orders and bank statements.

Members who realise they have made an erroneous payment are welcome to contact the treasurer to claim reimbursement. But if a member makes a double payment and does not report it we will treat the second payment as a donation. This new approach will save our branch officers a substantial amount of work.

Hearing Loop

Thanks to the grant which this Branch gave to the Trustees of Repton Community Centre, the Hearing Loop has been moved and is finally working. Members with hearing problems can link into the Loop and reports from members so far have been very grateful that it is now available. The Trustees have also expressed appreciation for our help.

Seize the chance to “Come & See What We Do”

This informative and entertaining event is taking the place of our usual Coffee Morning on September 28.

It has been created as a free open meeting to provide both u3a members and the public with the opportunity to see what Activity Groups we have to offer.

There will also be entertainment provided by two established performing groups.

The event will be open from 9.30am and refreshments will be available from 10am. Between 10.30am and 11.30am, the performers will take to the stage, the event will end at 12.30 pm.

The Singing for Pleasure group will be providing a musical interlude for the audience between 10.30am and 11.00am.

This will be followed by the Play Reading group entertaining with amusing and dramatic sketches. Obviously, it is not possible to have a play of 30 minutes duration (I don't have the time to write another 'Tailor-Made' one sadly!) Also I want all my group members to have the opportunity to take part in the actual performance.

There will also be an art exhibition highlighting the talented results created by members of the art group. There will also be an art exhibition highlighting the talented results created by members of the art groups.

We are all looking forward to it very much and hopefully our Membership and any guests will find something of interest to enjoy and maybe even join any of the Groups.

Maureen Andrews

And another celebration to look forward to on October 13 – our super double anniversary tea. See details on page 4.

Group leaders rewarded for their efforts

As a thank you for their dedication and effort, group leaders were treated as guests of honour at a celebration tea at Godinton House.

The event was extended to other helpers who support the smooth running of Branch events including the Refreshment Team, Meet & Greet Team and members of the Branch Committee.

Although August 3 was one of the hottest days in the heatwave, the 42 guests of honour managed to meet

and greet each other in pockets of shade among the glories of the gardens. Fortunately, the historic grandeur of the building where they enjoyed a delicious cream and strawberry tea later brought cool respite from the record temperatures outside.

It was not a case of all play and no work as the event included a short discussion conducted by chairman Barry Andrews.



At Godinton House - Chairman Barry Andrews (centre) with group leaders and helpers

Celebrating 12 years of our u3a

AS this year marks the 40th Anniversary of the launch of the u3a nationally and is also the 12th Anniversary of this branch, we are holding a Celebratory Tea for members, at the Repton Community Centre, starting promptly at 2.30pm. We will be welcoming Ashford Mayor Jenny Webb, a great supporter of the u3a movement. As well as a tea prepared by the WI, there will be entertainment. Magician Joss King will perform while guests are seated at tables during refreshments, followed by the East Kent Chorus, singing well known songs in close harmony.

Places are restricted, so make your booking today, or at the September 28 Coffee Morning; we are asking for £5 to secure your place.

If you are unable to attend a Coffee Morning and want to book a place please send your name and address and a cheque for £5 (payable to u3a Ashford, Wye & District) to me at, Repton Community Centre, Repton Avenue, Ashford, Kent, TN23 3RX, and I will send you a ticket.

Barry Andrews

New travel link opens more horizons

A new association between Ashford, Wye & District u3a and a company specialising in group travel offers a wide range of opportunities for day excursions and short breaks.

U3a member Ieda Hogarth is the committee's Trips Liaison person representing members in this new link with 'REAL Socialising'.

REAL Socialising is run by Viv Kenny, who started organising opportunities for travel across the UK and Europe 10 years ago. As well as having her own membership group, she also supports other groups and clubs including active retirement associations, local WI members and now u3a members. Viv aims to keep costs as low as possible, passing on group rate savings. Single supplements are usually very reasonable and, in some cases, supplement-free. Coach pick-ups are limited so more time is spent at the destination rather than making multiple stops before the journey even begins.

Although the trips programme is shared with other groups of like-minded travellers, the first outing offered will be exclusive to local u3a members. (see panel on right). A monthly online newsletter highlights future travel opportunities. Bookings can be made online at www.realsocialising.co.uk or by email to yiv@realsocialising.co.uk. You can also liaise with Ieda at the monthly Coffee Mornings at Repton Connect. For members without online access, Viv says she is happy to take calls to her mobile - weekdays, between 9am to 5pm, on 07773 946828.

Viv is always open to new suggestions of places to visit. She will be attending the "Come and See What We Do event" on September 28 to answer any queries about the new system.

A designated u3a day trip to Winchester Cathedral's Christmas Market is planned for December 4, with an optional festive lunch at the Mercure Winchester Wessex Hotel. Chalets are arranged in the Cathedral Close around an ice rink. A vintage and retro market also takes place that day. Any booking by September 30 will receive a complimentary glass of wine with their meal.

Membership is on the up

Among the many great reasons for our 12th anniversary tea on October 13 is the fantastic news that we are continuing to attract new members. There has been an increase of 10 in recent months to a total of 321.

Ahoy for naval history

The Mainly Men Group is now back in operation with plans for a trip to Chatham Historic Dockyard on October 20, 2022.

We will be visiting the submarine HMS Ocelot and HMS Cavalier plus the exhibition on the recovery of the wreck of the HMS Invincible. This was a captured French man-of-war and strongly influenced the design of British ships in the following years.

The normal cost is £18.75 but we are hoping to get a discount as a group. Anyone interested please contact **Andy Sheerman-Chase** at andrew.sheerman-chase@virgin.net

Yoga Fit

September 12 started a run of 12 weekly sessions for existing members. We did not have sessions in August but some members met up for coffee; it is enjoyable to have sociable get togethers as well. With 12 in the group we are at our maximum number.

Astra West

Gardens take members back in time

Perfect weather has attended all the garden outings so far this year. There was plenty of variety in the venues to help group members gain more inspiration for their own gardening projects. The outstanding results of professional gardening were viewed at Doddington Place, near Faversham; Great Dixter; Restoration House, Rochester and historic Walmer Castle. At Restoration House and Walmer Castle, members had a chance to step into the past on guided tours of the historic buildings which are the backdrop to magnificent landscaping. The final outing of 2022 is a visit to Sissinghurst at the end of September. It is not only outings which bring group members together - with dates for informal meetups organised at garden centre cafes in Ashford.



Plant happy gardening group

Getting a better grip on mobile phones

The idea of a smartphone seminar was so successful that the person behind the idea – Richard Wadey – had to run two events with co-presenter John Whybrow. The benefits gained are obvious in the wealth of positive comments from members who were lucky enough to get tickets. Overall the comments showed no one was disappointed and overall found the seminar “very useful”. One comment described the two tutors as “SO patient”.
* I picked up useful tips and think the idea about having a help group is a good one.

* It covered a considerable amount of useful information in a handout. It was also useful to hear from members’ experiences, especially the “Missing Manual Series” of books available from Waterstones, and the “Helpful” books advertised in TAM. As Richard created the concept in addition to his already very busy role as Treasurer he has had to firmly turn down requests for another seminar. However, he suggested members of the group could take the initiative in forming a self-help group.

Friendship and good food add up to Sunday treat



Members of the Weekenders group enjoy the sunshine after lunch at Singleton Environment Centre in July

The Sunday lunches for those who live on their own are back to their monthly regularity. Groups of between 10 and 15 members have visited the Pilot Inn at Dungeness, Singleton Environment Centre, Everest Inn and The New Fox Inn. There is a welcome for anyone else who likes the idea of a meal out with no shopping, no cooking and no clearing up afterwards.

Sylvia Millard

Choir brings pleasure to first audience

Following a very productive year, the Singing for Pleasure Choir staged their first full-length concert to a packed audience of friends and family in July. There was music to suit all tastes, from the 1972 classic 'I Can See Clearly Now' to the stage song 'Gonna Build a Mountain', as well as lesser known but equally listenable songs from around the world. The prize for best-dressed section had to go to the basses who were impeccably turned out in white shirts and matching bow ties. The Refreshment Team organised a delicious spread for everyone to enjoy during the interval. This very successful evening enjoyed by choir and audience alike managed to raise over £200 in our collection for local charity Find a Voice.

Wendy Heaton



Singing for Pleasure choir at their first concert

No need to wait for new group – start up your own

Members of Ashford & Wye u3a are obviously keen readers! The THREE existing book groups are so popular that we need another group to accommodate those who are keen to widen literature horizons. To solve this problem what is needed is a volunteer prepared to start up a fourth **Book Group**. Additionally, we would like to hear from a volunteer who would like to start up a **StrollersGroup**. We have two Walking groups but some members cannot manage the distance and/or the pace. Therefore, it would be good to have a new Group for those who would just like to go for a shorter walk at a slower pace.

Please contact Bernie Rogers (Programme Manager) if you are able to start up one of these groups.

Bernie Rogers, Programme Manager

Last but not least



Although the photo is not in the top three, we could not resist highly commending this entry in the photographic competition – also taken by third place competition winner Astra West – which we have titled - “And bringing up the rear”.

New group alert

E-BIKERS - why not join me on one of my favourite rides, mainly on quiet roads and bridleways. I plan two hours cycling plus a coffee stop – for example Wye to Canterbury on NCR 18; Westwell to Lenham along the North Downs Way or the Crab and Winkle Way from Canterbury to Whitstable. All these involve some off-road sections but are easily completed on an E-bike. For more details text or phone Richard on 07789 536074 or email richard.blackford@yahoo.co.uk.

Ageing without Children

A new East Kent local group of AWOC (Ageing without Children) is starting. AWOC is about providing mutual support, information and influencing for those “ageing without children”, either because they did not have children or for other reasons. Afternoon meetings are planned to start monthly in the autumn at a central venue in Canterbury. To join the mailing list and get notified of meetings, please email Penny at awoceastkent@gmail.com or phone 07904 333019. We are also looking for more steering group members.

The information above comes from Shepway u3a member Penny Shepherd, who felt it would be of interest to Ashford members. Penny is on the steering group of AWOC East Kent. More at www.awoc.org.uk.