



August 2023

www.u3asites.org.uk/Ashford-Wye

Registered charity number 1172873

Chairman's Message

Well, what a difference a day makes; One day I am doing my usual activities, the next morning I wake up with the most excruciating pain I have ever experienced in my spine, caused by a disease called Discitis, where a relatively minor blood infection mutated into a near fatal one very rapidly. Following a spell in Hospital, and now a twelve week course of daily infusions of strong antibiotics, I am pleased, and very delighted to say, that I am making good progress towards recovery. I would like to say how grateful I am to the Microbiologists, Doctors, Nurses and the "Hospital at Home" Team for bringing me through to this point in my care. Maureen is the most dedicated "Wife/Nurse/u3a Secretary" I could have been blessed to marry. I must also thank our Vice-Chair Carol and all the enthusiastic and hard working Committee, for keeping me up-to-date, and everything ticking over in my absence, and to all the kind Members who have sent me "Get Well" Messages by card, email or telephone, which I have really appreciated. I do look forward to re-joining you all, in the not too distant future, at a Coffee Morning.

That leads me on to say what a great variety of subjects the Coffee Morning Speakers cover and, looking at the list of Subjects Tina has arranged for the months to come, I am sure you won't be disappointed. Anne Alexander has worked hard to produce this latest Newsletter, despite there being a lack of much material to include. All Members are entitled, and encouraged, to send Anne any contributions they feel would be of interest to the whole Membership, especially reports of the many Activity Groups, which might just encourage some to think about looking for a new or different Activity to join. The 2023/24 Programme, which Wendy has up-dated, and the yearly Tri Fold list of Speakers will be posted out very shortly. Despite being unwell herself, thanks are due to Aileen, the Membership Secretary, who has been handling the continuing increase in Membership, which is very comforting. Richard, our Treasurer, and his Volunteer Finance Assistant, Christine Heather, have been keeping us on a very steady financial path towards a health balanced account for the year. I never cease to be amazed at the ease with which Clive, our Web Master, solves every computing problem which any of us present him with, and can always find a solution one way or another. Many thanks to **all** the Committee who are working tirelessly, behind the scenes, on behalf of the Membership.

Darryl

'Have you remembered to renew your subscription? It is due now! Please contact the Membership Secretary if you require more details.'

What have we been up to?

ART 1

Our group is going from strength to strength. We came together in the Iron Room 11 years ago with just a few members, others joined and even now new amateur artists are finding our group very inclusive and encouraging. We have some very advanced artists and some that haven't touched a brush since school. Every medium is used as we are learning from and encourage each other.

We have made plans of going for lunch in a local pub after our painting session. Also visits to art galleries in the south of England and London are planned.

CARD CRAFTING

Meetings remain as before with the exception that Maureen has added another session due to the popularity of this group, these are now held on the same day but as morning and afternoon sessions. Spaces are still available for the morning session, which is designed more for those new to crafting with more 'learning' available. If you would like further information

about joining they can ring me on 01233 632317 or email on maureen.grassals@outlook.com

PLAY READING

The only change to this group is that Carol Clay will now be leading this group, thank you Carol. Everything remains the same.

WALKING WEDESNESEDAYS

Our Wednesday group walk for August was from the Conningbrook pub. We were a slightly smaller group than usual due other commitments plus the prospect of poor weather. The weather forecast was dire but it was mainly dry, windy, sunny and bright. Typical British summertime but great for walking.

We left from the pub and walked through Little Burton, under the M20 and into the Queen Mothers Park. This is a very tranquil place with lots of places to stop and rest and watch the wildlife. There are some lovely wood sculptures that have made use of old trees.



Going on into Martyrs field we then walked along Hythe Road for a short distance before turning back to cross the motorway again. The views here are brilliant, although a bit noisy! We then went through a short piece of woodland then across the field to the Willesborough Road.

After a short walk along the road, spotting a beautiful family of swans on the Stour, we reached the Conningbrook Lakes Country Park.



A welcome stop for a snack sitting in one of the shelters we managed to miss the rain. We walked around the lakes enjoying the peace and quiet as well as lovely views.

After meeting up with the Stour again we continued past the new housing already occupied. The footpath is still maintained and we crossed the field, with crops ready to harvest, and made it back to the pub for some refreshments and more conversation.

It is a very good walk, just over 5 miles, with lots of different interesting areas to see which everyone enjoyed.

WEEKENDERS

The group leader of this group is now Malcolm Finch. If you are interested in joining this group or would like more information his details are,
email: mw.finch@zen.co.uk
Tel. 07793222182.

GROUP UPDATES

Classical Guitar

Stuart would like to put together a classical guitar group to meet at his home initially. Enthusiasm over great skill welcome too. If you play a little at home, why not join a group playing small trio and quartet pieces?

Nature Study

Robert would be willing to start a Nature Study group[(birds and plants). To meet initially at Finberry to explore the ecology of the area.

More details to follow, if you are interested in becoming a member of either group please register your interest with Wendy, our Programme Manager.

Great News

An IT support group is starting in September, exclusively for U3A members to 'drop-in' and get help and advice on any IT related matters. An email will be sent out shortly detailing this.

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The art of Socialising for REAL!

Interest in participating in days out and short breaks is growing thanks to our association with local travel club 'REAL Socialising'.

Viv Kenny who has run the 'REAL Socialising' travel club for 10 years, attends the monthly U3A meetings when she can and if not, is always available to answer questions and queries about trips via email, viv@realsocialising.co.uk

There is no cost to join the travel club and members are welcome to attend any of the trips on offer, either as a solo traveller or with fellow U3A members.

There have now been two dedicated U3A member trips, last December to Winchester (Angel of the North). Another recent trip to Royal Norfolk visiting Sandringham proved popular with U3A members too.

Suggestions for new places to visit are always welcome and discussions with U3A committee members and Ieda Hogarth about future opportunities would be good to gauge interest for more dedicated U3A tours. The advantage with a dedicated coach is that we can include several Ashford pick-ups to better suit members.

One trip that Viv is very keen to organise exclusively for U3A, is to Norfolk to visit Ware Hall House, the subject of the very interesting talk given by Christine Adams about her aunt, Miss May Savidge and details will be available just as soon as possible.

Christmas Market and in April a visit to the Tower of London, both had over 40 members participating.

Smaller numbers have joined in the ready-made selection of days out and short breaks Viv offers. She says that by doing the direct booking with hotels, transport providers and venues, costs can be saved which makes prices more attractive to her members and members of clubs and organisations, like U3A who join in with the activity.

Several joined a 6-day break to Northumberland in May, exploring Alnwick and Bamburgh Castles, Holy Island and Beamish and enjoyed a seal and sea bird cruise (and a photo opportunity at the

Following her visit to u3a's in the South Liz Thackray, Chair of the u3a Trust had this to say;

"What comes through loud and clear everywhere I go is the enthusiasm and energy of our members – whether they're playing table tennis or ukeleles, writing short stories or talking about local history, chatting over coffee or over supper.

Highlights for me have included giving certificates to two u3as celebrating their silver jubilees, meeting possibly the youngest u3a member in the country – 27 year old treasurer of his u3a – meeting members of the two u3as whose invitations seeded these trips.

I am looking forward to visiting u3as in other parts of the UK later this year and next year."

National News

Save the date: 17 to 19 July 2024



The Trust are delighted to announce the first ever UK-wide u3a festival is taking place 17-19 July 2024 at the University of York. The event will be an opportunity to bring members together to share the joy of u3a membership.

Trustee Margaret Fiddes is involved with organising the event and says, "The countdown to Festival 24 has begun and I am ridiculously excited. People are already coming up with ideas. We are planning to have a mixed and full programme together with activities, outings, music, speakers, sports and have-a-go sessions."

The festival will run over 3 days and will be held at the University of York based around their exhibition centre:

<https://yorkconferences.com/venues/exhibition-centre/and-sports-centre/>

<https://www.york-sport.com/centre/>.

Accommodation will be available in the student

halls and we will provide more information on this in the coming months.

Read more on [the u3a website](https://www.u3a.org.uk). If you are interested in taking part in the festival or have any questions, please email festival@u3a.org.uk

ASHFORD NEWS

Coming Up:

23rd August Meeting: John Field – The Amazing World of Magic. John, a member of the Magic Circle, gives a humorous and educational talk. John has been performing magic for over 40 years and during that time has honed his skills to the highest level. He was elevated to the exclusive degree of Associate Member of The Inner Magic Circle with Silver Star in 2005, in recognition of his performing skills. Approximately 350 magicians hold this degree worldwide. The Magic Circle is THE most prestigious club for Magicians in the world. Basic membership is hard to come by but elevation to a higher degree is by invitation only after a performance to the highest standard.

27 September: Joe Parker is a Financial Advisor who talks about finances and comes highly recommended from a u3a member.

25 October: Bernard Lockett talks about Gilbert and Sullivan

22 November: Simon Waterfield talks about WW1 as The Kilted Tommy.

Just out of interest: As there was no response to this item, it will not be continued

Editors Note: I would like to thank all that contributed to this edition .

This Newsletter is for you all as members and if you would like to contribute an article about the group or groups you attend, please do and send it to u3aashnews@gmail.com.

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Latest Notes from Program manager Wendy Withycombe

A new service just for u3a members – an IT ‘Drop in’ session starting at Repton Connect .

It will be held on the second Friday of each Month from 1.30 to 3.30 starting on 8th September

No booking to start with -just turn up with your queries.

Helen, who is going to run it, explains what she is offering:-

"Although I've worked with computers for nearly 50 years, I'm not an IT professional (I'm a retired scientist), but I've helped family members, friends and colleagues over the years and I'm officially a '[Digital Champion](#)' (what a title!!). I'm willing to look at any IT issue related to using smartphones, tablets (including e-readers such as Kindles) or laptop computers. Most of my experience to date has been with Windows computers and Android smartphones/tablets so I'm still learning my way around iPhones and iPads, but I'm getting there. It doesn't matter how basic an issue is, but equally I like a challenge so I'm willing to tackle more techie queries. I've been told that I'm a *lot* more patient than the average grandchild..."

So- bring along your IT queries . You can be next in line after me!

Also a possible new group:-

Jonathan would like to start a Landscapes, Archaeology and History group. More details to follow

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 – Wendy Withycombe
Systems/website administrator (SA) Clive Wren	Newsletter Editor – Anne Alexander
Speaker Secretary Tina Holden	Trips Liaison – Ieda Hogarth