



February 2022

www.u3asites.org.uk/Ashford-Wye

Registered charity number 1172873

News from the chair

WHAT an extraordinary two years we have all experienced and we are still not out of the woods yet it seems. It has been wonderful to see so many members attending the last three Coffee Mornings and that many of the Groups have continued through the use of Zoom and any other media available.

I congratulate everyone for their fortitude and resilience in these difficult times. I know a few members have succumbed to the virus and we all hope they are now feeling much better.

In March last year at the online AGM, Tony and Glenda Boyd Williams were elected Chairman and Business Secretary. However, after a few months they had the opportunity to move to Cheshire to be near their son and family. With the Committee's backing, they asked both my wife Maureen and I if we would be willing to temporarily take on those roles for six months until March 2022, when the next AGM will be held and we happily agreed. Having now worked with your Committee for a short while, I have to say what an exceptionally talented and dedicated team they are and they have made us very welcome. After much deliberation Maureen and I have decided to let our names go forward at the AGM.

The next AGM will be on Wednesday, March 23 at 10.45am at the start of the Coffee Morning. A formal notice and more details will be sent to everyone – email and post (for those without emails). I am delighted to welcome Carol Clay as Vice-Chair. Having done a brilliant job as Trips Organiser for the last three years she brings a wealth of experience, primarily to advise, assist and stand-in for the Chair when required. Thank you Carol.



Barry and Maureen Andrews

I would also like to thank Anne Fuggle, who has been Speaker Secretary and is standing down from that post at the AGM. Over the past three years Anne has engaged brilliant Speakers covering a wide range of topics which have been very interesting and entertaining. Tina Holden has kindly agreed to take on the role after March.

No-one knows how long this pandemic will continue to affect everything we all do on a daily basis but rest assured your Committee is keeping a close watch on the local conditions and will keep safety and risk assessment very much in the forefront of any arrangements made for events in the future.

Best wishes,
Barry Andrews



**New vice-chair
Carol Clay**

Ashford, Wye & District u3a – new committee

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 - Anne Fuggle (retiring) Tina Holden (From March)	Trips Organiser – vacant

Walking group

Our November walk around Godinton Park was led by Beth and Judith. Despite a frosty morning, we had a good turnout with 19 members. We started at the car park of the New Chimneys pub in Loudon Way, Ashford. After walking through part of the housing estate we reached the walking path. Travelling through some woodland paths we reached the Park. The weather was perfect. We had lovely clear sunny skies with little breeze. Through the parkland and fields, the wideranging views were beautiful. Sheep we passed took little interest but carried on enjoying the grass and posing for photos. It was perfect in the sunshine, enjoying exercise and good conversation. Back at the pub, many took the opportunity for a coffee, drink or delicious lunch.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the December walk due to weather and difficulties with public transport. But we had brilliant weather along the Royal Military canal and Hythe seafront in January. Plus coffee/lunch at the Lazy Shack beach cafe. Our February walk is Ramsgate to Broadstairs.

I am currently holding a small waiting list but if anyone is interested in the group please contact me via the u3a district website or the details in the programme

Angela Waite



Perfect weather for the walking group



The welcoming hospitality team at the monthly coffee mornings at Repton Park Community Centre

Sign language query

I am quite interested in learning to use Sign Language and I wondered if anyone else would also be interested – and whether there is anyone within u3a who would be interested in teaching it?

Janine Hardwick

u3a National Awareness Day

A nationwide u3a Awareness Day has been announced by National Office for September 21, 2022 and Ashford, Wye & District u3a will be working towards a local event at that time.

Cooking up book success

I was looking forward to restarting my cookery sessions again this year but regretfully have had to put this on hold, due partly to Coronavirus and also commitments relating to the publication of my new book, *Eat Well to Age Well*, on January 20.

There were several dates set aside for publicity events, including interviews on KMTV and radio. To my surprise, I was asked to be "Hero of the Week" on BBC Radio Kent. I believe this was because royalties from sales are to be donated to Pilgrim's Hospices of Kent, I spoke to Pat Marsh for 10 minutes on January 15 on his breakfast show. I was interviewed by Dora Walsh, a nutritionist and presenter on the HealthRadio Network for 50 minutes on January 18. All quite nerve racking but enjoyable. Macknades, Ashford, kindly hosted a book launch (filmed by KMTV) with me signing copies, on January 21. The u3a



magazine TAM kindly featured a couple of recipes in the February issue plus a competition to win a copy. Books available from Macknades, Waterstones, Amazon and Smiths. It was partly due to my involvement with u3a and regular column in TAM which helped considerably in my quest to find a publisher. Thank you all for your support.

Beverley Jarvis
Member of Guild of Food Writers

• Beverley will be at the February Coffee Morning to sign and sell her book

Current Affairs Kennington Group 2

We meet every third Wednesday from 10 until 12. We usually decide on topics either by email or at the start of the meeting and spend about half an hour on each topic. Despite depressing news there are lighter moments and laughter and although there are lively and opposing ideas it never becomes heated and there is always space for everyone to express their views. We try to spend the last 10 minutes discussing an amusing or uplifting topic so we part on a happy note.

Jan Watson

Yoga

A few members would like to carry on with the yoga fit and if enough people are interested Monday mornings as before at The Iron Room in Boughton Aluph starting at 10am. Anyone interested please contact me, either at the coffee morning or phone or email.

Astra West

Finance can be fun

If there is sufficient interest, I would like to form a group to share thoughts and ideas on how finance and financial ideas affect our lives.

The get-togethers would allow us to share thoughts and add to our knowledge of things we are familiar with. They will also give us the opportunity to explore ideas we may wish to know more about; cryptocurrencies and quantitative easing are possible examples.

What is covered in the sessions will be determined by those attending. Pensions and various forms of borrowings will no doubt feature prominently but I would expect discussions to cover wider issues such as; why we have booms and busts and how we attempt to manage them; how financial markets work; stocks and shares; what are hedge funds, SIPPs, ISAs, SPACs, IPOs; why tax havens exist and will they continue, managing financial risk; what underlies insurance; insolvency and bankruptcy etc.



Illustration by James Bradley

If you are at all interested in things financial and wish to gain confidence and a better understanding, albeit in an oft light-hearted and sometimes irreverent way, please contact me

Bob Bradley

GARDENERS UNITE gardening group

This group was formed during 2020 but due to Covid restrictions we were unable to participate much that year. In 2021 we identified the focus for an informal, social activity that enables members who have an interest in gardening but not necessarily great knowledge, to share information, solve problems and visit local gardens, nurseries and garden centres.

We visited Chilham Castle Gardens – just before it was closed due to the property being sold – and enjoyed a picnic. Later we visited beautiful Doddington Place gardens which is truly a very beautiful setting. As autumn arrived we met at two different garden centres in Ashford for coffee and bulb buying. In 2022 further visits and opportunities are planned. If you are interested in either group please contact me _____

Lynn Saunby

Weekenders

The Weekenders Group wasted no time in meeting again for a sociable, monthly Sunday lunch. The group, aimed at people who may live alone, has grown to 22 members and since August, 2021 has enjoyed four lunches in and around Ashford. Group Leader Sylvia Millard said: "We put the group's growing success down to members appreciating the opportunity to go out for a relaxed meal and a friendly chat."

Sylvia Millard



*Maureen Andrews (4th from right)
Group Leader
and the Play Reading Group*

Play reading

Our enthusiastic Play Readers read on subjects ranging from humorous, thought-provoking and mysterious plays to two 30-minute self-penned plays, performed at u3a Coffee Mornings. After 10 years we still have some original members and are very keen to recruit some gentlemen to give the necessary depth to the PLOT! No requirement to be experienced. Come and enjoy good company and several laughs. A warm welcome and fun afternoons await at the Francis Road Community Church on the last Monday of the month (except August and December) 2- 4pm, £3 per session – £15 per term.

Maureen Andrews

Singing for Pleasure

The Singing for Pleasure choir has been meeting in person since September 2021, after a year of rehearsals on Zoom. The choir is stronger than ever now numbering over 40 singers and we have welcomed several new members. Thanks to a growing bass section and more altos and sopranos, we are increasingly able to sing as a three-part choir. The group has come a long way since its inception with about half a dozen singers.

Covid has not stopped us singing. The rehearsal hall is well ventilated with windows and doors open, and members are seated with generous spacing. We have a break halfway through to air the room, and hand sanitisers are always available. As the winter progresses, we may be putting on an extra layer to keep warm, but fortunately the heating is very effective.

Last term the group enjoyed putting together some of the songs sung in lockdown, finally managing to sing the harmonies and hear the overall effect. Residents of Francis Road have been treated to the strains of 'Sweet Caroline' and 'Hallelujah', wafting out through the door on a Friday afternoon. It was also good to sing Christmas songs and carols together, which we were unable to do in 2020.

We have reconvened this term and are further broadening our repertoire in preparation for a midsummer concert for friends and family. As anyone in the group will tell you, singing is an ideal way to banish those winter blues!

Wendy Heaton

Trips out and about again!



Members of the **TRIPS** group celebrated a chance to move further afield again with an outing and lunch at the Shepherd Neame brewery in Faversham

Art Group

After a difficult time during Covid, the Art Group kept up to date and enthused by our WhatsApp group, which was a godsend. It made us laugh about the jokes people put on, commiserate with each other and yearn to be together again. By juggling names in the beginning we could be six attending, then 12 and now, thank goodness, most of us have returned to the Iron Room although we still continue being on WhatsApp. A quarter of an hour before we finish our painting mornings, we put all works onto the wall and critique each other, in a kind and caring way.

We have been to art exhibitions in Canterbury with a lunch afterwards, had challenges to paint in the style of Patrick Caulfield and Georgia O'Keefe.

In the past we had some professional artists to give us a demo in various media. We also went to places with artistic interests such as Margate, Eastbourne, Hastings or Tudeley.

All in all, we are a VERY happy group of artists.

Ursula Peters

Upper painting-ORCHID: Below-PUFFIN



Gallery Group

This is a newly formed group for people who have an interest in the arts and would like to have company when visiting local and London based galleries and exhibitions. Recently we met to view Weald of Kent Art Society's Autumn exhibition at St Mildred's Church in Tenterden. This was enjoyed by all and the level of ability was very impressive and the techniques used many and various. We enjoyed coffee and snacks afterwards at a café in the High Street. Our next trip is to the Beaney Museum and Gallery, Canterbury on March 16, followed by tea/coffee. Hopefully, 2022 will offer many opportunities to visit more local and London venues.

If you are interested in this group, please contact me by email

Lynne Saunby

Current Affairs

Meeting at my home in Ashford, at 2pm on the second Wednesday of each month, the group comprises a mix of nationalities and cultures that enjoy widening current issues to cover international affairs and perspectives placed upon them.

There are currently a few spaces for others who wish to join us; preference will be given to those who enjoy cheese.

Bob Bradley



Table Tennis

The table tennis meetings at Repton Community Centre have been going since the relaxation in Covid 19 restrictions. Play has been good and certainly fun playing doubles and we still have natter time. It is amazing the interests players have – weaving, painting, classic cars, music plus interesting occupations. We even have players who cycle to table tennis 'wow we might even be carbon friendly.

We have been fortunate that Ray & Colin brought a table tennis machine which fires balls at differing speeds at different angles and spin so all our players had a go and enjoyed the experience.

Now winter is upon us the Repton centre is warm and comfortable place to spend a couple of hours so if you are interested you can join any time.

Graham Deal

Music appreciation

Our little group has started to meet face-to-face again. We have had two meetings and thoroughly enjoyed being together after so many months on Zoom, which was really quite impersonal. We have listened to the recordings of Ma Vlast by Bedric Smetana, a wonderful experience on YouTube, as we could hear a recording and saw pictures of the Czech landscape.

During the next meeting Sky Arts majestically entertained us with a fantastic recording of Beethoven's 9th Symphony.

Each month another member makes his/her choice.

David and Ursula Peters

Finding peace in a frantic world

The current uncertain times we are living in reminds us of the uncertainty of our own existence. And how important it is to remain focused, grounded and in the present moment. Our objectives are to develop the ability to have a quiet, clear and curious mind and be in the present. By doing this, many areas of our life can be improved, namely our emotional, physical and mental wellbeing. Developing awareness/ mindfulness, can help us to be more focused, enjoy life and understand ourselves better. During our sessions, we aim to strive for freedom from inner chatter and to reconnect with our own bodies, experiencing afresh all that we have taken for granted.

Our course has not only continued throughout these difficult times, but slowly expanded. We have agreed to continue using Zoom, which we all feel provides the most suitable medium for a mindfulness course.

The Mindfulness Zoom course runs at 2pm for 40 mins, on the 1st Tuesday of the month. If you would like more information and perhaps wish to join us, please contact me.

Brenda Dunn

French group

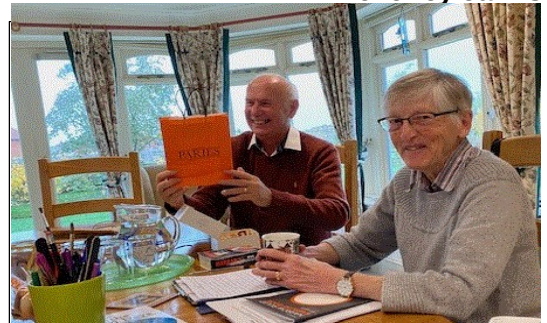
We are a lively group of eight people with varying abilities in spoken French. We can all just about hold a conversation. We enjoy learning about one another's recent news and discuss other topics such as the weather and the seasons, our time at school and careers. The aim is to help each other improve and we are delighted to be back meeting every two weeks face-to-face and without masks.

Venue: Chilmington Green

Every other Monday morning

Time: 10-11.30 am

Beverley Jarvis



Cards and Rummykubs

I organise the Playing Cards for Fun group where we play Rummy and Uno. We also have another group playing Rummykubs which is a simple board version of Rummy. These small groups meet in our homes. They are light hearted and fun and keep the old brain cells alert.

We have one or two places available. Please contact me for further details.

Kathy Hodgson