



Bearsted & District u3a Monthly Reminder April 2023

Welcome to the April 2023 Monthly Reminder, which is being distributed to all members either via e-mail or paper copy. This month's meeting will be held in Detling Village Hall on Thursday 13th April starting at the usual time of 2 pm.

Car Sharing

Those who regularly attend monthly meetings will know that parking in Detling can be difficult. It would therefore be helpful to others if members would consider whether car sharing is an option. Perhaps you know another member who lives near to you and also attends meetings. We know that some of you already do this but many may not have considered this as an option. Car sharing would not only benefit members but also the local community.

Committee

*Please note that Jenny's review of the chair role which appeared in last month's Reminder is included at the end of this issue. Whilst on the subject of the committee we would like to remind members that in addition to requiring a new chair from November 2023 we still need a volunteer to be **vice-chair**, starting as soon as possible. The vice-chair would shadow the current chair: it is envisaged that the chief responsibility would be to chair committee meetings should the chair be unable to attend for any reason. If you are interested, please contact Jenny. Her telephone number is at the end of the "Chair's Chat" section below.*

Chair's Chat

Spring will soon be upon us and hopefully the thought of sunny days, cut grass and days out, will spur us on to get out and about and enjoy it!

It is our 10th Anniversary this year, so the committee is looking to organise an event to celebrate. If you have an idea for us to look at, please let me or any committee member know.

Have we any groups still going from those early years? It would be lovely to hear from you if we have!

Our Facebook page is progressing steadily with 50 members joining up so far. There are some lovely photographs there showing what some of the groups have been up to. It is worth a look. Do remember when applying to join that you need your membership number; and to agree the Terms and Conditions by ticking the box.

Kind regards

Jenny

Chair - Bearsted & District u3a

01622 663743

Speaker Secretary (Richard)

In March we were given insights into a medieval housewife's lot by historian and author, Toni Mount. It was an amusing and interesting talk which demonstrated that women in those times ran their own businesses and enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy.

April's presentation is entitled "A Musician's Life" by Adrian and Jane Smith. Adrian (viola) and Jane (violin) are freelance musicians. They have worked in concert halls, cathedrals, arenas and recording studios alongside Shirley Bassey, Rod Stewart, Yehudi Menuhin, Andre Bocelli, Neil Diamond and many others. They have recorded for *Downton Abbey* and *Mission Impossible* and are currently working in the West End in the show *Pretty Woman*.

The talk is about their experiences working with well-known people, enlivened by interesting and amusing anecdotes. They will bring their instruments and will play short excerpts from classical, show and popular music that relate to the talk.

Please note that Speakers may be subject to change at short notice and it is worthwhile checking our website for the latest information.

Social

Various committee members are considering whether a social sub-committee should be set up with a view to organising events such as coffee mornings, coach trips and other occasions. Members are invited to help in this. If you would like to be involved in increasing the scope of u3a activities in this way, please contact Damian, the Reminder editor, via the website and he will make sure that your interest is noted.

Interest Group Co-Ordinator's Update (Linda)

“The research that I do for my groups is the part I enjoy the most”

Learning, studying, exploring, solving, planning - research shows that by keeping our brains active we can help to delay cognitive decline.

Play an active part in your group.

The more you put in to your group the more you will get out.

We had a very successful coffee morning for new members recently with over 30 people attending so we will be holding more in the future.

Several people put their names forward for the **Family History** group which is now full so we have started up a second group. The group will meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 2.00 p.m.

A member has suggested a group for **Detectorists** and no, it won't be like the TV series. Is anyone else interested? Does anyone know about the rules and regulations that govern this activity? Please let me know if you are interested or can help the group get established.

If you can't regularly attend group meetings ask yourself if you are denying a place to others who can.

Group Activities

Gardening Group (Babs)

Spring has sprung, at last! and our hosts for the March meeting had a beautiful display of daffodils in their garden.



The meeting this month was concerned with pests and beneficial creatures in the garden – Good Guys and Bad Guys. Some obvious ‘good guys’ are bees and other pollinators, which we need for our crops and next year’s seeds. Also, ladybirds and hoverflies - their young are voracious predators of aphids (obvious ‘bad guys’).

Slugs, though, have always had a bad press but only a small percentage of slugs are likely to be a nuisance. Most of them live on rotting leaves and other detritus. So, if they’re not eating your plants, they’re probably good guys and beneficial in your garden. They also have their predators – frogs, beetles and birds for instance.

It was a very interesting discussion. The conclusion being that we need them all. It’s a question of balance.

Lunch Bunch (Nigel)

This month’s Lunch Bunch meeting will be at the Pepper Box Inn, Windmill Hill, Harrietsham, on Tuesday 25th April, 12:15 for 12:45.

Read it Aloud (Damian)

This month we were back at our usual venue, the subject matter being “journeys”, appropriate as our hostess had just returned from a visit to Australia. As usual there was both prose and poetry. Of particular interest were the reminiscences of the mother of one of our members, describing a journey into the Indian foothills of the Himalayas in order to escape the summer heat.

Local History 1 (Damian)

Our March meeting took the form of a visit to Maidstone Town Hall, organised and conducted by u3a member Richard, a former Mayor of Maidstone. We learnt how this 17th Century building has been altered over the centuries. It started as a stand-alone council chamber partly above an open space for market stalls but was later extended so that it was joined to its neighbouring building. We learnt about the careers of the more notable mayors, in one case a notorious exile. Other highlights of the tour were the council chamber, mayor's parlour and the holding cell for prisoners awaiting trial, which has been reconstructed in the loft using the original timbers.



Craft Group (Sue)



Seven of us met on 8 March to make Coronation or Christmas wreaths led by Liz. We had lots of fun and plenty of chatting too, including what to do at the next couple of meetings.



Vanessa managed to finish her wreath during the session but it took the rest of us a bit longer to finish at home, including Sandra's very neat finished wreath hanging up. In April we decided to have a go at crochet with Carol leading, so we're looking forward to that.

[Emergency contact details](#)

Members are reminded to keep their emergency contact details up to date. If you need to make any changes, please let Claire know via the website.

[Share your Knowledge!](#)

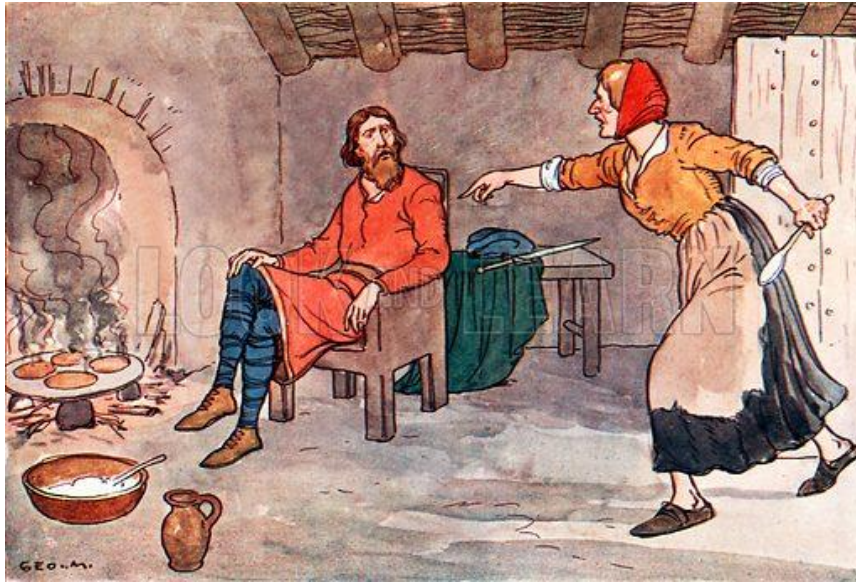
We know that many of you have hidden talents and so we would be interested to know whether anyone would like to make a presentation at our monthly General Meeting. Full support will be given so if you would like to share knowledge accrued in your working life or that reflects your interests, please let Richard or Jenny know through the usual channels.

[Contributions from Members](#)

This month's Quiz. Subject: *Easy Anglo-Saxons (Damian)*

- 1. Who got hit in the eye by an arrow at Senlac Hill?**

2. A legend concerning King Alfred says that he was berated by the wife of a peasant for allowing cakes he was watching to burn. In which English county did this occur? An extra point if you can give the name of the place it is reputed to have happened.



3. Who died in 735 AD and now enjoys fame as the first English historian?

4. Which king is reputed to have ordered the tide not to come in?

5. It is said that it will rain for forty days and forty nights if it rains on which saint's day?

6. What is the name of the Saxon hero who defied the Normans on the Isle of Ely and in the fens.

7. What were the names of the two brothers said to be the leaders of the first Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain?

8. Give the name of the king who was responsible for the construction of the famous ditch which served as the border between England and Wales.

9. Which king, who died in 616 AD, allowed Augustine to convert his people to Christianity?

10. King Edgar, known as the Peaceable, is thought by some historians to be the first English king to be formally crowned at a coronation ceremony. Where in England did this take place? For lots of extra points, do you know the date and if so, why is it significant in the 21st Century?

Answers to last month's quiz

1. Geoffrey Chaucer's career as a writer and civil servant flourished under which two English kings? **Edward III and Richard II.**
2. Sir Thomas Malory, author of "Le Morte d' Arthur" wrote his book whilst languishing in prison during which conflict? **The Wars of the Roses.**
3. "The Two Noble Kinsmen" has been fairly recently added to William Shakespeare's list of works. Who was the co-author. **John Fletcher.**
4. When Napoleon III abolished the democratic system in France, Victor Hugo became unwelcome when he called the emperor a traitor to his country. On which British island did he go into exile? **Guernsey.**
5. Anthony Trollope, author of "the Warden" and "Barchester Towers" amongst others, worked for which well-known public organisation, recently privatised? **The Post Office.**
6. Sir Henry Rider Haggard was famed for his romances "She" and "King Solomon's Mines", but what did he get his knighthood for? **Services to agriculture.**
7. Lamb House in Rye had two famous residents, both well-known writers. Who were they? **Henry James and E F Benson.**



8. John Buchan, who wrote "The Thirty-Nine Steps" was also later Governor General of which of Britain's dominions? **Canada.**
9. "Just William" was the first of Richmal Crompton's many books about William Brown but who illustrated 33 of them, from 1922 to 1962? **Thomas Henry.**

10. What was mostly harmless in Douglas Adams's book of the same name? **The Earth.**

Volunteer needed

Many of you will be familiar with Maidstone RSPB. Kevin Willis, Bearsted u3a treasurer, is also the group leader of Maidstone RSPB. The group now needs a treasurer because the present incumbent has to step down soon. If anyone from Bearsted u3a wishes to volunteer for this role please contact Kevin at "maidstonerspb@gmail.com".

The role is not demanding but you need to be comfortable and diligent with simple money management, and prepared to attend our monthly evening meetings. The group's website is:

<https://group.rspb.org.uk/maidstone/>

This gives an introduction to our activities.

Request for Contributions

Everyone is invited to make a contribution to the next Reminder or to comment on this one. Please contact Damian via our website. Book groups might like to send a photograph of the cover of a book they have been reading; or you might like to submit a picture of a member carrying out a u3a activity.

Many of you subscribe to "Third Age Matters", the magazine of the national u3a. Members are invited to contribute their thoughts to The Reminder on any interesting articles they read there. If you wish to do so, please let Damian know via the website.

Website

Dan, who is responsible for our u3a's publicity, would like members to send him any particularly attractive photographs of Bearsted that they think would be appropriate for the Welcome page of the Bearsted and District u3a website. If you have any, please contact him using the publicity link on the contact page of our website. He will give instructions on how to submit them.

Up-to-date details of our u3a are on our website. For access use the link: <https://u3asites.org.uk/bearsted/home>

The national u3a newsletter is full of useful and interesting things you can become involved in, including podcasts. All u3a members can now obtain access to national newsletters from the u3a website available at <http://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter>. It is easy to create an account to use it. If you want to listen to u3a radio podcasts, you can do so by accessing the [u3a YouTube channel](#). **Please note: should clicking on any link not work simply cut and paste the link into your browser.**

Deadline for Contributions to the May 2023 Reminder

Please note that the **deadline** for contributions to the May 2023 Reminder is Friday **28th April**. The committee will need to scrutinise a draft before issue so prompt responses would be appreciated. Also, some of our members are not online and so time needs to be allowed for them to receive paper copies by post. It would be appreciated if any contributions could be submitted in WORD format.

Members will not need reminding (although we are going to do so), that we do not use members' surnames in The Reminder for privacy reasons.

Note on the Bearsted and District u3a Chair Role (provided by Jenny and first included in the March 2023 Reminder)

Role Description

1. To provide inclusive and democratic leadership of the board of Trustees (the committee).
2. To ensure the committee fulfils its responsibilities for the overall governance, strategic direction, financial stability, administration and sustainability of the u3a.
3. To ensure the u3a applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects/purposes, abides by its governing document (the constitution) and complies with charity law and other relevant legislation.
4. To ensure the u3a upholds the guiding principles.
5. To oversee adherence to the terms and conditions of affiliation to the Third Age Trust.
6. To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the u3a.
7. To safeguard the good name and values of the u3a organisation.
8. To liaise with local organisations and to be the first point of contact.

Q. How many meetings do you attend?

A. We have 11 monthly Committee meetings a year. I attend all of them unless I am away. I attend a few other meetings but only if I am available or feel they are beneficial to our u3a. This usually would be u3a Kent Network or National Office.

Q. How much time do you spend on u3a 'work'?

A. Not Including the monthly meeting and committee meetings I would say between 1 to 2 hours a week.

Q. What is your favourite part of being chair?

A. To be a spokesperson and an ambassador for the u3a ensuring that the local community is aware of what the u3a is and does.

Q. Is there much paperwork?

A. Our committee is very well set up with each committee member taking on a role and the paperwork that comes with that role. I have very little paperwork; I reply to emails or pass on any information I have to the committee.

Q. How technical do you need to be?

A. There are obviously emails to be done and an understanding of Beacon (the u3a's computer system) which has its own administrator.

Q. Is organising the AGM difficult?

A. No, just a bigger version of a committee meeting. I do complete and update the Charity Commission on any new committee members and make sure they understand their trustee appointment.

Q. Do you get involved in the finances?

A. We have always had excellent Treasurers so my role is just to ensure financial transparency through detailed disclosure of financial information to the committee.

Q. How much training does a new chair receive?

A. It is my role to carry out a comprehensive handover to the new Chair. This would include as much detail as is required. I will also, as will all committee members, be on hand to help for as long as needed.

COMMUNICATION is key for a Chair role.