

Bearsted & District u3a Monthly Reminder August 2023

Welcome to the August 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 10th August starting at the usual time of 2 pm.

Chair's Chat

July saw a successful visit from our National Chair, Liz Thackray, who attended our Monday Table Tennis group.



The group photograph above is included in the National Newsletter alongside some of the other visits by Liz to u3as in the South East. The link is [u3a - Liz Thackray visits u3as in the South East](#)

Her aim in visiting Kent was to meet as many u3a members as possible and to chat with them so they could get to know her as a u3a member and not just as National Chair. Liz, in congratulating the group, said that she could feel their energy and vibrancy: a compliment that I feel reflects the attitude of all the members of the Bearsted u3a.



U3a National Chair Liz Thackray in conversation with Graham, Bearsted and District u3a Joint Vice-Chair

All for one and one for all is how I like to look upon our u3a family. All the members of our u3a support each of the individual members, and the individual members support the u3a. It is as much about how we can help each other as well as what we personally get out of being a member.

This can also stretch to other u3a's: if help is ever needed, we will be there.

New health and safety policy

A brand new Health & Safety policy for u3as has been approved by the Board. Bearsted & District's updated version will be available to view once our committee has viewed the document and signed it off.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Kind regards

Jenny

Chair - Bearsted & District u3a

01622 663743



Speaker Secretary (Richard)

At the July meeting, we met Dr Stephen Goss whose talk “No tolerance of undeserving rank and splendour – the wit and satire of Gilbert and Sullivan” was informative and entertaining, including excerpts of the most notable music in which they collaborated during the late 19th Century. Even then, the Houses of Parliament became the subject of satire, much as today.

We apologise to those who attended the meeting for the difficulties with the sound system. This is being looked at with a view to minimising such difficulties in future.

In August, we will be joined by Philip Oostenbrink, the head gardener at Walmer Castle. His illustrated talk looks at the development of the gardens from the early 1700's and the influence made by various Lord Wardens, including Wellington, Churchill and, of course, the Queen Mother.

Looking further forward to September, Andrew Baker, a retired headmaster and cruise ship lecturer, will be looking at “British Politics in Turmoil”. He will discuss the interlocking factors that lie behind the upheaval brought about by, for example, multiple PM's, Brexit, the financial crash and the pandemic; and how all this shapes our thinking today.

Our December Meeting (Jenny)

As I mentioned last month our Bearsted and District u3a **10th Anniversary** is this year. The committee has decided to celebrate it with all the members at our Christmas meeting on 14th December 2023. More details will be sent out nearer the time, but I would like to ask again **whether there are any members that could get together (or by themselves) and bake an Anniversary Cake for the occasion?** Please let me know.

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.

Transport

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.

Gift Aid (Kevin)

Most of our members will be familiar with the concept, if not the administration, of Gift Aid. Your committee has decided that, in line with many other U3A groups, we should seek to make a recovery from His Majesty's Revenue & Customs so we have submitted an application to register for this. The only change from your perspective as members is an additional box to tick on the forthcoming new year membership form, regarding tax status, and this is identical to similar forms used by many other charities, English Heritage, National Trust, for instance, when paying for their facilities. If any of you have any questions, do let the committee know.

Risk Assessment (Kevin)

The Third Age Trust now requires all U3A groups to carry out operational risk assessments. Bearsted u3a is now setting this up for our activities. The Third Age Trust has template risk assessments covering internal and external, active and passive activities, and we hope that Bearsted u3a can adopt these with limited alteration. Nevertheless, it is important that members and group leaders recognise that risk assessment only works if it is thorough. So, while the committee apologises for the seemingly meaningless detail of much of it, it is the unexpected that catches people out. The committee will be liaising with the group leaders to make this as unobtrusive as possible. Again, please talk to us if you have any questions.

U3a Trust Chair's Visit to Bearsted a& District u3a

As mentioned by Jenny in Chair's Chat, Liz Thackray, the National u3a Chair visited Bearsted & District u3a at Sandling Village Hall on 17th July where Table Tennis Group 1 were meeting. This was part of Liz's visit to South Eastern Region u3as. Also present were Jenny Akehurst, Chair

of Bearsted u3a; Susie Berry, Regional Trustee, South East Region; Carole Dickenson; Chrys Short, Kent Network Chair; members of the Kent Network Committee; and members of Bearsted u3a committee.



Jenny in conversation with Susie Berry, Regional Trustee, South East Region

Jenny welcomed Liz to Bearsted u3a and introduced the members of the Table Tennis group who then returned to the important business of table tennis. Liz chatted with many of the members and after all the games had ended, sat down with Rob White, Kent Public Relations Advisor, to answer some of the questions which he had gathered from the Kent u3as. What follows is a shortened version of the Question-and-Answer session. Questions are in **bold**.

How do you see the future role of the Networks in the Region's structure? Liz explained the background to setting up the Networks. An early decision was made that they should not be part of the Governance structure but nevertheless have a primary role in sharing know-how between u3as, enabling u3as, providing training and doing all sorts of things to basically encourage u3as. Networks are about what the u3a is doing to help share ideas, share skills, share experiences of where things have gone right (or wrong) and support each other. She went on to say that currently there is a pilot running of a proposed council which would act as a conduit between members and Trustees. However, she understands that local u3as do not want another layer of bureaucracy.

What role can Networks fulfil to improve communication with regard to Trust members? The Networks have an important role in maintaining communications between the Trust and the members, Liz

said. Ideally all u3as should be part of a Network but at the moment not all u3as are.

Several members at the Network AGM stated that it was frequently impossible to get a reply to telephone messages or e-mail from the Trust. How can an individual member of a U3A make their feelings known to the Trustees? Liz said that the Trust has now introduced a new system which will record all e-mails and phone calls, assign them a ticket and enable tracking and response to each one.

Rob mentioned that after the AGM the Trust announced it was going to work to improve communications with the members: can Networks assist in the rollout of [\siteWorks](#) perhaps becoming centres of excellence, where existing users of WordPress based systems can be available to advise other users and potential users? Liz said yes, there's a lot that can be done by Networks, especially in the link to regional trustees.

Average member age is increasing-- why don't more newly retired people join their U3A? Survey results among potential members have shown that newly retired people are looking for stimulating activities both mentally and physically; they do not regard themselves as 'old' and may not yet be interested in some of the activities of older members. All u3as should remember this when they are designing methods of attracting new members.

How can we get more men in the u3a movement? Although the proportion of men and women in the movement is affected by the normal male to female ratio of our age group, the u3a movement can attract more men. For example, in my own u3a we had an Open Day run by our Archaeology Interest Group on site at their archaeological dig. Nearly 500 people turned up and we recruited 20 new members, mostly retired men. Although it may be true to say that men are not natural joiners unlike their female counterparts, I believe that retired men are more likely to be lonely and may be unaware of the benefits joining a u3a can offer. Clearly, if we offer the right activities, we will get more men to join.

At present some u3as pay for their own websites, others have free SiteBuilder sites. What is the plan for SiteWorks? In future will the Trust pay for all u3a websites? At the moment the plan is not to charge SiteBuilder u3as for the first 2 years after they migrate to SiteWorks. During the migration of SiteBuilder sites, its cost (which is

now paid centrally) will gradually reduce and the Trust will review the position regarding the financing of SiteWorks.



Rob White

Liz Thackray

[Interest Group Co-Ordinator's Update \(Linda\)](#)

We have some new groups starting shortly. If anything interests you, please contact me via the website or see me at the monthly meeting. I can usually be found at the back of the room.

Ancient History 2

Keith has been running our Ancient History group for the past 4 years and is intending to start a new group. Here is what he has to say:

"From UR to ROME"

Our journey through ANCIENT HISTORY will start around 4,000 BC and end 4,500 years later in ROMAN BRITAIN; from the ancient city of UR (URUK) to THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. With few exceptions we cover that period of history in Europe and the Ancient Near East. The main topics are shown below. In Group 1, I am currently preparing our 40th meeting. I always send my notes to participants after each meeting.

Mesopotamia - peoples, tribes, settlement, cities, wars and territorial expansion

Language, writing, "technology"

The growth of empires, Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome

Religions, science, philosophy

Kings, Queens, Pharaohs, Emperors

Classical writing, plays, poetry, mythology

As well as the main topics shown above, we will cover some ANTHROPOLOGY and topics like THE DISCOVERY OF DNA AND HOW IT HAS ADVANCED ARCHAEOLOGY; EIGHT IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGISTS; and a few other side-steps.

If you are interested in joining the new group, please contact LINDA at Bearsted U3A or contact me directly on 01622 880 377.

Meetings will be held at my home in Hollingbourne where I can accommodate a maximum of eight members (plus myself). You will be invited to an opening group meeting in late September where you will be able to give me your preferred date and day of the month for the meetings that will last for two hours. Hopefully we will reach a consensus.

Classical Guitar

Is anyone interested in forming a new group? We have just the person to help you get started so let me know if you would like to give it a try.

Pickleball

We hope to be able to start this group next month but it's not too late to join.

River Fishing

When our lives are getting busier a spot of fishing might be just the relaxing sport you need. Beginners are welcome. Jim is happy to have a chat with anyone who might be interested.

Village Visits

There are still some spaces in this new group so let me know if you are interested (see also below in Group Activities).

Photographs

This is to remind group co-ordinators that they should ensure that all members of their group who appear in photographs are happy to do so when it is intended to post the photograph on the website, publish it in the Reminder or otherwise make it publicly available.

Group Activities

U3a Intermediate Italian group (Karen)

Our intermediate Italian group remains healthy and active. We have two new members which maintains the group's energy. We continue to enjoy our book 'Resto Qui' which is set around the Second World War and describes the impact on families and communities of invasion and their conflicted opinions. We also very much enjoy some lively discussions on a range of topics from politics to the arts and life in general

Lunch Bunch (Nigel)

The next lunch meeting is at the Bowl Inn, Egg Hill Road, Charing, TN27 0HG on Tuesday 22nd August at the usual time of 12:15 for 12:45.

Village Visits Group

First Outing Report (Paul)

The new Village Visits group had its first outing on 21st July. This was a guided tour of Rochester Cathedral after coffee in the nice café in the crypt. For various reasons the attendance was smaller than anticipated but this had the benefit of the chance to see what is said to be the oldest door in England. Because the area can only be accessed by two people at a time this is not included on tours for larger groups.

The tour, lasting just over an hour, was both very informative and entertaining. It highlighted the development over the centuries of this very ancient cathedral. It also covered the different construction styles and the improvements made possible by lottery funding. The connections with Charles Dickens and General Gordon were also covered. The links with the Royal Engineers Regiment, based locally, are strong with memorials dating back to campaigns including Waterloo, the Boer War and Khartoum.

Attend a Future Visit! (Elizabeth)

New members are welcome to attend our August Village Visit which is on Friday 18th August and will be to view the magnificent stained-glass windows at All Saints', Tudeley, the only church in the world to have all its twelve windows decorated by the great Russian artist **Marc Chagall**.

New members are always welcome to join the group which intends to visit places of interest, mostly in a Kent village, within a radius of approximately 25 miles of Maidstone. To save your place in the group and book for the August visit please email me: lizabethanne@live.co.uk

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.

Contributions from Members

This month's Quiz (Damian)

Inventions

- 1. In which year was the heat pump invented, and by whom?**
- 2. Who in 1831 invented the electric generator?**
- 3. Gottlieb Daimler of Germany invented what in 1885?**
- 4. In which year did Peter Goldmark of the US invent the colour (color!) television?**
- 5. Italian Bartholomew Fredi invented the watch in which century?**
- 6. Mrs WA Cockran of the US invented the automatic dishwasher in which year?**
- 7. In which century was the pencil invented by Frenchman Nicholas Jacques Conte?**
- 8. When did Fang Fen of China invent the universal joint (be surprised!)?**
- 9. Denis Papin invented the pressure cooker in which century?**

10. What flying machine did Louis and Jacques Breguet of France invent in 1907?

Answers to last month's quiz

All of the following were pop stars. By what name are they better known (all had hits in the 1960's)?

- 1. Arnold Dorsey is also Englebert Humperdinck (but not the classical composer of that name!)**
- 2. Brian Rankin is Shadow Hank Marvin, the individual with most weeks on the British pop chart in the '60s**
- 3. Terence Nelhams was Adam Faith who reputedly discovered...**
- 4. Sandra Goodrich who became Sandie Shaw**
- 5. Charles Westover was Del Shannon whose biggest hit was "Runaway"**
- 6. Ronald Wycherley was Billy Fury, a horse racing enthusiast who starred in the not so classic movie "I've Gotta Horse"**
- 7. Richard Sarstedt was Eden Kane whose two brothers also charted under their real names**
- 8. Adrian Hill was Ronnie Hilton who filled the No1 position the week Elvis first entered the British charts (to dispel any doubts, that is Presley not Costello).**
- 9. Charles Holley was, of course, Buddy Holly**
- 10. Brenda Tarpley still is Brenda Lee**

Social

A nucleus of committee members has set up a social sub-committee 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. Alternatively, he is usually at the monthly meetings so you could speak to him there. Other committee members will be able to help if he isn't available.

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.**

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.

Deadline for Contributions to the August 2023 Reminder (Damian)

Please note that the **deadline** for contributions to the September 2023 Reminder is Friday **25th August**. This is earlier than usual because Damian has another holiday! 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.