



Bearsted & District u3a Monthly Reminder for December 2023

Welcome to the December 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 14th December starting at the usual time of 2 pm.

From the Rockin' Chair

The chair is dead long live the chair! Sounds like a catchphrase for a DFS sale! So, it's goodbye and thanks to Jenny for her four years at the helm and here am I stepping into her very large shoes, running ones at that! My safety net, for which I am very grateful, is our very enthusiastic, energetic and experienced committee who I trust will keep me headed in the right direction.

I hope to meet more of you at the Great Danes Christmas lunch and at the joint 10th Anniversary and Christmas meeting. Aside from those two events, should any member wish to contact me, you can do so via the website.

Finally, I would like to wish all our members a very Happy Christmas and a New Year which is full of learning, laughing and living!

Graham

Chair - Bearsted & District u3a



Speaker Secretary (Rick)

November's talk from Barbara Meyer was entitled "Big Cats Around the Globe", and told the story of the different species, with much interesting information. For instance, when is a leopard not a leopard? Strange as it may seem, some that display the leopard's coat are actually tigers, as

their DNA proves! Barbara showed some beautiful photographs she has taken and talked about several schemes that are operational in the battle to preserve each of the species.

December's meeting is, as I am sure you will know, the 10th Anniversary of our U3A, and is combined with our Christmas celebration. John Field, a member of the Magic Circle, will be talking about and performing magic; and Cameo Christmas Capers will bring music and comedy. It should be a fun afternoon. Full details are to be found on the Events page of our website. Don't forget that there will be a prize for the best festive outfit and that this is an extended afternoon finishing by 5.00 p.m.

And then it's 2024! At our January meeting, we will be joined by Guy Bartlett who will be telling us about "Concorde, Icon of the Skies". The story explores the history and technology of the fastest passenger aircraft of all time and we will see film taken in flight from the cockpit.

[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.

[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 Graham know through the usual channels.

[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.

Interest Group Co-Ordinator's Update (Linda)

As the year draws to a close it is good to know that we have so many vibrant groups in our u3a. We now have 46 groups covering 36 different subjects. Many thanks go to our group coordinators who keep it all happening.

Can I remind everyone, especially our new members, that if you are unable to attend a group meeting you should give your apologies not only to the co-ordinator but also to the host who may want to know how many chairs to put out and how many packets of biscuits may be required. Some group members pay 30p towards refreshments, others bring along an occasional packet of biscuits and some have a biscuit rota. All groups determine what suits them best. Thank you to those of you who offer lifts to members too.

Geoff will be starting another of his **Bridge** courses in February. These are suitable for beginners but also those who have some prior experience and want to develop their skills further. Let me know via the website if you are interested.

An interest in an **Astronomy** group has been expressed and if anyone else is also interested, please let me know.

As our next monthly meeting is our Christmas party, I won't be having the usual table at the back of the room as there will be too much going on. But I will be there and if you want to talk to me about any groups, please seek me out. I'm always happy to talk to you.

Here are some ideas for new groups:

Cycling The Environment Folk Music Games (Rummikub,
Scrabble etc) Jazz Appreciation Creative Writing Poetry
Knitting and Crochet

Perhaps you would like to start a new group yourself. Come and talk to me.

Group Activities

Making Music Together (from Joy)

We are delighted to welcome Margaret to our Group. Apart from playing a variety of recorders Margaret also plays the organ, piano and ukulele.

We were invited by the Music Teacher at Harrietsham Primary School to play to the juniors and around 120 children assembled in the hall. It was a lovely morning. We played to the children including a short demonstration of our instruments. One highlight was when we played The Lockdown Waltz by Bert de Cock. This was followed with a clip taken from YouTube where this piece is played by The Corona Orchestra comprising 75 musicians in 11 countries on 3 continents. During the morning the children played to us and at the end we all played together.

If anyone would like to join us, they would be most welcome.



Hidden London Walks Group (from Patricia and Richard)

Formed in January 2023, we have just come to the end of our first year of monthly walking. We have a group membership of 23 which is a huge number to guide around London but so far, we haven't lost anyone.

All our members have taken time to lead a Hidden London Walk, doing a recce, risk assessments, follow ups with research and eventually guiding the group around the route. Our group numbers have varied between 14 up to 21 at different times of the year which has been most encouraging. All walks are 'hosted' by two people and all the walks have taken us to parts of London that most of us have not been to. It's been a fun year, and to say we are delighted is an understatement. We meet again in January to book our slots for the 2024 diary!



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.

Contributions from Members

Christmas Quiz (Damian)

- 1. First of all, the calendar. In 1582 Pope Gregory XIII cut ten days from October to correct the Julian calendar. Why October?**
- 2. What is Stir Sunday?**
- 3. What important event should take place on St Nicholas's Day (6th December)?**
- 4. 21st December is St Thomas's Day. What is "Thomasing" and "mumping" which used to take place on this day?**
- 5. Who was the first Christian martyr to die following Christ's crucifixion and on what day is his feast day?**
- 6. 28th December is Childermas. What event is remembered on this day?**
- 7. What infamous murder occurred on 29th December 1170?**
- 8. What is Plough Monday?**
- 9. St Distaff's Day follows Plough Monday. What does this signify?**
- 10. What was the particular Christmas relevance of Candlemas (2nd February) until Victorian times?**

Answers to last month's quiz – the subject was British Kings and Queens and surprising facts you may not know. “British” here means any monarch who ruled a kingdom or territory in these islands at any time since the Romans left.

1. **King John of England has a reputation for ruthless cruelty. However, he had an active interest which shines a different light on his character. What was it? The clue is that all leaders should have this in mind. He was very interested in law and made efforts to be fair and just in his courts. He even made a point of hearing cases that interested him in person, even if they were disputes between ordinary people.**

2. **The usurper, Henry IV of England, was said to suffer from which disease, considered by the clergy to be divine retribution for his execution of Archbishop Scrope of York? Leprosy, though it is now considered that his ailment was some form of eczema.**

3. **At whose coronation were the abbey doors closed so as to exclude the queen from the ceremony? This was George IV's coronation, one of the most opulent.**

4. **Which king of Scotland was the last British king to be canonized? David I who died in 1153. His feast day is 24th May.**

5. **For what act was Henry VIII awarded the title “Defender of the Faith” by the Pope? As a staunch supporter of the Catholic Church, Henry wrote *Defence of the Seven Sacraments* with Thomas More and John Fisher, which became a best seller throughout Europe.**

6. **Which couple had the shortest royal marriage, and how long do you think it might have been? Alexander III of Scotland and Yolande of Dreux whose marriage lasted 4 months and 19 days when Yolande died in 1286.**

7. Which British monarch holds the record for the greatest age difference between a king and his spouse? **King Aethelwulf of Wessex and Judith – 48 years. As occasionally happened in Anglo-Saxon times, Aethelwulf’s son, King Aethelbald, married his stepmother following his father’s death.**

8. Who spent the shortest period of time as a reigning monarch? **King Ragnald of Man. He usurped the throne in 1164 but was killed four days later.**

9. Who was the oldest successor to be declared monarch? **It was William IV in 1830 but King Charles III beat him in 2022.**

10. King Aldfrith of Northumbria is known for having written several books amongst which was a very light hearted one. What was its subject? **It was a book of riddles called *Enigmata*.**

A Humorous poem (from Irene)

“Toilet Strategy” by Joanna Fuchs

A little boy sat on the toilet;
He was in there way too long.
His mom came in to check;
She thought something was wrong.

He’d sit and sigh, sit and sigh,
Then he’d slap the top of his head.
“Why do you do that?” His mother asked.
“Works for ketchup,” he said.

Membership Cards (Claire)

As you all know we no longer print out membership cards for all our membership. Some of you have sent me stamped addressed envelopes requesting a membership card and I have duly sent these out. Your membership number remains the same from when you first joined and does not change. However, if you would still like a membership card, please send an SAE (and note identifying yourself) to me - Claire

Anderson, Sandiacre, Orchard Close, Langley ME17 3LL. Alternatively, if you have forgotten your membership number, you can email me (membersec.u3a@gmail.com) and I can let you know your number

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 January 2023 Reminder (Damian)

Please note that the **deadline** for contributions to the January 2023 Reminder is Friday **29th December**. **However, as this falls between Christmas and New Year we are not inviting contributions unless they are absolutely essential.** Note that the newsletter will revert to its usual format for February. 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.