

# **Spring Newsletter 2023**

## **Introduction by Acting Chair Richard Collisson**

As I sit by my desk wondering what to write, the rain is pouring down and it is bitterly cold. Hopefully by the time you receive this newsletter it will be warmer, the days longer and our gardens bursting into life and colour.

The u3a is a wonderful movement that has a presence in all the corners of our Nation: Shetland & Skye all the way to Jersey and Guernsey. Hastings and Rother in 2023-24 will be celebrating its 35th anniversary. In 1989 we had 79 members and subscriptions were £4!

We now have over 60 groups, almost 600 members and the subscriptions remain modest at £15.00pa. Where else can you get such value for money and the opportunity to meet others in the pursuit of many interests?

I hope you have all had a chance to read my letter by now. Perhaps all convenors could discuss our recruitment crisis with their members. Please consider the comments from our previous chairs Lorna and Robert in the Notes and Notices that follow.

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## **Notes and Notices**

### **U3A Chair and Vice Chair vacancy March 2023**

You will by now have received a letter from our Acting Chair and hopefully realise the seriousness of the situation. Please see below some of the responses:

I am writing in response to your recent letter about the future of Hastings & Rother U3A. You explain clearly that if we fail to recruit a Chair and Vice Chair, the organisation will have to be disbanded. A number of points occur to me:

- Group activities seem to be the major benefit for many members, and these would be an immediate casualty if we were disbanded. Some have expressed the view that these activities could continue on the same basis as before. Not so! At present all groups and activities such as meetings and 'Days-Out' are covered by insurance provided by the Third Age Trust: (in effect the national HQ of the U3A). This insurance would cease on H&R U3A's disbandment. In future, if a member sustained an injury – as a result of a fall for example – at a group meeting in another member's home, then the host might well be held liable and suffer serious financial consequences. As one of the organisers of 'Days-Out' I can assure members that these would not take place in future. The cost and complication of organising appropriate travel insurance would be too great.
- There is the further point that, even if some groups chose to continue their activities without insurance, then their numbers would likely decline without a forum for future recruitment.
- Group Convenors play a vital role in our U3A. Could they meet informally to discuss the issue of recruitment of a Chair and Vice Chair? Could they be invited to meet the Committee – perhaps after the next Committee meeting.
- I want to suggest that at the next Speaker meeting (Monday 3rd April 2023 at St Peters) members should be encouraged to attend and to express solutions to the issue of recruiting officers to the Committee.

Finally: a more positive thought. We have more than 550 members and we all have an opportunity to enhance our longevity and a happy retirement in three important ways:

- Activity
  - Social contact
  - Doing things that we enjoy
- Long may that continue with Hastings & Rother U3A!

Robert Hadland (Former Chair)

Letter to the Chair.

I am desperately hoping that you will have some good news with several members volunteering.

I want to reiterate Robert's last 3 bullet points. In a former life I was deeply involved in health care research. The evidence is not ambiguous, if people want to promote their health in these later years and enjoy good quality of life it is these 3 things that come up trumps in all studies. They are the essence of the u3a.

I also want to heap praise on you Richard for tackling this challenge in the face of such discouragement.

Lorna Couldrick (Former Chair)

## **Editorial**

**AGM - 24 July 2023**

It's that time of year again with the AGM looming. This year it is more important than ever with both Chair and Vice chair unresolved. By the time we send out the next Newsletter (mid-June 2023) we will need a definitive list of candidates and incumbents for the continued function of the committee on your behalf. Although our existing committee is full of dedicated and in many cases long serving members it is important not to overload them with multiple roles.

Any member of the Hastings and Rother u3a may stand as candidate and if elected serve on the committee. It is essential that anyone who believes they are able to fill any of the senior roles they should get involved with the committee and possibly get up to speed so that when elected hit the ground running for a smooth handover.

Even if you feel that you are not ready or able to fulfil the demands of the leading functions, helping with one of the other existing jobs may free someone up to fulfil the essential positions we now so desperately need.

If you would like to contribute to our Newsletter, please contact the team with any articles and pictures of u3a activities, group information or events both recent and planned.

**For inclusion in the Summer 2023 issue please send by e-mail to [newsletter.hru3a@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.hru3a@gmail.com) before the 10th of June**

Best wishes from the Newsletter Team: John, Anne and Chris.

## **Our Facebook Group.**

Follow our Facebook Group to get updates re Events etc.

Just type "Hastings & Rother u3a" (and then press enter) into the Facebook Search Bar at the top of the Facebook homepage.

## **Volunteers Required.**

### **VICE CHAIR**

**(Required immediately)**

#### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Adhere to the basic principles as laid out in the Branch Constitution and the Objects and Principles of the U3A as defined by the Third Age Trust.
2. Support the Chair in the organisation and running of the branch.
3. Deputise for the Chair as and when necessary.
4. Where possible to take on another key-function within the branch.

### **CHAIR**

**(To commence from AGM July 2023)**

#### **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Ensure adherence to the branch Constitution and the Objects and Principles of the Third Age Trust.
2. Give autonomy to office holders through delegation and offer support when required.
3. Actively recruit, welcome & liaise with volunteers for crucial non-committee roles.
4. Chair committee meetings or delegate to the Vice-chair:
  - a) Assist the Secretary in drawing up agendas,
  - b) Welcome committee members and thank them for attending,
  - c) Keep order, ensure balance and encourage everyone to participate, listen attentively, move action forward, vote when appropriate (Chair has casting vote), act as mediator/arbitrator between people and problems, summarise decisions, action, deadlines, etc. keep meeting to an appropriate length,
  - d) Delegate tasks to committee members as appropriate.
5. Preside at monthly meetings:
  - a) Welcome members (especially new members and visitors), ensure national, regional and local notices are announced as appropriate, drawing members attention to the notice board for further information,
  - b) Greet and introduce the speaker and enlist a member to thank the speaker,
  - c) Close the meeting.
6. Plan and conduct the AGM in accordance with the Constitution and present a report for the year.
5. Write a "Message from the Chair" for each Newsletter.
6. Note any members' concerns and work with the Committee to resolve these.
7. Represent the Branch on local organisations as appropriate, either personally or through delegation.

## Zoom Meetings & Talks

Unfortunately, we are no longer able to support local Zoom meetings or schedule talks. However the Third Age Trust has a comprehensive programme available to all Members.

**The link to all events will be available on the U3A website**

**<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>**

## THE POWER OF 50

When we buy things large or small, we patriots would prefer to get items made in the UK if we can. After all, corporation and personal income tax do help our treasury and our economy as well. Also, it helps employment and we could reduce imports. Every country in the world has a special number proving where the item was made. You will find it in the first digits of the huge number appearing above or below the bar code printed on the packaging or container of your item.

Anyway, anything made in the UK has the initial number 50. China's start with a 6. Germany 40 to 44. 30 to 37 is France. 49 is Japan etc etc. Even Nepal has a number but I wonder what they make and export.

There is no way to guarantee that components from abroad are not incorporated in our purchases, but the arguments above hold true nevertheless.

So, if you have a choice when buying, please do consider looking at the bar code area.

Ron Gager

## u3a Regular Coffee Mornings

You are cordially invited to come along and meet some of our members for a coffee and a chat. These coffee mornings are held between 10.30 am to 12 noon on the second Monday and Thursday of each month at two separate venues. Please choose the venue that suits you or come to both. Just make yourself known to the group.

### Venue 1:

Second Monday  
White Rock Hotel Hastings  
Coffee Bar/Restaurant  
Roadside parking meters nearby  
(98 and 99 buses stop nearby)

### Venue 2:

Second Thursday  
De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill  
Go to the cafe on the 1st floor.  
Lift available if required.  
Plenty of parking available  
(99 bus stops nearby)

## Events

### **2023 Speaker Programme**

**Venues: St Peter's Community Centre, Old Town, Bexhill, TN40 2HE**

**Or: White Rock Theatre, Hastings, TN34 1JX**

*10.00 Coffee*

*10.30 Notices*

*10.45 Speaker*

*12.00 Close*

#### **3rd April 2023 St Peters**

##### **"THE LIFE OF BRIAN."**



Yes! It's Brian Murphy! He is world famous for his title role in the world-wide hit series George and Mildred. He is also well known for his roles in the sit-coms Last of the Summer Wine and Man About The House.

Brian started his career in the Theatre Workshop company, run by Joan Littlewood, which was based at Stratford East with productions that went on to tour the world, such as The Hostage and The Quare fellow written by Brenden Behan. Also, Oh What a Lovely War, and Sparrows can't sing, both of which became box office smash hit films. His TV, film and theatre roles are endless in his long and very successful career.

. Brian will be introduced by his actress wife Linda Regan

#### **22nd May 2023 White Rock Theatre**

##### **Neil Sadler California Dreaming**



Neil is a retired senior police officer who can provide talks or more structured presentations on a range of subjects. "Exhibits", equipment and photographs will illustrate his "cases"

He spent much of his 30 years service as an operational officer in various ranks across Sussex, working briefly in Hong Kong, Trinidad and Abu Dhabi....he even survived Bognor Regis, Haywards Heath and Crawley !

#### **26 June 2023 St Peters**

##### **Just Ken**

##### **Kenneth Roberts**

(Conductor/Musical Director and OSE Founder)

Ken was born in Hastings and educated at York University where he gained BA and MA degrees in music. He works as Musical Director for numerous companies at home and abroad. He also enjoys giving his series of lecture recitals around the country on subjects ranging from Mozart to 'Jelly Roll' Morton.



## **Book Review**

### **Richard Osman: Enid Blyton for Oldies?**

Nearly 50 years ago I attended a seminar about encouraging young children to read more books. Many earnest arguments were put forward and it seemed to be agreed that it didn't matter too much what they read, so long as they read something – “even Enid Blyton is better than nothing”. This caused a bit of a stir and somebody suggested that “Enid Blyton is literary mince. Mince is fine if you want to make shepherd's pie, but who wants that when you could have roast beef?” (This, of course, in the days when vegetarianism was a minority sport, and much condescended to).

Enid Blyton sat at the keyboard for countless hours and turned out loads of best-sellers. “The Famous Five” tackled many villainous adults and solved crimes without the interference of their parents or the police. “The Faraway Tree” was deep in a forest, where young children found a different mysterious world every time they climbed to the top of the eponymous tree. I remember ‘the Land of Ice-cream’ as a particular favourite.

Richard Osman strikes me as the Enid Blyton de nos jours. His first 3 books introduce us to the “Thursday Murder Club”. Pensioners Joyce, Ron, Ibrahim and Elizabeth, solve murders, having snared the local CID (Chris and Donna) into helping them with information and advice. Then there is Bogdan, who hails from Poland: his character is stolen shamelessly from “Aladdin”. He is the Genie of the lamp – summoned by mobile rather than by polishing a lamp – but who arrives just as quickly and provides invaluable services by day or by night. “Bogdan: be a dear and deliver £10,000 worth of cocaine for me”. (All in the successful attempt to trap yet another criminal)

The Murder Club members, lubricated by regular bottles of wine, have as many jolly japes as the Famous Five and are almost as impervious to serious injury, let alone death. Elizabeth and her ailing husband are abducted, bound and gagged, driven nearly 200 miles in the back of a van, then dumped by the side of the road at the dead of night. They do not suffer any apparent ill-effects such as hypothermia; they call Bogdan who drives to collect them and return them to their retirement village. Ron “fits-up” the yobbo who has mugged Ibrahim, by concealing drugs in the youth's flat, while posing as a plumber. Retired nurse Joyce has no sympathy with a villain, shot in the shoulder: “Don't be such a baby, it's only a scratch.”

Literary mince? Yes maybe, but very nutritious and only 5% fat. It has been hard work to suspend my disbelief at times – but, dear Reader, I have signed up for a copy of “Thursday Murder Club 4”.

*Robert Hadland March 2023*

## **Light Reading**

### **THE RISE OF THE GERIACTIVISTS**

Recently leaked preliminary findings from an all-party committee who were looking into the matter of geriatric delinquency makes for disturbing reading.

This new form of urban terrorism seems to have sprung up in response to the failure of the government initiatives against gun and knife crime and the ineffectiveness of ASBO's. All over the country U3A groups started to provide Martial Arts lessons. Also pensioner drop in centres, in addition to tea and buns and classes on how to make leftovers go further or keeping warm on an insufficient winter fuel allowance were lessons on 'Kendo and the Zimmer Frame' and 'Karate for the Somewhat Forgetful.' The report warns that stiff arthritic fingers can be lethal in the wrong hands.

This newfound interest in self-defence spawned a series of cult movies starting with a remake of Bruce Lee's 'Enter the Old Dragon' and culminating in the iconic 'Crouching Granny Hidden Pampers.' Senior citizens were seen leaving the matinees re-enacting the slow motion fight scenes in real time. This culminated in the form of an aged superhero known as Zimmer- man who, having defeated a gang of teenage muggers after his pension, became a vigilante patrolling the city centre. For months police sieved the Jewish benefit agencies trying to track him down believing that Zimmerman was his real name.

The Internet abounds with sites inciting the Geriatric Population or 'Geri-Pops', as they are being called, to reclaim the streets. Advice and training in specialist techniques, suspected to be posted by a Scottish Nationalist militant group Auld Qaeda, have been discovered on pensioner's laptops. The committee calls for a complete ban on several downloads such as 'Boring as a Form of Defence' and 'Flatulence as a Weapon.' In Bexhill a seventy-year-old man, using the latter technique, cleared a crowded chip shop in a matter of seconds and escaped with some fish scraps for his cat. The police put a sniffer dog on his trail but the poor creature expired from sensory overload.

A train guard found a young person slumped lifelessly in his seat on the last train from London to Hastings. He was taken to hospital where he remains in a coma. On investigation it was discovered that he had spent the entire journey trapped alongside an old man who had insisted on recounting what life was like when he was a lad. Doctors say there is nothing physically wrong with the victim but he seems to have lost his will to live.

All over the country, pensioners are spending their mobility allowance on souped-up electric buggies and staging late night drag races in the shopping malls. On at least one occasion a gang of leather clad Hells Granddads ram raided a branch of Holland and Barratt escaping with hundreds of pounds worth of Glucosamine and Little liver Pills.

East Sussex police report that a publican was badly beaten for refusing to put

the complete works of Aled Jones on his juke box. He is expected to recover but will have a limp for the rest of his life due to the damage done to his metatarsal by the sharpened leg of a walking frame that pinned him to the floor.

In Southend-on-Sea last summer a group of retired civil servants re-enacted the battles between Mods and Rockers of their youth. The sea front resembled a scene from Quadrophenia except that the opposing sides' defining haircuts have been largely replaced by skin heads, natural rather than shaven.

This winter, the same town fell prey to gangs of Ninja Nannies that roam the streets at night terrifying the local youths. On hearing the incipient click-shuffle, click-shuffle, of walking sticks and carpet slippers on damp pavements youths are forced to break off their normal activities of breaking into cars and knifing each other and rush home to their mums. The authorities have been unable to identify any of the 'N.Ns' even using CCTV as they have taken to wearing plastic rain hats pulled down over their eyes.

Other night stalkers smartly dressed in dinner suits and top hats, instead of dressing gowns and winceyette nighties, are adding to the late night mayhem but these are the Un-Dead and quite a different issue.

The problem of wrinkly violence is not only confined to the Geriactivists. Many normal citizens of pensionable age have taken to sharpening the edges of their bus passes. These become every bit as dangerous as Death Stars. Thrown with deadly accuracy, they are capable of slicing the cowl off a Hoodie's jacket and returning to their owners like boomerangs.

The police have been given special powers of stop and search in order to deal with the problem. They are patrolling the high streets checking I.D's and frisking anyone that appears to be over sixty five. They have no compunction about running-in any old codger found to be carrying a hidden weapon or suspected of Sanatogen abuse. Understandably, this has caused considerable resentment among senior citizens as the widespread graffiti proclaiming Grey Power will attest.

# **GREY POWER**



**I'm old & tired.  
Get off my lawn!**

@John G. Ridge Writers

## Group News

### **Ridge Writers Change of Venue:**

Having experienced difficulties at Beauport the group will now meet on the second and third Tuesdays of each month starting at 10:30 am in:

#### **The Bo Peep public house 25 Grosvenor Crescent TN38 0AA**

Plenty of tea and coffee available.

It is on several bus routes and there is ample free parking nearby.

### **U3a Qigong Classes for Health, Stability and Wellbeing**

**Mondays fortnightly 3-4pm at Azur Pavilion TN38 0BU**

Qigong is similar to Tai Chi *"the art of Life Energy"* with gentle flowing movements of the upper body and arms, standing or seated. Qigong enhances your breathing and gives a sense of tranquillity. No equipment needed. Wear comfortable clothing and footwear.

**As 10<sup>th</sup> April is a Bank Holiday the next 2 classes are Mon 24<sup>th</sup> April & Mon 8<sup>th</sup> May  
It's a Drop-in class. Participants pay £3 per session.**

### **Table Tennis**

We meet at the Hollington Community Centre, Wishing Tree Road, TN38 9LL every Monday afternoon (barring bank holidays) between 2 - 4 pm to play Table Tennis. Usually between 8 - 14 players and we play singles and doubles. A very mixed ability group, we don't take ourselves too seriously, it's all about having fun.



If we are very busy it is possible to have 5 table tennis tables so 20+ players easily accommodated.

It costs £5 per person per session plus 50p for tea/coffee and another 20p for biscuits and sometimes cake. We always stop for a refreshments break halfway through, a chance for a good natter.

More members always welcome, come and see if you like us.

Moir Foster (Convenor)

### **Bexhill Storytellers.**

Barry Taylor is forming this new Writers Group which will meet at:

**The Bull Inn Bexhill Rd TN38 8AY from 3.30-5.30, (in the restaurant area)**

on the last Friday of each Month. Starting 28th April.

Plenty of buses serve this Pub, and the Bar will be open for those of nervous disposition!

Enquiries via Groups List on this website.

## Travel Group

With thanks to our friends at Rye u3a a small group from H&R have recently enjoyed a wonderful overnight trip to France where we had a delightful gourmet meal accompanied by some splendid wine and canapés. What more can you ask for?



With thanks to Robert, Heather, David and Deborah we have a forth coming trip to Dover.

However we have no actual H&Ru3a travel group. Would you like to start one? Do get in touch with the Groups Convenor Lynda Wood who can help you set one up.



Photographs from Richard Collison

## **Your Committee**

Acting Chair	Richard Collisson	<a href="mailto:chair.hru3a@gmail.com">chair.hru3a@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Josephine Noyce	<a href="mailto:treasurer.hru3a@gmail.com">treasurer.hru3a@gmail.com</a>
Assistant Treasurer	Gail Oswald	<a href="mailto:u3a@gailoswald.co.uk">u3a@gailoswald.co.uk</a>
Minutes Secretary	Jenny Meteyard	<a href="mailto:minutes.hru3a@gmail.com">minutes.hru3a@gmail.com</a>
Business Secretary	Ginny Edwards	<a href="mailto:secretary.hru3a@gmail.com">secretary.hru3a@gmail.com</a>
Membership Secretary	Matilda Jarvis	<a href="mailto:membership.hru3a@gmail.com">membership.hru3a@gmail.com</a>
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<i>Groups Coordinator</i>	<i>Lynda Wood</i>	<a href="mailto:groups.hru3a@gmail.com">groups.hru3a@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	<a href="mailto:vicechair.hru3a@gmail.com">vicechair.hru3a@gmail.com</a>

## **Introducing**



Speakers Secretary Pandora Bastian [speakers.hru3a@gmail.com](mailto:speakers.hru3a@gmail.com)  
 Pandora is working alongside Babs to set up future talks.



Venues Coordinator April Yasamee [venues.hru3a@gmail.com](mailto:venues.hru3a@gmail.com)

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank all who contributed to the ongoing activities of Hastings and Rother u3a in particular to Babs Spackman who has to step down from her role as Speakers Secretary but has ensured a continuous run of excellent speakers throughout the year and supporting Pandora as she takes over that task.