

Ringmer U3A



Newsletter



Vice-Chairman's message
Reports from our Groups
News from Sussex U3A Network
Beacon and Website Updates
New Groups for 2020

Spring 2020 Edition

Edited by Jon Elphick

Announcements

Monday 3rd February

Next E-Bulletin to be distributed

Monday 9th March

Copy deadline for the Summer edition of the Newsletter

Monday 6th April

Summer 2020 edition of the Newsletter to be published

Wednesday 13th May

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 3rd June

National U3A Day

Message from the Vice-Chairman

We are approaching the Christmas and New Year period, and our thoughts are turning to 2020. This will be the 30th year of a U3A Group in Ringmer, and we really must mark this anniversary in style. We hope to do something on Wednesday 3rd June, as this will also be National U3A Day. Do let your Committee know what you feel we should be doing to celebrate this landmark, and also how you may be able to help.

Talking of the Committee, we really are reaching a crisis point. Nobody has volunteered to join us, and we have now been running for some time with no Chairman, Committee Secretary or New Groups Co-ordinator. Our Annual General Meeting has been set for Wednesday 13th May, and unless the matter of committee vacancies is resolved by then we will be faced with the strong possibility of having to fold. This would be such a shame after all the efforts of the committee members and convenors over the past 30 years. Once again I put out a plea for people to come forward and volunteer.

Finally can I wish all of you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Ian Loughborough



Out & About Group

Visit to Standen House and Garden



On 10th October 12 members of the Out & About group paid a very interesting visit to Standen House and Garden near East Grinstead. Built between 1892 and 1894, the house was completely decorated by William Morris with his iconic fabrics, wallpapers and furnishings.

William Morris, born in 1834, was a designer associated with the British Arts and Crafts Movement, and he created some of the most recognisable textile patterns of the 19th century.

The house was owned originally by the Beale family, and Morris was commissioned to do the interior decor, which can still be seen today. Interestingly Morris never visited Standen to see his work after it

was completed. The house and its gardens passed to the National Trust in 1972.

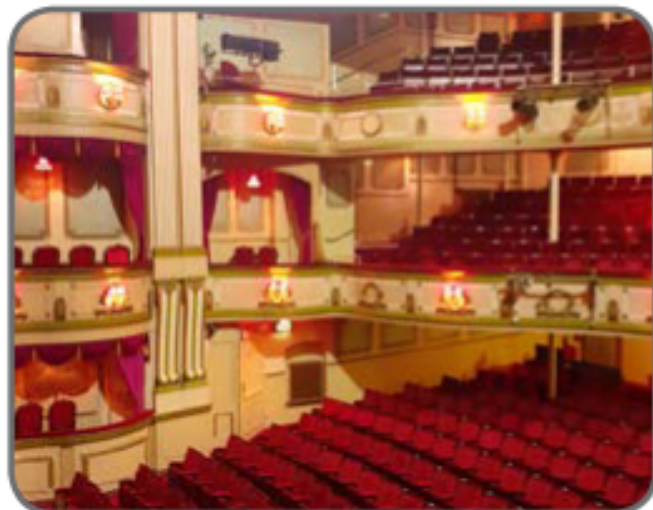
The group also spent time in the lovely gardens and the very nice café, where we had coffee and lunch. We all enjoyed the day very much.

Judy Ellis



Some glorious autumn colour to be seen at Standen

Behind-the-Scenes Visit to the Theatre Royal, Brighton



Eight of us braved the heavy rain and wind to catch the Brighton bus for our visit on 2nd November.

We started our tour in the stalls, where our guide gave us a short history of the theatre. The site was given by the Prince of Wales for a new theatre near his property, the Royal Pavilion, and the doors opened in June 1807 with performances of *Hamlet* and *The Weather Cock*.

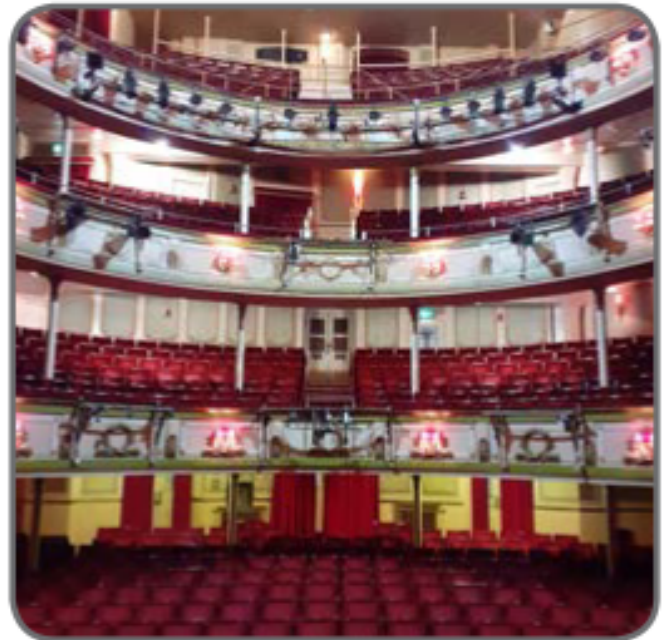
We heard how Ellen Elizabeth Nye Chart became manager after the death of her husband. They had both lived in the theatre, and two of their rooms are now the royal circle bar; a bust of Ellen Elizabeth is displayed in one of these rooms. She was the first to introduce matinees, and she also organised

annual pantomimes for the inmates of the workhouse (now Brighton General Hospital). It is thought by some that she haunts the theatre; if she is not happy with the way things are going the lights flicker and her seat (at the back of the stalls) goes up and down on its own.

Following this introduction we went up onto the stage where we could see the preparations taking place for the afternoon performance of *Toast*. We were unable to look into the dressing rooms, as the actors were already using them, but we explored the back stage corridors and rooms as far as the stage door. The back of the theatre was converted from fishermen's cottages, and some of the brickwork remains.

We were told of the problems that sometimes occur because of the constraints of the building being Grade II listed. The only way to get scenery and props into the theatre is through quite a narrow corridor, which can cause problems (e.g. the camper van used in the production of Alan Bennett's play *The Lady in the Van*).

We also explored the area below the stage, which is very small and dark, with a further section where the orchestra has to play if required. We were shown an old pump that was worked by Victorian children in the days when the theatre would flood (a stream runs under it towards Pool Valley).



We visited the royal circle, the bar and the royal box (which Queen Elizabeth II visited). We looked inside and all agreed, I think, that sitting in the royal circle would be preferable, as the view of the stage was very limited in the box. There was a seat in this box that cannot be seen from any other seat in the theatre, where it is said the Prince Regent sometimes sat when he did not want to be observed.

Jo Miller

2Garden Group

As you read this in December we will already have come to the end of our year –my first as convenor – as we do not meet during December and January. During this break the main organisation of the 2020 programme will be taking place; but that still seems a while off, and currently we are reflecting on the second half of this year.

Our August meeting was an outing to The Old Vicarage in Washington, West Sussex (pictured right and overleaf). In spite of the shower of rain which greeted us on arrival there was a wonderful and extensive view towards the North Downs, and we enjoyed a guided tour of a most attractive and imaginative garden. This flowed effortlessly





throughout its three and a half acres, surprising us with a different style and feature at every turn, finally arriving at the huge conservatory where tea was served (with home-made cakes).

In September we visited The Garden House, Crowborough and were given a warm welcome by the owners, who also gave us a brief history and guided tour of their garden, which had been planned by a renowned garden designer. Towards the end of our visit tea (one again with home-made cakes) was served in the garden studio, although many of us enjoyed ours around a table in the late afternoon sunshine.

Each of the four gardens we have visited this year

has been inspirational in its own individual way, and we will hope for similar next year.

Our penultimate meeting, at a member's home, was well attended and included a tour of the garden, where we enjoyed some rare sunshine for October! One member brought surplus produce and seeds from her garden to share, and our afternoon concluded with home-made refreshments. Our final meeting in November was an ideal time for members' reflections and ideas for planning next year's programme; and none of our meetings would be complete without refreshments, of course!

Early next year we look forward to welcoming the Head Gardener of Glynde Place, who will tell us about his role over the four seasons of a year and answer (hopefully, he says!) members' questions. As we meet on the second Tuesday afternoon of the month, our first meeting in 2020 will be on the 11th of February.

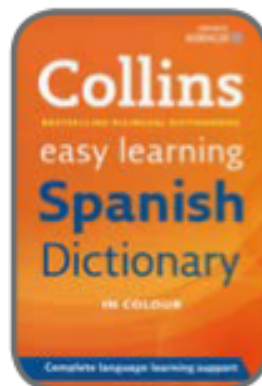
At the U3A enrolment morning we were pleased to welcome six new members, and we hope that they will enjoy their time with this group and participate in all that it has to offer. Members of Ringmer U3A (and of other U3A groups) are very welcome to join us on our outings; further details of next year's programme will follow in the next Newsletter, or contact me via the website.

Rita Price

Spanish Conversation Group

The Spanish Conversation group started again in September after the summer break. We welcomed a new member, taking the number in the group to ten. We have another possible member, who has attended two of our meetings, but she has not yet confirmed whether she wants to officially join the group.

We continue to hold fortnightly meetings at members' houses. Our lessons take a similar format as before: correction of homework, individual news, conversation around a topic of interest, and any grammar points that arise during our conversation.



As always, I very much welcome members' suggestions for other activities that would help and encourage the learning of the language.

In future it would be interesting to watch Spanish films and have discussions about them afterwards; also debating topical news items would be challenging and good fun.

We will have our last meeting of 2019 on 16th December. We have not yet decided on the date of our first meeting in the New Year.

Conchita Wigley

Family History Group

The Family History Group is now ten years old, having been started by Ian Loughborough in February 2009. Seventeen people attended the inaugural meeting in the Village Hall, and the accompanying photograph was taken for posterity. The second meeting in March was held in the Scout Hut, as have all meetings since.

Eleven of those 17 original members still attend, and five of these – Bob Cairns (Convenor since 2016), Sue Hall, Alan Pett, Pauline Lloyd and John Saunders – form the planning group, which determines the programme and helps make the meetings work. Jon Elphick prepares the group's bi-monthly newsletter.

After ten years the group has been reviewing its activities and members have been asked for their views on the future programme. With our membership consisting of people with mixed experience it is important to get the balance and level of presentations and practical work right in order to keep everyone's interest.



The hottest subject currently is DNA, as nearly 40 members are struggling to analyse the results of their tests which were taken during the summer.

Our monthly gatherings continue to be lively, and we are looking forward to our social meeting – jointly with the Photography and IT groups – on Tuesday 31st December.

Bob Cairns

Short Walks Group

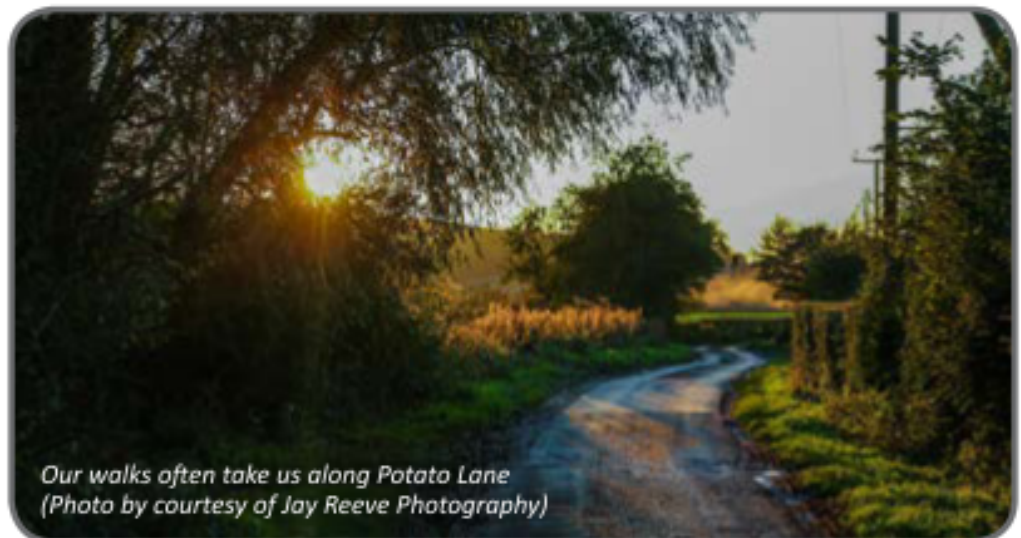
Over the past four months the Short Walks group has continued to meet regularly for a leisurely walk around the footpaths of Ringmer, though on a few occasions we didn't go ahead because the weather was not good enough to make walking pleasurable.

The group is intended for those who like to enjoy a leisurely stroll and a chat. We only use public footpaths, lanes and byways, and aim to keep to flat routes without stiles etc. Our walks last for no more than 90 minutes.

We meet twice a month – on the second Monday at 10.15am and the fourth Thursday at 2.30pm. Walks start from

the Doctors' Surgery car park in Anchor Field, and sometimes we finish with a visit to a café for a cup of tea or coffee. There is always room for more to join in – everyone is welcome!

Jon Elphick



*Our walks often take us along Potato Lane
(Photo by courtesy of Jay Reeve Photography)*

Sussex U3A Network (SUN)

Study Days

SUN organises study days at various venues around Sussex, covering a diverse range of subjects. These events cost £8 for a full day of entertainment from highly qualified speakers; however they require a minimum of 40 attendees if they are to proceed. Unfortunately two study days had to be cancelled due to lack of interest, including the one scheduled to take place in Ringmer, which was a shame.

Please consider whether you would be interested in future study days to support the network. 'Exploring the link between music and nature' will take place in January, and 'The diversity of landscapes in the South East of England' is in February. 'How fashion and fortune affected country houses in the South Downs' is in March.

I hope that members will try to support these study days. To book a place, either contact me or look on the Ringmer U3A website for the link to the SUN website under the EVENTS tab.

Jill Collins

Viennese Joy and Parisian Pleasure in Steyning!

How perfect to spend a very rainy Saturday at a SUN Study Day listening to wonderful music in the company of about 90 other U3A members. This was the final study day that John Hursey (a retired music tutor from



Canterbury Christchurch University) would give for the U3A, as he has decided that it really is time for him to retire completely.

We learnt about and listened to Schubert songs and piano pieces, Brahms waltzes, Straus's 'Die Fledermaus', Parisian court musicians, Faure, Debussy, Mozart and Bizet. John played us music from some of his favourite recordings and performed other pieces himself on the Steyning Centre's grand piano.

One of John's key pieces of advice was to use great music as 'medicine for the mind', something that has enabled him to recover from the grief of losing his beloved wife. He suggested that each day after breakfast, or after any evening meal, we set ourselves the challenge of listening (maybe for only ten minutes) to some uplifting music from our own collections or on YouTube.

Certainly the day itself was medicine for the mind, and I was delighted to have been able to attend John Hursey's final performance!

Kay Fitzgerald

The Steyning Centre, venue for John Hursey's SUN Study Day



Astronomy Group

During August and September we were enjoying a lengthy period of clear weather and the Astronomy Group was able to observe the planets Jupiter and Saturn. Since this period the weather has become less obliging and it has not been possible to organise observation evenings.

On 11th November Mercury transited the face of the sun, and we were able to view this during the afternoon in a member's garden.

Our Group continues with its monthly meetings. Topics have included Mercury, exoplanets, the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing and high-speed space travel.

Group meetings planned for the coming months will look at double stars and observing the Universe by using electromagnetic wavelengths other than light.

Brian Wignall

Creative Crafters

The group celebrates one year of being established this month, and we've been taking our time to get to know each other and learn about each other's talents. We've met in the same venue throughout that year, either with the french doors open or with the wood-burner going – often so engrossed in what we are doing that we forget to put another log on!

We've talked about teaching each other new crafts, and members have shown an interest in learning 'the disappearing nine patch'. We started this last month, and have had quite a giggle with squares



sewn back to front! Luckily they can't be sewn upside down! When the patch is finished it can be made into a cushion cover or used as part of a quilt. We will see what happens – after all we are learning as we go

Other members of the group have chosen to continue with their own projects, but we all join in with the banter. Pictured are a couple of the patches in progress: watch this space to see what they end up as.

Julie Terry

What The Papers Say

There is so much to discuss – our meetings get ever more lengthy and lively. We've even been thinking of meeting more often, to try to keep up with the changing face of politics in this country and abroad. However local affairs are also always of great interest and members' knowledge is invaluable.

Our meetings continue to be on the fourth Monday of each month at 2pm. We won't be meeting in December, but we can be sure there will be plenty of issues to talk about at the January meeting – can't wait!

Sue Wilkins

U3A Beacon System and Membership Update

As you may know, Beacon is the system that Ringmer U3A is using to maintain its and the groups' membership data. I'd like to thank all members for their co-operation when renewing their membership this year, as Beacon has allowed this to be (mostly) error free. My apologies to the small number of members who were affected by an error on my part.

To line up with the way Beacon works we've slightly changed the way the subscription fees work. When an application is made in July and August the subscription will be the full year's fee, but it will include the following year as well. (The only application forms I've been getting in July and August are renewals. This allows the renewal to be entered onto Beacon at once). We'll also add a second tick

box on to the membership form to allow permission to use photos, so that partners can individually give or withhold this. If you have any other suggestions for improvements to the membership form or the renewal process please let me know.

Finally, a fly in the ointment! During the coming year Beacon will start to move from its current platform to a new one, Beacon 2.0. It is not clear at this stage what the differences will be, but from my past experience I'm expecting the change to be painful, with the need for changes to our processes and fresh training. At present there is no timetable for Ringmer U3A to move to the new platform.

Ken Boot-Handford, Membership Secretary

kboot@ringmeru3a.org

Website Update

Welcome back to another website update. Here are just some of the latest changes:

Welcome page – Noticeboard: Notices provide you with the latest information updates. These are constantly changing, and are generally posted/available for a limited time only.

Resources page: A revised governance procedures and practices document as well as the 2019 AGM minutes have been published. These are now available on the website.

Contact page: As you may be aware we are looking for some new Ringmer U3A committee members. The contacts page has been updated to show the current vacancies.

Groups page: We have a new Newsround group – visit the group page for more details and how to join. A new Beginners Spanish group is planned for the New Year, so for those interested we've set up an initial group page.

News page: A number of newsletters and e-bulletins have been published since the last update, so it's well worth while taking a look. To view, visit the News page and follow the links.

If you have any questions, suggestions or comments concerning the Ringmer U3A site you can always leave a message for us by using the website's contact page.

Keith Moore, Webmaster

Computer Group

The Computer Group continues to be strongly supported, with 36 members currently on the register; however new members are very welcome.

Our group has a planning team, which meets regularly to discuss a programme based on members' feedback from questionnaires or at the monthly meetings. This year we started in September with an overview of the Ringmer U3A website, and the October meeting covered the transfer of videos to digital format.

In November we looked at photograph enhancing, cropping and scanning, with practical examples for use – such as greeting cards. December's meeting

will be a workshop based on members' input including questions and requirements.

At the end of December there will be a combined Christmas meeting with the Family History and Photography Groups. There will be no meeting in January. At every meeting there is a table where members can discuss any computer or technology related issues with a member of the planning team.

Information about the group is published on the Ringmer U3A website computer page in the CG (Computer Group) calendar or on the CG information page.

Sylvia Coleman



New Groups for the New Year!

Spanish for Beginners

We would like to see if there is enough interest among our membership to start a Spanish group for beginners. It would run on a self-help basis, using CDs and books, with members sharing knowledge and helping each other.

Conchita, who runs our current Spanish Conversation group, has kindly agreed to lend support and will help from time to time.

If you are interested then please get in touch with Ian Loughborough or Tim Polwart via our website as soon as possible. If enough people are interested we will organise a meeting in the New Year.

Newsround

At a meeting in October it was agreed to start up a new group, Newsround, in 2020. The group will meet in members' homes at 10am on the fourth Monday in each month, with the first meeting taking place on 27th January.

It will initially be run along the same lines as the existing What the Papers Say group.

This new group does need some more members if it is to be successful. If you are interested then please contact the Convenor, Ann Davis, through our website as soon as possible.

Tim Polwart

Elsie Bowler

You will have been saddened to hear of the recent death of Elsie Bowler at the age of 100. Elsie was a loyal supporter of Ringmer U3A, having joined in the early 90s. She led the Poetry Group from 2011 until last year; she was also a keen member of the Musical Appreciation Group for many years. Elsie will be sorely missed by all her many friends in the village, and our condolences go to her family.



Guiding Principles

As we approach Christmas and the New Year this seems a good time to remind ourselves of the U3A's guiding principles for all groups.

1. To adhere to the guiding principles of the U3A movement,
2. To encourage and enable older people no longer in full-time paid employment to help each other to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience,
3. To promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a U3A,
4. To do all it can to ensure that people wanting to join a U3A can do so,
5. To commit to the furtherance of fair treatment and the absence of discrimination in all our activities, and strive to achieve a membership which reflects our local community.

Ringmer U3A Calendar for Spring 2020

AS = Astronomy (Brian)
CG = Computer Group (Sylvia)
CC = Creative Crafters (Julie)
Fr = French (Bridget)
FH = Family History (Bob)
Ga = Gardening Club (Jenny)

2Ga = Garden (Rita & Marie)
Kn = Knit One, Chat One (Sue)
Ma = Mahjong (Sue)
Nr = Newsround
OA = Out & About (Valerie)

Ph = Photography (Martin)
PS = What the Papers Say (Sue)
Sp = Spanish (Conchita)
SW = Short Walks (Jon)
Wa = Walking (Lynne)

Dates and times are subject to change, so keep in touch with your Convenor. All the Convenors can be contacted via the Ringmer U3A website.

Day	January	February	March	April
Mon		3 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Sp 10.30	2 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Sp 10.30	
Tue		4	3	
Wed	1 Bank Holiday	5 Wa 13.30	4 OA 10.30; Wa 13.30	1 Wa 13.30
Thu	2 CG 14.00	6 CG 14.00	5 CG 14.00	2 CG 14.00
Fri	3 Kn 14.00; CC 14.00	7 Kn 14.00; CC 14.00	6 Kn 14.00; CC 14.00	3 Kn 14.00; CC 14.00
Mon	6 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00	10 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; SW 10.15	9 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; SW 10.15	6 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00
Tue	7	11 2Ga 14.30	10 2GA 14.30	7
Wed	8 AS 19.30	12 AS 19.30	11 AS 19.30	8 AS 19.30
Thu	9	13	12	9
Fri	10	14	13	10 Bank Holiday
Mon	13 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; SW 10.15	17 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Sp 10.30	16 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Sp 10.30	13 Bank Holiday
Tue	14	18 Ga 14.30	17 Ga 14.30	14 2Ga 14.30
Wed	15 Wa 13.30	19 Wa 13.30	18 Wa 13.30	15 Wa 13.30
Thu	16	20	19	16
Fri	17	21	20	17
Mon	20 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Sp 10.30	24 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Nr 10.00; PS 14.00	23 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Nr 10.00; PS 14.00	20 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00
Tue	21 Ga 14.30	25 FH 14.00	24	21 Ga 14.30
Wed	22	26	25	22
Thu	23 SW 14.30	27 Ph 14.00; SW 14.30	26 Ph 14.00; SW 14.30	23 SW 14.30
Fri	24	28	27	24
Mon	27 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Nr 10.00; PS 14.00		30 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Sp 10.30	27 Fr 14.00; Ma 10.00; Nr 10.00; PS 14.00; Sp 10.30
Tue	28 FH 14.00		31 FH 14.00	28 FH 14.00
Wed	29			29
Thu	30 Ph 14.00			30 Ph 14.00
Fri	31			

Your Current Committee

Vice-Chairman	Ian Loughborough
Secretary	Kay Fitzgerald
Treasurer	Sylvia Coleman
Membership Secretary	Ken Boot-Handford
SUN Representative	Jill Collins
Newsletter Editor	Jon Elphick
Groups Co-ordinator	Tim Polwart
Webmaster	Keith Moore

Committee members can be contacted via the U3A website.

Group	Convenor	Status	Members	Meets
Astronomy	Brian Wignall	SA	18	Second Wednesday of each month at 19.30.
Computer Group	Sylvia Coleman	SA	35	First Thursday of each month at 14.00. New members welcome.
Creative Crafters	Julie Terry	SA	6	First Friday of each month at 14.00.
Family History	Bob Cairns	SA	52	Last Tuesday of each month at 14.00 in the Scout Hut. Can take one or two new members.
French Conversation	Bridget Cross	SA	6	Every Monday in member's houses from 14.00 to 15.30. One space available.
Gardening Club	Jenny West; Joan Wignall	WL	18	Third Tuesday of each month at 14.30.
2 Garden	Marie-Claude Pullen; Rita Price	SA	18	Second Tuesday of each month at 14.30, starting on 11th February.
Knit One, Chat One	Sue Hall	WL	9	First Friday of each month at 14.00.
Mahjong	Sue Horne	WL	8	Every Monday at 10.00 excluding bank holidays.
Newsround	Ann Davis	SA	New group	Fourth Monday of each month at 10.00, starting on 27th January.
Out & About	Valerie King	SA	43	St Mary's Room at 10.30 on the first Wednesday in March.
Photography	Martin Whitlock	SA	38	Last Thursday of each month at 14.00 in the Scout Hut. New members welcome.
Short Walks	Jon Elphick	SA	25	Second Monday of each month at 10.15 and fourth Thursday of the month at 14.30, always meeting in the Doctors' Surgery car park.
Spanish for Beginners	tbd	SA	New group	New group seeking members; time of meeting to be agreed. Contact Tim Polwart.
Spanish Conversation	Conchita Wigley	WL	9	Every other Monday at 10.30.
Walking	Lynne Booth	SA	23	First and third Wednesday of each month at 13.30 in the car park behind the shops. Can take more members, but they must be prepared to organise the occasional walk.
What the Papers Say	Sue Wilkins	WL	6	Fourth Monday of each month at 14.00, excluding bank holidays.

Key SA = Spaces are available for new members. WL = The Group is currently full, so there is a waiting list to join.