

# u3a Ringmer

## Spring 2023 Newsletter

Our Website is <https://u3asites.org.uk/ringmer/home/>

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Ringmer u3a will hold its Annual General Meeting at 14:00 on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May in the village hall. All members are encouraged to attend to meet the committee and hear the latest news and comment. This is your opportunity to influence and re-elect the committee.

### **Notes from the Chair**

It's nearly Spring ! Given the wind, rain and frost, you might want to hang on to the thick coat and blanket a little while longer, but the days are indisputably getting longer and lighter. At 2Garden we have been talking about pruning and planting, hibernating hedgehogs waking up and bringing our gardens back to life after the winter. We are also planning outings for the summer months, and I know that some other groups are doing the same.

You might be interested in the Southeast region's Summer School in Chichester. This popular event is returning this year after the enforced break, running from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> of September at the University of Chichester. Please follow this link: [u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/events](https://u3asites.org.uk/southeastu3aforum/events) for more information on courses, accommodation and costs. If you do not have internet access, please contact Jill Haistead on 07939 332542 and the relevant information will be posted to you. Booking opened on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

Whatever you are doing over the next few months, I wish you warm sunshine and soft breezes.

*Sarah Boot-Handford*  
Ringmer u3a Chair

## Group Activity

### Interest Groups – the reason we join u3a

**Thanks:** Aren't we lucky to have so many Interest Groups to join in our u3a ? Your Committee held a coffee morning recently at *Grounded in the Forge* to thank our Conveners for all the hard work that they do to make our various Groups such a success. As you know we managed to start up two new groups last year and hopefully we could do the same this August.

**“Sorry I won't be there this month”:** We live in difficult times and your Conveners do need your continued support. Many of you are helping out in various ways thus enabling your group to thrive. However, there are a few who sometimes fail to turn up at meetings without telling their Convener. This makes it more difficult to plan the meeting and it is unnecessary. We appreciate that there will be times when you cannot turn up at the last moment, but that should be the exception.

**Regular attendance:** We are all aware of the increase cost of living and this is having an impact on those larger groups that have to pay for accommodation. One such group has already found it necessary to increase the fee for each meeting. If you belong to one of these larger groups then please do try and attend regularly so the cost of hiring the accommodation is spread evenly amongst all the members. There is an old saying “use it or lose it” and we have already lost some groups through lack of support. Let us make sure that we do not lose any more.

**Interest Group Coordinator:** Finally, we are still looking for a volunteer to help coordinate the various interest groups. Basically you will act as a link between the Conveners and the Committee. It is an interesting role and not that onerous. Please contact any member of the Committee if you are interested to know more.

### 2 Garden Group

The 2Garden group has experienced a sad loss. Our convener Rita Price died suddenly on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. Rita had looked after the group since the beginning of 2018 and had done so well, keeping it going with Zoom sessions during the lockdowns. She was knowledgeable, thoughtful, warm and efficient. Always cheerful, she arranged some great outings to gardens we never knew existed. We miss her terribly.

It left the group without a lead. I was happy to continue in my role of coordinator and communication point. No one in the group wanted to take Rita's role on. But one of our member suggested that the role could be split into the different functions. Joyce, whose suggestion it was, volunteered to arrange the garden visits, Christine to attend the U3A open day, Sarah to do the quiz. There are other aspects of the role that we still need to sort out but hopefully the survival of the group is secure.

*Marie-Claude Pullen*

## **Astronomy Group**

We have continued to meet on a monthly basis. Since the New Year we have met to discuss Mars which was at its nearest point in its orbit to Earth in December and the satellites which are now orbiting our planet. We considered how the large numbers of satellites are putting space travellers at risk because of collisions and how astronomical research is made more difficult by their presence. We have been in touch with the Royal Astronomical Society and have written to our local MP about this problem (there is a need to engage in negotiations at an international level on this question). Some of us have braved some rather chilly weather to look at the constellations which are in the sky at the moment. We also looked at planet Jupiter and the Orion Nebula through the telescope. Next month we will look at the work of the Herschell family and in May/June we will discuss the Realm of the Galaxies and spend some time observing them- on a warm spring evening when the skies are clear and the barbecue will be working again.

*Brian Wignall*

## **Computing and Home Technogy**

We started the first quarter of 2023 with some interesting topics, in particular a very topical talk in February on Home Solar Energy which was open to all Ringmer u3a members, and well attended.

In the second quarter of the year, we have talks on Microsoft Excel, Amazon's Echo devices and the virtual assistant, cloud computing, file management and making backups of your files. Our questions and answers sessions are open discussions welcomed by our group members and we are planning to re-commence our popular workshops.

As already mentioned in this newsletter we really need our members to come along and support the group. We always welcome new members, so, why not come along and join in with our very friendly group, enjoy the topics, a cup of tea and a chat.

*Keith Moore*

Following on from our meeting on Solar Power back in February we have now received information that registration for "Solar Together East Sussex" is now open and closes on Friday 21 April 2023. This Scheme is an innovative group-buying scheme, which brings Sussex households together to get high-quality solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage at a competitive price. It is supported by local authorities across Sussex. If you already have solar panels installed you can also register to have battery storage added to your existing solar panels to maximise the benefits of your system. Registration is free and without obligation.

More details can be found at [Solar Together - Lewes and Eastbourne Councils \(lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk\)](https://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

## **Garden Group**

The u3a Garden Group currently have a full membership of 18. We recently visited Pembury House Clayton to see the snowdrop display which was spectacular and enjoyed by all. Our programme for 2023 includes talks on daffodils, soil and pruning, growing dahlias and bee keeping. We will also be visiting the One Garden, Stanmer Park and Pelham Plants at Laughton. Plus a Garden Group member has kindly offered to host a strawberry tea in August. A busy and interesting year.

*Jenny West + Joan Wignall*



## **Photography Group**

Ringmer u3a photography group continues to thrive and the group is still open to new members who have an interest in photography. We meet on the last Thursday of each month in the Ringmer Scout hut. We are a very friendly group, all with an interest in improving our photographic skills. We have a monthly subject where members show their images (digital) to the group. We also talk about the history of photography as well as some of the technical skills. Of course there is always the statutory tea break in the middle of the session, where members can discuss whatever they like! If you are interested in joining the group or have any questions speak with the group convener, *Martin Whitlock*.

## **Newsround Group**

This group has now been running for a year or so and we have really enjoyed coming together to discuss topics of interest from the news. It has been particularly appreciated by those who do not have others with whom to share thoughts on what's going on in the world. We meet once a month on a Monday morning and everyone brings along a couple of topics they have found interesting over the previous week. We are now eight in number and this works very well as we meet in one another's homes. Numbers were bolstered this year when Bob Cairns joined us, bringing along his particular brand of provocative discussion. All members do not hesitate to take part and opinions vary making the sessions very stimulating. We all go home feeling uplifted and having used our brains and discursive powers.

*Jenny Hill*

## **Walking Group**

Walking group.... a change is coming...

As usual we have been lucky enough to walk twice a month in spite of the weather. With or without me, as the photo shows....somewhere on the Downs...ably guided by Rita. We have also discovered new routes from Laughton, up behind the Wok, to areas we've never seen before! Thank you to all our intrepid guides.

A change is coming though. We have nineteen names on the group list, some of whom we have never seen. As with many groups we have only half of the members actively leading walks and attending regularly. At the start of this year they have offered dates to lead as usual but one walk each takes us just about to the end of May. Leading a walk always feels a little worrying .... will the group like the walk..(Yes!) Is it too far, too familiar, too steep, too muddy etc. We can pair up or share pre-walk together to support each other if necessary.

There are no more walks on the calendar after the end of May 2023. The group will resume with the start of the membership year in September. Those wishing to take part can come to a planning meeting where we will give dates on which we can lead a walk. There is plenty of flexibility as we have spent the last few years swapping dates around as other calls on our time crop up. I will contact everyone in August to make arrangements.

I hope that this will create a group where we are all sharing the work and the fun. I'm really looking forward to all the beautiful spring walks to come and your company.

*Lynne Booth*

## **Wine Appreciation Group**

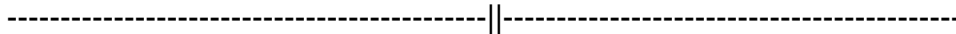
The Wine Appreciation Group has been very busy over the last four months, appreciating wine. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month in a member's house, and our host also chooses the subject and organises the tasting session. In December at Sarah and Ken's, we tried a selection of budget Proseccos and decided that most, but not all, of them could have a place in our Christmas celebrations. For our January meeting, Janet and Clive took us on a tour of South African vineyards – recreating in their dining room a tour that they have actually done in the country. We were all very impressed with the quality of the wine available.

In February, at Peter's, we explored the variety of wines from Chile, ranging from the whites of the cold south to the semi-tropical reds from the north of the country, but all very enjoyable. Most recently, hosted by Hazel, we held our very first blind tasting. Comparing two wines of the same grape, one more expensive than the other, we confirmed the belief that you do not have to spend a fortune to enjoy a delicious bottle of wine.



Next month, it's Australia and later in the year we are hoping to visit one of the local vineyards to sample some home-grown wines.

*Sarah Boot-Handford*



Group List			
2 Garden	Tuesday pm second Tuesday each month	Astronomy	Thursday 7:30pm second Thursday each month
Beginners Spanish	Meeting dates/times TBA	Computer & Home Tech	Thursday pm second Thursday each month
Eco Group	Thursday p.m. Third Thursday each Month	Family History	Tuesday pm last Tuesday of each month
Gardening Club	Tuesday pm third Tuesday each month	Mah-Jong	Monday am every Monday
Newsround	Monday am fourth Monday each month	Photography	Thursday pm last Thursday of each month
Walking Group	Wednesday pm first and third Wednesday	What the Papers Say	Monday 14:30hrs fourth monday
Wine Appreciation	Wednesday 2:30 pm 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month		