

# Ringmer U3A



## Newsletter

## Enrolment and Open Day

## AGM Report

## News from Sussex U3A Network

## Our move to Beacon

## Reports from our Groups



Autumn 2019 Edition

*Edited by Jon Elphick*

## Announcements

**Wednesday 14th August**  
Open Day in the Village Hall

**Friday 18th October**  
Next E-Bulletin to be distributed

**Tuesday 8th November**  
Copy deadline for the Spring  
edition of the Newsletter

**Friday 6th December**  
Spring 2020 edition of the  
Newsletter to be published

## Enrolment and Open Day

**Wednesday 14th August**

**10am to 12 noon in the Village Hall (Symons Room)**

By the end of July all members should contact the Convenors of the Groups to which they belong to confirm that they wish to remain in that particular Interest Group. If you do not notify your Convenor, your place may be given to someone else on Open Day.

Enrolment Forms are included in this newsletter. The preferred option is that it should be completed and dropped in or posted to me at 33 Springett Avenue, Ringmer, Lewes BN8 5HD together with your subscription. Alternatively you can hand them in at the Open Day on 14th August. Please remember that we ask everyone to pay their subscription by cheque made out to 'Ringmer U3A'. This is so that all monies go directly through the bank.

Please read and complete the membership form carefully. Due to the tightening of the law on privacy and data processing there are now a number of questions to be answered on the form.

At the Open Day, Convenors will have a list of members who have notified them of their wish to remain in their respective Groups. They will therefore know whether there are any vacancies for new members. Groups often do fill

up. If you are interested in a Group which is full, please leave your name with its Convenor – we try to start new Groups whenever there is enough interest shown.

Even though you may have pre-enrolled, we still encourage you to drop in at the Open Day to speak to our Convenors and Committee Members, find out about other Groups you may be interested in, declare an interest in a proposed new Group and enjoy a cup of tea with other U3A members. If you would like to join an extra Group you need to check with its Convenor that there is a vacancy.

This year we will only supply membership cards on request, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Instead of sending out cards we will be sending an e-mail confirming your membership. Our Convenors can see on the Beacon system that you are a member, so a membership card is only needed if you are planning to visit another U3A.

If you have any questions I can be contacted by e-mail via the **Ringmer U3A website**.

**Ken Boot-Handford**  
Membership Secretary



## Walking Group

We have about 20 in the group, but there's a 'hard core' of about eight to ten of us who seem to be prepared to walk in any weather and over any terrain, every outing.

Each member offers to plan and lead a walk about every six months, so this gives us a great variety of walks... by the coast, on the Downs and through the Weald... Shoreham, Seven Sisters and Ashdown Forest this year, as well as the footpaths around our beautiful local area. We've had some unexpected beauties this year! Quite often we will



*The Group taking a break during a springtime walk near Telscombe.*

stay on for a cup of tea in the Café Ringmer if we are back soon enough.

It has always been the Group's aim to involve members as much as possible, so a list of those offering to lead walks is put together at the start of September and March. Nobody knows where we will be going until we turn up behind the shops on the first and third Wednesday in the month at 1.30pm with £1 clutched in our hands as a contribution if we share a car. Booted and waterproofed... a couple of hours and about five miles later we'll have found out just what the walk was all about today!

Please join us if you are willing to brave the unknown and would arrange a walk – with some help – after you've had a chance to settle in and experience the full joy of the Walking Group.

**Learn...** to find your way around our lovely local paths.

**Laugh...** at the weather and the occasional confusion about the route, and share good companionship.

**Live...** all that walking must be good for you!

**Lynne Booth**

## Website Update

Our website continues to grow and provide more informative content for the membership. Here are just some of the recent and planned changes to the site.

**Resources page:** Information on governance and AGM meetings is now available to view and download.

**Groups page:** The Family History Group web pages have been expanded, with a new dedicated Family History Newsletters page. Also, at the request of the Group, a new Family History Documents page has been added to provide access to documents of interest to Group members.

**Membership page:** When the new 2019/20 membership form is published it will be available to view and download.

Don't forget that this Newsletter will also be available to view and download from our website via the News page.

Keep up to date by regularly visiting our website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/ringmer/home>. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions for our website you can always contact us via the website's contact page.

**Keith Moore**

## Astronomy Group

The Astronomy Group will be holding its next monthly meeting on 11th September. We do not hold regular meetings during the summertime months, because the nights are too light for stargazing (unless you want to stay up very late!). We are however planning to get together for a special evening before September to make observations of Jupiter and Saturn; but the date for this meeting cannot be decided yet, as weather conditions and the precise positions of the planets need to be taken into account.

Our Group does have vacancies for new members. If you think you would like to join us it is not necessary to have a deep understanding of astronomy; it is enough that you just have an interest. We will help you to understand more about the topic as we go along.

This is a friendly group of people who are always ready to talk to new members and help them to get the most out of this fascinating subject.

**Brian Wignall**

## Photography Group

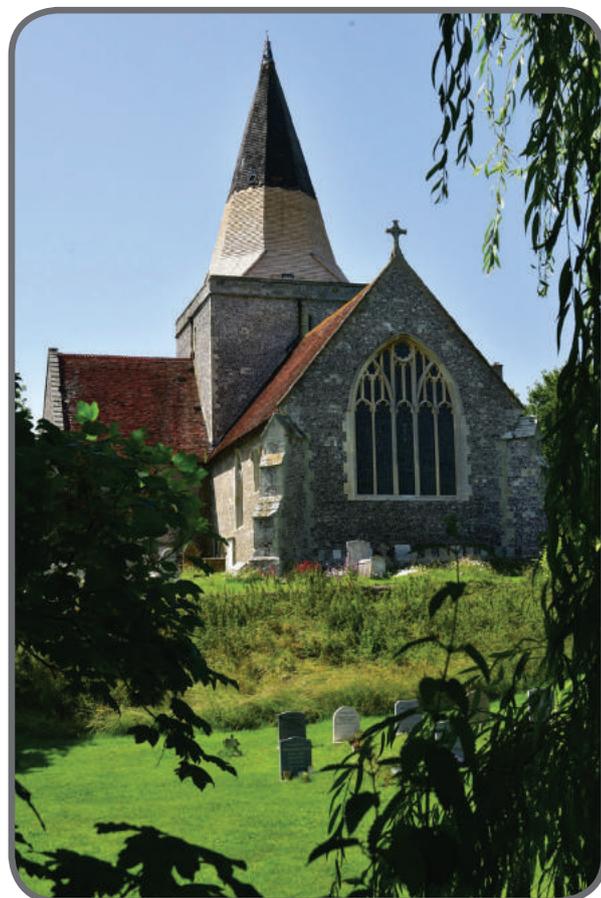
Ringmer U3A Photography Group continues to thrive, and has a membership of 31. There is still room for more members, so why not come along and improve your photographic skills? We cater for all abilities, and you do not have to have a great knowledge of photography – just a camera and the desire to enjoy your photographic experience with the like-minded members of our friendly Group.

We meet monthly throughout the year on the last Thursday of each month at the Scout Hut. Each month members set a theme for the next meeting; we then share our photographic efforts with the Group the following month. Our December meeting is a joint one with the Family History Group.

At our April meeting award-winning local photographer John Price came to present a talk about his experiences with his camera. He showed us some great photographs, giving members food for thought and ideas on how they might improve their own skills.

Our June meeting was a beautiful sunny afternoon trip to Alfriston, with our cameras of course. A walk round this lovely Sussex village taking photographs was followed by afternoon tea in a nearby tea room.

**Martin Whitlock**



*Two of the photographs taken by Group members during our visit to Alfriston.*

## Computer Group

The Computer Group continues to meet on the first Thursday of each month in the Scout Hut, and since the last Newsletter some interesting and valuable presentations have taken place. A session on Excel in May, and Camera, Computer and Sewing Machine to Create Textile Art in June, were both very popular. The July meeting was one of our regular and very popular workshops at which members can discuss and find solutions to computer

problems. There will be no meeting in August, but the Group starts again in September.

Our programme for the rest of the year will be available on the Computer Group page of the Ringmer U3A website. This is updated regularly, with news under the CG News section and events under CG Calendar.

**Sylvia Coleman**



## Creative Crafters

The Crafters have been getting together regularly, with six members attending most meetings. We all continue to get to know each other and find out what we can do as a Group. One member wants to learn how to do patchwork, so after our meeting with the other craft groups this is something we are going to explore.

Everybody is welcome to join in, or just come along for the chatter and the cake and continue with their individual projects. I have been extra busy recently crafting a piece for the South of England Show during our group sessions, which was entered on behalf of the Ringmer WI.

We have spaces available for new members if you would like to join us.

**Julie Terry**

*Our entry into the South of England Show.*

## Short Walks Group

The Short Walks Group continues to meet twice a month for a leisurely stroll around the footpaths of Ringmer, or a nearby place of interest. Our walks last for no more than 90 minutes.

The Group is intended for those who enjoy a leisurely stroll but feel the Walking Group's rambles may be too much for them. Our walks use only public lanes and byways, and aim to keep to flat routes without stiles etc.

We meet twice a month as follows:

- Second Monday of each month at 10.15am
- Fourth Thursday of each month 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 room for more members, so why not come along?

**Jon Elphick**

# Annual General Meeting Report

On Wednesday 15th May a good quorum of members gathered in the Village Hall for our Annual General Meeting. After the Committee's next meeting a full copy of the Minutes, with all the reports, will be available on the website. In the meantime, these are the key points you need to know:

Ian Loughborough, having exceeded the number of years as Chairman allowed under our Constitution, confirmed that he was stepping down. However, he is willing to continue for the time being as Vice Chairman in the hope that someone will soon come forward to take over the Chair. Next year is our 30th anniversary, so Ian asked for suggestions from members as to how we might mark the occasion.

The accounts for the year to 31st March 2019 were approved by the meeting. It was decided that, for



Photo by courtesy of Jay Reeve Photography.

the first time since 2015, we would increase our annual subscription; the new sum agreed is to be £10 for the year 2019/20, with those joining after 1st January 2020 paying £6. Associate membership will remain at half the full subscription fee (£5).

Sue Hall retired as Treasurer after eight years of keeping our finances in excellent order. Sylvia Coleman has agreed to take over the role of Treasurer. In addition Stephen Van Dulken has stepped down from the committee as he is planning to move house. Sue was thanked by Ian and all the members for her work as Treasurer, and presented with a card and flowers. Ian had already delivered a thank-you card and small gift to Stephen as a token of our appreciation.

The committee was re-elected *en bloc*. Tim Polwart, having joined during the course of the year, has taken over the role of Interest Groups Co-ordinator from Sylvia. All other positions remain the same; detailed job descriptions are on the Ringmer U3A website.

It was pointed out by Ian that we currently have four vacancies on our committee. Please consider whether you might join us, initially without portfolio. You would be very welcome!

**Kay Fitzgerald**  
Hon. Secretary

## Gardening Group

The U3A Gardening Group continues to thrive, with 18 enthusiastic members and a varied programme. Our plans for 2019 include a plant swap and pruning advice, propagating succulents, a visit to Camelia Botnar, greenhouse care, a visit to a member's cut flower allotment, a strawberry tea, a review of a garden designer, and advice on photographing plants and flowers.

Our members are also taking part in a small project – each member was given a dahlia tuber, and during the season we will be noting the progress of each plant and sharing our experiences.

**Jenny West and Joan Wignall**



Comparing the progress of our dahlia plants.

## Out & About Group

On a clear, chilly day in June a small group of Out & About members had a very enjoyable trip to The Grange Gallery at Rottingdean. We were there to see an exhibition on the work of Edward Burne-Jones, and his influence on work by contemporary artists.

The event offered an extensive account of the life and work of Burne-Jones, especially about the years spent in his beloved Rottingdean with his wife Georgiana. The exhibition also detailed his work in stained glass, for which the artist is famed.

In another room in the gallery we enjoyed looking at works by local artists who were inspired by Burne-Jones. These items included window hangings in stained glass as well as plates and vases – all beautiful and very colourful.

As a Pre-Raphaelite artist, Burne-Jones worked closely with William Morris. Together they designed and produced wonderful stained glass



windows in many churches throughout the country. An exceptional example of their work can be seen in the church of St Margaret's in Rottingdean itself. Rottingdean itself is a lovely place – maybe that will make an interesting trip for the Out & About Group on a future occasion.

As well as enjoying these trips and visiting events, the Out & About Group members have regular coffee get-togethers at interesting places in the locality. Over recent months these have included Raystede Animal Centre, The Depot Cinema in Lewes, Offham Farm Shop and the Elephant Café-Bar at Sheffield Park – after that get-together some members went on to visit Sheffield Park Gardens (see photos).

These popular outings are in shared cars, and allow members who do not have their own vehicle to socialise and visit places that are not easily reached by public transport.

**Valerie King**

## Report from the Sussex U3A Network (SUN)

The Summer School at Chichester University was a great success, with 187 students from 94 U3As across the country; sadly I was the only person from Ringmer. The courses ranged from cycling to falconry and family history to yoga, with full board in an ensuite room and entertainment each evening.

SUN study days will be returning in September, and for £8 members can enjoy a variety of topics at different venues around the county (£10 for non-members). On Saturday 14th September, Peter Enser will be taking a look at travelling between London and Paris – ‘A Journey through Time’ at Uckfield. On 12th October the study day will be HERE in the Village Hall, with Joanna Gilar giving a talk on ‘The exploration of landscape and environment in storytelling’ – please come along and support her. Full details of all study days throughout the year will be available at our Open day on 14th August.

Progress is being made with the upgrade/replacement of Beacon and four companies are preparing bids. Hopefully the new system will be available in April next year, at which time there will be minimal disruption while the system is upgraded.

The SUN shared learning project on Sussex Myths and Legends will be on display at the Jubilee Building at Sussex University on Saturday 13th July from 10 to 5pm. This is a FREE event – full details are on the SUN website: [www.sussexu3anetwork.org.uk](http://www.sussexu3anetwork.org.uk). Do go along and see what other U3As are doing.

**Jill Collins**



## 2Garden Group



We are now half way through our year, having held three of our six home meetings. These are hosted by some of our members in their homes, although not everyone is able to attend each time. We have also been on two of our four outings, travelling in members' cars to large private gardens, opened for groups by prior arrangement under the National Gardens Scheme. Our first one was to Ham Cottage, Ardingly, where we were greeted by the friendly owners and given a short introductory talk followed by a personal tour of the garden. Our second visit, on another sunny afternoon and after a pleasant

drive through the Ashdown Forest, was to Falconhurst, Mark Beech. After an introductory talk by the owner we were free to stroll throughout the beautiful garden, admire the view and enjoy tea and home-made cake on the lawn (see photo) before returning home.

Two further outings have been arranged: The Old Vicarage, Washington on 13th August and The Garden House, Crowborough on 10th September. Minimum numbers are needed for these visits, so we welcome members from other Groups. Contact us via the **Ringmer U3A website** if you are interested.

Our final home meeting of the year is on 12th November, when members will be asked to reflect and discuss the pros and cons of the past year and put forward suggestions for meetings and outings for 2020. If you have a garden (big or small), enjoy sharing ideas and learning about growing things (whatever your experience), and enjoy visiting other gardens, perhaps you would like to consider joining our Group – we look forward to welcoming you!

**Rita Price**

## Ringmer U3A's move to Beacon

As you may be aware, this year we moved all our membership data to the U3A's Beacon system. This is run by the Third Age Trust, the national organisation that all U3As belong to. The move was driven by a need to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulation, tightening up how Ringmer U3A stores and processes personal data. Using Beacon has brought us a number of benefits:

- We no longer need membership cards within Ringmer U3A, as all Convenors have access to lists of their group's current members on Beacon. Cards however are still available on request in case you need them for the purpose of visiting other U3A groups or events. Confirmation of membership and most other communications are by e-mail.
- E-mails sent via Beacon do not show the e-mail addresses of the other recipients – this is personal data that Ringmer U3A needs to treat as confidential.
- Ringmer U3A Officers and Convenors no longer need to keep lists of members' contact details. Personal data is only held on Beacon, and this is automatically kept up to date.

The Third Age Trust has a Beacon Management Team which is responsible for the protection and safe-keeping of the data on the system, for which Ringmer U3A contributes a small sum which comes out of our members' annual subscriptions. Each U3A which uses Beacon has a Co-ordinator, and I am glad to say that – thanks to the co-operation of our Group Convenors and my fellow Committee Members – after one year the system is running smoothly and well.

**Ken Boot-Handford**

## Knit One, Chat One



Our meetings continue to take place once each month. On Friday 5th July we arranged a combined gathering with Knit & Natter and the Creative Crafters, when we had an enjoyable afternoon and were able to see and discuss each other's work over a relaxed cuppa. The photo shows members of all three groups, some of them with examples of their work.

The Group is currently full, but please get in touch if you'd like to join us – vacancies do arise from time to time!

**Sue Hall**

## What the Papers Say

We are a small group that meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 2.30pm in members' homes. Each member brings a topic to discuss – it can be international, national or local. Some are incredibly serious, but others have a much lighter side; all are discussed at length. They often lead

on to other subjects – it's amazing where we go in a couple of hours! We don't always agree, but we always respect each other's opinions and beliefs.

Thought provoking – definitely. Boring – never!

**Sue Wilkins**

## Spanish Conversation Group

I am glad to report another very successful year in our Spanish Conversation Group, after a bit of a shaky start due to low attendance during September. We are now having a summer break until 16th September, when our regular meetings will start again.

There are nine of us at present. We meet in each other's houses, on alternate Monday mornings at 10.30 until 12.00.

During these meetings we talk, mostly in Spanish. We tell each other our news, have discussions of different topics or news in the media. Sometimes we do role plays and read Spanish cultural articles. We cover grammatical points when these arise in the course of our conversations; and we sing – in Spanish, naturally. We have coffee and tea and always lovely biscuits, and we have fun and we laugh a lot.

The atmosphere is very friendly and always relaxed. We support and help each other. There is no pressure, but at the end of every lesson I like to set *deberes* – a small task or preparation for the following meeting. The purpose of this is to help consolidate and understand what we have covered during our session.



I have to emphasise that I always welcome ideas from members of the Group, as we can learn from each other. My role is to guide and facilitate with the learning – not to dictate what to do. It has to be a group effort.

Because we meet in each other's houses, we are limited to how many we can accommodate; at the moment we are full. However I am happy to take the names of any U3A members interested in joining the group, so that I can contact them should a vacancy arise.

**Conchita Wigley**

## Family History Group

More than 30 members of the Group have been struggling to make sense of their DNA results, following April's special meeting on the subject led by Martin McDowell from Belfast. We're hoping that Martin will come back in the autumn to help us interpret what we have discovered. I found out that Martin is a 2nd–4th cousin!

Our June meeting saw the return of the popular 'My Story', when five of our members shared stories about their ancestors. They ranged from Hilary Smith's 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly' about her family's experiences during WW2 in Ringmer to Chris Leech's 'Putting Flesh on the Bones' about his family who lived at Bagshot Manor, owned by the Duke of Connaught, before WW1. This included an amazing booklet published by his great, great

aunt about her life there with her father, who was the estate carpenter.

Regrettably the planned visit to Kew Gardens and The National Archive in June had to be cancelled because not enough people expressed interest.

In May we looked at using postcards as a research tool, and at our July meeting we will be concentrating on trades and professions – especially those which have long since disappeared.

The planning group will meet in early September to determine the programme for the year ahead; and at our September meeting, following the August Open Day, we hope to welcome five or six new members.

**Bob Cairns**

## And finally: A message from the Vice Chairmann

My how time flies. One minute I am looking forward to a holiday trip, and the next it is suddenly just a distant memory. Now we find ourselves approaching our annual Open Day and enrolment event. I do hope that Ringmer U3A can start up some more interest groups this year, as we just seem to be losing them at present.

U3A is a marvellous organisation, which offers so much to so many. However it does require volunteers, and in this area we sometimes struggle. Maybe you couldn't do a job by yourself, but two or three together could share the work. Several groups do this already, and it is most successful.

Finally on to an old chestnut – my successor. I am no longer Chairman, and we really must find somebody to take up the reins. If you know of a likely candidate then please persuade them to step forward. I am more than happy to assist the new incumbent, and we have an excellent committee to back them up.

Thanks and best wishes,

**Ian Loughborough**



## Ringmer U3A Calendar for Autumn 2019

<b>AS</b> = Astronomy (Brian) <b>CG</b> = Computer Group (Sylvia) <b>CC</b> = Creative Crafters (Julie) <b>Fr</b> = French (Bridget) <b>FH</b> = Family History (Bob)	<b>Ga</b> = Garden Club (Jenny) <b>2Ga</b> = Garden (Rita & Marie) <b>Kn</b> = Knit One, Chat One (Sue) <b>Ma</b> = Mahjong (Julia) <b>OA</b> = Out & About (Valerie)	<b>Ph</b> = Photography (Martin) <b>PS</b> = What the Papers Say (Sue) <b>Sp</b> = Spanish (Conchita) <b>SW</b> = Short Walks (Jon) <b>Wa</b> = Walking (Lynne)
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**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	September	October	November	December
Mon	2 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00			2 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00
Tue	3	1		3
Wed	4 OA 10.30; Wa 13.30	2 Wa 13.30		4 OA 10.30; Wa 13.30
Thu	5 CG 14.00	3 CG 14.00		5 CG 14.00
Fri	6 Kn 14.00; CC 14.00;	4 Kn 14.00; CC 14.00;	1 Kn 14.00	6 Kn 14.00; CC 14.00
Mon	9 Ma 10.00; SW 10.15; Fr 14.00	7 Ma 10.00; SW 10.15; Fr 14.00	4 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00	9 Ma 10.00; SW 10.15; Fr 14.00; Sp 10.30
Tue	10 2Ga 14.30	8 2Ga 14.30	5	10 2Ga 14.30
Wed	11 AS 19.30	9 AS 19.30	6 Wa 13.30	11 AS 19.30
Thu	12	10	7	12
Fri	13	11	8 CC 14.00	13
Mon	16 Ma 10.00; Sp 10.30; Fr 14.00	14 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00; Sp 10.30	11 Ma 10.00; SW 10.15; Fr 14.00; Sp 10.30	16 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00
Tue	17 Ga 14.30	15 Ga 14.30	12 2Ga 14.30	17 Ga 14.30
Wed	18 Wa 13.30	16 Wa 13.30	13 AS 19.30	18 Wa 13.30
Thu	19	17	14	19
Fri	20	18	15	20
Mon	23 Ma 10.00; PS 14.30; Fr 14.00	21 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00	18 Ma 10.00; PS 14.30; Fr 14.00	23 Ma 10.00; PS14.30; Fr 14.00; Sp 10.30
Tue	24 FH 14.00	22	19 Ga 14.30	24
Wed	25	23	20 Wa 13.30	25 <b>Bank Holiday</b>
Thu	26 Ph 14.00; SW 14.30	24 SW 14.30	21 Ph 14.00	26 <b>Bank Holiday</b>
Fri	27	25	22	27
Mon	30 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00; Sp 10.30	28 Ma 10.00; PS 14.30; Fr 14.00; Sp 10.30	25 Ma 10.00; PS 14.30; Fr 14.00; Sp 10.30	30 Ma 10.00; Fr 14.00
Tue		29 FH 14.00	26 FH 14.00	31 Ph 14.00; FH 14.00
Wed		30	27	
Thu		31 Ph 14.00	28 SW 14.30	
Fri			29	

## 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
Group Co-ordinator	Tim Polwart
Webmaster	Keith Moore

Committee members can be contacted via the U3A website.

Group	Convenor	Status	Members	Meets
<b>Astronomy</b>	Brian Wignall	SA	17	Second Wednesday of each month at 19.30. One vacancy.
<b>Computer Group</b>	Sylvia Coleman	SA	36	First Thursday of each month at 14.00. New members welcome.
<b>Creative Crafters</b>	Julie Terry	SA	5	First Friday of each month at 14.00.
<b>Family History</b>	Bob Cairns	SA	55	Last Tuesday of each month at 14.00 in the Scout Hut. Can take some new members.
<b>French Conversation</b>	Bridget Cross	SA	6	Every Monday in members' houses 14.00–15.30. One space available.
<b>Gardening Club</b>	Jenny West; Joan Wignall	WL	18	Third Tuesday of each month at 14.30.
<b>2 Garden</b>	Rita Price; Marie-Claude Pullen	SA	16	Second Tuesday of each month at 14.30. Spaces for four more members.
<b>Knit One, Chat One</b>	Sue Hall	WL	9	First Friday of each month at 14.00.
<b>Mahjong</b>	Julia Middleton	WL	9	Every Monday at 5 Harvard Road, and sometimes at 21 Tile Kiln, at 10.00 excluding bank holidays.
<b>Out &amp; About</b>	Valerie King	SA	41	St Mary's Room at 10.30 on the first Wednesday in September and December.
<b>Photography</b>	Martin Whitlock	SA	31	Last Thursday of each month at 14.00 in the Scout Hut. New members welcome.
<b>Short Walks</b>	Jon Elphick	SA	21	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.
<b>Spanish Conversation</b>	Conchita Wigley	WL	9	Every other Monday starting on 16th September at 10.30.
<b>Walking</b>	Lynne Booth	SA	27	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.
<b>What the Papers Say</b>	Sue Wilkins	WL	6	Fourth Monday of each month at 14.30, excluding bank holidays.

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