

Contents

[Chair's comments](#)

[Membership Renewal](#)

[News from the Groups](#)

[Conveners' Corner](#)

[Members' Resources](#)

Chair's Comments

Dear Members

I do hope you are well, and coping with all this hot and dry weather we have been having. Perhaps, now the schools have broken up, we will return to more normal conditions.

It was lovely to see so many of you at the AGM and talk on Power of Attorney in May. I do hope you found the talk useful. At the AGM, the committee was unanimously re-elected. They are:

Sarah Boot-Handford	-	Chair
Ken Boot-Handford	-	Newsletter and Beacon Administrator
Sylvia Coleman	-	Treasurer
Mark Hosken		
Jo Miller	-	Membership
Keith Moore	-	Website Administrator
Susann Pedley		
Peter Smith		
Martin Whitlock	-	Secretary

It is great, but it is the same nine people. Some of them have been on the committee for a long time now and are beginning to feel it's unfair of them to monopolise the tea and biscuits we enjoy at our quarterly meetings and would like to give some others of you a chance. If you can spare four afternoons a year, please consider joining the committee – we're very friendly – just speak to any of us at your group meetings, or find our contact details on the website.

Open Day

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to our annual Open Day on 19 August at Ringmer Village Hall, between 2 and 4 pm. Here, you will be able to see all the groups we offer and join them for the next year if there is space. If a group is full, we will offer a waiting list and, if there is sufficient demand, open a second group. This is something we have successfully done with the Gardening and Current Affairs discussion groups.

You will also have a chance to suggest new groups for the forthcoming year and if there is sufficient interest, we will get a new group started. One that has already been put forward is the idea of a "Potluck Lunch" group – others up for consideration include Creative Writing, Film Group, Board Games and Cryptic Crosswords.

We will be taking payments of your subscription for the year (see next section) particularly if you want to pay by cash or card. You can even get a cup of tea and a biscuit in the company of other u3a members.

There's one thing I would like you to do before the Open Day, and that is to tell your Convenor whether or not you will be staying in your groups in the forthcoming year; this is so the convenors can get an idea of how many spaces they can offer to new members on Open Day.

Hub

On the morning of 3 October, we will once again be taking part in the Village Hub, aka the Societies' Fair, when many organisations from across the village show off their activities to residents new and old. If you know anyone who is interested in joining the u3a, especially if they are new to the village, please do encourage them to visit the Village Hall between 10am and 1pm on 3 October.

Best wishes

Sarah

Membership Renewal

The membership renewal form is being distributed along with this newsletter. It is also available on our [website](#). Renewal can take place by returning the form to the membership secretary, or in person by attending our Open Day.

There are two ways of paying and submitting the enrolment form. Our preferred way is to pay by bank transfer (details are on the form - make sure you add your name as reference!) and send me an email with a scan of the completed form. (If you can't print or scan the form just send an email with all the information the form asks for, in particular the questions about u3a Matters and photo consent). The email address to use is ringmeru3amembership@gmail.com.

Alternatively, the more traditional way is by writing out a cheque to Ringmer U3A and delivering the cheque with the completed form to the membership secretary at the address on the form.

If you attend the Open Day it is also possible to also pay by cash or by card. Blank enrolment forms will be available.

The Membership Secretary will send you an email confirming membership.

News from the Groups

2Garden

We have enjoyed three meetings since the last newsletter. Our April meeting was in house. Mike kindly put a lot of effort into researching Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish biologist and physician who formalised the modern system of naming organisms. Linnaeus worked during the eighteenth century and is known as “the father of modern taxonomy”. After Mike’s interesting talk we enjoyed refreshments provided by Sarah. Our June and July meetings were visits to reasonably local gardens that Joyce found in the NGS Yellow Book. Limekiln Farm at Chalvington is owned by two medics, a retired anaesthetist and a retired surgeon. They have a wonderful garden with historical roots but still evolving, the latest development being a prairie style garden. Other areas reflect the age of the seventeenth century house. Of particular interest was the physic garden, which has been divided into sections growing herbs of relevance to different areas of medicine: gynaecology, cardio-thoracic, dermatology, infectious diseases, sedatives and poisons (including the most deadly plant on the planet). Alpines at Maresfield was another lovely garden whose owners have been working on it for thirteen years but have achieved a degree of maturity that I envied. They are helped by a belt of mature trees on the boundary but their layout and design were very satisfying, particularly the sweep of the long border which was reflected the other side of a manicured lawn by the curve of the long grass in the orchard. This garden has everything: a kitchen garden, pond, orchard, shade, a greenhouse and superlative cake! We have space for a couple more members.

Art History

The Art History Group, currently, has 10 members meeting every first Friday of the month. We are in the process of developing a programme for the next u3a next year. The programme is based on presentations/discussions given by a group member of an exhibition they have visited or of an artist of their interest. All information will be published on the u3a website. Recent presentations have been on David Hockney, Frida Kahlo, Robert Delaunay, James Tissot and the English Colourists.

A meeting at The Depot.



Astronomy

On May 23rd the Astronomy Group met and heard a fascinating talk by Roy Marriot of the Lewes Astronomical Society. He showed us photographs he had taken of supernovae in galaxies very distant from our own Milky Way Galaxy. He also showed us beautiful images of the Horsehead Galaxy nearer to home in our own galaxy.

We do not usually hold meetings in the summer months but on the evening of August 12th we have the opportunity to meet and observe a partial eclipse of the sun. Anyone on holiday in Spain on that date will have the opportunity to observe the full eclipse. On the same evening the Perseid Meteorite Shower will also be visible.

We will meet after the summer on September 24th when we will think about the latest developments in observing exoplanets and “dark matter” by means of the latest space telescope. This telescope is planned to be launched in August. It is named the Nancy Grace Roman Telescope after the famous American Astronomer and founder of NASA’s space astronomy programme

Computing and Home Tech

We recently held our last meeting of the 2025-2026 u3a year, to celebrate this our July meeting was a social event always full of fun and laughter along with a selection of refreshments. Looking back over the year we’ve covered a wide range of topics, activities and workshops on computing and home tech.

During May to July our meetings offered a selection of topics and activities including; talks on communication Apps, Home AV entertainment, a Q&A session, and finally our social gathering which took place during this hot weather, so one of our activities on the day was a desert survival quiz.

Our next meeting is planned for September, and our planning team will be working on ideas for topics and activities for the coming year.

I would like to thank the planning team, our presenters and members for their involvement and support over the past year, which is much appreciated.

Keith

DNA

The DNA Group is closely connected to the Family History Group and all members belong to that group. This last year we had 22 members and met three times during the winter season. We plan to do the same again this year and meet on 1

October 2026, 3 December 2026 and 4 February 2027 (Provisional dates). We will start with a refresher session and then look at the various ways that you can use DNA in your family history research. There is always a broad range of expertise in the group and we try and ensure that we meet the needs of all members. If you are interested in joining this group then speak to the convenor, Ian, at Open Day or contact him through our website

Family History

We have had another successful year which we finish with intriguing presentations about the use of AI in family history research. Our meetings have been well attended with an average of 36 at each meeting. There will be vacancies for next year as we have lost a few members recently.

Having been established for 17 years it is difficult to put together a programme each year which will hold the attention of both new and established members. Hopefully members will come forward with ideas to help our small planning group plan for the coming year.

Our year has seen highs and lows. Our Christmas social with the Photography and Computer and Home Tech groups was memorable as was Glynnis Walker's story about her grandfather, a famous French jockey who rode for the Aga Khan. The lows were the deaths of our great friends and avid supporters of the group, Sue Hall and Jilly Mercer.

It is probably the right time to make changes both to the organisers of the group and our programme but I would be surprised if that was to happen and so I thank Pauline Lloyd, John Saunders and Alan Pett for their continued and continuing support.

Jazz Appreciation

Our group meets monthly on a Friday morning to listen to and discuss Jazz and The Great American Songbook. Recently we have focussed on bebop, female singers and local artists we can hear playing live locally. We have decided that the optimum size for our group is eight people.

Headliners

We are a lively group with a wide range of opinions, so there is never a dull moment when we meet every month to discuss the news. We rotate around our members' houses and we do have a couple of vacancies if you would like to join our chats – come and see us at the Open Day.

Poetry

We meet monthly on a Thursday afternoon to read poetry out loud to each other. Recently we have read poems about Transport, Education and Romance. Here is a favourite from the Transport selection:

Cargoes

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rail, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

John Masefield, 1903

Photography

Ringmer u3a photography group continues to be well supported and this was shown on a recent visit to the Grange Gardens in Lewes.

It was hot afternoon and many members have produced some wonderful images of the gardens, especially the wild meadow flower beds and the queue for a much needed cold ice cream



Quilting and Needlecraft

Our group meets in a rota of our homes to stitch our handicrafts and chat, while enjoying tea, cake and fruit. During the fine weather we frequently sit in the garden, but we decided to cancel our June meeting as it was for too hot to sit outside, or indeed to go out at all!

What the Papers Say

Our news group meets on the fourth Monday of each month. We are a small group so we are able to take turns to host the meetings in our homes.

Each member chooses a subject to discuss, and the diversity is amazing. We all contribute to the discussions, whether from research, individual life experiences or political inclinations and all opinions or thoughts are treated with respect.

Our meetings are lovely, often good fun but always challenging and certainly make you think.

At the moment our group is full but there is a waiting list.

Conveners' Corner

Open Day

Our annual Open Day will be in the Village Hall at 14:00 on 19th August 2026. It would be great if conveners (or someone from your group) could be at the Open Day to talk to interested members about your group. If your group is full and there are no vacancies for next year please let the Chair know before the Open Day.

Ringmer Village Hub

This is going to take place on 3rd October 2026 in Ringmer Village Hall. Ringmer u3a will have a display. As it is an opportunity to make contact with many of the societies and organisations in the village please let your members know.

Website

We have a new area of the website which is intended to bring together information for Convenors to help, support and assist them in the running of their interest groups.

It highlights information that Convenors need to be aware of when running an interest group, using Beacon for group information and communication, how to be involved in updating their own group page, and the opportunity to promote the group and Ringmer u3a through the website.

Beacon

Beacon is the system that we use to maintain the membership records and group membership. It has advantages for conveners when emailing group members: the contact details are kept up to date through membership renewal; and emails sent via Beacon only show the email address of the sender and recipient. This keeps the other group member's email addresses secret, so complying with the UK's data protection legislation. An alternative when sending group emails is to use Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) for your members email addresses.

If you don't use Beacon but would like to please contact Ken, the Beacon Administrator, via the website. He can provide access and coaching on how to use Beacon.

Members' Resources

Ringmer u3a

Website

Our website is at <https://ringmer.u3asite.uk/>

On it you can find details of all our Groups, and through the website you can contact all conveners and committee members. (Using the website for contact avoids making public our personal email addresses and telephone numbers, and all the spam that that generates.)

As mentioned in the spring newsletter we planned to provide a new area of the website intended to bring together information for Convenors to help, support and assist them in the running of their interest groups.

We are pleased to announce that the Convenors area went live on time and will be updated as new information becomes available.

Feedback If you have any comments or questions in relation to the website, then do contact me via the website contact page, I will be pleased to help and answer your questions.

Committee

The committee would love to have new ideas for groups and activities. The members are listed on the website and can be contacted through the website.

The committee is always in need of volunteers to join. It isn't a major commitment – the committee meets for 2 hours 4 times a year. Please let the Chair know if you are willing.

National u3a

u3a Matters

The magazine is posted to all members' households (unless you opted out) five times a year. A shortened version is available online at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/u3a-matters>

u3a Friends Newsletter

The u3a Friends email newsletter shares news, learning opportunities and member stories from across the u3a movement. You can sign up at <https://u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter>

u3a Educational Events

National u3a also run a series of free events on Zoom. Some upcoming events out of a list of more than 20 over the next month are:

- The climate crisis and the National Emergency Briefing - July 30 at 10:00
- Building the world's most advanced airliners – August 5 at 13:00
- Deepfakes demystified: understanding the risks and staying safe – August 14 at 14:00

Find out more and book at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

u3a Interest Groups Online

This is like another u3a but existing only online. It costs £12 a year membership. They have a large number of interest groups that take place via Zoom (or sometimes WhatsApp). You can find out more details at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online/>, including browsing a list of

groups and seeing if they have vacancies. If you click on a group it will give you further details. You can also join from there.

Other Local u3as

There are other local u3as that you can join. As a full member of Ringmer u3a you can usually join these as an Associate member at a reduced subscription. Details of the local u3as and what they offer are available on their websites. Some of the local u3as are:

Uckfield - <https://uckfield.u3asite.uk/>

Lewes - <https://lewesu3a.uk/>

Newhaven and Peacehaven - <https://newhaven-peacehaven.u3asite.uk/>

Hailsham - <https://hailsham.u3asite.uk/>

Seaford - <https://seaford.u3asite.uk/>

If you have any comments about the newsletter (things you like, things you dislike, suggested improvements) then please let me know by replying to the email delivering this newsletter.

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