u3a learn laugh live

The Windmill

Eastbourne & Wealden u3a

Charity No. 1184226

Issue 110

October – December 2026

A Personal Message from John Riley



Some members have thought it strange, even weird, when I say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my 14 years on the committee of our u3a. Being membership secretary for 9½ years enabled me to get to know a lot of people and to make many friends. Joining the u3a following retirement was one of the best things I did.

Although I never aspired to be Chair, I must say that I have enjoyed the experience over the past 4½ years. As a result, I have certainly learned, laughed and lived.

I thank the committee, both past and present, for their help and support. I also thank members for your support. Everything has always been a team effort.

I wish Mike and the new committee every success. As you will see from the following pages they have been very busy.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Tuesday 1st December 2026 2:00pm £5.00 per ticket

Victoria Baptist Church

Finger Buffet, Prize Hamper, Table quiz

Entertainer Rick Bonner

Tickets available at October and November monthly meetings from Sandra Rowe

Otherwise contact Catriona Sheen

From the Chair

Mike Gordon

It has certainly been a busy time since introducing myself in The Windmill, Issue 109, July – September 2026.

I am happy to report I am still a bodger in my spare time and recently spent a week 'off grid' in Wales with other bodgers. On that occasion I turned a small bowl on a pole-lathe and also made a carving knife.

In the Chair's role it has been pretty full on with tasks, some of which will be reported on in this edition. As a Committee we are working on collecting emergency contact numbers from as many members as possible just in case we need to contact someone of your choice should you become unwell, for example at a Monthly Meeting, or taking part in Group activities. We definitely feel it is better to be prepared just in case.

We respectfully ask for every member's cooperation with this detail.

At the time of writing I am pleased to tell you that we have had several new members join us. We hope to recruit more with our upcoming Open Days (see p. 5).

We continue to ask for members to step forward and add their name to our volunteers list. The aim is to get enough volunteers to help at the Monthly Meetings to make the task of having successful Meetings each and every month much easier. Please do consider joining the volunteers to cover just one Monthly Meeting during the year.

You can expect to see interesting speakers at our Meetings arranged by Carolyn Brown our Speaker Secretary. If you know of a speaker that you have enjoyed elsewhere please do offer details to Carolyn.

We have co-opted Jane Bradley onto the Committee to join Gwenda and Maxine in organising our Social events and arranging our refreshments at the Meetings, amongst other things.

Gabbie Brady has been working very hard on our behalf with Norman Brown, our Website Manager to set up our adopting the Third Age Trust 'Beacon' online administration system. This will be running quietly and securely in the background. One thing that email users will notice is that each email will be addressed to each member in person by their first name.

I am most grateful to every member of the committee and the three non committee members - Carolyn Brown Speaker Secretary, Gabbie Brady Beacon Administrator and John Riley The Windmill Editor, working tirelessly on your behalf. A huge thank you to each and every one.

Editor: John Riley

Submission date for the January to March issue is the 15th December.

Website: https://eastbourne-wealden.u3asite.uk

SPEAKER SECRETARY, Carolyn Brown

Have you heard a good speaker elsewhere? If so, please send details to Carolyn through the website contact page



October 6th

Memoirs of a Media Composer

with Paul Lewis

A whistle-stop tour through a busy TV composing career beginning in the '60s, the "Golden Age" of British TV, and lasting 47 years until Paul had outlived all his director and producer colleagues! Anecdotal and entertaining, with behind-the-scenes insights into the workings of TV in the pre-digital age, illustrated with CD extracts from TV themes.

November 3rd

Walking the High Weald

by David Clarke



This talk is an engaging account of a walk between four National Trust properties; Bodiam Castle, Sissinghurst Castle, Scotney Castle (photo) and Bateman's, that explores the history and the industrial past of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in this part of Kent and East Sussex.



December 1st

Christmas Party with RICK BONNER

Rick is a charismatic and dynamic, international vocal entertainer and JAZZ & SWING SAXOPHONE player who performs professionally around the south of England.
Rick is a consummate professional, who performs some of the greatest songs ever written by some of the greatest performers who ever lived.

Tickets at just £5 are selling fast. DON'T DELAY. This is a subsidized event and includes a finger buffet and the chance to win a wonderful Christmas hamper. SEE ADVERT ON FRONT PAGE.

January 5th

"I will be sober in the morning" Winston Churchill

by Tony Harris



Relive Britain's finest hour with actor historian Tony Harris as he breathes life into our greatest ever Prime Minister. Tony takes his Churchill performance all over the UK and will take us from the great man's birth to his death in 1965.

All the anecdotes; all the great speeches and many facts you didn't know. It's all in "I Shall Be Sober in the Morning ".

Spend a Day with the u3a

Activity/Study Workshop at the Birley Centre, Carlisle Road.

Thursday 22 October from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm



Organised by the East Sussex East (ESE) Network of ten neighbouring u3as, with volunteers from each participating u3a, the activity/study workshop will include **keynote speakers**, a lively mix of **interactive activities**, and plenty of chances to explore what the u3a has to offer in our area.

It is open to both members and non-members. Tickets cost £15 and must be bought in advance.

A "History Day" Built Around Curiosity

Keynote Speakers will give talks on '"Children in Medieval Times", "The History of the Kent & East Sussex Railway" and "A Musicians Life".

Activities will include:

History Quiz, Walking Tours, Military Modelling, Pub Games, Pole-Lathe Turning by our Chair Mike Gordon (photo), The Year of the Normans, Rope Making, The Site of the Battle of Hastings, and a VR experience, as well as displays of dolls, fans and other artefacts.



Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available throughout the day and are included in the ticket price. Bring your own picnic or visit one of the nearby cafés and restaurants.

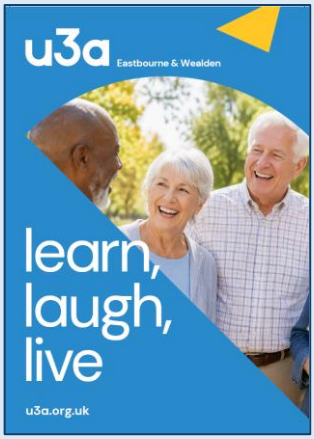
Further Information and Tickets

For up-to-date information including timetable and to purchase tickets via the website visit the u3a East Suseex East Network website **HERE.** You can also buy tickets from our Treasurer Catriona Sheen at the October monthly meeting.

Mike Gordon writes, "I shall be turning the components to make a Windsor chair on my pole-lathe during the day – aiming to sit on the dry assembled chair by the end of the day. The photo shows me with my pole-lathe giving tuition."

Committee News by Karen Newing, Secretary

The New Committee.



At our AGM in July, we elected five new members to our committee. They are Mike Gordon Chair, Janice Barnby Membership Secretary, Angela Waite Groups Co-ordinator, and Gwenda Rose and Maxine Smith as Committee Volunteers.

Since then, Gabbie Brady has agreed to be our u3a Beacon Administrator (as a non-committee role) and Jane Bradley has been co-opted onto the committee as part of our social events working group.

Catriona Sheen, Karen Newing and Norman Brown continue as Treasurer, Secretary and Web Manager respectively. As non-committee members Carolyn Brown remains Speaker Secretary and John Riley continues as Windmill Editor.

What is u3a Beacon?

U3A Beacon is an online management system created specifically for local u3a organisations to manage membership records, interest groups, and finances in one secure place. We are in the process of setting up the system for our u3a and Gabbie Brady is leading this project for us. We don't have a system live date yet, but we will keep members posted.

Beacon will not have any impact on our members as they won't need to access the system themselves. It will only be used and updated by assigned committee members. Personal member data will be stored safely all in one place on a secure server.

Membership renewals 2027

Janice Barnby, our Membership Secretary, will soon be sending out membership renewal notifications. Next year's membership fee is £12.50 (£8.50 for associate members). U3a Matters magazine is currently published five times a year. On your renewal form, you will see there is now an option to carry on receiving the magazine by opting in, but because of increased postage fees incurred by our u3a there will be an additional membership fee of £4.00 per annum to help towards the cost of postage. Most other u3a's now charge extra to receive the magazine. If you are an associate member of our u3a, you will be asked by your main u3a if you want to opt in to continue to receive the magazine.

Social events 2027

Jane Bradley, Gwenda Purvis and Maxine Smith have set up a separate Socials working group and will be planning our 2027 group social events. If you haven't received it already, you will soon receive a member survey inviting members feedback on what u3a social events you might be interested in going to in the future. Our members opinions matter to us, so please do complete the survey. **Closing date for survey responses is 3 November 2026.**

Monthly meeting Raffle

Monthly meeting raffle ticket sales are very important to our u3a, as it helps to part fund our Christmas party. We would like to increase the number of prizes available to win, so we would welcome all donations of unwanted gifts as prizes in our monthly meeting raffle. Please bring any prize donations to our monthly meetings. Thank you.

New member recruitment activities

We have set up a membership recruitment working group, which is made up of Janice Barnby, Mike Gordon, Karen Newing and Angie Waite.

So far, we have designed and produced new promotional materials to support our recruitment campaigns and display at upcoming recruitment and member events. These include two free standing banners, A5 flyers and laminated interest groups posters, which those of you who came to our September meeting, will have seen displayed at the back of the hall.

We have three recruitment events planned for this year at

Gather Community Hub in The Beacon on Thursday 8 October from 10am to 4pm.

Upcountry Garden Centre at Stone Cross on Tuesday 20 October from 10am to 2pm.

Motcombe Community Café, 65 Ocklynge Road, Old Town on Thursday 12 November from 10am to midday.



A big thank you to those members who have agreed to help out at those events.

We would love to meet and get to know all our u3a members better, so please do come along to these events and say hello if you are able to.

Groups Update by Angie Waite, Groups Coordinator

I am pleased to say we had two new groups start in September, Museums and Galleries and Rummikub. Both have been very popular.

Our groups are what makes our u3a vibrant and inviting to new and existing members. Some of our groups are full and some have waiting lists so it is important to try and build new groups or expand or replicate existing popular ones. We have been successful in recruitment recently and have more events planned so we need to ensure we have group events and activities that these new members can be involved in.

At the recent monthly meeting I asked for topics people would be interested in and had several ideas given to me. They include Singing for pleasure, Music theory, Technical and engineering discussions, Drawing and watercolours, and handicrafts. I am sure many members have other interests that they would like to see developed and shared. Looking at our programme, we do not have any Arts or crafts, History or Current affairs groups. Is this something people would like?

If you are interested in any of these ideas or have others you would like to see then please email me your thoughts.

You do not have to volunteer to lead a group, although that would be brilliant and I can provide a lot of help in terms of process, management and venue options. The u3a also gives a lot of useful guidance.

If I can get enough interest in a topic I am sure we can develop some new groups for all to enjoy. Shared Group leadership is also an option and can work well sharing the role.

So please email me to share your thoughts, ideas and interest in new groups we can develop.

Group News

Breakfast Club Group Leader: Karen Newing



This is a very chatty group who kick start the month with good conversation, lots of laughter and a lovely Sunday breakfast. We currently have around 17 members. So far, we've been to 14 different venues in and outside of Eastbourne, but our members do have favourites that we return to. We try to find venues that offer a varied menu so there's something to suit all tastes and meet any dietary requirements. We meet on the first Sunday of each month at either 10am or 10.15am. So not too early! If you would like to join us, you would be made to feel very welcome!

Social Weekenders by Group Leader: Karen Newing

This jolly group has now been running for a year. We currently have over 30 members . We've had a lot of Sunday lunches, enjoyed a Behind The Scenes Tour at The Towner Gallery, seen a fascinating art exhibition at Charleston Farmhouse about the Bloomsbury set member, Roger Fry, laughed and sang our way through EODS Priscilla Queen of the Desert and in November we're booked to see We Will Rock You at Eastbourne Hippodrome. We mostly meet on the third Sunday of each month, but this can vary if there's a timed event we want to go to. If you would like to join this very sociable and lively group, please contact me.

Strollers

Group Leader: Carolyn Brown



We now have spaces available for those who would like to join us.

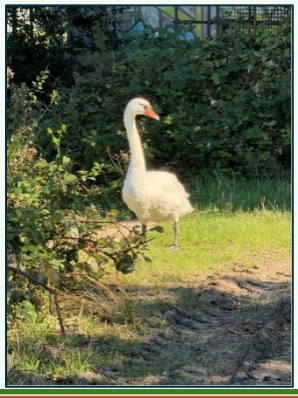
We walk between 1 and 2 miles but always include a stop for coffee.

The Strolls are always on a flat surface in and around Eastbourne.
The Eastbourne and Wealden u3a website has further details concerning future Strolls.

Walkers Group Group Leader: Sue Hales

9 walkers enjoyed the lovely weather for our September walk around Shinewater Park. We doubled the walk by finishing the clockwise route and then decided to walk it again, anti-clockwise.





Photography Group Group Leader: Norman Brown



Our Monthly meetings are usually broken down into 3 sections. We begin by reviewing members photos taken from a recent project, then the Group Leader provides a Powerpoint presentation on different aspects of **Photography to help members improve their** photographic skills. The third section, by far the most important, is when we break for refreshments! As an alternative meeting we sometimes meet at an agreed location to do a 'photoshoot'.

Most recently we met at the Pier to undertake a shoot of the controversial new Carpet Gardens. It was a glorious day and with the additional planting of colourful blooms I think we managed to capture it at its best. It was interesting to compare how members perceived and composed different images at the same location.

We have an ongoing project where we take photos of objects or scenes whose name begins with a specific letter of the alphabet. Last month we got to the letter 'P' so the Pier, Pevensey Castle, Poppies, etc featured. Next month we approach the letter 'Q', not quite so easy so it will be interesting to see what appears!



The Powerpoint presentations on Hints and Tips for the next 3 months will be on : **Landscape Photography, Portrait Photography and Black and White Photography**.

Rambling Group

Group Leader: Theresa Hancock



We've not been very lucky with our rambles over the summer because of the weather.

In **July** the heatwave meant our planned walk was changed so that we met at Friston Church (pictured) and were able to amble through the forest for a cooler walk.



There was a heat warning for the day of our **August** ramble so that one was cancelled.

Then, in **September**, Jane changed her walk from Chiddingly to the Hellingly area because of recent heavy rain. Jane reports, "After a short distance on the cuckoo trail, stopping to view a sign about the old train that ran to the Asylum from Hellingly station, we visited the old village of Hellingly, including water mill and church. We walked on farmland, crossing the cuckoo trail on a bridge, and had a taste of Park Wood. We then explored Roebuck Park and grounds of Hellingly Country Park, formerly the Hellingly Asylum, visiting the community cafe for refreshments. The weather was lovely. This was my first time leading a u3a walk, and the first walk for one of the participants. The group commented that the area was new to them, and they appreciated the background and historical information I shared about the area."

Our rambles take place on the second Friday of each month, generally about 4½ to 5 miles long and normally starting at 10 o'clock. Lifts are usually available if required, though sometimes we use the bus.

We have some interesting rambles coming up from Glynde, Southease and East Dean. For more details, please see the poster at the monthly meetings, or look on the website (where there are also lotos of photos).

Hastings Embroidery

By Carolyn Brown



We visited The Hastings Embroidery Exhibition on the 17th September 2026, which was created in 1966 by the Royal School of Needlework. The skill used in the stitching, selection of fabrics and threads is amazing and is fascinating to see. It covers major periods of British History from 1066 to Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953. The embroidery has been created in many separate panels. They range from the landing of William at Pevensey, Chauser, Guy Fawkes, The Fire of London, American Independence to Queen Elizabeth's Crown Jewels.



Are these the Lewes Martyrs?

The Embroidery is on display until the 1st November. You need to book a place through Eventbright but entry is free. The Embroideries are upstairs at the Hastings Town Hall.



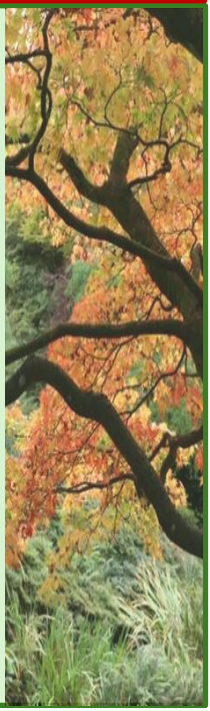
Autumn

by Roger Lee (member)

When the country clocks go back at this October's end
Another hour of darkness does the chilly evening lend.
Autumn mists through woodland and meadowgrass descend
Clinging to the coppice like a long-time, faithful friend.

Along the forest footpaths trees shed their summer gown
As many leaves of shaded green convert to golden brown.
Western winds come blowing hard and sweep them from their crown
A signal to the hedgehogs it's almost time to bunker down.

Another change is in the air - an intrinsic seasonal fling
When sycamore seeds like helicopters fly downwards on the wing
And prickly beech nuts in the scrub onto furry coats do cling
To plant themselves beneath the leaves and rise again next spring.



GROUP CONTACTS, MEETING DAYS AND TIMES

Groups Co-ordinator: Angie Waite

GROUP	GROUP LEADER	PHONE/EMAIL	MEETING DAY	TIME	VACANCIES
Breakfast Club	Karen Newing		1st Sun	10.00	Enquire
Canasta	Mick Garner		Every Fri	14.00	Full
Dining	Sharon Phillips		3rd Fri	18.30	Open to All
Langham Hotel Lunches	Sue Hales		Alternates Tues & Thurs monthly	12.00 for 12.30	Enquire
Literature	Christine Neuss & Janet Harper		2nd Wed	14.00	Enquire
Luncheon Club	Mary Bradley		4th Tues	12.30	Enquire
Mah Jongg	Cheryl Bone		1st & 3rd Mon	10.00	Enquire
Museums and Galleries	Angie Waite		1st Wed	Varies	Enquire
Music Makers	Ann & Ted Barden		2nd Thurs	10.00	Vacancies
Musicality	Bill Kipling		3rd Wed	14.00	Enquire
Photography	Norman Brown		3rd Mon	14.00	Enquire
Pub Games	Michael Jones		2nd Mon	14.30	Vacancies
Rambling	Theresa Hancock		2nd Fri	10.00	Open to All
Reading for Pleasure	John Moore		1st Mon	14.00	Vacancies
Rummikub	Janice Barnby		1st Thurs	14.00	Enquire
Scrabble	Denise Morgan-Smith		2nd Tues	10.00	Vacancies
Small Group Lunches	Barrie Pipe		4th Tues	12.15	Open to All
Social Weekenders	Karen Newing		3rd Sun	Varies	Enquire
Spanish	Anne Barden		Alternate Mons	09.30	Enquire
Solo Whist	Ian Newson		Mons fortnightly	14.00	Enquire
Stretch & Balance	Sylvia James		Most Tues	14.00	Full
Strollers	Carolyn Brown		2nd Mon	10.30	Enquire
Ten-Pin	John Phillips		2nd & 4th Weds	10.00	Enquire
Theatre, Films and Shows	Wendy Hylands		Varies.	Varies	Open to All
Walkers	Sue Hales		3rd Wed	10.00	Open to All

Some groups are full. Please ask to be put on the Waiting List. Any problems, tell Angie.