

Autumn Newsletter 2023

Introduction by Chair Derek Hussey

Wow, well here we go my first committee meeting done, and much to get to grips with.

Thank you for electing me as Chair, but as the only nominee your choice was limited, but it is appreciated.



As I mentioned at the AGM a lot of dedicated work goes on in the background with our excellent committee members, to ensure that the many groups are supported and encouraged all the way. Of course, we could do with more members coming forward as convenors to organise new groups, you don't need to be an expert in any subject just a facilitator for a group to get together and establish a common interest.

Nothing just happens.

It was great to see so many turn up to the AGM, you caught us a little by surprise and we had to hurriedly arrange extra scones etc, not to mention seating. Anyway, it all worked out wonderfully well in the end with a lot of hard work by our volunteers.

I say again nothing just happens.

Now on into the Autumn months, and the shorter days but keep positive and safe

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Notes and Notices

AGM 24 July 2023

Held at St Peter's Community Centre, Church St, Bexhill

There was an excellent turnout for the AGM, so many in fact that our brilliant catering team had to send out for extra scones and jam. The full and detailed Minutes will be available to all members after the next committee meeting.

The Acting Chair Richard Collisson opened the meeting.

He welcomed members to the meeting and commented that it was wonderful to see so many members. He then proceeded to his report of the previous year before going on to introduce the members of the committee and paid tribute to all the volunteers that have taken on the committee and supporting roles to ensure the smooth running of our u3a. In particular, he thanked Barbara Spackman, the Speakers Secretary, who has recently retired.

Richard stated that of course Group convenors are extremely important and should be thanked for their work. He noted that there are currently 66 group's for 615 members, with some members belonging to more than one group, and many groups have no vacancies. More groups are therefore needed. Richard appealed for more people to step up as group leaders/convenors; there is support available and the groups coordinator Lynda Wood would love to hear from people. This could be for new groups on existing topics where the groups are full, or for new topics. There are currently 71 convenors/group leaders, as some groups have two convenors to share the responsibility and organisation.

H&Ru3a previously belonged to the Sussex U3A Network (SUN) but this had the drawback that most events such as workshops and courses were held in West Sussex. Over the past year a more local network 'East Sussex East' has been developing. Our Acting Chair, Business Secretary, and new Regional Representative recently attended a meeting which included National Chair Liz Thackray and S.E. Trustee Susie Berry, where it was agreed that this local network can go ahead and can organise local and regional events in our area.

At last year's AGM there were a number of requests for new activities or groups. A few have been achieved e.g. Keep Fit (Qi Gong), and there are plans for a social in the autumn and possibly a Quiz in early 2024. Richard emphasised that new groups and activities can only be provided if there are volunteers to run them. Richard asked members to look at the packs on their tables and once again note down what they would like to see from u3a in the future, and perhaps even volunteer!

Finally, Richard thanked Lorna and the team from the Strollers group, for setting up the tables and chairs (including additional ones at the last minute because of the unexpectedly large turnout) and organising the cream tea to follow the meeting.

Treasurer's Report & Accounts

Josephine Noyce presented a report on the past year. Copies of the accounts were available at the meeting. Josephine reported that the accounts have been partially audited and the audit will be completed in August.

Josephine commented that over the past year the u3a had moved out of Covid and was back to normal operating. Since April 2023 all groups are self-funding, as the subsidy for hiring venues ceased.

Because of rising costs and the likelihood that these will rise further, the committee decided to raise the annual subscription to £17, but this is still lower than it was in 2018.

A motion to accept the accounts and report was duly proposed, seconded and carried unanimously by a show of hands.

There followed a short debate regarding internet banking and phasing out the use of cash and cheques. Josephine had suggested that with banks increasingly closing branches, within a year all transactions might have to be online, but it was noted that even if the Bexhill branch of Lloyds closes, there would probably still be a branch in Hastings, to which the account would be transferred. It is also possible to carry out bank transactions at the Post Office, including paying in cash and cheques. It was reported that other organisations whose bank branches have closed are already in this position.

Election of committee members. (A full list of committee members is on page 12)

The Business Secretary read out the list of current committee, members, nominees for the committee, and those taking on other roles but not standing for committee; she proposed that those standing for election should be elected in a block rather than individually. There were no objections and it was carried unanimously by a show of hands.

Our newly elected chair addressed the meeting.

Derek Hussey thanked the membership and commented that it was going to be quite an eventful year. He has only been a member of H&Ru3a for 18 months and had not previously belonged to a u3a, but already appreciates how much work the committee does to keep the u3a running. Nothing 'just happens', without a lot of work from a number of people. He thanked the excellent committee and volunteers, particularly Richard Collisson as Acting Chair, who had ensured the survival of the u3a during some difficult times during the past year.

Presentations were made to Barbara Spackman and Richard Collisson to thank them for their work over many years.

It is Not Too Late to Renew Your u3a Subscription.

Just £10.00 will cover you for a 7 month subscription, pro rata for period of 1 September 2023 to 31 March 2024. Then from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, individual membership will become £17.00 for a full 12 month subscription.

Payment should be made to:

Account name: Hastings & Rother U3A

Sort Code: 30 90 89 Account number: 55086960

Please note you MUST submit an application form when paying using online banking.

Please return your renewal form, (completed on both sides) with a cheque or details of bank transfer to the address at the bottom of the second page.

N.B. please do not use old stamps (without barcode) for postage the PO charge us an arm and a leg for delivery. Old stamps can be exchanged free of charge.

There are three ways to get a *standard exchange* form:

- **Print out the form from [Royal Mail's website](#).** If you don't have access to a printer, you can instead [complete a web form](#) and request for it to be posted to you.
- **Phone Royal Mail's customer services team** on 03457 740740 and ask for a form to be posted for free. Calls to this number are capped at your standard geographical rate, so check with your phone network how much it'll cost beforehand.
- **Visit your local delivery office** where you can pick up a form and envelope in person. ALL delivery offices will stock them. Note that you can't, however, collect forms from post office branches.

You can only request *Bulk Stamp Swap Out* forms from the [Royal Mail website](#) or by calling the Royal Mail customer services number above.

There's no limit on the number of forms you can request.

It's free to post your form and stamps back to Royal Mail

Acknowledgements

We would like welcome Derek as our new Chair and to thank all who contributed to the ongoing activities of Hastings and Rother u3a in particular to Barbara Spackman who for so many years managed our speakers' programme. And to Richard Collisson who having stepped up as acting Chair for the past year has chosen to step aside to allow a new Chair to be put in place. He continues to work tirelessly to assist in the smooth transition.

Postbag

Letter from a former member.

Dear Tricia (Jobling - Beacon Administrator)

I have just moved away from Rother District and am now living in Warwickshire.

I left the Hastings & Rother U3A with great sadness having to leave many lovely friends behind. The U3A has been a great place to be, so supportive and inclusive. I have learnt to sew, to paint and draw, have a better understanding of philosophy, learnt to knit and crochet, enjoyed qigong by the beach, danced the cha-cha-cha and even baking quite a decent pavlova! But most important of all the U3A taught me how to interact with people and how to make friends, a skill I sorely lacked previously.

Once again, a big thank you, Hastings & Rother U3A.

Regards Soo

Greetings to you all, from Richard Collisson

What a fantastic turnout at the AGM. I was overwhelmed by the numbers. Thank you also to the Strollers catering volunteers. Carole and Lorna, can you please pass on thanks to your team.

Apologies to Ginny as I unknowingly departed from the agenda. I flowed from my welcome straight into my report. Put it down to the large turnout!

Thank you all for your support over the last 14 months or so. We now have a strong team on the committee supported by a number of wonderful volunteers. I am sure you will go from strength to strength led by our new chair Derek.

Henceforth all chair.hru3a@gmail.com emails will be received by Derek.

Thank you also for your most generous gift of the garden voucher.

With my very best wishes to you all.

Enjoy your summer and see you in the Autumn. *Richard*

Group News

Ridge Writers

In the ongoing saga of Ridge Writers, *well we are a Creative Writing Group*, we have merged with Bexhill Storytellers under the Umbrella title of **H&R Scribes** (other creative writing groups are available). We will continue to meet on the second and third Tuesdays of each month starting at **10:00 am** and have added an afternoon session on the first Friday of each month, starting at **3.00 pm** all at:

The Bull Inn Bexhill Rd TN38 8AY (in the restaurant area)

Membership remains open and you can attend any or all of the meetings.

Enquiries: john@jgoodwin.info Tel:07307878647

Table Tennis



We meet at the Hollington Community Centre, Wishing Tree Road, TN38 9LL every Monday afternoon (barring bank holidays) between 2 - 4 pm to play Table Tennis. Usually between 8 - 14 players and we play singles and doubles. A very mixed - ability group, we don't take ourselves too seriously, it's all about having fun. If we are very busy it is possible to have 5 table tennis tables so 20+ players are easily accommodated.

It costs £5 per person per session plus 50p for tea/coffee and another 20p for biscuits and sometimes cake. We always stop for a refreshments break halfway through, a chance for a good natter.

More members are always welcome, come and see if you like us.

Moir Foster (Convenor)

The Dining Out Group

Rosemary Funnell, our Dining Out convenor, is stepping down. She has done an excellent job over the past 8 years and even chose the name for the group. Rosemary has explored ethnic restaurants in the Bexhill, St Leonards and Hastings areas over this time and has also considered travel options, car parking and generally helped everyone to enjoy the experience. All the group has appreciated her hard work over this time and well done for doing such a brilliant job.

The group is continuing but in a slightly different form; Marilyn Wright will be the named convenor but members of the group will take turns to organise venues, thus sharing the responsibilities. Ginny Edwards, the business secretary, is part of the group and is assisting us with the technical side of things for which we are all extremely grateful. So far this year we have visited a restaurant in Hastings and several pubs and each member has gallantly stepped up to explore these venues and book for the group.

Theatre Group

We have a good membership base but more are welcome. We only go to theatres in Eastbourne, Bexhill, and Hastings, also to the Kino cinema as it does live shows, live streaming and films. However we do have a lovely time and all those who join us on the outings are always happy and smiling. Please note we can only accept payment by cheque.

Contact: Diana Hughes for more information

u3a Qigong group

Mondays from 11th September 2023, 3-4pm at Azur pavilion, Marina, TN38 0BU.

Our drop-in class will be weekly, every Monday at 3-4pm from September. This gives you the opportunity to come on alternate Mondays, as it suits you. Please bring water to drink & £3 donation for the room hire.

Poetry Corner

Doggerel for the Newly Retired by Sandra Morris

"Retire", they said. "It will be fun.
Think of the things that you'll get done.
No more, for you, the nine to five
Live your best life, feel more alive."

Except it doesn't work like that
There always is a caveat.
It's not about the time you 'win'.
Those hours you braved with rictus grin.

If only all that time was yours
To spend, unfettered, on explores.
Or doing stuff that you enjoy
The pleasures of the hoi polloi

Instead it's "Can you do next week?
My car's developed an odd squeak.
The school run's really not that bad"
"Well... can't you ask their bloody dad?"

Or "Holidays are such a mare...
It's such a pain to find childcare
Could you just? Oh I'll stop you there.
I'm sure we do more than our share."

"Oh no.... don't cry. I'm sorry love
But we already go above...
Beyond and do our utmost best
We need to just chill out and rest."

In our advancing, latter years
Freed, finally, of our life's careers
We've done our bit for raising kids
We now just want to spend our quids

On doing all the things WE want
Perhaps a 3-week cruising jaunt
Or all-inclusive holiday
Oh, for the chance to get away.

To eat, relax, explore and read/
Enjoy the sun, reduce life's speed.
Then back at home enjoy my hobby.
Learn a new skill, take up Punjabi.

"Retire", they said. "It will be fun.
So, never one to be outdone.
I'm planning for my next adventures.
Ideally before I need dentures.

Light Reading

The Sock in Winter.

Autumn—not an easy season for the winter sock. It is at this time of year that they start to reappear after the enforced hibernation of the steaming summer. To emerge camphorous and crumpled from the dark cave of the sock drawer, having been rolled in a ball with their partners, squashed together with similarly balled - up others of their kind, like a carriage full of commuters going nowhere. Now to resume an active role, rather than a dilatory one.

It is a time of great excitement for the humble sock, but of great trepidation too. The transition from sedentary to pedantry always seems so sudden. To find oneself one minute, snoozing in cosy darkness, the next dragged into the light, shaken apart from one's closest affiliate and stretched over a foot that is only vaguely familiar as the one that filled your world the previous winter. The long-relaxed interlock of the cotton strains to accommodate, as the pudgy foot wiggles its toes and coarse fingers pull at the very fabric of the poor sock's being, releasing the elastic of the cuff with a snap around thickened ankles. They must have put on weight. Of course, the sock will take the blame as the difficulty is put down to shrinkage. However the owner will soon forget once the extremity is snug in its warm embrace, for never have humans been heard to ask, "Does my heel look big in this?"

But this is only the prelude to the first day of a new year. In the hope that its shapely figure still has the elasticity for the task, the sock is determined to hit the ground running. Instead, it finds itself shuffling, naked, along chilled, tiled floors. Dust, fluff and pet hairs penetrate its very sole until it is finally properly clad in the leather armour of a pair of boots.

Not that there is any stigma in being uncovered. At least it is better than being exposed, trussed in the bondage suit of sandals. To be so brazen as to reveal one's fetish to the world is something one would never do outside your home. Anathema to the pious product of St Michael, it is often seen among tourist socks.

Warming to the task, there is a lot to look forward to. Will we venture onto the playing field, a round of golf perhaps? There, a chance to renew the acquaintanceship with colleagues who having lost their partners now finding a new vocation adorning the heads of golf clubs, they definitely have gone up in the world. Perhaps to the gym, to be set temporarily aside, breathing the heady atmosphere of the locker room and maybe catch a glimpse of those sylph-like athletic sports jobs that glow so white and bright in their brief but active careers.

The life expectancy of a Sussex sock is far greater than those of northern climes. Rested for almost half of the year, it can hope for a long and mostly pedestrian lifespan.

However, there is a watershed on the horizon. To the aging sock population. Christmas is to be viewed with the same trepidation as might a turkey. For it is at this time that a major influx of new socks appears in the community. Bright and gay they arrive, like so many pairs of young lovers, often still bound together and each with a spring in its heels, keen to step into the older one's shoes.

Will it be this year that we will be replaced? Will that thinning place on the ball of the foot be our Achilles heel? Knowing so well that the elasticised neck soon slackens in the heat of the day and toenails have taken their toll on your reinforced gusset, will it be this year that you are tossed aside in favour of a newer model, even if it is a cheapo from the middle aisles of the supermarket? Then what will befall you, to be shredded and recycled? Do you really believe in reincarnation? To return as a colourful Fair Isle jumper or an aristocratic polo shirt, now that would be something. What if we are to be deposited in the Humana box, to find new challenges in some far-flung desert or jungle. Most likely though, it will be the rubbish bin and landfill, decomposing slowly, an ill-fitting end to such a close-fitting garment. Gone with no trace of being, not even a footnote on the history of the world.

However, there is no point in dwelling on it, for today is the first of a new season so step-to and enjoy it. For whatever the future may bring, 'the games afoot.'



Editorial

If you would like to contribute to our Newsletter, please contact the team with any articles and pictures of u3a activities, group information or events both recent and planned.

For inclusion in the Winter 2023/24 issue please send as an attachment by e-mail to newsletter.hru3a@gmail.com before the 30th of November

Best wishes from the Newsletter Team: John, Anne and Wendy.

Events

2023/24 Speaker Programme

Venues: St Peter's Community Centre, Old Town, Bexhill, TN40 2HE

Or: White Rock Theatre, Hastings, TN34 1JX

10.00 Coffee 10.30 Notices 10.45 Speaker 12.00 Close

Monday 25th October 2023 St Peters Community Centre

The Honourable & Dishonourable Art of Acting - Malcolm Jones,

an Accredited Lecturer for the Arts Society, who lectures on Theatre & Entertainment History tells the story of Actors, often seen in the past as rogues & vagabonds, and the long & lively road to respectability filled with fascinating characters.

Monday 27th November 2023 White Rock Theatre

Tom Crean, Unsung Hero of Antarctic Exploration - Michael Smith,

an authority on Polar exploration whose books have sold worldwide talks today about Tom Crean whose incredible exploits exploring with Captain Scott and Ernest Shackleton were overlooked for 80 years.

Tuesday 5th December Christmas Quiz & party.

See Page 11 for details.

u3a Regular Coffee Mornings

You are cordially invited to come along and meet some of our members for a coffee and a chat. These coffee mornings are held between 10.30 am to 12 noon on the second Monday and Thursday of each month at two separate venues. Please choose the venue that suits you or come to both. Just make yourself known to the group. N.B. The venues below host our get-togethers at no charge so it is only a courtesy to purchase a beverage when attending.

Venue 1:

Second Monday
White Rock Hotel Hastings
Coffee Bar/Restaurant
Roadside parking meters nearby
(98 and 99 buses stop nearby)

Venue 2:

Second Thursday
De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
Go to the cafe on the 1st floor.
Lift available if required.
Plenty of parking available
(99 bus stops nearby)

Looking Forward

Bookmark

Due to uncertainty about White Rock Theatre, production of our popular bookmark has been delayed. We will get it out as soon as the situation is made clear.

Christmas Party

This year's Christmas party will be at St Peter's Church Hall on Tuesday 5 December from 2-4.00pm. This will be an all ticket affair as the hall capacity is limited. Tickets will be £5pp and on sale at all coffee mornings and speaker meetings starting in October.

The East Sussex East (ESE) cluster group.

Representing the H&R committee were Richard Collisson, Carole Benton and Ginny Edwards who joined 9 other local u3a's to welcome TAT Chair Dr Liz Thackray and our Southeastern Regional Representative Susie Berry to a meeting of our ESE cluster group in Eastbourne in July.

The East Sussex East (ESE) cluster group formed a year ago to share information, advice and best practice with our neighbouring u3a's. Started by Battle and District it was quickly joined by other local groups and now consists of Battle, Crowborough, 3 Eastbourne groups, Hailsham, Heathfield, Hastings&Rother, Mayfield and Rye. It's a mix of small and large branches giving ESE a total of about 3000 members.

We invited chair and regional rep to our July meeting to exchange views and hear their impression of ESE and how it could fit into any new framework. Their enthusiasm for our group was extremely encouraging and they were very keen to see it develop from a simple cluster into a proper network in this region. This would be especially helpful if we worked together to create a summer school or joint events in the future.



Photo: Front row: Ginny Edwards H&R, Dr Liz Thackray TAT Chair, Diane Wilson Battle, Susie Berry Southeastern Region Rep

Your Committee

Committee (elected trustees) .

Trustees serve for 3 years and apart from Chair and Vice Chair, can then stand for re-election.

Position	Name	Email
Chair (Officer)	Derek Hussey	chair.hru3a@gmail.com
Vice Chair_ (Officer)	Vacant	
Treasurer: (Officer)	Josephine Noyce	treasurer.hru3a@gmail.com
Assistant Treasurer:	Ewa Goulding	treasurer.asst.hru3a@gmail.com
Business Secretary (Officer)	Ginny Edwards	secretary.hru3a@gmail.com
Minutes Secretary:	Jenny Meteyard	minutes.hru3a@gmail.com
Membership Secretary:	Matilda Jarvis	membership.hru3a@gmail.com
Groups Coordinator	Lynda Wood	groups.hru3a@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor:	John Goodwin	newsletter.hru3a@gmail.com
Beacon Administrator:	Tricia Jobling	database.hru3a@gmail.com
Member/ Trustee	Christine Evans	

In Addition the following have volunteered to help the committee and to take on supporting roles:

Non-committee roles

Position	Name	Email
Initial Enquiries	Sue Shilstone	initialenquiries.hru3a@gmail.com
Speakers Secretary	Pandora Bastian	speakers.hru3a@gmail.com
Website Administrator	Brian Gould	website.hru3a@gmail.com
Venues Coordinator:	April Yasamee	venues.hru3a@gmail.com
Regional Coordinator	Carole Benton	regional.hru3a@gmail.com
IT Administrator	Richard Collisson	