

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2025

Chairman's Christmas Musing

I write this just after attending the last of our major events of the year – the Christmas party, held in Bexhill's St Peter's Community Centre. Some 100 members arrived and were treated to a glass of something sparkling (choice of alcoholic or not) then moved into the main hall where our Catering Volunteers had laid out tables in preparation for an afternoon tea preceded by a musical interlude.

Before my introduction to the proceedings, I was told not to do any Doom and Gloom so instead I tried to get some pantomime spirit going – oh, no, I didn't. Then I had the pleasant duty of presenting honorary memberships to some of our former long-serving committee members.



A number of members were seen to be singing and actually physically bopping along, on their feet, to well-known Christmas favourites delivered by Kevin Terrell who describes himself as a Macmillan Busker raising money for the charity of that name. My thanks to all who came along and to those who set it all up and then cleared it all away.

Christmas-time is an occasion when we celebrate being with families and of one memorable addition to a family two millennia ago. It is also a time when we remember family and friends who are no longer with us but rejoice in the arrival of new births. I hope that those of us who have suffered the former can also find comfort in the latter. Those of you who were at the party will remember that I did mention some doom and gloom but I finished with the hope that three words might be applied to all the current issues worrying the world and our country: Peace, Goodwill, Resolve. The first two are easy to say, the last will take a little (lot?) longer but if we can each do something in our own small way perhaps this will lead to better things. I do hope that you all have an enjoyable festive season in whatever way you can and I look forward to greeting you with 'a Happy New Year' in the not-too-distant future.

Richard Stanton

Introducing new Committee members

Vanessa Shaw, Minutes Secretary

I joined the u3a just over a year ago, after returning from living in Greece for nearly twenty years. Previously I had worked for the Civil Service and some local charities in Hastings, such as Age Concern and Care for the Carers. I saw this as an opportunity to meet new people and become involved in the groups. I belong to one of the Book Groups, which introduces me to authors I didn't previously know. I ran a small group for H&Ru3a on Family Trees for 4 months to share my knowledge about researching family history.

John Firth, Speakers Secretary

I have previous experience in this area, having been responsible for arranging speakers during my time with Probus in Stratford upon Avon. I'm new to Bexhill, having moved with my wife from Stratford early in 2025 to be nearer to family. I'm very interested in history and enjoy political debates. I also enjoy watching sport, especially football and cricket. In my younger days I also participated, but that was some time ago.

Susan Firth, Newsletter Editor

And now I will introduce myself, Susan Firth. It's no coincidence that we share the same surname; I am John's wife. We are enjoying our new life at the coast and are looking forward to meeting people and making new friends. I enjoy dabbling with words, writing rhymes and short stories. I've also been involved in amateur dramatics, mainly the costume and wardrobe departments but I have been known to tread the boards in very minor roles.

Vacancies

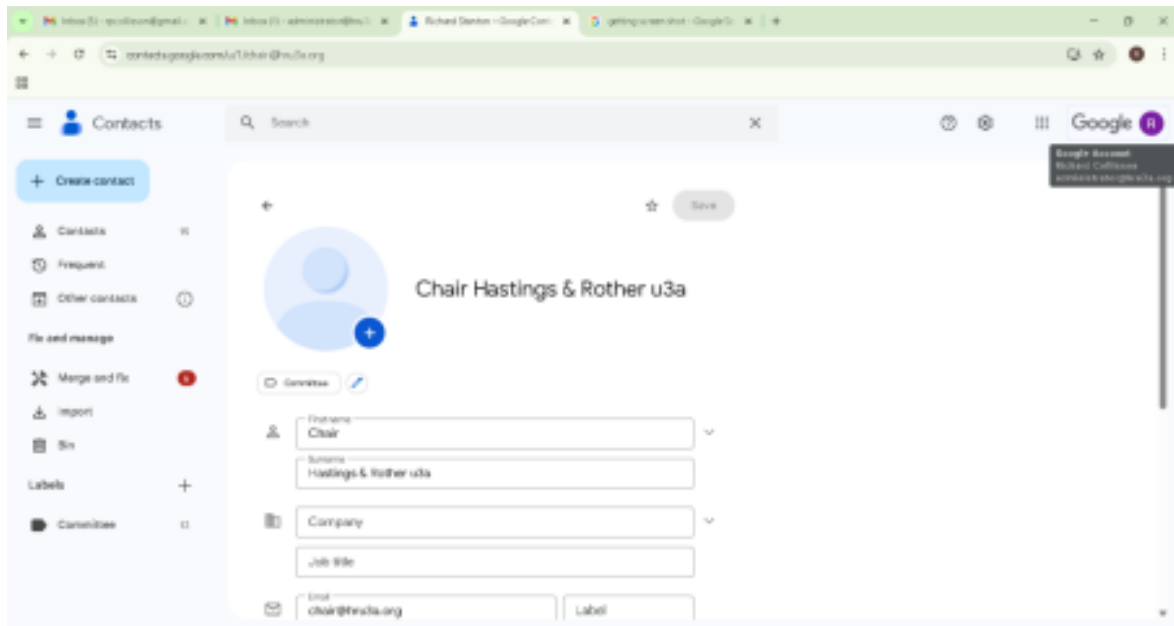
- 1 Would you be willing to take on the role of Equipment Officer? We need someone to record the whereabouts of our assets.
- 2 We need a co-host and volunteers to join the Welcoming Team at the Hastings coffee mornings.
- 3 If you have booked to go on a visit by coach, would you consider helping out by checking others back onto the coach and other minor duties?

If you can help with any of the above, or would like more information please get in touch with Claire Williams, business.secretary@h&ru3a.org

E-mails to Committee members

With there being a number of changes on the committee recently some members are having difficulties in sending an email to the right person when there is a change of office holder. Here is what you can do:

- This is an example for the chair of H&R
- Go to your contacts list.
- Instead of giving the name of the actual office holder give the 'name of the role'.
- In this example give the name as **Chair** and NOT the actual name of the current officer.
- This can generally be changed via Edit and make sure you save.
- The screenshot below is for Gmail.
- Other email providers will be broadly the same.
- This will mean when sending an email, it goes to Chair rather than mentioning the name of the previous holder of the post i.e.: Derek Hussey for the Chair.



Richard Collisson
Administrator of email system.

New information on H&R u3a Website

To see a full list of forthcoming events, please click on the tab EVENTS. For example, one of the events you will see is: about a fun and free quiz on Sunday afternoon, 25th January at White Rock hotel.

Speakers Meetings

We hope you have enjoyed seeing and hearing the presentations this year. We have a varied programme arranged for next year and we would like your opinions at the end of the meeting.

We will be providing a simple and anonymous way for you to respond, in the form of a coloured disc and a choice of containers marked from acceptable to excellent.

u3a Magazine

We are thinking about annual fees and reviewing membership costs. As part of looking at cost saving we thought it worth highlighting that the costs of postage and sending out magazines is currently more than the price of membership. If you are happy for us to remove you to reduce costs, please would you let us know. Please just send an email with "Remove from Magazine" in the Subject line to:

Dave Benton database@hru3a.org

Grant from ASDA

We are delighted to have been awarded a Grant from ASDA for £600. It is specifically for use with set up and associated costs of running groups. If you need equipment to help with a group that you currently run or would like funds to help buy equipment for a new group you would like to set up please can you contact Claire Williams, business.secretary@h&ru3a.org

Garden Appreciation Group

Photos taken during the year – kindly provided by Ginny Edwards who convenes this group along with Sue Marsden



May:

Delicious refreshments greeted us on arrival at The Priests House in West Hoathly. This 15th century house once boasted over 170 types of medicinal and culinary herbs in the garden



June: Our coach trip to visit the Downland Museum of Rural Life in West Dean. The museum relocates historic buildings in danger of demolition. They are restored and conserved to provide a glimpse into everyday life in the 16th ,17th, 18th, and 19th Centuries



The BBCs 'Repair Shop' film set on the grounds of the museum



On the same trip we also visited the fabulous gardens next door to the museum at the West Dean College of Art and Conservation.



July: we took part in the National Garden Scheme, Sussex to visit a beautiful private garden at Brightling Down Farm in Dallington. Started from scratch 20 years ago, the garden has a pond, woodland and Japanese garden complete with bespoke tea house.



The very Zen tea house at Brightling Down farm complete with heritage dragons the owners sourced from Kyoto.



September: a visit to Nymans the house and garden **cared for by the National Trust. Designed to be a four-season garden, it has something of interest every month of the year.**



October: we had a fabulous visit to Bedgebury Pinetum which has the largest collection of conifer trees in the world.



Our very knowledgeable guide tells us about the rare Woolami pine. Recently discovered in a hidden glade in Australia, it was part of the landscape when dinosaurs roamed the earth. Specimens have been distributed to select botanical gardens around the globe to encourage its preservation.



November: our final visit was to the National Trust's Standen House and Garden in East Grinstead. The house is beautifully decorated by volunteer staff for Christmas. This year inspiration came from old letters the Beale children wrote to Santa with a Christmas tree in each room echoing the theme.



In the family dining room, the teddy bears and dolls have a festive picnic. We felt it was a wonderful way to get into the Christmas spirit.

Quarterly Poem

We would like to share this poem kindly submitted by Pat Watkins.

First day of the year and what better date

To start to get fit and lose excess weight.
Each morning I'll strive to walk round the park,
I'll not be put off by the rain or the dark.
I'll cut out the sugar and chocolate and gin
And soon I'll be tantamount to being thin.

Second day of the year, a setback to my plan.
No walking today as the nice weather man
On the BBC news said a bad storm was nigh.
Can't take any risks with this body, can I?
So I stayed in to binge on a series or three
And got rid of the last of the gateau at tea.

Third day of the year must try harder I know
But it's difficult when there's a warning of snow
and the pork pie I'd bought in case Dad might pop in
had a best before date, wasting food is a sin,
so I ate it with pickle and ciabatta rolls
I'll make good tomorrow and still reach my goals.

Fourth day of the year walked the hill to the crest
but had to come back due to pains in my chest
tho' it could have been heartburn from croissants and tea
as Gaviscon sorted it out instantly.
The walking, I judged, to have burned a few cals
so I went to the pub for a lunch with the Gals.

Fifth day of the year no breakfast for me
I just didn't get up till just before tea.
I'd forgotten how bad hangovers can be.
A fry up will soon sort me out, wait and see.
I took down the deckies and under the tree
found a full tub of Heroes, unfortunately.

Sixth day of the year, to the shops took a stroll.
The new baker's giving out free sausage rolls.
The weather was cold and the queue was quite long
but what's half an hour to help start-ups along?
Didn't want to look mean as the baker looked nice
so I bought two cheese scones and a small custard slice.

Seventh day of the year, my scales are to blame,
a week into diet my weight's still the same.
I must have lost some as I'm nearly half starved.
My intake of calories must have been halved.
"Diets don't work" and I've proved that it's true.
Now where are those scones, it's time for a brew.

EVENTS

2026 Speaker Programme

Venues Alternate between:

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

White Rock Theatre, Hastings, TN34 1JX

10.00 Coffee

10.40 Notices

10.45 Speaker

12.00 Close

Monday 26 January – White Rock

A Life in Music

by Mike Hatchard

Monday 23 February

Fraud: Think you're Immune? You might not be!

by Roger Tristram

Monday 30 March

Walking with Polar Bears

by Gillian Lloyd

Coffee Mornings

You are cordially invited to come along and meet other members along with some of the Committee for a coffee and chat. The coffee mornings are held between 10 and 12 at one of two venues. Choose the venue that suits you best or come along to both and make yourself known to the group. The facilitators, welcoming team and Committee members will be wearing blue lanyards. Neither of the venues charge us but as a courtesy we ask that members buy a coffee or tea.

We meet on the second Monday of the month, at the White Rock Hotel Hastings, (in the coffee area on the left through main doors). Roadside parking (meters) is available and 98 and 99 buses stop nearby

We meet on the second Thursday of the month, at the De La Warr Pavillion, Bexhill, (in the café on the first floor, at the end past the coffee bar). Lift available and parking outside, 99 bus stops nearby.

E-mail addresses of current Committee members

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
April	Yasamee	venues@hru3a.org
Susannah	Farley-Green	regional@hru3a.org

Caroline	Brewer	socialteam@hru3a.org
VACANT	C. Williams covering	groups@hru3a.org
Claire	Williams	business.secretary@hru3a.org
Colin	Dearmer	inclusionofficer@hru3a.org
Dave	Benton	database@hru3a.org
Dave	Benton	administrator2@hru3a.org
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John	Firth	speakers@hru3a.org
Josephine	Noyce	treasurer@hru3a.org
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Richard	Collisson	administrator@hru3a.org
VACANT	not monitored	equipment@hru3a.org
Sue	Shilstone	membership@hru3a.org
Susan	Firth	newsletter@hru3a.org
Vanessa	Shaw	minutes@hru3a.org
Website Tony	Hudson	website@hru3a.org

Please let me know if you have any submissions for the next quarterly Newsletter, I would love to hear about and include pictures of your groups, activities and interests, email: newsletter@hru3a.org

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy year in 2026.

**Susan Firth
Newsletter Editor**