

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2026

Chairman's Commentary

At recent Speakers' Meetings and Coffee Mornings, I have been advocating the provision of contact details. For 'contact' read Next of Kin, Spouse, Partner or Other person having a concern for your welfare. There are two scenarios: one obligatory and the other not. Obligatory is the need to provide your contact details to the leader or organiser of any day trip arranged under u3a auspices. And, this is for two reasons: one to make sure everyone is on the coach before departure and two in case of an incident. Not obligatory is giving your details to your group leader and the scenario here is that you might suffer a serious incident ie collapse, fall or other serious injury. The first action is to call for an ambulance, the second action will be to comfort the sufferer and part of this action would be to rummage through pocket, wallet, bag or purse to find something to tell us who to call In Case of Emergency (ICE). Many of you have been long time members of H&R u3a and were previously offered a u3a ICE card which you filled out with details of one or two ICE contacts on one side and ailments, allergies and medication on the other as you saw fit. These cards are no longer available because u3a in their wisdom assumes that we all have smart phones now which can be set up to show ICE on the lock screen – the screen that shows immediately after switching on. I have done this on my mobile phone (Android) and provided information to my own groups how to do this for both Androids and iPhones. However, that information did not work for all. If you wish to do this, you probably need to ask Mr Google or a friendly teenager. Carrying an ICE card is not obligatory but it is a good idea and it (and your smart phone) is there for incidents outside the u3a. Ask for one at any coffee morning or speaker's meeting.

If you read my Chairman's Introduction in last year's Winter Newsletter then you will know that I have had a varied, interesting career. I am sure that many of you could match that or go one better. But, would you (or could you) stand up and tell us about it? Our Speakers Secretary thinks there must be equally interesting talks to be had from within the membership as well as from further afield. If you think you could stand up in front of an audience and talk about your career (or aspects of it) for 45 minutes and then answer questions for a few minutes more, please make yourself known to Valerie (speakers@hru3a.org) who is already thinking about next year's programme.

Finally, when I originally drafted this, my belief was that summer was almost upon us despite the torrential rain outside the window. Well, it came with a vengeance but now looks to be settling down into the English norm.

And finally, finally, with Battle and Rye u3as in our near vicinity, did you know that you can attend any of their groups (if they have room) for a free taster session? Then, if you wish to continue, apply for affiliate membership. Details from either of the u3as.

Richard Stanton

Introducing New Committee Members

Vanessa Shaw, Welfare Coordinator

I recently volunteered to take on this role, having previously worked for Age UK, Care for the Carers and the Benefits Agency (now the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP)). I will be the point of contact for any welfare concerns. Any member, Group Convenor or committee member can raise concerns about a member. e.g. a member having a sudden or unexpected change in their health or behaviour. I will make contact with the member, where possible, and keep all details confidentiality. Liaising with the Group Convenor or Inclusion Officer, where appropriate. My reports will be stored securely, only accessible by myself, the Chair and Business Secretary.

As we are all now in our third age, we are more likely to be affected by illness, bereavement or the need for support with day to day living, so you can seek support for yourself. I cannot offer detailed personal advice, but can suggest organisations that can offer that support and advice. I will keep a database of such organisations and produce regular articles for the Newsletter about them.

My contact details are welfare@hru3a.org

Stop the Press!

As we were about to go to print, we have good news; the two vacancies have now been filled. Very many thanks to those who have come forward.

The role of Vice President has been taken on by Dorrey Smallman.

The role of Inclusion officer has been taken on by Jane Skinner.

Social Team News

Save the Date!

Barn Dance Friday 16th October,

at St Peters Community Hall, Bexhill

The social team have arranged a Barn Dance with Spinning Jenny providing the music. Tickets will be on sale from 14th September.



Summer Social

Friday 17th July 7pm-9.30pm at St Peters Community Hall, Bexhill.

50s and 60s music will be played during the first part of the evening, after which we will have Brian as the Elvis tribute. Bring your own drink and nibbles, tickets will be on sale from 17th June at £5.

Please note, this event is open to non members

Rochester Visit

The social team organised a coach visit to Rochester on the 15th June.

Members enjoyed a day of glorious sunshine, during which they had a tour of Rochester Cathedral and time to explore the town



Spend a Day with the u3a

Open Day at the Birley Centre, 22 October, 2026

Put this date in your diary!

Members from across Eastbourne and the wider East Sussex network are warmly invited to a special **u3a Open Day** at the **Birley Centre**, Eastbourne on **Thursday 22nd October** to a relaxed, welcoming day of learning, discovery, and hands-on fun celebrating the spirit of lifelong curiosity.

Running from **10am to 4pm**, the event brings together all three Eastbourne u3as—Meads, Eastbourne Central, and Eastbourne & Wealden—along with seven neighbouring groups in the East Sussex East network.

You can expect:

Two keynote speakers, a lively mix of **interactive activities**, and plenty of chances to explore what the u3a has to offer in our area.

A Day Built Around Curiosity

This year's theme is History, interpreted in the broadest and most enjoyable way. Whether you're drawn to local stories, social history, artefacts, puzzles, or immersive experiences, there's bound to be something to catch your imagination.

Planned activities include:

Traditional Pub Games – A cheerful display and demonstration, including the ever-popular Toad in the Hole.

VR History Experience – Step into the past with guided virtual-reality sessions.

Devonshire Quarter Tour – Morning and afternoon walks led by local historian, Kim Adams, uncovering the stories behind this distinctive cultural area.

Hands-on History – Explore Rye Museum's loan boxes (WW2, Victorian objects, and more) with help from knowledgeable volunteers.

History Quiz – A light-hearted challenge for anyone who enjoys testing their knowledge.... and many more activities to be confirmed.

Between the walks, visitors can also meet and chat to **Kim Adams**, a local author and walk leader, who will be happy to talk about any aspect of local history. Kim, a well-known local historian and long-standing Eastbourne Central u3a member, is admired for his deep knowledge of the town and his warm, engaging style.

Speakers, Refreshments, and a Welcoming Atmosphere

Two guest speakers one in the morning and one in the afternoon will anchor the day. Their topics will be announced soon, but both will reflect the historical theme with engaging stories and fresh perspectives.

Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available throughout the day. Lunch isn't provided, but the Birley Centre is perfectly placed for nearby cafés and restaurants.

A Collaborative Effort

The Open Day is organised by **the East Sussex East (ESE) u3a Network**, (see below) with each participating u3a contributing volunteers, activities, and ideas. The aim is simple: to showcase the breadth of learning, friendship, and fun that the u3a offers, and to welcome both long-standing members and those curious to find out more.

Tickets and Further Information

Tickets will be available online once final costs are confirmed. They will be open to all u3a members and their eligible guests, with booking fees included.

A full programme—including timings for the walks, speaker details, and activity schedule—will be shared in the coming months.

Take part

If you have an interest, collection, hobby, craft, or table-top activity that you think would be a good fit for the day, please do let us know. It doesn't need to be elaborate — anything that showcases what our members enjoy, create, or know about would help bring the event to life. Even small displays or simple “have-a-go” ideas are very welcome, and they all contribute to giving visitors a real flavour of the variety within our u3as.

Please note: All activities, dates, and timings are provisional and may change as plans are finalised. Please look out for updates. We'll confirm any changes as soon as possible.

Can You Spare a Couple of Hours?

We're looking for a few volunteers who can spare a couple of hours to help the day run smoothly. Tasks include welcoming visitors, helping with refreshments, guiding people to activities, and offering general support. It's a great way to be part of the day and meet members from across the area. If you're able to help, please let your committee know.

The East Sussex East network

The East Sussex East network brings together ten u3a organisations in East Sussex to share ideas, skills and resources for the benefit of our members. Working collaboratively also enables us to run larger projects—such as excursions, workshops and study days—that would be difficult for individual u3as to deliver alone. The member u3as are: Battle & District u3a, Crowborough u3a, Eastbourne Central u3a, Eastbourne Meads u3a, Eastbourne & Wealden u3a, Hailsham District u3a, Hastings & Rother u3a, Heathfield & District u3a, Mayfield & District u3a, Rye District u3a

Focus on Groups

Carol Crossley's Wednesday afternoon sewing and tailoring class

Roxanne Banks says:

"I had always longed to own my St Lucian national costume but I just did not know how to start. I did not have the skills required to make one; that is until I joined the u3a - and Carol's class!

There I joined an enthusiastic class of would-be sewers and through many afternoons of joyful sewing classes our little group managed to achieve so much and I fulfilled my dream.

Carol has been a patient, supportive and enthusiastic teacher. She always ends her classes with a little tea party (tea from a tea pot, served in cups and saucers!) which we really appreciate.

Carol is struggling with some health issues at the moment, but despite that she has opened up her home to us again and our little sewing bee is buzzing once more"

Marian is delighted with her tea dress - her first attempt at sewing.

She also made a cute little dress for her four year old great-niece. Her sister's son designed and printed the fabric whilst at university as part of his course; she was asked to use it to make the dress. With Carol's help and advice, this is the result.



Sue made a new hat and duffle coat for Paddington Bear - he is 45 years old and his old garments were somewhat moth-eaten.



Sheila is thrilled with her summer dressing gown - with Carol's help she's also made some wonderful cushion covers and a very useful protective pouch for her cutting-out scissors.



Sue has also made a very snazzy pair of culottes



Gill is the most experienced seamstress in our bee; she makes all her clothes, including underwear, but nevertheless was grateful to Carol for her assistance in creating this beautiful jacket which required some complicated tailoring techniques. A big thank you to Gill who opened her home to us when Carol was in hospital. She also allowed us to play with her overlocking machine - we were thrilled to achieve such a professional finish to our garments.



And here we are, at our Christmas tea party.



Many thanks to Sue Shilton, our Membership Secretary, for sending this item and the photos. Sue has also included information about Roxanne and her family:

“Roxanne comes from a very interesting St Lucian family. Her father, Sir Duncan St Omer, was a renowned and very talented painter and muralist. He designed the national flag of St Lucia when it gained independence from Britain in 1967 and his work can be seen in churches all over the island. Roxanne is one of nine children and her brother Giovanni recently won first prize in Dominica’s carnival pageant. Roxanne’s mother always FaceTimes during our sewing session which enables us to enjoy a few minutes of St Lucian sunshine. Lady St Omer travels to the UK once a year and we were delighted to celebrate her 92nd birthday with her last year at the Cooden Beach Hotel.”

Please do send me news and photos of your group for inclusion in future newsletters, preferably in plain text please (an email is perfect!) and standard format photos. Email me at newsletter@hru3a.org

Charity Corner

In this edition we are highlighting the charities, Age UK and Age UK East Sussex. Many thanks to Vanessa Shaw, our Welfare Officer, for this item. Here are Vanessa's words:

I must confess to a bias in recommending them, I worked for Age Concern, when they were based in Robertson Street, Hastings, years ago. I have recently used their information services to help a relative sort out disability benefits, housing problems and carers.

I'm in the process of completing my Power of Attorney and my living will, their guides have been brilliant! Age UK provides free advice for older people, their families and friends. The national organisation can be found at <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/>

They provide information factsheets and guides on a huge range of topics, covering health & wellbeing, legal matters, housing, benefits and care & support. These can be found online at <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/information-advice/guides-and-factsheets/> You can download the guides that you need or ask for a print copy by email or phone. They offer support through a free advice line on 0800 678 1602. Lines are open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year.

If you prefer local or face to face advice you can contact Age UK East Sussex. <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/eastsussex/our-services/> You can arrange a telephone consultation with one of their advice workers, by calling 01273 476 704 between the opening hours Mon - Fri 10:00am - 3:45pm

As well as providing the detailed advice that the national organisation has, they also have details of local organisations that can provide help. If you need help with completing forms such as Attendance Allowance or Pension Credit, that can also be provided. They are based at the Isabel Blackman Centre in Hastings. Providing information is just a small part of what they do. The website links will lead you to so much more.

As Welfare Coordinator I will be keeping a database of information, but I cannot provide printed copies of all the factsheets and guides for Age UK myself. There are way too many!

However, please contact me if you want help obtaining copies. welfare@hru3a.org
Vanessa Shaw

Community Banking in Bexhill Information

As banks are closing in our towns throughout the country, we thought you might like to know the post office in Bexhill offers a Banking Hub in Devonshire Square. The hub hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. The banks have variable opening times within those hours, with Barclays closed between 1 and 2pm.

Monday: Lloyds
Tuesday: Santander
Wednesday: HSBC
Thursday: Barclays
Friday: NatWest

Specialist bankers are available to help with complex issues (fraud, bereavement, managing accounts)

The following item was submitted by Sue Shilston, our Membership Secretary

OUT OF AFRICA AND INTO BEXHILL-on-SEA.....

**In conversation with u3a member Ros Wyer,
an enthusiastic participant of French Conversation,
Spanish Conversation, The Literary Salon and Book Club**

How was it that you came to live in Africa?

Various reasons. I wanted to do something outside of London, which in March was cold, wet and grey.... We are talking 1965. I saw an ad in the paper: *"Teachers. Secretaries, Nurses - why not work in the sunshine in Africa?"* Many African countries had become independent, most of the Whites had left. I applied and within a month found myself to be secretary, working for Justin B. Zulu, Permanent Secretary in the Office of National Development and Planning in Zambia. As we were working on the First National Development Plan the President, Kenneth Kaunda, was a frequent visitor. Lusaka, Zambia, was a busy, thriving capital of mostly large single-storey houses in beautiful gardens and I loved it from day one. Perfect, warm, sunny weather with big, blue skies - the rains had just finished and winter not yet arrived. I lived in a Govt hostel to start with and then moved, with 3 other girls, into a house.

Was there anything in your childhood that indicated your life might follow this path?

I suppose so, as my father had fought in both world wars in Africa, firstly with the King's African Rifles in Tanganyika and latterly with the Royal Pioneer Corps in Bechuanaland (Botswana) and I grew up on tales of Africa.

What was your parents' background?

Both my parents were well travelled - Mum having lived and worked in both Australia and Germany as a governess/nanny. Whilst in Germany she went to hear one of Hitler's speeches and was horrified by the hysteria it created. She took fright and left the country to return to England. Dad worked in Southern Rhodesia, Canada and Australia and my parents met on a ship returning from Australia in 1932. The first time my father set eyes on my mother was when she was being winched on board the ship which had already left the dock - she had missed its departure! On Christmas Eve morning Mum sent a card to Leicestershire, which arrived the same afternoon, and Father turned up on the doorstep on Christmas morning. They got married in London in 1937.

Personal history

I met my husband, Rod, the day after I arrived, in 1966, at a farewell party for British Customs Officers. He was in Zambia and during the construction of Lake Kariba - as he had a boat - he was involved in "Operation Noah"; all the animals in the Zambezi Valley had to be rescued. He was actually an accountant by profession. We got married in 1967 and set up house together. During my leisure time in Zambia (which was prolific as servants in the house were quite normal) I learnt to fly a Cessna 150 2-seater aeroplane. At that time, many of the farmers' wives used to fly around the country (under the radar, literally!) to visit each other - so I decided to have a go. There was no tower at the original Lusaka Airport and I used to wait on the runway for the sun to rise before I could take off. Great fun, and I loved being alone in the huge blue sky.

I also learnt to water-ski on Lake Kariba, in spite of the crocs. In 1980 we moved to Botswana where I worked for 20 years in a local international school. At one point I became Editor of a magazine - "Motswana Woman" for which I wrote all the articles. I also wrote articles for local airlines' magazines. This publication was called "Marung" (meaning "in the clouds"). The articles were usually about wildlife and history of the area. I also went on to write for the government magazine - about wildlife and diamonds - which went out to embassies throughout world.

Which counties did you live in?

Firstly Lusaka in Zambia. Rod, my husband, was then transferred to Johannesburg where we remained for 8 years. Finally we went to Botswana where he worked for a construction company. Diamonds had just been found and the "Diamond Sorting Building" was under construction. We remained in Botswana for 35 years.

What were your impressions when you first arrived in Africa?

Warmth, friendly people, sunshine and the smell of flowers. All the gardens were full of tropical plants. I have always needed to live where the skies are blue.

At that time did you imagine you would spend most of your life in Africa?

No, I promised Mum I would undertake one contract and come home. My husband, Rod, was a 2nd generation South African who had never left Africa. I am not someone who ever looked ahead.

Of all the countries you lived in, which gave you the most cause for concern? Was your concern directed towards the living conditions of the Africans, your personal safety, or something else?

I accepted the status quo, and was aware that many Africans - at that time - lived in grass huts. In Botswana, in particular, they were well looked after by the government. Rod and I bought a 10 acre piece of ground from Lady Khama, wife of the President, Sir Seretse Khama, in order to build a house. She became a friend. The country that gave me most cause for concern was South Africa due to apartheid.

Where were your children born? What is their overview of their early life in Africa?

They were both born in Johannesburg and have shown no curiosity about our family life in Africa. They went to boarding school in England and, as teenagers, grew up in a very British way. Without a university degree it is very difficult to get a work permit in Botswana, so they made their lives in the UK.

At what point did you come to realise that you might have to leave?

Rod always knew that we would retire to England (he had made this promise to Mum but he would have hated it). He never retired! He was still working at 83 as he had no pension. Rod died in 2014 and I made the decision to come to the UK as my children are here.

Had you maintained contact with relatives and family in the UK

Yes, we returned frequently to visit friends and relatives.

How did you end up in Bexhill?

Having lived in a desert for 50 years, I was desperate to live by the sea. My daughter, who was living in Norbury at the time, suggested I live on the south coast. We looked in Hastings, then Bexhill and I finally arrived in September 2016.

And how did you come to hear about u3a?

My sister, Juliet, was Groups Co-Ordinator for the u3a in Amersham for several years

I know that you are an aspiring linguist, being a member of both Spanish and French conversation groups - is Afrikaans your 4th language? -

No! I know several words, but cannot really hold a conversation. In one job I did, working for the City Council in Johannesburg, we were required to speak one day in English, and one day in Afrikaans.

Perhaps you could set up a group for those who have lived in Africa - I know there are a few!

Yes, absolutely!

Quarterly Poems and Photos

The poem for the Summer Newsletter is by yours truly, Susan Firth.

Our son was about seven or eight years old when the holiday mentioned in the rhyme took place. As he grew older, he would ask us what sort of parents we were to allow him to have this particularly dangerous item. This is my response.

A Beach Spade - The True Story.

Long ago on holiday we played on golden sand,
football, cricket and then tried castles built by hand.
The castles weren't successful; we found a shop nearby,
a spade was what we wanted, what we thought we should buy.

There were plastic trowels and metal spades, a choice we had to make.
We thought the plastic best for young feet and toes and safety's sake.
But on the sand the plastic trowel did not perform the task.
Oh, please please please the metal spade is all that I will ask.

So, with warnings of great tragedy and instructions to wear shoes,
we reluctantly agreed to let our young son choose.
Back to the shop along the prom is where we therefore strolled,
to buy the pointed metal spade, the only type they sold.

It really was effective; our son he took great care.
He built the biggest castles, of sand, beyond compare.

Some forty years have passed
and the spade has seen its last.
It has finally been laid to rest,
no doubt at all it gave its best

The spade has been so useful, has helped with many a chore,
it's lifted paving stones, cut edges to the lawn and more.

It's sad it's lost its little handle; the metal point has bent.
With reluctance, and regret, to recycle it was sent.



Earlier, in late spring, I saw both a rhododendrum and roses in bloom, which I thought both unusual and very beautiful.



Contacting Convenors and Officers

Messages from members are always very welcome, however, please note the following:

Junk Emails

It appears that some u3a emails are going into members' email 'Junk' folders and so can be missed. This is not just a local problem but is happening to u3a groups all over the country. The problem appears to be that the email suppliers (Google, Hotmail etc.) are using artificial intelligence to identify 'junk' and that can include Beacon emails. Can we suggest that members keep an eye on their email 'Junk' folders and if there are any u3a emails in there mark them as 'Not junk'. It is also recommended that you add an entry in your address book for Hastings & Rother u3a with an email address of noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk this should mean that it is recognised in the future.

If you need help with this, please contact database@hru3a.org

Summer TAM magazine

Some of you may receive the summer edition of the Third Age Matters magazine even though you did not request it when you renewed your subscription, this is because of the way the addresses are submitted for the distribution of the magazine. Don't worry you will not be charged for the magazine and it should sort itself out by the next edition.

E-mail addresses of current Committee members

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Email Address</u>
Susannah	Farley-Green	regional@hru3a.org
Caroline	Brewer	socialteam@hru3a.org
Carol	Martin	groups@hru3a.org
Claire	Williams	business.secretary@hru3a.org
Jane	Skinner	inclusionofficer@hru3a.org
Dave	Benton	database@hru3a.org
Dave	Benton	administrator2@hru3a.org
Ewa	Goulding	treasurer.asst@hru3a.org
Dorrey	Smallman	vicechair@hru3a.org
Valerie	Sprott	speakers@hru3a.org
Josephine	Noyce	treasurer@hru3a.org
Richard	Stanton	chair@hru3a.org
Richard	Collisson	administrator@hru3a.org
Ken	Saunders	equipment@hru3a.org
Sue	Shilstone	membership@hru3a.org
Susan	Firth	newsletter@hru3a.org
Vannessa	Shaw	minutes@hru3a.org
Vannessa	Shaw	welfare@hru3a.org
Website Tony	Hudson	website@hru3a.org

Speakers Meetings

Monday 27 th July	St Peter's Community Centre	AGM Starts at 14:00	
August – No meeting			
Monday 28 th September	White Rock	The Battle of Hastings – We should have won!	David Clarke
Monday 26 th October	St Peter's Community Centre	The Band That Went to War: The Royal Marine Band in The Falklands	Brian Short
Monday 23 rd November	White Rock	Christmas – A Festive History	Andy Thomas

Join us for our speaker's meetings, held at:

St Peter's Community Centre, Church Street, Bexhill, TN40 2HE

Or

The White Rock Theatre, opposite Hastings Pier TN34 1JX

10:00 Coffee or Tea	10:30 Notices	10:45 Speaker	12:00 Close
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Our regular coffee mornings brings members together at:

White Rock Theatre, Stalls Bar in Hastings on the **2nd Monday of the month**, with Mick Malloy and Hillary Rhodes as your hosts. The Stalls Bar is on your right as you come through the main entrance.
10:00 until 12:00

The De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill on the **2nd Thursday of the month**, with hosts Linda Hussey and Lesley Smith.
10:30 until 12:30

Members and non-members are welcome to attend either or both.

Please do 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 me at newsletter@hru3a.org

Susan Firth
Newsletter Editor