

u3a

Crowborough



2026 - 2027

www.crowborough.u3asite.uk

Chairman's Message

I hate to say it, but there are fewer than 100 days until Christmas. Where does the time go?

2026 was a special year as we celebrated our 20th anniversary. I hope you were able to attend one of our celebratory events, which were organized to thank all our members for their support over the years. In June, we enjoyed an afternoon of music provided by our own choir, shanty, and ukulele groups. In August, we held an evening magic show and quiz, alongside a celebratory cake competition judged by the magician, Bertie Pierce.



Our Vice-Chair, Brian Child, put together an afternoon of folk and shanty music in the form of a mini-festival. It went incredibly well, so a second one is already planned for 2027 (incorporating the lessons we learned with the sound system!).

Membership numbers continue to climb, currently standing at 916. Our New Groups Convenor, Kim Read, has been getting all kinds of new groups off the ground to keep a wide variety of activities available. However, we know that some members have experienced difficulties getting into the group of their choice, which is of particular concern. The Committee has tasked Kathryn Willig with recording

the names of anyone waiting to join a full group. This will help Group Leaders fill slots as they become available, and it will help Kim get a second group started once Kathryn notes there is sufficient interest.

This process relies on your cooperation, too. If you cannot get into a particular group, please let Kathryn know. (The email link can be found on the Contact page of our website.)

I know that the internet is not an attractive place for some of our members, but the world has changed from when we were young. "Going digital" is being thrust upon us from all directions, not least by the banks and health services. At Crowborough u3a, we have tried to shift our own services in that direction too, but at a gentler pace. You can pay your membership via BACS, and we try to keep you informed about activities with a single monthly email rather than having increasingly expensive newsletters printed. Also, our website carries all kinds of useful information. In fact, it is more up-to-date than it has ever been, and I would encourage everyone to keep an eye on the events page in particular. This has become our principal means of getting information out to ALL OUR members, along with the Monthly Bulletin.

Crowborough belongs to a small network of East Sussex u3as and is the largest of our set of ten.

This year's network study day will be held in Eastbourne on the 22nd October and takes the form of a "Bring a Friend Day" with a loose historical theme. It is funded by all ten u3as and promises to be a grand day out.

It only remains to thank you all for your support over the last year. We have a dedicated and enthusiastic committee and a set of brilliant Group Leaders who have sustained Crowborough u3a for the last twenty years. Let's hope the next twenty take us from strength to strength.

Trevor Probert

Chairman

Tel: 01892 654278

Email: trevorprobertcrowbu3a@gmail.com

Cover photo: David Bird, Photography Group – A group photo exhibition is held in the café area of the Crowborough Community Centre each autumn, and this year it runs until the 22nd October.

News from the Groups

We have 93 groups at present, of which at the time of writing 62 have vacancies; those with vacancies are highlighted in yellow in the list at the end.

The following groups are among those that have started during the last year: Ballroom Dancing, Book Circle 2, Bridge, Calligraphy, Contemporary History, Cooks Club, Cribbage, Crochet Knit & Natter, Dancercise, German Conversation, Healthy Ageing, London Explorers Weekdays, Recorder Group, Rummikub, Sewing and Yoga. Many of these groups are still open to new members. If you are interested in joining one of them, please contact the Group Leader via the website or using the phone number in the list at the end of the Yearbook. The New Groups Convenor Kim Read has done sterling work in setting up these groups.

The successful Group Leaders meeting in July gave group leaders the opportunity to swap ideas and meet each other and the committee. This was also an opportunity for the committee to thank group leaders for their commitment throughout the year, without which the u3a could not function. Thanks also to all group leaders who send me information about their group so that the website can be kept fully up to date.

If you wish to join a group that is listed on the website as "Waiting List" please contact the Waiting List Coordinator Kathryn Willig. You will then be informed as soon as a place becomes available or a new group is being formed.

If you have a special interest or area of expertise that is not covered by our existing groups, why not start a new one? Plenty of help to get it going is available from Kim Read (New Groups Convenor). Please let Kim or me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Colin Condon
Groups' Coordinator
Email: groupscrowbu3a@gmail.com

New Groups

Since joining the u3a, I have enjoyed meeting people from all walks of life, bringing people together, and listening to how they want their groups to grow. I have even joined a few groups myself; it is a great way to learn new skills.

Being the New Groups Convenor is a role I enjoy very much.

We are constantly trying to start new groups, so keep an eye on the [New Groups](#) page on the website. If you have any suggestions, please get in touch.

Kim Read
New Groups' Convenor

Membership Renewal

Our membership year ends on the 31st October. To celebrate our 20th anniversary, we have reduced this year's fee to £12 per full member.

How to Renew:

- **Email users:** Renewal details were emailed on the 1st October. Please check your spam/junk folder if you cannot find the message.
- **Non-email users:** You will receive your renewal details by post.

Payment: If possible, please pay via bank transfer. This saves the u3a valuable time and money, and it avoids long queues at the Groups Display Afternoon. For further guidance or questions, please visit our website or get in touch.

Stephan Butler
Membership Secretary
Phone: 07867 014091
Email: membersipu3acrowborough@outlook.com

Monthly General Meetings

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month in the Main Hall at Crowborough Community Centre. Doors open at 2 pm, and talks begin at 2:30 pm.

These sessions are free for all Crowborough members and include complimentary refreshments. Prospective members are also welcome to join the u3a at the start of any meeting.

Car sharing where possible helps reduce pressure on parking.

Note: The October Monthly Meeting is replaced by our Groups Display Afternoon.

The full speaker programme is available on the website's [Events](#) page. Upcoming talks include:

Thursday 15 th October	Groups Display Afternoon You are warmly invited to join us at the Community Centre from 2 pm to find out what our various groups are doing. You will have the opportunity to chat with Group Leaders (or their representatives), join a group, or add your name to a waiting list. It can be busy right at the start, so consider arriving after the initial rush to beat the crowd!
Thursday 19 th November	Concorde: The First Time Machine Guy Bartlett returns to Crowborough. This time, he will talk to us about Concorde, the iconic plane first flown in 1969. Join Guy on a journey of discovery focused on this beautiful aircraft and learn new, fascinating facts.
Thursday 17 th December	Oh No It Isn't!: A History of Pantomime What is it about pantomime that attracts us to this strange concoction of fairy tales, dance, jokes, songs, and cross-dressing? And what is it really like to play the back end of a pantomime cow? All this – and the answer to whether something really is behind you – will be answered in Pete Allen's festive talk about what has become one of the great British Christmas traditions.
Thursday 21 st January	The Amazing World of Magic Our speaker in January will be Dr John Wyatt, who was a Bomb Disposal officer in the Army. John will cover the history of bomb disposal and various types of operations with descriptions of real scenarios, from direct operational experience.

If you are new to u3a, please let us know when you arrive and we will answer any questions you may have, and we will introduce you to some existing members or Group Leaders.

Jenny Bartlett
Speakers' Secretary

[Trips & Outings](#)

This year the coach trip to [Winchester Christmas Market](#) will take place on Friday 27th November 2026, the cost is £25. If you want to go, please fill in the booking form on the website or see Lynda at the Group Display Afternoon.

We are grateful that Ron Reed has agreed to be our new Trips Coordinator. He has some ideas, but he will not start organising the outings for 2027 until after the New Year. His ideas include:

- Milestones Museum: This museum takes you back to when we were younger, when sweets were sold from jars and cost a penny. It is very large, but as it is inside, the weather does not matter. They also have a large restaurant.
- Warner Hotels – Littlecote House: Lunch and then an afternoon show in their theatre.
- Blenheim Palace: Home to the Dukes of Marlborough since 1705 and the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill.
- Theatre Trip: Maybe a trip to a musical in Eastbourne.

Please keep an eye on the [Outings](#) page on the website and our Monthly Bulletins for news of what is being planned for 2027

[Coffee & Chat](#)

Coffee and Chat now takes place every Thursday morning between 10 am and 12 noon at Donna Maria. Existing members, new members, and prospective members are all welcome to come along for an informal chat about anything and everything. There is nearly always at least one member of the u3a committee there, and they will endeavour to answer any of your questions. You do not need to tell us that you are coming—just turn up!

Lynda Lenton

Latest News and Information

Latest News: Always available on our website: <https://crowborough.u3asite.uk> If you are reading this digitally, internet links are shown in blue and underlined.

Monthly Bulletins: Emailed a few days before each Monthly Meeting to remind you of the topic and speaker. If you haven't received yours recently, please check your junk/spam folder. To prevent this, mark the email as "not junk" or add noreply@u3abeacon.org.uk to your trusted contacts. If issues persist, contact the Membership Secretary or speak to a committee member at a meeting.

National u3a & Magazine: Visit www.u3a.org.uk for national news. The magazine, *u3a matters*, is published five times a year and can be read online. To pitch an article, email editor@u3a.org.uk.



Magazine Delivery: Postal copies of *u3a matters* cost Crowborough u3a £4 per year. Please only request a hard copy if you actively read it. To opt in or out of postal deliveries, email the Membership Secretary. Once finished, please pass your copy on to another person to maximise its value.

Online Groups & Support: Members can join [online interest groups](#) and Group Leaders can access advice from national [Subject Advisers](#).

Committee Members

Chairman Trevor Probert	Oversees the operation of Crowborough u3a	654278
Vice Chairman Brian Child	Supports Chair & oversees locally organised events	325064
Treasurer Rob Stone	Handles all money matters	331303
Business Secretary & Bulletin Editor Yvonne Stone	Administers management meetings, reporting requirements and correspondence.	331303
Membership Secretary Stephan Butler	Enrols new members, handles membership data	07867 014091

Database Manager Martin Castle	Oversees developments of our database and GDPR compliance	
Groups' Coordinator Colin Condon	Gives general support to our group leaders	
New Groups' Convenor Kim Read	Starts up new activity groups	07975 740924
Trips' Co-ordinator Lynda Lenton / Ron Read	Organises formal trips and outings	
Speakers' Secretary Jenny Bartlett	Books speakers and organises monthly events	07834 831962
Waiting List Manager Kathryn Willig	Manages waiting lists for full groups	
Web Manager Paul Penrith	Controls web content and GDPR compliance	664731
East South East u3a Representative Liaison officer Jane Lazell	Engages in exchange of ideas between local u3as.	07974 369408
Committee member without portfolio Sally Child	Supports Vice-Chair	

You can also send a message to a committee member through the [Contact](#) page on our website or put letters in our post box located in the foyer of the Community Centre.

Crowborough u3a, as part of the Third Age Trust, is registered with the Charity Commission (Number 1128386).

Group Reports

Please refer to the table of 'Interest and Activity Groups' at the end of this Yearbook for the phone number of the Group Leader and the meeting times.

For the most up to date information, always refer to the [Groups](#) page on our website.

Art Appreciation

We meet once a month and discuss an artist and their paintings. We all research one picture of the chosen artist and then present it. Over the last few months we have discussed Frida Kahlo as well as Zuberan to go with recent exhibitions in London.

Dorothy Tanning was discussed and we all agreed we would not want any of her pictures on our wall, so we don't just discuss artists we like, we are trying to stretch our brains. Other artists include Gustave Caillebotte, Paul Gauguin and Laura Knight. It is all improved by the tea and cake we have at our hosts' houses.

Sue Taylor



Ballroom Dancing

Our ballroom dancing group is a fun way to stay active, sharpen your memory and meet friendly people. Whether you used to dance years ago or have never taken a single step, you are incredibly welcome. It does not matter if you are single or a couple male or female or have a friend come along. For just £10 a lesson, you will learn the basics of classic dance, Ballroom and Latin in a friendly environment. Absolute beginners are highly encouraged, and there is no need to bring a partner. Our experienced, friendly and encouraging and skilled teacher Sami gives personal individual attention throughout the lesson.

We meet the second and fourth Wednesday in the month in the Hall at the Crowborough Community Centre between 11.15 am and 12.15 pm. So there is plenty of room to strut your stuff (see photo on next page).

Please come and try dancing with us.

Denys Clarke



Book Circle 1

We have had a change of leader and some new members this year. Jenny Scott, who ran the group for many years, has stepped down and we have been joined by two new members – consequently the group remains full.

We read a variety of fiction and only occasionally share the same opinions of what we have read; as a result, our discussions are lively, stimulating and entertaining.

And yes, we do actually talk about the book!

Jeannie Whitehead

Book Circle 2

Do you enjoy reading? Why not share your thoughts with others? Chat about the author, plot or characters.

We meet on the second Monday of the month from 10.30 am to approximately midday. The venue is in each other's homes.

We read both contemporary and classic novels and recently we have read:

- Kate Atkinson *Transcription*
- Muriel Spark *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*
- Bonnie Garmus *Lessons in Chemistry*
- Shelby Van Pelt *Remarkably Bright Creatures*
- Jane Austen *Northanger Abbey*

It's all about getting together and enjoying each other's company.

Jenny Bartlett

Bridge

We are a small group formed this year, who meet monthly in our houses. Our group is not competitive and emphasizes the social side and enjoyment of playing bridge. We play seriously and aim to improve our skills by learning from each other. After each hand we discuss our bids considering if we could have done better! We enjoy refreshments and plenty of discussion. The group is for all who want to enjoy a morning of bridge – established players who may not want the formality and competitiveness of a club; those who haven't played for a while; beginners and those who want to learn. We welcome new members.

Janice Richardson

Calligraphy

Calligraphy is a new and friendly group with five members. We meet monthly in each other's houses, with a style of script and a contextual theme for each meeting. Our first meetings have been a gentle exploration of particular styles and also of resources relevant to the study of calligraphy. We have tried our hand at designs such as monograms. We have also looked at writing styles based on topics including Music, Italy and Ancient History. We are self-reliant: as we are a small group, we do not have formal teaching but we learn from each other and through practical efforts.

We are open to new members. No experience of or expertise in calligraphy is needed. If you might be interested, please contact us via the website.

Rhona Condon

Card Making

There are seven of us in this group. We meet each Monday morning and we take it in turns to go to each other's house for our card making. So really seven is the most we can get around a table with all the equipment we have acquired.

Our group consists of people with many talents. Some of our cards are hand embroidered, some are painted and some are from recycled cards. We also sell some of these cards at the monthly u3a meetings, and most of the money made goes into buying more supplies. Our group is very friendly and we can cover a wide range of topics whilst making a card. The group is full at the moment and most of us started out not knowing how to make a card, so anyone would be welcome, should a space become available. Put your name on the waiting list.

Carole Taylor

Creative Writing 1

This is a small group limited to 7 or 8 people because of the meeting format. We meet the second Wednesday in the month.

Members make a prepared contribution each month against a single selected title, and present them at each meeting. It is suitable for beginners who maybe have not done so since their school days. Enquiries are welcome, and if there is a vacancy there is the option to come along purely as a guest/observer to meet the members (with no compulsion to join).

We are a social friendly bunch and a relaxed atmosphere prevails.

Peter Jeffery



Dancercise

We meet every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at Crowborough Community Centre on Pine Grove, between 11.15 am and 12.15 pm.

You might be asking yourself what on earth is Dancercise?

Well, in the words of our amazing teacher, "It does, basically, what it says on the tin! It's exercise gained from learning routines in lots of different dance styles – could be Modern, Jazz, Film iconic routines, Waltz, Charleston, 60s swing, Cha Cha Cha...Bollywood – Yes! Think Jai Ho!"

We do a couple of jazzy warm-ups to loosen the body through, then launch into a dance routine. There's laughter, fun and sometimes frustration, but always a good workout, without going too mad!

Every session is tailored to the participants so everyone gets the best out of it, doesn't feel overwhelmed, but strives to achieve a little bit more each time. Being honest, it's not for the faint hearted, but it's not like a fast cardio session – you just don't know your limits until you try!

Finally, in the words of two happy dancers:

"Made me feel 23 again!"

"Fabulous fun, fabulous instructor, fabulous exercise, just ab fab!"

Louise Jackson

Delving Deeper into History

This group does exactly what the name suggests: we take the story of events as a starting point and, over three or four meetings, we focus our attentions on explaining why events shaped as they did, discussing turning points, considering surprising outcomes, and exploring the impact of these events on wider society. In our 2025–2026 programme, we explored turning points in the history of Brandenburg Prussia, a state which went from backwater to domination in pre–Great War Germany, its ruling family, the Hohenzollerns, becoming Kaisers of a newly united state. We looked at several individuals who, for whatever reasons, have been neglected by historians and wider society, including Ignaz Semmelweis, whose simple advice to wash hands before examining women who had just given birth massively reduced levels of puerperal fever but whose ideas did not immediately gain traction as there was significant resistance to change; sadly, no-one chose to consider the contribution of the entertainingly named Bernardo O’Higgins from the list I provided. We examined and discussed the impact of David Low’s cartoons in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War, and both his opinions and his ability to cut to the core of the issues he examined. Women have also commanded our attention, with an exploration of the work of females of influence who did not receive the attention they were due, from the exceptionally gifted artist Sofonisba Anguissola, whose portraits of a king symbolised the breaking of the social mould; to the eccentric Queen Christina of Sweden, brought up in a staunchly Protestant state but who converted to Catholicism, abdicated and died in Rome; to Rosalind Franklin, who we agreed should have been awarded a Nobel Prize for her work on DNA.

Our plans for 2026–2027 include an exploration of that ancient and venerable profession, spying; an analysis of revolts and revolutions in Europe, the Americas and the Far East; an assessment of the career of Napoleon Bonaparte; and an examination of Italy from 1815 to 1919, emphasising the strengths and weaknesses of the new state and the particular problems it tried, and sometimes failed, to overcome. This is a really exciting programme, which we agreed as a group. Meetings are always friendly, with a positive spirit and plenty of laughter as well as some serious study. We share ideas and information freely; group members are encouraged to offer their views, however tentatively; and we discuss openly. One group member bakes fantastic cakes, and she brings a different spongy delight to each meeting.

If you would like to join the group, I must add that it is currently full. Anyone wishing to join the waiting list should contact the Waiting Lists Manager (details are on the u3a website).

Rhona Condon

Drawing Improvers

I run two art groups from my home. The drawing group is for improvers, and we meet on the 4th Thursday afternoon in the month.

The emphasis is drawing from real life. In the winter this will be still life subjects and in the summer months outside in the garden; such techniques as perspective are covered.

After a recent tutorial on drawing trees, I asked members to draw trees for homework. They are encouraged to practise their drawing skills for homework, as drawing requires practice to gain improvement.

The Art Group meets once a month (2nd Thursday afternoon) with introductions to using different artists media. Using watercolour pencils, charcoal and mixed media (combining different artists media) in the same picture are some of the recent subjects covered. I also discuss the correct paper to use for each artist media. They can use my artists media if they wish to as some of the artist materials may not be familiar to members.

Gillian Cousins

Exploring Local History

This is a group where everyone contributes. At each monthly meeting two members talk on topics of local history. Recent topics have included: Crowborough Brickworks, tourism, a Crowborough house through time, Scotney Castle and iron ore in the area.

We meet in the very pleasant hall next to St John's Church Hall and have facilities such as a projector and, more importantly, a kitchen in which to make tea and coffee and serve biscuits during each meeting.

Many of us had little or no knowledge of historical research before joining the group, but have found that lots has happened in and around Crowborough in the past. If you are possibly interested, then come along to a free taster session, we meet on the first Tuesday of each month. Currently we have 15 members, so no one has to give a talk more than twice a year.

Mike Read

Fit 'n Fun

Our group continues to be very popular and Sami makes the group exercises fun but also incredibly beneficial. We stretch, we bend and include some cardio work, all to good music.

Alison Allcorn

Folk

We have been meeting monthly since September 2025 at the Crowborough Community Centre.

Everyone is encouraged to enjoy making music in a supportive environment. We have a variety of acoustic instruments and we range from complete beginners to accomplished musicians. We also enjoy the occasional song. We have a broad interpretation of "folk".

Iris Coppard



Gardens 5 (Fridays)

This year our Gardens Group has ventured far and wide in search of intriguing gardens, taking us beyond East Sussex into West Sussex, Kent and Surrey. In chronological order we have visited: Fairseat Manor (Sevenoaks), South Grange (Northiam), Sienna Wood (East Grinstead), Claridge House (Dormansland), Colwood House (Warninglid), Alpines (Maresfield), Town Place (Freshfield), Cacketts Farmhouse (Horsmonden), Herstmonceux Castle and Sarah Raven's Perch Hill (Robertsbridge).

Once again we have realised just how fortunate we are to have access to so many splendid gardens in our area. For many of us the top pick of an excellent bunch was the superlative Town Place (see photo above) which I would encourage any Crowborough u3a member to visit!

Alan Gaukroger

Geology

The group was set up in April 2023 with an even mix of novices and “qualified” geologists. We follow the u3a principle of mutual engagement, where everyone makes a contribution to the group activities and everyone has a say in what we do. We meet monthly at each other’s homes, where we may spend 10 or 20 minutes each presenting our findings on the geology-related topic of the month, or we may listen to a presentation by one of the group members on a single topic of interest. The topics covered this year have mainly been related to all things Cambrian: the time when life exploded on Earth. We have also completed our individual examinations of critical minerals. (Who knew that Tellurium is essential for making solar panels sufficiently efficient to be economically viable?)

In 2026, one of our newer group members was granted a Fellowship of the Geological Society of London. This gave us the opportunity to visit their premises in Piccadilly to inspect a collection of historical geological documents and talk to their archivists. As the summer sun started to make its presence felt, we headed out to the Bexhill Museum to examine their expansive geological collection. We were really lucky that the Curator of Geology happened to be available and gave us an hour’s informal presentation around the collection, as well as a thorough summing up of the local geological history. We took the chance to adjourn to the beach at low tide to see the dinosaur footprints preserved on the seashore. This is a rich and varied subject, and our small band of eleven has a good spread of knowledge between us. We do have room for more members, and anyone is welcome to join us.

Trevor Probert

German Conversation

This friendly group has been running since March and meets monthly in the group leader’s house. Every member has done German before, even if it was many years ago. Each month we discuss a topic which has been chosen before the meeting. Members can then prepare in advance what to say, if they so wish. Members contribute as much to discussion as they feel confident to do.

Topics discussed recently include education, places special to members and favourite holidays. In the second half of our meeting we look at some other aspect of German life or culture. Recently we have watched the film Goodbye Lenin which describes in a humorous way the upheavals in East Germany caused by the fall of the Berlin Wall. We have also watched excerpts of the thriller Dark Rivers, set in the city of Passau. As far as time allows, we discuss issues arising from what we have seen.

Colin Condon

Jazz Appreciation and Rock, Blues & Pop

The Jazz Appreciation and Rock Groups are identical in the kind of things we do, the only difference being the musical content. Our main aim is to have a sociable afternoon, sharing and listening to memorable music, familiar and new. You just need to have an appreciation for music and a curiosity to find out more.

Each month there are usually two presentations by members, each running for approximately one hour, with a short break between for refreshments and a chat. We encourage as many members as possible to present. However, we never insist every member must do a presentation. We are happy to have you in our audience. Presenters choose an area of music they are interested in. The format is generally to play several relevant tracks while imparting information about them. More often than not we use YouTube to play the music of live performances. Occasionally we play actual 45s, CDs or music stored digitally on a computer.

Some examples of recent presentations are:

Jazz Group:

Jazzing The Blues

Females In Jazz

Members Selection – Members select a favourite track and tell us what they like about it.

Rock, Blues and Pop group:

My Desert Island Discs

Travelling On Route 66

The Canadians – 12 great tracks by 12 Canadian Bands or Singers.

Both groups have a membership of around 50, but there is no pressure to attend every month. We meet in a room in the Crowborough Community Centre. At present, the cost is £5 for three sessions.

From time to time, we have refreshments after the session to allow members to socialise. This provides an opportunity for newer members to get to know some more of the group.

We now have a tradition of an annual concert in the main hall with local and professional bands. This is a very popular event attended by over one hundred u3a members.

We always have room for new members and very much look forward to welcoming you.

Martin Bartlett

Line Dancing

The line dancing group started almost a year ago.

We meet every Monday in the main hall at the Crowborough Community Centre, between 2 and 3 pm.

We are lucky to have Sami Hughes-Guard, a professional dance teacher, instructing us. Her enthusiasm and experience keeps us mentally and physically challenged each week and she has a variety of dances in her repertoire.

We welcome anyone whether they have done line dancing previously or not. The main emphasis of each session is FUN!

Please contact the group leader via the website for more information or to join the group.

Mell Gwinnutt



Local History 2 (now also called "Talks for All")

The additional title reflects that our speakers are not always "local history" based, but anyone who has something interesting to say is welcome.

Recent talks have included "In search of Birds of Paradise" from Ray Hale, a great friend and bug hunter, "Fire" from Jo Livingston, the history of the auxiliary fire service, and "A Kiwi Drops in", from Geoff Piper, the true story of a New Zealander who came to the UK in the last war. Last month a well-known apiarist from Kent gave us a fascinating talk on the "Secret Life of Honeybees" which answers many questions. Did you know how honeybees communicate to each other about the direction of food sources and the distance from the hive? Neither did we, but we know now.

Forthcoming talks include Chris Horlock (Mysteries of Sussex), Mile Smith (Race to the South Pole), Nigel Manger (Submarines), Ian Everest (South Heighton) etc.

We have room for new members at present.

Jim French

Music Appreciation

This is a group of music lovers keen to explore the 'Classical' repertoire and share their particular enthusiasms. It is led by Michael Aston, a pianist and retired music educator, and meetings are held at his home. Topics are chosen by members or the group leader and are very wide-ranging. Recent meetings have focused on:

- Music from particular countries (France, Italy, USA and Russia)
- Individual composers (Chopin, Walton, Arvo Pärt etc)
- Music for seasons
- Music with Shakespearean connections
- Musical partnerships (Robert and Clara Schumann, Gustav and Alma Mahler)

Members bring along CDs relevant to the chosen topic and, after listening to the musical excerpts, opinions are shared. Occasionally the group leader plays a short programme of piano music. Meetings always end with refreshments and enjoyable socialising.

Michael Aston

Patchwork & Quilting

We are delighted to have welcomed new members recently and have introduced a new programme this year focused on beginners and those seeking to develop their skills further. Participants will work on one or two blocks each month, which can be assembled into cushion covers, table runners, bed runners, or various sizes of quilts.

At the heart of our group we have a core of very experienced quilters willing to share their extensive knowledge and abilities. The collective experience within the group is exceptional.

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Dorothy Thompson and Barbara Diamond for their dedication and expertise over the years and look forward to maintaining the high standards set by them.

Margaret Lawson

Photography

The photography group has been successfully running now for several years. We have had several members joining with a varied degree of experience in all aspect of photography ranging from taking, printing and improving photos for their own enjoyment and also for display.

Each of our meetings is split into two halves. The first half is to display members' photographs with a view to discuss, and constructively suggest, how the photographs might be improved. The second half of the meeting is to discuss and expand on a photographic theme which might include a topic raised by a member.

We cover a variety of photographic areas including such items as portrait, landscape, macro, flash and also the use of software to develop photos for printing or displaying on social media platforms.

A group photo exhibition is held in the café area of the CCC each autumn and this year it runs until the 22nd October. Please visit us and also get a tea or coffee in the new café.

David Bird



Pickleball

In order to accommodate an influx of new members, this year we have run playing sessions on both Wednesday and Friday afternoons. We are grateful to Goldsmith's Leisure Centre for their support and flexibility on court bookings. Our emphasis remains on members having fun in a sociable environment, at the same time having the chance to develop their skills. In July we played a return challenge match against players from Crowborough Tennis Club (see photo below), sadly they had rather the better of us on this occasion!

We still have some scope to take on new members (ideally with some prior experience of racket sports), particularly for our Wednesday afternoons.

Alan & Pat Gaukroger



Poetry 1

When we meet on the afternoon of the third Friday of the month, we take a variety of approaches to our poetry content and subsequent discussion. Sometimes we use our trusted anthology of Roger McGough's 'Poetry Please' or bring along personal choices to share. At other times we may have pre-chosen a theme or indeed an individual poem to consider.

This last year has seen us hold several sessions on epic poems such as Longfellow's 'Hiawatha', Keats' 'The Eve of St. Agnes', Rossetti's 'Goblin Market' and Milton's 'Paradise Lost'. We have looked at Blake's 'Songs of Innocence & Experience' enjoying his illustrations as well. More recently we set ourselves the task of bringing some 21st century poems which included Poems on the Underground 2026, Don Paterson's 'Lazarus' and poems written during the pandemic by the likes of Simon Armitage, Roger McGough and Hollie McNish.

Ever on the look out for poetry in the media, we were able to consider a poem written by a student's mother about him as a child which appeared on his own English exam paper much to his surprise! We have used poetry podcasts and poets' own voice recordings although sometimes we don't think their delivery is as impressive as their poems. World Poetry Day has been another source of inspiration.

We continue to enjoy each other's viewpoints and ideas which sometimes lead to lively but worthwhile debate. Here's to another year of pleasure in poetry!

Christine Round

Pub Lunches 4 (Thursday)

The lunch groups are very popular and like ours many have a waiting list. However, in my experience new groups are relatively easy to set up and run. A new group could start with just three members and build up to a size of about 12. All you do is circulate the details to the members and book the table. Then enjoy the company over a good lunch. However, it is always advisable to double-check nothing has changed since the last visit.

There are a number of really good country pubs within striking distance. We have a bank of about 7 or 8 regular venues and visit twice a year. They are welcoming and need our support.

Peter Jeffery

Recorder

When the members of the new Crowborough u3a Recorder Group first got together in November 2025 and very nervously and tentatively tackled Silent Night, we were pleasantly surprised at how much we still remembered, and how tuneful we sounded!

Since then, we've increased to nine members, outgrown our front rooms and moved to the Community Centre. And, crucially, we've made perceptible progress: there are a couple of pieces that we tried early doors and quickly put away again, but on returning to them find that we are now able to make a really good stab at them. That's been good for our confidence, as have the two performances we've given so far – one for a group of blind people and their carers, the other at a u3a musical afternoon. Attendees came up afterwards to exclaim at how good we were – though to be fair it turned out they'd only been expecting a squeaky version of London's Burning, so it wasn't too hard to exceed their expectations!

All our current members have either learned to play since retiring or have returned after decades of doing no more than unearthing their recorder from time to time when having a clear-out and deciding that no, we wouldn't throw it away just yet, as maybe one day we might come back to it.

So, if you have your recorder lurking in a cupboard somewhere, do dust it down and come and join us! We also have some spare instruments that you can borrow while you decide whether the recorder is for you. Anyone joining the group is entitled to five free one-hour online lessons from the u3as national recorder lead, Val McCarroll. And the members all support one another, share tips and ideas. So there's lots of help available.

Making music together is a real joy – and dissolving into laughter when we get it horribly wrong and it sounds terrible is all part of the fun too!

Sue Kinoshita



Rummikub

We are a new club and hoping to attract new members. Rummikub is a simple game – our grandchildren love it – and you don't need to know how to play. You will pick it up in minutes! We meet every Wednesday at the Constitutional Club by the Cross. It is free to us as long as we buy a cup of tea or a soft drink. Parking is best at Morrisons or on side roads.

Come and meet new people, learn a new game and have fun!

Rummikub is a popular tile-laying strategy game for 2-4 players that combines elements of Rummy and Mahjong. The goal is to be the first to clear all tiles from your rack by forming valid sets of runs (consecutive numbers of the same colour) and groups (same number in different colours).

Lynne Thorpe



Science & Technology

The Science and Technology group meet from 2-4 pm on the third Wednesday of the month at CCC.

Some members of the group have science or technology backgrounds but this is not essential. What we all have in common is an interest in learning more about the various aspects of this fascinating and important subject.

Members often share topics of special interest to them. We have occasional outside speakers and visits as well as social events and informal discussions.

Topics we have covered in the last year include AI, the Panama Canal, Frank Whittle, Energy Storage, Data Bases and the Royal Albert Bridge. We had a fascinating talk from an outside speaker Anita Tull on 'Food Science in the Kitchen' with tasty treats to try. Our summer visit was to the Crossness pumping station. We were taken on their train 'The Excrement Express' to the beautiful Victorian buildings where we had an excellent guided tour of the interactive museum and pumping station followed by lunch (see photo on previous page).

Future topics planned include: Magnetism, Bird Tracking, the Quantum World, Metrology and TV.

Kay Singleton

Scottish Country Dancing

We are a small but lively group who meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday each month at Rotherfield St Martin Hall. Some members have danced for a few years, others had not danced since schooldays, but we cover all abilities and everyone is made welcome.

We dance from 10 am until 12 noon and repeat dances on a regular basis. It is great fun and all that is needed is a flat pair of shoes and a sense of humour.

The price per session is £5 and includes a break for tea, coffee and a chat. Give us a try and see if this might be for you.

Clarissa (Chris) Featherbee

Sea Shanties

Our year has been really busy. Apart from our normal sessions twice a month we have been performing at 12 venues, from care homes, clubs such as Derby & Joan to festivals. Our highlights have been Crowborough Mini Folk Festival, the u3a musical afternoon and the Rye Pirates & Smugglers Festival. After having been together for three years our popularity is growing. What used to be just standing and singing has now evolved into a show with backdrops, lighting, action shanties, costumes and poems with still more changes to come. Do you like dressing up? We as a group have become a community – caring for each other's welfare. Each session normally consists of running through the programme for our next performance, then tea, coffee and biscuits, announcements and individual shanty choice from our extensive shanty book. The book has grown over the years from just 12 shanties to 42, all voted on by the group. Each year we add at least 12 new shanties. One of the few groups that will never be full; so if you like to enjoy

yourself, meet people and make new friends, come along. There are no auditions. Even if you think that you can't sing do come along. If you play any of the following instruments, you would be most welcome: mouth organ, guitar, ukulele, mandolin, violin, viola, accordion, concertina, melodeon, percussion, dulcimer or Irish bouzouki. Basically, any instrument used in folk music.

As I tell all new members, we are not a choir. If you miss a session, it isn't a sin. We run as the old square-riggers would have run: When joining a ship, you weren't asked if you could sing, if you were there – you joined in. You don't need to read music; you don't need to remember lyrics. You do need to enjoy yourself.

Brian Child



Stamps/Coins/Postcards

Did you collect stamps when you were young? Many of us were collectors, and some might have also collected coins or postcards. Most of us discarded our collections as we grew up, but some of us kept collecting, or took a break and returned later when work and family commitments allowed.

We run a Stamps, Coins and Postcards group for those who still find pleasure in collecting. We are a small friendly group who meet in our homes monthly on the second Tuesday for two hours from 10 am. Our group is informal. Each month we choose two themes. Members explore their collections and find examples on the themes that they can 'show and tell'. For the 'tell' we encourage members to research the background to their chosen items, so we can learn about them. We welcome the inclusion of other items that members might use to illustrate the

themes, such as books, maps, photos etc. We also have a regular mini quiz, a sharing of news and we take a coffee and biscuit break.

We have invited visitors to our meetings to talk about their own collecting interests. There can be useful connections between our collections and those with other interests such as local or family history. We also offer all Crowborough u3a members an 'evaluation' of any stamps, coins or postcards in their possession to help to identify what they are and to answer any questions. Many people still have an old collection but don't really know what they have got. We welcome interactions with any members in connection with any aspect of stamps, coins or postcards.

If our group might be of interest to you then please get in touch.

John Wilson



Sustainable Living

Our group explores practical ways to live more sustainably and eco-soundly, empowering each of us to do our bit in the vital fight against climate change. We focus on adjustments that you and your family can implement today. By making small changes to our daily routines—from how we manage our gardens to how we run our homes—we can collectively make a massive difference.

We generally meet for monthly discussions over coffee in Wetherspoons, but when we can, we like to do site visits.

Stephan Butler

Woodwork

The Woodworking Group have been busy with various projects, both individual and group.

The main group effort has been the making of a rustic rocking chair, mainly using timber harvested from a member's garden. The rockers were constructed by utilising a naturally curved branch from a birch tree.

Currently we are making dovetail boxes of individual design.

A new member has recently joined our group bringing us up to full strength.

Richard King

Yoga

We have only just got together for this group, and already there is a sense of everyone enjoying yoga and each other's company.

The whole experience is about taking time out of our busy day to relax our bodies and minds. Looking after ourselves is so important. We meet in a lovely area of Crowborough, surrounded by woodland.

Kim Read



Interest and Activity Groups

Groups with **vacancies** are highlighted in yellow (correct as of 30th September). For the most up-to-date information, please refer to our website.

If you wish to join an interest group that has a waiting list, please register your interest using this link [Waiting List Manager](#). We will try to add you to the group as soon as a space becomes available. Alternatively, if there is sufficient interest to form a new group in that subject area, you will be invited to a meeting to set it up, where the most convenient day to meet can be discussed.

Please note that some groups share charges for venues, speakers, refreshments or travel. For further information please speak to the Group Leader, or message them via our website: crowborough.u3asite.uk/groups.

On the website, you can sort the list of groups alphabetically, by category or by meeting day, or by venue.

Group	Leader	Phone	Meeting Times
Art Appreciation	Sue Taylor	01892 665673	3 rd Monday
Art (Monday)	Michael Page	01892 661300	Mondays
Art group (Thursday)	Gillian Cousins	01892 278389	2 nd Thursday
Aviation	Louis Lombert	01892 664210	Please enquire
Ballroom dancing	Denys Clarke	07774 902973	2 nd & 4 th Wednesdays
Birdwatching	Peter Lane	01892 665437	Last Friday
Book Circle 1	Jeannie Whitehead	01892 852698	2 nd Wednesday
Book Circle 2	Jenny Bartlett	01892 662816	2 nd Monday
Bridge	Janice Richardson	01892 852867	4 th Tuesday
Calligraphy	Rhona Condon	01892 663424	Ad hoc meetings
Canasta	Anne March	01892 611342	Thursdays
Cards (Crafts)	Carole Taylor	01892 663795	Mondays
Church Visits	Barbara Collins	01892 663745	2 nd Monday
Cinema visits	Kim Read	07975 740924	Ad hoc meetings
Classic literature	Ian Hutchins	01892 663576	2 nd Wednesday
Contemporary History	Keith Hookway	07717 796746	3 rd Tuesday
Cooks Club	Celia Cadwallader	07807 945402	Ad hoc meetings
Creative Writing 1	Peter Jeffery	01892 655670	2 nd Wednesday
Creative Writing 2	Alan Ground	01892 667336	1 st Friday
Cribbage	Lesley Webb	07909 510381	Every Tuesday
Crochet Knit and Natter	Shirley Barrett	07539 086712	3 rd Thursday
Croquet	Murray Brown	01892 661503	1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays
Current Affairs	Coral Larmour	01892 664067	2 nd Tuesday
Dancercise	Louise Jackson	07708 579432	1 st Wednesday
Debates	Peter Lane	01892 665437	1 st Monday
Drawing Improvers	Gillian Cousins	01892 278389	4 th Thursday
Embroidery	Rosalind Marriott	01892 662892	1 st Monday
Exploring local history	Mike Reid	01892 655967	1 st Tuesday
Family History	Margaret Bird	01892 655487	Please enquire

Family history improvers	Lin Alexander-Pye	01892 653200	4 th Wednesday
Fit 'n Fun	Alison Allcorn	01892 661838	Wednesdays
Folk music	Iris Coppard	07960 872523	3 rd Wednesday
French Conversation 1	Janet Locke	01892 661374	2 nd & 4 th Fridays
French Conversation G1	Marie-Rose Bunce	01892 610775	Every other Friday
French Conversation G2	Marie-Rose Bunce	01892 610775	Every other Friday
Gardens 1	Pauline Bastick	01892 661087	Last Friday
Garden Visits 4	Mandy Smith	01892 654647	3 rd Monday
Gardens 5	Alan Gaukroger	01892 482300	3 rd Friday
Geology	Trevor Probert	01892 654278	2 nd Wednesday
German Conversation	Colin Condon	01892 663424	1 st Wednesday
Healthy Ageing	Kathryn Newton	07863 473686	1 st Tuesday
Historic House Visits	Richard Smith	01892 654647	Please enquire
History: Delving deeper	Rhona Condon	01892 663424	2 nd Tuesday
History (General)	Sean Larmour	01892 664067	2 nd Thursday
Italian Chat 1	Sally Allport	01892 653939	2 nd & 4 th Wednesdays
Italian Chat 2	Sally Allport	01892 653939	1 st & 3 rd Wednesdays
Italian for Tourists	Robi Willig	01892 652861	Please enquire
Jazz Appreciation	Martin Bartlett	01892 662816	4 th Monday
Line Dancing	Melanie Gwinnutt	07469 733387	1 st & 3 rd Monday
Local History 1	Mike Reid	01892 655967	3 rd Tuesday
Local History 2/Talks for all	Jim French	01892 610534	1 st Tuesday
London Explorers	Alan Collins	01892 663745	3 rd Saturday
London Explorers Weekday	Adrian Barton	07761 533720	1 st Friday
Mah Jong	Nicole Gilbert	01892 654797	Weekly Friday

Meditation and Wellbeing	Rod Smith	01892 655792	3 rd Tuesday
Museums & Galleries	Alan Collins	01892 663745	1 st Thursday
Music appreciation	Michael Aston	01892 356038	2 nd Wednesday
Patchwork & Quilting	Margaret Lawson	01892 653359	2 nd Monday
Petanque	Alan Ground	01892 667336	Weekly Friday
Photography	David Bird	07790 817448	3 rd Monday
Pickleball	Alan Gaukroger	01892 482300	Weekly Wednesdays & Fridays
Play Reading 1	Susan Horne	01892 655727	4 th Tuesday
Play reading 2	Peter Emanuel	01892 327521	2 nd Tuesday
Poetry 1	Christine Round	07773 458086	3 rd Friday
Poetry for pleasure	Jayne Orviss	01892 309766	3 rd Tuesday
Pub Lunches 2	Janet Little	01892 654292	2 nd & 4 th Wednesdays
Pub Lunches 3	Laurel Soden	01892 662198	1 st Thursday
Pub Lunches 4	Peter Jeffery	01892 655670	2 nd Thursday
Rail Interest	Graham Bucksey	01892 660428	4 th Tuesday
Recorder Group	Sue Kinoshita	07746002815	2 nd & 4 th Thursdays
Rock, Blues & Pop	Martin Bartlett	01892 662816	2 nd Monday
Rummikub	Lynne Thorpe	07866 267724	1 st & 3 rd Wednesdays
Science & Technology	Carol Braddock	01892 663329	3 rd Wednesday
Scottish Dancing	Clarissa Featherbee	01892 665204	2 nd & 4 th Thursdays
Scrabble	Frances Arrowsmith	01892 665176	1 st Thursday
Sea Shanties	Brian Child	01892 325064	1 st & 3 rd Tuesdays
Sewing	Margie Lawson	01892 653359	2 nd & 4 th Thursdays
Shakespeare	David Bryer	01892 315967	4 th Tuesday
Short Walks in	Sean Larmour	01892 664067	1 st Tuesday

Crowborough			
Singing for Pleasure	Margaret McCartney	01825 508253	Wednesdays
Spanish Conversation	Barbara Lombert	01892 664210	3 rd Monday
Stamps / Coins / Postcards	John Wilson	01892 653145	2 nd Tuesday
Sunday Coffee and Chat	Susan Andrews	01892 341455	Every Sunday
Sunday Lunch group	Carolyn Holton	07808555091	1 st Sunday
Sunday Readers	Susan Andrews	01892 341455	Last Sunday
Sustainable Living	Stephan Butler	07714 765258	1 st Monday
Table Tennis	Sue Edgley	07984 571205	2 nd & 4 th Tuesdays
Theatre visits	Marie-Rose Bunce	01892 610775	Ad hoc visits
Ukulele	Paul Gamba	01892 652963	2 nd & 4 th Fridays
Walks (4 – 6 miles)	Colin Henderson	01892 668044	3 rd Thursday
Woodwork	Richard King	Enquire via website	1 st & 3 rd Wednesdays
World of Wine	George Moss	07557 791831	3 rd Wednesday eve
Yoga	Kim Read	07975 740924	Every Wednesday