

May 2026 Newsletter

Contents:

Committee

- 'From the Rockin' Chair'
- From the Committee:
Secretary, Membership, Groups etc & any news from other u3as

Click on [heading](#) below to link to each article.

Groups Focus

- [Coordinators Update](#)
- [Groups Update](#)
- [Groups News](#): London Walks; Nordic Walking

[Last Month's Meeting](#): in June issue

[And Finally](#): Some dates in May

Contributions to Alan:

<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

- By 22nd of month to ensure entry in next issue (or incl later issue)
- MS-Word Arial 12 preferred
- Max length 1 page please
- No surnames for privacy

NB Articles may be edited

Any **Photograph** submitted must have permission for its' use and publication from **all** those photographed.

u3a Contacts & Information

- B&D website
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/>
- B&D Committee Members
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>
- B&D Events
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/events/>
- B&D Groups
<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/groups/>
- B&D FaceBook – to join:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1381609732656710>
- National u3a website
<https://www.u3a.org.uk>
- National u3a YouTube Channel
<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheU3a/playlists>
- u3a National Newsletter
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter>

Welcome



May and plans are already in progress for our Open Afternoon in September. Lots of information from the committee. Groups are also busy, as you will see from our Groups News. How about our other groups? Let us know what you've been up to, we'd love to hear from you.

Alan (Editor)

Dates for your Diary: details on the website at

<https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/events/>

📣 Thursday 14 May 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"A Beginning, a Muddle & an End" Bobbie Darbyshire

👥 Thursday 28 May 09.30 Committee Meeting*

📣 Thursday 11 June 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"Russia, Then & Now" Andrew Baker

👥 Thursday 25 June 09.30 Committee Meeting*

📣 Thursday 9 July 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"The Malta Story" Paul Whittle

👥 Thursday 23 July 09.30 Committee Meeting*

Monthly & Committee meetings are held at Detling Village Hall. Non-members are welcome to come to two monthly meetings before joining.

*NB If you would like to attend a committee meeting, please contact our Chair, Graham <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

Committee

- **'From the Rockin' Chair'**



Back to normal for our monthly meetings after the rearrangement in April to accommodate the Canterbury pilgrims – what tales they had to tell - next meeting 14th May.

The search for new committee members continues. You will see below the description Kevin has given of his duties as Treasurer. This is a most vital role, but not one to be afraid of. I urge anyone with an abacus to consider stepping up, as without a replacement our u3a will be in serious jeopardy. “Rachel from accounts”, this could be your next job!

Plans are in motion for our Open Day in September. I am eager to attract more members of the public and am looking for places to publicise the event. Supermarkets, doctor’s surgeries, village halls and the farmers market on the Green are in hand, but if you have any ideas, please let me know.

Learn laugh live.....and help!

Graham Chair: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

- **From the Committee**



Our committee meetings are structured around the role of each member and cover a number of issues. This month they included our Open Day in September, as mentioned by Graham, and the importance of filling the treasurer’s position. We also discussed plans for a future coach excursion and making improvements to the audio facilities at the monthly meetings with new microphones, and research into this has already begun.

Peter Secretary: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>



I have to step down from the role of Bearsted u3a Treasurer at the AGM in November, so we need someone new. The Treasurer is a necessary committee role for the group, and involves attending monthly committee meetings, advising on the finances of the group and considering the financial implications of planned activities.

The treasurer liaises with the activity groups on their costs and recoveries, and particularly the membership secretary through the renewal season. We operate one bank and one deposit account and handle small amounts of cash and cheques, but the majority of transactions are via BACS transfer. Finances are currently managed on a spreadsheet, but could be transferred to the Third Age Trust Beacon accounting software. It is necessary to interact with the Charities Commission on annual returns and HMRC on Gift Aid. It’s not particularly time-consuming, and should comfortably fit into other daily/weekly activities. Please ask any of the committee for more information if you’re interested.

Kevin Treasurer: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>



As a coordinator or member of our u3a you will have heard about our use of a system called Beacon. It's been in use by the u3a since 2015, with currently over 650 u3as using the system. Bearsted & District adopted it in 2018 and I became the administrator in 2020.

Beacon is an encrypted online management system designed to support the operation and administration of each individual u3a and for the u3a to be General Data Protection Regulations 2018 compliant. This is because anyone responsible for using personal data must make sure the information is:

- used fairly, lawfully, and transparently
- used for specified, explicit purposes.
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant, and limited to only what is necessary.
- accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- kept for no longer than is necessary.
- handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction, or damage.

This is why we recommend groups use Beacon. If you don't want to, you must make sure any system you use meets the requirements, including not sharing personal details, including email address details, unless explicitly agreed by all. If you use WhatsApp please refer to our guidance on our website.

If you have any questions regarding Beacon, especially as a coordinator, please do contact me

Jenny Beacon Admin: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>



12 new or potential members came along to our recent get-together to find out what Bearsted u3a has to offer, both locally and nationally. Graham, our chair, explained the structure of u3a, including The Third Age Trust, the national body, which provides a range of support services to all u3a groups including administrative and educational support.

Alan, our editor, spoke about the different ways that we communicate with our members, whether that is via our website, Beacon for secure emails, monthly newsletter or our private FaceBook site, which is used especially well by our Art and Craft Groups, as well as Floristry, Birdwatching and Walking groups, among others.

Maureen, Interest Groups Coordinator, talked about how our groups operate and explained the ethos of u3a, which is built on lifelong learning and self-help for people no longer in full-time employment. It was great to see how everyone enjoyed the morning with many staying for a second cuppa and chatting together. Some even helped with the clearing up afterwards which is what u3a is all about, with everyone contributing something to its success.

Thank you to everyone who came and we hope you found it useful.

Linda New Members Adviser: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>



Our **next Monthly Meeting** on Thursday 14 May 2.00pm is

“A Beginning, a Muddle & an End” by Bobbie Darbyshire

A former winner of the fiction prize at the National Academy of Writing, Bobbie will be telling us just how the characterisation for a novel, location, plot and subplot all arrive in the writer’s mind. This will include references to several well-known literary authors.

Rick Speaker Secretary: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/> For last month’s click: [Monthly Meeting](#)

News from other u3as

“AI in Action Today” - 4th June 2026

Sevenoaks u3a Science Seminar – please book by 15th May latest via: https://sevenoaks.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/science-seminar/

or through the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sevenoaks-u3a-science-group-seminar-2026-ai-in-action-today-tickets-1322536766069>

South East u3a Forum Summer School Monday 7th – Thursday 10th September at University of Chichester. Details are available at [2026 – South East u3a Forum](#) If you are interested in this event or would like to discuss it further, please contact:

Graham Chair: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

Groups Focus

Coordinators Update



Thanks to everyone who made suggestions for our Open Afternoon on 10 September and for offers of help. Plans are progressing and I’ve included more details under the **Groups Update** section of this newsletter below.

The Open afternoon is for everyone and a good opportunity for all members to help in a variety of ways, either planning and designing displays or helping on the day. Please discuss it within your groups.

Maureen: Groups Coordinator: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

[Return to contents page](#)

Groups Update:

Our **u3a Open Afternoon** will take place on **Thursday 10 September** 14.00 to 15.30. This replaces the usual speaker meeting. It’s going to be a celebration of our groups, with plenty of time and space for socialising and networking. Tea and coffee will be available, using (compostable) disposable cups to ease pressure on the refreshments team.

Groups will be showcased in “hubs” based on categories as follows:

Active & Social	Creative	Discussion
History	Languages	Music & Dance
Science, Nature & Technology		

There will also be a Membership desk

We need a couple of people from each category to coordinate each hub. Thanks to those of you who've already offered. We also need **volunteers** to help set up and take down at the end. The room will be available from 12.15 and we need to be out by just after 16.00. In addition, we need welcome hosts and people to help with refreshments. Many hands make light work!

Maureen: Groups Coordinator: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

[Return to contents page](#)

Groups News

Hidden London Walks 1

After a successful tea, cake and chat afternoon during January, we have once again been able to fill this year's calendar with walking hosts. An exciting year awaits, and if February is a month to compare with, we are in for many wonderful walks through different parts of London.



Earl's Court

February: Our walk leaders had done enormous research into the Earl's Court area and we spent a very interesting day listening to the history. We were amazed at the old pretty multi-coloured mews' houses, interspersed in the most unlikely of places compared to new modern buildings in the area, especially where the original Earl's Court was, now sadly nowhere to be seen. Huge plans seem to be in the offing there, on a site that is now derelict and surrounded by hoarding. For our first outing of the year, we had a good turnout and fair weather.

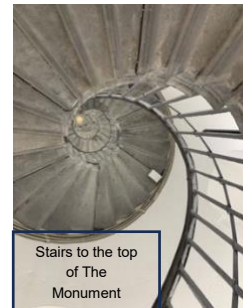
March: A revisit to the 'Wren and other Architects' walk was led by Richard and although this had been a first walk three years ago when we started, many members joined in with the revisit. We also had a number of new walkers so the group were pleasingly intrigued. From The Monument to the smallest statue in London, we covered a short history of the rebuild of London after the Great Fire.



Mary le Bow Church

The modern: 'The Nail' to the old 'St Paul's Cathedral', St Stephen's Walbrook with the telephone which started 'The Samaritans', and St Mary le Bow with its fabulous new stained glass, to name a few.

Patricia & Richard



Stairs to the top of The Monument

[Return to contents page](#)

Hidden London Walks 2

March walk around Canary Wharf and Docklands



Joyce



[Return to contents page](#)

Village Visits

Our Village Visits group went to Woodchurch this month. We had a very enjoyable and informative talk on the creation of the village museum and its artefacts, followed by a walk around the village itself.



We saw a medieval Wealden Hall house (about 15th century) and other houses built on the sites of former Wealden Halls. There were medieval pavements and later pavements of Bethersden marble, built by French prisoners from the Seven Years War who were housed at Sissinghurst. Several houses originally had their own wells and the village pump was suspect owing to its proximity to the church yard, rendering the quality of the water to be called “churchyard soup”. The church itself stood on the site of an earlier wooden church with parts dating from 13th century. There were lots of tombs in the churchyard belonging to prominent local families.



We rounded our visit off with an enjoyable lunch at the local vineyard. Joyce



[Return to contents page](#)

Nordic Walking

Our new group has started well with nine members and three on the waiting list.



A couple of members have done Nordic Walking before, but for the rest it has meant getting used to the particular technique required to gain full benefit from doing this form of exercise. We start our sessions with some warm-up exercises and finish with a ‘cuppa’ if we can.

The first couple of sessions have been spent in Mote Park. Our last meeting took us to Bearsted Woodland Trust and some adjoining fields and allowed us to experience different challenges going up steps and inclines. A chance to try our double-polling technique! We’ll be exploring some different places in the coming weeks. Linda



Last Month's Meeting

Because of the postponement of the April meeting the report will appear in next month's newsletter

Rick: Speaker Secretary: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

[Return to contents page](#)

And Finally

Each month I have a choice of any subject to finish our newsletter (editor's privilege!). Naturally, it's what interests me! But this month I decided to look at what happened this month through English history – and no surprise, after 2000 years, there's a lot to choose from, in fact too much to concentrate on one, so here's a selection.

1 May 1707 – the Union between England & Scotland is proclaimed. This was during the reign of Queen Anne and I saw an interesting documentary about the queen, basically stating she has been 'undervalued' in our history. This event gave us our flag, with the addition of Ireland in 1801 with the red cross of St Patrick. Ever wondered why Wales is not featured on the UK flag? Because the flag represents the union of kingdoms, Wales is a principality and through the Act of Union in 1536 legally represented by the St George's Cross.

4 May 1471 & 22 May 1455– the last and first battles of the Wars of the Roses, at Tewkesbury & St Albans.

7 May 1945 – VE Day and the end of the war in Europe, but the war against Japan continued - I don't think I can add to anyone's knowledge here!

17 May 1900 – Siege of Mafeking by the Boers is broken and the Robert Baden-Powell of later Scout fame had been the garrison commander. The 2nd Boer War 1899-1902 taught the British 'no end of a lesson' (Kipling). It cost over £200m, and at least 22,000 British lives. There are memorials to the dead in many British towns, including Maidstone in All Saints Church and Maidstone Grammar School.

29 May 1660 – Restoration of the monarchy under Charles II when he enters London – in 'And Finally' in February I mentioned the specific service in the Book of Common Prayer for the 'martyrdom of Charles I' on 30 January and those for 5 November and 29 May – "being the day of His Majesties birth, and happy return to his Kingdoms".

30 May 1536 – Henry VIII marries Jane Seymour – the wife he chose to be buried beside in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. The marriage took place 11 days after the execution of Anne Boleyn.

And that's just a selection!

Alan: Editor: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

[Return to contents page](#)