

October 2026 Newsletter

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[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 to our Newsletter

Following on from our Open Afternoon in September a warm welcome to our new members. We have our New Members meeting and AGM in November and a coach trip in December.

Please note there will be no November newsletter.

Alan (Editor)

Dates for your Diary: details <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/events/>



Tuesday 6 October *Coach & Boat Trip to Windsor*



Thursday 8 October 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"The Story of Mary's Meals" Roy Peachy



Thursday 22 October 09.30 Committee Meeting*



Monday 9 November 10 for 10.30

Potential & New Members Meeting Downswood Hall



Thursday 12 November 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
AGM followed by *"Kentish Clerical Errors" Ed Adams*



Thursday 26 November 09.30 Committee Meeting*
No meeting in December



Friday 4 December 10.00 Coach Trip
Winchester Christmas Market



Thursday 10 December 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"From Les Mis to the Lion King" Martyn Harrison



Thursday 14 January 2027 2.00pm Monthly Meeting
"For What It's Worth" Janie Ramsey

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

Committee

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



Well-done to all of you who contributed to our Open Day, your hard work really paid off. I have been asked why the change of format. It was clear that with 57 groups each could not have a table, so the idea of hubs was born. We didn't get everything right and changes will be needed next time, but the event was a great success. Thanks to some good work on publicity 44 non-members attended and 20 signed up.

You may have noticed people at our meetings with a coloured sticker on them. The colour is irrelevant, but the sticker indicates they are new attendees. Please make them feel welcome.

Learn, laugh, live

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

- **From the Committee**



Notice of the AGM, which will be held on Thursday 12 November, will be emailed to all members and will include all the information required, including nomination forms.

If you are interested in standing for the committee, please ensure you submit your nomination in good time.

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



Membership renewals are now due, and if you haven't already renewed can you please do so as soon as possible.

Thank you.

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



Following our successful Open Day we will be holding a **New Members' Meeting on Monday 9th November 2026**. It will be an opportunity to learn more about what Bearsted u3a has to offer, both locally, and nationally. You will be able to meet some of our committee members and find out what they do.

If you have recently joined Bearsted u3a you should have received an invitation. If you haven't, please contact me. If you were unable to attend a previous meeting you are welcome to join us this time, please contact me.

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



Unfortunately, due to health issues, Geoff Piper is not able to give his talk originally booked for October on "The Story of a WW2 Hero". I'm sure we all wish him well.

In his place, Roy Peachey will be telling us the remarkable story of "Mary's Meals".

It was in the 1990's that Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, a Scottish farmer, took a week off work to deliver food aid to Bosnia during the Bosnian War. He never worked as a farmer again, but went on supporting and feeding orphans in Romania, then Malawi where he started feeding 200 children. Today, Mary's Meals feeds over 3 million children in their places of education in 16 countries across the world. This is the story of how Mary's Meals grew to what it is today.

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



I have e-mailed all our members with regard to a coach trip to Winchester Christmas Market on 4 December. As we will be leaving Winchester at 6.00pm, we shall be starting later than usual, at 10.00am.

If you are interested in coming, please contact me as soon as you can, via the link below.

Richard Coach Trip Coordinator: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/contact/>

Groups Focus

Coordinators Update



Thanks to everyone who helped make our September Open Afternoon a great success. If you have any suggestions as to how we can improve the event for 2027, whilst it's fresh in your mind, please let me know via the contacts button on the website.

If you missed the event, I've added some photos to the Groups pages of our website. You can view them here: <https://bearsted.u3asite.uk/groups/>

Welcome to new members who will be receiving the newsletter for the first time. If you've put your names down to join groups, you should have been contacted by the various coordinators. Sometimes emails and voice messages can go astray. If you haven't heard anything, after checking your junk folder, please let me know and we'll have another try.

We have several **NEW GROUPS** starting this autumn:

SPANISH BEGINNERS at the end of October

ANTHROPOLOGY - November

KNITTING FOR BEGINNERS – date tbc

In addition, several people have asked about a possible **GERMAN CONVERSATION** Group. If anyone would be willing to coordinate such a group, perhaps jointly with another person, please let me know.

The **ART GROUP** is proving very popular with quite a few people on the waiting list. Group One have offered to help set up a 2nd Group, but we need a couple of people to coordinate the group. Once again, if you're interested, please get in touch.

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

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News from Groups

Village Visits

On a sunny Friday, 10 members of our group enjoyed a morning's trip around the village of Farningham. We were led by Jane, who had undertaken a huge amount of research, from prehistoric times right up to the present day.



We started our walk at the River Darent, a pure chalk stream, home to brown trout once fished by Charles Dickens. There's evidence of pigs and crops farmed in Neolithic times, the subsequent settling of the Darent Valley by the Romans and the building of important villas in the area. We then learned of Wadard, mentioned in the Bayeux Tapestry, who was granted a manor in Farningham

and is featured on the village sign.

Farningham is in the Domesday Book, and the village was granted a charter to hold a weekly market and an annual fair. Important families have lived in Farningham. Some participated in the Wyatt rebellion, including Sir Henry Isley who was executed and his estate purchased by William Roper, who married Thomas Moore's daughter Margaret, and whose family founded the Roper Charity which still benefits the villages of Farningham, Eynsford and Horton Kirby. We saw the Cattle Screen Bridge across the River Darent, erected by the Hanger family, to prevent livestock wandering downstream into the village.



A toll was introduced to fund the repair of roads which were in poor condition and we saw Sparepenny Lane which was the alternative route to Eynsford to avoid the toll charge (did you save a penny toll? Ed.). The Manor House in the village was extended, destroyed and rebuilt over the centuries culminating in the existing new Manor House, once home to Captain William Bligh.

In more recent times, the Colyer family, responsible for the running of the corn mill for over six generations, had a significant effect on the village, up to the cessation of milling in 1900, building many impressive houses, whose occupants included Graham Sutherland. We were very lucky that Jane had arranged for us to be able to visit the garden behind Farningham Mill, usually only open to the public once each year.



We visited the village church with its West window installed in 1954 to replace the window destroyed by a bomb in 1941. The window features King Charles I and Queen Elizabeth II, and was the first stained glass window in the UK to feature the new Queen. We also looked at the 15th century font featuring the seven sacraments, and the Roper memorial.

Having enjoyed our time in Farningham and learning so much about the village, we all enjoyed a pub lunch in The Malt Shovel in nearby Eynsford. Mary

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And Finally

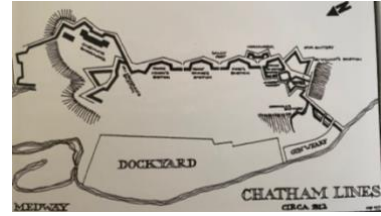
On the 19 October 1781, General Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown in Virginia, where the American's and French had besieged the Crown's forces. In 1783 the Treaty of Versailles was signed, whereby Britain recognized the independence of the United States. There is a tendency, especially in the USA, to forget that this was more than a conflict between the colonies and Britain. It involved Britain in fighting in many parts of the world and in the need to secure Britain itself from invasion.



The logistics of the war were difficult as well. In crossing the Atlantic for example, military dispatches and supply convoys to America averaged 6 to 8 weeks – though if the weather was against you, it could take 2 or 3 months. Though we won more tactical engagements and battles, Washington preserved his army and won strategic victories at Saratoga and Yorktown, which broke the political will to continue.

1778 France formed an alliance with the US, recognizing their independence. They were joined by Spain in 1779. From 1780-84 Britain fought the 4th Anglo-Dutch and the 2nd Anglo-Mysore Wars. This all meant threats to all parts of the empire and to Britain itself.

With threats close to home, our defences needed overhauling and new works constructed. In Dover, for example, existing fortifications such as Archcliffe Fort (on the left-hand side as you drive out of town on the A20), and new gun batteries added, as well as the start of fortifications on the Western Heights – these would develop to become one of the largest and most elaborate fortifications in Britain. The threat of French invasion meant dockyard defences needed upgrading – at the time the old earth ditches and ramparts protecting Chatham were “greatly destroyed and rendered almost defenceless by cattle grazing thereon”. They were to be rebuilt using brick-lined ditches and ramparts and the beginnings of what will become Fort Amherst.



With Spain in the war Gibraltar was besieged, from 1779 to 1782. Tunnels were cut within the rock, and cannon mounted, eventually resulting in miles of tunnels and extensive lines of fortification.



There were also the lucrative sugar plantations to defend in the Caribbean. The fleet was needed in British waters as well. All these requirements, both at home and abroad, took money and resources, including those of the army and navy. Our National Debt more than doubled to £250 million by 1783.

Not long after this Britain would be engaged in another war with France. Their previous support for America resulted in massive debt, economic crises and with the inequality of the political system, together with proof Enlightenment principles and ideas could produce a workable government, resulted in revolution and ultimately to the rise of Napoleon.

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

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