



HAYWARDS HEATH and DISTRICT



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Registered Charity No. 1008994

Third Age date

THE UNIVERSITY of the Third Age is setting up in Haywards Heath. An inaugural meeting in the new town hall on April 8 at 2pm will introduce retired people to the international organisation, which arranges inexpensive study groups. Speakers from established U3A groups will be there. Call Haywards Heath 457752 for details.

Mid Sussex Times 29/03/1991

The Haywards Heath and District U3A was established as a Charity on 28th February 1992 and is governed by its Constitution adopted on the 19th August 1991. The Management of our U3A is vested in its Committee without which it could not exist. Over the years many U3A members have served diligently as Committee Members and we are grateful to each and every one. Below is our recognition of those who have served in the 3 key roles over the last 25 years.

HH U3A Chairmen 1991—2016

Charles Cullis	1991—1992
Judy Chapman	1992—1994
Mary Arnold	1994—1996
Brian Drew	1996—1999
Jenny Porter	1999—2003
Jean Goater	2003—2005

John Simpson	2005—2007
Alastair Porter	2007—2008
Ray Jones	2008—2009
Carolyn Nurse	2009—2012
Alan Simmonds	2012—2015
John Kinchington	2015—2016

HH U3A Secretaries 1991—2016

Edwina Gunner	1991—1994
Beryl Weller	1994—1996
Pat Pugh	1996—1999
Shirley Cruse	1999—2003
Aileen Ray	2003—2006
Clem Frank & Anne Wetton	2006—2007
Clem Frank	2007—2009
Sarah Tapp	2009—2012
Jean King	2012—

HH U3A Treasurers 1991—2016

Nigel Steele	1991—1994
George Flower	1994—1996
Aubrey Christlieb	1996—1999
Marjorie Butt	1999—2005
James Moore	2005—2010
Graham Stanley	2010—2013
David Waite	2013—2015
Alex Sansom	2015—

Who would have thought 25 years on ...



The Concept

According to Judy Chapman, who became first Chairman, 17 people met to discuss forming a local U3A. By the end of the meeting a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary had been prevailed upon to form the first Committee and the rest is history.

The Plan

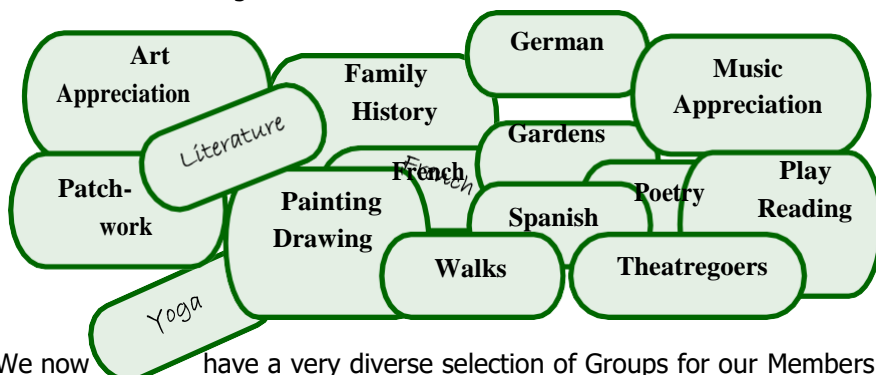
The first meeting of the HH U3A was advertised in the Mid Sussex Times 29th March 1991 sandwiched between snippets for a mobile exhibition visiting local villages and the Easter train timetable disruptions. Over 100 people attended this meeting.



From left: Norman Chapman; Geoff Goater; Miss Gode; D. Brazell, Mayor; Charles Cullis.

The Outcome

By January 1992 there were 122 Members and 20 Groups. Today we have almost 1000 Members and some 88 Groups. Some Groups have survived the whole 25 years, moving through numerous members and convenors, transformations and in some cases branching out into Groups 1, 2 and 3 because of increasing demand from Members.



We now have a very diverse selection of Groups for our Members to attend which reflect current interests and these continue to evolve—our most recent new group concept is An Introduction to Lace Making.

What does Membership of the HH U3A mean to you?

I have posed this question to various members I have met over the last few months and the overriding response I receive is summed up in one word:

Friendship

Judy Chapman when reflecting back on her time with U3A said "... *the friendships made between like-minded Members are one of the great benefits of belonging to U3A*"

What does membership mean to some of our newest members?

'When I first heard about Haywards Heath U3A I was very interested to know what groups and activities were available. I was very impressed with the number of groups which one could participate in. When I retired I was still active on the sporting side but felt I needed some additional mental stimulus so I joined the fortnightly U3A Bridge sessions on a Tuesday afternoon. I also felt it was an opportunity to pursue areas of interest e.g. languages which I had not had available to me at school many years ago. I have only participated in the Bridge and Short Tennis activities so far but I hope to widen my participation in the future' **Gerry Savage**

"I joined the U3A because I think I am now the perpetual student! I didn't do well at school and came out with no qualifications. I went back to adult education gradually working my way up until I went to University as a mature student, graduating in 2003. I just love learning now. I feel very privileged to have joined the U3A and share the vast amounts of knowledge and life experiences given freely by dedicated members. I am meeting like-minded people with the same interests as me and I am really enjoying the three courses I have signed up for. I look forward to giving my brain matter something to do in continuing to learn new things." **Lavinia Malins**

These comments emphasise how well we meet the expectations of Peter Laslett, founder of the U3A in this country—"The University shall consist of a body of persons who undertake to learn and help others to learn".

This Poem by Pat Stanhope sums it up nicely:

In The University of the Third Age
Your life can open a brand new page.
Not looking back to yesteryear
But enjoying what is now and here.
To try a new pastime you have not known
Discover a talent you have not shown.
Share new skills and make new friends
The choice of subjects never ends.
The chance to use a weary brain
And meet life's challenges again.
A lifetime of knowledge is in your hands,
So widen your interests and make new plans.

Reading through the Newsletters from No. 3 to the current day I have found numerous pieces of trivia.

One Quote of the Quarter No. 65—July 2008

"The older I get, the more I learn. The more I learn, the more I learn how much more there is to learn"

No. 57—July 2006 contained a "Helpful Hint" on how to remember the solar system with the use of mnemonics:

(SUN), MERCURY, VENUS, EARTH, MARS, JUPITER, SATURN,
URANUS, NEPTUNE and PLUTO become either:

A) **M**any **V**ery **E**m inent **M**en **J**ust **S**eem **U**sually **N**ice **P**eople

Or if you are feeling somewhat more abandoned and want to add the Sun for good measure:

B) **S**aucy **M**ariners **V**ery **E**ager **M**ums and **J**aunty **S**ailors **U**ndress for **N**aughty **P**arty

The mind boggles in the great scheme of things!
commented the Editor of the day

COMPUTER GROUP

Michael Bennison writes about his recollections of the original Computer Group.

"The group, if you can call it that, had an initial meeting in the mid 90's, when I arranged an introduction to micro computers at the local sixth form college. We borrowed some of their machines for people to gain experience. We then had a few sporadic meetings before the A23 era. John Fuller, who emigrated to East Anglia, was a major influence in the early stages, setting up the first U3A web site as well as running the computer group."

Remembering our first steps towards using technology to keep membership records:

"My late wife Barbara and I joined in Autumn 1995. Not long afterward we took over as Membership Secretary from Sheila Romain who, I think, had set up the first U3A Membership database on a spreadsheet. I remember sitting round our dining table, with Brian and Ann Drew, hand writing membership cards before we got around to printing them properly."

Does anyone remember the Paximat?



During a recent conversation I had with a long standing member he talked about how they started off using a Paximat but over the years they have replaced equipment and in 2010 purchased a Clearco HD9000 Multi-Use Spec Projector



I wonder what we will be using at the 50th Anniversary!!

Within the archives I have come across different poems by our talented members. I particularly liked this one by June and Ron Perou— newsletter No. 63 January 2008.

THE COMPUTER SWALLOWED GRANDMA

The computer swallowed Grandma,
Yes, honestly its true!
She pressed 'control' and 'enter'
And disappeared from view.

It devoured her quite completely
The thought just makes me squirm
She must have caught a virus
Or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin
And files of every kind;
I've even used the Internet
But nothing did I find.

In desperation, I asked Jeeves
My searches to refine;
The reply from him was negative
Not a thing was found 'online'.

So if inside your 'Inbox'
My Grandma you should see,
Please 'Copy, Scan and Paste' her
And send her back to me!

A tribute to all the Grandmas who have been fearless and learned to use the Computer ... they are the greatest.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

Colin Simpson reminisces:

Well, there I was, looking calmly and peacefully into the window of Charles Clarke some 15 years ago, when I felt someone tapping my shoulder—the lady in question was Judy Chapman. “I want you,” she said, which raised my hopes - to be immediately dashed when she continued, “I want you to take over the Art Appreciation Group of the U3A”.

I had never heard of that great organization but had just taken early retirement and was wondering how I was going to fill my time. The Haywards Heath branch of the U3A had been started only a couple of months earlier and the Committee had decided that Art Appreciation could well be of interest to some of the 50-odd members that it then had. They had hired a professional art lecturer to give three talks on any aspect of art, and were looking for a sucker to carry on the good work. My wife Heather had once been employed by Judy’s structural engineer husband Jack, and the girls talked about their better halves’ likes and dislikes. So Judy knew that for years I had been interested, in a completely amateur way, in paintings and artists and the lives they led.

Judy had thought that I might like to take on the challenge of leading the art group. I was rather reluctant as I had never led a meeting, nor even given a talk in my life. But I do like a challenge, so I told her that I’d do it for a short while, and thought that I would be able to supply enough material to talk for a MAXIMUM of five meetings in my lounge at home. So a date was set. The fact that an art group was being started was advertised to the members of the Haywards Heath and District U3A.

Came the day itself, and ten people turned up on my doorstep. Apart from Judy, I knew none of them. What HAD I let myself in for? But the ice was soon broken and my feeling of nervousness soon turned into a feeling of - yes - enjoyment.

And that group of ten certainly seemed to be enjoying themselves too, especially when coffee and biscuits were produced.



7/3/2002

"I used to like everything before I took my art-appreciation course."

Well, that first meeting under my leadership was over 25 years ago, Tuesday October 8th 1991. I was a little out in my forecast when I said that I could lead five meetings. I was leader of the group until 2011 and during that time gave over 220 talks. We got together roughly once a month throughout the year. Sometimes members of the group themselves would talk, other times I brought in professional people, or other U3A volunteers as speakers.

I also arranged coach trips to various galleries and exhibitions in England, and although London was the general destination, I took coach parties to Oxford, Cambridge, Southampton, Birmingham and Cardiff.

We also went on a couple of 5-day trips abroad - to Paris and the Musee d'Orsay (April 1997) and Amsterdam. Though the trips were art-based, I showed the group around a bit when abroad. In Paris I arranged for the coach to take us up to the top of Montmartre, and meet us at the bottom of the hill four hours later after we had had an informal look around and a meal in the area.

The Art Appreciation group quickly grew and from meetings in my rather small lounge we had to increase the size of the meeting venue so moved to the Methodist Church Hall.



I feel I've got a lot to thank the U3A for and particularly Judy Chapman. It was she who got me really interested in the U3A - by offering me that challenge. It has given me far more pleasure than I could possibly have anticipated all those years ago.



THANKS FOR THE MUSIC

Music Appreciation was one of the initial groups when HH U3A was formed and it is still going strong. The Group started with members meeting in each others' homes to enjoy listening to the musical choice of the host. By 1994 numbers had risen to over thirty and in September they moved meetings to the Methodist Church Hall.

We have many talented musicians within our membership and as a result a number of other groups have evolved.



The Choir

Led by Peter Gacsall and Valerie Stevenson



HANDBELLS

Started in 2008

Led by Rosemary Pardey



Instrumental Group Led by Christine Colbourne

This Group was formed in 2011 to provide twice yearly concerts. The group has grown in size and now plays at other events also.



BETTY MURRELL DAY

Thanks to a generous legacy left to HH U3A by Betty Murrell for the enjoyment of all the groups we have held four annual events at the Ravenswood Hotel at Sharpthorne. Several Groups display their talents in the Old Hall—many paintings and photographs, cards and lovely clothes made by the dressmaking group. We really are a talented bunch of folk.



THE BIRD WATCHING GROUP

(not Twitchers")

Paul Roberts recalls:

During its existence (started November 1996) the Bird Watching group has visited many varied habitats in the local area. We in Haywards Heath are blessed with Woods, Commons, Forests, Downs, Sea-shores, RSPB sites and Nature Reserves all within about an hours car journey. We do occasionally venture further afield and this year we have been to the RSPB sites at Dungeness and Pagham Harbour.

The exact number of bird varieties that make their home either permanently or transitorily depends on which rare birds are included or excluded in the count, but is just under 600 of which we bird watchers have seen over 100 and, don't forget, that is just in our local area.

Our Record Book:



The smallest bird we have seen, is the UK's smallest bird , the Goldcrest .



The biggest would probably be the Mute Swan.



As to the least common bird we have seen? Well, it might be the Turtle Dove which may not sound terribly exciting but it is on the RSPB's red list of endangered varieties."

FAMILY HISTORY



Tracings one's Family Tree has become very popular over the years but it can be a very solitary task, with many frustrations when brick walls just refuse to fall.

Pat Stevenage started and ran the first Family History Group within Haywards Heath U3A back in 1991. Members relished the idea of joining a group of like minded individuals to talk through their finds, their

difficulties and successes and to generally share this common interest.

Visits were arranged to London for research and demand meant further groups were started. Groups do run their course and some get to the stage where they have covered all topics and family trees have successfully been discovered - a long standing group closed last year but this year a new group has been established populated by new enthusiastic ancestry hunters.

Michael Bennison remembers back in 2000 Pat suggested a Millennium Project which encouraged group members to produce mini family trees as at this milestone in history. These informative mini trees are a fitting tribute to Pat.

Michael recalls "I do not think we made any spectacular discoveries but we did gain both instruction and mutual support"

Family Tree Trivia

The longest family tree in the world is that of the Chinese philosopher and educator Confucius (551–479 BC). He is the descendant of King Tang (1675–1646 BC). The tree spans more than 80 generations from him, and includes more than 2 million members. An international effort involving more than 450 branches around the world was started in 1998 to retrace and revise this family tree. A new edition of the Confucius genealogy was printed in September 2009 by the Confucius Genealogy Compilation Committee, to coincide with the 2560th anniversary of the birth of the Chinese thinker. This latest edition is expected to include some 1.3 million living members who are scattered around the world today.

Exploring London Group 1

Little did I realise when I arranged an inaugural meeting for the above Group in January 2010 that there would be so much interest in exploring London! I had heard of other U3As in the London area having such groups and wondered if any of our members would be interested in a similar group. We had 24 people at the first meeting and as the group evolved and the range of activities increased so did the interest and numbers. Eventually we reached 230 members and at this point the group was becoming unmanageable so a second group was set up in 2013. Group 2 developed rapidly and this summer we decided to set up a third group. Each group has a leader but relies on members to help organise trips and this is working really well. We are now doing between 30 and 40 different trips a year and usually take 15 to 20 people on each one.

From the beginning we have used public transport for our visits and have made excellent use of our Senior Rail cards and Bus Passes. I think the group is an excellent example of the U3A philosophy as it is certainly educational, social and confidence boosting. A number of



***Some Group Members on a recent walk along the Thames Path
from Tower Bridge to Bermondsey and Rotherhithe***

Group members were not used to travelling to London and wary of public transport but we have discovered the best ways to travel around London and, in particular, how useful the Thameslink line is when visiting central London and cheaper than the Southern line to Victoria. We only use the underground if buses are not suitable and have become very proficient at popping on and off buses!

We have had a wonderful time over the last 6 years and have virtually exhausted all the chief places of interest in central London so are now widening our field for visits and started doing more walks around specific parts of London and the Thames Path. We have visited a fascinating variety of places including the Royal Palaces, Livery Companies, Theatres and the Opera House for behind the scene tours, Parliament and several of the Government Buildings e.g. Portcullis House and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Royal Courts of Justice and the Supreme Court, numerous Museums and Art Galleries and important religious building such as the Mosque at Regent's Park, Hindu Temple at Neasden and a Buddhist Temple in Wimbledon, and of course, St Paul's and Southwark Cathedrals and Westminster Abbey. When considering the most popular trips, I think everyone will have their own favourite but the most popular have certainly been the Mansion House, BBC, British Library, Wimbledon LTA, the Cable Car and Docklands Museum, Lloyds of London and latterly the Walks.

I have thoroughly enjoyed running this group although it has been hard work at times but have built up a lot of knowledge about London and still find it fascinating exploring different areas and going behind the scenes at different places and finding out how they function.

Sarah Tapp



HAYWARDS HEATH U3A – RAILWAY STUDIES GROUP

Railway buffs come in all shapes and sizes and meet in all sorts of different places, but somehow seem to identify kindred spirits. The late Alan Fall met Michael Davies at the U3A Computer Group and between them could name several other people with the same interest in railways. So Alan said "why don't we set up a U3A Railway Studies Group?" – so they did. Alan was Convenor/Secretary (and did the work) and he asked Michael Davies to chair the meetings, which began in the Spring of 2008, initially in his home, but then moving round. There were about a dozen members at the time.

It was all very informal and "do-it-yourself", in true U3A fashion. Several members of the group gave talks or showed films or photos. Alan organised a very successful trip to visit the Didcot Railway Museum and the Pendon Model Village Museum. Then the company all visited Michael Davies garage to inspect "Uxbridge Junction", the '00 Scale' layout which used to run round his garage in Saville Road.

The group was successful and then disaster struck in the summer of 2010 – Alan Fall suffered a stroke and did not recover, Mike Tyrrell took over as Convenor/Secretary, but initially it was to cancel the coach trip which Alan was planning and cancel the future speakers but then with John Goss's help the group restarted with a meeting every other month.



Time has marched on. We now have almost 40 members and meet monthly through the winter in the Perrymount Methodist Church Upper Room. There is still a degree of member participation, mixed with the odd guest speaker organised by Mike Tyrrell, our current Convenor and Secretary with John Goss as Chairman. There have been some excellent site visits, too, over the years – e.g. Kent & East Sussex Railway, the Bluebell Railway, Bekonscot, Epping & Ongar, Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch, London Overground and Docklands Light Railway (as progressive sections of each were opened), the Isle of Wight Railway, Brunel's London, and the London Transport Museum at South Acton.



September 18 2016 was an important day in Haywards Heath celebrating 175 years since the coming of the railway. There were trips up the branch line to Ardingly in a heritage diesel unit, a display on the station forecourt including the locomotive "Stepney" visiting for the day on a low loader from the Bluebell and an excellent model railway exhibition in the Dolphin Leisure Centre (at which some of the railway studies group helped out).

For the future the group is attempting to spread the load of organising the meetings and events by setting up an informal committee to manage things, which is hoped will continue the success of the group into the future.

The Garden Group

The U3A Garden Group was one of the first groups to be included at the start-up of Haywards Heath U3A in 1992 and one of the first leaders was a lady called Barbara Potman—there were probably about 12 members to start.

By the year 2000 Brian Drew and his wife were leaders and the format was very much as it is today. Meeting in King Edward Hall, Lindfield, on the 2nd Friday of each month, inviting a knowledgeable speaker for the months October to May, and then organised visits to a variety of gardens, large and small, by coach or car for the rest of the year.

In November 2012 our leader Barry Ranger suffered a terrible stroke and so the baton was passed on to our current leaders, Janet Smith and Linda Newman. We are pleased to say that Barry's wife Lorna still comes to our meetings and is a great help when needed. We now have over 100 people on our lists and thanks to our tea ladies and a small committee to plan future speakers and outings we hope members will continue to enjoy "Gardens".

The Group has visited many gardens and garden related venues over the years—the picture below shows them at Castle Lavender, Lullingstone in July 2013—a gloriously sunny day, the air filled with lavender scent.



GARDENS GROUP VISIT TO CASTLE LAVENDER, LULLINGSTONE, KENT—JULY 2013

I hope that you have enjoyed reminiscing with me and other members of our wonderful Haywards Heath & District U3A. We have achieved so much since we started 25 years ago and we continue to go from strength to strength.

Many thanks to all Members who have supplied information and pictures for this publication, which aims to briefly encapsulate some of the history, events and activities of the first 25 years of Haywards Heath & District U3A

A final contribution found in Newsletter No. 51—January 2005 to raise a smile and a knowing “oh so true” nod.

Why English is So Hard

We'll begin with a box and the plural is boxes,
But the plural of ox is oxen not oxes,
The one fowl is goose, but two are called geese,
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.
You may find a mouse, or a whole lot of mice,
But the plural of house is houses not hice.
If the plural of man is always called men,
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?
And I speak of a foot and you show me your feet,
But I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set teeth,
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?
If the singular is this and the plural is these,
Should the plural of kiss be nicknamed kese?
Then one may be that and three may be those,
Yet the plural of hat would never be hose.
We speak of a brother and also of brethren,
But though we say mother, we never say methren.
The masculine pronouns are he, his and him,
But imagine the feminine she, shis and shim.
So our English I think you will all agree,
Is the trickiest language you ever did see.