

August 2025

From the Chair

First, an apology. As Burns once said the “best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley” And as most of you will understand from experience, things don’t always go as planned.

We have been lucky to replace 2 members of our Committee, Val Tierney (Treasurer) with John McCoy and Gill Ashford (Business Secretary) with Denise McCoy, both of whom are most welcome additions to our committee. But sometimes we ask too much, and this time, we, the more experienced members of the committee, did not notice that there were errors in the descriptors in our Treasurers’ report even though the figures were accurate. Corrected copies have now been distributed and, most importantly, the correct version will be filed with the Charity Commission.

We are grateful to member Peter Weber for pointing out that this year’s accounts do not contain a sum of reclaimed Gift Aid which would normally have added income to our bank account. Following news from the Third Age Trust that a number of u3as who offered certain benefits to members at no cost, such as a monthly talk, HMRC contends that this element should not be eligible for Gift Aid relief because the members are getting something back in exchange and it is not a true donation. The case has been going on for a while and in March [White Cliffs Minutes](#) we decided that we should temporarily refrain from claiming the Gift Aid until the matter was resolved one way or another. It seems we were ahead of this game because earlier this month the Third Age Trust suspended the calculator on the Beacon IT system. We would add that if the case is decided that we can continue to claim Gift Aid in whole or in part, then we would be able to reclaim for the past years when it would have been due. The case is still ongoing.

The summer has been continuing with the development of new groups and for some of us, preparations for the new Committee, so that when elected, will be in a good position to take over from those of us who have left. As we are in the holiday season, I hope that you are enjoying those groups which are still going on during the summer and are ready to join some more for the coming year. Heather, Sara, and Ellie have been working very hard on getting all the work done for us to be able to join or rejoin our groups.

The Kent Show attracted many visitors as always, and our u3a promotional tent was helped by Eleanor Brooks who has been the secretary of the Kent Network to which we, and about 34 other Kent u3as belong. It was a magnificent effort, and you might be reading about it in a future edition of Third Age Matters magazine. We had a few people interested in joining our u3a and we will be reviewing the outcomes of all the promotional activity shortly. As some of you know, although I am leaving the committee of our White Cliffs Country u3a, I will still be in touch as chair of the Kent Network to foster liaison between all our more local u3as and share our ideas and good practice tips at events, as well as helping committees to function well with training and peer groups.

The Trips team too have been getting many of you to places of interest and fun over the summer. I hope you enjoyed your visits too, and we owe thanks to all of the team members and are sad to see some of them now step down.

I will be leaving with some sadness that my years on the committee have passed, but with a very warm set of great memories of sharing fun and hard work with all of the committee members, past and present, who have made it both worthwhile and welcoming. And I pass my good wishes to the new committee members who will take over next month, so please join us at the AGM to elect them!

Thank you for being such great members and continue to enjoy our u3a.

Sue

Groups News

The groups list is published on the website and Beacon. Now we are well into August our Groups have been released in order to start first meetings in September.

Some groups have been really popular and are now full. Others less so. Have you ever thought of writing a book or Poetry? We have some group leaders with the knowledge and skills to coach you to achieve! Do you enjoy card games or chess? There are groups looking for new members. If you want to learn something new to you and make more friends, contact the group leader and they will tell you how the group works.

Please get in touch if you need some help with groups and look out in the coming months for new groups. Also, if you feel you could run a group then get in touch.

Keep an eye out for more groups starting in January.

Talks and Events

Do you live in or near DOVER ?

Do you ever think there's not enough u3a stuff happening in Dover, and too much in Deal? Well, you may be able to help change things!

Our lovely Committee member, Ellie Brooks, will soon be moving away from the area, and we're really going to miss her cheerful and efficient presence. As well as having worked tirelessly for our u3a, she has played a big part in building up membership in the Dover area, organising events and being a sort of unofficial cheerleader for members in the locality.

So, we're really hoping other Dovorians might step forward and take over from Ellie. You don't need any special computer or organising skills – but just be happy to liaise with the Committee about ideas for talks or socials and maybe encourage friends and neighbours to come along and join u3a.

If you think you might be able to help – perhaps together with a friend – please do email one of the Committee. It would be such a shame if in the future we had to wind down our activities in Dover due to dwindling support!

Thank you

Paulin

On behalf of the u3a Committee

Membership

Seven of our members represented White Cliffs Country u3a in the Deal Pride march on 12 July. They carried a banner designed by member Carol Fowler, and waved a huge Pride flag. Pictures from the day are posted on the White Cliffs Country Facebook page. Our next quarterly New Members meeting is 6 November, Thursday, from 1-2 pm at Sholden Village Hall. If you are a new member and haven't had the chance to attend a new members meeting, please do email me at membership@wccu3a.co.uk to let me know you are coming. I will then send you an invite with directions closer to the time Welcome new members. If you use Facebook, keep an eye out for our White Cliffs Country u3a flyer. Many of the local villages have kindly agreed to post our flyer on their Facebook page. The annual renewal date for the White Cliffs Country u3a is on 1 May. We have moved it away from the previous 1 April renewal time to avoid the busy tax year reconciliation.

IT, Beacon and Website

A few members have said they are having trouble logging in to Beacon, but it turns out that its their device that's not Auto filling the relevant fields. Beacon itself does not remember logins or passwords, its people's own devices that store all that information. Its hard to put some one size fits all advice for this as all Browsers are different, but there should be a way you can turn on or off AutoFill and Password management on every device. Bill has sent out an email with a link to try and help.

Third Age Trust News

TAT would like some help to update their image library, they would particularly like images of younger members that they can use in newsletters, website, and general publicity. If you think you can help with anything, please email communications@u3a.org.uk.

TAT's end of year financial report is available on this link [Financial Report](#)

Are you signed up to the monthly u3a Friends Newsletter. It is the best way to keep up to date about u3a news, events, and opportunities. u3a Friends get access to Friends Extra, TAT's exclusive scheme that offers discounts on travel, shopping, electronics and much more.

Please sign up via the TAT website here [Friends Newsletter](#)

Kent Network News

Kent u3a Network at Kent County's Biggest Event!

The Kent County Show excelled once again this summer—and the Kent u3a Network was right at the heart of it! Across three thrilling days, over 60,000 visitors flocked to the county's premier celebration of farming, countryside, and community—and many made their way to our vibrant u3a stand.

Our journey began in January, driven by the energy of our amazing volunteers. With a Third Age Trust grant, we proudly purchased a bright new gazebo, printed 10,000 flyers, and displayed three striking banners.

Support came in from u3as across Kent—providing tables, roller posters, flag banners, bunting, and even balloons to help create a standout presence. Volunteers worked tirelessly to set up the stand, staff it for 10-hour days, and pack it all away with impressive teamwork.

Surrounded by over 400 trade stalls, our stand drew the attention from curious passers-by to lifelong learners. Visitors explored the depth of u3a activities—from history and languages to walking groups and ukulele ensembles—and left inspired by what u3a can offer in retirement.

The Show sparkled with horse dressage, sheepdog displays, showjumping, music gigs, vintage tractors, food stalls, and more. Amidst the festivities, our team championed the joy of learning, the power of community, and the vibrancy of later life.

We didn't just hand out flyers—we sparked conversations, inspired ideas, and connected with potential members and future group leaders. The enthusiasm was catching.

Thank You!

To everyone who gave time, energy, and ideas—you made it happen. The Kent County Show 2025 was a milestone for the Kent u3a Network.



Trips and outings

Elham Valley Vinyard



19 Gentle Explorers enjoyed a trip to Elham Valley Vineyard, run by The Fifth Trust to support adults with learning disability. We enjoyed exploring the vineyard, an extremely well stocked garden centre, and visited the various workshops where the students were hard at work. Last but not least we enjoyed home baked cakes, scones, and tea/coffee.

Eynsford Heights and Castle Farm Lavender Fields Day Trip – 8th July 2025

We had a beautiful day in the stunning Darent Valley, again were so very lucky with a very warm bright sunny day.

We had later pick up times in Deal, Walmer and Dover as travel to Eynsford is a shorter distance. With everyone safely on board we enjoyed the Kent country scenery as we made our way to the charming village of Eynsford. In the centre of the village is a beautiful ford and as we passed to add to the charm a pony and trap were in the shallow waters for the pony to take a drink.

Our first stop was a visit to Eagle Heights Wildlife Foundation, one of the UK's most inspiring wildlife centres which is carrying out important conservation and rescue work. It is home to a breathtaking array of birds of prey Eagles, Hawks, Owls, and Falcons, as well as Huskies, Meerkats, Lemurs, reptiles and more. After arrival we had plenty of time to view many of the birds of prey, and other species, including the thirty or so Huskies that have been rescued, and it was wonderful to them the dogs bathing in the shade or sunlight.



A seating area is laid out on a gentle slope to watch to watch thrilling displays of the birds with the Darent valley forming wonderful sweeping view. We were treated to three displays and some close encounters of a creamy coloured Barn Owl called Thema, 'JR' the Caracara Falcon, and lastly Rex, a large, impressive Stella Sea Eagle who soared the skies above us and over the valley to a height of 80 metres . Other members of the public attended the display, and it was wonderful to see how the children reacted to these magnificent displays as well as the not so young!

After our visit to Eagle Heights, the coach continued back into the village to the Malt Shovel pub where we enjoyed a traditional two course lunch with a drink included. The pub is known for its warm hospitality and good locally sourced food. A perfect place to enjoy a leisurely countryside meal.

On our exit from Eynsford we made a short visit to the stunning Lavender fields at Castle Farm where the lavender was in full bloom, to enable us to admire the views and wonderful scent. It was a great place to take photos, visit their shop, or just sit and have an ice cream. This was only a short visit, but it would have been a pity to be in this part of Kent and not view the lavender fields which were in full glory at this time of year.

The day was full of variety and was well organised by Amanda Maloney who was even helping at the Malt Shovel to ensure all members were happy. I think we can safely say that members were delighted with the day and warmly thanked Amanda, and David Wilsher who aided with logistics on the day and lastly to Tyler our coach driver for this safe passage to and from the enchanting Darent Valley.

Carol Fowler
Trips Team



Old Royal Navy College Day Trip – Tuesday 13 May 2025

Forty eight members set off for a trip to Greenwich on a lovely warm spring sunny day. The weather could not have better!

After our three pickups locations in Deal, Walmer and Dover we climbed the hills from Dover tow and enjoyed the wonderful countryside views. The journey went very well and made good time to Greenwich.

Carol Fowler our organiser had worked her usual magic and had all things under control and arranged for the coach to be admitted into the heritage site not a usual



offer. Once inside and booked in with an arm wristband allowing access to buildings and facilities it was time for coffee. We sat under the trees in dappled sunlight enjoying the lovely views of the Thames and its flowing traffic with the Cutty Sark as an adjoining back drop was quite idyllic. Two private tours had been booked, and most people took the advance of the microphone headsets to ensure they could hear the guide and not miss any points of interest along the way. Group 1 set off fifteen minutes earlier than Group 2 which was for those not so fleet of foot. This worked well although Group 2 finished first and seemed to have had a better deal as the lady guide was more concise of her explanations and some mentioned the Group 1 guide rather liked the sound of his own voice!

The history, architecture, and beauty of the buildings with views of the river and up to Greenwich Park are fabulous. Viewing the ORNC Chapel and the Painted Hall were just magnificent. Every painting had so many details and stories to tell. There was so much to view and understand. The long-chequered history of the Place, and previous Place built on the same site, with the birth and residence of royalty, and later the great seafaring Captains, and in more modern times training of the Royal Navy have passed through its doors and resided here.

Part of the site is home to Greenwich University and Music College. As we walked across the grass were serenaded by music and opera singing flowing through the windows in the sunlight which was quite magical.

A very good lunch was served efficiently on time at the Old Brewery restaurant within the site and purchasing our own drinks was equally well managed.

After lunch we had free time to revisit the buildings or watch the flow of traffic on the Thames or just enjoy another coffee. The homeward journey traffic was a little heavy but once pass the Medway bridge we made good process back home, members were very delighted with the day and thanked Carol for her good organisation and sweets, and to Tyler our excellent coach driver.

Amanda Maloney
Trips Team



Other News

Di Ring and her husband Wilf were lucky enough to come face to face with the King on Thursday 10th July during his visit to Walmer. This photo was taken after he approached the band stand via the promenade.

Di says that he was very approachable and chatty and everyone enjoyed the visit which and the perfect weather that day.

