

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

White Cliffs Country

Newsletter Spring 2026

Serving Deal, Dover and Sandwich



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Welcome from the Chair



Welcome to the Spring Edition of our quarterly newsletter. Spring is certainly evident with colourful gardens, birds' songs, and bluebells in our neighbouring woodlands. It is a joyful time of year with a lot to look forward to during the coming months and for us, as we have much to enjoy within our members' programme.

New interest groups going live or continuing for another term in Spring, new Group Leaders' Forum in May, monthly Talks programme at the Astor, a quiz to be held in Dover, a day trip in May and another in June, new members meeting in June, our

30th Anniversary celebration in August, along with us representing White Cliffs Country (WCC) u3a at Deal Carnival Procession in July.

I am also delighted to let you know we now have over 500 members! Welcome on board to our new members.

The committee has been hard at work, reviewing and updating our role descriptions and policies, along with creating additional policies and a new Welcome Pack for Trustees. All these are now available to view on our website (policies can be found [here](#), and role descriptions and the Welcome Pack can be found [here](#)).

In early March we had a very successful and enjoyable visit from the Third Age Trust (TAT) Communications team, who attended the Women in Society and History (WiSH) interest group. The TAT team held discussions with all members of the group and interviewed and recorded three members. The interviews were posted on the [national u3a Facebook page](#) which has 8,000 subscribers. So, thank you WiSH group for putting us on the u3a map! Please see Page 8 for more information.

All of the above would not be possible without us all contributing as volunteers, so thank you! You can volunteer in many ways from running an interest group to being a "Meeter and Greeter" at our many events, please do get in touch with me or any member of the committee if you are able to help. The committee will be establishing some short term projects or tasks which we will be publishing in due course and hope you will be able to contribute.

Please remember to view our [website](#) regularly for news and information.



Have a wonderful springtime!

Learn, Laugh, Live

Carol

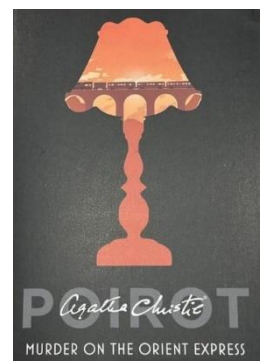
**Carol Fowler
Chair of White Cliffs Country u3a.**

Interest Groups News - your u3a needs you!

All u3as are run "*For Members By Members*".

Would you like to see new groups such as:

- Bird watching
- Bus pass travel - how far will your pass take you?
- Armchair travel - other country's culture & food, places to visit
- Crafts - do you have a talent to share with others?
- Tracks of my years - play your favourite music
- Current affairs - whatever is in the news
- Local history - find out more about your area
- Explore nature - visit sites of interest
- Crime novels
- Board games
- Gin group



You may also have some ideas for a group?

We need members to facilitate groups - if you are interested, please contact Jan Poynter, our Groups Coordinator, on janpoynterwccu3a@gmail.com.

Jan Poynter, Groups Coordinator

Membership update

Our next quarterly New Members' meeting is **Friday 19 June 2026 at 11:00am**, Sholden Village Hall. If you are a new member and haven't had the chance to attend a New Members' meeting, please do email Ponda, our Membership Secretary, on membership@wccu3a.co.uk to let her know you are coming. Welcome new members!

The **annual renewal date for the WCC u3a is 1 May**. On 1 April, Ponda sent renewal instructions to all members due for renewal and another email on 1 May to those yet to renew their membership. If you would like her to send these instructions to you again, she would be happy to do so. Just pop her an email at membership@wccu3a.co.uk to let her know. Please be sure to renew your membership by 31 May at the latest so that you will be able to continue attending your Interest Groups. Only current members can take part in u3a activities.

Save the date!

WCC u3a has registered to march in the **Deal Procession for the Carnival on Thursday 30 July** in the evening. We will be carrying our u3a parade banner during this event. Ponda will share more details closer to the date.

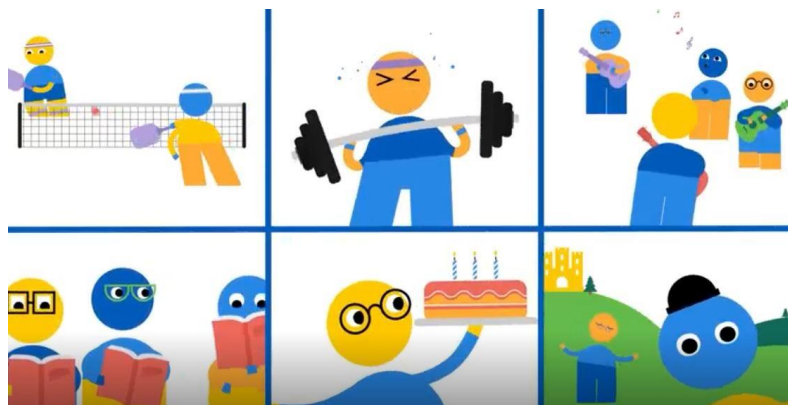
Please note that, unfortunately, **Deal Pride** will **not** be taking place in 2026. However, we understand a new charitable organisation, with trustees and a formal governance structure, is expected to be established later this year in preparation for summer 2027.

Please feel free to share the following links with your friends:

Kent Coast Volunteering has kindly posted information about WCC u3a on their webpage, since WCC u3a charity is completely run by volunteers: "*For Members, by Members*". You can see the information about WCC u3a on their [webpage](#).

The national Third Age Trust (TAT) communications department created this fabulous advertising [cartoon](#), and kindly added our name to it (see screenshot below). This has been, and will be, posted on the local village Facebook pages to let the public know what we are all about. TAT have also created another video for us to share with people we know to raise awareness of what is on offer. You can view it [here](#).

Ponda Thomas, Membership Secretary



Talks and Events programme

White Cliffs Country u3a has monthly talks which are free and open to all members. These are on the first Wednesday afternoon of the month at the Astor Theatre, Deal. There are also occasional quizzes, coffee mornings and other events. Talks and other events are also planned for the Dover area. Below is the programme for 2026. Look out for updates on the [Events](#) page of the website.

If you have suggestions for talks or would like to give one yourself, please contact Sara, our [Talks Coordinator](#). We also now have a suggestion box, which is available at the talks, and invite you to submit any suggestions for talks or ways in which we can improve our programme. Thank you to those who have already made use of this facility, your ideas are appreciated.

We have arranged with the Astor theatre for a **WCC u3a discount** of £5.00 per ticket for the following performance: **Quentin Crisp, Friday 3 July**. Either visit the Astor box office in person or telephone 01304 370220 Wednesday to Saturday, 10.00 to 13.00. Please mention you are a member of WCC u3a to receive your discount.

Sara Miller, Talks Coordinator

Talks and Events 2026

13 May 2026	All day	Belmont House and Gardens plus tour of Faversham (This is now fully booked)	Various pick-up points
03 Jun 2026	2:00pm	A history of Country Music. aka "Your Cheatin' Heart"	Astor Theatre
4 Jun 2026	9:15am	Science Seminar: AI in Action Today (Sevenoaks u3a) (Click here to book your place - booking closes 15 May)	East Malling Orchards Conference Facility
19 Jun 2026	11:00am	Quarterly New Members' meeting	Sholden Village Hall
23 Jun 2026	All day	Hever Castle and Hever in Bloom 2026 (booking req'd)	Various pick-up points
01 Jul 2026- 03 Jul 2026	All days	u3a Festival 2026 (Fully booked but click here to join the waiting list)	University of York
01 Jul 2026	2:00pm	Life on the Farm Reservoir	Astor Theatre
30 Jul 2026	Evening	Deal Procession for the Carnival (booking required)	Carnival
04 Aug 2026	Afternoon	WCCu3a 30 th Anniversary Celebration (booking required)	Walmer and Kingsdown Golf Club
05 Aug 2026	2:00pm	Dover RNLi	Astor Theatre
02 Sep 2026	2:00pm	Annual General Meeting followed by entertainment	Astor Theatre
07 Sep 2026- 10 Sep 2026	All days	South East u3a Forum Summer School (Click here to find out more and book a place)	University of Chichester
07 Oct 2026	2:00pm	Pluckley: the making and faking of a ghost story	Astor Theatre
04 Nov 2026	2:00pm	Amazing WW2 Women or "Band of Sisters"	Astor Theatre
02 Dec 2026	2:00pm	Christmas celebrations through the ages	Astor Theatre

Save the date! – Tuesday 4 August

We are delighted to announce our 30th Anniversary Celebration will be held on Tuesday 4 August at Walmer and Kingsdown Golf Club.

Please join us for a delicious afternoon tea and to acknowledge present and past members who have all contributed to the continual success of White Cliffs Country u3a.

Booking information, timetable, menu, cost per member (although subsidised by donations) will follow in June. The capacity is 120, so remember to book and pay as soon as possible when the booking system opens.

Thank you to those of you who completed the recent transport survey, we have decided not to pursue the booking of a minibus service from Borrow Pit Car Park to the golf club, as the number of interested members did not make this a viable choice and cost. We will be encouraging members to share car travel.

We look forward to this celebration and welcoming you!

Carol Fowler, Chair WCC u3a

Day Trips 2006 Programme



The first day trip on **Wednesday 13 May** to Belmont House and Gardens, lunch and a tailored walking tour of Faversham was fully booked in 36 hours, and of course we are very pleased this was such a popular choice. We would like to offer for more members to attend each day trip but it is very much limited to the numbers of group visitors each venue will accept, good locations and catering for lunch, and the timetable and logistics of the number of attendees.

A summary of all our day trips and photographs are posted on the WCC u3a website, as long as members have given us personal permission to do so. So, do check out the [website](#) for information on day trips.

Our second day trip this year on **Tuesday 23 June** will be a visit to the historic and beautiful Hever Castle and Gardens during their Garden in Bloom programme. The gardens will be full of wonderful blooms at this time of year, plus floral displays, exhibitions etc. Bookings opened on 11 May, and as usual will be on a first come first served basis. Click [here](#) for more information. I believe this will also be a popular choice so book and pay as soon as possible when bookings open.



Carol Fowler, Chair WCCu3a and Trips Team

Upcoming events elsewhere

u3a Festival 26



The University of York is hosting u3a's Festival between 1-3 July. This three-day event brings the movement together and is a celebration of the fun, learning and community that is key to u3a.

The festival will feature a wide range of activities, talks, workshops, exhibitions, sports tournaments and concerts to celebrate the vibrancy of u3a.

Accommodation will be available on site and the campus is just east of the historic city of York, with transport links by train and plenty of parking. Members will also have access to the restaurant, cafeteria, bar and refreshment areas on site.

The Festival is now fully booked, but you can join the waiting list by visiting the [TAT u3a website](#).

u3a Festival Fringe – take part in the fun from home

If you are unable to attend the Festival itself, then you may be interested in u3a Festival Fringe, which is an online events programme, designed to complement the Festival activities. Events will take place in the lead up to, and following on from, the Festival in York. The programme will feature online workshops and talks from Festival speakers with highlights including *How to watercolour*, *The role of women in ancient Egypt* and *The role of wind energy in the UK's electricity system*. More information on how to take part will be shared as it becomes available.

SE u3a Forum Summer School

The University of Chichester is hosting this event from 7-10 September. You can find out more and book both courses and accommodation [here](#).

This is primarily a four-day residential summer school, although there is an option to be non-residential. As well as a programme of day-time courses, there will also be entertainment on campus each evening, which is included in the pricing of the summer school (apart from a theatre visit).



“AI in Action Today”

This Sevenoaks u3a event is being held on 4 June 2026 at the Orchards Conference Centre, East Malling and costs £20. It will explore specific applications to agriculture, medicine and its sociological consequences. Booking will be open until 15 May 2026. To find out more and book your place, visit [Sevenoaks u3a website](#).

Third Age Trust Communications visited WCC u3a



On Monday 9 March 2026 two members of the Third Age Trust (TAT) Communications Team visited WCC u3a. They were interested in how we attract new members and Ponda, our Membership Secretary, provided them with information about initiatives undertaken to increase our membership. Our chair, Carol, also informed them of our other initiatives for members, including this newsletter!

In the afternoon they joined our Women in Society and History Interest Group (WiSH). This group was chosen by TAT as the previous day had been Women's International Day.

Maureen, the group leader writes, "WiSH, or Women in Society & History to give it its full name, was established in 2016. The Group meets monthly eight times per year from September to December and January to April.

"At our March meeting we were joined by representatives from the Third Age Trust (TAT). I expected our visitors to be members of the Trust and was surprised when two young women employed by the Trust entered the room!



"During the visit, group members shared with the meeting research previously undertaken to give a flavour of how the group is run. At my request, Fanny Craddock was one of those featured. There was also a display featuring DVDs and books I have collected over the years, as well as a leaflet 'Women's Rights in Anglo-Saxon England', researched and produced by one of the members.

"Before the TAT members left, they interviewed two members of the group, (Jenni and Sara) plus myself, to be featured in a podcast, as well as taking our photographs.



"WiSH has been described as a relaxed and friendly group which is exactly what I wanted to achieve. New members are always welcome and, finally, it is not just a group for women - men are also welcome!"

The videos made by TAT Communication Team have been posted on the national u3a Facebook as well as our White Cliffs u3a group. You can watch the video on [Facebook](#).

*Well done and thank you to
Maureen, Jenni, Sara and the rest of the
WiSH team!*

*And a big thank you to Ponda for
initiating the TAT visit!*

Gentle Explorers



On 26 March I had the privilege with twenty-four other members of Gentle Explorers to visit and explore all areas of the station and lifeboat at **Dover RNLI**. The visit included a presentation of the work and history of Dover RNLI, a tour of the new Lifeboat station, and an amazing tour of City of London, Severn class lifeboat, the largest in the RNLI fleet. The Lifeboat station is currently manned by 88 volunteers, from those who save lives on the sea to those who are fundraisers.

It was very evident to see a really dedicated team spirit. Dover has a distinguished history, and last year appointed the first women coxswain since 1837.

Well done and thanks to Sheila Wilding for organising, and to all Dover RNLI volunteers who gave up their personal time for us to very much enjoy the experience.



Andy Miller, Dover Lifeboat Visits Officer, will be giving a talk at the Astor theatre, Deal on Wednesday 5 August 2026. One not to miss!

Carol Fowler

And on 13 February, the Gentle Explorers had a wonderful visit to see the snowdrops at **Goodnestone Park Gardens**. They had a gentle wander round the gardens and were very lucky to be accompanied by the head gardener who explained the planting and techniques used in the garden. They came away having learnt a lot!



With thanks to Sheila Wilding

Beacon and IT Update



On Monday 10 March an IT Drop-In workshop was held at The Landmark Centre in Deal to help members with any technical queries. Whilst most questions were around renewing online membership, help was also given for organising emails, deleting WhatsApp chats, and various queries using smartphones, which is the most popular device in use today.

There was a steady flow of members throughout the session and help was given and all queries were answered by our experienced IT support team.

Philip Healey

*With grateful thanks to
Mary Venables, Bill Venables
and Philip Healey*

