



LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE

March 2026

FROM THE CHAIR

I am writing this on the Spring Equinox, meteorological spring started nearly three weeks ago, but the weather of the last week suggests that we may have turned a corner at last!

That said, it probably means that the next week or so will be cold and wet.

With the spring comes new beginnings, so I am including a shortened version of Eric Midwinter's article from TAM, Spring 2022, for your consideration.

What do you do, what groups do you belong to, what

groups do you help run by collecting the money or making the tea, what is your particular passion/skill set and, on that basis, what group could you set up? Why don't you come to the monthly meeting? I know St Mary's centre can only hold 100 of our 560 members, but when I visit our interest groups, I am always amazed by the number of people that I have NEVER seen before.

So, as we all start to emerge from our winter hibernation, think about what you might be able to contribute to the benefit of the members of BRu3a and do read the following :

"In 1981, only 200,000 persons of pensionable age were involved in any kind of regular learning activity. In 2021, more than 400,000 such people were u3a members. But that is only half the story, impressive though that is!

The notion that older people may and should be active citizens rather than passive social casualties is now broadly agreed. This acceptance that older age may be a positive golden rather than a negative grey has been a definitive shift in civil society, and the u3a has certainly been a major factor in this.

Our Website:

<https://bognorregis.u3asite.uk/>

Beacon:

<https://u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?>

Contact us:

<https://bognorregis.u3asite.uk/the-committee/>

"Everyone in u3a should be an involved member, not a customer being served."

Eric Midwinter, u3a Founder

This shift has justified the decidedly political aim of the founders to construct a national demonstration of the ability of older people to organise their own agencies. Mutual Aid Universities.[1984] proposed a mode of self-energising, self-mobilising membership which fitted into the most progressive outline of all types of learning activity, found globally to be the most effective and beneficial. A more participatory mode of learning was required to replace the outmoded didactic methods of the past.

Thus, the u3a interest group is a learning circle based on the needs and strengths of its members, held together by an 'impartial' convener [group leader?] In any group/u3a, some will do more than others, but the danger is that some will become the very few and the others become the almost all.

The u3a is not, nor should it ever become, a service charity in which a few provide a programme for the many. Everybody should be an involved member. Nobody should be a customer being served or a patient being treated.

Whilst not wanting to heap responsibility on new members, some indication of what the u3a is about should be provided otherwise we might be accused of selling a false prospectus. For only through this form of mutual aid will each member be encouraged to realise their best self, which is the ultimate goal of the u3a model."

~ Iain Palot

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT: JANUARY

SPEAKER: JULIE PULLINGER

TAX, CARE AND TOY BOYS

Julie Pullinger gave us a most informative and oft times amusing talk on wills, inheritance tax and Power of Attorney (POAs). Most people were familiar with these topics but it was very useful to be reminded of some of the various salient points. Amongst the most memorable were:

- the need to make a new will if one remarries and
- to revisit one's will every few years to check it is up-to-date regardless.

There were also plenty of tips for single people.

Whilst Julie made it very clear that she was talking in general terms and that everyone's estate planning is individual, she also went on to point out the possible dangers of leaving stated amounts of money in a will, and was instead in favour of expressing legacies in percentages of an estate.

She advised that leaving money to charities in a will can be problematic, and preferred charity giving in one's lifetime. She told an amusing story about the possibility of donkeys potentially gaining more from an estate than the other beneficiaries!

Another useful reminder was that POA forms need to be sent off once they are all signed since, until they are registered, the POA is not in force. Most pertinent to those who organise their own POAs perhaps.

Several members completed the forms provided to take advantage of the free home consultation. Apart from this she may be contacted as follows: Julia.pullinger@coop.co.uk or call 07960 036309.

~ Christina Wilks

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT: FEBRUARY

SPEAKER: CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

We were due to be given a talk on Mental Wellbeing for Older People, but the scheduled speaker was unfortunately unavailable due to illness.

However, the Citizens' Advice Bureau came to the rescue, to tell us would be involved in volunteering for Citizens' Advice, which is a registered Charity.

Locally, there are three offices, in Littlehampton, Chichester and Bognor Regis. Though they are part of a larger (nationwide) organisation, each is treated as an independent franchise. Headline issues that they routinely deal with include Benefits, Work, Debt and money, Housing, Family, Law, Immigration and Health – but they are happy to assist with (almost) anything – for example, they were recently about to source a typewriter technician who could service a typewriter that had great sentimental value.

Volunteers initially received two weeks of online training, with mentors and assistance always on hand in the office. No-one is ever left alone in an office, and a supervisor is always available.

It's not just formal training that's useful – life-experience is also invaluable for those who volunteer to give advice.

There are also important volunteer roles behind the scenes, for example helping with administration or staffing the reception desk; and flexible hours are available.

For more information, see <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/browse/volunteer-with-us/>.

~ Karen McCreedy

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Upcoming meetings are on 26th March 2026, when Paul Boniface will tell us about “The Natural Recovery of the Sussex Coast”; and on 23rd April, we’ll hear about “Sussex Agriculture: Muck and Money” from Geoffrey Mead.

In May, Sandra Simmonds will be following up on her previous fascinating talks by telling us about her “Life after Iran”.

Doors open at 10am for a 10.30am start. Please remember to bring your own mug for tea and coffee!

MAHJONG: A TILE TALE

At New Year our thoughts inevitably turn to the future. As we enter the Chinese Year of the Fire Horse, we are told how the traits associated with that animal may affect the year ahead. One of the positive traits linked to the Fire Horse is sociability. A trait which forms a large element in Bognor Regis u3a’s Mahjong group.

Jo, the group leader, learnt the game while she was in China. She enjoyed playing it so much that when she moved to Bognor Regis seven years ago, she set up her own u3a Mahjong group. There are many versions of Mahjong but all of them are games of skill, strategy and chance played with tiles. Jo’s group plays the International version, which involves scoring.

The group welcomes new members and is always friendly and supportive towards them. Each person is given a written copy of the rules and encouraged to have fun and enjoy the game. Everyone loves it when a high score of 81,000 is reached, but competitiveness is not a word you’ll hear in this group. They are happy when anyone wins and are quick to congratulate them on a game well played.



One of the group members is Chinese. Although she found the group’s form of Mahjong different from the one she was used to playing, but soon got used to their version and loves playing it.

Supportiveness is one of the main features of this group of friends. During difficult times they are always there for each other whether it’s offering lifts to visit relatives in hospital or a smile and a kind word. The members of this group came together socially to learn and play Mahjong.

Now their love of the game has taught them so much more.

It's not too late for a New Year's resolution so why not fire up your synapses and join this group to learn a modern take on the age-old art of Mahjong?

If you would like more information on this or any of Bognor Regis u3a's groups please go to our website: <http://bognorregis.u3asite.uk>

~ Val Henke.

WALKING GROUP

After a walk at the beginning of January to blow the Christmas cobwebs away, the weather defeated our walking group through February.

But the March sunshine has seen us re-lace our bootstraps and enjoy some of the beautiful countryside that's on our doorstep.



First, we tackled the new section of the Centurion Way, that has recently opened between West Dean and Singleton. The old station platform was the perfect place for our snack break; and information boards provided sound as well as vision to evoke the way the line used to look.

The café at West Dean made a welcome lunch stop.

Our second walk of the month took us on a circular walk from Eartham car park toward Bignor Hill, returning along Stane Street. The magnificent view from our snack break spot made the climb up the hill well worthwhile!

If you'd like to join us, we meet on the first Monday and third Wednesday of every month, starting at 10 a.m. and finishing around 1 p.m. – always with a snack break, and often with a lunch option at the end of the walk.

Further details can be found on our webpage at:

https://bognorregis.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking-group/

~ Karen McCreedy

GROUP LEADERS' DINNER, BOGNOR REGIS U3A

All volunteers want to feel valued, and the interest group leaders and their support leaders at Bognor Regis u3a are no exception. Fortunately for them, not only do their group members really appreciate their efforts, but they are truly valued by their u3a Committee Members too.

As a big 'thank you' for all the time and effort they have devoted to creating and/or running their groups, the Committee decided to offer each and every group leader and support leader a free two course dinner at the Bognor Regis Golf Club. This decision was enthusiastically endorsed by National u3a and the meal was booked for the evening of 15th January. A perfect time to cheer everyone up in the dismal winter days following Christmas.



Typically, the evening of 15th was wet and windy, but the welcome at the Golf Club was warm and the food delicious. As a bonus the party was entertained by Dave Harris, gently strumming his guitar while crooning through a range of songs from the 1940s 'Rat Pack' era to Abba and others from the late 20th Century. Many joined in, singing along with the familiar tunes. A perfect end to a very enjoyable evening.

Bognor Regis u3a currently has 48 interest groups, in categories as varied as arts and crafts, history, games, literature, science and technology, sports and walking. With so many interest groups operating, often at the same time, leaders rarely get to meet one another. The meal was a great opportunity for them to get together and swap stories of how they started their groups and how much pleasure they and their members get from their activities.

In the past twelve months, ten new groups have been formed, including Art History, Beer Knowledge and History, Coffee and Chat, Mahjong (second group), Play Reading (two groups), Quiz (team), Rummikub, Sunday Roast (lunch outings) and Walking With Dogs. These perfectly complement the long-standing groups, many of which have been running successfully for some time, some since 2011 when Bognor Regis u3a began.

If you would like more information on any of Bognor Regis u3a's groups please go to our website: <http://bognorregis.u3asite.uk>

~ Val Henke