BOGNOR REGIS u3a Pier Views

LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE

September 2026

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

FROM THE CHAIR

The summer is over and what a summer!! Already, though, my biscuit-coloured lawn has turned green, and with the warm nights requires mowing every few days.

But to u3a matters!

Some groups continued to meet throughout the summer; well done all!; while some are now starting up again for the autumn. We're always looking for new ideas, so if you have some, let Mike know and he will help get you started. I am particularly interested to see the Art History and Philosophy groups get going; I think that they have great potential.

Forty of us enjoyed a five-day trip to the North East, visiting the Roman fort at Vindolanda and the Roman Army Museum as well as the Angel of the North, the Bishop's Palace in Bishop Auckland, Hexham Abbey, Bamburgh Castle and an evening visit to the spectacular Kynren. You missed the geese [if you know you know]. More on this in the December issue!

With King Richard III on the way up and the Piece Hall in Halifax on the way south, it was a very full five days.

Can this be matched by five days next May on the Opal Coast of Northern France?

A trip to see the late Queen's fashion is set for February, but at the time of writing there seems to be little interest; hopefully that will pick up. The problem with all these trips is the cost of coaches and with petrol and diesel prices still going up, I cannot see the situation improving in the short term.

On more domestic matters, the proposal for a New Year's Party will only be realised if we have a group of volunteers to manage it. The Trustees can help but this is a situation where your contribution to the running of YOUR u3a is vital. DO YOU WANT A PARTY? If so, what are you

prepared to help with? So far we have two, possibly three people which is not enough, so no help no party!

We also need a vice chair to shadow the work that I do for a year with a view to taking over from me at some point in the future. Getting people to volunteer is a u3a wide problem and while we have always been successful in filling these jobs the response so far has been less than minimal.

~ Iain Palot

MONTHLY MEETING REPORT: JULY

SPEAKER: PAUL TRACEY
PIERS ON THE COAST

Having arrived late, Paul told us about his career in Computer Aided Design and his hobby of painting. The latter led to his post-retirement quest to paint the piers along the south coast, and to learn more about them.

Why do piers exist? Because they originated as thin jetties for merchant ships. Once tourists began to arrive in resorts by rail, they enjoyed walking on them, and so the piers evolved.

Paul showed his paintings of Brighton, Bognor Regis, Bournemouth, Eastbourne and Southsea piers, which were visited and photographed before being painted. He also painted historic piers such as the Brighton Chain Pier from old postcards or illustrations.

We also heard about Paul exhibiting paintings at the Royal Academy and Royal Society of British Artists, and selling his work.

~ Karen McCreedy

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Upcoming meetings are on 24th September 2026, when Philip MacDougal will tell us about "A Factory at War"; and on 22nd October, we'll hear about "A Day in the Life of a Ranger" from Steve Webster.

On 26th November, Sheila Willis will tell us about her policing career in "Handbag to Handcuffs".

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

PLAY READING GROUPS

Despite the exceptionally hot weather, we did not cancel any monthly Play Reading gatherings. Instead, we used available freestanding fans in rented rooms, or moved outside to the garden of a regular member's house used for our Bognor East (Felpham) meetings.



We mainly read comedy scripts such as *Dad's Army* and, more recently, *Vicar of Dibley*. All of these bring many laughs – as well as personal memories of times past, young families and earlier homes.

The monthly meeting remains an afternoon of fun and enjoyment, with plenty to talk about and reminisce during the tea break between scripts.

For the last two readings – a thirty-year-old farce, and *Vicar of Dibley* – we all drew names from a hat so there was no favouritism. Limiting membership to around eight per group ensures all members get the chance to read a part. The majority of our members have no Am-Dram experience, but as the months have gone by they have learned how to maximise the humour from the scripts without any prompting.

We have also read some mysteries, and I am completing another where a cast of six check in to a Hotel. While they don't initially know each other, they discover they have all been recruited to use their jobs to carry out a heist together!

~ Geoffrey Erbes

WALKING GROUP

The very hot weather, and a shortage of walk leaders, put our group on hiatus for a couple of months.



But we began September with a lovely five-mile walk through Eartham Woods, along part of Stane Street, and over Long Down with its view towards Halnaker Windmill We then continued on through Eartham village, before heading uphill to the Folly, where we enjoyed a rest while enjoying the view out toward Bognor Regis and the sea.



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

CAMERA CLUB



We've had our first 'in' meeting since the summer break and enjoyed viewing images of West Dean Gardens, taken on a hot day in July.

Like so many of our own gardens, West Dean was struggling with the long dry spring and summer.

Their 'dry meadow' planted on 120 tonnes crushed concrete and the newly replanted Sunken Garden, where drought tolerant, colourful, plants and grasses have been set on 10cm of Fittleworth sandstone, were a magnet for many different insects.







The walled garden gave us dahlias and fruit trees to focus on, and the greenhouses contained many different varieties of succulents and fuchsias if you were able to withstand the extra heat!





Our ‘out’ meeting, of course, ending with tea and cake in the newly refurbished café.

Disappointingly, our June location visit was on the one wet day we had that month. The rain arrived at Borde Hill Gardens shortly after we did; however, in true ‘Blitz’ spirit we ‘carried on’ and managed to take some photos before huddling together under the parasols outside the café.







A couple of our hardy members stayed until the rain cleared and found different areas to photograph so we had a few surprises at our next meeting.

We don’t programme any meetings in August but enjoyed each other’s company at an ‘at-home’ cream tea – ‘rain stopped play’ again, but it didn’t stop us





making short work of the delicious scones and homemade raspberry jam along with plenty of tea and cake!

We're all set to enjoy a visit to Pier Road, Littlehampton, later this month and a return visit to Butterfly Gardens @ Middleton Common Farm in October.

New members are always welcome – an interest in photography and a device for taking digital images are all that are needed. We have all levels of expertise amongst our members, and everyone is happy to share tips and advice and general chat, on location and during our cuppa-and-biscuits break each month. Come and join us on the first and third Thursday each month. Email Margaret Minty - margaretminty@icloud.com – for any further information.

~ Margaret Minty

GYM AND SWIM

We meet every Wednesday from 12-1pm at Bersted Park Community Centre, Lakeland Avenue, PO21 5FF.

There is a wide range of equipment, including one or two treadmills, a cross trainer, two rowing machines and many others. The approximate price for a session is around £3.50, but this depends on how many members we have and we pay for the quarter in advance - usually around £35-£40 a quarter. The ticket includes a free swim at Arun Leisure Centre.

Anyone can come along for a free trial lesson and there is always a member of staff there to show you how to use the equipment.

Contact terasawilkins@hotmail.co.uk for more information.

~ Terasa Wilkins

WEDNESDAY CYCLING GROUP

We ride weekly and, since June 3rd, only one ride has been cancelled as no leader was available. During the very hot weather we did shorter rides selecting shade where possible and on August 19th. when rain started after our cancellation time we sent out a belated message giving folk the option to change their minds. Well, some did but when we arrived at Comet Corner in the rain we were met by 5 smiling faces electing to celebrate the much-needed rain with a curtailed ride to Serving Thyme.

There we enjoyed our usual sociable refreshment stop, recovered and cycled home in the dry





In the last few months, we have covered many miles of the surrounding countryside including Slindon, Ferring, Pagham, Hayling Island, The Mundhams, Kingston Gorse, Shoreham, Chichester Canal, Itchenor, Bosham and Tinwood.

Our longest rides are 40+ miles but there is the opportunity to travel partway by train if anyone wishes to. Other rides range between 15 and 25 miles generally, depending on your starting point and train use.



Our countryside is beautiful and we make every effort to choose quiet or traffic-free routes. On the way to Emsworth we pass through West Stoke, West Ashling, Funtington and Prinstead, all charming villages. Everyone really enjoys the exercise, company, fresh air and refreshments so if you are tempted by any of the above do give it a try.

You can find more information at https://bognorregis.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/wednesday-cycling-group/

~ Val and Chris Cooper