

Ashford, Wye & District

u3a learn,
laugh,
live



Programme
September 2026 to August 2027

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Front cover: Mosaic, by members of Boughton Aluph Art Group

1. None of the artists knew in advance that they were painting a mosaic. Each artist was given a small piece to copy, then all the pieces were put together to form a picture.

General Information

Ashford, Wye & District u3a offers a range of groups in the arts, sciences, and general interest. Many groups operate on a self-help basis with participants contributing their own knowledge. Meetings are often in members' homes. u3a membership is open to anyone no longer in full-time employment.

The membership fee for all members, which is currently set at £20, is due annually on 1st June to cover the period up to 31st May of the following year.

The Membership Secretary will communicate with all current members in mid-May each year reminding them that their membership fee is due, and informing them of the various methods of payment which are available to them.

If you have any queries regarding u3a membership (including payment of your subscription) please contact **Jean and Alan Cross, our Joint Membership Secretary (details on page 6)**. Information about membership is also given on our website: ashford-wye.u3asite.uk

Please note, you must be a fully subscribed current member before you can attend any group.

Our monthly Coffee Mornings, which include a talk by an external speaker, are open to all members. These are held at Repton Connect Community Centre, and there is no charge. Details of speakers, dates and times can be found on page 6.

Members will receive the quarterly national u3a magazine entitled 'u3a Matters' in the post. If you wish to opt out of receiving this magazine please contact **Jean and Alan Cross (details on page 6)**.

**For details and enrolment for a particular group
please contact the Group Leader in the first instance.**

In general, there is no charge for joining groups except those taking place in a public hall. There may be small charges to cover costs of materials (such as photocopying) and a contribution to refreshments, if provided, payable to the Group Leader.

Where groups meet in public venues a fee will be charged as a contribution towards the hire costs. To book a place with a group in a public hall please first check with the Group Leader for full details. Please pay by Bank Payment (BACS) wherever possible. Your Group Leader will give you the details. If members are unable to use internet banking to set up a BACS payment, they can pay by cheque. Please make your cheque payable to: u3a Ashford, Wye & District, and send it to **Jenny Jackson, our Treasurer**. If you have any queries about paying to join a group, please contact **Jenny Jackson (details below)**.

If you are advised a group is full, or have ideas for other groups, please contact the **Programme Manager and Groups Coordinator, Cheryl Sims (details on page 6)**, to register your interest. It may be possible to run an additional group or to put you in touch with other members with a similar interest, to start your own.

**A list of all Groups is available on our website:
www.ashford-wye.u3asite.uk**

Committee Members

Chair

Derek Himsley

Treasurer

Jenny Jackson

Business Secretary

David Wood

Programme Manager and Groups Coordinator

Cheryl Sims

Joint Membership Secretary

Jean and Alan Cross

Website and Beacon Administrator

Lloyd Papi

Speaker Secretary

Wendy Bennett

Coffee Mornings

Refreshment Team Coordinator

Astra West

Meet and Greet Team Coordinator

Julie Nauth-Misir

Our Coffee Mornings are held on the **fourth Wednesday of each month** (except December) at Repton Connect Community Centre, Repton Avenue, Ashford TN23 3RX. Refreshments are available from 10am, with the Chair announcing u3a notices at around 10.45am, followed by the Speaker's talk. There is no charge for the Coffee Morning, however we always have a collection for a charity.

We would be most grateful if you are able to arrive earlier to help with setting out the chairs and tables for the Coffee Morning, and stacking up the chairs afterwards.

Speakers

26th August 2026 - Guy Bartlett: History of the Red Arrows

This presentation explores the history of RAF aerobatics teams and includes a look at what goes into making the RAF Red Arrows the premier aerobatics team in the world.

23rd September 2026 - Kent Air Ambulance

Our speaker this month will share an inspiring and in-depth update on the lifesaving work carried out by the Kent Air Ambulance. This interactive presentation will be filled with powerful statistics, images, patient stories, videos, and more.

28th October 2026 - Jennifer Godfrey: Suffragettes of Kent

Stories of hope, determination, courage and sacrifice by those campaigning for women's suffrage in Kent.

25th November 2026 - Andy Thomas: Christmas - A Festive History

Andy uncovers the intriguing background to the festive season. From the ancient midwinter celebration of light to the marking of the birth of a messiah, mid-December has long been a time for rituals and rejoicing.

December - there is no Coffee Morning this month

27th January 2027 - Dean Caston: History of the Royal Variety Performance

This talk covers the story of the Royal Variety Performance dating back to 1912. A nostalgic look at some of the stars who have performed in the show, including Cilla Black, Arthur Askey, and Gracie Fields.

24th February 2027 - Chris Levett: Kent Hop Farms

Chris is passionate about hops and fruit, they have been in his life pretty much since he was born! The Levett family have been farming hops and fruit in Kent and Sussex for over 250 years. Kent used to be the Garden of England, but sadly no longer. Chris will share his memories of the past, and update us with current practices.

24th March 2027 - Kent Fire Brigade: Fire Safety

Kent Fire Brigade works hard to make the county safer. This talk will focus on useful advice and information to help you stay safe in your home and in the community.

28th April 2027 - Helen Simpson: Hearing Dogs for the Deaf

At Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, they understand that deafness and hearing loss affect so much more than just someone's ability to hear. Helen will share with us how these clever canines and personalised support, help people living with deafness and hearing loss to rebuild connection, companionship and confidence that transforms lives.

26th May 2027 - Tim Baker: The Acting Lark - A Comedy Career in Commercials, or what's left of it...

Tim is a man of many parts - literally! You may just have caught a glimpse of Tim on TV in one of his numerous roles. He describes himself as a tall, balding and wrinkly actor, author, comic novelist - and wildlife photographer. Tim encourages audience participation - even heckling - as he reveals the secrets of the acting trade during his humorous talk about the rise and potential fall of a commercial actor.

23rd June 2027 - Tony Harris: Jack the Ripper - Sherlock Holmes names him

Join Sherlock Holmes (aka Tony Harris), as he shares his investigation to find Jack the Ripper.

28th July 2027 - Phillip Oostenbrink: Walmer Castle and Gardens

Philip has been Head Gardener at Walmer Castle and Gardens since June 2020, and shares his experience of working at an English Heritage property and maintaining the gardens there.

25th August 2027 - Andy Robertshaw: The Making of War Horse

Andy's involvement in the making of War Horse was significant, as he served as a military history advisor on the film. He will share stories about his role, including working as an 'extra'.

Groups

7 O'CLOCK CLUB

Evening social group, both men and women welcome.

Group Leader: **Corina**

Venue: Conningbrook Hotel, Canterbury Road, Kennington, Ashford TN24 9QR

Day: Usually the first or second Wednesday of each month

Time: 7pm

ACTION FOR TOMORROW (A4T)

We are a group of people, concerned with the current climate crises afflicting the Planet. We aim through study and action to improve the long, and short term, prospects for the environment, and all living things, including humans.

Group Leaders: **Philip Sims** and **Richard Wadey**

Venue: Repton Connect Community Centre

Day: Third Thursday of each month. Time: 10am to 11.30am

Fee: £30 per year to cover hall hire

ART

We currently have two groups.

Boughton Aluph Group 1

This friendly group consists of absolute beginners up to quite advanced amateur artists who encourage and learn from each other. Occasionally we invite professional artists to give a demonstration in his/her preferred medium. Outings are arranged to art galleries in the South East and London. We have been lunching in local pubs and restaurants after our meetings.

Group Leader: **Ursula Peters**

Venue: Iron Room, Boughton Aluph

Day: Every Thursday. Time: 9am to 12 noon

Fee: Approx £17 for 17 weeks [depending on cost of hall]

Wye Group 3

An untutored art group, run in the same vein as Group 1.

Group Leader: **Jane Hall**

Venue: The Reece Pavilion, Wye Village Hall

Day: Every Monday. Time: 9.15am to 12 noon

Fee: Approx £35 per 3 monthly term

BADMINTON

Group Leader: **Lloyd Papi**

Venue: Challock Village Hall, Blind Lane, Challock TN23 5AU

Day: First and third Fridays of each month

Time: 9.30am to 11.30am

Fee: Approx £11 per term of 4 sessions

BALLET

New group starting in September 2026, taught by a qualified instructor from Dance Visions. Suitable for Beginners / Level 1 students.

Group Leader: **Alison Wood**

Venue: Stardust Studios, 223 Quantock Drive, Ashford TN24 8QH

Day: Every Tuesday, during term time

Time: 9.30am to 10.30am

Fee: £10 per lesson, payable in advance per block of 4 weeks

BOOK GROUPS

We currently have four groups.

Wye Group 1

Between us we select for discussion a wide variety of books: classics, modern novels, biography, travel, etc.

Group Leader: **Polly Mellor**

Venue: Usually at Polly's home in Wye

Day: Last Thursday of each month, except December

Time: 2.30pm to 4pm

Wye Group 2

We focus on novels, selecting books suggested by members of the group, aiming to widen our experience by choosing authors we have not discussed previously. We find that meeting around a table leads to lively discussions involving all members.

Group Leader: **Jonathan Timms**

Venue: The Reece Pavilion, Wye Village Hall

Day: First Thursday of each month, except August

Time: 1.30pm to 3pm

Fee: Approx £20 per year to cover hall hire

Willesborough Group 3

Group Leader: **Astra West**

Venue: Usually at Astra's home in Willesborough

Day: First Monday of each month. Time: 2pm

Ashford Group 4 - Repton Park

We select a wide range of books from a list put together by the group. There are usually lively and enjoyable discussions on our book choices. We aim to find out more about the authors, and also bring suggestions about other books the group might like to read individually.

Leader: **Wendy Withycombe**

Venue: Repton Connect Community Centre

Day: Second Monday of each month. Time: 1.30pm to 3pm

Fee: Approx £12 for six sessions [depending on cost of hall]

BRIDGE

The aim of this group is to develop and improve the skills of members who play Bridge. New members welcome.

Group Leader: **David Harper**

Venue: The Reece Pavilion, Wye Village Hall

Day: Every Monday from 21st September to 14th December

Time: 2pm to 4pm

Fee: Approx £20 [depending on number in group]

CARD CRAFTING

Learn how to make your own greetings cards and scrap-booking. Guidance and tuition are given if required. There is space in the afternoon group for more experienced crafters, and also in the morning beginners group.

Group Leader: **Maureen Andrews**

Venue: Maureen's home in Singleton

Day: First Thursday of each month except August and Dec

Time: Morning [please enquire] and Afternoon 1.30pm to 4.30pm

Fee: £8 per session - all materials provided

CLASSICAL MUSIC APPRECIATION

We are a small group of classical music lovers who meet about once a month, normally in members' homes. The host provides the programme (on CD, DVD or TV), and light refreshments. The music is normally followed by a lively discussion. We also attend live concerts at the Marlowe theatre, and opera screenings at the cinemas in Ashford.

Group Leader: **David Wood**

Venue: Group members' homes

Day: Usually the first Tuesday of each month. Time: 2.30pm

COFFEE AND CHAT

Mixed social group, both men and women welcome.

Group Leader: **Corina.**

Venue: Conningbrook Hotel, Canterbury Road, Kennington, Ashford TN24 9QR

Day: Usually the first or second Wednesday of each month.

Time: 2pm

CROSS STITCH

An introduction to cross stitch work. All materials provided.
New members are welcome.

Group Leader: **Bronwen Harper**

Venue: Bronwen's home in Kennington

Day: Fortnightly on Mondays [except July and August]

Time: 2.30pm to 4.30pm

CURRENT AFFAIRS

We have four groups. Members meet to discuss and debate local, national and international topics. Someone may propose a subject of news of specific interest, of which we collectively know little of the background or politics. This gives everyone the chance to do some research, which can create a lively discussion at the following meeting. We try to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute and, in the best tradition of u3a, we strive to make our gatherings interesting, stimulating, thought provoking and fun.

Kennington Group 1

Group Leader: **Sue Long**

Venue: Sue's home in Kennington

Day: Second Wednesday of each month. Time: 2pm

Kennington Group 2

Group Leader: **Jan Watson**

Venue: Jan's home in Boughton Aluph

Day: Third Wednesday of each month. Time: 10am

Ashford Group 4

Group Leader: **Maureen Hammond**

Venue: Maureen's home in Ashford

Day: Second Wednesday of each month. Time: 11am to 1pm

Ashford Group 5

Group Leader: **Maureen Hammond**

Venue: Maureen's home in Ashford

Day: First Wednesday of each month. Time: 10am to 12 noon

DARTS AND BOARD GAMES

All are welcome to play darts, chess and other board games.

Group Leaders: **Tina Holden** and **Rita Major**

Venue: The Beaver Inn, Beaver Road, Ashford TN23 7SP

Day: Fortnightly on Mondays. Time: 2pm to 4pm

DEBATING HEALTH

Enlightening and entertaining meetings in a friendly environment, led by a newly qualified mature junior doctor. The group has fun analysing, discussing, and debating various relevant physical and mental health issues and problems, as well as their prevention and lifestyle improvement. Group members are encouraged to offer topics for debate, research them beforehand and discuss them at the meetings.

Group Leader: **Lena Lowings**

Venue: Lena's home in Great Chart

Day: Fortnightly on Mondays. Time: 10:30am to 12 noon

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The group discusses and explores aspects of photography, particularly digital. The aim is to exchange experiences, ideas and views on equipment and techniques. Use is made of resources from u3a national office and the internet, sample photographs are discussed and outings are made for practical sessions. The group is open to members at any level.

Group Leader: **David Mann**

Venue: David's home in Kennington

Day: Third Monday of each month. Time: 10.30am to 12 noon

FINANCE CAN BE FUN

Topics for this group can be chosen by group members. How about crypto currencies, causes of boom and bust, quantitative easing, inflation, government financing - to name but a few!

Group Leader: **Bob Bradley**

Venue: Group members' homes

Day: Third Friday of each month. Time: 10.30am

FRENCH INTERMEDIATE CONVERSATION

Meetings start with half the group speaking, in turn, in French for 3-5 minutes, on a prepared topic of interest. This sparks some lively conversation. New vocabulary is noted and learnt, and we may also study an aspect of French grammar. We aim to speak only in French during the meetings.

Leader: **Beverley Jarvis**

Venue: Beverley's home in Chilmington Green

Day: Fortnightly on Mondays. Time: 10am to 11.30am

GERMAN INTERMEDIATE CONVERSATION

The aim of this group is for those with intermediate knowledge of German to gain confidence in conversing.

Group Leader: **Ursula Peters**

Venue: Ursula's home in Ashford

Day: Every Monday. Time: 9.30am to 10.30am

IT DROP-IN SESSIONS

No booking needed - just turn up with your queries.

Helen, who runs the sessions, explains what she is offering:

"Although I've worked with computers for nearly 50 years, I'm not an IT professional, but I'm officially a 'Digital Champion' (what a title!!). I'm willing to look at any IT issue related to using smartphones, tablets (including e-readers such as Kindles) or laptop computers. It doesn't matter how basic an issue is, but equally I like a challenge so I'm willing to tackle more techie queries."

With **Helen Ougham**

Venue: Repton Connect Community Centre

Day: Second Friday of each month. Time: 1pm to 3pm

ITALIAN CONVERSATION

Practise your spoken Italian with u3a members living in Chivasso, near Turin.

Group Leader: **Marvi Audenino**

Day: Fortnightly meetings, for 2 hours, via WhatsApp

KNIT AND NATTER

A new group, knitting items for charities, such as Knit for Peace.

Group Leader: **Liz Gladstone**

Venue : Liz's home in Ashford

Day: Fortnightly on Thursdays. Time: 2.30pm

LUNCH CLUB

This is a group which enjoys meeting up for lunch and exploring different venues around the local area. New members welcome.

Group Leaders: **Vivien Southern and Christine Pitt**

Venue: Various

Day: Fourth Thursday of each month. Time: 12 noon

MAH-JONG

Mah-jong is a game of skill, strategy and calculation that involves a degree of chance. New members are welcome.

Group Leaders: **Judy O'Hara and Joan Samuels**

Venue: Joan's home in Kennington

Day: Every Thursday, except the first Thursday of each month

Time: 2pm to 4pm

MAINLY MEN

This is a group which visits places others do not reach. Despite the name, ladies are welcome but generally the visits are male orientated, eg Brooklands Motor and Air Museum.

Group Leader: **Andy Sheerman-Chase**

Venue: Various, chosen by the group

Day: We operate on an ad hoc basis. No fixed centres or halls

Fee: No fees, just cost implication and travelling costs

MINDFULNESS

A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world. Our aim is to develop the ability to have a quiet, clear and curious mind, living in the moment, staying focused and grounded. We meet via zoom at 2pm on the first Tuesday of each month and are happy to welcome new members.

Group Leader: **Brenda Dunn**

MODERN JIVE

Learn to dance beginner's modern jive - a mix of various styles, but much slower than traditional rock and roll style jive; less energetic with no fancy footwork and very easy to learn. Fun, informal, sociable, good music, friendly people and lots of laughs. No need to bring a partner - just bring your water, sense of humour and wear shoes that don't grip the floor.

Group Leader: **Pam Cairns**

Venue: Ashford Community Church, 54 Francis Road, Ashford TN23 7UR

Day: Wednesdays, in blocks of 6 weeks, then a break of 2 weeks. September block starts on 2nd September

Time: 2pm to 4pm

Fee: Between £12 - £18 per block of 6 weeks

NATURE WALKS

This is a seasonal group. The nature walks comprise a series of rambles looking at birds, butterflies (weather permitting), plants and trees. The venues in the Ashford area are emailed to group members a week in advance. Numbers are limited to ten, and no dogs please. Heather Silk is an experienced walk leader, having led walks for other organisations, including Kent Wildlife Trust and the RSPB.

Group Leader: **Heather Silk**

Day: Second Thursday of each month, March to October inclusive. Time: 10am to 12 noon

PLANTS AND GARDENS

The springboard for these informal meetings is the Royal Horticultural Society Plant Finder. From it plants are selected to consider, in their original countries, their diversity and the insects and birds which pollinate them.

Group Leader: **Geoff Chapman**

Venue: Geoff's home in Wye, with visits to other gardens

Day: First Thursday of each month, except August

Time: 10.30am

PLAY READING

The group reads a variety of plays - full length or short one-act ones - comedy, drama, and even self-penned plays. This extremely friendly group would really like to welcome some more gentlemen - no need to be a budding Laurence Olivier just as long as you can read!

Group Leaders: **Maureen and Barry Andrews**

Venue: Ashford Community Church Hall, Francis Rd, Ashford

Day: Last Monday of each month [except August and Dec]

Time: 2pm to 4pm

Fee: Approx £16 per 5 months [depending on cost of hall]

PLAYING CARDS FOR FUN

There are two groups, enjoying the sort of games played at family gatherings, mainly Rummy and Quick-fire Uno. There are no complicated rules and partners are not required. Members have fun and the group provides a stress-free way of keeping the brain active.

Group 1

Group Leader: **Kathy Hodgson**

Venue: Group members' homes

Day: Second Wednesday of each month. Time: 2pm to 4pm

Group 2

Group Leader: **Kathy Hodgson**

Venue: Kathy's home in Willesborough

Day: Third Thursday of each month. Time: 2pm to 4pm

POETRY READING

If you enjoy reading poetry, wish to share your favourites and extend your knowledge, this group aims to fulfil these wishes.

Group Leader: **Patricia Mann**

Venue: Patricia's home in Kennington

Day: Third Wednesday of each month. Time: 2pm to 4pm

RUMMIKUB FOR FUN

We currently have two groups. Rummikub is a version of Rummy, played with tiles and simpler rules, with a twist. The groups also play Rummikub Word.

Group 1

Group Leader: **Kathy Hodgson**

Venue: Kathy's home in Willesborough

Day: First Thursday of each month. Time: 2pm to 4pm

Group 2

Group Leader: **Kathy Hodgson**

Venue: Usually Joan Samuels' home in Kennington

Day: Fourth Monday of each month. Time: 2pm to 4pm

SCRABBLE

This popular group has been running since the establishment of our local u3a.

Group Leader: **Sheila Chapman**

Venue: Sheila's home in Wye

Day: Every Monday. Time: 10.30am

SHAKESPEARE (As You Might Like Him)

The world's greatest playwright was a poet and so brought poetry into a very public arena and made it work theatrically. What we have is a jewel with many facets and some appeal to us more than others. If school Shakespeare was a turn-off for you or, even if it were not, come along and be turned on.

Group Leader: **Geoff Chapman**

Venue: Geoff's home in Wye

Day: Last Wednesday of each month [except August]

Time: 10.30am to 12 noon

SINGING FOR PLEASURE CHOIR

All those who enjoy singing in a friendly environment are welcome to join this three-part choir. The repertoire is wide and varied and music is supplied for those who read it, or words for those who prefer not to. Whatever your level of experience you will discover the uplifting power of group singing, challenge and stretch your vocal skills, enjoy good company and leave with a smile on your face.

Group Leader: **Wendy Heaton**

Venue: Ashford Community Church, Francis Road, Ashford

Day: Every Friday 2pm to 3.30pm, with a short break at Christmas and Easter, and a longer one in the summer

Fee: Approx £2 per session, to cover hall hire, accompanist and music, payable termly

Next rehearsal will be 11th September.

TABLE TENNIS

We are a friendly group of players of all abilities, and we always have time for a natter when a rest is required.

Group Leader: **Graham Deal**

Venue: Repton Connect Community Centre

Day: Every Tuesday. Time: 9.30am to 11.30am

Fee: Approx £20 per two months

TEN PIN BOWLING

This newly formed group offers a choice of 3 different days to practise your bowling skills. The first meeting after the August break will be on Thursday 3rd September at 5.50pm. However, from October the evening meeting will be on the first Tuesday of each month, see below for details.

Group Leader: **Derek Himsley**

Venue: Hollywood Bowl, Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP

Days and times: First Tuesday of each month at 5.50pm; second Thursday of each month at 11am; third Wednesday of each month at 11am. [Except August]

Fee: Normally just over £7 for two games, but cost does vary

TRIPS

We no longer organise our own trips, but members can book short breaks and day trips through **Viv Kenny's** company, 'Real Socialising'. Details can be found on her website: realsocialising.co.uk.

It is suggested you also subscribe to receive newsletter updates on the Real Socialising website as trips can sometimes be fully booked in a short space of time. Visit www.realsocialising.co.uk.

WALKING GROUPS

There are currently two groups which meet once a month for a 3-5 mile walk through the beautiful Kentish countryside. Walks are led by members of the group. They sometimes include rough terrain, moderate inclines and stiles, and are often muddy, so suitable clothing is advised. Contact the group leaders for full details.

Wednesday Group

Group Leaders: **Martin and Anne Troman**

Venue: Various

Day: First Wednesday of each month. Time: 10am

Thursday Group

Group Leader: **Francie Last**

Venue: Various

Day: Third Thursday of each month. Time: 10am

WALKING PADEL

Group Leader: **Jacqui Wapshott**

Venue: Square One Padel Centre, Leacon Road, Ashford
TN23 4TU

Day: Every Monday. Time: 11.30am to 12.30pm

Fee: £8 per session, payable in advance per block of 4 weeks

WALKING TENNIS

Walking tennis is aimed at complete beginners, tennis players who are less mobile, people returning from injury or operation, and older people. It's played in a doubles format with no running allowed.

Group Leader: **Jacqui Wapshott**

Venue: Wye Tennis Club, Bridge Street, Wye TN25 5EA. The courts are located at Wye playing fields, by the village hall

Day: Every Wednesday. Time: 2pm to 3pm

Fee: Approx £2.50 per session

WEEKENDERS

Planned around an informal Sunday lunch, this group is aimed at people who may live alone and find Sundays lonely. Venues are suggested by group members and menus vary from traditional Sunday roasts to curries, fish and chips and other pub meals. Vegetarians and those with dietary needs are catered for wherever possible. New members are welcome.

Group Leader: **Malcolm Finch**

Venue: Various

Day: Sunday [Monthly dates and times agreed by the group]

YOGA FIT

This is an informal and relaxed class starting with a warm up, followed by aerobic moves before gradually slowing down to stretches. Then it's mats out and different yoga exercises and postures with a few minutes' relaxation to finish.

Group Leader: **Kathy Roberts**

Venue: Iron Room, Boughton Aluph

Day: Every Tuesday. Time: 10.45am

Fee: Approx £22 for 10 sessions

**A list of all Groups is available on our website:
www.ashford-wye.u3asite.uk**

This Programme is only up to date at the time of printing.

Updates will appear in periodic emails,
and on the website.

Please retain this Programme for general information
and contact details.