

Memories

Well, we have certainly come a long way since 1994, when sixty people decided to set up the Midhurst branch of the u3a. As we celebrate this milestone in our existence we asked our members for their memories about our organisation, good, bad and amusing! More importantly what new memories do you want to make? It is YOUR u3a and the direction we take in the next few years should be determined by YOU - so let us know. Unlike 1994 when there were 60 members, today we have about 380 so communication is vital – make your voice heard.



One member explained that she was sitting waiting for the Tuesday general meeting to begin when a visitor sat beside her, and they got chatting. The main topic was the u3a and the visitor asked if we had good speakers at the general meetings. Our member said that indeed we did and that she understood that the committee 'marked' each speaker's performance, out of ten, after the event. Imagine her surprise as the meeting started and the chairman introduced the speaker for the day when the lady

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beside her stood up and walked to the front! At the end of the meeting the speaker approached our member and said, "I hope I get a ten". She was assured that she would and anyone who heard Dame Stephanie Shirley that day will probably concur!

Things don't always go the way we would like. One member recalls her first general meeting. She was new to the area and like many of you saw the u3a as a way of getting to know people. It was disappointing for her to pass the entire two hours without anyone speaking to her. The next month she tried again but frustratingly the same thing happened. She resolved that if it were to happen a third time she simply wouldn't bother to come back! Luckily things changed, she was made to feel welcome



and has been a member for many years, going on to lead a group and contribute in many ways to our organisation. These days we have 'welcomers' at each Tuesday meeting to ensure we don't lose valuable members through neglect!

Having joined u3a, why do we stay? To enjoy congenial company, learn new things, create new memories.



Dog Walking Group October 24

One dog walker recalls a beautiful day when the group were out for a walk in an idyllic setting when they happened upon a peaceful sunlit pond. At least peaceful until all of the dogs present decided en masse that it was time for a swim and all plunged headlong into the pond only to emerge wet and covered in sand.

At times quick thinking is required! The leader of the Petworth coffee morning was once expecting the usual seven to eight members when twenty-two people turned up, most of whom didn't know each other. Fearing a couple of hours of stilted silence she rapidly started a game of 'My name is Mary and I'm a pig-poo shoveller' and they were all soon laughing raucously leaving the café as friends.



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Even the u3a can have things go wrong! One Group Leader led a trip to the National Gallery in London. As you may be aware coaches are NOT allowed to park in Trafalgar Square, so he was very insistent that everyone on the coach memorise exactly where they were to be picked up and at what time. To his horror come pick-up time he was a member short! The driver couldn't wait so the rest of the group

started their return journey whilst the leader returned to the gallery to find his lost sheep. As you will know the gallery is enormous and on different floors so after another anxious search the leader reluctantly concluded he would have to call it a day and catch a train

home. There he discovered that the 'lost' member had forgotten the pick-up point and also returned home by train. Thank goodness, these days, for mobile phones!

As the last leaves fall from the trees, presaging the end of the year, so our 30th anniversary year is also coming to a close. We have had fun celebrating our achievements over these years and now need to look forward to the future. Where do YOU want our u3a to go over the NEXT five years? As you know we have a large number of interest groups but are always looking for ways to expand our repertoire. Please contact us with ideas and suggestions no matter how strange they may seem. Remember it is OUR u3a and only we can keep driving it forward.'



Our exhibition in the Museum was a great success and over 500 people visited it. Thanks to all who participated in its preparation. As the people who visit the museum are often visitors from other places, we may have helped boost the membership in other u3as rather than our own, but according to the Nightingales, who run the Museum, a lot of people expressed an interest in just who we are and how our organisation actually works.

Calligraphy Group poster

Our own membership was boosted in September at the Open Day, in the old Library where we signed up fifteen new members and we heartily welcome them and are looking forward to getting to know them. Also, on this day we met Pam Bielby, one of the people who first had the idea of starting a u3a in Midhurst in 1994 and she was delighted to see just what we have grown into.



Something new in November were the two sets of short courses on Watercolour Painting for those who have always wanted to have a go but never dared to. Veronica will guide you through the initial steps and the first two courses were completely full, but she is taking names for another. The next course is on Friday 10th and Saturday 11th January in the afternoons at the Methodist Hall. Further details are available on the website.

https://midhurst.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/watercolour-painting-begin-at-the-beginning-and-beyond/

Please note that the course is an active one, involving standing and moving around.

This is a departure from our more usual monthly or fortnightly sessions, but it is always a good idea to keep our options open and consider new ways of learning from each other, or indeed just exploring a subject together.

At the end of October, we enjoyed Ian's 30 Year Quiz and Fish and Chip Supper (other options were available!). Speaking to a member of the winning team she said that her gang

were particularly good at remembering dates and this served them very well. Our thanks to Ian for his efforts in arranging this event to keep our brains spinning as darker evenings set in.

There is no monthly meeting in December as the speaker we had originally booked was offered a cruise and decided that a holiday on a cruise ship was more attractive than an afternoon in the Methodist Hall in Midhurst – I can't imagine why?!



Christmas lunch at the Unicorn December 2023

However, we are having our usual Christmas Lunch on the 16th December in the Unicorn at Heyshott but as usual the tickets have sold fast.

We will be looking forward to the next talk 'Beware Carrots from Northumberland – Lady Bette, last of the Percys' by Bob France on the 21st January.

At 3, Bette inherits the immense wealth of the Percy Dynasty, including Petworth, Syon and Alwick. By 15, she is on her third husband ... Her vast wealth transforms Petworth into a grand ducal palace.



Until then have a Merry Christmas and let's look forward to what 2025 brings us.

if you'd like to celebrate New Year's Day with members of our Coffee Morning group you'll be assured of a warm welcome. Coskuns, North Street, Midhurst, 10:30am — 12:00noon.

Keep up to date with what is happening in Midhurst u3a by checking the new web site at <https://midhurst.u3asite.uk/>