

Tenterden u3a AGM 21 May 2026

Chair's Report

The u3a is a tremendous organisation. It has an extensive national network and the Tenterden branch now has 420 members and rising. The word 'University' in its name reflects the fact that it was founded on the principle of education and the '3a' or 'third age' part refers to its focus on retired people.

I have greatly enjoyed being your Chair for the last year. We have had many interesting lectures at the Monthly Meetings. Social events including the Christmas Lunch and the Group Leaders Tea in the summer have been well supported. Study Mornings over the last two years have included "Rewilding" in 2024 and 'Modern Medicine' in 2026. The feedback from each has been very positive.

Rennie Halstead stood down after a successful term as Chair. Tom Evans left an excellent communication system in place and Rennie took over as Communications Officer. He has taken on the production of Update, publicity for the Study Morning and revision of the website. Update issues over the year have given an excellent summary of immediate past and forthcoming events.

The website has been updated, with all future Monthly Meetings including the title of the talk, clearly listed. Past events have been transferred to an archive section, still available for viewing.

The Monthly Meetings were very well received. Their general high quality is largely due to the commissioning by John Russell and June Thomason with the extra contribution of Clare Nursey who joined John and June during the year. The talks covered a huge range of topics from the National Memorial Arboretum, teddy bears, a retrospect on the Queen, paranormal mysteries and cover-ups to the music of Weston and Lee presented and sung by Tenterden u3a member Terry King.

The Christmas Lunch at the Pig and Sty was a sell-out. Its success was largely due to Anna Toombs and Jenny Stevens who put an enormous amount of effort in its organisation. An unexpected outcome of the lunch was the offer by Chris Edwards, Head of Operations of Elite Pubs of a 10% discount card to any member of Tenterden u3a on food and drink at any of their outlets.

The Study Morning on Modern Medicine was a success. It included lectures on the past, present and future of medicine given by Professors John Nicholls and Paris Tekkis and Sir Neil Mortensen, Past President of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. These were followed by a discussion which included Dr Neil Pillai of Ivy Court Surgery.

Besides the Monthly Meetings, our most important activity occurs in the Groups. They are the core of the organisation. There are over forty groups, each

representing a particular interest whether a foreign language, science and technology, the arts or various forms of communal social activity. The Group Leaders do a crucial job and Sally White, the committee member responsible for their coordination, offers an extraordinary degree of support and encouragement. The Groups Leaders Tea in August at Smallhythe Place was a delightful occasion, made even more so by the sunshine.

One of the most pleasant and stimulating aspects of being chair is to have the opportunity to work with such an excellent committee. Every one of its members is dedicated to the organisation and without such loyalty we would not be in business. We cannot function, however, without new people coming forward to join the committee when there is a vacancy. I am therefore delighted to report that during the year June Thomason joined the Committee and John Coe, a new arrival to Tenterden, attended a recent committee meeting as an observer. John Russell, our efficient Secretary followed Anna Toombs who, to everybody's delight, wished to stay on the Committee.

Two committee members are standing down. These include the Treasurer, Rosalind Johnson who has managed the finances with great efficiency over more than seven years in office. Rennie Halstead has also decided to leave to give him more time for other things. He has agreed, however, to continue as Communications Officer for the time being. We are most grateful to Rosalind and Rennie for their great contributions.

I look forward to the Annual General Meeting on 21 May.

With best wishes to all members,

John Nicholls

Chair

April 2026

