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laugh,  
live

**Wadhurst & District**

**NEWS**

**April 2025**

## Wadhurst & District u3a

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Committee Member	<i>Rosemary Johnson</i>

To contact a member of the Committee, please telephone **01580 200647** or email using the links in the **'Contacting Us'** page on our website:

**[www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk](http://www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk)**

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### **TO JOIN Wadhurst & District u3a**

Download a membership application form and a Gift Aid form from the **'How to Join'** page on our website.

You can either

print, complete the forms and return them with a cheque for the annual fee of £25 to our membership secretary by post,

or

fill in the forms electronically, email them to our membership secretary, and pay the annual fee of £25 online to Wadhurst & District u3a.

Further details are given on the application form. Ring Sheila Jemmett at **01580 200647** if you have any questions.

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### **ONLINE PAYMENTS TO Wadhurst & District u3a**

Lloyds Bank, sort code: 30-98-77, account number: 48499968,  
In name of: *Wadhurst u3a*

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**NEWS Magazine Editor:** Philip Cheung

COPY DEADLINE for the August 2025 issue: 20th July 2025. Please email copy to 'NEWS Editor' using the **'Contacting Us'** page on our website.

## *From the Editor*

If this issue arrives a little later than usual, I have a very good excuse. Ken Turner died at the beginning of March and I knew that I would discover much about his life at his funeral. I decided that this issue can wait, in order that we can write a fitting tribute to our much loved second chairman.

The funeral took place on 4th April. There were many of us there at Hastings Crematorium, and afterwards at Netherfield Hill Farm, where Claire, Ken and Jean's daughter, lives. You will be pleased to know that Jean is in very good health and in fine spirits. I hope the memories of Ken, found at the end of this magazine, resonate with yours.

*Philip Cheung*

## *Selected Group News*

*Wadhurst & District u3a has some 35 interest groups to offer. Here are news items from some of them. Do not hesitate to contact the convenor if you are interested in an interest group. Contact information can be found on the Groups Table on pages 11-12. You can also email convenors using the links bearing their names on the group pages in Wadhurst & District u3a's website:*

[www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk](http://www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk)

### **ART IN TICEHURST**

*Kris Armstrong*

Ticehurst art class meet on the last Friday of the month at 2pm. Generally we use watercolour and Tim Burnham is our tutor. During the better weather we plan to paint *en plein air*. New members welcome.

The work of some of our members is displayed on the two sides of the back cover.

To contact Kris Armstrong, please use the information on the Groups Table.

## *New Group*

### **BALLROOM & LATIN AMERICAN DANCING**

This is a proposed new group. Enquiries to Jan Whiteley (Contact Group Coordinator on website.)

Harley Nelson and Thomas Purdy, professional dancers, are keen to share their expertise and passion about good dancing and quality teaching. They focus on helping you dance independently, giving you confidence to attend social events.

Join them for

- 1 hour of Ballroom Dancing at £5 pp, or
- 1 hour of Latin American Dancing at £5 pp, or
- both at £10 pp.

During these sessions, you will learn:

**5 Ballroom Dances:** *Waltz, Foxtrot, Quickstep, Tango and Viennese Waltz.*

**5 Latin Dances:** *Cha-Cha-Cha, Rumba, Samba, Paso Doble, and Jive.*

**BRING A FRIEND, COME INDIVIDUALLY, OR WITH A PARTNER.**

Everyone is Welcome and All Abilities!!! A free taster session to gauge interest is available.

**VENUE:** either Wadhurst Commemoration Hall or Ticehurst Village Hall

## **FRENCH CONVERSATION**

*Philip Cheung*

The aim of the group is to have fun speaking French, all the while learning to speak more fluently. At our meetings, we usually start off a conversation with a small piece of homework. For example, in May, we shall each think of a word in English and explain how it is translated into French. Some words, with multiple meanings in English (such as 'yet') will be translated into several different French words!

You need not be fluent to join the group. However, as we learn from each other, fluent speakers are most welcome.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month. Members are notified each month about where we meet (at a member's house). The group is currently full but the waiting list is now down to zero. Please contact me using the information on the Interest Groups Table.

## **GARDENING**

*Sheila Jemmett*

On a bitterly cold but gloriously sunny day in mid-February a group of intrepid gardeners ventured to The Old Rectory in Fawkham (near Brand's Hatch) to wander among the snowdrops at the invitation of Mr & Mrs Proudfoot.

After a warming hot drink, with cake, we meandered around the large garden, admiring the swathes of snowdrops that have naturalised over many years and exclaiming over the (sometimes expensive) named varieties. These were planted in separate groups and all meticulously labelled. Snowdrops are notoriously promiscuous and readily cross-pollinate so must be kept apart to preserve the 'bloodlines'. Other plants of interest included hellebores and winter aconites, bringing a touch of colour. Mr Proudfoot is also the owner of a collection of (twenty-one) garden rollers, many of which were displayed around the garden! All-in-all a lovely visit to an interesting garden.

Visits to Nettlestead Place and Hole Park are being planned.

## *New Group*

### **HOME GARDENS**

*Rosemary Johnson, Sue Bridges*

During the Spring and Summer months we are going to visit each others gardens, both small and large! This is a social occasion with coffee, tea & cake provided!

We also hope to exchange seeds, seedlings, cuttings and plants. It is planned to visit two gardens a month and the host will decide the day and time.

At the moment we have room for two more gardens, with either couples counted as one garden or individuals. If interested please contact either one of the above using the information in the Groups Table.

### **PLAY READING**

*Philip Cheung*

Our plays for April to September are listed below.

<b>Cause Celebre</b>	Terence Rattigan
<b>Death and the Maiden</b>	Georgina Reid
<b>Loot</b>	Joe Orton
<b>Once A Catholic</b>	Mary O'Malley
<b>The Severed Head</b>	Iris Murdoch & J.B.Priestley
<b>84 Charing Cross Road</b>	James Roose-Evans /Helen Hanff

Except for *Death and the Maiden* by Georgina Reid, the plays above are West End hits, and two of them, *The Severed Head* and *84 Charing Cross Road*, are based on best-selling novels. Although Georgina Reid, has published at least 14 plays between 1965 and 1985, and several can be borrowed from Kent County Library, I can

find no other information on her. Googling will yield an Australian Georgina Reid, writer and editor, who was however only born in 1980. We have a mystery playwright, if not a mystery play!

Our afternoon readings are very informal, with tea at the 'interval'. No one sees the play until the day of the reading. There is no casting. We take turns to read the next character to come on stage, dropping out when the character exits, to go to the end of the queue for the next character to come on stage. In this way each of us reads several parts, big or small, at random. When someone reads a part exceptionally well, we ask him/her to keep the part for the afternoon. We have different experiences and abilities, but we all enjoy the plays, and improve our reading of them with time.

Members host the readings at their homes, space permitting. Usually the host sends out a list of dates and asks members to say which dates are convenient. A date is then chosen that suits a majority of members. The dates for the readings are decided a few weeks in advance. They usually occur in the second half of the month.

If the above sounds fun to you, join us! To do this, simply email me using the information on our website: [www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk](http://www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk). I'll then put you on my mailing list and you will receive the invitations to play reading every month.

## *New Group*

### **ROCK & POP .... *Those were the days!***

*Tim Ball*

*What song is important to you?*

*How did social history influence it and*

*how did it influence other music?*

Music holds the key to many of our memories so join us to share the music that has accompanied your life: on the radio, on the TV, at the cinema or records that you bought. Knowledge of music isn't needed; just sit back and enjoy listening to the music accompanied by projected visuals of the artists and concurrent events.

Afterwards we can discuss the music, share interesting facts or memories of seeing the artists live.

At each meeting we will listen to one member's choice of 3 songs accompanied by interesting snippets of information such as information about the performer, the song, the genre etc. Our listening can range across genres such as jazz, pop, folk and rock, and will span from the 1950's up to probably 2000. We will use Spotify, playing through a bluetooth speaker.

Venue: The Hub  
Time: 2nd Wednesday of the month  
Cost: £10 per hour for the hire of The Hub,  
shared amongst participants.

Please contact Tim to learn more about this new group, using the information on the Groups Table.

## **POETRY READING & POETRY WRITING**

Sadly, Val Smith can no longer run these groups, so I was wondering if any of her group members or any other u3a members would be interested in running one or both of these long standing groups. If interested please contact Jan Whiteley using the *Contacting Us* page on our website.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

*Philip Cheung*

From last September to February 2025, we had a series of meetings looking into aspects of *The transition to carbon-zero*. We looked at technologies such as lithium ion batteries and nuclear fission reactors; the economics of deploying photovoltaic cells and batteries in rural Uganda, and importing solar and wind energy by subsea cables from Morocco to the UK; the practicalities of insulating our homes and heating them with heat pumps. The series has now come to a close.

From April, we start a new series, inspired by Ed Conway's book *Material World* where the author looks at the many uses of six basic

materials: sand, salt, iron, copper, oil (petroleum) and lithium. We read the book and use it as a springboard to explore at greater depth subjects that are of interest to us, or where some of our members have first-hand knowledge. Sand, from whence glass and concrete come, has inspired a talk on *Fibre optics in Telecommunications*, and a joint presentation on *Aspects of Concrete* by Keith Midwinter, structural engineer and Tim Ball, architect, from our own ranks. Who knows what the other five materials will bring?

If you are interested in our meetings please send me an email using the information on our website: [www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk](http://www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk). I'll reply to confirm the details of our next meeting. A small contribution is required towards the hire of the venue and a cup tea with biscuits.

## TEN PIN BOWLING

*Lynda Emberson*

Our numbers are increasing as we share this with Hawkhurst u3a. We would like to welcome Ian who joined us at the end of February and belongs to Wadhurst u3a.



We meet at Hollywood Bowls, Tunbridge Wells, on the last Friday of the month (except school holidays) at 2.00pm for a 2.30pm start. Depending on numbers I decide how many lanes we need to open

so it is important that I am notified beforehand. The cost is £7.70 for two games, lasting a total of 2 – 2 ½ hrs. You pay at the desk on the day.

If you have difficulties with transport this can be arranged in advance.

It is good exercise and helps mobility. If however this is a problem there is special apparatus to help you push the ball instead of lifting. The balls are also different weights. Should you need the bars up this can be arranged. **THE ONLY COMPETITION INVOLVED IS PERSONAL BEST!**

Do hope you will come and join us. To contact me please use the information in the Groups Table (pp 11-12).

## WALKING

*Sarah Parry*



*A brief pause for humans and dogs alike*

We've continued with our monthly walks (although January's did have to be abandoned because of the weather) and covered a variety of routes, some led by me and some by other members of the group who choose their own. During the year we've included

walks across country, from National Trust properties (cafes and loos available!) and round Tunbridge Wells for our traditional December walk, finishing in The Pantiles for coffee and cake.

We meet on the second Thursday of the month, setting off at 10am from wherever the walk starts, and aim to be back in about 2 hours. The combination of exercise and the sociability of a group walk is what we all enjoy and we aim to keep going through the rest of the year. Details of each walk are up on the website a week or so ahead and anyone can just come along and see how they like it ( and us... ).

New members are always welcome and several have joined us in recent months. Nobody has to volunteer to lead any of the walks. We appreciate it when they do and it means we get to do new and different routes. Dogs are welcome too, as long as their owners take full responsibility.



*Interested observers*



*A lovely view on a lovely day.*

## Wadhurst u3a Interest Groups

Interest Group	Convenor	Day of Month	Time	Venue
Active Plus Thursdays	Jane Austin	Thursdays	10.05	Uplands Sports Centre
Active Plus Tuesdays	Jane Austin	Tuesdays	11.10	
Art Appreciation	Margot Yeo	See website		
Art at Ticehurst	Kris Armstrong	last Friday	14.00	member's home
Art at Wadhurst	Sheila King	2nd Tuesday	10.00	Carillon Cottage
Book Group One	Margaret Jones	See website		
Book Group Two	Janet Pelham	4th Wednesday	14.00	Carillon Cottage
Book Group Three	Jane Austin	2nd Monday	14.00	The Hub
Bridge	Liz Rosevear	Thursdays	10.00	Sparrows Green Pavilion
Chair Yoga Fridays	Jane Austin	Fridays	To start in May. See website	
Chair Yoga Mondays	Jane Austin	Mondays	12.30	Uplands Sports Centre
Croquet	Jane Austin	Summer only	14.30	Wadhurst Cricket Pavilion
Family & Social History	Sheena Carmichael	2nd Thursday	14.30	member's home
French Conversation	Philip Cheung	1st Wednesday	10.30	member's home
Friendly Computers	Philip Cheung	contact convenor for individual sessions		
Gardening	Sheila Jemmett	3rd Tuesday	10.00	The Hub
Historic Building Visits	See website for latest news			
Home Gardens	Rosemary Johnson & Sue Bridges	fortnightly	-	member's home

Kindfulness	Susie Swift	4th Friday	10.30	member's home
Knit & Natter	Kate Metcalfe	1st Tuesday	14.30	member's home
Life Writing	Jessica Brown	alternate Tue	10.00	member's home
Mah Jong	Norwill Hazell	2nd & 4th Thu	14.00	member's home
Modern Architecture	Jane Austin	See website	14.00	The Hub
Play Reading	Philip Cheung	See website	14.00	member's home
Poetry Reading/Writing	<i>Suspended - awaiting new convenor</i>			
Rock & Pop	Tim Ball	<i>Check with convenor</i>		member's home
Science & Technology	Philip Cheung	1st Tuesday	14.00	Sparrows Green Pavilion
Show & Tell	Eileen Ramm	4th Tuesday	14.00	member's home
Strictly Fitstep	Sara Irwin	Wed except 1st	11.15	Ticehurst Village Hall
Sunday Singles Lunches	Mary Brewer & Iris Glover	3rd Sunday	12.00	<i>check with convenors</i>
Table Tennis	Philippa Standley	Tuesdays	12.30	Uplands Sports Centre
Tai Chi	Uplands u3a Tai Chi	Mondays	11.30	Uplands Sports Centre
Ten Pin Bowling	Lynda Emberson	last Friday	14.00	Hollywood Bowl, TW
Walking	Sarah Parry	2nd Thursday	10.00	<i>check with convenor</i>
Wine Appreciation	Jane Austin	4th Wednesday	17.00	The Hub
Yoga online	Sara Irwin	Mondays	9.30	Zoom

**To email convenor:** On the u3a Wadhurst website (see below) select the Group concerned.

Click on the **link** labelled **Convenor**.

**To leave a message:** ring **01580 200647**. State your name, tel number and the group(s) of interest.

\*\*\* Consult our website: [www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk](http://www.wadhurst.u3asite.uk) for up-to-date information. \*\*\*

# The Scam

*by Jessica Brown*

The landline rang at 11.00am. “Good Morning”, said a voice in a slightly foreign accent. “We’re ringing to inform you that your computer has been hacked.”

Normally, I’d have put the phone down immediately, but I had in fact been having some problems with my laptop – so I listened to what he had to say.

But firstly, I asked him how they knew I’d been hacked. “There’s a central control system”, he said, “which allows us to see everyone’s accounts”. When I queried this, he told me to go to the top right-hand corner of the page where I’d find a little magnifying symbol which I should press. So I did.... “What does it say?” he asked. Stupidly, I told him “it says ‘Safari’. ‘OK’, he said, “We’ll send a technician round tomorrow morning (Monday) to sort your computer out. What’s your address?” And stupidly once again, I gave it.

But I did think to ask the technician’s name and where he was coming from.

“His name is Robin Johnson and he’ll be coming from Reading. He’ll charge you £4.95 “for the petrol.”

Alarm bells began to sound. Reading is two hours drive away. And the petrol would certainly cost more than £4.95. Or did he mean £4.95 per mile??

“He’ll be with you at 10.00am tomorrow”, he said, and rang off.

The more I thought about it, the more dodgy it seemed. I phoned my three children all of whom live abroad, for advice. Michelle, in Geneva, immediately phoned the police in the UK to alert them of the scam.

Because I was feeling nervous of who might turn up on Monday morning, I invited both my gardener, Richard, and my neighbour, Andy, to join me for coffee. We sat in the garden all morning but of course no one turned up.

But as the result of Michelle's phone call to the police, two very cheery constables turned up on Tuesday morning (after Life Writing). They gave me lots of sensible advice, and literature, about keeping safe and avoiding fraud.

Scammers target landlines at random – they know that in this day and age it is only older folk who use landlines, anyone younger will rely on a mobile phone.

They gave me two bright yellow Kent Police Warning notices to put, one on the porch window, and the other on the window by the backdoor. "WARNING, NO CANVASSERS, NO CALLERS. Callers only seen by appointment." Also a large bright green CCTV sign. Not that I have got any CCTV.

I now feel much less vulnerable, living on my own...

## **AVOCADOS**

### **LOVE THEM OR HATE THEM?**

*by Valerie O'Dwyer*

In the 70s, I was working a variety of jobs while trying to decide what I really wanted to do that also fitted in with bringing up our children. I was freelance so could choose what I did, when and for how long.

An agency contacted me one day and asked me to go to an office in the New Covent Garden to discuss a job.

There were 5 other girls there, all equally mystified about what we were to be asked to do. It turned out to be promoting avocados (they are not pears as they are often called). Avocados were virtually unknown to most people in those days so this was to be challenging. We were briefed by a nutritionist, equipped with an estate car (a great luxury after my ancient Vauxhall Viva), various other pieces of demonstration equipment such as paper plates, electric mixer, a large and heavy electric frying pan, a display board with briefing pictures and points about

calories etc., numerous sheets of information and a green apron with a large avocado embroidered on the front.

We were given a list of appointments and a pass to go to the Western International Market at Heathrow airport approximately every one or two weeks to collect 16 cases of avocados!

The problem here was to get them ripened in numbers to suit the various appointments. In brown paper bags and in the airing cupboard was a good way. It was not unusual to remove something from the cupboard and find an avocado drop out! My area was most of the south of England, including London, and as far west as Hampshire. It involved one or two appointments per day for at least 3 days a week. Cooking, packing equipment and washing up at home after the demonstration.

I had to drive around the North Circular Road, the South Circular Road and many small back roads. This was before the M25 so in fact easier although very heavy traffic. I gave talks and tastings to just about every type of club, society or fundraising group.

Some of these groups were elderly people who were fascinated by the avocados. On arrival at one venue, I found an elderly lady already ensconced in the front row of chairs. She watched me unpack and arrange the avocados and then leant forward and said "What are those?" When I explained she said in amazement "Oh, I thought we were going to have a tasting of Advocaat!". One disappointed lady.

I received many questions at the end of each talk - "Can you eat them with chips as my husband only eats things with chips?" As an example.

It is strange today to see avocados in just about every greengrocers and supermarket. However, they are the small rough skinned Hass variety. I buy and eat these although they are much harder to tell if they are ripe due to the hard skin. My favourite variety, which I seldom see, is the Fuerte. They are smoother, thinner skin and remain green even when ripe. They are usually larger than the Hass and have a more pear-shape.

All avocados are high in calories and healthy fats, vitamins and minerals and therefore highly nutritious.

I would suggest using overripe ones mashed and put into a sandwich with Marmite - delicious. Cold avocado and orange soup is always popular in our family. Guacamole, ice cream, a green fruit salad made with apples, pears, kiwis, melon, grapes and chopped avocados, its uses are endless. Enjoy!

# Nepal

by Philip Cheung

Georgina and I visited Nepal early in March for our son Thomas's marriage to Usha, his Nepalese bride. We had a most enjoyable time and learned much about a country we had never visited before. If, like me, your knowledge of Nepal is confined to 'the country of the Gurkhas', and possibly also the Sherpas, you might find the following interesting.



## *A little Geography & History*

A country of 31 million people, Nepal is situated between India and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. Running about 500 miles from east to west, and 100 miles north to south, it borders the

Himalayas to the north and is surrounded by India on the other three sides.

An advanced civilisation developed in the region several thousand years ago. Fast forward to 1769, Prithvi Narayan Shah, king of Gorkha, founded the modern state of Nepal by conquering several neighbouring principalities and renaming his new kingdom after Nepal Valley in which the new capital, Kathmandu, stood. His descendants continued to expand their territory, waging wars with neighbours, including Imperial China (1788-92), and clashed eventually with the British East India Company (1814-16), before settling for Nepal's present day borders.

The Shah dynasty ruled Nepal until 2008, if only nominally at times. The last years of the monarchy were marked by political upheavals and civil war. You may remember the incident in 2001 when the crown prince killed his family before shooting himself. In 2006, a 20-year long civil war came to end when Maoist revolutionaries agreed to enter mainstream multi-party politics. In 2008, a provisional parliament abolished the monarchy, and Nepal became the *Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal*.

### ***The Nepalese***

How do you describe the population mix in Nepal? In the streets you see people whose looks vary from Indian (quite a mix in itself) to Tibetan, with all the shades in between, in complexion and stature, the shape of eyes and noses, male facial hair, ...etc. etc. Going into the history of migrations since ancient times would take too long. On the other hand, the languages and religions of the Nepalese would give a good idea of their diversity.

Nepali, Nepal's official language, belongs to the Indo-European family of languages. It is spoken as a first or second language by 91% of the population. However, about 82% speak one of 48 Indo-European mother tongues and 17% speak one of 63 Sino-Tibetan mother tongues. The remaining 1% speak one of 13 mother tongues belonging to other language families.

In terms of religion, 81% of Nepalese are Hindu, 8% Buddhist, 4% Muslim, 3% Kiranti, and 1% Christian. Indeed, Nepal is the country with the highest percentage of Hindus in the world! There is

nevertheless a strong Buddhist presence everywhere because Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born in Lumbini in southern Nepal in 563 BCE.

### ***The Gurkhas***

It seems that the majority of Nepalese are not the Gurkhas that most people in Britain associate with Nepal. Who are the Gurkhas?

These famous soldiers do not belong to an ethnic group called Gurkha, nor do they come from a region by that name. Gurkha is another way to spell Gorkha, the kingdom that unified Nepal in 1769. At the end of the war between Nepal and the British East India Company, the Brits were so impressed with their adversary that the peace treaty of 1816 included a clause that allowed the British Army to recruit Gorkhalis, as they were then known, into its ranks. The units so formed were called the Gurkha Regiments.

While the Gorkhalis were probably as mixed ethnically as the modern-day Nepalese, very soon after 1816, men of the Gurkha Regiments were recruited almost exclusively from Sino-Tibetan speaking mountain tribes such as the Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu and Sunwar. Today these tribes make up only 6% of Nepal's population.

### ***Kathmandu (862,000 inhabitants, elevation 4,344 ft)***

Capital of Nepal, Kathmandu is a bustling city, with what seems to us a permanent traffic jam. The narrow streets of the city centre are not for the faint-hearted. Cars, motorcycles and pedestrians squeeze past each other with typically an inch to spare. However everyone is patient and good-tempered. We did not witness any accidents or altercations.

We visited the Durbar Squares (royal squares) of Patan and Bhaktapur. They were the centres of two kingdoms that existed in the Nepal Valley before unification. Today Patan is a district of Kathmandu and its royal palace a beautiful museum. Bhaktapur is about 10 miles east of Kathmandu. Its entire centre has been preserved as a heritage site. Dotted around the square are shops selling cloth, wood carving, brass work, paper and prints, that are made by traditional methods, often on site.

*Royal Palace, Patan Durbar*

*Now a museum, the traditional arts and crafts of Nepal are displayed in its airy rooms, with explanations of how the intricate artefacts are made. There is a cool, shady garden in its interior. The trees were in full bloom during our visit in early March.*



*Bhaktapur Dunbar*

*We decided to discuss prices in French while bargaining in the shops of Bhaktapur to keep our thoughts to ourselves. To our astonishment a shopkeeper joined our conversation with better French than either of us. Our daughter who grew up in France is naturally fluent.*

***Pokhara*** (513,000 inhabitants, elevation 2,697 ft)

As Kathmandu is not a city to everyone's taste (although we thoroughly enjoyed it), we were recommended to visit Pokhara, Nepal's second city, for its better air. Pokhara has a lakeside district that is a favourite tourist destination. It is the starting point for treks to the foothills of the Annapurna. For us, its Gurkha Memorial Museum was a major attraction.

A 25-minutes flight took us from Kathmandu to Pokhara. We found lakeside Pokhara an oasis of calm after Kathmandu although it is still a busy place. Our hotel was quiet but only one minute away from restaurants and shops.

One monument we visited was the Peace Pagoda, built atop a 3500-ft hill rising steeply from the lake 1200 ft below. We went there by taxi but for the return journey, we walked down to the lake

through a wood. A ride in a small boat across the lake took us back to town. The Pagoda has a moving story. It was built on the initiative of a Japanese Buddhist monk who was devastated by the atomic bombs dropped on his country and decided to act on an old scriptural passage which says that peace will return to the world when Buddhism is brought back to India from Japan.

## ***The Wedding***

A ceremony called Mehendi takes place the day before the wedding when the bride and female guests, and some male ones, have their hands and forearms decorated with henna, a vegetable dye. The decorating is done by one artist working on her own. While she works, the guests chat, eat, dance and generally get to know each other.



At 11 the following morning, a horse-drawn carriage brings the bridegroom to the bride's home, played by a modern hotel. His entourage consists of a band of musicians, friends and family: Ma, sister and sister-in-law in saris; Pa, brother and brother-in-law in daura-suruwal.

After an elaborate welcome the open-air marriage ceremony begins. The bride and groom are blessed and anointed multiple times, tread symbolically over water and fire, pay their respect to the elements and the mountain peaks... The ceremony lasts 4 hours, even with drastic cuts. Fortunately, guests are not obliged to sit through it all.

They are at liberty to drift in and out of the rituals to stretch their legs, have a chat or a drink.

Eventually, the poignant moment arrives when the bride departs with the bridegroom to his home. The bride's mother bursts into tears, as does the bride. As the bridegroom's home is also played by the hotel, the carriage goes for a 'journey' around the car park before returning for a short respite when everyone can rest, change their clothes or have group photos taken. Dinner and dancing commence at sunset and finish late into the night. We had a long, enjoyable and fascinating day.



*This family group photo is laid out quite formally although I was not aware of it at the time. Men are on the left and women on the right. Starting from the newlyweds and moving outwards are: his parents, her parents, her brother and sister-in-law, his sister and brother-in-law, his brother and sister-in-law, and finally her unmarried sister.*

N.B. A Nepalese astrologer chose the date of the wedding several months ago. Just before we left for Nepal, newspapers in the UK announced that all the seven planets would be visible in the night-sky in the days to follow. Did the astrologer know this from his calculations, to make his choice of an auspicious day?

# KEN TURNER

## 1938 - 2025



Wadhurst & District u3a was fortunate to have had Ken Turner as its second chairman (2016-9). His leadership, enthusiasm, knowledge, calm, kindness and thoughtfulness are qualities that everyone should aspire to, not only chairpersons.

There is little doubt that Ken the horticulturalist was an enormous asset for the u3a. Gardeners flocked to the Gardening Group for his expert advice. In the early days when the group was still small, meetings were sometimes held at members' homes where Ken would have real examples to work on. Non-gardeners also benefited from the garden visits that Ken organised during the summer months. Two overseas trips, to Holland in 2018 and Normandy in 2019 were unforgettable experiences where our eyes were opened to horticulture (and other aspects of life) practised in environmental circumstances and cultural traditions different from

our own. These trips allowed many u3a members to cement their friendship, making the association a strong and vibrant one.

Ken attended Kent Horticultural Institute where he became a lecturer. He also lectured at Hadlow College where he became governor. Later he worked at Crowders Nursery and became a director of Coblands Nursery in Tonbridge, blending his academic and commercial experiences into a unique whole. He received a medal for his work with the RHS and was made an Associate of Honour for his horticultural services. Ken cared not just for plants: he cared for his students and colleagues. When a lecturer, he travelled the country to secure good jobs for his students. An Award of Merit was presented to him by HRH Princess Sophie at Hampton Court for his work in education and for his contribution to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and apprenticeships.

The eulogy and tributes at his funeral spoke of Ken's ability to bring in people and channel their talents and energies to achieve a common goal. When he asked someone to join the u3a committee or to help in some other way, it was hard to refuse. His kindness, unselfishness and personal touch made many things possible, ***with the support of his wife Jean.***

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Ken was always happy to share his knowledge and experience on all things garden-related and a loyal member and leader of the Wadhurst Gardening Association for many years. I will never forget a group of us shivering in the rain while Ken in shirtsleeves demonstrated pruning on a shrub in his garden before inviting us in to enjoy Jean's delicious coffee and cake as we dripped all over their floor. His talks were always inspirational and amusing - a delightful man.

*Rosemary Collins*

What a sad loss!! U3a will be forever grateful for his leadership as one of the founder members of Wadhurst u3a. He was a great Chairman and promoted the Garden Group so successfully

arranging visits to gardens in Holland and France as well as across England.

Ken was one of the first people we met when joining u3a. He smiled and made us welcome and introduced us to other members. One day he arrived at my front door and persuaded me to join the happy band of Trustees who sat round the table in their house in Stone Cross Road, eating one of Jean's delicious cakes and working our way through the Agenda.

Our thoughts go to Jean, his wife, who also contributed so much to our u3a.

*John O'Dwyer*

I met Ken and Jean on my first u3a Garden visit to France, visiting Monet's Garden and many other private Chateaux and Castle Gardens, which were all superb.

That trip and future trips were all meticulously planned and so well organised by the ever smiling Ken, well apart from when I was late back to the bus!!

His knowledge was second to none as far as plants, trees and flowers were concerned and it was fascinating to listen to his explanations, always given willingly and patiently.

He will be missed a great deal and I feel privileged to have met such a lovely person.

*Jan Whiteley*

Ken set up and led the u3a Gardening group for many years. His enthusiasm and depth of knowledge was legendary and he was able to impart this knowledge in a way that even the inexperienced gardener could understand. Sometimes he even demonstrated pruning techniques indoors by bringing large branches of various shrubs and proceeding to show how and where to cut!

He also led several coach tours to gardens here in the UK and abroad, in France and Holland, with never-failing humour.

He is a hard act to follow and will be deeply missed.

*Sheila Jemmett*

## Monthly Meetings & Events

at The Commemoration Hall, Wadhurst

Meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month  
at 2.30 pm, unless otherwise stated.

<i>Fri Apr 4</i> <i>7.30 pm</i>	<i>Quiz Night</i>
<b>Apr 17</b>	<b>CONCORDE - Icon of the Skies</b> <i>Guy Bartlett</i> History of the fastest passenger aircraft of all time.
<b>May 15</b>	<b>MARIE CURIE</b> <i>Chloe Woolfe</i> Information and raising awareness - How can the charity can help?
<i>Sat Jun 14</i> <i>7.30 pm</i>	<i>Barn Dance</i> <i>!!! Save the date !!!</i>
<b>Jun 19</b>	<b>THE HARP AND ITS MUSIC</b> <i>Margaret Wilson</i> An entertaining talk about the instrument with lots of music.
<b>Jul 17</b>	<b>TALES FROM THE TOWER OF LONDON</b> <i>Rob Smith</i> History of The Tower through stories of the people who lived there
<b>Aug 21</b>	<b>40 YEARS AT KODAK</b> <b>with History of Photography</b> <i>Tony Earle</i> Amusing talk by a former Kodak research scientist

Monthly speaker meetings, with a cup of tea and biscuits, are free for members of Wadhurst & District u3a. Unless otherwise indicated, non-members are welcome, with an admission charge of £3.00.



# Ticehurst Art Group



