



# u3a BULLETIN

Lewes

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## THE U3A IN ARONA, ITALY

*When new member Ernesto Granese offered to write about a u3a in Italy, Bulletin was very keen to hear about it.*

In 1990, after returning to Italy from England, I worked at the Blue Motel in Arona, a charming town on the shores of Lake Maggiore, renowned for its history and stunning landscapes. Arona is the birthplace of Saint Charles Borromeo, whose towering statue overlooks the hill where the Rocca of Arona once stood. From this vantage point, one can see Switzerland, the Alpine peaks, and the Ticino River.



### *Unitre*

During my two years in Arona, I became involved with the Unitre (University of the Third Age), thanks to my landlady, Mrs Ornella, a founder member.

### *Embraced the role*

Initially hesitant to teach English due to my limited experience, I was persuaded by the offer of reduced rent. After a successful trial lesson, I embraced this role, making friends and feeling at home among the members, despite being younger than most.



## MEET ELEANOR AUSTIN

### OUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR GROUP LISTINGS



The Unitre of Arona was established in the late 1980s. It is housed in the town hall, a central building that dates back to the mid-18th

century and is a hugely popular focal point for Arona's over-60s.

#### *Courses*

The courses range from classic language and creative writing classes to psychology and health workshops. With the majority of students being women, the programme also includes lectures and courses on combating violence against women, a significant social issue in modern Italian society.

The Unitre also organizes outdoor activities like boat trips, hikes, and social dinners.

Though my time there was brief, the experience was deeply fulfilling, and I remain connected to some of the remarkable individuals I met, such as Mrs Nelly and architect Signor Sommaruga.

#### *Recommend a visit*

Arona, with its rich history and breathtaking scenery, holds cherished memories for me, and I highly recommend a visit to anyone exploring the region.



Eleanor Austin is a true Lewesian, having been born up on Cuilfail in the bungalow built by her parents.

She left Lewes to train as a teacher, then moved around Sussex before returning to Lewes to raise her family.

Eleanor has taught students ranging from Primary to Adult, then became a Support worker as part of the Joint Community Reablement team (JCR) with East Sussex County Council.

#### *Interests*

Eleanor now likes to grow trees from locally sourced seeds, enjoys walking, gardening, books, Brownies, dowsing and wildlife in general. She has reignited her interest in making music, playing with the u3a Recorder ensembles and taking up new instruments such as the Bodhran (Celtic drum). The Malling Short Mat Bowls group provides more fun on a Friday.

#### *Committee*

Eleanor hopes her contribution will be useful in enabling the committee to meet the challenges of keeping such a large organisation running smoothly.





# NEW GROUPS

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, OR TO CONTACT THE GROUP LEADERS, LOG IN TO THE LEWES U3A WEBSITE (LEWESU3A.UK), AND LOOK UNDER THE 'GROUPS' TAB.**



Group Leader Sue Engineer says: 'We will meet on alternate Tuesdays from January 7th 2025.

We aim to be a friendly group, where everyone has a chance to enjoy and develop their play, from beginners to experts,.

We meet from 10-12 at Greyfriars Court, which has a pleasant room with 12 small tables, and also an excellent coffee machine. u3a charge £1 a session for accommodation, and an initial charge is payable on joining.

With a maximum complement of 18, we currently have just two vacancies. We shall keep a waiting list, and as there is obviously some enthusiasm for the game in u3a, people who cannot manage Tuesday mornings might consider setting up a second group.'



**BRIDGE FOR BEGINNERS** from 7th January. Group Leader: Sue Yates.

The course is currently full but if you are interested and would like to join the group if a place becomes available, please contact the Group Leader.



**A HISTORY OF THE HANSEATIC LEAGUE** from 8th January. Group



Leader: Michael Austin. The biggest trading network in the

known world between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. How did it become so successful?

**EXPLORING SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES** from 9<sup>th</sup> January.

Group Leader: Lynne Thomas

The course will involve reading and discussing 'Macbeth', 'Othello', 'Hamlet', and 'King Lear'. No previous knowledge is required, but course members will need to bring their own copy of each play.

**HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE**

**Medieval to Stuart c1066-1700** from 16<sup>th</sup> January. Group Leader: Sue Berry. The story of the early development of our country houses and their estates.



**ROGER COCKRELL'S PUBLIC  
LECTURE ON PUTIN'S WAR ON  
UKRAINE**

at the Town Hall on 31 October was oversubscribed, so he offered to give another lecture, and this too was fully booked.

The attendees were asked for a contribution to 'Stand for Ukraine'.

Roger says, 'I was invited to make an appeal for funding to equip an ambulance and for essential medical supplies for Ukrainian victims of war.

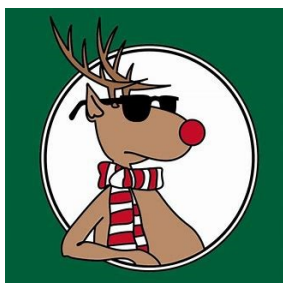
**Stand for Ukraine**, the group I support in Hove, is linked with a Ukrainian charity, which asks for the specific things they need.

Lewes U3A members who attended the lectures donated over £500 to Stand for Ukraine, and this was the



reaction from my friend, Iryna: 'Thank you so much for your

extraordinary support during this dark time. By working together, we can make a huge difference for those affected by this long and brutal war.'



*Message from our Chair,  
Susan Murray*

'I wish all members of Lewes u3a a very Happy Christmas and joy and peace for the coming year. I hope you will enjoy time with family and friends and come back refreshed to u3a activities in the New Year.

I really delight in our many flourishing u3a groups that cater for so many different interests. We can, I think, all agree that we are thriving and providing information, entertainment and company for so many people. Many thanks to everyone who has played a part in making this all happen in 2024.

I was sorry to miss seeing many of you at our recent AGM – my husband had been hospitalised but is home now, so we will be sharing a very quiet Christmas.



Whether you will be busy or resting, enjoy the break and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.'

**COMMENTS, ENQUIRIES OR SUGGESTIONS TO:  
BULLETIN@LEWESU3A.UK**