

Bulletin

for Interest Groups

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*Message from
the
Chairman*

I do not need to remind you at the moment that both home and international news are unremittingly gloomy. But there is cause for optimism in that the programme of events provided by Orpington u3a, mentioned earlier in the year, is now in full swing and the first three trips to Hever Castle, Musicals in the Crypt at St. Martin's and Wisley Gardens, have all sold out.

Further outings are being arranged and will be announced for sale soon. Our events team, led energetically by Paul, is always happy to hear from you with any ideas you may have for future visits.

At our last General Meeting the theme of 'Springtime' was supported by an excellent talk from our guest speaker Clive Nutman on the subject of bees and how they enhance and support the natural environment. So don't let the news get you down

GET OUT AND ABOUT WITH ORPINGTON U3A !!!



*"Spring is sprung
The grass is riz
I wonder where the
birdies is
The birds is on the wing
But surely that's
absurd
The wings is on the
bird"!!!*



Spike Milligan

General Meetings 3.30-5.30pm

Crofton Halls, BR6 8PR

Doors open at 3.30pm for refreshments, until the main meeting starts at 4pm

Members who park at Crofton Halls when attending General Meetings will need to enter their car registration at reception to avoid a parking fine.

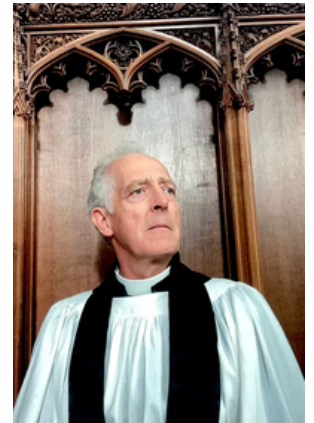
Click [HERE](#) for further details.

19th May - Tim Baker-Bartholomew Dark Secrets of the Acting Lark (Triumphs and Disasters)

Tim is a tall, balding and wrinkly actor, a comic novelist and, in drag as Mimsey McWirter, a children's storyteller.

In an improvised and lively talk guaranteed to generate gales of laughter, Tim shares his insider's knowledge about appearances on TV in both commercials and dramas – from glamorous ego-boosting triumphs involving large amounts of money and international travel, to the vital but soul-destroying creation of casting self-tapes at home and firing them off into the ether... usually to complete silence.

Audience participation – indeed heckling – is encouraged as Tim reveals the secrets of the trade: the role of producers, 'creatives', directors, casting directors, agents and, finally, the lowly actor.



16th June - Sue Flipping Pyramids, Pink Lakes and Potholes



Sue will take you on a virtual road trip, using her personal experiences, of Yucatan with its unique landscape. The tales of ancient Mayans, swimming in underground caverns, carefully avoiding drug barons and sitting by one of the most Instagrammable lakes in the world.



Roy 'Blowing his own Trumpet' at our General Meeting held in March



Monthly u3a Coffee Morning

On the third Thursday of the month we have a Coffee Morning at 10.30am in the

BR6 Bakehouse Café

All members are welcome



Events!

Greenwich Park Picnic

The events team is pleased to say we are planning a picnic in Greenwich Park on 9th July.

This will be a lunchtime event with everyone welcome.

No commitment is required, just turn up on the day.

Plan to meet at 'Nelson's Ship in a Bottle' sculpture, located in the National Maritime Museum gardens, from midday.

This is approximately a 10 minute walk from Greenwich station.

If you require any more details please contact the Events Organiser



South East u3a Forum Summer School Sept 2026 at The University of Chichester

Monday 7th September – Thursday 10th September

Below is a list of the 13 courses available:

2026 - South East u3a Forum

[link](#)



- **AI** – Beginners
- **Art History** – The Male Gaze
- **Craft** – English Paper Piecing
- **Jazz** – Appreciation
- **Life Story** – Social History/Creative Writing
- **Linguistics** – What's in a Name?
- **Mah Jong** – Beginners
- **Mathematics** – for Life
- **MPT** - Memory, Perception & Thinking
- **Philosophy** – Introduction
- **Poetry** – Australian
- **Spanish** - Beginners
- **Yoga** – Seated, Mat and Standing

The prices for 2026 summer school are as follows:

| | |
|--|--|
| En-Suite Accommodation - £390.00 | Standard Accommodation - £360.00 |
| Non-Residential with dinner - £220.00 | Non-Residential no dinner - £175.00 |

This is primarily a 4-day residential Summer School held at the University of Chichester, although, participants do have the option to be non-residential. Extra details about the choice of accommodation, costings and payment along with other relevant information can be found on the [General](#) Information sheet 2026.

London Explorers

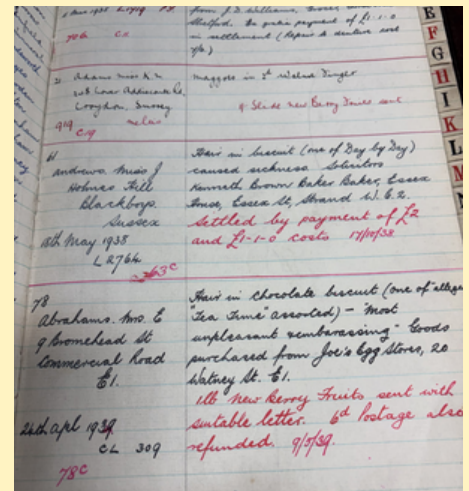
The Biscuit Museum

On Thursday 9th April, two groups visited the Peek Frean Biscuit Museum in Bermondsey. Housed in a modern complex of studios and offices, this tiny museum occupies a couple of rooms. Frank, our guide, is one of the curators of the museum and is a former employee of Peek Frean. He regaled us with the history of Peek Frean and biscuit manufacturing in Britain, and was full of anecdotes about life at the factory through the ages, until it finally closed.

The museum has, as its centrepiece, a magnificent replica of the wedding cake they made for the late Queen. Other displays were of any and all biscuit memorabilia: biscuit tins, posters, photographs, and the complaints book.

We all enjoyed this visit to a quirky little (and little known) museum, while eating custard creams or bourbons!

Our thanks go to Frank and his colleague Gary for arranging the visit for us. The museum is only open by appointment and both are volunteers.



London Explorers

Visit to Queen's House, Greenwich - 11th June

London Explorers have organised a guided tour of Queen's House, Greenwich on Thursday, 11th June 2026 at 11.30 am. The cost of this will be £16 per person. We will catch the 09.41 am train at Petts Wood station, second carriage from front, and change at Lewisham for the DLR to Cutty Sark. There is a 15min walk to Queen's House.



Happy Birthday!

Arnie, a u3a Orpington Golfer, was celebrating his 94th birthday last week, alongside the Chairman of the Orpington u3a, and the MyTime Sales manager and financial coordinator.

Arnie is a supreme example that whatever your age, the u3a will allow you to thrive and prosper.

u3a Bromley Barn Dance - 8th May

To all u3a Bromley, Orpington and Beckenham Members

Put on your dancing shoes and enjoy a fun evening with the Selfolk Orchestra. YOU CAN BRING a non u3a partner if you wish, otherwise, come as you are. Bring drinks and nibbles and plenty of energy!

Venue: United Reformed Church, Bromley 20 Widmore Rd, Bromley BR1 1RY (good bus and train connections)

Date/Time: Friday 8th May 7pm - 9pm.

Cost: £8 per person

BOOK ONLINE with Ticket Tailor using [THIS LINK](#)





Walks



Walks are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, starting at 10am unless stated otherwise.

All walkers join the walks at their own risk.

New walkers are welcome to join any of the walks - but please telephone us before coming on your first walk. Please ensure that you wear suitable footwear for the walks.

Note that the walk description is only a brief guide, not a complete breakdown of the walk.

Wednesday 20th May

Lullingstone Country Park

Meet outside the café in the Lullingstone Country Park car park (£3) Castle Road, Eynsford DA4 0JF.

This is a circular walk of 3.5 miles. Please be warned it is quite hilly so please make sure you are up for it, but it is worth it for the views! Toilets and refreshments in the car park at the end or several pubs 5 mins away in Eynsford.



Photos from a very enjoyable walk in March to Norstead Manor



Craft

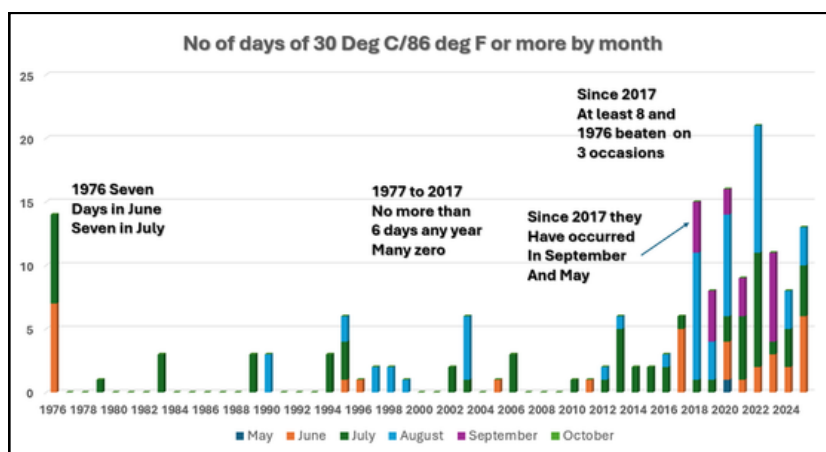
The Craft Group has been running for a couple of months now. Here are examples of some of their creations.





50+ Years of Weather recording in South London

Robert gave a very personal and enthusiastic presentation about local weather trends and extreme occurrences over the past fifty years. He became interested in the weather as a child, began weather recording as a scout and has continued ever since. Robert's talk covered both weather monitoring in his back garden as well as his professional exploits working at the Met Office as a forecaster and weather advisor.



We were reminded of extreme weather events such as the flood of 1968; the heatwave and drought in 1976 and the Great Storm of 1987. While some episodes may be outliers, Robert's long-term data show clear shifts in average temperature and rainfall in recent years. Robert's animated account brought the historical evidence to life. His newspaper articles, maps, photos, video and diaries helped show not only what happened, but how people experienced these events at the time.



Sevenoaks u3a – Science Study Day

AI in Action Today

Thursday 4th June 2026 Opens 9:15 for 9:45 start

Orchards Events Venue, East Malling Research, New Road, East Malling, ME19 6BH

Cost: £20 (Booking in advance is required)

Talks and speakers for this event will be: -

- AI and urban food mapping for sustainable food production – Dr Howard Lee
- Understanding modern AI: how Large Language Models are shaping the future of healthcare – Professor Julia Ive
- Sociological implications of AI - Dr Blay Whitby

[Further information and booking details](#) Book early as numbers are limited.

Queries to: scienceday@sevenoaksu3a.org.uk

Town and Country Lunches

Recently eleven of us visited the biggest Hindu Temple in Europe. The bus journey from Wembley Park Station passed Wembley Stadium, so we saw the famous arch up close and the big walkway to the stadium. Once at the temple, we had to take our shoes off. Fortunately the floor had underfloor heating. We were privileged to see the ceremony to their gods, praying for peace and harmony. It was so interesting. We then wandered around this magnificent temple with all its intricate marble carvings. We then went to the restaurant to have a vegetarian buffet, eat as much as you like. A very very interesting and enjoyable day.

We have availability for 4 more members. If you would like to join please contact the Group Leader



Ambling London 2 - March Walk

In March a group of us climbed a 51 step spiral staircase to reach the entrance of our visit to The Old Operating Theatre and Herb Garrett in St. Thomas' Street, London Bridge. After lunch, we had a walk exploring the hidden areas and buildings behind Guy's Hospital and Borough High Street, eventually ending at Southwark Cathedral, where we saw part of a concert and spotted Hodge, the resident cat.



Philosophy

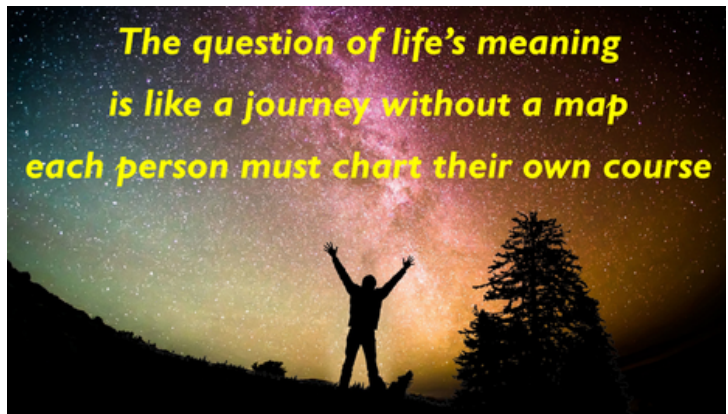
The Meaning of Life

Life on Earth forms an interconnected ecosystem, however (as far as we know), only humans think about the meaning of our lives. People often draw on science, religion, and philosophy in the search for meaning. Science investigates physical mechanisms and origins but cannot determine purpose, although some find meaning in exploring nature and our place in the cosmos. Religion looks to the spiritual realm, offering Divine purpose as the meaning of life. Philosophy offers methods for reasoning about meaning but cannot provide a definitive answer to this complex question.

Across history, philosophers have offered various perspectives. Plato and other ancient philosophers linked meaning to virtue and alignment with the Good. Aquinas, grounded purpose in God and the human intellect's search for truth. Nietzsche argued that life has no built-in meaning, so humans must create it. Similarly, Sartre claimed we exist first and define ourselves through our choices. Camus saw the tension between our desire for meaning and an indifferent universe as the "absurd", urging us to create meaning anyway, and Frankl stated that meaning is personal and changes moment by moment.

Modern views highlight contribution to society, relationships, and experiences. Astronauts' accounts, show how the vision of Earth from space can reshape our sense of meaning, blending scientific awe with spiritual reflection. Ultimately, the search for meaning is a personal journey without a fixed map.

For more information or to join the Philosophy Group, please contact the Group Leader



Attention Group Leaders

Are you aware that more members would like to join your Group but you cannot accommodate them due to the size of your meeting place? If so, why not try meeting in a larger room with the cost of room hire subsidised by the u3a for an initial period whilst the group expands.

For further details, please contact the Group Coordinator

Unfortunately the May book sale will not take place this year as there was so little interest last year. The book groups put in so much effort for so little return which is very disappointing.

Snooker - New Group

For people interested in playing snooker in a friendly group. All levels of ability accepted, including beginners. Communal cues available if required.

Day: Every Monday evening from 7-9pm. **Number of players:** Maximum of 12.

Venue: Petts Wood Snooker Club, West Approach, Queensway, Petts Wood BR5 1DB (next to railway station). Access is **via stairs** to the club. Good public transport links.

Cost: £15 for two hours, based on two players per table. Discounted offers available for combined table and drinks.

After the first session, members must join the club (£15 p.a. for seniors).

Please contact the Group Leader for more information.



Sharing an Interest One to One

Do you like ballet?



I have been contacted by a member interested in securing another member to accompany her to matinee performances of the ballet.

If you are interested, please contact the Group Leader

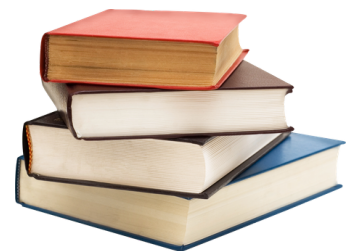
Award Winning Books

This book group meets monthly on the first Tuesday of every month at members' houses or in a local café to discuss an eclectic mix of books. The only criterion is that the book has won an award of some kind.

Recent titles have included: *The Night of Wenceslas* by Lionel Davidson (Crime Writers Association Gold Dagger 1960); *1599, a Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* by James Shapiro (Samuel Johnson prize 2006); *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead (Pulitzer Prize 2016); *Half a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Adichie (Women's prize for fiction 2007).

We always have a lively discussion with varying opinions, and get the books second hand or from the library. Our list of books is agreed mutually from lists of literary awards. We currently have 7 members and would have room for one more.

For more information please contact the Group Leader



Real Ale Appreciation



The Real Ale Appreciation Group continues to be active and in 2026 we have enjoyed the following outings.

In January, we ventured into Paddington Bear country visiting three hostelries around the Paddington area. The first was an unusual Wetherspoons, unusual for the fact that it was in a modern office building and seemed to be custom built. Wetherspoons are well known for their tendency to occupy older premises like banks, cinemas and theatres no longer in use, so this was a real change. Appropriately, the next pub was 'The Bear' in Praed Street, although I don't think there was ever any connection with the aforementioned bear!! Our last stop was 'The Victoria', a stunning old pub, decorated wallpaper, wood paneling and cosy nooks – so cosy that we were reluctant to leave! In February, we were due to do a "Beers By Tram2" around Croydon but we had to make alternative arrangements as TfL decided to cancel all trams that day! A quick rethink we ended up in 'The One Inn the Wood' in Petts Wood! Certainly not a bad substitute!

March saw us resurrect the Croydon trip. There were two highlights. Firstly, the tram journey itself - a new experience for many of us – and a fantastic Micro Pub, 'The Claret and Ale' in Addiscombe, which was surprisingly rammed to the rafters with horse racing punters as it was Cheltenham week!

April saw us in Clerkenwell. After lunch and a beer or two in Wetherspoons, we wandered slowly through the historic Smithfield Meat Market which is undergoing a major refurbishment. Two pubs we then visited – 'The Hand and Shears' and 'The Fox and Anchor' – both harked back to the market days when the porters would enjoy an ale or two during and after their night shifts in the meat market. Great that these traditional venues still exist and are thriving.

May's visit will be to a Beer Festival organised by the Society for the Preservation of Beer from the Wood (SPBW) and in June we plan a walk through the Wapping area of London visiting some of the historic pubs along the north bank of the River Thames.

We are a very friendly (mixed) group and if you would like to join us or just want more information, please contact the Group Leader

