

Bulletin

for Interest Groups

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Message from the Chairman

Would you like to join our events team ?

One of the most pleasing aspects of my brief term as Chairman of Orpington u3a, so far, has been the success of our new Events team. They have got off to a great start organising a varied programme of events which are open to all members.

We are enthusiastic about developing this offering further, with greater frequency, a variety of trips.

In order to do so, we would like one more volunteer to join the team.

The team meets every couple of months to discuss ideas and agree the future programme. Team members then co-operate and help to organise and lead the events - working together to make sure everything runs smoothly and that members have an enjoyable time.

**You don't need any previous experience - just enthusiasm,
some ideas and a willingness to get involved.
This is NOT a committee role and there is
no requirement to join the committee.**

If you enjoy meeting people, suggesting interesting things to do and helping to make them happen, then we would love to hear from you.

Interested? Please contact the Chairman

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.

15th September - Chris O'Donoghue How I Became a Gardener

From pottery to potting shed - Chris started work in the early days as a thrower at Poole Pottery and then to running a ceramics business in Rye. He now does restoration work and designs gardens.

Please note this is a change from the speaker advertised in the August Newsletter.



20th October - Paul Barwick Alexander Litvinenko - the spy who solved his own murder



In 2006 two Russian Secret Agents flew into London from Moscow. Their mission had one objective, to kill Ex KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko. We look at his life, death and the attempts to assassinate him.



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



"Hi Everyone"

Events!

Afternoon Disco in The Crypt

Join us for an upbeat afternoon disco filled with great music, good company and plenty of dancing. It's a simple, enjoyable way to stay active and keep yourself moving.

Afternoon Disco on the 31st of October in The Crypt at St Martin-in-the-Fields.

Time 14:00 to 16:30. Cost £10 per person. Limited availability for this event.

Tickets to be sold initially at September's monthly meeting, via a trybooking.com link.

The Events Team are also considering two festive outings, and we would really appreciate your thoughts before we proceed:

- RHS Wisley Christmas Lights trip. This would be an evening event. Late November or early December.
- Coach trip to Bluewater for some Christmas shopping. Late November or early December.

Please send your feedback to the Events Team



Slightly Ballroom

with Orpington u3a!

Our **social** Ballroom and Latin beginners' Tea Dance class got off to a flying start in January. We have taken a break during the Summer and will start again on Monday 21st September if there are enough people who would like to do it, so **PLEASE CONTACT THE GROUP LEADER NOW**, to register an interest and go on the mailing list for updates.

We dance on Mondays from 2.00 - 3.30pm with a drink in the middle, in the Aubrey Mullock Hall at Orpington Village Halls. Gentlemen are especially welcome, may expect to be shared, and ladies to dance together sometimes. There will be a **£5** per session charge to cover the cost of the hall hire. Parking is free for 3 hours under Tesco.



No experience necessary!

Since our last article, we have only had a few people sign up which will not make this group viable. Why not think again and give dancing a go; you might be surprised at how much you enjoy it.

Volunteer Group leader is an Associate member of the United Kingdom Alliance of Teachers of Dance.

London Explorers

Visit to the London Canal Museum - 1st October

London Explorers have arranged a visit to the London Canal Museum at Kings Cross, including a canal boat ride for Thursday, 1st October 2026 at 12 noon. We'll catch the 10:11am train from Petts Wood (second carriage from front) to London Bridge and then take the underground to Kings Cross. The cost is £13.50pp, please pay by Bank Transfer or cash.



London Explorers

Dr Johnson's House - Report

On Friday 24th July 25 members had a guided tour of the house lived in by Dr Johnson while he wrote his famous Dictionary of the English Language. The 17th century house is preserved as a time capsule of the Age of Enlightenment and is in hidden alleyways off Fleet Street. Surrounding buildings were destroyed over the centuries, but this remains.

Our young guide was so knowledgeable, giving us the history of the house and of Dr Johnson and his many friends and associates. A fine portrait of Francis Barber, Johnson's black manservant, who he educated and made his heir, hangs in the drawing room. The history of Barber and David Garrick, Johnson's great friend were vividly brought to life. The garret where he worked, and all the other rooms, are full of interesting prints and photos of the house in use during the War as a refuge for firefighters.

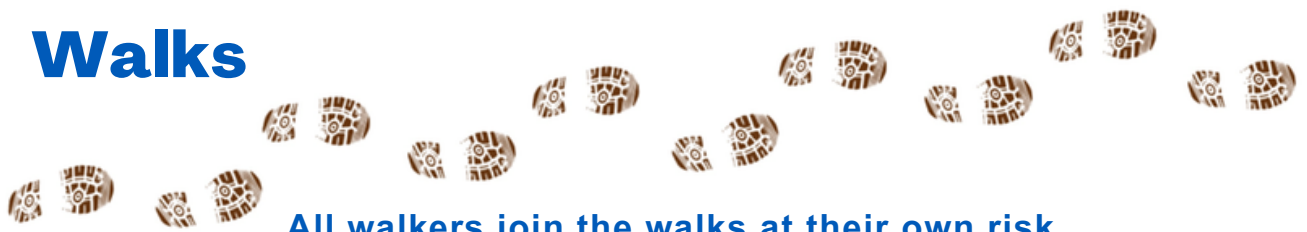
We all thoroughly enjoyed the visit, despite the heat!

In the square outside is a statue of Hodge, Dr Johnson's cat "a very fine cat indeed"!





Walks



All walkers join the walks at their own risk

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

PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING MONTHS

Wednesday 16th September - Leigh to Haysden Country Park



We are proposing something a little different in September. This will be a return walk from Leigh to Haysden Country Park, 4 to 5 miles in total, with a 30 minute break in the middle at The Café in The Park. This Kiosk provides hot and cold snacks and drinks, outdoor seating and toilets. The walk is flat and not too strenuous, if a little longer than usual.

Meet at Leigh Cricket Club Pavilion, at the junction of The Green and Green View Avenue in Leigh, near Tonbridge. Plenty of parking by the side of the road. Please allow good time for the journey as the walk will start promptly at 10am.

There are no toilets in Leigh, but refreshments are available after the walk at The Plough and Barn, Leigh Road, Hildenborough TN11 9AJ. This is a lovely old pub with a garden about 3 minutes drive from the Cricket Pavilion. We anticipate that the walk, including break, will be around 2½ hours.

Wednesday 21st October - High Elms and Downe

Just under a 4 mile walk around Downe and High Elms. Generally level walking with no stiles. Four average steps and nine fairly steep steps. Some rough ground in the woods.

Meet at Cuckoo Woods car park (free) High Elms Road, BR6 7JL. If approaching from Shire Lane, it is after High Elms car park and about half a mile after the golf club house on the left.

Refreshments after in Farnborough Village.



Philosophy



*Only well-connected gentlemen with wigs went inside the
Coffee Houses as they could afford to pay the penny for coffee
and discuss the burning issues of the day*

Gradually the coffee houses opened to everyone and spread across London town. From those small beginnings, Lloyds of London, Banking, The Stock Exchange, Auction Houses, Science, Literature, Debates, Politics and daily papers were discussed and spread!

I think all the group enjoyed the 'Ted Talk' and it was great to get into smaller groups and discuss the topics of the day.

Here is the link to the 'Ted Talk' I hope you enjoy it - [The Lost World of the Coffee Shop](#)
The Ted talk then led on to a social re-enactment of those formative times.



POP MUSIC



1955-1979



These photos prove that good pop music doesn't just lift your mood — it whisks you straight back through the decades. If you fancy being transported to the soundtrack of your younger self, come and join this fun, feel-good group.

Family History - Vacancies

We now have vacancies in both family history groups. For more information please take a look on the [Family History](#) page of our website.



Wine Tasters 'Cheers' - Vacancies

The 'Cheers' Group meet on the second Tuesday of each month at a member's house. For each meeting, one of the group presents six wines chosen from a particular region or based on a specific theme, usually 3 white and 3 red. Between the whites and the reds there are snacks and some social time. The relative merits of the wines are discussed and the costs are divided up between those present at the meeting.



In previous meetings we have sampled wines from numerous countries, both European and beyond. Sometimes focussing on well known wine-producing areas and sometimes less well known areas. If you are curious and would like to try us out, why not come to one of the meetings to see what you think. It's a relaxed, friendly way to explore new wines and you'll be very welcome. We would love to find some new members.



Discussion



This is a new Group and will operate monthly - possibly second Wednesday in the month, but to be determined by members. Members to decide on various areas for discussion. The first meeting will be on **Wednesday, 9th September at 2pm**.

Cribbage and Cribbage 2 - Vacancies



There are vacancies in both Cribbage groups.

If you are interested in joining either group, please contact the group leaders.

LANGUAGES FOR BEGINNERS?

Spanish for beginners? Turkish? Greek? Welsh?
Or even Scottish Gaelic?

Duolingo and similar programmes exist to help you learn or improve a language. You could sit at home and discipline yourself to do a bit each day, but wouldn't it be more enjoyable to learn with a few others to give mutual support and encouragement?



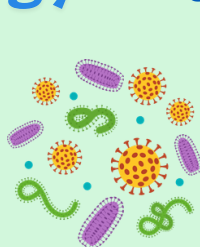
If you are interested in improving your language proficiency in a self-help group, send me an email with the language you're interested in and I'll try to match you up with someone else who's interested in the same lingo.

Better still, if you're fluent in Japanese, Hindi or other languages, and you'd be prepared to help one or two others, I'd love to hear from you too.

Science & Technology

Programme for the Autumn term:

- 8th September – Extremophiles
- 13th October – Exoplanets
- 10th November – Bees and Beekeeping
- 8th December – Christmas Meeting



Gardening Made Easy

All three GME groups met together for a joint lunch. One group bought savoury items and the other two groups brought refreshing 'sweets'. Some of the members even remembered to bring plants to swop, it was really a social event that went very well. Thanks again to the host for making sure there was enough seating and plates and cutlery for us all!

There will be another opportunity to meet up together at the 2nd December meeting.

If you would like to join any of the three GME groups please contact the group leader.



Visual Arts

Canary Wharf Report

A neat dozen of us assembled on Orpington Station under our esteemed leader. Our destination was Canary Wharf; not to admire the skyscrapers in this mini-Manhattan but to tackle the sculpture trail. And what a trail it is, with 100 pieces boasting London's largest collection of outdoor public art. So it was an ideal pick for the first expedition of Visual Arts, Orpington U3A's newest group. Not content with running one of the long-established Arts Appreciation groups the group leader decided to branch out: still art but perhaps less about paintings and more about other things. Our couple of hours at Canary Wharf on a pleasantly fresh day could not hope to take in more than small fraction of the 100-strong trail but under careful guidance we found plenty to involve us. Trail is perhaps a misnomer since the pieces are very spread and in no particular order. As a result our group often became scattered though thankfully no-one was lost. We were all amused by Tandem Lovers, a wacky bronze featuring a rabbit (actually Rabbitwoman) and a dog (Dogman) happily in biking mode. We appreciated the tenderness, despite its size, of Returning to Embrace in which a man and a woman were intimately joined. We could not ignore Fortuna, a huge bronze towering over Jubilee Park. The more abstract pieces left us intrigued or just puzzled.



The undoubted showstopper was Whale on the Wharf, a massive whale leaping out of the water constructed of five tonnes of plastic waste pulled from the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The caption reckoned that, pound for pound, there is more plastic waste in our seas than whales. An impressive piece of art and a sobering message. All in all, it was a good day out and the group leader can be more than satisfied with the first foray for her new group.

Next meeting: 23rd September. Explore Bermondsey: Glassblowing, art galleries, a sculpture and a mural.

CRAFT



In July we soaked up the summer sun while marbling in the garden, then turned our attention to weaving with the Japanese kumihimo technique.