

# Bulletin for Interest Groups



Group Co-ordinator

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Learn  
Laugh  
Live

## Message from the Chairman

February and March are busy months for Orpington u3a and especially for our new Membership Secretary, who is dealing with the flood of renewal forms. We reached the dizzying heights of over 1000 members last year and it is pleasing to know that most of you will rejoin us, proving that you are enjoying all that we have to offer.

So, what does your membership mean to you? In a recent meeting I attended, the new CEO of the Third Age Trust (the national organisation) described a 'golden thread' that links all of us. It's an analogy that I really like: as I look around my groups, at a General Meeting or on a visit, I recognise the commitment and enthusiasm of the members for the organisation and feel a connection that extends beyond an everyday attendance of an event.

However, we must not be complacent. We must adapt to a changing demographic and, in particular, attract a younger generation to ensure that the movement continues and flourishes.

In the meantime, we thank the Membership Secretary and all those helping her for their hard work in maintaining our database so that we can all continue to enjoy our membership and Learn, Laugh, Live!

Chairman

## Attention All Group Leaders: New Interest Group Grant Scheme

We are running an **Interest Group Grant Scheme (IGGS-25)** again this year, whereby Group Leaders are able to bid for grants to buy goods or services. These purchases must help the Group, either by (i) improving the members' experience, (ii) facilitating an increase in the number of u3a members that the Group can accommodate, or (iii) by reducing the cost of running and/or participating in the Group.

Details of the scheme were emailed to Group Leaders with an email address registered in Beacon on Monday 3rd February and you have until **Friday 28th February** to submit bids. If you did not receive the email, please request details of the scheme by contacting the Treasurer.

**Remember  
to enter  
your vehicle  
Reg. No.  
on arrival**

## General Meetings 3.30 - 5.30pm

Crofton Halls, BR6 8PR - In Studio 1 (previously called the main hall)

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

**Patron Only Car Park**

**P** For use only whilst registered at Crofton Halls

Crofton Halls patrons must enter their full, correct vehicle registration into the terminal or via QR code at reception on arrival to obtain a permit for the duration of their stay

Blue Badge holders - all terms & conditions apply

**P** Park within marked bays

No parking on yellow lines/hatched areas

Failure to comply with the terms & conditions will result in a Parking Charge of: **£100**

Car park monitored by ANPR systems

### PLEASE NOTE - New Parking System at Crofton Halls

← **PARKING NOTICES HAVE BEEN ERECTED.** Drivers using the car park must enter their vehicle registration **within 15 minutes** of arrival to be allowed parking for up to 3 hours without charge.

Failure to do so will result in a £100 fine. **THIS APPLIES TO DISABLED PARKING TOO.** Anyone dropping off or picking up will be ok if they don't spend 15 mins inside the car park area.

You will be able to enter your vehicle registration on either of the two devices located in the main reception or on your phone using a QR code which will be displayed in reception.



### 18 March - Janie Ramsay Without Reserve - World of Antiques

A look behind the scenes of the Antiques Trade both in retail and from experiences when working for Sotheby's.



### 15 April - Ian Bevan, History of Greenwich

Greenwich has been a Viking stronghold, a royal estate, a home for navy veterans, even a smugglers' den, as well as the home of the royal observatory. Ian will talk about the history of Greenwich from the first Celtic settlement to the present day.

**On the third Thursday of the month we have a Coffee Morning  
at 10.30am in the BR6 Bakehouse Café  
All members are welcome**



## February General Meeting



**The World Garden, Lullingstone** – Tom Hart Dyke who comes from a long line of the Hart Dyke family, residing at Lullingstone Castle for generations, gave a passionate and very entertaining talk about his love of plants inspired by his grandmother. His story included nerve-racking adventures whilst collecting plants and how he designed and established the World Garden at Lullingstone.

### Interest Groups Co-ordinator Update

I would like to introduce myself as the new Interest Group Co-ordinator for Orpington u3a following the recent retirement of Janet after many years of successful service on the committee.

We presently have a number of new groups seeking members which may be of interest to you and there is a small selection shown below.

I look forward to meeting many of you soon.



**Royal College Music Lovers** – This new group has already had a successful visit to a concert at the Royal College and new events are planned this month and in March. There is more information on Page 7.

**Canasta Hand and Foot** – A variation of canasta – tuition provided. For more information see Page 5.

**Award Winning Books** – A new book group that meets at members' houses and intends to read a wide variety of books that have won a literary prize to be nominated by members.

**Sports Events** – More members are needed for a group to visit local sporting events on an occasional basis.

**Art for Fun** – A new art group



## London Explorers

### Friday 14 March – Middle Temple, Inns of Court

A Guided Tour of Middle Temple, Inns of Court, with 400 years of history, Friday 14 March 2025 at 11.15 am. We will catch the 9.42am train from Petts Wood to Charing Cross and will have a gentle walk to the Middle Temple.

The cost for the Tour is £15.00 per person



### Friday 25 April – Foundling Museum

A guided tour of the Foundling Museum at 11.30am where you will hear of its origins as a foundling hospital and its connection with Handel. We will catch the 9.42 train from Petts Wood to Charing Cross, then take a bus ride to Russell Square leaving us with about a 5 minute walk to the museum. The cost is £15 per person payable at the next meeting by cash or cheque.

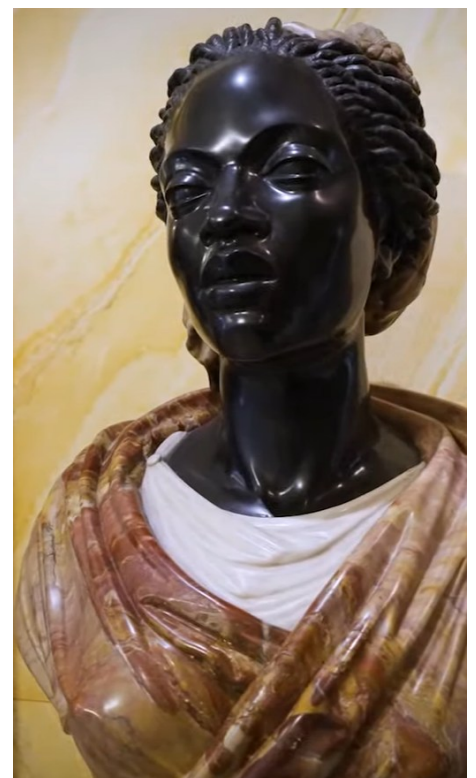


### Recent visit

London Explorers group visited the Wallace Collection for an extremely interesting tour led by a very knowledgeable guide. Upon arrival we were warmly greeted and informed of the family history of the four Marquesses of Hertford and their interest in an eclectic collection of porcelain, furniture, armour, art and statues. The collection was gifted to the Nation in 1900 by the widow of Sir Richard Wallace, the last Marquess of Hertford.

Much of porcelain and furniture was acquired from the Estates of the French Monarchy from the Court of Versailles, purchased at auction from the new Government immediately after the French Revolution, much of the porcelain was manufactured in Sevres and was monogrammed with the initials of the French Royal family.

We thoroughly enjoyed the tour bringing to life many historic artefacts by being shown the meaning of the symbols and history behind them. We finished by looking at some wonderful old Masters in the Art Gallery including the famous Laughing Cavalier by Frans Hals, 1624.



## Science & Technology

The topic for February was based on the NASA article [The Human Body in Space](#). Astronauts face significant health risks in space, including exposure to cosmic radiation, psychological stress from isolation, challenges due to the distance from Earth, physical effects of microgravity, and maintaining a safe environment within spacecraft. NASA counteracts these risks with radiation shielding, mental health support, comprehensive medical protocols, daily exercise regimens, and stringent environmental controls to ensure the well-being of astronauts on long-duration missions.

The Artemis program, led by NASA, aims to re-establish a human presence on the Moon for the first time since 1972. The next Artemis launch, in 2026, will be a 10-day crewed mission around the Moon. A crucial goal for this program is the Lunar Gateway, a space station planned to orbit the Moon. The Gateway will serve as a communication hub, science laboratory, and habitation module for astronauts, supporting lunar surface exploration and human missions to Mars.

In contrast, Elon Musk's SpaceX Mars mission plans do not involve the Lunar Gateway. Their Mars missions, which are likely to begin before the end of the decade, will use the Starship spacecraft to travel directly to Mars.



### FUTURE MEETINGS

11 Mar	Nikola Tesla
8 April	Air Traffic Control
13 May	Fusion Power

If you are interested in joining and would like more information please contact the Group Leader

### Science & Technology

Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, 2-4 pm at St Paul's Church, Crofton Road, in the VCR

## Learn to Play Canasta Hand and Foot - New Group

**Starting 19th March.** Canasta Hand and Foot is an enjoyable card game that is a slight variation of traditional Canasta. It is quite easy and fun to learn.

Meetings will take place on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month between 10 and 12 noon.

If interested please contact the Group Leader

## Country Music Appreciation - Discontinued

We regret that due to a decrease in the number of attendees we have decided not to continue with this group in 2025.

## Bridge for Beginners

**The Bridge for Beginners Group has a few vacancies.**

If you would like to learn the game from scratch, or just brush up some rusty bidding and card-play skills, you would be very welcome.

We meet on Wednesday afternoons, 2-4pm, and you will have the opportunity to develop your game in a friendly and sociable environment, offering both learning and practice.

For details, please contact the Group Leader



## Real Ale Group

The Real Ale Group (RAG) was started in 2009 and, apart from COVID, we have met every month since then! We meet on the second Thursday and, over the years, have visited many hundreds of pubs in the local area, in London and in Kent – in fact, anywhere in the South East where we can enjoy Real Ales.

We have already enjoyed two visits to London in 2025. Firstly, we helped to christen the new Wetherspoons outlet in Waterloo Station followed by a visit to The Hole in the Wall round the corner. In February we were in Borough High Street in the world-famous George Inn, a 17th Century coaching inn now owned by The National Trust.



We follow CAMRA Guidelines for marking and assessing the beers we drink but their definition of Real Ale has become somewhat confusing over recent years. We are more pragmatic – if the beer is not dispensed by a hand pump or by gravity then it is NOT Real Ale!! No bottles or cans or gassy lagers and “Craft” ales!!

In March, we are planning a more local trip around Bromley and Farnborough Village. In April, we will be back in London and in May we are planning to visit CAMRA’s Kent pub of the year in Tonbridge.

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

## Gardening Made Easy

The A and B 'Gardening Made Easy' groups met together, early this month, for breakfast at Wetherspoon's, Petts Wood. The sharing of seeds, cuttings and plants goes on each month by both groups so if you would like to join, please contact the Group Leader





# Philosophy



## SIKHISM

The founder of Sikhism was Guru Nanak (1469 – 1539). He was born on 15 April 1469 in Rai Bhoi Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib which is 40 miles west of Lahore, Pakistan. His mother was Tripta and father Mehta Kalu village accountant, and sister Nanaki, four years older than him.



The whole Sikh movement was Guru Nanak's teachings and life experience and a model for the nine Gurus who followed him. They passed on their teachings to the community which grew around them. This was formed of many thousand ethereally beautiful poems and hymns. These are enshrined in the two key texts of the Sikh Panth (the Sikh community). They are the Adi Granth and Dasam Granth and are recognised as masterpieces of Indian devotional literature. The Adi Granth is the scriptural Guru called 'Siri Guru Granth Sahib Ji' (SGGS) which has the collection of hymns recited by the Sikh Gurus as well as Hindu Sadhus and Muslim Fakirs. SGGS is the only Holy book which has works not only of believers of Sikhism but also of Hinduism and Islam.



SGGS begins with Ek Onkar, there is only one God. It is Guru Nanak's morning prayer Jap Ji.



SGGS is so important in Sikh tradition that it takes centre stage in the gurdwaras (Guru's Door or Sikh temples) and various ceremonies of worship. Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) has doors on each of its 4 sides signifying a welcome to all people from any geographic or spiritual direction. Thus, anyone can participate in the services as long as they wear a head scarf and remove shoes outside the gurdwaras.



After every service the congregation partakes **langar** (a vegetarian meal); initiated by Guru Nanak in 1481 when his father gave him money to buy goods to sell. Instead of doing so Nanak with the help of Bala, his companion, prepared a meal for the saints that they had passed by on their travels. He also bought them clothes.



### References:

- Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair SIKHISM, A Guide for the Perplexed, Bloomsbury, Chapter 1, 2013.
- Arvind-Pal Singh Mandair Sikh Philosophy, BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC, Introduction, 2022.
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/znpq47h>
- <https://www.arvindpalmandair.com/>



Our group is studying the main religions of the world this year so if you would like to join this friendly group please contact the Group Leader.



## The Royal College Music Lovers - New Group

The Royal College of Music is one of the world's great conservatoires, voted Number 1 recently, training gifted musicians from all over the world for international careers as performers, conductors and composers. [Home | Royal College of Music](#)



I am a Friend of the Royal College of Music and plan to co-ordinate monthly concert visits. I can obtain tickets for most concerts, either free of charge or for around £5 - £10.



There is also a brand new museum, with a host of valuable instruments, worth looking at, and a new cafeteria offering a wide selection of teas/coffees and snacks.

Interested in classical music? This could be a really friendly and enjoyable group. Please contact the Group Leader for more information.

## Walks



Walks are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, starting at 10am unless stated otherwise. For more information please contact the Group Leader.

### PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING MONTHS

#### Wed 19 March – Circular walk around Penshurst Estate

Meet outside the Porcupine Café, Penshurst Place (it is outside the walls of Penshurst Place, no fee for parking) for a 3-mile circular walk around the estate. There is a hill up to the ridge (with beautiful views on a clear day) but no stiles.

The terrain is mostly grass but there is some paved walking, likely to be muddy in places so come prepared. Toilets and refreshments afterwards available in the Porcupine Café or the Leicester Arms.



#### Wed 16 April – Bluebells at Andrews Wood

Meet in Andrews Wood car park, off Shacklands Road (Near Polhill garden centre) for a 3 to 4 mile walk. There is a steep hill, and it may be muddy. Toilets and refreshments available afterwards at Polhill garden centre or Badgers' Mount Toby Carvery.



*All walkers join the walks at their own risk.*

*New walkers are welcome to join any of the walks - but please telephone or email 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.*



## London Region of U3As

### Walks and Visits Programme Women's History Month March 2025

We are delighted to announce that the bookings for the programme of walks and gallery visits highlighting Women's History Month in March 2025 is **NOW OPEN**.

All events are £10 no refunds.

Click on these links to find out more or to register:

[Events - London Region of u3as Network](#)

[2025.03-LRU3A-Womens-History-Month-March-2025.pdf](#)



Women's History Day is dedicated to honouring the accomplishments and contributions of women throughout history. Celebrated on 8th March, it is part of Women's History Month in many countries.

The origins go back to the early 20th century, when women's rights activists began advocating for women's suffrage, labour rights, and equality. Over the years, Women's History Day has evolved to celebrate the diverse achievements of women in various fields such as politics, science and arts.

**BOOK EARLY  
TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT  
THIS IS A POPULAR EVENT AND  
PLACES ARE LIMITED**

#### Wednesday 12th March - Gallery Visit - Morning

The Women who Broke Barriers  
National Portrait Gallery  
11.00-13.00 capacity 10  
Guided by Dr Paul Waddams  
[This will be repeated at 14.00](#)

#### Wednesday 12th March - Gallery Visit - Afternoon

The Women who Broke Barriers  
National Portrait Gallery  
14.00-16.00 capacity 10  
Guided by Dr Paul Waddams  
[This is a repeat of the 11.00 tour](#)

#### Friday 14th March - Walk

Warring, Worthy and Wise:  
The Wonderful Women of Westminster  
11.00-12.30 capacity 20  
Guided by Caroline Mongan

#### Friday 14th March - Gallery Visit

Wonderful Women in Art at the National Gallery  
14.00-15.30 capacity 20  
Guided by Caroline Mongan

#### Wednesday 19th March - Gallery visit

Women in the Wallace Collection  
11.00-12.30 capacity 20  
Guided by Richard Cohen  
[This tour will be repeated on 22th March](#)

#### Thursday 20th March - Walk

The Women who Broke Barriers walk  
11.00-13.00 capacity 20  
Guided by Dr Paul Waddams

#### Saturday 22nd March - Gallery Visit

Women in the Wallace Collection  
11.00-12.30 capacity 20  
Guided by Richard Cohen  
[Repeat of visit on 19th March](#)

#### Tuesday 25th March - Walk

Morning Trailblazing Women of Bloomsbury  
11.00-13.00 capacity 20  
Guided by Chris Wilkins Molloy  
[This will be repeated at 14.00](#)

#### Tuesday 25th March - Walk

Afternoon Trailblazing Women of Bloomsbury  
14.00-16.00 capacity 20  
Guided by Chris Wilkins Molloy  
[This is a repeat of the 11.00 walk](#)

# Deadlines for the next publications

Note: It's the day after the General Meeting

**Newsletter 164 - 19 March**

**Bulletin 11 - 16 April**

Please send all articles to the News Editor Team (i.e. both editors)



Click here for: [Recent Newsletters | Orpington U3A](#)

*This Bulletin contains personal information. If you print it, please DO NOT leave it in a public place and dispose of it by shredding. THANK YOU*

## Interest Groups Categories

[Card and Board Games](#)

[Culture](#)

[Exercise and Outdoor](#)

[History](#)

[Language](#)

[Leisure](#)

[Music](#)

[Science & Technology](#)

[New Group News](#)

For a full list of the Interest Groups timetable please take a

**look at our webpage**

[Interest Groups Timetable | Orpington U3A](#)

**Do you have an idea?**

Then why not consider starting your own group? It's a lot easier than you think!

We will advertise it for you, offer help and advice, and arrange discussions with other members who have a similar interest. The best groups are those where everyone shares the responsibilities of running the group.

**Click**



For more information about Interest Groups

**u3a orpington**

**learn  
laugh  
live**