



Charity No 1155593

Newsletter No 147

April 2025

In this Issue

Monthly Meeting	2
Website Update	2
Summary of Activities and Outings in coming months	2-5
Membership Information	7
News from the Groups	8-11
Committee and Contacts	12
Groups Timetable	13

Welcome to the April edition of our monthly newsletter. Inside you will find reports and articles from our study/interest groups, news about future events, and general information about Swanley and District u3a. I need to remind everyone that our AGM will take place at our monthly meeting on the 2nd May. I would encourage you to come along. In addition to the formal business, Dave will be present to entertain us with one of his popular quizzes.

Now is the time to pay your annual u3a subscription if you have not already done so (I know many of you have already paid!). The cost is £20 for the year 2025/26 and there are various methods of payment. Bank transfer is our preferred option, but we are happy to accept payment by cheque or cash. Speak to Gill, our Membership Secretary, if you have any questions. Bookings will open for the South East Forum Summer School on the 10th April. This annual event takes place at the University of Chichester at the beginning of September. Details and further information can be found via our Newsletter & u3a Links page on our website at <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/newsletters/>. There is a variety of courses available - Roman History, Opera Appreciation, Philosophy, Poetry and more. You can also find out about accommodation and evening entertainment events.

Please remember to log your car registration if you use the Alexandra Suite car park. The machine is in the reception area. Alternatively, you could use the Asda car park which is free for three hours or park for free on the road after 10:00 a.m.

I hope you all enjoyed our last meeting. We were entertained in a most enjoyable and informative way by Belgium's most famous detective, M. Hercule Poirot (aka Tony Harris). We established a new record for attendance with 176 members present. You will be pleased to know that we have arranged for Tony to return next year. At our next meeting we are pleased to welcome back Ian Bevan. This time his topic will be the story of one of London's oldest theatres - the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. We can anticipate an entertaining and interesting talk.

I look forward to seeing you at our meeting on the 4th April. We start at 10:30 a.m.

John Baker Chairman

Reminder!

Please switch your mobile phone to silent mode during the meeting

Swanley and District U3A Monthly Meeting Friday 4th April 2025

At the Alexandra Suite, St Mary's Road, Swanley BR8 7BU

April 2025: Ian Bevan

From 'Nell Gwyn to Willy Wonka' - The history of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane). The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane was built in the early 1660s when Thomas Killigrew was given a patent by Charles II to put on dramas. Since then, there have been three other buildings on the site. This talk traces the history of the Theatre Royal including the productions and the characters that have graced its stage over the centuries.

Upcoming talks:

May 2025: No Speaker – AGM & Quiz

June 2025 Margaret Watson – “Life on a Harp String”.

A jam-packed talk of information and entertainment. Take a trip with Margaret as she delves into the 5000 year history of the harp. Boasting over 1400 hundred working parts, you will learn about the complex mechanism – together with light anecdotes and lots of harp playing, Margaret shows how surprisingly versatile, fun and modern this ancient instrument can be!

Nicola Teoh

WEBSITE Update (<https://swanley.u3asite.uk/>)

Groups Page: All current groups are now listed and you can contact any group leader by clicking on their name which will generate a contact form. Pages are still being updated with photos.

Events Page: This has now been updated with all forthcoming and proposed outing and events.

Newsletter and National u3a Link Pages:

There are now links here to various National and South East area u3a activities which you can partake in. One such link is to Interest Groups Online (abbreviated as IGO) which is an online u3a community that gives you the opportunity to join groups, talks and courses from the comfort of your home.

Alan Hayward

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES – During the Coming Month(s)

Notice is hereby given that the

2025 Annual General Meeting of the Swanley & District U3a

will take place at The Alexandra Suite, St Marys Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BU

On Friday 2nd May 2025.

Our nomination form for a position on the Swanley & District U3a committee is included as an attachment to this newsletter.

You can also download the form from our website <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/documents/>.

Completed forms must be returned to carolw8920@gmail.com by no later than

Friday 11th April 2025

Carol Willingham Business Secretary

Bridge Club

Hi folks, the next meeting will be on Weds 2nd April at the Howard Venue, Hextable at 10.00am. See the Bridge group page on our website for further details https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/bridge/.

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Board and Card Games

Next get together is on Monday 28th April 2025 at the Howard Centre in Hextable BR8 7LG. There is a charge of £3 which is used for hire of the room and buying games. (PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO BANK HOLIDAYS IN MAY WE WILL BE MEETING MONDAY 12/5/25 at 2pm FOR MAY GET TOGETHER).

Everybody is welcome we are a friendly bunch. We have a wide selection of games codenames, Sequence, scattergories, Yahtzee, Boogle, Crowns, UNO, cribbage, Linkee, scrabble, etc. Just come along on the day bring any games you would like to play or email me via the Board & Card group page on our website for further information (https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/board-card-games/).

Joyce Wood

Walking Group

Thursday 10th April 2025 10.00 for 10.15

Meet **Morva** at “**The Pied Bull**”, **High Street, Farningham, DA4 0DG** for a walk of along the river towards Horton Kirby, across fields to Vineyards and Charton Manor and back into Farningham village. Probably about four miles fairly flat and two stiles.

Directions: By car: Take the A20 away from Swanley. When you reach the Farningham roundabout, by the petrol station, turn right heading towards the village. At the crossroads, turn left and you will find “The Pied Bull” about half a mile up on the right. The pub has a small car park but can also park in the streets nearby.

By public transport: The nearest railway stations are at Farningham Road and Eynsford, both about 1.5 miles away.

Please contact Morva Henry via our website to let her know if you are coming and state whether you will be staying for lunch. https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking-group-as-notified/
If you are interest in our walks and wish to be added to the email distribution list then please contact me via our website as shown above.

Clive Rayner

Off the Beaten Track London Walks

Our next walk around Old Charlton and the Woolwich Dockyard area is on Tues 8th April (there are still a couple of places available) and we will be repeating it for 2nd time on Thus 1st May. Those on our email distribution list have been emailed the details.

If you would like to sign up for these walks, then please contact us via our website group page https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/london-history-walks/ or sign up at our main meeting.

Please note the numbers will take on these walks is limited to 24 for safety and logistical reason, however if demands warrant it, we will do a repeat.

Alan & John

Members on Their Own

It is good to report member numbers have improved by having meetings at Molly’s in the Elim Church in Cherry Avenue. At the last meeting we decided to change to the 3rd Thursday in the month to give a useful gap between the main U3A meeting.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 17th April with an adjusted start time of 12.15pm to help those who choose to walk to the venue.

DGC with thanks to our founder member Sheila Botterill. For more information see our website group page https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/moto-members-on-their-own/.

QUIZ DATES

Dates for this month's Quiz afternoons
(£3 per person with all profits going to the RNLI):

Tuesday April 1st - 2pm.

Thursday April 17th - 2pm.

Please join us at the **Howard Venue** if you would like to join a U3A team on either of these dates.

David Collins



MAY NEWSLETTER

For the May newsletter can you please send your articles and photos to me

*The closing date is **THURSDAY 24th April 2025***

Alan Hayward

Events and Outings

Pashley Manor Tulip Festival and visit to Tenterden

April

Thursday April 24th Leaving Hextable **9.00** Swanley at **9.10**.

In the morning we will enjoy the gardens and Tulip Festival and you can visit the cafe for coffee and early lunch as you wish.

At **1pm** we leave for Tenterden, arriving **1.30**, to enjoy some time there to explore and for lunch or afternoon tea as required. We will leave at **3.00** and should be back by approx. **4.30**.

Total cost is £37

Please sign up and pay at the March monthly meeting.



PLEASE NOTE THIS TRIP IS NOW FULL

If you need further information, please contact Penny via our website:

https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/pashley-manor-tulip-festival-vist-to-tenterden/

Penny Collins

May

City & Village tour to Romney Marsh with fish & chip lunch at the Pilot Dungeness, followed by a visit to Rye

Wednesday May 14th

Coach tour including lunch, blue badge guide and stop at a Medieval Church and an easy walk.

Cost £51



Please confirm your place and pay at the April Meeting at the latest as the trip is SOLD OUT and there is a waiting list

If you need further information, please contact Sandra via our website:

https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/visit-to-romney-marsh-and-rye/

Sandra Greenaway

June

Theatre trip to Churchill Theatre Bromley to see **Five Mistakes That Made History**

Friday June 20th

A hilarious historical storytelling show performed by historian and comedian Paul Coulter about how mistakes big & small changed the world.

Cost £20 for show Tickets.

We will travel on the 18.41 train from Swanley to Bromley South.

If you want to make your own way there, please ask **Penny** for your ticket or meet her at **7.00pm** at the theatre.



THIS TRIP IS NOW SOLD OUT

If you need further information, please contact Penny Collins via our website:

https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/churchill-theatre-to-see-five-mistakes-that-made-history/

Penny Collins

July

Tuesday July 1st William Morris, Epping Forest & Cream Tea Cruise

Arts & Crafts man William Morris was born in the Lee Valley village of Walthamstow just above the City and just below Epping Forest. An award winning gallery dedicated to his life and work is now housed in his splendid Georgian Manor house.



Our Blue Badge Guide will give you a good insight into the man before we follow the trail through the house. We then head through a slip of Epping Forest, hearing about the long history of this ancient hunting ground, as we head to the genteel old market town of Epping for free time to buy lunch.

Then it is on to Broxbourne in the Lee Valley Park for the 90-minute cruise with a cream tea served on board a comfortably appointed broad beam boat.



Cost approx. £67 depending on numbers

Note: This doesn't include morning refreshments or lunch.

Please sign up at the April meeting if you would like to go on this trip so that we can gauge numbers for a coach and fix the price.

Miriam Crump

September

Tuesday 9th September THE SUFFOLK COASTAL TRIP

Advance notice for diary planning!

This is a City and Village trip to explore the Suffolk coast, with visits to Aldeburgh and Southwold and to enjoy a fish and chip 2 course lunch at the famous Flora Tea Rooms on Dunwich beach.

We have an experienced Blue Badge guide and as you know, they have a wealth of local knowledge.

Our first stop is coffee, [included in the price] near the Orwell Bridge, where we pick up our guide. Then onto Aldeburgh where we see the famous Moot Hall and the controversial scallop sculptures by Maggie Hambling. This was the home of Benjamin Britten and remains the centre of the International Aldeburgh Festival of arts at nearby Snape Maltings.



After lunch in Dunwich we travel on to Thorpeness and Southwold, an elegant Edwardian resort. The guide will take you to one of the finest medieval churches in England –the home of 'Southwold Jack'. The day ends with free time to explore this charming seaside town.

Approximate times of leaving will be 8:45am and leaving from Suffolk at approximately 4:45pm, arriving in Swanley, subject to traffic at about 6:30pm, but I will give you more accurate times nearer the date.

COST £62

We travel right up the Suffolk coast, almost into Norfolk so the cost of the coach is a little higher. The price includes: The services of a Blue Badge guide throughout the day.

Morning coffee / tea

Fish and Chips, Dessert and a hot drink.

I will begin collecting cheques in **JUNE** so please make a note in your diaries!

If you need further information, please contact Sandy via our website:

https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/the-suffolk-coastal-trip/

Sandy Treloar

October

Friday 24th October Meal at the City View Restaurant followed by a visit to Greenwich. City View Restaurant is part of Shooters Hill Sixth form College, it's on the 4th Floor, there is a lift.

The current price for a 3 course lunch plus a mini bottle of wine or a beer is £15.75, or £13.95 for 3 courses and a soft drink.

There may be a slight increase, because of course it will be the start of a new college year.

The cost includes a cup of coffee or tea. This trip comes highly recommended.

After lunch we will be going to Greenwich for some free time.

Barbara Garrod

November

Tuesday November 25th Matinee Christmas Divas Party and Christmas lunch at the Tereza-Joanne in the Royal Docks.

Cost approx.: £69

2 course lunch with tea/coffee including coach fare.

Please sign up at the April meeting if you would like to go on this trip so we can make the booking.

Payment to be made at September meeting.

Elaine Nixon

Membership for 2025-2026 is now due!

Our new membership year begins at the beginning of April 2025 and runs until March 2026. The cost is remaining at £20.

Please note that you need to renew to continue to attend u3a meetings and activities.

The renewal process for the new year has been open since January 2025 and runs through until the start of April. Please can you renew now if you have not done so yet.

You can do this as follows:

- a) Our preferred option is that you pay your £20 renewal subscription by bank transfer.

The bank details are:

Bank: Natwest

Account number: 51170027

Sort code: 60 21 10

Account name: Swanley & District U3A

IMPORTANT When your bank asks you to insert a **reference**, please put your **surname and membership** number so we know who made the payment! (For example - **BAKER117**).

PLUS Please confirm that you have made this payment by emailing Gill Baker at gillbaker@talktalk.net If you are paying for a spouse or partner in addition to yourself, please provide both names and membership numbers in the email.

- b) If you prefer, pay by cash or cheque at one of the monthly meetings. Cheques made payable to **Swanley and District U3A** please.

Your new membership card will be available at the following monthly meeting.

Please let me know if any of your contact details have changed - address, email, phone numbers.

We hope that you will want to stay with us for another year, but if you have decided not to renew, it would be very helpful if you could let me know. You are welcome to rejoin at any time if that is the case.

I hope this covers everything – please contact me if you need any clarification.

Many thanks!

Gill Baker Membership Secretary

GROUP / EVENTS NEWS

A Murder Mystery Evening

Members of our u3a gathered in the Five Wents Hall for an evening of murder and mystery. The drama took place in a London fashion studio in the 1960's. During the first part of the evening we watched a short play which set the scene and introduced the characters – the designer, the model, the dresser, the security man, the newspaper reporter etc. A body had been discovered in the basement! Now it was time to use our detective skills. We were aided by some additional clues and the interrogations conducted by a senior police officer. We were even allowed to question the suspects ourselves.

During the interval we tucked into a fish and chip supper and attempted to identify the murderer. Soon it was time to hand in our conclusions, name the guilty party and suggest a motive. I have to admit that I would make a very poor detective. I accused the wrong person and decided that the motive was that I didn't really like him! Well done to those successful people who identified the killer. Spoiler alert! Look away now if you don't wish to know the result! It was Cassie, the young model, although she claimed it was an accident.

Congratulations to the Alternative Shadows team who acted and presented the mystery with considerable energy and enthusiasm. Many thanks to Penny and Dave for arranging an enjoyable evening.

John Baker

Bridge

We realise it can be daunting joining an existing group especially if you are learning a new game. Colin and I are happy to offer extra sessions for total beginners or a refresher, please ask if you feel this will be helpful.

This month's question:

Bidding sequence between a north/south partnership. Your opponents pass each time it is their turn to bid.

South opens 1 heart; north replies 1NT; south now jump bids to 3 diamonds.

What do you know about south's hand? What do you know about north's hand? What must north do on their next turn to bid

Answer next month.

** Reminder and answer to last month's question.

♣ K9853 ♦ AK7 ♥ Q94 ♠ J6

What will you open with this hand?

Answer next month

Assess your hand; 13 points, a 5-card club suit, otherwise it's a reasonably flat hand.

The best opening bid is 1NT – this tells your partner you have 12-14 points and an even hand. This is not quite true but you can make this bid because your 5-card suit is a lower scoring minor suit. This bid may also benefit your partnership because it makes it more difficult for your opponents to bid if they have a good hand.

In the above example you could open the bidding with 1 club but this is a less good option because your follow-up bid could be awkward depending what your partner replies.

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Walking Group – Chelsfield, Friday 14 March

Eight of us met at Chelsfield Village on a bright and chilly Friday morning. I personally was a little concerned about the weather as the day before there had been some snow and sleet. My concerns were unfounded as it turned out to be a glorious morning and not that muddy underfoot. We walked out through the village across open fields and along country lanes. A couple of times we stopped to admire the views with Canary Wharf, the City of London and the Shard visible in the distance (unfortunately the photo I took did not come out too well).



As Clive expertly guided us round, we could see that Spring was well on its way with bushes and trees sprouting new growth. After walking for about 3.5 miles, we arrived back at Chelsfield Village and some of us had lunch at The Five Bells pub which I think was named after the village church which originally had five bells.

A wonderful way to spend a Friday morning: great weather, some exercise, good company and delicious food. Thanks to all who came along and to Clive for organising. I do hope to see some of you on future walks.

Further details on the next walk around Farningham on 10 April are in this newsletter.

Sandra Evans

Antiques and Collectables

Our theme this month was ceramics. Everyone was able to find something to bring along.

Madeline dug out a rather striking vase that she bought for £1 about 15 years ago at an antique weekend trip to Peterborough. It was made by the Howard Pottery Co. between 1925 and the 1970s in Stoke on Trent. I love the bold colour and stripes – originally the red was much brighter but has faded over time.



John brought along some of his WW1 ceramics – he has quite a wide collection now. Similar to crested china, they were sold to people to commemorate places and events. These examples were used to express patriotism, and to

mark the armistice of 1918, and the signing of the peace treaty in 1919. They can be found quite cheaply – usually in the form of cups, but also tanks and memorial statuettes.

Judy's automated cigarette box was inherited from a relative. It has the words of 'Daisy Bell' ('Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do') and plays the tune as it slowly opens to offer a cigarette. Made by Crown Devon in the early 1930s, it came in other designs such as John Peel, Widdecombe Fair, and Edward V111's Coronation. Nobody had seen one before.



Tom visited Hong Kong in 1989 and took a taxi ride around the region of Macau, which is famous for its casinos. They were taken to the shop belonging to the brother of the taxi driver and purchased a framed ceramic plaque. It came with a certificate of authenticity alleging that it was from the Qing Dynasty and was dated to around 1790. Tom was told it was originally part of a much larger scene which had been damaged.

Sue has a large SylvaC vase with a squirrel for a handle, with his acorns. She purchased two of these at a boot fair in the 1980s to use to display teasels for Harvest Festival at her school. The vase has a model number showing it was made in 1959. The company started trading in 1894 and produced reasonably priced popular ceramic figures including dogs and rabbits. A very recognisable style.



Tony's pottery cars were bought in Sidcup about 20 years ago and are in the style of Capodimonte porcelain models. Since the Italian pottery closed in 1817, many companies made similar figurines in porcelain under the name of Capodimonte, and later still, labelled Capo Di Monte and made with much cheaper methods and materials.

Wendy has a collection of trinket dishes, including some Wedgwood pieces with the well-known Kutani Crane design. Kutani is an area in Japan famous for its production of early porcelain. We were intrigued by the blue edged piece with the royal crest, dated 2002, because Wendy acquired it when she worked with the team which made all the preparations for the Queen's Jubilee.



Jenni showed us an interesting soap dish which was an advertisement for Yardley English Lavender. She can't remember where it came from. The blue figure is probably Victorian and was bought in a charity shop.

Shelagh brought along two pretty trinket boxes and a pin tray made by the Lord Nelson pottery. These were purchased by her grandfather in the 1950s and given to her mother. They depict romantic scenes of a courting couple, with gilded floral motifs. Elijah Cotton started the pottery in the 1880s near Stoke on Trent and it remained a family business until the 1950s.



Audrey has some amusing porcelain bottle pourers which she bought at an antique fair. There are three in a box. They were used with 'magic cigarettes' which blew smoke when the pourer was used. They are probably German, from the 1930s.

I have a hand painted square plate, which was made at the A J Wilkinson factory in Stoke in 1933, at the time when Clarice Cliff worked there. She patented the square shape, called Biarritz, to prevent competitors copying it, and the shape was made in many different patterns and designs. This beautiful plate has the Cottage Garden design, and may have been one of Cliff's designs, but it is not signed, which is why I only paid a few pounds for it.



Gill Baker

Bowls Group

We welcome new bowlers as well as old bowlers, join us at the White Oak Indoor Bowls Centre for friendly roll-ups (not too serious) and break for tea or coffee.



Interested in giving it a go? Then enquire at our monthly meeting or contact me via our website at https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/bowls-indoors/.

Bob Mellor

Sports

Croquet is now on Tuesdays starting on 8th April

Kurling will be every Monday from 10-12 during summer months

Petanque is now on Wednesdays starting on 16th April

Bill Hammond

Swanley and District u3a Committee Members 2024/2025

			
John Baker Chair	David Collins Vice-Chair	Carol Willingham Business Secretary	Clive Rayner Treasurer
			
Gill Baker Membership Secretary	Gill Morrin Minutes Secretary	Penny Collins Social Secretary	Alan Hayward Newsletter/Website
			
Nicola Teoh Speaker Organizer	Jacky Taylor Publicity Secretary	Sandra Evans Group Co-Ordinator	Vacancy Committee Member

Contact Details

Chair	John Baker
Vice Chair	David Collins
Business Secretary	Carol Willingham
Membership	Gill Baker
Social/Outings Coordinator	Penny Collins
Group Co-ordinator	Sandra Evans
Assistant Co-ordinator	David Collins
Newsletter and Website	Alan Hayward

Website: <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/>

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Swanley u3a Groups Timetable

Group	Leader	Meeting Day
Antiques and Collectables	Gill and John Baker	3 rd Tuesday Morning
Art and Craft	Penny Collins	2 nd Tuesday Afternoon
Art Appreciation	Margaret Austin	1 st Monday Morning
Art/Painting & Drawing Art Outdoors	Gill Baker	2 nd & 4 th Tuesday Evening
Art – Looking at Art	Gill & John Baker	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
Bird Watching		Not meeting at Present
Board & Card Games	Joyce Wood	2 nd or 4 th Mon pm Howard Cen Hex
Book Group	Sue Scott & Wendy Keable	2 nd Monday pm Swanley Library
Bowls (Indoors)	Bob Mellor	4 th Thurs pm at the Whiteoak's
Bridge	Carolyn & Colin Chapman	1 st Wednesday Morning
Chess	Terry Bennet	4 th Wednesday Morning
Creative Writing	Penny Collins	1 st Thursday Morning
Croquet	Bill Hammond	Every Tues at 2pm Swanley Rec Gardens
Gardening	Sandy English	4 th Wednesday Afternoon
Geography	Penny and Dave Collins	3 rd Friday Morning
History Modern	Jackie Griffiths	4 th Tuesday Afternoon
History of London 1	John Baker	2 nd Thursday Morning
History of London 2	John Baker	4 th Thursday Morning
Kurling	Bill Hammond	Every Mon am. White Oak
Let's Speak French	Barbara Ramsey	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday Morning
London History Walks	Alan Hayward/John Baker	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
MOTO (Members on their own)		3 rd Thursday at 12.15 Elim Church Swanley
Music Making	Mark Fittock	Every Tuesday Morning
Petanque	Bill Hammond	Weds 2pm Princes Park Dartford
Photography (Digital)	Alan Hayward	2 nd Friday Afternoon
Play Reading	Penny Collins	4 th Friday Morning
Quiz Team	Dave Collins	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
Rugby-Walking & Appreciation	Alan Hayward/John Baker	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
Spanish	Ruth Wilkinson	Every Thursday Morning
Strollers		Not meeting at Present
Table Tennis	Bill Hammond	1 st & 3 rd Friday 2-3.30pm White Oak
Outings and Theatre Trips	As Notified by the Social Committee	
Word Magic on Zoom	Gill Heath	2 nd Wednesday Morning
Walking Group	Clive Rayner	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
Wine and Dine	Santha Blankley	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
Wine Tasting	Robert Brickell	4 th Wednesday Evening