



Charity No 1155593

Newsletter No 152

September 2025

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Welcome to our newsletter for the month of September. It was interesting to read the reports of the Charles Dickens walk by the London History group and the Gardening group's visit to Arnold Yoke in last month's edition. Thanks to John Baker and Sandy English for sending them in. I would encourage all groups to consider reporting on outings and activities. It can foster a real sense of belonging and group association. Why not write a paragraph to tell us what your group has been doing recently? Please remember that any items for publication

should be sent to our newsletter co-ordinator Alan Hayward.

I hope you enjoyed listening to Professor Mark Donnelly at our August meeting. He spoke of difficult times but it made me think of stories my granddad told me of the Great War and I was glad to be reminded of them. This month we are pleased to welcome back Guy Bartlett, who has spoken to us at previous meetings. This time his topic is Concorde- Supersonic Cover Up? An Air France Concorde crashed shortly after take-off from Charles De Gaulle airport in July 2000. We were told the cause was a strip of metal which had fallen from a DC-10 and burst one of Concorde's tyres. However, a new theory has emerged and the truth may be far more disturbing. Guy's talk will explore what actually happened and why Concorde was really stopped from flying in 2003. He promises something for everyone, whether you like aeroplanes or not. It should be an interesting morning.

At our last committee meeting it was noted that some members have been affected by scams, with scammers sending e mails claiming to be from friends who have had an accident or lost money or had it stolen. These e mails are usually blunt and to the point- not in your friend's usual style. If you are at all suspicious, do not reply, as this will open up other e mail addresses on your computer to the scammer. And, of course, if you get a follow-up e mail asking for money, do not send any.

Finally, can I remind you to bring your cups/mugs to the meeting? It greatly helps our team who work so hard to provide the teas and coffees each month. Our next meeting is on September 5th and I look forward to welcoming you. We start at the usual time 10.30 am.

Dave Collins Chairman

**Swanley and District U3A Monthly Meeting Friday 5th September 2025 at 10.30am
At the Alexandra Suite, St Mary's Road, Swanley BR8 7BU**

Friday 5th September Guy Bartlett talk entitled 'Concorde – Supersonic Cover Up?'

An Air France Concorde crashed shortly after take-off from Charles De Gaulle airport in July 2000. After an extensive investigation the world was told the cause was a strip of metal which had fallen from a DC – 10 and burst one of Concorde's tyres.

However, the truth is far more disturbing. Using official crash investigation reports, a new theory has emerged.

This talk will explore what actually happened on that fateful day and why Concorde was really stopped from flying in 2003. This talk will make you rethink what you thought you knew...

Guy has presented to our group numerous times before. His passion for all things aviation related results in energetic and inclusive talks. There will be something for everyone, whether they like aeroplanes or not.

Friday 3rd October Neil Sadler's illustrated talk 'Almost Death in Paradise'...The Caribbean, Pirates & Rum, sees him travelling to Trinidad & Tobago to work with the local police.

Neil spent 30 years as a police officer in Sussex and on the staff at the National Police College. He'll be looking at the reality of the well-loved TV programme "Death in Paradise". He'll also be looking at Pirates (fictional and real) Rum will also feature. Sadly, there are no samples to try!

So, sit back and let yourself be whisked across the Atlantic to the Caribbean...it may give you some ideas for future holidays.....or it might do the exact opposite.

Nicola Teoh

Newsletter & our Website (<https://swanley.u3asite.uk/>)

Please remember we DO NOT put e-mail address or telephone numbers in our newsletter.

(As per our Privacy & GDPR Policies and Website terms of use).

You can contact any Committee Member, Group Leader or Event Organiser by following the links in the newsletter or going to the appropriate page on website where a contact form is generated which you can fill in and e-mail to them.

This is for your protection as well as ours.

Our Newsletter & u3a Links Page: Besides our own newsletter this page also provides many links other to other u3a activities nationwide which if you wish you can partake in.

One such event at present is the u3a Short Story Competition 2025 (see creative writing article on page 8).

Alan Hayward

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES – During the Coming Month(s)

Bridge Club

The next meeting is on Wednesday 3rd August, 10.00am at the Howard Venue, Hextable.

Do you want to keep your brain active? Are you a keen card player? Bridge is a great way to keep the grey cells ticking over. Why not come and join us? New members welcome.

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

We restart again on Monday 22nd September 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.

Everybody is welcome we are a friendly bunch. We have a wide selection of games codenames, Sequence, scattergories, Yahtzee, Boogie, 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

QUIZ DATES

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

Tuesday September 2nd- 2pm.

Thursday September 18th -2pm

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

David Collins

Table Tennis

The next session is Friday 3rd October 3rd

This will be followed by Friday 7th & Friday 21st November and then Friday 5th December.

Please let me know if you intend to play as we do not want to run at a loss.

Croquet

Next session Wednesday 10th September when We hope to be playing a team from Swanley council (including the new mayor) – come and support us.

We will continue until October/ November (depending on the weather).

Kurling

Will continue till Monday 22nd December. We may be moving the time to 2pm in October (depending on what the majority want). We have a few vacancies if you are interested.

Petanque

Will continue till November.

Dates Fridays 3rd & 17th October 3 & 17th and Wednesdays 12th & 26th November

If you are interested in any of the above this year or next, see me at the next main meeting.

Can anyone help me? I need a small sewing job on our croquet bag as the handles are coming of does anyone have a sewing machine?

Bill Hammond

September NEWSLETTER

For the October newsletter can you please send articles and photos by Thursday 25th September to ahayward530@gmail.com

Alan Hayward



Events and Outings

TUESDAY 9th September SUFFOLK COASTAL TRIP

2 PLACES HAVE JUST BECOME AVAILABLE FOR THIS TRIP

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED (Cost £62 per person) – PLEASE CONTACT SANDY

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

Coach pick up times:

Hextable 08:30

Swanley (back of Asda) 08:40

We should leave Suffolk at approx. **16:30/45**

Arrival in Swanley will depend on the traffic, as always!



It should be a really good day out.

It's a lovely coastline with a Blue Badge guide to tell us all about this part of Suffolk.

A reminder that the trip includes morning coffee/tea and 2 course fish and chip lunch at the famous Flora Tea Rooms on the beach at Dunwich.

Do hope you enjoy the day!



Sandy Treloar

OCTOBER

WEDNESDAY 15th October: A visit to Hall Place Butterfly House

Meet at Hall Place outside the Butterfly House at 10am.

Please contact Penny (https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/a-visit-to-the-butterfly-house-at-hall-palce) if you need a lift by car or can offer a lift.

If you haven't visited the Butterfly House then this is a marvellous experience. The Conservatory has been upgraded and made into a wonderful Butterfly House with huge colourful butterflies flying past your nose or even landing on you.

Please pay on the day- £7.50. Enjoy strolling round the gardens and take tea & cake in the cafe.

Penny Collins

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 25th November Arrive 11:30am Depart 3:30pm

Tereza Joanne Matinee Christmas Divas Party at London Royal Docks

Cost: £67 (includes coach)

Enjoy the chart topping hits of the best female vocalists of the 50's to 70s in a show full of nostalgia.

Choice of meal to be selected prior to event:

Christmas Turkey Lunch with all the Trimmings OR

Vegetarian Wellington with all the Trimmings

White Chocolate and Raspberry Cheesecake with optional Cream OR

Fruit Salad with optional Cream

Tea/Coffee

Two places have become available for this event. Please advise if you would like to attend.

Payment by cheque payable to Swanley and District U3A for £67 to be made at Sept meeting.

Please let me know if you will not be at this meeting or need any further information via contact form on our website: https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a-contact-form/?contact_id=3614

Pick up times to be confirmed nearer the date.

NB This is a coach outing completely separate from our U3A Christmas Dinner.

Elaine Nixon

DECEMBER

Friday 12th December – Christmas Lunch at Pedham Place

We have made a booking for a three course Christmas Lunch at Pedham Place Golf Centre once again.

This year it will be on Friday 12th December which is the week after our monthly meeting.

We will be taking names from the September meeting or you can contact Gill via our website https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/christmas-lunch/, and you will need to pay in full by the November meeting.

The cost this year will be the same as last year: £30

You can tell me who you would like to sit with, if you have a preference, and I will do my best to accommodate your wishes.

You also need to tell me if you have any dietary needs.

I hope to have more details at the meeting. Many thanks



Gill Baker

Date for your diary

March 21st 2026- Murder Evening with Fish 'n Chips supper- Five Wents Hall, Swanley.

More information nearer the time.

MEMBERSHIP

For 2025 – 2026 – **HALF PRICE** from OCTOBER TO MARCH

PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN!

Our membership year begins at the beginning of April 2025 and runs until March 2026. The cost is usually £20. People can join at any time during the year.

From October to March, the cost for the half year is reduced to £10. Anyone who comes in September can have one meeting as a visitor and then sign up as a member from October onwards for £10.

If you know anyone who wants to join us, please tell them that they are welcome to come to any monthly meeting to see what we do before committing to membership.

If they decide to go ahead, they should fill in a form with their contact details. Forms are available from Gill Baker Membership Secretary at our meetings.

Payment can be made by cash or cheque at a monthly meeting. Cheques made payable to **Swanley and District U3A** please.

Alternatively, the £10 (half year) subscription can be paid 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 - **BAKER**).

PLUS Please confirm that you have made this payment by emailing Gill Baker via the contacts on our website <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/contact/> 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.

A form needs to be completed for each new member and returned to the Membership Secretary. The membership card(s) will be available at the monthly meeting.

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

Many thanks!

Gill Baker Membership Secretary

GROUP / EVENTS NEWS

Bridge

Do you want to keep your brain active? Are you a keen card player? Bridge is a great way to keep the grey cells ticking over. Why not come and join us? New members welcome.

This month's question:

♣ J763 ♦ KT ♥ AJ95 ♠ KQ2

Your partner has opened the bidding 1NT. Your opponent passes, what will you bid? Your partner replies 2S. What will you bid next?

Answer next month.

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

♣ ♦ KQT8764 ♥ KQ2 ♠ AJ9

You are 1st to bid. What will you open? What do you hope to bid when it is your turn to bid again?

If your hand is unbalanced always bid your longest suit first. Some players might think to make a pre-emptive bid of 3D with a 7-card suit. However, pre-emptive bids are for weak hands (5-9 points) and you have a strong hand with 15 points so open in the usual way – 1D. After your partner's reply you will want to tell your partner all about your long suit and good points so jump bid in diamonds. A possible bidding sequence might be 1D – 1S – 3D (the jump bid means I have 6+ diamonds cards and 15+ points).

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Art – LOOKING AT ART IN SUSSEX

Our journey to the south took us through Kent and into the peaceful Sussex countryside. Nine members of the "Looking at Art" group arrived at Charleston Farmhouse. Situated at the foot of the South Downs, from 1916 it was the home of the artists Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. During the following sixty years it evolved into a gathering point for painters, writers and thinkers. They were known collectively as the Bloomsbury Group. The house interior is a true time capsule. It was easy to imagine the cultural, creative and bohemian lifestyle which was once to be found here. Every room contained their art work, decorated furniture, ceramics and textiles. Every inch seemed to be painted in iconic Bloomsbury designs, even the door panels. The studio was particularly poignant. It felt as if the artist had only just left the room. Outside was a very attractive walled garden. The house is now administered by the Charleston Trust which ensures that this unique place is available for visitors.



Two of the barns have been converted into a café and an art gallery; therefore a good place for lunch and a chance to view the current Post Impressionism exhibition. It featured artists such as Van Gogh, Cezanne and Pissaro.

Our destination in the afternoon was the small church of St. Michael and All Angels at nearby Berwick. It is hidden amongst the Sussex cornfields and meadows, a beautiful location. In 1941 the Bishop of Chichester invited Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell and her son Quentin to decorate the church. The walls now display some fine murals which depict biblical stories – The Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion. They are accompanied by local farming scenes and decorative borders.



Our visit was enhanced by a talk from Andy, one of the church wardens.



At the end of the day some people returned to Swanley and some of us made our way to Lewes for dinner and overnight accommodation



The next morning we visited a gallery to see work by Vanessa Bell. It included portraits, landscapes, book cover designs, ceramics and textiles. She was truly a twentieth century ground breaking artist. The exhibition allowed us to step into her world and admire her remarkable talents.



Our next stop was in the charming village of Rodmell. We found our way to Monk's House, the former home of Virginia and Leonard Woolf. The small cottage, initially purchased as a weekend retreat in 1919, eventually became their permanent home. It was here that Virginia wrote many of her bestselling books.



She preferred to work in her Writing Lodge, a converted tool shed. It is to be found in amongst the flowers and fruit trees in the garden. There are wonderful views across the fields. She lived here, just a few miles from her sister Vanessa, until her tragic death in 1941.



And so ended our excellent trip to Sussex. It was very enjoyable and our thanks go to Gill who made all the arrangements and co-ordinated the various visits.



John Baker

Creative Writing

There are one or two places in our Creative Writing group held on the 1st Thursday of the month in the morning.

This is a relaxed group in which we share short stories, poems or personal pieces of writing we have prepared with the group.

During our meetings we have a short exercise which is always interesting and fun.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Penny Collins via the contacts on our website at https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/creative-writing/ or at our main monthly meeting.

There is currently a short story competition open to all U3A members. If you are interested in taking part see the link on our website for the rules. <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/newsletters/>

Short Story

THE LUMP UNDER THE BEDCLOTHES

My ferret was lost. Escaping was his forte but finding him was not mine. His many hiding places were ingenious. He had been found in my husband's welly, inside the drainpipe outside the back door, in grandma's hat, in a rather large vase that stood by the fireplace and even in the tumble dryer.

Today I was busy and was frantically trying to locate him in order to return him to his cage before I had to rush out to my meeting. Hunting in every likely and unlikely place I reached the bedroom and there under the duvet I saw the lump! A bumpy mass that looked strangely ferret shaped. Strangely it was very still. The little trickster was being very cunning. I crept up stealthily, knowing he had a habit of shooting out from nowhere like a furry bullet.

Then something jumped onto my back nearly knocking curiosity out of me. The ferret hung on determinedly and then peeped over my shoulder with an evil grin. Great!

But what was under the bedclothes?

Penny Collins

Swanley and District u3a Committee Members 2025/2026

			
Dave Collins Chair	John Baker 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	Susan Baugh Assisted Treasurer

Contact Details

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

You can contact any of the above committee members by going to the Swanley & District Website committee page at <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/contact/> and clicking on the appropriate name.

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	Bob Parker	3 rd Wednesday as notified in Newsletter / Website
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 Weds 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 10—12. 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)	Madeleine Opitz	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 Friday2-3.30pm 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