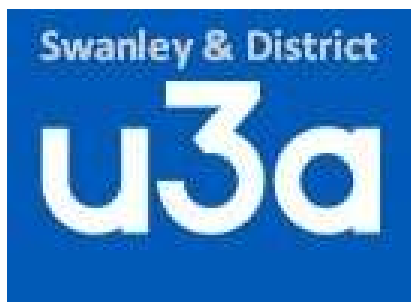




Charity No 1155593



Newsletter No 162

July 2026

In this Issue

Monthly Meeting	2
Summary of Activities and Outings in coming months	2 – 4
Membership Information	5
News from the Groups	6 – 13
Committee and Contacts	14
Groups Timetable	15

Welcome to our newsletter for the month of July. I do hope that once again you are enjoying the hot, sunny days, whether staying here or going on holiday, but please be aware of the health warnings and take precautions if the heat starts to get too much for you. Inside this newsletter you will find news about future planned events and outings, reports from some of our interest groups and general u3a information.

I hope you all enjoyed Guy Bartlett's talk at the June meeting on the History of Aviation in Kent. Maybe you will decide to visit one of the places

he recommended as a follow up to his talk. We had some success with our 'bring a friend' to this meeting with yourself and the friend, who must be a non-member, given a free raffle ticket and the usual refreshments in the hope of encouraging them to join us. Our membership has now reached 268, only 7 fewer than the 275 at this time last year. We will repeat this 'bring a friend' to the July meeting as we try to get closer to our target of 300 members and avoid having to increase our membership fee next year.

We have been told that there are places available on 2 courses at the South East u3a Forum Summer School at the University of Chichester from Monday 7th – Thursday 10th September. These courses are Spanish – Beginners and Mathematics – for life. If you are interested in either of these, more information can be found South East u3a website – see *page 2* for website address.

Ian Bevan will be returning to speak to us at the July meeting. He is a City of London guide and a Freeman of the City of London and will be speaking about Tudor London. In the 16th century many changes took place in London with new palaces, new houses and the dissolution of the monasteries. There was a big increase in population and Ian will tell us how London became a very prosperous city during this century. It should be an interesting talk and I look forward to seeing you at the Alexandra Suite on Friday July 3rd at our usual start time of 10.30 am.

ADVANCE NOTICE- Our August meeting has had to be moved from the usual **1st Friday** of the month to the **2nd Friday** and will be on Friday August 14th.

Dave Collins Chairman

Reminder!

Please switch your mobile phone to silent mode during the meeting

Swanley and District U3A Monthly Meeting Friday 3rd July at 10.30am

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

Friday 3rd July: Ian Bevan Talk: Tudor London

In the 16th century, the population of London multiplied four times and many changes took place - new palaces, the dissolution of the monasteries, new housing. This talk charts the development of London as it erupted beyond the Roman wall and became a very prosperous city.

Ian is a City of London Guide / Lecturer, Freeman of the City of London, lecturer in history at various organisations (e.g. U3A) with a particular interest in the Crystal Palace. Author of 4 books.

Friday 14th August Speaker: Sue Parker-Nutley Talk: An Actor's Life for Me'

A talk on Sue's life as a professional actress, including anecdotes, poems/monologues and a song or two - to make you smile, laugh, reminisce.

Nicola Teoh

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES – During the Coming Month(s)

WEBSITE & u3a updates

The South East u3a have their Summer School 2026 at The University of Chichester from Mon 7th to Thurs 10th September. Various Courses are now available for you to book if you are interested see <https://southeastu3aforum.u3asite.uk/2026-2/>

For those that might be interested on the main u3a website there are also the **2026 Essay Competitions** (*closing date noon Friday 31st July*) and the 2025/6 Short story competition winning stories 'Lost & Found' plus photographic competitions. For more information on these and other online activities see <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities>

Bridge Club

The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 1st July at 10.00am. If you are interested in playing Bridge, please registered your interest via the group page on our website as at the present time the group is full. https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/bridge/.

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

QUIZ DATES

There are **2 Quiz afternoons** this month.

(£3 per person with all profits going to the RNLI):

Tuesday July 7th – 2pm

Thursday July 16th – 2pm

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

David Collins



Quizzes

Walking Group

The walking group has been inactive for a few months but is restarting and there are 2 forthcoming walks:

Wednesday 22nd July

A flat walk of between 3 & 4 miles from "The Pied Bull" in the High Street, Farningham

Meet Clive at "The Pied Bull", High Street, Farningham, DA4 0DG at **10am** for a **10.15** start

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. You can park in the streets nearby.

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

If you are interested, please use the following website link to our website https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking-group-as-notified/ to let Clive know if you are coming and whether you will be staying for lunch or sign up next monthly meeting (back of hall).

Monday 17th August

A walk of between 3 & 4 miles from "The Cricketers" Meopham Green

Meet Clive at The Cricketers Meopham Green, Wrotham Road, DA13 0QA at **10am** for a **10.15** start.

Note: There is a point about half way round where people who wish to do a shorter walk may drop out.

Directions:

By car: Meopham Green is on the A227 about half way between the A2 and A20 turnoffs and is next to the windmill. If you are eating, use the pub car park otherwise there is plenty of parking around the green and you can also park in side streets.

By public transport: You can get a train from Swanley to Meopham. The pub is about 1.75 miles walk from there, but you could get a 308 or 416 bus.

If you are interested, please use the following website link to our website https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking-group-as-notified/ to let Clive know if you are coming and whether you will be staying for lunch or sign up at next monthly meeting (back of hall).

Clive Rayner

EXPLORING OTFORD

Monday 10th August 2026

Join me for a ninety minute walk around the village of Otford to explore some of the 18th century houses, the 12th century church and the ruins of the 16th century palace. Hear the stories of these historical buildings.

Meeting Points:

Swanley Station at 10:00 a.m. or

Outside **Otford Station at 10:45 a.m.**

No cost, just your journey to Otford!

There are several opportunities for lunch in the village.

John Baker

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

For the August newsletter can you please send articles and photos by **Thursday 30th July**

Alan Hayward

Events and Outings

July

Thursday 16th July **TIPTREE JAM MUSEUM AND CLACTON**

The Wilkin family first started making quality preserves in 1885 at their farm in Tiptree near Witham in Essex. They received their first Royal Warrant from King George V in 1911. Queen Elizabeth II visited in 2010 and the Warrant was renewed by King Charles III in 2025.

<https://tiptreetearooms.com/pages/tiptree-tea-room>

On arrival at the Tiptree Café you will be treated to scones, Tiptree jam and clotted cream together with tea or coffee.

Next to the café is the museum where you can follow the history of the site and watch the video that explains how the fruit is grown and illustrates how traditional preserve making continues to this day in Tiptree.



We will then continue on to Clacton-on-Sea for the rest of the day where you will be at leisure to visit the pier, stroll the promenade, browse the shops and, of course, eat fish and chips.

The coach will leave Hextable at 8.30am and Swanley at 8.40am and return to Swanley at approximately 5.30pm.

Price: £30 Further details and booking can be made at our main meeting or through our website at https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/tiptree-jam-museum-and-clacton/

Veronica Brazier

Thursday 30th July **Cobham Hall**

There still some places available for the visit to Cobham Hall on Thursday 30th July. The tour will be led by Christoph Bull starting at 2:00 p.m.

Cost: £13.20 and includes afternoon tea.

We will need to make our own way there, but car sharing and lifts can no doubt be arranged.

See me at the u3a monthly meeting on 3rd July to see if places are still available.

John Baker

August

Tuesday 4th Aug **Trip to Lewes with to visit the Anne of Cleves museum & Lewes Castle**

Known as the place of extravagant bonfire night celebrations, this compact hill-top town is given shape by its city walls and is crowned by an immense castle. Much of the original Norman structure has survived which gives some kind of scale. Overlooking the **River Ouse**, it is well worth climbing to the **Keep** as from there you can get a bird's eye view of the town's strategic position and, in particular, that vital place in English history where the Battle of Lewes was fought in 1264. This battle, where **Simon de Montfort** defeated Henry III, laid the foundation for parliamentary government.

The castle is on High Street but lower down, Anne of Cleves' house & museum is situated on Southover High Street. There are antiques shops, restaurants and other establishments, and nearby are **Grange Gardens** and **Priory Park**. It is approximately an 11 minute walk between the castle and the museum.

Cost: £26 Includes the coach and Anne of Cleves house & museum.

Coach Timings: TBC

Miriam Crump

Wednesday 5th Aug

Day at the Oval to watch a 1-day game Surrey v Kent

Dave Collins

September

23rd or 30th Day trip to Margate Date will be confirmed at the July meeting

Visit the Turner Contemporary Art Gallery with a David Hockney Sunley Window, with free admission or visit the Shell Grotto or Margate Museum or Margate Caves or Pier & Vintage Shops.

Cost £20

Date for your diary

Saturday December 5th

Murder evening with fish 'n chips supper at Five Wents Memorial Hall. It is called Murder They Wrote and is set in the 1950s.

Penny Collins

MEMBERSHIP for 2026 – 2027

Anyone who has not renewed, and who has not contacted me by Friday 5th June, has now be removed from the database as I assume that they do not wish to continue their membership.

They will no longer be eligible to attend the monthly meeting, nor any interest groups, outings or events.

However, they are welcome to rejoin at any time if their situation changes.

Prospective New Members:

Contact me via the website (see below for address) or come to a monthly meeting.

Payment methods:

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 the bank asks for a **reference**, please put the **surname and your membership number** so we know who made the payment! (For example – **BAKER117**).

PLUS They need to confirm that they have made this payment by contacting Gill Baker via the Membership page on the U3A website: <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/membership/> or by letting her know at a meeting.

If they are paying for a spouse or partner in addition to themselves, they should provide both names 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.

The membership card will be available at the monthly meeting.

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

Many thanks

Gill Baker Membership Secretary

CALLING ALL MEMBERS – PLEASE BRING A FRIEND!

We need new members!

Last month we invited you to BRING A FRIEND in June and July to our monthly meetings on the first Friday of the month.

Some of you took the opportunity to do so, and 6 new members signed up on the spot! Thank you!

So, we are trying again.....

Your friend can attend free for one meeting to see what we do, listen to an interesting talk, find out about our interest groups and meet our committee and other members whilst enjoying a cup of tea or coffee. PLUS a free raffle ticket which is drawn during the meeting.

If your friend subsequently wants to join, they can sign up on the day with the Membership Secretary or at the next meeting.

I look forward to meeting your friends!

Gill Baker Membership Secretary

GROUP / EVENTS NEWS

Bridge Group

This month's question:

North;	♣	QT74	♦	AJ42	♥	A8	♠	Q72
South;	♣	6	♦	K98432	♥	QT5	♠	963

A similar hand to last month. North to open the bidding. The partnership agreement is to use basic Acol with 3 weak 2's, Stayman and transfers. What is the most likely bidding sequence?

Answer next month

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

North;	♣	QT74	♦	AJ42	♥	A8	♠	Q72
South;	♣	K98432	♦	6	♥	QT5	♠	963

South to open the bidding? The partnership agreement is to use basic Acol with 3 weak 2's, Stayman and transfers. What is the most likely bidding sequence?

A weak hand (5-9 hcp's) with a 6-card suit can usually be opened at the 2-level (eg 2D, 2H or 2S). However, clubs is an exception to this because an opening bid of 2 clubs has a special meaning telling your partner you have 23+ points. A bid can only have one meaning to avoid confusion, hence, tempting as it is, South must pass.

With 13 hcp and an even hand North will now open 1NT.

South now has two options: pass (leaving partner in 1NT) or transfer into his long suit. With a weak hand, 6 clubs and a singleton diamond I favour the transfer option. South bids 2 spades to transfer to a minor suit (partner must then complete the transfer into the club suit).

North now completes the transfer and bids 3 clubs.

South bids pass. Final contract 3 clubs.

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Creative Writing

Rambler

What's he saying now?

Oh I don't know. I can't understand what he's on about. I'll probably have to go round and see him. He's phoned you several times then?

Yes, daily. He gets some crazy idea or notion, then becomes completely incoherent in trying to explain things to me.

He always did have a story to tell. Once he had your attention, he would ramble on and on. It was so difficult to extract oneself politely once you had lost the track!

Indeed, but this time what he's saying just doesn't make sense. It's not him complaining about the kids playing football against his fence or what Mrs So and So is up to next door.

He's not in any trouble, is he?

I'll find out and let you know. Thanks Sis, speak to you later.

Hello Dad, it's Jenny.

Jenny love – yes – I erm - just a minute – there's been more developments. Now just you listen to this. They phoned me again you know. Me, personally. The line wasn't very good and I kept saying hello? Hello? I couldn't tell whether there was someone there or not, but I tried to listen acutely and eventually

Dad, Dad, who is calling you?

What dear? Oh, well I don't know. I didn't recognise the number. Anyway, I thought I had better answer the call in case it was something important. I tried to hear what they were saying but I had just put the kettle on it's so noisy when it boils. Sometimes it just doesn't switch off so I have to keep an eye on it. I really need a new one – perhaps we could go to Asda and have a look – there's a store not far from here

Dad, you're rambling again. What is the problem with this phone call?

Oh well, because I didn't respond, as I went into the kitchen to check whether the kettle had switched off, the line went dead.

Yes, you probably need to unplug the kettle if the phone rings at the same time. Then you can concentrate on who is ringing you.

Good idea love. I'll do that next time. Who do you think it was?

It could be just a cold call, someone trying to sell you something.

No, I don't think so. It was a very posh voice. They called me by my first name. How would they know that? The name I was known by in the war. Now not many people would remember that would they? It gave me a jolt. This is going back a few years isn't it! I was only talking to Ron in the pub the other lunch time about those war years and how fearless we were then. None of this modern drone warfare in those days. True grit and determination with just sturdy boots, a rifle and helmet. Thorough training and efficient command, that's what we followed – not all techy stuff

Dad, you're rambling again – you were concerned about the phone call.

Yes, yes. Well, I'll let you know if it rings again. I'm going to put the kettle on now. Bye love. Thanks for the call.

Hi Dad, it's Jenny. Haven't heard from you for a couple of days. Everything all right?

Jenny, hello. Oh yes, there's been another development. I've received this very official looking envelope with some sort of stamp on it – looks like a crown. It's a bit smudged. Should I open it? I hope it's not some sort of bill or fine.

Surely not Dad. I don't think they fine mobility scooters parked in the wrong place. Open it and see.

Oh. Oh my! Oh I've got to sit down. Listen to this - I've been awarded a medal – a war media – that I've been entitled to and never claimed! Smudger Smith – that's me! They tried to phone me – the Ancestry Forces War Records Department. How did they know? Do you think Ron told them? Do you think he wrote to these people? We do exchange war stories. I didn't think he was listening – maybe I rambled on a bit too much.

Dad, for once your rambling has come up trumps. I'm coming round.

Delma Gould

Geography Group

The Geography Group's study in June was **Uzbekistan** – yes, I didn't know it either!

Uzbekistan is located in Central Asia, bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, Kyrgyzstan to the northeast, Tajikistan to the southeast, Afghanistan to the south, and Turkmenistan to the southwest.



With more than 37 million people, and roughly the size of Spain.

Uzbekistan is Central Asia's most populous country.

The population is predominantly **Muslim**.

About **60% of the population is aged under 30**.

The name "Uzbekistan" combines Turkic and Persian words meaning "**Land of the Free**".

Uzbekistan is one of only two doubly landlocked countries in the world, meaning it is surrounded entirely by other landlocked nations, and reaching a coastline requires crossing at least two countries. [The other is Lichtenstein].

The country features diverse landscapes, including the **Kyzylkum Desert**, which spans approximately 115,000 square miles, and the **Tien Shan Mountains**.

Uzbekistan was a central hub of the **Silk Road**, connecting China with Europe and the Middle East for over 1,500 years. Cities like **Samarkand** [which has been continuously inhabited for over 2,700 years], **Bukhara**, **Khiva**, and **Tashkent** were key trade and cultural centres.

The region was conquered by **Alexander the Great in 329 BCE**, later by the and became part of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union before gaining independence in **Mongols under Genghis Khan in the 13th century** and became part of the **Russian Empire and Soviet Union** before gaining independence in 1991. Russian rule lasted nearly two centuries.

The Aral Sea, once the fourth largest lake in the world, has lost as much as 90% of both its water (volume) and its surface area since 1961. It was once almost twice the size of Belgium. The main culprit has been Soviet irrigation projects used to nourish millions of acres of cotton fields (90 percent of the former Soviet Union's production).

The diversion of the rivers feeding the lake has resulted in intense salinization and the sea, has also suffered tremendous pollution from insecticides and chemical fertilisers. This chemical pollution and the decline in water level have killed the once-flourishing fishing industry, grounded most ships that formerly worked within the Aral's shores, and contaminated wide areas around the sea with salty lethal dust. This in turn has poisoned vegetables and drinking water, affecting the health and livelihood of the population.

High-speed rail connects Tashkent [Tashkent means city of stone], **Samarkand**, **Karshi** and **Bukhara**. The 214 miles Tashkent–Samarkand journey takes about two hours.

Tashkent features a stunning metro system known for its museum-like stations.



Uzbekistan holds rich deposits of oil, gas, gold and uranium.

The **Muruntau open-pit gold mine's** output averages 80 tons a year, and it holds estimated reserves of 170 million ounces, making it the largest gold mine by output anywhere on Earth.

Energy from natural gas and oil provides around 97 per cent of the country's needs.

Uzbekistan houses one of the oldest Quran manuscripts in the Muiy Muborak library.



The Samarkand manuscript, now kept in Tashkent.

Uzbek hospitality, known as mehmondo stik, treats every guest as a blessing.

Uzbek cuisine is renowned for dishes like **Plov**, **Samsa**, and **Shashlik**, reflecting the Country's rich culinary heritage

Uzbekistan's national dish, **Plov**, a medley of rice, vegetables, meat and spices, is widely believed to have aphrodisiac qualities.



Samsa is a savoury Uzbek pastry, typically filled with minced meat and onions, baked in a tandoor clay oven giving them a distinctive crispy layered crust.

Shashlik consists of succulent chunks of marinated meat, traditionally lamb, threaded onto skewers and grilled to perfection over hot coals.

Uzbekistan qualified for the FIFA World Cup finals for the very first time in 2026. Uzbekistan is the first Central Asian nation to qualify for the football World Cup.

At the 2024 Paris Olympics Uzbekistan won 8 Gold medals, 5 of them in boxing.

Uzbekistan, one of the youngest teams **at the 44th Chess Olympiad** held in 2022, **secured the gold medal** and Uzbekistan's, Javokhir Sindarov, at 19 years old, **became the youngest ever winner of the Chess World Cup in 2025.**

and now we know a lot!

Colin Annetts

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

A fun article by Phil Saunders, about being a numismatist and the Royal Mint 2026 challenge competition, which has now ended but challenges are still open, for those that love cryptic, GCHQ type quests.



Chasing Newton's Gold – and Coming Home Empty-Handed!

As a numismatist of many years, I have spent countless happy hours studying coins, their history and the stories they tell. So when The Royal Mint launched its “Great British Treasure Hunt 2026”, inspired by Sir Isaac Newton, I was hardly going to ignore it.

The idea sounded wonderfully simple. Buy a special £5 “The Penny Drops” coin, solve a few puzzles, follow some clues, and you might win the prize of a 250-gram bar of solid 22 carat gold.

How hard could that be?

As it turned out, very hard indeed.

The entire adventure was inspired by Sir Isaac Newton. Most of us remember Newton as the fellow who supposedly sat under an apple tree when gravity suddenly occurred to him. In reality, he was one of history's greatest scientists, mathematicians and all-round geniuses. He developed the laws of motion, transformed mathematics, studied light and optics, and somehow still found time to become Warden and later Master of the Royal Mint. Clearly he was one of those irritatingly talented individuals who would have been good at absolutely everything.

The treasure hunt cleverly linked many of its puzzles to Newton's life, work and fascination with numbers, patterns and hidden meanings. Participants moved between the coin itself, its packaging, online clues and a series of increasingly fiendish riddles.

At first, confidence was high. The opening challenges felt manageable. There were puzzles involving shields, symbols, colours, constellations and coded messages. I confidently sharpened my pencil, made a cup of tea and declared that I was “getting the hang of it”.

Several hours later I was examining a coin through a magnifying glass while muttering strange phrases to myself.

Some challenges required aligning symbols. Others involved deciphering hidden messages, spotting tiny details, interpreting mysterious diagrams and following clues that seemed to have been written by Newton after three sleepless nights and a large mug of 17th-century coffee.

The hunt unfolded through multiple levels, each introducing new ways to confuse perfectly sensible adults. Just when you thought you had solved one puzzle, another appeared that made the previous one seem straightforward. Additional side quests added even more twists and turns for those determined enough to keep going.

Yet that was part of the fun.

Thousands of people across the country were simultaneously scratching their heads, searching for clues and wondering whether they had finally cracked the code or simply lost their minds.

By the end of the adventure I had successfully deciphered and solved 22 riddles, collected four medals along the way and, perhaps through equal measures of determination and stubbornness, worked my way through every level and side quest that the hunt could throw at me. Every completed challenge felt like a small victory over Sir Isaac Newton himself – although I suspect he would have solved the entire hunt before breakfast.

And then there was the prize!

Waiting at the end of this intellectual obstacle course was a magnificent 250-gram solid gold bar. Not chocolate gold. Not gold-coloured. Actual gold.

Sadly, despite completing the challenges, the gold bar did not end up in my possession. Apparently the organisers insisted on giving it to somebody else.

Still, I count the experience as a success. I learned more about Newton, exercised parts of my brain that had been quietly resting for years, and discovered that retirement does not necessarily protect one from becoming obsessed with cryptic puzzles.

Before anyone rushes out hoping to win the gold bar, I should point out that the competition has now closed.

The good news is that the puzzles can still be played for fun. The bad news is that you will experience exactly the same headaches, confusion and desperate staring at tiny symbols that I did — only without the possibility of becoming considerably richer.

Would I do it again?

Absolutely!

In fact, I am already looking forward to seeing what challenge The Royal Mint devises for 2027. Hopefully there will be another fascinating puzzle to solve, another historical mystery to unravel and, who knows, perhaps next time the gold might find its way into the hands of a deserving numismatist from Swanley U3A.

And finally, if there are any other numismatists (coin collectors) lurking within our U3A membership, please do get in touch.

It would be wonderful to exchange knowledge, stories and collecting experiences with like-minded enthusiasts. Besides, my family have become remarkably skilled at changing the subject whenever I mention mint marks, die varieties or commemorative £2 coins.

It would be nice to find someone who actually wants to hear about them!

Onto another quest!

Thanks for reading.

Phil Saunders

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	Vacant 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/>

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are of a general nature and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Swanley and District u3a or any part of The Third Age unless specifically stated. All rights reserved, any reproduction without permission is prohibited.

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 Tuesday /Wednesday as notified in Newsletter / Website
Board & Card Games		Not meeting at Present
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 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