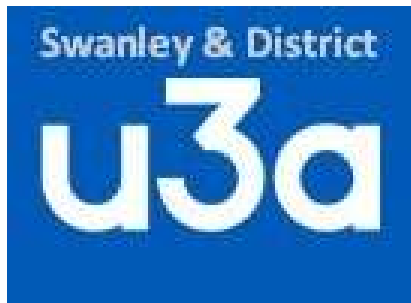




Charity No 1155593



Newsletter No 163

August 2026

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Welcome to our newsletter for the month of August. 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. The newsletter is our main channel of communication with members. I hope it continues to be an interesting and enjoyable read.

I hope you all enjoyed Ian Bevan's talk at the July meeting on Tudor London. It was a century of great change and it's hard to imagine the city with so few people in it compared to today.

We again 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 276, only 1 less than the 277 at this time last year. I am pleased to note that 27 of you are new members this year. You are all very welcome. We will repeat this 'bring a friend' to the August meeting as we try to get to our target of 300 members and avoid having to increase our membership fee next year.

We have unfortunately had to cancel the proposed trip to Margate as there was not enough interest to make it viable. Those of you who had booked in have been offered an alternative trip to Rye and Winchelsea. Please see Penny's note in the 'Events and Outings' section inside this newsletter.

Our speaker at the August meeting will be Sue Parker-Nutley. The title of her talk is 'An Actor's Life For Me'. She has asked me just to introduce her at the meeting and leave the rest to her! It should be an interesting morning. Can I also please remind you to bring your own cup to the meeting as this makes it much easier for the team providing the teas and coffees.

PLEASE NOTE that the meeting will be on the second Friday this month so will take place on **FRIDAY AUGUST 14th** at our usual start time of 10.30am. I look forward to seeing you there.

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 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.

Friday 4th September Speaker: Melanie Gibson-Barton

Talk: Murder, Madness and Mayhem – The Belgian Royal Family

For a monarchy that's only been in existence since 1830, there's a lot to tell, says Melanie.

Nicola Teoh

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES – During the Coming Month(s)

WEBSITE & u3a updates

Bridge Club

The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 5th Aug 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.



Quizzes

After consulting with those of you who attended my last quiz, we have decided to put the cost up to £4. I have been running these quizzes for several years now and this is my first ever price increase. I hope it will not put any of you off joining us. Any profits will continue to be given to the RNLI.

Tuesday Aug 4th – 2pm

Thursday Aug 20th – 2pm

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

David Collins

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

Walking Group

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's a point 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

Members On Their Own (MOTO)

Please note we now have a new venue for our meetings:

Swanley Bowls Club Garrolds Close Swanley BR8 7BF

First meeting will be on Thursday 20th August at 11.45.

Madeline Opitz

Off the Beaten Track London Walks

Having had a break during the summer to research new areas to walk we are restarting our walks on in September and the first one will be to Hammersmith and Chiswick in West London.

We have 2 dates **Thurs 17th and Tuesday 22nd September**. Details will be e-mailed out to those on the distribution list. If you would like to be added please sign up at our next monthly meeting or via the website at: https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/london-history-walks/

Alan Hayward / John Baker

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

*For the September newsletter can you please send articles and photos by **Thursday 27th August***
Alan Hayward

Events and Outings

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: Includes the coach and Anne of Cleves house & museum.**

COACH PICK UP TIMES Hextable 09.00 Swanley 09.15

Miriam Crump

Wednesday 5th Aug Day at the Oval to watch a 1-day game Surrey v Kent

If you are joining me on this trip, please meet at Swanley Rail Station at 9.30.

Waterloo and Charing Cross Stations are closed on this day so we will travel on the 9.48 to Victoria and then catch either the 36 or 185 bus to the Oval.

Dave Collins

September

Wednesday 23rd Day trip to Margate

This has had to be cancelled as not enough of you had booked in to make it viable.

Those on the list who are going to Rye and Winchelsea on September 29th instead please see Penny at the meeting.

Penny Collins

October

Thursday 22nd COBHAM HALL TOUR

I have arranged another opportunity to visit Cobham Hall for a tour led by Christoph Bull. It will be on Thursday 22nd October at 2:00 p.m.

Cost: £13.20 which includes a cream tea.

We will need to make our own way to Cobham. It takes about twenty minutes by car.

To book your place or ask any questions see me at the next u3a meeting or contact me by email at https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/cobham-hall-visit/

John Baker

THEATRE TRIPS

Following the register of interest for theatre trips at the last meeting I would advise that I was unable to secure any group tickets for To Kill A Mockingbird as they would not hold the tickets for long enough to enable payment.

I can confirm that I have reserved tickets for the following productions at The Churchill Theatre, Bromley:

Wednesday 7th October at 7:30pm: High Society Churchill Theatre

Direct from the sell-out season in London's West End and starring Helen George from Call The Midwife. Billed as the most swell party of the year.

Tickets: £60.98 To be paid at the meeting on 14th August by cheque or via bank transfer.

Wednesday 28th October at 7:30pm: Christmas Carol Goes Wrong Churchill Theatre

Another sell out West End smash hit from the company behind The Play That Goes Wrong.

Enjoy a night of pure escapism as The Cornley Amateur Drama Society bring chaos, comedy and joy in a disastrous take on a much loved classic.

Tickets: £49.00 To be paid at the meeting on 14th August by cheque or via bank transfer.

Please let me know if you would like to come to either of these productions.

Travel details for both trips to be confirmed.

Payment must be made by 14th August but if this is not possible and you would like a seat reserved, please let me know ASAP via our website at:

https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/church-theatre-trips-in-october/

Elaine Nixon

January

23rd January Dinner Ladies at the Churchill Theatre

I have reserved some seats in the stalls at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley for Dinner Ladies on Saturday 23rd January at 2.30.

It's one of three performances there before it goes on tour.

Les Dennis is playing the handyman's role.

Tickets: £54

We will need to meet in the theatre foyer at 2pm.

Please bring your cheque to the next meeting on 14th August.

If this is not possible and you would like a seat reserved, please let me know ASAP via our website at https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/dinner-ladies-at-the-churchill-theatre/

Barbara Gorrod

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 – Please encourage friends and family to join us!

Our membership year began at the beginning of April 2026 and runs until March 2027.

The cost is **£20**.

Thank you to all those people who have renewed or who have joined for the first time this year. It means that our organisation will be financially viable for 2026-2027.

We have asked our group leaders to remind their members that they should have renewed by now, and their membership card should be brought along as evidence of this. If someone has already paid, they should collect their card from me at the monthly meeting. If not, please contact me at the monthly meeting or via the website.

Anyone who does not renew, 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 they contact me.

We are still looking for new members

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

If they decide to go ahead, they can fill in a form with their contact details. Forms are available from me at a monthly meeting, or by contacting me via the Membership page on the U3A website:

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

Thank you

Gill Baker Membership Secretary

GROUP / EVENTS NEWS

Bridge Group

This month's question:

North;	♣	A	♦	AKJ4	♥	KQJT7	♠	KQ6
South;	♣	T87	♦	Q532	♥	A652	♠	93

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?

Answer next month

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

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

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?

With 13 hcp's and a balanced hand (no 5+ card long suit, no singleton, no void) North opens 1NT.

The most outstanding features of South's hand are that the hand is very weak (5 hcp's), and it has a long 6-card suit. It looks as though 1NT could be a tricky final contract so South decides to direct his partner to transfer to a minor suit. To do this South's bid is 2S.

In reply, North must bid 3C. (North must not bypass 3C and bid 3D, he doesn't know which long minor suit South holds and disaster looms if he does so.)

South now corrects to 3D. North then passes. Final contract 3D.

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Birdwatching Group

On Wednesday 28th July Five members attended The Old Lodge Nature Reserve in Ashdown Forest

Birds seen included:

Redstart	Tawny Owl	Robins	Song Thrush	Blackbirds	Stonechats
Blue Tits	Crows	Jay	Great Spotted Woodpecker	Linnets	Goldfinch
Woodpigeon	Stock Doves.				

Birds Heard

Chiffchaffs Siskin.

Bob Parker

Walking Group Farningham Village – Weds 22nd July

The Walking Group met at The Pied Bull in Farningham Village on a beautiful sunny morning, fortunately a little cooler than it has been lately. 17 of us, including some new Swanley U3Aers, and led by Clive Rayner, headed out for a circular walk via Horton Kirby of just over 3.5 miles.



Following some of the River Darent Walk/Trail, we walked alongside the river for much of the time shaded by trees and stopped a couple of times to try and spot small fish swimming in the beautifully clear water.

Wildflowers were blooming and I saw a few red poppies and many thistles but unfortunately, I could not name the others. Blackberries were starting to ripen and I saw a couple in our group sampling them as we went along. Many butterflies were also seen. We passed a couple of cricket pitches and the only thing missing was the sound of leather on willow and shouts of "out!".

At one point we saw a bird of prey sitting on a branch high up in a dead tree and I was told later that it was a buzzard. I also heard later that somebody in our group saw a rabbit scuttling off into the undergrowth.



We reached Horton Kirby where we had a view of the weir and admired the baskets and planters outside some of the houses in the village. We then turned and started on the walk back via Westminster Fields and along the other side of the river which brought us back to The Lion Hotel and Farningham Village.



We are lucky that we live in or near the Garden of England and had the weather to enjoy it. All in all a lovely way to spend some time. An easy walk through the countryside, two pretty villages, great company and my ploughman's lunch back at the Pied Bull was pretty good too!

Thanks to Clive Rayer for organising the walk, leading us and booking some of us in for lunch at The Pied Bull.

I hope to see some of you on the next walk in August.

Photos by Dave Pearson, Alan & Sandra

Sandra Evans

Geography Group

Some Interesting Facts about the Netherlands from the Geography group:

- Netherlands not 'Holland' – the Netherlands consists of 12 provinces, and Holland is an area made up of two provinces. Historically, Holland was the area that contributed the most to the Dutch economy thus becoming a common name for the entire country.
- The Netherlands has a very high population density – with a total population of about 18.3 million people and a land area of 13,019 sq. miles – it has a population density of 1,417 people per square mile. [UK 750 per square mile].
- The Netherlands is the lowest-lying country in Europe – 26% of the Netherlands is below sea level. and some 60% of the population is living 16' 5" below.
The lowest point is 22 feet below and Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport is 16' 5" below.
- The Netherlands is the second-largest exporter of vegetables in the world after China.
- The first stock market in the world was invented by Dutch legislators in 1602 as a means of funding the Dutch East India Company.
- There are over 22 million bicycles in the Netherlands and only 18 million residents. Over 100,000 bikes are reported stolen each year in the Netherlands.
- Between 90 and 93% of the population can speak English.
- The Dutch are the tallest nation in the world with an average height of 5' 9". and Dutch men the tallest globally at an average of 6' 0".
- There are over 1,000 windmills in the Netherlands.
- The Dutch produce around six million souvenir clogs (or klompen) each year.
- Almost 80% of the world's flower bulbs come from the Netherlands. Around two billion tulips leave the country each year. Tulips aren't native to the Netherlands they were imported from Türkiye and in the 16th century and in the 1630s, tulip prices rose until bulbs cost as much as houses!
- The Netherlands is the world's second-biggest beer exporter after Mexico, with brands such as Heineken, Grolsch, and Amstel.
- Gin was invented by the Dutch in the 16th. century. The term 'Dutch courage' allegedly derives from when gin was used to gain bravery during the Thirty Years' War.
- The Dutch turned carrots orange. For centuries, almost all carrots were yellow, white, or purple however, in the 17th century, Dutch growers cultivated them as a tribute to William of Orange.
- CDs, DVDs, and Blu-Ray were all invented in the Netherlands Philips created the cassette in 1963 and then worked with Sony to replace it with the CD. In 1997, Philips created the DVD to replace the VHS, which later evolved into the Blu-ray disk.
- Coffee shops in the Netherlands are permitted to sell cannabis (hash and marijuana), but there are strict toleration criteria. As of 2012, they are not permitted to sell hard drugs, sell cannabis to minors, advertise drugs, or sell large quantities (over 5g of cannabis) in a single transaction.
- The Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalize same-sex marriage. Since 1 April 2001, it has been possible for two men or two women to marry in the Netherlands and over 7,420 couples have got hitched. Today, same-sex marriage is possible in 39 countries. [UK 2014]

Colin Annetts

Digging4Cake Gardening Group

This month 30 of the Digging4Cake Gardening Group visited Tenterden and Gt Dixter in Northiam by coach.



First Tenterden for a stroll down the lovely High Street with its individual cafes and shops and enough time to sample the tea and cake.

Then on to Gt Dixter

The famous house and garden of Christopher Lloyd who devoted his lifetime to creating one of the most experimental, exciting and constantly changing gardens of our time.

There was so much to look at. The sunken garden with its water lilies surrounded by every plant you could think of. The long border was so colourful and buzzing with bees and butterfly's.



Time for lunch in the outdoor cafe and a chance to browse round the shop and buy some plants of course.



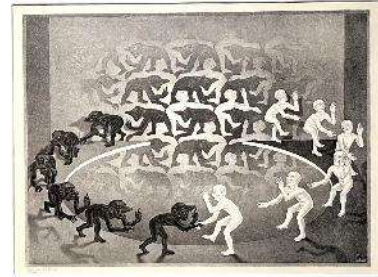
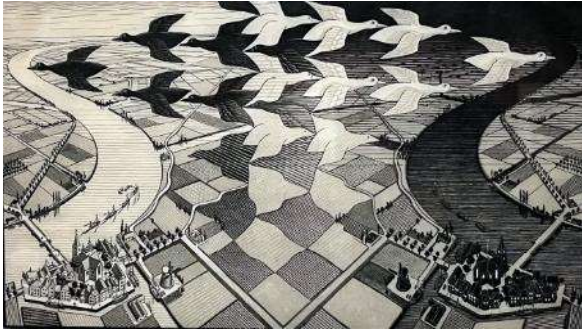
The weather was kind to us. A bit overcast but warm.

A good day had by all

Sandy English

Looking at Art MAURITS ESCHER EXHIBITION

Members of the Looking at Art Group travelled to Somerset House to visit an exhibition of the work of Maurits Escher (1898-1972). If you are not familiar with his name, you will, no doubt, have seen his pictures. The Dutch born graphic artist produced numerous iconic images. This was a rare opportunity to view his work in London. His impossible constructions, tessellations and geometric designs were produced through the use of wood cuts, lithographs and mezzotints. He had studied architecture as a young man and, consequently, his pictures are often greatly influenced by mathematics. The exhibition rooms were filled with examples of his original work and some interactive displays. Escher is a difficult artist to summarise, print maker, mathematician? He once said, "I often seem to have more in common with mathematicians than with my fellow artists."



It was an interesting and enjoyable morning. You can visit the exhibition until 6th September. I would certainly recommend it.

John Baker

Antiques and Collectables

This month our subject was old photos. Most people brought along family photos from their own collections – some were posed in studios; others were holiday snaps or photos taken at home by budding photographers.



A fascinating look back into past lives. Studio portraits were expensive and were a symbol of social status. We learned that in



the earliest portraits, people had to stand or sit still for up to 30 minutes, which is why they are so often shown leaning on chairs.

To keep children still, mothers would be hidden behind chairs or under material, so they could grip them. Another method was to put a metal stand through the clothing to provide a rigid support.



Smiling was considered undignified, which is why they always look solemn. In Victorian portraits, it was common to include deceased children, as the only way to preserve their memory.





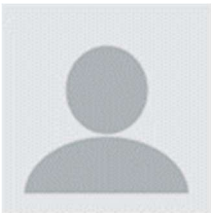
Far removed from today's easy snapping on mobile phones!

Gill Baker

Photos from Clacton Outing



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/>

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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 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)	Madeline Opitz	3 rd Thursday at 11.55 White Oaks Centre 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