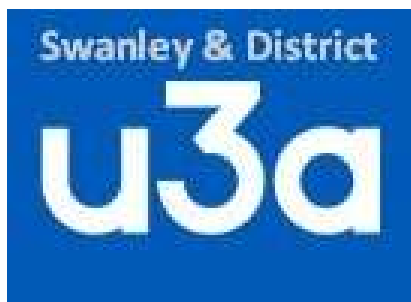




Charity No 1155593

Newsletter No 164

September 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 – 10
Committee and Contacts	11
Groups Timetable	12

Welcome to our newsletter for the month of September. Inside you will find news of future planned events and outings, reports from some of our interest groups and general u3a information.

It looks like we might be coming towards the end of the very hot weather. I know we need some rain, but as a cricket fan I am hoping for some more warm dry days during the last month of the cricket season in September. Amazingly when seven of our members joined me on a trip to the Oval in August to watch Surrey play Kent, the start

was delayed for 15 minutes because of a bit of light rain. We were happy to sit in it and wait for the sunshine that followed to enjoy a good day's play. It was also good to look at Alan Hayward's photographs of the play that he displayed at the August monthly meeting, capturing shots and flying stumps (see *page 10*) as well as any professional cricket photographer. Thank you, Alan.

I am pleased to report that our 'bring a friend' to the monthly meeting has helped increase our membership to 289, compared to just 277 at this time last year, and 36 of you are new members, compared to just 16 last year. You are all very welcome and we will continue with the 'bring a friend' to the September meeting. If you bring a friend you will both receive a free raffle ticket and the friend will attend free of charge and will be able to join at the October meeting at the reduced cost of £10 to cover the rest of the membership year until April 2027.

I hope you all enjoyed Sue Parker-Nutley's talk at last month's meeting. Several of you have spoken warmly of an entertaining and informative mix of Sue's experiences as a actress and songs. At the September meeting we are pleased to welcome back Melanie Gibson-Barton, who has given us a number of talks in the past. Her talk this time is entitled 'Murder, Madness and Mayhem- The Belgian Royal Family'. Melanie says, 'for a monarchy that's only been in existence since 1830, there's lots to tell'. It should be an interesting morning and I look forward to welcoming you on Friday September 4th at our usual start time of 10.30am.

Dave Collins Chairman

Reminder!

Please switch your mobile phone to silent mode during the meeting

Swanley and District U3A Monthly Meeting Friday 4th September at 10.30am

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

Friday 4th September Speaker: Melanie Gibson-Barton

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

Melanie has visited our u3a many times and we welcome her back to speak about the Belgian Royal Family. She says that for a monarchy that's only been in existence since 1830, there's a lot to tell!

Friday 2nd October Speaker: Phillip Caine

Talk: Barrow to Baghdad and Back Again (my career story)

Philip's work has taken him to many countries around the world, the last 10 years of which were spent in the Middle East. Since retiring in 2015, he has become a NOVELIST & GUEST SPEAKER and will tell us how a career that began in Barrow in Furness, ended in Baghdad.

Nicola Teoh

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES – During the Coming Month(s)

WEBSITE & u3a updates

Bridge Club

The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 2nd Sept 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.

Cost £4

Tuesday Sept 1st – 2pm

Thursday Sept 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

Walking Group

Tuesday 8th September

Meet Morva Henry at Crockenhill Village Hall car park BR8 8LT at 10.00 for a 10.15 start

A flat walk of between 4 and 5 miles. Please contact Morva via our website at https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking-group-as-notified/ to let her know you are coming and to say whether you will be staying for lunch at "The Chequers" after.

Clive Rayner

Birdwatching Group

Wednesday 16th September

Stodmarsh Nature Reserve

Meeting in the car park at 10am.

For more details see https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/bird-watching/

Bob Parker



Off the Beaten Track London Walks

Around the Old villages of Hammersmith and Chiswick in West London.

The walks on **Thursday 17th** and **Tuesday 22nd September** are now both **FULL**.

We will be doing the walk for a 3rd time – date to be confirmed.

Details will be e-mailed out to those on the distribution list that couldn't make the original dates.

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

Table Tennis

This is resuming on Friday 18th September

Anyone interested in playing please speak to me at the back of the hall at our next monthly meeting.

Bill Hammond

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

*For the October newsletter can you please send articles and photos by **Thursday 24th September***
Alan Hayward

Events and Outings

September

Those who are going to Rye and Winchelsea on September 29th, pick up times are:

Hextable Post Office- 9.15

Swanley ASDA Bus Stop- 9.25

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

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 This trip is now **SOLD OUT**

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 This Trip is now **SOLD OUT**

Please note that payment has been made for both theatre trips and we are now unable to give any refunds.

We will meet at Swanley Station, exact timings to be confirmed. Please let me know if you intend to meet at the theatre. https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/church-theatre-trips-in-october/

Thank you for your support.

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.

Cost: £22

Penny Collins

SAVE THE DATE!

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT PEDHAM PLACE ON FRIDAY 11th DECEMBER

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 11th December which is the week after our monthly meeting.

We will be taking names from the October meeting, and you will need to pay in full by the November meeting. If you are not able to attend the October meeting but would like to put your name down, please contact me via the U3A website. <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/membership/>

The cost this year will be: £32 for three courses

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 details of the menu at the October meeting.

Many thanks

Gill Baker

MEMBERSHIP for 2026 - 2027– HALF PRICE FROM OCTOBER TO MARCH

PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR FRIENDS TO JOIN!

Our membership year begins at the beginning of April 2026 and runs until March 2027. 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 or via our Membership page on the U3A website: <https://swanley.u3asite.uk/membership/>

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

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.

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

A HISTORY WALK IN OTFORD

Twenty four of our members recently joined me on a short history walk around Otford. The village has a generous number of seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings to admire. We stopped to view the famous duck pond. It once provided a water supply to the local people.



The church of St. Bartholomew boasts a remarkable collection of chandeliers. Their light creates a magical atmosphere every Christmas. There are two imposing memorials from the 1700's for two brothers from the wealthy Polhill family.



The nearby ruins of the Archbishop's palace reflect a time when Otford was frequented by clerical dignitaries and royalty. It is strange to imagine that the solitary tower was once part of a building which rivalled Hampton Court in size and splendour. Naturally, many of the old village houses have been altered and refurbished over the years.



They tell the story of a thriving Darent Valley village. Our final stop was at the village school (opened in 1806). Mr. Richard Hoff became the headmaster in 1878 at the age of twenty three. He stayed for forty one years! The large house next door was once the headmaster's home. They knew how to look after teachers in those days!



Look out for further history walks in the villages of the Darent Valley.

John Baker

Bridge Group

This month's question:

North; ♣ A6 ♦ J74 ♥ KJT76 ♠ Q52

Your opponent (West) has opened the bidding 1D. It's North's turn to bid. What are his bidding options.

Answer next month

** Reminder and answer to last 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 Acoll with 3 weak 2's, Stayman and transfers. What is the most likely bidding sequence?

First assess the hands. South has 6 hcp's and an even hand. So he opens the bidding with a pass.

North has 23 hcp's. An exceptional hand. North ignores the shape of his hand as it is important to tell South how strong his hand is. There is a special opening bid for extremely strong hands. North opens 2C.

Once South's heart has calmed down, he struggles to remember his reply. With 0-7 hcp's he has a special reply of 2D. (This bid is nothing to do with his suits but merely to tell his partner roughly how many points he has).

With 23 hcp's North hopes his team can find a suitable game contract. Now is the time to start exploring the shape of his hand. With a 5-card heart suit he bids 2H.

South also likes hearts with a 4-card suit. South also knows his team has a minimum of 29 hcp's. Plenty of points for a game contract so he bids straight to 4H.

Final contract – 4H.

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Arts and Craft Group

The art and craft group have been busy. Box and basket by Pam Cole



Penny Collins

Digging4Cake Gardening Group

Titsey Place House and Gardens, Oxted, Surrey

The estate was originally bought in 1534 by Sir John Gresham, of the famous London Merchant dynasty.

Some of the group visited the house, led by guides, and we were given a lengthy history of past and present occupants. The house contains many pieces of beautiful furniture, including Chippendale chairs – sadly we had to stand.



Large parts of the gardens were not at their best, suffering from lack of rain, like most of our own gardens. The kitchen gardens fared better and include apples and pears, which are used for juicing and sold in the tea room.

Dahlias are also a feature in the kitchen garden and looked magnificent.

Tea and cake were taken in the pretty conservatory before our journey home.

Pat Buss

Creative Writing

Penny always gives an interesting theme for our writing. I chose to turn this dialogue into an alphabetical conversation.

THE NEXT MORNING (A Conversation)

Are you awake? she quietly asked.

But it's still dark, he answered.

Cup of tea?

Do you think you could ask me later?

Entirely up to you.

For what it's worth, thanks for asking.

Good time last night.

Ha, are you serious?

I just wanted to say I enjoyed it, that's all.

Jolly good time indeed.

Kind of you to stay.

Lovely of you to invite me.

Made it sort of special.

No doubt about it.

On your birthday as well.

Please don't remind me.

Quite a celebration.

Really, really remarkable.

Shame it had to end.

The time of my life.

Unfortunately, you'll have to leave soon.

Very well, if you insist.

Why don't you call me later?

eXactly what I was thinking.

You could come back tonight and we could do it again.

amaZing! To study the stars in the night sky through your telescope. It's what astronomy is all about.

J D Baker

Cricket at the Oval Weds 5th August



Bowling and Caught One-Handed



Bails Dislodged

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		Inactive
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