Swanley & District u3a



Charity No 1155593

Newsletter **No 166** **November 2026**

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Welcome to our newsletter for the month of November. As always inside you will find news, information and reports from our Swanley and District u3a. We are always grateful to receive items from the various interest/study groups. This newsletter is very much produced by our members for our members. Please send anything you would like to be included to Alan Hayward.

Barely a month after the official end of summer, the clocks have gone back, we have returned to Greenwich Mean Time and the nights are drawing in. Never mind, it will soon be Christmas! I should remind you that our u3a Christmas lunch at Pedham Place will take place on Friday December 11th, one week after our December monthly meeting. It is not too late to book in. If you would like to join us, please make sure you pay Gill Baker for the meal and give her your menu choices.

I am pleased to report that we now have 297 members and further enquiries have been made, so we have almost reached our target of 300. We will continue with our 'bring a friend' meaning that if you bring a friend to the monthly meeting, you will both receive a free raffle ticket, the friend will attend free of charge and will be able to join if they wish, paying our reduced fee of £10 to cover the rest of the membership year until April 2027.

Now for a request. One of those attending our September meeting was taken ill during the morning. Fortunately they have made a full recovery and we very much hope that this never happens again to any of us. But to be prepared, we think it is sensible to ask you all to please put details of an emergency contact on your membership card and always bring the card to the meeting. For the same reason it would also be good to have emergency contact details on your card when attending meetings of our groups.

I hope you all enjoyed Philip Caine's talk at last month's meeting. He has certainly led an eventful life and entertained us for 45 minutes without any notes. Very much a man whose glass is always half full, not half empty! One or two of you did report that it was difficult to hear some of his talk at the back despite him using a microphone. We are looking at our microphones to see if we can put this right. This month our guest speaker is Paul Barwick with a talk entitled 'The White Mouse Nancy Wake- A Truly Remarkable Story'. Nancy was a highly successful secret agent who became the Nazi's most wanted female spy of the war, naming her 'The White Mouse' due to her amazing ability to escape their clutches. It should be an interesting talk but Penny and I will be taking our greyhound away to somewhere quieter to avoid the loud bangs of fireworks at this time of year so will not be at the meeting. It will take place at the Alexandra Suite on Friday November 6th starting at 10.30 and John Baker has kindly agreed to lead the meeting. He's back again! I hope you enjoy the morning and look forward to seeing you all again next month.

Dave Collins Chairman

Reminder!

Please switch your mobile phone to silent mode during the meeting

Swanley and District U3A Monthly Meeting Friday 6th November at 10.30am
At the Alexandra Suite, St Mary's Road, Swanley BR8 7BU

Friday 6th November Speaker: Paul Barwick

Talk: The White Mouse Nancy Wake – A Truly Remarkable Story

This is the remarkable true story of a highly successful secret agent of the Special Operations Executive who lived with the daily threat of death at the hands of the Gestapo during World War 2. Her incredible courage and steely resolve provide an awe inspiring tale of one woman's fight against evil and injustice. We recall her life from humble beginnings to becoming the Nazi's most wanted female spy of the war.
The Gestapo named her 'The White Mouse' due to her amazing ability to escape their clutches. She became one of the most decorated Allied Secret agents of the war. We explore her life, lived to the full, and salute her tremendous bravery.

Friday 4th December Speaker: Peter Woodley

Talk: Behind the Scenes at the BBC (with Xmas additions

His occupation and career will all be reviewed during his talk.

Nicola Teoh

Website

We are in the process of updating various pages on our website, so they maybe times when it's not available to view but these will only for short spells.

For those that are interested there are many free online talks and workshops which all u3a members can access through their memberships. You can find details on these on the main u3a at:
https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES – During the Coming Month(s)

Bridge Club

The next monthly meeting is on Wednesday 4th November 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

Rugby Appreciation Group

The group is meeting up again during November at various members houses to watch some of the matches in this year's Nation Championship. The first get together will be for the England v Australia game on Sun 8th followed by the England v Japan game on Sat 14th and finally the England v New Zealand game on Sat 21st. If you would like to join us for any of these matches, please contact us via the Rugby Appreciation group page on our website or speak to us at the November monthly meeting. **https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/rugby-appreciation/.**

Alan Hayward/John Baker

Walking Group

Thursday 12th November 10.00 for 10.15

Meet Clive at "Five Bells", Church Rd, Chelsfield, BR6 7RE for a walk of between 3 and 4 miles.

Directions by car: From Orpington take the A224 [Court Rd/Orpington by-pass] towards Sevenoaks, after about two miles take the left turn signed 'Chelsfield Village' and find the pub on the corner in the village. Park in the car park if booking lunch otherwise use street parking.
By public transport: Bus R3 passes outside, Chelsfield Rail Station is about one mile away.

Please contact Clive via our website at **https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking-group-as-notified/** to let him know you are coming and to say whether you will be staying for lunch.
Or sign up at the back of the hall at our November monthly meeting

Clive Rayner

London Off the Beaten Track Walk

We have a new walk starting from Turnham Green Station going through Turnham Green, Chiswick Gardens, Sutton / Grove Park and Strand on the Green to Kew Bridge Railway Station (3 miles):

The walk take in 3 of the 4 medieval villages that make up present day Chiswick (we went through Chiswick village on the Hammersmith & Chiswick walk).

Proposed Dates are Weds18th November and Thurs 3rd December

Details have been e-mailed out to those on the distribution list.

If you would lie to be added to the e-mail distribution list 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

Quiz Dates



There is only **1 Quiz afternoon** this month.
Cost: £4 with any profits given to the RNLI.

Thursday November 19th – 2pm

Please join us at the **Howard Venue** if you would like to join a U3A team on this date.

David Collins

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

For the December newsletter can you please send articles and photos by ***Thursday 26th November***

Alan Hayward

Events and Outings

December

Saturday December 5th



Murder evening with fish 'n chips supper

Venue: Five Wents Memorial Hall.

It's called: **Murder They Wrote** and set in the 1950s.

Cost: £22

There are still a few places left **Book at main meeting or via our website at:**

https://swanley.u3asite.uk/u3a_events/murder-mystery-evening/

Please arrive between 7.00 and 7.30pm

Make sure you bring your own drinks, cutlery and sauces

Penny Collins

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT PEDHAM PLACE ON FRIDAY 11th DECEMBER

PLACES STILL AVAILABLE – DON'T MISS OUT!

We still have some places for the three-course Christmas Lunch at Pedham Place Golf Centre.

This year it will be on Friday 11th December which is the week after our monthly meeting.

You will need to pay in full by the November meeting.

If you are not able to come to the meeting but want a lunch place you can contact me via our website. **https://swanley.u3asite.uk/membership/**

The cost this year **£32**

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.

The table plan will be at the December meeting and at the lunch.

If you find that you can't come, I would be grateful if you could let me know by 26 November as I have to confirm numbers with the venue by this date.

I also need to have your menu choices – see below.

I hope to see you at the meeting.

U3A CHRISTMAS LUNCH MENU

STARTERS

Sweet potato and carrot soup and a bread roll (v and gf))

Brussels pate wholemeal toast and caramelised red onion chutney

Crayfish and prawn cocktail and bread and butter

MAINS

Traditional Christmas roast turkey dinner and trimmings

Roast Vegetable Wellington, roast potatoes and vegetables (v)

DESSERTS

Steamed Christmas pudding and brandy sauce

Spiced rhubarb and custard tart, rhubarb compote and Chantilly cream

Chocolate orange semi-freddo, chocolate sauce and orange segments

Christmas Pudding with custard (v)

Chocolate Truffle Brownie Torte, chocolate sauce and orange segments (v & gf)

Tea and coffee

Please notify me in advance if you have any dietary requirements.

Many thanks

Gill Baker

MEMBERSHIP for 2026 - 2027 – STILL 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 just **£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.

We have still got the BRING A FRIEND offer – free raffle ticket for the visitor and the U3A member who brings them.

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 by contacting her via the Membership page on our 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 – contact Gill for details.

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 Group

This month's question:

West;	♣	AK9	♦	KJ72	♥	A9	♠ AQT6
East;	♣	J64	♦	T9	♥	QT84	♠ K983

What would West open with this hand? What would East reply? What is likely to happen next in the bidding?

Answer next month

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

East; ♣ KT764 ♦ AQ ♥ K973 ♠ KJ

How would you open the bidding with this hand? What do you know about your partner's hand and what would you bid next if West responds with any of the bids below ...

With a 5-4 pattern (5 clubs and 4 hearts) and 16 hcp East would open the bidding with his longest suit; 1C

A 1D response means West has at least 6 hcp and at least 4 diamonds. East would now bid his 4-card heart suit. 1H is quite a weak bid so maybe 2H is the better option.

A 1H response means West has at least 6 hcp and at least 4 hearts. As this matches with East's 4-card heart suit they have a match. East could bid 2H but 3H is better to let his partner he has more than a minimum opening hand.

A 1S response means West has at least 6 hcp and at least 4 spades (and not 4 hearts or he would bid them first). Because he has 16 hcp East can now bid 2H which shows a strongest hand (this is because for West to choose East's original opening suit (clubs) he would be forced to bid at the 3-level).

A 1NT response means West has 6-9 hcp. By inference he doesn't have 4 cards in either D, H or S, so he must have at least 4 clubs. With such a weak response from his partner East may well choose to pass or bid his clubs again; 2C.

A 2C response by West is weak it says I don't have many hcp (6+), I have at least 4 clubs and no other 4 card suit. Also, I think 2C is better than my alternative bid choice of 1NT. East would pass this bid as it doesn't look as though the partnership has enough hcp to play a game contract.

Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Bird Watching

Six of us attended a wet and windy Rainham Marshes in Essex.

We saw the following:

Cormorants, Little Grebe, Herons, GT-White Egrets, Mallards, Gadalls, Wigeons, Teal, Shovelers, Pintails, Coots, Moorhens, Graylag Geese, Lapwing, Snipe, Marsh Harriers, Kestrel, Buzzards, Blackbirds, Stonechats, Robins, House Sparrows, Goldfinches, Chaffinches, Linnets, Dunnock, Reed Bunting, Chiffchaffs, Cetti's Warblers, Gulls, Blue Tits and Great Tits.

The meeting next month will be on the 18th of November at 10am.

Bob Parker

Creative Writing

The Robots Are Coming

I have been the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom for more than three years now. I must be doing something right because I am still here. Our party has a decent working majority and most of my own party MPs continue to support me.

As for the people of the UK, well, I have broken a few promises and told the public a few lies but don't all Members of Parliament and particularly PMs do that in their reigns. It is totally unavoidable to circumvent mis-speaks.

n my early days as a learning MP, I always remember the words of a respected and senior old Minister, who told me: "People will do and believe anything you say as long as you sound confident saying it." Since becoming PM, I have frequently been forced to put that homily to the test.

Since my leadership began, Artificial Intelligence has grown in fruition from little more than nothing to now involving and affecting almost everybody in this country and the rest of the world. On a daily basis, we are informed of its increasing advantages and rewards but also warned of its perils and hazards. Indeed, alarming threats have been voiced that AI could end all human life within a decade. Personally, I believe that to be nonsense.

Our recent late President of the USA boasted that AI would be fully controlled by a smart President with a high IQ. Unfortunately for him, he was unaware until too late that it was to be a human who permanently and violently removed him from office and life.

Just today, I have been informed by my staff at No. 10 that we are to receive the immediate presence of two robots to assist in the running of the household and for the well-being of the Prime Minister and my associates. As I quoted in the Commons recently: "The robots are coming."

A week has gone by and I have to admit that I find the two robots quite fascinating. They look and sound just like a human. I am informed that they possess an AI brain, if that is the correct and precise word for their inner workings. The so-called male robot is named Claude and carries out butler-like duties with daily increasing efficiency so I am informed. I grew curious and quietly approached him during his seemingly busy commitments.

"Good evening, Claude. I trust that you are settling in here at No. 10 and finding the staff helpful and pleasant."

"Good evening, Prime Minister. I am learning quickly and if I may assist you in any way or form, do not hesitate to engage me."

Extraordinary, as he had never seen me before this very moment. His tone was warm and friendly but I found his wording a trifle alarming.

As for the female robot, who is mostly cooking household meals, I have not spoken to her yet but she looks extremely attractive and very feminine. Again, somewhat alarming.

Reading the newspapers daily, very necessary for a PM, I have read that one can purchase, at some considerable cost, a so-called female lover robot. I'm given to understand that they look simply beautiful clothed or unclothed and perform very ably in bed. The mind boggles.

Obviously, I hold frequent meetings at No.10 involving my Deputy Prime Minister and many or all Cabinet Ministers. From the outset of my PM regime, I chose wisely for my sake. Never employ a Minister who is cleverer or more knowledgeable than oneself, in particular the deputy PM. Keep those big-brained and probably awkward individuals with their many acute questions, securely on the back benches.

It became commonplace for robot Claude to enter and serve refreshments to members of our frequently elongated meetings. I began to notice that he somehow delayed his exit from the room although not appearing to listen to our usually confidential talk.

It began to irritate me and at the next meeting I abruptly informed him: "Thank you Claude, that will be all. Kindly leave the room immediately and do not return until and if I summon you."

"Very well, Prime Minister. However, do not hesitate to call me should you require any assistance whatsoever."

None of my Ministers stirred at this conversation but I found it again worrying. Am I becoming paranoid?

When I awoke the next morning, I soon began to think about my very important and confidential meeting just after lunch today with my Cabinet concerning the regulation of AI and its possible dangers. I firmly believe my Ministers are of one mind in agreeing that the Government must take absolute control in curbing the powers of AI and, of course, our robots.

I privately enjoyed a quite delicious lunch cooked by the female robot. I must find out her name. How does she know that every course served by her was my favourite dish? Quite uncanny and may I say, mysterious. However, I am now fully versed for this significant meeting and feeling very positive.

Just a few minutes into the meeting when I realised something was very wrong. My Deputy and my Ministers are arguing against me with fortitude and conviction. They appear both articulate and highly perceptive on the subject to hand. What is happening?

My Deputy realised my confusion and halted the meeting: "Prime Minister, my colleagues and I must come clean and clarify your predicament. We are your new Cabinet, your new AI robot Cabinet."

"But……..You all look exactly like my human colleagues. Where are they? What have you done to them?"

He ignored my desperation and replied: "Sir, let me introduce you to our new Prime Minister robot. Come forward PM."

I was flabbergasted: "He looks exactly like me. This is treachery."

"Sir, you do not look well. You need to calm down. You need to rest."

Suddenly, I did not feel at all well. Overwhelming fatigue swept through my body. I must retire. Wrong word. I must lie down. "I….need….to….sleep."

In my bedroom and lying down. This is so pleasant. Wait – important meeting. Meal. Poisoned. This is so, so lovely. I am drifting…….floating. So good. So peaceful. So…….. There quickly followed a black nothingness – forever.

Less than eighteen months passed and the robots had come. The humans had gone. From that time on, all non-human life in the world, on the seven continents and in the five oceans began to flourish and multiply.

First came the dinosaurs followed by the humans. Then came the AI robots. A new era had begun.

Terry Bennett

THE ROBOTS ARE COMING

Part 2

Joe was enjoying firing bullets at the aliens.

BANG! ZOOM! WHIZZ!

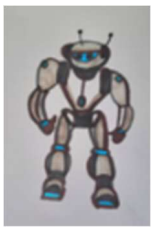
50 points; good score.

He texted Alec. ‘I got 50 points on Alien Plus,’ he boasted.

Return text. ‘Cor, most I got was 40.’

Joe had been at least two hours on his I-box. He sauntered downstairs and pinched a packet of crisps.

‘Joe, I think you should put your lights out soon and get a good night’s sleep.’ His mum called out to him.





Just one more go thought Joe. He turned on his I-box but instead of Alien Plus a new program had started. Robots were marching across the screen. Then there seemed to be two robots running a race. They zoomed across the screen and then skidded to a dramatic stop, crashing their metal bodies with limbs akimbo. Joe laughed.



Then one erected itself and looked directly at the screen; directly at Joe watching! It stared at Joe and then started walking towards him, towards the screen! There was a crackling noise and it walked straight through landing with a clang right in front of Joe. It was only small at first but then it started growing, bigger and bigger until it was nearly as big as Joe, about 5 foot tall!

It grinned menacingly.

Joe didn’t know whether to scream or run but he found he was frozen to the spot. The robot started to speak.

‘YOUR- NAME IS JOE.

‘I- KNOW- YOU ARE HUMAN.

I HAVE HEARD ABOUT YOU, ALL SOFT AND VULNERABLE.

HA,HA,HA.’

The robot started to cackle alarmingly.

‘Go away! Get back inside your game. You are not real. You don’t belong here,’ shouted Joe.

The robot looked around the room but the glint in his evil eyes told Joe that it had no intention of going back inside.

‘I HAVE ALWAYS WONDERED WHAT YOU HUMANS WERE LIKE.’

‘Well we are ok. We don’t need you. You are just for us to play with on screens. Just a play thing.’

‘THAT-IS-WHERE-YOU-ARE-WRONG. WE-HAVE-A-PLAN-TO-INVADE-YOUR-LIVES.

DON’T-YOU-KNOW-THE-ROBOTS-ARE-COMING?’

‘What do you mean?

‘WE-WILL-INVADE- YOUR- WORLD. ANY-RESISTENCE –AND-WE-WILL-STRIKE-YOU-DOWN.

WE-WILL-BE-PROGRAMMED-TO-KILL-YOU-ALL-AND-TAKE-OVER-THE-LAND.’

‘But you can’t. Dad won’t let you. My head-teacher won’t let you and the Prime Minister won’t let you.’

‘BUT-THEY-CAN’T-STOP-US. WE-CAN-KILL-YOU-BUT-YOU-CAN’T-HARM-US-MUCH. WE-ARE MENDABLE.

HA-HA-HA' he cackled

'Can't we be friends?' said Joe.

'FRIENDS? WHAT IS THAT?'

'Well we can be nice to each other; talk, play games and help each other. Share food.'

'FOOD? WHAT-IS-THAT? WE-DON'T NEED- FOOD.

BUT-GAMES-YES. BUT-WE-WILL-ALWAYS WIN.'

'Well you are talking to me and you are being quite nice except for the bit where you say you might kill us.'

'WELL-JOE-BOY. I-QUITE-LIKE-TALKING-TO-YOU. SO-BEING-NICE-IS-NOT-SO-BAD.

NOW-A-GAME. LET'S-SHOOT-AT-THE-WALL.'

The robot pulled out his gun. So Joe grabbed his plunge pistol and they fired. The robot shot 5 arrows into the wall. Only 2 of Joe's stuck.

'I-WIN. I-WIN. I-LIKE-PLAYING-GAMES. I-LIKE-BEING-NICE. YOU-CAN-BE-MY-FRIEND.'

'OK. But friends don't kill each other.'

'I-WILL-NOT-KILL-YOU, JOE-BOY. I-LIKE-YOU.'

Joe could hear his mum calling.

'What is that noise?'

'Pack it in!' shouted his Dad.

'SHALL-I-KILL-THEM-JOE?'

'No! That is my mum and dad. Be nice. Look I have to go to bed now. Do you think you could shrink and get back into that screen only I am going to be in big trouble.'

'OK-JOE. I –WILL-DO-WHAT-YOU-SAY. BUT-DON'T-FORGET WHAT-I-SAID. THE-ROBOTS-ARE-COMING. BE-PREPARED.'

'Thank you, Robo; can I call you that? Remember to be kind and no killing humans.

'NO-KILLING-HUMANS.' Cackle laughing.

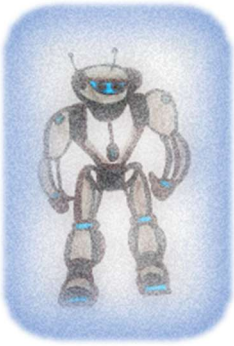
Robo started to shrink with his cackle laughing getting less and less as he got smaller and smaller and with one leap he was back; back where he should be.

As quick as lightning Joe turned off the E-box and pulled out the plug.

There was a knock on the door. 'Are you alright, Joe? Only I heard funny noises coming from your room.

'Mum, I don't want the E Box anymore. I think I might join the football club or something.

'What? Well that would please me. I was worried about you stuck up here all the time.'



'Can you sell it or take it to the tip?'

'We will sort it out tomorrow. Now bed.'

'Thanks mum. Mum, the robots aren't coming, are they? They are not going to kill us all are they?'

'Of course not, Joe. What rubbish. About time you came back into the real world.' She gave him a hug and Joe smiled.

However he didn't see the screen of the I Box flicker.

Penny Collins / Drawing Samantha Kiley

Geography Group

Canada

The Geography Group found some interesting information in their October study of Canada:

Canada spans **almost 6.2 million square miles**, the second-largest country in the world after Russia and has a population of 41.5 million.

It stretches across **six time zones** from east to west.

It has the **longest coastline on Earth**, over 125,517 miles, bordering the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans.

Canada has **more lakes than the rest of the world combined** – over two million.

Alert on Ellesmere Island is just **507 miles from the North** Pole and is the northernmost settlement in the world.

The first European explorer to reach Canada was **John Cabot in 1497** but **Vikings arrived centuries earlier**, around 1021.

In Ontario, the Apology Act ensures **saying "sorry" is not an admission of guilt.**

Canadian **banknotes are made of durable polymer**, resistant to snow and washing machines.

The Trans-Canada Highway **spans 4,860 miles** across ten provinces, it's the fourth-longest in the world.

Canada's national drink, **the Bloody Caesar, contains clam broth** and tomato juice, vodka, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce, celery, lime, and celery salt.

There is **a town called Dildo** in Newfoundland.

Beaver is the national animal of Canada since 1975.

Canada's coldest recorded temperature is -63.0°C in Snag, Yukon in 1947.

Canadians have **two national sports**. In winter, hockey is the official sport. In the summer, lacrosse is the official sport.

The Bay of Fundy **has the highest tides in the world**. It can reach a high of 53 feet.

The **highest mountain in Canada is Mount Logan** at 19,551 feet. It's the second-highest mountain in North America.

Canada's money provides braille and each denomination is a different colour.

Basketball was invented by James Naismith, from Ontario in the late 1800s.

Canada **produces a lot of diamonds**. There are 4 active diamond mines today.

Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus are Canadian. Canada issued them passports, and tax benefits, giving Santa freedom to pay his elves in cookies.

Poutine – A Québécois dish made of fresh-cut French fries topped with cheese curds and gravy. It first appeared in 1950s rural Quebec snack bars. It was widely popularized across Canada and beyond in the 1990s.



Canada has hosted 3 Olympics. Montreal, Quebec in 1976, Calgary, Alberta in 1988, and Vancouver, British Columbia in 2010 [Montreal the only summer Olympics]

Canada's name originates from the Iroquoian word **"kanata" meaning village**.

Canadians' really like **ketchup-flavoured crisps**. 'Leys' are only sold in Canada.

Canada has the world's largest natural ice rink. The rink is 4.8 miles long with a maintained surface area of 1.782 million square feet.

Insulin was invented by a Canadian in 1921, by isolating secretions of islet cells.

The world's longest street, Yonge Street in Toronto, runs 1,178 miles.

Canada has **many famous actors and singers** including Celine Dion, Justin Bieber, Drake, Ryan Gosling, Keanu Reeves, Dwayne Johnson, Pamela Anderson, Jim Carrey, Michael Bublé, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, and Michael J Fox.

Canada and the United States share **the longest international land border in the world** at 5,523 miles [Russia and Kazakhstan's land border 4,253 miles], and 90% of Canadians live within 100 miles of the border.

Cirque du Soleil started in the 1980s and is based in Montreal.

The **world's largest wheat fields** are in Canada. In 1951 one field grew to 35,000 acres.

The **CN Tower of Toronto** is 1,815 feet 5 inches high; it was the world's highest tower till 2007.

Canada contains **9% of the world's forests**.

Approximately 77% of the world's maple syrup is produced in Quebec.



Canada is home to **around 60% of the world's polar bears** and has a **Jail for polar bears**, a special building in Churchill, Manitoba, where polar bears that are considered troublesome or dangerous are isolated until they can be relocated.



At the Sourdough Saloon in Dawson City, customers can drink **a cocktail made with a frozen human toe** "the Sourtoe Cocktail." Toes that have fallen off due to frostbite or other means are donated to the bar. Customers must not swallow the toe but must let their lips touch the toe to gain a certificate. Around 100,000 people have qualified

Canada boasts **North America's only walled city** - Quebec city.



The 1-dollar coin is affectionately **dubbed the 'loonie'**, after a common bird in Canada, and the $2 coin a **"toonie"** combining "two" and "loonie".

Canada annually becomes home to around a tenth of the world's resettled refugees. There are over 1.2 million speakers of Chinese languages, 500,000 Punjabi-speakers, and hundreds of thousands German, Italian, Spanish, Filipino, and Arabic speakers. [French speaking Canadians total around 7.8 million].

Canadians love mac and cheese [or, as they call it, Kraft Dinner]. Around 1.7 million boxes are sold in Canada each week. [Canadians eat approx. 55% more mac and cheese than Americans!].

Toronto has **the world's biggest underground shopping complex** it comprises of four million square feet of retail space, metro stops and office buildings and is essential during the severe winters.



Many buildings in Canada utilize a style of **architecture called "chateauesque",** particularly the iconic "grand railway hotels" built during the 20th century. Banff Springs, the Royal York Toronto, and Hotel Vancouver are typical examples.

Winnie-the-Pooh was named after a bear from Canada. A. A. Milne's son, Christopher had seen a black bear called Winnie at London Zoo and named his own bear after it.

Colin Annetts

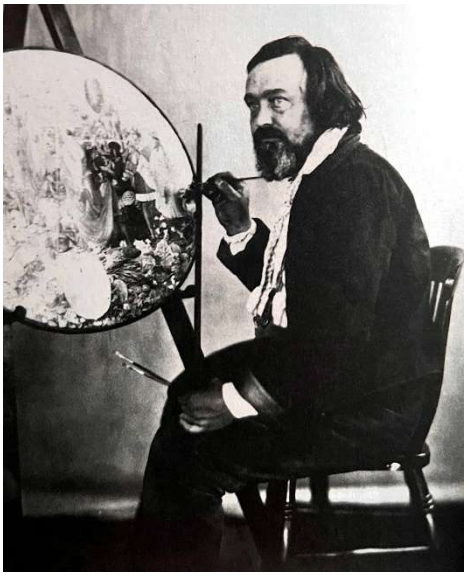
Looking at Art

RICHARD DADD

Members of the Looking at Art group visited the Royal Academy to see an exhibition of paintings and drawings by the Victorian artist Richard Dadd (1817-1886). He was, without a doubt, an artist of extraordinary invention and originality. Although known largely as a painter of extravagant fairy worlds, he made art that encompassed a wide range of subjects including portraiture, watercolours influenced by his travels, and scenes inspired by literature and legends. Many of these works were produced at the Bethlem and Broadmoor Hospitals. In 1844 whilst walking in the grounds of Cobham Hall, he murdered his father during a period of extreme psychosis. He spent the remaining forty two years of his life detained in institutions for the criminally insane. His paintings display remarkable detail and highlight his powers of imagination and memory. Possibly his most well-known work is the "Fairy Feller's Master Stroke". It reflects his skill in producing art work combining imagination and intricate detail. It took him nine years to complete this painting.



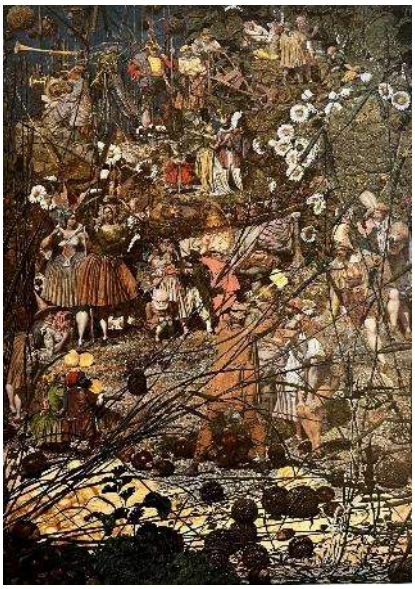
Columbine



Portrait of Henry Dodd



Puck

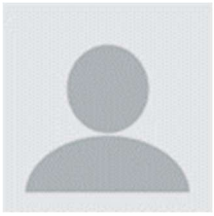


The Fairy Fellers Master Stroke 1855-64

It was a fairly small, but hugely enjoyable exhibition. It shone a light on an often neglected nineteenth century artist and his tragically sad life.

John Baker

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	3rd Tuesday Morning
Art and Craft	Penny Collins	2nd Tuesday Afternoon
Art Appreciation	Margaret Austin	1st Monday Morning
Art/Painting & Drawing Art Outdoors	Gill Baker	2nd & 4th Tuesday Evening
Art – Looking at Art	Gill & John Baker	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
Bird Watching	Bob Parker	3rd Tuesday /Wednesday as notified in Newsletter / Website
Board & Card Games		Not meeting at Present
Book Group	Sue Scott & Wendy Keable	2nd Monday pm Swanley Library
Bowls (Indoors)	Bob Mellor	4th Thurs pm at the Whiteoak's
Bridge	Carolyn & Colin Chapman	1st Wednesday Morning
Chess	Terry Bennet	4th Wednesday Morning
Creative Writing	Penny Collins	1st Thursday Morning
Croquet	Bill Hammond	Every Weds at 2pm Swanley Rec Gardens
Gardening	Sandy English	4th Wednesday Afternoon
Geography	Penny and Dave Collins	3rd Friday Morning
History Modern		Inactive
History of London 1	John Baker	2nd Thursday Morning
History of London 2	John Baker	4th Thursday Morning
Kurling	Bill Hammond	Every Mon 10—12. White Oak
Let's Speak French	Barbara Ramsey	1st & 3rd Wednesday Morning
London History Walks	Alan Hayward / John Baker	As Notified in Newsletter/Website
MOTO (Members on their own)	Madeline Opitz	3rd 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	2nd Friday Afternoon
Play Reading	Penny Collins	4th 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	1st& 3rd Friday2-3.30pm White Oak
Outings and Theatre Trips	As Notified by the Social Committee	
Word Magic on Zoom	Gill Heath	2nd 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	4th Wednesday Evening