

U3A Newsletter



**Feb/Mar
2026**

Keeping you informed of group activities, events, trips and meetings.

This month's speaker is

Fran Sandham

He did a very interesting talk about his 3,500 mile walk across Africa a year or so ago.

His talk this time is "**Dr Livingstone, I presume.**"

It is the story behind the legendary meeting in Africa in 1871 between the missing explorer Dr David Livingstone and the ambitious news reporter Henry Morton Stanley. How their meeting proved to be the newspaper scoop of the century, bringing Stanley world fame and notoriety; the widespread controversy, hostility and personal ridicule Stanley faced on his return to Europe and America after finding Livingstone; why their meeting was such a sensational news story – and why Stanley's four words became the most famous greeting in history.



Next month's speaker is our own Steve Nolan with ...

"An Insight into 1970/1980's Policing"



50 years ago, things were very different. Policing was and is no exception. OK the very basics of policing have not changed, someone commits a crime and you deal with it accordingly, but how it is implemented and the equipment available then, compared with the present day, has changed enormously. SO let Steve give you an insight into what policing was like, starting in the 1970's and continuing across the three decades that followed including facing riots and attacks on London in his first few years.

Website: <https://gravesend.u3asite.uk/members/>

u3a Gravesend,
Northfleet &
District

The deadline for notices, articles, or photographs for next month's newsletter, which

Trevor Woodward will be editing, is:

12 noon on Wednesday, 4th March 2026.

Please e-mail items to: newsletter_editor@gndu3a.onmicrosoft.com

Notices:

CHANGE TO NORTH KENT COLLEGE PARKING



The College have advised, due to an increase in students, we are unable to use the front car park at the Lower Higham Road Entrance.

Instead, they have kindly offered the use of their rear overflow car park, past the main building.

To access the overflow car park, enter via Lower Higham Road entrance and turn right at the main building. Follow the winding road until after all buildings to the overflow car park under the trees. which is close to Dering Way. After parking, leave via the Dering Way exit and walk up Dering Way to the CPC rear entrance via car park. Later, return via Dering Way to College to overflow Car Park then exit into Dering Way. For more details and a map- please visit our u3a website – select events and see Our Social Events.

Gravesend, Northfleet & District u3a - Election of Committee Members

Several of our current Committee Members have given their time and energy over recent years, often serving more than one 2 year term of office. Several Committee posts will come up for re-election this year, and the election will be part of our AGM May/General Meeting on Friday, 8 May, 2026.

While some Committee Members have indicated their willingness to re-stand if required, the following positions are up for election/re-election:

- Chairman - u3a rules mean Alan and Doreen cannot stand for a further 2-year term in these roles. They are allowed to stand, if voted in, for a 1 year term, after which they must stand down.
- Vice Chair - as above.
- Membership Secretary
- Groups Coordinator
- Webmaster and Data Protection Officer.

If you would like to be considered for any of these roles, or if you would like to put yourself forward to join the Committee in a non-portfolio role, please contact the Business Secretary, Stephen Nolan (stephennolan777@gmail.com). We have job descriptions for each of the above roles which we can email out to anyone interested and can provide any other information/advice if requested. Details of those Members putting themselves up for election/re-election must be circulated with the AGM paperwork in advance of the May AGM, so please do get in touch.

Stephen Nolan

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL – 2026



Thank you to the more than 500 members who have already renewed for 2026.

If you have not yet renewed you will have recently received an Email or letter giving options for payment and we are pleased to advise there is a last opportunity to renew at our 13th February meeting at the CPC. Alternatively, you can still easily renew your membership on our website, this saves valuable time for our volunteers and helps reduce paper waste and postage costs.

Regrettably, any members not renewed by 15th February will be Lapsed and therefore you will no longer be able to participate in groups and events or receive Newsletters. We hope you will renew before then and continue to receive the social, health and wellbeing benefits of membership of your U3A.

Sue Kirwan

CPC JANUARY MEETING

128 members joined us for our January meeting, where we enjoyed a fascinating and entertaining talk from Jo Livingston of Dartford U3A. Her presentation, *“In for a Penny, in for a Pound,”* took us on a light-hearted journey through 70 years of currency, with wonderful images and plenty of intriguing history.



But it also made us stop and think.

With over 500 members in total, more than three-quarters did not attend — even though the CPC has seating for at least twice the number we had in January. So, we would really love to hear from you. What would make you want to come to our meetings?

Are there particular speakers, topics, activities, or types of events you would enjoy? Would you prefer more talks like Jo’s, live music (like the excellent band we had in December), interactive sessions, or something completely different?

This is your U3A, and your ideas will help shape our future programme. Please take a moment to let us know what would tempt you through the door — every suggestion is welcome!

Dennis Neighbour, Meetings Secretary

Always look on the Bright Side

I am happy to say that I have received positive feedback for my recent articles. Another U3A member recommended this piece by Patricia Routledge written when she was 95 as suitable for Always Looking on the Bright Side.

I will be turning 95 this coming Monday. When I was younger, I often worried I was not good enough—that I would never be cast again, that I would disappoint my mother. But these days begin in peace and end in gratitude.

In my forties, my life finally began to make sense. Before that, I had performed steadily—provincial stages, radio plays, West End productions—but felt somewhat lost. I was searching for something within myself, a home I had not yet found.

*At 50, I took a television role that many of you would later know me by—Hyacinth Bucket from *Keeping Up Appearances*. I thought it would just be a minor role, a brief moment. I never expected it to become beloved across the globe. That character taught me to embrace my quirks and quietly healed something deep within me.*

At 60, I started learning Italian—not for my career, but simply so I could sing opera in its native tongue. I learned the gentle art of living alone without loneliness, reading poetry aloud each night—not to perfect diction, but to soothe my spirit.

At 70, I returned to Shakespearean theatre, a place I once thought I had aged out of. This time, there was nothing to prove. I stepped onto those legendary boards with calmness. The audience felt that serenity. I had stopped performing; I was simply being.

At 80, I discovered watercolour painting. I painted flowers from my garden, nostalgic hats from my youth, and faces glimpsed on the London Underground—each painting was a silent memory made tangible.

Now, at 95, I write letters by hand. I am learning the simple joy of baking rye bread. I still breathe deeply each morning. Laughter remains precious, though I no longer feel the need to make others laugh. Quietness is sweeter than ever.

I am writing this today to share something simple and true: Growing older is not a final act—it can be life's most exquisite chapter if you allow yourself to bloom once more. Let the years ahead be your treasure years. You do not have to be perfect, famous, or adored. You only need to be present—fully—for the life that is yours."

Sally Spellman

Important Email Security Notice – Please Read

We have been made aware that **a member's personal Email account** had recently been compromised (Hacked) and used to send messages to their Email contacts, including some of our members, requesting the purchase of **Amazon vouchers**. To warn everyone of this we sent an Email in January in case others have the same problem.



These messages often claim the person cannot speak because they have lost their voice or are just unable to talk. If you receive a suspicious email, such as this, **just give them a call** (do not Email back as a hacker may have control of the Email) **Never buy Amazon vouchers or similar and never send or give voucher codes to anyone.**

Please be assured that this message did not come from the person you think it is. If you receive such an email, do not respond, do not purchase vouchers, gift cards, or send money and do not click on any links. Simply call the person to advise them, then forward the message to **report@phishing.gov.uk** then delete the message.

No one will ever ask you to buy gift cards or vouchers, or to send money or personal details by email.

Thank you to those who reported this promptly. Staying alert and reporting suspicious emails helps protect all our members. The good news is the member's personal email now has a more complicated password to protect them for the future. The best advice is to use a unique password and if you have not changed yours recently - today could be a good time.



Another Scam - Phishing

Others may Email you warning of something ending soon or needing your urgent immediate action - claiming to be from Microsoft, your Bank, Hotmail, other Email site, or similar, maybe claiming you have been Hacked. They often look authentic - usually advising of a short time to fix.

THESE ARE INTENDED TO CAUSE PANIC and get you to click a link in the Email, **NEVER - CLICK A LINK.in the Email** - or you may regret it as they may steal your login and password! Always go via Google or similar to the official website for the site or use a saved safe link to login to your account. Another way to check is to hover your mouse over the sender (do not click) and see the true email of the sender, which may have Microsoft or other in the destination URL, along with other letters or words, which should not be there. **NEVER REPLY TO THE EMAIL.**

Further help and information are available online - search for Email Hacking also Phishing, alternatively Peter at our Tame your Tech group can offer more assistance.

Mike Swift RIP

At the beginning of February we learnt of the passing of Mike Swift, a loyal member of our u3a for the last 15 years. In 2014 he agreed to join the committee as Minutes Secretary and continued in the role until early 2017. Mike was an original member of the both the Photography and Creative Writing Groups when they formed in 2011. He continued in Photography 1 until 2024 when his lack of mobility restricted his ability to take an effective part.

Mike was an avid writer of short stories and in addition to Creative Writing 1, was a member of a second writing group, outside the u3a. As in Photography, he was great fun to be with and had a dry sense of humour. Mike wrote very well in an entertaining way, his stories always having a clever twist and often featuring a play on words. We joked that his stories always contained a death somewhere or another. You may well have read some of Mike's pieces in our 'Story of the Month' section.

Over the last few years Mike's health deteriorated and in Nov 2025 he and his wife Diana moved to a bungalow in Pudsey, Leeds, to be nearer to their children.
Mike will be sorely missed by all those who knew him

Colin Nice

Group News:



Quiz Night

An amazing turn out to our January quiz. 95 in total (our best) of members and friends enjoyed our social bi-monthly evening quiz: 16 teams with nibbles and drinks, free raffle, and prizes for the first three teams. Well done to everyone who took part and thank you for your support.

The date of our next quiz is Saturday, 11th April 2026.

Pool Group meeting now meeting every Tuesday 2:30!

Great News- starting from 3rd February our Pool Group is meeting every Tuesday. Anyone playing Petanque beforehand should be able to leave and arrive by 2:30 although its ok for you to arrive a bit later.

Spots & Stripes Pool Hall, 70 New Road, Gravesend, above Casino Slots, which has excellent facilities including 6 Pool Tables and Bar also serving Tea & Coffee - Only £2.50 (50p, £1 or £2 coins only) - Note there are stairs.



Our group members are very welcoming and encouraging, so experienced players are happy to offer coaching and tips to play or improve, if you wish. This Pool group, has proved very popular and now meets 2:30 - 4:00pm every Tuesday and is open to everyone, experienced or beginners, so please also tell your friends. Nearest parking is Thamesgate Centre = No booking - just turn up any Tuesday.

SOLO'S COFFEE MORNING

There is only one coffee morning each month, and it is on the first Thursday morning of the month at 10:15 a.m.

Linda Howe

RUMMIKUB GROUP CHANGE

Rummikub 3 group has been merged with Rummikub 4 and will be known as Rummikub 3. Rummikub 3 will take place on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 09:50 a.m.

Linda Howe

Classical Music Appreciation

Do you love classical music? If so, read on! Our classical music group was one of the first groups to be formed and has been under the same leadership since 2005.

Members of the group take turns in choosing a program of music, part of which should be a complete work. As members taste in music varies considerably, we listen to a wide cross section of styles, from symphonies and concertos to Folk music and opera. For example, in January we enjoyed Rachmaninov's piano concerto no.3. After tea and biscuits, we listened to several pieces of popular music sung by opera singers. This sparked a lively debate on the ability (or otherwise) of classically trained voices to adapt successfully to popular songs.

We are keen to welcome new members to our group, which meets at 2pm on the 3rd Wednesday monthly at the leader's house in Meopham. If you think this could be for you, please contact me preferably by phone.

Carol Edwards

Badminton 2

New group possibly starting. Group leader Bertie Chou. The proposed day/time will be Fridays/am, frequency will depend on interest shown. The venue will be Cygnets. Costs will be £2.50 admission for nonmembers and £2 per visit. There will be a signup sheet at the February 13th general meeting.

Fishing (fresh water)

The fishing group will be resuming soon.

Scrabble Plus

A new group is starting soon. Group leader, Ray Maclean. Limited to 8 members. Meeting once a month 1000-1200 on either 1st or 2nd Wednesdays. The plus will allow some flexibility for different board games. Currently, there are 4 x members, so 4 x spaces remain.

GROUPS - COACHING


In a new year our members often look to join new groups. To help you, some of our U3A groups are now offering coaching as part of their activities. Coaching can be a valuable way to support members' personal development, confidence, and goal-setting.

To easily join a group, please go to <https://gravesend.u3asite.uk/members/> select MEMBERS LOGIN and select first option - Groups - then click on the yellow link to apply to join group.(where visible) otherwise email Group Leader.


Table Tennis	Badminton	Modern Jive Dance
Petanque	Walking Tennis	Pool
Bowls	Short Mat Bowls	Ballroom Dance
Ukulele	Fitness Low Impact	Mexican Train Dominoes

Many other groups also provide some coaching, so please ask the group leader.

Group information for February

<p>Ramble Friday, 20th February With Colin</p> 	<p>Ramble – Riverside Country Park and Woodlands – Fri 20th Feb</p> <p>Peter Finch and Edel Morris are leading a mainly flat 5 ml walk, generally on made up paths. If there is rain, there will be some mud. Highlights: Medway estuary, woodland, wild fowl and shipwrecks if the tide is right. Toilets and cafe at start/finish. £2.50 parking fee payable by card. Please email Colin if you'd like to join it.</p> <p>Meet at 10am at Riverside Country Park, Lower Rainham Road, Rainham. ME7 2XH.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Colin Nice (contact details at end of newsletter).</p>
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WALKERS TAKE PART AT THEIR OWN RISK

<p>Hike Friday 6th March With Colin</p> 	<p>Hike – Chatham History Walk – Fri 6th March</p> <p>A revisit of a lovely 4.8 mile walk around Chatham, choc full of history. During the walk we visit the beautiful formal naval buildings (now home to Kent & Greenwich Uni), The Great Lines, Fort Amherst and part of Chatham dockyard. It has got hills, the river, fabulous views, and stacks of history! If you would like to join the walk, please email Colin.</p> <p>Meet at 10am outside M&S at the Chatham Dockside Outlet (M&S is the first store you come to), parking in the outlet car park. ME4 3ED</p> <p>Directions -Take the A289 under the Medway Tunnel. Keep left in the tunnel and take the slip road off as you exit the tunnel. On the exit roundabout turn right and turn right at the next roundabout. Over the next roundabout and turn right into the car park – park at the far side for nearness to M&S.</p>
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WALKERS TAKE PART AT THEIR OWN RISK

**Sunday Lunch Bunch
1st March
With Marilyn**

Sunday Lunch Bunch will be meeting at R & M Italiano, 158 Parrock Street, Gravesend at 12.30 pm on 1st March.

Please contact me by email, phone or text if you would like to come along. I also need menu choices in advance.



<https://www.rmrestaurant.co.uk/food-menu>

Marilyn Pascoe (contact details at end of newsletter).

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS



UKULELE GROUP OUTING

A group of twelve, made up of members of both Ukulele Groups, as well as some friends and partners, went on a road trip on Saturday January 10th. Car sharing, our road trip was to see 'The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain', who were playing at The Dorking Halls. We dined at 'Roosters Kitchen' Mediterranean Restaurant before the show, which was just across the road.



The UOGB are celebrating their 40th anniversary and don't take themselves too seriously, despite their dress code of 'Black Tie'. You will find many videos clips of them on YouTube if you would like to get a flavour of their performances. We managed to get some excellent seats in rows three and four, so were only about fifteen feet away from the performers. They do not use amplifier effects, it is just eight musicians with an array of different types of Ukulele, each with one microphone for their vocals and one for their Ukulele. Their comedy, great musicianship and vocal harmonies kept us entertained all night. The audience demanded and got an encore and the evening ended with a lengthy standing ovation. A great night was had by all.

Peter Buttle

Walks in January

It had been a relatively warm winter up to the new year, but come 2nd January, lo and behold, a thin covering of snow greeted our 23 walkers at Shorne Woods Country Park. Ours are a brave, hardy and intrepid bunch, fearless of the conditions underfoot, and of course, nobody dipped out.

They completed the 4.8ml walk, led by Ray, that took them through Cobham and on to the See Ho pub before returning to the welcome warmth of the country park café.



Later in the month, the day after torrential rain had fallen, 27 walkers met at the Riverside Country Park in Gillingham for a 4.5 ml walk along the banks of the Medway led by Joyce & Barry Bell. Thankfully there was no rain but dodging the huge puddles was challenging and it was a genuine muddy boots walk. There was a café at the end as a reward!

Geography

Geography 1 studied Morocco this month with the high, snow peaked Atlas Mountains running through the country from the north-east to south-west. Facing the Atlantic were fertile plains, sandy beaches and many of the cities. The temperatures were very agreeable too. Our impression of the country had been that it was semi-impooverished but that proved to be far from the case with well over 1000 miles of well-maintained motorways, hi-speed rail and a well-developed infrastructure overall. Further, with a very low inflation rate and high growth rate it was very much one of Africa's 'success' stories.

Geography 2, meanwhile, studied Peru, the third biggest country in South America, and lying just south of the equator. To the west is the Pacific, running north-south, and rather than green fertile land edging the sea, it was edged by desert. Despite the desert, it was on the coast where most of the major cities lay. Inland from the desert, were the Andes mountains, which, on travelling eastwards, descended and became the Amazon rainforest. Indeed, this area was the source of the Amazon.



Peru is home to Machu Picchu, a stunning 15th-century Inca citadel located high in the mountains, famous as the "Lost City of the Incas". All was well until we heard that a couple of the prize dishes were Alpaca and Guinea Pig. Hearing this made us feel ravenously hungry – not!

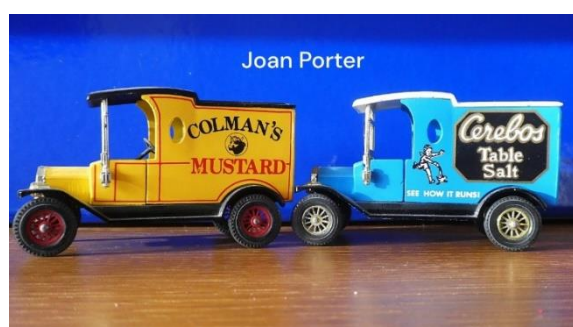
Birdwatching

On a wet, cold, blustery January morning, seven of the Bird watching group met at the Riverside Country Park in Rainham Kent. Before leaving the car park a green woodpecker had been seen, together with robins, magpies and Carrion crows. Along the shoreline, on the way out to Horrid Hill, black headed gulls, redshank, wood pigeon, starling, shelduck and teal were spotted together feral pigeons. Some members of the group, braved the wind and stayed on the walkway and were rewarded with sightings of curlew, oyster catcher, wigeon and shoveler. We walked along the shore and found ourselves clambering over the rocks to reach the grass at the end of the spit. Here we could see many more shelduck, oyster catchers, redshank, crows together with flocks of small waders such as dunlin.

As we returned to the carpark and café, we detoured through the woodland area and found song thrushes, blackbirds, collared doves, wood pigeons and redwing. We stopped by the bird feeders and watched great tits, blue tits, house sparrows, and chaffinches. The final sightings for the day was a very colourful jay (several of us had watched the BBC's Winterwatch and had been surprised by the mimicry of jays and how tuneful they could be) and more redwing.

Photography 2

Two Things – A straightforward theme, but some of us still left getting shots to the last minute, so many were close to home, including Jill's 2 different coloured orchids. Peter and Ben went further afield and Bridget kindly interrupted her bowls' game to model. See more on our website, link below. Joan Porter https://drive.google.com/drive/mobile/folders/1htb4tuKS_xS6IGNxKcGpQuaPEktuZc4Z?usp=sharing

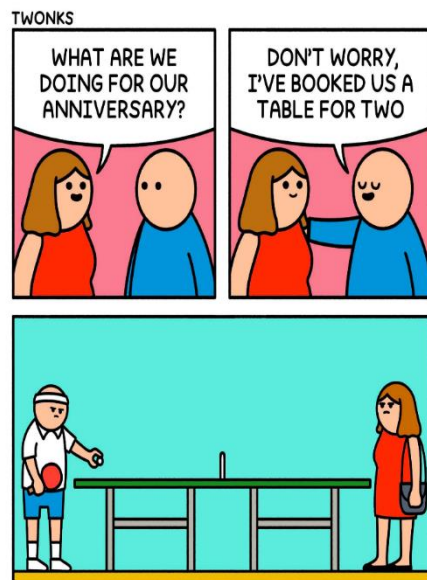




Knit & Natter

Every day felt just the same
 Pretty dull and very tame
 A neighbour asked me- 'What's the matter?
 Why not join the Knit & Natter?'
 'Great idea!' I replied
 Went along and knitting tried
 I soon caught on, it wasn't hard
 A sweater made, slightly marred
 But people like it, I believe
 (I conceal the extra sleeve)
 I'm knitting now without a hitch
 Oops! I've dropped another stitch
 My bobble hat your head will turn
 At U3A we Live and Learn.

Des Rees



Creative Writing Story of The Month

Heads and Tails – A story For Children by Joyce Bell

Olive Oliphant couldn't say when she first found out she was a witch. She certainly didn't come from a family of witches – no her Mum and Dad were definitely not happy about it. And she didn't look like a witch – she didn't have a long pointy nose with a wart on it, and the nearest thing she had to a broomstick was her Mum's Dyson and she was pretty sure she wouldn't be able to make that fly. In fact, she was a very unremarkable looking girl – not very tall, a little plump, with a mop of curly mousy hair which was always tangled no matter how often her mum brushed it.

The witch thing all started because she liked making up little rhymes. She figured that some of the nursery rhymes her Mum and Dad read to her – like Hey Diddle Diddle the Cat and the Fiddle – were so silly that anything she made up couldn't be any sillier.

One day she was bored because it had been raining all day and she couldn't go out.

“Ho hum, tickle my bum – why must it rain today.

Man in the clouds please make the rain go away.”

Olive was dumbfounded when suddenly the rain stopped and the sun came out.

“Must have been a coincidence” she said to herself.

But then a few days later, she had lost her favourite teddy

“Diddle-dee dee scratch my knee, where's my bear

Where can it be, I've search everywhere.”

Suddenly she saw him poking out from under the bed – she was sure had looked under there.

Things came to a head one day when her little brother was being particularly annoying.

“Pit pat rub my back, Luke's being a brat

I don't want a brother I want a cat”

To everyone's surprise her little brother had turned into a lovely ginger cat. Her mother was furious!

Strangely enough Luke didn't seem to be aware he was a cat, although he did ask for a glass of milk which was something he usually hated. It took Olive quite a few tries before she finally managed to change him back into a little boy.

“That's it” screamed Olive's mother – “no more silly spells.”

In truth Olive had also been a bit scared about this and decided that she would be more careful about making spells and would only use them in dire emergencies. She didn't really know what this meant but had heard her mum and dad say it and thought it meant only once in a blue moon – another strange expression she had heard her parents use.

When Olive was in the park on day, she saw something that she considered a dire emergency – a dog with no tail! “How awful” she thought to herself. “A dog who can't wag his tail. How will people know if he is happy or sad?”

She decided this was important enough to use her special talent. The problem was she hadn't used it for so long that she was a bit rusty. Then she got all nervous and confused.

“Wobbly jelly, rub my belly, the dog is so sad

Give him another head which he can wag”

Disaster! The dog now had two heads – one of them wobbling about frantically.

“Oh no – I said head instead of tail. I must put it right.”

“Tickly toes, wiggle my nose, my spell has failed

Make the heads back into tails”

Olive breathed a sigh of relief, until ...

Oh no – two tails and no head!

“OK concentrate – and get it right this time” she said to herself.

“Dear dear, pull my ear – Whatever I said

What the dog really wants is one tail and one head”

Phew – at last the dog had a head and a tail. If she was being picky Olive would have said the tail wasn't quite right – it was a bit small and the wrong colour. But she didn't dare try to make it better.

Olive decided in that moment that her witching days were over. She would go back to just being a rather ordinary little girl.

“I WANNA TELL YOU A STORY “

Hello I'm Sally and I host Creative Writing 2 at my house on the third Tuesday of every month from 10.30 until 12.30.

Do you enjoy reading or writing? You may not exactly be a budding author but that's not the point!

So how does the group work I hear you ask?

Each month a topic is set by a member of our group. Past subjects include:-

Time for a clear out

The Open door

Or even choose a picture from a magazine and create a story.

We all have roughly a month to write anything up to 1000 words or 1 A4 sheet of paper on the chosen subject. It could be factual, fictional, a short story, a poem or anything you like. Personally, I really enjoy deciding what to write even researching a few facts.

At the following meeting everyone reads out their piece prompting discussion, laughter and great conversation. It always surprises me how many different takes on a subject there can possibly be!

We then enjoy tea, coffee and biscuits followed by a fun, short exercise also set by a member of the group for example:-

A themed crossword
 A word search
 Fun with scrabble tiles or story cubes

Creative Writing 2 is actively looking for new members to join us and you are more than welcome to give it a try.

So try something new I guarantee you'll enjoy it and make friends along the way.

Sally Spellman

Go easy when you're driving...

At our January meeting, our Chairman ended proceedings with a joke that raised a few smiles. For those who weren't able to be there, here it is again.

A motorist was driving along quite happily when they passed a speed camera at 40 mph in a 50 mph zone — suddenly *flash!*

"Well, that's odd," they thought. "I wasn't speeding."

So they drove round the block and went past the same camera again, this time at a very careful 30 mph — *flash!* again.

Now thoroughly puzzled, they decided to try once more. They went round the block yet again and crept past the camera at a snail's pace... and to their amazement — *flash!* yet again.

Three weeks later, the post arrived.

Inside were three fines — not for speeding at all, but for not wearing a seat belt! 😊



Important: when paying for trips please add your membership number.

2026

Forthcoming events:

Sat 21st March

Thriplow Festival Day Trip – full.

Sue Northcott

Sat 11th April

Quiz Night

Steve Nolan

Tues 2nd June

Coach trip to Dover

Mick Brookes

Fri 26th June

Walmer Castle & Deal

Sue Northcott

Visit to Restoration House, Rochester is being arranged when open, a sign-up sheet for interest will be available.

Coach Day Trip to Dover - Tuesday 2nd June 2026

As part of its programme of events for 2026, and in conjunction with Joyce Bell's local history group, the social committee is pleased to invite you all to get aboard the coach and discover the town of Dover, the place you've only ever passed through on your way to France! Our Grange Travel coach will leave Cascades at 9 o'clock and should be back in town around 6 pm, giving us six hours to take in the sights of the town and have lunch. I've picked out a couple of attractions, listed below, but everyone is free to do their own thing in the town, provided they're back at 4:30 to catch the coach back to Gravesend!

There's a lot to see in this ancient port town, notably a mediaeval travellers lodging that grew into a Town Hall, a Roman house and a fascinating town museum. Unfortunately, the Roman Painted House, discovered in 1970, is very fragile and is closed on the day of this trip.

The Maison Dieu was founded more than 800 years ago as a place for poor pilgrims to stay the night. It later became a victualling yard, making ship's biscuits and beer for the Royal Navy. In the late 1830s, it became Dover's Town Hall and a popular events venue. This gothic masterpiece is Grade I listed and has recently undergone a painstaking £11m restoration thanks to a Heritage Lottery grant. Visitors can immerse themselves in its colourful past, taking in the splendour of its beautiful rooms from the magnificent Connaught Hall, or medieval Stone Hall, to the Courtroom, Council Chamber or Victorian gaol cells.

More information on : www.maisondieudover.org.uk

Dover Museum was founded in 1836 and is centrally located on the Market Square. Its galleries tell the fascinating story of the development of the town and its famed port, using original objects, graphics and models. Pride of place goes to the 'Dover Boat' - a Bronze Age wooden craft, more than 30 feet long, built without any metal fastenings yet capable of regular crossings to France, discovered accidentally as workmen excavated a pedestrian passageway under the M20 a few minutes walk away - the world's oldest seagoing boat. More information on : www.dovermuseum.co.uk/Home.aspx

Both the Maison Dieu and the museum offer free entry but, fear not, there's plenty of nearby shops, cafés, chippies and pubs to spend your money in including a Wetherspoons! I am assured by Dover Tourist Info that the central area of Dover is flat, unlike the area around the castle! Hopefully we shall have a nice change of scenery, sea air and an interesting day out. I need 40 passengers to run the trip at £25 each, reducing to £20 if I can fill the 53 seat coach. There will be a sign-up sheet at the next few General Meetings, but you can register your interest by emailing me at mick_brookes@hotmail.com.

Mick Brookes

Reminder - all Groups, Activities and Events are undertaken at your own risk

Calendar of Group Meetings and Events

The information printed below has been derived directly from the Beacon website as at February 4 2026. If your group meetings are missing, or incorrect, please contact the relevant Group Leader.

MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Joan Porter
 10:00 Ukulele - Alan Scott
 10:30 Local History 2 – Ruth Ricketts
 11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Des Rees
 13:45 Table Tennis - Stephen Nolan
 14:00 Rummikub 1 – Margaret Pullen
 14:00 Mindfulness Meditation - Julie Redmond

TUESDAY 17 FEBRUARY

10:00 Spanish Intermediate -
 10:00 Bowls Short Mat – Ray Maclean
 10:30 Creative Writing 2 – Sally Spellman
 11:05 Reading – Margaret Groom
 12:00 Fully Loaded Lunch Club – Ben Winder
 13:30 Card Samba - Linda Mei Stevens
 14:30 Pool – Alan Scott

WEDNESDAY 18 FEBRUARY

10:00 Photography 1 - Colin Nice
 10:00 u3a Rock Choir – Alan Scott
 10:00 Tame Your Digital Tech – Peter Buttle
 10:00 German (Beginners) -
 13:55 Mah Jong 1 – Linda Mei Stevens
 14:00 Badminton – Peter Buttle
 14:00 Classical Music Appn – Carol Edwards
 14:15 Line Dancing Beginners + - Linda Howe

THURSDAY 19 FEBRUARY

10:00 Creative Writing 1 – Penny Collins
 10:00 Learn the Ukulele – Johnny G
 10:30 Walking Tennis – Lorna Pender
 14:00 Bowls on Thursdays – Dennis Neighbour

FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY

10:00 Ramble - Colin Nice
 14:00 Mexican Train Dominoes - Peter Buttle
 14:00 Canasta – Sylvia Stickings

MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY

09:55 Tai Chi Intermediate - Joan Porter
 11:00 Tai Chi Beginners - Des Rees
 19:30 Dance – Modern Jive – Alan Scott

TUESDAY 24 FEBRUARY

12:15 Petanque – Joan Porter
 14:00 Bridge – Anne Stott
 14:00 Painting & Sketching – Judy Duffield
 14:30 Pool – Alan Scott

WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY

09:30 Craft & Laugh - Jackie Godwin
 10:00 Psychology - Lin Fridd
 12:30 Zumba Gold – Angela Clear
 14:00 Badminton – Peter Buttle
 14:15 Line Dancing Beginners + - Linda Howe

THURSDAY 26 FEBRUARY

10:00 Rummikub 2 – Sandra Parker
 10:30 Senior Elastix – Jan Elci
 10:30 Walking Tennis – Lorna Pender
 14:00 French Conversation -Anne Stott
 14:00 Geography 1 – Colin Nice
 14:00 Bowls on Thursdays – Dennis Neighbour
 14:15 Dance – Ballroom – Tony Warren

FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY

10:00 Bird watching - Irene Robson
 14:00 Wine Appreciation - Brian Edwards
 14:00 Knit & Natter - Marianne Saliba-Hayes

SATURDAY 28 FEBRUARY

10:00 Scratch Band – Angela Clear

SUNDAY 1 MARCH

12:30 Sunday Lunch Bunch

MONDAY 2 MARCH

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Joan Porter
 10:00 Ukulele – Alan Scott
 11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Des Rees
 13:45 Table Tennis Steve Nolan
 14:00 Readers Forum – Carol Edwards
 14:00 Mindfulness Meditation – Julie Redmond

TUESDAY 3 MARCH

10:00 Short Mat Bowls, Legends - Ray Maclean
 10:00 Spanish Intermediate – Jan Rees
 13:00 Model Making – Christopher Hewlett
 14:00 Local History 1 - Joyce Bell
 14:00 Painting & Sketching 2 – Judy Duffield
 14:30 Pool – Alan Scott

WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH

10:00 Tame Your Digital Tech - Peter Buttle
 10:00 German Beginners – Jan Rees
12:00 Newsletter Deadline to Trevor Woodward
 14:00 Badminton - Peter Buttle
 14:15 Line Dancing Beginners Plus - Linda Howe
 18:05 Film – Jean Stephens

THURSDAY 5 MARCH

09:30 Cookery World Cuisine – Rani Kaur
 10:30 Solos - Linda Howe
 10:30 Walking Tennis – Lorna Pender
 14:00 Bowls on Thursdays – Dennis Neighbour

FRIDAY 6 MARCH

09:30 Hike - Colin Nice
 14:00 Mexican Train Dominoes - Peter Buttle
 14:00 Knit & Natter - Marianne Saliba-Hayes

MONDAY 9 MARCH

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Joan Porter
 10:00 Ten Pin Bowling Stephen Nolan
 11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Des Rees
 13:45 Table Tennis – Steve Nolan
 19:30 Dance - Modern Jive - Alan Scott

TUESDAY 10 MARCH

09:30 Sew4U - Jackie Godwin
 12:15 Petanque - Joan Porter
 14:00 Cribbage 2 - Ann Stott
 14:00 Philosophy - Jean Stephens
 14:30 Pool – Alan Scott

WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH

10:00 Mah Jong 2 - Sandra Parker
 12:30 Dance Zumba Gold - Angela Clear
 14:00 Badminton - Peter Buttle

THURSDAY 12 MARCH

09:50 Rummikub 3 – Linda Howe
 10:00 Cribbage 1 - Brian Edwards
 10:00 Geography 2 - Colin Nice
 10:30 Low Impact Fitness – Lynne Scott
 10:30 Walking Tennis – Lorna Pender
 14:00 British History - Mick Brookes
 14:00 Bowls on Thursdays - Dennis Neighbour
 14:15 Dance - Ballroom - Tony Warren

FRIDAY 13 MARCH

10:00 Photography 2 - Ben Winder
13:45 General Meeting CPC

You are respectfully requested to shred the following pages before disposal as they contain members' personal information.
 Your co-operation is appreciated.

Trevor Woodward