

Gravesend & Northfleet District

U3A Newsletter



**July/Aug
2026**

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

This month's speaker is.....



Philip Oostenbrink.

Philip has been Head Gardener at Walmer Castle and Gardens (English Heritage) since June 2020. Previously he was Head Gardener at Canterbury Cathedral, and has, in the past, also taught horticulture at a secondary school in The Netherlands. In 2021 Philip published a book titled, 'The Jungle Garden,' and he opens his own home jungle garden, which featured on BBC Gardeners' World in 2018, for charity once a year. This planting theme will extend to Walmer Castle as one of the main projects creating a jungle garden in the dry moat around the castle. Collecting plants has been a passion for Philip all his life and currently he holds four National Plant Collections.

On **Friday 14th August**, our speaker will be **Peter Woodley**, who will tell us about being
Behind the Scenes at the BBC.

Peter will take a light-hearted look at life and work in the television industry. He worked in the Camera and Electrical Department at the BBC for 45 years. In that time he progressed through the ranks, seeing television change from black and white to colour, the introduction of stereo sound, the change to widescreen, then digital television, and lastly the launch of high definition. He also had experience in the production side of television, which is where some of his stories come from, and was responsible for the recruitment and training of technical people for the Corporation.

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

The deadline for notices, articles or photographs for next month's newsletter, which **Michele Morement** will be editing, is:

12 noon on Wed. 5th Aug 2026

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

Notices

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Help Us Shine at the Gravesend Regatta!

We need your smiling faces on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd August - Gordon Promenade.

The 180th Gravesend Regatta is just around the corner, and our U3A team will be right in the heart of the action with our own promotional gazebo. This is our biggest opportunity of the year to showcase our fantastic groups, meet local people, and welcome new members to our community.

We already have some member volunteers, but we need more, enthusiastic volunteers to help run the stand alongside our committee members, handing out leaflets and chatting with visitors

How You Can Help?

You don't need to be an expert - you just need to share your love for our U3A. We are breaking the days down into short, manageable shifts, so you will still have plenty of time to enjoy the regatta yourself.

Choose Your Shift.

Please let us know your preferred day, Saturday 1st or Sunday 2nd, and whether a morning or afternoon slot suits you best. We will match you up with a shift that fits your schedule perfectly.

Let's work together to make this year's regatta special!

Contact: Alan Scott - (Details at the end of this Newsletter).



Quiz Nights.

Quiz nights have become very popular and are a great social evening at very small cost to members, and we thank you for your continued support.

The next dates are 5th September, 17th October, and 7th November. The October one is an additional date, and will be all music related.

Kind Regards,

Stan, Steve, and Lorna.

Reminder – Photographic Competition – see page 15.

Group News:

Group information for July.

The new group **Now and Zen** is now active and has some spaces. The meeting time is 11:00 every Tuesday at David's house in Nurstead Church Lane. A signup sheet will be available at the next meeting.

Ray Maclean

Ramble
Fri 17th July.

with Irene.



Cobham Wood and Ranscome Farm.

Irene is leading this 5 mile walk in Cobham Woods and Ranscombe Farm, with great views, and not too hilly.

Meet at 10am in the Car Park in Cobham (just behind the primary school).

Colin Nice (contact details at end of newsletter).

Walkers take part at their own risk.

Hike
Fri 7th Aug.

with Tessa.



Westerham and Chartwell.

Westerham is a lovely wooded part of Kent that we don't visit often and Tessa is leading this five mile walk through the woodland there. It's a circular walk through woods to Chartwell (where there are toilets). We also visit Crockham Hill Common, and there's just the one stile. Please email Colin Nice if you would like to go.

Meet at 10am in the free car park at **Hosey Common - TN16 1PL.**

Colin Nice (contact details at end of newsletter).

Walkers take part at their own risk.

Sunday Lunch Bunch.



The Sunday Lunch Bunch will **not be meeting** in August, but will resume on **Sunday 6th September** - venue to be advised.

Marilyn Pascoe (contact details at end of newsletter).

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS



Photography 1.

We were scheduled to visit Hever Castle this month, right in the middle of the 'red heat warning' – so we didn't go! We've postponed until next month, so watch this space.

Trevor Woodward

Walks in June.



Early in the month Peter Finch led a 5½ mile walk from Cliffe village, through Cooling and its castle, and on to the hamlet of Cooling Street. Peter reports that, happily, all went well! It's a country

walk and is mostly flat and easy walking

In the middle of June, it was Peter again who led a walk through the London Parks. He reports, "A select group braved a sizzling London for the Royal Parks walk. We took in 'changing the guard' at both Horse Guards and Buckingham Palace. While both the Hyde Park rose garden and Queen Elizabeth Memorial garden are currently still maturing, they provided plenty to see, and some welcome shade."



Colin Nice

Photography 2.

Contrasting - we looked and we found plenty of contrasting subject matter, as you can see below. Now we're busy discovering 'Pathways' for our next theme. Remember, we're not the only photographers in our u3a. The 'My Gravesham' photographic competition is open to all. See details in this Newsletter.



Quote of the Month:

As you get older, three things happen. The first is your memory goes, and I can't remember the other two.

Norman Wisdom

Editorial:

After eight and a half years, this is my last edition of the GN&D newsletter. I took over from Philip Stevens, who designed the banner headline I still use today. My co-editor then was Colin Nice, who taught me all I know, and looked after me in the early days. Not only do my thanks go to him, but also to the proof-reader at that time, Brian Edwards, who constantly had to correct my calendar, in the days when I had a chart of which day of the month each group met, and had to work out what date that was. I thank them both for their constant support and encouragement. And I must also include in that my wife, who constantly weathered me pulling my hair out in frustration with my laptop. But the point of this notice, is to thank all the many members who, over those years, have been very kind in their comments on my efforts. Your encouragement has been invaluable. I still have a folder on my laptop of all the compliments you sent in when we kept going through the Covid lockdowns.

I thank you all.

I also very much welcome Sally-Ann Edmonds, who has volunteered to take my place.



Trevor Woodward

The weather has not only affected many of our groups this month, but it has also impacted on contributions to the newsletter. This means we're a couple of pages shorter than usual, for which I apologise, and for the amount of "fillers." But, as I've said before, we can only publish what we get.

Trevor

Social Diary Dates:



2026 Forthcoming events

Tues 14th July Party in the Park - Old Gravesendians

Doreen Neighbour/Anne May

15th - 19th Sept Llandudno & Snowdonia

Linda Howe

Restoration House & Huguenot Museum, Rochester. Still trying to fix a date.

Important: When paying for trips, please add your membership number.

Next quizzes: 5th September, 17th October, and 7th November

Members' contributions



I'm not very good in the heat
Twenty degrees, and I'm beat
I'm starting to melt
It's slack round the belt
And the two blobs of fat were my feet.

Des Rees.



In aid of ellenor Hospice

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
1st July 2026.

If your group meetings are missing, or incorrect, please contact the relevant Group Leader.

MONDAY 13 JULY

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Old Gravesendians
10:00 Ten Pin Bowling - Medway Valley Leisure
11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Old Gravesendians
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Cycling – Varies
14:00 Line Dancing Beginners - Christ Church
Hall
19:30 Dance - Modern Jive - Christ Church Hall

TUESDAY 14 JULY

09:30 Sew4U - ASDA Community Room
10:00 Now & Zen – Home in Nurstead
12:30 Picnic in the Park - Old Gravesendians
14:00 Cribbage 2 - Home in Gravesend
14:00 Philosophy - Home in Northfleet
14:30 Pool - Spots & Stripes

WEDNESDAY 15 JULY

10:00 Mah Jong 1 - Home in Gravesend
10:00 Photography 1 - Home in Gravesend
10:00 Singing - Rock Choir - Home in Gravesend
10:30 Bee Walking - Varies
12:00 Virtual Get-Together – Zoom meeting
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Badminton on Wed. - Cygnet Leisure
Centre
14:00 Classical Music Apprec'n - Home in Meopham
14:15 Line Dancing Beginners+ - Christ Church Hall

THURSDAY 16 JULY

10:00 Creative Writing 1 - Home in Gravesend
10:00 9 Hole Golf - Varies
10:00 Learn the Ukelele with JG - Home Lower
Higham Road
10:30 Solos - Arts Centre Cafe
10:30 Walking Tennis - Gravesend Rugby Club
14:00 Bowls on Thursday - Cobham Bowls Club

FRIDAY 17 JULY

10:00 Ramble - Cobham Wood/RanscomeFarm.
13:00 Badminton 2 – Cascades Leisure Centre
14:00 Bowls on Friday - Woodlands Bowls Club
14:00 Canasta - Home in Meopham
14:00 Mexican Train Dominoes - ASDA
Community Room

MONDAY 20 JULY

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Old Gravesendians
10:00 Ukelele - Home in Gravesend
10:30 Local History – Home in Gravesend
11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Old Gravesendians
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Rummikub 1 – Home in Shorne
14:00 Mindfulness Meditation - Chalk Hall

TUESDAY 21 JULY

10:00 Short Mat Bowls - Cobham Bowls Club
10:00 Now & Zen – Home in Nurstead
12:00 Fully Loaded Lunch Club - St Georges Art
Centre Cafe
13:30 Card Samba - Home in Gravesend
14:00 Reading – Home in Gravesend
14:30 Pool - Spots & Stripes

WEDNESDAY 22 JULY

10:00 Tame Your Digital Tech - Home in Gravesend
10:30 Bee Walking - Varies
12:00 Virtual Get-Together – Zoom meeting
12:30 Dance Zumba Gold – Shears Green Community
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Badminton on Wed. - Cygnet Leisure Centre
14:15 Line Dancing Beginners+ - Christ Church Hall

THURSDAY 23 JULY

10:00 Rummikub 2 - Home in Meopham
10:30 Senior Elastixs Fun Fitness - Old
Gravesendians
10:30 Walking Tennis – Gravesend Rugby Club
14:00 French Conversation - Home in Northfleet
14:00 Geography 1 - Varies
14:00 Bowls on Thursday - Cobham Bowls Club

FRIDAY 24 JULY

10:00 Bird watching - Varies
13:00 Badminton 2 – Cascades Leisure Centre
14:00 Wine Appreciation - Home in Meopham
14:00 Bowls on Friday Lawn - Woodlands Bowls
14:00 Knit & Natter – Home in Challenge Close

MONDAY 27 JULY

Local Theatre Group - Varies

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Old Gravesendians
11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Old Gravesendians
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Cycling - Varies
14:00 Line Dancing Beginners - Christ Church
19:30 Dance - Modern Jive - Christ Church Hall

TUESDAY 28 JULY

10:00 Now & Zen – Home in Nurstead
12:15 Petanque - Gravesend Rugby Club
14:00 Bridge - Home in Northfleet
14:00 Painting & Sketching - Home in Istead Rise
14:30 Pool - Spots & Stripes

WEDNESDAY 29 JULY

09:30 Craft & Laugh – ASDA Community Room
10:30 Bee Walking - Varies
12:00 Virtual Get-Together – Zoom meeting
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Badminton on Wed. - Cygnet Leisure Centre
14:15 Line Dancing Beginners+ - Christ Church Hall

THURSDAY 30 JULY

10:30 Walking Tennis - Gravesend Rugby Club
14:00 Bowls on Thursday - Cobham Bowls Club

FRIDAY 31 JULY

13:00 Badminton 2 - Cascades Leisure Centre
14:00 Bowls on Friday - Woodlands Bowls Club

SATURDAY 1 AUG

10:00 Scratch Band - Home in Gravesend

MONDAY 3 AUG

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Old Gravesendians
10:00 Ukelele - Home in Gravesend
11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Old Gravesendians
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Readers Forum - Home in Meopham

TUESDAY 4 AUG

10:00 Short Mat Bowls - Cobham Bowls Club
10:00 Now & Zen – Home in Nurstead
13:00 Model Making – Home in Greenhithe
14:00 Local History 1 - ASDA Community Room
14:00 Painting & Sketching 2 – Home in Kings Dr.
14:30 Pool - Spots & Stripes

WEDNESDAY 5 AUG

10:00 Film - Home in Northfleet
10:00 Tame Your Digital Tech - Home in Gravesend
10:30 Bee Walking - Varies
12:00 **Newsletter deadline - Michele Morement**
12:00 Virtual Get-Together – Zoom meeting

13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Badminton on Wed. - Cygnet Leisure Centre
14:15 Line Dancing Beginners+ - Christ Church Hall

THURSDAY 6 AUG

09:30 Cooking World Cuisine – Varies
10:15 Solos – Arts Cafe
10:30 Walking Tennis - Gravesend Rugby Club
14:00 Bowls on Thursday - Cobham Bowls Club

FRIDAY 7 AUG

10:00 Hike - Westerham and Chartwell
13:00 Badminton 2 - Cascades Leisure Centre
14:00 Mexican Train Dominoes - ASDA Community Room
14:00 Knit & Natter - Home in Challenge Close

MONDAY 10 AUG

09:55 Tai Chi (Intermediate) - Old Gravesendians
11:00 Tai Chi (Beginners) - Old Gravesendians
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Cycling - Varies
19:30 Dance - Modern Jive - Christ Church Hall

TUESDAY 11 AUG

09:30 Sew4U - ASDA Community Room
10:00 Now & Zen – Home in Nurstead
12:15 Petanque - Gravesend Rugby Club
14:00 Cribbage 2 - Home in Gravesend
14:00 Philosophy - Home in Northfleet
14:30 Pool - Spots & Stripes

WEDNESDAY 12 AUG

10:00 Mah Jong 2 - Home in Meopham
10:30 Bee Walking - Varies
12:00 Virtual Get-Together – Zoom meeting
12:30 Dance Zumba Gold - Shears Green Community Centre
13:45 Table Tennis - Istead Rise Community Hall
14:00 Badminton on Wed. - Cygnet Leisure Centre
15:00 Scrabble Plus - Home in Gravesend

THURSDAY 13 AUG

09:50 Rummikub 3 - St Georges Art Centre Cafe
10:00 Cribbage 1 - Home in Meopham
10:00 Geography 2 - Home in Gravesend
10:30 Low Impact Fitness – Old Gravesendians
10:30 Walking Tennis – Gravesend Rugby Club
14:00 British History – ASDA Community Room
14:00 Bowls on Thursday - Cobham Bowls Club

FRIDAY 14 AUG

10:00 Photography 2 - Home in Frobisher Way
13:00 Badminton 2 – Cascades Leisure Centre
14:00 Bowls on Friday - Woodlands Bowls Club
14:00 **Monthly Meeting - CPC The Maltings**

Additional dates for your diary:

Thursday, 23rd July 7:00pm

The annual, open-air Shakespeare production at Nursted Court is 'Much Ado About Nothing' at 7 o'clock on Thursday, 23rd July. Tickets for Seniors are £22.00, available online, and from the Woodville box office

Mick Brookes

Saturday 25th July 11:30am

Members might be interested to know that they can join a conducted historical tour of Central Gravesend, guided by Christoph Bull, entitled "Gravesend's Victorian Dream." Christoph explains how our town suddenly took a different path, and changed from being a tourist destination to an industrial, riverside town.

We will visit the wonderfully restored Zoar Chapel in Saddington Street (now the Hope Church) - and discover a very important local historical figure commemorated inside. Despite what you might think – we will not be in Gravesend at all! Find out how that is possible!

Meet: 11.30am outside former Post Office, The Grove, Gravesend (opposite the Clock Tower).

The event is free, but donations will be welcomed. No need to book - just turn up!

Mick Brookes



Zoar Chapel



Bad Joke corner - Time to make you groan.

Q: Where do bad rainbows go?

A: To prism. It's a light sentence, but it gives them time to reflect.

There exists a quantity of artificial butter flavour, beyond which people begin to believe it's not butter. It's known as the margarine of error.

My wife asked me to get her Chanel No 5 for Christmas. She's now left me, and I'm sat here watching "Cruising with Jane McDonald,"

Orion's Belt is a big waist of space.

You know when you're sitting on the toilet, and you realize there's no toilet roll, so you have to do that silly, trousers-down waddle walk to go and get another one?
Well, I'm nearly at Sainsburys!

"...so just to be clear, you're not cooking dinner then?"



I finally figured out
what I want to be
when I get older....
YOUNGER!!

I forgot the password for
the file where I keep all my
passwords.

