

ASHINGDON & ROCHFORD

# Newsletter



Charity No: 1180576

DECEMBER 2023

**The deadline for contributions to the next Newsletter is Wednesday 27 December 2023**

**Please send items for publication to the Newsletter Editor**

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Hello, my u3a friends, time for the monthly news, only four weeks to Christmas, hence my Christmas top, trying to get in the mood, I feel it may take more than a reindeer top! I am not ready at all, but decorations will be out and then it will feel more like Christmas. Lucky we only do a secret Santa for family gifts so no stress there, just little children get money and a present, I need a 'to do' list on the go I feel, I am definitely a list person.



I will be donating money to charity and only sending Christmas cards to people I don't see, so don't be upset if you don't receive one

The Christmas tree, our theme is Christmas past, hence home-made decorations, people have been so inventive, thanks so much, so grateful when lots of you get in the spirit, the tree will go up on the 7th December and be on display 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, so please go and have a look. St Andrews Church, Ashingdon.

Christmas party on the 7th. So small entrance fee to cover cost of hall, getting chairs out etc, and to pay for group. Bring your own food and drinks, get your Christmas jumpers out, or ties, and come and have bit of fun, great raffle, all to enjoy. 1.30 pm.

Then it's Saxon Hall lunch, 12.30 for 1pm, again be festive, or posh frock on, or what you like, we have over 80 so make everyone welcome, if you see anyone looking bit lost find them a place to sit, introduce them to others. Everyone will have a reminder of their order, which will be given out by social committee. Last social occasion of the year for us.

If anyone has any problems, speak to social committee who can help you. We just want you all to enjoy yourselves.

Next meeting will be January 4th 2024, Scary time just flies, so no panic! 4 weeks to go, to the big day, get list going, you can't escape it, so go with it, an excuse for mulled wine, indulgence, have fun.

Lady Chair Beryl

## NEXT MEETING

### Christmas Party

**7 December  
1.30**

**Doors open at 1:15 pm**

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## FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS

04 January 2024  
Barry Linton  
*Staying Safe Online*

01 February 2024  
Mark Smith  
TBA  
(Antiques road show expert)

07 March 2024  
Simon Waterfield  
*An Audience with Mr Dickens*

## Noticeboard

**Mark Smith** - I have booked the Antiques Road Show Expert Mark Smith for our February (1/02/2024) meeting and to try something different I've asked him if he would be prepared to host a "mini" antiques road show with you, his audience for the afternoon, and he has agreed.

Hopefully that should make for a fun interactive session and he has asked if you could bring along any of the following items that have an historical significance to you or your family.

Items like Medals, Log books, Photos or badges that you may have for his appraisal and opinion. He has specifically requested **NO** bayonets, swords or weapons or any potentially dangerous items.

He also asked if anyone may have a "Guinea Pig badge. Mark has described this as being his "**Holy Grail**" as he has yet to find one.

Hopefully we will have a full house with plenty of interesting items.

*Roger Blight (Speaker Coordinator)*

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### Short Course:

Learn to make cross stitch Easter Cards includes tea, coffee, cake and chat on the following dates. There are 3-4 places available. £1 per session.

Tuesday January 9th

Tuesday January 23rd

Tuesday February 6th

From 10.30am until 12noon.

Anyone interested please sign up at desk or call Anne Hill

Venue as advised

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### Members' Monthly Draw

*The winner of the November Draw was*

**Kathy Kelly**

You too can win £10! All you have to do

*"Just remember to SIGN IN"*

## Dates for your diary

### Monday Health Walks

Rae, Anne and Richard invite any of our u3a members to join us on our weekly, Monday walks from Magnolia Park. We start walking at 10.am so meet at 9.45.am to allow time to put on boots etc., to enable a prompt departure at 10 am. Walk distance is about 2 to 3 miles at a pace to suit the ability of the slowest walker. Please use suitable foot wear for unmade sometimes muddy footpaths and bring suitable rainwear etc for our changeable weather

*Richard Paternoster*

## Walks with Phil

Friday 1 December

Let's meet at Belfairs Park ready to walk by 9.45. If you drive in the one way system and drive between the bowling greens, bear left with one bowling green still on your left together with the toilets, and then go in the parking area on the left that says "Way In" we shall meet in that particular car park. We will walk NW along the northern edge of Belfairs Park to the far end of Poors Lane and swing SW to explore the upper reaches of the mighty Prittlebrook. Then when Poors Lane transforms into a residential road we will return eastward along the southern boundary of Great Wood and back into Belfairs Park, and back to our cars. Probably less than 4 miles of mainly woodland and mainly level walking.

Friday 15 December

We will be meeting ready to walk by **10.30** at the Cock Inn. Please note later start. We have permission to park there. If you want to join the nine already signed up for lunch in that pub afterwards, please let me know asap. Telephone 07810 218640. As for the walk, I envisage walking about 100 yards west along Hall Road and then following the path around the back of the Lawn to beyond Gusted Hall. We will turn south and downhill to the Roach stream and then turn east again along bridleways near the southern edge of Cherry Orchard Park. Eventually we will turn north and join the stub of the old Cherry Orchard Lane which emerges on Hall Road about 100 yards east of the Cock Inn. Voila! About 90 minutes with some gentle ups and downs in mainly open landscape of parkland or low intensity farming.

Friday 29 December

Let's meet at the Ashingdon and West Hawkwell Community Centre car park by 9.45 ready to car share in driving to Marsh Farm car park in South Woodham Ferrers. I envisage I envisage a gentle level walk east along the River Crouch until we are obliged to turn north and west again by the intrusion of Clements Green Creek. After following its meandering bank for a mile, we will cut back south on an established path to rejoin the bank of the Crouch and complete the rest of the distance back to our cars. Probably just over 3 miles of level walking amongst the wild birds who have escaped from Wallasea Island, but hopefully some good fresh air and exercise after Christmas!

*These walks are open to all members with a reasonable level of walking fitness and owning sturdy footwear. Just turn up. But any concerns give me ring or text.*

January dates

To fit around my Scrabble expedition this month I expect to organise walks for Fridays 5 and 19 January, and then probably 2 February. Sorry to mess about with the two weekly interval again!

### **A note about walks whilst staying at Nidd Hall**

I have decided that I would quite like to revisit the Railway Museum in York so I propose to lead walks on the other two days only. (The excursions planned for non-walkers are to Harrogate and RHS gardens I believe). Sorry, but if you want to walk on the day of the York trip, I can lend you my map and make suggestions. Harrogate and the RHS gardens are not far from Nidd Hall. So, I am hoping to use the coach fitting around these visits to lead two walks in areas about ten miles north west from Nidd Hall. These will be on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales. I have not finalised anything, but probably these walks will not more than 6 or 7 miles each day in the upper Nidd valley and onto the edges of adjacent moors, somewhere near Pateley Bridge. Perhaps terminating in a pub or tea room, for a sandwich or something, waiting for the coach to pick us up. But any thoughts about what/where/how etc please me know.

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## Serendipity Future Plans

Very sadly, we have decided to postpone our annual New Year lunch next January for a variety of unavoidable reasons. It is hoped we will be able to hold a similar event later in the year.

Meanwhile, your Serendipity team are deciding on and planning a number of interesting visits for 2024 which we will publicise in due course. We are trying to arrange interesting trips which are not too expensive in view of the general financial situation.

There are quite a few new members of the Ashingdon & Rochford U3A who are interested in joining the Serendipity group and several existing group members who have not taken up the opportunity to go on visits for some months so we have decided to allocate places on visits on a first come, first served basis to be fair to all.

We wish you all a good Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

*Sue Horncastle - Group Co-ordinator*

## Group News Roundup

**The Flower Arranging Group** met on Friday 24th November for the last time before Christmas.

We had a theme of "Craft Wood and Fire". We all enjoyed making these seasonal arrangements and decorations.

The wall decorations were inspired by similar items sold by John Lewis, but I think ours are better!!

Our next meeting will be on 26th January when we will be doing arrangements using only three main flowers.

*Maureen Pointer*

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### Card and Papercraft



A huge thank you to Denise Astor for showing our group how to make this stunning twist and pop-up card. It was certainly a challenge with lots of very accurate measuring and cutting required but the results speak for themselves. Outstanding! Thank you too for the delicious homemade biscotti Denise, cookery lessons next please!

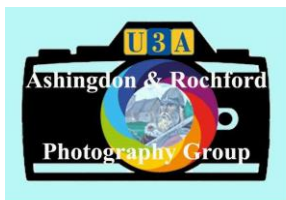
We were delighted to welcome Noreen Bishop into our group, I'm pleased you enjoyed the challenge Noreen.

We will not meet in December and our next meeting will be on January 15, 1.15 at Hawkwell Baptist Church as usual.

Happy Christmas everyone

*Wendy Paternoster*

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## U3A Photo Group Nov 2023 Wet & Windy with Soggy leaves



Since mid-October, this corner of Essex has only had a handful of dry days and near by some over 50mph wind gusts at Shoeburyness. It's not the weather to be outdoors taking photos of the autumn colours. The leaves are falling fast, and the trees are becoming bare. The weather is expected to remain wet and windy for the rest of the month, so it may be better to stay indoors and with a good book or enjoy some indoor activities.

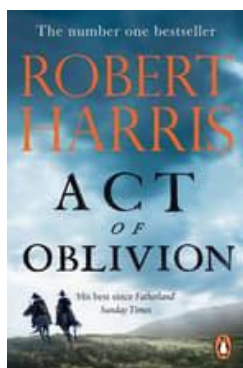
Other news, the group is looking at a social get-together for some time early next year. We'll keep you posted on the details.

Sorry, this is a very brief report, but I'm out of the area a lot this month. Unfortunately, I have not the time to produce a Photo Gallery this month. However, we hope to be back next month with some beautiful photos from our group members



*Roger Young*

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**The Tuesday book group** met on 21st November at our new venue of the Book Hub at the Faith Hope and Charity shop at Golden Cross. It is very pleasant there and we like being surrounded by shelves full of books.

We discussed Act of Oblivion by Robert Harris which is based on true events. Set in the 1660's it tells the story of the pursuit of Colonel Edward Whalley and his son-in-law Colonel William Goffe who escaped to New England after being found guilty of treason following the overthrow of Oliver Cromwell and the Restoration of the Monarchy.

*Maureen Pointer*

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### Calligraphy Group

My ladies are doing exceptionally well with their calligraphy writing. They are now able to construct words and sentences in italics without referring to their notes and each month are improving.

We enjoy good social mornings and find that after they have attained a good standard they still want to stay on in the class and practise their writing which they cannot always do at home.

Next month we are designing Christmas cards with verses written in italics and most of my ladies are also writing their own Christmas cards in script which is wonderful.

I am only too happy to teach one and all my skills, basic as it is, so they can capture the enjoyment I get from this descriptive writing.

*Barbara Baker*

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## Gardening Group

The group met at the hall and enjoyed a great talk given by Paul Nice on how to pull together a spring trough and a talk on Hydroponic Propagation.

Included are a couple of photos of the spring trough made up at the meeting and two blue and white pots with 3 layers of bulbs, Tulips bottom layer, Daffodils middle layer and Crocus top layer with 2 inches of compost covering them. They are then covered with a layer of horticultural grit. We look forward to seeing them bloom in the spring.



There will be no meeting in December so the next meeting will be on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024, at the same hall and will be a Q&A session, a seed swap and general discussion. Please get your thinking caps on and send your Questions to either Paul or Marion by the end of December.

In-between time we both wish you all a merry Christmas, a happy new year and look forward to seeing you in January.

*Marion Cain*

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## Bird Watchers

I had to cancel our outing to Two Tree Island in November due to personal reasons, but it turned out the weather was awful that morning anyway. Matt braved the weather and went there on his own, got very wet but also got these great photos.



Teal



Ringed Plover



Avocets



Redshank

*Paul Nice*

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## Local History 2

On a very wet afternoon, our group met in St Nicholas Church, Great Wakering. Derek, a member of The Friends of St Nicholas welcomed us and explained that the group was formed to raise funds to help keep the 11<sup>th</sup> century church in good repair.

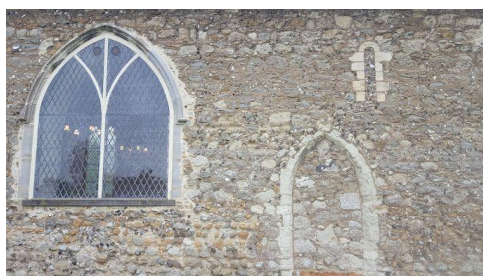


Derek gave a very interesting talk on the history of the church. The present Norman building was begun about 1100AD with the likelihood of a Saxon Minster. The Nave and Chancel were both built about 1100 by the Normans. The Norman font dates from 1200 and the stone pulpit is Victorian.



The lower stage of the tower was added to the Norman church around 1130, and the upper part was constructed towards the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The spire was probably completed with the bell chamber at the top of the tower in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was painted white in 1912 so that it could be used as a landmark for shipping in the Thames. There is a peal of 6 bells in the tower.



The West Porch was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It is unusual in that it consists of two storeys. The upper room in the porch is known as the Priest's Chamber. It is believed to have been used by monks from Beeleigh Abbey for overnight quarters when they were preaching in the church.



We were unable to go around the outside as it was still raining, and so we returned to the Lady Chapel where two ladies served us tea and jam puffs.

*Carol Collins*

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## History Group 3

Our November History Group Meeting was a talk given by Simon Deacon on: "The History of Southend High Street and Marine Parade".

Very many of the photographs Simon showed were bought by his late father. At an auction his father left a bid for an old suitcase stuffed full of photographs taken by a local photographer. Apparently, the value was supposed to be in the suitcase itself and the photographs were going to be thrown away!

Thank goodness Simon's father's bid was the only one. It was amazing to see Southend as it used to be, and it bought back memories for many of the group.

We learned a lot about Southend's past and we will look at it with new eyes the next time we visit. Just remember, wherever you go, look up and see the remains of the history before your very eyes.

*Karen Hunter*

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## Serendipity visit to Tower Bridge

U3A members visited Tower Bridge on Thursday 23 November and enjoyed excellent guided tours.

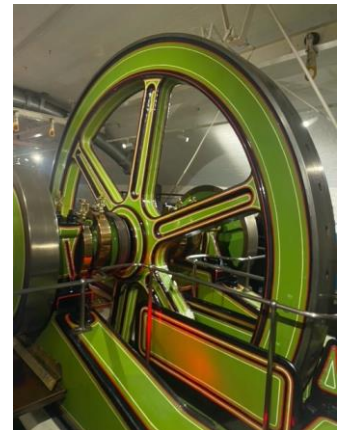
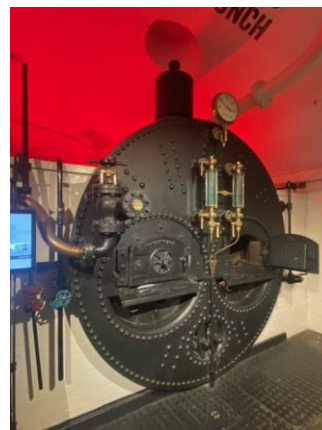
Tower Bridge was opened after a public competition of 50 designs were submitted to win the contract. The competition was abandoned in 1879, and the architects Sir Horace Jones with Sir John Wolfe Barr built the bridge, however Sir Horace Jones died one year into the bridge's construction. It took 8 years to build, involving divers and squads of riveters (over 13 million rivets were used). Its original colour was chocolate brown, a colour favoured by Queen Victoria, and was steam driven until 1976, however it is now powered by hydraulics but driven by oil and electricity. The glass Walkways that span between the two towers were installed in 2014.



On the glass bridge



Bridge Opening



Boiler & Steam driven Wheel

*Shelagh Nicholas*

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## Christmas Wreaths

What a great start to Christmas! 14 of us gathered in my garden to make natural Christmas wreaths. Luckily, although cold the weather was sunny and kind.

The previous few days has seen me doing some helpful pruning in the local parks, and along the seafront to gather evergreen foliage. I had also been collecting flower heads throughout autumn and some people had given and brought greenery from their gardens.

So armed with plenty of interesting materials we all learnt how to make a Christmas wreath, and after a couple of hours of creative concentration we had all produced a beautiful wreath.

All that remained was the need to warm up and that was achieved with coffee and freshly baked mince pies!



*Sue Morris*

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## The Bungalow Tea Rooms, Chigwell Row - Alan Perkins

If you were a cyclist or a rambler in the late 1950s or early 60s, you will almost certainly have been familiar with The Bungalow Tea Rooms at Chigwell Row, Essex.

The village was on the A1112, the road from the A127 to Chigwell, at the top of the hill and notable for All Saints Church and the Maypole pub (mentioned in Dickens' Barnaby Rudge). Down the road, towards the Retreat pub, the Tea Rooms consisted of a number of single-storey, wooden buildings, one of which was of course an actual tea room where splendid old fashioned teas (tea, sandwiches, cakes, scones, toast and jam, etc.) were served, making it a popular destination for cyclists and walkers. There were very few cars in those days, other transport was mainly by bus from Ilford, Romford or Barkingside.

The Bungalow Tea Rooms also happened to be the Winter headquarters of Ilford Athletic Club, and I was first introduced to them shortly after joining the club in January 1950. They were in fact, within the grounds of a traditional, brick-built house owned by Edgar Moon the Secretary and one of the founders of Ilford AC. His older brother was the club president.

On Saturdays during the winter two of the buildings were set aside to provide bathing and changing facilities for club members. We were a mixed club, so one was for men and the other for women (things were simpler in those days, you were either one or the other). I can of course speak only of the arrangements for the men! Another building was used for social events.

So, on a typical winter's Saturday afternoon, if neither the men's nor the women's sides of the club were competing away, there would be either training runs or competition against other clubs from our home base. Our competition course was a lap of about two and a half miles around the surrounding countryside. It was very varied going, starting with tracks through woods, which could often be very wet and muddy. It then opened out to fairly level grassland, followed by some quite steep hills and then a long downhill finish. Races would be over any combination of these laps from one to four; i.e. two and a half to ten miles. The whole area adjoined Hainault Forest so there was plenty of ground to cover if you wanted to explore elsewhere.

When finished, you returned to your bathing/changing room where in the bathing section, a number of 6ft. zinc baths would be laid out on the floor each filled with 6 or 7 inches of hot water supplied from gently steaming, large, Burco boilers. If the course was very muddy the baths soon acquired a deposit of mud at the bottom. The hot water was frequently topped up by willing helpers, so one was generally able to finish reasonably clean and warm. One of the willing helpers unfortunately considered himself a bit of a prankster and thought it great fun, just as you got relaxed and warm, to empty a bucket of cold water over your head. Not always the most popular man in the room!

The afternoon's exertions would be followed by a slap-up tea and then we would all retire to the "events" building for an evening of entertainment. Sometimes this took the form of a dance, in which case Edgar would have dusted the linoleum floor with talcum powder or crushed soda crystals for greater ease of footwork. Music was provided from 68rpm shellac records played on a wind-up gramophone, using steel needles. Popular dance bands of the day were Victor Sylvester, Henry Hall, Joe Loss etc. (I am sure you could name a few more.)

On other occasions, there might be whist drives, beetle drives (remember them?) and all kinds of quizzes. Sometimes there were even hockey matches, using upside down walking sticks and a very soft ball – only 2 a side at a time if I remember rightly! Then it was time to head for home; Inevitably by bus, trolley bus, or a combination of both.

Those of us who experienced those happy, innocent times, became bound together by friendships that have lasted ever since. Many different, life paths were trodden and most of us have gone now. Indeed, I may be the only one left, but for many years we had annual reunions, where, within moments, we would be laughing and joking with each other again as if time had stood still and we were once again all together in the Bungalow Tea Rooms.

Nostalgia eh? It's not what it was you know.

## Committee Members Contact Details

<b>Lady Chair</b>	Beryl Horrex
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Ian Foster
<b>Business Secretary</b>	Carol Collins
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Noreen Bishop
<b>Joint Membership Sec.</b>	Val Stenson
<b>Joint Membership Sec./Beacon Admin</b>	Pam Foster
<b>Joint Group Coordinator</b>	Carole Edwards
<b>Joint Group Coordinator</b>	Rae Hill
<b>Committee member</b>	Phil Kelly
<b>Committee member</b>	Anne Hill
<b>Committee member</b>	Roger Blight
<b>Committee member</b>	Marion Cain
<b>Committee member</b>	Ann O'Brien
<b>Committee member</b>	Wendy Paternoster
<b>ExOfficio/Minutes Sec</b>	Janet Berry

### GROUP MEETINGS CALENDAR

#### MONDAYS

Walking	Weekly	9.45	Richard Paternoster, Anne and Ray Hill
Are you Curious	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Dave Lazell & Graham Collins
Beer Appreciation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Terry Lake
Bird Watching	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month	TBA	Paul Nice
Calligraphy Group	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month	10:30 am	Barbara Baker
Card and Paper Craft	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of month	1:30 pm	Wendy Paternoster
Discussion	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of month	2:30 - 4:30	David & Barbara Hine
Knit and Chat	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of month	2:30 - 4:30	Barbara Hine
Petanque (Boules)	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of month	10:00	Linda Deadman
Rummikub	Weekly	2:00 – 4:00	Pam Leys
Supper Club	1st Monday of month	6:00 pm	Val Stenson

#### TUESDAYS

Book Club (2)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month	10:30	Maureen Pointer
French Conversation	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month	2:30 - 4:00	Sue Horncastle
Local History (2)	2nd Tuesday of the month	2:00	Graham Collins & Carol Collins



Petanque (Boules)	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month	2:00 – 4:00	Beryl Horrex/Janet Toms
Short Mat Bowls	Every other Tuesday	2:00 – 4:00	John Stenson
Ten Pin Bowling	Fortnightly	11:00	Jacqui & Keith Baker
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>			
Card & Papercraft 2	4th Wednesday of month	10.00 –	Denise Astor
Knitting & Sewing	4th Wednesday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Katherine Lake
Line Dancing	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed of the	2:00 - 3:00	Jill Nettleship
Local History (1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of month	p.m.	Sandra Dawson
Table Tennis	Weekly	7:30	John Owen
Yoga	Weekly	2:00 - 3:00	Barbara Ferdy
<b>THURSDAYS</b>			
Cribbage (cards)	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday in month	10:00 - 12:00	Keith Baker
Gardening Group	2nd Thursday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Paul Nice & Marion Cain
Knitting (2)	Fortnightly	2:00 - 4:00	Sue Dodkin
Serendipity	Monthly (Normally a	All day	Various
Snooker	2nd Thursday of month	11:00 - 1:00	David Lazell
Snooker (2)	3rd Thursday of the month	11:00 – 1:00	Peter Saville
<b>FRIDAYS</b>			
Canasta	2nd Friday of the month	2:30 - 4:30	Ian Foster
Book Club (1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday of month	1:30	Wendy Paternoster
Flower Arranging	4 <sup>th</sup> Friday of month	2:00 - 3:30	Maureen Pointer
I.T.	4 <sup>th</sup> Friday of month	2:00 - 4:00	Dave Pointer
Local History (3)	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of month	10:00	Sue Morris. Sue Mitchell & Karen Hunter
Photography	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday of month Inside Outside	2:30 - 4:30 2:00 - 4:00	Roger Young
Solo/canasta	4 <sup>th</sup> Friday of the month	7:00 - 9:00	Ian Foster
Walking	2 Fridays per month	Mid	Phil Kelly
<b>SATURDAY</b>			
Petanque (Boules)	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Saturday of month	10:00 - 12:00	Rosemarie Barrows
<b>SUNDAY</b>			
Sunday Lunch Club	Monthly, various dates	1:00 - 3:00	Carol Collins
<b>Other Various Dates</b>			
Garden Visits			Janet Arrowsmith
Theatre Trips			Claire Ham