

# U3A Newsletter

Gravesend,  
Northfleet  
& District

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**Nov / Dec 2023**

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

**Today's speaker is.....**

**..... Steve Hookins.**

## "Doing Our Bit!"

Delivered in character, let one man and his broom, "Mr Foreman," of the Emergency Road Repair Service (see photo),



talk about the roles carried out by some of the Home Front's unsung heroes.

From the Upper Thames Patrol to the workers of the MG Works in Abbingdon, via the Emergency Hospital Service. He

also looks at some of the civilians who were awarded the George Cross and George Medal.

For your delight and delectation, he also performs an array of impersonations of notable men of the period. This talk is complemented with a small display of genuine WW2 Home Front civil defence badges and ephemera.



**On Fri 8th December, our speaker will be Dr. James Taylor, FRSA.,**

a former curator of paintings, drawings and prints at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

He will present a talk on:

## "Grace Darling and the Fine Art of Saving Lives at Sea."

Darling's daring rescue of steamship passengers off the Northumberland coast in 1838 brought her international fame. Discover more about her bravery, short life (she died aged 26) living in the Brownsman and Longstone lighthouses and her influence, alongside the artistic

contribution that has helped to keep her in the public eye.

Grace became the 'poster girl' of the RNLI and was the first woman awarded their medal for gallantry.

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

12 noon on **Wed 29th November 2023.**

Please e-mail items to: [grv.u3a.editor@gmail.com](mailto:grv.u3a.editor@gmail.com)

Gravesend, Northfleet & District



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

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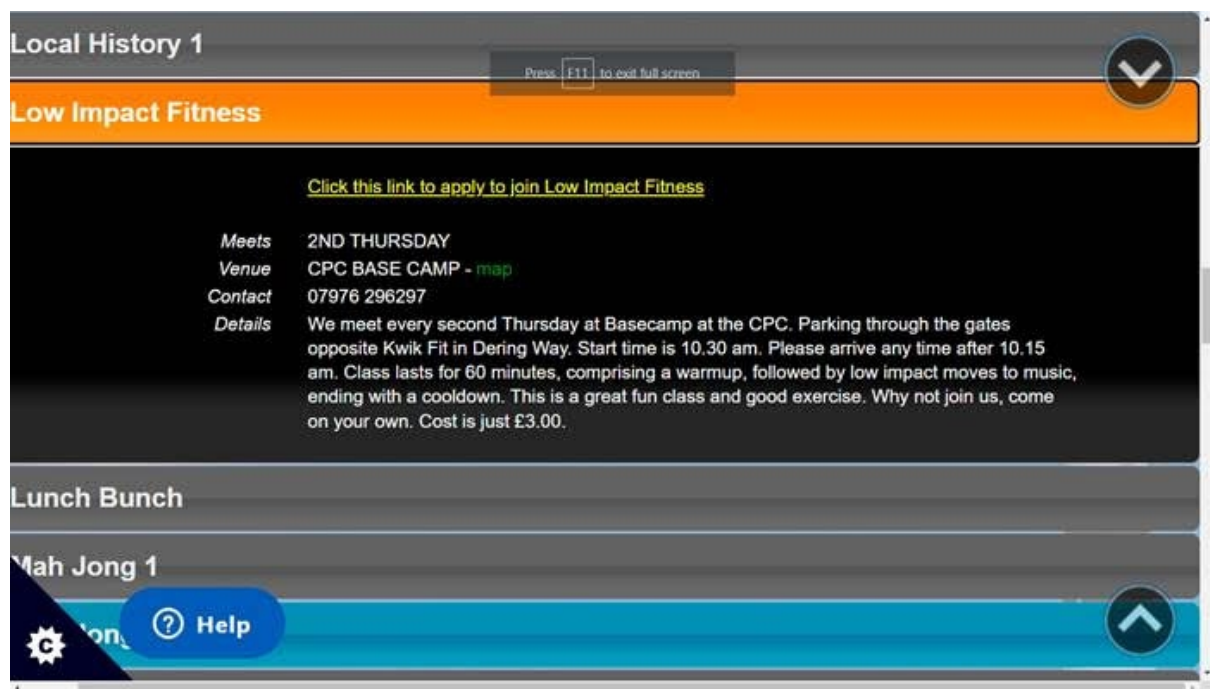
# Joining Groups.

## Want to join a Group – not sure if there is space?

Many members are now joining Groups on-line in just 4 clicks.

Any time, night or day, you can log in to **Gravesend U3A website** – click **Members** – click **Members' Login**, using your email and password. Click **Groups**, select the group you are interested in and click **Join Group**, and the Group Leader(s) will be advised. If **Join Group** is not shown, please contact the Group Leader – there may still be space.

Alternatively, you can still use the Group's contact details shown at the back of the newsletter



## Singing for Fun.

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 11:30 – 13:30 Legends Sports, Thong Lane, DA12 4LG -- Only £1**

Alan is pleased to advise that we have restarted our Singing for Fun group, at a new location, every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday at the same venue as Tai-Chi group.

You do not need to have a good voice, whatever voice you have its ok for Singing for Fun, 20 voices together make a great sound.

This is group Karaoke, we have the music and words on a TV screen as we all sing along together to a range of songs from your youth, to more current tunes and sing-alongs.

**Everyone welcome to join** - come on your own or with friends to join this fun group.

**Interested? Please Click Join Group on Gravesend U3A Website – or just turn up!**

**Alan Scott** (contact details at end of newsletter).

## GROUP MEETINGS ANNOUNCEMENTS



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### **Ramble** **Fri 17th Nov.** *with Tessa*



#### **The Farleighs.**

Tessa is leading our ramble which has a bit of everything – riverside, historic bridges, pretty villages, a hill, lovely views, woodland and farmland – and all in about 5 mls. And there's a mobile tea/coffee café as well at the end. Sounds perfect! Starting at Teston, it's a circular route, visiting East and West Farleigh before returning to Teston. If you'd like to join the walk please email Colin.

**Meet at 10:00am** in the Teston Country Park car park ME18 5BX.

(Loos in the car park)

**Directions:** A2/M2 to A228 exit just before the Medway bridge. Follow the A228 all the way past Kings Hill and then take the A26 towards Maidstone. Pass through Watlington and after about ½ mile at Teston turn right onto the B2163. The car park is the other side of the railway line on the right. Parking is £2, payable by cash, card or the apps Park Buddy, PaybyPhone, Ringo.

**Colin Nice** (contact details at end of newsletter).

### **Walkers take part at their own risk.**

### **Sunday Lunch Bunch** **Sun 26th Nov** *with Marilyn.*

Sunday Lunch Bunch will be meeting at 1.15 pm at the China Garden, 33 Windmill Street, Gravesend DA12 1AS. Fixed price lunch £15.90.



**Marilyn Pascoe** (contact details at end of newsletter).

### **Hike** **Fri 1st Dec** *with Barry*



#### **Shorne Woods and Cobham Hall & Woods**

Barry leads us on a 5.7 mile walk from Shorne Woods through the grounds of Cobham Hall. It then takes in views of the Cuxton Valley before continuing via the Mausoleum and Cobham Woods and returning to Shorne. The walk is fairly hilly in places. If you'd like to join the walk please contact Colin, as normal.

**Meet** at 9.30am outside the visitor centre in Shorne Woods Country Park. Parking is £3.00

**Colin Nice** (contact details at end of newsletter).

### **Walkers take part at their own risk.**

### **Quiz Night** **Sat 9th Dec** *With Stan*

7.30pm at Christ Church hall, Gravesend.  
We are meeting at Christ Church hall this time.  
Hope to see you for a fun night.

**Stan Morris** (contact details at end of newsletter)



### **Christmas Lunch** **Wed 6th Dec** *with Maggie*

will be at 12:30 at Bartella's on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. and will cost £30 plus tip.

**Maggie Hart** (contact details at end of newsletter).







## NEW GROUPS:

### Mindfulness Meditation.

**Tues 21st Nov 10.30 am -- Only £1**

Legends Sports, Thong Lane, DA12 4LG.

Join Julie to learn some useful breathing techniques and a variety of meditation practices to help bring relaxation to the body, calmness to the mind and learn to find the importance of finding quiet in our busy and often stressful world.

Sessions will be chair-based, relaxed, fun and accessible. There will be 2 sessions a month.

**Usually Med 1- 1st Mon of month 1:00 - 2.30 – Med 2 - 3rd Tues of month 10.30 -12.00**

**(Note for December Med 1 - 4<sup>th</sup> & Med 2 - 12<sup>th</sup> )**

You are welcome to either or both **and its only £1**

We're looking forward to sharing this new venture with you as we search for stillness in our busy lives.

**Interested? Please Click Join Group on Gravesend U3A Website or contact Julie**

**Julie Redmond** (contact details at end of newsletter).



### Short Mat Bowls.

**Tuesday 21st November 10:00 – 12:00 Legends Sports, Thong Lane, DA12 4LG -- Only £3**

There is already a lot of interest for Ray's new group, which plans to meet 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of each month.

Legends has an excellent "true" bowling surface in the "Dome". Existing tennis court markings can be utilized in this all weather venue.

**Interested? Please Click Join Group on Gravesend U3A Website or contact Ray.**

**Ray MacLean** (contact details at end of newsletter).



## Proposed new Group:

### Geography Group 2.

We are just a couple or so people from making the group number viable. Do you fancy joining?

Our first meeting would be a short one to agree when and where the group would meet, a leader and how we operate.

**To give you an idea**, the existing Geography group operates as follows:

- We meet monthly for a couple of hours, meeting in the houses of the members and rotating the venue between the homes of those members that have sufficient space to accommodate the group or are prepared to host.
- At the end of our meeting the group decides on a country to study the following month and the home at which we will meet.
- When tackling our research, ideally we download information from the internet and then select those parts that are most relevant and interesting.

Occasionally rather than choose a country a variation is selected, for example:

Deserts - Islands in the Pacific - Counties of England, - States of America, etc

**Interested? Please contact Colin Nice** - contact details at end of newsletter.



# NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS



## Walks in October.

Early in the month Ray led a very pleasant 7 mile hike from Hoo village, along the Saxon Shore Way to Upnor, and then back, following a sort of figure of eight route. Early in the walk, the path was along the beach and one part, in particular, proved to be very muddy, but it was made up for on the return, with a lovely riverside stop in Lower Upnor.

In the middle of the month, storm Babet threatened our revised walk from Cobham with torrential rain throughout the morning. As we know, many parts of the country received the full force of the downpour, but miraculously, on the afternoon prior to the walk, the forecast changed to potentially minimal, if any, rain. The walk went ahead, ably led by Ray, again, and even though there was some very light, almost 'nuisance' rain, the eleven enjoyed a 6ml walk, muddy in places, which took in Sole St. and Meopham.

**Colin Nice**

## Short Mat Bowls.

Our inaugural session of short mat bowling went pleasingly well. It could be described as unorthodox, short mat bowls, rather than outlandish tennis, in that we used the tennis courts at Legends. We used short lengths of wood to indicate the mat, the block, the dead line and the ditch. Out of 30 in the group 13 of us attended on the first day. I had thought that 16 would show, but some couldn't because of illness. The game certainly requires a slightly different skill set, compared to regular bowling, but we learned a lot on day one and I think we all had fun. The next session will be Tuesday 7th November, at 10 am.

**Ray MacLean**



## Quote of the Month:

"It's so much easier to suggest solutions when you don't know too much about the problem."

**Malcolm Forbes**

# Geography – Egypt.

We studied Egypt this month and it proved to be a good choice. The country is almost square in shape, with two natural borders, the Mediterranean Sea along the north coast and, to the east, the Red Sea (predominantly) and part of Israel. With the exception of the Nile, the country is pretty much arid desert and surprisingly, much of this is below sea level.

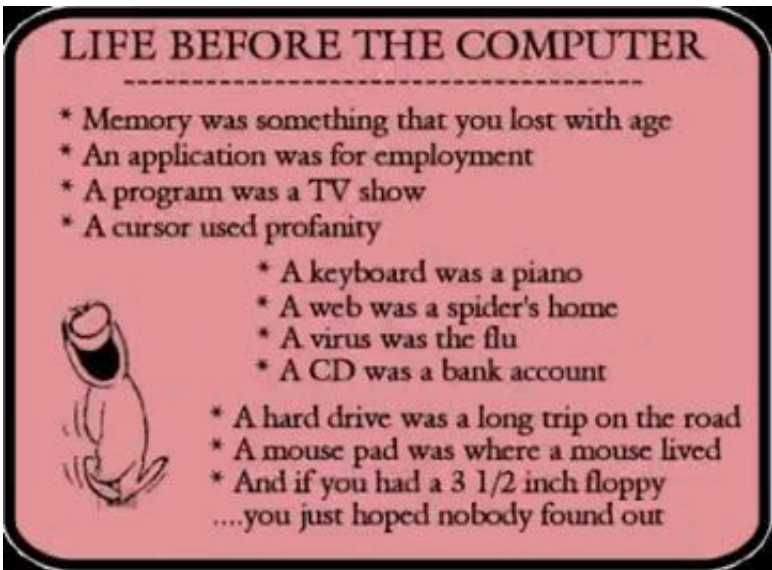
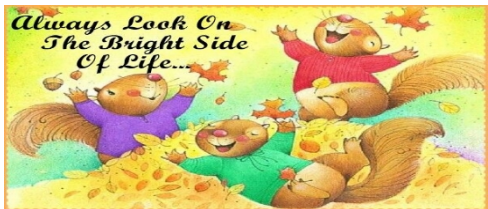
The Nile, flows south to north to the east of the country, and the land either side of the river is incredibly fertile. Unsurprisingly it's along the Nile and the Med that most of the cities and towns lie and the population lives.

And then there's the pyramids and the Sphinx. A number of our group have visited some of the pyramids, but not all 118 of them. There were lots of amazing facts about them but the Pyramid of Khufu is the only one of the 'Seven Wonders of the Ancient World' still in existence. 2.3 million limestone blocks were needed to build it, each weighing on average 2½ tonnes – how did they quarry and cut them, transport them and lift them into such a giant structure so perfectly aligned?

**Answer:** We don't know! Amazing!



Colin Nice



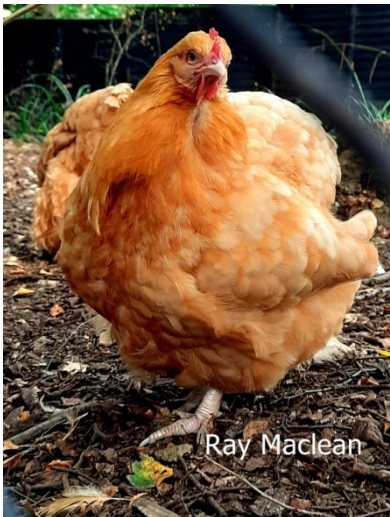
Seen on U3A holiday



# Photography 1: Wildwood Animal Park.

This month our group visited Wildwood Animal Park, near Herne Bay, for a couple of hours of photography. A number of enclosures were closed for upgrading, to be ready for future animal arrivals, and a number more apparently contained exotic species, which seemed well hidden or were, perhaps, replete with food and asleep under cover from human eyes. However, we did manage to photograph some animals and had a very enjoyable couple of hours there, finishing off with a nice lunch in the café.

Colin Nice



Ray Maclean



Jackie Toulson



Colin Nice



Trevor Woodward

## MEMBERS' JOTTER FOR RECORDING TRIPS / WALKS BOOKED AT THE MEETING

Trip/Walk	Date	Details	Cost	Organiser

## Creative Writing – Story of the Month.

### The Closed Door – by Sally Spellman

To retire from your profession is a hard thing for sure.  
It was your life, your forte and to some extent your world.  
Indeed, any job however great or small brought friendship, interest and a purpose  
What comes afterwards can feel a silent metaphor, a closed door.

Time now for hobbies, for holidays, and relaxation  
Or maybe simply reverse the clock, childminding is always an option!  
Daytime tele is not always advised  
Jeremy Kyle or 'Four In A Bed' will not keep those brain cells alive!

For some left on their own they need to get out  
and discover what else is about!  
And so, for me, I found the U3A.  
What on earth is that, I hear you say!

Retired and inspired,  
Keen to learn something new,  
To meet new people, make friends and more  
A welcome awaits beyond that door.

You can sing, you can cycle, you can dance or play bowls  
Play games, join a walk, enjoy good food or days out  
And if you're no expert it simply doesn't matter  
There's always someone to share a really good natter.

I joined a group to play Petanque  
Sometimes I play well and my team is triumphant  
At other times I'm rubbish but nobody minds  
We all laugh and enjoy a jolly good time.

A group of writers is really good fun  
Who knew that one subject could inspire such variety  
And now 'Tame Your Digital Tech' is a fairly new group  
helping members to embrace new technology.

There's always so much in which to take part  
Keeping a good diary becomes quite an art  
With over 500 members and numbers still growing  
The older generation are active, and closed doors are opening



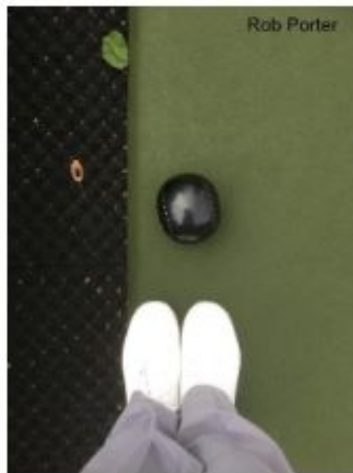
## Photography 2: “On the Edge (of).....”

.....reason, our seats, jumping off a wall or a boat?

Mariam was at the cutting edge, Jill made use of a photogenic boatman, Alan posed a very obliging cat and Ben lets us admire his socks – but Ken’s??? A knotted parsnip or a mummified friend? We shudder to think.

Next time – ‘Open Doors’

Joan Porter



## Social Diary dates:



### 2023

### Forthcoming events:

<b>Mon 27th Nov:</b>	<b>Wisley Glow Festival with Jewels. Fully Booked</b>	<b>Sue Northcott/ Anne May</b>
<b>Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec:</b>	<b>Quiz Night Cruise Ship Lunch &amp; Show</b>	<b>Stan Morris Peter Buttle</b>

### 2024

<b>Thurs 1st Feb:</b>	<b>Brick Lane Panto and Tea. Cost approx, £70 - £74.</b>	<b>Linda Howe</b>
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## U3A Cheshire Holiday

We, in Kent, often think 'it's grim up north', but after five days in the Cheshire area, I believe the 34 members who went on our holiday in Coronation Street Land would rather beg to differ. The natives are friendly and very welcoming.

We were based in the delightful little town of Altrincham in a very comfortable hotel. The generous breakfasts were first class and we were offered a different dinner menu every night. Everyone seemed happy with their accommodation.



The theme of the first day was 'canals' and we visited and used the famous Anderton Boat Lift, had a short cruise on the river Weaver and then on to the fascinating Canal Museum at Ellesmere Port. The second day was spent in Chester - a guided tour around the Cathedral, a rare survivor of the chaos of the Dissolution, and then on to explore the beauties of Chester town.



On the third day we were left to our own devices. Many caught the nearby modern tram and went shopping in Manchester, others explored the market, shops and pubs of prosperous Altrincham itself. The tedium of our return journey on Saturday was relieved by a visit to the Wedgwood pottery museum near Stoke, with the opportunity to buy something rather better than a tee-shirt for our nearest and dearest at a 50% discount!

Many thanks to Marilyn Pascoe for organising this excellent holiday, our driver, Colin and our courier, Debbie of Jewels Tours.

**Mick Brookes**





## Visit to RHS Glow at Wisley Including Cream Tea - with Jewels Tours Monday 27th November 2023

**Cost: £57**

**Pick Up at Cascades**

**Organiser : Sue Northcott**



Wander an enchanting route around the garden, and see some of Wisley's iconic sights in a new and dazzling light. Pick up a treat from the Village Square before heading to Seven Acres to see the illuminated wicker alliums, globes and arches.

The Glasshouse will be filled with light and fun, with a Christmas beach theme, and outside, the Glasshouse Lake will sparkle with disco balls. Rock Garden and Oakwood will be all aglow, while the Alpine Meadow becomes a 'field of fire'. Enjoy the Wisteria Walk lit in a haze of purple, before the grand finale of fire and water at the Laboratory.

This evening event will be lit by subdued lighting all around the walking areas. There are inclines, some of which are acute, so please choose your steps and footwear carefully.

### CRUISE SHIP CHRISTMAS LUNCH & SHOW Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2023

Enjoy a delicious five-course Christmas lunch and a show aboard Ambassador's Cruise Ship 'Ambition', while it's docked at London's International Cruise Terminal at Tilbury. We will be seated together, however this is likely to be across numerous tables, but we will be seated on the same or closest tables as possible.

We propose to travel to Tilbury from Gravesend and back again using the ferry. You'll be pleased to hear that you can use your bus pass on the ferry. If you'd prefer to drive, car parking is also available. The make, model, colour and registration of your vehicle will be required at the time of booking.

Please note that Photo ID, this can be a passport, driving licence, or bus pass, will be required from everyone, prior to boarding the ship.

**Dress Code: Smart**

**Organiser: Peter Buttle**



**Brick Lane Pantomime presents -  
Peter and the Loose Boys  
+ a Special Afternoon Tea**

**Thursday 1st February 2024    2.00 – 5.00 p.m.**

**Cost: Approx £70 - £74**

**Organiser: Linda Howe**

Matinee show with a delightful afternoon tea served during the interval

As you know, Linda has organised this event in the past and it has been very well received. Linda has agreed to organise this for all U3A members, and has asked for an indication of numbers before booking any tickets.

Please sign at the general meeting if you are interested in this 2024 extravaganza about Peter and the Loose Boys.



### **New Terms of Trade.**

Effective immediately, whenever you sign up for any Social Committee event, you need to pay by the next monthly meeting in order to confirm your place. Payments for Social Committee events can be made at the Social Committee tables at our monthly meetings using the following methods:

(1) By card using the SumUp terminals.

(2) By cheque, which should always be made payable to '**Gravesend u3a Social a/c**'.

You can also always contact the relevant Event Leader (by phone or email) to arrange to send them a cheque by post.

# Calendar of Group Meetings and Events

**The information printed below has been derived directly from the Beacon website as at 29th October. If your group meetings are missing or incorrect, please contact the relevant Group Leader.**

## MONDAY 13 NOV

Solos – Holiday Isle of Wight – Linda Howe  
10:00 Tai Chi – Alan Scott  
10:00 Ten Pin Bowling – Arthur Partington  
14:00 Jazz Appreciation – Brian Edwards  
19:30 Modern Jive – Alan Scott

## TUESDAY 14 NOV

10:00 Philosophy – Jean Stephens  
12:15 Cribbage 2 – Anne Stott

## WEDNESDAY 15 NOV

10:00 Mah Jong 1 - Sandra Parker  
11:00 Tame Your Tech - Ali Meherali  
12:00 Virtual Get-together – Peter Buttle  
14:00 Badminton – Sandra Parker  
14:00 Classical Music Apprchn – Carol Edwards  
14:15 Line Dancing Beginners - Linda Howe

## THURSDAY 16 NOV

10:00 Creative Writing 1 – Penny Collins  
14:00 Dartford Bowls - Dennis Neighbour

## FRIDAY 17 NOV

10:00 Ramble – Colin Nice  
14:00 Pool – Tony Tigg  
14:00 Canasta - Sylvia Stickings

## MONDAY 20 NOV

10:00 Tai Chi – Alan Scott  
12:00 Ukulele – Alan Scott  
14:00 Rummikub 1 – Anne Pilkington  
19:30 Modern Jive – Alan Scott

## TUESDAY 21 NOV

10:00 Spanish Intermediate – Jan Rees  
10:00 Short Mat Bowls – Ray MacLean  
10:30 Creative Writing 2 – Sally Spellman  
10:30 Meditation 2 – Julie Redmond  
12:00 Fully Loaded Lunch Club – Ben Winder  
14:00 Reading – Margaret Groom

## WEDNESDAY 22 NOV

12:00 Virtual Get together – Peter Buttle  
12:30 Lunch Bunch – Maggie Hart  
14:00 Badminton – Sandra Parker  
14:15 Line Dancing Beginners – Linda Howe

## THURSDAY 23 NOV

10:00 Rummikub 2 – Sandra Parker  
14:00 French Conversation – Anne Stott  
14:00 Geography – Colin Nice  
14:00 Dartford Bowls - Dennis Neighbour

## FRIDAY 24 NOV

10:00 Birdwatching – Irene Robson  
14:00 Wine Appreciation – Brian Edwards

## SUNDAY 26 NOV

13:15 Sunday Lunch Bunch – Marilyn Pascoe

## MONDAY 27 NOV

### Visit to RHS Glow at Wisley

10:00 Psychology – Lin Fridd  
10:00 Tai Chi – Alan Scott  
14:00 Readers' Forum - Carol Edwards  
19:30 Modern Jive – Alan Scott

## TUESDAY 28 NOV

12:15 Petanque – Joan Porter  
14:00 Painting – Judy Dutfield  
14:00 Bridge – Anne Stott  
15:00 Darts – Paul Shovlar  
17:30 Dusk Strollers – Barbara Blum

## WEDNESDAY 29 NOV

10:00 Tame Your Digitaal Tech – Ali Meherali  
12:00 Virtual Get-together – Peter Buttle  
12:30 Lunch Bunch – Maggie Hart  
14:00 Badminton – Sandra Parker

## THURSDAY 30 NOV

10:30 Senior Elastixs – Jan Elci  
14:00 Dartford Bowls - Dennis Neighbour

## FRIDAY 1 DEC

09:30 Hike – Colin Nice  
14:00 Table Tennis – Tony Tigg  
14:00 Mexican Train Dominoes – Steve Nolan

## SATURDAY 2 DEC

**09:55 Cruise Ship Christmas Lunch & Show**  
19:30 Quiz Night - Stan Morris

## MONDAY 4 DEC

10:00 Photography 1 – Colin Nice  
10:00 Tai Chi – Alan Scott  
12:00 Ukulele – Alan Scott  
13:00 Meditation 1 – Julie Redmond  
19:30 Modern Jive – Alan Scott

**TUESDAY 5 DEC**

09:30 Sewing together -  
10:00 Poetry Appreciation – Theresa Johnston  
10:00 Spanish Intermediate – Jan Rees  
10:00 Short Mat Bowls – Ray MacLean  
10:00 Model Making – Chris Hewlett  
14:00 Local History 1 – Joyce Bell  
14:00 Rummikub 3 – Anna Burroughs

**WEDNESDAY 6 DEC**

10:00 Film – Jean Stephens  
12:00 Virtual Get together – Peter Buttle  
**12:30 Christmas Lunch at Bartellas – Maggie Hart**  
13:00 Art apprec'n. – Robert Vanderwindt  
14:00 Badminton – Sandra Parker  
14:15 Line Dancing Beginners – Linda Howe

**THURSDAY 7 DEC**

10:30 Solos Coffee Morning – Linda Howe  
10:30 Senior Elastixs – Jan Elci  
14:00 Dartford Bowls - Dennis Neighbour

**FRIDAY 8 DEC**

10:00 Photography 2 – Ben Winder  
**13:45 General Meeting CP**

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