



# Newsletter No 127

[Learn Laugh and Live](#)

**August 2023**

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Welcome to the Swanley and District u3a newsletter for the month of August. Inside you will find news and general information, reports from some of our interest groups and details of future events. I recently attended the AGM of the Kent u3a Network. It is always interesting to discover what is happening in other groups across the county. It seems that many of our neighbours have now reached, or in some cases exceeded, pre-covid membership levels. The entire movement is now growing again. We are well on the way to achieving our target of three hundred members. Why not take one of our publicity leaflets and bring a friend to one of our monthly meetings at the Alexandra Suite.

I hope you all enjoyed the speaker at last month's meeting. I found Gilly Halcrow's story about the "Shetland Bus" fascinating. It is a story from World War 2 about which I had no previous knowledge. She confirmed that it is a story that is much better known in Shetland and Norway than anywhere else. Our speaker at the August meeting will be Guy Bartlett. The intriguing title of his talk is "Smoke On, Go!". It concerns the famous Red Arrows display team. Some reminders! Please continue to bring your own mugs/cups to the meeting. It is a great help for our refreshment volunteers. Secondly, don't forget to tap in your car registration at the machine in the reception. Thirdly, please keep the front two rows available for those who experience hearing difficulties. We want everyone to enjoy the speaker. Your co-operation is much appreciated. Many thanks to Sandy who organised an excellent trip to Petworth at the beginning of July. It is always worth visiting the house to see the stunning collection of paintings and sculptures! I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting on Friday 4th August. We start at 10:30 a.m.

**John Baker** Chairman

**Swanley and District u3a Committee Members 2023/2024**

			
<b>John Baker Chair</b>	<b>David Collins Vice-Chair</b>	<b>Carol Willingham Business Secretary</b>	<b>Allan Hayward Group Co-Ordinator</b>
			
<b>Gill Baker Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Janet Hamling Minutes Secretary</b>	<b>Penny Collins Social Secretary</b>	<b>Sandra Treloar Committee Member</b>
			
<b>Tony Scale Committee Member</b>	<b>Clive Rayner Treasurer</b>	<b>Alan Hamling Speaker Organizer</b>	<b>Jacky Taylor Publicity Secretary</b>

**Swanley and District U3A Monthly Meeting Friday August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at the Alexandra Suite, St Mary's Road, Swanley BR8 7BU**

The August talk is entitled 'The Red Arrows Smoke and Go' - Guy Bartlett. This is a Brief history of RAF display teams leading up to the formation of the Red Arrows'.

**Upcoming talks over the next 3 months.**

- September:- From one to a thousand - Richard P Winston
- October:- The 60's a decade of change - Paul Robbins
- November:- From Pottery to Potting Shed - Chris O'Donoghue

**Alan Hamling**

## Summary Of Activities During the Coming Month (s)

### **MOTO (MEMBERS ON THEIR OWN) – WEDNESDAY, 2nd AUGUST, 2023**

This is for all members who are living on their own and would like to meet up and have a coffee/tea and chat. Please come and join the group at the Café at the Birchwood Golf Club (off Birchwood Drive). They will be sitting inside the restaurant in the armchairs. Parking is free. Notices regarding cameras are for security reasons and not for parking fees. The group is intended to be a way for people to arrange their own meetings, outings, activities in small groups.

It would be helpful if you let me know you if intend to come so that I have some idea of numbers. Unfortunately, I will not be able to join you this month as I have another engagement.

My contact details are Tel: 01322 559534, email: sheila.derek@btinternet.com

**Sheila Botterill**

**STROLLERS WALK IN JULY** – An enjoyable walk took place on 12th July with 7 members taking part along the river Cray to the five arches and afterwards coffee and cake was consumed at the new café called Penelope's.

**STROLLERS WALK IN AUGUST** – WEDNESDAY, 9th AUGUST for a walk round Farningham. Please park in the High Street and meet at the Pied Bull Pub (which is in the High Street) at 10.15 a.m. for a 10.30 start. We attempted this walk earlier in the year but abandoned it due to bad weather.

**STROLLERS WALK IN SEPTEMBER WILL TAKE PLACE ON 13 TH SEPTEMBER - VENUE TO BE ADVISED.**

**ALL FUTURE WALKS NOW TAKE PLACE ON THE SECOND WEDNESDAY IN THE MONTH.**

This is an initiative for people who like walking at a slower pace. All welcome not just for people on their own. Please let me know if you intend to come.

My contact details are Tel: 01322 559534, email: sheila.derek@btinternet.com

**Sheila Botterill**

## **Board and Card Games Afternoon.**

We will not be meeting in August our next get together is Monday 25th September between 2 - 4 pm at the Howard Centre, 39 Egerton Avenue, Hextable, Kent. BR8 7LG.

Everybody welcome, I have a selection of games however do bring any games that you want to play. We hire the room so there is a charge of £3.

Just come along or email for further details [Joyce.wood1925@gmail.com](mailto:Joyce.wood1925@gmail.com)

**Joyce Wood**

## **QUIZ DATES**

4 quizzes at the Red Lion in the next month – 3 in the afternoon with no charge but voluntary donations to the RNLI requested and 1 in the evening with £3 entry, half the money given in prizes, the other half to the RNLI.

### **AFTERNOON QUIZZES**

Tuesday August 1st 2pm

Thursday August 17th 2pm

Tuesday August 29th 2pm.

### **EVENING QUIZ**

Wednesday August 23rd 7.30pm.

Please come along if you would like to join a U3A team on any of these dates.

**David Collins.**

## **OUTINGS**

### **TIBERIUS DEADIUS with a 2-course CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

I am organising this outing to the Tereza Joanne Venue near Brick Lane, London on Wednesday November 8th.

We will take a coach to the venue and enjoy a 2-course Christmas Supreme lunch with Cheesecake & hot drink. Tiberius Deadius Murder Mystery is set in an ancient Rome that owes more to Up Pompeii than I Claudius and is a complete hoot. The cast will act out scenes of the Murder Mystery and between courses visit each table so you can question them, build up the story and try to solve the murder.

We will arrive for lunch at midday and head home at 3.30 ahead of the rush hour.

If you would like to join me on this outing, please book in at the August monthly meeting and pay the cost of £55 either with your booking in August or at next month's September meeting to secure your place.

**Penny Collins**

## **Outings and Trips**

### **City and Village trip 'Sussex Coastal Curios' Thursday, September 28th**

This trip is now full. If you wish to go on a waiting list, please let me know. Please pay £50 to 'SWANLEY AND DISTRICT U3A' at the August meeting. I will also need your mobile number and if you are travelling alone, your ICE number. [this is only for emergencies, but I'm not expecting any!]  
As there will be a lot of people to 'process' it would be helpful if you could bring a cheque already filled in, with your mobile number as well. Thank you. Exact times of pickups will be in the September newsletter but anticipate, at the moment, leaving around 9am and arriving back in Swanley around 6:30pm. It would also be helpful to know the number of members wanting the vegetarian option. I am sorry, I do not know what that will be at this stage. See you on 4th August.

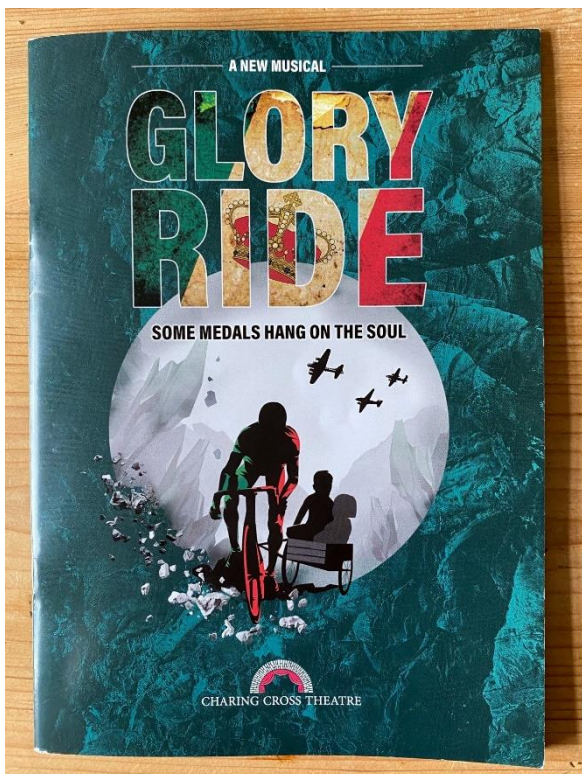
**Sandra** 07939339390  
Sandratreloar04@btinternet.com

### **OFF THE BEATEN TRACK**

After a summer break we are preparing to start our "Off The Beaten Track" London history walks again. Having explored the south bank of the Thames from Greenwich to Bermondsey, we crossed the river to Wapping and Shadwell. Some new and lesser known parts of London are waiting for us! Look out for further information coming soon.

**Alan and John**

## GLORY RIDE



We took advantage of the recent discounted ticket offer for u3a members to see Glory Ride. It was our first visit to the Charing Cross Theatre which is conveniently located in the arches under the station. Starting life as a music hall in the 1860's, its present name was adopted in 2011. The interior could probably be described as cosy - it really is quite small. However, this adds to the charm of the theatre. Glory Ride is a musical play which tells the remarkable true story of two-time Tour de France winner and Italian cycling hero, Gino Bartali. The action takes place during the war years in Florence. Bartali uses his cycle training regime to undertake dozens of secret missions in which he transports counterfeit documents and smuggles Jewish children to a place of safety. The production tells his story effectively

with considerable passion and power. There are good songs, although nothing really outstanding. To be honest, the sound was rather too loud at times. The lead performances are strong and convey the emotion, the hopes, and the fears of life in Mussolini's Italy. The story is often quite sombre with the ever-present threat of the Blackshirts, but there are moments of humour. We learn how Bartali conspires with the church, with his manager and with his wife to protect the vulnerable at a dangerous time. We also see how he faces conflict with a former childhood friend who rises in the ranks of the Italian army. It was an enjoyable evening and introduced us to Gino Bartali - a legend on the bicycle and an unassuming wartime hero. His story deserves to be more widely known. Look out for any further discount theatre tickets which might be offered in the future.

### John and Gill

### Christmas Lunch 1st December 2023

A date for your diaries – this year's Christmas Lunch has been booked for Friday 1st December after our monthly meeting.

Once again it will be a carvery meal at Pedham Place Golf Centre.

Further details will be available from the September meeting when you will be able to book your place.

### Gill Baker

## Group News

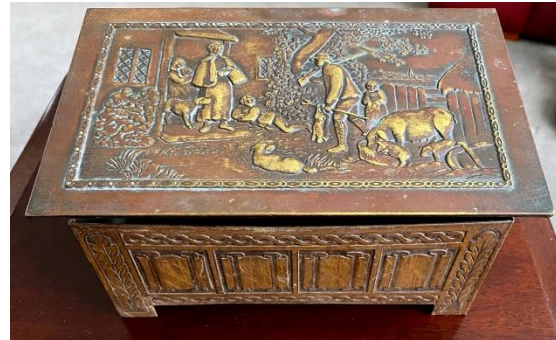
### Antiques and Collectables Group

Our 'Show and Tell' for this month's meeting, as usual provided a very diverse and interesting selection of items and stories.

Audrey regularly visits an antique dealer in Hastings, and spotted an old metal box which

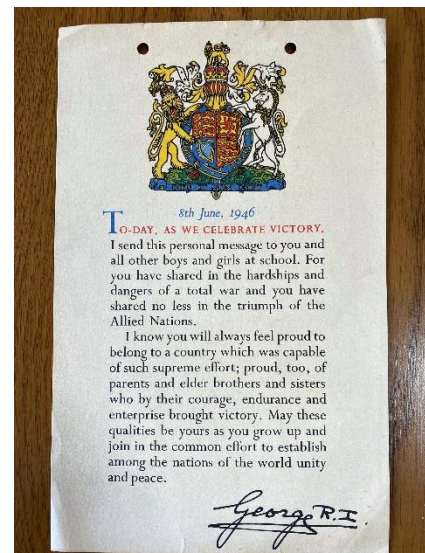
the owner said she could have for free. It is a Jacob's biscuit box dating from around 1929, and has a traditional peasant cottage scene, with pigs and dogs and a farmer with his gun.

W. and R. Jacob Ltd was founded in Ireland in 1851 and opened its first English factory in Liverpool in 1914. Cream Crackers have been produced since 1885, and sweet biscuits and fancy biscuits were served for afternoon tea

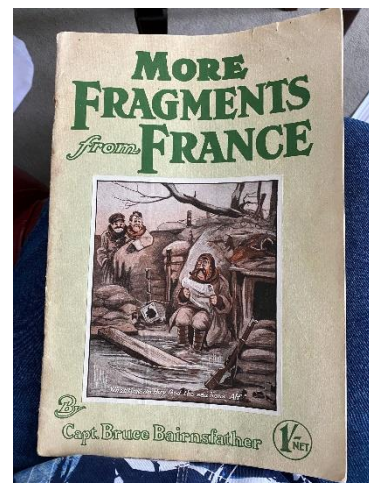


and were associated with luxury and status. They were sold in decorative tins which are now very collectable. Jacob's later became United Biscuits.

On our recent trip to Faversham, John purchased a piece of paper which is a message from King George VI, issued to all children in 1946. John assumes it was distributed through schools. It acknowledges the hardships and dangers faced by families in the war, and their courage, endurance and enterprise which brought victory. The King expresses hope that 'these qualities be yours as you grow up and join in the common effort to establish ... unity and peace.' On the back are some important War dates, plus a space to write 'My Family's War Record'. The letter coincided with official victory celebrations held in London and elsewhere.



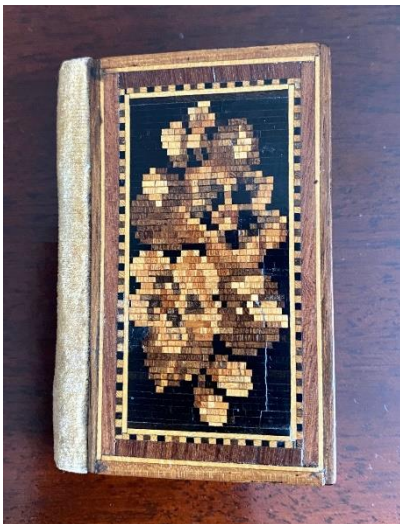
Wendy showed us a WW1 magazine 'Fragments from France' by Captain Bruce Bairnsfather, which is full of cartoons about the war, featuring 'Old Bill'. These were popular at the time with troops, although many people objected to the vulgarity in them. In 1914 he joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment but became shell-shocked in 1915 following an injury. His cartoons about life in the trenches were published by various magazines and led to a War Office commission to produce more to entertain troops.



Jenny brought along a charming pottery head which belonged to her husband's grandfather. He kept tobacco inside it. It doesn't have any marks or names on it so Jenny knows very little about it. She thinks it is of a military policeman from WW1 but was not told any details about its acquisition or origin. She also showed us a photo of the grandfather with a son who was her husband's uncle.



Chrissy was pleased with a recent purchase at the shop in Otford – a very small wooden needle case, with Tunbridgeware patterns on the inside and outside. This form of



decoration originated in Tunbridge Wells in the 18th century. Sticks of different coloured wood were tightly glued together, thinly sliced, and applied to a surface, typically a box. Visitors to the spa town bought Tunbridgeware items as souvenirs. Articles included cribbage boards, paperweights, writing slopes, snuff boxes and glove boxes.

Judy had an example of pressed glass – a blue candle holder with 'Good Night' engraved around the base. Prior to 1800 glass was cut by a craftsman or blown on a wheel, so only the better off could afford it. By the 1850s the industrial revolution made glass accessible to all. Pressed glass could be made quickly and economically, but still imitated cut glass owned by the rich. It was light and colourful and could be made in many different forms. Manufacturing mainly took place in the Midlands and Northeast.





In the 1920s, Penny's uncle Bob (her father's brother) took a free passage to Australia at the age of 15-16. His family had little money and there was little prospect of work for Bob. He went without his family but wrote home during the long journey. Penny has one of his letters, from September 1922, about 5 weeks into the trip. The letter mentions a ship that sank in the area the previous month, and that Bob's ship had been to a small island nearby to look for survivors without success. Bob eventually landed at Adelaide, and made a good life in Australia, but could not return to see his family.



Sue brought along a wooden blotter with a metal (silver?) top, which was given to her when she was a child, by her grandmother's neighbour. Sue remembers going regularly on a Saturday afternoon to see the neighbour, to have tea and play board games. She later discovered that the neighbour, who was a doctor, was a Jew and had escaped from Holland in the 1930s. The top of the blotter portrays a domestic scene, and the words Wessanen – Wormerveer. Adriaan Wessanen started a company in 1765 in Wormerveer near Amsterdam, to sell mustard, canary and other seeds. Sue still uses the blotter.



On our recent visit to Detling Antique Fair, I found a small round metal music box. This is Victorian, with an illustration of a shepherd boy. It is called a hand-cranked music box, as it only makes a sound when the handle is turned. I can't recognise the tune. The handle moves a cylinder with a series of spikes, which strike a comb with tines that vibrate to make the melody. The sequence of notes is determined by the arrangement of the projections on the cylinder. It was probably made in France or Switzerland. This kind of early music box was originally made to fit inside a watch case.

**Gill Baker**

## **Birdwatching Group    Birding visit 19th.July 2023**

This outing took us to Rainham Marshes in the east of London adjacent to the Thames Estuary in Purfleet, Thurrock, and Havering. Prior to 2000 the area belonged to the M O D where there was a military firing range with evidence still existing on the northern perimeter. Since then, the RSPB transformed the area which is now a great haven for birds. It is traffic free with good paths and water board paths and the terrain is flat which makes it accessible to everyone. The site is now designated as part of the Inner Thames Marshes site of Special Scientific Interest.

The reserve has hides along the circular route with a number of viewing areas across the marshes and with nature in mind the habitat is largely overgrown lending itself to an abundance of wildflowers, plants, shrubs, insects, Marsh frogs, water voles and butterflies. A large central area electrically wired around the boundary is home to grazing cattle, a practice which originally dates back to the time of the Celts and Saxons. In addition to the birds listed we saw a group of Harbour Seals resting on the far shoreline.

Once we escaped the brief but heavy shower as we exited the tunnel on the M25 the five of us had a cloudy, dry, and warm day during our visit which ended with a drink and snack at the centre.

Birds seen-

Swifts, Blue Tits, Wood Pigeons, Feral Pigeons, Grey Herons, Small Egrets, Robins, Coots with young, Greylag Geese, Canada Geese, Goldfinches, Magpies, House Sparrows, Starlings, Mallard Ducks, Tufted and young Ducks, Marsh Harrier, Bearded Tits, Reed Warbler, Little Grebe, Buzzard.



Next visit Wednesday 16th August.

This will be to The Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust ,Guilford Road, Sandwich Bay CT13 9PF. where we will be meeting John Buckingham between 10 and 10.30 a.m. to observe some bird ringing (Circumstances permitting) followed by a talk with visual presentation. In the afternoon there will be a visit to the site (scrape) with hides finishing about 3 p.m. Invitation is open to all interested members; bird knowledge is not required.

Please bring a packed lunch. If you wish to visit, please let Heidi or me know on either email or by phone 01322 663902) A voluntary contribution to the centre will be appreciated.

**Valerie Bamber**

## Swanley & District u3a – Gardening Group

### VISIT TO DOWNDERRY NURSERY – 26 July 2023

Deep in the countryside near Plaxtol and Hadlow and sheltered in a walled garden, which was once part of a grand estate, is Downderry Nursery, holder of The Scientific Plant Collection of Lavenders. Consisting of many types, colours and forms, a selection of the collection of 300 varieties is displayed in flower beds; a giant wickerwork basket; long avenues and also in rows in an adjoining field.

Director Dr. Simon Charlesworth told us that the nursery opened in 1998. Painstaking work is done on propagation to preserve the collection and to provide plants to the general public and also farmers of lavender in Kent and elsewhere. Downderry has been a very successful exhibitor at Chelsea Garden Show and Hampton Court Garden Show.



Originating in many countries around the Mediterranean, some types are not hardy in our climate, disliking wet autumns and cold winters. Angustifolia (English) lavender varieties originated in Provence and have a sweet soft smell and are used for perfumes. By intricate hybridising methods of the different species, including the tall and graceful latifolia 'spike' lavenders, hardy x intermedia varieties are now available at Downderry for various purposes. We watched the distilling of 'Grosso' used to produce lavender oil, suitable for detergents.



Lavenders enjoy growing in neutral to alkaline soil in a sunny position – though this plant can grow in heavy soil providing plenty of grit is added and raising on a mound is advised. To keep a bushy shape, lavenders flowering in June/July are pruned in August and in September for plants flowering in July/August. Plants are available by visiting Downderry Nursery at weekends until 30 September or ordering online – [downderry-nursery.co.uk](http://downderry-nursery.co.uk) for more information.



**Christina Tyler, Gardening Group**

## Croquet Petanque & Table Tennis and Kurling

**Table tennis** this will stop for the summer (holidays, etc) it will restart on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September Thank you to all who have supported this.

**Kurling.** This has been so well supported that it is now at its full capacity If you wish to do this, I will put you on the waiting list. Kurlers if you know you will not be coming can you let me know a.s.a.p. so I can give someone on the waiting list a go.

If the weather was all right on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug the U3A played a team from Swanley council, more news next time...

**Petanque** is at the Prince's park Dartford on the second and fourth Tuesday, this is free , but we ask for a donation of 50p (voluntary) to charity 2.15 start.



**On Tue 25<sup>th</sup> July** 14 members met up for a game of Croquet at Dartford FC. All games were very close and very enjoyable the weather was very as kind as well, A big thank you to Bill for organising all these events. **Rod**

If you are interested in any of the above, contact me at [billatswanley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:billatswanley@yahoo.co.uk)

**William Hammond**

## Walking Group(s)

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 – 10.00 for 10.15**

Meet **Pat** at the 'The Horse & Groom' gastro pub, 15 Leyton Cross Road, Wilmington, Dartford, DA2 7AP, for her first walk for the group of about four miles which will be fairly flat **Directions:** by car from The Premier Inn, Swanley, go south down Birchwood Road to find the pub on your right. **By public transport** bus B12 passes the door. Please contact **Pat** at [pat.burt1@ntlworld.com](mailto:pat.burt1@ntlworld.com) or phone her on 01322 274541 or mobile 07801 962947 to let her know you are coming and say whether you will be staying for lunch.

**Clive Rayner**

## **MEMBERSHIP OF THE U3A**

### **DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO IS RETIRED OR SEMI RETIRED WHO WOULD LIKE TO JOIN US?**

We are looking to increase our membership in order that we remain a viable organisation, and so that we can keep the membership fees at a reasonable and affordable rate for everyone.

We have at the moment 252 members, but prior to the pandemic we had around 300 on our books. We are striving to reach that number again.

If you have any friends or family who may be thinking about joining, please invite them to come along and visit a monthly meeting, where they will be able to see what we do and talk to us about the various groups. They can attend one meeting prior to joining, by paying £1 at the door, and then decide if they want to sign up. Anyone who joins after the end of September can pay £10 for half the year (until the end of March 2024) You can pick up leaflets and application forms from me at the meeting or look at the membership section on the website.

I can be contacted by email if people have any queries.

**Gill Baker**

Membership Secretary

[gillbaker@talktalk.net](mailto:gillbaker@talktalk.net)

## Newsletter

The closing date for the next newsletter will be Friday 25<sup>th</sup> August. Please send articles and pictures to [tscale001@gmail.com](mailto:tscale001@gmail.com) , thank you. *Tony*



### Contact Details

<b>Chair</b>	<b>John Baker</b>	<a href="mailto:johnbaker52@talktalk.net">johnbaker52@talktalk.net</a>
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<b>Business Secretary</b>	<b>Carol Willingham</b>	<a href="mailto:carolw8920@gmail.com">carolw8920@gmail.com</a>
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<b>Membership</b>	<b>Gill Baker</b>	<a href="mailto:gillbaker@talktalk.net">gillbaker@talktalk.net</a>
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<b>Assistant Co-ordinator</b>	<b>David Collins</b>	<a href="mailto:dacollins53@hotmail.co.uk">dacollins53@hotmail.co.uk</a>

**For contact details of group leaders please contact Alan Hayward**  
[achayward2512@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:achayward2512@yahoo.co.uk) or **David Collins** [dacollins53@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:dacollins53@hotmail.co.uk)

**Website-<https://u3asites.org.uk/Swanley>**

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**Swanley U3a Group Timetable**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Meeting Day</b>
Antiques and Collectables	Gill and John Baker	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday Morning
Art and Craft	Penny Collins	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday Afternoon
Art Appreciation	Margaret Austin	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday Morning
Art Painting & Drawing and Art Outdoors	Gill Baker	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday Evening As Notified
Bird Watching	Leader As Advised	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Morning
Board & Card Games	Joyce Wood	2 <sup>nd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday Afternoon at Howard Centre Hextable
Book Group	Sue Scott & Wendy Keable	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday Afternoon Swanley Library
Bowls (Indoors)	Bob Mellor & John Underwood	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday Afternoon at the Whiteoak's Centre
Chess	Terry Bennet	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday Morning
Creative Writing	Penny Collins	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday Morning
Croquet	Bill Hammond	Every Wednesday Afternoon
Gardening	Sandy English	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday Afternoon
History Modern	Jackie Griffiths	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday Afternoon
History of London 1	John Baker	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday Morning
History of London 2	John Baker	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday Morning
Let's Speak French	Barbara Ramsey	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Morning or as Notified
London History Walks	Alan Hayward & John Baker	As Notified
MOTO (Members on their own)	Sheila Botterill	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday Morning
Music Making	Mark Fittock	Every Tuesday Morning
Petanque	Bill Hammond	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday Afternoon Princes Park Dartford
Photography (Digital)	Alan Hayward	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday Afternoon
Play Reading	Penny Collins	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday Morning
Quiz Team	Dave Collins	As Notified in Newsletter
Rugby-Walking & Appreciation	Alan Hayward & John Baker	As Notified
Singing Group		Not meeting at present
Spanish	Ruth Wilkinson	Every Thursday Morning
Strollers	Sheila Botterill	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday Morning
Table Tennis	Bill Hammond	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday Afternoon
Theatre Trips	Sandy Treloar	As Notified
Word Magic on Zoom	Gill Heath	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday Morning
Walking Group	Clive Rayner	As Notified in Newsletter
Wine and Dine	Santha Blankley	As Notified
Wine Tasting	Robert Brickell	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday Evening

