



# Newsletter No 134

[Learn Laugh and Live](#)

March 2024

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Welcome to our March newsletter. As my secondary school teacher once said to me, halfway through a German grammar lesson when he noticed me staring at the clock, "Die Zeit fliegt, Herr Baker!" (Time flies). I am pleased to report that our membership continues to increase. At the time of writing 165 people have renewed their membership subscription for 2024/25. Many of you are using the bank transfer method (BACS). Thank you!

Membership cards can be collected at the monthly meeting.

The Finders Keepers antiques outing to Long Melford was very enjoyable and successful. You can read about it elsewhere in this newsletter. Alan and I are

pleasantly surprised how many members wish to take part in our next "Off The Beaten Track" London walk. Two dates are now full, so we will endeavor to provide a third date. We really do not wish to disappoint people.

I need to ask you to take care when parking your car at the Alexandra Suite. I realize that, generally, parking bays are too small for most cars. Or are modern cars too big for parking bays? Anyway, I ask you to park your vehicle with care and consideration so that we can make optimum use of the available spaces. Another reminder - please remember to switch off your mobile phone once the Friday meeting starts! Alternatively, turn it to silent mode. Your co-operation is much appreciated.

Our last speaker, Bob Ogle, was in top form. I have the utmost admiration for someone who can talk for forty-five minutes in such an eloquent manner with virtually no notes for reference. We will certainly ask him to return. Our next speaker is the ever-popular Tony Harris. The subject of his presentation is Margaret Thatcher. I am sure he will inform and entertain us in his usual unique and inimitable style! I look forward to seeing you at the Alexandra Suite on the 1st March. We start at 10:30 a.m.

**John Baker Chairman**

**Swanley and District u3a Committee Members 2024/2025**

			
<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 &amp; Asst: Graham Withers</b>	<b>Alan Hamling Speaker Organizer</b>	<b>Jacky Taylor Publicity Secretary</b>

**Swanley and District U3A Monthly Meeting Friday March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, at the Alexandra Suite, St Mary's Road, Swanley BR8 7BU**

The March talk is entitled Mrs Thatcher the Iron lady - Tony Harris  
The talk is about; 'The story of Mrs. Thatcher's Life from relatively humble beginnings in Grantham to the world's premier female leader.'

**Upcoming talks over the next 3 months**

April 2024:- The Baby Boomer nostalgic show part 2 - Alan Haines  
May 2024 :- AGM with a quiz from - David Collins  
June 2024:- C1. JFK: The politics of Hope and Expectation - Andrew J. Baker

**Alan Hamling**

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

### Group Co-Ordinator News

With so many new members now if you have an idea for an interest group which we don't currently have please come and speak to me. It's quite likely other people may have the same interests. Help and advice will always be given to you in setting up a new group. The main u3a have a vast list of subject advisors that can also help support group leaders and your groups by offering ideas, advice or signposting to resources.

The Art, Photography, Creative Writing, Play Reading and Word Magic group joint activity at the end of January based on Sunshine and Showers was a great success – See article by John Baker. We are looking at doing another one in the future, so If other groups are interested in doing a joint activity please come and speak to me at the main meeting.

Off the Beaten Track Walks – Bethnal Green Circular walk from Shoreditch High Street Station

Due to so many of you signing up for this walk we are doing a 2nd repeat on Monday 11th March. We still have a few places left so if you are interested in going, please register at the main meeting (back of the hall) or email me.

**Alan Hayward**

### Annual General Meeting Swanley & District U3a

Notice is hereby given that the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Swanley and District U3a will take place at The Alexandra Suite, St Marys Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7BU on Friday 3rd May 2024 at 10.30am.

A nomination form for a position on the Swanley & District U3a committee is included as an attachment to this newsletter.

Completed forms must be returned to [carolw8920@gmail.com](mailto:carolw8920@gmail.com) by no later than Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

**Carol Willingham**  
**Business Secretary**

### **MOTO (MEMBERS ON THEIR OWN)- WEDNESDAY 6th MARCH 2024**

this is for all members who are living on their own and would like to meet up and have a coffee/ and chat. Please come and join the group in the Mulberry Cafe at Ruxley Garden Centre. We will be sitting inside the restaurant at the far-left hand side. 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 if you intend to come so that I have some idea of numbers.

My contact details are: Tel: 01322 559534, email [sheila.derek@btinternet.com](mailto:sheila.derek@btinternet.com)

**MARCH STROLLERS - 13MARCH, 2024 - DANSON PARK - MEET AT THE STABLES CAR PARK AT 10.15 am for a 10.30 START - for a walk round Danson Park, when hopefully the spring bulbs will be out and afterwards at one of the cafes in the park for tea/coffee.**

Sheila Derek

### **Thriplow - Daffodil Festival & Country Fair Sunday 17 March 2024**



### **Coach pick up times**

Hextable - 10:00

Swanley - 10:15

### **Reminder:**

The £20 you have paid is for the Coach and your entry ticket and does not include any food or drink.

There are lots of food stalls and a Village Pub, at the event, where you can purchase food and drink, with places also available to sit if you want to take your own.

**Sandy English**

**Digging 4 Cake Gardening Group**

## **Membership for 2024-2025**

Our new membership year begins at the beginning of April 2024, and runs until March 2025. The cost is remaining at £20.

**The renewal process for the new year is open from January 2024, and runs through until April. You can renew at any time in that period.**

You can do this as follows:

a) Our preferred option is that you pay your £20 renewal subscription by bank transfer.

The bank details are:

**Bank:** Natwest

**Account number:** 51170027

**Sort code:** 60 21 10

**Account name:** Swanley & District U3A

**IMPORTANT** - When your bank asks you to insert a **reference**, please put your **surname and membership** number so we know who made the payment! (For example - **BAKER117**)

**PLUS**, Please confirm that you have made this payment by emailing Gill Baker at [gillbaker@talktalk.net](mailto:gillbaker@talktalk.net) If you are paying for a spouse or partner in addition to yourself, please provide both names and membership numbers in the email.

b) If you prefer, pay by cash or cheque at one of the monthly meetings. Cheques made payable to **Swanley and District U3A** please.

c) Or pay by post to me at the address below with a cheque (please don't send cash in the post)

Your new membership card will be available at the monthly meeting.

If you prefer to receive it by post, please send a stamped addressed envelope to

**Gill Baker at 24 St Davids Road, Hextable, BR8 7RJ**

Please let me know if any of your contact details have changed - address, email, phone numbers

etc.

We hope that you will want to stay with us for another year, but if you have decided not to renew, it would be very helpful if you could let me know. You are welcome to rejoin at any time if that is the case.

I hope this covers everything – please contact me if you need any clarification.

**Many thanks!**

**Gill Baker Membership Secretary**

## Group News

### Antiques and Collectables Group

This month we decided to bring items which were either made of Wood or Metal. As always, the group brought along a wide range of interesting objects. Audrey showed us a lovely tin Mobo 'Bronco' horse which she had as a child. It has been in her shed for some time, so is rather rusty, but still charming. She recently purchased a similar horse in better condition for her grandchildren to use. The factory that produced these was based in Erith until 1972, D. Sebel & Co.



Judy brought along a Shillelagh which she had purchased when in Ireland for a wedding. This has a hollow head which has been filled with lead. Shillelaghs were used as walking sticks but could also be brandished as a weapon if the occasion arose. It is made of Blackthorn wood.



Madeline has a pretty music box with a secret opening mechanism. This belonged to her mother. Inside was a very small box with a roll top lid. As a contrast, she also brought along a competition medal for marksmanship, dated 1929. This was issued by the Royal Grammar School in Guildford, which probably had a Cadet Corps for training potential army officers.



John has a collection of trench art which he had polished up before bringing them along. They were made during and after the war by people who found discarded shell cases and turned them into decorative objects. These include a lighter, a letter opener, a vase, and a planter.



Tony surprised us by bringing a box of tools he made in the 1950s when he was undertaking an engineering apprenticeship at Vickers in Crayford. Some of them were engraved with his name, so he could keep track of them in the factory.



Tim had also polished his item – a beautiful copper bottle, with beaten sides. He doesn't know much about its origin or use, but we agreed that it is a lovely thing. He also had some old coins – some British half-crowns from 1836 and 1837, and one from West Africa from 1936 with the head of Edward VIII. This is unusual as very few were made.



Penny purchased a delightful Royal Doulton dish at the recent Finders Keepers outing. It has a garden design showing a gardener coming through the gate with a scythe. The dish dates from between 1934 and 1950.



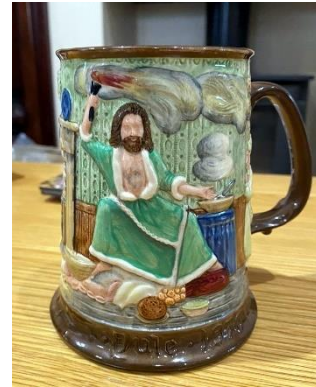
Sue proudly displayed her family teapot, which was probably a wedding present in 1935 for her husband's parents. This is made of pewter and has a bone handle. It was made between 1925 and 1935 by Robert Pringle and Sons, who were London jewellers based in Clerkenwell from the 19th century until the 1960s.



Wendy brought along two items – a small Chinese tea scoop with a dragon's head, from a trip to Faversham, and a folding fruit bowl with a locking handle, which she bought in Canada in 1991.



Dave's large Beswick Royal Doulton drinking vessel, which he found on the Finders Keepers trip, was called 'an antique of the future' by our expert on the day. The tankard was made in 1976 and depicts the 'Ghost of Christmas Present' from Charles Dickens 'A Christmas Carol'. Different designs were issued each year from 1971 to 1982.



I contributed three things. I have a small arts and crafts photo frame, and a wooden shoe stretcher, both bought on a recent visit to Suffolk. I also have a tiny Huntley and Palmers tin, which was used for biscuit samples.



**Gill Baker**



## Birdwatching Group

### Visit to [Cliffe Pools](#) on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024

Just three of our group made it to Cliffe Pools on a rather blustery, overcast, and rainy day but despite the weather we did manage to see some birdlife who like ourselves appeared to be braving the weather.

Birds seen included Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Common Gull, Tufted Duck, Lapwing, Black Headed Gull, Oyster Catcher; and a few more too distant to identify accurately. Heard but not seen were Great Tit and Robin.



We came across a rather large borrow in the centre of the path we were walking on which could have easily caused a mishap for the unwary birdwatcher; it being easily large enough to accommodate a booted foot and leg if stepped into. We mused that it could have been the abode of the legendary Cliffe Pools 'Lurking Leg Biter' and then decided to head to the Six Bells pub in Cliffe village for lunch as the fresh blustery wind had given us an appetite.



Here I spotted some trophies hung on the Wall above the fireplace and it set me wondering if any of these may be a trophy of the previously imagined 'Legendary Lurking Leg Biter' I will leave the reader to decide if any of these could be the culprit; or could it be put down to the 'Good Ale of the Six Bells' imbibed with lunch?



*Tony Scale*

## Bridge Group

The

next bridge meeting is on Wed 6th March at 10.00am.

The card playing is going so well with more experienced players helping newer players to improve their skills. Hence, this month saw the introduction of how to score.

You are the first player to open the bidding. What would you bid with this hand?

♣ AT98 ♦ A73 ♥ QT2 ♠ J95

Answer next month.

Reminder of November's question. What would you bid with this hand?

♣ AQ53 ♦ J ♥ KT942 ♠ QJT

Ans. With 13 points and a 5-card heart suit – open with 1heart.

Meeting dates (1st Wednesday in the month); March 6th, April 3rd, and May 1st

Looking forward to seeing you on the 6th.

C&C

## Croquet Pétanque Table Tennis and Kurling

Due to my availability from April, I can only run the following on these days

Pétanque 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday "15 -30 at Princes park Dartford

Table tennis 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday at White oak leisure centre 2pm -3.30

Kurling 2<sup>nd</sup>&4<sup>th</sup> Monday "pm -4pm White Oak Indoor Bowls Centre

Croquet 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 2.30-3.30 Swanley recreation ground

If you can't make these dates, come and see me ,we may be able to work something out, the equipment is always available

The only activity I need to be at is Kurling.

**William Hammond**

## FINDERS KEEPERS



The destination for our first ever “Finders Keepers” outing was the Suffolk village of Long Melford. We alighted from the coach at The Bull public house and went inside for a very welcome cup of coffee. Once there we met our antiques expert, James Layte. He has often appeared on television. He spoke to us about things we might care to look out for.

We were also given our spending money, £10. This could be spent individually or combined with a partner to increase purchasing power.

The two large antique shops were a five-minute walk along the main street. We had about ninety minutes to fulfil our quest.



Once inside the shops, the serious business of searching for treasures began. A remarkable variety of items were acquired - from ceramics to tin boxes, china cups to glass ware, asparagus tongs to a glass medicine measure.



After a tasty lunch at the pub, James spoke about all of our objects. He arrived at a short list after selecting one item from each table. He eventually decided that the day's winning received a prize, an 18<sup>th</sup> century French ceramic cup. It was a very enjoyable day. Our thanks go to Penny for organising such an interesting trip. Can we do it again, please?



**John Baker**

## QUIZ

Since the Red Lion is no longer willing to take firm bookings and only offering me provisional dates, I am moving to a new venue the Howard Centre in Egerton Road, Hextable, and have booked 2 quizzes per month for the year in the afternoons on the first Tuesday and third Thursday of each month. There is a small charge for using the Howard Centre so I will need to charge £3 per head with the extra money going to the RNLI.

### QUIZ DATES

Tuesday March 5th 2pm. Thursday March 21st 2pm.

Please come along if you would like to join a U3A team on either of these dates. It would be great to have good numbers to launch quizzes at this new venue.

**David Collins.**

## OUTINGS

### 3 RIVERS TOUR

Our coach will take us to a Garden Centre near Manningtree where we will meet our Blue Badge Guide and have time to buy morning coffee. We will drive along the river STOUR past Mistle Towers, through Manningtree and on to the mysterious Shotley Peninsula on the ORWELL estuary then across the Orwell Bridge.

We will stop for a carvery lunch and coffee in Woodbridge, a pretty village on the river DEBEN. After lunch we sit back and enjoy a 90-minute cruise on the Deben. The tidal estuary is one of the most scenic spots on the east coast. Our on-board commentary will tell of its rich wildlife and history. Tea and cake are included.

On our return the coach will be waiting to drive us home, leaving around 4.45pm.

The cost is £65 to include the coach, guide, carvery lunch and river cruise with tea and cake.

**NB. IMPORTANT CHANGE OF DATE. Unfortunately, City and Village Tours cannot find a tour guide for May 13<sup>th</sup> but have given us Friday May 17<sup>th</sup> instead.**

1.If you have put your name on the list and paid, please confirm you can still come on Friday May 17th, either at the March meeting or by telephone or email. My contact details are at the back of this newsletter.

2.If you are on the list but have not paid yet, please confirm your place for Friday May 17th and pay at the March meeting.

3.This outing has proved very popular with a long reserve list, so I have booked another coach and tour guide for Tuesday July 9th. If you are on the reserve list, please confirm you can do that date at the March meeting or by telephone or email and pay to secure your place either at the March or April meeting.

4.If you have already paid and are unable to do either date, I will return your cheque at the March meeting.5.There are places still available for the outing on Tuesday July 9th.

**Penny Collins**

## **NEW SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

We are delighted by the popularity of our outings, shown by the numbers booking in to them and by members making suggestions for future trips. We would like to arrange more but will need help if we are to do so.

For this reason, we are looking to form a social committee, separate from the main committee. We would only need to meet twice a year, to work out a programme of events and share the workload. Please let us know if you are interested.

**Penny and David Collins**

## **Walking Group**

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 10.00 for 10.15**

Meet **Clive** at “**The George**”, **Taylor's Lane, Trottiscliffe ME19 5DR** for a walk of between three and four miles. **Directions: By car:** Leave the M20 at junction two and when you reach the roundabout at the end of the slip road, turn right and go ahead, down the hill, to the next roundabout. Turn left onto the A227 heading towards Meopham and Gravesend and after 1.75 miles, turn right into Vigo Hill and follow the road through to Trottiscliffe village. The pub is at the far end by the village green. Please contact Clive on 01474 706173/07748 852686 or email me at [clivetheilex@gmail.com](mailto:clivetheilex@gmail.com) to let me know that you are coming and whether you will be staying for lunch.

**Clive Rayner**

## **SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS**

Van Gough headed South  
Away from those dark satanic mills  
Seek warmth and sunshine  
To help ease his many ills.  
Revelling in that strong light  
Which burst the sunflowers shiny bright  
And burnt the bushes in the night  
Beneath that old hat of straw, he toiled  
Though his red hair frizzled and his freckles boiled.  
All shadow hid from that mid-day sun  
Before peeping out again once noon was done  
The artists eye captures that first, thin, black line  
As it frames each house, each tree, each vine.  
Working at the easel till the daylight is spent  
Then trailing homeward through lavender fields scent.  
Back in the village, with day light gone  
It's too the café for something strong  
For absinth makes the heart beat faster  
While in the shadows madness stalks the sound of laughter.

**Mark Fittock**

4 November 2023

## JOINT GROUP EVENT



This inaugural event took place at St. Peters Church in Hextable and included representatives from five interest groups: Creative Writing, Play Reading, Word Magic, Photography and Art. The theme for the morning was “Sunshine and Shadows”.



The contributions from our groups included photographs, poetry, short stories, paintings, and music. It was an enjoyable and successful event. Participants agreed that it would be well worth repeating. Our thanks go to Gill and Penny for the organising and administration, and also to all the contributors!



**John Baker**





## Newsletter

The closing date for the next newsletter will be Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March. 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>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>David Collins</b>	<a href="mailto:dacollins53@hotmail.co.uk">dacollins53@hotmail.co.uk</a>
<b>Business Secretary</b>	<b>Carol Willingham</b>	<a href="mailto:carolw8920@gmail.com">carolw8920@gmail.com</a>
<b>Social/Outings Coordinator</b>	<b>Penny Collins</b>	<a href="mailto:pennycollins@hotmail.com">pennycollins@hotmail.com</a> 01322 669724
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Gill Baker</b>	<a href="mailto:gillbaker@talktalk.net">gillbaker@talktalk.net</a>
<b>Group Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Alan Hayward</b>	<a href="mailto:achayward2512@yahoo.co.uk">achayward2512@yahoo.co.uk</a>
<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      October 2023

Group	Leader	Meeting Day
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 Art Outdoors	Gill Baker	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday Evening
Art – Looking at Art	Gill & John Baker	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> Mon pm <b>HowardCtrHex</b>
Book Group	Sue Scott & Wendy Keable	2 <sup>nd</sup> <b>Monday pm Swanley Library</b>
Bowls (Indoors)	Bob Mellor	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs pm at the Whiteoak's
Bridge	Carolyn & Colin Chapman	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday Morning
Chess	Terry Bennet	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday Morning
Creative Writing	Penny Collins	1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday Morning
Croquet	Bill Hammond	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed pm Swanley RecGrd
Gardening	Sandy English	4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday Afternoon
Geography	Penny and Dave Collins	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday Morning
Family History	Clive Taylor	4 <sup>th</sup> <b>Thurs 10:30 @ Swanley Library</b>
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
Kurling	Bill Hammond	2 <sup>nd</sup> &4 <sup>th</sup> Mon pm. White Oak
Let's Speak French	Barbara Ramsey	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday Morning
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	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tue 15.30. <b>PrincesPrkDfd</b>
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 2-3.30pm White Oak
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

