

SWANLEY AND DISTRICT U3A

GROUPS DIRECTORY OCTOBER 2023

This directory contains the details of the many interest and study groups available to members of the Swanley and District U3A. If you are interested and wish to discover further information please contact our group co-ordinators:

Alan Hayward achayward2512@yahoo.co.uk or
David Collins dacollins53@hotmail.co.uk

Antiques & Collectables

Group Leaders: Gill and John Baker

Group Meetings: 3rd Tuesday morning of the month

This group provides an opportunity for members to share and pursue their interest in antiques and learn from each other. People bring items to meetings and give a brief presentation. There are also visits to antiques fairs and other places of interest including a day trip to Rye. A recent "Bargain Hunt" activity was much enjoyed by all the participants.

Art & Craft

Group Leader: Penny Collins

Group Meetings: 4th Tuesday afternoon of the month

This is a friendly group where we make various things ranging from cards, patchwork and stuffed toys to bags and jewellery. The group caters for all abilities and we take it in turns to suggest and bring in new ideas.

Art Appreciation

Group Leader: Margaret Austin

Group Meetings: 1st Monday morning of the month

Each month, a member researches and presents a short talk on an artist. We use materials from books and the internet to illustrate the talks. A recent theme was British artists in the 19th and 20th centuries. Most recently the topic has been the Pre-Raphaelites, their medieval-style paintings and the art critic, John Ruskin. We have also looked at European Expressionist art. Members visit art galleries and exhibitions and report back to the group.

Art Painting & Drawing and Art Outdoors

Group Leader: Gill Baker

Group Meetings: 2nd & 4th Tuesday evenings of the month. Art Outdoor As Notified

We signpost people who are interested in art, to the Swanley and District Art Society which meets at St. Peters Church in Hextable – this is a small friendly group for all standards. Beginners are made very welcome. There is a programme of suggested subjects to inspire creativity.

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Some members will from time to time share their interest in an artist by giving a short presentation or may demonstrate how they use a particular medium. Occasionally there is a tutored workshop or a demonstration from a professional.

In the summer months, the group sometimes ventures out to places of interest to paint on location outside – this can be very rewarding if the weather conditions are favourable! Once a year we showcase our artwork at an exhibition to which everyone is welcome.

The group would love to have new members, so please get in touch if you are interested.

Art – Looking at Art

Group Leaders: Gill and John Baker

Group Meeting: As Notified

The focus will be on visiting exhibitions and galleries, locally and further afield.

Bird Watching

Group Leader: Tony Scale

Group Meetings: At 10:00 a.m. on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at a park, a nature or wildlife reserve, usually in Kent

This group is open to all U3A members, old and new. Sign up for visits at the Bird Watching desk at the monthly meetings.

Full details of future visits will be included in the monthly U3A newsletter. Your views and recommendations would be welcome.

Board & Card Games

Group Leader: Joyce Wood

Group Meetings: 2nd & 4th Monday Afternoon at the Howard Centre Hextable

To play different Types of Board and Card Games

Book Group

Group Leader: Sue Scott & Wendy Keeble

Group Meetings: 2nd Monday Afternoon of the month 2-4pm Swanley Library

The library have been very supportive, providing us with suggested reading matter and supplying us with books. At our meetings we discuss which books to read in the future and welcome suggestions from all participants. We pick a new book to read each month and discuss it at the next meeting. We try to mix the choice in order that we try new genres of topics. This is a very good way of enjoying an afternoon with lots of engaging comments and interesting ideas.

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Bowls (Indoor)

Group Leader: Bob Mellor

Group Meetings: White Oaks Leisure Centre – 4th Thurs afternoon of the month

Dress code is white top and grey trousers and flat shoes or bowling shoes. There is a cost involved for the hire of the lane(s).

Bridge

Group Leaders: Carolyn & Colin Chapman

Group Meetings: 1st Wednesday morning of the month

Open to all Bridge players and members who'd like to improve their game or learn from scratch (some whist experience is helpful). Bridge is a social, challenging game which certainly keeps the grey cells active.

If you know how to play and fancy a game with friends, please come along. If you are new to the game, we'll teach you (Basic Acol with a weak no trump). If you can play and want to further your skills, we'll help.

Chess

Group Leader: Terry Bennett

Group Meetings: 4th Wednesday morning of the month

This is a new group open to all members. Participants are keen to improve their playing and understanding of chess. Beginners are welcome.

Creative Writing

Group Leader: Penny Collins

Group Meetings: 1st Thursday morning of the month

This group is for anyone who wants to have a go at writing either from personal experience or writing informative or imaginative pieces. Each month we are given a topic or theme to write about or act as a trigger for our writing. We then meet and read our piece to the group. No experience is needed and all contributions are valued. Occasionally we produce a booklet of our writing to share with others.

Croquet

Group Leader: Bill Hammond

Group Meetings: Every Wednesday afternoon during Summer Months at 2pm

We played at the Swanley Recreation ground behind the Alexandra Suite in Swanley providing it is not raining. No experience is needed and all equipment is supplied. Wear comfortable shoes, and it is advisable to bring a hat and a drink. Cost is £3 per week; numbers are limited to the amount of mallets available.

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French Conversations

Group Leader: Barbara Ramsey

Group Meetings: 1st and 3rd Wednesday Morning of the month or as notified.

In order to promote and improve French conversation skills, the group has read stories, completed crosswords, answered quiz questions, practised listening skills ... all in French! The group has also looked at French newspaper and magazine articles. There has been a residential trip to south west France. The group has also enjoyed some French lunches. Advice on grammar is available, but the emphasis is on speaking, understanding and having fun!

Family History

Group Leader: Clive Taylor

Group Meetings: 4th Thursday morning of the month at 10.30 in Swanley Library

Open to all levels, Starter to Experienced, we will have access to Ancestry and Find My Past Databases. We can you start on your journey to finding who your ancestors are or help you break that 'brickwall' regarding one of your ancestors.

Gardening Group

Group Leader: Sandy English

Group Meetings: 4th Wednesday afternoon of the month

The group meets each month at various venues chosen by members. We have visited many gardens in Kent both residential and commercial.

The residential sites have formed part of the National Garden Scheme the members of which open their gardens to raise money for charity.

We have membership of two garden centres which enables us to buy our gardening products at a discounted rate and has given us an insight into the workings of a garden centre. Recently we have visited the gardens of members who were having problems with either plants or what to plant in an area of the garden. This has proved to be very popular and has given us all the chance to enhance our gardening knowledge.

At the end of the gardening year, we come together for a planning session which is a chance to discuss how the year went and to get ideas for next year's meetings. Once a visiting timetable is agreed this is distributed to all the members.

Geography

Group Leader: Dave Collins

Group Meetings: 3rd Friday morning of the month

A different country is chosen each month and each member of the group researches a different aspect of that country. Research is not limit to just geographical aspects and can include: Population & Topography, Rivers & Waterways, Flora & Fauna, Climate, Economy, Industry, Culture & Cuisine, Sport and Modern History since 1945.

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History Modern

Group Leader: Jackie Griffiths

Group Meetings: 4th Tuesday Afternoon

This is a diverse group in which everyone is able to contribute to discussions. No previous knowledge is necessary. The group has studied the Industrial Revolution, the First World War and the Russian Revolution of 1917. Learning activities are supported by books, internet research and DVD materials. There has been an outing to the Imperial War Museum. A trip is also planned to Dover Castle.

History of London

Group Leader: John Baker

Group meetings: Group A – 2nd Thursday morning of the month

Group B – 4th Thursday morning of the month

The London History Group investigates and explores the two-thousand-year story of our capital city from Roman Londinium to the present day. Our learning activities at the monthly meetings are supported by the use of DVD materials, books and presentations by individual members. Recent themes have been City Guilds, London Streets and Historical Jobs and Professions.

We also organise London walks and visits to places of interest. Visits have included the Guildhall Library, Historic Deptford, St. James Square and the surrounding area, the district around London Bridge and Bermondsey, Bloomsbury.

London History Walks (off the beaten track)

Group Leaders: Alan Hayward & John Baker

Group Meeting: As Notified

These are historical walks in the region of 2.5 – 3.5 miles that in the main do not include well known land marks but are 'off the beaten track' and in some cases around less known parts of London. Sign up at the main monthly meeting to be added to the distribution list.

MOTO (Members On Their Own)

Group Leader: Sheila Botterill

Group Meetings: 1st Wednesday Morning each month

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 us at the Mulberry Tree café at Ruxley Manor Garden Centre. We will be inside the restaurant on the far left-hand side. Please bring some ideas for activities. The group is intended to be a way for people to arrange their own meetings/ outings/activities in small groups.

Music Making

Group Leader: Mark Fittock

Group Meetings: Every Tuesday morning

Bring your musical instrument and join with others to make music.

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Petanque

Group Leader: Bill Hammond

Group Meetings: 2nd and 4th Tuesday afternoon at 2pm

We play at the Princes Park Dartford (home of Dartford FC). No experience is necessary and all equipment is supplied. Hats and drinks are recommended (you can get refreshments in the bar) there is no charge for this, but I do ask for a (voluntary) donation of 50 p for charity.

Photography

Group Leader: Alan Hayward

Group Meetings: 2nd Friday afternoon of the month

This is a digital photography group with members having a variety of cameras - Compact to DSLR (Dx & Fx). Our aim is to learn more about our cameras by understanding their various functions such as the different modes of operation, moving away from "Auto Setting", to looking at depth of field, focal length, white balance etc. This enables us to take better photographs. We do photo shoot trips and put on slide shows at the U3A monthly meetings. We aim to have a different project every month, e.g., landscape to portrait, black and white, macro etc.

Play Reading

Group Leader: Penny Collins

Group Meetings: 4th Friday morning of the month

This is a group where we read aloud some old favourite plays and more modern dramas. This is great fun and gives us the opportunity to try different parts. Recent plays have included An Inspector Calls and Popcorn. New members are welcome to join us.

Quiz Group

Group Leader: Dave Collins

Group Meetings: As advertised in the monthly newsletter

Anyone interested in Quiz Evenings is invited to come along and join one of our U3A quiz teams taking part in weekly quizzes advertised in the newsletter. They are held on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings at The Red Lion in Swanley Village or Birchwood Golf Centre. Tuesday quizzes raise money for the RNLI, while on Wednesday the winning teams win money prizes. Questions are on a wide range of topics. We all know something, nobody knows it all and the evenings are always relaxed, friendly and sociable.

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Rugby Appreciation

Group Leaders: Alan Hayward & John Baker

Group Meetings: As advertised

This group is interested in everything to do with the game of rugby. The aim is to meet together in order to discuss aspects of the game, watch recordings of old games (reliving our youth), watch live international or top-level matches. Trips are organised to see fixtures at Blackheath, Sidcup, Swanley (our local newly formed club) and Twickenham. Walking rugby is available in the summer months. Anyone is welcome to join us. No previous experience is necessary!

Rugby Walking

Group Leaders: Alan Hayward & John Baker

Group Meetings: As advertised

During the summer months. No previous experience is necessary!

Singing Group *Not active at present as a new group leader is required*

Group Leader: N/A

Group Meetings: To Be Confirmed

Spanish

Group Leader: Ruth Wilkinson

Group Meetings: Thursday Morning weekly

A group for members who wish to practise and improve their use of the Spanish language.

Strollers

Group Leader: Sheila Botterill

Group Meetings: 2nd Wednesday morning

For members who wish to do short walks at a leisurely pace.

Table Tennis

Group Leader: Bill Hammond

Group Meetings: 1st and 3rd Friday afternoon of the month 2 – 3.30pm

The table tennis group is well established with a hardcore of twelve members. Meetings take place at the White Oak Leisure Centre and the cost is £5 per person. All equipment is supplied. No experience or expertise is required. You need to be a member of White Oaks to gain entry. This is easy just turn up and tell them you are with U3A table tennis and would like a card, this give you 20% discount at the café. Trainers are the only requirement. New players are always welcome. Research indicates that participation in table tennis is of great benefit to people of the third age!

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Theatre Group

Group Leader: Sandy Treloar

Group Meetings: As advertised

Opportunities to visit local and West End theatre production throughout the year.

Walking Group

Group Leader: Clive Rayner

Group Meetings: As Notified in the monthly Newsletter

This group participates in circular 3 – 4 mile walks in the North-West Kent countryside. Walks are followed by a pub lunch.

Normally, 10 – 20 people take part. Walks are led by individuals in the group, but there is no pressure to be a walk leader. It is a friendly group and new members will be made very welcome.

Walk details will be found in the monthly newsletter

Wine Appreciation

Group Leader: Bob Brickell

Group Meetings: 4th Wednesday evening of the month

This group is open to anyone with an interest in wine and a desire to learn more. Tastings are organised using themes, e.g., wines from selected countries, award winning wines.

Wine & Dine

Group Leader: Santha Blankley

Group Meetings: As advertised

This small group is an off shoot from the Wine Group. It gives the opportunity for fine dining accompanied by excellent wines!

Word Magic on Zoom

Group Leader: Gill Heath

Group Meetings: 2nd Wednesday morning of the month

We are a friendly enthusiastic group of people who love WORDS. We meet on Zoom each month and share material we have found on a specific theme. Our contributions are drawn from a multitude of sources: - Fiction, newspapers, internet articles, poetry, art and quite often songs with appropriate words which we are able to share online. We are having great fun at the moment using colours as a theme. So far, we have 'done' Blue and Purple and will be looking forward to what is discovered linking with Orange for next month. New members are always welcome. You don't have to be a mega brain to join this group.