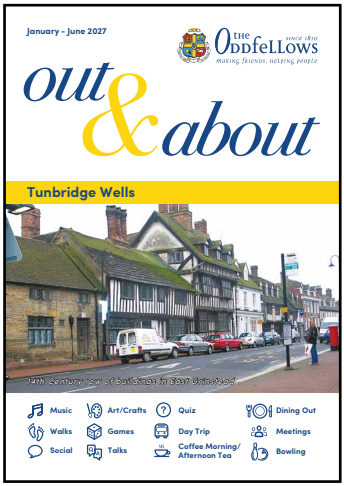
Tunbridge Wells Out & About and News and Vews

Please scroll down to the first page for Tunbridge Wells Out & About and page 21 for Tunbridge Wells News and Views

Please scroll to page 1 or click the link below
Tunbridge Wells Out & About



Please scroll to page 21 or click the link below
Tunbridge Wells News and Views



January - June 2027

THE ODDFELLOWS SINCE 1810

making friends, helping people

out & about

Tunbridge Wells



14th Century row of buildings in East Grinstead

- Music
- Art/Crafts
- Quiz
- Dining Out
- Walks
- Games
- Day Trip
- Meetings
- Social
- Talks
- Coffee Morning/ Afternoon Tea
- Bowling



An Evening at the Races
Wednesday 2 June

Welcome to the next edition of your Events Diary for the Tunbridge Wells Branch.

As a local Branch of the Oddfellows, we offer you a great opportunity to make new friends and enjoy a variety of activities. We also provide our members with a range of advice and support services when you need them. We are basically a group of friends brought together through shared interest in socialising, making friends and helping people. This issue features details of all our upcoming events from live music to eating out.

Contact Details

Tunbridge Wells Branch Office
Branch Secretary: Karen Rose

Address:
1 Southwick Close, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 2EZ

Telephone: 01342 324980

The best time to ring is during the week between 10am and 4pm but if there is no reply please do leave your name, telephone number and a short message.

Email:
karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk

Don't forget that everyone is welcome at Oddfellows events. Even if you are not a member, we want to extend an invitation to you and your friends to give us a try by attending any of our events that take your fancy before you decide to join.

Please Note
Photography will take place at each of our events to be used across Oddfellows' website, social media platforms, adverts and promotional material.

If you would not like to be in any of these images, please let a member of staff or the photographer know.

Find us at OddfellowsTunbridgeWells

Branch venues and local contacts

Beacon Branch
Crowborough Social Club,
Croft Road
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 1DL
Contact: Naz Mian
Telephone: 07905 472361

Bexhill and Hastings Branch
RAFA Albatross Club
15 Marina
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN40 1JS
Contact: Margaret Walisko
Telephone: 01424 217243

Earl of Cottenham Branch
The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club
4 Station Road
East Grinstead
West Sussex
RH19 1DJ
Contact: Andy Mason
Telephone: 01342 317970

Sevenoaks Branch
The Stanhope Arms
Church Road
Brasted
Westerham
Kent
TN16 1HZ
Contact: Mike Hyde
Telephone: 07711 677683

Tunbridge Wells Branch
Constitutional Club
1 Sandrock Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN2 3PX
Contact: Karen Rose
Telephone: 01342 324980

Weald Branch
White Hart
Wadhurst
East Sussex
TN5 6AP
Contact: Mike Hyde
Telephone: 07711 677683

Branch Meetings

Every Oddfellows Branch is run independently by a committee of members. Regular meetings are held to discuss matters such as Branch finances, membership and members support. Any member is welcome to attend these meetings. They are held on the first Wednesday of the month (second in January) at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club either before or after the talk or activity.

January 2027

TUES 12

Mark Brundall

8pm £5



The Beacon Branch is pleased to welcome back Mark Brundall. Sing and dance along to a night of live Rock and Ballads. Refreshments will be provided at The Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 5 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

MON 18

Rob Tompsett

7.45pm £5



The Weald Branch are pleased to welcome Rob Tompsett to The White Hart. Rob will be playing many well-known sing along tunes on his electric ukulele. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 11 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

WED 13

The Carving of an Icon - The History of Mount Rushmore

7.30pm £ Free Q&A



Join us to welcome back Joe Mendell to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Stuck in the middle of the US there is a rather unusual monument to four of the greatest Presidents of the US. But why is it there? Whose idea was it? How was it made? And what was its original purpose? Joe will provide the answers in his presentation. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 8 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

January 2027

TUES 19 Lunchtime Get-Together Tunbridge Wells

12 noon | £ As per menu



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 13 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

MON 25 Lunchtime Get-Together Crowborough

12 noon | £ As per menu



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at The Crowborough Cross, 3 Beacon Road, Crowborough TN6 1AF. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the Wetherspoons pub. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 19 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

TUES 26 The Wealden Ramblers

7.45pm | £ £5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome back The Wealden Ramblers to The Stanhope Arms. Two Men of Kent and members of the Tonbridge Folk Group, known for their repertoire of traditional, contemporary and self-written folk songs, thought-provoking and amusing, all with a Kent theme. Refreshments will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 19 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

January 2027



SAT 30

Hastings in Wartime

12.30pm £ Free Q&A

Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Ken Brooks to The Albatross Club. Like other towns on the south coast, Hastings was in the 'front line' during the Second World War. Barbed wire was placed along the seafront in preparation for a German invasion and St Clement's Caves were used as air raid shelters during the bombing raids. But despite the terrible conditions, people managed to cope - often with the traditional British sense of humour. Whether for a trip down memory lane or to answer some questions, this talk will reveal Hastings as it was in WWII. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 22 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

February

MON 01

History of Pantomime

7.45pm £ Free Q&A



Join the Weald Branch in welcoming Pete Allen to the White Hart. What is it about pantomime that attracts us to this strange concoction of fairy tales, dance, jokes, songs and cross-dressing? What is it really like to play the back end of a pantomime cow? All this, and the answer to whether something really is behind you, will be answered in this festive talk about what has become one of the great British Christmas traditions. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 26 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

February

WED 03 Natural History of New Zealand

7.30pm £ Free Q&A



Join us to welcome back Geoff Collins to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Geoff has previously spoken to us about Amy Johnson, but this time he will take us on a tour to New Zealand. Geoff's talk will include a Powerpoint presentation. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 27 January. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

MON 15 A Wealden Womans War

7.45pm £ Free Q&A

Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch in welcoming Penelope Harris to the Ex-Services Club in East Grinstead. Based on a book called A Wealden Woman's War, a true story, this talk is mostly nostalgic. It covers the war years, starting in 1940 with Edwina's story of her life in the WAAF, meeting a one-legged Spitfire Pilot and their subsequent marriage and life together during and after the war. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 8 February. Email Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.

TUES 09 Heartbeats

8pm £ £5



Join the Beacon Branch for an evening of entertainment with the Heartbeats. Recognised as one of Kent's premier 'Fifties/Sixties' bands, they entertain audiences of all ages with renditions of classic numbers, as well as a few lesser played, but instantly recognisable, tunes that are synonymous with an era of fabulous music and melody. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 3 February. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

February

TUES 16 Lunchtime Get-Together Tunbridge Wells

12 noon | £ As per menu



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 9 February. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

SAT 27 History of Rye

12.30pm | £ Free | Q&A

Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming David Clarke to The Albatross Club. Rye, with its medieval airs and cobbled streets, its history as a Cinque Port, the smugglers and its people, has been written about and photographed to distraction. This talk will bring some sense to the orderly and disorderly streets, twitchels, passages and history. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 19 February. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

TUES 23 On the Buses

7.45pm | £ Free | Q&A



The Sevenoaks Branch is pleased to welcome Lucy Allen to The Stanhope Arms. Remembering a comedy classic with the Director's daughter. Dust off your flares! It's time to take a nostalgic look back to the 1970s and the making of this much loved show. Let's celebrate the unforgettable characters, talented actors and enjoy some hilarious comedy clips together. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 16 February. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

March

MON 01 The Pre-Raphaelites

7.45pm £ Free

Join the Weald Branch in welcoming Delia Taylor to the White Hart. Delia will look at the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and at the paintings that made them famous, along with their lives, lovers and legacy. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 22 February. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.



TUES 09 Jessica Louisa

8pm £ £5



The Beacon Branch is pleased to welcome back Jessica Louisa, a professional singer and all round power house based in Kent, who will perform songs from the 50s to current classics. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 3 March. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

WED 03 Annual District Branch Meeting and Social

7.30pm £ Free



The annual meeting aims to approve the 2026 accounts and appoint District Branch Officers for the forthcoming year. A drink at the bar and a buffet will be provided for all members who attend this important meeting at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 24 February. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

March

SUN 14

Sunday Lunch at La Farola

1pm | Members £32 Guests £47



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch for a delicious Sunday lunch at the family run La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar. Members will enjoy freshly prepared dishes and a warm atmosphere. An early booking is essential due to the popularity of this occasion and because places are limited. Cheques should be sent in advance to Karen Rose at the Branch Office to secure your place by Wednesday 3 March. La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, 194-200 London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1EY. Please email Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.

TUES 23

Tommy Cooper

7.45pm | Free

The Sevenoaks Branch is pleased to welcome back John Field to The Stanhope Arms. One of the funniest men ever to grace the stage or TV was (and still is) universally loved. Yet life was not easy for Tommy Cooper. Hear the truth about this great man, no impressions as he was a unique 'one off'. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 16 March. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.



SAT 20

Quiz Time

12.30pm | Free



Come and join other members at The Albatross Club and test your general knowledge in Derek Fickling's quiz. Derek's questions will include a range of topics such as television, entertainment, geography and history. Prizes will be awarded to the winners. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 12 March. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

April

MON 05 Unstable Cliffs

7.45pm £5

Join us at the Weald Branch to be entertained by Unstable Cliffs who are a two person band from Bexhill. They will entertain you with Rock, Blues and Country music from the 50s to the noughties. Refreshments will be provided at the White Hart, Wadhurst. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 29 March. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.



WED 07 Bombing Conspiracies

7.30pm £ Free

Join us to welcome back John Wyatt to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. John will provide detail of a number of bombing conspiracies in which he played a leading role in investigating: Assassination of Alexander Litvinenko; Assassination of Rafiq Hariri (Lebanese Prime Minister); Assassination of General Kobbekadua (Chief of Staff, Sri Lankan Army); Breakout of HM Prison Whitemoor; and Cambs 1st Gulf War Oil Fires. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 31 March. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

SUN 11 Lunch and Ten-Pin Bowling

12.30pm £ TBC



Join us at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club for a two course lunch and a drink. Members to purchase their own food and the Branch will provide a free drink. We will then move on to the Hollywood Bowl, Knights Park, Knights Way, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3UX to enjoy some games of bowling. The Branch will subsidise the cost of bowling for each member. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 7 April. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

April

TUES 13 Stevie Bart

8pm £5



Join the Beacon Branch to welcome back Stevie Bart to the Crowborough Social Club. Stevie will provide us with an evening of Rock 'n' Roll from Elvis to Shakin' Stevens and everything in between to help us dance the night away. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 13 April. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

TUES 20 Ian Petrie and Ted Handley

7.45pm £5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome back Ian Petrie and Ted Hanley (accordion) to The Stanhope Arms. They are always enormously popular any time we manage to get to see them. They perform a mixture of folk and popular songs - all well-known, all worthy of a sing-a-long, and all hand-clappingly good. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 13 April. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT 24 Tudor London

12.30pm £ Free Q A



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome back Ian Bevan to The Albatross Club. In the 16th century, the population of London multiplied four times and many changes took place - new palaces, the dissolution of the monasteries, new housing. This talk charts the development of London as it erupted beyond the Roman wall and became a very prosperous city. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 16 April. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

April

TUES 27

Lunchtime Get-Together Tunbridge Wells

12 noon | £ As per menu



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 20 April.
Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

May

WED 05

On Broadway; The Life and Adventures of Damon Runyon

7.30pm | £ Free

Join us to welcome back Pete Allen to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Although best known for writing the stories that are the source of the classic musical 'Guys and Dolls', Damon Runyon's unique style and use of language has entered our everyday speech. This is the story of the man who turned gambling, gangsters, guys and dolls into the stuff of legend. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 28 April. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

May

SAT 08

Ramble and Pub Lunch

10am | £ As per menu



The Earl of Cottenham Branch is organising a ramble in the Groombridge area. The walk will be roughly a 3.5 mile circular walk from The Crown Inn, Groombridge Hill, Groombridge TN3 9QH and will take approximately two hours. Sturdy walking shoes are recommended as well as being relatively fit and agile for any stiles. A drink will be paid for by the Branch. A menu will be available should you wish to purchase your own lunch. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 30 April. Email Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.

May

TUES 11

Rachel Eade

8pm £5



The Beacon Branch are pleased to welcome back Rachel Eade to the Crowborough Social Club. Rachel is an excellent entertainer with a powerful voice and bubbly personality. She will perform a mixture of favourites both old and new. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 5 May. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

TUES 18

Fred Clark

7.45pm £5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome back Fred Clark to The Stanhope Arms following his popular appearances over the last two years. A local singer who sings some of his own compositions and a range of well-known covers. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 11 May. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

MON 24

Practical Jokes and Infamous Hoaxes

7.45pm £ Free Q&A



Join the Weald Branch in welcoming Neil Nixon to the White Hart. Neil will take us on an entertaining and lively trawl of 10 of the greatest lies offered up as if they were the truth, with details of those responsible and why they bothered. Presented historically and varied to include both the sinister and side-splittingly funny. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 17 May. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

May

SAT 29

Robin Hood

12.30pm | £ Free



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming Tony Harris back to The Albatross Club as he performs as Robin Hood. Tony will bring the legendary heroic outlaw, originally depicted in English folklore and latterly on screen, to life. It is guaranteed to be an enthralling performance as Tony relies on performance not notes. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 21 May. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

June

TUES 01

Lunchtime Get-Together Tunbridge Wells

12 noon | £ As per menu

Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 26 May. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



June

WED 02

An Evening at the Races

7.30pm | £ Free



Join us for drinks, together with horse racing on DVD and cash prizes for the winning punters. The fun and games will be followed by a buffet and the Branch meeting at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 26 May. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

June

TUES 08 Elvis Presley Tribute

8pm £5

Join the Beacon Branch in welcoming back Andy T King to the Crowborough Social Club. Andy will perform as Elvis and sing a variety of hits from the King's career. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 2 June. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.



MON 21 The Channel Tunnel

7.45pm £ Free

Join the Weald Branch in welcoming Bob Hart to the White Hart. Bob will describe the history of the Channel Tunnel through the 18th and 19th centuries, featuring the various proposals up to the final decision to build a tunnel. The main design features of the tunnel, the problems encountered, the build process, ventilation and dynamics of running a fast train through a narrow tunnel. Bob will also describe his personal role in the project. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 14 June. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

MON 14 The Golden Age of Smuggling

7.45pm £ Free



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch in welcoming Anthony Smith to the Ex-Services Club in East Grinstead. Anthony is the long-standing resident curator and custodian of The Priest House, West Hoathly. He will give a brief history of free-trading, mainly in Kent and Sussex, between 1700 and 1840. Explaining what they smuggled, how it was done and the consequences for the country as a whole. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 8 June. Email Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.

June

SAT 26

Magician

12.30pm | £ Free | Q&A



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Ryan Kirby to The Albatross Club. Ryan is a UK-based magician and close-up entertainer who loves performing in public and seeing the reactions he gets. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 18 June. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

TUES 29

Lunchtime Get-Together Tunbridge Wells

12 noon | £ As per menu

Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 22 June. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



Learn, have fun, and stay in touch from home

Our online events are here to stay



To see what's coming up visit **oddfellows.co.uk/events** and enter 'Ayr' in the place name search box

OEM/0122SMALL

Get the most out of your membership



As well as making friends and meeting new people, the Oddfellows offers a wide range of benefits to members.

From advice and financial aid through to travel opportunities, we provide a helping hand to make life a little easier. With your standard benefit membership, for £25 a year*, you have access to:

- Local social events
- Money saving partner offers
- Care and Welfare Helpline and local support
- Dedicated Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line
- Convalescence and Carer Support (after 2 years' membership)
- Benevolence Grants
- Member referral rewards scheme
- Access to group holidays and travel discounts
- Educational and Apprenticeship Awards
- 24/7 access to our historical online archive

If you're an extra benefit member, your £35 a year membership* enables access to additional benefits of:

- Optical benefit of up to £30 every second year of membership
- Dental benefit of up to £30 every membership year (after 1 year's membership)

Find out more about the benefits and support available

You'll find more information about member benefits in your member handbook. You can also call **0800 028 1810** 9am-5pm Mon to Thurs, 9am-4pm Fri, or visit **www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits**

To make sure you receive our monthly emails for updates on benefits and offers, just email us with your full name, postcode and membership number (if you know it): **membership@oddfellows.co.uk**

*Terms and conditions apply to all Oddfellows benefits, which are non-contractual and may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Financial benefits are awarded at the Society's discretion, not guaranteed, and claim applications may be declined. For full details, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/member-tcs or call 0800 028 1810.

The Oddfellows SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

GMA5ED/0926

At a glance

January 2026

Tues 12	Mark Brundall, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Wed 13	The Carving of an Icon - The History of Mount Rushmore, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Mon 18	Rob Tompsett, White Hart, Wadhurst	7.45pm
Tues 19	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Mon 25	Lunchtime Get-Together, The Crowborough Cross	12 noon
Tues 26	The Wealden Ramblers, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Sat 30	Hastings in Wartime, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

February

Mon 1	History of Pantomime, White Hart, Wadhurst	7.45pm
Wed 3	Natural History of New Zealand, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 9	Heartbeats, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Mon 15	A Wealden Womans War, The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club	7.45pm
Tues 16	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Tues 23	On the Buses, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Sat 27	History of Rye, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

March

Mon 1	The Pre-Raphaelites, White Hart, Wadhurst	7.45pm
Wed 3	Annual District Branch Meeting and Social, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 9	Jessica Louisa, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Sun 14	Sunday Lunch at La Farola, La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, East Grinstead	1pm
Sat 20	Quiz Time, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Tues 23	Tommy Cooper, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm

The Oddfellows is the trading name of The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Manchester Unity Friendly Society Limited, incorporated and registered in England and Wales No. 223F. Registered Office: Oddfellows House, 184-186 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3WB

At a glance

April

Mon 5	Unstable Cliffs, White Hart, Wadhurst	7.45pm
Wed 7	Bombing Conspiracies, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Sun 11	Lunch and Ten-Pin Bowling, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12.30pm
Tues 13	Stevie Bart, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Tues 20	Ian Petrie and Ted Handley, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Sat 24	Tudor London, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Tues 27	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon

May

Wed 5	On Broadway; The Life and Adventures of Damon Runyon, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Sat 8	Ramble and Pub Lunch, The Crown Inn, Groombridge	10am
Tues 11	Rachel Eade, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Tues 18	Fred Clark, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Mon 24	Practical Jokes and Infamous Hoaxes, White Hart, Wadhurst	7.45pm
Sat 29	Robin Hood, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

June

Tues 1	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Wed 2	An Evening at the Races, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 8	Elvis Presley Tribute, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Mon 14	The Golden Age of Smuggling, The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club	7.45pm
Mon 21	The Channel Tunnel, White Hart, Wadhurst	7.45pm
Sat 26	Magician, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Tues 29	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon

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Winter 2026
www.oddfellows.co.uk

Tunbridge Wells News and Views

News and views from your local friendship group

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Beacon Branch



Earl of Cottenham Branch



Friendship Lunchtime Get-Together



Tunbridge Wells District
welcome

Welcome to the forty-sixth edition of your twice-yearly Tunbridge Wells Newsletter

A message from your Secretary

Firstly, I would like to welcome our fifteen new members who have joined since April. I do hope that you have settled in and are enjoying attending our varied social events and making new friends. In that time, there have been thirty-five events across our District ranging from walks and BBQ's through to music events and lunches.

With Christmas nearly upon us it is time to start thinking about 2027. The Events Diary for the first half of 2027 has been produced and again contains a variety of events including games, music, interesting talks, a walk and our lunchtime get-togethers. Everyone is welcome at our events, so if you can encourage family

Contact Details

For more details about any of the events listed, membership and the wide range of benefits available, please call:

District Secretary: Dr Karen Rose

Branch Address: Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club, Rocklands, 1 Sandrock Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3PX

T: 01342 324980
E: karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk

The best time to ring is during the week between 10am and 4pm but if there is no reply please do leave your name, telephone number and a short message.

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and friends to come then bring them along to try us out before they join and they will be made very welcome. Let your friends and family know that there's so much to get out of being an Oddfellows member, from our varied social events to our supportive benefits package. Just do not forget to book your place at events as some of our venues have restrictions on numbers! Also do let us know of any dietary requirements.

This newsletter gives a flavour of the events that have taken place across the six social lodges of the Branch over the last few months and been enjoyed by so many of our members. Please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions for future events or would like to become more involved in the life of the Oddfellows.

You can also get in touch for advice, to talk over something that is worrying you, or simply to chat. Where we can help, we will. We know many of you do not like asking for help. Please do not think you are putting us out. We are your Society, here to support you. There are also various financial grants that are available should the need arise.

Please note that the District Office will be closed from Friday 18th December 2026 through to Monday 4th January 2027. I do hope that you all have a relaxing Christmas break.

Finally, I had the immense honour of being elected as Deputy Grand Master of the Oddfellows at our online AMC in July. It really is a privilege and I thank you all for your support. This picture was taken at the Grand Masters weekend of myself and Debbie Jex, Grand Master.

Karen



Karen and Debbie.

REFER A FRIEND

Share the love and make someone smile

To refer someone you know and make their day, either fill in the **Refer a Friend form** available from your Branch Secretary, or call Membership on **0800 028 1810**, or visit our Members' Area at **www.oddfellows.co.uk**



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Ref 1644

Beacon Branch

Thanks to the efforts of Naz Mian, a number of varied events have again been organised for the Beacon Branch at the Crowborough Social Club. Each event included a very delicious buffet and refreshments.

In April, forty-seven members were entertained with great music from Stevie Bart. Before the music, Naz Mian presented cheques to two local charities. The first was Clued-Up who help young people aged between 11 and 25 years old with mental wellbeing, school transition, bullying and self-esteem among other things. They have been established for 25 years. The other charity was Crowborough Healthy Walking Group who now have 80 members and were started 13 years ago by the NHS, McMillan and ramblers, to get people back to health after operations. Anyone can join them on their weekly walks.



Stevie Bart.

Stevie then helped get everyone on the dance floor starting with Bill Haley and the Comets with 'Shake, Rattle and Roll' followed by Cliff Richard's 'Gee Whizz' and 'Batchelor Boy', then Buddy Holly's 'Maybe Baby'. As always, several Elvis tracks and memorable others from the 60s and 70s. A fantastic night!



Rachel Eade.

In May, Rachel Eade entertained forty-five members with a great mix of songs from the 50s upwards suited to her powerful voice. Starting with the Beach Boys (And Then I Kissed Her); Valerie by Amy Winehouse; San Francisco by Scott McKenzie: and ABBA with Mamma Mia and Waterloo, to name but a few. Achy Breaky Heart and Footloose of course called for some line dancing! Rachel finished with Tina Turner's Simply the Best which described the evening perfectly.

Forty-nine members attended in June to hear The Management Acoustic Duo play and they brought a lot of energy with them! Everyone was up dancing, singing along, and having a brilliant time. Great music and great company.



The Management Acoustic Duo.

In July, a very enjoyable evening was had with Alison David who entertained fifty-five members and one guest with her captivating voice, huge repertoire, and bubbly personality. Alison sang a variety of songs from the 60s onwards including Elvis, Tom Jones, the Beatles, ABBA, Dolly Parton, and even Queen's Bohemian Rapsody for her finale. Barefooted and colourful, Alison got members on the dance floor on a very warm evening and provided another memorable night!



Alison David.

Forty-nine members and two guests gathered on a pleasant evening in August for a competitive game of pétanque, although some members preferred to forego the exercise and just sit and chat while enjoying the fresh air.

Playing in teams of four, participants quickly discovered that tossing a silver metal ball along a gravel pitch towards a fairly small target is not as easy as you'd think! A huge thank you to David and his team for expertly guiding members through the games with everyone a winner in this friendly, fun-filled competition. Afterwards, Maxine and her team served up a delicious barbecue. Our thanks go to Naz for organising the event. Roll on next year!

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Members enjoying Petanque.

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In September, forty-eight members enjoyed an evening of music from Move over Dali – a 6-piece band. They entertained us with a mixture of rockabilly and old classics from the 60s onwards. Heard it through the Grapevine by Marvin Gaye, Flying Pickets (Only You), Bob Dylan (I'll be your baby tonight) and many more. A special tribute to Dolly Parton with Jolene was much appreciated. Members were on the dance floor and all had a lovely evening.



Move over Dali.

There was one lunchtime get-together in September where fifteen members enjoyed a fabulous three-course lunch washed down with a drink or two! A huge thank you to Maxine and her team for the delicious food. It was also wonderful to welcome some new members, who thoroughly enjoyed meeting and getting to know fellow members. Here's to many more great get-togethers!



Members enjoying friendship.

Bowling

In April, thirty-four members enjoyed a very tasty carvery at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club consisting of beef, pork and lamb with lots of vegetables, followed by cheesecake, chocolate orange cake, or cheese and biscuits. After a relaxing coffee, twenty-eight members then went to the Bowlplex where they competed over two games. The top scorers were Solveig with 120 followed by Andrew on 118. Others high scores were from David on 111, Don on 108, Angela on 105, Rebecca on 103, Lesley on 102, Anna and Glen on 100. A very enjoyable afternoon.



Andrew, Solveig and David.

How Now Spirit? Tingling Tales of Theatre Ghosts

In May, thirty-six members and two guests welcomed Pete Allen back to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional club. Pete explained that in 1986, he worked backstage at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane as a flyman – someone who supervises the movement of the scenery. He showed pictures of himself with several well-known celebrities including Catherine Zeta-Jones!

The Theatre Royal Drury Lane is said to be the most haunted theatre in the world with over 2,000 accounts of ghostly appearances. People have heard the grand piano lid slamming, statues have disappeared, and there has been a smell of lavender. Pete had himself experienced sounds, smells and things (or ghosts) brushing past him – but explained that it is very dark when the lights go out, in fact pitch black, so it is very easy to trip or bump into something and let your imagination take over. Actors are a very superstitious lot and are notorious for their traditions e.g. 'Break a Leg'; 'The Scottish Play'; and 'No Whistling Backstage'. Pete explained that most of these can be reasonably explained but not all! Some ghosts haunt many theatres and they tend to be recently deceased characters from the era. Pete suggested that maybe tomorrow's ghosts could be those of Bruce Forsyth or Cilla Black? A very entertaining talk.



Pete Allen.

Bexhill and Hastings Branch

Huge thanks to Margaret Walisko for organising an exciting programme of talks and music for the Bexhill and Hastings Branch at the Albatross Club. Each event was followed by a buffet lunch and refreshments provided by the Lodge.



Tony Harris.

In April, twenty-one members listened to Tony Harris as the formidable William Wallace (Braveheart). Tony sported a Scottish accent, as well as a tartan kilt and sash, a curly auburn wig, and a white and blue painted face. He said he had used a fixative spray so the paint wouldn't slide off! Tony started by telling us of his gruesome execution at Smithfield in London having been dragged naked for 6 miles behind horses before being hung, drawn and quartered. His arms and legs were cut off and sent to cathedrals in Scotland. His head was tarred and put on show so people could see what would happen to anyone standing against the king. Tony told us of how William didn't want to sign the treaty with England and with his small army of archers defeated the English army at Stirling Bridge. He hid in the forest for years as a wanted man and was betrayed by a Scottish nobleman and arrested. A very interesting and amusing talk by Tony.



Andy T King.

Thirty-two members and a guest enjoyed the Elvis tribute by Andy T King at the end of May. Andy went through Elvis' early days and told us the story behind each song and his various films. A few members were dancing to the faster tunes. Andy of course made eyes at the ladies and moved his snake hips in the familiar Elvis way. An excellent performance as always with everything from Love Me Tender, Return to Sender, Wooden Heart and In the Ghetto. Elvis was voted the world's most handsome man and Andy said he was the most handsome man in his road – a cul-de-sac with three other bungalows inhabited by three old ladies. As usual, a lot of banter and laughs. Elvis may have left the building, but he is sure to return.

In June, on a sweltering hot day, twenty members attended a bingo session hosted by Bob which was most enjoyable. Andrew Stanhope, Solveig Stanhope, Derek Fickling, Pat Jarrad and Dot Harrold all received cash prizes plus chocolates, biscuits or sweets. A couple of new games for some of us. As well as full house we had middle



Members enjoying Bingo.

line only; pyramid (one on top row, two in the middle and three on bottom row); and three numbers each on top and bottom line. A lovely event and an opportunity to catch up with other members.

What a fantastic time was had by twenty-six members and a guest in July who were entertained by the return of local group The FOG (Five Old Geezers). The band played for over an hour with music from the 60s and 70s. There was lots of foot tapping and a chance to join in the singing. It was wonderful to see so many friendly faces enjoying the entertainment.



The FOG.



Sue Parker-Nutley.

In August, twenty-three members were entertained by Sue Parker-Nutley. Sue had decided in her thirties to become an actress. She has appeared in a variety of TV shows from Eastenders and Call the Midwife to commercials for Stannah Stairlifts and Tena Lady! During covid she had to self-tape and she prefers doing this today. Her little tripod with her phone is perched on an ironing board and Sue stands in front of her only blank wall - a wardrobe door!

An unusual job Sue had was playing a video game – Royal Kingdom. She was picked up in a limousine and taken to an unused airfield. Her character was on a plane playing the video game and chatting to a man next to her. This was half a day's work and she was paid her £350 fee plus £5000. The company was owned by Ridley Scott who always paid his actors well. Another interesting job was for a golf tournament where she got two roles – a lady drinking a cup of tea and a vicar teeing off a 2-foot square platform on top of a church! She had to learn to hit a ball in 15 minutes then was chained to her stuntman and had to hit an imaginary ball (this could be added later). They asked if she could hit a real ball at the end and Sue was very proud that this take was actually used.

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Sue also entertained everyone with a monologue, some poems and a song. Although being a jobbing actress is not very lucrative it certainly has its moments and Sue said the best bit was meeting a lot of nice people along the way. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed her talk.

In September, twenty-six members and three guests enjoyed a wonderful time when they were entertained by Stevie Bart – the master performer of rock and roll numbers. He sang everything from Buddy Holly, Elvis, Cliff Richards and more. Everyone enjoyed singing along and many got up on the dance floor.



Stevie Bart.

BBQ and Ritual

In July, we held our annual ritual lodge at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells. It was lovely to find so many members interested in the traditional side of Oddfellowship with five members either being welcomed or taking two of the degrees. Afterwards, they joined with other members at the club to enjoy a delicious BBQ. Thirty-one members and a guest enjoyed a meal expertly prepared by the staff. A selection of meats (steak, lamb koftas and chicken) was enjoyed along with a jacket potato and a variety of salads plus a variety of desserts. Everyone had a very enjoyable time at this informal social occasion.



Members enjoying the BBQ.

An Evening at the Races

Forty-six members enjoyed an evening of racing at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells expertly organized by Naz Mian in June. Everyone had fun trying to place their bets on the winning horse in each of the six races with some having a lot more success than others! Each race had fun names such as Jurassic Champion Challenge; Puff & Panter's Stakes; and Welcome-As-A-Cuppa Cup. There was lots of cheering and the winner was Alan, with Dermot in second place, and Dot, Angela and Beccy tied for third place.



Naz with Alan.

Curiosities of the City of London (Part 1)

In August at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells, thirty-six members were entertained by Stuart Robinson who had worked in London for several decades and found the city so interesting that he qualified as a guide in order to share with others the knowledge he gained. During his many walks around the city, he came across a random collection of curiosities and items.

Stuart started off with a brief resume of the history of London from Romans, through Saxons and Vikings up to the Blitz. His curiosities were probably not what members were expecting him to talk about but none the less they were an interesting cross section of City history. He started with the first Fire of London caused by the sacking of Roman London by Boudicca in 60AD and a monument that was buried in a city wall. He then moved to the second Fire of London known as the Great Fire of 1666. Stuart drew our attention to a small wooden figure at Cock Lane near Pie Corner where the fire ended.


Stuart Robinson.

Drinking fountains were his next topic before moving on to a gruesome account of a condemned man's final hours on his way to the scaffold and the derivation of some of the expressions in common parlance today that resulted from those practices. Stuart finished with a mysterious ghost story of Cock Lane that turned out not to be a ghost but a story of deceit. A very interesting and informative talk.

Earl of Cottenham Branch

Thanks to Pete Gardner, Andy Mason and Karen Rose for their work in providing a variety of events for the Branch.

On a sunny Saturday May morning, twenty-five ramblers set off on a 3.6 mile walk from The Swan in Forest Row. There were six stiles that had to be traversed twice (on the way out and then on the return) but thankfully it was fairly flat under foot. The walk took us over fields, through woods, over the river Medway three times and past the end of Weirwood Reservoir. Much fun was had with lots of chatting and catching up. We all arrived at The Swan around two hours later ready for a drink. Two other members joined us for our well-deserved lunch. A thoroughly lovely day.

Twenty-two members and a guest were entertained in June by Tony Harris who was dressed as a first-class survivor on the Titanic. Tony explained that RMS Titanic was the White Star Line's answer to the regal Mauritania and Lusitania during the golden age of transatlantic crossings. He also spoke about the sister ship, Olympic, as ships are usually built in pairs. The Olympic was launched first and it was later discovered that it ran aground off Cornwall soon after its launch. This incident was hushed up for 75 years.



Tony Harris.

Tony's conspiracy theory had us Googling like mad when we got home. What if it was all an inside insurance job? What if the rich wanted to make money?

The White Star line only had the Olympic insured for third party, fire and theft. £1.5 million to build and they scrimped on the insurance premiums! The most thought-provoking of Tony's talks. Despite the tragic loss of life, the talk was kept light hearted and, as with all his characterisations, Tony searched for the humour in the situation.



The Swan Ramblers.



London Walk.

In September, eleven members headed to Temple in London for a guided tour of the 'Inns of Court' with Ian Bevan. Today there are four Inns of Court – Middle Temple, Inner Temple, Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn. Each Inn has five main features – the Hall, the Treasury, the Library, the Garden and a Chapel. Ian took us on a tour of these Inns and showed us the main features. He also spoke about the history of each Inn and famous people who had connections with them. Fountain Court in Middle Temple is mentioned several times in the novels of Charles Dickens. Also, various TV programmes such as Rumpole of the Bailey and Silk were filmed at the Inns, as well as an episode of Downton Abbey. A thoroughly interesting tour that ended at Gray's Inn where several members then headed off for lunch in the nearby Cittie of Yorke pub.

Twenty-five ramblers and a dog set off on a 3.6 mile circular walk from The Kentish Horse in Mark Beech in September. The walk was downhill to start, with some tricky stiles to navigate, but took us across some lovely farmland with plenty of sheep and cows. The homeward stretch was uphill and there were a couple of friendly horses to greet us at a stile. Again, there was a lot of chatting and we arrived back at the pub a couple of hours later, where we were joined by two more members, for our well-deserved refreshments and plentiful food. A really enjoyable day.



The Kentish Horse Ramblers.

Sevenoaks Branch

Once again, Mike Hyde produced an exciting programme of talks and music for our meetings at The Stanhope Arms in Brasted. Each event included a very tasty buffet and refreshments.



Ian Petrie and Ted Handley.

In April, twenty members enjoyed the annual visit from Ian Petrie and Ted Handley. This time they expanded their offering to us, starting with a Scottish reel, then a song by Mark Knopfler (Lily of the West), and a polka. There were some of the usual favourites, Marching Through Rochester (who'll be a soldier), and, toward the end, Wild Rover, Irish Rover, and the 'hairy tongue' song. But, succumbing to requests from some of us prior to the meeting, they played a few of Ian's own compositions including I'm Going Home, Go For It, and, from his album of the same name, Along The B2000. As usual with Ian and Ted, they obviously enjoyed themselves as much as we did, and they warmed to the theme eventually needing to be stopped as they tried to play on into the night.



Rob Tompsett.

The meeting due in May was intended to see Fred Clark perform for us, but as he and his family were all poorly, Rob Tompsett kindly agreed to take his place. Rob played a whole host of tunes that, rather than up and dancing, had us very much laughing and singing along as we recognised (well almost) all of the words. Congratulations, Save Your Kisses For Me, Brown Eyed Girl, Runaway, Delilah, It's A Beautiful Day, Hi Ho Silver Lining, Do Wah Diddy Diddy, Ob-La-De Ob-La-Da. Quite the song fest, and, as is his way, Rob managed to get everyone involved in the fun and games.



Guy Bartlett.

Guy Bartlett told twenty-seven members the unbelievable but true story of the 747 airliner that had all four engines fail over Indonesia at our July meeting. In 1982, a Jumbo left Heathrow

bound for Auckland with 4 intermediate stops, carrying three cockpit crew, 16 cabin crew and 248 passengers. All went fine until after leaving Kuala Lumpur when strange problems started to be seen. Although there were no technical or external signs of any unusual situation, the plane started experiencing problems that the pilots could not explain. There was sufficient fuel and no pipeline blockage for it, and no sign of any electrical failure, but one by one the four engines all shut themselves down.

Despite many attempts, the engines failed to restart. At 37,000 ft the plane was now gliding; they knew it could last for about 100 miles, around 15-20 minutes, so long as they kept up a reasonable speed as going too slow would cause them to stall and fall. They turned around, heading to Jakarta which was 100 miles away. But a 3.5km mountain range was in the way. They had to dive as, with no power, there was no oxygen being provided to the cabin but going lower would reduce the time available to keep trying to restart the engines. Quite a problem!

They were in the last stages of preparing to ditch into the sea when one engine did restart. Then another. They had enough to reach the airport and land safely, even though the airport's Instrument Landing System was inoperable. It was later discovered that a nearby volcano had erupted and very fine volcanic dust had solidified in the engines. This experience caused the way that airlines viewed active volcanoes to be significantly changed. The 747 had glided for 13 minutes without any power at all!



Fred Clark.

Difficulties with the meeting booked in September gave us the chance to rebook Fred Clark from earlier in the year. Fred was on top form giving a thoroughly enjoyable evening to the 16 members that were present. Everyone was up and dancing and singing along including the regulars in the other bar and those behind the bar. Fred sang some of his own compositions, which were extremely good, and many covers. He started with the Fleetwood Mac song Everywhere and finished with You Are My Sunshine. In between were such as Sitting On The Dock of The Bay, Country Roads, Only You, Here Comes The Sun. The best evening we have had for some while.

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Weald Branch

Once again, Mike Hyde produced an exciting programme of music and talks for our Weald meetings with each event including a very tasty buffet and refreshments. Sadly, we saw the closure of The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst in June. After one meeting at The Bull, Three Leg Cross, the Weald meetings are now settled at The White Hart, Wadhurst.

In April, we experienced the mob-handed appearance of the East Kent Chorus a cappella group again. This time there really was as many of them as us at fourteen a side. But what a joyful evening we got as they sang unaccompanied (apart from some of us trying to join in) through a range of very different styles of music. We heard The Bright Side of Life, My Bonnie (with appropriate hand gestures!), When I'm Sixty-four, Hello Mary Lou, and many others. Including interesting versions of The Lion Sleeps Tonight, Under the Boardwalk, and, once again to test us in the audience, 1,2,3,4,5 to the tune of Knees Up Mother Brown (go on, try it!!).

In May, twenty-nine members saw the long-awaited visit of Lucy Allen, stuntwoman, telling of why and how she got into such a profession, and details of what it all involved. Although initially she had a few technical problems trying to project some film excerpts that included some of her stunts, the evening really livened up when she got to talking without video, or notes.



Lucy Allen.

She has been doing this for 30 years, having initially been enthused by seeing the gymnast Olga Korbet, thinking 'I can do that'. After gymnastics, she joined a circus at a time when it was just possible to do so without being from a circus family. She explained some of the disciplines and equipment usage she learned though the Cirque du Soleil, swinging from her teeth etc. She enjoyed being frightened and learned a lot very quickly.

She joined the Stunt Register in 1990, got an Equity card, and progressed into acting and stunt work; her first role was on Casualty, being knocked off a bike hit by a lorry! She explained when and why stunt doubles are required and when they are not. And took us through some of the tricks of that trade, and many of the films and TV shows she has been in.

But probably most interesting was the Q&A session after her talk when many detailed things were asked about and happily explained by her.

Sadly, very soon after seeing Lucy we learned that the Cherry Tree pub was about to close, causing the loss of our June meeting.

We resumed in August when thirty-four members and guests came to see Unstable Cliffs perform at the Bull in Three Leg Cross. The band were on their usual cheerful, inclusive and tuneful form. They played a grand selection of their usual repertoire – Mustang Sally, I Fought the Law, King of the Road, Proud Mary, Delilah, Crazy Little Thing Called Love, and many more.

The evening seemed to be a success, and was generally enjoyed by those of us present. But it was not a financially viable occasion, so we had to start looking for another venue for our meetings.



Unstable Cliffs.

In September, twenty-three members attended the White Hart in Wadhurst to see Jessica Louisa, who had always been very popular. As usual, Jessica gave a completely professional and well-presented collection of songs enjoyed by all. Not too much dancing, but a rearrangement of the tables for next time could cure that. Stupid Cupid, Shaking All Over, Lipstick on your Collar, This Old Heart of Mine, Twist and Shout, Rock Around the Clock, and many others. And Summer of 69 did get the girls behind the bar out and dancing. But the venue did prove to be very good and, hopefully, we can look forward to many more successful events there.



Jessica Louisa.



Annual Movable Conference (AMC) 2026

In July, three deputies (Andy Mason, Margaret Walisko and Ruth Chambers) represented our Branch at the two-day conference on Zoom. The deputies voted on behalf of the Branch membership regarding various rule changes and reported back to the Lodge at the August meeting in Tunbridge Wells. Sister Karen Rose was elected Deputy Grand Master. Next year the conference moves to Eastbourne.

Bizarre Hollywood



Joe Mendell.

A fascinating presentation was given by Joe Mendell in July at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells to thirty-four members, and it has completely changed how those classic films from the 'Golden Age of Hollywood' are seen and remembered.

It is often easy to romanticise stars like Rita Hayworth and Marilyn Monroe, and the glamour of Gone with the Wind or Casablanca, but the reality behind the curtain was brutal. Studios treated actors like property, controlling everything from their schedules to their appearances. Did you know that some stars were forced into plastic surgery and pancake makeup just to fit a mould? Or that they had no say in their public image, their scripts, or even their personal lives? It really makes you appreciate how much those actors endured to bring us the movies we love.

The price of fame back then was incredibly steep. A huge thank you to Joe for such an insightful and eye-opening talk and for stepping in at short notice after the arranged speaker had to pull out.

Loose Change



John Griffiths-Colby.

Thirty-six members and a guest were given a thought-provoking talk by John Griffiths-Colby at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club in September. John took us on a fascinating journey through history, human survival, and the stark realities of the modern world. We were taken back 10,000 years to the lost land of Doggerland – the land that connected the British Isles to Europe before it was swallowed up by the North Sea. He traced the migration of our ancestors: Neanderthals, Denisovans, and finally, Homo sapiens. It proved one thing: we are only here because our ancestors moved, adapted, and survived the ice sheets while other species failed.

John also spoke about the historic drivers of economic change, what change is, what change is not, and what you can make it. Is it really change or is it just different or better? A car in the 1920's looks very different to a car in the 2020's but they are still fundamentally the same. A very interesting and informative talk.

Friendship Lunchtime Get-Togethers

There have been three lunchtime get-togethers (April, May, and September) at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club in the last six months. In April, sixteen members and a guest enjoyed a lovely catch up with tasty food and drink with some having a full breakfast!

Twenty-three members and two guests attended in May and enjoyed a chatty lunch with friends. Jigsaws were on sale as well as a raffle. Our Friendship Month lunch in September saw a very enjoyable and tasty lunch attended by twenty-four members and a guest. Several new to the club thoroughly enjoyed themselves and will come again!

At each of the lunchtimes, members were able to purchase their own food with the Branch paying for a drink. Our thanks go to Ray, Rob and his helpers for providing tasty food for us all.



Getting into the Friendship spirit.

Meet Grand Master Debbie Jex



For Debbie Jex, the Oddfellows has been part of her life for more than 50 years. Recently elected as Grand Master, she remains characteristically modest about the honour.

"I know it's a huge honour and I am immensely proud," she says. "But half the time I'm just the District Secretary at Reading Oddfellows until somebody reminds me I'm the Grand Master."

Debbie first joined the Society as a child when her parents became members. However, it was in 1993, when she became Lodge Secretary, that her deeper involvement began.

"That's when I got pulled in," she jokes.

Over the years, the Society has provided much more than a role. It has become a source of friendship, connection and lasting memories.

"It's not just a job now, it's a way of life. It's a huge part of my social life, a huge part of my friendship group."

Looking back, Debbie believes the relationships she has built through the Oddfellows have enriched her life.

"I've attended some lovely events and made friends with lots of lovely people all over the country. So it's definitely enriched my life."

As Grand Master, Debbie sees her role as representing and championing members.

"I'm there to champion our members and make sure we're doing the best we can for them."

She is also excited about meeting members across the country and helping more people discover the support and friendship the Society offers.

"I'd like more members to know what a wonderful caring and benevolent Society this is."

After decades of service, Debbie's message remains simple:

"The Oddfellows is there for you if you need it."

Read the full interview on the Oddfellows' website at: www.oddfellows.co.uk/news

Important update to some membership benefits

As part of our regular review of the services and support we provide, three discretionary, non-contractual membership benefits were withdrawn on 16 September 2026.

The benefits affected are **Legal Aid Scheme, Accidental Death Benefit** and **Emergency Financial Aid**.

The change applies to new Standard, Extra Benefits and Young Oddfellows members joining from 16 September 2026, and to existing Standard, Extra Benefits and Young Oddfellows members when they renew their membership.

Existing members will continue to have access to these benefits until their renewal date.

Any claims, applications or cases already received and in progress will continue to be considered and fulfilled in accordance with the relevant benefit terms and conditions.*

As with all member benefits, the Society regularly reviews its offering to ensure it remains relevant, appropriate and sustainable. While these three discretionary benefits have been withdrawn, no other membership benefits have been affected.

The Society remains committed to providing members with valuable support, friendship and opportunities to connect with others.

Members who have questions about how this change affects them or their membership can contact the Membership team on **0800 028 1810** for further information, or email **membership@oddfellows.co.uk**

Apprenticeship Educational Awards

If you're starting an apprenticeship, the Oddfellows' Apprenticeship Educational Awards could help with some of the costs along the way. Each year, up to three eligible members can apply to receive a non-repayable bursary of £250 per year for the duration of their apprenticeship.*

The award can be used towards expenses such as textbooks, equipment, rent, bills and other practical costs.

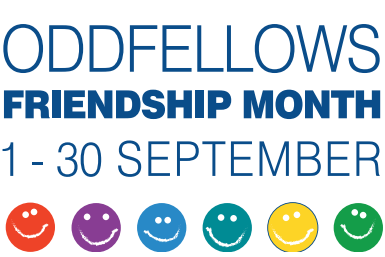
To apply, members must have at least five years of continuous Oddfellows membership (which can include Young Oddfellows membership) and be starting their first apprenticeship. This is a discretionary benefit and applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

To find out more or request an application form, contact your Branch Secretary as soon as possible. Applications must be submitted by 31 December each year.

*Terms and conditions apply to all Oddfellows benefits, which are non-contractual and may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Financial benefits are awarded at the Society's discretion, not guaranteed, and claim applications may be declined. For full details, call 0800 028 1810 or visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/member-tcs

Friendship Month 2026: celebrating connection, community and companionship

Another Friendship Month has come to a close, with Oddfellows branches across the UK welcoming members, friends and guests to a wide range of free and low-cost taster events designed to bring people together and celebrate the value of friendship.



From coffee mornings and social lunches to walks, talks and special gatherings, September provided countless opportunities for people to reconnect with existing friends, make new connections and enjoy good company.

Keep friendships warm

This year's campaign focused on the importance of staying in touch as we move into the colder months, when opportunities to get together can sometimes reduce and feelings of isolation can become more common.

The campaign struck a chord with people across the country. Branches reported strong attendance at events and were especially pleased to welcome newcomers discovering the Oddfellows for the first time.

"A huge thank you"

Pam Casey, Secretary of the Order, said: "A huge thank you goes to every branch, volunteer, organiser, member and guest who helped make Friendship Month 2026 such a success.



Concord Oddfellows celebrated Friendship Month in style at their popular coffee morning in Aldershot.

"Your enthusiasm and willingness to reach out to others demonstrated the positive difference that friendship can make in our communities."

Steph Hopes, Branch Secretary for Concord Oddfellows, said: "We welcomed several people who had never attended an Oddfellows event before. By the end of the morning, everyone was chatting as though they'd known each other for years. It was a fantastic atmosphere."



Handforth and Altrincham Oddfellows met up for a round of adventure golf.

Sharon Hulse-Cottle, Branch Secretary of Handforth and Altrincham Oddfellows, said: "Our members did a brilliant job of helping newcomers feel at ease. By the end of the event, there was a real buzz in the air. It was lovely to see new faces becoming part of the group."

Expert support

Friendship Month also helped raise awareness of the wider benefits of friendship. During the campaign, expert anthropologist Dr Anna Machin supported the initiative by sharing insights into the importance of maintaining meaningful relationships and making time for regular face-to-face contact.

While Friendship Month may be over, the opportunities certainly aren't. With a busy programme of events planned throughout autumn, winter and beyond, there are still plenty of ways to meet new people, try something different and strengthen existing connections.

You can always find details of upcoming local and online events at www.oddfellows.co.uk/events



Birmingham Oddfellows shared positive messages of friendship at its events.



Oddfellows Members: Do you need help?

None of us know what is around the corner...

Local Care and Welfare Support

To request contact from a Welfare Visitor and for local help and information about Branch benefits and benevolence contact Karen on **01342 324980** or email **karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk**

Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line

Call 0800 0149 821*

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)
Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm
Email: oddfellows@citizensadvicemanchester.org.uk

Run by Citizens Advice for Oddfellows members, you can access free, confidential, independent advice on welfare benefits, money and debt issues, consumer problems, housing, fuel bills, employment issues and many other issues.

***The Oddfellows cannot provide legal advice and accepts no liability whatsoever for advice provided by Citizens Advice, which is an independent advice agency. If you have any queries about the advice you have received or wish to make a complaint then you should contact Citizens Advice directly. Citizens Advice operate a formal complaints process.**

Care and Welfare Helpline

Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)
Monday to Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm, Friday, 9.30am - 4pm
Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

Run by the Oddfellows Care and Welfare Department, you can access information and guidance on issues such as accessing health and care services, supported housing, support for carers, and planning for later life. The helpline will try and identify any Oddfellows benefits or services in the community which may be of help to you.

Visit our website page at www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/care for care and welfare information

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