

July - December 2024



O^{the} OddfeLLows SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

out & about

Tunbridge Wells



The gardens at Calverley Grounds



Music



Art/Crafts



Theatre



Dining Out



Walks



Games



Day Trip



Meetings



Social



Talks



Coffee Morning/
Afternoon Tea



Friendship
Month



*Spanish Sunday Lunch -
Sunday 27 October, we hope you
can join us!*

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 Woodman
2 High Street
Otford
Sevenoaks
Kent

TN14 5PQ

Contact: Mike Hyde

Telephone: 07711 677 683

Tunbridge Wells Branch

Constitutional Club
1 Sandrock Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN2 3PX

Contact: Karen Rose

Telephone: 01342 324980

Weald Branch

The Cherry Tree
Dale Hill
Ticehurst
East Sussex
TN5 7DG

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.

July 2024

MON
01

Rachel Eade



7.45pm



£5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome Rachel Eade to The Woodman. New to us, 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 Monday 24 June. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.



TUES
09

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 3 July. Contact Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



WED
03

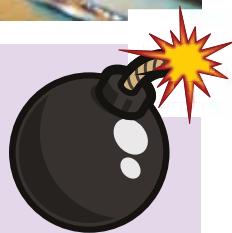
Bomb Disposals Operations



7.30pm



Free



Join us to welcome John Wyatt to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. John will talk about Bomb Disposal from inception in 1943 to date with actual operational experience of initially dealing with German UXBs (unexploded bombs) to terrorist and extremist devices. How an operation is carried out including defusing, making safe and disposal. Not too technical, but studying some actual incidents. John has experience of operational tours of Northern Ireland in the 70's and The Falkland Islands. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 26 June. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

July 2024

SAT
13

The FOG



12.30pm



£5



TUES
16

Peter Snipp



8pm



£5



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming The FOG to the Albatross Club. For our second music event in Bexhill, the live band will perform a variety of hits from the 1960s.



Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 5 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

The Beacon Branch are pleased to welcome Peter Snipp to the Crowborough Social Club. Peter appeared at The Woodman in 2023 and was well received. He is a professional singer and sings classic songs and ballads from the great era of the Rat Pack, Matt Monro, Tony Bennett, as well as songs from the classic musicals and films. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 9 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

WED
17

Barbecue and Ritual



7pm



Members £14, Guests £18



Join the Pride of the Valley and other members at 8pm for a scrumptious barbecue in the extensive private gardens of the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Sit back and enjoy a relaxing evening in the company of friends. Prior to the barbecue at 7pm, the Branch will be holding a Welcoming and Degree Ceremony



for any members who are interested in the ritual side of the Society. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 9 July. Payment is required in advance to secure your place for the barbecue. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

July 2024

SAT

20

The Priest House



10am



Members £10, Guests £15



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch for a guided tour of The Priest House in West Hoathly. The Priest House is a 15th century timber-framed house in West Sussex, with both religious and royal history. Seized by the Crown during the dissolution of the monasteries, ownership has seen it pass from Thomas Cromwell, to Anne of Cleves, then to Mary I and Elizabeth I. Today it is a museum with a notable



cottage garden. The tour will be followed by lunch and a drink in a nearby pub. Members to purchase their own food, and a drink will be paid for by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential as places are limited. Book by Wednesday 3 July. Priest House, North Lane, West Hoathly, West Sussex RH19 4PP. Contact Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.

MON

22

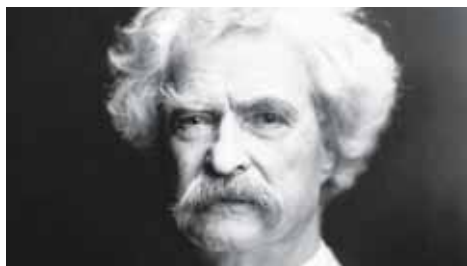
Mark Twain



8pm



Free



The Weald Branch is pleased to welcome back Joe Mendell to The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. In his

presentation you will be introduced to Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain. Joe will dress and act as Mr Twain, reading some of his speeches and talks as he wrote them, using his colourful yet interesting wording. You will be introduced to the real heart of the man; what he thought about the social and economic issues of the day (many of which are still relevant today!). Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 15 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

August

WED 07 Tax, Care and Toy Boys



7.30pm



Free



We are pleased to welcome Co-op Estate Planning who provide information and advice on later life issues. Their informal, often humorous talk, is delivered in plain English and covers subjects such as 'Protecting your family's nest egg'; Inheritance Tax; Lasting Powers of Attorney; and stopping 'sideways disinheritance'. Refreshments will also be provided at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 31 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

SAT 10 George IV - Connoisseur or Conman



12.30pm



Free



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Martin Heard to the Albatross Club. Using a range of illustrations including many contemporary satirical prints, this talk discusses the extent to which George IV was either the conman who swindled the British taxpayer or the connoisseur whose legacy is such an important part of our nation's cultural heritage. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 1 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

TUES 13 Petanque and Barbecue



7pm



Members £14, Guests £20



Join the Beacon Branch members to play petanque and attend a delicious barbecue in the picturesque garden of Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 6 August. Cheques/ payment must be made in advance to confirm your place. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.



August

MON 19 Life as an RAF Policeman

 7.45pm  Free



Join the Sevenoaks Branch in welcoming Philip Waite to The Woodman. Mr Waite is a retired RAF Police Sergeant of 22 years. He served in the UK and Germany, and on a special squadron undertaking Royal Visits, Ministerial and VIP duties, Ceremonial Occasions. Flying as support crew on RAF operations and the first Gulf War. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 12 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT 31 Friendship Dinner Dance

 7pm  Members £20
Guests £30 

Following on from the success of previous dinner dances, the Tunbridge Wells Branch are hosting their fifth Dinner Dance at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 20 August. Please contact Solveig for more information and to book a place. Email solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

September

ODDFELLOWS
FRIENDSHIP MONTH
1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



MON 02 Lunchtime Get-Together - Crowborough

 12 noon  As per menu 



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Crowborough Social 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 Monday 26 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

September

ODDFELLOWS

FRIENDSHIP MONTH

1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



WED
04

Quiz



7.30pm



Free



Come and join other members and test your general knowledge in Derek Fickling's quiz at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Derek's questions will include a range of topics such as television, entertainment, geography and history. Prizes will be awarded to the winners. The quiz will be followed by a buffet and the Branch meeting. Refreshments will also be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 27 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



MON
09

Impressed



8pm



£5



Join the Weald Branch to welcome Impressed - the sea shanty version of the Wealden Ramblers. Refreshments will be provided at The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 3 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT
07

Birds, Beasts and Bacchanalia



12.30pm



Free



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Chris McCooey to the Albatross Club. Chris will talk about many things including the dog hanged at Tyburn and the one who adopted a badger cub; the big cats roaming wild; Sussex dragons; Timothy the tortoise and Winnie the Pooh. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 28 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

TUES
10

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 3 September. Contact Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

FRIENDSHIP
MONTH
EVENT
Invite a friend

September

ODDFELLOWS

FRIENDSHIP MONTH

1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



TUES
17 Bingo



8pm



TBC



MON
23 WG Grace



7.45pm



Free



Eyes down for the first house! Join the Beacon Branch for an evening of fun. There will be eleven rounds of bingo with various prizes for Line and Full House. Some of the money raised on the night will go to the bingo caller's chosen charity. A buffet will also be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 10 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

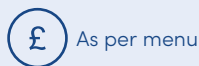


Join the Sevenoaks Branch in welcoming back Ian Bevan to The Woodman. There can be few people, even if they know nothing of cricket, who have not heard of WG Grace. This talk will cover the life of this great sportsman from his birth in Downend, Bristol, his remarkable cricket career for Gloucestershire and England, and his move to South London where he died 100 years ago. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 16 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT
21 Ramble and Pub Lunch



10am



As per menu



The Earl of Cottenham Branch is organising a ramble in the Edenbridge area. The walk will be roughly a 3.5 mile circular walk 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 Wednesday 11 September. Venue to be confirmed, Edenbridge. Contact Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.



October

WED 02 **The Bomber in the Backyard**

 7.30pm  Free



Join us to welcome back John Griffiths-Colby to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. On 11 July 1944, Vic Doe was six years old when a USAAF B-24 Liberator Bomber 'Incendiary Blonde' crash-landed at his family's farm on the Isle of Grain, Kent, UK. This is the story of what he witnessed and the enduring friendship between that young boy and Malcus S Horton, an exceptional 24-year-old pilot from Richmond, Virginia. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 24 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.


SAT 05 **It'll Be All Right on the Night - Won't It?**

 12.30pm  Free



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome David Horne to the Albatross Club. David will speak about his hilarious life as an actor who has experienced every theatrical disaster imaginable. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 25 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

MON 07 **Alpaco Country**

 8pm  £5



The Weald Branch is pleased to welcome back Alpaco Country, a mature three piece local band who play music by a variety of bands from Johnny Cash to George Strait and Merle Haggard to Alan Jackson. Refreshments will be provided at The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 2 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

MON 14 **Newhaven Fort - Then and Now**

 7.45pm  Free



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch in welcoming Ian Everest back to the Ex-Services Club in East Grinstead. As the manager of Newhaven Fort from 1987 until 2001, Ian talks about its military history and the trials and tribulations of converting this Scheduled Ancient Monument into a popular visitor attraction. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 2 October. Contact Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.

October

TUES
15 **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 8 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

TUES
22 **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 15 October. Contact Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

SUN
27 **Spanish Sunday Lunch**



1pm



Members £28, Guests £38



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch for a delicious tapas lunch at the family run La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar. Members will enjoy freshly prepared dishes and a warm atmosphere that will give them a sense of being on holiday in Spain. An early booking is essential due to the popularity of this excellent occasion and because places are limited. To secure your place cheques/payment should be

sent in advance to the Branch Office. Book by Wednesday 16 October. La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, 194-200 London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1EY. Please contact Karen for further information and to book your place. Email karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call 01342 324980.



October

MON
28 **The Story of
Chung Ling Soo**

🕒 7.45pm 🕒 Free



The Sevenoaks Branch is pleased to welcome back John Field to The Woodman. This amazing man (Chung Ling Soo) fooled the world for almost 20 years. Shot and killed on stage in North London in 1918, the story of his rise to fame and its consequences will leave you flabbergasted. It is an incredible tale, all fully illustrated. Refreshments will follow the talk. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 21 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

November

WED
06 **Coal Gas to Concorde
- The Race Across The
Atlantic (1844-1939)**

🕒 7.30pm 🕒 Free



Join us to welcome back Peter Griffiths to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. From the earliest attempts by balloon, via Alcott and Brown, Lindbergh, flying boats, the early jets, to Concorde, countries have striven to be the first or the fastest to cross the Atlantic. Peter's talk encompasses the triumphs and the disasters of Atlantic flight. Inflight-refuelling, piggy-back flights, the Hindenburg, the Comet, to the race for supersonic flight. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 29 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

November

SAT
02 **The Ogre of Brede**

🕒 12.30pm 🕒 Free



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome David Clarke to the Albatross Club. In the 16th century, it was said that a giant prowled the streets of Brede looking for children to eat for supper. It may have been a cautionary tale but that is to discount the legends borne out of religious strife that surround the village, of smugglers, a matchless Madonna, a biblical misprint, body snatchers and that rather macabre tale of the Sussex Cannibal. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 24 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

November

TUES 12 **Marco Magic**



Join us at the Beacon Branch to be dazzled by Marco Seymour who is a member of the world famous Magic



Circle. Marco will not only do magic, but Alison will sing. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 5 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

MON 18 **Rachel Eade**



The Weald branch are pleased to welcome once again Rachel Eade to The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. 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 Monday 11 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

TUES 19 **Lunchtime Get-Together - Tunbridge Wells**



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 12 November. Contact Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

MON 25 **Smokin Mojos Unplugged**



The Sevenoaks Branch is pleased to welcome back the Smokin Mojos, a local Blues/Soul/Country/Rock band with a diverse and interesting song list and growing in popularity. Unplugged, they provide an acoustic set of their full range of music, but cut down to fit into smaller venues. Expect an exciting evening of great music. Refreshments will also be provided at The Woodman. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 18 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

December

WED
04

Beetle Drive



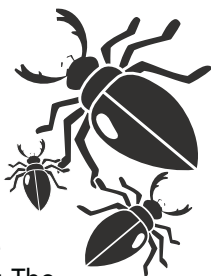
7.30pm



Free



Beetle Drive enthusiast Roy Wright invites you to join us at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club for an enjoyable and entertaining evening. A prize will be awarded to the winner. The fun and games will be followed by refreshments and the monthly Branch meeting. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 26 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



TUES
10

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 4 December. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

SAT
07

Christmas Lunch - Bexhill



1pm



TBC



Join the Bexhill and Hastings Branch in the Festive period for an excellent tasty lunch at The Royal Victoria Hotel. Menu and prices will be available in September. Payment and menu choices should be made no later than



Wednesday 6 November to Karen Rose at the Branch Office. The Hotel requires full payment four weeks in advance. Booking is essential. Orders cannot be taken after Wednesday 6 November. Royal Victoria Hotel, Marina, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 0BD. Contact Solveig for further information and to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

December

SAT
14

High Rocks - Christmas Lunch



1pm



TBC



Join friends for a delicious meal in beautiful surroundings at The High Rocks. Select your lunch from a menu offering tasty and seasonal food. Menu and prices will be available in September. Payments and menu choices should be sent in advance to Karen Rose at the Branch Office. All bookings and payments must be received by Tuesday 12 November. Booking is essential. The High Rocks, High Rocks Lane, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9JJ. Contact Karen for further details and to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call 01342 324980.

TUES
17

Christmas Lunchtime Get-Together - Tunbridge Wells



12.30pm



As per
menu



Join us for a Christmas lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own Christmas 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 4 December. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



Booking and Cancellations

Please remember the importance of early booking for all events to avoid disappointment or cancellation due to lack of support.

Give someone a great start in life **for only £10!**



**It's never too early to start
making friends for life.**

We laugh as we learn together and give each other a helping hand through the ups and downs of growing up. That's what being a Young Oddfellow is all about.

If you have a family member aged 17 or under, and would like them to experience the friendship and support of the Oddfellows, we'd love to welcome them.

There are lots of great reasons* to join Young Oddfellows – to find out more, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/young-oddfellows

**As a parent, grandparent or guardian,
you can join them online or ask your
Branch Secretary for an application form.**



**Young
Oddfellows** SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

***Terms and conditions apply to membership and financial benefits.
Call 0800 028 1810 for details or visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions**

At a glance

July 2024

Mon 1	Rachel Eade, The Woodman	7.45pm
Wed 3	Bomb Disposals Operations, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 9	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Sat 13	The FOG, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Tues 16	Peter Snipp, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Wed 17	Barbecue and Ritual, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7pm
Sat 20	The Priest House, West Hoathly	10am
Mon 22	Mark Twain, The Cherry Tree	8pm

August

Wed 7	Tax, Care and Toy Boys, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Sat 10	George IV - Connoisseur or Conman, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Tues 13	Petanque and Barbecue, Crowborough Social Club	7pm
Mon 19	Life as an RAF Policeman, The Woodman	7.45pm
Sat 31	Friendship Dinner Dance, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7pm

September - Friendship Month

Mon 2	Lunchtime Get-Together, Crowborough Social Club	12 noon
Wed 4	Quiz, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Sat 7	Birds, Beasts and Bacchanalia, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Mon 9	Impressed, The Cherry Tree	8pm
Tues 10	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Tues 17	Bingo, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Sat 21	Ramble and Pub Lunch, Edenbridge	10am
Mon 23	WG Grace, The Woodman	7.45pm

At a glance

October

Wed 2	The Bomber in the Backyard, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Sat 5	It'll Be All Right on the Night - Won't It?, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Mon 7	Alpaco Country, The Cherry Tree	8pm
Mon 14	Newhaven Fort - Then and Now, The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club	7.45pm
Tues 15	Stevie Bart, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Tues 22	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Sun 27	Spanish Sunday Lunch, La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, East Grinstead	1pm
Mon 28	The Story of Chung Ling Soo, The Woodman	7.45pm

November

Sat 2	The Ogre of Brede, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Wed 6	Coal Gas to Concorde - The Race Across The Atlantic (1844-1939), Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 12	Marco Magic, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Mon 18	Rachel Eade, The Cherry Tree	8pm
Tues 19	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Mon 25	Smokin Mojos Unplugged, The Woodman	7.45pm

December

Wed 4	Beetle Drive, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Sat 7	Christmas Lunch - Bexhill, Royal Victoria Hotel, St Leonards-on-Sea	1pm
Tues 10	Heartbeats, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Sat 14	High Rocks - Christmas Lunch, The High Rocks, Tunbridge Wells	1pm
Tues 17	Christmas Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12.30pm



Interested in volunteering?

We couldn't run all our events without our wonderful volunteers. There are lots of ways you can get involved as a volunteer, from one-off help to regular support.

You can help us by:

- Welcoming members, guests and speakers at events
- Being the volunteer host at external events
- Joining the Committee of Management
- Becoming a Volunteer Welfare Visitor
- Supporting others as a Telephone Befriender

Become a Telephone Befriender or Welfare Visitor

Keep in touch with members who can no longer get to meetings, are unwell, or would otherwise benefit from a friendly phone call or visit. Could you spare a bit of your time for this rewarding and valuable role, making occasional phone calls or visits to members?

If you're interested in finding out more about helping us as a volunteer, contact Karen by phone on 01342 324980, email at karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk

"Supporting events as a volunteer makes me feel more committed to the Oddfellows and what I do. I enjoy meeting up with other members/friends, any outings that take place, the lunches and some of the talks are especially interesting".

Cynthia, volunteer



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making friends, helping people

Summer 2024
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



Weald Branch



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

A message from your Secretary

Firstly I would like to welcome any new members who have joined in the last six months. I do hope that you have settled in and are enjoying attending our varied social events and making new friends. It has been a busy time with thirty-nine Face to Face events in the last six months including three Christmas lunches.

The Events Diary for the second half of 2024 has been produced and again contains a variety of events including interesting talks, music, games and a walk, as well as plenty of lunchtime get-togethers and of course our Christmas lunches. Everyone is welcome at our events, so if

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

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

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.

you can encourage family 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



Karen in the Tomb of Tutankhamun during her Easter Holiday.

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!

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 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.

With the longer days now with us, hopefully the sun will continue to shine. Please do enjoy the friendship of Oddfellowship and help to spread the word about us.

Karen

The Roy Hill Shield

Judy Griffin was the winner for 2023 of the prestigious shield by recruiting eleven new members. The shield is awarded annually to the person who recruits the most new members to the Branch. The trophy was purchased in memory of the late Roy Hill, a previous Secretary of the Tunbridge Wells District Lodge, who passed away in 2004. It was presented to Judy at the February meeting in Tunbridge Wells.



Judy Griffin being presented with the shield by Karen.

Beacon Branch

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

In October, Mike Sweetman entertained thirty-seven members with a variety of Country tunes as well as some Elvis, Jim Reeves and Buddy Holly, and a few we had never heard of like Whiskey Under the Bridge. A good



Mick Sweetman.

night of country music that got members foot-tapping, and up and dancing along with some line dancing too.

Thirty-nine members enjoyed the return of Move Over Dali – a Kent-based rock and blues 5 piece band – in November. Members danced to songs such as It's Got to be Perfect (Fairground Attraction); From a Jack to a King (Ned Miller); and Bad Moon Rising (Creedence Clearwater Revival) to name but a few. Also several songs – unknown to most of us – like Red Cadillac and a Black Moustache (Warren Smith). A good time was had by all.

In December, thirty-seven members enjoyed Alpaco Country – a trio from Kent – who entertained us with a blend of Country music, both traditional and



Move Over Dali.



Alpaco Country.

modern, and well-known tunes by Johnny Cash, the Eagles, Neil Sedaka, Neil Diamond and The Mavericks amongst others. Lots of members got up to dance.

Thirty-nine members braved the very cold weather in January for an evening of popular songs performed by one of our regular artistes, Justine Clark. Among a wide variety of numbers, sung to backing tracks, Justine offered well-known songs by the likes of Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, the Everly Brothers, the Carpenters, Abba and others. Many of those present took the opportunity to grace the dance floor with both rocking numbers and the slower kind encouraging enthusiastic participation.



Justine Clark.

In February, a lovely early Valentine's celebration with music by the ever popular Heartbeats. Forty-nine members plus two guests danced to rock, twist and pop from the 60s onwards. Red roses were handed over by Naz to the ladies (and some men)

and Bryony had made chocolate cakes for everyone which were much appreciated. A late night with some sore feet in the morning!



Naz with the Heartbeats.

In March, Naz managed to secure a replacement act at the last minute when the original group had to cancel due to illness. Thirty-four members enjoyed listening to Gez Gold, a frequent performer for us, and his colleague Piers Foster who we have not seen



Gez Gold and Piers Foster.

before. Although they do not usually perform together, they did very well and we were treated to a wide selection of mostly well-known songs, including Take It Easy (Eagles); All My Loving (Beatles); Runaway (Dell Shannon); Annie's Song (John Denver); and The Last Time (Rolling Stones).

Continued on the next page...

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There have been three lunchtime get-togethers at the Crowborough Social Club in the last six months. Twenty-one members attended in November enjoying a menu of homemade soup, fish and chips, and cottage pie followed by ice cream. In January, eleven members met for lunch with an excellent

choice of food available. In March, twelve members enjoyed lunch with friends and a variety of food was again on the menu from homemade chicken curry and onion bhajis to sausage and chips. The lunchtimes are really good value for money and it is great not having to cook at home later.



Lunchtime get-togethers at Crowborough Social Club.

Join the conversation @OddfellowsUK

Share your news, start a conversation or simply stay up-to-date! If you're on Facebook or Twitter (X), make sure you've liked and followed our Oddfellows social media pages.

Find us at  OddfellowsTunbridgeWells  OddfellowsUK

Friendship Lunchtime Get-Togethers

There have been two lunchtime get-togethers (October and February) at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club in the last six months plus a Christmas lunch in December. In October, thirty-three members enjoyed a lovely lunch with a few new faces and a lot of chatting going on. Thirty-six members attended in February with many staying for the afternoon. At each of the lunchtimes, members were able to purchase

their own food varying from baked potatoes and poached salmon, to pies and lasagne, with the Branch paying for a couple of drinks. In December, the Club put on a two course festive carvery for thirty-three members that was very well received. Much fun and laughter was had by all present at each event. A raffle was also held each time for our Charity of the Year – Age UK, Tunbridge Wells.



Getting into the Friendship spirit.

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.

In October, Guy Bartlett spoke to twenty-five members about the SAS assault on the Iranian Embassy, codenamed “Operation Nimrod”, which was broadcast live at peak time on the

5th May 1980. It was viewed by millions of people, mostly in the UK, making it a defining moment in British history. Guy took us through the history of the SAS (Special Air Services) whose motto is ‘Who Dares Wins’. He then took us step by step through the siege where six armed men had taken 26 people hostage. Guy explained the steps taken over the six days of the siege including the seventeen minute raid by the SAS who rescued twenty-four of the hostages (two were killed by the gunmen) and killed five of the six hostage-takers. A truly fascinating talk and Guy brought along some of the weapons and equipment that would have been used by the SAS for members to handle.



Guy Bartlett.

At the end of October, thirty-seven members enjoyed a Tapas lunch at La Farola in East Grinstead. Our members consumed nine tapas dishes including smoked ham and cheese, meatballs, calamari, spicy potatoes, rice and chicken, plus dessert and tea/coffee over a couple of hours with a glass or two of wine or something similar.

Thirty-three members returned to La Farola in March to savour another delicious traditional three course Sunday lunch with a glass of wine. Everyone was delighted with the warm friendly atmosphere and enjoyed plentiful food. Oddity came to East Grinstead for the first time and enjoyed his lunch.



Oddity at La Farola.



Members enjoying La Farola.

In February, James Dickinson spoke to twenty-seven members about Henry V and the battle of Agincourt. James explained that the battle took place during the Hundred Years War in Northern France on St Crispin's Day, 25th October 1415. He told us about the location of the battle, the



James Dickinson.

sizes of both the English and French armies and the tactics involved that ultimately led to an unexpected English victory against the numerically superior French army. This victory boosted English morale and prestige, crippled France, and started a new period of English dominance in the war that would last for 14 years until England was defeated by France in 1429 during the Siege of Orléans. James ended the talk with Shakespeare's battle cry for Henry V 'Cry God for England, Harry and Saint George!'

Looking Back at Christmas

Twenty-four members attended a delicious three course Christmas lunch at the Royal Victoria Hotel on a sunny day in December. Oddity was in attendance as Father Christmas offering members a Christmas stocking lucky dip of Christmas chocolates. A raffle, organised by Solveig Stanhope, was also held that raised £60 with Brenda Bowe winning the hamper. As a result of the raffle and those held at Bexhill meetings, the Branch was able to send a cheque to St Michael's Hospice for £300.



Brenda and Solveig.

A week later, on a crisp, cold sunny lunchtime, seventy-nine members and guests enjoyed a three course meal with wine, crackers and drinks at the High Rocks in Tunbridge Wells. Along with the relaxed atmosphere and social occasion, a raffle for a hamper plus lots of other goodies was organised by Solveig Stanhope. The winner of the hamper was Annie Clark. A total of £171 was raised by the donation raffle with the proceeds going towards our charity of the year – Age UK, Tunbridge Wells.



Members having fun at High Rocks.

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 RAFA Albatross Club. Each event included a buffet lunch and refreshments provided by the Lodge.

In October, Ian Rumley-Dawson gave a very interesting illustrated talk to forty-one members and guests about albatrosses – purely a coincidence that this happened at the Albatross Club! Ian told us that he has made several voyages as a wildlife lecturer on cruise ships to Antarctica and the Southern Ocean.



Ian Rumley-Dawson.

Altogether there are over 40 species of albatross that are part of a group of species called procellariiforms, which include birds such as petrels and shearwaters. The largest species are found around Antarctica and include the Wandering Albatross. These larger birds can live up to 60 years. They spend almost their whole lives at sea, only coming to land to breed. The wingspan of the largest birds can reach up to 12 feet. Birds usually mate for life and return to the same nest site every year. The young take about 4 and a half months to fledge

and do not find a partner until about 7 years old.

Different species tend to nest on different islands in the Southern Ocean, such as Bird Island in South Georgia and several small islands off the south coasts of New Zealand, for example Chatham Island, Pyramid Rock, and the Bounty Islands, all of which are uninhabited by man. Among other interesting facts which Ian told us are that one albatross had been tracked as flying 4,631 miles in 13 days, another female had been tracked for over 15,000 miles in 38 days, and that, sadly, over 1,000 birds are being caught each year in fishing tackle. A truly fascinating talk.



Andrew and Solveig Stanhope.

In November, thirty-three members attended on a very wet and windy day shortly after Storm Ciara had hit the South coast. Due to cancelled trains, the speaker was unable to make the meeting. Instead of learning about female spies they

listened to the tale of how and why Solveig ended up in England and with Andrew Stanhope in particular! A lovely social afternoon was enjoyed afterwards.

Thirty-nine members and a guest attended in January to find out about the Grand Canyon (Arizona, Grand Canyon and the South Rim). Ray Young showed a film from his visit to the Grand Canyon in 2007 after he gave an introduction covering 5,000 miles across the USA. He showed lovely scenery from forests 6,000 feet above sea level to the rugged shapes of the Grand Canyons at 2,500 feet. Ray also warned that six to ten people fall to their deaths every year at the Canyon by not sticking to the official trails. He



Ray Young.

explained that the brown Colorado River winding through the Canyon is famous for spectacular waterfalls and rapids. A very interesting illustrated talk on Ray's trip was enjoyed by all.

In March, forty members and three guests came to hear Andy T King perform his tribute to Elvis. Andy performed for over an hour as Elvis and sang a stream of well-known songs such as Blue Suede Shoes; Blueberry Hill; Return to Sender; Devil in Disguise; In the Ghetto; Are you Lonesome Tonight?; Fever; and Suspicious Minds. Andy serenaded several members as Elvis and many got up to dance to the music. A very entertaining afternoon.



Andy T King as Elvis.

Traditional Terms

Grand Master (GM): Chairman

Provincial Grand Master (Prov GM): District Chairman

Provincial Deputy Grand Master (Prov DGM):
District Deputy Chairman

Provincial Corresponding Secretary (Prov CS):
District Secretary - responsible for administering Branches

Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master (IPPGM):
Immediate Past District Chairman

Past Provincial Grand Master (PPGM): Past District Chairman

Lodge: Branch

Brother and Sister: Traditional term used in Unions, Guilds and Fraternal organisations to suggest mutual support and family

Sevenoaks Branch

Once again, Mike Hyde has produced an exciting programme of talks and music for our meetings at The Woodman, Otford with each event including a very tasty buffet and refreshments.

October saw our best turn out at The Woodman to hear ever-popular speaker Delia Taylor talk about The Decade of Change, the 1960s.



Delia Taylor.

Delia walked thirty members, year by year, through the 60s giving examples of the news, current affairs, television and musical highlights of each year (60 – end of conscription, 1st kidney transplant; 61 – trolleybuses ended; 63 – the Big Freeze, Cuban missile crisis, Dr Who; 67 – heart transplant, equal pay act, Woodstock; etc). As most of us were there, the memories come flooding back. And, the mark of a really good presentation, we were talking about it for some time afterwards too.

We completed our year at The Woodman in November when John Field returned to talk about the world of magic to twenty members. Magic has been an attraction for around 5,000 years; although some of the tricks have become increasingly

sophisticated, he explained it is often the simple ones that still appeal as he demonstrated the three card and the three cup tricks. He described some of the best

known magicians and their style (he had previously given us Houdini's story and will in 2024 tell us in detail about Chung Ling Soo). Quite a fascinating talk, full of intrigue and interest.



John Field.

Brian Briggs started his nautical life as a cook on a tugboat on the high wage of £8.50 per week, moved to container ships for a while, then eventually after getting his qualifications became a tugboat captain. In his talk in January, he gave a really interesting insight into his working life, working on the Thames and in coastal waters, becoming the first to take a tug to Algeria, then becoming a trainer of new recruits.



Brian Briggs.

Brian explained to twenty-seven members and a guest how tugs (and all ships) have become more automated, reducing the crew size required from 9 to 3. He described the workings of Tower Bridge (free to lift!), the pubs that were the training centres, the old hanging dock on the Thames, and Thames beach. He went on to show a number of pictures of Thames ships that had been involved in accidents. Brian briefly mentioned the involvement of his (and other) tugs in the Falklands War period - but that will be told in detail in a later talk from him.

Rob Tompsett was due to play his ukulele again for us in February at The Woodman, following his very successful sing along session in 2023 at The Cherry Tree, but falling ill on the day of our event meant he could not attend. As it was too late to arrange a replacement, the nineteen members in attendance that evening had to cope with Mike digging out an old 'Christmas songs' quiz. Members enjoyed the challenge and the social event.

Delia Taylor returned in March to entertain twenty-one members. This time she gave a presentation on the 80 years of Desert Island Discs. It started in 1942 as an idea from Roy Plomley, who was the first presenter, and there have been over 3,500 'castaways' since then. Although it is now on BBC Radio 4 and has been since 1967, it was originally broadcast on BBC Forces Program (1942-44), then the Home Service (43-44 and 51-67) and the Light Programme in 1945 and 1946. Delia described the period of each presenter (Plomley 1942-85; Parkinson 1986-88; Lawley 1988-2006; Young 2006-18; and Laverne 2018 to date), giving the most popular tunes (very much classical in the early days) and books requested. She gave a number of fascinating facts about some of the castaways (the first was Vic Oliver, the most appearances David Attenborough) with many accompanied by the music in question (David Cameron, Ernie the Fastest Milkman in the West). And the most requested tune? My Way. But the most played is the By a Sleepy Lagoon theme tune.

Remembrance Sunday

On Sunday 12 November 2023, Oddfellows throughout the District remembered those who had lost their lives in the First World War and subsequent conflicts. A wreath was laid on behalf of the Branch by Andy Mason at the East Grinstead War memorial, and by Naz Mian (see photo on the right) at the Tunbridge Wells War memorial.



Weald Branch

Once again, Mike Hyde has produced an exciting programme of music and talks for our meetings at The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst, with each event including a very tasty buffet and refreshments.

In October, we were unsure whether to expect four or five singers to turn up to sing to the twenty-three members present. In the end, there were eleven of the 'a cappella' East Kent Chorus singers – because they all wanted to come along (and at no extra cost!). What a fabulous rendition they gave us, all unaccompanied, of some very well-known songs. And, of course, we managed to join in as usual. The songs included such variety as When I'm 64; My Bonnie; Hallelujah; Fat Bottomed Girls; What A Wonderful World; and Amarillo. We thoroughly enjoyed our evening and they got some funds for their club; we shall have to do it all again sometime.



Roy and Phil.

At very short notice, due to illness of the booked speaker, Roy Green, harmonica player, agreed to attend with his mate Phil on guitar. It became apparent that Roy is a player of some note and ability (and with friends and contacts across that world). They played a range of songs, some of which we might not have considered to be 'harmonica material' including Wonderful Land; Down Mexico Way; Ghost Riders In The Sky; Over The Rainbow; and a host of delightful Irish and Scottish folk tunes.



East Kent Chorus.



Smokin Mojo's.

In January, twenty-three members welcomed one of our most popular bands, the Smokin Mojo's. And once again we were not disappointed as they played their usual eclectic mix of rock and R&B, all good dancing material. Some thoughtful rearrangement of the pub's bar seating area managed to find more space than usual for dancing although it did move some to the further end of the pub when eating.

In February, John Mills, an ex prison warder and Governor who had been based mainly at Maidstone and Holloway, gave twenty-one members some facts and figures about 'life inside'. He started on the Lifers wing at Maidstone and worked for a while with sex offenders, but moved to Holloway women's prison (now closed), including the pregnancy wing. He gave details from his experiences, saying that often 'lifers'



John Mills.

tend to be easier to manage as they have no real option, and that female prisoners were generally harder to manage. Men are kept in cells, women in rooms (although they actually look the same). Women who give birth are allowed to keep their infants with them up to three years old. Category A prisoners are considered to be a threat to the State and the public; Cat B are a threat to the public; but C and D prisoners are much less of a threat. He went on to debunk a number of myths that particularly tabloid journalists spread about prison life being cushy; from his accounts, it really is not!



Side by Side.

A grand range of well-known sing along, dance-along songs again from Side by Side gave twenty-one members a really happy evening in March. This time they included many we had heard from them before, but with several new additions to their list. They are proving to be a very popular choice as we hear them more, and they get more familiar with what pleases us. Roll on next time.

Who's Wally?

In October, forty-five members welcomed John Griffiths-Colby to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club to talk about 'Who's Wally'. John explained that Wally was his eldest uncle and one of seven siblings of John's father. Walter Stafford Colby came from a long line of Yarmouth fisher folk and was drafted into the Royal Navy early in World War 2. Eighty years on and twenty-five years since Wally passed away, John discovered that Wally was a Stoker 1st Class aboard the carrier HMS Indomitable when it was struck by an Italian torpedo during the Invasion of Sicily.



John Griffiths-Colby.

Wally then served aboard the frigate HMS Redmill, and became known as 'Lucky'. He found himself supporting the D-Day landings; on an Arctic Convoy; and then hunting subs until the Redmill was torpedoed – this time by U-1105 – only days before the end of the War in Europe.

John explained that like many, Wally never told his story, but now he can. A truly fascinating story about a remarkable man.

Lasso Around the Moon

In November, Pete Allen spoke to thirty-one members at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells about the film 'It's a Wonderful Life', a 1946 Christmas film produced and directed by Frank Capra and starring James Stewart and Donna Reed. The film is based on a short story by Philip Van Doren Stern called The Greatest Gift and is now considered to be one of the greatest films of all time. It was named the 7th best film in Channel 4's poll of the '100 Greatest Films Ever Made'. However, when it was released in 1946, it was a box office disaster and lost £525,000 at the box office.



Pete Allen.

Pete explained about the actors, director and the various scenes in the film. He said that thanks to poor administration, it became a Christmas classic after its copyright lapsed in 1974 and it fell into the public domain, which allowed it to be broadcast on TV without licensing or royalty fees. Paramount eventually got the copyright back and thanks to its TV exposure the film is now as much a part of Christmas as mince pies and mistletoe. A very interesting and festive talk.

Beetle Drive

In December, Beetle drive master Roy Wright organised an exciting competition at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells that attracted twenty-seven members who had a loud and competitive evening building their beetles. After a period of energetic and frantic play, the winner with 104 points was Rod Page, followed closely by Shirley Beeney and Susan Purcell. Rod was presented with the Oddfellows Shield for accumulating the most Beetle parts during the evening.



Roy Wright and Rod Page.

Doing Our Bit!

In January, Steve Hookins delivered his 'Doing Our Bit' talk in character as Mr Foreman of the Emergency Road Repair Service to forty-one members at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. During the Second World War, Britain was able to mobilise civilians more effectively than any other combatant nation and by 1944 a third of the civilian population was engaged in war work. Often this work was unpaid and undertaken in addition to other paid employment. Whereas the contribution of such organisations as the Home Guard and ARP are justly and widely celebrated, the enormous scope of the war work performed by civilians is now far less appreciated and Steve aimed to rectify this deficiency. During the talk he mentioned over forty civilian organisations covering a remarkably diverse range of activities including



Steve Hookins.

defence and weapon manufacture, medical services, transport and communications, fundraising, food production, welfare and entertainment.

The Emergency Road Service enabled London to carry on in spite of the severest air raids and carried out essential repairs on roads badly damaged and cratered by bombs. In London, Sir Thomas Peirson Frank, the chief engineer of the London County Council, created 'rapid response' teams who repaired upwards of a hundred breaches in the Thames wall, thus preventing low-lying areas of London from being flooded.

Aided with a single prop (a broom), Steve gave impersonations of five notable (and moustached) men of the period. Their identities were guessed with differing degrees of success. After this entertaining and highly informative talk, members were given the opportunity to view a display of genuine WWII Home Front civil defence badges and other ephemera from the speaker's personal collection.

America's Presidents in Bits and Pieces

In February, Joe Mendell returned to the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells to talk to twenty-nine members about the forty-six presidents of America in bits and pieces. Joe gave interesting facts about each president in turn. Twelve were military generals. John Adams was the first president to serve in the White House and also owned a pet dog called Satan. John Quincy Adams was a devout skinny dipper! William Henry Harrison only served 31 days before dying in office. Abraham Lincoln was the first

Republican president and the first president to be assassinated.

Franklin D Roosevelt was the fourth president to die in office; had polio and was

also a skinny dipper. I could go on but it was a fascinating brief insight into all the presidents.



Joe Mendell.

The Belgian Royal Family – murder, madness and mayhem

In March, forty-three members welcomed Melanie Gibson-Barton to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Her

talk explored the story of the Belgian Royal Family that has only been in existence since Belgium's independence from France and the Netherlands in 1830. Having previously split her time between living in Kent and living in Bruges, Belgium, Melanie has witnessed



Melanie Gibson-Barton.

two kings on the throne, one abdication and a royal scandal in just seventeen years which inspired her to commence her research.

Melanie explained that the crown of the Kings of the Belgians rests on the terms of the constitution drawn up by the Belgian National Congress in 1830. These strict terms have resulted in mayhem for the monarchy and the citizens of Belgium through the decades. Melanie's talk uncovered tales of murder and madness connected with the Belgian Royal Family.

The story unfolds from the appointment of Leopold I, Queen Victoria's uncle, as the first King of the Belgians in 1830, touching on Leopold II's exploitation of the Congo, the

impact of the First and Second World Wars on the monarchy and the stories of familiar personalities, including King Baudouin, Queen Fabiola, King Albert II and Queen Paola to

the current King Phillippe. While clearly loving Belgium and respecting its monarchy, Melanie's humorous presentation has left her wondering whether she will be allowed back into Belgium.

Annual Meeting

In April at the Annual Meeting, Ruth Chambers was thanked by thirty-six members for her successful year in office as Provincial Grand Master (District Lodge Chairman). It was also reported that a total of £917 had been raised through the monthly raffles and High Rocks raffle for Ruth's nominated charity of the year – Age UK, Tunbridge Wells. This amount was topped up by the Branch to £1,200.

Naz Mian succeeds Ruth in this position and Andy Mason became Provincial Deputy Grand Master. Naz has nominated Brighter Heathfield as his charity of the year. Also at the meeting, donations of £500 were awarded to Imago Community and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. Donations of £200 were awarded to each of the following charities: Compass Garden, East Grinstead; Rye Harbour Sailability; The Trussell Trust, East Grinstead Foodbank; Folly Wildlife Rescue; and Taylor Made Dreams.



Ruth Chambers, Naz Mian and Andy Mason.

Society-funded cancer research on track

The Centre for Cancer Immunology, current beneficiaries of the Society's HA Andrews Memorial Fund, recently received its second donation instalment.

The Centre, based at the University of Southampton, was chosen as the recipient of the £100,000 grant, split over three years, in 2022. The money is sponsoring the PhD studies of Nur Zainal, who is looking into a specific gene which it is believed can be manipulated to target cancer cells in a new vaccine.

Nur's first year

The first year of Nur's studies has been spent preparing for the execution of her PhD project over the next three years. She has been learning appropriate techniques, skills and procedures, as well as being introduced to theories and connecting with relevant research groups.

Nur, who travelled to the UK from Malaysia with her family to undertake the PhD, said: "I believe the invaluable experiences and knowledge I have acquired over the past year have equipped me to be a more productive and capable student."



Nur updating AMC last year

"I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Oddfellows for their support in making my studies possible."

On the right path

Some of Nur's work on 3D cell culture – growing cancer cells in a way that more closely resembles the environment they experience in our bodies than traditional 2D cell culture – is included in a manuscript which will be published in a major international journal, for which she will be listed as a co-author.

Dr Tim Fenton, Associate Professor in Cancer Biology, says Nur has "excelled during her first year", adding: "We hope that Nur's studies will lead to improvements in the design of cancer



Dr Tim Fenton

vaccines, which is a key theme in the work being undertaken at the Centre for Cancer Immunology here in Southampton."

HA Andrews Memorial Fund

The Fund provides financial support to UK-based medical research projects or organisations. For more information about the Fund, and how you can donate, go to www.oddfellows.co.uk/ha-andrews

Striving for a greener future

The Oddfellows is committed to being as green as possible. That's why we've been calculating and offsetting our annual carbon footprint since 1 April 2020.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, 106.38 tonnes of CO₂e was recorded as being produced through the operations of our Liverpool and Manchester offices and associated transport activities, which includes our financial services brand, Unity Mutual.

Although this figure is up 5.4% on the previous year, benchmarked against employee numbers, carbon emissions have remained almost constant (up 0.2%).



The Oddfellows' CEO, Jane Nelson, said: "Our focus is to keep learning through our assessments and to make incremental changes to the way we operate so we can bring our greenhouse gas emissions down and play our part in tackling climate change."

The Society's aim is to be Net Zero, where our carbon emissions are as low as possible. As a last resort, we have offset our 2022-23 carbon footprint by funding carbon dioxide-saving initiatives, including in Eritrea, Cambodia, Brazil, Bulgaria and India.

Jane added: "Climate change is real. It's the greatest environmental challenge we've ever faced. But there is hope, because we can all do something about it."

Investing in futures

Unity Mutual discovered a genuine interest in its children's savings accounts – a topic many grandparents and parents hadn't considered before – while at the 2023 Baby and Toddler Show in Manchester.

The Junior ISA (JISA), offered in partnership with Mini First Aid to include a free paediatric first aid course*, turned heads, especially when parents realised once they'd set it up, anyone could contribute.



Unity Mutual at the Baby and Toddler show

Unity Mutual's Head of Sales and Marketing, Abi Jones, said: "No more brainstorming gift ideas for that first birthday or Christmas – a shared investment in a secure future sparked enthusiasm. Because, sometimes, the best gifts are the ones that grow over time."

*T&Cs apply.

Our fantastic four

Congratulations to 2023's First Degree Course Educational Awards winners. George, Benedict, Jamie and Charlotte will each receive £3,600 over the next four years of their respective university courses to help ease the financial pressures of student life and create opportunities.

George LeBon

Heart of Norfolk
Branch member

George began his studies at the University of Southampton in September 2023 – a four-year course in Computer Science with Cybersecurity.



His dream job is to become a “white hat hacker”, which he explained is someone who is “hired by companies to try and hack into their databases and report back the vulnerabilities”.

He says he and his family were overjoyed to discover he'd be receiving the funding and has thanked the Society, adding: “It will go towards buying textbooks so I can enhance my knowledge further and better understand the industry that I want to work in.”

Benedict Weis

Leodis Branch member

Benedict hasn't yet decided what his ideal future job role might be. He is studying Aerospace Engineering at Queen's University Belfast and hopes a career path might become clearer over the next few years.

Since starting in September 2023, Benedict has joined the University's rowing club and the money will help him pay for training camps and trips, which he says will allow him to study more effectively without worrying as much about his finances.



“I would like to thank the Oddfellows for the award and just to say how grateful I am for it,” he said.

Jamie Messett

Loyal Lord Byron
Branch member

Jamie started his first of four years of Chemistry at the University of Oxford's Balliol College in October 2023, and will put the money towards



learning materials. He would like his future to be in the pharmaceutical industry, but a PhD and a career in research is also a potential avenue.

He said: "Nobody should underestimate how valuable funding can be towards determining how well a student performs.

"I would like to thank everyone involved in helping me with this award, and also everyone involved with providing the funding."

Charlotte Stevenson,

Pride of Woolwich
Branch member

Charlotte started her four-year course in Physics and Philosophy at the University of Oxford's Brasenose College in October 2023.

She is hoping to do a PhD in astrophysics and then continue researching within the field beyond that.



The funding will allow her to take part in unpaid research programmes during university holidays, covering the cost of travel, accommodation and food, as well as contributing to the cost of textbooks and other resources. She said: "This award will be an immense help throughout my degree and I'm so, so grateful to have received it."

Grand Master (Chairman) of the Society, Barbara Needham, said: "Ordinarily, we hand out three First Degree Course Educational Awards each year, but such was the strength of the applications of this year's winners that we felt they all deserved the financial boost. "I'm delighted for all four of them, and I wish them every success over the next few years at university and beyond."

For more information and T&Cs, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/educational-awards

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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