

November 2026 – January 2027



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DDfelloWS SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

out & about

North London District



History



Art/Crafts



Online



Dining Out



Walks



Games



Day Trip



Meetings



Social



Talks



Coffee Morning/
Afternoon Tea



Quiz



Welcome to the new edition of **Out & About**, incorporating **Cultured Comments**, the Magazine of North London District

The Four Seasons

No sooner have we left our sweltering, sizzling Summer behind, then we leapfrog amber and auburn Autumn into windy, woolly-wearing Winter. Our December celebrations will suit those with a passion for food with several choices around north London, where you can enjoy Christmas with Oddfellows friends.



Friendship Month

This year's Friendship Month was yet another huge success. The occasion is an annual national awareness campaign celebrated throughout September. Great to see regular and new faces at our events. New members who joined received a Love to Shop voucher, as did their sponsoring members.

Magazine contributors

You may also read another humorous and evocative poem from our Resident Poet Jackie Ingleby-Douglass as well as pearls of wisdom from our regular columnists, writers Linda Regan and Bob Sinfield, who write exclusively for our magazine.

Paul Fitton
Editor

Front cover: Our monthly coffee mornings continue at Highbury.
Photo by Stephen Brading.

The photo above shows members socialising at Enfield. Photo by Jackie Lancaster.

A bit about us...

The Oddfellows is a not-for-profit friendly society that's been around for over 200 years. Our aim is to bring people together through our social events, as well as support our members with a range of benefits and services. The Society is run by our members for the members. For more information visit www.oddfellows.co.uk or call **0800 028 1810** to speak to one of our team.

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**You are invited to send letters,
contributions and photos for the
magazine by the deadline of Friday
11 December 2026 to Paul Fitton.**

November 2026

FRI
06

**Behind the Cigar
and the Siren Suit**



John Strange
Spencer
Churchill is
Winston's little
known brother.
Winston claimed
in later life that
of all people,
his brother
had been
the greatest
influence in
his life. Meet the mind that moulded
history in Ian Hutt's presentation.
Contact Paul (see page 3 for details)
for the Zoom Meeting ID.



TUES
10

A Latte Fun is Brewing!



Words cannot Expresso how much we
would like to see you! Catch up with
Oddfellows friends at our monthly
Highbury coffee mornings. Tea is
also available. Book by Monday 9
November 2026. Highbury Crescent
Rooms, 70 Ronalds Rd, Islington,
London N5 1XA. Contact Tracy on
07724 116427.



November 2026

THURS
12

Wine and Nibbles at Warren Street



5.45pm



Members £6,
Guests £10



Wine and nibbles at our monthly get together. Duchess House is a three minute walk from Warren Street tube station. Book by Thursday 1 October 2026. Duchess House, 18-19 Warren Street (entrance first door on the left on Grafton Mews), London W1C 5LR. Please let Jackie know on 07788 418267 if you would like to attend.

THURS
19

Enfield Afternoon Tea



2pm



Free



Come along for a cuppa with friends at the Enfield Baptist Church. Enfield Baptist Church, Cecil Road, Enfield EN2 6TG. Please let Jackie know on 07788 418267 at least three days before if you will be attending.



Image by Gwen24 from Pixabay

TUES
24

Art Unscrewed



4pm



Free



Dulcie will take you through a step-by-step process during this hour of painting and at the end you will have a painted some fabulous pink flamingos! The Zoom login



is the same every month now. If you need the login details please call Jackie on 07788 418267 at least one day before.

FRI
27

Lunch at Highbury's Hidden Gem



1pm



From £9



Lazy lunches and quirky charm. Unwind over midday eats at The Alwyne Castle. Highbury's hidden gem has cosy conservatories and hearty pub classics for lunch. Less than five minutes walk from Highbury and Islington station. Buses 4, 19 and 236 stop outside and 20, 277 and 393 at the station. Book by Thursday 26 November 2026. The Alwyne Castle, 83 St Paul's Road, Highbury, London N1 2LY. Contact Tracy on 07724 116427.

November 2026

MON
30

Lunch at Qumana

L 1pm



£ From £10 to £20 including drink

Located on the main strip in Hatch End, Qumana is a popular local spot known for artisanal, casual dining. It is a spacious, vibrant restaurant housed in a converted former bank vault, complete with a rooftop terrace. Book by Friday 27 November 2026. Qumana Brunch and Grill, 280 Uxbridge Road, Hatch End, London HA5 4HS. Contact Paul (see page 3 for details).

December

THURS
03

Jazz at Warren Street

L 5.45pm

£ Members £6,
Guests £10



Enjoy drinks and nibbles accompanied by some live sax, played by Ian Down and friends. Duchess House is three minute's walk from Warren Street tube station. Book by Thursday 1 October 2026. Duchess House, 18-19 Warren Street (entrance first door on the left on Grafton Mews), London W1C 5LR. Places are limited, so please book your spot by 1 October with Jackie on 07788 418267.



December

TUES
08

Christmas Coffee Morning

L 11am

£ Free



'Tis the Season to be Jolly Well Caffeinated - because you can't wrap presents on an empty stomach!' Take



a relaxing break from your Christmas preparations in our Crescent Rooms in Highbury. Book by Monday 7 December 2026. Highbury Crescent Rooms, 70 Ronalds Rd, Islington, London N5 1XA. Contact Tracy on 07724 116427.

FRI
11

The Weekend Starts Here!

L 2pm

£ Free



Oddfellows Happy Hour at Christmas, hosted by Paul Fitton! Old friends, new memories -



just one click away on Zoom. Don't worry about cleaning your room - just push the mess aside, wear your favourite Christmas clothes and let's screen share some laughs together! Contact Paul (see page 3 for details) for the Zoom Meeting ID.

December

THURS
17

Christmas at Enfield



To celebrate Christmas we will have some mince pies, Christmas cake and a quiz! Come along for a cuppa and fun with friends at the Enfield Baptist Church, Cecil Road, Enfield EN2 6TG. Please let Jackie know on 07788 418267 at least three days before if you will be attending.



TUES
22

Art with Dulcie



Dulcie will take you through a step-by-step process during this hour of painting and at the end you will have produced 'River Winds' in the style of Van Gogh. The Zoom login is the same every month now.



If you need the login details please call Jackie on 07788 418267 at least one day before.

FRI
18

Christmas at The Alwyne Castle - Book your place today!



The magic of Christmas lives all year at The Alwyne Castle and you can celebrate in style. The selection of seasonal dishes is designed to bring warmth and joy to make your Christmas memorable. Christmas menu choices and a £10 non-returnable deposit must be made by Friday 11 December 2026. The Alwyne Castle, 83 St Paul's Road, Highbury, London N1 2LY. Contact Tracy on 07724 116427.



Photo by The Castlebar

January 2027

TUES
12

Pouring into the New Year!



11am



Free



We're brewing up a fresh start for 2027 to bring you a whole Latte New Year Cheer! Your one New Year resolution must be to make friends at our monthly free coffee mornings in Highbury rooms. Book by Monday 11 January 2027. Highbury Crescent Rooms, 70 Ronalds Rd, Islington, London N5 1XA. Contact Tracy on 07724 116427.



THURS
14

Conversation and Wine at Warren Street



5.45pm



Members £6,
Guests £10



Join us for some New Year chat at Warren Street with some drinks and nibbles. Duchess House is a three minute walk from Warren Street tube station. Book by Thursday 1 October 2026. Duchess House, 18-19 Warren Street (entrance first door on the left on Grafton Mews), London W1C 5LR. Please let Jackie know on 07788 418267 if you would like to attend.

THURS
21

Talk by Bob Sinfield at Enfield



2pm



Free



Blasts from the Past – Bob Sinfield revisits some of history's most colourful characters, including Thomas Edison, Charles Darwin and the roguish diarist Samuel Pepys. Enfield Baptist Church, Cecil Road, Enfield EN2 6TG. Please let Jackie know on 07788 418267 at least three days before if you will be attending.

TUES
26

Art Unscrewed



4pm



Free



Dulcie will take you through a step-by-step process during this hour of painting and at the end you will have painted three beautiful mackerel. The Zoom login is the same every month now. If you need the login details please call Jackie on 07788 418267 at least one day before.



January 2027

FRI
29

Cheers to the New Year at The Alwyne Castle



1pm



As per
menu



Cure the winter slump with our Oddfellows January survival strategy. Meet us by the roaring open fire at The Alwyne Castle for a proper mid-winter feast. Hearty pub classics, heavy wood-panelling and a pint by the fire. Escape the house for a lively lunch just minutes from Highbury and Islington station. Who's in? Book by Thursday 28 January 2027. The Alwyne Castle, 83 St Paul's Road, Highbury, London N1 2LY. Contact Tracy on 07724 116427.

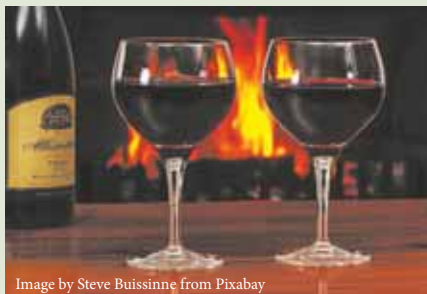


Image by Steve Buissinne from Pixabay

What does The Oddfellows do for Me?

By Paul Fitton

North London District of the Oddfellows is a local branch of one of the UK's oldest and largest friendly societies, dedicated to social connection, charity and member support.

Our purpose and activities are:

Social Events: hosting regular local activities, ranging from pub lunches and coffee mornings to historical walking tours and online get-togethers.

Support Network: functioning as a non-profit mutual organisation helping combat loneliness by building a community where older adults and local residents can form lasting friendships.

Welfare: members gain access to care and welfare helplines, advice lines, and shared support networks.

You can learn more about the Oddfellows in this edition and decide which social events you would like to attend.

If you are looking to expand your social circle or find an activity near you, you can visit www.oddfellows.co.uk to find a local group, check the Oddfellows Events Finder to discover scheduled walks, coffee hours or talks, or request a Free Membership Pack. It's easy, just call the national line at **0800 028 1810** to request a localised events diary and information pack. You can also read about our current events and discover more about the Oddfellows in this magazine.

Chairman's Letter

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Out and About. I hope you've all had a good summer and that the extreme weather didn't stop you from enjoying it.

As autumn began, the society held its annual Friendship Month in September, and I hope many of you were able to enjoy the various activities held throughout Friendship Month across the District and the country.

At the end of September, we held our half-yearly meeting, during which reports were presented covering both the business and social activities of the North London District. Updates were also shared on the Annual Movable Conference (AMC), which was held online via Zoom this year, as well as the Southern Group Conference, which took place in Torquay.

In addition, deputies representing the District were elected, alongside nominations for the Unity and Southern Group committees. If you are interested in becoming a deputy to the Annual Movable Conference (open to qualified members) or the Southern Group Conference (open to all members), please contact the District Secretary Terry (see page 2) for further information.

It was also a pleasure to be re-elected to the Investigation Committee at this year's AMC. It is a privilege to serve on this Committee, having been elected by the deputies at the AMC to continue in this role.

In the new year, the District is about to enter a busy period, with preparation of the Annual Accounts for our Annual Meeting in March or April, as well as both the Southern Group Conference in Torquay and the AMC in Eastbourne.

I will also be busy preparing for the Annual Meeting of the Investigation Committee at the start of February, which is held at Oddfellows House in Manchester.

May I take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, along with health, wealth, and happiness for the year ahead.

Yours Fraternally

Nick Norman



RNLI Sheringham

Update By Paul Fitton

The Oddfellows has had a long tradition of supporting lifesaving on the water. Records show that the first involvement was in Cleethorpes with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in 1868.

We have also funded three lifeboats at RNLI Sheringham since 1961. However, as reported previously, safety concerns following a structural survey of the lifeboat station building and landslide concerns has closed operations there during refurbishment. The lifesaving duties are currently being shared by neighbouring stations at Wells and Cromer.

A new steel frame and concrete structure are being installed and the expected reopening of the lifeboat station is May 2027, following the extensive remedial works.

This will tie in with the date of the new Oddfellows-funded Atlantic 85 inshore lifeboat. This will bring our total funding to £1,125,000.

However, because of the way the RNLI works, they have said that all future funds would go into a general fund to support National Independent Lifeboat Association (NILA) stations around the country. Whereas the RNLI operates as one unified, large organisation running hundreds of stations and a coordinated fleet across the UK and Ireland, NILA acts as a collective association and unified voice for over 50 separate, standalone

independent lifeboat organisations that do not belong to the RNLI.

East Anglian Group Conference will continue to manage the support fund on behalf of the Oddfellows with an annual bursary being made to the Sheringham station. If you wish to donate, please do so by cheque made out to The East Anglian Group Conference Lifeboat Fund or by bank transfer - sort code 30-99-77 account 01391357. Please send your cheque via Terry Rowland (see page 2).

The Oddfellows B-953 Lifeboat

The Oddfellows Lifeboat was launched in action three times in early August.

The latest Shouts for the B-953 have included:

- A two-hour rescue on 3 August 2026, a 'Medical Evacuation from Vessel'. The station was tasked by Dover Coast Guards to a 36ft sailing vessel in the River Crouch, in which a single crew member had a suspected dislocated hip. The Lifeboat arrived on scene and placing a crew member on board, took the vessel in tow to Burnham Marina where the most beneficial casualty extraction resources was available. South Woodham Coast Guard team and East of England Ambulance service attended the casualties and recovered him from the vessel taking him to hospital. The lifeboat then returned to service.

- A shout to a vessel aground on 9 August. The crew were tasked to a Rigid Inflatable Boat having run aground at 1130 on the approach to the River Crouch. The one adult and two children on board had been attempting to drag the craft free but had become tired. The Lifeboat launched and attended, standing by whilst the vessel refloated on rising tide, and then escorted it to Burnham Yacht Harbour. Safety advice was given to the skipper. The Lifeboat rehoused and was made ready for service at 10:00UTC. The operation lasted two and a half hours.

The B-953 has also been launched on eight exercise launches, which has included some key moments for members of crew such as two crew members undertaken a navigator assessments who pass out, a Tier 1 Crew member who pass out, and a maiden service call for one of the stations crew members on the most recent launch.

The Lifeboat Operations Manager has expressed the crew's gratitude to the Oddfellows for the privilege of being entrusted and the opportunity to operate the B- 953. He remarked on how well she performs.

1953

By Paul Fitton

These two photos show a happy occasion in 1953, when members of Duchess of Kent Lodge/Branch organised an outing to Chessington Zoo to celebrate the national festivities surrounding the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

A large number of Junior members attended and it's pleasing to note that two named below are still involved in Oddfellows activities. Keith Potter lends his knowledge to District committee business while Ian Hutt has given a number of presentations at our Zoom events. His next talk will feature Winston Churchill's younger brother, the enigmatic John Strange Spencer Churchill. Find out more in the events listings.



Winston Churchill and the Oddfellows – Myth or Fact?

By Paul Fitton

Historical records and directories list Winston Churchill among the famous statesmen and leaders who belonged to the Oddfellows. However...

Churchill joined the Loyal Waterloo Lodge No. 96 of the National Independent Order of Odd Fellows in 1907, an offshoot of the Oddfellows and maintained his membership for the rest of his life until 1965.

Like his memberships in other groups, such as the Ancient Order of Druids or Ancient Free Gardeners, his participation was largely honorary or inactive.

He was also an officer in the British Army, a historian, a writer, and an artist. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature, and was the first person to be made an honorary citizen of the United States.

The legacy of the wartime prime minister is reflected within the international network of the Oddfellows (IOOF), including active Branches named after him, such as Sir Winston Churchill Lodge No. 32, operating under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

If you are interested, lifetime North London member Ian Hutt is presenting Behind the Cigar and the Siren Suit about John Strange Spencer Churchill, Winston's little-known brother. Winston



Photo by Yousof Karsh

claimed in later life that of all people, his brother had been the greatest influence on his life. You can meet the mind that moulded history in Ian's Zoom presentation on 6 November at 2pm. Contact host paul.fitton@oddfellows.co.uk for the direct Zoom link.

Our Virtual Doors are Open

Thinking about becoming an Oddfellows member, but want to know more first? Join us at one of our online open days.

Hosted by members, we'll take you through what to expect from membership, what the Oddfellows is all about, what's offered at local branches, and we'll answer any questions that you may have along the way.

How to register

Here are the dates of our next open days. They're free to attend and last around one hour.

- Tuesday 10 November 2026 at 11am
- Wednesday 9 December 2026 at 2pm
- Thursday 14 January 2027 at 11am.



Image by Peter Olexa from Pixabay

'It was a good balance of fun and informative, and I felt comfortable and part of the group.'

- Open Day guest

If you would like to register, visit **www.oddfellows/events** and scroll down to Virtual Open Days. Click on the day you'd like to attend and fill in the registration form. We'll then send you an email to confirm your place and a reminder closer to the time.

Need help with Zoom?

Our open days are held on Zoom. If you haven't tried Zoom video-conferencing before and would like help on how to use it, let us know. You can email the Events team with any questions on **events@oddfellows.co.uk**.

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**



*Terms and conditions apply to the Refer a Friend offer. It cannot be used in conjunction with any other member offer. For full terms and conditions and for details of the rewards visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/offers.

Ref 1644

The Green, Green Grass of Home - Part Three

By Jacqui Lowther

... read the final part of Londoner Jacqui's girlhood, staying with family in Wales...

My Grannie had very painful ulcerated legs and would never go shopping, so it was our job on Saturday to take a bag each and I was in charge of the ration books and the shopping list and go to the little local shop a couple of streets away. The shop was in the lady's front room with a counter across the doorway of the adjoining room. Most of the groceries were on shelves around the front room but the butter, bacon and the sugar which had to be weighed on the brass scales with the ounces and pounds weights, were kept in the back room. Cigarettes and tobacco were kept under the counter.

We never handled money as all the shopping was put on the 'Slate'. The only time we were in charge of the money was when we went to the gas works to get the coke for the fires. Our Dad took us both a couple of times to show us how it all worked and then it was our job, again on the Saturday to collect the coke. First, we had to go to the man who rented out large barrows for threepence. This barrow had two large wheels and a very long handle. When the barrow was resting the handle was pointing up in the air and I had to jump to reach it and pull it down. We wheeled it to the gas works, placed it under a chute and inserted a sixpenny piece and 100cwt of coke would drop into the barrow. We had to hold onto the handle, so that the barrow didn't tip. We would both hold the handle and wheel

it to our house and Daddy or Grampy would tip it in the back yard. Then, we would have to return the barrow to the barrow man and he would give us a penny back, which we were allowed to keep.

We were then given our pocket money, a threepenny bit each and we would go the Saturday afternoon children's pictures. It cost tuppence and we had to sit two in a seat. Threepence for a single seat, we always sat together. We saw cartoons, Mickey Mouse, Popeye and always a cliff hanger serial.

One of my favourite cowboys was Gene Autry and he visited Cardiff in August 1939 just before the war started. He walked along the streets with his beautiful horse, Champion. He was dressed in a Pale Blue Velvet Cowboy Suit with a white Stetson hat and he had the most fantastic tan and blue eyes, which could have been make-up. We also had a visit of the King and Queen in an open top car with the two princesses, in 1941. We all stood on the edge of the pavement and waved our little paper flags.

It's 85 years since that day and it still seems like yesterday.

To close and to continue the cinema theme, when we returned to London my Granddad was the Commissionaire at the Hammersmith Gaumont and that was my local cinema. He stood out the front in his splendid blue long coat with epaulettes on the shoulders and a peak braided cap. I always got a good seat!

Letters and Feedback

Poetry in Motion

Out & About magazine has just dropped into my porch and I read it with interest each quarter.

Your resident poet, Jackie Ingleby Douglass, asked for follow ups to her poem 'My Man', offering a tempting prize! As I've always enjoyed poetry writing then I've penned these few lines below.

My Man

You look back to your Wedding Day.
It seems so very long ago.
The altar where he stood so tall.
Your Dad and you, approaching slow.

He turns and smiles, p'raps winks his eye.
You blush a little, take his hand.
You say your vows, blink tears away.
Your finger wears his wedding band.

The years have passed, your children born.
You've bought a flat, and then a house.
And money's tight, and time too short.
You're mother, cook, nurse - wife, of course.

You've had your ups and downs, I'm sure.
Known grief and loss and love and pain.
But looking back, you'll smile and say,
I bet I'd do it all again.

All the best.

Dot Pullan

Zoom Re-zoom-ion

'It was lovely'

- First-timer Zoomer Ann

'It has been lovely to meet up with everyone and catch up on their news!'

- Stephanie



An original Donald McGill Comic Postcard - Published by D Constance Ltd

Meet the Members

Marina

By Paul Fitton

In this member spotlight, we sit down with Marina to discuss her journey from a curious newcomer to become a popular member and learn of her experiences with the Oddfellows so far.

Join in with an Oddfellows activity on any given day of the week and you are bound to see a familiar face bringing fun and energy to the event. Marina is one of those people. Although joining only a couple of years ago, she embodies the true spirit of friendship. We step behind the scenes to explore why Marina enjoys the Oddfellows so much.

Marina first heard of the Oddfellows from the friend of a friend. She checked us out on the internet to discover more about the 'Oddballs' – and decided to go along. She likes all of the events that she attends and remembers the first, a walk at Kings Cross with Social Organiser Jackie Lancaster which she found very enjoyable. Marina knew the area but was pleased to discover more.

Other trips stand out. Marina says, 'I have enjoyed most: the boat trip to Fulham Palace, the Chelsea Flower event, Symphonic Queen at the Royal Albert

Hall and the classical music concerts. Perhaps the one that stands out most is the Tutankhamun Immersive Exhibition, which I found very interesting.'

Marina has a number of interests, such as travel, reading, walking, gym visits two or three times a week, visiting museums – she is a Natural History Museum member, rotating memberships with other museums – and listening to crime audio books. She adds that she does, 'go out a lot - but Oddfellows has enriched my life by taking me to different places.'

What has she gained from the Oddfellows? 'Meeting new people who I am still in touch with. We are all very sociable and we all get on well with each other. In fact, we're meeting up to visit Buckingham Palace.'

Marina adds that the membership benefits*, such as help with optical payments is very good for members.

The Oddfellows thrives because of the enthusiasm shown by members like Marina. Her journey reminds us that every member contributes a vital piece to our collective success.

*Terms and conditions apply to all member benefits and services. For full details, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions, or call us on 0800 028 1810.

Linda Regan

**And so, the summer has ended.
Always a shame. Dark nights will
approach and this can get you down.
I felt like that when the summer
show I was in, and where I met my
husband, came to an end.**

In my last column, I mentioned, as my hubby was an Oddfellow, and also a well-known actor (he played George, in *George and Mildred*), that I would tell you a few fun stories about life with him.

We met in a summer season, at the theatre in Eastbourne. We played husband and wife in a play called *Wife begins at Forty*. It was high comedy and a lot of fun. The play was a success and we worked well together.

As I had bought him lunch the day after the play opened, (just a ploughman's in the local pub), he told me he would return my kindness by buying me dinner one night. Toward the end of the season, he reminded me of his offer, and said he had booked a lovely Italian restaurant.

It was the best Italian restaurant in the area, and we had a lovely, romantic, candle-lit, dinner. He was the perfect gentleman, everything was just perfect – until - he said he would walk me back to my flat.

He walked on the outside, as all gentlemen do.

As we rambled slowly toward my flat, I was aware of a very large seagull squawking loudly, and flying toward us. It circled over our heads, and I watched in horror as, still squawking, it lowered itself, in mid-air, just above Brian's head.

As Brian stepped quicker, the bird kept up. I was about to say, 'Let's run,' when



the large bird opened its bowel and dropped his business on poor Brian's head.

Brian tried not to get flustered, and I tried not to laugh, because, as we all know, Brian was bald, and this was clearly a very uncomfortable situation for him. I handed him a tissue, and then another, and then I lifted up my skirt and took my petticoat off and wiped his already sunburned head to clean it. The remainder of the walk back to my flat was done in silence. He then had to then walk home to his flat carrying my pink frilly petticoat. (He wanted to wash it for me.)

The very next day, I came into the theatre with an umbrella. I had bought this for him as a thank you present for dinner and also as future armour against large seagulls. The rest of the actors in the show had gathered around and wanted to know why I had bought him an umbrella. As I told them the story, most of them found it highly amusing, even Brian. But then one of them said, 'No, don't laugh, this is a sign. If bird droppings land on you, it's a sign something wonderful is coming your way.' She turned to Brian. 'Something wonderful will happen for you, mark my words.'

And of course it did, because within months Brian and I married. We had a wonderful thirty six years of marriage - full of laughter. We both had the same ambition to spread laughter and make the world a better place. So, let's all keep smiling through the dark winter. Spring will be here before we know it.

Little Peter

By our Resident Poet
Jackie Ingleby-Douglass

Little Peter's on the stage,
in the Christmas play.
He didn't want to do it,
but his teacher had last say.

Joseph, wise man, sheep or lamb,
baby Jesus, Mary.
Which one are you my little love,
as all these parts do vary?

Shepherd, King, bright light, star.
How I wonder what you are.

Front of stage as bold as brass.
Now I see the rest of class.
You start singing, full of cheer,
bringing smiles to all who hear.

You lead the choir strong and loud
making me so very proud.

The Numbers Game

280,600 Insurance members in the Oddfellows*

39,000 Branch-based members who are supported by social, care and financial benefits *

More than **£148,000** raised for good causes by our Branches nationally in 2025

149 passengers on our Thames River cruise in 2010 celebrating the Oddfellows 200th anniversary

18 social events organised by our District in the next three months

0800 0148 822 is the number of the Oddfellows Care and Welfare Helpline**

* as at 1 January 2026

** see page 31

Learn, have fun, and stay in touch from home

We've online events for all to enjoy. Give one a try.



To see what's coming up visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/events

OEW/1024A6

Fitzrovia Nights!

By Paul Fitton

This summer, members headed straight to our rooms at Duchess House where the refreshments are chilled, the bites are always ready and the company is top-tier. Our monthly laid-back social evenings have been popular for both regulars and newbies.

Organiser Jackie Lancaster said, 'It was a very, very hot gathering in Warren Street in July. So hot that fans and water were a feature! We might go to a pub garden in August!'

The Fitzrovia Menu:

drink
snack
chat
repeat.

Member Indra Sikdar is a regular. He says, 'As I work in London, towards the end of the week I find attending the social events at Warren Street really relaxing and a chance to catch up with friends and to meet some new people.'

Indra continues, 'Each monthly meeting has a theme and a different type of menu, be it Indian, Malaysian or simple cheese and wine. I feel the in-person meetings are a good 'ritual' keeping up the practice of talking in person. Particularly when a lot of communication these days is via social media.'

Our monthly Fitzrovia Evenings continue and we will be handing out good vibes and great pours all evening. No formal agendas, just standard-setting socialising. Why not add your name to the guest list? Just contact Jackie on 07788 418267 or at jackie.lancaster@oddfellows.co.uk.

Our rooms in Grafton Mews are off Warren Street. It's a 100m walk from Warren Street underground station (Northern and Victoria lines) or a 350m walk from Great Portland Street underground station (Circle, Metropolitan and Hammersmith lines). Buses 24, 29, 73, 134 and 390 stop nearby.



A warm July evening at Duchess House in Warren Street. Indra is sitting on the right of the picture. Photo by Jackie Lancaster

Enfield Meet Ups By Paul Fitton



Cheers! Photo by Jackie Lancaster

Our Branches in Enfield go back nearly 200 years and members still continue to meet there socially.

We relaunched local activity in the area in 2012 with 46 current and new members appearing at our first welcoming event. We continued to meet monthly at All Saints Church in Market Square until the pandemic in 2020. We still meet monthly but now at Enfield Baptist Church in Cecil Road. We also eat out at nearby pubs.

The key is the interesting conversation that takes place. Regulars Diane and Neil say, 'We always enjoy the meetings at Enfield Baptist Church. Interesting talks,

for example the recent series about the history of Crystal Palace, or just chatting with friends over refreshments.'

So if you're walking or driving along Cecil Road on any third Thursday of the month between 2pm and 4pm, take a turn into Enfield Baptist Church. A casual get-together over warm cups of tea or coffee, treats, and open chats. The perfect solution for anyone looking to unwind, make friends, and share stories in a welcoming space.

Want to find out more about our Enfield activities? See the listings in this edition or contact Jackie Lancaster (see page 3).

Used Stamps

Jane Parkin is collecting used stamps for Many Tears Animal Rescue Charity. She would love to receive your used stamps. Please send them to her at Oddfellows Hall, 27 Belmont Close, Clapham, London SW4 6AY.

Many Tears is based in Carmarthenshire in Wales. The charity has dogs in foster in homes throughout the UK as well as resident horses, ponies and donkeys. You may find out more at www.manytearsrescue.org

Zoom into Art

By Paul Fitton

Art Unscrewed hosts regular online art-recreation sessions for North London Oddfellows. During these virtual gatherings, members are guided through recreating well-known and lesser-known paintings within an hour via Zoom.

Members follow instruction from host Dulcie, as she directs everyone through a step-by-step process to produce an individual copy of the original starting from a blank canvas. It's a relaxing way to learn new techniques that you can use between each monthly session. The sessions are suitable for all standards, from beginners to more-accomplished artists.

Step 1



Step 2



These sessions are usually held on the last Tuesday of each month at 4pm via Zoom, so you can paint from the relaxing comfort of your own home.

Jackie Lancaster's photos of the works of various members show you some of the stages of production of Bee and Flower, painted in the August session.

You can join in by contacting jackie.lancaster.co.uk for the Zoom code. You can also find out about the next three sessions in our magazine listings and about other Zooms at www.oddfellows.co.uk/events.

Step 3



Step 4



Bob Sinfield recalls The News Huddlines



Radio, it is said, has the best pictures - and I can see why they say it.

All the action takes place in the listener's imagination,

so it's an ideal medium for comedy classics like Hancock and the Goons... and more recently, The News Huddlines which ran from the mid-1970s to the early 2000s.

When Roy Hudd launched the series, he was already a star of stage and TV but the first time I saw him warming up a Huddlines audience, I realised he was a wireless natural. Especially impressive was the fact that he barely had time to read the jokes before saying them. Topical material doesn't date well, so the script had to be bang up-to-the-minute.

He was also a dab hand in the programme's sketches where impersonations of well-known figures were a must. Granted, he did have help in the form of Janet Brown and Chris Emmett. Janet's take on Margaret Thatcher was the stuff of legend (she even recorded a single called Iron Lady) while Chris could have you believing that Jim Callaghan and Denis Healey were there in person, alongside Ted Heath and Harold Wilson.

When I joined the script team in the early 1980s, one of the main writers was Andy Hamilton who might only be five foot two but is a giant of comedy creation. Many other luminaries graced our pages with their witty words, notably David Renwick of One Foot in the Grave and Jonathan Creek fame. Renowned actresses like Alison Steadman and June Whitfield came aboard in the later years. June was so keen to play Mrs T that she even auditioned for Roy in the middle of a panto they were both in! The audience loved her transformation from Fairy Godmother to Prime Minister in the space of one sentence.

Of course, you can't please everyone - especially with humour - and the subjects almost guaranteed to offend are religion and royalty. When we broadcast a somewhat off-colour (though very funny) line about Princess Margaret, one angry



Roy Hudd

listener wrote to say we should be publicly horse-whipped in Trafalgar Square. I don't know if they were offering a service but we didn't take them up on it.

In the early 21st century, the Huddlines came to an end, due to the arrival in the front office of a 'new broom'. Taking our star out to lunch, this broom suggested that Hudd should be more up-to-date and model his style on that of Jonathan Ross. Roy left the table abruptly, saying he'd never been so insulted in his life.

But whenever there's a news story that's begging for a joke, I always imagine him standing at the microphone, poised for mischief.

When a recent Home Secretary wanted to outlaw homeless people from living in bivouacs on the street, I could just hear Roy saying, "I know what the charge would be: loitering within tent!" Yes, even on a topical show, the old ones are often the best.

Christmas Parties

By Paul Fitton

It's nearly that time of year again!

Oddfellows means a lot of things for a lot of people. Many members talk today about charabanc trips and coach outings, sports days and cricket matches, days out and social activities and children's Christmas parties and dinner dances. Here are two memories from nearly 100 years ago.

Beryl Whipp recalls Children's Christmas parties. 'I wonder if any of the older members remember the lovely Christmas Parties Oddfellows used to give to us Juniors in the 1930s?

'To me it was the 'Best Party'. My father used to take my cousins and myself to a hall in north London. I cannot tell you the exact place. Many children would gather and all would be given a lucky number ticket. Inside, games would be organised and then we would sit down to a good tea.

'Afterwards, a rare treat. A Brother Oddfellow would show us films: Laurel and Hardy and Charlie Chaplin gave us fun and laughter. Then the lucky numbers would be called and those who had their number drawn out would receive a lovely gift. As this was taking place, parents would be arriving to take their children home.

'We might have been disappointed if we did not receive a prize but as we left, everyone would be given a bag of sweets. We went home tired but happy. Good memories!'

Aren't Beryl's childhood memories lovely. A different time. Simple things – and to close gently, I remember receiving a letter from another member who recalled the Oddfellows Christmas parties in the 1930s – and the sheer joy she had when playing with a golden balloon. Happy Days!

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

Keep Young and Beautiful – Part Seven©

By Paul Fitton

This time, we are looking at growing old gracefully.

It's true, isn't it. Over 70s have the best eyesight. I seem to have become quite invisible when out – except to other over 70s. They always give a knowing nod and 'hello'. Everyone else ignores me.

Do you still think that friends who you haven't seen for a long time haven't aged well? Hmm! just remember that they are probably thinking the same about you! This was brought home to me on a recent dental visit.

I noticed that the name on the medical diploma hung on the wall in the waiting room was the same unusual name as a girl from primary school. However, the aged dentist that I saw couldn't have been the same person. I asked her if she attended Elmwood in the early 60s. She replied that she did. Wonderful! I told



her that she was in my class – and she asked me what I taught! Oh dear!

Just a few hair-raising points. A friend said recently that he has the same amount of hair that he always has had. It's just rearranged differently. He dyes it grey too, for that 'air of sophistication'. Being 1.86/6'2" I doubt that any member knows that I have a bald spot. Unless they are taller than me, of course. A former member used to rub black Kiwi shoe polish on his bald spot (true) whilst another had some rabbits tattooed on his bald head. He said they look like hares from a distance (not true)!

To close, just a few general points about aging. When I retired from the civil service in 2009, an older work colleague said that he must be doing something wrong. He had attended my father's retirement party as well as mine!

I don't know if it's the same for you but I've reached the age where the patient information leaflet that comes with medicines is far too interesting.

... and lastly, a riddle: What goes up but never comes down? (Answer at foot of page.)

Answer: Your Age

Oddfellows Memorabilia

Paul Fitton continues his regular look at Oddfellows Memorabilia

This mid-19th-century pocket watch with an 1843 hallmark displays a central Oddfellows dial and was probably presented to a valued official for his services.

It bears the signature maker's mark of C Etchells, a watch and clockmaker who operated out of Berry Edge, the historic village settlement that grew into modern-day Consett, County Durham. Etchells was a local provincial clockmaker active during the mid-to-late 1800s.

The regional timepiece has a diameter of 55mm and depth of 15mm.

It has a full plate fusee movement with round pillars. It has a pierced and engraved round cock, polished steel regulator on top plate below the plain three arm steel balance.

The face has a white polychrome dial showing an enamel and gilt scene in the centre, painted with Oddfellows symbols

and the Oddfellows motto, 'Amicitia, Amor et Veritas'.

The watch face has painted Roman numerals with pierced gold hands. Matching silver pair cases, silver oval pendant and bow, maker's mark 'R&S' and '3oz' to indicate the weight of silver...

... and it is in working order!



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

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.

ODDFELLOWS
FRIENDSHIP MONTH
1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



"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.

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



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 your Branch Secretary Terry Rowland on 020 7226 1740.

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**

At a glance

November 2026

Fri 6	Behind the Cigar and the Siren Suit	2pm
Tues 10	A Latte Fun is Brewing!	11am
Thurs 12	Wine and Nibbles at Warren Street	5.45pm
Thurs 19	Enfield Afternoon Tea	2pm
Tues 24	Art Unscrewed	4pm
Fri 27	Lunch at Highbury's Hidden Gem	1pm
Mon 30	Lunch at Qumana	1pm

December

Thurs 3	Jazz at Warren Street	5.45pm
Tues 8	Christmas Coffee Morning	11am
Fri 11	The Weekend Starts Here!	2pm
Thurs 17	Christmas at Enfield	2pm
Fri 18	Christmas at The Alwyne Castle - Book your place today!	1pm
Tues 22	Art with Dulcie	4pm

January 2027

Tues 12	Pouring into the New Year!	11am
Thurs 14	Conversation and Wine at Warren Street	5.45pm
Thurs 21	Talk by Bob Sinfield at Enfield	2pm
Tues 26	Art Unscrewed	4pm
Fri 29	Cheers to the New Year at The Alwyne Castle	1pm

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

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