

February - April 2026



Othe **ODD**fELLOWS SINCE 1810
making friends, helping people

out & about

St Mary Cray and Dartford District



Music



Art/Crafts



Tasting



Dining Out



Walks



Games



Day Trip



Online



Social



Talks



Coffee Morning/
Afternoon Tea



Quiz



Welcome to the new edition of **Out & About**, incorporating **Pathway**, the Magazine of **St Mary Cray and Dartford District**

A Bumper Year for Recruitment

The Oddfellows has had a bumper year for enquires national, with an amazing number of people who are seeing what we are offering and are interested in finding out more. In 2024, we significantly increased our recruitment total and the fact we have been able to keep that momentum going in 2025 is amazing and reflects the fantastic efforts that are done by everyone.

Membership Benefits

You can find out more about the Oddfellows very easily by visiting www.oddfellows.co.uk. Learn about membership benefits* such as social events, care support, money-saving offers, travel and our historical archive the social benefits of Oddfellows membership, Unity Mutual (our financial services brand), Care Helpline as well as more details about Dental and Optical Benefits, Legal Aid,

Citizens Advice, Convalescence and Financial Aid and the latest national Oddfellows news.

*** Terms and conditions apply to all benefits. All Oddfellows benefits are non-contractual and may be withdrawn at any time without notice. For more information visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions or call 0800 028 1810.**

Retirement

I mentioned in the last magazine that I am retiring from the post of District Event Organiser on 30 January 2026. However, I am continuing to edit *Out & About* magazine and will always welcome your contributions. Enjoy making new friends and meeting people.

Paul Fitton
Editor

Front cover: A friendly doggy face at our Mottingham Hall

The photo above shows members enjoying Mick Colman's Music Bingo event at Flower of Kent Branch's hall at Footscray

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 social events, as well as support our members through a range of benefits and services. For more information visit www.oddfellows.co.uk or call **0800 028 1810** to speak to one of our team.

Booking and Cancellations

Please remember the importance of early booking for all events to avoid disappointment or cancellation due to lack of support. Please note that a place is not guaranteed at any event until full payment has been received.

Contact Details

District Secretary:

Eliza Puddefoot

Address: 58 Mitchell Avenue,
Northfleet, Kent DA11 8AX

Telephone: 07391 986653

Email:

eliza.puddefoot@oddfellows.co.uk

Magazine Editor and District

Event Organiser: Paul Fitton

Address: 15 Moat Close,
Green St Green, Orpington,
Kent BR6 6ET

Telephone: 07851 910619

Email:

paul.fitton@oddfellows.co.uk

You are invited to send letters, contributions and photos for the magazine by the deadline of Friday 27 March 2026 to Paul Fitton

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

February 2026

TUES
03

Art Unscrewed



5pm



Free



At the end of our one hour session, you'll have painted 'Coffee and Rain'. Please note that this session (only) starts at a later time. Email Jackie at jackie.lancaster@oddfellows.co.uk for the new direct Zoom link.



lancaster@oddfellows.co.uk for the new direct Zoom link.

THURS
05

Play Your Cards Right Afternoon



2pm



Free



Higher or Lower? Come along to the Play Your Cards Right event. Play your cards right and you will win some fun prizes. It will be nice to see you, to see you nice! Book by Wednesday 4 February.



Oddfellows Hall, 6a Beaconsfield Road, Mottingham SE9 4DJ. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

SAT
07

Valentines Disco with Live Music



7.30pm



Members £10
Guests £15



Join us in celebrating the month of love at our Valentines Disco with music performed from the amazing live singer Jo McGetrick. Book by Monday 2 February.



Oddfellows Hall, 118 Maidstone Road, Footscray, Kent DA14 5HS. Contact Bonny on 07584 045254.

WED
11

Good Intent Social



1.30pm



Free



Good Intent Branch has a short information meeting followed by a quiz or games with coffee or tea with a cake or three. British Legion Hall, Devon Road, South Darenth DA4 9AA. Contact Jane on 07791 942969.

WED
11

Peter Clarke plays songs from the Great American Songbook



2pm



Free



Talented clarinetist Peter Clarke entertains members with some classic songs from the all-time greats. Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 9JH. Contact Paul (see page 3 for details).

February

WED
11

Art Tour of The National Gallery with Roger Turner



2.15pm



Free



Now a regular fixture in our events programme, Roger will be guiding us through a selection of paintings and sharing his vast knowledge of art with us. This time we are visiting the world renowned National Gallery. The tour will take approximately one hour and then we will have a cup of tea or coffee in the gallery café afterwards. Meet inside the main entrance at 2pm for a 2.15pm start. Charing Cross tube and overground station is a five minute walk away. The National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DN. Please email Jackie on jackie.lancaster@oddfellows.co.uk to express your interest.



THURS
12

Coffee and Chat



2pm



Free



Come along and enjoy a coffee, tea, cake and chat. Whether you come along on your own or with a friend you'll be guaranteed a warm welcome. Book by Monday 9 February. Greys Tea and Coffee House, 34 High Street, Bexley, Kent DA5 1AH. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

FRI
13

Social Get Together



2pm



Free



Come along for a fun afternoon of games with a lovely cup of tea or coffee. Orpington Methodist Church, Hulbert Hall, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 9JH. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.

MON
16

Pancakes!



2pm



Free



Join us for pancakes at Holy Trinity Church, North Room, Church Lane, Bromley Common, Bromley, Kent BR2 8LB. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.

WED
18

The Inbetweeners



1.30pm



Members Free
Guests £3



You're invited to Flower of Kent Branch's next monthly social afternoon. The 'Inbetweeners' meet at 1.30pm to enjoy games such as bingo, Hoy, quizzes and raffles, along with cake, tea or coffee and a good gossip, usually finishing around 3.45pm. Organised by Caroline and John Shine, they look forward to seeing you. Oddfellows Hall, 118 Maidstone Road, Footscray, Kent DA14 5HS. Contact Gill on 07840 546852 or Bonny on 07584 045254.

February

THURS
19

Celebrate Pancake Day with the Ultimate Stack!



2pm



Free



It's pancake time and were ready to make it delicious. Whether you're a classic maple syrup fan or if you like to go wild with toppings, we've got the stack for you! Book by Tuesday 17 February. Oddfellows Hall, 6a Beaconsfield Road, Mottingham SE9 4DJ. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

THURS
26

Coffee and Chat



2pm



Free



Come along and enjoy a coffee, tea, cake and chat. Whether you come along on your own or with a friend you'll be guaranteed a warm welcome. Book by Monday 23 February. Greys Tea and Coffee House, 34 High Street, Bexley, Kent DA5 1AH. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

THURS
26

Garden of England Social



8pm



Free



Social evening with a short meeting letting the members know what is going on, then followed maybe a quiz or games with coffee or tea and usually a cake. Hurst Community Centre, Hurst Community Centre, Bexley, Kent DA5 3LH. Contact Jane on 07791 942969.

FRI
27

Business Meeting



2pm



Free



Pride of Kent Branch Business Meeting for members only. Christ Lutheran Church Hall, 227 Poverest Road, Orpington, Kent BR5 1RD. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.

March

THURS
05

Get Ready for the Ultimate Pig Race!



2pm



Free



Who will be the fastest pig in town? It's time to find out at the Great Pig Racing Extravaganza! Book by Tuesday 3 March. Oddfellows Hall, 6a Beaconsfield Road, Mottingham SE9 4DJ. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

March

WED 11 Good Intent Social

🕒 1.30pm

£ Free



Good Intent Branch has a short information meeting followed by a quiz or games with coffee or tea with a cake or three. British Legion Hall, Devon Road, South Darenth DA4 9AA. Contact Jane on 07791 942969.

THURS 12 Coffee and Chat

🕒 2pm

£ Free



Come along and enjoy a coffee, tea, cake and chat. Whether you come along on your own or with a friend you'll be guaranteed a warm welcome. Book by Monday 9 March. Greys Tea and Coffee House, 34 High Street, Bexley, Kent DA5 1AH. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

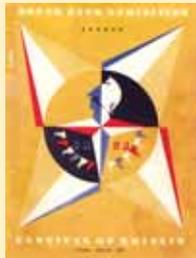
WED 11 The Festival of Britain 1951

🕒 2pm

£ Free



Exactly 100 years after the Hyde Park Great Exhibition came the Festival of Britain, a nationwide event celebrating British innovation, design, science and culture to lift spirits after World War II. The main site on London's South Bank featured iconic structures like the Dome of Discovery and the Sylon, alongside exhibits showcasing post-war modernism, industry and arts. Presenter Michael Gilbert visits to tell you more. Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 9JH. Contact Paul (see page 3 for details).



FRI 13 Social Get Together

🕒 2pm

£ Free



Come along for a fun afternoon of games whilst enjoying a lovely cup of tea or coffee.



Orpington Methodist Church, Hulbert Hall, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 9JH. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.

March

MON 16 Social Get Together



We are marking a special occasion today as Sue Potts concludes her time as Social Organiser. Please join us this afternoon to celebrate Sue's contributions and give her a fitting farewell. Holy Trinity Church, North Room, Church Lane, Bromley Common, Bromley, Kent BR2 8LB. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.

THURS 19 Hop into Easter with your very own Easter Bonnet!



Calling all crafty creators! This Easter, why not make something extra special! Join us for a fun-filled Easter bonnet workshop and design your very own one-of-a kind bonnet! Book by Tuesday 17 March. Oddfellows Hall, 6a Beaconsfield Road, Mottingham SE9 4DJ. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

WED 18 The Inbetweeners



You're invited to Flower of Kent Branch's next regular monthly social afternoon.



The 'Inbetweeners' meet to play games, such as bingo, or Hoy, or a quiz, have a raffle, eat cakes, drink lots of tea or coffee and gossip. The Inbetweeners start at 1.30pm and usually finish about 3.45pm. These occasions are organised by Caroline and John Shine who will be pleased to see you there. Free car park. Oddfellows Hall, 118 Maidstone Road, Footscray, Kent DA14 5HS. Contact Gill on 07840 546852 or Bonny on 07584 045254.

TUES 24 Art Unscrewed



At the end of our one hour session, you'll have painted 'Umbrella in the Rain'. Email Jackie at jackie.lancaster@oddfellows.co.uk for the new direct Zoom link.



March

WED 25 Singo Bingo

🕒 7.30pm

£ Members Free
Guests £3



Singo Bingo is a fun and exciting spin on the traditional game of bingo. Instead of listening for numbers you are listening for the song titles from short clips of music played by DJ Mick Coleman. Book by Monday 23 March. Oddfellows Hall, 118 Maidstone Road, Footscray, Kent DA14 5HS. Contact Bonny on 07584 045254.



THURS 26 Garden of England Social

🕒 8pm

£ Free



Social evening with a short meeting letting the members know what is going on, then followed maybe a quiz or games with coffee or tea and usually a cake. Hurst Community Centre, Hurst Community Centre, Bexley, Kent DA5 3LH. Contact Jane on 07791 942969.

THURS 26 Coffee and Chat

🕒 2pm

£ Free



Come along and enjoy a coffee, tea, cake and chat. Whether you come along on your own or with a friend you'll be guaranteed a warm welcome. Book by Monday 23 March. Greys Tea and Coffee House, 34 High Street, Bexley, Kent DA5 1AH. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

FRI 27 Pride of Kent Branch Summoned Meeting

🕒 2pm

£ Free



Review of 2025's finances. Christ Lutheran Church Hall, 227 Poverest Road, Orpington, Kent BR5 1RD. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.



April

WED 08 Good Intent Social

L 1.30pm £ Free



Good Intent Branch has a short information meeting followed by a quiz or games with coffee or tea with a cake or three. British Legion Hall, Devon Road, South Darenth DA4 9AA. Contact Jane on 07791 942969.



FRI 10 Social Get Together

L 2pm £ Free



Come along for a fun afternoon of games whilst enjoying a lovely cup of tea or coffee. Orpington Methodist Church, Hulbert Hall, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 9JH. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.

SAT 11 District Dinner Dance

L 6pm £ Members £30
Guests £40



We are again holding our annual dinner dance at the Boathouse in Danson Park, this is a popular event where we are celebrating our Provincial Grand Master (Chairman), Tony Greenaway. There will be a three course meal followed by dancing, the entertainment is being hosted by the popular DJ Traviss and of course a game or two of 'Heads or Tails'. Dress code is dinner suit or smart dress. Tickets go fast so contact us to book yours! Book by Friday 27 February. The Boathouse, Danson Park, Danson Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA6 8HL. Contact Eliza on 07391 986653.

WED 08 Murder, Madness and Mayhem? - The Belgian Royal Family

L 2pm £ Free



For a monarchy that has only been in existence since independence in 1830, be assured there's lots to tell. Explore, too, their links with the British Royal Family.



Presented by popular speaker Melanie Gibson-Barton. Orpington Methodist Church, Sevenoaks Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 9JH. Contact Paul (see page 3 for details).

April

TUES
14

London's Burning! - The Blitz and The Great Fire, a Guided Walk

11.15am

£ Free



Our favourite City Guide, Chris Wilkins-Malloy has another treat in store for us. This walk explores how



the City of London was changed by two 'Great Fires' in 1666 and 1940. In September 1666, a four day fire destroyed roughly 4/5ths of the medieval city, including St Pauls Cathedral. In December 1940, the German Luftwaffe attempted to recreate the conflagration, with incendiary bombs and high explosives. Find out about firefighting procedures in 1666 and 1940 and hear eye-witness accounts. See what remains and what has been changed forever. The walk takes two hours and finishes at The Monument to the Great Fire of 1666 at Fish Street Hill. Meet at the National Fire Fighter's Memorial at 11.15am for a prompt start to the walk at 11.30am at the corner of Carter Lane and Peter's Hill. The nearest tube is St Paul's. National Firefighter's Memorial, Carter Lane, London EC4V 5EY. Please let Jackie know that you would like to attend by email at jackie.lancaster@oddfellows.co.uk or 07788 418267 at least one week in advance (book by Tuesday 7 April).

WED
15

The Inbetweeners

1.30pm

£ Members Free
Guests £3



You're invited to Flower of Kent Branch's next regular monthly social afternoon. The 'Inbetweeners' meet to play games, such as bingo, or Hoy, or a quiz, have a raffle, eat cakes, drink lots of tea or coffee and gossip. The Inbetweeners start at 1.30pm and usually finish about 3.45pm. These occasions are organised by Caroline and John Shine who will be pleased to see you there. Free car park. Oddfellows Hall, 118 Maidstone Road, Footscray, Kent DA14 5HS. Contact Gill on 07840 546852 or Bonny on 07584 045254.



THURS
16

Chocolate Challenge

2pm

£ Free



You have heard of the Pepsi Challenge, well this is the Chocolate Challenge. Are you a choc expert, do you think you can taste and name some classic chocolate treats. If you are up for the challenge then please come along to this fun event. Tea and cakes also available for the non-choc lovers. Book by Monday 13 April. Oddfellows Hall, 6a Beaconsfield Road, Mottingham SE9 4DJ. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

April

MON 20 Social Get Together



Come along for a fun afternoon of games whilst enjoying a lovely cup of tea or coffee. Holy Trinity Church, North Room, Church Lane, Bromley Common, Bromley, Kent BR2 8LB. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.

TUES 21 Art Unscrewed



At the end of our one hour session, you'll have painted 'Three Women in Morocco'. Email Jackie at jackie.lancaster@oddfellows.co.uk for the new direct Zoom link.

WED 22 St George's Pint and Pie



Join us in celebrating St George's Day with a delicious hot pie washed down a pint of your choice. Book early to avoid disappointment. Book by Wednesday 15 April. Oddfellows Hall, 118 Maidstone Road, Footscray, Kent DA14 5HS. Contact Bonny on 07584 045254.

THURS 23 Coffee and Chat



Come along and enjoy a coffee, tea, cake and chat. Whether you come along on your own or with a friend you'll be guaranteed a warm welcome. Book by Monday 20 April. Greys Tea and Coffee House, 34 High Street, Bexley, Kent DA5 1AH. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

THURS 23 Garden of England Social



Social evening with a short meeting letting the members know what is going on, then followed maybe a quiz or games with coffee or tea and usually a cake. Hurst Community Centre, Hurst Community Centre, Bexley, Kent DA5 3LH. Contact Jane on 07791 942969.

April

FRI 24 Committee of Management Meeting



2pm



Free



Committee of Management meeting. Committee members only. Christ Lutheran Church Hall, 227 Poverest Road, Orpington, Kent BR5 1RD. Contact Anna on 07704 271845 or Sue on 01689 852868.



THURS 30 Golf and Good Company - An Indoor Putting Afternoon at Golf Oddfellows



2pm



Free



Looking for a fun way to spend the afternoon? Come along to our relaxed and sociable indoor golf afternoon - specially organised so you don't have to walk around a golf course... No need to be a golf pro - this is all about having a laugh, meeting others and enjoying a gentle game with our easy to use indoor putting machine. Whether you've played before or just fancy trying something new, everyone is welcome! Book by Monday 27 April. Oddfellows Hall, 6a Beaconsfield Road, Mottingham SE9 4DJ. Contact Carly on 07546 735431.

SUN 26 The Shoop Shoop Show The Cher Collection



7.30pm



Tickets £29.17



Get ready to experience a Cher show like no other! 'Turn Back Time' with The Shoop Shoop Show - The Cher Collection, an exhilarating music-led production with a party atmosphere is led by international powerhouse vocalist Rachael Hawnt, the winner of ITV's Starstruck. The show spans every decade of Cher's incredible career, so be prepared to be dazzled by disco hits and pop rock chart-toppers. With incredible custom-made costumes, jaw-dropping production, choreography and a world class live band, The Shoop Shoop Show - The Cher Collection will have you singing and dancing the night away. Subject to availability. Cost: Tickets £29.17 - dress circle and stalls, saving £6 on booking fee. Book by Friday 24 April. Aldwych Theatre, 49 Aldwych, London WC2B 4DF. Contact Paul (see page 3 for details).

Oddfellows Extra

– big brand offers and savings



From cinema tickets, holidays and new cars to grocery shopping, health spas and home insurance – Oddfellows Extra* can help you save on life's little extras or necessities.

Oddfellows Extra is an online collection of money-saving discounts and offers from many well-known brands and major retailers.

All Oddfellows Extra deals are open to Standard members and members with Extra Benefits from day one, for no extra charge.

Access Oddfellows Extra

If you're a member, sign in to the Member's Area and select 'Oddfellows Extra' from the member offers section. If you've not yet registered for the Member's Area, there are instructions on how to do so on our website: www.oddfellows.co.uk/login

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*Terms and conditions apply to all benefits.
Visit the Oddfellows Extra website for details.



Oddfellows Extra is operated on behalf of Oddfellows by Parliament Hill Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for under register number 308448.

Chairman's Letter

Tony Greenaway receiving a cheque for the District charity from Raquel Blake, the Chair of Star of Mottingham Branch

Dear Sisters and Brothers

I do hope you all had a safe enjoyable Christmas with friends and families. Our district was bustling with activity to close out 2025. One highlight was our District Disco on Saturday 20 December, hosted at the Flower of Kent 4868 Oddfellows Hall in Footscray. The evening was a success, and it was so nice to see members and guests enjoying their nibbles, the bar and the festive music which was supplied by our favourite disco man Mick Colman.

There were additional events during December which the District's Lodges hosted. All of our social organisers need congratulating on having worked relentlessly in the last year to supply entertainment for all. These events between them in some way helped raise charity monies via selling raffle tickets of which the proceeds, going to the Provincial Grand Master's (District Chairman) chosen Charity, the Greenwich and Bexley Hospice, which has over the last year I believe, has raised with the help of many, a significant figure approximately £1000 at the time of writing.

I would like to give special thanks to Paul Fitton, who sadly for us all is retiring at the end of January.

A dedicated social architect and in my



Tony Greenaway receiving a cheque for the District charity from Raquel Blake, the Chair of Star of Mottingham Branch

opinion a man who poured 100% of his heart and energy, turning gatherings into lasting memories. He has a passion for bringing people together and has left an indelible mark on our community. May his retirement be as vibrant and fulfilling as the many connections he has made. Looking ahead to 2026 the District is starting the year with a full calendar including, coffee mornings, social gatherings and cheese and wine tasting all in January, a perfect way to wind down the first month of the new year.

May I take this opportunity to thank all our members and friends for your continued support over the last 12 months. And we look forward to seeing you all at many more events in 2026.

Yours in Friendship, Love and Truth

Anthony Greenaway
District Chairman
St Mary Cray & Dartford

Around the Branches

Pride of Kent

This edition highlights events at Pride of Kent Branch who meet in Orpington, Bromley Common and Petts Wood



Regulars socialising at Holy Trinity Church on Bromley Common

With three opportunities to meet every month, Pride of Kent Branch's social sessions offer you a good chance to make friends. Regular monthly meet-ups at Holy Trinity Church on Bromley Common on Mondays and twice (Wednesdays and Fridays) at Orpington Methodist Church provide a wealth of opportunities to socialise.

In addition to the varied meet-ups, regular attendees also dined out at a Christmas lunch.

The next Orpington sessions include talks from presenters and musicians, with clarinettist Peter Clarke and speakers Michael Gilbert and Melanie Gibson-Barton visiting. See the event listings and the Branch Contacts on page 38 for more information.

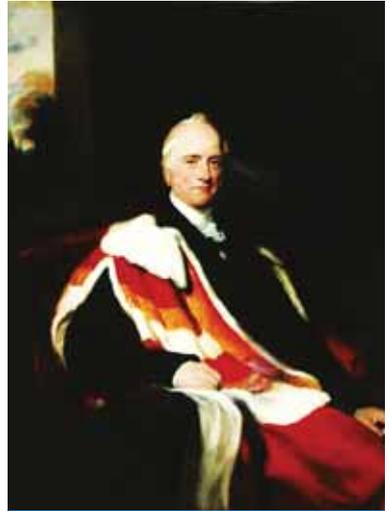
Sue Potts retired from her position as Branch Secretary four years ago. However, she continued to host the Monday socials at Holy Trinity and the Friday socials at Orpington. Sue has decided to retire fully to enjoy the benefits of membership! Thanks for all that you have done, Sue. Sue is pictured at the head of the table in the picture, wearing a red jumper.

Garden of England

Once a month, members enjoy each other's company at the Hurst Community Centre in Bexley. This is handy for those who live in the surrounding areas, such as Sidcup and Blackfen.

Originally Hurst Place, the large Georgian building was built in 1790. It has a rich history. Owned by Lord Bexley, a member of the Vansittart family, it served later as a convalescent home during WWI, air-raid shelter during WWII, and accommodation for homeless families, evolving into the vibrant community hub it is today,

Branch social sessions range from speakers and performers to tea and cakes. Jane Parkin can tell you more at jane.parkin@oddfellows.co.uk or on 01322 663706.



Lord Bexley

Good Intent Branch

Jane also runs Good Intent Branch at the British Legion Hall in South Darenth. Social sessions take place on the second Wednesday each month between 1pm and 3pm. Any member may attend but the location may suit those living in nearby places such as Sutton-at-Hone, Horton Kirby, Farningham and Eynsford.



Jane and the other local members look forward to meeting you. Call her on 01322 663706 if you would like to come and see what we are all about.

Star of Mottingham

Carly Hampshire organises wonderful social afternoons fortnightly. Why not have a look at Carly's great events shown in our listings, which this Spring include games, crafts and food? Meeting others is such a great way to spend an afternoon.



Dancing at Oddfellows' Mottingham Hall



Christmas fun at our hall in Mottingham

Flower of Kent Branch at Footscray

Local Social Organiser Bonny Young arranges regular events for members to enjoy at the hall at 118 Maidstone Road. These include spectacular Saturday and midweek evening occasions. Bonny's contact details are on page 38.



Christmas Disco at Flower of Kent Branch's hall at Footscray at Footscray

For members preferring an afternoon activity, Caroline and John Shine organise the Inbetweeners' monthly socials at the hall. The fun event attracts members from all around who enjoy each other's company, chatting and playing games.

The highlight of recent events was the Christmas Disco. In addition, popular presenter Melanie Gibson-Barton visited and Paul Fitton hosted a cheese and wine tasting experience.

Professional speaker Melanie always provides an interesting topic. This time, it

was And so to Ted... a History of Teddies and other Bears. It was a wide-ranging, fun talk of Bear Essentials to appeal to arctophiles and bear lovers! To add to the fun, Melanie had encouraged members to bring their bears along to hear the talk! Do you still have yours? I do!

Forthcoming evening events at Oddfellows hall include a Valentine's Disco with live music from Jo McGetrick, Singo Bingo with DJ Mick Colman and a St George's Day Pie and Pint..

You can also pick up books and puzzles from the swap cupboard at the hall.

Didn't we have a lovely time the day we went to...

The Clowns' Museum

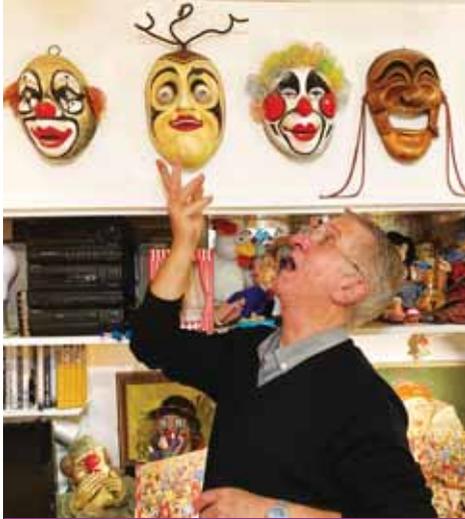


Photo of the Clown Museum's Curator Mattie Faint by Paul Fitton.

The Oddfellows has had a link to The Clowns' Museum since our first visit over ten years ago. In that time, the museum's curator, Mattie Faint has visited Oddfellows Branches all around London and presented online sessions to tell us about the amazing delights of the Clowns' Museum, as well as his own theatrical career, short films about the museum and the Life of Joseph Grimaldi – the most popular entertainer of the Regency era.

Now housed in a Georgian house in Clerkenwell, the museum is a real delight. Members entered into a house packed with clown memorabilia and stories. The clown costumes ranged from a delicate suit made

over 150 years ago to one of the famous Coco the Clown's outfits. Then there were the Clown eggs, recording unique clown faces on painted eggs, some 80 years old, to act as a copyright, ensuring no two clowns have the same look. Every item had a tale to tell, most interestingly by Mattie.

Another great Oddfellows day out for our members. The morning and afternoon sessions were linked by all members meeting for lunch inbetween each visit.

Korean Day

Twelve members enjoyed our Korean Day, which was in two parts. We started with a visit to the Korean Cultural Centre, off the Strand, to see an immersive exhibition and then strolled for a meal at Little Korea in Soho's Chinatown.



Strolling Through Korean Gardens reimagined the country's rich garden heritage through a contemporary lens. This is a rare opportunity to encounter the philosophy, beauty, and poetic sensibility of traditional Korean gardens through digital projections in an immersive soundscape, sensory environments and



storytelling. The exhibition brought to life celebrated gardens such as Soswaewon, Bokildo, and the Secret Garden of Changdeokgung Palace.

A stroll through London's lively Trafalgar Square, taking in the bustling Christmas Market, took us to Lisle Street and Chinatown where we savoured the culinary delights of Little Korea restaurant.

The three photos show members wearing traditional South Korean costume.

Railway 200 Exhibition

The touring exhibition allows visitors to discover the past, present and future of railways on the incredible exhibition train, Inspiration. Curated in partnership with the National Railway Museum, Inspiration's exhibition carriages are:

- **Railway Firsts:** Showcasing groundbreaking innovations in railway history
- **Wonderlab on Wheels:** Offering engaging hands-on activities to explore the science and engineering behind railways
- **Your Railway Future:** Uncovering some of the more hidden roles in rail and encouraging people to consider a career in rail to shape the next 200 years.

The exhibition is touring various locations in Britain until the summer of 2026.

A dozen members visited the exhibition at Paddington and Victoria stations. The photo shows some of the members at Paddington Station.



A Thank You On Retirement

I have been asked to write about my time as Oddfellows Event Organiser. Here goes!

Me, Myself and I!

I left my civil service career in 2009 aged 55, not intending to work again. However, that was before I discovered the Oddfellows. When I advised my family that I'd be working for them, my father, originally a Manchester man, said that his grandfather was an Oddfellow. I discovered subsequently that he had been the Provincial Grand Master of Eccles District in 1904.

At that time, I felt like a Junior member myself, most members being older than me! So, I set off on a journey that has taken me through to 2026. Now, I am one of those older people that I looked up to 17 years ago!

Members and work colleagues

I have been proud and pleased to meet some wonderful and friendly people and work with some helpful colleagues. It's the members who make the Oddfellows what they are but behind the scenes, there's more work than members imagine performed by a group of long-serving, dedicated officials and volunteers. Without these members, the Oddfellows wouldn't function.

The Oddfellows isn't just a network of friends, it's an organisation that helps with its care, benevolence and financial help.



Just have a look at www.oddfellows.co.uk to see all of the many membership benefits that are available.

Events and Magazines

I worked for South London, North London and St Mary Cray and Dartford Districts, organising Inter-District events bringing members together from all around London. I established new social groups and helped existing Lodges/Branches with their own events. These have largely involved presenters and musicians along with other activities. I have hosted, presented or publicised nearly 1800 events and loved every one, meeting lovely people everywhere and enjoying seeing friendships emerge between members.

Out & About magazine has also been fun to produce and is hopefully well-read

before being assigned to a piece of string on a hook in the loo!

The Pandemic

Those dark times of the pandemic arrived in 2020 and government restrictions didn't allow people to meet up. What to do? Well, I tried to keep members together by producing a weekly E-magazine of 21 pages which ran for 106 editions. This was packed with original stories, poems, quizzes and puzzles to keep over 1000 members happy as each edition dropped into their email in-trays every Saturday.

The Oddfellows also started to Zoom social events into members' homes – about thirty a week at its peak. I was pleased to be part of this and of the thousands of Zooms that have been held, have the second and this highest number of viewers at a session, with 98 and 92. My colleagues and I have continued to Zoom regularly and the Oddfellows provide 15 online outlets every week.

It was an honour to receive a national Making a Difference Award at the Oddfellows Annual Moveable Conference in Scarborough in 2021.

Events Outlined

In the last 16 years, members have enjoyed nearly 150 District events, over 80 walks, tours and phototours, 15 annual boat trips, nearly 500 online Zoom socials and well over 1000 local events comprising meals, presentations, musicians, quizzes and activities. Most events involved food, from refreshments at local events

to pub meals after District events in and around London.

Nearly all ticket prices were negotiated at lower than group rate. Visits to Hampton Court and the Tower of London, for example, had 75% discount and members benefitted from free entry to Paradise Wildlife Park. Our two exclusive pods on The London Eye were at less than half price.

Just a few examples of our visits are: Buckingham Palace and Gardens and Exhibitions (biennial), Westminster Abbey, House of Commons, Big Ben (Elizabeth Tower), Kensington Palace, Clarence House, St Paul's Cathedral, Madame Tussauds, The State Apartments of Speaker's House, The Royal Mews, Apsley House, Wellington Arch, Houses of Parliament, The Jewel Tower, as well as ten visits to National Trust properties.

The list continues but to select a few highlights: Biggin Hill Heritage Hangar and a flight accompanying a Spitfire, the Beating the Retreat ceremony, Wembley Stadium and exclusive tours of the unique SS Robin for over 100 members over three days.

Other events included exhibitions, theatre, concerts and variety shows. Our annual boat trips included memorable voyages on the Waverley Paddle Steamer and Ducktours amphibious vehicles.

A massive thank you to all members and work colleagues

Bob Sinfield Remembers Bob Monkhouse



Bob Monkhouse (left) with Bob Sinfield.

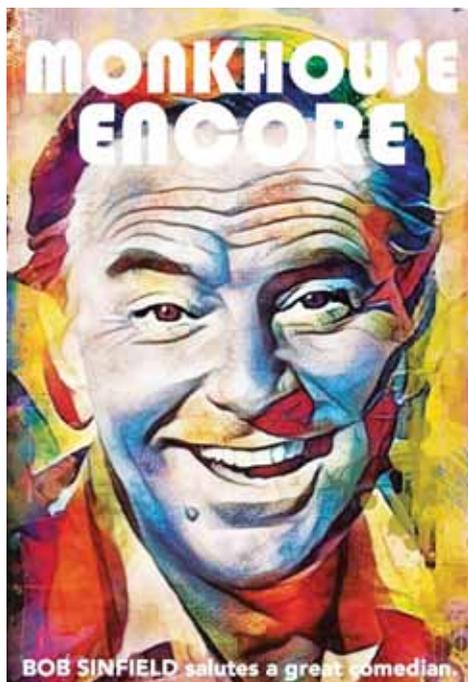
There are few things I enjoy more than addressing the Oddfellows on the subject of Bob Monkhouse. I know a thing or two about the man because in the last few years of his life, I got the chance to work with him on a variety of comedy enterprises.

It all started in 1999 when I was asked to write the script for a radio tribute to the much-loved American comic Bob Hope. I needed to find a celebrity narrator and Monkhouse seemed the natural choice as he and Denis Goodwin had written jokes (unpaid) for Hope across several decades, virtually every time he visited the UK. Luckily for me, Bob M jumped at the chance to present the show, despite a bulging diary of TV and after-dinner speaking engagements. He was also massively helpful with background information and couldn't have been kinder.

And it didn't stop there. Once we'd given up Hope, so to speak, he offered me the chance to interview him for a Radio 4 retrospective on his own life. This

involved a trip to Monkhouse Towers (better known as Claridges), an impressive pile just outside Leighton Buzzard. As expected, the house was festooned with TV, radio and film memorabilia, to say nothing of his famous joke books, a set of encyclopaedia-sized volumes, all colour coded according to subjects (yellow for estate agent gags, I noticed).

Our association - or Two Bob Bit as I call it - continued and only came to an end with the great man's death. In 2001, he was given just two years to live, following a diagnosis of prostate cancer. As much as he could, he filled every minute of that time with live appearances as well as



Bob Sinfield is a broadcaster, writer and performer.

stints on television and radio programmes, including a nod to his almost obsessive love of the cinema in a series cheekily entitled *The Oscars - 70 Odd Years*.

All this positive energy was typical of a man who refused to let misfortune get him down. Bob had suffered many tragedies in his time but whenever possible, he'd simply laugh them off. One of my favourite Monkhouse jokes concerns his miserable schooldays when he was mercilessly bullied. He said, "They tried flushing my head down the loo. It took a while. They put me in feet first."

And during his final guest spot on Michael Parkinson's chat show, he neatly summed himself up with the phrase, "Comedy is what I'm for." As ever, his wording was spot on.

If you'd like further insights into this extraordinary performer (as well as a lot more mirth), I can offer you the chance to win my book, *Monkhouse Encore*. All you have to do is be the first to answer this multiple choice question (no Googling please): was Bob Monkhouse born in (a) Ickenham, (b) Twickenham or (c) Beckenham? Send your reply to me at doctorsinuk@yahoo.co.uk and I'll dispatch a copy, post haste and postage free. Good luck and if you're quick and correct, happy reading.

The Bounder!

By our Resident
Poet Jackie Ingleby-
Douglass

She couldn't write a poem today,
She couldn't find the time.
She couldn't find the words to say,
She couldn't make them rhyme.

She thought she was so clever.
She thought she was so smart.
She thought it's now or never
She thought right from the start.

She didn't see him coming.
She didn't like this game.
She didn't really like him.
She didn't know his name.

He came and stood beside her.
He stood right by her side.
He handed her some hankies.
He told her open wide.

She knew he was a bounder.
He never told the truth.
He put his arms around her
And then pulled out her tooth.

Booking and Cancellations

Please remember the importance of early booking for all events to avoid disappointment or cancellation due to lack of support. Please note that a place is not guaranteed at any event until full payment has been received.

Linda Regan

Is it just me, or does anyone else get moments when every head around you is staring at you as you have made a faux pas.

So, this week I truly showed myself up. I am reasonably useless with modern technology and I need to keep up with it as I am writer and actress. Also, I want to.

I have a friend who is totally brilliant at it. One phone call later and we had to arranged to meet. She said she would introduce me to a couple of tricks that, with one click of thumb, or finger, could help my Instagram, where I promote my books.

I watched with fascination, (and a note book by my side), as she pressed a button, then another, and a song came up on a picture of one of my book covers. She, quite rightly, told me music would draw people's attention to the page. I was thrilled. Then she showed me a couple of other tricks, and again I made notes. I happily paid for our dinners, thanked her, and made my way back to the train station.

On the train, I started reading the notes I had made. Firstly, I had learned how to add little pictures with messages on my phone. I wrote my friend a message, added a picture of a dancing bear and a thank you, and pressed send. I congratulated myself. Next, I wanted to check on the music I could add on my book covers. My notes said – 'Write name in toolbar, then list of songs. Pick the song and it will adhere itself to your book cover'.

I brought up the picture of my book cover, and following my notes, I started to write my name, Regan, in the box that came up,

following my note instructions that said write name in box.

I got as far as RE, then from out of seemingly nowhere, my phone burst into a rendition of 'Remember You're A Womble'. Loud wasn't the word. It echoed all around the heaving, train carriage. And I had no idea, nor had I written it in my notes, how to switch it off.

My cheeks were burning, I was pressing buttons like mad, and apologising to the carriage full of, eyebrows raised, commuters.

Next a young man came over. He pressed something and the noise stopped. "Would you like me to delete it from your song memory?" he asked me.

"Oh, yes please", I told him. "I never want to hear it again. I am so embarrassed". "Would you like a song to replace it with?" he asked. "You can choose anything". "Oh, can I? Thank you. I choose, 'Tomorrow there is Hope'. I told him. It is a beautiful song by Anita Harris".

It seemed the right choice, because despite my technical inadequacies, I will not give up. Tomorrow there is hope. We now live in a technical world, and no matter what age we are, we must never stop trying. Making mistakes is part of learning. However, I definitely won't experiment with technology on a crowded train again.

Linda Regan is a film, television and stage actress, columnist, speaker and a successful novelist. Linda's husband Brian Murphy was an Oddfellow.



Letters and Feedback

" I enjoyed Linda Regan's column in the last edition. I feel I must add to Linda's knowledge. There are indoor spiders and outdoor spiders. If you put an indoor spider outdoors, it will beetle back in (excuse the pun) or die of the cold. Also, daddy longlegs are arachnids but not spiders."

Julian Burrows

" Amazing performance. Tissues out. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming'. Feedback about the Spring and Summertime Concert at St Paul's Church – the Actors' Church - in Covent Garden."

Vivienne Jones

" I laughed so much at the story in the last edition about the TV remote being taken to work in the briefcase instead of the mobile phone in the last edition!"

Myrna Williams

" We love receiving Out & About magazine and enjoy reading the interesting news."

Dave and Zandra Bown

" I've been fascinated, after Anne-Marie Brennan's Zoom session about her Life as a 14th century Re-enactor."

Jennie I pswich

" I was delighted to read the article about The Oddfellows Hall in Mottingham in the last edition. My dad, Noel 'Ted' Warman was a friend of the Wellington family and also lived, as a boy and adult, in Dorset Road, Mottingham. Dad was a faithful Odd Fellow for many years and eventually mum also joined; Odd Fellows night was every Monday as I recall. I still remember mum and dad's Silver Wedding Anniversary party which took place in the Oddfellows Hall in 1965 when I was 9.

Mum and dad moved to Newcastle upon Tyne in 1988 to be near me, my wife and their grandchildren. We still use the carriage clock which was presented to them and engraved with good wishes by the Mottingham Lodge at that time. It was a big wrench for two Londoners, and there was no Branch nearby, although some time after moving mum and dad valued a visit from officers of the nearest Branch in Sunderland. Dad died in 1999 and mum in 2009. I have continued as a lifelong member of Mottingham Branch, so I still look forward to the Out and About magazine."

Dave Warman

Ten (and More!) Famous Belgians

A talk by Melanie Gibson-Barton

Melanie Gibson-Barton is a popular presenter who has visited us locally and via Zoom for several years. She has a love for Belgium, as you'll be able to tell from the description here.

Melanie's mystery talk entitled 'Ten (and More!) Famous Belgians' began with a request that the audience keep secret the names she shared with us during her fun and informative talk.

Melanie showed us that the people of the tiny country of Belgium, not given their independence until 1830, are famous for more than their chocolate, chips and beer. The colourfully illustrated, wide-ranging talk gave the stories of men and women born through the centuries to present day in the area covered by present-day Belgium, a country just 14% the size of the United Kingdom. There were indeed many more than just ten famous Belgians in a variety of fields such as music, the arts, sport, science, invention and heroism. The time flew by as

Melanie presented the stories of her choice of almost 80 famous Belgians enabling Melanie to prove that there are many reasons to be grateful to this tiny country, with plenty 'I didn't know that!' moments.

The 'Ten (and More!) Famous Belgians' talk fits within a suite of talks by Melanie about the history and culture of Belgium based on Melanie's personal knowledge of the country built up through previously splitting her time between living in Kent and living in Bruges, Belgium.

Melanie has been giving talks for several years to the National Trust, U3A, history groups, church groups, Women's Institutes, Soroptimists and retirement social groups such as Rotary, CSMA, ARAs and PROBUS – 'live' and in Lockdown via Zoom.us - and tells us she has the privilege of meeting new audiences to entertain and inform every day. Her range of currently seventeen talks can be viewed at www.toonstelling.com.

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

Keep Young and Beautiful - Part Four

By Paul Fitton

I do hope these regular advisory articles help you, even if you are learning from the errors of others' ways! Today, we'll look at the physical, mental and general trials and tribulations of growing older as well as giving some good advice.

Here's a tip I learnt in December. If your birth year starts with '195', or earlier, don't wrap Christmas gifts on the floor.



How's your hearing? Do you think that television actors mumble and whisper and do you wonder if the background music during dramatic scenes is there purely to annoy you? Do you need to play the volume on your television so high that your neighbours don't need to turn theirs on? Well, there is a way around it. You can add subtitles to your screen. However, I

hope that your eyesight is good enough to read them, otherwise it's another trip to Specsavers for a 'higher-spec' pair of glasses!

Memory? Tell me about it. I rang a company the other day and was given option after option. When I finally got to speak to someone after a thirty minutes' wait, I'd forgotten why I rang them.

Fancy a statistic? Well, married women who ask, 'which dress suits me best?' live longer than the husbands who give their opinion.

Did you attend any of our events over Christmas? I heard of one of the members at an Oddfellows dance asking, 'Where have you been all my life?' The reply, 'I wasn't born for half of it'!

To close, here's some good advice. My Dad lived to 98 and used to say, 'Don't get old'... but then, it's better than the alternative.

Until next time.

Used Stamps

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

The Green, Green Grass of Home - Part One

By Jacqui Lowther

I spent my young school days in Cardiff as all my Mother and Father's family are of Welsh stock, including them.

My brother and I were born in London, not Wales and this was due to the very bad unemployment that existed in the '30s.

Our Dad thought he would have more chance of a job if he went to London so they both walked there from Cardiff. It took them a week, sleeping under haystacks and barns, if they were lucky.

Unemployment was rife all over the country also, it was extra hard for the Welsh and Irish as the Londoners thought that they were taking their jobs. This meant men queuing very early in the morning at building sites to see if they wanted any extra men and hoping the Foreman liked the look of you. Our Dad was a bricklayer and extremely lucky to get a week's work, but even that was in the lap of the Gods, because if it rained, men were 'rained off'. Most times he would only get a day or two days' work.

In 1938, Our Dad's Stepfather wrote to him, (no phones in those days) and said that he could get him a job working with him on a building site in Cardiff, so he promptly bought himself a cheap second bike and pedalled all the way back to Cardiff (The Green Green Grass

of Home). He lodged with his Mother and Step Dad and hoped one day to save enough money so that he could rent a place for us all to live. Meanwhile he sent our Mam a Postal Order every week for her to pay the rent and buy groceries. We had a basement flat in Shepherds Bush (they are now called Garden Flats). She also had a part time job in Cadburys in Hammersmith. As a perk for the staff, she was allowed to purchase delicious, scrumptious Cadbury chocolate Swiss rolls for a penny every Friday night at finishing time.

In 1939, Mam took us on the 'Milk Train'; from Paddington to Cardiff to spend our school holidays with our Dad. The week-end she returned to take us back to London, War was declared.

Our Grandparents, our parents and Aunts and Uncles all got together and had a long discussion well into the night and decided that London would be one of Hitler's prime targets, (which proved to be very true). So, it was decided that it would be safer for the children (us) to remain in Cardiff.

My brother, Georgie and I were heart-broken the next morning to be told that 'Mammy' had gone back to London without us, but, we were consoled with the fact that it would only be a few more weeks as the war wouldn't last that long!!



Oddfellows Memorabilia

Paul Fitton continues his look at past Oddfellows items

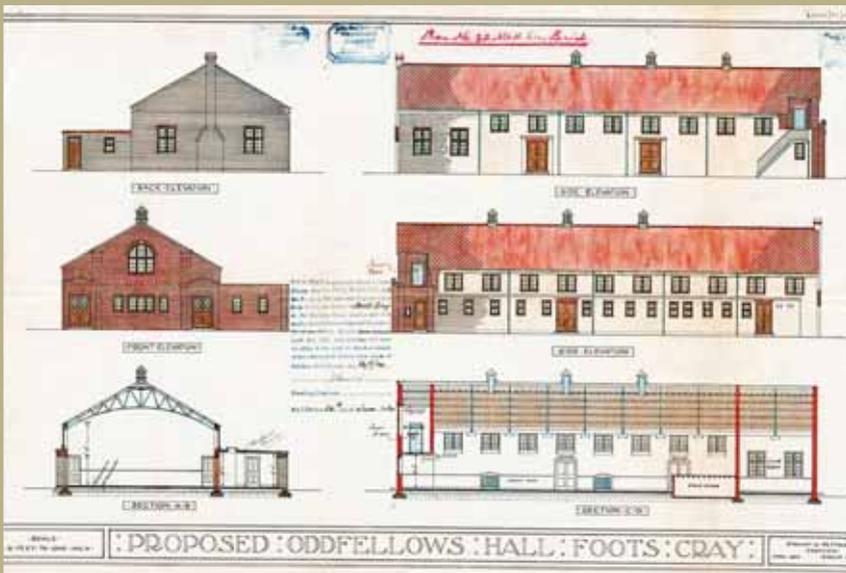
This building proposal for the construction of Odd Fellows Hall in Maidstone Road, Foots Cray was approved by the Bromley Rural District Council on 24 June 1924.

The plans contain an iron door to the 'bioscopic', or cinema room. The note shows proposals include an

asbestos roof to that room due to its fire resistant properties, long before the health hazards of the substance were fully understood.

However, the plans don't represent the current building. Can you add anything about the history of the buildings - past or present - at 118 Maidstone Road?

The plans were drawn up by Stanley G Pettman, of Sidcup Hill, in April 1924.





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
- Helping prepare teas/coffees
- Being the volunteer host at external events
- Organising events as part of a social committee
- Joining the Committee of Management
- Becoming a Volunteer Welfare Visitor or befriender

Want to deliver a new activity?

We encourage all our members to arrange events for other members and friends. If you'd like help to run a new event, like a book club, singing group, a one-off walk in the country or coffee morning, get in touch and we'll support you every step of the way.

If you're interested in finding out more about helping us as a volunteer, contact Eliza by phone on 07391 986653, email at eliza.puddefoot@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



Friendship: the constant that carries us forward A message from our CEO, Jane Nelson

Another year has passed by so quickly at the Oddfellows, and it reminds me how fast life moves. However, in a hurried world, friendships really do slow the pace and bring us back to what truly matters.

Life for each and every one of us feels richer in good company. Even between get-togethers, friendships keep us hopeful. They anchor us through life's ebb and flow – deepening our joy in good times and supporting us in challenging ones. True friends celebrate our successes, steady us when we falter, and offer a sense of belonging.

Life may change, but lasting friendship remains a constant that grounds us, making everything a little brighter. And whether near or far, genuine connections help us navigate life with resilience, laughter, and warmth.

Remember every friendship begins with a simple moment of connection, and we all have the power to create new ones or welcome others into our community who seek companionship. Please always stay open to new friendships in 2026 and nurture the ones you treasure.

If you're a member and see a new face at one of our social events, offer that warm welcome we're known for. A friendly chat, a check-in, or an introduction can ease first-visit nerves and help turn a new space into a familiar one. These small acts show that we want people with us for the long run.

Throughout 2026, let's hold on to what gives our Society its strength – the belief that shared friendship creates a place where people feel supported, valued, and at home.

Friendship is the bedrock of our Society. So together, let's continue building a welcoming community where every friendship can begin.

This will be my last turn of year message to you all as of course I retire in May. I want to thank each and every one of you for your support and friendship over the years and I wish you, your friends and your families a very happy and healthy 2026.

Yours in friendship,

Jane Nelson, CEO, the Oddfellows

A warm welcome to Simon, our CEO Designate

In October 2025, the Society appointed Simon Gallimore as Chief Executive Officer Designate. He's currently working alongside Jane Nelson, our CEO, ahead of assuming full responsibilities in May 2026. Read more at: www.oddfellows.co.uk/news/welcoming-our-new-ceo-designate



Talented trio win Educational Awards

We're proud to announce our 2025 First Degree Course Educational Award winners: Melanie Healy (Humber Wolds Oddfellows), Will Stevenson (Pride of Woolwich Oddfellows) and Emma Corbin (Worcester Oddfellows).

Each winner will receive a non-repayable bursary worth £900 per year for the duration of their studies, which can go towards anything from text books and vital equipment to helping out with rent, bills and other practical items.

Jane Nelson, CEO of the Oddfellows, said:

It fills me with pride each year when we announce the winners of the First Degree Course Educational Awards, and I'm sure that Melanie, Will and Emma will work hard and have a wonderful university experience.

University is an exciting time, but it can also be quite stressful. I hope this money will go some way to help reduce some of the financial pressures that are a reality of being a student.

Melanie Healey, Humber Wolds Branch

In October 2025, Melanie began her Asian and Middle Eastern Studies course at the University of Cambridge. The four-year course will begin with learning Arabic language skills from scratch, building up her existing French language skills and looking at French Literature.



She says she is hoping to put the money towards travelling to French and Arabic-speaking countries for internships and exchanges to help sharpen these skills.

Melanie said: "I was delighted when I found out that I'd been chosen to receive the funding, and I would like to thank the Oddfellows for the grant."

Although unsure what her career plans are at this stage, Melanie says she "would definitely like to work in a role that allows me to use my language skills".

Will Stevenson Pride of Woolwich Branch

Will started reading Geography at the University of Durham's Trevelyan College in Autumn 2025, where modules cover



topics such as climate change, physical geography, human geography, geographical research and geographies in crisis.

The money, he says, will go towards the social aspects that university life has to offer, such as the Durham University Big Band.

Will said: "Hearing I was a recipient of the award was incredibly exciting, and I am extremely thankful to the Oddfellows for the trust and generosity they have offered me."

Will also hasn't mapped out his career plans at this stage, but says that's one of the reasons the course appealed to him, given "the breadth of Geography and its wide application".

Emma Corbin Worcester Branch

Unbeknownst to either, Emma and Will have ended up on the same Geography course at the University of Durham.



Emma plans to put the money towards learning materials and field trips.

"I felt extremely grateful and lucky when I was picked as one of the successful candidates from what would have been many amazing applications," she said. "I would like to say how thankful I am. It is a great opportunity to have an award like this available."

Emma too hasn't decided which direction she wants her career to take, but thinks her chosen course will provide her with a range of opportunities.

"It's an increasingly relevant subject, considering topics such as climate change and geopolitics," Emma added.

More about our Educational Awards

Each year, our Fraternal Board chooses who will receive the Educational Awards funding, based on the applications received from members. To learn more about the awards, including the Apprenticeship Educational Award, eligibility and how to apply, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/care/educational-awards.

2026: Time to make a financial plan



a proud part of the Oddfellows

The year might have only just started, but we all know how quickly the calendar can flip. One minute it's spring, and the next we're wondering where the mince pies have gone.

Taking a little time now to think about your finances before the new tax year starts in April can make life feel calmer and more organised.

Where to start?

A financial plan doesn't have to involve spreadsheets or complicated formulas. It can simply start with a few questions, like: 'What do I want to save for? Am I prepared for life's surprises? Could my money be working harder for me?'

For some Oddfellows members, the focus might be on simply enjoying life or planning for the future. Others may also be thinking about the younger people in their lives – children, grandchildren, or that teenager who changes career ambitions daily.

Small, regular contributions now could grow into something meaningful later.

Start saving

Lucky for Oddfellows members, our financial services arm, Unity Mutual, is close at hand.

Unity Mutual is a regulated provider of ISAs and other savings and investment

products, which means they follow strict rules designed to protect our members.

Unity Mutual's Guaranteed Investment Bonds, including two, three and five year terms, offer fixed-rates for savers with a lump sum to invest, and Oddfellow members can benefit from preferential rates.

Alternatively, ISAs are a tax-efficient way to save or invest, whether you're building up funds to enjoy retirement or looking to help give your child a confident step into adulthood.

ISA Products available from Unity Mutual for Oddfellow members include a Lifetime ISA, a Flexible ISA and a Junior ISA, and you can also make the most of Guaranteed Investment Bonds and Tax-Exempt Savings Plans.

Get in touch

And the good news? You don't have to figure it all out by yourself. Unity Mutual is happy to chat with you about your goals, big, small, or somewhere in between.

Our friendly staff can provide information on what is available to you. They'll talk through things in plain English, not financial jargon, so you can make decisions confidently and comfortably.

Find out more

Visit www.unitymutual.co.uk or call us for a chat on 0161 214 4650.



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 Maria on **07946 063890** or email maria.greenaway@oddfellows.co.uk

Oddfellows 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**

EDCWA50223

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Good Intent Branch

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Flower of Kent Hall Caretaker:
Mel Martelly

Garden of England Branch

Secretary: Jane Parkin
Contact details as left

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At a glance

February 2026

Tues 3	Art Unscrewed	5pm
Thurs 5	Play Your Cards Right Afternoon	2pm
Sat 7	Valentines Disco with Live Music	7.30pm
Wed 11	Good Intent Social	1.30pm
Wed 11	Peter Clarke plays songs from the Great American Songbook	2pm
Wed 11	Art Tour of The National Gallery with Roger Turner	2.15pm
Thurs 12	Coffee and Chat	2pm
Fri 13	Social Get Together	2pm
Mon 16	Pancakes!	2pm
Wed 18	The Inbetweeners	1.30pm
Thurs 19	Celebrate Pancake Day with the Ultimate Stack!	2pm
Thurs 26	Coffee and Chat	2pm
Thurs 26	Garden of England Social	8pm
Fri 27	Business Meeting	2pm

March

Thurs 5	Get Ready for the Ultimate Pig Race!	2pm
Wed 11	Good Intent Social	1.30pm
Wed 11	The Festival of Britain 1951	2pm
Thurs 12	Coffee and Chat	2pm
Fri 13	Social Get Together	2pm
Mon 16	Social Get Together	2pm
Wed 18	The Inbetweeners	1.30pm
Thurs 19	Hop onto Easter with your very own Easter Bonnet!	2pm
Tues 24	Art Unscrewed	4pm
Wed 25	Singo Bingo	7.30pm
Thurs 26	Coffee and Chat	2pm
Thurs 26	Garden of England Social	8pm

At a glance

March

Fri 27	Pride of Kent Branch Summoned Meeting	2pm
Thurs 22	Strictly Dance Afternoon	2pm
Thurs 22	Garden of England Social	8pm
Fri 23	Wallington's Henry Codling	2pm
Tues 27	Art Unscrewed	4pm
Wed 28	The London Silver Vaults and a Meal	11am
Wed 28	Cheese and Wine Tasting	7.30pm
Fri 30	Committee of Management Meeting	1.30pm
Fri 30	Tour of Trafalgar Square	2pm

April

Wed 8	Good Intent Social	1.30pm
Wed 8	Elizabeth Barton - The Maid of Kent	2pm
Fri 10	Social Get Together	2pm
Sat 11	District Dinner Dance	6pm
Tues 14	London's Burning! - The Blitz and The Great Fire, a Guided Walk	11.15am
Wed 15	The Inbetweeners	1.30pm
Thurs 16	Chocolate Challenge	2pm
Mon 20	Social Get Together	2pm
Tues 21	Art Unscrewed	4pm
Wed 22	St George's Pint and Pie	7.30pm
Thurs 23	Coffee and Chat	2pm
Thurs 23	Garden of England Social	8pm
Fri 24	Committee of Management Meeting	2pm
Sun 26	The Shoop Shoop Show - The Cher Collection	7.30pm
Thurs 30	Golf and Good Company - An Indoor Putting Afternoon at Golf Oddfellows	2pm