

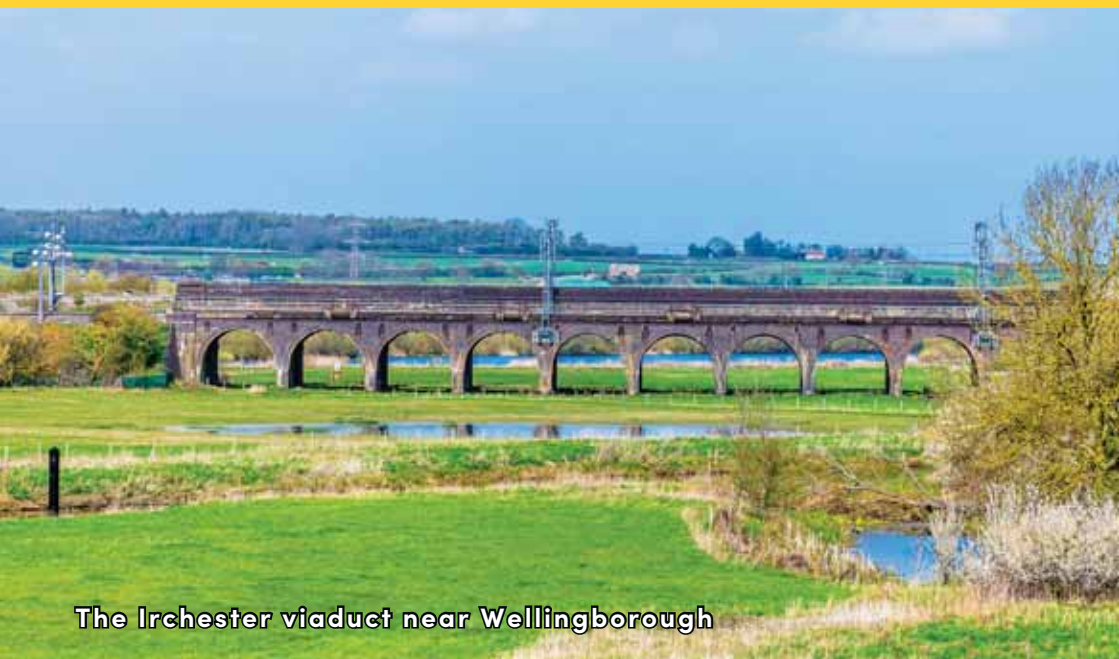
October - December 2026
Autumn Issue



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

out & about

Making friends across 5 Shires District



The Irchester viaduct near Wellingborough



Travel



Social



Games



Dining Out



Music



Talks



Quizzes



Friendship



Walk



Meeting



Coffee Morning/
Afternoon Tea

www.oddfellows.co.uk



5shiresdistrict



Come and join us at our Christmas Tree Festivals in December

Welcome to the Autumn edition of your Out and About

Oh my word I hope you are enjoying the cooler autumnal evenings now we have entered the “ember” time of year, and your gardens are starting to recover from the Summer of drought.

How has it been a year since I announced the amalgamation of the District in the Autumn newsletter 2025? It really has been a roller-coaster but the amalgamation is now fully complete with the systems updated.

The social lodges have all had a very busy summer and we have also had some staff changes. Both Kelly and Samantha Henderson have moved

on to new challenges. Maria has now embraced the warmth and friendship of Grenville alongside her social organiser role with Victoria.

In the following pages you will see that the events are now in date order and not separated into areas. We hope this makes it easier for you to find events happening across the District that you would like to attend.

We are now able to pay claims directly into your bank accounts – please note we are not allowed to store these details and you will need to provide them each time you claim.

Yours in friendship

Em
Prov CS

Who are the Oddfellows?

Currently, the 5 Shires District covers Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire and Northamptonshire. Each Social Branch has as many events as they can fit in. Through friendship and social events, we help our members to get more enjoyment out of life. With the help of the Unity office in Manchester, we offer care and support in times of need. We welcome every one of all ages – our youngest being toddlers and the eldest 100+ years old. To find out more, please visit www.oddfellows.co.uk or call 0800 028 1810.

Front cover: A view across the fields towards the Irchester viaduct near Wellingborough UK in the early summer

Branch Contacts

5 Shires District

District Secretary: Emily Ellis

Postal Address: Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton MK43 9JB

Telephone: 07932 529205 **Email:** emily.ellis@oddfellows.co.uk

District Email: 5shiresdistrict@oddfellows.co.uk

Assistant District Secretary: Sarah Wetherell

Telephone: 07932 529205 **Email:** sarah.wetherell@oddfellows.co.uk

The District Branch meets every third Tuesday of the month at Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds MK3 9JB

Albert Social Branch (Hitchin)

Social Organiser: Samantha Johnson

Telephone: 07984 530287 **Email:** albertsocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the third Monday of the month.

Bedford Social Branch

Social Organiser: Sarah Wetherell

Telephone: 07932 529205 **Email:** bedfordsocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the last Thursday of the month at Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton MK43 9JB.

Grenville Social Branch (Buckingham)

Social Organiser: Maria Kelly

Telephone: 07932 529162 **Email:** grenvillesocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the last Tuesday of the month at Buckingham Library, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP.

Victoria Social Branch (Wellingborough)

Social Organiser: Maria Kelly

Telephone: 07932 529162 **Email:** victoriasocial@oddfellows.co.uk

Meets on the second Monday of the month at Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon, Northants NN9 5LZ at 7.30pm

If you would like to attend any of the meetings or events at any Branch, or would like further information, please contact the District Secretary via phone, email or post at the contact details given above.

Note: Colour coding of branches is used – corresponds to articles later in the magazine: **Dark Blue** = District **Brown** = Bedford **Blue** = Grenville
Orange = Albert **Purple** = Victoria

Regular Events

Grenville Branch Bring, Buy and Swap Jigsaw Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning



10am



Free



**First
Tuesday**

Join members and friends for our monthly jigsaw fundraising event and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee. We continue to raise funds for local charities and our Provincial Grand Master's (Chairman) charity. Jigsaws not your thing? You are still very welcome to pop in for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat. Buckingham Library, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.



6 October

3 November

1 December

Victoria Branch Jigsaw Swap



10.30am



£2



**Second
Wednesday**

Come and join us for our monthly Jigsaw Swap at Finedon Independent Wesleyan Church. Bring along your completed jigsaws and swap them for some new challenges! How it works: £2 per jigsaw (any size). Receive a 50p refund for each jigsaw you return or bring in to add to the collection (only refunded if you are buying a jigsaw).

Maximum refund of £1.50 per visit.

Whether you're an experienced puzzler or just looking for your next jigsaw, everyone is welcome. You do not need to be a member to attend - the Jigsaw Swap is open to everyone. All money raised will be shared between a selected charity and the Provincial Grand Master's (Chairman) appeal. We look forward to seeing you there! Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.



14 October

11 November

9 December

Regular Events

Grenville Branch Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre



11am



As per menu



Join us at this independent garden centre on the third Wednesday of the month for a coffee, tea, cake and a catch up – even stay for lunch afterwards if you fancy it! Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre, Tingewick Road, Buckingham MK18 4AE. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

**Third
Wednesday**



21 October

18 November

Albert Branch Coffee Morning at Hitchin



10.30am



Free



Come and join friends and members of Albert Branch for coffee and cake in the lodge rooms. Kettle will be on from 10.30am. 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

**Various
Wednesdays**



**4 November
25 November**

16 December (Please note the earlier date in December)

Victoria Branch Coffee Morning at Bewitched Coffee



10.30am



As per menu



Come along and enjoy a relaxed coffee morning at Bewitched Coffee with members and friends of Victoria Branch – perfect for a cuppa, a chat and maybe a slice of cake! The café serves a lovely selection of drinks, food and snacks. A great chance to catch up, unwind and enjoy good company – everyone welcome! Bewitched Coffee, 2 Juniper Grove, Glenvale Park, Wellingborough NN8 6AD. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

**Various
Days**



**Thursday 22 October
Wednesday 25 November**

Thursday 10 December

October 2026

THURS 01 **Grenville Branch Brunch and Coffee**



11.30am



As per menu



Join us for a relaxed morning of food, coffee, conversation and catching up. Whether you're a regular member, a friend of the Branch, or simply fancy meeting up for a chat, everyone is welcome! We'd love to see you there! The Kings Head, 7 Market Hill, Buckingham MK18 1JX. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

SAT 03 **Bedford Branch - Croquet**



10am



£7.50



Our autumn croquet trip returns this year, offering a relaxed and enjoyable day of friendly competition and good company. Please remember to wear flat shoes and bring a packed lunch. As we require a minimum of six players for this event to happen, please book your place with Sarah as soon as possible by Saturday 19 September. Stoney Stratford Croquet Club, Ancell Trust Sports Ground, Ostlers Lane, Stoney Stratford, Bucks MK11 1BN. Contact Sarah on 07932 529205.



WED 07 **Bedford Branch Coffee and Brunch at Emmaus Carlton**



10.30am



As per menu



Come and join us for a brew and/or brunch at Ems Bistro, followed by a browse through their many shops on site: Home store, boutique, bric-a-brac and bookshop. You could bag yourself a bargain! Book by Wednesday 30 September. Emmaus Village, School Lane, Carlton MK43 7LQ. Contact Sarah on 07932 529205.



THURS 08 **Albert Branch Brunch at Rosso Lounge**



11am



As per
menu



Join us for brunch and/or coffee and cake at Rosso Lounge in Biggleswade. Rosso Lounge, 15 Market Square, Biggleswade SG18 8AS. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

October 2026

MON
12

Victoria Branch Social Night - Halloween

7.30pm

£ Free



Come and join us for a spooktacular evening of Halloween fun at Finedon Independent Wesleyan Church.



The evening will include: Halloween crafts - quiz, games. Tea or coffee will be served throughout the evening. All are welcome, so bring your family and friends along and enjoy a fun, relaxed evening celebrating Halloween together. We look forward to seeing you there for some Halloween fun! Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

TUES
13

Albert Branch Coffee and Cake with Guest Speaker from LPA Made Simple

10.30am

£ Free



Join us for a social morning with guest speaker from LPA Made Simple. All whilst enjoying tea, coffee and cake with friends. If anyone wishes to discuss their services prior to the talk, their direct line is 0845 057 3286 and their website is www.lpamadesimple.co.uk which contains full information, or you can call our guest speaker, Jackie, direct on 01277 364043. 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

WED
14

Bedford Branch - Ageing Well Exhibition 2026

10am

£ Free



Pop along to The Corn Exchange in Bedford to discover all that is available to us locally. There will be over 30 organisations (including Oddfellows) with refreshments available and activities for you to participate in. The exhibition runs from 10am to 2.30pm - pop along and do say 'Hi' to us on the Oddfellows stand. The Corn Exchange, 13 St Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SL. Contact Sarah on 07932 529205.

FRI
16

Victoria Branch Lunch at The Miller Pub

12.30pm

£ As per menu



Join us for a friendly lunch. Everyone is welcome and we'd love to see you there for good food and great company. We look forward to sharing lunch with you! Book by Monday 5 October. The Miller Pub, 2 Miller Lane, Wellingborough NN8 2NF. Please let Maria know on 07932 529162 if you would like to attend, so that she can book a table.

October 2026

MON
19

Albert Branch Craft Afternoon



12 noon



Free



As this year's Christmas Tree Festival is fast approaching, we are holding a free-to-attend craft morning to make new decorations for this year's tree. All crafty bits, tea or coffee and biscuits provided. Alternatively, if you have something you are working on and want to continue while having a natter and cuppa, please feel free to join. Crafting not your thing? You're still welcome to come along for a coffee and biscuits! 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

THURS
22

Bedford Branch Social with Talk from Home Instead



7.30pm



Free



Tonight's talk centres around Dementia: What it is, what it looks like and how you could support friends and family. Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9JB. Contact Em on 07970 793978.

SUN
25

Victoria Branch Trip to the Pumpkin Patch



12.30pm



£3 then cost
of pumpkins
on the day



Join us for a fun day out at the pumpkin patch! Bring your wellies, grab a wheelbarrow and set off to find the perfect pumpkin to take home. The Saxby's Cider Shop will be open and teas, coffees and soft drinks will be available to purchase.

Ticket: £3-£5 per car. Your ticket includes: Entry to the pumpkin patch. Parking for one car. Admission for all occupants of the vehicle. Pumpkins are not included in the ticket cost and can be purchased separately on the day. This is your arrival time only. Once inside, you are welcome to stay and enjoy the pumpkin patch for as long as you like. Come along and enjoy some autumn fun with family and friends!

Time subject to change slightly, but Maria will inform all attending of any changes. Book by Sunday 18 October. Saxbys Farm, Grange Farm, Irchester Road NN29 7HJ. Please let Maria know on 07932 529162 if you are coming as soon as possible, so tickets can be booked, as they book up quick.

October 2026

TUES
27

Grenville Branch Social Afternoon - Halloween Spooktacular



1.30pm



Free



Come and join us for a spooktacular afternoon of Branch Halloween fun. The afternoon will include: Halloween crafts - quiz, games. Tea or coffee will be served throughout the afternoon. All are welcome, so bring your family and friends along and enjoy a fun, relaxed afternoon celebrating Halloween together. We look forward to seeing you there for some Halloween fun! Buckingham Library, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.



THURS
29

Bedford Branch Lunch at The King William



12.30pm



As per
menu



At the heart of Kempston, The King William pub is everything a proper British pub should be, welcoming, full of character and proud to serve honest food and drink at great value. Join other Oddfellows for lunch - the light lunch menu offers two courses for £9.99 or three courses for £11.99. The King William, 56 High Street, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7AL. Please confirm your seat at the table by contacting Sarah on 07932 529205 by Monday 26 October.



October 2026

FRI
30

Victoria Branch Bowling and Lunch



11.30am



From £6



Get ready for a fun-filled social outing with a mix of friendly competition and great food! Join us for a relaxed and enjoyable bowling and lunch at Hollywood Bowl. Whether you're a bowling pro or just in it for the laughs, it's a fantastic way to get together, have fun and enjoy lunch. Bring your friends along and meet new people. It's all about good times and great company. From £6 per person. Pay on the day. Hollywood Bowl, 15 Whitworth Way, Wellingborough NN8 2EF. Let Maria know on 07932 529162 if you'd like to attend, so she can book a lane or two by Friday 23 October.

November

WED
04

Bedford Branch Brunch at the Fox & Duck



11.30am



As per menu



Join members and friends for a morning brew (and a cake if you fancy) at the new coffee shop local to the District Office in Wootton. Fox & Duck, 13 Bedford Road, Wootton, Bedford MK43 9JT. Let Sarah know on 07932 529205 if you fancy popping along.



THURS
05

Grenville Branch Lunch at The Grand Junction



12.15pm



As per menu



Members and friends - you're invited! Come along and join us for a lovely afternoon of good food, great company and plenty of conversation. Whether you're a regular member, a friend of the Branch, or simply fancy joining us for lunch, everyone is welcome! Come along, enjoy a delicious meal and spend some time catching up with friends. We'd love to see you there! Book by Monday 26 October. The Grand Junction, 13 High Street, Buckingham MK18 1NT. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

November

FRI **06** **Victoria Branch Games and Lunch**



11.30am



Free



Come along for a fun, friendly afternoon of games and lunch. Bring your own packed lunch and enjoy time socialising, playing games and having fun together. Tea or coffee will be available. Everyone is welcome, so why not bring a friend and join us for a relaxed and enjoyable afternoon? We look forward to seeing you there! Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

THURS **12** **Albert Branch Poplars Garden Centre for Coffee and Christmas Displays**



10am



As per menu



Meet at the entrance of the garden centre to have a look around the Christmas displays, before going to the café for a hot drink and natter. Don't fancy walking around the garden centre? Meet in the café at 10.30am. Poplars Garden Centre, Harlington Road, Toddington, Dunstable LU5 6HE. Please let Sam know on 07984 530287 if you are planning on coming.

MON **16** **Albert Branch Welcome Ceremony**



11am



Free



We are looking forward to holding a 'Welcome Ceremony' at Nuns Close and would love for as many of you to join us!

Any member who has joined the Society and is yet to attend their ceremony and hasn't yet received their pin badge is welcome. Followed by tea, coffee and cake in the lodge rooms. Book by Monday 9 November. 8 Nuns Close, Hitchin SG5 1EP.

Please let Sam know on 07984 530287 if you'd like to take part, so we can make sure we have enough badges to give out.

MON **09** **Victoria Branch - Ultimate Quiz Night**



7.30pm



Free



Join us for the ultimate quiz night. Put your knowledge to the test and enjoy a fun evening of quizzing, laughter and friendly competition. You can play as part of a team or enter on your own - everyone is welcome. Whether you're a quiz expert or just looking for a great evening out, come along and join the fun! We look forward to seeing you there. Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

November

WED 18 Bedford Branch Coffee Morning at Anna's Tearooms



10.30am



As per menu



Join us for a festive coffee morning at Anna's Tearooms at the Swan Hotel. They have a wide selection of teas and coffees, as well as home-made cakes. Parking is available free on site – just register your registration number at the hotel reception when you arrive. Book by Wednesday 11 November. Anna's Tearoom, The Bedford Swan Hotel, The Embankment, Bedford MK40 1RW. Contact Sarah on 07932 529205.

FRI 20 Victoria Branch Lunch at The Lilacs



12.30pm



As per menu



Come and enjoy a lovely lunch with friends at The Lilacs pub. Good food, good company and plenty of laughs to be had by all. Pre-order available, Maria will be in touch to see what you would like to eat. Book by Wednesday 11 November. The Lilacs, 39 Church Street, Isham, Kettering NN14 1HD. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.



TUES 24 Bedford Branch St Paul's Church Lunchtime Recital



1pm



Donation suggested of £5 per person



Join friends to listen to the lunchtime recital at St Paul's Church. This lunchtime, it is Nia Williams (Philharmonia Instrumental Fellow: cello). The recital starts at 1pm, following which we can go for a coffee. Book by Tuesday 17 November. St Paul's Church, St Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SQ. Please let Sarah know on 07932 529205 if you are coming, so she can look out for you.



November

TUES
24

Grenville Branch Social Afternoon - Beetle Drive



1.30pm



Free



Join us for a fun-filled afternoon of beetle drive! Come along for some friendly competition, plenty of laughs and a chance to spend a lovely afternoon with fellow members. Lots of fun and laughter, there will be refreshments. Prizes and friendly competition. Great company, whether you're a beetle drive expert or have never played before, everyone is welcome! Come along, roll the dice and see if you can create your beetle before everyone else! We'd love to see you there! Bring your competitive spirit and get ready for an afternoon of fun! Buckingham Library, Verney Close, Buckingham MK18 1JP. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

THURS
26

Bedford Branch - Christmas Festive Fun Evening



7.30pm



Free



Wear your best Christmas jumper/outfit/hat, bring a dish to share with others (list ingredients please, to avoid reactions by others). If you have a festive game to share with us all, that would be great too. Book by Thursday 19 November. Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9JB. Please contact Sarah on 07932 529205 or Em on 07970 793978, so we know if you are coming along, so that we can ensure sufficient mystery prizes!

Join the conversation @OddfellowsUK

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

Find us at



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December

THURS
03

Albert Branch Hitchin Garden Centre Visit and Coffee



11am



As per menu



Join us at Hitchin Garden Centre to enjoy the run up to Christmas, walking through their Christmas displays, followed by tea, cake and catch up in the café. Meet by the door leading inside the garden centre and please let Sam know if you are planning on coming along. Hitchin Garden Centre, Cambridge Road, Hitchin SG4 0JT. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

SAT
05

Bedford Branch Christmas Market and Christmas Tree Festival



10am



Entrance fee for
Tree Festival



Come and enjoy a little bit of Christmas with friends. We will meet outside Bedford Central Library at 10am before perusing the Christmas Market at the Harpur Suite, the Bedford Flea market in Harpur Square and then visiting St Paul's Church for the Christmas Tree Festival (a small entrance fee is charged, which goes to charity), finishing off with a drink at the café within St Paul's. Book by Saturday 28 November. Bedford Central Library, Harpur Street, Bedford MK40 1PG. Let Sarah know on 07932 529205 you are coming, as we do not want to leave anyone behind.



MON
07

Albert Branch Christmas Lunch at The Sun Hotel



12.30pm



As per
menu



Join us for a Christmas lunch at The Sun Hotel in Hitchin. Please let Sam know if you'd like to join by Tuesday 1 December, so we can reserve a table. The Sun Hotel, Sun Street, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1AF. Contact Sam on 07984 530287.

WED
09

Bedford Branch Dinner at The Grand India Restaurant



6.30pm



As per
menu



Join members and friends for dinner at The Grand India Restaurant. This restaurant is a family-run business, established in 1980. The menu offers a variety of authentic dishes, freshly prepared daily by their experienced chefs. The Grand India Restaurant, 39 Tavistock Street, Bedford MK40 2RB. Please let Sarah know on 07932 529205 to reserve you a seat at the table.





Albert Branch Christmas Tree Festival

**Friday 11 to Sunday 13
December at 3pm**

Come down to see this year's Christmas tree, which Albert Branch have decorated as part of the Christmas Tree Festival, along with many other beautifully decorated trees by local schools, companies and groups. Joined by carol singers and an onsite café with festive treats, it's a lovely festive outing. The event runs from Friday 11 to Sunday 13 December. Please note, Sam Johnson will not be attending this event, but would love to see your photos!

*Holy Saviour Church
Radcliffe Road
Hitchin
SG5 1QG*

Entry cost to be confirmed

**Call Sam for
more information on
07984 530287**



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December

SAT
12

Victoria Branch Christmas Lunch



12.30pm



As per
menu



Join us for a festive Christmas lunch, with great company and plenty of Christmas cheer. Pre-booking is essential, so please make sure you reserve your place in advance. We look forward to celebrating the festive season with you! Book by Thursday 3 December. Location to be confirmed. Please contact Maria on 07932 529162 to be added to the mailing list for more information.



MON
14

Victoria Branch Christmas Festive Evening



7.30pm



Free



Join us for a festive evening of Christmas fun at Finedon Independent Wesleyan Church! Enjoy a cheerful evening filled with: Christmas arts and crafts, fun and games, mince pies and festive treats. Come along and get into the Christmas spirit with friends, laughter and plenty of festive fun. Everyone is welcome, so bring your family and friends and join us for a wonderful Christmas evening. We look forward to seeing you there! Finedon Independent Wesleyan Chapel, Affleck Bridge, Finedon NN9 5LZ. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

WED
16

Grenville Branch Christmas Lunch at The Bell Hotel



12.30pm



As per menu



Join us for a festive Christmas lunch at The Bell Hotel and enjoy good food, great company and plenty of Christmas cheer. The Christmas menu will be released closer to the time. Pre-booking is essential, so please make sure you reserve your place in advance. We look forward to celebrating the festive season with you! Book by Wednesday 2 December. The Bell Hotel, Market Square, Winslow, Buckingham MK18 3AB. Contact Maria on 07932 529162.

District Branch Night – Business Meetings

Join members of the District for the monthly business meeting at 7.30pm. Followed by a cuppa and cake. This meeting is to discuss all aspects of the District, including care, welfare and finances. Everyone welcome. Kingston House, 106a Bedford Road, Wootton, Beds MK43 9JB. Or visit www.zoom.com. Zoom Meeting ID: 885 9332 6826. Passcode 149190. Contact Em on 07970 793978.

Tuesday 20 October

Tuesday 17 November



Victoria Branch Christmas Tree Festival

**Saturday 12 to Sunday
13 December at 10am**

We'd love for our members to join us at the Christmas Tree Festival, where we'll be proudly displaying our very own Oddfellows Christmas tree! Our tree will be on display on Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 December, giving you plenty of opportunity to come along, enjoy the festive atmosphere and see all the wonderful Christmas trees on display. Maria will be there on Sunday 13 December, so please come along and say hello! It would be lovely to see lots of our members and enjoy some festive Christmas cheer together. Come help us spread a little Christmas magic!

*Wellingborough United
Reformed Church
High Street
Wellingborough
NN8 4HW*

Small entry fee

**Call Maria for
more information on
07932 529162**



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District News



Ruth O'Rourke has been appointed as our Provincial Deputy Grand Master (Deputy Chairman) and is looking forward to working with Jackie Procter our Provincial Grand Master (Chairman) as the District Lodge continues to shape itself.



Brother Harper was presented with a District Merit Jewel in recognition of his efforts during the amalgamation and his continued support for Jackie as Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master (Immediate Past Chairman).

Panto 2026



Seats have been booked for Monday 28 December 2026, 2pm showing at Milton Keynes Theatre to see Sleeping Beauty. Junior members go free, the cost for the adult tickets is £42. Please contact the District office to book as soon as possible – if you haven't already.

Further good news is that following the formation of the new District Branch, we can now pay eligible members their claims online - we have almost 'binned' the cheque book!

A date to pencil in your new 2027 calendars and diaries is the District Branch Annual Summoned Meeting, which will be held on Saturday 17 April 2027.

On a more serious note, as with other organisations, we have a zero tolerance policy when it comes to all forms of abuse directed to staff and our many volunteers across the District. If there are any concerns, then please do contact the District office in the first instance.



One of our members, Trish, has sent us a photo of her view from her morning walks now that she is settled in Scotland.

Albert Branch News

Hello again everyone,

What a fun few months we have had! We had a great lunch at the Turkish restaurant and a brilliant turnout for brunch in Hitchin at our new daytime meet up time on the third Monday of the month - it was lovely seeing so many faces.

Friendship month is now wrapped up and we have enjoyed all our events, handing out goody bags and meeting lots of new

members. Photos to follow in the next Out and About.

And finally, Christmas prep is well underway. We will be back at the Christmas Tree Festival, holding a Christmas lunch and a couple of festive visits to garden centres, so please do come along!

See you all very soon,

Sam



Bedford Branch News

Oh, what a summer we have had!! With the hot weather, the coffee mornings at Peacocks Auction House have been well attended – a few hours with air conditioning, a good brew and of course, lots of laughter.

Looking forward, we are spreading our wings for coffee mornings, so do check the details carefully. Our festive coffee

morning will be at Anna's Tearoom again this year, please let Sarah know if you are wanting to join us.

The monthly social evening was moved to a Thursday evening for the summer months and talks from Co-op and Bob Ricketts were well received. Any suggestions for talks will be welcomed – just let Sarah know the details.

Grenville Branch News

We've had another lovely few months at Grenville, with plenty of opportunities to get together and enjoy each other's company.

Our recent jigsaw swap was extremely well attended and brought together lots of friendly faces for a relaxed and enjoyable morning. It was wonderful to see so many people taking part and sharing puzzles with one another. We also continue to enjoy our regular coffee mornings, which are always welcoming,

friendly and a great chance to catch up in a relaxed atmosphere.

A group of us recently went out for a meal together, which was a lovely opportunity to socialise and spend time together outside of our usual meetings. We are always pleased to welcome new members and look forward to seeing some new faces at our future events. If you would like to join us, we would be delighted to meet you.

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

Victoria Branch News

We've had an exciting few months, filled with laughter and good company. We have enjoyed several lunches and dinners together, and we also took a number of juniors bowling and to the cinema to watch Toy Story 5.

We were delighted to welcome a speaker, who gave a fascinating talk about the wildlife project at Rushden Lakes. Everyone learned just how much is happening there and gained a greater

appreciation for the work being carried out. In the coming months, we will be holding a jigsaw swap too, so there's plenty on offer to fill up your calendars!

We are looking forward to celebrating Halloween and Christmas with all our members over the next few months.

We always have lots of fun and warmly welcome new faces. If you would like to come along to any events, please contact Maria. We look forward to meeting you.

Interested in volunteering?

Helping others is at the heart of being an Oddfellow and that's exactly what our wonderful volunteers do. 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 refreshments
- 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.



To find out more, contact Em by phone on
07970 793978 or email emily.ellis@oddfellows.co.uk

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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 Em on **07970 793978** or email **emily.ellis@oddfellows.co.uk**

Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line

Call 0800 0149 821*

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm

Email: oddfellows@citizensadvicemanchester.org.uk



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

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

Care and Welfare Helpline

Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday to Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm, Friday, 9.30am - 4pm

Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

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

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

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Members take centre stage

Look out for some familiar faces this autumn!

Throughout October and November, the Oddfellows is running an upbeat new advertising campaign across the UK aimed at reaching the nation's retirees.

Built around the theme of 'real people, real joy, real experiences', the campaign shines a spotlight on the authentic friendships and shared laughter found within our local groups.

Member models

Members from Leeds, Derbyshire Peak, Mersey, Handforth and Altrincham, Mid-Staffordshire, Nottingham Trent, and Ormskirk and Southport Oddfellows all stepped forward to help.

They spent an exciting day at a professional studio shoot in Manchester working alongside an experienced production crew.

"It was such a fun day," said Andrea Jenner from Derbyshire Peak Oddfellows. "There was lots of laughter and interaction with Oddfellows from other areas."

Carol Pitchford from Leeds Oddfellows agreed, adding: "It was lovely to meet up with a crowd of strangers who then became friends."



Spreading the word

The adverts will be appearing on Facebook and Instagram, online via Rest Less and in upcoming print editions of Saga Magazine, Yours, and Woman's Weekly.

Spokesperson for the Oddfellows, Pam Casey, said: "We wanted the campaign to reflect the real people at the heart of our Society. Our groups are places where people can simply be themselves, enjoy real companionship, and feel genuinely supported."

How you can help

While we hope this campaign inspires more retirees to give us a try, as members, you're our best ambassadors. If you know someone who would benefit from our social events, travel opportunities or welfare support, please encourage them to head to www.oddfellows.co.uk/retirement to find out more.

Celebrating our 2026 Making a Difference Award winners

We are thrilled to announce this year's incredible Making a Difference Awards winners: Richard West of the Royal Berkshire Branch in the Reading District, and husband-and-wife duo Roger and Susan Williamson of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk District.

The Awards highlight the wonderful ways our members go above and beyond to ensure their branches are the best they can be for their fellow members.

Richard West: Reading's 'guardian angel'



Debbie Jex and Richard West

Presented with the 'Enriching Lives Socially' Award by Deputy Grand Master (Deputy Chair) Debbie Jex, 88-year-old Richard West helps to bring joy and positivity to his fellow members in all he does in organising and hosting social events.



Since joining the Reading District in 1992, Richard has worked tirelessly to build a varied and exciting social programme for his fellow members.

Alongside his late friend Doug Walters, Richard helped establish popular singing and exercise groups, and even relaunched a folded group in the nearby village of Pangbourne, which is now in its tenth year.

From coordinating monthly quizzes to organising glamorous annual trips to the Ascot Races, Richard pours his heart into everything he does.

For many, his efforts have been transformative. "We have a number of ladies who say the choir has become a lifeline for them," Richard shared. "I like seeing them enjoy themselves. You can see how it benefits them individually."

Debbie Jex is also Reading Oddfellows' Branch Secretary. She added: "I don't know where we'd be without Richard. His energy is boundless and his enthusiasm even more so. One member has even described him as a 'guardian angel'."

Roger and Susan Williamson: A wonderful team



(L to R) Roger Williamson,
Susan Williamson, John Mann
and Alison Schultz

The Oddfellows' Grand Master (Chair), John Mann, presented the 'Achieving Together' Award to Roger and Susan Williamson. Both in their 80s and Oddfellows members since 2008, the couple's commitment and kindness are renowned at their Branch.

Both take a seat on the King's Lynn Oddfellows' Committee of Management, ensuring members' voices are always at the heart of decision-making.

Roger, a Trustee and three-time Past Provincial Grand Master, hosts walks,

bingo sessions for up to 40 members, and a popular monthly quiz.

Meanwhile, Susan coordinates the kitchen, manages supplies, and runs the raffles.

The couple were incredibly modest about their win. "Initially, I thought it was a joke because the letter turned up on the first of April," laughed Roger.

Susan added: "We're only doing what anybody else would do, but it's nice to know that people appreciate it. To win the award together is special."

Branch Secretary Alison Schultz praised their selflessness, saying: "They offer friendship to so many in the way Oddfellows should, and treat everyone with consideration, kindness and compassion."

Shining examples

Richard, Roger and Susan are proof that our Society thrives because of the generosity and warmth of our members.

Thank you to all who go above and beyond to help and support others within their Branch.

You can find out more about
our Making a Difference Awards,
including previous years'
winners, at [www.oddfellows.co.uk/
makingadifference](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/makingadifference).

It's never too early to talk about money

At Unity Mutual, the Oddfellows' financial services brand, we believe it's never too early to talk to the young people in our lives about their finances.



Today's younger generations have a lot to consider, with rising costs, student debt and spending temptations online. Simple chats about saving, budgeting and planning ahead can help young people feel more confident about money as they grow and become more independent.

Passing on more than money

Helping younger family members financially is wonderful, but sharing knowledge can be even more valuable.

Explaining different saving tips, how debt works, or pensions and retirement, gives younger generations practical lessons they may not hear elsewhere. Even small conversations can leave a lasting impression.



Don't wait to save

One way to encourage good saving habits is through a Unity Mutual Junior ISA*, which allows children to start saving and is a great way to introduce them to finances and investment.

Opened by a parent or guardian, family and friends can contribute up to £9,000 per tax year, with any growth free from UK tax. All the money saved belongs to them and once they reach the age of 18 can be put towards things like university costs, driving lessons, or even a deposit on their first home.

Making money conversations normal

The best financial lessons are often the simplest ones. Talking openly about saving for goals, comparing prices, or handling debt helps children develop healthy habits. Younger family members are more likely to feel confident about money if the adults around them discuss it calmly and honestly.



To find out more about Unity Mutual and the products we offer, visit www.unitymutual.co.uk or call 0161 214 4650.

*Terms and conditions apply to all our products. Capital at risk with investment products.

At a glance

Orange♦ = Albert, Brown● = Bedford,
Blue■ = Grenville and Purple★ = Victoria

October 2026

■	Thurs 1	Grenville Branch Brunch and Coffee	11.30am
●	Sat 3	Bedford Branch - Croquet	10am
■	Tues 6	Grenville Branch Jigsaw Swap Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning	10am
●	Wed 7	Bedford Branch Coffee and Brunch at Emmaus Carlton	10.30am
♦	Thurs 8	Albert Branch Brunch at Rosso Lounge	11am
★	Mon 12	Victoria Branch Social Night - Halloween	7.30pm
♦	Tues 13	Albert Branch Coffee and Cake with Guest Speaker from LPA Made Simple	10.30am
●	Wed 14	Bedford Branch - Ageing Well Exhibition 2026	10am
★	Wed 14	Victoria Branch Jigsaw Swap	10.30am
★	Fri 16	Victoria Branch Lunch at The Miller Pub	12.30pm
♦	Mon 19	Albert Branch Craft Afternoon	12 noon
	Tues 20	5 Shires District Branch Night	7.30pm
■	Wed 21	Grenville Branch Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre	11am
★	Thurs 22	Victoria Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
●	Thurs 22	Bedford Branch Social with Talk from Home Instead	7.30pm
★	Sun 25	Victoria Branch Trip to the Pumpkin Patch	12.30pm
■	Tues 27	Grenville Branch Social Afternoon - Halloween Spooktacular	1.30pm
●	Thurs 29	Bedford Branch Lunch at The King William	12.30pm
★	Fri 30	Victoria Branch Bowling and Lunch	11.30am

November

■	Tues 3	Grenville Branch Jigsaw Swap Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning	10am
♦	Wed 4	Albert Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
●	Wed 4	Bedford Branch Brunch at the Fox & Duck	11.30am
■	Thurs 5	Grenville Branch Lunch at The Grand Junction	12.15pm
★	Fri 6	Victoria Branch Games and Lunch	11.30am
★	Mon 9	Victoria Branch - Ultimate Quiz Night	7.30pm
★	Wed 11	Victoria Branch Jigsaw Swap	10.30am
♦	Thurs 12	Albert Branch Poplars Garden Centre for Coffee and Christmas Displays	10am

At a glance

Orange♦ = Albert, Brown● = Bedford,
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November

♦ Mon 16	Albert Branch Welcome Ceremony	11am
Tues 17	5 Shires District Branch Night	7.30pm
● Wed 18	Bedford Branch Coffee Morning at Anna's Tearooms	10.30am
■ Wed 18	Grenville Branch Buckingham Nurseries and Garden Centre	11am
★ Fri 20	Victoria Branch Lunch at The Lilacs	12.30pm
● Tues 24	Bedford Branch St Paul's Church Lunchtime Recital	1pm
■ Tues 24	Grenville Branch Social Afternoon - Beetle Drive	1.30pm
♦ Wed 25	Albert Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
★ Wed 25	Victoria Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
● Thurs 26	Bedford Branch - Christmas Festive Fun Evening	7.30pm

December

■ Tues 1	Grenville Branch Jigsaw Swap Fundraiser and Drop in Coffee Morning	10am
♦ Thurs 3	Albert Branch Hitchin Garden Centre Visit and Coffee	11am
● Sat 5	Bedford Branch Christmas Market and Christmas Tree Festival	10am
♦ Mon 7	Albert Branch Christmas Lunch at The Sun Hotel	12.30pm
★ Wed 9	Victoria Branch Jigsaw Swap	10.30am
● Wed 9	Bedford Branch Dinner at The Grand India Restaurant	6.30pm
★ Thurs 10	Victoria Branch Coffee Morning	10.30am
♦ Fri 11	Albert Branch Christmas Tree Festival	3pm
★ Sat 12	Victoria Branch Christmas Tree Festival	10am
★ Sat 12	Victoria Branch Christmas Lunch	12.30pm
♦ Sat 12	Albert Branch Christmas Tree Festival	3pm
★ Sun 13	Victoria Branch Christmas Tree Festival	10am
♦ Sun 13	Albert Branch Christmas Tree Festival	3pm
★ Mon 14	Victoria Branch Christmas Festive Evening	7.30pm
♦ Wed 16	Albert Branch Festive Coffee Morning	10.30am
■ Wed 16	Grenville Branch Christmas Lunch at The Bell Hotel	12.30pm

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