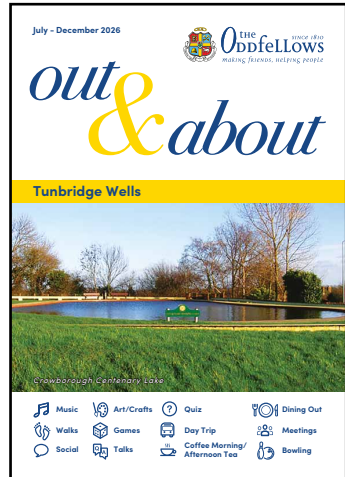


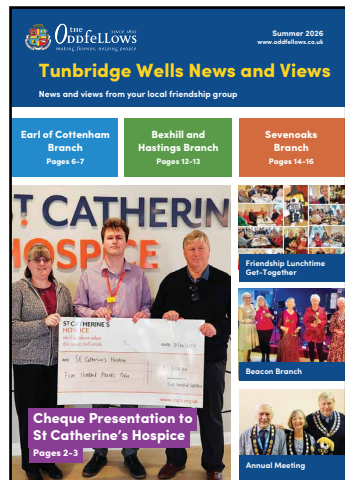
# Tunbridge Wells Out & About and News and Views

Please scroll down to the first page for Tunbridge Wells Out & About and page 17 for Tunbridge Wells News and Views

Please scroll to page 1 or click  
the link below  
[Tunbridge Wells Out & About](#)



Please scroll to page 17 or click  
the link below  
[Tunbridge Wells  
News and Views](#)



July - December 2026



O<sup>the</sup> **ODDFELLOWS** SINCE 1810  
making friends, helping people

# out & about

## Tunbridge Wells



*Crowborough Centenary Lake*



Music



Art/Crafts



Quiz



Dining Out



Walks



Games



Day Trip



Meetings



Social



Talks



Coffee Morning/  
Afternoon Tea



Bowling



*Friendship Ramble and Pub Lunch  
Saturday 19 September*

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

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

*Front cover: Simon Carey and licensed for reuse under the Creative Commons Licence.*

## Contact Details

**Tunbridge Wells Branch Office**  
**Branch Secretary: Karen Rose**

**Address:**

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

**Telephone:** 01342 324980

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

**Email:**

[karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk)

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

### Please Note

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

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

Find us at  [OddfellowsTunbridgeWells](https://www.facebook.com/OddfellowsTunbridgeWells)

# Branch venues and local contacts

## Beacon Branch

Crowborough Social Club,  
Croft Road  
Crowborough  
East Sussex  
TN6 1DL

**Contact:** Naz Mian

**Telephone:** 07905 472361

## Bexhill and Hastings Branch

RAFA Albatross Club  
15 Marina  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
East Sussex  
TN40 1JS

**Contact:** Margaret Walisko

**Telephone:** 01424 217243

## Earl of Cottenham Branch

The East Grinstead Ex-Service's  
Club  
4 Station Road  
East Grinstead  
West Sussex  
RH19 1DJ

**Contact:** Andy Mason

**Telephone:** 01342 317970

## Sevenoaks Branch

The Stanhope Arms  
Church Road  
Brasted  
Westerham  
Kent  
TN16 1HZ

**Contact:** Mike Hyde

**Telephone:** 07711 677683

## Tunbridge Wells Branch

Constitutional Club  
1 Sandrock Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent  
TN2 3PX

**Contact:** Karen Rose

**Telephone:** 01342 324980

## Weald Branch

Unfortunately, due to circumstances outside our control, meetings for Weald have been paused for the time being.

**Contact:** Mike Hyde

**Telephone:** 07711 677683

# Branch Meetings

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

# July 2026

## WED 01 I am a Taphophile - but they can't arrest me for it!

L 7.30pm    £ Free



Join us to welcome back Neil Sadler to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. A fascinating and informative presentation with Neil's customary humour and music about famous (and not so famous) people and their final resting places. Where is the most expensive, the most ostentatious and the weirdest mausoleum to visit in the world? Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 24 June. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



## WED 08 Barbecue and Ritual

L 7pm    £ Members £17  
Guests £24   

Join the Pride of the Valley and other members at 8pm for a scrumptious barbecue in the extensive private gardens of the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Sit back and enjoy a relaxing evening in the company of friends. Prior to the barbecue at 7pm, the Branch will be holding a welcoming and degree ceremony for any members who are interested in the ritual side of the Society. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 1 July. Payment is required in advance to secure your place for the barbecue. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



## MON 06 Inns of Court

L 11.30am    £ £5



The Branch will be joining Ian Bevan for a walking tour in the city. Legal London consists of the four Inns of Court in and around Holborn, the Strand and Fleet Street, where barristers have had their chambers since the 14th century. This walk describes the features of these historic parts of London and some of the characters who have frequented its courts and alleyways. Members are then free to find somewhere to eat at their own expense. Spaces are limited, so book early to avoid disappointment by Monday 22 June. Temple Station, Victoria Embankment, London WC2R 2PH. Email Karen to book your place [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Andy on 01342 317970.

# July 2026

TUES  
**14** Alison David

L 8pm

£ £5



The Beacon Branch are pleased to welcome Alison David to the Crowborough Social Club. Alison has a captivating voice with a huge repertoire of songs. She projects charisma and warmth to the audience through her powerful voice and bubbly personality. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 8 July. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.



SAT  
**25** The FOG

L 12.30pm

£ £5



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming back The FOG to the Albatross Club. The live band will perform a variety of hits from the 1960s. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 16 July. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Margaret on 01424 217243.



TUES  
**28** Ladies and Gentlemen, All 4 Engines have Failed...

L 7.45pm

£ Free



Join the Sevenoaks Branch in welcoming back Guy Bartlett to The Stanhope Arms. At 37,000 feet, one after another - and for no reason the crew could discover - all four engines on a British Airways 747 failed. With a crippled aircraft, the captain, Eric Moody, controlled the powerless jumbo jet, the co-pilot, Roger Greaves, sent out mayday calls and the flight engineer tried repeatedly to re-start the engines. What happened next is the stuff of fiction, except this time, it was for real. Refreshments will be provided. Book by Tuesday 21 July. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.



# August

## WED 05 Curiosities of the City of London (Part 1)

7.30pm £ Free



Join us to welcome back Stuart Robinson to the Tunbridge Wells



Constitutional Club. This talk will be about the lesser known buildings, people and events that are connected to the history of the City of London. Subjects will include a Roman resident, a monument to self sacrifice, public executions and a Victorian ghost. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 30 July. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

## SAT 29 An Actors Life for Me

12.30pm £ Free



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming Sue Parker-Nutley to the Albatross Club. Sue has been a professional actress for over 15 years, appearing in films, TV, theatre and many other acting disciplines. Her talk includes anecdotes, poems/monologues and a song or two to make you smile, laugh and reminisce. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 20 August. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Margaret on 01424 217243.



## TUES 11 Petanque and Barbecue

7pm £ Members £17, Guests £24



Join the Beacon Branch members to play petanque and attend a delicious barbecue in the picturesque garden of Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential. Payment



must be made in advance to confirm your place by Wednesday 5 August. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.

# September

**WED**  
**02** **Gordon's Secret Code Book**

 7.30pm  Free



Join us to welcome back John Griffiths-Colby to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. This is the follow on story from last year's talk on the Farmhouse and King Henry IX and the code book that was found there during the renovation. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 26 August. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

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

 12 noon  As per menu 

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

**TUES**  
**08** **Move Over Dali**

 8pm  £5



Everyone is welcome to join the Beacon Branch for an evening with Move Over Dali, an acoustic 'bluesabilly' pop band based in Kent. Their material is a mix of original songs and unusual covers in their own style. They are a mature lively band who have fun playing live and can be seen all over the South of the UK in pubs, clubs and parties. Refreshments will be provided by the Branch at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 2 September. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.

**Circle**  
**September for**  
**new friendships**



Who can you invite  
along to join in the  
friendship and fun?

**All welcome**

**ODDFELLOWS**  
**FRIENDSHIP MONTH**  
1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



To see what's on and find out more about Friendship Month visit [www.friendshipmonth.com](http://www.friendshipmonth.com)



# September

SAT  
19

## Friendship Ramble and Pub Lunch



10am



As per menu



The Earl of Cottenham Branch is organising a ramble in the Markbeech area. It will be a circular walk starting from The Kentish Horse in Markbeech and will take approximately two hours. Sturdy walking shoes are recommended as well as being relatively fit and agile for the stiles. A menu will be available should you wish to purchase your own

lunch. Booking is essential by Wednesday 9 September. The Kentish Horse, Cow Lane, Mark Beech, Edenbridge TN8 5NT. Please contact Karen to book your place on the walk and/or lunch at [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Andy on 01342 317970.



TUES  
22

## Duck Soup



7.45pm



£5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome back Nick Kelly (Duck Soup) to The Stanhope Arms. Nick is a talented and versatile multi-instrumentalist with 30 years experience playing in venues across Europe. He plays and sings a whole range of music styles, from skiffle, across the golden age of rock and roll, to favourites from the 70s, 80s and even a little later. Refreshments will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 15 September. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT  
26

## Stevie Bart



12.30pm



£5



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Stevie Bart to the Albatross Club. Stevie will provide us with a lunchtime of Rock 'n' Roll from Elvis to Shakin Stevens and everything in between to help us dance the time away. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 17 September. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Margaret on 01424 217243.



# September

## MON 28 Lunchtime Get-Together Crowborough



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Crowborough Social Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 22 September. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.

# October

## WED 07 Quiz



Come and join other members and test your general knowledge in Derek Fickling's quiz at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Derek's questions will include a range of topics such as television, entertainment, geography and history. Prizes will be awarded to the winners. The quiz will be followed by a buffet and the Branch meeting. Refreshments will also be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 30 September. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

# October

## TUES 13 Elvis Presley Tribute



Join the Beacon Branch in welcoming Andy King to the Crowborough Social Club. Andy will perform as Elvis and sing a variety of hits from the King's career. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 7 October. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.



## MON 19 Camping De-Luxe - Billy Butlin's Holiday Villages by the Sea



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch in welcoming back Kathryn Ferry to The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club. As author of the Official History of Butlin's, Kathryn is well-qualified to reveal the story behind one of Britain's best-loved holiday companies. This talk focuses on the early decades as entrepreneur Billy Butlin pursued his dream of offering affordable luxury to middle-income customers in the 1930s. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 12 October. Email Karen to book your place [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Andy on 01342 317970.

# October

## TUES 20 Lunchtime Get-Together Tunbridge Wells



12 noon



As per menu



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

## TUES 27 Side By Side



7.45pm



£5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome a new looking Side By Side back to The Stanhope Arms, Brasted. They will perform a variety of music through the decades to get us (and the staff and customers of the pub) singing and dancing along once again. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 20 October. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

## SUN 25 Spanish Sunday Lunch



1pm



Members £32, Guests £45



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch for a delicious tapas lunch at the family run La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar. Members will enjoy freshly prepared dishes and a warm atmosphere that will give them a sense of being on holiday in Spain. An early booking is essential due to the popularity of this excellent occasion and because places are limited. To secure your place payment should be made in advance to the Branch Office by Wednesday 14 October. La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, 194-200 London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1EY. Please contact Karen for further information and to book your place. Email [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 01342 324980.



# October

## SAT 31 The Life and Music of the Everly Brothers

L 12.30pm £ Free



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming Allan Paxton to the Albatross Club. The Everly Brothers were one of the most influential groups in the history of popular music. Their close, expressive harmonies set them apart and they produced some everlasting classic songs still played and remembered today. This talk will detail their life and times together, and some of the reasons they spent time apart, as well as highlighting several of their most memorable songs. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 22 October. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

# November

## WED 04 The Art of Surveillance

L 7.30pm £ Free



Join us to welcome Jools Lloyd to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Jools will give a fascinating insight into the world of surveillance, how it is used within a law-enforcement environment and include many of the difficulties encountered when following people. A very interesting 'behind-the-scenes' look at an aspect of detective work that although the public are widely aware of, little is actually known about. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 28 October. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

## TUES 10 Mark Brundall

L 8pm £ £5



The Beacon Branch is pleased to welcome back Mark Brundall. Sing and dance along to a night of live Rock and Ballads. Refreshments will be provided at The Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 4 November. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.



# November

## TUES 17 **Lunchtime Get-Together Tunbridge Wells**



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 11 November. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

## TUES 24 **An Actors Life for Me - Christmas Version**



Join the Sevenoaks Branch in welcoming back Sue Parker-Nutley to The Stanhope Arms. Sue has been a professional actress for over 15 years, appearing in films, TV, theatre and many other acting disciplines. Her Christmas talk includes anecdotes, poems/monologues and a song or two to make you smile, laugh, and reminisce. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 17 November. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

# December

## WED 02 **Beetle Drive**



Beetle Drive enthusiast Roy Wright invites you to join us at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club for an enjoyable and entertaining evening. A prize will be awarded to the winner. The fun and games will be followed by refreshments and the monthly Branch meeting. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 25 November. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



## SAT 05 **Christmas Lunch - Bexhill**



Join the Bexhill and Hastings Branch in the festive period for a tasty lunch. Venue still to be found. Menu and prices should be available in October. Payment and menu choices should be made no later than Wednesday 4 November to Karen at the Branch Office. Booking is essential. Please contact Solveig for further information and to book your place. Email [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

# December

TUES  
**08** Heartbeats



Join the Beacon Branch for an evening of entertainment with the Heartbeats. Recognised as one of Kent's premier 'Fifties/Sixties' bands, they entertain audiences of all ages with renditions of classic numbers, as well as a few lesser played, but instantly recognisable, tunes that are synonymous with an era of fabulous music and melody. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 2 December. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.

WED  
**16** Christmas Lunchtime  
Get-Together -  
Tunbridge Wells



Join us for a Christmas lunchtime get-together at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. You will be able to purchase your own Christmas lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Payment must be made in advance to secure your place. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 2 December. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

SAT  
**12** Christmas Lunch at High Rocks



Join friends for a delicious meal in beautiful surroundings at The High Rocks. Select your lunch from a menu offering tasty and seasonal food. Menu and prices will be available in October. Payments and menu choices should be sent in advance to Karen at the Branch office. All bookings and payments must be received by Tuesday 10 November. Booking is essential. The High Rocks, High Rocks Lane, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 9JJ. Please contact Karen for further details and to book your place, email [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 01342 324980.



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



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

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

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

There are lots of great reasons\* to join Young Oddfellows – to find out more, visit [www.oddfellows.co.uk/young-oddfellows](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/young-oddfellows)

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



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

**\*Terms and conditions apply to membership and financial benefits.  
Call 0800 028 1810 for details or visit [www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions)**

# At a glance

## July 2026

<b>Wed 1</b>	I am a Taphophile - but they can't arrest me for it!, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Mon 6</b>	Inns of Court, Temple Station, Victoria Embankment	11.30am
<b>Wed 8</b>	Barbecue and Ritual, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7pm
<b>Tues 14</b>	Alison David, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Sat 25</b>	The FOG, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
<b>Tues 28</b>	Ladies and Gentlemen, All 4 Engines have Failed..., The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm

## August

<b>Wed 5</b>	Curiosities of the City of London (Part 1), Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Tues 11</b>	Petanque and Barbecue, Crowborough Social Club	7pm
<b>Sat 29</b>	An Actors Life for Me, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

## September - Friendship Month

<b>Wed 2</b>	Gordon's Secret Code Book, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Tues 8</b>	Move Over Dali, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Tues 15</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
<b>Sat 19</b>	Friendship Ramble and Pub Lunch, The Kentish Horse, Mark Beech, Edenbridge	10am
<b>Tues 22</b>	Duck Soup, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
<b>Sat 26</b>	Stevie Bart, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
<b>Mon 28</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together, Crowborough Social Club	12 noon

## October

<b>Wed 7</b>	Quiz, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Tues 13</b>	Elvis Presley Tribute, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Mon 19</b>	Camping De-Luxe - Billy Butlin's Holiday Villages by the Sea, The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club	7.45pm
<b>Tues 20</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon

# At a glance

## October

<b>Sun 25</b>	Spanish Sunday Lunch, La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, East Grinstead	1pm
<b>Tues 27</b>	Side By Side, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
<b>Sat 31</b>	The Life and Music of the Everly Brothers, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

## November

<b>Wed 4</b>	The Art of Surveillance, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Tues 10</b>	Mark Brundall, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Tues 17</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
<b>Tues 24</b>	An Actors Life for Me - Christmas Version, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm

## December

<b>Wed 2</b>	Beetle Drive, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Sat 5</b>	Christmas Lunch - Bexhill, Location to be confirmed.	1pm
<b>Tues 8</b>	Heartbeats, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Sat 12</b>	Christmas Lunch, The High Rocks	1pm
<b>Wed 16</b>	Christmas Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12.30pm

Learn, have fun, and stay  
in touch from home

Our online events are here to stay



To see what's coming up visit [oddfellows.co.uk/events](https://oddfellows.co.uk/events) and enter 'Ayr' in the place name search box

OEM/0122SMALL



# Tunbridge Wells News and Views

News and views from your local friendship group

**Earl of Cottenham  
 Branch**  
 Pages 6-7

**Bexhill and  
 Hastings Branch**  
 Pages 12-13

**Sevenoaks  
 Branch**  
 Pages 14-16



**Friendship Lunchtime  
 Get-Together**



**Beacon Branch**



**Annual Meeting**

## Cheque Presentation to St Catherine's Hospice

Pages 2-3



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

### **A message from your Secretary**

Firstly, I would like to welcome our nineteen new members who joined since October. I do hope that you have settled in and are enjoying attending our varied social events and making new friends. It has been a busy time with thirty-five Face to Face events in the last six months including three Christmas lunches. Sadly, two of our events (Beetle Drive and a talk) in Tunbridge Wells had to be cancelled due to the water issues there.

The Events Diary for the second half of 2026 has been produced and again contains a variety of events including

### **Contact Details**

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

**District Secretary:** Dr Karen Rose

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

**T:** 01342 324980

**E:** [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk)

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

interesting talks, music, games and a walk, as well as plenty of lunchtime get-togethers and of course our Christmas lunches.

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

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

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

financial grants that are available should the need arise.

I have included a photo of myself and Andy Mason presenting a cheque to Jack Roberts at St Catherine's Hospice in April. The money was raised through our raffles in Tunbridge Wells. Andy had nominated them as one of his charities of the year.

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

**Karen**



*Karen, Jack and Andy.*

## REFER A FRIEND

# Share the love and make someone smile

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\*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](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/offers).

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## Friendship Lunchtime Get-Togethers

There have been three lunchtime get-togethers (October, November and February) at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club in the last six months plus a Christmas lunch in December. In October, twenty-three members and two guests enjoyed a lovely catch up with old and new friends accompanied with a drink and lovely food. Twenty-one members enjoyed a lovely lunch in November on a bright and frosty day. A great time was had by all. In February, thirty-three members and a guest attended on a lovely sunny day (for a change). Our mascot Oddity was there in his

Valentine's outfit. As usual lots of lovely food and drink. A great time with lots of catching up.

At each of the lunchtimes, members were able to purchase their own food varying from baked potatoes and poached salmon, to pies and lasagne, with the Branch paying for a drink. In December, the Club put on a two-course festive carvery for thirty-eight members and two guests that was very well received. Much fun and laughter was had by all present at each event. A raffle was also held each time for our Charities of the Year – St Catherine's Hospice and Compass Gardens, East Grinstead.



*Getting into the Friendship spirit.*

# The Farmhouse and King Henry IX

In October, thirty-eight members welcomed John Griffiths-Colby to the Constitutional Club. John spoke about the renovation of a derelict Somerset



*John Griffiths-Colby.*

farmhouse (Poplar Farm near Rooksbridge) by his sister-in-law in the 2010s which unearthed some artefacts belonging to the previous owners including a Civil Service briefcase with George VI insignia on it and containing documents, photos and an exercise book. That wasn't

the main surprise for the new owners who'd bought the house at auction. The surprise was that unknown to them, their families were already inextricably linked by the property to a joint history shared with the British Monarchy spanning 350 years from the 30 Years War in Europe to the 20th Century's largest sea battle at Jutland.

John showed the bizarre collision of three connected worlds through a single place on the Somerset Levels. The previous occupants of the house had borne witness to events that could so easily have created King Henry IX, changed the face of the Monarchy and modern history. John will return in September this year to provide more information on the exercise book that was found. A very interesting and well researched talk.

# The History of Champagne

In November, Peter Griffiths spoke to forty-one members at the Constitutional Club about the History of Champagne. He started off by saying that in his experience the best champagne is served cold, copious and free. His talk went on to debunk some of the myths about champagne, its origin and the part played by the monk, Dom Perignon. Peter took us on a journey from the early inadvertent sparkling wines, to the multi-national Champagne Houses of today, and spoke about how the wine, the making process and the taste

have changed over the years.

Some of the facts he gave us include: the earliest known fossil of a grape is about 80 million years old; an 8,000 year old earthenware jar was discovered in Tbilisi; and that the earliest champagne had a pink tinge (Pinot Noir grape). A very informative talk but unfortunately there were no free samples!



*Peter Griffiths.*

# Earl of Cottenham Branch

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

In October, twenty-six members listened to Pete Allen's talk on 'To Journey's End; The Life of RC Sherriff'. Pete, who is the Director of the RC Sherriff Trust, told us the story of how a shy insurance salesman and rowing coach from Hampton wrote one of the most moving and true accounts of life in the trenches of WW1. Journey's End was based on RC Sherriff's experiences as an army officer in the First World War. RC Sherriff enjoyed writing and went on to become one of the highest paid screenwriters in Hollywood helping create some of cinema's most memorable



*Pete Allen.*

films such as *The Invisible Man*; *The Four Feathers*; *Goodbye Mr Chips*, and *The Dam Busters*. In 2000, the National Theatre named 'Journey's End' one of the 100 greatest British plays of the 20th Century. A thoroughly informative talk.

At the end of October, thirty-seven members enjoyed a warm welcome at La Farola on a chilly day. The bar was full of people chatting and enjoying a drink before the tapas lunch. Cured ham, Manchego cheese, tuna salad, spicy potatoes, chicken, pork, whitebait and calamari was enjoyed along with French bread and some delicious wine. Dessert was either apple pie, lemon meringue or cheese and biscuits followed by tea or coffee. An excellent meal and venue with friends.

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



*La Farola.*

In February, twenty-three members heard Kathryn Ferry speak about 'The Old Convent'. In 1855, John Mason Neale, Warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead, created one of the earliest orders of



*Kathryn Ferry.*

Anglican nuns in Britain. A decade later work began on their Gothic-style convent to the designs of architect George Edmund Street. Kathryn told the story of how the Sisters of St Margaret overcame prejudice against their High Church beliefs to take their nursing and education mission across the globe. She also told us how the religious life gave Victorian women a unique outlet for their talents and how St Margaret's became a centre for girls' education as well as an internationally renowned school of ecclesiastical embroidery. A very interesting talk.

## Remembrance Sunday

On Sunday 9 November 2025, Oddfellows throughout the District remembered those who had lost their lives in the First World War and subsequent conflicts. A wreath was laid on behalf of the Branch by Andy Mason at the East Grinstead War memorial, and by Naz Mian at the Tunbridge Wells War memorial.



*Naz Mian.*

## The Roy Hill Shield

Maria Lemont was the 2025 winner of the prestigious shield by recruiting three new members. The presentation took place at our February Lunchtime get-together at the Constitutional Club. The shield is awarded annually to the person who recruits the most new members to the Branch. The trophy was purchased in memory of the late Roy Hill, a previous Secretary of the Tunbridge Wells District Lodge, who passed away in 2004.



*Maria Lemont and Andrew Stanhope with the shield.*

# Looking Back at Christmas



*Members enjoying their lunch.*

**Twenty members attended the Bexhill Christmas lunch at the Denbigh Inn at the beginning of December. Excellent food including garlic prawns, parfait or salad; followed by turkey, slow cooked beef or fish; with Christmas pudding, chocolate cup or brownie with ice cream for dessert. A raffle, organised by Solveig Stanhope, was also held that raised £40. As a result of the raffle and those held at Bexhill meetings, the Branch was able to send a cheque to St Michael's Hospice for £350 before Christmas.**

A week later, on a crisp, cold sunny lunchtime, sixty-four members enjoyed a three course meal with wine, crackers and drinks at the High Rocks in Tunbridge Wells. Along with the relaxed atmosphere and social occasion, a raffle for a hamper plus lots of other goodies was organised by Solveig Stanhope. A total of £133 was raised by the donation raffle with the proceeds going towards our charities of the year – St Catherine's Hospice, and Compass Gardens, East Grinstead.



*Members at High Rocks.*

# Online events with The Oddfellows – ‘Art Unscrewed’

Ruth Chambers started attending online Oddfellows events during lockdown when our usual face to face get togethers were halted overnight. The Oddfellows dealt with this as best it could by providing online options for things to do. These varied from keep fit to talks, and virtual coffee mornings. One of the options introduced was ‘Art Unscrewed’.

Ruth says – “This event has carried on post-Covid. It is a one hour paint-along event, attended at home by people online from far and wide. The ‘lesson’ is quite fast paced, but our teacher puts us at ease and says whatever we produce is fine! She does like to work in acrylics, and this is the first time I have used these. We have also been shown how to paint with sponges and credit cards! I have learnt so much from sharing these one hour



sessions with others. I find it absorbing and challenging. Over these last few years, I have also ended up meeting a few of my fellow ‘artists’ in person at training events.

I would like to urge others to give the online sessions a try, whether it be painting or something else. Especially if you cannot get to in person events as there is something to suit most people”.



*Ruth’s artwork.*

## Beacon Branch

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

In October, Andy T King, as Elvis, entertained fifty-four members and one guest. In the first half – between singing songs from Elvis’ early career – he told us of his rise to fame and how he starred in four movies. He spoke about how he met Priscilla in Germany during his army days and that Wooden Heart was dedicated to her. Andy covered a multitude of songs including Way Down, Treat me like a Fool, and Hound Dog, as well as various fast tracks which got everybody on the dance floor. Andy was brilliant at the shaking legs and moving hips and moved among the tables to sing directly to members! A brilliant evening was had by all.



*Andy T King.*

Forty-four members were entertained in November by two very personable young ladies who perform under the name ‘The Moxie Dolls’. For the first half, they sang a selection of well-known songs, dating

mainly from the 1940s, all with a strong flavour of the Andrews Sisters. Selections included In the Mood; Rum and Coca Cola; Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy, and Don’t Sit Under the Apple Tree. They closed the first half with We’ll Meet Again.

After a break, they sang a range of songs dating from a bit later than the 1940’s, including Night and Day; Jolene; Fly Me to the Moon; Hit the Road Jack; Crazy; Walking After Midnight, and Route 66, before finishing with I Will Survive. The evening was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone present.



*Moxie Dolls.*

In December, forty-six members and a guest enjoyed an evening of entertainment by The Heartbeats. As always, they got nearly everybody onto the dance floor with their rendition of everything including Kurt Veil (Jack the Knife), the Beatles and Elvis, before finishing with some lovely Christmas songs.



*Heartbeats.*

Our first event of 2026 saw Mark Brundall entertain thirty-seven members with hits from the decades. He performed songs from Elvis, Rick Astley, Wham, The Temptations, Cliff Richard and many more. Mark has a very powerful voice and got everyone up and dancing.



*Mark Brundall.*

musical journey from the 1950s right up to today's hits. A wonderful night of music, dancing and friendship.



*Jessica Louisa Collective.*

In February, The Heartbeats returned to entertain forty-five members at our Valentine's celebration. Roses were handed out by Naz to all and Solveig won a bouquet of red roses for her outfit. The music as usual was full of favourites from the Beatles, Elvis, The Hollies, The Eagles, The Drifters, Bee Gees and many more. A couple of line dances were also attempted! An energetic and enjoyable evening.

Forty-four members were treated to the wonderful sounds of the Jessica Louisa Collective in March. Jessica had everyone tapping their feet as she sang a fantastic mix of classics whilst taking us on a

In January, a lovely and chatty lunch was attended by fourteen members who enjoyed paté or prawn cocktail, followed by salmon or beef pie, with fresh fruit salad or ice cream for dessert. The lunches are really good value for money and everyone enjoyed themselves.



*Members enjoying lunchtime friendship.*



*Members with their roses.*

# Bexhill and Hastings Branch

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

Twenty-four members and three guests were entertained with a talk by Trevor Weeks of the Wildlife Rescue and Ambulance Service (WRAS) in October. The work of the WRAS

mainly involves rescuing animals who have got caught up in items that people have left lying around, like wire and rope. Their job can be quite dangerous, especially with frightened deer or foxes.

In January, twenty-four members heard Jonathan Ramsden, Communication and Education officer, talk about the history of Cats Protection and what they do today. The charity was founded in 1927 by Jessie Wade. One million households



*Trevor Weeks.*



*Jonathan Ramsden.*

in Britain have pets and an annual survey shows that having a cat will help with stress, cardiovascular problems and companionship. In 2024, Cats Protection helped 191,000 cats mainly through rehoming or neutering. They have 32 cat centres, the nearest to us being Hailsham or Chelwood Gate, and employ 1,000 staff and have 10,000 volunteers. Compulsory chipping came into force in 2024 which makes it easier to return missing cats. One cat jumped on a coach and ended up in Yorkshire! An interesting talk.

Twenty members and three guests attended the talk by Kevin Gordon about the Crumbles Murders in February. In 1920, the 17 year old Irene Violet Monro from



*Kevin Gordon.*

London was killed by two young men William Gray and Jack Field. A young boy on holiday with his mother was playing on the beach and found an exposed foot. The two men had taken out credit at a pub and came back in the evening and paid from a ladies purse. Both men were executed and blame each other but two spades were found near the body.

In 1924, another woman was murdered by Patrick Mahon, a married Irishman, who had several affairs. He promised to marry Emily Beilby Kaye and bought her an

engagement ring (with money stolen from her) and rented a cottage in the Crumbles. His wife found a locker ticket and the police found a saw, knives and bloodstained clothing within a Gladstone bag. Mahon was arrested and eventually confessed but insisted that Emily had hit her head and died. In fact, he had sawn her head off and burnt it in the fire. Bones and body parts were found in trunks in the cottage. The original owner of the cottage charged people 6d to look around the property, which became a popular tourist attraction! Mahon was found guilty and executed. An interesting but gruesome talk.

In March, eighteen members and two guests enjoyed Derek Fickling's quiz. In fact, Derek thought the quiz wasn't hard

enough as the winner, Debbie Gillan, got 33 points (out of 40), and the runner up, Rod Page, 32 points. There were 4 tying for third place with 30 points: Andy Smith, Stella Matthews, Sue Fickling and Solveig Stanhope. Many thanks to Derek for running the quiz.



*Oddity helping Derek with the quiz.*

## Annual Meeting

**In March at the Annual Meeting, Andy Mason was thanked by thirty-seven members for his successful year in office as Provincial Grand Master (District Lodge Chairman). It was also reported that a total of £808 had been raised through the monthly raffles and High Rocks raffle for Andy's nominated charities of the year – St Catherine's Hospice, and Compass Gardens, East Grinstead. This amount was topped up by the Branch to £1,000.**

Andrew Stanhope succeeds Andy in this position and Solveig Stanhope became Provincial Deputy Grand Master. Andrew has nominated Aspens (formerly Pepenbury) as his charity of the year.



*Andrew, Solveig and Andy plus Oddity.*

Also at the meeting, donations of £300 were awarded to each of the following charities: Crowborough Healthy Walking Group; Kit Wilson Trust; Buckhurst District Girl Guides; High Weald Swifts; Crowborough for Young People Ltd; and the Sporting Memories Café, Tonbridge Angels Foundation.

## Sevenoaks Branch

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

What a treat twenty members and a guest had in October.

They had a visit from the very talented multi-instrumentalist Nick Kelly, who performs under the name Duck



*Nick Kelly.*

Soup. All of the instruments, including those on the backing tracks he used, were played by him. And he gave us a wide range of songs that were, literally, music to our ears with many tunes that were new to our evening entertainment – Folsom Prison Blues; Foot Tapper and Apache from the Shadows; Oh Well and Albatross from Fleetwood Mac; My Old Man’s a Dustman and Putting on the Style (Lonnie Donegan); some George Formby, and You Never Can Tell from the film Pulp Fiction, as well as many other sing along and dance-to songs. What a thoroughly entertaining evening we had.

In November, eighteen members listened to Sue Parker-Nutley talk about her life as, in her own words, a jobbing actress. She gave us a one-woman show, with a range of songs, poems, anecdotes, and details

about life as an extra in film and television. She told of what is required in an audition, and what the rate of success is (roughly one audition from fifty applications and one role from fifty auditions), together with the going rate for an “extra” (enough for a weekend mini-break!).

Commercials have castings rather than auditions. They pay better, but sometimes it is, for example, just your hands that get to the screen. Some of her adverts have been fairly memorable – Wonga, Alton



*Sue Parker-Nutley.*

Towers, LIV golf tournament, various other 60 second commercials. She also does work on training films, murder mystery weekends, Fringe theatre, but very few feature films actually get released to the cinema these days.

Her poems included Albert and the Lion (remembered by some from long ago) and a few by Pam Ayres. As well as some simple songs to join in with, including I do like to be beside the seaside! Sue finished with an impression of making a Christmas cake whilst getting drunk.

Our ‘ukulele-bashing’ friend appeared in January, to once again give eighteen members an evening of dancing, singing and general involvement. Each time Rob Tompsett has appeared for us over the last

couple of years, he has proved to be one of the best at reading his audience and really giving them what they enjoy most. He is a great audience pleaser with a collection of songs that go down with us very well. He started with Another Saturday Night, and included Walk of Life, Brown Eyed Girl, Picture of You (Joe Brown), When My Little Girl is Smiling, Runaway, Halfway to Paradise, YMCA and so many more. Possibly the best evening in the first half of the year.



*Rob Tompsett.*

Boxers, Bandits and a Blind Beggar, a history of Bethnal Green, was presented to twenty-five members by one of our favourite speakers, Ian Bevan, in February. And, as



*Ian Bevan.*

usual it was a very thoroughly researched and well-presented talk that could not fail to be totally fascinating and absorbing.

Bethnal Green was one of 21 villages east of the Tower of London that now make up Tower Hamlets; it was probably named after a Saxon chief. In the 17th century it was the place to live outside London; Samuel Pepys and his friends lived there. In the 18th Century an influx of Huguenots arrived from France and it became the

centre for silk weaving. Then Jewish business people arrived from Spain and Portugal giving it a name for tailoring. The end of the 18th and into the 19th century saw Irish immigrants arriving in numbers.

The area became much poorer, and poverty and child mortality became common. Many wealthy people tried to assist; notably Angela Burdett-Coutts, a British philanthropist, who became one of the wealthiest women in England when she inherited her grandfather's banking fortune, contributed much (as she did across London). She had built a covered market to replace street trading, Columbia Market, and Columbia Building for very poor residents. Victoria Park, opened in 1842, was one of the very first public parks.

Bethnal Green became a London borough in 1910, before it eventually became Tower Hamlets. It had marches and riots around the Black Shirts in the 1930s. Its new and unopened tube station was used as a war time shelter; it contained a theatre, a library, etc. But it became the scene of 176 deaths in 1943 when air raid sirens caused a stampede. This was covered up at the time, and only became known about much later. In the 1950s the area was largely derelict from bombing in the war. More recently it has become a centre for Bangladeshi residents.

There is a tradition of boxing there. York Hall, still functioning today, is known worldwide as a prestigious centre for boxing. And two well-known boxers, at the nearby Repton Club, were the Cray twins!

*Continued on the next page...*

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Peter Borthwick returned to the Stanhope Arms in March to give the next instalment of his talk 'Are We Alone?' to eighteen members. This time it was much more about talking through some unusual theories and possibilities that, although very hard to accept fully, come into the 'but what if this maybe did happen' category.



Questions included why were the Babylonians so very advanced culturally? Why does the Hindu religion reference weapons of mass destruction? How does every civilisation that has existed have

records of very significant floods? He also highlighted the strange coincidences of the moon being exactly the right size and distance away for eclipses to be total, and for it to be rotating and circumnavigating the earth exactly in tune to prevent the far side from ever being seen from earth.

Peter talked through some of the still unexplained experiences of astronauts (like the knocking on the outside of the craft heard by Yang Liwei, the first Chinese astronaut). And the many experienced by people on Earth. And the fact that astronomers are searching for a hypothetical massive ninth planet that is suspected to exist based on the unusual orbital clustering of very distant icy orbits. And, just to add some unwarranted spookiness to the proceedings, the dimmed lights in the pub's dining room faded in and out throughout!

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## 2025 West End Productions

In February, Louise Ryrie spoke to thirty-nine members and a guest at the Constitutional Club about her life and the shows she reviewed in 2025. Louise has been a seasoned classical ballet teacher for the last 30 years (including running her own ballet school), and is also a Pilates instructor. She now writes for publications like Pointe Magazine, produces musical stage productions, and reviews performances. Louise took us through her career and the obstacles that she has faced and then explained how she got into writing reviews on West End

productions. In 2025, she reviewed about 40 performances. Her personal top three shows last year were Giselle (performed by the national ballet of Japan); Jane Eyre (by the Northern Ballet company); and The Midnight Bell by Matthew Bourne. A very interesting insight into the life of a production reviewer.



*Louise Ryrie.*

## Lockerbie and Other Airline Bombings

In April, John Wyatt returned to the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells to speak to thirty-seven members and two guests about his key role in carrying out the explosive tests for the 'Lockerbie Bombing' Appeal. This resulted in a number of startling revelations which never became public due to Al Megrahi being released on compassionate grounds before the forensic evidence came to court.

On the evening of 21 December 1988, 31,000 feet above the small Scottish town of Lockerbie, Pan Am Flight 103 on a regular scheduled transatlantic flight bound for New York, was destroyed by a powerful mid-air explosion, killing all 259 passengers and crew and 11 people on the ground in Lockerbie. 10,000 pieces

of debris from the explosion was spread over 2,000 sq miles.

John took us through the events of that night and the subsequent investigation and tests carried out in America as well as his own series of tests. He spoke about facts rather than theory. He then went on to talk about the 'Shoe Bomber', Richard Reid, who was travelling from Paris to Miami on 22 December 2001. Also, the 'Crutch Bomber', Umar Farouk Abdulmutallub, 25 December 2009, where John got to blow up a 747 for the TV programme 'How Safe are our Skies' to replicate the bomb. A very interesting and thought-provoking talk.



*John Wyatt.*

## Weald Branch

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

In November, nineteen members were fortunate once again to see the Rebel Strings. Whenever we have had them (or their larger group the Smokin Mojos) perform for us, they have never failed to entertain – and this was no exception. This time they played a very different group of tunes from previously, including Bruce Springsteen (The Streets of Philadelphia and Dancing in the Dark), Paul Weller, Wild World, and then some about Life – The Time of your Life, The Best Days of my Life, and finishing with Dire Straits' Walk Of Life.



*Rebel Strings.*

January saw the very welcome return of Alpaco Country, one of our ever-popular bands. Twenty-three members enjoyed a collection that included songs from The Mavericks, Neil Sedaka, The Woolpackers! (Hillbilly Rock), The Drifters, Chris Rea, Eric Clapton, Jerry Lee Lewis and many

more. And the seldom heard There's a Guy Works Down the Chip Shop! It was a very enjoyable, and energetic, evening for all.



*Alpaco Country.*

We were due to see Not King Cole in February, but due to some very inclement weather in the north of the British Isles and him being stuck in the Shetlands, he was unable to appear. Instead, the duo from Bexhill, Unstable Cliffs, stepped heroically into the breach, and performed magnificently for twenty-five members. They provided many tunes to dance to (and foolishly saying they would be happy to appear at short notice). And dance we did! This time they played Steamy Windows, Honkytonk Women, Wonderful Tonight, Old Time Rock and Roll, Life Goes On, Another Brick in the Wall and many more. And they seem to enjoy themselves as much as we do.



*Unstable Cliffs.*

In March, Delia Taylor told twenty-three members the story of Ian Fleming. He was born in 1908 into a moneyed family, lived



*Delia Taylor with Mike Hyde.*

for the first 6 years on a landed estate, had a brother that married Celia Johnson, and a grandfather that co-founded Flemings Bank. His pet name for his mother was .... M! Although he attended some prestigious schools, he was not good at studying, so was sent to Sandhurst Royal Military Academy, where he also failed.

He was sent to Austria where he found a talent for languages and became a reporter. As such he went to Russia and managed to claim an interview with Stalin, in Russian! During WWII, he prospered. Ian worked at Bletchley Park, liaised with codebreakers including Alan Turing and the Enigma Machine, and was asked by the president of America to set up a department in the US that became the CIA. He met Dusko Popov, a spy who inspired James Bond and Casino Royale. Operation Mincemeat

came from a paper that Fleming wrote explaining a way to misdirect the Germans before the Allied landings in Sicily. He oversaw the distribution of information for Operation Overlord. His wife Muriel died quite young but became immortalised as Miss Moneypenny.

Then followed his life as a writer. Working as a correspondent for the Sunday Times he negotiated a three month annual holiday during which he went to Jamaica, to Goldeneye. Several affairs followed and many books were written. Yet he still found time to advise John F Kennedy on the handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

James Bond was the name of someone that had written a book on Jamaican bird life, 007 was the bus route he used to travel on to London from Kent, many of his villains were named after school classmates that he didn't like. He wrote 16 books in 16 years, amending Bond's history to give him Scottish ancestry after Sean Connery got the film role (after nine others turned down the role). He wrote Chitty Chitty Bang Bang for his son Casper after being accused of thinking more of James Bond than his own son. Over 100 million of his books have now been sold worldwide.

## 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  [OddfellowsTunbridgeWells](#)

## Oddies autumn getaway to Llandudno

**Join us as we take a trip to Llandudno, North Wales, on an Oddfellows-hosted group holiday with Alfa Travel.**

Oddfellows members and guests will take in some breathtaking scenery during a four-night stay at the Hydro Hotel from Saturday 26 September to Wednesday 30 September 2026.

From £369 per person, half board, the price includes coach pick up and drop off from locations across the South East via Reading, or a self-arrival option.



### Outstanding natural beauty

Two optional day trips are included in the price of the holiday.

On day two, you'll head by coach to the Isle of Anglesey, where the entire coastline has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. You'll call at the seaside town of Beaumaris with its mix of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings.

On day four, the second day trip will head to Caernarfon, home to Wales' most famous castle and a UNESCO World

Heritage Site. Afterwards, you'll venture into the Snowdonia National Park, calling at Llanberis, situated at the foot of Mount Snowdon, and Porthmadog.

### Relax in great company

We'll be organising some group drinks and times to dine together during the stay, and enjoying the hotel's evening entertainment, but your days will be largely free to plan as you please.

The hotel has a large entertainment suite with a dance floor and entertainment most evenings, and there are sun lounges and a games room with a snooker table.

You'll also find spectacular views over the bay or over the town to the Snowdonia mountain range from many of the hotel's bedrooms and from its Looking Glass Bar.

### Interested in joining us?

This group holiday is open to any members and their guests and will be hosted by our Oddfellows Travel coordinator and South East Lancashire Branch member, Emma Gorst.

For any enquiries, and to find out how to book, get in touch with Emma by calling **0161 214 4634**, or email [travel@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:travel@oddfellows.co.uk).

Please read and understand Alfa Travel's terms and conditions before booking at [www.alfaholidays.co.uk/booking-conditions](http://www.alfaholidays.co.uk/booking-conditions).

## Spring clean your finances for the new tax year

**The start of the new tax year on Monday 6 April might sound like an event reserved for accountants, but at Unity Mutual, the Oddfellows' financial services brand, we believe it's a time everyone can make the most of.**

Here are some simple ways to spring clean your finances and get on top of your money for the tax year ahead.

### Make the most of your ISA

Every adult receives a fresh £20,000 ISA allowance at the beginning of each tax year, so if your savings are lying dormant, why not move them somewhere your interest is protected from tax?



For those comfortable with investment risk, the Unity Mutual Stocks and Shares Flexible ISA\* offers potentially higher growth than traditional Cash ISAs (capital is at risk).

### Guaranteed returns, less hassle

If you have a lump sum sitting idle or an investment coming to maturity, a Unity

Mutual Fixed Rate Bond\* provides a predictable, low-effort option. Simply deposit your money for a set term to secure a guaranteed return.

Even better, Oddfellows members benefit from preferential rates on our 2, 3, and 5-year Bonds.

### Make savings work harder

With many banks still offering low rates, a quick comparison is essential to ensure your money is working for you. Even moving savings to a higher-interest account with your current provider can significantly boost your balance over the year.

### Find out more

Unity Mutual has over 200 years of experience managing Oddfellows members' funds, and our friendly team is on hand to help you navigate the year ahead. Visit [www.unitymutual.co.uk](http://www.unitymutual.co.uk) to find out more.

*\*Terms and conditions apply to all products. With stocks and shares, your investment can go down as well as up meaning your capital is at risk.*

### New tax year, new scams

Stay vigilant against common scams such as fake HMRC tax rebates or urgent payment requests for 'unpaid tax'. While these communications can look genuine, always verify them by going directly to the official government website.

## Support with fundraising and donations

**Donating to good causes is a cornerstone of Oddfellowship, and symbolises what it is all about – helping to improve lives through friendship and support.**

It's a thread that runs right through every Branch of the Society. Whether it's members dropping some spare change into a collection at a coffee morning, or the HA Andrews Memorial Fund supporting cutting-edge medical research projects, it all adds up and contributes to that ethos.

### Branch donations add up to huge 2025 total



Reading Oddfellows donated £4,300 to Camp Mohawk

Oddfellows branches and members are avid fundraisers. In 2025, more than £148,000 was handed over to a huge range of wonderful causes throughout the country.

Beneficiaries included schools, charities for people with special needs, animal sanctuaries, causes to improve health conditions, lifeboat and air ambulance

charities, and one branch provided the funds required to buy state-of-the-art medical equipment.

As well as handing over funds, many members bought and collected for foodbanks, including tinned goods and other long-life foods, toiletries and further everyday items.

To find out how you can get involved with Branch fundraising initiatives, speak to your Branch Secretary.

### £10,000 raised for Hurricane Melissa relief efforts

The Oddfellows recently donated £10,000 to support the Jamaica Red Cross' Hurricane Melissa Emergency Appeal.

Thanks to the generosity of Oddfellows branches across the UK, and with additional support from central funds, the donation will help communities affected by the devastating storm rebuild their lives.

Hurricane Melissa, a Category 5 hurricane, made landfall in Jamaica on 28 October 2025. The strongest hurricane ever to strike the island, it caused catastrophic damage and impacted nearly 1.9 million people.

The funds have been sent to the Jamaica Red Cross, via the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), to support ongoing emergency relief and recovery efforts. This includes providing essential supplies, shelter, and longer-term assistance to those whose homes and livelihoods were affected.



Further information about the Jamaica Red Cross' Hurricane Melissa Emergency Appeal can be found at [www.ifrc.org/emergency/jamaica-hurricane-melissa](http://www.ifrc.org/emergency/jamaica-hurricane-melissa).

### HA Andrews Memorial Fund recipient announced

In October 2025, representatives of the Oddfellows visited the impressive facilities at the Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC) to present a cheque for £67,068 to Prevent Breast Cancer, courtesy of our HA Andrews Memorial Fund.

The money will fund an innovative breast cancer prevention research project for two years.

Carried out by University of Manchester PhD student Anthony Wilby and Dr Hannah Harrison, the project is aiming to discover alternative preventative breast cancer therapies for pre-menopausal women.

The HA Andrews Memorial Fund, which was set up in 1971 to back UK-based medical research projects and organisations, has donated over £1.1m

since its launch. Head to [www.oddfellows.co.uk/ha-andrews](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/ha-andrews) to find out more about the Fund, including previous recipients.

### The very best of Oddfellowship

Spokesperson for the Oddfellows, Pam Casey (pictured below at MCRC), said: "The work the Oddfellows does for charities and good causes always astounds me. It reflects the very best of Oddfellowship and it makes me incredibly proud.

"Donating to good causes, no matter how big or small, or how much we can contribute, can make a huge difference. Our efforts might well have saved a life, put some food on a young family's table, or simply have made someone's day a little brighter.

"Thank you to everyone who has helped in any way. You're all a huge credit to yourselves and the Society."



For more on how the Oddfellows raises money for good causes, visit [www.oddfellows.co.uk/about/giving-back](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/about/giving-back)

# Oddfellows Members: Do you need help?



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

## Local Care and Welfare Support

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

## Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line

**Call 0800 0149 821\***

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

Monday - Friday, 9.30am - 4.30pm

**Email:** [oddfellows@citizensadvicemanchester.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits/care)  
for care and welfare information

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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.  
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