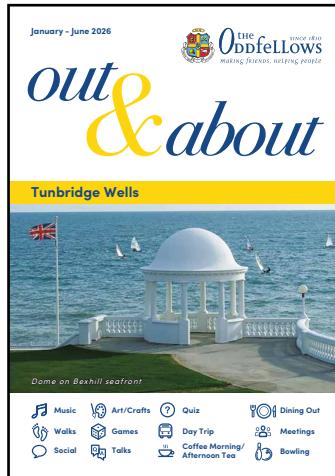


# Tunbridge Wells Out & About and News and Views

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Please scroll to page 1 or click the link below

[Tunbridge Wells Out & About](#)



Please scroll to page 21 or click the link below

[Tunbridge Wells News and Views](#)



January - June 2026



# out & about

## Tunbridge Wells



Dome on Bexhill seafront

	Music		Art/Crafts		Quiz		Dining Out
	Walks		Games		Day Trip		Meetings
	Social		Talks		Coffee Morning/ Afternoon Tea		Bowling



*Sunday Lunch at La Farola*  
Sunday 22 March 2026

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

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

## Contact Details

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

**Address:**

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

**Telephone:** 01342 324980

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

**Email:**

[karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](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.

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Find us at  [OddfellowsTunbridgeWells](#)

# Branch venues and local contacts

## Beacon Branch

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

**Contact:** Naz Mian

**Telephone:** 07905 472361

## Bexhill and Hastings Branch

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

**Contact:** Margaret Walisko

**Telephone:** 01424 217243

## Earl of Cottenham Branch

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

**Contact:** Andy Mason

**Telephone:** 01342 317970

## Sevenoaks Branch

The 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

The Cherry Tree  
Dale Hill  
Ticehurst  
East Sussex  
TN5 7DG

**Contact:** Mike Hyde

**Telephone:** 07711 677683

# Branch Meetings

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

# January 2026

TUES  
13

## Mark Brundall



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 Friday 9 January. 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

## Alpaco Country



8pm



£5



The Weald Branch is pleased to welcome back Alpaco Country, a mature three piece local band who play music by a variety of bands from Johnny Cash to George Strait and Merle Haggard to Alan Jackson. Refreshments will be provided at The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 13 January. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.



WED  
14

## Natural History of New Zealand



7.30pm



Free



Join us to welcome back Geoff Collins to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Geoff has previously spoken to us about Amy Johnson, but this time he will take us on a tour to New Zealand. Geoff's talk will include a powerpoint presentation. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 9 January. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



MON  
26

## Lunchtime Get-Together Crowborough



12 noon



As per menu



Join us for a lunchtime get-together at the Crowborough Social Club. You will be able to purchase your own lunch at the club. Come along and meet other members for a chat. Everyone is welcome, so please bring along your friends. A drink will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 21 January. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.

# January 2026 February

TUES  
27

## Vocal and Ukelele Bashing Entertainer



7.45pm



£5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome Rob Tompsett to The Stanhope Arms. Rob will be playing many well-known sing-along tunes on his electric ukulele. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 21 January. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.



MON  
02

## Not King Cole



8pm



£5



Join the Weald Branch in welcoming Not King Cole to The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. A very popular local singer with 20 years experience singing the songs of Neil Diamond, Robbie Williams, and Michael Buble, as well as Nat, Dean, Frank and many others. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 28 January. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.



SAT  
31  
JAN

## Cats Protection



12.30pm



Free



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming Jonathan Ramsden to the Albatross Club. Jonathan will talk about the history of the Cats Protection that began in 1927, how they help cats and their owners through rehoming, as well as a range of other services from education in schools and colleges to grief support for pet owners. Of course there will also be plenty of stories about the wonderful cats they have helped along the way! Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 23 January. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



# February

WED  
04

## 2025 West End Production Reviews



7.30pm



Free



Join us to welcome Louise Ryrie to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Louise will talk about all the good and the bad bits from a year of production reviews in London's West End, from the Royal Ballet and Matthew Bourne, to Bat Out of Hell, Little Women, and the Anne Boleyn Musical. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 30 January. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

TUES  
10

## Heartbeats



8pm



£5



Join the Beacon Branch for an evening of entertainment with the Heartbeats. Recognised as one of Kent's premier 'Fifties/Sixties' bands, they entertain audiences of all ages with renditions of classic numbers, as well as a few lesser played, but instantly recognisable, tunes that are synonymous with an era of fabulous music and melody. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 6 February. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.

MON  
16

## The Old Convent



7.45pm



Free



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch in welcoming Kathryn Ferry to the Ex-Services Club in East Grinstead. In 1855, John Mason Neale, Warden of Sackville College, East Grinstead, created one of the earliest orders of Anglican nuns in Britain. A decade later work began on their Gothic-style convent. This lecture tells 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. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 9 February. Email Karen to book your place [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Andy on 01342 317970.



# February

TUES  
17

## 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 Thursday 12 February. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



SAT  
28

## The Crumbles Murders



12.30pm



Free



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Kevin Gordon to the Albatross Club. Within the space of four years (1920 to 1924), two dreadful murders rocked the genteel seaside town of Eastbourne and indeed the rest of the UK. The victims, two young women from London, were both murdered in the lonely shingle area to the east of the town known as The Crumbles. Kevin will be revealing details of the crime. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 20 February. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

TUES  
24

## Boxers, Bandits and a Blind Beggar



7.45pm



Free



Join the Sevenoaks Branch in welcoming Ian Bevan to The Stanhope Arms for a history of Bethnal Green. Bethnal Green was a medieval hamlet to the east of the City of London. It became popular with rich merchants in the 16th century, but serious immigration began in the 18th century and by the end of the 19th century foreign immigration had turned Bethnal Green into an overpopulated scene of poverty and degradation. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 18 February. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.



# March

WED  
04

## Annual District Branch Meeting and Social



7.30pm



Free



The annual meeting aims to approve the 2025 accounts and appoint District Branch Officers for the forthcoming year. A drink at the bar and a buffet will be provided for all members who attend this most important meeting at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 27 February. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



TUES  
10

## Jessica Louisa



8pm



£5



The Beacon Branch is pleased to welcome back Jessica Louisa, a professional singer and all round power house based in Kent, who will perform songs from the 50s to current classics. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 6 March. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.



MON  
16

## The Life and Creations of Ian Fleming



8pm



Free



The Weald Branch is pleased to welcome Delia Taylor to The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. Ian Fleming is well known as the author of the James Bond books, but during WWII Ian Fleming instigated some of the most famous events carried out by the British and their allies. Ian's private life was also very intricate. This talk reveals lots of facts that have been hidden about Ian Fleming. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 10 March. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

# March

SUN  
22

## Sunday Lunch at La Farola



1pm



Members £30, Guests £45



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch for a delicious Sunday lunch at the family run La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar.

Members will enjoy freshly prepared dishes and a warm atmosphere. An early booking is essential due to the popularity of this occasion and because places are limited. Cheques should be sent in advance to Karen Rose at the Branch

Office to secure your place. La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, 194-200 London Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 1EY. Book by Wednesday 4 March. Email Karen to book your place [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Andy on 01342 317970.



TUES  
24

## Are We Alone? Part 2



7.45pm



Free



The Sevenoaks Branch is pleased to welcome back Peter Borthwick to The Stanhope Arms. Part two delves deeper into the subject of Are We Alone?

Peter will bring the talk up to date and explore both recent personal accounts and interactions, and contemporary records from space agencies such as NASA and the Chinese space programme. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 18 March. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT  
28

## Quiz Time



12.30pm



Free



Come and join other members at the Albatross Club and test your general knowledge in Derek Fickling's quiz. Derek's questions will include a range of topics such as television, entertainment, geography and history. Prizes will be awarded to the winners. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 20 March. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

# April

WED  
01

## Lockerbie and Other Airline Bombings



7.30pm



Free



Join us to welcome back John Wyatt to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. John was responsible for all the explosive tests for the 'Lockerbie Bombing' Appeal which resulted in a number of startling revelations which never became public due to the 'supposed' bomber Al Megrahi being released before the forensic evidence came to court. Also evidence from the 'Crutch Bomber' in which John blew up a 747 for the TV programme 'How Safe are our Skies' and the 'Shoe Bomber'. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 27 March. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

TUES  
14

## Stevie Bart



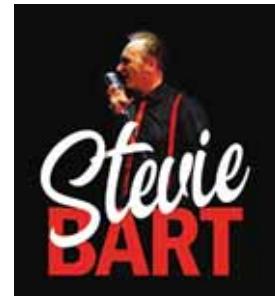
8pm



£5



Join the Beacon Branch to welcome back Stevie Bart to the Crowborough Social Club. Stevie will provide us with an evening of Rock 'n' Roll from Elvis to Shakin Stevens and everything in between to help us dance the night away. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 10 April. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.



SUN  
12

## Lunch and Ten Pin Bowling



12.30pm



TBC



Join us at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club for a two course lunch and a drink. Members to purchase their own food and the Branch will provide a free drink. We will then move on to the Hollywood Bowl, Knights Park, Knights Way, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3UX to enjoy some games of bowling. The Branch will subsidise the cost of bowling for each member. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 1 April. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



# April

MON  
20

## The East Kent Chorus



8pm



£5



The Weald Branch are pleased to welcome back the East Kent Chorus to The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. They will be singing some very well-known songs barbershop (a capella) style. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 14 April. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT  
25

## Braveheart



12.30pm



Free



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming Tony Harris back to the Albatross Club as he performs as William Wallace. William Wallace, also known as Braveheart, was a Scottish knight who became one of the main leaders during the First War of Scottish Independence. It is guaranteed to be an enthralling presentation as Tony relies on performance not notes. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 17 April. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



TUES  
21

## 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 15 April. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

TUES  
28

## Ian Petrie and Ted Hanley



7.45pm



£5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome back Ian Petrie and Ted Hanley (accordion) to The Stanhope Arms. They are always enormously popular any time we manage to get to see them. They perform a mixture of folk and popular songs – all well-known, all worthy of a sing-along and all hand-clappingly good. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 22 April. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.



# May

WED  
06

## How Now Spirit? Tingling Tales of Theatre Ghosts



7.30pm



Free



TUES  
12

## Rachel Eade



8pm



£5



Join us to welcome back Pete Allen to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Since the early days of theatre, actors, stagehands and audiences alike have claimed to have witnessed a disturbing amount of strange supernatural activity once the lights have dimmed. This talk takes a look at ghost stories from some of our most haunted theatres in the world. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 29 April. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

The Beacon Branch are pleased to welcome back Rachel Eade to the Crowborough Social Club. Rachel is an excellent entertainer with a powerful voice and bubbly personality. She will perform a mixture of favourites both old and new. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 8 May. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.



SAT  
09

## Ramble and Pub Lunch



10am



As per menu



The Earl of Cottenham Branch is organising a ramble in the Forest Row area. The walk will be roughly a 3.5 mile circular walk from The Swan, 1 Lewes Road, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5ER and will take approximately two hours. Sturdy walking shoes are recommended as well as being relatively fit and agile for any stiles. A drink will be paid for by the Branch. A menu will be available should you wish to purchase your own lunch. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 1 May. Email Karen to book your place [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Andy on 01342 317970.



# May

MON  
18

## Stuntwoman in a Man's World

 8pm

 Free

The Weald Branch is pleased to welcome Lucy Allen to The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst.

Lucy will tell of her life and adventures from a 30 year career in theatre, the circus and some serious stunt work performed in films. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 12 May. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.



TUES  
26

## Fred Clark

 7.45pm

 £5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome back Fred Clark to The Stanhope Arms following his popular appearance last year. A local singer who sings some of his own compositions and a range of well-known covers. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 20 May. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT  
30

## Elvis Presley Tribute

 12.30pm

 £5



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming back Andy King to the Albatross 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 Friday 22 May. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

TUES  
19

## 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 13 May. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

# June

WED  
03

## An Evening at the Races



7.30pm



Free



Join us for drinks, together with horse racing on DVD and cash prizes for the winning punters. The fun and games will be followed by a buffet and the Branch meeting at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 27 May. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.

TUES  
09

## Gez Gold and Piers Foster



8pm



£5



The Beacon Branch invites you to a musical evening with Gez Gold and Piers Foster. They play music from a wide range of genres and take requests from the floor. Those who heard them last year enjoyed their take on many popular songs. Refreshments will be provided by the Branch at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 5 June. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Naz on 07905 472361.



MON  
15

## Titanic



7.45pm



Free



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch in welcoming Tony Harris to the Ex-Services Club in East Grinstead. The ship that never sank! What if it was all an inside insurance job? What if the rich wanted to make money? What if everything you have ever heard was untrue? The most thought-provoking of Tony's talks with Tony dressed in top hat and tails as a first-class survivor. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 8 June. Email Karen to book your place [karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Andy on 01342 317970.



# June

MON  
22

Roy and Phil



8pm



£5



The Weald Branch are pleased to welcome Roy Green, harmonica player and his mate Phil on guitar to The Cherry Tree, Ticehurst. Roy is a player of some note and ability and performs a range of songs, some of which we might not have considered to be 'Harmonica Material', but all of which are memorable and recognisable. They even provide song sheets for us to join in! Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 16 June. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT  
27

Bingo



12.30pm



Cost of bingo card TBC



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Bob Bamblett to the Albatross Club. Bob, who organises the bingo at the Albatross Club, has agreed to come down to the basement to play bingo with us. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 19 June. Email Solveig to book your place [solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk) or call 07443 926944.



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

Ref 1644

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# Bring friendship to your front room

We understand that life can get busy – a diary clash, travel costs, or simply the need for a quiet day at home can all make attending events in person a challenge.

But no matter the reason, we believe everyone should be able to enjoy the warmth of friendship and community. That's why Branches across the country host around fifty free online events every month. From inspiring talks and creative arts and crafts sessions to fun games, gentle exercise and calming meditation – there's something for everyone.

These online gatherings are a wonderful way to reconnect with familiar faces and meet new friends from all over the UK – all from the comfort of your own home. Who knows? You might even discover a new passion along the way!

## What's coming up online

**Tuesday 9 December 2025, 7pm, 'Getting to know Unity Mutual'**

Use this link to register directly on Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/UnityMutualDecember>

A number of our Branches are also running Online Events over the holiday period. Anyone is able to attend, no matter where they live, so spread the word. Here is a selection from across the period:

**25 December, 7pm:** Thursday Quiz and Games Night (North Wales and Chester District Branch)

**26 December, 7pm:** Fun on Friday Boxing Day Special (Ipswich District Branch)

**28 December, 5pm:** Zoom-in for Live@5 Weekly Quiz (Ipswich District Branch)

**29 December, 7pm:** Monday Night Chatterboxes (North Wales and Chester District Branch)

**30 December, 7.30pm:** Why do we make new year's resolutions? (Bradford)

**31 December, 7pm:** Say Goodbye to 2025 with our New Years Eve Party (Ipswich District Branch)

**2 January 2026, 7pm:** Zoom-in for Fun on Friday (Ipswich District Branch)

Please go to [www.oddfellows.co.uk/events/](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/events/) to find out more information or to obtain the joining instructions for these and other similar events. All our online events are hosted on Zoom. If you haven't tried Zoom video-conferencing before and would like help on how to use it, let us know. You can come to me, or email the Events team on [events@oddfellows.co.uk](mailto:events@oddfellows.co.uk), with any questions and we'll help you get logged on and ready to join in.

**Karen Rose**



# 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.

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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

## January 2026

<b>Tues 13</b>	Mark Brundall, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Wed 14</b>	Natural History of New Zealand, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Mon 19</b>	Alpaco Country, The Cherry Tree	8pm
<b>Mon 26</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together - Crowborough Social Club	12 noon
<b>Tues 27</b>	Vocal and Ukelele Bashing Entertainer, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
<b>Sat 31</b>	Cats Protection, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

## February

<b>Mon 2</b>	Not King Cole, The Cherry Tree	8pm
<b>Wed 4</b>	2025 West End Production Reviews, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Tues 10</b>	Heartbeats, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Mon 16</b>	The Old Convent, The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club	7.45pm
<b>Tues 17</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together - Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
<b>Tues 24</b>	Boxers, Bandits and a Blind Beggar, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
<b>Sat 28</b>	The Crumbles Murders, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

## March

<b>Wed 4</b>	Annual District Branch Meeting and Social, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Tues 10</b>	Jessica Louisa, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Mon 16</b>	The Life and Creations of Ian Fleming, The Cherry Tree	8pm
<b>Sun 22</b>	Sunday Lunch at La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, East Grinstead	1pm
<b>Tues 24</b>	Are We Alone? Part 2, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
<b>Sat 28</b>	Quiz Time, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

# At a glance

## April

<b>Wed 1</b>	Lockerbie and Other Airline Bombings, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Sun 12</b>	Lunch and Ten Pin Bowling, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12.30pm
<b>Tues 14</b>	Stevie Bart, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Mon 20</b>	The East Kent Chorus, The Cherry Tree	8pm
<b>Tues 21</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together - Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
<b>Sat 25</b>	Braveheart, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
<b>Tues 28</b>	Ian Petrie and Ted Handley, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm

## May

<b>Wed 6</b>	How Now Spirit? Tingling Tales of Theatre Ghosts, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Sat 9</b>	Ramble and Pub Lunch, The Swan, Forest Row, East Sussex	10am
<b>Tues 12</b>	Rachel Eade, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Mon 18</b>	Stuntwoman in a Man's World, The Cherry Tree	8pm
<b>Tues 19</b>	Lunchtime Get-Together - Tunbridge Wells, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
<b>Tues 26</b>	Fred Clark, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
<b>Sat 30</b>	Elvis Presley Tribute, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

## June

<b>Wed 3</b>	An Evening at the Races, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
<b>Tues 9</b>	Gez Gold and Piers Foster, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
<b>Mon 15</b>	Titanic, The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club	7.45pm
<b>Mon 22</b>	Roy and Phil, The Cherry Tree	8pm
<b>Sat 27</b>	Bingo, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

# Make the most of your membership



## Your membership provides you with a great range of benefits...

**Standard £25 a year membership\* gives you access to...**

- Local social events
- Care & Welfare Helpline
- Oddfellows Travel
- Oddfellows news by email
- Branch Care & Welfare Support
- Oddfellows Citizens Advice Line
- Money saving partner offers
- Benevolence Grants
- Emergency Financial Aid (Household)
- Convalescence & Carer Support (after 2 years' membership)
- Accidental Death Benefit
- Legal Aid Scheme
- Educational & Apprenticeship Awards
- 24/7 access to our historical online archive

**£35 a year membership\* provides you with additional benefits of...**

- Optical benefit of up to £30 every second year of membership (after 1 year's membership)
- Dental benefit of up to £30 every membership year (after 1 year's membership)

For more information visit: [www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/benefits).

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For full details, visit [www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions), or call us on 0800 028 1810.

# Tunbridge Wells News and Views

News and views from your local friendship group

**Beacon Branch**

Pages 4-5

**Bexhill and Hastings Branch**

Pages 8-9

**Earl of Cottenham Branch**

Pages 12-13

**Bowling**

Page 6



**Annual Movable Conference (AMC 2025)**



**BBQ and Ritual**



**Friendship Lunchtime Get-Togethers**



# Tunbridge Wells District welcome

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

## **A message from your Secretary**

Firstly, I would like to welcome our twenty new members who joined since April. I do hope that you have settled in and are enjoying attending our varied social events and making new friends.

In that time, there have been forty-one events across our District ranging from an Inter-District Quiz and BBQ's through to music events and lunches.



*Karen horse riding in Iceland.*

## **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.

With Christmas nearly upon us it is time to start thinking about 2026. The Events

Diary for the first half of 2026 has been produced and again contains a variety of events including games, music, interesting talks, a walk and our lunchtime get-togethers. 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! Also do let us know of any dietary requirements.

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.

Please note that the District Office will be closed from Friday 19th December 2025 through to Monday 5th January 2026. I do hope that you all have a relaxing Christmas break.

**Karen**

## Traditional Terms

**Grand Master (GM):** Chairman

**Provincial Grand Master (Prov GM):** District Chairman

**Provincial Deputy Grand Master (Prov DGM):**

District Deputy Chairman

**Provincial Corresponding Secretary (Prov CS):**

District Secretary - responsible for administering Branches

**Immediate Past Provincial Grand Master (IPPGM):**

Immediate Past District Chairman

**Past Provincial Grand Master (PPGM):** Past District Chairman

**Lodge:** Branch

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

## Beacon Branch

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

Naz's nominated charities of the year as our Provincial Grand Master in 2024/25 were Age Concern Heathfield and Brighter Heathfield. In April, Naz presented a cheque for £500 to a representative from Brighter Heathfield who explained that the charity was started by volunteers doing litter picking a few years previously and then evolved to planting flowers and trees in the area to keep Heathfield a better place to be. The second cheque for £500 was presented to Age UK Heathfield who provide transport to take people to hospital appointments or shopping. They also have three minibuses to provide outings on a regular basis as well as a very popular Man Shed where retired men do all sorts of woodwork they sell at market.

After the presentations, thirty-five members were entertained by Gez Gold and Piers Foster doing their inimitable versions of

Bobby Darin, Elvis, Bruce Springsteen, John Denver and more. As it was Julian's 40th birthday, Naz had very kindly

bought him a chocolate cake and a card for members to sign. Everyone sang happy birthday, and Gez and Piers played a couple of Tina Turner songs for him to celebrate. An excellent evening.

In May, fifty-five members and a guest enjoyed an evening with the brilliant singer Rachel Eade. Her powerful voice easily covered anything from ABBA, Status Quo, Neil Diamond, the Carpenters, Elvis and more. The singing brought lots of people to the dance floor and even a couple of line dances were attempted by some. Another thoroughly enjoyable evening.



*Rachel Eade.*

In June, Justine Clark was welcomed back by forty-nine members and two guests and she did not disappoint. Her performance had everyone up and dancing with so much energy. There were songs from the 60's through to the present and she did not leave the King out with his suspicious mind.



*Justine Clark.*



*Piers, Gez and Naz.*

A brilliant evening saw fifty members and four guests being entertained by Stevie Bart in July. Stevie had his usual repertoire of rock and roll featuring Elvis and Cliff Richard among many others. The dance floor was full with members

dancing to Twisting the Night Away, Burning Love, Only 16, Mustang Sally, I'm a Believer, Lucky Lips, Reet Petite, Runaround Sue and many more. A hot but wonderful evening.



*Stevie Bart.*



*Members enjoying Pétanque.*

Forty-eight members gathered on a pleasant evening in August for a competitive game of pétanque, although some members preferred to forego the exercise and just sit and chat while enjoying the fresh air. Playing in teams of four, participants quickly discovered that tossing a silver metal ball along a gravel pitch towards a fairly small target is not as easy as you'd think! Many balls fell short of the target, others sailed past to hit the backboard, while a few skewed off sideways onto the next rink! Never mind, it's the taking part that counts and all who did so enjoyed the game, regardless of whether their team won or lost.

After the game both players and spectators enjoyed a splendid barbecue supper provided by the Club. Thanks to Naz for organising the event and we look forward to gathering again for a return match next year.

In September, forty-eight members and a guest listened to Mark Brundall who with his powerful voice covered everything from Dean Martin, Tom Jones, Elton John, Tina Turner, Queen and many more. Nearly everybody got up and danced and sang along and had a great time. A great evening for our Friendship Month.



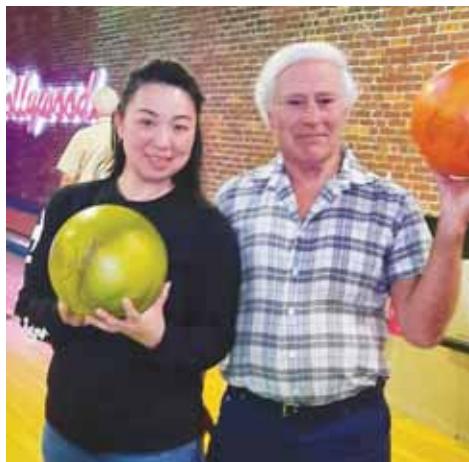
*Mark Brundall.*



*Gary Williams.*

There was one lunchtime get-together in September. Twenty-two members and one guest listened to a presentation about AI delivered by Gary Williams, volunteer from Thames Valley Cyber Crime. A very interesting talk followed by a tasty lunch and a drink. It was a lovely afternoon chatting with friends.

## Bowling



*Andrew and Thea.*

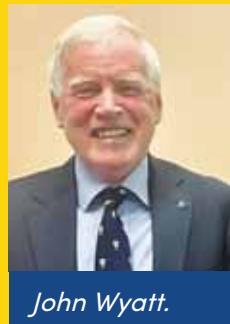
**In April, thirty members enjoyed an excellent carvery lunch at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells consisting of roast lamb and beef with roast potatoes, Yorkshire puddings and vegetables. The desserts were strawberry torte, chocolate fudge cake, baked cheesecake, and cheese and biscuits.**

Twenty-one members then headed to the Hollywood Bowl for two games of ten-pin bowling. The first game produced the overall winner David Purcell with 121, followed by Mike Taylor with 120 and Andrew Stanhope with 116. In the second game, six people scored over 100 points. George Booth with 116, Andrew Stanhope with 108, Alan Ovenden with 106, Jane Johnson and Thea Mian both with 104, and Andy Mason with 103. A relaxing day with good food and lovely company.

## High Profile Security Incidents

**In April, John Wyatt returned to the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells to speak to thirty-nine members about his key**

**role in investigating a number of high-profile security incidents. John had previously spoken to us about his 25 years in the Army, mainly as a Bomb Disposal Officer, and subsequently working as a consultant.**



*John Wyatt.*

John took us through the investigation into the bombing of the Grand Hotel, Brighton in 1984, and the sequence of events that happened that night and why several key personnel survived. He went on to speak about his involvement in the removal of pipemines under 36 airfields in the South of England. He also advised on the security of HM Crown Jewels in the Tower of London, along with the security of the Channel Tunnel and the route from Folkestone to St Pancras. A truly fascinating and informative talk.

# The History of the Royal Variety Performance

**In May at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells, Dean Caston spoke to forty-two members and a guest about the first Royal Command Performance in 1912 through to the current day. The first Royal Variety Show was instigated by Sir Edward Moss through correspondence with George V and was to be a royal variety show at the Empire theatre, Edinburgh, in 1911 to celebrate the King's coronation.**

Unfortunately, before this could happen the theatre caught fire and Sir Moss died. Sir Alfred Butt took over and the show took place at the Palace theatre in London during 1912. This was known as the Royal Command Performance and monies

raised went to the Royal Variety charity. The charity still benefits from the show. George V became its patron – as has every subsequent monarch.

During the 113 year history of the Royal Variety Performance it has been held in seven cities, with the London Palladium hosting the event 42 times. There were several years when the show did not take place, mainly due to the World Wars. The show was first televised in 1960. A very interesting talk.



*Dean Caston.*

## Annual Movable Conference (AMC) 2025

**In May, three deputies and a visitor represented our Branch at the three-day conference in Scarborough. The deputies voted on behalf of the Branch membership regarding various rule changes and reported back to the Lodge at the June meeting in Tunbridge Wells. Left to right in the picture are Margaret Walisko, Ruth Chambers, Karen Rose,**



*Branch representatives at AMC 2025.*

**Naz Mian and Thea Mian. Next year the conference moves to Eastbourne.**

# Bexhill and Hastings Branch

**Huge thanks to Margaret Walisko for organising an exciting programme of talks and music for the Bexhill and Hastings branch. Each event was followed by a buffet lunch and refreshments provided by the Lodge.**

In April, twenty-four members and a guest gathered to listen to Chris O'Donoghue, freelance garden designer and thriller writer, about his experience of designing small 'courtyard' gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show for three consecutive years (2007, 2008 and 2009).

Chris illustrated his talk with many colourful slides showing his gardens in various stages of construction. He explained that to be awarded the chance to design a garden, it is necessary to present the RHS with what they call a 'client brief' setting out in words and pictures the display they wish to prepare. If the brief is accepted, the designer is free to go ahead. But before they can start work there is the important task of obtaining sponsorship, as a courtyard garden at Chelsea is likely to cost between £25,000 and £30,000.

Chris's first design, in 2007, was based on an old railway carriage that he had seen at Pett Level, near where he lives. Chris was



*Chris O'Donoghue.*

delighted to receive a Silver Gilt award for his design. His second garden was designed for and sponsored by an animal rescue charity that cares for animals in Africa, with particular focus on working and retired donkeys. The design was based on a courtyard in Marrakesh (Morocco), and for part of the Show they had a real donkey on site. The third garden he designed was inspired by a medieval herb garden and incorporated some unusual plants, such as woad. This garden also earned Chris a Silver Gilt award.

Thirty-eight members welcomed Tony Harris to Bexhill in May, where he performed as Donald Trump. President Trump told us about his family's history from the

California Gold Rush of 1849, where Frederick Trump ran a brothel, through to his own election as President.

Members were then invited to ask questions such as his plans for Denmark, Canada and Mexico. Mr Trump also had advice for our own Prime Minister about the illegal immigrants arriving by boat – his response 'put doctors' receptionists at desks on the beach along the South Coast'. A thoroughly entertaining performance.



*Tony Harris.*

In June, forty-one members were entertained by Andy T King as Elvis. Andy sang songs from 1956 to 1977, interspersed with stories about the songs and the films that Elvis

made during his life. Everyone joined in to sing Happy Birthday to Rob, and Andy finished with 'Suspicious Minds'. Another entertaining afternoon was had by all.

Twenty members gathered in July to listen to a very well-informed talk by Joe Mendell, about the dangers we all face when using our computers, laptops, mobile phones and even landlines. All these dangers can be grouped under the heading of SCAMS, and include such potential issues as hacking, phishing and – a newish one – quishing (via QR codes). In contrast to Joe's previous presentations using the comedy scripts of Bob Newhart, this was a very serious subject, although Joe was still able to inject a fair degree of humour into his talk.

He told us the most important thing to remember, especially if we receive scam phone calls or texts, is to not panic, don't get angry or flustered, and don't react to pressure to act quickly. And NEVER



*Andy T King  
with Oddity.*

divulge any personal or bank details unless you are completely satisfied that the call, text or email is from someone, or an organisation, that you know and trust.

There was a lot to take in from Joe's talk, and everyone listening was able to appreciate the dangers lurking out there, and he was thanked very much for making us even more aware of how difficult life can be in the modern world! Above all, his message to us was – be aware!



*The FOG.*

In August, thirty-three members enjoyed dancing and singing along with The FOG. A few Beatles songs – I Saw Her Standing There, Eight Days a Week and All My Loving, followed by Poison Ivy, Rock Around the Clock, I Only Want to Be with You, Dedicated Follower of Fashion, and many more. A few people even managed a line dance!

Thirty-two members attended in September to be entertained by Neil Sadler. Neil told everyone about his time as a police officer at Gatwick Airport. Everyday produced a different challenge, from removing disruptive drunks from planes to dealing with bomb threats. A very interesting talk, interspersed with a few amusing incidents.



*Joe Mendell.*



*Neil Sadler.*

## An Evening at the Races

In June, thirty-nine members and a guest enjoyed an evening of racing at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club expertly organized by Naz Mian. Everyone had fun trying to place their bets on the winning horse in each of the six races with some having a lot

more success than others! Each race had fun names such as The Pow Wow Stakes; The Hungry Horse Handicap; and The Village Idiot Stakes. There was lots of cheering and the winner was our guest Matt, with Margaret and Ann tied in second place.



*Naz with Ann.*



*Naz with Margaret.*

## Volunteer Fire Brigade

In August, Jo Livingston entertained fifty-one members with the history of the Volunteer Fire Brigade at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells. From the fire of London in 1666 to her family of four generations all in the fire service. Her great grandfather Samuel Bateman started as a call boy at the age of 12 (rounding up men when needed) and his subsequent rise through the ranks. At his funeral in 1937, the hearse was a converted fire engine.

In 1938, there were 1600 different fire brigades and today we have 47 in England, three in Wales and 1 in Scotland, nearly all of them called

Fire and Rescue Services. Women were accepted in 1938 – of 370,000 members, 80,000 were women but only as drivers and other jobs. The first female fire fighter was not until 1982. An interesting talk.



*Jo Livingston.*

## Inter-District Quiz

In June, our Branch hosted the Quiz at St Wilfrid's church hall in Horley. Stephen from the Mitcham, Reigate and Crawley Branch devised some tricky questions for the eight rounds. The rounds included general knowledge; pictures; fruit and nut anagrams; and Andrew Lloyd Webber musicals. Out of the 6 teams (20 members and two guests from three Branches) that took part, Mid-Surrey



*Lyne and Stephen.*

Branch won the quiz with 59.5 points with our team runners-up with 57 points. Mid-Surrey Branch will be hosting the quiz in 2026.

## The Beat Goes On

In July, forty-three members were pleased to welcome Neil Sadler back to the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells. Once again Neil gave a very interesting and often funny presentation about his time as a Police officer from where it all started in Bognor Regis in 1978 and onwards. He spoke about training Police officers in Abu Dhabi; missing persons in the UK and the time and resources that

are spent locating them; and not forgetting the Police Identity Parades (when they go wrong), as well as many other weird and wonderful examples of human nature. A truly fascinating, funny, and insightful talk.



*Neil Sadler.*

## BBQ and Ritual

In July, we held our second ritual lodge at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells since the pandemic. It was lovely to find so many members interested in the traditional side of Oddfellowship with eight members either being welcomed or taking either one or two of the degrees. Afterwards, they joined with other members at the club to enjoy a delicious BBQ. Twenty-nine members and a guest enjoyed a meal expertly prepared by the staff. A



*Members enjoying the BBQ.*

selection of meats were enjoyed along with a jacket potato and a variety of salads plus desserts. Everyone had a very enjoyable time at this informal social occasion.

# 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.**

On a sunny Saturday May morning, twenty ramblers set off on a 3 mile walk from The Red Lion pub at Chelwood Gate. It was fairly flat under foot but plenty of shade was available walking through the woods. Some members took the opportunity to walk up the gorge and see several mini waterfalls. Much fun was had with lots of chatting and catching up. We arrived back at the pub around two hours later ready for a drink. Another member joined us for our well-deserved lunch. A thoroughly lovely day.

A couple of days later in May, twenty-two members headed to Cannon Street

in London for a guided tour of the 'Alleyways of the City' with Ian Bevan. Ian took us down some lesser-known byways such as Mansion House Street (the shortest street in the

city) and Change Alley (named due to its proximity to the Royal Exchange). He spoke about many facts and figures from history, and showed us where the first coffee house stood. Ian also took us through some churchyards and into a couple of Wren's churches which were



*Ian Bevan.*



*Chelwood Gate Ramblers.*

rebuilt after the Great Fire in 1666. A thoroughly interesting tour that ended at the Monument where members then headed off for lunch.

In June, twenty-six members attended the Ex-Services club to hear Simon Waterfield, dressed as a retired Senchal (Estate manager to the Great Lord Dunlow of Essex), recount the story of how his master was caught up in the chaos of the Magna Carta. He



*Simon Waterfield.*

spoke about King John and Richard the Lionheart, and how they ran the country through the Barons who would collect taxes and manage the laws on their behalf. He went on to explain how the Charter came about and the consequences of it. A fascinating and well-performed insight into the Magna Carta.

In September, on another sunny day, twenty-five ramblers set off on a 3.2 mile circular walk from The Bear in Hartfield. The walk was relatively flat and took us across some lovely farmland with plenty of sheep. Again, there was a lot of chatting and we arrived back at the pub a couple of hours later, where we were joined by four more members, for our well-deserved refreshments and plentiful food. A really enjoyable day.

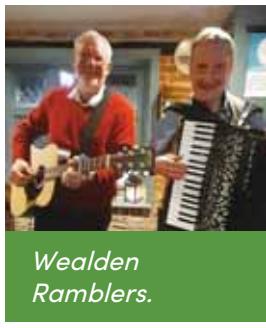


*Hartfield Ramblers.*

## 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.**

The local folk duo, the Wealden Ramblers, made a welcome return for eighteen members at the start of April. Once again



*Wealden Ramblers.*

Roger and Bob provided song sheets for us to use, inviting us to join in with their rendition of many well-known, some not so well-known, locally-based folk songs. We attempted such delights as Great Navy Days, Dr Syn, Hop Is King, Appling-O, the Smugglers Song, some of which they had written or arranged themselves. We delighted in The Old Country Train (Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst by way of Horsmonden etc), and finished with a rousing delivery of Spanish Ladies when 'we'll rant and we'll roar like true British sailors'. A very jolly evening.

Our annual visit from Ian Petrie and Ted Handley at the end of April gave twenty members more folk music, but this time from a perspective wider than just Kent. We enjoyed English, Irish, Scottish, and even a touch of Australian folk songs. As usual, Ian and Ted gave full value for money, starting before being properly introduced,

and having to be stopped as we ran out of time! For those who didn't know before, the Hairy Tongue song name was explained, and we finished with full throttle versions of Wild Rover and Irish Rover.



*Ted and Ian.*

In May, the replacement speaker was Peter Borthwick who gave twenty-one members his talk on Are We Alone? An explanation of why there might be intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, presented as a series of undeniable facts from which we could form our own opinions.



*Peter Borthwick.*

Peter started by describing the enormous size of the known universe: the sun is 1.3million times bigger than the Earth by volume; the biggest star currently known is 5 billion times bigger than our sun; there are 200-400 billion stars in the Milky Way; there are estimated to be

between 200 billion and 2 trillion galaxies in the Universe. Such numbers suggest all manner of things will exist out there.

Next, he gave some evidence that suggested there has been alien involvement on Earth. Huge rocks that have been moved and perfectly shaped that are bigger than anything we could move today. The Great Pyramid that contains 2.3 million stones, that weighs 6 million tons but which, by some estimations, was built in about 20 years. An Indian temple obviously built by 'top down' construction. Many things that we can see now from space that simply shouldn't be there.

And finally, he went through several more current events, sightings by intelligent and lucid people, and apparent state secrets.

One of our most popular speakers, Guy Bartlett, appeared for twenty-four members and a guest in June. This was the talk that Guy had made us wait for, saying previously that 'the four minute warning' would be an attack on our poor sensitivities! But we survived it; once again receiving a well-researched, well delivered and thoroughly absorbing presentation from him.

He started by describing the onset of the Cold War between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in 1949, and the poor state

of the British defences and capabilities following WW2. Initially the concern was who would and how to run the country if we were attacked; the Cherry Report saying that an airborne attack would be so much harder to defend than the coastal assaults we had seen previously. New jet enemy aircraft would give far less time to respond, and would require much better Radar. Underground bunkers were created as post-attack control centres. Guy showed examples of those bunkers, and recommended visiting some remaining local ones now open to the public.

He told of the move through different British nuclear weapons. He listed and showed the effects of a nuclear blast, including the electromagnetic pulse that would destroy all electrically controlled equipment, and the work of first Jodrell Bank, then old and new Fylingdales, and surveillance from space.

In a specially updated version of his talk, prepared specially for us, he commented on NATO Article 5, Trump's recent demands, currently 4 armed submarines but only one in action at any one time, and two new aircraft carriers that lack planes and other ships capable of defending them. In all, a very long but worthwhile and thought-provoking talk well up to Guy's usual standard.

Fourteen members and two guests were pleased to welcome Roy and Phil in July. As before, Roy Green showed his remarkable skills as a harmonica player across a range of different styles of music,



*Guy Bartlett.*

***Continued from the previous page...***

presenting many well-known tunes slightly differently. For the second half of their act, they handed out song sheets so that we could at least try to sing along using the correct words – South of the Border, Somewhere Over the Rainbow, The Carnival is Over, Hallelujah, Ghost Riders in the Sky and many more.



*Roy and Phil.*

In August, twenty-seven members welcomed Fred Clark, a local singer/songwriter. Fred opened by saying the object of the evening was to have fun, which we certainly did as we experienced several of his own compositions and many well-known covers. These latter included It Must be Love, Dock of the Bay, Crazy Little Thing Called Love among many others. Fred's own compositions were all very tuneful, and were good, thoughtful, representations of his own and his family's life. At the end of the evening there was an all-round and immediate request for Fred to be booked again, which he will be in 2026.



*Fred Clark.*

## Quiz Night

**In September, the annual quiz was held at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells with thirty members and a guest in attendance. Derek Fickling, our Quiz-master, had devised fifty tricky multiple-choice questions from topics such as film and television, science, animals, and sport. Questions included 'In what film does one of the characters say 'You're going to need a bigger boat?' a – *Titanic*, b – *Jaws* or c – *Moby Dick*? Answer is b. The joint winners of the Branch Cup were**



*The winners with the Branch Cup alongside Derek.*

**Andrew Hathaway, Solveig Stanhope, Monique Punyer, and Ruth Chambers with 32 points. Everyone thanked Derek for an entertaining and challenging quiz.**

# Friendship Lunchtime Get-Togethers

**There have been three lunchtime get-togethers (April, May, and September) at the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club in the last six months.**

In April, twenty-three members and a guest enjoyed a lovely lunch with a lot of chatting going on. Also, it was the first time for our jigsaw puzzles exchange/sale. The money will go to our charity of the year St Catherine's Hospice. Twenty-two

members attended in May and enjoyed catching up with friends.

Our Friendship Month lunch in September saw a very enjoyable and tasty lunch attended by twenty members. At each of the lunchtimes, members were able to purchase their own food with the Branch paying for a drink. Our thanks go to Rob and his helpers for providing tasty food for us all.



*Getting into the Friendship spirit.*

# Weald of Kent

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.

Colin Harvey showed twenty-three members a film from his collection in April, this time presenting the story of the designing and building of the Titanic. The White Star Line decided to have the three largest ships built to challenge Cunard's Lusitania and Mauritania; they chose to have them built by Harland and Wolff in Belfast. Belfast was already a very large port, but it was necessary to redesign major parts of the docks and to develop mud flats into two of the largest shipyards for parallel construction. This was an engineering feat by itself before even starting on the ships. Over 15,000 workers were employed for the Olympic, the first built and launched, and the Titanic, requiring a new township to be built in East Belfast.

Colin showed several of the steam cranes, requiring 167 tons of coal each day when in use, gantries and other equipment needed to support such extreme craftsmanship. The great gantry built especially for this work was never used to the same degree again. And so little of the original structures now exist. The film showed a remarkable vision



*Colin Harvey.*

of what was required to construct such memorable ships.



*Side by Side.*

Thirty members in May saw the return of Side By Side, one of our most popular, and danceable, bands. Once again they gave a great collection of well-known songs – Yesterday Man, Never Can Tell, Give Me Some Loving, Hey Baby, Hungry Heart, and so many more. Side By Side provided a grand evening for those that wanted to dance, sing along, or just listen, as they always do. Sadly this may be the last time we see them due to poor health.

Sue Hicks is a poet who addresses everyday issues, and a professional pharmacist. In June she came along to give twenty-one members examples of her work, dedication and enthusiasm for both.

Her poetry poked fun at many issues we all face, generally and medically. She also talked with some enthusiasm about her



*Sue Hicks.*

pharmaceutical work and gave some advice about how to use your local pharmacy and how to self-treat some simple common complaints.

Last year, Rukshana Master showed some fantastic pictures of the Summer and Winter Palaces in St Petersburg. In July, with fourteen members and four guests, she continued the story of her

and her husband's trip toward Moscow on and alongside the waterways from St Petersburg. Again, she had a stunning collection of photos showing many of the attractions along the way. These included typical Russian housing, the vodka museum (with 3500 varieties of vodka on display), an enormous palace built entirely of wood without the use of any nails, screws or other fixings. All the churches have onion domes – the Russians admired Muslim architecture but worshipped as Christians so they could continue to drink vodka! Rukshana concluded her talk by showing views of, and giving details of Moscow and the Kremlin (a citadel containing not only the palace but also three churches with, of course, onion domes!).

At the first meeting in September, twenty members saw the very welcome return of Unstable Cliffs, the two-man band from Bexhill. They raised the roof – we have rarely had such a high percentage of the



*Rukshana Master.*

audience up and dancing (and singing along), with the peak being Mustang Sally when virtually everyone was on the dance floor. Other not so often heard delights included Lola, Got My Mind Set on You, Maggie May, and Walk of Life. We will be seeing Unstable Cliffs again before too long.



*Unstable Cliffs.*

The second September meeting had possibly the largest audience with thirty-three members and two guests to see Jessica Louisa.

Jessica's reputation, from her appearances at Crowborough, preceded her, and we were in no way disappointed. There was dancing from the very first song – the number of dancers at times had Jessica hemmed into a corner, but she afterwards said she was very happy with that as it meant we were the most receptive and happy audience she had seen for a long while. Her repertoire included so many 50's Rock and Roll, Twist, Motown, even Bob Marley songs, with an encore of Proud Mary.



*Jessica Louisa.*

## Unity Mutual: A brand-new website and exciting Oddies member benefits

**Unity Mutual, the financial arm of the Oddfellows, is delighted to have launched a brand-new website.**

The fresh design reflects its updated brand identity, but more importantly, it has been built with accessibility and inclusion at its heart – a continuation of the Oddfellows' ethos.



Whether looking for information on savings, investments or life insurance, the new site is easier to use, clearer to navigate and designed so that everyone can get the most from it.

Unity Mutual has partnered with Recite Me to introduce a full suite of accessibility tools, allowing visitors to customise their browsing experience. These include a text-to-speech function, styling features and translation options, which ensure their online services are available to all –

including those who may face barriers due to disability, neurodivergence or limited English language ability.

James Gilliver, Chief of Operations at Unity Mutual, explained: “Accessibility is extremely important to us at Unity Mutual. Our new website reflects our promise to inclusivity, ensuring all customers can access information in the way that best meets their needs.”

“But it’s not just about accessibility. We’ve also worked hard to make our content clearer and more engaging, so you can feel confident in understanding your financial choices. Our aim is to empower you and your family to make informed decisions about saving for the future.”

An extra reason to take a look is that Oddfellows members can currently benefit from special Guaranteed Investment Bond rates, available exclusively through Unity Mutual.

**To see the new website, its new accessibility features and for more information about its products and rates, go to [www.unitymutual.co.uk/oddfellows](http://www.unitymutual.co.uk/oddfellows), and discover how Unity Mutual can help build a brighter financial future.**

# Application deadlines approach!

**Whether it's enhancing careers or highlighting fantastic people, the Oddfellows has a number of ways we can give our members a boost – but we can only do so if we hear about them.**

Deadlines for applications to be submitted for two of our wonderful schemes are fast approaching – the Apprenticeship Educational Award and the Making a Difference Awards.

## Apprenticeship Educational Awards



Each year, the Oddfellows grants up to three Apprenticeship Educational Awards, which consist of £250 per year for the duration of the apprenticeship.\*

Eligible members must apply via their Branch. If you, or someone you know, has been an Oddfellows member for five or more years, which includes Young Oddfellows membership, and started or plan to start an apprenticeship in 2025, get in touch with your Branch Secretary.

The Branch's deadline for submitting applications for consideration is **Wednesday 31 December 2025**.

\*Each case is reviewed on personal merit. For previous recipients' stories, details on eligibility and how to apply, visit [www.oddfellows.co.uk/educational-awards](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/educational-awards)

## Making a Difference Awards



Want to shine a light on those special people at your Branch who go above and beyond? Every Branch has them, so make sure we hear about their brilliance.

Any member can nominate a fellow member, so if there are people at your Branch who make a difference, speak to your Branch Secretary to find out how you can nominate them.

The deadline for Branches to submit their shortlist is **Saturday 31 January 2026**, so get your nominations in as soon as possible so they can be considered.

To find out more about our Making a Difference Awards, the categories, nomination process and the prior winners, go to [www.oddfellows.co.uk/makingadifference](http://www.oddfellows.co.uk/makingadifference)

**If you've missed these deadlines this time don't worry, just make a note for next year!**

# Thank you for saying 'yes' to friendship

**This Friendship Month, we've been encouraging people to say 'yes' to trying new things, making new friends, and discovering all the brilliant things happening at our Branches throughout the nation.**

It's safe to say, September 2025 has been another fabulous celebration of friendship. The Oddfellows' CEO, Jane Nelson, said: "Friendship Month 2025 has once again demonstrated what the Oddfellows is all about, and I'm thankful of every single

person up and down the country who had been a part of it."

"Saying 'yes' to trying new things can be daunting, but you've all done an excellent job of showing how positive it is to be a part of friendship groups like ours. So, thank you for saying 'yes' to helping make your Friendship Month events a success, whether that's organising events, serving cups of tea, or simply making people feel welcome and comfortable. It all adds up to another wonderful Friendship Month."



*Birmingham Oddfellows*



*Bradford Oddfellows*



*Brighouse and Huddersfield Oddfellows*



*Albert Oddfellows*



Derbyshire Peak Oddfellows



Cambridge Oddfellows



Heart of the West Oddfellows



Concord Oddfellows



Halifax Oddfellows



Sudbury Oddfellows



# 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](mailto: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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