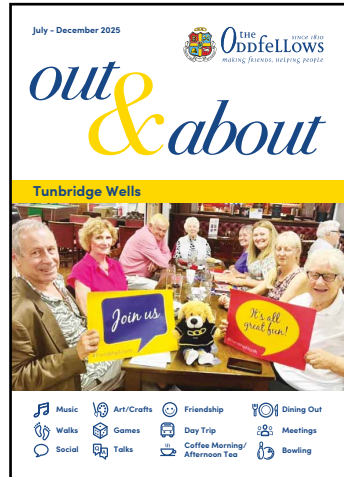


Tunbridge Wells Out & About and News and Views

Please scroll down to the first page for Tunbridge Wells Out & About and page 20 for Tunbridge Wells News and Views

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



Please scroll to page 20 or click
the link below
[Tunbridge Wells
News and Views](#)



July - December 2025



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

out & about

Tunbridge Wells



Music



Art/Crafts



Friendship



Dining Out



Walks



Games



Day Trip



Meetings



Social



Talks



Coffee Morning/
Afternoon Tea



Bowling



*Friendship Ramble and Pub Lunch
Saturday 20 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.

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

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

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.

July 2025

WED
02

The Beat Goes On



7.30pm



Free



Join us to welcome back Neil Sadler to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. This time we will hear about famous missing people searches; working in Abu Dhabi and Abdul's unusual job; and Police Identification parades (when they go wrong). As well as many other weird and wonderful examples of human nature. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 25 June. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

MON
07

The Waterways of the Tsars Part 2 - Mandrogly to Moscow



8pm



Free



Join the Weald Branch to welcome back Rukshana Master. The second part of Rukshana's talk takes us from the River Neva out of St Petersburg, through Lake Ladoga, the largest lake in Europe, down the Volga river and the Waterways of the Tsars, stopping at some of the gems of Russian culture along the way before finally arriving in Moscow. Refreshments will be provided at The Cherry Tree. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 2 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

WED
09

Barbecue and Ritual



7pm



Members £16, Guests £22



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 2 July. Payment is required in advance to secure your place for the barbecue. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



July 2025

TUES
15

Stevie Bart



TUES
22

Roy and Phil



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 Wednesday 9 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome Roy Green, harmonica player and his mate Phil on guitar to The Stanhope Arms.



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' and a host of delightful Irish and Scottish folk tunes. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 17 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT
26

Scam



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Joe Mendell back to The Albatross Club. In our new 'online' age, there are bad people who want to steal your money

and your personal information for illicit means. Joe will demonstrate some of the techniques these people use and update everyone on what is being done to stop these people. It is a non-technical talk which uses common sense information and suggests simple facilities that you might find useful. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 18 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

August

WED 06 A Century of the Volunteer Fire Brigade



7.30pm



Free



Join us to welcome Jo Livingston to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. A history of the years when firefighting depended on local altruism, using photographs and other items from Jo's family's long association with the Brigade. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 30 July. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

TUES 19 Fred Clark



7.45pm



£5



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome Fred Clark to The Stanhope Arms. 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 Thursday 14 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

SAT 30 The FOG



12.30pm



£5



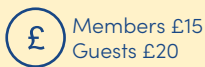
Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming back The FOG to The Albatross Club. The live band will perform a variety of hits from the 1960s. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 22 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.



TUES 12 Petanque and Barbecue



7pm



Members £15
Guests £20



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 by Wednesday 6 August. Cheques/payment must be made in advance to confirm your place. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

September

ODDFELLOWS FRIENDSHIP MONTH

1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



MON
01

Unstable Cliffs



Join us at the Weald Branch to be entertained by 'Unstable Cliffs' who are a two person band from Bexhill. They will entertain you with Rock, Blues and Country music from the 50s to the noughties. Refreshments will be provided at The Cherry Tree. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 28 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

TUES
09

Shine



The Beacon Branch is pleased to welcome back Shine, a Tunbridge Wells band who put their own slant on popular 'Ska' New Wave, Reggae and really cool songs to get you on the dance floor. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 5 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.



WED
03

Friendship Quiz



FRIENDSHIP
MONTH
EVENT

Join the fun

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 Friday 29 August. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



September

ODDFELLOWS

FRIENDSHIP MONTH

1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



Friendship Lunchtime Get-Together - Tunbridge Wells

TUES
16



12 noon



As per menu



8pm



£5



The Weald Branch is pleased to welcome 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 Cherry Tree. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 11 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.



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 Friday 12 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

FRIENDSHIP
MONTH
EVENT

Join the fun

SAT
20

Friendship Ramble and Pub Lunch



10am



As per menu



The Earl of Cottenham Branch is organising a ramble in the Hartfield area. The walk will be roughly a 3.5 mile circular walk 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. The venue for the lunch will be confirmed nearer the time. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 12 September. Email Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.



FRIENDSHIP
MONTH
EVENT

Invite a friend

September

ODDFELLOWS

FRIENDSHIP MONTH

1 - 30 SEPTEMBER



MON
22

Friendship 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. Thames Valley Police Cyber Unit will also be there to do a presentation on Cyber Crime and AI. Please note that booking is essential by Tuesday 16 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.



FRIENDSHIP
MONTH
EVENT
Invite a friend

SAT
27

Come Fly with Me



12.30pm



Free



Join the Bexhill Branch to welcome Neil Sadler to The Albatross Club. An odd thing happened today at the airport; strange goings on behind the scenes at Gatwick, the world's second busiest single runway airport; including the stowaway to freedom and a very expensive sleepover! Neil's talk draws on his experience as a police officer at Gatwick. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 19 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.



Say *yes* to friendship in September

Make someone's day and invite them along to share the friendship 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

October

WED 01 The Farmhouse and King Henry IX



Join us to welcome back John Griffiths-Colby to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. This is the story of 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. Lynette and Paul didn't choose Poplar Farm; it chose them. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Wednesday 24 September. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

TUES 07 Duck Soup



The Sevenoaks Branch are pleased to welcome 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. His guitar playing skills leave audiences spell-bound. Refreshments will be provided by the Branch. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 2 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.

MON 13 To Journey's End; The Life of RC Sherriff



Join the Earl of Cottenham Branch in welcoming Pete Allen to the Ex-Services Club in East Grinstead. In 2000, the National Theatre named 'Journey's End' one of the 100 greatest British plays of the 20th Century. This is 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 WWI and went on to become one of the highest paid screenwriters in Hollywood helping create some of cinema's most memorable films. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Monday 6 October. Email Karen to book your place karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call Andy on 01342 317970.

October

TUES 14 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 Friday 10 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

SAT 25 Wildlife Rescue Ambulance Service (WRAS)



12.30pm



Free



Join the Bexhill Branch in welcoming Trevor Weeks to The Albatross Club. Trevor is East Sussex WRAS's founder. Although he started WRAS in 1996, he has been undertaking wildlife rescue and conservation work since 1985 when he was just 13 years old. Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 17 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Margaret on 01424 217243.

SUN 26 Spanish Sunday Lunch at La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar



1pm



Members £30, Guests £40



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, book by Wednesday 15 October. To secure your place cheques/payment should be sent in advance to the Branch Office. 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 or call 01342 324980.



October

TUES
28

Moxie Dolls

L 8pm

£ £5



The Beacon Branch is pleased to welcome back the Moxie Dolls, a vocal harmony partnership with a rich seductive sound, charisma and chemistry like no other. Once they step in to the spotlight, prepare to be dazzled! The Brighton based duo conjure up soul stirring harmonies tailored to any event. Refreshments will be provided at the Crowborough Social Club. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 24 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

November

TUES
04

An Actors Life for Me

L 7.45pm

£ Free



WED
05

The History of Champagne

L 7.30pm

£ Free



Join the Sevenoaks

Branch in welcoming 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 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 30 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.



Join us to welcome back Peter Griffiths to the Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club. From the early inadvertent sparkling wines, to the multi-national Champagne Houses of today. The talk debunks some of the myths about champagne, it's origin and the part played by the monk, Dom Perignon. It also charts how the wine, the making process and the taste have changed over the years. We are afraid there are no free samples! Refreshments will be provided. Please note that booking is essential by Friday 31 October. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



November

TUES
11

Elvis Presley Tribute



8pm



£5



The Beacon Branch is pleased to welcome Andy T King to the Crowborough Social Club. Andy will again 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 7 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.



TUES
18

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 11 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



MON
24

Rebel Strings



8pm



£5



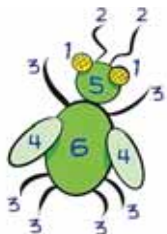
The Weald Branch is pleased to welcome Rebel Strings, the two man version of the Smokin' Mojo's. The duo will perform a diverse and interesting song list. Expect an exciting evening of great music. Refreshments will also be provided at The Cherry Tree. Please note that booking is essential by Thursday 20 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Mike on 07711 677683.



December

WED 03 Beetle Drive

⌚ 7.30pm £ Free



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 26 November. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.

TUES 09 The Heartbeats

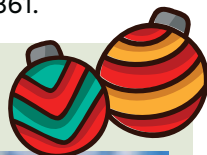
⌚ 8pm £ £5



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 5 December. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call Naz on 07905 472361.

SAT 06 Christmas Lunch - Bexhill

⌚ 1pm £ TBC 🍴



Join the Bexhill and Hastings Branch in the festive period for an excellent tasty lunch at The Royal Victoria Hotel.

Menu and prices will be available in September. Payment and menu choices should be made no later than Wednesday 5 November to Karen at the Branch office. The hotel requires full payment four weeks in advance. Booking is essential. Orders cannot be taken after Wednesday 5 November. Royal Victoria Hotel, Marina, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 0BD. Please contact Solveig for further information and to book your place. solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



December



SAT
13

High Rocks - Christmas Lunch



1pm



TBC



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 September. Payments and menu choices should be sent in advance to Karen at the Branch office. All bookings and payments must be received by



Tuesday 11 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 karen.rose@oddfellows.co.uk or call 01342 324980.

WED
17

Christmas Lunchtime Get-Together - Tunbridge Wells



12.30pm



TBC



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 Tuesday 9 December. Email Solveig to book your place solveig.stanhope@oddfellows.co.uk or call 07443 926944.



Booking and Cancellations

Please remember the importance of early booking for all events to avoid disappointment or cancellation due to lack of support.

Bring friendship to your front room



There are many reasons that might prevent you from being able to attend some of our events in person. A clash in the diary might mean something else takes priority, you might not be able to spare the cost this time, or perhaps you just want to stay close to home that day.

We want people to enjoy the benefits of friendship no matter what. That's why Branches all over the country host around 50 free online events each month, ranging from talks, arts and crafts and games, to exercise and meditation sessions.

These online events are a great opportunity to catch up with familiar faces and meet new and interesting people from all corners of the country from the comfort of home. You might even discover a new favourite hobby.

What's coming up online

We have lots of national online events that all our members can enjoy, the events below are just a flavour.

Tuesday 15 July, 10am - Gardening the natural way with Adam Pasco

Join us on Zoom, Meeting ID: 892 3222 7539. Password: 778536.

Tuesday 19 August, 7pm - Art and the Working Class with Ann-Marie Michel

Join us on Zoom, Meeting ID: 882 8581 8734. Password: 299310.

Anyone is able to attend an Oddfellows online event, no matter where they live so spread the word.

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, with any questions and we'll help you get logged on and ready to join in.

To find out about all upcoming in-person and online events, including online events hosted by other branches, go to www.oddfellows.co.uk/events or ask me to send you a list by email.

Karen Rose

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

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

**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**

At a glance

July 2025

Wed 2	The Beat Goes On, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Mon 7	The Waterways of the Tsars Part 2 - Mandrogy to Moscow, The Cherry Tree	8pm
Wed 9	Barbecue and Ritual, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7pm
Tues 15	Stevie Bart, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Tues 22	Roy and Phil, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Sat 26	Scam, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

August

Wed 6	A Century of the Volunteer Fire Brigade, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 12	Petanque and Barbecue, Crowborough Social Club	7pm
Tues 19	Fred Clark, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Sat 30	The FOG, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

September - Friendship Month

Mon 1	Unstable Cliffs, The Cherry Tree	8pm
Wed 3	Friendship Quiz, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 9	Shine, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Mon 15	Jessica Louisa, The Cherry Tree	8pm
Tues 16	Friendship Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Sat 20	Friendship Ramble and Pub Lunch, Hartfield area	10am
Mon 22	Friendship Lunchtime Get-Together, Crowborough Social Club	12 noon
Sat 27	Come Fly with Me, The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm

At a glance

October

Wed 1	The Farmhouse and King Henry IX Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 7	Duck Soup, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Mon 13	To Journey's End; The Life of RC Sherriff The East Grinstead Ex-Service's Club	7.45pm
Tues 14	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Sat 25	Wildlife Rescue Ambulance Service (WRAS), The Albatross Club RAFA	12.30pm
Sun 26	Spanish Sunday Lunch at La Farola Restaurant and Tapas Bar, East Grinstead	1pm
Tues 28	Moxie Dolls, Crowborough Social Club	8pm

November

Tues 4	An Actors Life for Me, The Stanhope Arms	7.45pm
Wed 5	The History of Champagne, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Tues 11	Elvis Presley Tribute, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Tues 18	Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	12 noon
Mon 24	Rebel Strings, The Cherry Tree	8pm

December

Wed 3	Beetle Drive, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	7.30pm
Sat 6	Christmas Lunch, Royal Victoria Hotel, St Leonards-on-Sea	1pm
Tues 9	The Heartbeats, Crowborough Social Club	8pm
Sat 13	Christmas Lunch, The High Rocks, Tunbridge Wells	1pm
Wed 17	Christmas Lunchtime Get-Together, Tunbridge Wells Constitutional Club	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.

*Terms and conditions apply to all member benefits and services.

For full details, visit www.oddfellows.co.uk/terms-conditions, or call us on 0800 028 1810.



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Summer 2025
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Tunbridge Wells News and Views

News and views from your local friendship group

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Earl of Cottenham Branch



Looking Back at Christmas



Beacon Branch



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

A message from your Secretary

Firstly I would like to welcome any new members who have joined in the last six months. 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-seven Face to Face events in the last six months including three Christmas lunches.

The Events Diary for the second half of 2025 has been produced and again contains a variety of events including interesting talks, music, games and a walk, as well as plenty of lunchtime get-togethers and of course our Christmas lunches.

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

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.

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



Compass Garden in East Grinstead.

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.

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

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

Bexhill and Hastings Branch

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

In October, David Horne told thirty-nine members and guests about his acting career spanning 50 years. He started as a 12 year old playing a female in A Midsummer Night's Dream – admittedly he attended an all boys school, so someone had to do it. He went to drama school in Birmingham and toured lots of theatres in England and abroad, including Vienna and Frankfurt. In the latter he fell asleep off stage while waiting for his cue, which was very embarrassing.

He played a villain on stage with his victim hiding in a cabin in the Alps. When his gun failed to go off after several attempts, he decided to strangle him in the end. He threw the gun out of the window and the Alps collapsed! The detective finding the body didn't realise the script had changed and said this was definitely murder as the bullet had gone straight through the heart which caused a lot of laughter from the audience.



David Horne.

David has also appeared on TV, directed lots of plays and also worked with well-known actors like Ian Lavender, Matthew Kelly and Su Pollard. He still enjoys pantomimes and has played an Ugly Sister with 12 costume changes which didn't always go to plan. A very interesting talk.

Pete Allen's talk to twenty-six members in November was called Lights, Camera, Ho! Ho! Ho! A Surprising Celebration of Christmas Movies. The question is what makes a Christmas

movie? Do the movies need to include Christmas or do they become a Christmas movie because they were released over the Festive season such as The Great Escape? In September 2024, several channels started showing their Christmas movies with Hallmark releasing 38 new Christmas movies on 1st October 2024. The Americans seem to love their Christmas movies and it is likely that these are their equivalent to pantomime season in the UK. Pete gave us a fascinating insight into Christmas movies and showed us various clips from over the years. A real trip down memory lane.

In January, thirty-two members heard Philip Elms give an interesting talk about his life as a local journalist and amateur actor and director. Born in Hastings in



Pete Allen.

1948 he moved to a modern council estate at the age of 4. He remembered his parents putting a shilling in the meter and one of his neighbours using a cardboard piece (which worked) until the meter was emptied and he had to pay in real money. Philip joined the St. John's Ambulance as a cadet at 10 and enjoyed many performances at the White Rock waiting for a member of the public to faint, which never happened. Once he thought he found a dead body at a fairground which turned out to be a drunk.



Philip Elms.

He joined the Bexhill Observer just before he turned 16 and was a journalist for local newspapers for 45 years with a starting salary of £6 5sh a week. When Philip was covering a meeting for a local drama group he joined them which continued for 37 years. As a journalist he once ended up in the dock with some Mods and Rockers and vowed never to wear a parka again when on duty! Philip has written several books from the History of Little Common to a Diary of Lockdown from local people supplied over 63 days.

He touched on many memorable incidents from Queen Elizabeth's visit, to running a Variety Show for the Princess of Wales Memorial Fund raising £5000.

In February, Joe Mendell entertained twenty-two members with his impersonation of Bob Newhart, the American comedian. His deadpan

and satirical delivery took him from studying accountancy in Chicago to Hollywood sitcoms and films. Joe was very funny re-enacting some of Bob's well-known stories with much laughter and applause.



Joe Mendell.

Ray Young entertained thirty-five members in March with facts and figures about Tanzania and a video about the Serengeti and the Masai warriors.



Ray Young.

Tanzania's flag consists of a black diagonal stripe representing the people, with the top triangle its green land, and bottom triangle the blue sea (the Indian ocean). The largest city and capital is Dar es Salaam and of course there is Mount Kilimanjaro, a popular tourist attraction. The country's main export is gold worth £130 billion a year, as well as cashew nuts, Brazil nuts, coffee and coconuts. Their biggest import is oil.

Ray then showed us a video of the Serengeti National Park with all its diverse wildlife including butterflies and birds. The Masai warriors wear red clothing and young boys of 14 get circumcised to become warriors and wear black clothing with white painted faces. A very interesting talk.

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-eight members and a guest enjoyed a lovely relaxed lunch with members catching up with old friends and chatting to new ones.

Thirty-four attended in November with lots of chat and laughter. In February, thirty-eight members and a guest enjoyed the variety of food offered and drinks

provided. 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 twenty-seven members and five 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 – Brighter Heathfield and Age Concern Heathfield.



Getting into the 'Friendship Spirit'.

Bomber in the Backyard

In October, fifty members welcomed John Griffiths-Colby to the Constitutional Club. John had been doing some in-depth research into the almost undocumented crash-landing of 'Incendiary Blonde' 42-95158 on 11 July 1944, on the Hoo Peninsula, Kent. His friend Victor Doe (now 86) witnessed the landing as a 6-year-old lad. Vic formed an enduring friendship with the pilot, 1st Lt. (later Colonel) Marcus S. Horton



John Griffiths-Colby.

who gave him a tour of the wreck in 1944. Sadly, during the return from their mission to Munich, two of the crew were killed when their aircraft was damaged after being fired upon by a Messerschmitt.

In capturing Vic's memories and together with letters from Horton, John has uncovered a great deal of detail about the crew – much of it direct from their families in the US. John's talk described the events of that day and the lives and times of the crew – with some remarkable connections in around their service – even through to the tragic sinking of HMS Coventry during the Falklands War in 1982. A truly fascinating talk.

Remembrance Sunday

On Sunday 10 November 2024, 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.

Picture right: Naz Mian.



Earl of Cottenham Branch

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



Tony Reason.

In October, Tony Reason spoke to twenty-six members about his sponsored trek to Everest Base Camp in October 2013 at the age of 71 years old. Tony explained that he had always had a sense of adventure and had travelled with friends to Scandinavia by motorbike and to Rome by car in the 1960's. Even after marriage, he carried on travelling with his wife. Tony met with a friend who was taking part in the trek to Everest and learnt that there was a space available. The next day he visited a lifelong friend Malcolm, in a hospice, who had MND and after talking to him he decided to go on the trek. Sadly Malcolm passed away the next day.

After giving us some facts about Nepal, Tony then showed a 30 minute video he had made of the 62 mile trek including flying on Yeti Airlines to a remote airfield. The group of ten experienced variable weather conditions and temperatures ranging from plus 20°C to minus 10°C on the trek. However, the

scenery in the Himalayas was stunning as well as the flora, wildlife and people. Tony spoke for free, asking that we make a donation to MND, which we gladly did. A truly inspirational talk.



John Wood.

In February, John Wood spoke to twenty-seven members about his father Major Leonard Berney. Born to Jewish parents in London in 1920, Leonard Berney joined the army immediately after school and was appointed an officer aged 18. Several years later he was one of the first of the Allied troops through the gates of the disease-ridden, overcrowded Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp where he came face-to-face with its many horrors. He remained there for 14 weeks, helping save as many lives as possible, and becoming the Commander of the Belsen Displaced Persons Camp. After the war, Leonard became a successful businessman.

The talk included a detailed personal account of the liberation of the camp with video testimony by both Leonard and Belsen survivors, as well as many historical and personal photographs. Initially, Leonard never spoke about Belsen but on the 30th



Members enjoying La Farola.

anniversary of the liberation he told John the whole story. On discovering, some years later, the existence of Holocaust denial Leonard was outraged and started to speak publicly about his Belsen experience. A thoroughly interesting and thought provoking talk.

At the end of October, Thirty-two members gathered for their annual tapas lunch at La Farola restaurant. There were some new members this year and all thoroughly enjoyed the food and drink on offer. Nine tapas dishes were consumed including manchego cheese, dry cured ham, garlic mushrooms, chicken skewers, spicy pork, tuna salad, whitebait and meatballs. Baskets of French bread were frequently replenished. A lot of catching up was done and many thanks were given to the lovely staff who looked after us all.

Thirty-six 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.

The Roy Hill Shield

Maria Lemont was the 2024 winner of the prestigious shield by recruiting five new members. 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 with the shield.

Coal Gas to Concorde

In November, Peter Griffiths spoke to thirty-five members at the Constitutional Club about the early attempts of flight from 1844 to 1939, and the race to cross the Atlantic.

Peter told us about the attempts to cross the Atlantic, firstly by balloons



Peter Griffiths.

filled with coal gas, then seaplanes, airships and aeroplanes. He also spoke about legendary pilots, including Major Pritchard (the first pilot to navigate the Atlantic by air from Europe to the United States); Alcock & Brown (British aviators who achieved the first non-stop transatlantic flight from Newfoundland to Ireland), Charles Lindberg (first non-stop flight from New York to Paris); and of course about the life and disappearance of Amelia Earhart. A thoroughly interesting talk.

Beetle Drive

In December, Beetle drive master Roy Wright organised an exciting competition at the Constitutional Club in Tunbridge Wells that attracted thirty-three members who had a loud and competitive evening building their beetles. There was lots of hilarity passing the cup with the dice.

The seasoned players made sure the speed was kept up amid a lot of shouting and laughing. Eight games were played and there were two winners with 94 points, Debbie Gillan and Don Basins, closely followed by Solveig Stanhope with 93 points. The coveted shield will be well looked after for another year. Wine and chocolates were handed out and Edna Sutherland was pleased with her Terry's chocolate orange for finishing last.



Beetle Drive winner Don Basins with Roy.

Looking Back at Christmas

Twenty-nine members attended a delicious three course Christmas lunch at the Royal Victoria Hotel in St Leonards on Sea at the beginning of December. Oddity was in attendance as Father Christmas offering members a Christmas chocolate.

A raffle, organised by Solveig Stanhope, was also held that raised £68. 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 £400 before Christmas.



Members enjoying their lunch.

A week later, on a crisp, cold sunny lunchtime, eighty members and guests 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 £160 was raised by the donation raffle with the proceeds going towards our charities of the year – Brighter Heathfield and Age Concern, Heathfield.



Members at High Rocks.

Sevenoaks Branch

Once again, Mike Hyde has produced an exciting programme of talks and music for our meetings. For October and November they were held at The Woodman, Otford. For 2025, the events moved to The Stanhope Arms in Brasted. Each event included a very tasty buffet and refreshments.

John Field told twenty-one members the remarkable story of the Chinese magician Chung Ling Soo in October. The first fact was that this Chinese magician was actually born in New York State as William Ellsworth Robinson to parents of Scottish decent who were active in Vaudeville. Robinson started performing magic shows at the age of 14 but soon started copying the work of other better known magicians and using false names as he wanted to be a Vaudeville star. He was not initially successful and worked for a while in a magic shop making illusions for other magicians. He developed some illusions for himself and, after seeing a genuine Chinese magician, he dressed similarly and pretended to speak very little English, and adopted his new stage name.

He became very popular, especially in Europe, and eventually became one of the highest paid performers on the Vaudeville



John Field.

circuit. His tricks and illusions became more adventurous and dangerous; he had many feuds with other illusionists, and had a complex love life involving a wife that he married when he was 22 but never divorced and many stage assistants as lovers. He died at the Wood Green Empire, London, as a result of a failed bullet catch trick – it was found out after that the revolver had not been properly cleaned and had backfired. He fell to the ground and said ‘oh my God, something’s happened, lower the curtain’, the only time he had spoken English on stage.

John gave many details about the various tricks that Soo performed and the rivals that he upset. It was a fantastic presentation about a fantastic (but now little known) performer.



Rebel Strings.

Our very last meeting at The Woodman was in November due to the sale and redevelopment of the pub. The ever-popular Smokin Mojos unplugged were booked, but unfortunately because the bass player was poorly they came without him and the drummer. However, the two that did come, Bob Brook and John Card,

regularly play together as a duo under the name Rebel Strings. They were excellent playing songs less often heard by the sixteen members in attendance from Bruce Springsteen, the Everly Brothers, Ocean Colour Scene, Cat Stevens, Green Day, Prince, and many more. A very enjoyable musical evening and there was even a little space found for some dancing.

A singer new to us was the first to appear at our new venue, the Stanhope Arms, in February. Ceiron Faux, using the stage name Not King



Not King Cole.

Cole, entertained thirty-one members with a selection of songs by, of course, Nat King Cole and The Rat Pack. He also performed a very wide range of other artists with songs such as Brown Eyed Girl, Country Roads, Leaving on a Jet Plane, Forever in Blue Jeans. As usual, there was much happy dancing and singing which, because there was a particularly large attendance, hemmed Ceiron a bit too close to the end wall. He was a success and will be seen by us again.

In early March, fourteen members welcomed the return of Brian Biggs. Brian had spoken to us previously about his

life as a tugboat captain and a training officer. This time he told of a particular circumstance he was involved in. At the end of the Falklands War, the Government decided that a



Brian Biggs.

tug was required in Stanley to help clear the harbour. Brian and his tug, the M/T Implacable, were chosen to go, but the Navy in its wisdom decide that a RN captain, with no experience of tugs, should go along, assuming overall command.

Tugs have relatively small fuel tanks and Brian had planned a staged route with several refuelling stops. But the RN man overruled this, had longer stages, and then went on to overfill the boat's fuel supply. Sailing from Rosyth into bad weather in the North Sea, the tug lay too low, took on water, and began to list badly. Brian ordered a diversion into Southampton Water to shield them from the storm and to rectify the problems, but the RN captain bypassed that, resulting in the tug sinking, one man dying, and the remainder of the crew needing to be rescued by helicopter from the sea. So the journey to the Falklands only got just past Southampton. A sad but very informative talk indeed.

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Find us at  **OddfellowsTunbridgeWells**

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.



Alpaco Country.

The return of Alpaco Country in October gave twenty-four members a magical evening of dancing (including some line dancing!) and singing along to their happy sound. They managed a repertoire of tunes different to their previous appearance (with just a few repeats). We heard songs such as Whole Lotta Shaking, Ruby, Roll Over Beethoven, Jitterbug Boogie, Peaceful Easy Feeling, and many more. Once again, a very enjoyable evening for us all

Rachel Eade had been an instant success when she first appeared at The Woodman in July. In November she entertained twenty-five members and was a hit all over again. Rachel managed



Rachel Eade with Oddity.

largely a very different selection of tunes for us, but all of them well-known and very likely to initiate some dancing and singing. It must be said that Rachel really knows how to work her audience. We will be seeing more of her in future, of that there is no doubt.

In January, the man with the electric ukulele, Rob Tompsett, provided twenty-seven members with an extremely jolly sing along and dance session. Rob really does know how to enthuse his



Rob Tompsett.

audience. A selection of his tunes – Tie a Yellow Ribbon, Delilah, Hi Ho Silver Lining, Here Comes the Sun, and so many more. Rob is someone we will definitely have to see again.

Twenty-six members heard a most fascinating and amusing talk given by Delia Taylor in February. Her subject was the life and adventures of Coco Chanel, and what adventures they were with more than a whiff of scandal!



Delia Taylor.



East Kent Chorus.

Known these days mainly for her fashion and perfume offerings, we heard that Gabrielle Chanel was born in poverty in a charity hospital in 1883, and the family with six children lived in one room. After her mother died, her father left the female children in the grounds of an orphanage where she stayed until the age of 18.

Subsequently she started dancing in clubs (where she picked up the name Coco), met increasingly rich lovers, started designing and making clothes, opened her first boutique, and progressed quite rapidly to a chain of stores. By 1935 she employed over 4,000 staff and sold some 28,000 dresses that year. Although she never married, she was close friends with many well-known men including Dali, Picasso, Russian Grand Duke Dmitri Pavlovich (who killed Rasputin), Ivor Stravinski, the Duke of Westminster, Churchill, and the future King Edward VIII. Also

Walter Schellenberg, German Chief of Intelligence and a spy – Coco herself was suspected of being a spy, but was saved from trial by Churchill. She lived the last 30 years of her life in the Paris Ritz hotel.

For all of these, and more, Delia gave us some delightful details of a fantastic life; and what a wonderful presentation by Delia.

When we last saw the East Kent Chorus they came with 11 a cappella singers, but in March they beat even that as 12 of them arrived! And they were all so cheerful, amusing, and obviously enjoying themselves singing, for a donation to their choir funds. The nineteen members present very much enjoyed them too. As before a wide range of different types of song, including the difficult (for the audience required to join in) singing of 12345 to the tune of Knees Up Mother Brown... try it!

Beacon Branch

Thanks to the efforts of Naz Mian, a number of music and lunchtime events 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, thirty-seven members enjoyed an evening with very popular Stevie Bart who entertained everyone with a variety of Elvis songs, some of which were lesser known but beautiful like 'I Need You So'. A lot of people took to the dance floor to 'Do You Want To Dance' by Ricky Nelson, then the Everly Brothers, Shakin' Stevens, Don Gibson (Sea of Heartbreak), Del Shannon, Billy Fury and many more. Stevie is the master of them all. Some members even managed a couple of line dances amid all the rock-n-roll. A really enjoyable evening.



Stevie Bart.

Forty members enjoyed a very entertaining and amusing presentation by Marco Magic in November. His show not only included magic tricks but also some jokes and singing. Although many of his tricks were not new to the audience, nobody could work out how they were done! Tricks included making a number of metal rings join together and come apart (even though there appeared to be no gaps in the metal);

tearing a sheet of newspaper into small pieces and then producing it back in one piece; pouring a jug of water into a folded newspaper without any seeping out, then turning the



Marco Magic.

paper round to pour the water back into the jug and displaying the completely dry newspaper to those watching. Members were thoroughly mystified by these and other tricks, and Marco was roundly applauded for his show, with a request for him to return again in the future.



Heartbeats.

In December, fifty-eight members plus a guest had a very enjoyable evening dancing away to the Heartbeats. They covered everything from Elvis to the Beatles and of course some Christmas songs as well. Day Dream Believer, Save the Last Dance for Me, Run Around

Sue, Tutti Frutti, Blue Christmas and more got nearly everybody onto the dance floor. An amazing buffet and a drink were very welcome after a lot of energetic dancing with several managing some line dancing as well. A lovely end to the year.

Forty-two members gathered in January to enjoy a programme of popular songs beautifully sung to electronic backing by Jessica Louisa,



Jessica Louisa.

who we have enjoyed seeing and hearing before. Her playlist included many songs that most of those present were able to sing along with, for example Da Doo Ron Ron (The Crystals), Burning Love (Elvis Presley), Twistin' The Night Away (Sam Cooke), Proud Mary (Creedence Clearwater Revival), You Don't Have To Say You Love Me (Dusty Springfield), Be My Baby (The Ronettes) and Twist And Shout (The Beatles). Some members also got up to dance, especially to the Twist numbers! It was truly an evening enjoyed by all.

In February, the Heartbeats returned to entertain forty-two members and two guests at our Valentine's dance. The Heartbeats were excellent as usual and got everyone up on the dance floor. They performed familiar songs from the Eagles, The Hollies, The Beatles, Elvis and many

more. Red roses were handed out by Naz and Thea. A thoroughly enjoyable evening.



Members dancing to the Heartbeats.

Forty-one members and a guest enjoyed a splendid evening of music in March provided by Peter Snipp, a trained opera singer (now



Peter Snipp.

retired) who we have had the pleasure of listening to twice before. In spite of only just having recovered from a flu-like infection, Peter delivered a very varied programme of songs. In the first half of the evening he concentrated on songs associated with the crooners, including Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Peter's favourite Matt Munro. He included a couple of Matt's songs that are much less well-known than the usual repertoire. After the buffet, Peter again took the stage and entertained everyone with a wider

Continued on the next page...

Continued from the previous page...

variety of songs and styles, including such surprises as Van Morrison's Brown Eyed Girl and, of all things, Jitterbug Boogie by T Rex, which got folk up and bouncing about on the dance floor! A very entertaining and enjoyable evening and all agreed another return by Peter in future would be very popular.

In January, a lovely and chatty lunch was attended by eleven members who enjoyed soup or prawn cocktail, followed by poached salmon or cottage pie with either fresh fruit salad or banoffee pie for dessert. All this was accompanied by a drink and tea or coffee. The lunchtimes are really good value for money and it is great not having to cook at home later.



Members enjoying lunchtime friendship.

My Life in Comedy

In January on a snowy evening, twenty-one members and a guest were entertained at the Constitutional Club by Colin Bostock-Smith. Colin treated us to a very amusing insight into the life of a comedy scriptwriter whose career in Radio and TV spanned the 1970's through to the 2000's. Having started life as a Fleet Street journalist, Colin found his talents better suited to writing scripts for Radio and



Colin Bostock-Smith.

TV. During his long career he wrote scripts for Bob Monkhouse, David Jason, Rowan Atkinson, Anne Robinson, Russ Abbott, The Two Ronnies, Griff Rhys Jones, Pamela Stephenson, Clive James and, not to be overlooked, Basil Brush and Roland Rat.

Colin spoke of times gone past and showed us some of the sketches he had penned. We were treated to 'Songs of Praise' from Not the Nine O'Clock News, 'Squash' from the Two Ronnies, 'Bill Clinton' from the Clive James Show and many other highlights we all remember from years gone by. A very entertaining talk that brought back many funny memories.

Woman in a Man's World

In February, Geoff Collins spoke to forty-members and guests about Amy Johnson – Woman in a Man's World. Amy was the eldest of four sisters and grew up in Hull where her father ran a fish export and import business. She studied at Sheffield University before a failed love affair persuaded her to try a new life in London. She worked as a typist for a firm of solicitors and was introduced to flying as a hobby and gained her aviator's certificate and pilot's licence as well as becoming



Geoff Collins.

the first British woman to obtain a ground engineer's licence.

In 1930, Amy achieved worldwide recognition when she became the first woman to fly solo from England to Australia. Geoff spoke about the issues that Amy encountered on that flight and her tour of Australia afterwards and also subsequent record breaking flights. During the Second World War, Amy joined the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA). On 5 January 1941 while flying an Airspeed Oxford for the ATA from Prestwick to RAF Kidlington near Oxford, it is suggested that Johnson ran out of fuel in adverse weather conditions. Her body has never been recovered. A thoroughly insightful look into the life of Amy Johnson.

Annual Meeting

In March at the Annual Meeting, Naz Mian was thanked by twenty-nine members for his successful year in office as Provincial Grand Master (District Lodge Chairman). It was also reported that a total of £833 had been raised through the monthly raffles and High Rocks raffle for Naz's nominated charities of the year – Age Concern, Heathfield, and Brighter Heathfield. This amount was topped up by the Branch to £1,000.

Andy Mason succeeds Naz in this position and Andrew Stanhope became Provincial Deputy Grand Master. Andy has nominated The Compass Garden, East



Andy Mason, Andrew Stanhope and Naz Mian.

Grinstead, and St Catherine's Hospice as his charities of the year. Also at the meeting, donations of £300 were awarded to each of the following charities: Age UK – Crowborough; DAVSS; Folly Wildlife Rescue; Rye Harbour Sailability; The 3H Foundation; Upz and Downz.

Oddfellows Travel: Destination Mystery

In November last year, 16 Oddfellows and three friends boarded a cruise ship with no idea of its destination.

With six mystery ports scheduled in 11 days, there was a lot to pack in, and there was plenty to keep them entertained on board: interesting talks, a murder mystery, craft sessions, quizzes and a drinks party.

Port one

Dawn broke on day two, revealing Gijon in northern Spain as the first destination. Some set out on organised excursions while others explored independently.



Port two

An overnight hop delivered our travellers to their second secret Spanish stop – Ferrol.

Wendy, an Ipswich Oddfellows member and cruise host, said: “It was an interesting port, not well known to many regular passengers. There was a mix of interesting architecture and maritime history – the naval museum was a must.”

Port three

The ship next docked in Porto, Portugal, where the group were greeted by a broad

esplanade and a sweeping sandy beach, and they discovered a thriving fish market.

Port four

Back in Spain, the fourth port was a warm, sunny Malaga. “It was amazing,” said Wendy. “The cathedral was well worth a visit, also the Roman amphitheatre.”

Port five

The Spanish odyssey and Roman themes continued at the penultimate stop in Cadiz.

“The sea defences were testament to the city’s position close to the entrance of the Mediterranean,” Wendy said.

Port six

Having worked out their next stop, Wendy said: “Lisbon wasn’t quite such a mystery, but a delight nevertheless. The highlight was a lift ride to see magnificent views over Lisbon and the River Tejo.”

Surprises and celebrations

Before returning, the Oddfellows crew received a mystery gift bag containing souvenirs from Spain and Portugal, Fred. Olsen gifts and chocolates, and celebrated a member’s birthday with cake provided by the chef and singing waiters.

See Oddfellows Travel’s 2025 group holiday schedule, including a cruise to Iceland in July, by visiting www.oddfellows.co.uk/travel

Unity Mutual: Seasonal scam spotting



With tax season coming to a close, scammers start to move their attention to new opportunities.

As new financial scams emerge, people get targeted in different ways. Our financial services brand, Unity Mutual, has assessed what to watch out for in the coming months.

April to May: The tax refund scam

With key tax deadlines passing, fraudsters may take advantage of taxpayers hoping for a refund. You may receive emails, phone calls or text messages claiming you're due reimbursement.

Verify any tax-related communication through official government channels before responding to avoid being caught out.

Summer scams: Holidays, events and ticket fraud

From June to August, scammers often aim to exploit the excitement of summer holiday planning by offering fake 'not to be missed' deals on accommodation and flights, often through unofficial websites.

Concert and sporting event fraud is also on the up, and attempts to sell fake tickets on social media platforms are becoming increasingly common. Avoid these traps

by booking through reputable travel agencies and official events websites.

August to September: Back to school scams

As students and their families prepare for a new school year, fraudsters like to create fake offers for school supplies, loans and student rental accommodation.

If an offer seems too good to be true, verify it with official sources before taking action.

Stay vigilant year-round

While some scams are season-specific, fraudsters are always on the lookout for their next victim.



Stay informed, be sceptical of unsolicited requests for money or personal information, and always verify who you're dealing with before taking action.

For more financial tips and resources visit www.unitymutual.co.uk/knowledge-hub
To view Unity Mutual's range of family friendly financial products* visit www.unitymutual.co.uk/oddfellows

For more information call 0161 214 4628.

*Terms and conditions apply

Trio receive university funding

Congratulations to the latest recipients of our First Degree Course Educational Awards: Lillie Buckley, Edward Smith and Torsten Ellis.

Easing the pressure

Each year, a selection of Oddfellows members heading to university for the first time are chosen to receive a non-repayable bursary of £900 per year for the duration of their studies.

Jane Nelson, CEO of the Oddfellows, said: "I'm delighted that the Society can play a part in enhancing Lillie, Edward and Torsten's university experiences.

"Attempting to budget finances alongside studying is as tough as it's ever been but this funding from our Educational Awards will help to ease those stresses as they embark on this exciting stage in their lives."

Each year, our Fraternal Board chooses who will receive the funding, based on the applications received.

Grand Master (Chairman) of the Society, Barbara Needham, added: "I'm so proud that we are able to give the younger generation a bit of a financial boost, which will help them to take these all-important next steps on their way to making their mark on the world.

"I wish them every success over the next few years and beyond."

Lillie Buckley, Nottingham Trent Branch member

Lillie started studying Veterinary Science at the University of Bristol in September 2024.



She says the funding will allow her to purchase a new laptop for doing her university work, as well as helping to cover travel costs for work placements which she'll complete as part of her studies.

She said: "When I found out I would be receiving the funding, I was extremely happy and honoured to have been chosen. I want to say a huge thank you to the Oddfellows, as this will help support me throughout my degree and I can't wait to see what the future holds.

"I am loving the course so far. We've learnt lots of interesting things. In the future I would like to be a small animal vet, however I am keeping an open mind as I love cows!"

Edward Smith, Erewash Valley Branch member

Chemical Engineering student Edward began his course at the University of Manchester in September 2024.

He plans to follow his studies with a chartership while working as a Process Engineer. A Process Engineer designs, optimises and manages the processes used to transform raw materials into finished products in manufacturing or chemical plants.

“I felt very proud, honoured and relieved to receive extra funding to help with my studies,” he said. “I would encourage all eligible students to have a go at applying for this award.”



Edward says the money will go toward purchasing books and other learning materials.

Torsten Ellis, Derby Derwent Valley Branch member

Torsten has been reading Theoretical Physics with Mathematics at Lancaster University since October 2024.



He says the funding will allow him to budget better when purchasing learning materials, such as textbooks, and taking part in extra-curricular activities.

He added: “It felt great to learn I had been chosen for the funding. I was also somewhat relieved as it means I will have to worry less about my finances over the course of each year.

“My modules are split between the physics and maths departments, which is great because I’ll get a rich understanding of both and I’m looking forward to next year when I can pick modules and advance my understanding of both fields.”

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



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

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

Care and Welfare Helpline

Call 0800 0149 822

(free to callers from any landline or mobile number)

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

Email: care@oddfellows.co.uk

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

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

EDCWA50223

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