



Chairman's letter

As we start 2025, there will be some changes in Orpington u3a. The most significant, I suppose, is the new day and time of our meeting: after 27 years and no fault of our own, we have had to compromise, knowing that this will not suit all. At the AGM there were a few hiccups which we hope to iron out, but please bear with us – we are doing our best in difficult circumstances. We were pleased that so many members were able to attend at the new time.

Our wonderful Committee is also changing, with some swapping roles or stepping down, but with the promise of new members joining. My heartfelt thanks to each of them for all the support they give me, their hard work, advice and outstanding service, which makes this job so much easier. In particular, I'd like to thank Janet Holmes, who has been our Group Coordinator and was previously our Chairman from 2015-2018. She is a fund of knowledge about all things u3a and her cheerful, calm personality makes her popular with our members. We hope you enjoy your 'retirement'!

Our membership renewals will begin shortly. Remember that YOU are vital to the continuation of this fabulous organisation and are essential to making it a happy community, where learning and laughter are of paramount importance.

**Please note that the new time for the General Meeting is 3.30.
The previous class ends at 3.05 and then we need time to set out chairs etc.**

Membership Renewal for 2025 is now due

The fee will remain at £12 per annum

Please complete your renewal by 1-March

If you joined after 1-Dec 2024 you do not need to renew until 2026

Membership can be renewed easily online

For further details or if you prefer to renew by cash or cheque a membership renewal form is included with this Newsletter

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All telephone numbers quoted in the newsletter are as dialled from the Orpington (01689) Exchange

**The last day for receipt of copy for Bulletin No. 10 is Wednesday 19 February 2025
and for Newsletter No. 164 is Wednesday 19 March 2025**

For contact details of Committee Members and Gr
Please login with your Username and Pass

www.u3aorpington.org.uk

New committee members needed!



Monthly General Meeting - Crofton Hall (3.30-5.30pm)

18 February - Tom Hart Dyke - The World Garden, Lullingstone

Tom Hart Dyke, plant hunter, first shot to international prominence in the year 2000, when he was kidnapped in the Colombian jungle on a plant hunting expedition that went dangerously wrong.

On the day the guerillas told him he would die, he planned a world garden for his ancestral home, [Lullingstone Castle](#), "I spent the remainder of the day drawing plans, in my diary, for a World Garden – containing the plants I had collected from across the globe, planted out in their respective countries of origin. I wanted this plant filled extravaganza of a worldly garden to pay homage to the amazing achievements of plant hunters especially during the Victorian and Edwardian era".



18 March - Janie Ramsay - Without Reserve - World of Antiques

Behind the scenes of the antiques trade, both retail and while working for Sotheby's.

Monthly u3a Coffee Morning - BR6

NOTE CHANGE! As a consequence of moving the General Meetings to Tuesdays in 2025, the day for the Coffee Mornings will be changing to the **third Thursday** of the month.

The next meeting is on 20th February at 10.30 am



Solutions to Cryptic Crossword No 97

Across: 1 Trendy, 4 Jurassic, 10 Unannounced, 11 Gin, 12 Rubbish, 14 Nonstop, 15 Counterbalance, 17 Aggressiveness, 21 Triplet, 22 Advance, 23 Tun, 24 Propellants, 26 Condense, 27 Spider.
Down: 1 Thurrock, 2 Era, 3 Dentist, 5 Uncontaminated, 6 Addenda, 7 Sight screen, 8 Canape, 9 Authorisations, 13 Bourguignon, 16 Assessor, 18 Release, 19 Envelop, 20 Static, 25 Nod.
Riddles: Q1 9 Q2 A Clock

GROUP REPORTS

Sports Events - New Group

A new open group that will arrange tickets and visits to local and possibly national sporting events including, for example: club rugby lower league and non-league football, county cricket, motor sports, tennis, hockey, horse racing, darts etc.

Events will be proposed by the group leader and members. If you are interested in this prospective new group please contact

Award Winning Books - New Group

A new book group that will meet monthly at members' houses with a view to reading and discussing a wide variety of books that have either won or been shortlisted for a literary award, for example: Booker, Golden Dagger, Pulitzer, Hugo/Nebula, Costa. If you are interested in this group please contact

Attention All Group Leaders: New Interest Grant Scheme

We are running an **Interest Grant Scheme (IGGS-25)** again this year, whereby Group Leaders will be able to bid for grants to buy goods or services. These purchases must help the Group, either by (i) improving the members' experience, (ii) facilitating an increase in the number of u3a members that the Group can accommodate, or (iii) by reducing the cost of running and/or participating in the Group.

Details of the scheme will be emailed to Group Leaders who have an email address registered in Beacon on **Monday 3rd February** and you will have until Friday 28th February to submit bids.

If you do not have an email address or do not receive the email, please request details of the scheme by contacting the Treasurer

Painting

The painting group is pleased to announce we have space for new members.

This friendly group meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays between 1.30 and 3.30pm in Petts Methodist Church Hall.



New Members' Meetings

As a result of changes at Crofton Halls the venue for these meetings will now be at Orpington Methodist Church on Sevenoaks Road in the Wesley meeting room.

The church is well served by public transport – buses 358 and R11 stop outside and it is only a short walk from other bus routes. On street parking is available on the road adjoining the church premises or at the nearby Tesco store (parking free for up to 3 hours). I will be contacting new members with more details about the next meeting.

I would also like to say thank you to all those members who have joined recently and who I have had the pleasure of meeting. The reasons for you joining are varied but you bring with you your experience, skills and interest which enhances and ensures the continued success of Orpington u3a. Here's to another good year in 2025!

Philosophy

Exploring the Depths of Judaism: A Musical Journey with Matthew Sear

Recently, composer Matthew Sear joined us to give a talk on the history of Judaism, delving into its rich customs, conventions, and diverse sects. His exploration not only illuminated the tapestry of beliefs and practices that have evolved over centuries, but also the idea of a creator and creativity.

Matthew's passion for Kabbalah, a mystical interpretation of Jewish texts, served as a backdrop for his discussion as he gave examples of Kabbalah interpretations of biblical stories such as Moses restoring the tablets of the ten commandments.

One highlight was his collaboration with artist Mina Kupfermann on 'Seven Days', an innovative project that melds art and music inspired by the Genesis creation narrative. Through this partnership, the duo's aim is to evoke the profound themes of beginnings and transformation found in the biblical text in a way that is less about words, and more the experience of the creation story through a sensory experience for an audience.

Matthew additionally presented a video of excerpts of the work with explanations of how various instruments and colours were combined to react to each day's narrative.

In addition to 'Seven Days', Matthew introduced his latest project, which sets original music to the Psalms. This endeavour showcasing his ability to blend contemporary musical language with ancient scripture, inviting listeners to experience the Psalms in a fresh, dynamic way.

Matthew's music can be found on Spotify and Apple Music under 'Matthew Sear' and his website is updated regularly

If you are interested in joining the Philosophy group which meets on the first Friday morning of the month, please contact



Bell Ringing

Christmas Together

We were delighted to host a 'Clang and Cake' event on 17th January, as part of planned winter festive get togethers with members of HRGB. The Addington Bell ringers came over to Orpington – 11 of them. There were 26 of us altogether ably led by our conductor Deirdre, who kept us in control most of the time.

Although the festive period is over, we played well known Christmas tunes such as Deck the Halls, Waltz of the Snowflakes and also El Noi de Mare- a Catalan piece. Addington introduced us to a Flemish Carol - a John Rutter piece which is sure to become one of our favourites. In turn we demonstrated Dialogue for Bells.

It was lovely listening to the bells ringing together.

As hosts we put on a splendid variety of savouries, homemade scones, biscuits and cakes. There is always plenty to talk about over a cup of tea and a plate of delicious food.

Addington have invited us back to play with them in the summer, and we look forward to visiting them for "Tinkle and Treats".

GROUP REPORTS

London Explorers

Thursday 20 February 2025

The Bank of England and the Temple of Mithras

Can the tooth fairy go cashless? Are cryptoassets money? Who decides how we pay? Money and the way we use it has changed in recent decades. With digital and contactless payments on the rise, the choices we make, as individuals and businesses are having an impact. Future-proofing the economy to meet our needs, now and in the future, is the job of the Bank of England.

From digital currencies to the importance of cash in our everyday lives, from sustainability to making sure we have choice and access to different ways to pay, this exhibition responds to questions you have been asking. So, where are we now, and what is the future of money?

See and experience the reconstructed remains of the Temple of Mithras at the Bloomberg building. The temple has been restored to capture the mystery and intrigue of the Roman cult of Mithras, who used to meet on this site. Haze, light and the sound of footsteps, chanting and secret whispers will transport you back to London AD 240.

Excavations undertaken between 2012 and 2014 were some of the most extensive ever to have taken place in London, and revealed new evidence of the area's Roman origins. Thousands of artefacts were discovered, sherds of Roman pottery and tonnes of animal bone, providing evidence of trade, consumption, food and industry.

This promises to be a fascinating day out, so put the date in your diary! For more information contact

Friday 14 March 2025

A Guided Tour of Middle Temple, Inns of Court, with 400 years of history, at 11.15am. We'll catch the 9.42am train from Petts Wood to Charing Cross and will have a gentle walk to the Middle Temple.

The cost for the Tour is £15.00 per person, payable at the next meeting by cheque or cash.

Choir

We would like more members.

Come and join us if you like to sing.

We meet in All Saints Church Hall on alternate Thursdays at 11.30.



Wordsmiths

WOULD-BE WRITERS AND PLAY READERS REQUIRED

Wordsmiths is a writing group which meets monthly. We are looking to extend our membership and include play-reading, as well as writing, in our repertoire.

If you are interested in either writing or play-reading or both please contact me for further details.



MOTO 1

This is a friendship group for members who, for whatever reason, do not have a partner and are on their own. We organise a variety of events, eg lunches, coffee mornings, trips to the cinema and theatre, as well as tours (the Poppy Factory is our latest one) and days out.

We have a WhatsApp group for members to post events on and one for 'chatting' about a variety of topics. Our membership is currently full but if you would like to join us, please ask to be added to the waiting list.



Quiz

Approximately 100 members attended the Quiz Afternoon, which was both enjoyable and challenging. Our excellent Quiz Master, the inestimable Brian Flagg, an Orpington u3a member, provided us with questions on a range of subjects to tax our memories. congratulations to Sybil and her team who won the prize.

Our thanks to Hilary and Pete Robson for organising it and to Brian for his time and geniality. We hope to hold another Quiz next year.



Gardening Made Easy

Wildlife needs your help to survive the cold weather, as food is in short supply and freezing temperatures make life difficult. In addition to filling bird feeders, you can make a difference by leaving seedheads intact and creating habitat piles.

Take a more relaxed approach to pests and let the birds control them for you, some birds even eat slugs and snails. Save yourself time in the Autumn and leave seedheads standing, as well as attracting seed-eating birds they will add ornamental interest to your garden throughout the Winter. Pile up logs, sticks and other unwanted plant material in a quiet corner, this will create an invertebrate-rich feast for all sorts of birds. (Extract from BBC Gardeners' World Magazine).

The Wednesday 'Gardening Made Easy' group has been divided into two smaller groups A and B. However, we still will be meeting six times together during the year.

If you would like tips and ideas for your garden please contact:

GROUP REPORTS

The Royal College Music Lovers - New Group

The Royal College of Music is one of the world's great conservatoires, voted Number 1 recently, training gifted musicians from all over the world for international careers as performers, conductors and composers.

Opened in 1883 by the then Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), the RCM has trained some of the most important figures in British and international music life, including composers such as Holst, Vaughan Williams, Turnage and Britten; conductors such as Leopold Stokowski, Sir Colin Davis and Sir Roger Norrington; singers such as Dame Joan Sutherland, Sir Thomas Allen and Alfie Boe; instrumentalists such as Sir James Galway, John Lill, Gervase de Peyer, and Natalie Clein.

With more than 900 students from more than 50 countries, the RCM is a vibrant community of talented and open-minded musicians. RCM professors are musicians with worldwide reputations, accustomed to working with the most talented students of each generation.

I have been a Friend of the Royal College of Music for some years. Having spoken with the College, and with their agreement, I would like to lead a new Orpington u3a group entitled:- The Royal College music lovers.

Following an initial meeting perhaps at the Crofton Halls, I would offer to co-ordinate concert visits, one per month, for members of the new group. I am able to obtain tickets for most concerts, which are of an outstanding quality, either free of charge or within the price range £5 - £10.

Our members will be able to enjoy outstanding music at a very reasonable price. I could reserve tickets, which members could then pay for and collect at the box office when they arrive.

The College itself is situated in Prince Consort Road, directly opposite the main entrance to the Royal Albert Hall. Members travelling up to London Victoria, can then take the No 52 bus directly to the main Royal Albert Hall.

This could be a really friendly and enjoyable group, and we would aim to launch the new group from January 2025.

There is also a brand new museum, with a host of valuable instruments, worth looking at, and a new cafeteria offering a wide selection of teas/coffees and snacks.



Interested in classical music? Then sign up to this new u3a group, you won't be disappointed!

Table Tennis, Short Mat Bowls and Pickleball are Moving

Due to the refurbishment of the Walnuts we will be relocating in the new year.

From 3rd January, Table Tennis & Short Mat Bowls will be relocating to the main hall at Crofton Halls on Fridays from 3pm to 5pm

From 7th January, Pickleball will be relocating to Bromley Lawn Tennis & Squash Club, 72A, Sandford Road, Bromley BR2 9AN on Tuesdays from 12noon to 2pm

New members are welcome to join all of these fun sports.



Science and Technology



Did 17th-century Dutch master Johannes Vermeer use lenses and mirrors to produce photographic realism in his paintings?

In our first meeting of the year we watched a fascinating documentary about inventor Tim Jenison's quest to uncover the techniques used by Vermeer. The film combines historical research, scientific experimentation and a personal journey to test the hypothesis that Vermeer used a camera obscura and other optical devices to create his masterpieces.

Trailer - [Tim's Vermeer](#)

If you are interested in joining the Science & Technology Group (2nd Tuesday of the month, 2-4pm) please contact

FUTURE MEETINGS

- 11 Feb - The Human Body in Space
- 11 Mar - Nikola Tesla
- 8 April - UK Airborne Anti-Submarine Warfare Technology
- 13 May - Fusion Power

POLITE NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

Please ensure that hand written communications are clear and legible. In particular your email address, name and other contact details on membership forms and interest group forms.

It is of equal importance that you double-check that no errors have been made when filling in forms online.

Thank you, your cooperation is appreciated!

Sharing an Interest

There has been a good response from some members interested in sharing an activity with one other member on the following topics:

- Arranging/cataloguing books
- Gardening
- Improving French conversation
- Improving Spanish conversation
- Improving/playing chess
- Improving Italian conversation
- Playing Board games
- Sharing walking/trips out
- Simple Piano duets

If any of the above activities interest you or for further information, please contact the Group Facilitator by phone or email shown below.

Alternatively, If YOU have an activity or hobby YOU would like to share with another member, please contact the Group Facilitator, Linden Toy on:

GROUP REPORTS



Walks

Walks are on the 3rd Wednesday of the month, **starting at 10am unless stated otherwise.**

All walkers join the walks at their own risk. New walkers are welcome to join any of the walks - but please telephone us before coming on your first walk.

Please ensure that you wear suitable footwear for the walks. Note that the walk description is only a brief guide, not a complete breakdown of the walk.

Wednesday 15 January - Knockholt

15 hardy souls set off for a challenging 3.5 mile walk along the North Downs Way and around the Chevening Estate, tackling muddy paths, stiles and steep inclines. My phone health app said we climbed the equivalent of 20 flights of stairs on the way back up! Afterwards, members enjoyed a post-Christmas lunch in the Three Horseshoes.



PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING MONTHS

Wednesday 19 February - Chislehurst

This is a 3 mile walk, meeting outside Sydney Arms pub, Old Perry St Chislehurst BR7 6PL. Free parking available along the street; bus routes nearby.

Refreshments & loos available afterwards. The walk is an easy 3 miles, no stiles and on decent footpaths for this time of year!

Wed 19 March - Circular walk around Penshurst Estate

Meet outside the Porcupine Café, Penshurst Place (it is outside the walls of Penshurst Place no fee for parking) for a 3-mile circular walk around the estate.

There is a hill up to the ridge (with beautiful views on a clear day) but no stiles.

The terrain is mostly grass but there is some paved walking, likely to be muddy in places so come prepared.



Concerts - Closing

Unfortunately this group will be closing after 26 years.

Town and Country Lunches

Our recent outing of the group saw ten of us heading to Trafalgar Square to see the Christmas tree. After coffee in the crypt of St. Martin's we made our way to Covent Garden, where we bought goodies and watched various street entertainers.

The decorations were giant bells and baubles. We then went to Somerset House to have our mulled wine and watch the skaters, and have our photo by the tree.

Lunch was in The Coal Hole in the Strand. This was reputed to be the coal hole for the heating of the old Savoy Hotel. After a perfect day we made our to the station and home.



Rummikub 2

Do you like playing Rummikub but can't make a regular commitment? We need people we can call on occasionally, when one of our regular members cannot come.

If you would be interested, please ring me.

Art for Fun - New Group



Elaine Clarke is hoping to start a new Art for Fun Group. It will meet on a Wednesday, venue, time and frequency to be decided.

If you have some, little or no experience and would like to join this group please contact

Line Dancing - Full

Our popular Line Dancing class takes place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

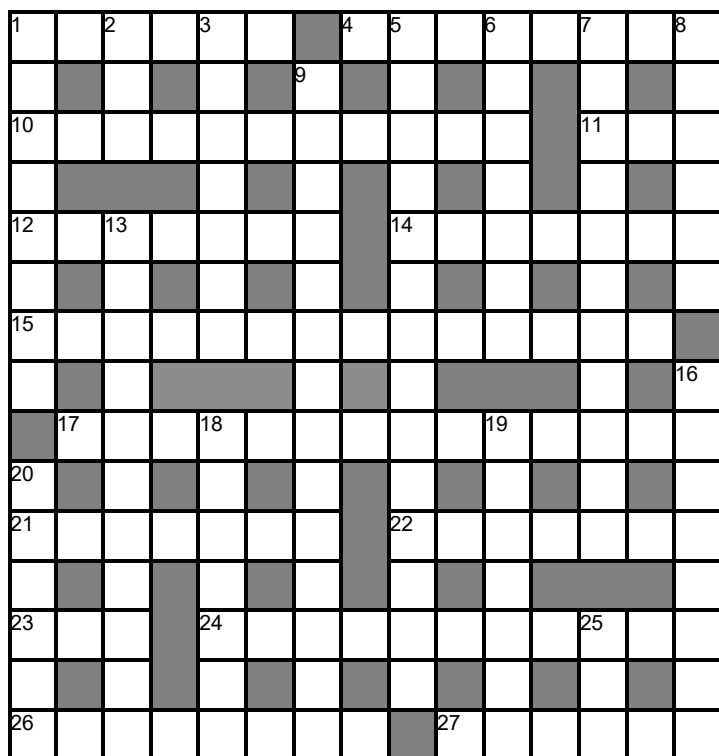
However, **the group is currently full** so please contact Jenny to be added to the waiting list.

Please do not turn up on the day if you aren't currently a member as we will have to turn you away.

PUZZLES

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD no. 97

Submitted by Cryptic Crosswords 1



Across

1. Attempt covering object to being fashionable and up to date (6)
4. A Scottish isle's quoted exactly as the second period of the Mesozoic era (8)
10. International body proclaimed the very opposite! (11)
11. Drink regularly in Anglian bars (7)
12. The cherub bishops take to heart is nonsense (7)
14. Perpetual negatives in France are above everything (7)
15. Bascule offset against the opposite (14)
17. See Reg's savings dispersed by belligerence (14)
21. One of three allowed on tour (7)
22. Make progress toward a loan maybe? (8)
23. Large barrel that teachers return to (3)
24. Large soldiers perhaps after push forward find sources of propulsion (11)
26. Scan thick precis? (8)
27. Rest on the billiard table for an arachnid (6)

Down

1. Discovered that Hur rocked a Thameside district (8)
2. Are back in the longest division of geologic time (3)
3. Practitioner has depression first (7)
5. Remaining pure and contain unmated characters (14)
6. Is Dan dead? Write postscripts perhaps (7)
7. An aid for the man in to have sense where images are projected? (5,6)
8. Able to copy an appetizer? (6)
9. Writer is at one working second permits (14)
13. Our bun going bananas for a sauce made with red wine, onions and seasoning (11)
16. To determine the value of alternative examiner (8)
18. Rescinds legislation but reforming, these characters slip back into bad ways (7)
19. Detailed letter covering to surround (7)
20. Initially some traders advised that it could produce interference at reception (6)
25. Flower returns a gesture of approval (3)

Solution on page 2

SUDOKU

		1	2	3				5
						6		2
6		3	5		8			7
	4	8	6				2	
		5		4				
					3	9		
			1		2		7	
					5	3		1
							6	9

Q: If 2 is company and 3 is a crowd, what are 4 and 5?

Q: I add 5 to 9 and get 2. The answer is correct, so what am I?

Answers p2

CHANGE TO MONTHLY MEETINGS

Due to renovation work at the Walnuts, our previous time slot on Mondays for the General Meeting has been given to one of the MyTime groups.

After intense negotiation, our Chairman has secured us a slot on **the third Tuesday of the month from 3.30 to 5.30pm.**

We are sorry for the disruption and inconvenience this will cause but all other avenues have been explored and we must make the best of the situation until normal service can be resumed.

It's time to renew your membership!



A message from our Committee



Orpington u3a needs a Committee to keep it running
We are looking for members to join our friendly team
Why not come along to one of our Committee Meetings to see what we do and consider helping?
For more information, speak to any member of the Committee or contact Sue:

Can you make a cup of tea? Do you have a friendly smile?



We need help at the monthly General Meetings in Crofton Halls.

We have a rota of volunteers greeting new members at the door - it's a great way to meet people.

If you are able to help at one of the meetings please contact Sue:

Access to Interest Group Information

There is a full list of existing Interest Groups with group information including times, days, and venues on the website. Group Leader contact details are also available but as these are confidential you will need to Login with your Username and Password to access this information.

The list is updated regularly and is sent to all members, at least 3 times a year, with the Newsletter. All members will have been sent the 'Orpington u3a Interest Groups List' (a paper copy for those without email or Internet access)

Please keep the list safe and contact the Group Leaders directly if you have any questions about their group.

This Newsletter contains personal data

Please do not leave a printed copy in a public place and dispose of it responsibly, preferably by shredding all contact details

Thank you