



RAYLEIGH GRANGE u3a
Newsletter - Edition No. 184 2026



Welcome to the July Newsletter

Our next monthly meeting at the Grange is our

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

on WEDNESDAY 8th July at 2.00 p.m.

Our u3a Band will be entertaining us



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

18th June 2026

RGu3a - Members Safety – Update

Fire – Evacuation Policy – March 2026

Invacuation Policy – March 2026

Personal Emergency Evacuation (PEEP) Statement - March 2026

Your RGu3a Committee always takes the wellbeing and safety of members seriously. To that end, the Committee have reviewed and updated procedures.

Of course, the likelihood of having to implement any of these at the Grange Community Centre is remote.

Fire Evacuation Policy

Rochford District Council have now taken over the management of the Grange Community Centre, they now check that the fire alarm systems and emergency fire doors are working correctly, they keep the records accordingly to conform to Fire Safety Regulations.

The Committee's updated Policy states the maximum number of persons safely allowed in the large hall as 280 seated (around 100 members normally attend our monthly meeting).

With the small hall maximum standing being 75 (some of our members go home after our speaker, therefore, do not go to the small hall for tea, coffee and biscuits.

Areas covered in our Policy are Notifying Fire & Rescue Services (Fire Alarm System does have an automatic direct emergency contact with the Fire & Rescue Service).

A committee member making contact too is just an added safety procedure.

Our Assembly Point is the netball court which is beyond the car park.

The rationale for using the netball court rather than the car park is because if there were any cars moving then potentially that could be another dangerous situation.

Monthly Meetings Register serves two purposes, one so we know who is attending the meeting and secondly it would be used in the event of a fire at the Assembly Point to check who has vacated the Hall.

I cannot stress the importance of this enough, because we would not want the Fire Service entering a burning building looking for a member who has just driven off!

Fire Marshalls

Committee members would be at all fire exits to guide and assist members to the Assembly Point. Committee members would be wearing a High-Vis Yellow Hat to make them stand out.

Invacuation/ Lockdown

Our invacuation would come into effect in the event of the following situations:

Potential intruders or security threats, environmental hazards (e.g. chemical spills, toxic fumes) or criminal activity/ disturbances;

Our policy clearly states that the Grange Community Centre would go into Lockdown with all doors and windows secured (as far as possible). Of course, the described scenarios could occur quickly without the time to react as effectively as one would wish!

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) Statement

This policy is designed for members who have some kind of additional needs in the event of an emergency, attending our monthly meeting or participating in one of our Interest Groups.

It is up to the individual member to notify a committee member or group leader if they require extra support. The committee/group leaders will accommodate additional requirements where feasible.

Typically – Permanent PEEPS are:

A person with a disability or impairment that affects their mobility which could include sight, strength to open doors or a hearing impairment.

Temporary PEEPS

Could be a short-term disability, e.g. a broken leg or recent surgery/ illness.

For the complete updated three policies please click on the **RGU3a Policies** section of the website.

I look forward to seeing you all at our Annual General Meeting on the 8th July 2026.

Edward Byford
Chairman

NOTICE

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

This is to remind you all that the July Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 8th July (Not the first Wednesday)** at which we will hold our **AGM**. Please do come, you will not be pressured to join the committee unless you want to but your support at the meeting is very important. It also gives you a chance to see the people who look after your interests and vote on anything of importance.



QUIZ – GENERAL KNOWLEDGE 1

1. What is the busiest single airport runway in the world?	2. What material is produced in a Ginnery?
3. What fruit contains the most calories?	4. In Britain what is the only road sign to be on an inverted triangle?
5. Which is the largest country in the world with only one time zone?	6. What do Germans do with a “Handy”?
7. If you walked one mile south, one mile west and then one mile north and ended up where you started where would you be?	8. Which famous marionette accompanied Annette Mills on her piano?
9. What is a spurtle used for?	10. Henry VIII is buried alongside which of his wives?

Answers on page 13

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

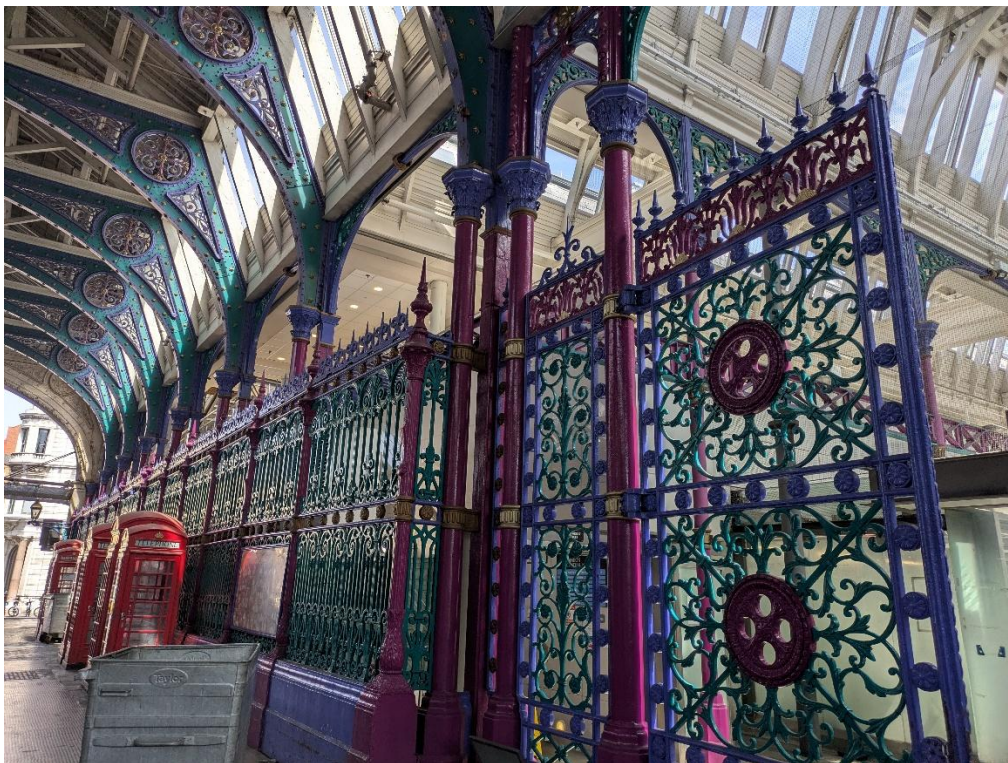
OUT AND ABOUT GROUP 1

The more ghoulish members of the group spent an enjoyable (if a bit too hot) morning last month on the edges of the City on a guided walk entitled “Burnings, Butchery and Black Death” led by Tom.

After a brief introduction, we walked to our first point of interest – Charterhouse Square. Lying just outside the City boundary, this area was used as a burial ground for victims of the Black Death and we were standing on the bones of the thousands who died of the Bubonic Plague which hit London in 1348. Over 60% of the population, some 42,000 souls, died. Five skeletons were unearthed during excavations for the Crossrail Link and plague could still be detected in the victims teeth.



We moved on to Smithfield Market, now a supreme example of cleanliness and hygiene, but once a place of slaughter, entrails and stench everywhere.



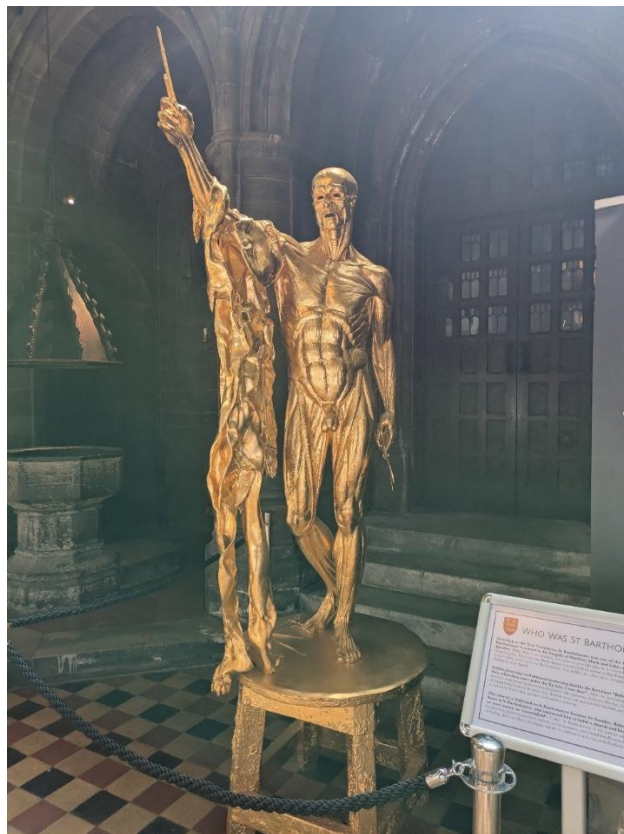
Then on to Cloth Fair – the clue is in its name. Another interesting road containing the two oldest houses in London. It was once a gentlemanly trading venue, but over the years descended into a place of booze and debauchery. Hence, it was closed down by the authorities. More recently, the City Corporation wanted to demolish the area as part of a slum clearance programme, but the houses were bought by two architects and restored to act as the headquarters of their practice. On one memorable day, Ken Livingstone, the then Mayor of London, got locked in the lavatory of one of the houses but was eventually rescued! Sir John Betjemen was a local resident and his property now carries the traditional blue plaque. One window is no longer a window. Because of the adjacent property, occupants of that room could overlook their neighbours who, understandably, objected. The window was originally bricked up but was subsequently reinstated although made non-transparent by a painting of a homecoming sailor being welcomed by his family.



Another place of interest was St. John's Priory which is one of the few religious institutions to escape demolition to satisfy the greed and wrath of Henry VIII and which is now the headquarters of the St. John Ambulance Brigade.



We progressed past an old gin factory and into the Church of St. Bartholomew the Great, a beautiful church now a fraction of its original size. On exhibition there was a sculpture by Damian Hurst of St. Bartholomew who was martyred by being skinned alive. The statue shows him holding his skin over his outstretched arm.





We passed a memorial to those killed in retribution of the Peasants' Revolt where we were regaled with vivid descriptions of the fate of the leaders of that movement and then on to Ely Place, the site of the Church of Etheldreda, one of two Catholic Churches in London dating from the reign of Edward I. At a time when Catholicism was illegal in England, it was used as the private chapel of the Spanish Ambassador and, hence, technically Spanish land. This led to it being used as a place of worship by local "hidden" Catholics. This was the final landmark on our walk and, after saying our farewell to Tom, we went our separate ways for lunch before returning home.

Ann C-O
Group Leader

BIRDWATCHING GROUP

ABBERTON RESERVOIR - MAY

A favourite place for the group as it never fails to please, we always see something different there. Abberton Reservoir is mainly known as a wetland habitat that see's tens of thousands of birds every year, some are resident like Mallards and Coots but thousands of migratory birds like Ruff, Godwit, Redshank and Swallow to name a few, pass through to the delight of the knowledgeable "Birders". However, did you know that the reservoir was used by The Dambusters as a secret WW2 training ground whilst developing Barnes Wallis's famous Bouncing Bomb. The reservoir shape closely resembled the Eder Dam in Germany and the Layer Causeway was used to simulate a dam wall during testing. Fascinating, but I digress.



Common Tern



Great Cormorant



Mute Swan

So, back to bird watching. Our first stop is always the causeway and we spent about an hour watching some marvellous aerial displays from Common Terns, Cormorants, Swans, Mallard and Egyptian Geese. It was brilliant to witness the courtship of two Great Crested Grebe. A Carrion Crow was tucking into a dead fish at the water's edge and nesting Spoonbills were high up in the trees. A Jay was also spotted in the trees.



Great Crested Grebe



Grey Heron in flight



Black-headed Gull



Jay



Spoonbill



Grey Heron



Arctic Tern



Lapwing

We had a lovely walk around to the bird hides, which were a little quiet, probably due to the high level of water in the reservoir, but overall more than 20 species of bird were spotted. A lovely day, lovely weather and great company – what more could you ask for?

Steve Rix
Bird Watching Group Leader

Photo Credits: John Oakshott and Steve Rix



ANSWERS – GENERAL KNOWLEDGE 1

1. Gatwick	2. Cotton
3. Avocado	4. Give Way
5. China (although it actually spans five zones)	6. Make a phone call (it is what Germans call a mobile phone)
7. North Pole	8. Muffin the Mule
9. It is a Scottish traditional spoon to stir the oats when making porridge	10. Jane Seymour

ALL THINGS CRAFTY

In April and May we tried our hands at Kinusaiga fabric pictures using polystyrene and insulation sheets and in June we made tiny bird houses using fabric and cardboard.



Sarah Kay
Group Leader

GARDEN GROUP VISIT TO KELVEDON HALL



On a sunny afternoon recently, we visited Kelvedon Hall. It is just off the A12 and before the road was built, was part of Kelvedon itself. It is an historic house and estate near Great Braxted and was built in the mid-18th century.



The Grade 1 listed hall is one of several landed estates that are found in rural Essex. The hall, like many English manor houses, has developed and changed over the years, reflecting the style and needs of the owners. The current owners, Victoria and Jack, have been there for around 25 years.



Historically the estate has been a private home and administrative centre for surrounding farmland. The gardens are a mixture of formal and informal elements, with certain areas left unmanicured to encourage wildlife. There is a woodland area, with mature trees and wildflowers. Many pinecones are collected to use as kindling for the open fires in the house. There are pathways through the gardens which lead you around the beautiful borders. When we visited the colours seemed to be mainly white and purple.





There is a large pond which has recently been cleared of weed and through an archway, a distinctive swimming pool and pool house next to the tennis court. The stables, piggery, garden walls and other outbuildings are also listed.





Our visit concluded with tea and delicious cakes in the courtyard and under a shady pergola.

Ann C-O
Group Leader



QUIZ – CONNECTIONS

1. The Malvern Hills are located in which three English counties?	2. What was the name of the British figure skater who was 1976 Olympic and World Champion?
3. Which rock band had a hit with “(Don’t Fear) the Reaper”?	4. What is the name of G. K. Chesterton’s detective priest?
5. In dentistry, what is the name given to hardened dental plaque?	6. The creation of the county of Cumbria saw the disappearance of which two former counties?
7. In the Christian Eucharist which two items represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ?	8. Which Nobel prize winner was offered the presidency of Israel?
9. Which gunfight resulted in the deaths of Tom and Frank McLauray and Billy Clanton?	10. What connects the previous nine questions?

Answers on page 23



OUT AND ABOUT GROUP 1
WALKING TOUR OF HAMPSTEAD AND FENTON HOUSE
JUNE 2026

It was already very hot when we arrived at Hampstead Heath station. Hampstead village is perched on a hill to the west of the heath. It was a fashionable spa town in the 1800's. Its sloping situation deterred Victorian property speculators and put off railway development. So Hampstead has retained much of its original charm. It's an area full of interest which has attracted many interesting and varied residents over the years. This was to be our focus for the day.

Our first port of call was the Magdala Tavern, where Ruth Ellis shot her lover David Blakely in 1955. She was convicted and hanged for murder, the last British woman to receive this sentence. One enterprising publican had drilled holes in the brickwork, hoping it would create interest and additional trade.

Our route took us next past Keats House, which is now a museum dedicated to his life. It was noticeable how quickly we moved from the hustle and bustle of Hampstead to the quiet leafy back streets which had attracted so many famous residents such as Alan Ayckbourn, Edith Sitwell, Bunny Austin, Herbert Asquith, John Constable, Marie Stopes and more recently The Sex Pistols and David Bowie (who probably squatted!)

Lee Miller was another resident. She was a highly influential photojournalist in the 1930's and 40's. She joined the D-Day landings and followed Allied troops as they advanced through Europe and was with them when they liberated Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps. The images she took at the time remain hauntingly powerful.

We next arrived in Willow Walk named after the willow trees which originally grew here alongside the River Fleet. This created the perfect conditions for growing watercress and we later saw a row of delightful 18th century cottages for the watercress workers.



Outside Willow Cottages (originally homes for the watercress workers)

Number 2 Willow Walk was the National Trust's first modernist building. It was designed in the 1930's by Erno Goldfinger. One local resident was outraged that three 18th century cottages were demolished to build this very modern house. This was Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond. To ensure that Erno Goldfinger was forever cast as a villain, he named James Bond's arch enemy Auric Goldfinger!

The climb suddenly became steeper and we were delighted to arrive at Burgh House for lunch. This delightful Queen Anne building is now a community Arts Centre also housing a museum of Hampstead and the food was delicious.

Suitably refreshed we began our final climb towards Fenton House. We passed Admiral's House, a quirky Georgian house never owned by an admiral but once owned by Fountain North, a former sea captain. He had installed a quarter deck on his roof and fired a cannon from the roof to celebrate British Naval successes. This was possibly the inspiration for the Mary Poppins character, Admiral Boom who fired a cannon from his rooftop. Admiral House was actually the home of Sir George Gilbert Scott, the Gothic revival architect.



Outside Fenton House



We enjoyed the beautiful sounds of keyboards played by a volunteer

Finally, we had a relaxing walk around the beautiful terraced gardens, with an orchard, kitchen garden and formal garden with immaculate topiary.

And so we left Fenton House and slowly descended downhill to the station. A memorable day.

Carol Payne

Some Chuckles from Steve Rix

BREAKING NEWS ESSEX

Police have found £12 million worth of cocaine, 6 AK47 assault rifles and 200 live hand grenades at a house behind the library in BASILDON.

Residents are said to be shocked as they had no idea there was a library in Basildon.

I walked into the bedroom holding two aspirins and a glass of water and the wife said, "What are they for?"

"It's for your headache dear," I replied.

"But I don't have a headache!" She said.

"Ah Gotcha" says me!

I applied to emigrate to Australia and they asked me if I had a criminal record. I said, "I didn't realise you still needed one."

Bill Gates says a cow creates more pollution than a car. Ok Bill, I'll lock myself in a garage with a cow overnight. You lock yourself in a garage with a car overnight, with its engine running. We'll meet for breakfast in the morning to compare results.

The police came to my house today and said, "It looks like your husband has been hit by a bus." I said, "I know, but other than that, he has a lovely personality and he's great with the grandchildren."

My local coffee shop has a sign that reads, "No Wi-Fi, just pretend it's 1973." So, I paid 15p for my coffee and lit up a cigarette.



ANSWERS – CONNECTIONS

1. Worcestershire , Herefordshire and Gloucestershire	2. John Curry
3. Blue Oyster Cult	4. Father Brown
5. Tartar	6. Cumberland and Westmorland
7. Bread and wine	8. Albert Einstein
9. The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral	10. Sauces – even Albert Sauce named after Prince Albert it flavours braised steak

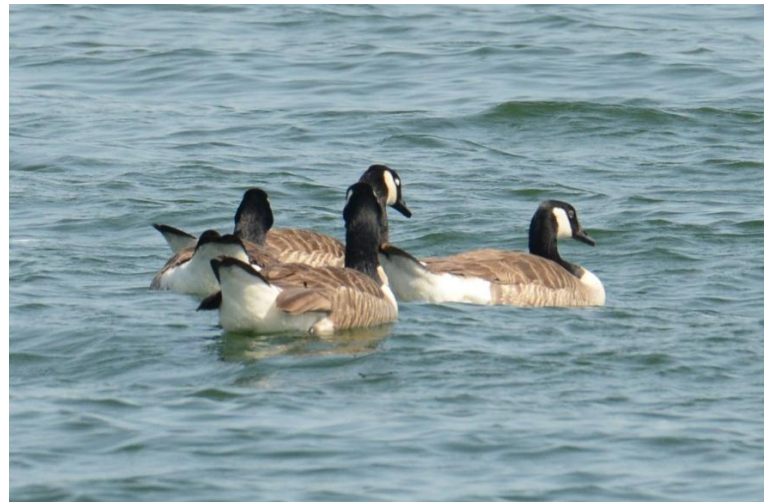
BIRD WATCHING GROUP HANNINGFIELD RESERVOIR



The group decided to go to Hanningfield Reservoir for our June meeting. It was a very hot day over 30°C so we decided not to be out too long. The woodland around the reservoir and the bird hides provided us with some much-needed shade. We wondered if there'd be much birdlife on the reservoir due to the heat, but there were a surprising amount and variety of birds to see. All in all, at least 16 species were spotted including Tufted ducks, Crested Grebe, Pochard and Common Tern to name a few.

Thanks to those who came and braved the weather conditions.







Steve Rix
Group Leader

Photo credits: Linda Boar and Steve Rix



FROM THE EDITOR

How quickly our AGM comes round – please make every effort to attend this important meeting.

There will be **no monthly meeting at the Grange in August** and some of our groups also take a break – so do please check.

Our next Newsletter will be in September, but I am happy to receive any contributions at any time over the summer break.

The deadline for receiving articles for the September 2026 Newsletter is

Sunday 23rd August 2026

rgu3newsletter@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

SEPTEMBER MEETING

WEDNESDAY 2nd AT 2.00 PM

SPEAKER: Mark Lewis

Smuggling Days and Smuggling Ways

The amazing story of Smuggling in 18th and 19th century Britain when an increase in taxes led to an explosion of illegally imported contraband.

GROUP CALENDAR

If you are interested in joining any of these Groups please contact the Group Co-ordinator

GROUP	DAY	TIME	GROUP LEADER
AD HOC HISTORY	To be advised		Donna & Steve Lowe
ALL THINGS CRAFTY	2 nd Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Sarah Kay
ART APPRECIATION	3 rd Wednesday	2.00 – 4.30 pm	Pat Shephard
BADMINTON 1	Thursday – Fortnightly	10.00 am	Jacqui Butcher
BADMINTON 2	Wednesday – Fortnightly	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Geoff Pearce
BIRD WATCHING	4 th Thursday	10.00 am	Steve Rix
BOOK GROUP	Last Thursday	3.00 pm	Jackie Dillnutt
BRIDGE	As agreed	Various	Mark Wiseman
BRIDGE BEGINNERS	1 st /3 rd Friday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Mark Wiseman & Ken Paton
CANASTA 1	2 nd Monday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Doreen Brown
CANASTA 2	3 rd Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Edna Webb
CANASTA BEGINNERS 1	3 rd Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Clarke-Overy
CANASTA BEGINNERS 2	2 nd Wednesday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Jane Gee
COFFEE & CONVERSATION	4 th Wednesday	10.30 – 12.30	Barbara Oliver
CHURCH VISITS	3 rd Wednesday	10.00 – 1.30 pm	TBA
CINEMA	Wednesday (various)	Morning	Christine Shaw
CRIBBAGE	4 th Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Susan Neil
DARTS	Thursday – Fortnightly	11.00 – 1.00 pm	Ray & Maureen Saveall
DISCUSSION	3 rd Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Doreen Brown
FAMILY HISTORY 1	1 st Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 2	1 st Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 3	2 nd Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 4	4 th Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FILM APPRECIATION	3 rd Monday		Joan Hanscomb
GARDEN GROUP	Various		Ann Clark-Overy Susan Neil
JAZZ APPRECIATION	Wednesday (various)		Dave Westall
JUST SEW & SEW	1 st /3 rd Friday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Chris Roffey
KNIT & NATTER 1	2 nd Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Ann Clarke-Overy
KNIT & NATTER 2	4 th Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Sarah Kay
LUNCH SUNDAY	3 rd Sunday		Susan Neil
LUNCH WEEKDAY	2 nd Wednesday		Edna Webb

MAHJONG	Tuesday – Fortnightly	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Ann Clarke-Overy
MARITIME HISTORY	1 st Monday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Sue Howarth-Reading
MINDFULNESS/MEDITATION	4 th Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Carol Bright
OUT AND ABOUT 1	Various Days		Ann Clarke-Overy
OUT AND ABOUT 2	Various Days		Julie Witts & Christine Wilson
PETANQUE 1	1 st /3 rd Monday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Margaret Cudby & Theresa McAninch
PHOTOGRAPHY MONDAY	Various		Geoff Kittle
PHOTOGRAPHY FRIDAY	3 rd Friday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Maureen Cheesewright
POETRY APPRECIATION	3 rd Thursday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
PSYCHOLOGY	2 nd Monday	1.30 – 3.00 pm	Jean Thraves
PUDDY GALORE	4 th Tuesday	4.00 pm	Anne Berry
RUMMIKUB 1	1 st Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Lynda Rooke
RUMMIKUB 2	2 nd Thursday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Pam Green
SAMBA CANASTA	1 st /3 rd Thursday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Dave Westall
SCRABBLE	3 rd Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Wendy Bedwell
SHAKESPEARE APPRECIATION	3 rd Friday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Paula Whittle
SHORT MAT BOWLS	Tuesday – Fortnightly	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Susan Neil
SINGING FOR PLEASURE	1 st /3 rd Tuesday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Joan Wayman
SOLO WHIST	2 nd Monday	10.00 – 12.00	David Lobley
TABLE TENNIS	1 st /3 rd Friday	1.30 – 3.00 pm	Maureen Saveall
TENPIN BOWLING	Tuesday – Fortnightly	11.00 – 3.00 pm	Jacqui Butcher
THEATRE/EVENTS	Various times & days		Doreen Brown Edna Webb Susan Neil Ann Clarke-Overy
TRIVIAL PURSUIT	4 th Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Steve Barns
u3a BAND	Various – Cedar Centre		Steve Lowe
WALKING MIDWEEK	3 rd Monday		Gwen Bushell
WALKING SUNDAY	Last Sunday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Christine Shaw
WINE THURSDAY	Various	7.00 pm	Susan Neil Ann Newman
WINE FRIDAY	Various	7.00 pm	Susan Neil Ann Newman
WOMEN IN HISTORY	Last Friday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Lynda Rooke
u3a MONTHLY MEETING	1 st Wednesday	1.30 – 4 .00 pm	Various Speakers

For specific dates please liaise with your Group Leader.