

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We have had two very memorable talks in January. First, Anne Goldstein gave us a moving and fascinating account of the history of the Basque and Jewish child refugees who were looked after at the Beacon between 1937 and 1950. Though many had heard about the children, few of us knew any details and Anne's excellent presentation brought it vividly to life.



A week later, Greg Clark, our MP, spoke to the Science and Technology Group about the role of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology which was also attended by other interested TWu3a members. It was another fascinating talk which highlighted some of the pressing issues of the day and how complicated they are. Reports on both these excellent talks are below.

We returned to Trinity for our coffee morning as usual at the end of January but were distressed to hear about their severe financial difficulties. Not only do we hold our coffee mornings there but several of our groups meet in the foyer and many of us, both as group members or individually, enjoy the varied programme of drama, music, dance and much more which they offer. Tunbridge Wells without the Trinity Arts Centre would be a much sadder place and we wish them every success with their fund raising.

[Eryll](#) (01892 513805)

Please note that photos taken at u3a events are often used in publicity material. If you do not want your picture used in such ways please make a member of the committee aware of this at the event you are attending. Thank you.

Coming up

Thursday 16th Feb:
Monthly meeting: an archaeological overview of new sites in the Tunbridge Wells

Friday 24th February:
Coffee morning at Trinity



Thursday 16th March:
Monthly meeting: the amusing story of Kentish public libraries

Inside this issue

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Chairman's Update; contents | 6 | Short breaks; save the date |
| 2 | Monthly Meetings; Bingo | 7 | Last month's talk |
| 3 | Outings and Group Coordinators' updates | 8 | Useful Information |
| 4 | Group News | 9 | Outing Application form |
| 5 | Greg Clark's talk to the science group | 10 | Bingo Application form |

Hybrid Monthly Meeting at the **Camden Centre**

Thursday 16th February 2.30pm

An archaeological overview of new sites in the Tunbridge Wells area
By Nigel Stapple

Nigel has been an important part of the recent dig team in Rusthall. Last year he talked to the tea team on one of their monthly walks. This should prove an interesting insight to some new local findings.



Rusthall Dig

March Monthly Meeting at the Camden Centre - Thursday 16th March 2.30pm

The good, the bad and the ugly

the amusing story of Kentish public libraries by Christoph Bull

This is an illustrated rip-roaring virtual tour through the history and funny stories associated with a much loved public service. Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge libraries both feature as part of this experience. Don't expect to quietly doze!

BINGO is BACK!



Enjoy some old fashioned fun and games at this popular event.

Venue: Indoor Bowls Club at Hawkenbury

Date: Friday 17th March

Time 2.15 – 4.15

Cost: £10

Tea and Cake included.

Application form at the end of the Newsletter

CASH PRIZES!
££££££££££££££££

Outings Coordinator

On Wednesday 19th April we will be going to Basildon Park, a National Trust property near Reading. An 18th century Palladian-style mansion, restored by Lord & Lady Iliffe after being requisitioned in the World Wars. With extraordinary vision, the Iliffes brought Basildon Park back to life, acquiring a collection of fine furnishings and carefully selected Old Masters. The 400-acre woodland park offers glorious seasonal colour with spring bluebells plus historic trees, views of the house and even World War Two Nissan huts. The formal garden was designed by David Brandon, and features Lady Iliffe's rose garden and restored terrace balustrade. The tea-room in the lower entrance hall of the house is open daily. There are picnic areas if you wish to bring a picnic.



"Basildon Park" by [Amateur with a Camera](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#).

The application form for this trip is at the end of the newsletter. Please note if you are not a National Trust member, there will be a further entrance fee of £15 to be paid on the day.

The Outings team has been busy agreeing and arranging the monthly outings for the year. These are the next few months' trips.

Wednesday 17th May Vyne House N/T property

June (date to be confirmed) Wakehurst Place gardens and Sheffield Park gardens

Tuesday 4th July Knebworth House

Thursday 10th August The Rural Life Living Museum, Farnham Surrey.

I hope many of our members will be joining us on these trips, please check the Newsletter monthly for details, we usually advertise them 2 months before the due date.

****We have one cancellation for our trip on the 2nd March to Richmond for the day including a ticket to see the show Fisherman's Friends, cost £50.25.**

Please contact me on 07504919081 or jyoutings@gmail.com

[Joan Young](#)

Groups Coordinator update

TW u3a groups.....by the members, for the members

Would you like to help set up a new group? Maybe join a group that fell by the wayside during lockdown? Other group contacts can offer a wealth of information and advice. The following groups might be able to start up if they have a group contact.....

Breakfast Brunchers 2

Table Tennis 2

Country Dancing

Beginners Crochet

Out & About 2

London Explorers 7

Posh Nosh Diners 2

Cribbage

Any details about groups or the listing please contact the Groups Coordinator:

lhaselltwu3a@gmail.com

Group News

Here are some of the **Craft Beer Group** enjoying an outing to St Albans, organised by a previous member who had moved there recently. We meet monthly and 2022 trips included Rye, Rochester, Clerkenwell, the Bermondsey Beer mile, Maidstone, Hastings and the Spa Valley Railway beer festival, interspersed with local trips. We've learnt a lot about the different types of beer and like to support small breweries and interesting/historical pubs. So, if you want to know your saison from your wheat beer, do consider joining us. It's about quality over quantity and despite the photo there are women in the group. Our February



meeting will be at the Wetherspoon's real ale month.

Contact Mike Minihane [here](#) for more details.

The ukulele group aims to meet as a large group at least twice a month. If you would like to join in it's not necessary to be able to read music.

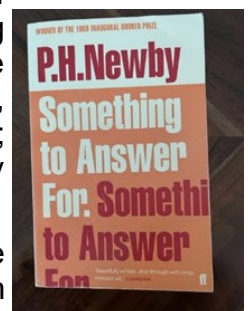


The Booker Prize Reading Group held its first meeting on Friday 10th January 2023, to talk about the first book we have read: 'Something to Answer For' by PH Newby.

At the moment, there are seven of us in the group. We haven't yet set a maximum number of members for the group, but neither have we settled on a regular meeting place. We all need to be able to speak and be heard, so we don't think we will be more than 8-10, unless there are enough of us to contribute to the formal hire of a private room. We would therefore welcome anyone interested in joining us, and welcome, as well, any ideas for a suitable venue.

Oh, and what to say of our first book? Written today, and by an unknown author, it probably wouldn't be published, and certainly not without being 'cleansed' by the sensitivity editor. Indeed, if too much attention is given to the book, it'll probably be cancelled! It's an intellectually quite challenging book, with an unsympathetic anti-hero; but it was topical in its day; it's memorable; and, after all, it was, in 1969, the first winner of the Booker Prize, which today is one of the most prestigious literary prizes in the English speaking world.

Join us! Our next three books are 'Disgrace' by JM Coetzee, winner of the Booker in 1999; 'Girl, Woman, Other' by Bernardine Evaristo, co-winner in 2019; and 'The Elected Member' by Bernice Rubens, the second winner in 1970, the first woman, and, to date, the only Welsh winner!



Mark Steeves

Talk by Greg Clark to the Science Group

Our local MP, Greg Clark, is Chair of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee. He gave a talk on the work of this committee to the Science group, plus other U3A members who had expressed interest in this. Some 60 people attended and many said what an outstanding event it was.

Greg gave an excellent and highly informative talk followed by a Q and A session where a number of issues were explained.

This committee is unique in that all other commons select committees shadow the work of a government department whereas this one looks at anything where government action needs to take account of scientific advice and is not tied to any government department. A key feature of their work is to draw on a breadth of evidence worldwide. Unusually, the Committee does not deliberate along party political lines and in his experience all conclusions have been unanimous.

He gave several examples of their current and recent work. The first of these was in connection with Covid. This examined lessons learned from the covid-19 pandemic, and which of these could be applied to prevent the emergence and spread of new emerging diseases with pandemic potential. This work was conducted in part during the lockdown and for the first time involved experts from around the world giving their evidence via Zoom rather than having to appear in person.

Other topics included:

Artificial Intelligence, whose use has increased significantly in recent years. It offers a range of potential benefits such as quicker analysis of large datasets allowing more accurate information, forecasts and predictions, and more personalised public services. However, there are a number of concerns, such as the possibility of biased algorithms, a lack of transparency and unexplained decision-making. This is a powerful new technology that presents huge new opportunities but raises a number of risks that need to be understood so that any legislation is properly targeted.

The role of hydrogen in achieving “net zero”. There are some strongly divided opinions on the prospects regarding hydrogen. The Committee found that hydrogen could have a place in the “net zero” target but it is not a panacea.

Possibilities for nuclear power in delivering “net zero”. Due to rising fuel prices, securing the UK’s energy supply is currently a top priority for the Government and is of great interest to the public. The Government’s energy security strategy emphasised that nuclear power would play a key part in supplying the UK with baseload electricity, however there is currently great uncertainty about how quickly new nuclear power plants can be built, when

fusion technologies might be available, and what the costs of these large infrastructure projects will be. There are also new technologies with small modular reactors.

Opportunities in space. The UK space sector holds great potential and there is a race with other countries to increase investment into what is a rapidly expanding sector. Many satellites are built in the UK but not launched here.

We are grateful to Sandra Blacker (seen here with Greg Clark and Tony Quigley) for setting up such a well-attended and well appreciated event.

The current inquiries can be found at:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/135/science-and-technology-committee/>

Tony Quigley



**Only a few twin/double
rooms left.
Sorry no singles.**

SHORT BREAK to the DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG

October 9th - 13th October 2023

4 nights half board 3* Belle-View Hotel, Vianden

A very exciting first for our u3a. Travelling by coach across the channel!

Highlights include:

- ◆ City of Tournai, Belgium (en route)
- ◆ Villeroy & Boch porcelain factory
- ◆ City of Luxembourg tour
- ◆ Military History Museum (the Battle of the Bulge)
- ◆ Vianden Castle guided tour.
- ◆ Mullerthal (Little Switzerland guided tour by coach)
- ◆ Echternach medieval town
- ◆ Trier (Germany's oldest town) inc the Roemer Express (electric train)
- ◆ Moselle Valley wine tour & tasting
- ◆ Dinant Belgium (return journey)



This is being organised through Simply Groups.

Please contact [Sandra McDonald](#) (01892 752196)

for more information and to receive the flyer and booking form.

******* Save the date *******

22nd April 2023

**AFTERNOON TEA WITH
'CAFÉ SOCIETY'**



Last Month's Talk

"A Home of Smiles"

Celebrating Tunbridge Wells history of welcoming Basque and Jewish child refugees 1937-1950

By Anne Goldstein

Firstly, Anne spoke about the Basque children, refugees from the Spanish Civil War who escaped to Britain after the bombing of Guernica. Following a bad crossing, the SS Havana arrived in Southampton in May 1937 with almost 3,000 children plus helpers, teachers and priests. The refugees were first taken to North Stoneham reception camp, Eastleigh, Southampton and housed in field tents. Although the Prime Minister thought our climate would not suit them, they were welcomed and soon became acclimatized.



Beacon girls 1942

Funding for the Basque children was raised by a voluntary committee who campaigned to bring them over, headed up by Catherine, Duchess of Atholl and Dame Leah Manning. The Beacon had been empty for some while before Muriel Amy Payne, director of St Christopher's Nursery Training College, acquired the lease. She loaned it free of charge and The Beacon welcomed 60 of the Basque children aged between 5 and 12 to come and stay. Muriel had a background of working with vulnerable children and was a pioneer for their health and mental wellbeing.



Anne with Duncan, who's mother was at the Beacon

The children were very traumatized by their experience but with the love and affection they received at the Beacon began to enjoy themselves. The Mayor of Tunbridge Wells, Cllr E J Strange, said that "all had a Christian duty to support the refugees". For 10 shillings a week, local people could "adopt" a child and the community was generous in giving food donations. Although most of the children did return home by March 1938, some stayed and settled down in Britain, although it was hard when they finally returned to see their families in Spain.

The Jewish refugees started arriving in November 1938 after "The Night of the Broken Glass" (the November Pogroms). 7,500 Jewish-owned businesses, homes, and schools in Germany, Austria and the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia were plundered. 267 synagogues were destroyed and 30,000 men arrested. Sir Samuel Hoare gave the go-ahead for child refugees to temporarily come to Britain. 10,000 journeyed via Holland, alone with just one small suitcase.

After arriving in Harwich, they were taken to Dovercourt, an off-season Warner's Holiday Camp. There was tension one day in the camp when there was a rumour of another pogrom in Vienna. The organisers contacted Vienna and it was confirmed that had not happened. A refugee boy sang a Jewish prayer and all calmed down. In 2010, Bertha Bracey, a Quaker who lived in Langton Green, was given the title 'British Hero of the Holocaust' for her work in rescuing the Jewish refugees.

A group of Viennese girls were the first to stay in the Beacon and this grew to 40 refugee children at one time. The initial aim was for them to go into domestic service or out to the Colonies. There are still a few people in Rusthall who remember being at school with the girls. Eight boys later joined the Beacon hostel.

Erica Preat, one of the Beacon girls, originally from Aachen in Germany, wrote a history of their time in Rusthall and organised Beacon Girls' Reunions where many came together to share their memories. Firm friendships were made and they continued to stay in touch with each other as most had no other family left.



Christine Hyder

Important information

Forthcoming Events For Your Diary

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 16 Feb 2023 | Monthly meeting: An archaeological overview of new sites in the Tunbridge Wells area |
| 16 Mar 2023 | Monthly meeting: The good, the bad and the ugly - the amusing story of Kentish public libraries. |
| 17 Mar 2023 | Bingo afternoon at the Indoor Bowls Club |
| 22 April 2023 | Afternoon Tea at the Masonic Centre with the wonderful Café Society |

New members

A big welcome to our **6** new members in January
Reg Bandy, Una Bandy, Max Lewis, Clare Risby, George Warr and Ian White

And welcome back to John Erlan and Margery and Anthony Hawkins

Your Committee

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Chairman | Eryll Fabian | 01892 513805 |
| Vice-Chair | Sandra McDonald | 01892 752196 |
| Secretary | Fiona Findlay | 07872 169146 |
| Treasurer | David Brimlow | 01892 860598 |
| Group Coordinator | Lindsay Hasell | 01892 673180 |
| Membership Secretary | Judy Horwood | 01892 537601 |
| Outings Coordinator | Joan Young | 0750 4919081 |
| Short Breaks & Holidays | Sandra McDonald | 01892 752196 |
| Events Coordinator | Philippa Bernstein | 07788 498606 |
| Newsletter | Bridget Sands | 01892 546161 |

A Message from the Editor

Any publication is only as good as its contributors and I do hope you will continue to support the Newsletter as it is such an easy and effective way to communicate with you all. If you have a great idea for an article or there is anything interesting you would like to see in the newsletter in the future please let me know.

If anyone objects to their photo being reproduced in this Newsletter, please contact me as soon as possible.

All contributions for the **March** Newsletter should be e-mailed to **Bridget** by February 28th at the latest (**earlier submissions are very welcome!**) or phone 01892 546161.



u3a Office

Keep up to date with u3a Office news on the website:

www.u3a.org.uk or write to:

The Third Age Trust, Room 104, Lenta Business Centre,
156 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8EN

BASILDON PARK NR READING (RG8 9NR)
WEDNESDAY 19th APRIL

For u3a Members only. A fair amount of walking—please wear suitable footwear and clothing.

Tunbridge Wells u3a Outing Application Form

| |
|---|
| OUTING CODE: F17 OUTING ORGANISER: JOAN YOUNG EMAIL: jyoutings@gmail.com |
|---|

Basildon Park is an 18th century house lovingly restored by Lord & Lady Iliffe in the 1950s, dressing it with fine antiques and paintings, and with all the comforts of a 1950s home. Outside there are informal gardens and 400 acres of parkland to explore.

The cost of this trip is £16.70 including the coach, and the drivers gratuity. But please note, if you are not a National Trust member, there will be a further entrance fee of £15 to pay on the day.

To pay by BACS please email Joan and include your name, mobile/home phone number, date of payment and Name of Outing and Code (details above). Plus where you want to board the coach.

To pay: Make an online transfer to: **Tunbridge Wells u3a Sort code: 40-52-40 Account No: 00024097** [Your bank may not recognise our CAF account, but as long as you've entered the details correctly, you can go ahead with the transaction].

Reference: OUTING CODE - F17 and your Surname

To pay by cheque: please post the application or a note to: *JOAN YOUNG, 21 CONISTON AVENUE, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, TN4 9SP.* Add your email or phone number for confirmation of receipt.

APPLICATION FORM Basildon Park Code: F17

I enclose a cheque for £..... made payable to Tunbridge Wells u3a

Name and mobile/home phone number

.....
If you are paying for your partner or a u3a friend, please include their details below

Name and mobile/home phone number

.....
Please tick where you want to board the coach.

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Crescent road opposite the Assembly Halls</i> | <i>9.00 am.....</i> |
| <i>St Johns opposite Sainsburys local</i> | <i>9.05 am/9.10 am.....</i> |
| <i>Southborough Fountain</i> | <i>9.15 am/ 9.20 am.....</i> |

We expect to be at Basildon Park by 11.00 am. We will leave at 15.30 pm. And hope to arrive back in Tunbridge Wells around 17.30pm.

***My contact number for any enquiries regarding this trip is 0750 491 9081 Please note after April 13th contact Stella Westrup on 01892 523413
or Valerie Apps on the outing day 07768790647***

NB: Once money has been paid, full refunds will only be offered if your place can be filled by another u3a member. Members are advised that neither the TWu3a nor the outing's organiser will accept responsibility for any mishap of whatever nature during the outing. Members are advised to consider personal insurance cover and reminded to bring any necessary medication with them.

IF YOU HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY GIVEN US DETAILS OF YOUR NEXT OF KIN OR PERSON TO BE ADVISED IN AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE LET US HAVE A NAME AND TELEPHONE NUMBER. THIS WILL BE STORED ON TWU3A'S SECURE DATABASE.

Tunbridge Wells u3a Event Application Form **BINGO**

| |
|---|
| EVENT NAME: Bingo EVENT CODE: BINGO |
|---|

Venue: Indoor Bowls Club at High Woods Lane, Hawkenbury TN2 4TU.

Date: Friday 17th March

Time: 2.15 - 4.15

Cost: £10 **Tea and Cake included.**

To pay by BACS firstly please email: Bridget at editortwu3a@gmail.com and include your name, mobile/home phone number, date of payment and Name of Event and Code (as above).

Then: make an online transfer to:

Tunbridge Wells u3a Sort code: 40-52-40 Account No: 00024097

[Your bank may not recognise our CAF account, but as long as you've entered the details correctly, you can go ahead with the transaction].

Please use the reference: Event code Surname e.g. **BINGO Your Surname**

OR To pay by cheque: please post the application below to: *Bridget Sands, 1 Onslow House, Castle Rd, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 8BY.* Add your email, or mobile/home phone number for confirmation of receipt.

NB: Once money has been paid, refunds will only be offered if your place can be filled by another u3a member.

APPLICATION FORM

Event name and Code: Bingo BINGO

I enclose a cheque for £..... payable to Tunbridge Wells u3a

Name and home/mobile phone number

.....

If you are paying for another u3a member, please include their details below

Name and home/mobile phone number

.....

Travel Information

If you are coming by bus we suggest using the 285 leaving the West Station at 13.40 arriving at 13.50 at the United Reform Church . It departs at 16.39 or 17.29.

Otherwise, there is plenty of parking.