

# TUNBRIDGE WELLS U3A NEWS

## March 2019



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
THE THIRD AGE

### CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

I expect that it will be back to normal weather by the time you're reading this, but as I'm writing this in the last week of February we're having record high temperatures, whilst at the same time last year we had to cancel our new members meeting because the Camden Centre was closed due to snow. Given the lovely weather this year, it was a pleasure to welcome over 40 new members to our meeting and share their enthusiasm for our U3A.

New members bring new ideas and skills to our U3A and we continue to offer new groups. One request that we can never meet though, is for a **yoga group**. If you'd feel confident enough to run a group, please let us know as you'd be very popular.

As a reflection of that enthusiasm, the newsletter is buzzing with new activities and application forms as usual. There's the carvery lunch at the Masonic Hall in May, the May outing to Standen, a seminar in June and the short break in October.

Finally and unsurprisingly, there has been no response to our request in the last newsletter for replacement committee members. **Please** don't dismiss this request, especially if you're a newish member. If you've recently retired you're likely to have the energy and time to take on these roles. Please contact me or any other member of the committee if you want to find out what's involved. We'd be very happy for someone to shadow one of us for a short time, without making a definite commitment.

[Sue Brimlow](#), *Chairman*, Tel: 01892 863691

### COMING UP

#### MONTHLY MEETINGS

at 2.30pm at the Camden Centre

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March**  
**The Origin and Meaning of**  
**Nursery Rhymes**  
a talk by Dr Linda Hall

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April**  
**The History and Work of**  
**The Dogs Trust**  
a talk by Lara Murphy

#### MONTHLY COFFEE MORNINGS

at Trinity from 10.30 – 12.00

**Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March**



**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April**

#### OUR OUTINGS

There will be outings on

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March to**

**WINDSOR CASTLE**

fully booked

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April to**

**Bletchley Park**

fully booked

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May to**  
**Heaven Farm, Standen,**  
**And Saint Hill Manor**  
application form on page 12

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## National Events



Membership of TW U3A automatically makes you part of the national U3A family, and gives you the opportunity to use the U3A's resources and to take part in many national U3A events, such as summer schools, workshops, lectures and concerts. **Very few of us take advantage of this!**

To receive the monthly national newsletter which includes information about these events and other initiatives, **sign up**. It's easy and free: Go to [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk), and click on U3A Email Signup under Quick Links at the bottom of the home page.



### Tickets are still available for the ***SUNDAY CARVERY LUNCH***

**On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

**at The Masonic Hall, St John's Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9UY**

full details and application form are on p. 9

### **Cunning Regal Women – English queens before Elizabeth I**

Two years ago Julia Cruse gave us a fascinating seminar on the role of propaganda in Tudor England and we are delighted that she is returning this year with two talks about early English queens. Full details about the seminar, which will take place on **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June**, are on p.10 of this Newsletter. Entry is by ticket, costing £6 per person, and the seminar is open to all members of West Kent U3As – so send your application in early to avoid disappointment.

*Adrian Twiner, Business Secretary*

### **Short Break Away – October 2019 – to Bristol and Bath**

Please think about joining us for our 4 day break away. We have a varied itinerary to suit a variety of tastes. We will go on Safari at **Longleat**, be taken back to Victorian opulence on **Brunel's SS Great Britain**, feel the wonders of **Roman & Georgian Bath**, marvel at **Wells Cathedral**, wander the Gothic mansion of **Tyntesfield** and travel home via either beautiful **Stourhead** with its lakeside setting or **Medieval Lacock Village and Abbey**. Back at our hotel set in landscaped grounds with indoor pool, we will enjoy each other's company over our evening meal. It is possible to share a room with a non U3A member so bring family or a friend along. **You will find a flyer at the end of this newsletter**. Do not hesitate to contact me.

*Sandra McDonald, Short Breaks Co-ordinator*

## OUTINGS NEWS

We had our first outing of the year to see **“Ghost”** at Brighton. Our members enjoyed a lovely visit to Brighton, taking in shopping, lunch and then the Theatre in the afternoon on a beautiful sunny day in February.



Windsor Castle by **Josep Renalias** [CC BY-SA 3.0  
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)]

Our next outing to **Windsor Castle** on 20th March, is fully booked with a waiting list. Let's hope it will be a lovely sunny day like our February trip. On 10th April we have an interesting outing to **Bletchley Park**, which is also fully booked with a waiting list.

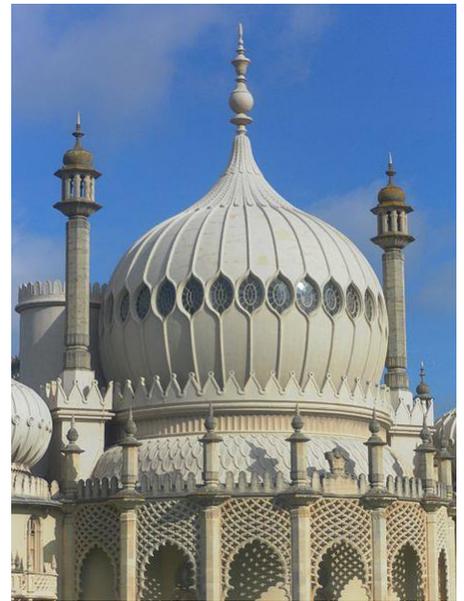
At the end of this Newsletter you will find the application form and details of our outing in May to a triple venue of delights: **Heaven Farm, Standen, and Saint Hill Manor**. Please send in your completed applications with your cheques as soon as possible to avoid disappointment for, as you can see from the above, our first three outings filled up very quickly.

*Joan Young, Outings Coordinator*

### Report on the Outing to **“Ghost, The Musical”** in Brighton

If you are thinking of motoring into Brighton, then do not. Let the train take the strain. Reconstruction and building works are everywhere. Our coach had to battle through numerous roadworks to reach the Royal Pavilion area but we were rewarded with a fine day out. In amazingly warm weather for February, members had free time to visit the excellent Brighton Museum or wander around the Pavilion Gardens or The Lanes or even take a stroll along the seafront, near to the pier. Apparently though, some preferred to just linger over lunch. Then it was time to make our way to the Theatre Royal - built more than 200 years ago, it remains a beautiful theatre with an auditorium that exudes opulence.

*Ghost, the Musical*, is an adaptation from the famous 1990 film starring Demi Moore, Patrick Swayze and Whoopi Goldberg. The musical, stage version became a hit when first launched in 2011 and this touring show was certainly worth seeing. With excellent cast, good voices, moving performances and stylish choreography, there was much to enjoy, although the acoustics during the first half needed some adjustment. The second half had just the right mixture of comedy, drama and pathos and tears were shed in the audience at the end. Our thanks to Lorna Jones for organizing this successful, first outing of 2019. She now has a copy of the film, to watch for the first time.



Onion Dome. Brighton Pavilion  
from Wikimedia Commons

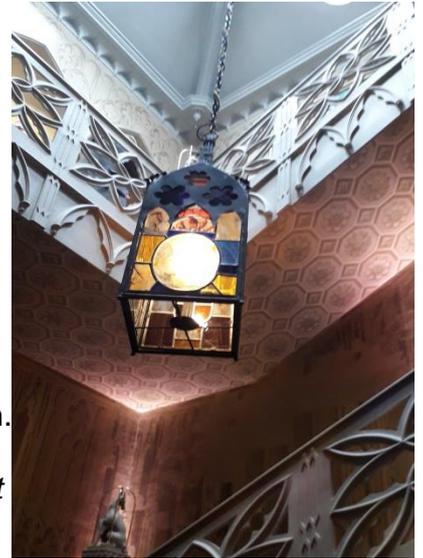
*Pat Micklewright*

## GROUP REPORTS

### LONDON EXPLORERS 4

On 8<sup>th</sup> February London Explorers 4 went to Strawberry Hill House, the Gothic home of Horace Walpole from 1749 to 1776. The exhibition, which finished in February, bought back some of the important masterpieces which were sold in a great sale in 1842. It was very interesting and well worth a visit. We also visited Eel Pie Island, an 8 acre island, known for the Blues explosion of the 1960s where groups like the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton and Rod Stewart played. The day was organised by Angela and Adrian.

*Suzette Elliott-West, Group Contact*



### OUT AND ABOUT WEEKENDERS



*Sandra McDonald, Group Contact*

True to our title this newly formed group has been getting 'Out and About'. After our first car share to Teapot Island we had a fascinating guided tour at Salomons and then visited Penshurst Place in February on the first day of its new season.

Penshurst is a lovely 14<sup>th</sup> century estate. We started our day with coffee in the Porcupine Pantry. In the garden we couldn't fail to miss the large metal sculpture of a porcupine, this being part of the family coat of arms.

Penshurst's Baron's Hall with its 60ft high chestnut ceiling was awe inspiring and we very were glad of the fire to warm us in the middle of the hall. Wandering the state rooms we were surrounded by family portraits, one them uncannily looking like Prince Harry! The guides were particularly knowledgeable and helpful. Outside we saw our first spring lambs and walked through the historic walled garden with the superbly laid out 'garden rooms'. I will definitely want to go back later in the year when there will be spectacular displays of flowers.



**Group Members: More reports and photos, please! Editor**

## UPDATE ON GROUPS

We have recently had a flurry of new interest groups and several more proposals were made at the New Members' Meeting. Keep your eye on the website for further details.

**BEE WALKS** will begin this month. It has been agreed to attempt the monthly monitoring walk on Tunbridge Wells Common during the 2nd week of the month starting in March and ending in October. The actual day cannot be given in advance as the bees can only be counted when the weather is suitable i.e. not too wet or windy. To join the group please contact [Bridget Sands](#), or phone 01892 546161.

**FOLK AND MORE** This new group, led by Courtney Hayden, had its first session on Monday, February 18th at St John's Yard. Great fun in a lovely, relaxed atmosphere. Further meetings will be held on the third Monday afternoons in March, April and May with possibly a break over the summer months. If you'd like to join in please contact [Courtney](#) or phone 07811183101.

**PLAY ACTING** Meetings will be held in Langton Green on the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 2.15pm. No experience needed. If you have any questions please contact [Anthea Hall](#) or phone 01892 862027.

**TEA AND POETRY** The first meeting was held at the end of February and the group will continue to meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 10.00 am in members' homes. See Ruth's poem below. The contact is [Elaine Royal](#) or phone 01892 524537.

### Proposals for new groups

#### A STUDY GROUP ON WAGNER'S RING

The aim of the group will be to explore how Wagner tells the story through music. An ability to read music would be helpful but not essential. We have a leader for this group but please email [Jan](#) to register your interest.

**CHESS** A group for beginners and hopefully a few who would be willing to share their skills.

#### A SECOND FOOD APPRECIATION GROUP

**A GUITAR GROUP** Learn to play the guitar. Emphasis on classical guitar and reading music. Someone to lead the group would be most welcome but if not, there are good teach yourself books to work through together.

**A BREAKFAST OR BRUNCH GROUP** Meeting in a local restaurant or pub for breakfast and a chat.

**SPANISH BEGINNERS** A new Spanish group has been requested. Come along and learn together.

**A PATCHWORK GROUP** has been offered by a new member who has experience in teaching beginners. The group will be suitable for all levels.

### The Groups below are looking for new members

**CREATIVE WRITING** The group members agree a theme and read their offerings to one another in their monthly meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday mornings. Contact [Don Laurie](#) or phone 01892 539951.

**5 MILE MONTHLY WALKING GROUP** A small group who enjoy walking in the countryside and an occasional pub lunch. Contact [Joy Podbury](#) or phone 01892 315549.

**WINE GROUP 1** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday. Contact [David Britton](#) or phone 01892 528785.

**WINE GROUP 2** 4<sup>th</sup> Friday. Contact [Jan Seddon](#) or phone 07815188471.

**LONDON EXPLORERS 5** 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday. Contact [Bob Slater](#) or phone 01892 547520.

**LONDON EXPLORERS 6** 1<sup>st</sup> Friday. Contact [Helen Seddon](#) or phone 0786667701

**For more information or to join new groups please contact Jan Sumner, Groups Coordinator [twu3agroupcoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:twu3agroupcoordinator@gmail.com) or phone 01892 860554.**

The **Tea and Poetry Group** is looking for new members.

Bring a favourite poem and discuss it with the group  
At 10 a.m. on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March.

Contact [Elaine Royal](#) or phone 01892 524537 for details.

And here's a special invitation from one of the group:

Elaine, Howard, Bob and me  
Met up for an hour of poetry  
More people of similar mind would be great  
to join our group. Don't hesitate!  
Nature poems are for next time  
So come along and bring a rhyme.



Ruth Johnson

## NEW MEMBERS' MEETING PROMOTED OUR MANY GROUPS .....

More than 40 new members came to the New Members' Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February. They were welcomed by Sue Brimlow and, fortified with tea and biscuits, had an opportunity to hear from Group Contacts who are actively looking for new recruits for their groups. With over 100 groups in our U3A, it was impossible to name them all but, of course, details are in the welcome pack which members receive, and which is updated every six months. It is also easy to view them on the [Tunbridge Wells U3A website](#). Here is the flyer which the cycling group displayed. Do contact Richard Martin if you are interested.

### Tunbridge Wells U3A – Cycling Group

*Pembury to Penshurst – 19 miles (30km) round trip.  
Route follows off-road cycle track alongside newly-dualled A21 to Vauxhall Lane, then through to north Tonbridge and quiet rural roads to Haysden lakes and finally an off-road cycle trail to Penshurst Place.*

*Pembury to Brencley – 11m (18km) mostly on NCR 18  
Once out of Pembury the route follows quiet rural roads through Matfield and Brencley villages.*

*The Cuckoo Trail on NCR 21  
Heathfield to Polegate – 20 miles (32km)  
Entirely off-road except ½ mile road section in Hailsham.*

*The Forest Way Trail on NCR 21  
Tunbridge Wells to Forest Row – 24 miles (38km)  
Quiet rural roads to Groombridge then entirely off-road to Forest Row on NCR*

*Some of our regular routes*

*We are a social group of leisure cyclists who meet on alternate Tuesdays to enjoy a relaxed ride at a gentle pace to suit everyone. We aim to use traffic-free trails and quiet rural roads. We ride for about an hour, take a lunch or refreshment stop at a half-way point, before returning home.*

Contact Richard Martin for further information about cycling with the group. We have our own WhatsApp group!  
M: 07803 267706 E: richardmartin51@btinternet.com

## A REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY MONTHLY MEETING

### James Bond: a British hero, a talk by Caroline Piper

In this very well delivered talk, we were told of Ian Fleming's background at Eton and Cambridge; his associations with men who would later go on to be spies; his affinity for affairs with married women, heavy vodka drinking, and smoking; not to mention being thrown out of Sandhurst for unfortunately contracting a sexual disease.

In WW2 he moved into Naval Intelligence, where he was responsible for the formation of 30AU, a specialist assault unit which he commanded until D-day; he also worked with MI5 and other agencies.

These esoteric experiences and the people he knew were used by Ian Fleming in his books, James Bond, for example, being the name of an ornithologist in the Caribbean. Commander Bond, also known as 007, was created in 1953 and 14 novels were written. Much was made of this amazing fictional character in films with exotic locations, fabulously beautiful women, and 7 brilliant male actors. Fast, wonderful cars and gadgets provided by 'Q' for the most unbelievably threatening situations, accompanied our hero who was attired throughout in the smartest of St James's street apparel.

The many links between fact and fiction were pointed out, such as 'M' who was possibly created due to Fleming's difficult relationship with his mother. Links, too, could be found to Admiral Lord Nelson's life, especially to the famous Turner painting of the warship, the Fighting Temeraire, as it is being towed to the breakers yard.

What a brilliant and informative delivery this well informed 'Bond Girl' gave us. Thank you Caroline!

*Courtney Hayden*

## FORTHCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

**21st March 2019:** Dr Linda Hall, a university lecturer who has lectured for the National Trust at Sissinghurst and Batemans etc will speak on **The Origin and Meaning of Nursery Rhymes**.

**18th April 2019:** **The History and Work of Dogs Trust**, a talk by Lara Murphy about the Dogs' Trust which is the largest UK charity supporting dogs.

**16<sup>th</sup> May 2019:** "Ghosts of Kent" by Rupert Matthews.

### Another plea from the Editor



Your reports, photos, poems, creative writing – in fact, anything connected with U3A activities – make the Newsletter interesting. Please keep them coming! Here are the Amblers, taking advantage of our lovely early spring.



## Useful Information and Important Messages

### Events in March and April

We have the following events arranged for March and April:

21 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Monthly Meeting: <b>The Origin and Meaning of Nursery Rhymes</b> – a talk by Dr Linda Hall
29 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Coffee Morning at Trinity
6 <sup>th</sup> April	Barn Dance – by ticket
25 <sup>th</sup> April	Group Contacts' Lunch – by invitation
26 <sup>th</sup> April	Coffee Morning at Trinity

### Forthcoming Events For Your Diary

12 <sup>th</sup> May	Carvery Lunch at the Masonic Hall – by ticket
11 <sup>th</sup> June	Julia Cruse Seminar: <b>Cunning Regal Women</b> – by ticket
19 <sup>th</sup> July	BBQ at the Nevill Golf Club – by ticket, details later
13 <sup>th</sup> August	Seminar: David Southwood (The Race to the Moon) – details later
7 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	Games Afternoon – details later
28 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Study Day: Various speakers (Art) – details later
12 <sup>th</sup> Dec.	U3A Christmas Lunch at the Masonic Hall – details later

### New Members

We are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since 1<sup>st</sup> February:

Patricia Anderson	John & Susan Chapman	Leonie Kidby	Jean Spears
Fiona Bigg	Denise Collins	Mike Queree	John & Sally Turner
Audrey Brooks	Sue Hart	Christine Roberts	John & Lorraine Walsh
Andy & Jane Brown	Theo Jonkergouw	Roxana Roman	

### Your Committee

Chairman	Sue Brimlow	01892 863691
Vice-Chairman	Adrian Twiner	01892 459352
Secretary	Wendy Maher	01892 325272
Treasurer	David Scott	01892 701950
Group Coordinator	Jan Sumner	01892 860554
Membership Secretary	Ruth Johnson	01892 523097
Outings Coordinator	Joan Young	01892 546687
Business Secretary	Adrian Twiner	01892 459352
Newsletter	Eryll Fabian	01892 513805
Short Breaks & Holidays	Sandra McDonald	01892 752196

### A Message from the Editor:

Members' photos and articles about group activities, places visited and anything relating to U3A events are always welcome. We can't guarantee to print them but will do our best if space allows.

All contributions to the **April** Newsletter should be e-mailed to [Eryll Fabian](mailto:Eryll.Fabian@u3a.org.uk) by 31<sup>st</sup> March (**earlier submissions will be welcome!**) or phone 01892 513805.



### **National Events**

Details of interesting national events appear on the website: They can be found on [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) or by writing to:  
The Third Age Trust, 52 Lant Street, London SE1 1RB



TUNBRIDGE WELLS U3A

**Visit to the Sunday Carvery**

After our successful Christmas lunch in December at the function room in the Masonic Hall, we have decided to take a group of members to the regular **Carvery** on **Sunday 12 May**. Tables are for 10 people, the bar opens at noon, and the meal starts at 1.00 pm.



For those of you who have not been there before, the address is:

**The Masonic Hall, St John’s Road, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9UY**

There is ample parking for cars at the venue, which is on the east side of the A26, approached by a driveway leading from the main road. *There are also buses from the town centre. Get off the bus at the stop for the Sports Centre, and then cross the A26 road, and walk to your right to enter the driveway between the white pillars.*

The cost per person for the two course self-service lunch is **£13.50**, which includes a choice of carved meats - Roast Sirloin of Beef, Glazed Gammon, Roast Pork, and Roast Turkey, served with a choice of 5 vegetables. After the main course, you can choose from several desserts.

There is a spacious bar as you go into the building, where you can buy your drink before entering the room, which holds 110 people. Other tables will be occupied by members of the public.

**As we need to confirm numbers in advance, please reply before SATURDAY 13 APRIL.**

Please post your completed application form together with your cheque for the ticket(s) to:

**Jean Brushfield, Freshfields, Molyneux Park Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 8DN**

Your ticket(s) will be emailed to you. If you require a paper copy, please send a SAE.

**Please bring your ticket(s) with you on the day.**

Any queries to Jean by email to: [jean@brushfield.com](mailto:jean@brushfield.com), or phone her on 01892 520 630



.....

I/We enclose a cheque for £ .....made payable to Tunbridge Wells U3A

Name ..... Membership no.....

Email address..... Phone no.....

If you are paying for a U3A friend, please include their details below

Name..... Membership no.....

Email address..... Phone no.....

# TUNBRIDGE WELLS U3A HISTORY SEMINAR ON TUESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

## Cunning Regal Women: English queens before Elizabeth I

The most famous iconic queen in our history is surely Elizabeth I, but what of the women who came before her: Matilda, the daughter of Henry I; Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of Henry II; Isabella of France, wife of Edward II; Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI; and Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's daughter? During this seminar we will examine their legacy and evaluate their relationships, marriages, successes and failures and the context in which they found themselves, heiresses or married to ruling kings.

The speaker for this seminar is Dr Julia Cruse, who spoke to us two years ago about Tudor England and we are delighted she has agreed to return.

**Date:** Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**Venue:** The Main Hall, The Camden Centre, Tunbridge Wells

**Cost:** £6 per person

### Programme:

**from** 2.30 p.m. Registration

2.45 – 3.45 The first lecture, **Three Domineering Queens.** Acknowledged as Henry I's successor Matilda failed to secure the crown. Was she unfortunate or was it because she was a woman? Eleanor was powerful and ambitious while Isabella was cruel and manipulative. We will consider whether we can separate the myths surrounding these royal women to evaluate the truth behind their control and power

3.45 – 4.15 Tea Break

4.15 – 5.15 The second lecture, **Two Militant Queens.** Margaret of Anjou lived through turbulent times, played a significant role in the Wars of the Roses and due to Henry's bouts of insanity at times ruled in his place. Was she indeed a woman with 'a tiger's heart wrapped in woman's hide'? Mary was a severe monarch and a military failure but does she deserve the sobriquet 'Bloody Mary' or is it fairer to see her as a pioneer who courageously fought for her right to be Queen?

**Organiser:** Adrian Twiner 01892 459352 [adriantwiner@gmail.com](mailto:adriantwiner@gmail.com)

**N.B. This seminar is open to U3A members in West Kent**

To reserve a place please copy and complete the slip below and send it with your cheque and SAE to: **Adrian Twiner, 16, Bishops Court, Bishops Down Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 8XL**

Please remember to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your ticket, which will be sent out from late April.

Please retain for information.



I/We wish to attend the Tunbridge Wells U3A History Seminar on **Cunning Regal Women** and enclose a cheque for £6 per person, made payable to **TW U3A.**

Name(s): .....

Address: .....

Telephone No: ..... Email address: .....

I enclose a cheque for £..... (£6 per person)



Tomb of Eleanor of Aquitaine  
Fontevaud Abbey (public domain)

**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

- \*4 days / 3 nights
- \*Holiday Inn Bristol Filton Half Board
- \*Coach Travel
- \*Gratuities
- \*Excursion package



**PRICE**

**£336.00** per person in twin /double  
(able to share with a non U3A member)



**WHERE WE WILL GO**

- \* Longleat Safari Park
- \* Bath Roman Baths
- \* Stourhead (N.T)
- \* SS Great Britain Bristol
- \* Tyntesfield National Trust
- \* Wells Cathedral
- \* Lacock Abbey (N.T)



**EXTRAS**

- \*Insurance (optional) £12.00
- \*Single room supplement £75.00 (limited availability)
- \*Entrance fees to N.T properties for non -members
  - \* Wells Cathedral ( voluntary contributions)



**FOR MORE INFORMATION,**

a full itinerary and a booking form please contact

**Sandra McDonald**

Email:

[twu3atours@gmail.com](mailto:twu3atours@gmail.com)

Tel: 01892 752196



