

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Merry Christmas (or Happy Holidays for those of other faiths); I look forward to joining you at our Christmas lunch, on Friday 8th December, and at the festive event on Thursday 21st December.

November's monthly meeting (16th): We welcomed dynamic duo Gemma Stapley and 'Ranger' Dan of the Tunbridge Wells & Rusthall Commons Conservators to our November meeting. They explained the key purpose of the Conservators is to protect, for public benefit, this near-town-centre green area of about 250 acres, with its varying and very interesting habitats. Their presentation was well received and an eye opener for many. Our thanks go to them, as well as to our outgoing talks organiser Bob Slater who has done a wonderful job for some years. He has now 'passed the baton' to new member Craig Forster, also a member of the Tunbridge Wells Speakers Club—we welcome him aboard.

Coffee mornings: Our committee has decided to try holding a second regular coffee morning on our monthly schedule for the new year. The additional one will take place at 10:30 on the 2nd Monday of each month (starting 12th February) at the Old Auction House (near the Pantiles on Linden Park Road).

A learning organisation: While recognising one of our intents is to encourage learning among our members, I am also struck by the constant learning in which we, the TW u3a organisation, are engaged. We try to do the best we can for the mutual benefit of members but are always ready to hear your views on how we might improve. Please feel free to contact me if you have thoughts to share.



Chris (07788 598472)

Coming up

Thursday 21st Dec 2.30:
Monthly Meeting: **Christmas Gathering & Quiz**

Friday 29th Dec 10.30:
Coffee morning at Trinity



Thursday 18th Jan 2.30:
Monthly meeting: **What makes a superstar?**

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.

NB: there will be no newsletter in January.

Inside this issue

- 1 Chairman's Message; contents
- 2 Monthly Meetings
- 3 Volunteers
- 4 Save those dates
- 5 Outings Coordinator's Update
Last month's Talk
- 6 Group Coordinator's Notes
- 7 Group News
- 8 More Group News
- 9 Useful Information
- 10 March Outing Application



THE CHRISTMAS GATHERING

featuring

Sandra's Famous Christmas Quiz

Crackers

Mulled wine

Mince Pies

Ukuleles!

Free raffle and special guest appearance

Thursday 21st DECEMBER 2.30pm

Christian Fellowship Hall

NB: This is our usual monthly meeting with a festive twist. Why not give your Christmas jumper another outing, or throw caution to the wind and wear a bit of tinsel!



January's Hybrid Monthly Meeting at the

Christian Fellowship Hall

Thursday 18th January at 2.30

Simon Mott : What Makes A Superstar

(The inside story of one of Britain's greatest entertainers)

Simon Mott grew up in Tunbridge Wells and his Mum still lives here just off the Pembury Road near Dunorlan Park. Simon has turned his favourite pastime, that being a fascination with one of Britain's biggest entertainers, into a wonderful audio visual presentation that has seen him touring all over the South East of England.

Simon cannot wait to give his talk to the Tunbridge Wells U3A as, surprisingly, Tunbridge Wells has a very special significance in the story of this superstar.

Looking ahead... February's Monthly Meeting is on the 15th

Jane Scotchner : Victorian Wonderlands of Crag, Caves and Cascades

Wealthy Victorians were often passionate about gardens and would use their wealth to create extravagant and elaborate ones. These gardens were often inspired by their travels, hobbies, literature as well as their own imaginations. Jane's talk is about how they used rockwork on a grand scale to create these fantasy worlds, taking us through a marvellous selection of gardens with stories about their creation and their fascinating owners.





At this Christmas time when we are thinking about giving and finding the right gift for our friends and family, consider this -

One of the greatest gifts you can give is your time.

These are some of the benefits of volunteering. Gaining new skills. ...Making new friends. ...Mental and physical health and wellbeing. ...Giving something back. ...Improving your confidence.



The T Team



Have you have enjoyed your refreshments at the monthly meetings?

Then maybe you would like to join our happy T Team.

It's a good way to meet new people.

Usually only two duties over the year at the Monthly Meetings, and New Members' Meetings.

You receive lots of smiles!

The facilities at the Christian Fellowship Hall are excellent.

Please speak to Barbara or Linda at a meeting or to email, click [here](#)

Volunteers needed

We are still looking for help in setting up a new website, to oversee our project (an organisational not technical role). A few might like to learn how to use WordPress (the globally used tool underpinning the development of SiteWorks).

Please contact the [Chairman](#) if you think you can help.

The Meeters & Greeters are those lovely people who welcome you in to the monthly meetings and to all u3a events.

They are still looking for a few more friendly volunteers to join their team. If this sounds like you, please contact [Jean Bicknell](#) by clicking on her name.

TWu3a got a mention in Third Age Matters this month.

In September we shared some photos of our clever florist Alison with the "u3a week" fb page. Now we have a mention on pages 16/17 of the TAM Winter Issue (59). From Dundee to Guernsey, Belfast, Kettering and Wolverhampton busy u3as from far and wide sent reports of how they celebrated u3a week.

As well as Alison's photo (in the background please note walking boots, crochet flowers and language dictionaries highlighting some of our interest groups), Eleanor Mair wrote *"Horticulture was a recurring theme throughout the week for many groups, including a beautiful floral display at a local flower festival by Tunbridge Wells u3a"*



>>> Hold that Date! <<<

Wine Tasting Afternoon Tuesday 26th March

Details follow in the February newsletter



u3a

Coffee Mornings are so popular we are adding another one!

Tues Feb
12th

10.30



The Old Auction
House

on Linden Park Rd

SAVE THE DATE departing **Wednesday 11th September 2024**

SHORT BREAK

KYNREN & NORTHUMBERLAND

5 days/4 nights duration

4* Redworth Hall hotel



Hardwick Hall (NT)

Bamburgh Castle

Alnwick Gardens

Angel of the North

Beamish Open Air Museum

Bowes Museum

Raby Castle

Harewood House

For more information please contact [Sandra McDonald](#)
Short Breaks Organiser

HIGHLIGHTS

KYNREN a spectacular **outdoor** theatre show with 1000 cast and crew telling the 2000 year tale of the history of England. Dazzling pyrotechnics, beautiful choreography, amazing stunts.



Outings Coordinator

The last outing of the year took place on the 1st December to Leonardslee Garden Illuminations. A full report of this festive trip will appear in our next newsletter in February.

Our first outing for 2024 will be to Borde Hill Gardens. The Gardens are set within 383 acres of heritage listed Parkland and their formal garden captivates and delights visitors with a series of intimate garden rooms. Beyond the formal garden you can explore the woodland walks, the South Park and the lakes with outstanding views across the Sussex High Weald. There will be many spring plants to see, and when you are ready to eat, they have a cafe in the Old Peacock house for drinks and light refreshments. They closed their restaurant in 2022, and are hoping to open a new one in 2024, but no details available yet. Alternatively, you can take a picnic to enjoy on the day. There is a gift shop that also sells locally produced food plus a plant nursery

The price of this day out will be £22 to include entrance fee, coach and driver's gratuity. The application form is at the end of the newsletter together with instructions on how to pay for the trip. I hope to see many of you on our first outing of the year.

[Joan Young](#) 07504919081

Last month's talk

**Daniel Colborne (*Ranger Dan*)
& Gemma Stapeley**

TW Tunbridge Wells &
RC Rusthall *Commons*

The role of the Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators

256 acres of land with common access and a mosaic of habitats within easy access of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall, the Commons were once registered as a village green. They were originally designated as Lowland Heathland but over the years have become Secondary Woodland. In 1830 the Conservators were set up to protect the area and their remit was updated in 1981 but the aim is to maintain, protect and keep the area free from encroachment.

The conservators are a committee of twelve, funded partly by TWBC on a very strict budget which only covers maintenance. The land is owned by targetfollow and they hold four of the seats on the committee.

The Friends of the Commons came into being after the devastation of the 1987 storm. They are a charity and raise money to fund projects that will benefit the wildlife and communities who use the Commons. Over the last 18 months Dan has been trying to assess the biodiversity, ecology and geography of the area to create a baseline for future management planning.



Recent projects have included:

- the felling of dangerous trees; ash dieback has rendered many a liability to the public.
- clearing areas to make open glades to improve biodiversity (there are seven bat species to keep fed).
- control of water flow to prevent flooding on the Pantiles.

And, if funding can be secured, the reinstatement of the Victorian Terraces behind Brighton Lake.

It's as well they are so energetic and positive, as Gemma and Dan are never short of work!!

Groups Coordinator's Notes

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

If you want to register interest in any of the groups below please contact the [groups co-ordinator](#)

Would you like to join **London Explorers 7** or **Evening Diners Group Two** in 2024? Maybe join a new **Discussion** group, a **Music, Movement and Dance** group or a 2nd **Canasta** group?

We now have a member who is willing to be group contact for **London Explorers Group 7**. A start-up meeting will be held on Thursday 11th January at 10.30am in Trinity coffee shop TN1 1JP, so if you are interested please message the groups co-ordinator.

The new **Evening Diners** group will dine out in mid-January 2024. The group was oversubscribed so we are now setting up an **Evening Diners Two** group. If you are interested in coming along to a start-up meeting in January 2024 then please get in contact, a new TWu3a member has already offered to be group contact.

The proposed **Music, Movement and Dance** group plans to start meeting in the new year at the Toc H Hall in Little Mount Sion TN1 1YS on a Wednesday lunchtime. Interested? ...please get in touch.

The **Canasta** group is now full so if you would like to join a 2nd group please get in contact with the group's co-ordinator.

A member would like to start a “**New Democracy Discussion**” group. They recently wrote: “*You may be concerned that, despite the potential of new technology, we fail to manage its detrimental social impacts whilst our healthcare, natural environments, water and other infrastructures just seem to go from bad to worse. Despite living in a “democracy”, we actually have minimal real influence as taxpaying citizens over a Government that seems to lack the competence and bandwidth to concurrently manage the multitude of problems it faces.*

This Group might suit you if you have an open mind about the ongoing suitability of our current structure of Government. It will explore and debate options for improvement and how they might realistically be taken forward.” Please register your interest with the [groups co-ordinator](#).

If you have an idea for a new, different TWu3a group then the “NOTES FOR STARTING A NEW GROUP” have been updated and can be found at the bottom of the [Groups page](#) on our website tunbridgewellsu3a.org

Seasonal Pop-ups about the “Work around the Commons”

There was the keen interest in the talk given by Ranger Dan and Gemma, so they have agreed to keep TWu3a members up to date with **Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn** pop-up meetings.

The first pop-up Commons **Winter Walk & Talk** will be on the morning of Friday 9th February 2024, and will start from the **Rackliff Centre** in **Rusthall**.

If you are interested in joining a limited number of members for a **February Winter Walk & Talk** please contact the [groups coordinator](#)

We will then contact you in the New Year to share more details. Please be aware that due to the timing this is the only opportunity we have to mention the **February Winter W&T** via the newsletter.



Group News

London Explorers 2 were blessed with sunshine for our short walk to the National Portrait Gallery, and we dodged the heavy showers later in the day. We were directed to enter via the newly refurbished doorway with 45 female faces etched in bronze by Tracey Emin looking down on us.

First things first, we voted to have a coffee in the Audrey Green café. This proved to be a bit of a bun fight as it was busy, but we did all eventually get a seat. The process helped us to decide that we might be better off getting lunch at The Café in the Crypt in St Martins!

We then separated, arranging to meet up at 12.30 for the free talk on the Portrait of the Day, given by a junior member of the Gallery staff. This was on a portrait of Sir Adrien Carton de Wiart by Sir William Orpen. So easy to walk past a painting like this and have no understanding of who this person was or why he was chosen as a subject, but it turned out there was a fascinating story to be told, which we all enjoyed.



Jill W had opted to go round the David Hockney exhibition which she also enjoyed, and we then met up for lunch. Returning to the NPG, we chose to do our own thing before reconvening at 3 for another short guided tour and an informative look at some of the paintings in different sections of the gallery.

So much to see and do! Another visit, another day is called for!

Anne Golds

PS. Many thanks to Anne for organising this very interesting and educational day out.

You may recall seeing last month that the **Recorder Consort group** has chosen only to *suspend*, not close, its weekly Thursday morning meetings. **Apologies if you tried to contact the group. Here is the correct link to the [group contact](#)** .

The group remains keen to continue meeting once a viable number of members is available. We encourage new (as well as existing) members to join so that meetings can be resumed.



Walk On the Wildside group at Bewl Water.

Sandwiched between two very wet and grey days was this glorious morning enjoyed by the WOW group. Despite road closures on the A21, a short detour took them to another free parking spot and off they went. The dam is under extensive work by SE

water and is looking rather industrial at present...

... but a few steps further on and some coots and a heron were seen enjoying perfectly still water and wonderfully clear blue skies. The paths were thankfully not muddy and a variety of fungi were spotted.



More Group News

Maths and Statistics Group

Don't forget that the Maths and Statistics Group is inviting you to attend their Zoom meeting on 8th January for a presentation by David Griffin on the mathematics of spirals.

David Griffin is the former leader of Wokingham U3A maths group. He is familiar to several U3A groups in the south through the presentations he has given and the puzzles he has set them.

He assures me that most of the maths will be A-Level or below. The meeting will start at 2.30pm and the presentation will last about an hour.

If you would like to join us, please email me by clicking on my name, so that I can send you the Zoom link.

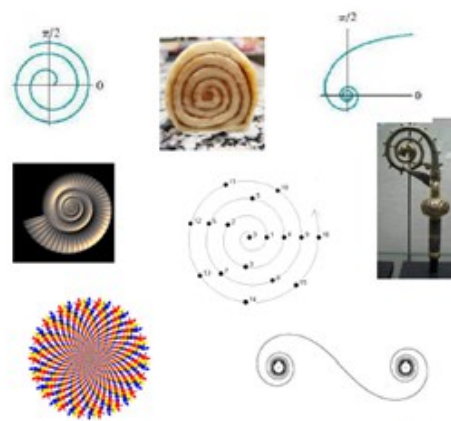
[Graham McNeilly](#)

The Mathematics of Spirals

David A Griffin

There are many types of spiral. They can be seen in art, culture, nature, mathematics, science and engineering.

This talk will illustrate several types of spiral and describe the underlying mathematics of each.



The **Art Appreciation Group** will meet on December 13th. There is no talk but members are invited to choose a painting of a garden to talk about for 5 minutes. Members can choose to do this or just listen if they prefer not to speak. Last year we had two meetings run along these lines which were very successful.

On January 10th, I will give a talk about the Barbizon School of painters who bridge the Classical and Romantic Movements with Impressionism. They were the earliest painters to paint outside— "en plein air".

Both meetings 2.30 p.m. at the Camden Centre.

Enquiries [Elaine Royal](#)



The Forest in Winter at Sunset
by Théodore Rousseau



London Explorers 4 had another interesting day around some of the quieter places in Islington. Followed by a visit to the Estorick Collection of Modern Italian Art.

Organised by Dick and Miranda.

Suzette Elliott-West

Important information

Forthcoming Events For Your Diary

21 December 2023	Monthly meeting: Christmas Gathering & quiz
18 January 2024	Monthly meeting: What makes a superstar?
15 February 2024	Monthly meeting: Victorian Wonderlands of Craggs, Caves and Cascades
26 March 2024	Wine Tasting afternoon

New members

A big welcome to the **26** new members who joined in November

Your Committee

Chairman	Chris Woodward	07788 598472
Deputy Chair	Fiona Findlay	07872 169146
Secretary	Sian Shaw	07835 300193
Treasurer	David Brimlow	01892 860598
Group Coordinator	Lindsay Hasell	01892 673180
Membership Secretary	Judy Horwood	01892 537601
Outings Coordinator	Joan Young	0750 4919081
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 **February** Newsletter should be e-mailed to **Bridget** by January 31st 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

BORDE HILL GARDENS -TUESDAY 12TH MARCH 2024

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

OUTING CODE :...G1 ORGANISER: JOAN YOUNG
EMAIL ADDRESS for applications: [Stella](#)

Borde Hill Gardens are set within 383 acres of heritage listed Parkland and their formal garden captivates and delights visitors with a series of intimate garden rooms. Beyond this you can explore woodland walks, the South Park and lakes with outstanding views across the Sussex High Weald. In Spring you can see Crocus, Daffodils, Magnolias, Primroses, Camellias, Early Flowering Rhododendrons and many more Spring plants

There is a Cafe in the Old Peacock house for drinks and light lunches alternatively you can bring your own picnic on the day. They also have a gift shop and a plant nursery.

The cost of the trip to include entrance, coach and driver's gratuity is £22

To pay by BACS please email: [Stella](#) and include your name, mobile/home phone number, date of payment and Name of Outing and Code (G1). 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 and your Surname e.g. **G1 Your Surname**

To pay by cheque: please post the application below to:

Stella Westrup 19, Oakwood Rise Tunbridge Wells TN2 3HD

Add your email or telephone number for confirmation of receipt.

APPLICATION FORM

Outing name and Code: G1 Borde Hill Garden

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.

Crescent road opposite the Assembly Hall 10.00am

St Johns opposite Sainsburys local 10.05/10.10am

Southborough Fountain 10.10/10.15am

We expect to be at Borde Hill Gardens at approximately ...11.00am.

We will leave at 15.00pm and hope to arrive back in Tunbridge Wells around 16.00pm

Stella's contact number for any enquiries regarding this trip is... 01892 523413

On the day, Joan Young's contact number ... 07504919081

Please note that once money has been paid in advance 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.