

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

### *Greetings all*

**October's new-members meeting:** I was pleased to see some younger 3rd-agers at this well-attended meeting. We hope they are followed by other younger ones, and that their influence can be felt across our u3a. We also appreciated the presence of many of our interest-group contacts who were there to inform members and answer questions.



**October's monthly meeting:** Fellow member Janie Ramsay delivered her 2nd talk about the Duke & Duchess of Windsor, Edward VIII and Wallis Simpson. I certainly learnt something about the character of the couple, and of their somewhat lavish lifestyle. The event was attended by about 105 members. Our thanks go to Janie and our Talks Organiser, Bob Slater, not to forget the gleeful greeters, our terrific T-team, and the technical team. Not only is it interesting to hear from those who come to speak to us, but it is good to mingle, and do a little munching. (I just love a bit of alliteration.)

**Christmas Lunch:** We hope members take advantage of the opportunity to share a Christmas lunch at the Masonic Hall on December 8<sup>th</sup>, to chat and get to know each other a little more (live, laugh and learn?). Please note that members need to book and pay ahead of the event, so that the organisers can cater appropriately.

**Coffee mornings:** I apologise for not regularly attending. This is due to my responsibilities as a volunteer prison chaplain.

*Chris* (07788 598472)

### Coming up

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2.30:**

**Monthly meeting: The work of the TW Commons Conservators**

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> Nov 10.30:**

**Coffee morning at Trinity**



**Friday 8<sup>th</sup> Dec**

**u3a Christmas Lunch**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> Dec 2.30:**

**Monthly Meeting: Christmas Gathering & Quiz**

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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.

## November's Hybrid Monthly Meeting at the

### Christian Fellowship Hall

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 2.30

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

### **"The role of the Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators"**

The Commons are a key part of what makes Tunbridge Wells special.

Why not come along and find out how they are managed and what the plans might be for the future?

**TW** Tunbridge Wells &  
**RC** Rusthall *Commons*



### **READ ALL ABOUT IT!!**

The Luxembourg Short Break was a tremendous success.

Check out page 4

**Still a few tickets left**

## **Christmas Lunch**

### **REMINDER**

**Christmas Lunch on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

The deadline for submitting applications is 15<sup>th</sup> November so please send in your application soon if you would like to join us.

There will be a seating plan, so let Eryll know if you would like to sit with a few friends.

Don't worry if you are coming alone –  
this will be a great opportunity to meet new people.

The application form is on page 10.

# THE CHRISTMAS GATHERING & QUIZ

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2.30pm

Christian Fellowship Hall

Mulled wine

Crackers

Music

Mince Pies

And of course, Sandra's Famous Quiz.



**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!

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Tunbridge Wells u3a has its own EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Policy.

Aileen Muir will host a Diversity Coffee Morning on 15<sup>th</sup> November 11am - 12.30pm. As well as coffee and cake, we'll be thinking what Diversity means to us. Please get in touch with [Aileen](#) or

[Anne Goldstein](#) if you are interested in coming along.

It's also National Interfaith Week.

## Volunteers needed

We are still looking for help in setting up a new website for our u3a, to

- (i) oversee our project (an organisational not technical role) and
- (ii) help prepare content—text and images.

And a few might like to learn how to use WordPress (the tool used to deliver 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.



## u3a Luxembourg Short Break

The u3a trip to Luxembourg was a great success; interesting and informative every step of the way. Even the weather cooperated! We broke our journey at Tournai, famous for being the first Belgian town liberated after D day. Then on to Luxembourg: looking out of the hotel window this was our fairytale view – the spectacular floodlit castle.



A drive through the city by coach and then a walking tour with a super enthusiastic guide. We learnt that children start school speaking Luxembourgish. French is soon added to the curriculum, then German, English and even a fifth language, Portuguese or Dutch! The cathedral was stunning and we were lucky to visit during a service when the huge nave was filled with choral and organ music and illuminated by the stained glass windows.



We watched the guards patrolling in front of the Duke's palace and then came across this intriguing Stars and Stripes memorial which you can see in the foreground. Every kilometre of the route the allies took to liberate Europe is marked with these stone markers, 1146 in all. It's called the Liberty Road (*La voie de la Liberté*).



Our guide for the Dietrich War Museum was a charismatic ex-soldier. Unusually the museum used photos and eye witness accounts to reconstruct wartime scenes. They had an authentic enigma encoder which the Allies managed to "crack" at Bletchley park using the genius of the mathematician Alan Turing.

On an early morning visit we made our way to Vianden Castle, still shrouded in mist. Dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century the castle is a formidable fortress offering a captivating glimpse into



Luxembourg's turbulent past. It's strategic hilltop location, fortified walls, and intricate detailing illustrates the engineering brilliance of that era.



We had a tourist train trip round the German city of Trier in the Moselle wine region. In the afternoon we toured the St Martin vineyard cellars, carved into the rock, followed by a generous "tasting".



Mullerthall is Luxembourg's little Switzerland, known for its fascinating sandstone formations and beautiful hilly landscape. Those who reached the Hohllay cave were excited to see the unusual cavern, created by cutting into the rock to make circular millstones.

Finally, Dinant in Belgium - an ideal place to stop on the homeward journey - famous as the town where Adolph Sax developed the saxophone. Huge colourful instruments brighten the bridge into the town centre.

Throughout our stay, Sandra was always there to answer questions, add interesting comments and to keep a careful eye on everyone. She also had a ready supply of chocolate bars!

*Phil & Jan Sumner*



## Outings Coordinator

In October we visited Wrest Park, a beautiful grade one listed 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion and stunning garden. A full review of this outing follows below.

Our final trip of the year to Leonardslee Illuminations on the 1<sup>st</sup> December is full with a waiting list. If you would like to join the waiting list, please contact [Sue Brimlow](#) or by phone 07711035238 . Please note that the first pick up point for Leonardslee will be at BUS STOP OPPOSITE THE FOUNTAIN at Southborough, then ST JOHNS CHURCH and finally OUTSIDE THE ASSEMBLY HALL.

The outings team are now busy organising our programme of events for next year. These are the trips planned so far.

Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> March	Borde Hill Gardens
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> April.	Basildon Park NT (rebooked after 2023 cancellation)
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May.	Brooklands Aviation and Motor Museum
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> June.	Chichester Flower Festival
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> July.	Blenheim Palace
Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> August	Hinton Ampner NT

The team are still planning September, October and the Christmas Outing, details will follow in the new year.

[Joan Young](#) 07504919081

## Last month's outing to Wrest Park

For over 600 years the Wrest estate was home to one of the leading aristocratic families in the country, the de Greys. Each generation left its mark on the estate.

The family reached its greatest prominence when Edward IV made Edmund Grey his Lord Treasurer in 1463 and then Earl of Kent in 1465. More than 200 years later the formal gardens and the canal known as the Long Water were created by Amabel Benn, together with her son, Anthony, the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl, and his wife, Mary.



In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century Anthony's son, Henry, Duke of Kent (1671–1740), laid out what is now Wrest's most exceptional feature, its massive formal woodland garden, enclosed on three sides by canals. He employed leading architects and garden designers to

create an ordered landscape of woodland avenues ornamented with statuary and garden buildings.

On the duke's death his granddaughter Jemima, Marchioness Grey (1723–97), inherited the estate. She showed a keen interest in the gardens. In 1758 she brought in 'Capability' Brown, to soften the edges of the garden and remodel the park, while preserving the heart of the formal layout. Brown himself realised that to do more 'might unravel the Mystery of the Gardens'.

Brown's work is commemorated by the 'Capability' Brown column, built for Jemima by Edward Stevens. Jemima also added a Chinese temple and bridge, the Mithraic altar and a bath house.

The manor house was crumbling and rather than making improvements to the old house, the second Earl de Grey, an accomplished amateur architect, demolished it and between 1834 and 1839 built a new house some 200 metres to the north. Unusually for the time, he chose to adopt an 18<sup>th</sup>-century French style of architecture both inside and outside the house, perhaps inspired by the estate's formal gardens. Earlier he had a new gate and lodges built at the Silsoe entrance to the estate, also in the French style.



*Continued on next page...*



When it came to the gardens, Earl de Grey showed great respect for the legacy of his forebears. Wrest was sold on 1917 as there was no heir to inherit. English Heritage took over the house, in 2006 and has begun an ambitious 20-year project to restore the gardens to their pre-1917 state. The house is used for administration and for functions but some of ground floor rooms which are unfurnished are open to the public so that one can have some idea of the grandeur of the house in its heyday.



Although it was overcast when we left for Bedfordshire and there was a light shower on arrival, the sun did eventually shine.

We all enjoyed exploring the house, formal gardens and woodland not to mention the café, gift shop and second-hand bookshop! Very many thanks to Joan Young for organising such a great outing.

*Helen Sanders*

## Last month's talk

**Janie Ramsay**

### **The Lifestyle of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor**

Janie Ramsay gave us a fascinating talk on the lifestyle of the Windsors, when they returned from the Bahamas after World War 2.

Initially they purchased a substantial property on the Riviera, the Chateau de la Croe, with 18 bedrooms, two swimming pools, including one on the roof, and a private beach. Numerous possessions were taken from royal houses to furnish the extensive property.



The Windsors became part of the Riviera set which included royalty, Winston Churchill and entertainers, such as Noel Coward and Cole Porter, who were expected to “sing for their supper”. They had a lavish lifestyle at a time when the rest of Europe was experiencing rationing.

They subsequently purchased a smaller property in the Bois de Boulogne where the Duke could play golf. They continued to entertain lavishly; the Duchess kept a notebook in which she noted the food and drink preferences of her guests.



The Windsors were obsessed about their “royal” position; they displayed royal insignia and used the title of HRH, both forbidden under the terms of the abdication. They were also obsessed about their public image; photos were vetted by the Duchess before publication; they became fashion icons and influenced trends such as tartan and the Windsor knot. The Duke was in the list of best dressed men for 10 years and the Duchess in the list of best dressed women for 20 years.

*Sian Shaw*

## Groups Coordinator's Notes

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

Are you interested in joining **London Explorers 7** or a new **Posh Nosh Diners** group?

Please come along to the start-up meetings that will be held for these 2 groups at

**Trinity Theatre on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November.**

If you would like more details about the **London Explorers 7** group please come along at **10.30am** when 2 existing LExplorers group contacts will be on hand to explain how groups organise their visits to London. We have an extensive list of venues and people who would like to join. We now need people who are willing to share the role of organising monthly trips and liaising with members of the group, and then the LExplorers 7 can start in early 2024!

The start-up meeting for a new **Posh Nosh Diners** group will take place at **2pm**. Once again someone is needed to keep in contact with other members. The existing Posh Nosh Diners group is very popular and one of the contacts will be on hand to explain how the group organises their evening events.

If you would like to have an updated list of TWu3a groups emailed to you please contact the [Groups Co-ordinator](#)

## Group News



The **Art Appreciation Group** will meet on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2.30 - 3.45 p.m at the Camden Centre

**A talk on Hans Holbein the Younger.** Cost £1 at the door.

New members welcome.

Enquiries email: [Elaine Royal](#)

After seven years as group contact for the **Bus and Train Explorers group**, I am standing down in December. The good news is that Margot Pierson will be taking over and all will be well.

Our latest trip was to East Grinstead Museum, which is mostly about the pioneering work done at the Queen

Victoria Hospital by surgeon Sir Archibald McIndoe with burns victims during World War II.

They called themselves his guinea pigs and mixed with local residents as much as possible, leading to East Grinstead becoming known as 'the town that didn't stare'.

*Carol Boyd*



A lovely day for the **Bee Walkers** to complete their last count of the year. The counting was not difficult as we only saw two bumblebees and one of them was pretty poorly. It is late in the season and many of them have already died. It is only the new queens that survive by feeding up and finding somewhere safe to hibernate for the winter.

*Bridget Sands*





## More Group News

Contrary to last month's incorrect news, please note that the **Recorder Consort group** has chosen only to **suspend**, not close, its weekly Thursday morning meetings. 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. If you would like more details about the **Recorder Consort** group please email the [group contact](#) .



### Maths and Statistics Group

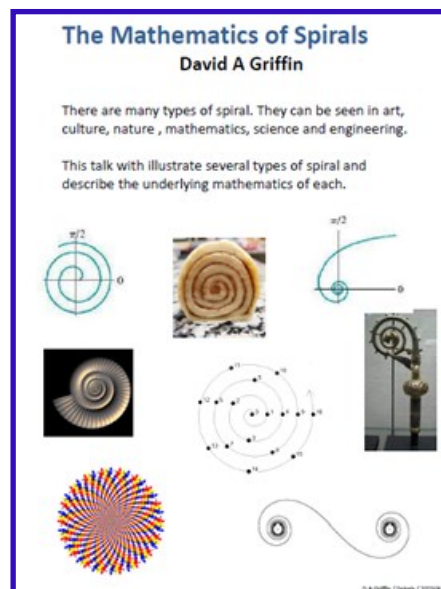
I am pleased to announce a special event early in the New Year to brush the Christmas cobwebs off your brains!

The TW Maths and Statistics Group is inviting you to attend our Zoom meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January for a presentation by David Griffin on the mathematics of spirals. (We usually meet on the first Monday, but have obviously had to reschedule to avoid New Year's Day!)

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](#) group leader

**Ramblers Too** are an active walking group, meeting every Monday morning for very varied walks of between 5 and 7 miles. We welcome new members and whilst a car may be necessary sometimes, we try to car-fill and share lifts as much as possible.

We loved seeing an unexpected avenue of Sequoia trees on a hot summer walk near Mereworth! If anyone is interested in joining us please do contact me.

[Angela Tutin](#)



**London Explorers 4** had a very interesting day at Wimbledon tennis club with a good, knowledgeable guide who gave us a one and a half hour tour. It was wonderful to see behind the scenes.

*Suzette Elliott-West*



## Important information

### Forthcoming Events For Your Diary

16 November 2023	Monthly meeting: <b>The work of the Commons Conservators</b>
8 December 2023	<b>Christmas lunch</b> (Masonic Hall)
21 December 2023	Monthly meeting: <b>Christmas Gathering &amp; quiz</b>

## New members

A big welcome to the **24** new members who joined in October

## 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 **December** Newsletter should be e-mailed to [Bridget](#) by November 30<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.u3a.org.uk) or write to:

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

**TWu3a Christmas Lunch**  
**on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 - Application Form**  
**(Applications to be in by 15<sup>th</sup> November please)**

<b>EVENT NAME: CHRISTMAS LUNCH      EVENT CODE: XMAS</b> <b>ORGANISER: <a href="#">Eryll Fabian</a></b>
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**Venue:** The Masonic Hall, St Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9UJ

**Date and Time:** Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 12.30 for 1pm.

**Cost:** £35 per person for three courses followed by tea or coffee, including gratuities.  
Please note that there will be a paying bar. Prosecco will be on special offer and will be charged at £3.50 per glass.

**Menu:** See application form below. Please include any allergies on the form.

**Seating Plan:** Please send Eryll names of friends if you would like to sit together.

**TO PAY BY BACS** please email: [Eryll](#) and include your name, mobile/home phone number, date of payment, Name of Event and Code (as above), **and menu choices**.

**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].

**Reference:** EVENT CODE (as above) Surname e.g. **XMAS Your Surname**

**TO PAY BY CHEQUE:** please post the cheque and application form below to:

*Eryll Fabian, 5 Broadwater Court, Broadwater Down. Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5PB.*

**Add your email address or telephone number for confirmation of receipt.**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Event name and Code (as above):** .....

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

**Name** .....

**Phone or address** .....

**If you are paying for your partner or u3a friend(s), please include their details below**

**Name(s) and mobile/home phone number(s)** .....

.....

Please indicate your menu choices below: **ALLERGIES** .....

**Starter**      S1. Pea and Mint Soup  
                  S2. Stuffed Mushrooms with Bacon Lardons (vegetarian option available)  
                  S3. Melon with Parma Ham

**Main Course**    M1. Roast Turkey and all the trimmings  
                          M2. Vegetable Wellington with trimmings  
                          M3. Salmon with white wine sauce, served with New Potatoes & Green Beans

**Dessert**        D1. Christmas Pudding served with Brandy Butter or Cream  
                          D2. Fruit Salad with Ice Cream or Cream  
                          D3. Cheese and biscuits (please indicate if you require gluten free)

**Name**.....**Choices (numbers)**.....

**Name**.....**Choices (numbers)**.....

**Name**.....**Choices (numbers)**.....