

# GAS Outings and Reports

## The Vyne: Sherborne St John, Basingstoke

Join us for a visit to this Tudor house and gardens, built 1500-1520 for Lord Sandys, Lord Chamberlain to Henry VIII who often visited the house with his wife Anne Boleyn.



The Vyne: front entrance  
Sebastian Ballard, [CC BY-SA 2.0](#),  
via Wikimedia Commons

In 1658 the house was sold to Chalmer Chute, a wealthy barrister who rose to become Speaker of the House of Commons. He remodelled the house, starting with the spectacular Palladian staircase and Tudor Chapel. The house remains in the Chute family but is managed by the National Trust.

The 13-acre garden has a small lake and waterfall, a kitchen garden and a small formal garden. There are three different, well-mapped walking trails to choose from to guide you through the woodlands, past a 16th century brick summer house. If you need to, please feel free to bring your own walking aid to enjoy the extensive garden. The paths

are flat and well maintained.

We have an early start so that we can enjoy our guided tour through the house before it opens to the public. If you wish, you can revisit the house later at your leisure. There is no lift to the first floor but there is a virtual tour of it, which can be viewed on the ground floor.

You can buy refreshments in the café. In the afternoon the coach will pick us up at 3pm for our return journey.

**Date:** Thursday, 15 September

**Cost:** (includes coach, house and garden entry fee, guided tour and tip)

- £24.80 per person for National Trust members (Don't forget to bring your NT membership card!)
- £37.15 per person for non-NT members

**Meeting times/points:**

- 8.15am Kingston: High Street, opposite the Rose Theatre
- 8.30am Surbiton: Claremont Road, bus stop 'Surbiton Station', opposite Waitrose

If you would like to join this outing, please complete the application form in this newsletter and send it with your cheque, made payable to **Kingston u3a GAS**, to:  
Jacqui Hine, 85 Richmond Park Road,  
Kingston KT2 6AF

020 8549 1924, [jacqui@hine.org.uk](mailto:jacqui@hine.org.uk)

## Wimbledon All England Tennis Club and Museum

Relive the excitement of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships by joining us on a 90-minute Blue Badge-guided tour of the grounds.

We'll visit areas not usually open to the public, such as the VIP suite, the BBC studio, and the interview room. Learn how the grounds have developed over the decades and discover the secret of maintaining the grass courts.

Then spend time in the Tennis Museum – the largest in the world. Opened in 2006, it provides a multi-dimensional tour of the traditions, triumphs, sights and sounds that have made Wimbledon the most coveted title in tennis since 1877. It developed from the simple game played during house parties on the lawns of grand country houses to the professional tournaments of today. The tournament moved to its present site in 1922.

**Time/Date:** 10am, Thursday, 13 October

**Cost:** Includes the 90-minute guided tour and entry to the Museum:

- £17.90 per person (concession for people 60+)
- £21.15 per person (for under 60s)

**Meeting point:** Wimbledon station, from where we'll catch the 493 bus which stops outside the Museum in Church Road.

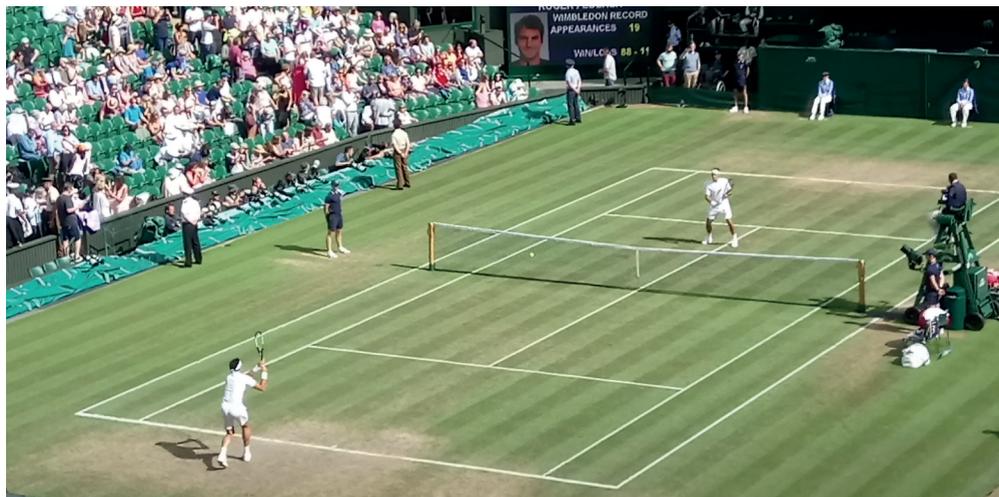
Refreshments are available at your own expense in the Wingfield Café inside the Museum.

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020 8549 1924, [jacqui@hine.org.uk](mailto:jacqui@hine.org.uk)



## Report: Visit to Pitzhanger Manor, Ealing

The name Pitzhanger was first recorded in 1493 and may refer to a wooded slope frequented by hawks or kites. A manor house had existed at Pitzhanger from the 17th century. In 1768 George Dance was commissioned to build an extension.

One of his architectural apprentices was John Soane, who eventually bought the house for £4,500 in 1800 as his country seat.

He removed much of the original building but left the extension built by George Dance. Soane's imagination and design skills were far ahead of his time. He used the house as a shop window for his designs, frequently entertained potential customers but rarely had an overnight guest.

His hopes for an architectural dynasty came to nothing as one son died young and the other was a wastrel. He sold Pitzhanger in 1810 and moved his library and art collection to his other house in Lincoln's Inn Fields (now open to the public as the Sir John Soane Museum).

Pitzhanger Manor was in private ownership until 1900, when it was bought by Ealing Council. In 1939 Soane's kitchen block was replaced by a new building to become the borough's public library. It is now the Pitzhanger Gallery, exhibiting contemporary works of art. Pitzhanger is now owned by Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery Trust. The Manor was restored in 2019 to Soane's



design using the same blending of tones of colour as he used.

Our guide, Philip, started his tour at the entry gate where we saw where Sir Giles Gilbert Scott got the idea of designing the roofs of the red telephone boxes. We heard that the carved pineapples demonstrated wealth and that, in the early 1800s, people often hired a pineapple to be the centrepiece of their dining table.

We saw wonderful ceilings, clever use of arcs and curves, painted wallpaper, a 'lantern' in the roof to shed light in the house, and classical figures, made by Eleanor Coade (1733-1820) using ground glass in a secret recipe to produce artificial stone with the appearance of carved limestone.

There was so much to see and so many interesting facts that I'm unable to do it justice in my short report. If I've set your taste buds going, then get a 65 bus from Kingston centre to Bond Street (Bus stop N), Ealing. The Manor is a short walk from there.

For further details, see Pitzhanger Manor's official website: [www.pitzhanger.org.uk/](http://www.pitzhanger.org.uk/)

**Maureen Grimwood**

## Report: Peak District Trip

Of the 35 members of Kingston **u3a** on this Historic Houses of the Peak District visit, a few were on their first such outing and all agreed that it was a lovely experience.

On the first day, after prompt local pick-ups, we arrived in sunshine at delightful Baddesley Clinton, a moated Elizabethan building. The house, clad in wisteria, boasts a priest hole. We had a timed entrance to the house, so there was no queuing.



Elaine Lewis at Chatsworth  
Photo courtesy of Elinor Parker

Arriving at our hotel, we were shown to our lovely, comfortable rooms. The layout of the dining room, with mainly

small tables, didn't permit much mixing of tour party members but the food was very good and there was a choice each day. Evenings tended to start in the bar and most people had brought something a bit fancier to wear. Buffet breakfast catered to most tastes and the staff were friendly and keen to solve any problems.

The hotel, built in 1740, had lovely grounds, although it wasn't close to the Peak District which meant quite a long drive every day to get to our visits. We had excellent guides, a friendly coach driver and only one rainy morning, all of which made for an excellent holiday.

On the second day we were joined by our guide who gave us, en route, a comprehensive understanding of local history (ancient and modern), geology, industry, architecture, farming, famous local people, customs and geography. On subsequent days we settled to a pattern of 9am departures. The group was considerate at getting promptly to wherever was required during the day.

Bakewell and the pudding shop, and Chatsworth filled the first day. On arrival at Chatsworth we were greeted by the baleful news that we weren't booked in and there was some dispute about who had membership of those associations that could afford them a reduced admission price. The coach driver cut this short by paying out of his own pocket so that we could all go in and we reimbursed him later, but this matter of concessions did recur.

Again the weather was lovely and the mixture in the house of the family's

modern acquisitions, mixed in with the traditional contents, gave the house a fresh look.

Subsequent days took us to Hardwick Hall and then to the delightful Renishaw Hall and gardens, where one could sense the atmosphere of a family home. The gardens were stunning, with bluebells and crisp topiary everywhere.



Bluebell Wood, Renishaw Hall  
Photo courtesy of Marcia Mayeda

Buxton was our next destination and, despite a chill wind, we walked around with a local guide seeing the sights of this spa town with its warm medicinal waters, its opera house and the largest slate-covered dome in the world.

Next stop was the Crich Tramway Museum where we were 'given' old pennies to pay the uniformed conductor for our rides up the track on single- and double-decker trams, lovingly restored in local livery.



Marcia Mayeda at Renishaw Hall  
Photo courtesy of Elinor Parker

Other attractions included a wonderfully tiled pub, tea rooms and tram sheds.

On our final day we went to Bolsover Castle, which had been founded in the 12th century and had a central hall and extensive ruins around it.

The long drive home, with comfort stops as on the way, was subject to a tiresome traffic crawl for the last hour. We bade goodbye to the driver with a good tip and arrived home safely with our various purchases of fudge, cake, pictures and souvenirs.

Everyone expressed their gratitude to Gisela for organising such an enjoyable trip and most of us are looking forward to travelling with **u3a** again!

**Elinor Parker**

# Centenary of the Discovery of Tutankhamun's Tomb

## November 2022

**Frances Welsh**

Most people nowadays have heard of Tutankhamun, the Egyptian pharaoh who reigned 1332-23 BCE. His golden image is used in every possible context to represent wealth, magic and the mysteries of an ancient civilisation. It's a glamorous story of an unknown king who died young and was buried with fabulous riches in an obscure desert grave.

As he gazed into the newly discovered tomb in November 1922, the English archaeologist Howard Carter's words echo down the years – 'wonderful things'. He wrote: 'As the room emerged slowly from the dust, I saw animals, statues and gold – everywhere the glint of gold'.

As well as the 'wonderful things' which displayed ceremonial and religious aspects of his public life, other objects in the tomb give a remarkable and unique insight into the private life of an Egyptian Pharaoh.

We have the chairs and stools he sat on; beds he slept on, with the headrests he used as a pillow; storage chests and caskets with some of their contents; and the king's leisure equipment – sets of throwing sticks, including boomerangs, 43 bows (both composite and wooden), and many arrows with points of wood, ivory, bone, bronze, stone and glass. There were six chariots and eight shields, some gilded for public display and



undecorated ones for hunting and battle.

We also have a lot of his clothing, ranging from formal priestly and ceremonial robes to 54 gloves, including a child's glove, and 93 sandals.

And even his most intimate underwear was there – a chest of loin cloths, 100 rolled up individually, ready to wear, and a box containing his shaving equipment. Tutankhamun was about 19 when he died.

There is a shirt of fine linen worn by the king as a child, and his childhood playthings. The box has multiple compartments and lids containing a small fire drill (the ancient 'box of matches') and a finger stall, together with a sling for throwing stones and small scribal palette covered with ink splashes – surely, the young boy's equipment.

The poignant label on the cut reed staff reads 'cut with the King's own hand' – the closest one can get to a young prince's pride in his achievement.

## Monthly Meetings

Here are the dates for the next few monthly meetings. For most of the talks the speakers will be on Zoom (except for 5 September) and we will send out invitations for you to join online if you wish. Alternatively you can come along to the United Reformed Church in person and watch/listen to the talks there. Talks begin at 2pm.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics/Speakers</b>
<b>5 Sep</b>	<b>A History of the Medicine We Take – Tony Cartwright, who will speak in person at the URC. You will not be able to attend via Zoom.</b>  The development of medicines, from traces of herbs found with the remains of Neanderthals, to prescriptions written on clay tablets, to drugs extracted from plants, to the latest biotechnology products.
<b>3 Oct</b>	<b>Jazz Age Greats – Graham Harrison</b>  Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington and Ella Fitzgerald are included: entertaining stories, the struggles they faced as black musicians, and the importance of black musicians and black music in the jazz tradition.
<b>7 Nov</b>	<b>AGM (1.30pm) followed by talk, Your Country Needs You ... – James Taylor</b>  Dr Taylor, author, art expert and former curator of the National Maritime Museum, returns to give an illustrated talk on how propaganda and humour were used in art and design in World War 1.
<b>5 Dec</b>	<b>History of the Christmas Carol – Adrienne Hesketh</b>  Adrienne's presentation describes the history of the Christmas carol, Christmas music and poetry.

So these things bring him to life more than any other Pharaoh. And even some of the formal jewellery that survived was found upon his body: he was wearing the bracelets (six on the left arm, seven on the right) and two daggers with gold and iron blades at his side.

The golden mask and treasures found in Tutankhamun's tomb are now kept in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

However, nearer to home, the Bodleian Library in Oxford has an exhibition on until February 2023 – Tutankhamun: Excavating the Archive. Displayed are some of the original documents written during the discovery of the tomb, and Carter's pocket diary, as well as the accounts of the many Egyptians who worked on the excavation. You can find more information about the exhibition at:

## Kingston u3a Executive Committee 2020/2021

Registered Charity No. 1011295

<b>Chair</b>	Linda Foreman	020 8390 0109 <a href="mailto:chair@kingstonu3a.org.uk">chair@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Lorraine Hellen	020 8390 5718 <a href="mailto:secretary@kingstonu3a.org.uk">secretary@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Joy Garvey	020 8399 9323 <a href="mailto:treasurer@kingstonu3a.org.uk">treasurer@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Database Manager</b>	Chris Cheek	020 8949 0994 <a href="mailto:database@kingstonu3a.org.uk">database@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Jane Hoyland	020 8399 0163 <a href="mailto:membership@kingstonu3a.org.uk">membership@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Groups Coordinator</b>	Shirley Miller	020 8940 8573 <a href="mailto:groupcoordinator@kingstonu3a.org.uk">groupcoordinator@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>General Activities Section (GAS)</b>	Gisela Zürcher-Feiß	020 8399 4990 <a href="mailto:generalactivities@kingstonu3a.org.uk">generalactivities@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Web Coordinator</b>	Diane Wilson	07944 333519 <a href="mailto:website@kingstonu3a.org.uk">website@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Speaker Secretary</b>	Mary Hodgson	07985 337219 <a href="mailto:speakers@kingstonu3a.org.uk">speakers@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>
<b>Newsletter &amp; Bulletin Editor</b>	Susan Hinchsliffe	07814 487727 <a href="mailto:newsletter@kingstonu3a.org.uk">newsletter@kingstonu3a.org.uk</a>

### Change of Address

Please send updates to:  
Chris Cheek, Database Manager,  
32 Howard Road, New Malden  
KT3 4DP or email him at:  
[database@kingstonu3a.org.uk](mailto:database@kingstonu3a.org.uk)

### Newsletter Contributions

Tell us what your group has been doing or the visits and holidays you've enjoyed. We'd also like to receive stories, poems or short reviews of books, plays, films or exhibitions. Contributions should be no more than 500 words but there's always room for

smaller items too. Photos (in .JPG format, please) help illustrate your contribution but don't forget to send the names of people shown in them. Send photos as separate files and not embedded in a Word document to:  
[communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk](mailto:communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk)

### Distribution

The newsletter is posted out in early February, May, August and November. If there are any problems concerning the newsletter, please contact Susan Hinchsliffe at:  
[communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk](mailto:communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk)