



# Here & Now

Reigate & Redhill u3a  
Magazine



## UNDER ONE'S HAT?



No 94  
Spring 2025

# Welcome from the Editor



Welcome to our 2025 Spring edition of 'Here and Now' and welcome to any new members of RRU3a who may be reading this for the first time. We were very lucky to receive articles from people answering our request for items and volunteered to write something. It makes our lives so much easier. I'm really proud of this issue which came together reasonably easily. Shirley has done a wonderful job of putting everything together to create a fresh looking, dynamic magazine.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to Pat King who has been a long-standing member of our magazine team but who feels it's time to step down and take a rest. Her humour, artistic talents and poetry skills will be missed. Taking her place, I'd like to welcome Deb Chapman to the team. I'm sure she will be a great addition.

It was interesting listening to people's comments as they admired the Art display at the last Friday monthly meeting. So many said that they'd love to be able to paint and draw but didn't have the confidence to come along and join our group as they thought the standard was too high. Fight your fear, give it a go. Several of the Art group members didn't show their work because they felt the same. Why not come along and join us for a try out and see what we do. With just a pencil and paper, you can doodle away and feel relaxed and calm. Dedicating two hours to improving your skills is time well spent. You might find you enjoy yourself!

I hope you will read pages 6&7 to find out all the latest news and activities available. You might find a new group to join or an outing that would interest you. There is so much available, you could fill everyday with something to do!

It's so nice to see the gardens coming back to life and the days getting longer. Seeing the snowdrops and daffodils makes me feel that warmer weather is just round the corner.

So, don't keep your talents 'under one's hat', start a new group, write an article, talk to someone new at a Coffee Morning. I never thought I could do half the things I do, until I gave it a go!!

**Tina Pankhurst**

## Don't tell!

My parents had built us a platform in a huge oak tree in our garden. It was quite difficult to reach if you weren't agile. I suppose I was about eight years old and had had a row with my parents over something. I decided to hide in the tree house overnight and scare them stupid. My brother was sworn to secrecy. I took some warm clothes and probably something to eat. Unfortunately it was really cold, there was no proper shelter, and I missed my warm bed! I decided to abandon my scheme and crept back to bed.

# From the Chair



We had a great End of Year Show. This prompted a small team of us to do some early entertainment planning for 2025. It would be super to incorporate some drama, sketches or poetry with our next production, but we need themes from you, our members. What ideas have you got "under your hat" which would lend themselves to a short in-house production using the many talents of our groups?

Our planning team laughed as we went down memory lane recalling the Wizard of Oz production and the shows built on suggestions from family history and other groups. Ideas not on a postcard, but email please to chair@u3a.org.uk with the heading "No idea too bizarre"!

Look out for MID8DLE, Singers and Ukuleles participating in Reigate Summer Festival 20-22 June <https://reigatesummerfestival.co.uk/>. Handbells will be offering a try-out session for people.

We are planning our very own Quiz Evening on Thursday 22 May at Reigate Park Church. Have a think in your groups as to whether you can field a team of eight. The aim should perhaps be to try and beat the team which the Pub Quiz Group put up!

On 15 September, we will be staging an entertainment based loosely on aspects of TV panel games at Reigate Manor with audience participation. Further details in due course.

We have a lovely programme of outings lined up for this year. Once published, they book up quickly. It would be great to boost the Outings team to provide both more technical support and more people to conduct outings, as this might enable us to run a popular outing a second time. If you can help, please email me – chair@rru3a.org.uk with the subject heading *Outings Support*.

There's been a lot happening on the technical front recently. At the end of March, we will be hosting with Reigate & Banstead Borough Council a Staying Safe Online Talk. We

have advertised in the bulletin the support our TechHelp Team is able to provide to our members, with help at coffee mornings. All our events have online booking forms with a preferred method of payment by bank transfer or card. And this year we have introduced a successful online portal for renewing membership. If you find any of these registration processes tricky, do please come along to a monthly coffee morning for assistance, or contact our TechHelp team: techhelp@rru3a.org.uk.

Shirley has written an article in this issue of H&N on Artificial Intelligence (AI). She rather surprised me by producing a fake photo of me – see page 9. This has prompted me to share my own photo from 2012 when I participated in a sponsored Vietnam to Cambodia Cycle Ride on behalf of the British Red Cross – a gruelling, but fantastic 250 miles! Something most members don't know about me and kept "under my hat" (or "cycling helmet")!

**Gill Haimes**



# Philip Treacy

I love hats. I used to drive my mother mad, trying on hats in the big department store in Bromley, in the 1960s. I have several vintage hats for wearing to Goodwood and quite a few worn to weddings. I even made a hat from the same fabric I had made a 1950's inspired outfit to a wedding in Florida. That was hard!

One person who knows all about hats is Philip Treacy, milliner to the Stars and to Royalty. I thought Camilla's hat, made from feathers, when she married Prince Charles was beautiful. I also remember the Pretzel hat, Princess Beatrice wore to Prince William and Kate's wedding. It got a lot of stick but she did auction it off for charity for £80,100.

Philip Treacy was born in a tiny village in Ireland in 1967. His parent's house was opposite a church and Philip, from a young age, loved to watch all the people in their finery arrive for weddings conducted there. At 17 he went to Dublin to study fashion and was lucky enough to do a six weeks' work experience with milliner Stephen Jones. He then went on to do a Masters at the Royal College of Art in London. In 1989 he met Isabella Blow, who became his muse and benefactor. He started by making a hat for her wedding followed by many more outlandish hats that caught the eye of famous dress designers and the well to do. In 2002 the Design Museum put on a display called *"When Philip met Isabella,"* showing 30 of his most iconic creations.

*At William and Kate's wedding there were no fewer than 37 Treacy hats being worn by guests*

Nowadays Philip Treacy is famous for creating hats for Lady Gaga, Madonna, Sarah Jessica Parker and most of the Royal family. At William and Kate's wedding there were no fewer than 37 hats being worn by the guests and 20 at Meghan and Harry's wedding. He designed the hats for the *"Beauxbatons"* in the Harry Potter film, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire.

Yes, some of his creations are way over the top but if you want to be noticed wear a hat!

Tina Pankhurst



**The Pith Helmet** – a type of sun hat made from the wood of the pith plant. It comes from the Filipino headgear known as the Salacot. These were widely adopted by the British Empire in British India and were originally called planters hats. During the Anglo-Zulu war British troops dyed their white helmets with tea or mud to act as camouflage



**Pill Box Hat** – made popular by Jacqueline Kennedy. This hat began as a form of military hat, a type of pillbox hat was worn by Roman soldiers. More recently, the trend for pillbox hats was started by milliners in the 1930s



**Shako** – the shako is a tall cylindrical military hat, usually with a visor. It often has a badge on the front and a feather or pompom on the top. The word Shako comes from the Hungarian name csako, which means peak. This was added to military hats in the late 18th century by Hungarian soldiers.

# 'Keep it under your hat'

It sounds so innocent, doesn't it? You know something that you want to tell somebody about, but don't really want everyone to know; "The supermarket are selling strawberries at half price, but they don't have many left – go quickly!"

But it can be much more serious. During the war, keeping secrets was often a matter of life or death. Perhaps none more so than the secret of nuclear power. Spare a thought for Werner Heisenberg. He was a brilliant German theoretical nuclear physicist.

In the first decades of the 20th century, research into the internal structure of the atom was progressing, often through trial and error. Scientists around Europe and the US, even in small countries like Holland and Denmark, were experimenting on a small scale and building on each other's discoveries. The "elder statesman" in the field was a Dane called Niels Bohr. Heisenberg had been one of his students.

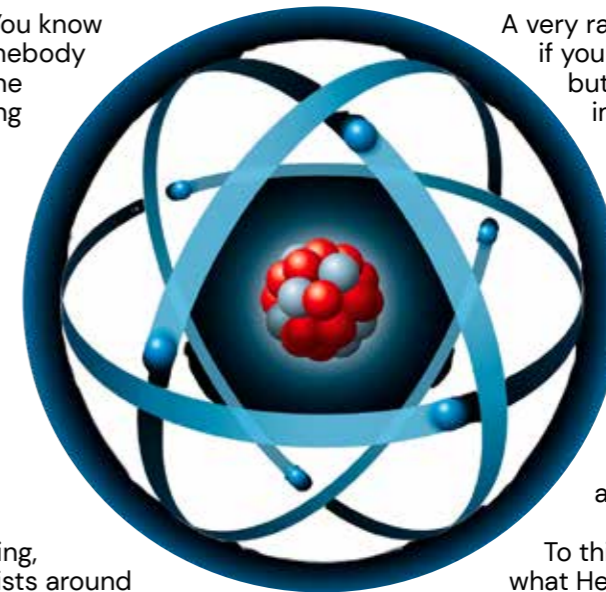
*'During the war, keeping secrets was often a matter of life or death'*

When the Nazis came to power, they cut back on any research that wasn't obviously of practical value; theoretical nuclear physics did not fit that bill. Also, many of the physicists working in Germany were Jews, who soon worked out that it would be safer to emigrate, many to the US. Heisenberg was left in charge of nuclear research at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin, but with limited resources.

In 1940 Germany invaded Denmark. In 1941 Heisenberg paid a visit in Copenhagen to his old mentor, Bohr. They both knew that if a heavy nucleus like that of Uranium is hit by a neutron, it can fall apart, and generate a lot of energy in the process. It also generates more neutrons, and it had occurred to the scientific community that in theory those neutrons could make other Uranium nuclei fall apart.

Could that result in a chain reaction, and possibly a major explosion? Not an easy question; it depends on how fast the neutrons travel, how close together the nuclei are, how much Uranium you have in one lump (the "critical mass") and whether you can keep the lump together long enough.

At the time, initial calculations indicated that natural Uranium could never explode.



A very rare form of Uranium might explode if you get enough of it in a lump – but the required amount seemed impossibly huge – and Bohr himself had never bothered to do more detailed calculations.

We know that Germany did not develop a nuclear weapon, but American and British scientists did. After victory in Europe Heisenberg and some of his German colleagues were interned in Britain, where they heard the news of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They seemed astonished.....

To this day there is mystery around what Heisenberg and Bohr talked about in 1941. Did Heisenberg go on to recalculate the critical mass but get it wrong again? Did he never even try, afraid of what the answer might be? Or did he work out the correct answer but decide to **"keep it under his hat"**, knowing what the result might be in Nazi hands? That would have taken courage in Nazi Germany! He took this mystery to the grave with him.

Dick van Schie

Werner Heisenberg





## Holiday

9 October 2025 – 5 days from £779 The Historic Houses and Heritage of Suffolk

Visits include Gainsborough's House, Christchurch Mansion, Constable Country, a guided tour of Bury St Edmunds, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Ickworth House, Sutton Hoo, Aldeburgh, Snape Maltings, Audley End House and Gardens. Contact Diana Cooper for details, email holidays@rru3a.co.uk, tel 07982 606943.

## Group news

Many members of our u3a certainly seem to enjoy lunching with fellow members at a range of pubs and restaurants! We now have two more groups which have started this year. **Lunch Club 3** meets once a month, on weekdays, with a different day chosen each month so that those who may have regular commitments on a certain day have an opportunity of joining. **Sunday Lunch Club 2** meets on the first and third Sundays of the month. Both groups have generated considerable interest, with waiting lists already for both. Do not worry if you think you would have liked to have joined one of the groups as with a few more people we should be able to start yet another, on condition that someone is prepared to lead it, with help from us!

**Book Group 2** will meet for the first time in April, with the set day and time being the 3rd Friday morning of the month. We have many avid readers in our u3a and the members of this group are no doubt looking forward to some good literary discussions. At the time of going to print, there are still spaces available



## Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings (with the exception of the Plant Swap coffee morning in May which is held on the lower level of Reigate Park Church) are held in the lounge of The Light in Redhill meeting once month on alternate Tuesdays and Thursdays. They are a great way to meet with other members. Computer support is

always on hand so bring your laptops, tablets or phones. Coffees and teas are available for purchase.

We will meet from 10.15 to 11.15 on the following dates: Tue 8 April, Thu 8 May (Reigate Park Church), Tue 10 June, Thu 10 July (followed by a meeting for new members) and Tue 12 August. Do check our website What's On calendar and under Coffee Mornings for the latest information.

**Fly Fishing** is a new group looking for members. With all the lakes etc in central Surrey, there is plenty for the group to explore. Members will need a licence and the relevant equipment. Please do get in touch with us if you would like to join any of our groups, including those mentioned above. We always welcome new ideas for groups, as long as you are prepared, with our support, to lead the group. To contact us: Fill in the Groups' Enquiry Form on the website or Email us at : groups@rru3a.org.uk or Phone: 01737 929104 **Hilary Loney and Nikki Stoddart**  
**Groups' Coordinators**

## Outings

Oxford City Tour  
Wed 2 Apr  
Cost £30  
At time of going to press, this outing is fully booked.



**A Day at the Seaside in Margate** Thu 19 Jun (save the date, details yet to be published)

**Theatre trip to "Chicago"** New Victoria Theatre, Woking  
Wed 30 Jul, 14.30 Cost £48  
At time of going to press, this outing is fully booked.

**Steam and Cream Tea on the Bluebell Railway** Thu 11 Sep (save the date, details yet to be published)

**Christmas Lunch at Hever Castle** Tue 9 Dec (save date)

Outings cannot be booked until a bookings form is published on our website. Updates and details will be given in our bulletin and at Friday monthly meetings. For bookings, please complete a form (help can be given for this at a Friday meeting), contact the Outings team email [outings@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:outings@rru3a.org.uk), or telephone Richard: 07929 715198. Advance payment must be made. All details available on the rru3a website What's On page <https://www.rru3a.org.uk/post/outings> including link to the booking form and information about future outings.

**U3a Quiz Evening – Thursday 22 May** – Reigate Park Church  
Save the date – details to follow in our bulletin.

# Monthly Meetings 2-4pm

In person at Reigate Park Church, or watch live on YouTube with the link provided before the meeting.

## Friday 4 Apr Tony Harris – Churchill

We will be meeting Tony again, this time in the guise of Sir Winston Churchill. Tony will take us from Churchill's birth to his death. Who wouldn't have wanted to meet this great man, who had such an enormous impact on our nation and its history? Tony is a professional comedian, raconteur and actor, who specialises in historical talks, with a hysterical twist. Using his acting talents and comedy skills he brings historical figures back to life with accuracy and wit.

## Friday 2 May Christine Green – Working for Auntie: Behind the scenes at the BBC as a graphic designer

Christine was a graphic designer at the BBC for 13 years creating opening titles

sequences for shows as diverse as the Queen's Christmas Speech, 'Our Friends in the North', 'Island Race' and, when she had gone free lance, 'Foyles War'. She received several international awards for her work including a BAFTA nomination for her work on 'Cambridge Spies'.

## Friday 6 Jun AGM followed by An Ambassador from The Children's Trust, Tadworth

The talk will be about its history and the Trust's work with children with brain injury. The Trust is based in Tadworth and is the UK's leading charity for children with brain injury. They deliver rehabilitation, education and community services through skilled teams who work with children, young people, and their families.

## Friday 4 July Geoffrey Mead – The South at Work

'The South at Work' looks at various approaches to the study of local industrial history and how various work practices and trades are linked. Work changes over time as raw materials, tools and transport change, and this is reflected in our region from Wealden iron to Gatwick, boatbuilding to Godstone's chalk pits, Brighton's piers to Reigate's quarry.

## Friday 1 August Paul Henry – From Fleece to Pleats

An introduction to the world of wool, spinning, weaving, dyeing, tartan and kilt making. Paul will discuss the history of wool, demonstrate spinning, talk about the development of weaving and the history of tartan and kilts.

## Study Days

Surrey U3A Network Study days are open to all U3A members and guests are very welcome. They are held in the Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon; starting at 9.30am with registration and running from 10am to 4pm. The fees, including coffee/tea and biscuits, are £12 for members attending and £15 for guests. For online watching at home cost is £7. Attendees should bring a packed lunch. Prior booking is necessary. All details can be found on our website. There are no meetings in July and August. Booking details can be found on the Surrey Network website. Booking forms are also available in the hall after Friday meetings.

**Friday 11 April 2025  
Vincent Van Gogh and Painting in 19th Century France  
Presented by Leslie Pitcher, Art History Lecturer**  
By his striking use of colour for emotive effects and his almost

hallucinatory patterns of brush strokes, Van Gogh changed the course of European painting. The lecture covers the development of painting in 19th century France and how Van Gogh fits into this. Then looks not only at Van Gogh's remarkably rapid stylistic development but also at what the paintings have to tell us about his dramatic and tragic life and his final suicide.

**Friday 16 May 2025  
The Asian Century?  
Presented by Steve Bird**  
Somewhere around 1880 "Pax Britannica" started to give way to an extra-long "American Century". However, for the past forty years or so the West has sensed a similar passing of the baton. This time the shift is not to another variant of the European culture which has been so dominant since the sixteenth century. Rather, we appear to be on the brink of an "Asian Century" with wholly different cultures, outlooks and attitudes, not the least being

a resentment of Europe and America.....

**Friday 20 June 2025  
NHS: The Next 10 Years  
Presented by Dr Catherine Heffernan**

In July 2024, the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care commissioned Lord Darzi to conduct an immediate and independent investigation of the NHS. This investigation covered the current performance of the NHS across England and challenges facing the healthcare system. All available data and intelligence were utilised to assess patient access to healthcare, quality of healthcare provided and overall performance of the health system. Publishing his report in Sep 2024, Lord Darzi highlighted that the NHS was in serious trouble. Going forward the NHS needs to move from analogue to digital, sickness to prevention and hospital to community. This study day will explore implications and 10-year plan.

# Can you tell if it's real or fake?

## How do you tell if an image is real or AI-generated?

Millions of images are created each day using artificial Intelligence software. Used on screen and print, it can be extremely difficult to know if what you're looking at is real or not. Some images are so outrageous to be obviously impossible but others, created to look real can be very difficult to tell. Close examination of light, shadows and reflections can give clues, also texture, symmetry and lack of imperfections.



A flying pig has obviously been created using AI but if an article appeared saying someone had seen flying penguins, could you believe your eyes?

These two images look just too perfect to be true apart from the obvious, that pigs and penguins don't fly!

AI software was instructed to create a realistic flying pig and penguin and these are the results.



Photographers produce pretty remarkable work which can seem almost too perfect but this is down to their amazing skill at capturing an image in the perfect light and position. Can you tell which yellow flower photo is real and which has been AI generated?



Many photographers edit their work to enhance and improve their images. Removing or blurring backgrounds or smoothing the skin of a portrait subject to produce a realistic image for the photo frame. This is an entirely different procedure to AI. The daffodil in the corner and photo of a marsh marigold above on the left, were taken by our magazine photographer Carol Hicks. The image on the right was generated in Canva AI software by asking for 'a realistic yellow pond flower with bee'.

## Does it matter?

Often it doesn't really matter if an image is merely for illustration, but they can be manipulated to mislead or deceive people into thinking something is true, when it isn't. As the line between reality and fake becomes blurred, we may need to rely on our intuition and ask "Is this possible or likely in real life?"

If you fancy a quick online quiz to guess if twenty images are real or fake, give this a try.

<https://real-or-fake-the-ai-game.onrender.com>



Northern lights seen in Reigate, Surrey = True, using a night mode filter



## Has a real photo been edited or is it fake?

Our chairperson Gill Haines loves cycling. Is this her on the right having fun in the outdoors on her bike?



The face is Gill's, but the body belongs to a younger cyclist, the one on the left! So the message is, don't take everything you see at face value. What's under one's hat, may not be real. A real photo, edited to enhance the appearance is normal practice. However, a real photo edited to deceive or mask reality, is often referred to as 'fake news'.



## Photo editing can be useful!

Baby photographers produce stunning photos of newborns. To ensure the baby's safety they will often ask the parents to be at the side or hold their head, and then edit them out afterwards. This results in beautiful photos whilst keeping baby safety the number one priority!



The below image of a baby on a swing was important to the mum because she had very fond memories of falling asleep in her Grandfather's arms on the swing in her childhood home. This is a composite image where several images were taken and then layered on top of each other. The baby was never lifted off the ground and kept safe at all times, then edited afterwards in Photoshop.



However, our news feeds are full of images which do intend to paint an incorrect view of events in the world today and an awareness of image manipulation is useful for us all in order to make informed choices about the content we see.

Shirley Harnett

## Which is real?

AI Generated by asking for:

'Night time catch large catfish'



Top image = real, bottom = AI using Canva

# YOU COULDN'T MAKE IT UP...

One warm summer evening I was at my desk at the **Bourne Gallery** with the door held open by a strategically placed waste bin. It was closing time when a motor bike roared up. A leather clad young woman was removing her helmet and throwing back her hair. I thought I was dreaming. "Hello" she said "I'm from the council and I've come to ensure you're disposing of your trade waste correctly". I pinched myself to ensure I'd heard correctly but she was already inspecting an old sandwich wrapper in the waste bin. "What's your procedure?" she demanded.

Once recovered I explained that we didn't generate much trade waste. Jokingly I said we did our best to recycle paintings and that all we threw away were empty champagne bottles and the odd box of surplus catalogues. "So how do you dispose of them?" she demanded. I explained that I personally took the bottles down to the bottle bank in the car park and put the catalogues in the paper recycling bin.

With shoulders back she proclaimed "That won't do! The bottles I can accept but the catalogues should be taken to the Trade Waste Disposal Centre and there'll be a charge". Astonished, I asked where that was. "Your nearest is in Epsom" she replied. "But that's miles away!" I protested. She was adamant however and said the new rules would be strictly enforced. "Stuff that!" I thought when the leather clad harpy had roared off on her bike. A month later we held our last exhibition of the season.

**"Stuff that!" I thought when the leather clad harpy had roared off on her bike.**

The Private View was held over a long weekend and on the Saturday evening I realised we'd need more champagne. "I'll just go to Sainsbury's and drop off the empties on the way" I thought. With a small pang of guilt I also threw in a box of surplus catalogues. Minutes later I pulled in at the recycling centre, opened the bottle bin and chucked in the empties. I grabbed the heavy box of catalogues and was moving down the line to the paper bin when an imperious voice called out "Excuse me!"

I couldn't believe it... I'd been caught red-handed! I turned and was confronted by an elderly clergyman in a dog-collar. He was lost and wanted to know the way to St. Mark's Church. With a sigh of relief I gave him directions. He was profoundly grateful and I, thankful that a higher power wasn't onto me, threw the box in the bin. There was a crash of breaking glass and my heart stopped! It was the wrong bin!

I peered inside thinking my goose was cooked. The box contained a hundred catalogues with my name printed on every page. I'd be dragged into court, fined, named, shamed and made an example for all. There could be no escape... or was there?

**I'd be dragged into court, fined, named, shamed and made an example for all. There could be no escape... or was there?**

The bin came to chest height and was less than a quarter full. It was on wheels and I reckoned that if I pulled it out a little I could get a foothold on the neighbouring bin and climb in to rescue the box. Without further thought I removed my jacket, hung it on a rusty nail and did just that. I lowered myself in, crouched down and picked up the box. Unfortunately just as I straightened up the bin rolled back into its slot and the lid slammed down hard on my head.

Stunned, I found myself sitting in darkness with a shard of glass in my ankle. I pushed the lid but it wouldn't budge. It appeared to be stuck. "Just how stupid could I be! I might never be found! I could die in here!" Acute embarrassment stopped me calling out but, with growing panic, urgent action was required.

"I know" I thought "I'll use the box as a battering ram". So holding it above my head I hurled myself against the lid, smashing it open. I must have appeared like a 'Jack in the Box' to the crowd of astonished onlookers clutching their empty bottles. "My God!" said one. "We thought there must be a fox or giant rodent in there" "No" I declared... "just an art dealer!" Then, with a bleeding ankle, bruised ribs, a lump on my head but my reputation intact, I drove to Sainsbury's for more champagne.

As I hobbled about the wine section, yelping now and again as another splinter of glass found its way through my sock, I couldn't help feeling something wasn't right. It was only when I reached the checkout I realised I'd left my wallet and mobile phone in my jacket... still hanging on the rusty nail! With no money for the parking, I ran panting and yelping back to the recycling centre. Unbelievably my jacket was still there with my mobile ringing in the top pocket. It was my wife. "Hi...How was your day?" she asked brightly... "you sound out of breath". "Just a little!" I gasped... clutching my wallet like a Scotsman suffering from sporran grip!

Some years later our business was subject to a tax investigation, sparked by claiming £25 a week for parking in London when viewing auctions. The inspector pointedly remarked that I appeared to lead a very glamorous life... visiting establishments such as Sotheby's and Christie's

I tried to dispel this perception by telling him the above story. He listened stony faced before saying: "So you're in the habit of breaking the law in other ways. I assume you know that refreshments served at exhibitions are not tax deductible?" When I replied that I did not, he broke into a smile, saying: "So let's see... you've been open twenty years with six exhibitions a year... that might come to a tidy sum with interest and penalties!"

John Robertson

# Bletchley Park

## It's a secret!

If you work in a government department you may be asked to sign the Official Secrets Act. First introduced in 1889, it is regularly revised and updated with punishments raging from fines to imprisonment for divulging state information.

The earliest example in England dates back to the 16th century and the reign of Queen Elizabeth the First. She declared that the accounts of Sir Francis Drake's voyages of exploration were to become the 'Queen's Secrets of the Realm'. Drake and his crew were sworn to secrecy, on pain of death, to keep new discoveries of land away from the eyes of the Spanish.

In times of war, keeping secrets becomes even more important. To those who worked at Bletchley Park during the Second World War, protecting the methods and results of decoding enemy messages became of vital importance.

Some years ago a friend of mine joined a tour of the main rooms at Bletchley Park. In one of the rooms the guide was explaining how one of the decoding machines worked when one of the visitors declared, **'You're wrong, it didn't work like that! I spent the war in this room and I can show you exactly how to operate it!'**

Everyone turned to see an elderly lady, but what followed next took everyone by surprise!

**'But I worked here too during the war!'**

came the response from her amazed husband.

The couple had been married for over fifty years but neither had ever revealed to the other their roles at Bletchley Park, because they had signed the Official Secrets Act.

The only person who was not surprised was the guide who told the astonished group that this happened on a regular basis!

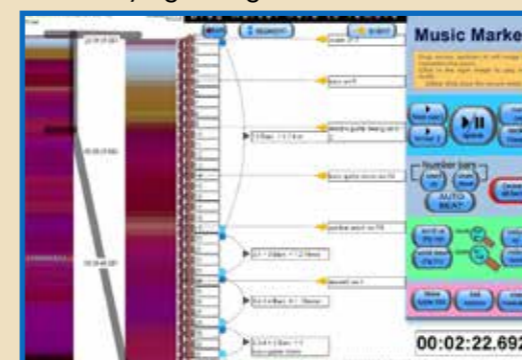
Have you ever signed the Official Secrets Act? Can you keep a secret?

Sally Baker

## Andrew Mason - BBC

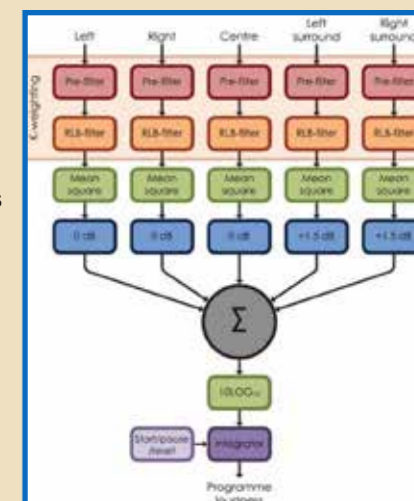
Andrew Mason gave a fascinating talk to the Science group in January, drawing on his 35 years of working in engineering research and development for the BBC. He provided insights into the making of programmes such as live music television where camera shot changes are timed to the beat of the music, and visualisations of the audio could be used to prepare the production assistant's breakdown - fixing the problem of adverts that are too loud. Here Andrew contrasted the venerable "peak programme meter" with the possibilities opened up by the "ITU-R BS.1770" algorithm.

As a retirement gift he was presented with a box that contains a stereo PPM and a "bendy loudness meter" - something quite unique. Finally he spoke of the future, technology still in development: Next-Generation Audio. With this, the listener can have fully-immersive 3D audio experiences, and can be given control of the mix of foreground and background sounds. Yes, the ability to cut out annoying background music!



An illustration of the use of a visualisation of a music track to help with the production of the breakdown in advance of a live recording

Block diagram showing the algorithm of the "Recommendation ITU-R BS.1770" loudness meter



If you want to read more about the topics Andrew brought up, these publications will provide good starting points:

BBC White Paper 166, for the applications of audio visualisations - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/publications/whitepaper166>  
EBU loudness recommendation R 128, for loudness measurement and control - <https://tech.ebu.ch/docs/r/r128.pdf>  
BBC R&D Next-Generation Audio web page, for an overview of the BBC's work - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/rd/projects/next-generation-audio>  
EBU introduction "10 things you need to know about next-generation audio" - <https://tech.ebu.ch/publications/10-things-you-need-to-know-about-next-generation-audio>

Andrew's retirement gift of a PPM and a bendy loudness meter



# Canfranc Station

## Lavish Luxury

During a dreary February afternoon it occurred to me that I may be able to bring a touch of sunshine to some members of the Reigate & Redhill U3A, by recounting a tale whilst touring in the Pyrenees in July last year.

As part of the trip my partner/chauffeur/chief bag-carrier arranged an overnight stay at Canfranc Estación, 3,280ft above sea level, which opened on 18th July 1928, during the reign of King Alfonso III, on a grand scale with the help of Spanish project engineer, Ramirez de Dampierre.

A 5-mile tunnel was built from Pau, in France, to the station at Canfranc, Spain. The station here had a large expanse of platform area, where passengers had to disembark and change trains due to each country's track gauge difference.

The village of Canfranc, once called the Casablanca of the Pyrenees is tucked away in a narrow valley, surrounded by mountains and now owned by the Aragon Government.

The station itself (now a hotel) was called the Titanic of the Mountains. It's a grandiose, lavish building and was the second largest railway station in Europe (the biggest being Leipzig).

What stories it has to tell!



During the Spanish Civil War, General Franco had the tunnels sealed on the Spanish side, due to concerns regarding the smuggling of arms through the area.

When WWII broke out the Spanish and German Wehrmacht set up a mutually beneficial agreement to use the line again – the tunnels were re-opened and the station became operational – mainly for freight. Hitler and Franco sealed the deal with a handshake on the tracks.

Thus Canfranc became the only Spanish municipality to become occupied by the Nazis during World War II, causing many arrests of those fleeing Germany for their lives on their way to Lisbon or Portugal, then on to South America.

More than 10,000 Nazis are also thought to have escaped through these 'Rat Lines'. Until recently it was believed about 86 tons of gold was smuggled through during the occupation, along with many precious works of art. Most of which has never been recovered.

There was a remarkable find of Nazi documents in 2000 by a local bus driver confirming this. Since then, further documents have come to light putting the figure at around 200 tons.

When Bill Clinton declassified thousands of WWII documents it was discovered that Salazar (the dictator of Portugal) and the Spanish Government, were paid in looted gold for providing the Third Reich with tungsten – a metal that reinforces steel, vital to the Nazi war effort.



Once hailed as a symbol of architectural elegance and grandeur, the station was ten times bigger than St Pancras, had 365 windows and a 790ft platform but could not escape the ravages of a disastrous fire, the Spanish Civil War and World War II. It was permanently closed

in 1970 after falling into disrepair following a derailment and collapse of a bridge. Then tracks rusted, the ceilings began to collapse through the harsh winter weather – then there was vandalism.

The Ara River runs alongside the centre of the village, banked by numerous small shops and cafes. We were glad of the champagne offered to us on arrival in the hotel's grand lobby, once the lofty customs hall, which has the coat of arms of France high on one wall and that of Spain on the opposite wall above reception.

The receptionists are dressed in the same green and cream uniform (complete with a whistle on their sleeves) that workers wore in the 1930s at the original station. The hotel opened its doors in January 2023 – and is extraordinarily fascinating and beautiful!

**Dorothy Harverson**  
Note: My thanks to Andy Owen of *Glint of Light* for his agreement to my use of some background information.



## More hats...

**Tam o' Shanter** – is the name given to a traditional Scottish bonnet worn by men. The name comes from Tam o' Shanter, the eponymous hero of a 1790 Robert Burns poem.



**Why** – do we call a hat a 'titfer'? It's from the cockney rhyming slang – tit for tat = hat.



**What is the origin of throwing your hat into the ring?** – The term comes from boxing competitions, and dates back to the beginning of the 19th century, or possibly earlier. If a person wanted to take part in a contest he would 'Throw his hat into the ring' to let his intentions be known.



Deb Chapman



## Amusing Sports Tales

- Professional soccer teams use to go onto the pitch with names and numbers on their backs to tunes blaring out. Despite being a mixed race soccer team we went on to the Goons Ying Tong song [with appropriate actions] changing it to I'm walking backwards for Christmas in December. We also decided we were all related, so the names on our backs were cut price; sale price; exclusive price; best price; flied lice[chinese player] etc.
- We never celebrated scoring but always congratulated the opposition's goal scorer. It confused them and gave us an advantage at the subsequent kick off.
- Bringing on a substitute became an art form. One of my teammates came on wearing pyjamas over his kit apologising to all and sundry that he had overslept. Another time we brought on my girlfriend [fully registered] who was 5ft 7ins tall [and disguised as a male on the touchline including bobble hat] to the dance of the 7 veils. This distracted the opposition's attention. They, and us, were totally bemused when she and I were found to be telepathic with a ball. 1-0 down at half time we won 9-1.
- Playing rugby against a team from Orpington on a wet muddy pitch, and leading by about 90 points with other teams playing on adjoining pitches, our captain decided we were going to be in the baths/showers first, so we quickly dashed in 4 tries to take the score to over 100 then, deciding the opposition had taken enough punishment and the game was effectively over, congratulated them and the referee, and leaving them both totally bemused as we walked to the changing rooms.
- Walking along Weston Super Mare sea front, on tour, we asked someone why there was such a large crowd looking up at a flat roofed hotel only to be told there was a 4ft windmill with sails on the roof. Arriving at the crazy golf course the proprietor was bemoaning the loss of his prize exhibit so, as a magnanimous gesture we offered to find it and get it back providing we were given a letter of accreditation and free goes, which was readily agreed. When we went into reception the staff at the hotel didn't believe us until we showed them visible proof. They let us take the windmill away and all ended well. We hadn't the heart to tell we were the culprits based on a drink related dare.
- When pubs and restaurants advertise 3 course meals for £X they assume people are going to ask for a starter, main course and dessert. But they don't state it. One establishment was thrown into confusion when a pal claimed he didn't like desserts or starters and wanted the chicken followed by the pork and then the lamb. After some prevarication they gave way and Roy quite happily ate all the food, but rumour had it that the menus were reworded shortly after.

John Williams

# A quiet day in the office

It is August 1982. Government Ministers' offices in Whitehall are quiet. Parliament is in Recess, Ministers are holidaying.



In one tall Government building, built like an egg-crate (and long-since demolished), the ministerial office suites are stacked one above the other

on different floors with an identical layout. Each has an 'outer office' staffed by Private Secretary and a small team, the Minister's own office with a desk and a conference table, and, beyond that, a private bathroom. The views over London are superb.

The suite of one of the Ministers of State lies immediately below that of his boss, the Secretary of State. On the afternoon in question the Private Secretary chances to look into his Minister's office. He is surprised to see water dripping from the ceiling at the far end, onto the conference table and surrounding carpet.

He dashes upstairs and into the Secretary of State's outer office. The only person there is the young lady who keeps her Minister's diary. He asks her if she knew water was coming down into the office below.



Already startled by his rapid appearance, she utters a cry of 'Oh my God!', leaps up and they both run into the Secretary of State's office – to find water flowing from the bathroom door at the far end and advancing across the carpet. Lunging towards the cascading washbasin, she turns off the tap and removes a pair of tights that had floated up and is jammed into the overflow hole. The waterfall stops instantly and the basin rapidly empties.



*She had somehow cut her leg on her way into work that morning, and decided to leave her damaged tights under a flow of water in the basin to soak out the blood. Left unattended, they had taken matters into their own legs.*

*Luckily it was a couple of weeks before Ministers came back from their holidays. Time for the carpets to be dried out and water-stains removed from the conference table downstairs. Neither Minister was any the wiser and both later went on to higher things.*

**Lester Hicks**

# One thing leads to another...

I joined u3a in 2012 at the suggestion of a friend who wanted someone to join with her. At the new member's meeting she suggested I start a machine patchwork group and she would join it. When enough members were signed up to start she changed her mind! This led me, with a great deal of trepidation, opening my door to complete strangers. Would we share the same interests and expectations? Over the coming months some members came regularly and some dropped out quite quickly but more than 10 years on the group is still going strong. As members move on for a variety of reasons new members have taken their place. I have made many new friends and we have shared so many new ideas and techniques. Without what I thought was promised support from my friend, I would never have volunteered to start a group but it was one of the best things I ever did.

This led to my next even bigger challenge.

This led to my next even bigger challenge.

About 10 years ago a new member who lived at Oaklands Park in Earlswood encouraged me to move to Oaklands. I had already decided that a move to a bungalow was going to be necessary but wasn't expecting that 6 months later I would be living in one. Moving home at any time is challenging but downsizing to your last home probably is the biggest. So not leaving it too long is probably for the best. Waiting until medical problems make it necessary is too late. How many of us have had to help our elderly parents find more suitable accommodation than the family home? Parting with possessions that you may have had for a large part of your life is difficult but having to leave it to family members to do it for you can be upsetting.

But why choose a retirement property for a last move? Usually external works such as gardening, roof work and painting are covered by a service charge which leaves much less to worry about. Research indicates that people living in retirement communities tend to live longer, happier and healthier lives. Loneliness can be a big problem in later life but you are more likely to find neighbours of similar ages and interests and make new friends. With like-minded neighbours living so close it's much easier to organise an interesting social life. 10 years on I have no regrets about moving to a retirement property.

So if all the groups you want to join are full, start your own. You just don't know where it will lead you.

**Shelagh Roberts**

# The Gown

by Jennifer Robson

I can't keep it under my hat how much I enjoyed this book. My husband has always joked that 1947 was the worst winter ever but he was only just born! I love books where I can latch on to the main characters really quickly and the fact that it included my favourite occupation of sewing made this book a must read. Set in London, at the time when everyone was looking forward to the royal wedding of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip, the story revolves around the workroom of Hartnells, the royal family's favoured fashion house. The story focuses on the two main embroiderers, Anne and Miriam. You really get an insight as to their daily lives and behind the scenes at Hartnells. Reading about Miriam's Jewish background and her time during the war was heartbreaking.

If you like royalty, history and sewing you are in for a treat.

**Tina Pankhurst**



# Learning to love Smart Devices (even more)

You may have seen my article in a recent Here and Now Magazine about how my iPhone (other makes are available), was the first step in saving my life last August.

Having recently needed to purchase a new iPad, I accidentally discovered that Apple have now added a Legacy Feature to newer models (iOS 15.2 and macOS 12.1). This feature allows the device owner to nominate someone, upon production of a Death Certificate, to access the data stored in their Apple Account. Previously Apple would not even allow a Spouse access to photographs, which was often the cause of a great deal of family distress. Texts, messages, notes and apps are available, but apparently not passwords and payment information. We are in an ever-evolving world!

**Christina Read**

**Facebook:** A legacy contact is someone you choose to look after your profile if it's memorialised. Facebook strongly suggest setting a legacy contact so that your profile can be managed once it's been memorialised.

The more general point for any of us is that it's very important to take time to think about all that 'stuff' you have on your smartphone, tablet or computer, and what would be the consequences if you suddenly passed away and none of your family nor your Executors could access any of this stuff? Would precious photos be lost? Would your Executors be able to find out all your subscriptions and be able to cancel them? Could they find your e-mail or WhatsApp contacts so as to be able to inform them of your passing? Without knowing a password or PIN to even access your device, all this stuff could be lost.

There are many ways to go about this. The Apple Legacy Feature is just one solution for iPad owners; other tech suppliers may have other comparable solutions for their devices. DIY solutions include making the access PW or PIN available to a family member whom you trust absolutely or in a sealed letter deposited with a solicitor Executor, or keeping back-up copies of the precious stuff on memory ('USB') sticks. Whatever, don't leave it until it's too late.

**Charles Symons**

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**Editorial Team:**

[mageditor@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:mageditor@rru3a.org.uk)

Tina Pankhurst

Sally Baker

Angela Austin

Deb Chapman

**Photographer:**

[magphotos@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:magphotos@rru3a.org.uk)

Carol Hicks

**Design & Production:**

[website@rru3a.org.uk](mailto:website@rru3a.org.uk)

Shirley Harnett

**Print:**

[www.printformation.co.uk](http://www.printformation.co.uk)

With thanks to Adobe and

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Pixabay images



*The transformation Photoshop enables - Carol Hicks*

