

RICHMOND-upon-THAMES



University of the Third Age

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Winter Newsletter 2019, Volume 52

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Recreation: Tricia Abrahamsen

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT – WINTER 2019

By the time you read this another Christmas will have passed and the New Year will be upon us. I hope that it will be a good one for us all, and Richmond U3A. I am sure we will continue to grow as more people learn of our existence, and I know that many of you recommend friends and family to join us. However, some decide to leave us and we will be conducting a short survey to try and establish why some members choose to do so, with a view to addressing their concerns or disappointments.

I want to take this opportunity also to remind you of our ethos, namely that we are a self-help organisation. Everything we do is thanks to members volunteering, whether it is becoming part of Sue's team of Really Useful Members [RUMs], setting up a group or thinking about joining the committee.

I am not going to say much about Groups as I will leave that to Norma to expand upon. However, I do want to mention that at last we have managed to find someone to start a Classical Music Appreciation Group – hurrah! I was also pleased to see Psychology and Sociology making an appearance in our offerings.

There will more interesting trips organised by Libby, and excellent Monthly Meeting speakers arranged by Peggy – do put the last Wednesdays of the month in your diary and give them a try if you have not already done so.

Learn, laugh and live your way through 2020; I can think of no better prescription.

Chris Hack, Chairman.

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One of our members, Maureen Landau, kindly gave us permission to use her photograph of a very high tide at Richmond on our front cover. This was also published recently in the Richmond and Twickenham Times.

GROUP NEWS

Although I am writing this before Christmas, I hope that by the time you are reading this, you have enjoyed the festive season with family and friends and are ready for another year of learning, laughing and living well.

It was very gratifying for me to learn that at least one person read my article in the Summer Newsletter. This lady emailed me to say that she would be happy to set up a new group, either Opera for Pleasure or Classical Music. She has been true to her word and her new group “Classical Music Appreciation” is starting this month – details have been sent out in a bulk email and are on the website. That still leaves an opportunity for a member to start another “Opera for Pleasure” group, so please contact me in the first instance if you feel able to do so.

A Cryptic Crossword group is another addition to our long list. I think that there is a place for other such groups: I know other U3As have groups on board games, either a specific one or a new one each time, card games and Backgammon. If you want to volunteer to run such a group, it can easily be arranged that different members take on the responsibility for organising each session. That way, no-one has to do too much work, and a wide variety of games can be enjoyed. There are, of course, similar activities which you may want to share with others. I hope you are inspired to contact me about such a group!

By now, many of the groups are full and waiting lists are growing. Don't forget that another group on exactly the same lines as existing ones can be started – e.g., there are four Scrabble groups – and if you have been a member of one group, you will have the ideas and support to start you off with a second (or third ...!)

The Section Leaders and I are here to help you so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have a brilliant idea for a new group and we will do all we can to make it work.

I hope you all have a very interesting 2020 and continue to enjoy being a U3A member.

Norma Cook, Group Coordinator, norma.beagle@gmail.com

Advance Notice to all our Group and Section Leaders: Please note in your diaries that this year's Group Leaders lunch will take place on Saturday, 30th May.

U3A OPEN DAY – WEDNESDAY 28th AUGUST 2019 (A)

At the end of August 2019, an Open Day was held at Clarendon Hall in which twenty-four different groups participated. Each group had an area displaying what they do and members were on hand to answer questions. Some groups were long-standing, others were new and looking to attract members.

The atmosphere in the hall was wonderful and the occasion attracted a great deal of interest and support. Each group had its own table on which to display its wares and it would be invidious of me to single out particular "stalls". There were representatives from each of the sections, Arts and Sciences, Languages, Drama, History, Philosophy and Literature and Recreation, not forgetting the Weekenders and the Simply Social groups.

I shall mention, however, the wonderful cakes at a table not connected at all with cakes, the art work which deservedly attracted a great deal of attention, two groups showing off knitted and crocheted items, I am sure, at the same time as putting the

world to rights, plus a glass of wine on offer from one group as well as prosecco and tea and scones provided for each visitor.



The ingenuity in displaying the different themes was impressive and the energy and enthusiasm of all members who put a lot of time and effort into the afternoon was, I hope, rewarded by the interest shown by all the guests. I am very grateful to all who took part.

This picture = “A small section of the Knitting, Crochet and Chat Group’s charming display.”

Norma Cook, Group Coordinator, norma.beagle@gmail.com

Editor’s note: Having received two reports of the August Open Day I decided that you would probably like to see them both.

U3A OPEN DAY – WEDNESDAY 28th AUGUST 2019 (B)

At the end of August, U3A Richmond hosted an Open Day at the Clarendon Hall in Twickenham. This gave various groups the opportunity to ‘showcase’ their particular activity.

A large number of groups were represented, including assorted handicrafts, art, calligraphy, writing, languages, Scrabble, birdwatching, Canasta, stamp collecting and several other pursuits. Clarendon Hall soon took on the appearance of a marketplace – the difference being that people were keen to share their interests and expertise instead of trying to sell you something you didn’t want. And some stalls even provided cake!

Not all activities could be represented – badminton, bee keeping and church bell-ringing come to mind (not really enough space in the hall to do them justice!) – but with more than 140 groups active in the Richmond area, U3A really does have something for everyone. It was a great opportunity to meet up with old friends and perhaps make some new ones. And several people commented that there just aren't enough days in the week to do justice to all that's on offer.

Gill Wetherall.

GROUPS A – Z: BELL RINGING

The 10 bells of All Hallows Church in Twickenham have an interesting and unique history, having rung out from three different churches in three different locations, over a period of 290 years. In 1939, their previous home – the Christopher Wren Church of All Hallows, Lombard Street in the City of London – was demolished, and the tower reconstructed stone by stone in Twickenham. The bells were reunited with their old tower after the war, in 1951, and have been in constant use since that time. Over 120 'full peals' and over 420 'quarter peals', all significant change ring performances, have been rung at All Hallows.

Following a major refurbishment of the bells in 2014, we launched a weekly U3A bellringing Group in spring 2015. Over the last four years, around 20 U3A members have embarked on learning to ring, through weekly sessions led and supported by experienced, local ringers. Two have returned to ringing after long absences. Ringing church bells 'full-circle' in the English style is not easy to learn, and requires some strength and dexterity. Inevitably some people have dropped out, but many have stayed the course, and continued to learn the traditional art of 'change ringing' which

dates from the seventeenth century. A number have rung in quarter peals, and one in a peal..... lasting almost 3 hours!

Christine Day from Putney has been with us from the outset, and describes why and how she got involved:

‘The sound of a peal of bells is associated in my mind with coming home from abroad. I had never contemplated the mechanics of ringing a peal, but the Richmond U3A course caught my eye and I thought “That would be interesting!”

I also thought it would be a doddle: after all, ringing a bell couldn’t be that difficult, could it? Surely you just pull a rope..... We watched the seasoned bell ringers doing just that, with the bells above singing out at regular intervals in different sequences. It was so effortless. That is good, you think, an easy exercise after the breathless climb up the tower. You are in for a shock. You pull the rope, and there is no sound: the bells weigh up to almost one ton, and a feeble pull won’t make them sing. You pull harder, but it is not enough and the bell is “coming down” instead of staying balanced. So you give the rope a hefty tug, the rope jerks out of your hand and goes wild, a mad snake flailing around. Fortunately, you are not on your own. There is an expert by your side, who grabs and tames the beast.

The U3A course is well constructed so that you progress in stages, gradually building up your skill and confidence. You do not need to be muscly, nor be particularly fit, nor be musical other than having a sense of rhythm. People of all ages can enjoy bell ringing; one experienced ringer at Sunbury on Thames is over 100, and still ringing! It is an interesting and fun exercise, and there is no pressure to do more than you feel comfortable with. The “teachers” are endlessly patient, encouraging and friendly. You learn to control the bell, ring in sequence and you know that, if you

just keep going, you can dream that you will one day be ringing a three-hour peal in Westminster Abbey for the next royal wedding. I now have great respect for ringers in general, huge appreciation for the experienced ringers who give up their Wednesday mornings to teach us and also a very critical ear when listening to church bells.'

Once the ringers gain more experience, they are then able to participate in ringing outings, and this term, 2019, we have had three 2-day outings to village churches in Surrey and Oxfordshire (with the statutory pub lunch), and a residential visit to west Wales, where the highlight was being able to ring at St David's cathedral.

The Group has proven very successful and is always open to new members. Anyone interested is very welcome to contact us to find out more and come for an introductory lesson.

The Group meets in All Hallows Church, Chertsey Road, Twickenham from 10.30 to 1200 on Wednesday mornings, and the new term will begin on Wednesday 8 January 2020.

John Sutton, johnsutton10@hotmail.com

GROUPS A – Z: EXPLORE, DISCOVER, SHARE

Though EDS started life in ETNA, we had our first topic "What makes me laugh" in the 'Rose of York'. On the 65-bus route with its musical bus stop called Nightingale Lane, a car park and the rolling Thames, it proved to be a very nice location. Monday afternoon at 2pm is a quiet time at the pub and we can benefit from lovely tea, coffee, beer etc.

At the first meeting among the fun were cartoons, reports on how to ensure happiness for your citizens, a laughter poem and many other extras that could not be revealed due to lack of time.

The next meeting was on 11th November and the topic was POLITICIANS!!!! (Please don't laugh or grind your teeth. They are human after all. And it is necessary for our brains to be challenged once in a while). We managed some serious conversations about politicians. At the moment (in the present political climate) it is hard to know whether to laugh or cry or just get on with life and keep calm. One of our participants included his very good summary of what we should expect from our politicians and I am still reading a book entitled "" Why we get the WRONG politicians"" but so far am none the wiser.

But in January we are embarking on the long Silk Road. Imagine the merchants going from Venice to China and crossing central Asia, experiencing differing cultures and terrains. On the way my research will be on Kyrgyztan where the world nomad games have taken place. My mother made a long journey there when it was still part of the USSR. She brought back a traditional Kyrgyz man's hat which I still have and find it smart and exotic. It will be my guide and I will try to find other examples of things that Kyrgyz people use, do, enjoy. After all, we are travelling along the Silk Road even if we are sitting in a pub in Richmond.

To remind you: a warm welcome at the "Rose of York" is assured. We meet on the 2nd Monday of every month, 2pm – 4pm, bring your take on the topic or just enjoy the chat and company of others! Hope you can make it and I will try to keep you updated.

Barbara Szivos.

GROUPS A – Z: HEALTHY KITCHEN ADVENTURE

I started The Healthy Food Adventures group in October, and I try to involve the group in all aspects of the menu. We prepare a 3-course lunch and then sit down, eat and discuss the menu.

I am open to what the group would like to cook. So, in December Gougeres will be on the menu which are choux pastry cheese puffs. They are a Burgundian canape usually served with a glass of fizz. Chocolate eclairs will show the versatility of choux pastry.

Fish will be the main topic so we will combine interesting ingredients together which will complement the dish.

I love Turkish and North African food, so here are some recipes for you to enjoy.

Moroccan Spice

I first went to Morocco on the Magic Bus in 1973 for £25 return. Some things have changed a lot since then. I had lots of thick brown curly hair, but that's disappeared, however the cuisine is still as flavoursome as ever. Sour and salty preserved lemons, spicy hot harissa, and tagines marinated in smokey, golden spice. So let's create some of this wonderful food.

*Use organic, locally sourced produce wherever possible.

Hummus with flat bread

Hummus

Ingredients: 1 tin chickpeas 1 clove of garlic, pasted Juice of 1 lemon 2 tbs tahini 75ml olive oil 1 tsp ground cumin 1 tsp ground coriander

Method: Put all ingredients into a food blender and process until smooth.

To serve: Place hummus in a bowl, make a swirl on top and add some olive oil. Add a sprinkling of zatar, paprika or both.

Pitta Bread

Ingredients: 250g strong flour 1 tsp salt 1 sachet of easy blend yeast 160ml of warm water 2 tsp of olive oil

Method: Pre heat oven to 220c. Mix flour, salt and yeast together. Gradually add water until you form a soft dough. Knead for 10 minutes, then cover with a cloth, and allow to rise until doubled in size. Once risen, knead for a minute then cut into 6 to 8 pieces. Roll into pitta shaped pieces. Bake in a hot pan or in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes.

Traditionally prepared hummus is rich in essential minerals such as potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, calcium, iron, and zinc. It also provides vitamins such as vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, vitamin B3, vitamin B6, and folate. It is a good source of plant-based protein and brings valuable fibre content to the plate. Hummus contains olive oil, which helps in maintaining cardiovascular health. Olive oil is also rich in anti-inflammatory properties and omega-3 fatty acids without any harmful cholesterol. Hummus is a good source of fibre, which helps in maintaining a healthy digestive system.

The base of hummus i.e. chickpeas, is a source of amino acids, which are important for building healthy muscles and tissues. Hummus is a good source of proteins for vegans who do not get their share of nutrients from animal and dairy products. Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins which the body uses for physiological processes such as muscular strength, repairing of tissues, the functioning of the brain, and energy production. Adding hummus to your diet is a tasty, yet healthy, way to fight iron deficiency. The iron, in chickpeas and tahini, helps carry oxygen to

red blood cells throughout our body, thereby making up for the iron deficiency and preventing anaemia.

Tony Rowe, roweanthony61@gmail.com 020 8894 9091

Editor's note: Tony tells me that the group is currently full but he is happy to put interested members on a waiting list. The next issue of this newsletter will contain recipes for Chicken Tagine and Frangipane Tart with Seasonal Fruit.

GROUPS A – Z: PSYCH and SOC SET

A new group has started at Richmond U3A this autumn. We meet every two weeks in Twickenham on Monday afternoon to discuss matters related to psychology and sociology. Some of us have had backgrounds in caring professions or administrative work, and some of us haven't, but these topics are of interest to everyone.

At our first meeting we had a detailed discussion of the psychology of learning and the psychology of teaching. This strengthened our resolve to do the work of the group in rotation so that we all are actively engaged in both pursuits.

Our concern about state education was the topic we discussed at our second meeting, touching on the effects of IT on education, the effects of austerity, the stresses of parenthood and how best to help children and young people share and develop their moral compass.

Our latest meeting was concerned with groups: our need for them, how we develop them and maintain them, and how we prevent them from making stupid decisions.

We aim to summarise our discussions and circulate the summaries to those of us on the mailing list. Some of us are willing to share our email addresses in an e-group in order that we can continue our discussions from home.

If you would like to give the group a try, you can just turn up at 2.30 on alternate Mondays at 7 Encroft Way, Twickenham. It's just by the Chudleigh Road bus stop on the 281-bus route and it's 10 minutes' walk from Twickenham station. Feel free to give me a phone call beforehand to introduce yourself and confirm arrangements. You are also invited to join the mailing list - with or without sharing your email address

Alick Munro. alick@munro.com

GROUPS A – Z: POLITICS and CURRENT AFFAIRS

We are all familiar with the rowdy debates in Westminster. Here in Richmond the U3A has its own discussion groups which meet twice a month. So far we have resisted calls to televise the meetings and broadcast to the nation.

A month ago we debated “what would you like to see in a political manifesto for a general election?” There were two rules. Nothing Brexit related and only one idea from each person. Although it was not planned no two people made the same suggestion.

Housing is in a mess. Too many live in big houses while the young struggle to buy and homelessness rises. More houses must be built perhaps owned by Community Land Trusts (CLT) which allow people to buy affordable homes but also restrict the price at which they may resell.

About 50% of young people go to University. But what is the purpose of this educated youth? What is the value of a degree in classics? Government review please!

There is much to admire about the recreational drugs industry. It changes to meet customer desires, it trades with the world, it provides well paid employment for minority groups. Unfortunately, it is illegal. Its quality control is poor: a bit like buying an alcoholic drink and not knowing if it had the strength of beer or premium gin. An evidence-based review could lead to a legalised industry providing consistent products and substantial tax revenues.

Parliament should be moved to outside London. This should move both the real and perceived focus to the entire country.

Immigration should be more open to people needed by the UK. The recent policy change allowing students to remain automatically for two years after graduation was welcomed.

People feel less secure these days particularly in the jobs market with zero hours contracts and precarious contracts. Legislation is required. However, in countries with a high level of job protection unemployment, especially amongst younger people, is much higher.

Public Transport (excluding flying) within the UK should be free. This would eliminate the disproportionately high costs of travel for the poor and long-distance commuters. It would also reduce road congestion and pollution. But try selling it to someone living in the Isles of Scilly where there is not even a bus route.

And the final suggestion was a promise to launch no change of policy or new initiative for the entire term of Parliament. Too many government initiatives had gone wrong it was better to do nothing.

As the election campaign starts we look to see these proposals in the parties' manifestos. If you would like to participate in our discussions go to the U3A Richmond website, then groups, then scroll down to Politics and Current Affairs. Group 1 meets on Tuesdays, Group 2 on Mondays. At the time of writing this article there were available places in both groups.

Bob Litherland, boblitherland@hotmail.com

Editor's note: Our apologies but please note that, because of the early deadline for entries due to Christmas, many of the start dates for the new season which have been included in the A-Z series will have already passed.

Editor's note: Please make a special note of the date of the AGM, put the 26th February in your diary, come along to have your say and then to hear one of our favourite speakers, Libby Insall, with tales from Kew Gardens.

*I am always pleased to receive contributions, whether offerings for the A-Z series, letters to the editor or any musings, moans or suggestions you would like to share. We like to get our next newsletter out in early April, so could I please have **contributions** by the **beginning of March 2020**.*

Sue Wood, susan.orleans@tiscali.co.uk

FIRST AID COURSE

In my education the only thing I learnt about first aid was as a boy scout aged 12, covering how to deal with a snake bite (make two cuts with your scout knife and suck out the poison). Fortunately, I have never had to use that particular technique. As I get older, however, I can see that certain emergencies might well arise in which I would not know how to react at all, partly through fear of making injuries worse. For example, if someone collapsed, I would not know whether to help them up or not. What exactly is the recovery position?

On 24th September I attended one of the two sessions on very basic first aid kindly offered by the Red Cross to U3A members. It lasted two hours and I found it very useful. The tutor avoided any technical language and concentrated upon practical situations. If someone collapses at home, what exactly should you do before an ambulance arrives? If someone chokes on food, do you hit them on the back or in the stomach? What about a severe burn? We were also given a short booklet summarising the main points. The tutor stressed that much of what she said might be considered common sense, but the advice went well beyond that.

These and similar situations are likely to arise for many of us and I would recommend this short course to everybody.

Christopher Barclay.

Geoffrey Greet

Congratulations to Geoffrey Greet, the first member of Richmond upon Thames U3A to reach the grand age of 100 years, on December 30th, 2019.

During World War II he served in the Royal Navy protecting the convoys crossing the Atlantic, entailing all sorts of adventures and heroic actions. He recounted these in a book “The Luck of the Draw”. In his retirement he paints, plays bridge and practices his French, an amazing man.

Rene Judge

“Extinction or Survival” at the University of Roehampton

The 5th November saw not only fireworks this year but another successful SW London U3A Study Day at the University of Roehampton. The theme of the day was “Extinction or Survival: Our Future on the Planet”.

After a welcome morning cup of coffee, Charles Ward from Energy UK delivered an interesting first presentation on “Environmentalism and the Future of Cities”. He explained how the developments in the integration of heat, transport and energy technologies would help decarbonisation and ultimately help our planet. Then came Vince Harris, a U3a member from Merton, who outlined many of the foreseeable technological developments of the next 20 years. He emphasised the massive changes new technology is likely to bring and the potential disruption to current ways of life.

After an excellent buffet lunch, Kevin McCarron from the University of Roehampton gave a presentation on the philosophical dilemmas that are presented by the concept of “Assisted Dying”. He argued, like Albert Camus, that judging whether life is or is not worth living is a fundamental question of philosophy. Using practical examples such as alcoholism and drug

addiction he illustrated the complexities of the debate about this issue.

The last session was undertaken by Ariel Kahn and Amy Waite. They were also both from the University of Roehampton and their overarching topic was “Human Hybrids”. Their focus was very different from the earlier speakers as they considered “Transformative Interspecies Relationships” and “Posthumanism” in works of fiction. I found their presentations more challenging as it was a field where I had no previous knowledge.

The day was well organised, the venue excellent and the refreshments were plentiful. However, more importantly, it was a stimulating and educational event. If you have never tried one of these study days, I would certainly recommend signing up next time you see one advertised.

Maggie Coleman.

NOT YOUR AVERAGE CONCERT

"Some months ago, the Writing for Pleasure group was contacted by Richmond New Music Collective, asking us if we would collaborate on a new kind of project. We were happy to do so. This collective is a small group of musicians/composers. The theme they suggested was 'age' but not simply 'old age'. They wanted to take a wider perspective on 'age'. We gave them some short pieces of our writing and they recorded us reading them out loud. After that initial collaboration, they went away to work on original music and other



ideas for making use of our work.

The final result was a concert in the Queen Charlotte Theatre in the RACC Parkshot on Friday, 8th November. The concert was dedicated to one of our members who sadly died before he could see how his writing was used. At the end of the performance, his moving poem to one of his daughters was read out. The concert showcased some unusual and innovative music with dance, visuals and electronics included and proved an interesting evening for all."

Jan Singh.

GYRATIONS IN THE GRAVEYARD

or How a Third-Ager got to grips with new technology

Technology and I generally have an uneasy relationship, but some months ago I took a step nearer to 21st century civilisation and invested in a smartphone. Rest assured, I have not suddenly morphed into someone who bumps into you in the street because they can't lift their eyes from the 'phone screen. However, I have more recently discovered something truly amazing: thanks to a maps app (you see, I've picked up the jargon already) this 'phone knows exactly where I am. OK, I can hear the weary sighs of those of you who reached this point several years ago but bear with me!

I conducted my first experiment over a well-known route: my walk home from Tesco in Teddington. I was amazed and delighted to hear the 'phone telling me precisely where to go (yes, headphones might have been useful at this point!). At one point I deliberately took a wrong turning, but the 'phone patiently modified the instructions till I was back on track, the calm voice giving not even the hint of exasperation that you might get from a human map reader. Heady with success, I decided to use the 'phone the following week as a 'sat nav' in my car, as I had been invited to the christening of my godson's twin daughters at a church a few miles

away which I had never visited. All went well at first, with the 'phone even managing to navigate around a 'road closed' diversion which would probably have left me stranded. Passing a sign directing me to the church, I knew I must be close, and the 'phone instructed me to turn down Cemetery Lane. This proved to be a short cul-de-sac with no parking, but I had noticed a nearby car park, so I left the car there and continued on foot – the 'phone still talking reassuringly to me.

Cemetery Lane led (unsurprisingly) into a cemetery, and I guessed that the church might be the other side of it. The 'phone announced: 'You have reached your final destination'. I looked around, but all I could see were gravestones. It didn't seem a very well-frequented graveyard, and it certainly didn't look like the main entrance to a church. I started to retrace my steps towards Cemetery Lane, and this time the 'phone was even more helpful: 'Your final destination is on your left.'

I peered at the nearest gravestone, almost expecting to find my name on it. Feeling by now a little spooked, I headed back to the main road, glanced to my right, and saw the unmistakable outline of the church about 200 metres away. Even better, happy people were waiting in the bright autumn sunshine to greet the two little babies who were going to be welcomed into the fellowship later.

So, the 'phone wasn't 100% accurate, but still considerably better than I could achieve on my own. What I want now is an app which will guide me around the first floor of Marks and Spencer in Kingston (it takes me ages to find the exit – is it just me?). Otherwise I might have to tell you a story called Lost in Lingerie....

Gillian Wetherall.

SURREY U3A NETWORK STUDY DAYS

Study days are open to all U3A members and guests are also very welcome. They are held in the Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon; normally starting at 9.30am with registration, and running from 10am to 4pm. The cost is £10 for members and £12 for guests. Attendees should bring a packed lunch. Prior booking is necessary. Full details are available at:

www.u3asites.org.uk/surreyu3anetwork/events

Bookings are now being taken for the following events:

Friday, 21st February – Astronomy – Moons & Landings

Presenters: David Fishwick and Graham Bryant.

Friday, 20th March – Results of Research on Food & Nutrition

Presenter: Professor Susan Lanham-New, Department of Nutritional Sciences, Surrey University.

Friday, 17th April – The Most Famous Pharaoh of Them All: Tutankhamun, the Boy King

Presenter: Clive Barham Carter.

For the following item booking will open on 1st February:

Friday, 15th May – Two Centuries of British Design

Presenter: Paul Atterbury, Antiques Road Show.

Please see www.u3asites.org.uk/surreyu3anetwork/events for full information and booking form.

RICHMOND U3A SPEAKERS JANUARY-MAY 2020

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month at 14:30 at Clarendon Hall, York House, Richmond Road, Twickenham, TW1 3BZ. It is on bus routes 33, R68, R70, H22 and 490.

29th Jan: Jane L'Epine-Smith—4 Tragic Women of the 20th Century

Jane examines the lives of Virginia Woolf, Sylvie Plath, Vivien Leigh and Judy Garland exploring the link between instability and genius.

26th Feb: AGM and Libby Insall – Kew Gardens New and Old

Having worked as a solicitor and piano teacher, in 1993 Libby became a voluntary guide at Kew Gardens. She has had a long involvement with U3A and runs a group called “Kew Gardens”.

25th Mar: Michael de Podesta – Why is the Earth's Surface the Temperature it is?

A scientist from the National Physical Laboratory, Michael mainly works on measurement problems related to temperature and will discuss the reasons to be concerned about recent changes in the Earth's surface temperature.

29th Apr: CANCELLED

27th May: CANCELLED