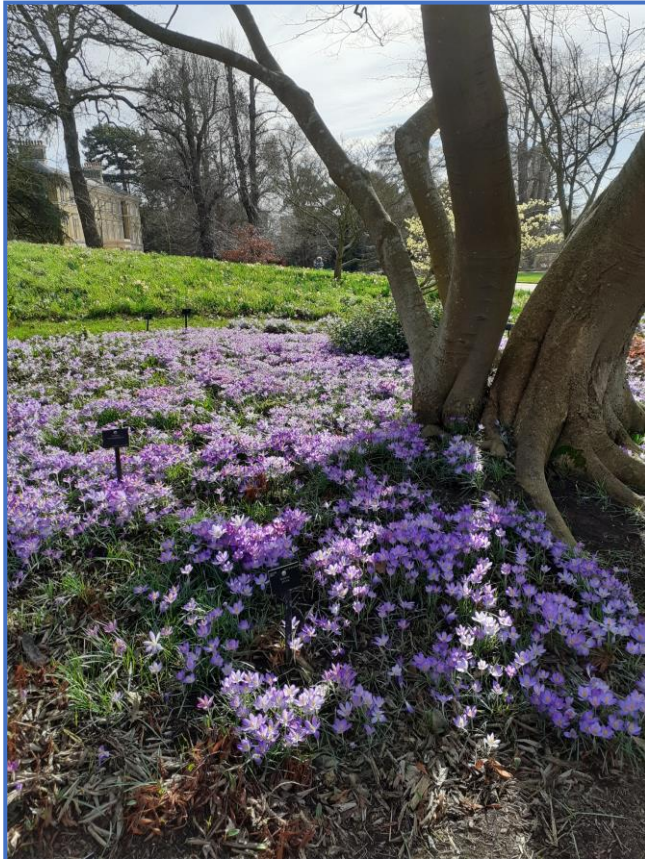


RICHMOND-upon-THAMES



University of the Third Age

www.u3asites.org.uk/richmond-on-thames



Newsletter April 2022, Volume 63

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Front cover – Maureen Landau took the picture on the cover and you will find more of her photos to enjoy on page 13.

RICHMOND UPON THAMES U3A COMMITTEE & OFFICERS

OFFICERS:

President: Stephen Jakobi

Chairman: Chris Barclay

Vice Chair: Libby Barton

Secretary / Editor: Sue Wood

Treasurer: Carole Fletcher

MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE:

Membership Secretary: David Wood – davidewood80@gmail.com

Groups' Co-ordinator: Chris Barclay – crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk

Committee members:

John Cardwell – Speakers

Peggy Roe

Bob Litherland

SECTION LEADERS:

Art, Science & Music: Graham Shortell

Languages: Norma Cook

Literature, Drama, Philosophy & History: Isobel Wilson

Recreation: Tricia Abrahamsen

COMMITTEE PHOTOS



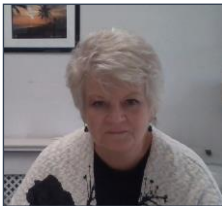
Chris Barclay



Libby Barton



Sue Wood



Carole Fletcher



David Wood



John Cardwell



Peggy Roe



Bob Litherland

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

The return to a face-to-face monthly meeting at the end of March was something to celebrate, after two whole years without. Monthly meetings can return to being more than just a lecture from a speaker. They give a chance to see old friends and meet other people for the first time. That all added to the community that we are trying to create. Lectures on zoom are very useful but they are also more anonymous. It does not really matter whether an online lecture is provided by Richmond u3a or the Open University or BBC iPlayer. The face-to-face monthly meetings and small groups are what make u3a special.

Apart from anything else, we want to provide services for those members who are not online. We offer the newsletter, the monthly meetings, those groups that meet in person and excursions like Libby's coach trip to Rochester on April 28th. We hope to improve our communications with these members so that they are kept informed about events in between the newsletters. Precisely because only a small number of members do not have e-mail, it should be feasible for us to use post or even telephone.

We are sometimes told that u3a needs to face up to competition from websites like FutureLearn or Rest Less (a digital community for the over 50s) which offer free online courses. Our answer is that we use zoom and other online resources to assist our groups but our focus is on meeting face-to-face.

Chris Barclay, crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk, Chairman.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Since July last year I have been struggling with ill health so I must now admit that thoughts of the newsletter have not been my priority. So my apologies if this issue is a bit thin. *

Being mostly confined to the house I have had plenty of time to enjoy the antics of the bird table and the gradual unfolding of the spring bulbs. Occasionally I have taken a gentle stroll around the "estate" (all 20 sq ft of it) and been heartened to see the first tiny sprouts of green leaves hidden away in the wintery undergrowth.

I am lucky enough to have a walled garden so have plenty of covering plants such as honeysuckle, roses, jasmine, hydrangea, abutilon, and passionflower. Seeing them come to life again is magical, apart from the abutilon which is seriously attempting to emulate Putin. In my previous garden I had a gentle little abutilon which grew to a few feet and covered itself in delightful bell shaped apricot coloured flowers. So I put one on my Christmas list and one of my grandsons obliged. Yes, it has the multicoloured leaves and apricot blossoms which have flowered for about ten months of the year, but Where is my machete?

U3A Committee Meetings have taken place on Zoom so I have been able to keep up with what is going on and, as usual, there has been plenty to discuss and plenty of decisions to be made.

Sue Wood

* P.S. My thanks that this newsletter has appeared at all must go to Norma Cook and Maureen Landau who came to my rescue with such fascinating items.

A VALEDICTORY GROUP NEWS

Many of us over the past two years have had time to think about our lives and I am no exception. This reflection resulted in my deciding not to seek re-election to the Richmond u3a committee and to give up my post as Group Co-ordinator, a job which I have carried out for five years. I am still Section Leader for languages.

Christopher Barclay, our chairman, offered to take on the role and since the end of February he has been more than ably and efficiently carrying that out. Fresh ideas in any organisation are always a good idea and I know that Christopher, in his regular emails, has already made some interesting suggestions.

I shall end this, my last report for the newsletter, with my constant refrain that the u3a only exists because of the hard work and dedication of its committee, RUMS and, of course, the group leaders. You do not need to have any particular expertise; plenty of help and advice is available and new ideas most welcome. Give it a try!

Norma Cook.

P.S. The last word goes to Covid – I have been saying in my last TEN pieces, since March 2020 that it will soon be over. As I write this we have the highest number of cases ever recorded! I should be renamed Cassandra!

GROUPS A–Z

Sadly, there are no items in this series this time but hopefully Group Leaders will remember that they do not have to be invited to participate and we will have some offerings for you in August.

Sue Wood

U3A SOUTH-WEST LONDON NETWORK STUDY DAY

The Challenges of Architecture Today

24th May 2022: Richard Mayo Centre, Kingston

A Study Day organised by the SW London Network of Richmond, Kingston, Hammersmith and Fulham, Wandsworth and Merton U3As. The day will focus on the competing challenges for architecture between modern day technological and commercial demands and the desire to ensure sympathetic compatibility with the past.

There will be three Speakers:

Sean Wolfe, Director of Estates and Sustainability at Kingston University. Sean will give an insight into the commissioning of the Town House. This prestigious educational building won the 2021 RIBA Stirling prize and is now one of 5 finalists in the European Union Mies Van Der Rohe award for contemporary architecture. This is the biggest architectural prize in Europe and is presented every two years.

Ian McInnes, A retired architect, a member of Dulwich U3A and Chair of the Twentieth Century Society which campaigns to promote and protect the buildings and designs that characterise 20th Century Britain. Ian will discuss how the drive to net zero emissions by 2030 or 2050 will impact on our built environment and the future of architecture.

Simon Tupper, Director IIDArchitects. Simon will review the architecture of Kingston looking at what has been held in some esteem over the last decade by bodies such as the RIBA and The Kingston Society. Simon will give a personal reflection on what works well and not quite so well.

There will also be the option of a guided walk around Kingston at 3.00pm. This will last about one hour.

More details from Rosemary Mattock, Merton U3A. Telephone 02089469632. Email: U3A.rose@gmail.com

LONDON REGION OF U3As SUMMER SCHOOL

Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th July 2022

At the St Bride Foundation Institute, off Fleet Street, London
(Centrally located with easy access by tube, bus and train)

SAVE THE DATES!

This year we are banking on the higher rates of protection against Covid and gradually building on the success of last year's tentative one-day event by offering a two-day programme. This lively and popular non-residential annual event is open to all U3A members.

Ticket cost will include refreshments and a cold buffet lunch.
You can choose to attend one or both days.

Activities will include talks, workshops and guided walks. There will be a wide range of subjects to choose from including Art, Current Affairs, History, Literature, Music, Sciences and Social Studies. This year the general theme is London.

At this stage we are just asking you to Save the Dates. We want everyone to be safe and will be closely following Covid guidance from the government, Third Age Trust, and working with St. Bride's.

The full programme and booking details are available at <https://u3asites.org.uk/london-region/events>.

REMEMBRANCE OF FOOD PAST

I was recently in Richmond, for the first time since before the pandemic and was observing how many shops had closed or changed. I was walking past a patisserie which I had not seen before when my eyes were drawn to a millefeuille right in the front of the window. Instantly I was taken back to my childhood and the millefeuilles my mother used to make.

Of course, we didn't call them millefeuilles then. Then was Manchester in the 50s - grey and gloomy with fog and postwar austerity, untouched by Elizabeth David and where olive oil was only ever used for earache. We called them custard slices.

They would appear every now and then for no particular reason, and for no special occasion, probably because there was cold custard left over from Sunday dinner (never lunch). My two sisters and I remember them well, though our younger brother (born in 1950) claims never to have tasted one. They were made from cream crackers sandwiched together with thick, cold custard and a thin sliver of icing (made from a spoonful of icing sugar and cold water) spread on the top.

New horizons and new culinary experiences in the 60s and 70s meant that I did not think about them for a long time. On a family holiday in the Cévennes in 1980, we discovered in a patisserie in Ganges the best millefeuilles in France and my twin sister then recalled Mum's vanilla slices. In true Proustian fashion, the Sundays of our childhood came back: Two-Way Family Favourites, The Billy Cotton Band Show, potatoes roasting in the oven by the fire, piano practice and reading allowed but no knitting or sewing and, most definitely, no homework.

We have not recreated them, and I suspect that the pleasure is more in the mind than the stomach. We have singularly failed to persuade our children to appreciate them but perhaps we shall be able to reintroduce them as a teatime treat, now that inflation, not so high for many years, begins to bite.

Did I buy one in Richmond? No! It was £4.95 for ONE millefeuille. I may live in the south but I am a northerner in my soul! Now, where did I put the cream crackers?

Norma Cook

MEMORIES

One of our greatest treasures in our third age is our repository of wonderful memories – childhood ones, amusing ones, sad ones, emotional ones, learning experiences, - they all become part of us.

Norma's article has reminded me of so many childhood experiences. But also it reminds me how much pleasure I feel when I hear my family laughing at childhood experiences, even if they are at my expense. Recently they have been recalling how we used to live near the river at Barnes and on Boat Race Day we used to watch the television until we knew the boats were within sight, then a mad dash down the road to see them go past and a dash back to see them go past the winning post. Despite not having any real allegiances the females of the family chose to support Cambridge and the males Oxford so there was always some friendly rivalry.

And another one that came to mind recently was that in winter I always used to put the porridge ready the night before so that, with five kids to get off to school, all I had to do in the morning was turn

the gas on. On this particular morning I took the lid off to give it a stir only to discover to my horror that the mixture had gone green. Still in my usual morning haze, I blinked and looked again but it was still green. Just then I heard some smothered giggles and there at the door were the culprits – “Happy April Fools’ Day” they said.

A friend recalled how when he was doing his engineering studies one of the lecturers used mnemonics in an attempt to make things easier for them to remember but then the lecturer would get himself in a tangle and mix them up when he was trying to remember them himself. Of course, the students found this hilarious.

Well, I hope this has kickstarted some happy memories for all of you and perhaps you will feel inclined to let us in on a few of them.

Sue Wood

DAFFODILS

In lockdown last year, when we were able to meet one other person outside for exercise, a friend and I used to meet in the Valley Gardens in Windsor Great Park. Week by week from the end of February until April we watched this valley come alive with daffodils. This year, for various reasons, we were not able to go so frequently, but at the end of March we met up, walked from the car park and were rewarded with this sight. I am sure there are twice as many as there were last year!



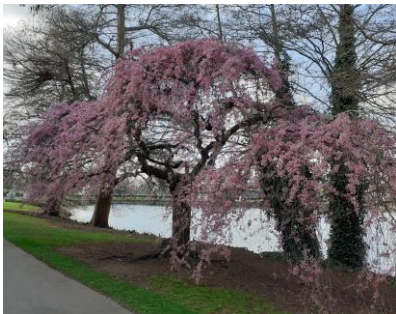
I was not at all surprised when I read recently that Windsor Great Park was the most visited attraction in 2021 with 5.4 million visitors.

Norma Cook

PHOTOS OF FOUR SEASONS (SPRING)

As promised, I have asked Maureen Landau for some more of her “Four Seasons” photos taken in Kew Gardens. This time the theme is obviously Spring.

She has included three entitled “Spring Tide” and in case you are still wondering where they were taken, the answer is Radnor Gardens. I must admit I’ve never seen it quite like that before.



The cover photograph is also one of Maureen's taken in Kew Gardens. So don't forget all of you keen photographers that I'm always glad to have suggestions for future covers, either of U3A activities or local scenes or anything else suitable. The only restriction is that it should be of portrait orientation and permission to use photos of any people involved should be requested.

Sue Wood.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SHARE THIS (ICWTST)

Novels by Elizabeth Strout

I want to share with you novels by Elizabeth Strout, probably best known for Olive Kitteridge, for which she won the Pulitzer Prize in 2008.

I recently re-read "My Name is Lucy Barton" in preparation for reading her latest novel, "Oh, William", which introduces us to Lucy's ex-husband, briefly mentioned in the Lucy Barton novel.

I began to read it last night and was captivated. If you haven't yet read anything by Ms. Strout, do have a go!

Norma Cook.

RICHMOND U3A SPEAKERS APR – AUG22

Our April meeting will take place in St Marys Church, Church Road, Twickenham, TW1 3NJ. A decision will then be made as to where subsequent meetings will be held. All meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month commencing at 14.30.

27th Apr: Christine Green – “Working for Auntie”

Christine won international awards during her 13 years working as a graphic designer for the BBC on shows which included the Queen’s Christmas Speech and Foyles War. Her talk will be illustrated with sequences, story boards and art works.

25th May: Colin Wiggins – Raphael at the National Gallery

Colin worked for over 30 years at the National Gallery which is hosting a unique exhibition including many Raphael’s from museums around the world.

29th Jun: Kevin Palmer – Tax, Care and the New Guy

Kevin will talk about Inheritance tax, Lasting Powers of Attorney, Long Term Care Fees, but who is this New Guy? Well this refers to when there is a remarriage and you wish to ensure your choice of inheritors.

27th Jul: David Allen – Blood, Guts and Gore

True stories of murder in Victorian England. David will take you on a gripping journey through the world of plots, poisons and the occasional chopped-up body!

31st Aug: Save the date. Details to be circulated later.