

RICHMOND-upon-THAMES



University of the Third Age

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



Newsletter April 2023, Volume 67

Contents

Topic	Page
COMMITTEE & OFFICERS	3
CHAIRMAN'S LETTER	4
GROUP NEWS	4
EDITOR'S LETTER	5
GROUPS A-Z: DRAMA WRITERS CO-OPERATIVE	6
GROUPS A-Z: GOLF	6
GROUP A-Z: REPAIRS BY TELEPHONE	7
TO TAM OR NOT TO TAM	8
AN OUTING TO WINDSOR ON 1ST JUNE 2023	9
TO BE OR NOT TO BE...A VIEW FROM ST ALBANS	10
NEXT EDITION	11
SURREY NETWORK STUDY DAYS	12
LONDON REGION OF U3As	13
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	14
I CAN'T WAIT TO SHARE THIS (ICWTST)	14
MEMBERS' PHOTOS	17
QUIZ – ANSWERS ALL END IN “RATION”	19
RICHMOND U3A SPEAKERS APR – AUG23	20

(Cover photo taken by Mona Turner, one of our members, in response to my request for photos and it was taken from her bedroom window early in the morning. What a beautiful sight to wake up to)

RICHMOND UPON THAMES U3A

COMMITTEE & OFFICERS

OFFICERS:

President: Stephen Jakobi

Chairman: Chris Barclay – crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk

Vice Chair: Libby Barton – libby.barton@btinternet.com

Secretary / Editor: Sue Wood – susan.orleans@tiscali.co.uk

Treasurer: Carole Fletcher – carofletch@aol.com

MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE:

Membership Secretary: David Wood – davidewood80@gmail.com

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

Committee members:

John Cardwell (Speakers) – john.cardwell51@yahoo.com

Bob Litherland – boblitherland@hotmail.com

SECTION LEADERS:

Art, Science & Music: Graham Shortell –
graham.shortell@blueyonder.co.uk

Languages: Norma Cook – norma.beagle@gmail.com

Literature, Drama, Philosophy & History:

Jan McCall – jan_mccall@yahoo.co.uk

Recreation: Tricia Abrahamsen – tricia.abr@blueyonder.co.uk

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Richmond u3a remains in a healthy position with more members joining and membership charges unchanged. In February, we had our largest audience yet at a monthly meeting since we started to use St Mary's Church, a year earlier. We hope to encourage new activities while retaining the benefits of what we have been doing. One possibility is to have hybrid monthly meetings so that those who are not able to attend, perhaps because of ill health, will still be able to listen to the talk and enjoy the discussion.

More generally, of course, the committee tries to facilitate the ideas put forward by our members. Our co-operative model is more important than ever in these troubled times.

Chris Barclay, crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk.

GROUP NEWS

We have well over 100 groups and about 80 group leaders. We always hope to encourage more people to come forward whether with traditional ideas or new ones. Some people may be reluctant to commit themselves to leading a group for a long period of time, but that is not always necessary.

We are currently trying to relaunch the Weekenders group on a model where members can suggest activities for the following month or even the next weekend.

There is also a role for "taster sessions". If you have an idea for a group to do something for just a few sessions, that is a good way to start. We can publicise it and you can see how you get on.

Chris Barclay, crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk,

EDITOR'S LETTER

Now we know spring is here. Recently our resident robin has been seen acting as Sir Galahad and standing watch while his lady friend feeds. Usually, he will attempt to frighten off all other birds and keep the feeding tray to himself. It doesn't usually work as then a gang of small bluetits will make a co-ordinated approach from different sides and grab seeds from under his nose. The loss of face means that he gives up in disgust. But he had obviously chosen a quiet time to proclaim his ability to protect his mate and I trust she was impressed.

We also enjoy seeing coaltits, long-tailed tits, and goldfinches but miss the lovely nuthatch we used to call Speedy. He would show off by swooping in, landing on a pole upside down and quickly working his way down it. And I adored his exquisite colouring of pale apricot and smoky grey. The other birds treated him with due deference on account of his sharp beak.

On a more serious note, disappointingly we had no nominations to join the Committee this year at our AGM. Our committee is down to seven whereas at full strength we have ten members. This is the first time in over ten years that I have known it so low. Many of our current members have served for many years now. Does this mean that the "younger generation" of members no longer cares whether Richmond U3A continues to exist? If anyone wants to "give it a try" we would welcome their dipping a toe in the water by arranging to come to a meeting to see if they wish to be co-opted until the next AGM. To find out more just talk to a member of the current committee.

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

GROUPS A-Z: DRAMA WRITERS CO-OPERATIVE

Scripts for dramas are often welcomed by amateur drama groups and by radio stations. They can be as short as 10 minutes long (1200 words). Soliloquys, dialogues and small casts are often preferred by professional producers, but amateur groups sometimes like a big cast.

We can learn from each other as we dramatise events from our own lives and those that we have observed or dreamt up, and speak them in parts among ourselves.

Not all our draft output will be masterpieces. We're all on a learning curve. It's not a competition.

Some of our output may make interesting reading matter, even if it is not destined for performance.

We meet on alternate Monday afternoons at 2.30pm at 7 Erncroft Way, Twickenham. TW1 1DA.

Draft texts are circulated to the mailing list beforehand. If you can bring them on your lap-top, that saves printing.

Those on the mailing list who can't attend a meeting, are welcome to comment on draft texts by email to the writers.

Brief reports of meetings are circulated to those on the mailing list shortly after.

Do let your friends who might be interested in this group know that the organiser will appreciate a call or an email from them.

Do give the organiser – **Alick Munro** - an email on alick@munro.com if you would like more details.

GROUPS A-Z: GOLF

Now that we are on the threshold of Spring the weather is perfect for a game of golf.

We are a friendly group who meet each Thursday afternoon at the David Lloyd club in Hampton.

All standards are welcome, and we can change the venue and time if members prefer.

If interested please contact: - **Andrew Howard-Smith**,
andrewhs2005@yahoo.co.uk

GROUP A-Z: REPAIRS BY TELEPHONE

Hey, do you want to save money and have a little fun?
Yes, of course you do! We all do.

So, think about this.....Repairs by Telephone!

With just a little help from Dave and his U3A group "Repairs by Telephone!"

It's by telephone or email. So, no meetings.

You might say "What's in it for me?" Well, tips on how to repair stuff and where to get stuff to do your repair.

There's something else called "Re-purposing".

It means re- dhecoles@gmail.com designing and making something from something else.

And from here on it gets a tad more serious...

We've heard all about landfill and something called built-in obsolescence. It means a product has a predetermined lifespan and will last only so long.



So what? So, call Repairs by Telephone!

David **Coles:**
dhecoles@gmail.com

TO TAM OR NOT TO TAM

I wonder how many members receive their copy of **TAM** (Third Age Matters), throw it on the side and forget to even open it. Eventually it gets thrown out unread. Well, each year the Committee pays £3.60 per member for TAM so if you don't bother to read it please let us know and we will stop filling your paper bin and recoup the cost.

AN OUTING TO WINDSOR ON 1ST JUNE 2023

A 2-hour river cruise with a ploughman's lunch on board

Our Excursion will start from the Old Deer Park Car Park at 9.00 am prompt and return to Richmond around 5.00 pm depending of course on the traffic.

The river cruise will depart from Windsor at 11.00 am, our 2 hour round trip providing excellent views of Windsor Castle, Eton College, etc. We pass through Boveney Lock and Monkey Island before returning to Windsor. After enjoying the views from the Upper Deck our lunch will be served in the comfortable saloon.

The Traditional Ploughman's Lunch (vegetarian option available) will include cheese, ham, salads, roll, etc., with fruit cake, tea or coffee and there is a cash bar for drinks.

We return to Windsor at around 1.00pm, giving us time for sightseeing before leaving Windsor at 3.45pm for our return to Richmond.

The cost of the outing will be £47.00 including Lunch and the Driver's Gratuity.

To apply please send cheque for £47 made payable to Richmond U3A together with name, address, telephone no, and email address, clearly printed, to Libby Barton, 83 Stanley Gardens Road, Teddington, TW11 8SY, enclosing a SAE if you do not have an email address.

Closing date for applications 17th May 2023.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE...A VIEW FROM ST ALBANS

To be or not to be in the U3A, that is the question.....I initially joined the Richmond U3A because I had lived abroad for a long time and was keen to find a new social circle after years away. I went to some of the talks, had tea and biscuits, but never really got to know anyone. My fault entirely as I knew that I would be moving out of the area ere long. In hindsight I wish I had taken more advantage of the many groups on offer as my friends and sister kept urging me to do!

After 18 months I moved to St Albans and joined the local U3A, later discovering there were 2 separate groups, I thought perhaps because of a larger more elderly population (turns out several of the number formed a breakaway group - a scandal!) However, maybe more of that some other time!

Now that I had more or less settled back into life in the UK and knowing no-one in the area other than immediate family, I seized every opportunity afforded by the U3A to establish some kind of social circle. What I discovered (and maybe should have sought out in Richmond) was that there were a lot of corporate activities. That is, you didn't need to belong to a theatre group (though that existed), but bulk tickets were purchased to go by coach to the West End, so one met far more people. The same with group trips to Stratford, and if you didn't fancy the play, you could just pay for the coach and enjoy a day out in Stratford, or Brighton, a holiday in France, a long weekend in Bruges. This July it's a cruise on the Rhine.

Having discovered the scandal (shock and awe!) and, given that if one belongs to more than one U3A group there is a discount, I also joined the 2nd (breakaway) group of the St Albans U3A (Verulam).

So I now have access to meetings every fortnight, innumerable outings and holidays and, thanks to the U3A, I have been able to meet many new people and forge new friendships – I truly would still be sitting at home alone if it wasn't for the U3A – particularly during Covid as so many of the talks were offered via Zoom – I would urge anybody new to an area to seek out their local U3A and support it as much as possible! Definitely “to be”!!!!

Vanessa Barditzky

NEXT EDITION *of the newsletter will be due in July so if you have anything you would like included, please let me have it well before then.*

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

SURREY NETWORK STUDY DAYS

MENUHIN HALL, STOKE D'ABERNON

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Registration from 9.30 a.m.

£12 for U3A members, £15 for guests, to include coffee/tea and biscuits

Study days are open to all U3A members and guests are very welcome. These events are now offered as a hybrid event for the same fee. Attendees should bring a picnic lunch but please note that Menuhin Hall is a nut-free environment so please ensure that your lunch does not contain any trace of nuts.

Friday, April 21st: The story of Polar Exploration & Arctic Frontiers in a Changing Climate – John Ash and Robert Headland

Friday, May 19th: The Dead Sea Scrolls – Professor Hugh Williamson – What they are and why they Matter.

Friday, June 16th: The Vikings and Their Influence in the World – Imogen Corrigan

Friday, September 15th: An Utterly Incomplete History of Keyboards and Keyboard Music – Steven Devine (Booking opens in May).

Prior booking is essential. Booking forms, map, and further information can be found on u3asites.org.uk/surreyu3anetwork, click on Events, then on the relevant study day title.

For more information, please contact **Denise Dobbs – u3a, 5 Aldridge Rise, New Malden KT3 5RJ**, Phone **07964 798791** or send an email to – surreyu3astudyday@outlook.com

LONDON REGION OF U3As

SUMMER SCHOOL 25TH & 26TH JULY

St Bride Foundation Institute,
14 Bride Lane (off Fleet St), London EC4Y 8EQ
(5 mins from Blackfriars underground station)

BOOKING NOW

Activities will include 17 talks, 4 workshops and 8 guided walks.

Wide range of subjects including Art, Current Affairs, History,
Literature, Performing Arts, Music, Sciences, Social Studies.

Select any combination of sessions according to the timetable.

You can choose to attend for one or both days.

£41 per day including refreshments and buffet lunch with a
choice of healthy salads and fruit.

Full Programme and application forms are now available.

See Events page of London Region website:
<https://u3asites.org.uk/london-region/events>

For enquiries, email – bookings.lru3a@gmail.com
or Tel: 07774 884 297

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

I am regularly in contact with the Richmond Community Volunteer Services [RCVS] in Richmond as it helps to coordinate and support local charities, including finding volunteers.

It occurs to me that many U3A members may be interested in doing voluntary work. Many suitable charities would be happy to make opportunities known to our members in our Newsletter.

I hope you will consider this idea, as I believe it would be of benefit to both local charities and members of our U3A.

Regards, **Chris Hack.**

Editor: Perhaps we could start by asking if members who volunteer and appreciate that more help is needed by their favourite charity, would like to write a few words about their experiences.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SHARE THIS (ICWTST)

1. Novel by Hanya Yanagihara

“A Little Life” by Hanya Yanagihara made quite an impact in 2015 and was a finalist for the Man Booker prize. It has since sold over a million copies and is one of those books that, if you have managed to get through the nearly 800 pages, you will never forget. It is extremely distressing. It tells the story of 4 college friends in New York who remain very close friends throughout their lives but one of whom is very severely damaged after the most appalling

childhood, although his friends are unaware of his background. His experience includes sexual abuse, child prostitution, physical abuse, rape and lots of consequent self-harming.

Not at all a cheerful subject for a play but the acting was so mesmerising that I sat for the 1 hour and 50 minutes of the first act without moving a muscle and found that my (aging) knees had locked when I stood up at the interval. And the second act of 1 hour and 30 minutes makes the whole experience a bit of a marathon but again I was so involved with the action that I didn't notice the time at all. The main character is played by James Norton which has of course engendered a lot of interest, especially after his recent success in Happy Valley on the TV. It is a sad fact though that some of the audience were there (and had probably never even read the book) just because of the advertising that James Norton would be appearing naked in various parts of the play. We shall gloss over that though because his performance is astonishing and has you spellbound from start to finish. All the other actors were incredible too.

The one thing that I didn't like about this production was the set which I found very dull and boring, and which doubled up as a living space and doctor's treatment room among other things. There was also a large screen in the background through the whole performance showing moving images of normal activity in a road, presumably outside the flat, which would just tootle along but get all fuzzy when the main character got so distressed that he was self-harming by cutting himself. There is lots of blood on the floor throughout this production!

To sum up, this is an amazing play and the first night reaction from the Richmond audience must have been everything the actors could have wished for. The whole of the audience was on its

feet clapping and cheering in a way that I have very rarely seen in the theatre. A feat of endurance for everyone involved but perfectly executed.

A Little Life is now playing at the Harold Pinter Theatre in the West End until 18th June and will then transfer to the Savoy Theatre in July 2023 for an extra 5 weeks due to public demand for tickets.

Carole Fletcher

2. A Town Called Solace by Mary Lawson

LOVED this book. It's probably one of my all-time favourites. Her writing is wonderful, and her characters nuanced and totally believable. A thread of tension runs throughout, on which the story hangs. It's more or less contemporary, set in a small community in Northern Canada. In the end it's not necessarily happy-ever-after, but it is heart-warming.

Mary Lawson was raised in Canada but settled in England in the 1960s and now lives in Kingston.

Peggy Roe

MEMBERS' PHOTOS



Taken by Mona Turner, who also took the cover picture, in May last year at the Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park

Here are two photos by Diana Loch of frost in Richmond Park.



And here two more of Diana's photos of the Queen's Green Canopy planting ceremony in the park which was attended by Sir David Attenborough and Clare Balding along with many schoolchildren on 20th March 2023.



QUIZ – ANSWERS ALL END IN “RATION”

For instance, if the clue is paperchains - - - - the answer would be deco-**ration**.

1. Length of time - -
2. Doing it together - - - -
3. Dividing - - - -
4. Wages - - - - -
5. Watering - - -
6. Too much watering - - - -
7. The Biro won't work - - - - -
8. Shaking - - -
9. Wearing out - - - - -
10. Sympathy - - - - -
11. Spinning - -
12. We no longer are the younger - - - -

Answers: 1. Duration 2. Cooperation 3. Separation
4. Remuneration 5. Hydration 6. Saturation
7. Frustration 8. Vibration 9. Degeneration
10. Commiseration 11. Gyration 12. Generation

RICHMOND U3A SPEAKERS APR – AUG23

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month at 14:30 in St Mary's Church, Church St, Twickenham, TW1 3NJ, overlooking the river and close to the Civic Centre off Richmond Road. Served by bus routes 33, R68, R70, H22 and 490 (Lebanon Court bus stop).

26th Apr: Howard Slater – Audrey Hepburn

The story of Audrey growing up during the Nazi invasion of Holland and her career after WW2.

31st May: Brad Ashton – The Job of a Laugh Time

Funny backstage stories about the star comedians he's worked with as a TV comedy writer, including David Frost, Bob Monkhouse, Frankie Howerd, Tommy Cooper, Hattie Jacques and even Groucho Marx.

28th Jun: Fran Sandham – A Solo Walk across Africa

An account of Fran's 3,500-mile solo walk coast to coast across Africa, on foot solo - or at least solo apart from a disastrous donkey.

26th Jul: Alison Mees – Living the African Dream

A keen wildlife photographer for 16 years Alison lived in Africa, working in the safari industry, also working with the cheetah researchers.

30th Aug: David Burnell – The Art of Underground Travel

A fully illustrated view of the world-famous collection of the London Transport poster collection, illustrating many aspects of London's life and recent history.