

# **RICHMOND-upon-THAMES**



## **University of the Third Age**

[www.u3asites.org.uk/richmond-on-thames](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/richmond-on-thames)



## **Newsletter August 2023, Volume 68**

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(The lovely photograph on the cover is of Maureen Landau in the Queen's Garden at Kew Gardens. To enjoy more of her photos please turn to page 17)

# **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

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**Treasurer:** Carole Fletcher – carofletch@aol.com

### **MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE:**

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### **SECTION LEADERS:**

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# **CHAIRMAN'S LETTER**

## **LONDON REGION OF U3As DELEGATES MEETING U3A and the CLIMATE CRISIS**

This afternoon I joined a meeting on zoom of the London Region of u3as. Apart from the usual reports of what various individual u3as have been doing, there was a presentation and discussion about the climate crisis. We are all aware of the problem and worried about it, especially when thinking what life will be like for grandchildren or great grandchildren. We cannot always assume that other countries and other people will deal with this existential crisis for humanity.

However, there was a range of views about what u3as could do about it. A few speakers thought that u3as should use their position to campaign on environmental issues, for example relating to decisions by local authorities. Naturally, u3a members can campaign as individuals but it would be a different matter for a u3a branch to campaign, even if agreement could be reached among members as to what position to take. We are not a campaigning organisation although plenty of other organisations do campaign.

A second idea was for individual u3as to use their collective buying power, for example with supermarkets, but that would also have problems. It does seem strange to buy fruit and vegetables that have been flown from the other side of the world. Yet, it sometimes takes more energy to grow exotic fruit in the UK than to grow it a long way away and fly it here.

A few u3as have started environmental groups that try to help with lifestyle advice, calculating your carbon footprint and so on. One u3a has an environmental group that – amongst other activities – encourages consumption of local food by having meals together and sharing recipes. That option would not be controversial, although it is also not going to save the world. Richmond u3a does not have an environmental group. Would it be a good idea? If so, is anyone interested in starting it?

**Chris Barclay, [crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk).**

## **EDITOR'S LETTER**

When I joined U3A way back in 2005 I had just started to live on my own for the first time having sold the big family house which had been the centre for so many family celebrations over the last 20 years. The last of the five had left home, I had retired three times, and moved to a new area. When I visited some erudite friends in Cornwall who were so busy with U3A I decided to give it a try.

I came back home and discovered that Richmond had a thriving U3A so joined and nervously sidled into the monthly meetings feeling isolated as the members all seemed to know each other. So I talked to people in the tea queue, smiled and went home. Eventually as a last throw of the dice I plucked up the courage to join a group. I chose classical music on a Monday morning. What a lovely way to start the week. What a revelation! At coffee time everyone came up to say “Hello” and I came away on a high. I was up and off! And some of the members I met then are still my friends today. I had soon joined seven groups.

A few months later I was helping with gathering books for a book sale so met George, the Chairman, who invited me to join the committee. Wow, I'd hadn't been on a committee since my days in a teenage Church group. General dogsbody for a while but then they needed a Membership Secretary. I loved it as I knew how I felt when I had joined, and most enquiries were by telephone then so I had a chance to encourage the nervous ones.

Then it was Chairman, another leap of faith as normally I didn't speak up much even in the Thoughts and Opinions group. I took a course in public speaking before I was brave enough to conduct the monthly meetings! Members were so kind. I survived and began to enjoy it. When the allotted four years were up I took a break and went travelling – New Zealand, Australia, Antarctica on my own, and Istanbul and Chicago with a young friend.

Back home and back to U3A, roped back onto the Committee, where I have been ever since. U3A has been my saviour from feelings of loneliness and uselessness and from being a burden on my family. It has given me friendship and the strength and confidence to meet challenges I would previously have shrunk from. And it has given me a wonderful partner.

I write this because I would like to know what U3A has meant to you. Members sometimes tell me that U3A has changed their lives. Has it done anything for YOU? Even sharing a sentence might inspire others. Do please let me know.

**Sue Wood**, [susan.orleans@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:susan.orleans@tiscali.co.uk)

## GROUP NEWS

Although we do not have a formal summer break, August does tend to be a quiet time for groups, with the prospectus being prepared to show a wide range of groups for the autumn. We hope that there will be something for everybody. Groups on Zoom do not suit everyone, but they can offer activities to those who find it harder to travel or live further away. Many groups have returned to the homes of group leaders, while other group leaders prefer to meet in cafes or other public rooms. Yet other groups are based on activities like walks or visiting museums.

Here are some examples of new groups. A crochet and knitting group started in March (Leader: Sangeeta Gardiner, Email: [sandsgardiner@hotmail.com](mailto:sandsgardiner@hotmail.com), Tel: 07786 440 562).

A new poetry group will start in September to follow the great year in which Keats wrote almost all of his best poetry. This group will use zoom, but also include optional visits to places associated with Keats, so as to include those who find mobility more of a problem (Christopher Barclay, [crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk)).

Two new groups are being considered and are likely to go ahead if there is enough interest – one for recorder players and the other for poetry (Jo Bentley, [jobentley2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jobentley2002@yahoo.co.uk)).

We also plan a relaunch of Weekenders, to encourage activities at weekends. (Helen Erhardt, [erhardthelen21@gmail.com](mailto:erhardthelen21@gmail.com) ).

Is there room for more groups? Yes of course there is. More people are joining Richmond u3a, and one benefit of a large membership is that there are usually plenty of people interested in

joining a new group. So, if you feel like giving it a go, you will be very welcome.

**Chris Barclay, [crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk),**

## **GROUPS A-Z: BIOGRAPHIES AND MORE**

We meet at the Park Hotel, Teddington (5 minutes' walk from train station and buses and with its own car park) at 10.30 on the second Wednesday of the month, when we take turns to choose and introduce a book.

Our books consist of an eclectic mix of biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, letters and a little history. Recently they have included Hilary Mantel's memoir, *Giving up the Ghost*; the Victorian traveller Isabella Bird's *A Lady's Life in the Rockies*; and Katherine Rundell's excellent *Super-Infinite: The Transformations of John Donne* (so much more than just a poet and Dean of St Paul's!).

We are about to read *The Real Mrs Miniver: The Life of Jan Struther* by her grand-daughter Ysenda Maxtone Graham (has anyone read *Mrs Miniver* or seen the 1942 film?); and William Dalrymple's *City of Djinns*, an engaging portrait of Delhi past and present and the (often quirky) characters connected with the city. So, if this appeals to you, we have a few vacancies.

Please contact **Sue Blake, [blakesusanashley@gmail.com](mailto:blakesusanashley@gmail.com)**



## **GROUPS A-Z: CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS**

Consider this: Film actress who chose to sketch Robin and Maurice Gibb less. (4,9) (see end of article for answer)

Amongst the many and varied participation groups at the disposal of U3A members, are some for those amongst us that like to both challenge and frustrate ourselves. I refer to the 3 Cryptic Crossword Groups, two that have been running since 2020 and the third started a year later.

Originally aimed at beginners, intermediate and more capable enthusiasts, all three now consist of quite accomplished solvers. Two of them have room for more members so if you feel you'd like to join them, access details via the prospectus or website.

For those of you new to them, Cryptic Crosswords are like their straightforward or 'Quick' counterparts in that they provide you with definitions or synonyms for the answer to be filled into the grid, except that they are hidden within a deliberately puzzling clue construction. Working out what it is that the crossword setter is telling you in these often seemingly crazily juxta positioned words will lead you to the answer. Getting used to completing, or attempting to complete the same setter on regular occasions will help you read their mind and know what they want. So, accessing the same newspaper or magazine regularly either through a newsagent or online will help.

It is easy to get fixed on one line of thought when tackling a clue and not be able to see the different approach to it that is required. Revisiting it later or the next day may help you do this, so solutions are not always quick to hit upon, and this in my opinion makes them all the more satisfying to crack.

All U3A members will of course be aware of the value to our well being of exercising our brains at least as much as our bodies and there are always new solving techniques and even new words to learn whilst puzzle solving. Frequently one will come across an answer which appears not to be a real word despite it fitting all the criteria for being correct. On these occasions a quick referral to Google confirms that for example, a panicle is a loose branching cluster of flowers, (who knew?) job done and personal vocab expanded.

Our three groups have slightly different approaches to their sessions, for example two are face to face while one is on Zoom, but all three complete a puzzle together each time they meet and have good fun in doing so as well. So if you think you might enjoy it, why not take the plunge and join us. Full details on the website or Beacon or see the prospectus.

*Answer to clue: Drew Barrymore*

**Alan Mitchell**, [alan\\_mitchell87@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alan_mitchell87@yahoo.co.uk)

## **GROUP A-Z: OPERA FOR PLEASURE**

I have been a member of this group since its inception and run it for about 10 years following the first leader Aileen's sad death. I took it over because we have space, a good size screen and excellent sound system to show Opera DVDs. We meet once a month to enjoy a whole opera of my, or a member's, choice. I am not an opera buff as was my predecessor, so we just give a short introduction to the opera and then sit back to enjoy.

I have a large collection of DVDs which I share with other U3A groups and with members of our group. I charge £1 for the session to help pay for any DVDs that I buy. Over the nearly 20 years we have watched a great range of operas from Monteverdi to John Adams. Verdi, Mozart and, for some Puccini and Wagner, remain great favourites, but among the 100 or so sessions we have watched many lesser known operas.

Unlike Aileen, I do not teach the group or organise visits to live opera, but would be prepared to do so should the group request it. We currently have 13 members, so I could take on a few more. I can seat 13, but we never have all the members attending. We are a very friendly group, many of whom have been members from the start. We have a cup of tea and cake either during an interval or at the end of the opera.

**Martine Osorio**, [mcolacoosorio@gmail.com](mailto:mcolacoosorio@gmail.com)

## **LONDON REGION SUMMER SCHOOL JULY 2023**

This year the London region Summer School celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at our usual venue The St Bride's Foundation just off Fleet Street in the City.

We had excellent attendance and as usual Members from Richmond upon Thames U3A were very well represented.

The programme was extremely varied with talks, workshops and walks.

The weather was fine and all the walks went ahead. The walks were led by qualified City of London and/or Westminster guides

and routes included Shakespeare's London, The City from the Romans to Richard Rogers and beyond plus several more.



The talks covered a wide range of topics from Science, Music and the Arts. The Climate change related talks were well attended as were the talks on Venice and the British, The Ballets Russes and After Raphael.

The workshops were fully booked as soon as bookings opened. The variety was huge. Art, quilting, film, and playing the Ukulele.

Members enjoyed a delicious salad lunch plus fruit, soft drinks and mineral water. This was followed by coffee with mint crisps. Refreshments were also served on arrival.

Unfortunately, I was unable to enjoy any of the programme as I was responsible for looking after catering and as you'll see from the photo the washing up too!

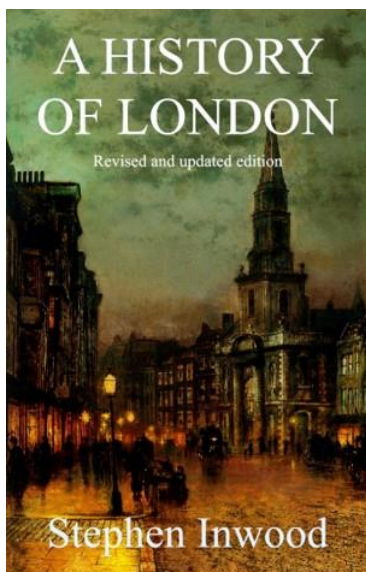
**Libby Barton**

# I CAN'T WAIT TO SHARE THIS (ICWTST)

## 1. *A History of London*

My friends and fellow vocalists in the U3a singing class may wonder where I have been for the last 2 or 3 years. During lockdown I started to experience heart trouble, which was eventually dealt with at the Royal Brompton, but the operation hospitalised me for the first half of 2022, and has left me rather disabled.

Still, I spent the two years of lockdown, and the last nine months, working on an updated version of my History of London, which first appeared in 1998 and was showing its age. The book was dated in two ways. First, it left London in the 1990s, with its old trading and manufacturing economy in terminal decline, and its population almost 2 million down on its 1938 peak.



Since then, London's population has overtaken its 1938 peak, and the growth of its financial and service sectors made London one of the three World Cities, alongside New York and Tokyo. The old book was dated in a second way, in those 25 years of research and publication and the availability of new sources needed to be absorbed into the new account. By using online resources and many hundreds of recent books and articles I have created a modern and up-to-date history that will last another 25 years.

The new History of London is only published as an e-book, available on Amazon.co.uk for £7.50, readable on a smartphone, a tablet or a laptop, as well as a kindle. The book is very long, but it is arranged to enable readers to choose the parts they are interested in and to find them instantly, and it written in clear and readable prose.

Give it a try, and you may find that you will be able to impress or bore your friends with your knowledge of our wonderful capital city, and of the part it has played in our national life. And you may discover, as I have done, that knowing London's history intensifies your pleasure in living in our great city and walking its fascinating old streets.

**Stephen Inwood**

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Sue,

I would like to enquire about the possibility of donating my late father's typewriters. I have several manual typewriters which my Dad used and accumulated over many years. My mother (Suzanne Bezkorvany, who was a U3A member for many years) and I would be very happy to donate them for free, either to the U3A Richmond organisation, or to any individual(s) who might like to have them.

We also have an old golf club set which we would like to offer for free, if anyone is interested.

Unfortunately, I don't have a car so it may be difficult to transport the above items. However, my mother and I live locally in East Sheen, so if anyone is interested, they are welcome to visit us and to pick up the typewriters and/or golf clubs. Please feel free to contact Nadia by email: [ncbez121@gmail.com](mailto:ncbez121@gmail.com)

Thanks so much, Kindest regards, **Nadia Bezkorvany**

Dear Sue

I would very much like to find someone who might be prepared to give me piano lessons.

Very sadly I can no longer play my flute which I have played regularly from the age of 10.

I would be happy to learn in a group or individually, when I would be happy to pay for lessons.

I have a good upright piano and live in Teddington and would be happy to use my house for group sessions.

I learnt the piano for a short time in my youth, but can no longer read the base clef, so am a one-finger-piano-player.

**Martine Osorio**

Dear Editor,

Age UK Richmond has many volunteering opportunities which I hope would be of interest to the members of U3A. Current vacancies include a Community Gardening Coordinator at our allotment in Teddington and a visiting Welfare Benefits officer to assist people filling in forms.

For further information I can be contacted on [volunteering@ageukrichmond.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageukrichmond.org.uk) or call 020 3816 0029.

Kind regards, **Natalee White, Age UK Richmond**

Dear Editor,

I wonder if there are any Richmond U3A members, perhaps not Kew Gardens members, who'd be interested in occasional, slightly slower walks there in clement weather?

I live opposite Kew Gardens, whose membership gives me FREE entry for a companion.

I'm seeking to set up a pool of folk who'd be interested in a hour or so's 1:1 slightly slower walk in the Gardens, viewing the delights of the changing seasons. They could then go on to explore the site's many attractions at their leisure. Just 9 minutes on the speedy 65 bus from Richmond Station or park free by my home.

To explore options please text or call Ros on 07402 630121 or 020 8940 0806. Or email [forestgirl101z@gmail.com](mailto:forestgirl101z@gmail.com)

Best wishes, **Ros Newnham**



## MEMBERS' PHOTOS

Maureen Landau took her camera with her when she visited the Queen's Garden close to Kew Palace in Kew Gardens on a beautiful sunny June day. She shared these with me, and I am delighted to be able to put them in the newsletter.



Welcome to Queen's Garden



Kew Palace



A charming obelisk



Golden Laburnum draped  
pergola



View from the shade of a walkway

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

In Israel it is known as a strudel. In Sweden it's called a kanelbulle (cinnamon bun). In France it's a petit escargot. In Czech it's a zavinac or rolled pickled herring.

So, what is it called in English? Rather boringly it's a commercial at!

And yes, you've guessed it. It's our old friend "@".

I know how much members enjoy Libby's catering so asked if she would share one of her favourite recipes with you. So here you are.

## **MY MUM'S CHOCOLATE MOUSSE**

This is a very easy recipe and it freezes well. There is no need to use expensive chocolate. Supermarket own brands work just as well as does diabetic chocolate. Makes about 10-12 portions.

### **RECIPE**

8oz Dark Chocolate

1 Tablespoon Cocoa Powder

4oz Butter

6 Eggs

### **METHOD**

Melt the chocolate and butter either in a saucepan over a low heat or in a microwave on low power. Do not let the mixture boil.

In the meantime, separate the eggs. Beat the egg yolks and whisk the egg whites until very stiff.

As soon as the chocolate and butter has melted stir in the cocoa powder and the egg yolks. Beat the mix well.

Beat in the egg whites a little at a time until the mix is smooth.

Divide the mix into small dishes or one or two larger dishes. Leave to set in the fridge. The mousse will keep in the fridge for 3 days. Otherwise freeze and use within 3 or 4 months.

## **RICHMOND U3A SPEAKERS AUG – NOV23**

*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). Walk towards the Council offices and turn left down the walkway just before you reach them.*

### **30<sup>th</sup> 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. The talk sets the posters in the context of the high design standards achieved by the Underground in the inter-war period.

### **27<sup>th</sup> Sept: Chris Truran – 'DABS and DNA Detect Criminals'**

This covers the development of fingerprint technology from the first burglar being arrested using fingerprints, to the development and use of DNA in 1984.

Also covers James Hanratty (the A6 murderer), the Lockerbie Bombing, the Tsunami and the Brighton Bombing.

### **25<sup>th</sup> Oct: Michael Rodway – The Painted Hall at Greenwich**

Michael is a volunteer guide at Tate Modern and in the Painted Hall at The Royal Naval College, Greenwich. His talk examines the history of the Painted Hall, its location, the artwork and some of the characters associated with the site. The artwork within has been described as the English equivalent to the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican.