

RICHMOND-upon-THAMES



University of the Third Age

www.U3Asites.org.uk/richmond-on-thames



Newsletter Winter 2020, Volume 57

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My brother, David Bigwood, took the cover photograph on a bright sunny day when he suddenly noticed the brooding black cloud looming over the sunlit buildings. For an ardent photographer, the contrast was too good to miss.

Sue Wood.

RICHMOND UPON THAMES U3A COMMITTEE & OFFICERS

OFFICERS:

President: Stephen Jakobi
Chairman: Chris Hack
Vice Chair: Libby Barton
Secretary / Editor: Sue Wood
Treasurer: John Cardwell

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Groups' Co-ordinator: Norma Cook – norma.beagle@gmail.com

Committee members:

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Herbert Wirth:
Chris Barclay:
Bob Litherland:

SECTION LEADERS:

Art, Science & Music: Graham Shortell

Languages: Norma Cook

Literature, Drama, Philosophy & History: Carole Fletcher

Recreation: Tricia Abrahamsen

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is hard to believe that almost a year has passed since our AGM last February, but of course, most of that time we have either spent in lockdown, or under some sort of restrictions. Either way, it has drastically affected our ability to operate as our U3A would like to, and as it has done in previous years. However, it has often brought out the best in us to persevere, and I thank all the Group Leaders who have found some way or another to keep their groups functioning.

Zoom has clearly been a real asset, at least for those with internet access who have felt comfortable using it. That is, understandably, by no means everybody. We have managed to restart our monthly meetings using Zoom, and they have proved very popular. Our monthly committee meetings have continued via Zoom and this has been a great help in keeping our U3A ticking over.

We have also published more newsletters to try and keep you informed and amused, and I am particularly grateful to Sue, our secretary, and David, our membership secretary, for all the extra work this placed on them, and indeed to all those who have written articles. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all my Committee colleagues who have been so supportive – and indeed yourselves for continuing to support our U3A, even in these difficult times.

There is not much else to report, other than, as you might have guessed, this is going to be my last report as your Chairman. It is hard to believe that I have had the honour of serving you as Chairman for four years. My three key goals were to increase our membership and spread the word about the U3A; to increase the number of groups on offer; and finally, to try and ensure that more

members were able to find a place on at least one group that was of interest to them. And perhaps even a fourth, namely that we continued to enjoy our U3A experience. I do not know about the last, but I am pleased to report that we have made significant progress in all the other areas. I am particularly pleased that we managed to start a Classical Music Appreciation group and a Wine Tasting group, albeit that I had to do the latter myself!

I like to think that I am leaving the Richmond U3A in a better place than when I took over, but that is for you to judge. I know that I am leaving it in very capable hands with my successor, and the remainder of the Committee who will be soldiering on for at least another year. I hope you all continue to 'Learn, Laugh and Live' in the coming year – and that it is a much more normal one than this.

Chris Hack, chack@onetel.com, Chairman.

GROUP NEWS

I always begin writing my contribution to the newsletter by reminding myself about what I had written this time last year. I ended my piece for the January 2020 newsletter by saying I hope you all have a very interesting 2020 and continue to enjoy being a U3A member.

The first wish certainly came true; though I had no idea just how interesting 2020 would prove to be. I hope that the second wish was also fulfilled, albeit in unsuspected ways.

Many more groups have continued to meet than I could possibly have imagined last March, for which we must thank the persistence and ingenuity of the group leaders. We have even had new ones starting. I hope that in January there will be two or three

more groups to add to our list so keep an eye out for information in the emails which are sent out regularly.

Volunteers will be welcomed to take over a couple of the book groups, which are inactive at the moment or even to start their own. Help and support are available so please contact me if you are interested, or, indeed, have your own idea for a new group. Dickens, anyone?

It has definitely been a year when some access to the internet has been helpful in keeping us connected. Zoom, whatever we may think of it, has meant we can see each other, haircut or not, and the phrase “you need to unmute yourself” has been uttered many times. The advent of Beacon, though unwelcome by some group leaders, has been useful to many and like all these things, we will get used to it!

I am wondering how to end this, as the phrase “be careful what you wish for” keeps coming to mind. Here goes – I hope that in 2021 Richmond U3A continues to be an enormous asset to all its members, providing support and friendship as well as giving us the opportunity to keep on learning.

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

ON BEING A GROUP COORDINATOR

The group co-ordinator’s main role is to be available to assist and advise the section and group leaders. I try and work closely with the other section leaders, Carole, Graham and Tricia, and in normal times meet up with them to discuss how the groups are doing and develop ideas for new groups. I also have to try and keep up to

date with information from the U3A national office and disseminate it where necessary.

Helping to prepare the new prospectus every year is an important task as this is the place where members look for their information. All information is now on the web and can be brought up to date quickly, but I know that not all members use the internet on a regular basis and anyway, there's something very pleasant in September, sitting down with the prospectus and looking at what is available for the coming year.

There is always the problem of popular groups having no vacancies, so I do try to find new group leaders and new groups wherever possible. I can't tell you how my heart lifts when I receive an email or telephone call from someone saying "I'd like to start a new group. How do I go about it?" The new members' lunches are a good place for this to happen. On the other hand, I find it hard to tell people that there are no vacancies for popular groups and always ask "Have you thought of starting one yourself?" It sometimes works!

I do try to meet with members who want to start a new group, so if you see me in a local café peering round, I am probably trying to identify someone I have only spoken to on the phone. Meeting prospective new leaders is a very pleasant aspect of my role and if it leads to new groups, even better.

I took on the role nearly four years ago and am beginning to feel that I know most GLs. I have met many in person now. The Group Leaders' lunch, which is held annually (except for this year, of course) is the committee's way of thanking the Group Leaders and gives me an excellent opportunity to meet these absolutely vital members.

I helped to organise an open day in August 2019 which gave me another chance to liaise with Group Leaders who made an enormous effort to showcase their groups and encourage people to join Richmond U3A. I now feel that I have many new friends and acquaintances from taking on this role.

There are one or two downsides – nagging GLs for information, sorting out the occasional dispute - but they are more than compensated for by the positives. During these last few peculiar months, I have been delighted to see how GLs have striven to keep their groups going. Even when it has not been possible to hold meetings, GLs have kept in touch with their members by email and telephone. I have had some really lovely, interesting emails about how you have all adapted to the “new normal” and some of these have been transformed into articles for the newsletter.

Now for the advert - for the new U3A database, Beacon. It has made my role a great deal easier as I can keep track of groups and members and update details very quickly and I can contact most GLs just by writing one email. It made updating this year’s prospectus very straightforward and I hope that GLs are now beginning to see the benefit, too. I tried very hard before Beacon but always managed to miss something and I feel that I am at last getting on top of the situation. I do encourage you all, group leaders and members alike, to have a look at it, if you have access to the internet.

I look forward to meeting everyone, in person, when we resume normal service, but in the meantime, do keep in touch with your ideas and offers of starting a new group!

[Norma Cook, norma.beagle@gmail.com.](mailto:norma.beagle@gmail.com)

GROUPS A–Z CHURCH BELL RINGING

April 22nd this year marked the 5th anniversary of the formation of the Church Bell Ringing Group. Over those 5 years, recruitment progressed well, and it was not uncommon to have 20+ ringers present at our Wednesday morning sessions. Alas, it was not possible to mark the anniversary in any way, as all bell ringing in the UK had been abruptly suspended 4 weeks earlier due to Covid, and it was clear that it could be quite some time before the restrictions would be lifted.

Our official status is “Inactive”, but thanks to our Ringing Master, Steve Mitchell and his wife Mary, continuity and fellowship has been maintained with our ringers through their hosting of weekly handbell ringing sessions in their back garden.



I was amazed by how our ringers have taken to this, particularly as it involves ringing two bells, rather than one! It’s been good fun, and I’m sure there will be an appetite to continue handbell ringing after ‘normal’ tower ringing restarts.

We resumed limited Sunday morning ringing at All Hallows in July with a rota of U3A ringers, and with strict rules of engagement... maximum 6 ringers, adjacent bells must not be rung (social distancing), ringers must not change bells during a session (possibility of cross-contamination via the ropes), and ringing time limited to 15 minutes. There was some very positive feedback from

the church congregation, as it apparently reminded them of normal times!

We have of course adhered to social distancing rules, and the donning of appropriate PPE for our ringing sessions. The choice of PPE was interesting.....



Chris Bennett opted for the tried and tested British Standard mask while Sachie Kimura went for a rather snazzy face mask and co-ordinated tee shirt combination Wendy Johnson opted for arguably the safest design on the market - the 'bank robber model'.....apparently pedestrians tend to give Wendy an extremely wide berth when they see her approaching!

Maintenance of the bells has continued, and the picture below shows the heaviest of the 10 bells at All Hallows - the Tenor - about to be inspected. It weighs 18cwt 2qtr 23lb - almost one ton.

The bells were originally installed in the Christopher Wren church of St Dionis, Backchurch Street in the city of London, and later, when the church was demolished, moved to the neighbouring church of All Hallows in Lombard Street in 1878. The Lombard Street church subsequently became redundant, and the tower was

moved stone by stone to Twickenham in 1939, and the bells, after being kept in storage during the war years, were reunited with their tower in 1951. Five of the ten bells were cast in 1726, and in six years' time, those bells will therefore have been calling the faithful to worship in 3 different locations for 300 years - I think that must be unique!



Within our U3A Ringing Group, we have a 'subset' of musicians, mainly singers, whose choir activities had also been suspended in March due to Covid. The 'Zoom option' was explored as a potential interim rehearsal solution, but it was soon apparent that it was not viable for ensemble singing due to varying time lags in the system..... another solution had to be found.... and the concept of 'virtual performances' was developed. This involved singers and/or players recording their part against a backing track, and the individual recordings then being combined to produce a 'performance'.

One of our singing ringers, Naomi Herbert, had experience of the recording and editing process, and kindly agreed to co-ordinate a U3A ringers' virtual recording. We chose "New Day", a song made popular by the Kings' Singers.

Naomi, Wendy Johnson and Chris Bennett recorded their (multiple) parts in their homes, while I, in consideration for my neighbours in the flats above and below me, decided to use the All Hallows ringing room!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7npzShAyyvHE&app=desktop>

At the time of writing this newsletter (late November), we were about to come out of the second period of lockdown, and the possibility of limited ringing was again on the horizon. We had also received the welcome news that multiple vaccines had been developed, and that vaccination programmes might start as early as December. By the time you read this Newsletter, I hope that the light at the end of the tunnel will be shining much more brightly, and that we will be regularly 'out on the pull' once again!

John Sutton.

GROUPS A–Z HISTORY BEHIND THE HEADLINES

“Oh... so that’s why.....”

A short history of the History Behind the Headlines group

In the mid-1990s Len Tysall was forced to retire from his position in the Paint Research Association. He felt this was rather unjust as he had only just attained his 80th birthday and was still feeling well and vigorous. But no arguments were allowed and so he retired, wondering what to do with the extra time he had available to him. Because he had always had an interest in history, Richmond U3A enabled him to start a new group called History Behind the Headlines, to meet in his flat in Kew. When Len died in 2011 we, being the remnant of the group, decided to continue it, as well as aiming for greater membership participation.

So, in September 2011 we became joint leaders of the resurrected group, started advertising for additional members and had an overwhelming response for such a small group. The eight to ten-member group decided to meet once a month using a format in which each member presented a short headline followed by a longer history, followed in turn by lively or quiet discussion, always with varying views expressed.

We met in the Cabbage Patch restaurant for several years, then briefly in the ETNA Centre, before Covid-19 lockdown led us to continue virtually, using Zoom. Five members of the 2011 start-up continue today many years later, including three of us who were originally members of Len's meetings. We keep the membership to a maximum of 10 in order to ensure sufficient time for discussion.

When the potential membership rose beyond ten, a second group History Behind the Headlines 2 was created with a new leader, Christine Ryan, using a different format. This group, now led by Jacque Saville, also has a maximum membership of ten. They are looking forward to meeting physically again, as they have decided that virtual meetings are not for them. Both groups agree that, because we meet informally, no matter how thorny the subjects we all remain friends.

The new and old History Behind the Headlines groups have, in one form or other, therefore been run by members for over two decades and we all look forward to the time when we can once again sit around the table to inform each other and enjoy our history-based discussions.

Roseanne Foster and Mark Scudamore.

GROUPS A–Z ITALIAN FOR PLEASURE

My mother was a Group Leader... Scrabble, and very good at it, too. I am sure that she was whispering in my ear when I looked down the list of U3A Groups and noticed that there was a Waiting List for each Language Group. Should I take the plunge and try and impart some of my love for the Italian language, the country and its fabulous culture? Aiming to boost confidence in understanding and using colloquial Italian, the emphasis would be on learning phrases and language for conversational use on a trip to Italy, in a small group setting, with coffee, cake, and, hopefully, fun and companionship.

And so Italian for Pleasure took off on 21 January of this year with six lovely members. We were motoring along, meeting fortnightly, with some members of the group looking forward to trips to Florence (at Easter) and Bologna (in June) when COVID stopped us in our tracks and forced everyone to reappraise and reinvent their lives. Zoom, WhatsApp, Teams, Skype... took over all our lives and the group felt that they were not quite ready to add Italian for Pleasure to the growing list of net-based activities.

At the end of June, after a break of a few months, we decided to try a Zoom variety, with four new members joining two from my original group. And now we are eight (with me), meeting once a week: we have talked about our lives; had conversations in a bar; ordered food in a restaurant; bought provisions in markets and supermarkets; asked for directions; taken trains and buses; and booked hotel rooms. And, I hope, we have had, and continue to have, some fun.

It would be wonderful if 2021 were to allow us to meet again face-to-face and, even better, to let us all use the language learned on a trip to Italy. Speriamo bene!

Judith Cseh-Menczer.

DITLOID ANSWERS (p12 of Oct20 newsletter)

1.	3 BM	3 Blind Mice
2.	10 Y in a D	10 Years in a Decade
3.	12 D of C	12 Days of Christmas
4.	36 I in a Y	36 Inches in a Yard
5.	147 MB in S	147 Maximum Break In Snooker
6.	7 H of R	7 Hills of Rome
7.	15 M on a DMC	15 Men on a Dead Man's Chest
8.	20 Q in a R	20 Quires in a Ream
9.	39 B of the OT	39 Books of the Old Testament
10.	64 S on a CB	64 Squares on a Chess Board
11.	4 F on a P	4 Faces on a Pyramid
12.	6 B in an O in C	6 Balls in an Over in Cricket
13.	36 BK on a P	36 Black Keys on a Piano
14.	168 H in a W	168 Hours in a Week
15.	225 S on a SB	225 Squares on a Scrabble Board
16.	206 B in a HB	206 Bones in a Human Body
17.	118 E in the PT	118 Elements in the Periodic Table
18.	220 C in a P of G	220 Calories in a Pint of Guinness
19.	40 P in a F	40 Poles in a Furlong
20.	15 L in a N	15 Litres in a Nebuchadnezzar

TRIP TO THE ARCTIC – FEB 2022

Invitation to Richmond U3A members to express an interest

It all started when one of our group members commented that we all needed something to look forward to....

Thus, evolved a plan to visit the Arctic in February 2022, and members of Richmond U3A are invited to express an interest and to complete a form stating their wishes and preferences.

This trip is bespoke and special. First, we shall visit Tromso, Norway, at the time of the Sami (Laplander) festival. That includes exhibitions of art works & textiles, winter markets, sports, music and reindeer racing. This is a particularly good time and place to see the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights.

Secondly, we shall be visiting the University there, known as the Arctic University. Our host will be Professor Bodil Hansen Blix, who is a leading writer in the field of “narrative gerontology”. In a nutshell, “narrative gerontology” is the study of how the stories we develop about ourselves, the way they are heard and shared, and the responses to them, all contribute to resilience and contentment in later life.

Where that doesn't work out, then there is a risk of demoralization and a feeling that the meaningful purposes of life have ended before life itself does. That is known as “narrative foreclosure”. Prof Blix and colleagues from Canada & the Netherlands have been leaders in developing forms of “narrative care” to address these issues. In many ways, what U3A does, is an informal form of narrative care which we offer to each other. For anyone wanting

further information or understanding, I can send a page of references, so please contact me as below.

Although hardly mentioned at all in the British press, a few months ago the largest and most expensive polar expedition ever, returned quietly home to Bremerhaven, Germany. 20 countries and around 600 scientists participated in the Multi-discipline drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAIC). The data will be analysed from now through 2021. We hope to get an up-to-date briefing on these most important findings. A stunning photographic documentary of this exhibition “Into the Arctic Ice”, has recently been published.

This trip will be special and bespoke because we are fortunate to have the service of CoGo Travel, who for over 10 years have been running such tailored programmes for “The Golden Gappers”, a USA group from Belper & District, in Derbyshire. They come highly recommended, and their general manager, Nick Dawson, has already provided our group with a Zoom based presentation on the future of travel for older people.

The main visit is to Arctic Norway, but an add on to sub-Arctic Norway will be made available depending on people’s budgets and inclinations. That will include visits to Oslo, Bergen, the fabulous train journey between, and a coastal voyage to Tromso from Bergen.

Costs will depend on what people want to do and prices for 2022 in Norway, which has never been a cheap destination. CoGo Travel are working on a quotation right now. They will be responsible for all physical arrangements, taking of deposits etc and insurance.

My own very unqualified estimate of costs is around £2K+ for the Arctic trip, and something similar for the sub-Arctic optional element. This trip will be designed around what people want to do and there will be maximum flexibility once travellers have joined.

Anyone interested should contact me and I will send a form to collect preferences and wishes.

**Bryan Tully, Group leader, “Wanderlust & Wisdom” U3A group.
(bryan.tully@btinternet.com)**

MEMOIR OF A STALAG

It feels cold and hard like gun metal, a bruised grey disc two inches by an inch in diameter with a dotted line pierced across the centre. There is a hole punched in each corner of the upper half and one hole punched in the centre of the lower half. On both sides of the dotted line are engraved the words **Stalag IVB Nr 263780**. In my hand I hold two years of my father’s life.

I wonder about the dotted line; two pieces of the same identity tag to be hung around his neck until perhaps he died in captivity as a prisoner of war (POW) in Muhlsberg Camp, near Dresden, East Germany? The upper part with the two holes broken off and screwed into a gravestone or box containing his ashes. The other half of the tag to be sent home. Who knows? I never asked him. I wasn’t interested. Until it was too late.

Men who had fought in the war rarely spoke about their experiences. It was as if there was an unspoken rule forbidding

disclosure about the nasty bits; the blood, the killing, the massacres, the pain, the trauma. I remember as a child we would sit around the Sunday dinner table. He would roll up his Old Holborn cigarette and tell us the tale of what happened at the end of the war. The camp was liberated by Russian Cossacks on horseback in 1945. The German soldiers abandoned the camp and their captives. The Russians killed those left. My father focused his storytelling on the journey across war-torn Europe and the adventures getting back to Blighty and the lifelong friendships he made in the Army.

The POW identity tag came home with him in 1945 and later hid alongside his war medals and his secret memories in a little brown box labelled O.H.M.S OFFICIAL PAID and addressed to Mr J.A.W. Teal, 82A New Kings Road, Fulham, S.W.6.

The box holds no personal thank you letter from the King for his service. Instead, there's a small piece of printed paper in red and black with the insignia of the Crown-the lion and the unicorn and the words 'HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE-DIEU ET MON DROIT' (EVIL BE TO HIM THAT EVIL THINKS – GOD AND MY RIGHT). THE BRITISH CHIVALRIC ORDER OF THE GARTER.

Underneath it says:

'The Undersecretary of State for War presents his compliments and by Command of the Army Council has the honour to transmit the enclosed Awards granted for service during the war of 1939-1945.'

On the back there is a description of the campaign stars, clasps and medals instituted in recognition of service in that war. I hold two tarnished bronze stars snugly in my right and left palms. They are identical with a raised inscription of the Crown and King's initials, GRJ V1. Encircling them it says, 'The 1939-1945 Star.' The other says, 'The Italy Star.'

Dad fought in Montgomery's Eighth Army, the Regiment of South East Kent, known as 'The Buffs' because of the colour of their hats. He fought in the Italian campaign invading Sicily from North Africa. He was captured at the Battle of Termoli in Southern Italy in October 1943. He was run over by a German Panzer tank, his Bren gun falling across his knees. He was to suffer the pain of that injury for the rest of his life. As a child I remember him kicking in his sleep and times when he would writhe in agony on the kitchen floor, yellow eyed from recurrent malaria that he first caught in Tunisia waiting for the invasion to begin.

Another little piece of heavy metal in the box is the size of the old half crown, silver and round. I can't identify its significance from the paper. It has the King's profile and Latin that I can't decipher inscribed around the edge. On the other side there is a picture of a lion standing on a creature half reptile half horse, and the simple 1939-1945 above them.

Dad's blue and bronze British Legion badge with its tiny lion's head and number 92634 sits cosily underneath the medals and strips of coloured ribbon to be worn with them. I don't ever remember him wearing them.

At the bottom of the small cardboard box is another identity tag. It is also metal but much lighter than the Stalag IVB one. It has the same Fulham address on one side. On the other is the name, Jack. It was the name of Dad's favourite cocker spaniel, who died in a traffic accident, running across the New King's Road in 1949. Jack was also my father's nickname.

Dad died on October 10th 1987 and was buried on the 17th, the day after the storm that brought down hundreds of ancient trees and South-east England to a standstill. I thought it a fitting end for a man who did not want to leave this world without a fight.

In 2018 my husband and I went to Sicily to trace my father's steps from the place of the landings in July 1943 across the mountains to Southern Italy. The Museum of the Landings in Catania provides a factual and moving tribute to both sides of the war in Italy. I imagined a memorial to the Eighth Army on the beach, south of Syracuse, where he landed. Walking in the prickly July heat through the built-up village, the smell of flowers and herbs wafting our walk, I imagined my father coming from the opposite direction away from the beach, perhaps experiencing the same smells, excited, nervous, scared, fighting his way along strange war-torn streets.

Walking to the end of a shady alleyway that led to the sea, our sight was momentarily blinded by the midday sun. Standing on the sand we scanned the scene before us. A restaurant, bar, beach umbrellas and tourists sunbathing and swimming in the azure Mediterranean sea. No trace of a war long gone but whose heroes will never be forgotten.

Janet Teal Daniel. Written in 2013, edited for U3A 'Writing for Pleasure' in June 2020. Task to describe an object.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SHARE THIS

1. Theatre

I love the theatre and have been devastated by the months of lockdown for this most wonderful of arts. I resisted the streamed performances for many months, being unable to bear the thought of seeing something online which I would have much preferred to see in person but ended up succumbing with a ticket to the Old Vic In Camera live streaming of Brian Friel's *The Faith Healer* in September. With phenomenal performances by Michael Sheen, Indira Varma and David Threlfall, this is a truly exceptional, magnificent production, which can now be seen again in January through Zoom in the In Camera: Playback series. And I am off to the virtual theatre again in early December, to see Andrew Scott in *Three Things...* with *A Christmas Carol* not far behind!

Judith Cseh-Menczer.

2. ... a meal, with friends, INDOORS.

Until that happy day arrives, a friend and I have been rediscovering the 'joys' of al fresco eating on our walks in the Surrey Hills. On three occasions we have been grateful to find a church porch to shelter in to eat our sandwiches, whilst the rain lashed down outside, but I have to admit I'd prefer a nice cosy pub!

The highlight of the autumn so far has been a visit to a lovely little café called Hillys, in Shere – previously visited in the summer, between lockdowns. On that happy occasion we enjoyed a

wonderful cream tea, with home-made scones and jam and proper leaf tea. We noted that they also did savoury cream teas as well as light lunches. This time we were on a circular walk from Newlands Corner, and were looking forward to having lunch sitting outside, but reckoned without the rain! Someone else had bagged the church porch for their picnic, so we returned to Hillys. A table and two chairs stood forlornly outside, with no shelter whatsoever, but hunger and the need to sit down overcame us.

The manager could hardly believe that we were happy to sit outside, and immediately produced two large umbrellas – a nice thought, but of limited use, as we couldn't hold umbrellas, toasted panini and cups of tea (in exquisite bone china cups) at the same time. We actually kept nice and dry in our waterproofs and wolfed the food down before it got cold – although our plates were full of water by the time we'd finished, and the tea was somewhat diluted. The manager was so impressed with our stoicism that he came out with more hot drinks and two chocolate brownies – on the house! Definitely recommended, come rain or shine. www.hillys.co.uk/the-tea-shop.

Gill Wetherall.

3a. "The Foundling" - a book by Stacey Halls

Stacey Halls is a young successful author. This is her second novel and she's already a Sunday Times bestseller.

This book reeled me in so quickly that when I put it down to make myself a cup of tea I realised that I'd read about a third of it. I was totally immersed in the lives of the characters in 18th century London to the extent of walking alongside them through the plot. It took just a few days to read and I felt quite bereft when I

finished as part of me just didn't want it to end. The mark of a good book.

3b. *"The Homesman"* - directed by Tommy Lee Jones (2014)

It's 1850 and a self-sufficient woman called Mary Cuddy needs help escorting three mad women from frontier Nebraska to Iowa. She's helped by a low-life, untrustworthy, rugged, cowboy type played by Tommy Lee Jones. It's a Western, but not quite as we know it. I found the characters to be quite solid and was particularly intrigued by the three mad women. There's a shock horror moment in the film when you think to yourself, "Well, I wasn't expecting that!" It must have been a good film as it was on BBC 1 at 11.30 pm and I didn't fall asleep. High praise indeed!

Mandy Maynard.

4. *"The Beekeeper of Aleppo"* and *"A Watermelon, A Fish and A Bible."* Both books by Christy Lefteri

Christy Lefteri is a child of Cypriot refugees, and spent time working as a volunteer in a refugee hostel in Athens. These are her first novels set in Syria and Cyprus respectively, sensitively and poetically written, illuminating history, the pain of war and the struggle of the human spirit to find hope and survive.

I was posted to work for the British Council in Athens on 16th July 1974, when it seemed Turkey and Greece could go to war over Cyprus. The result was the fall of the Junta and the return of democracy in Greece. But Cyprus remains divided.

I highly recommend these books to you.

Janet Daniel.

5. Web of the Week

Having had fun exploring this, I feel I can thoroughly recommend it. It is free, “creating a simplified and trustworthy door to the web where seniors can share stories”. Its aim is to help people to find interesting items on the web and every Sunday they publish a list of 10 uplifting things that people can view, do, share, or follow; films, articles, music and arts events, even jigsaws, etc, all for free.

They aim to untangle the mysteries of using the web and to make it accessible and enjoyable for all. I find the presenter a bit annoying but It’s certainly worth a try. www.weboftheweek.com

Sue Wood.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

As I’m not sure whether our next newsletter will be in March as our lockdown seems to be ongoing or whether we will be reverting to our usual three issues a year, I have not yet set a deadline for entries. Please help us to decide.

Any entries are always welcome. Whether you are a Group Leader or a member of a group whose special qualities you would like to share in our A-Z of Groups or would like to find other members who share similar hobbies or passions, or have something else you Can’t Wait to Share, here’s your chance.

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

MUSEUM OF EVERYDAY OBJECTS

About 10 years ago a national newspaper published a series of letters with a running joke about small museums dedicated to everyday objects. Someone found the Dickens House bleak and another thought the Fan Museum was cool—you get the idea! I

thought about this recently because at the time I had visited a Cardboard Box Museum and joked that I had not been bored stiff. The museum's full title is le Musée du Cartonnage et de l'Imprimerie and it is in a former box-making factory in Valréas a small town in Provence.

Silk manufacture was an important part of the economy in the 18'00s and to ensure the survival of silkworms from the Far East, a local man, Ferdinand Revoul, invented a box with holes in the lid for air. Assembling of these boxes provided invaluable work for the women of the area as it could be done from home. The manufacture of other types of boxes followed and by the beginning of the 20th century the town was the centre of the cardboard box industry in France.

A video in the museum featured local women who recalled their childhoods when they would help their mothers and grandmothers fulfill the quota of 150 boxes - la grosse douzaine, hence, gross meaning 144 in English. In one corner of the museum is the reconstruction of a rural home near Valréas, where cardboard boxes are stored everywhere, waiting for collection, boxes for famous perfumes, for medicine, for jewellery, for sweets. Examples are on display and we went round, pointing out familiar ones. We were not in a cardboard box museum but taking a peep into the lives of a whole society in France. We found it fascinating and all for €2 each.

Do you have a favourite museum dedicated to an everyday object, which fascinated you? Do share your enjoyment with other members of Richmond U3A!

Norma Cook.

RON SALMONS 1924 – 2020

Almost thirty years ago Ron and Peggy Salmons signed up, along with 17 other Richmond residents, to form the Richmond upon Thames U3A. They had membership numbers 11 and 12. In February 1996 Ron became Chairman, a post he ably filled until 2002 at which point membership had risen during his tenure from about 200 to over 300 with two or three new enquiries every week.

When I became Chairman, Ron was President, and I was frequently relieved to be able to turn to him for specialist knowledge and words of wisdom. He was blessed with a warm and welcoming presence, an unfailing charm, and a deep intelligence. Ron was a very special person and Richmond U3A benefitted enormously from all the time, energy and enthusiasm he brought to its service.

Although he has not been able to attend meetings recently there will be many of us with happy memories of him and gratitude for all he has contributed to our organisation.

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

Ron's son has sent me the ceremony script of Ron's funeral which includes the family's tribute, the readings and details of the music played. If you would like a copy, please email me and I will forward it to you.

RICHMOND U3A SPEAKERS JAN – MAR 2021

Until Government regulations allow us to meet in Clarendon Hall, we will hold these meetings via Zoom. Members will be sent an email “invitation” to join prior to each meeting.

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month at 14:30.

27th Jan: Dr Jackie Bell – Becoming an Astronaut

Jackie was chosen from over 3,500 applicants on the BBC series – Astronauts: Do You have what it Takes? – to undertake tests used to select astronauts at space agencies around the world.

24th Feb: RuT U3A AGM and Jane L’Epine-Smith – The Last Gentleman of Film

In 1916, aged 13, Eric L’Epine Smith ran away from home to appear in a silent film. Whilst running a theatrical agency he discovered Michael Wilding, Errol Flynn, Rex Harrison, Petula Clark, Vera Lynn and Diana Dors, etc. His daughter Jane takes us on a fascinating journey, giving interesting insights into the British film industry of the 1930s and 1940s.

31st Mar: Mark Scudamore, Chris Hack and Brian Holding – The Rotary

Rotary is an international service organisation that has been going for over 100 years. It brings together business and professional people to provide humanitarian service and to advance goodwill and peace around the world. You will learn what Rotary is today and about the activities of one of the Rotary clubs in our Borough. Our speakers are Mark Scudamore and Brian Holding - 2 long-serving Rotarians and Chris Hack - the new boy.

April 2021 – No meeting. Clarendon Hall requisitioned for electoral purposes.

NOTICE OF AGM 2021

RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
Registered Charity No. 1012343

Notice is hereby given that the thirtieth Annual General Meeting will be held online at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 24th February 2021

AGENDA

1. Opening remarks from the President, Stephen Jakobi
2. Apologies for absence
3. Adoption of the Minutes of the twenty ninth AGM
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
5. To receive and approve the Annual Report from the Chair
6. To receive and approve the Treasurer's Report and Accounts (distributed)
7. Appointment of Examiner for 2020 Accounts
8. Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee for the year 2020
9. Any other business

The Committee consists of 10 members, including the officers: Chair–Chris Hack, Vice-Chair–Libby Barton, Treasurer–John Cardwell, Secretary–Sue Wood and Members–Chris Barclay, Norma Cook, Bob Litherland, Peggy Roe, Herbert Wirth and David Wood.

This year the terms of office for the following expire: Chris Hack, who is standing down, and the following members who offer themselves for re-election: Libby Barton, Sue Wood, Chris Barclay, Norma Cook, Bob Litherland, Peggy Roe, Herbert Wirth.

If you would like to stand for election, please fill in the nomination form below. Do not hesitate to put yourself forward, just find two members to support your nomination.

Cut -----

Richmond-upon-Thames U3A AGM 24th February 2021

Nominee as Chairman, Vice Chairman, Membership Secretary, or Committee Member (Please circle appropriate position)

Name _____ Signature*

Membership No _____

Proposer's Name _____ Signature

Membership No _____

Secunder's Name _____ Signature

Membership No _____

*My signature above confirms that I agree to stand for election.

Post to Sue Wood, 32 Orleans Road, Twickenham, TW1 3BL, to arrive by Wednesday, 17th February 2021

MINUTES OF AGM 2020

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
held on 26th February 2020 at 2.30pm in the Clarendon Hall, York
House, Twickenham.

The President, Stephen Jakobi, was invited to take the Chair.

1. Opening remarks: The President extended a warm welcome to everyone. He then explained that he was passive president, in other words, he was there to be contacted if members wanted to consult him on a matter about which they were anxious or worried or if there was a crisis. He was also available to visit other groups.
2. Apologies for Absence: Leah Levin, Paul Leonard, Sue Wood, Libby Barton, David Wood and Herbert Wirth.
3. Adoption of Minutes of the twenty eighth AGM held on February 27th, 2019, which had been distributed to members was agreed nem.con.
4. Matters Arising: None
5. The Chairman's Annual Report: This had previously been distributed. The Chairman, Chris Hack, was heartened to report that the Richmond U3A continued to grow and that there were now nearly 1500 members and 150 groups. He mentioned some of the new groups which had recently been formed. He ended by saying that he had every confidence that 2020 would be another good year.

The report was approved nem con.

6. Treasurer's Report and Accounts: these had been distributed and the Treasurer, John Cardwell, gave a short report.

There was a slight surplus in line with previous years. There were 270 new members but 150 had not renewed. The Beacon management system was likely to be introduced soon, this year.

There were no questions, and the report and accounts were adopted nem con.

7. Appointment of examiner for 2019 accounts:

Danny Rybowski was thanked for examining the 2019 accounts. This is much appreciated. His offer to do so for the 2020 accounts was approved unanimously.

8. Election of Officers and members of the Executive Committee:

Nominations for the re-election of John Cardwell as Treasurer and David Wood as membership secretary had been received and having been proposed and seconded, these were approved nem con. No other nominations had been received.

9. Any other Business: There was no other business. The chairman thanked the committee for the sterling work they had done and would continue to do. He then closed the meeting.