

Kingston U3A

www.kingstonu3a.org.uk

The University of The Third Age is a national network of self-help groups run by and for older people. It was started in England in 1982 and all U3As are educational charities and members of the Third Age Trust which is their national support and advisory body. There are over 1000 U3As with a total membership of 400,000 throughout the UK, each running their affairs independently. The idea of setting up classes for retired people was started in France in 1971 and the organisation has spread worldwide.

The Third Age Trust believes that retired people have a wealth of knowledge, experience and skills which they might like to share with others. Members form groups to learn or take part in an activity but there are no examinations and no "terms". New groups can start at any time during the year and may be held weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

Kingston U3A was established in 1991. It has over 1000 members and more than 90 groups. Most are held in members' homes, which limits their size but means that costs are minimal. If you cannot join the group of your choice because it is already full or held on an inconvenient day please telephone the appropriate Group Coordinator and ask to be put on the waiting list. Phone numbers can be found in the Newsletter which is sent to you when you join. When a few people are listed we try to find a leader to take a new group. There is further information on our website which is updated regularly.

Groups are self-financing. Some, such as Singing and Art hire a hall or engage a tutor. Other groups have books on loan, use tapes, videos, 'DVD's or magazines. All these items are funded by members of the groups concerned and it is usual to make a contribution of 50p for refreshments provided.

There are coach trips and visits to places of interest in and around London and holidays in the UK and Europe are arranged. The Walks section offers walks locally and in London. Such events offer the chance to get to know what others are enjoying. Interesting speakers can be heard at the afternoon Monthly Meeting, usually held on the first Monday of the month unless it is a Bank Holiday when it will be held on the following Monday. National Office send out Third Age Matters five times a year and this magazine has information about activities in other U3As. This is free and is posted direct to your home. There are Shared Learning Projects usually held in museums where members from several U3As work with museum staff. Study Days are held at the Menuhin Hall, Stoke d'Abernon, Surrey. Three-day Summer Schools are held at various university campuses.

A printed newsletter is produced by Kingston U3A every three months and mailed to members giving an up to date list of classes and an e mailed newsletter is available in the intervening months. Some members assist leaders to run their groups, some host groups and a team makes and serves tea at the monthly meetings. We are totally dependent on people willing to give up some of their time to the organisation and it is an excellent way to get to know other members.

The annual subscription (from October 1st to September 30th the following year) is **£20 for a couple at the same address and £13 for a single person. New members joining after 31st March and before 31st July pay 50% of the appropriate fee** for the current year.

Please telephone the Membership Secretary if you require further information on 020 8399 0163