



Chair's Remarks



I see the lights in the precinct are already in place which means Christmas is already on the horizon. Some of you are off to Hever Castle for a festive lunch and the Kingston U3A Singers are getting ready for their Christmas concert.

And what a lot of things you've been up to – holidays in Devon, cycling in Blackpool, learning to play croquet and admiring the view from the City's roof-top gardens.

Suzie Vernel has already drawn up a list of talks and speakers for our monthly meetings in 2020. Good work,

Suzie! You'll find details of all those talks on page 11.

I'd like to extend my thanks to three members who have volunteered to help us: Jacqui Hine (GAS), Liz Brown (Finance) and Margaret Harold (New Member Liaison). We're still looking for help with communications, the database and the website, if anyone would like to volunteer in any of these areas in 2020.

Gisela and her team, meanwhile, have been busy organising trips to Greenwich and the Houses of Parliament next year, not to mention an enticing tour of famous locations in the Peak District.

It only remains for me to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Ireni Esler

Monthly Meetings

2 December: A Celebratory History of Christmas Andy Thomas offers us this deeper understanding of the history of the festival.

6 January: Kingston U3A Annual Quiz Please arrive in good time for a prompt start at 2pm. Numbers are limited: first come, first served.

3 February: The Cinema Museum Director Martin Humphries discusses the cultural importance of films and how things have changed over the years.

*2pm (doors open 1.20pm), United Reformed Church, Eden Street, Kingston
Members only*

Group News

Shakespeare's Comedies

Come along and reappraise Shakespeare's comedies, using video and textual analysis, as we examine gender fluidity in Elizabethan drama.

If you are interested in joining the group in the Surbiton area, please contact Peter Wills: 020 8399 5190
wills2274@gmail.com

Beginners Ukulele

A six-week course to learn the ukulele will start early next year. The teacher, Tara, will take the class through the basics of playing the instrument and provide ukuleles to anyone who does not already have one.

Time: 11am-12 noon

Dates: Weekly, Tuesdays, 7 January-11 February

Place: Community Room, First Floor, Kingston Guildhall, High Street, Kingston, KT1 1EU

Cost: £6 per session

If you would like to join, please contact Christine Evans: 020 8224 1985
christineevans2@aol.com

British & World History in the 19th Century

This group has a few vacancies. Currently they are looking at the links between South America, Britain and Europe. Find out how the loss of Spain's Empire in South America was a cause of the Opium Wars and had other far-reaching consequences.

If you are interested, please contact Iain McLean: 07983 332701
wimmclean@hotmail.co.uk

Scrabble

This group meets opposite Kingston Hospital and is run by Marita Brown. If you are interested, please contact Marita: 020 8942 5077
maritabrown@doctors.org.uk

Poetry Reading

This new group will meet in the Chessington area. If you are interested, please contact Jennifer Fairweather: 020 8391 5164 or 07445 615221
jenfair@waitrose.com

Further Offers ...

Ideas for new groups are always welcome. Please contact Shirley Miller: 020 8940 8573
shirley.miller4@btinternet.com

Kingston U3A Singers: Christmas Concert

Come along and enjoy a pleasant evening with us at our Christmas concert:

Time/Date: 7.30pm Saturday, 14 December

Place: Malden Methodist Church, New Malden High Street

Cost: £8 Tickets available from Sheila Evans (020 3602 6245), any member of the choir, or at the door.

We'll be singing an entertaining mixture of songs, with performances, too, by our smaller group, as well as two organ solos.

We look forward to seeing you!

If our concert inspires you to sing along with us, we offer a friendly welcome, with no audition, at our meetings at 10.30am on Thursdays at Glenmore House, 6 The Crescent, Surbiton, KT6 4BN. There's ample parking on site and we're close to Surbiton station and the bus stop outside Waitrose. For more

details please contact Helga Randall on 020 8397 8712.

Why not come along and give it a try?

MOTO 1



L-R: Ann Francis, Elaine Lewis, Ines White & Brenda Gunter in the roof garden at 120 Fenchurch Street

We visited one of the roof gardens on City tower blocks which have recently been opened to the public. We went to the gardens on the Ismaili Centre in King's Cross, several on different levels with peaceful atmospheres and great views of London.

Elinor Parker

Six go to Pitzhanger Manor

The U3A Social History group has been studying the Georgian period (1714-1837) for the last 18 months. We've all learned a lot and enjoyed a variety of topics such as monarchy and the people, education, entertainment, politics/religion/Ireland, food/drink/family life, transport, and world expansion/trade.

On Thursday, 5 September, to mark the end of our study of the period, six members of our group went on our annual visit, this time to Pitzhanger

Manor in Ealing. We had an interesting tour of the house. Recently refurbished, it's an attractive, tranquil building with interesting architectural features, including a conservatory overlooking the gardens, now part of Walpole Park, itself extensive and well worth a visit.

At the beginning of the 19th century Pitzhanger Manor was owned by Sir John Soane (1753-1837). Of course, in those days, Ealing was a rural location, a long way from London. Not that this seemed to bother Sir John, who, apparently, often walked all the way across the fields to his country residence from central London. He was one of the most inventive architects of his time. Among his designs are Pitzhanger Manor itself, the Bank of England and Dulwich Picture Gallery, as well as his own extraordinary London home, which he built by buying, demolishing and rebuilding three adjacent houses – 12, 13 and 14 Lincoln's Inn Fields.

This autumn we've moved on to study the 1625-1714 period and we'll be



Five members of the Social History group: back row l-r: Julian Shute & Kevin Breach front row l-r: Philippa Shute, Jeanette Sweetman & Jane Breach



6th member: Jill Hyman

looking at religion, politics, art, the Civil War, the execution of Charles I, and Oliver Cromwell.

If you are interested in Pitzhanger Manor, you can get there on the 65 bus from

Kingston and it's only a short walk from the Grange Road bus stop once you get to Ealing. For more details, see www.pitzhanger.org.uk/

Jane Breach

Anyone for Croquet?



Lorraine and Philip Hellen on the croquet lawn

One summer morning 16 KU3A members turned up at Surbiton Croquet Club to take part in a six-session taster course, designed to introduce us to croquet, or more correctly 'golf croquet'.

We soon began to learn the correct lingo – expressions like:

- **Stalking the ball:** lining yourself up in the correct position to strike your ball so

that it goes straight to where you want it – either through the hoop, or into an advantageous position.

- **Running the hoop:** hitting your ball through the hoop.

- **Jumping the ball:** striking your ball in such a way that it jumps over your opponent's ball which is sitting right under the hoop, in its 'jaws', but hasn't gone all the way through.



Hazel Burr runs the hoop successfully

But before we began to play there was a reminder about health and safety. Carelessly swinging a heavy wooden mallet could not only result in injuring a fellow player but is just as likely to turn your own shins a lovely shade of puce. You had to be aware, too, of where you were going if you didn't want to trip over the iron hoops on the court. Lessons we obviously heeded as we all finished the course with a full complement of limbs.

The aim of golf croquet is to win points by knocking your ball through a series of hoops before your opponent does. The winner is the individual, or couple, who runs seven hoops.

As Alice found out in Wonderland croquet is 'a very difficult game indeed'. We beginners, new to the croquet lawn, soon realised that there was more to swinging the mallet than we anticipated. But then so did Alice and she didn't even have the conventional mallet but an up-side-down flamingo. We soon realised

we had to judge how hard or gently to hit the ball to send it way down the lawn, or nudge it gently into position or through the hoop.

Maureen Abel:

I've never before met such a fun group of people who seemed to enjoy our croquet matches as much as I did.

Lorraine and Philip Hellen, seasoned croquet players, had kindly organised the course for Kingston U3A members. We were divided into small groups and taught the technique of the game and its rules by experienced players. Our grateful thanks go to Lorraine, Philip, and club members Andy, John, Barry, Bruce, Alan, Val and Maureen (hopefully no names left out) for their advice, patience and good humour.

Reactions to the course were excellent. Jan Wijayarathne particularly liked the strategic aspect of the game: blocking her opponent(s) from running the hoop if she couldn't manage it herself.

Another beginner, Hazel Burr, realised that playing croquet wouldn't be easy: 'Lining up the ball, judging the distance and the force of the strike all proved a challenge initially, but I felt I was getting

better at it after a few lessons.' All of us appreciated being taught in small groups and the individual attention this gave us.

So successful was the taster course that Lorraine arranged a further six sessions for those who were keen to learn more and improve their game. The course culminated in an exciting knockout competition won by Gavin McFarlane, with Hazel Burr as the runner up.

What a delight to be able to learn croquet at the leading croquet club in the south of England, on lawns like billiard tables. And the club coaches are so friendly and encouraging.

Gavin McFarlane

Lorraine and Philip hope to start up the group again in May 2020 and will offer another taster course to members of KU3A who are interested.

Anyone for croquet? Yes, indeed!



L-R: Valerie Hodgson, Maureen Abel & Nanette Gray

The warm welcome from Surbiton Croquet Club and the excellent tuition made the croquet sessions so enjoyable. We're most grateful to Lorraine and Philip Hellen for their excellent organisation.

Sheila & Peter Gent

Up The Mall & along The Promenade

You no doubt noticed a lot of the local roads closed to all but bicycles one Sunday in early August. This year's Prudential RideLondon was underway. Taking part in the Surrey 19 event were some members of Kingston U3A's

the cyclists rode the 19 miles via Esher, Kingston, Raynes Park, Wimbledon, Putney, Chelsea and Westminster to finish on The Mall in front of Buckingham Palace. 'It took us just over two hours to complete the route at a steady pace, and walking up the odd hill,' says Richard Post. 'It was a great feeling to see the crowds along the route cheering us on our way.' And as if 19 miles wasn't

enough, Richard and fellow rider Bill Overton cycled the 12 miles back home to Kingston.

Chris, sporting his impressive medallion for completing the course, sums up the last stage of the ride: 'It was quite a thrilling experience cycling up The Mall. But what a pity HMQ hadn't got the kettle on for us!'

The Kingston Cycling group meets a couple of times a month and most of the rides are local. Occasionally they take the train and start the ride in central London or out in the countryside around the city. On 27 August, however, nine members of the group headed northwards and



L-R: Richard, Chris Ulla, Sheila & Bill

Cycling group. According to group member Sheila Taylor, fellow cyclist Chris Johns was the inspiration behind five of them signing up for the event. Indeed it was Chris who organised the T-shirts you can see them wearing in the photos. 'Well, I thought it would be a good idea for us to have a group identity,' explains Chris, 'and the cyclist's yellow jersey seemed the obvious choice.'

The event started at Sandown Park Racecourse and



Clockwise from bottom left: Stuart, Nanette, Ulla, Jan, Sheila, Peter, Chris & Pamela

joined Ride the Lights, the annual event in Blackpool when the Promenade is closed to all traffic except bikes. It's a great way to get a preview of the famous lights before the official Big Illumination Switch On.

'It seemed as if every bike in Lancashire was there,' says leader Pamela Crisp, 'as we all congregated on the Promenade.' There were cyclists of all ages, many with illuminations on their bikes which Chris thought was 'such a nice touch'. The group joined in about eight o'clock. 'But not before we'd had a big plate of fish and chips to sustain us along the way,' adds Richard Post.



Luckily the weather was favourable – dry, a bit cloudy, but a nice sunset to add to the colours of the Illuminations. 'It took us a couple of hours to ride the eight or so miles,' estimates Pamela, 'although we did stop en route to take photos and buy some Blackpool rock. And in spite of the numbers, our group managed to stay together throughout.'

What were the Illuminations like? Impressive, naturally, although Chris remembers many of them from childhood holidays in the 1950s and 60s and didn't think they'd changed much.

Richard reckoned they'd had a 'champion time' at the event and offered 'a big thank you to group leaders Pamela and Stuart Crisp for a very successful Blackpool adventure'. And, they still have the yellow T-shirts to wear on the fortnightly Kingston U3A cycle rides.

Houses of Parliament Saturday, 11 January

On a 90-minute tour a Blue Badge guide will show us round the Houses of Parliament.

As we go through the Commons Chamber and the Lords Chamber, we'll find out how Parliament works, follow in the footsteps of the Queen at the State Opening and be inspired by the 1,000-year-old Westminster Hall.

From Waterloo station, we'll make the short Underground journey to Westminster then walk for a few minutes to the Houses of Parliament.

Date: Saturday, 11 January

Meeting Time/Place: 10am, Waterloo station, opposite platform 1

Cost: £20

If you would like to come, please complete the enclosed application form and send it with your cheque, made payable to Kingston U3A (GAS) and an sae (if you do not give an email address) to Sheila Evans, Apt 8, Maple Leaf House, 67-69 Maple Road, Surbiton, KT6 4AG Tel no: 020 3602 6245

If you give an email address, all information will be sent by email, including any changes to timings, so please check your inbox regularly.

Painted Ceiling, Greenwich Friday, 28 February

With our own special guide we'll have the opportunity to view the recently restored Painted Ceiling in the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich. This ceremonial dining room, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, has one of the largest

ceilings in Europe and is often referred to as the 'Sistine Chapel of the UK'.

From Waterloo Station we'll take the Jubilee line to North Greenwich station, then bus 188 (stop C) to Greenwich Museum opposite the Old Royal Naval College (7 stops). We'll have tea/coffee and a pastry on arrival in the Painted Hall Undercroft Café before meeting our guide and viewing the Painted Ceiling.

You'll then be free to view other areas of the Naval College open to the public and go into the Visitor Centre where The Old Brewery pub serves local beers and seasonal food (not included in the cost). Return to Waterloo by river on the Thames Clipper from Greenwich Pier to the London Eye (£3.65 with your Freedom Pass) or return to the main gate of the College for bus 188 which stops outside to take you back to North Greenwich station and the Jubilee line.

Date: Friday, 28 February

Meeting Time/Place: 10am for 10.15am, Waterloo station opposite platform 1

Cost: £21.15

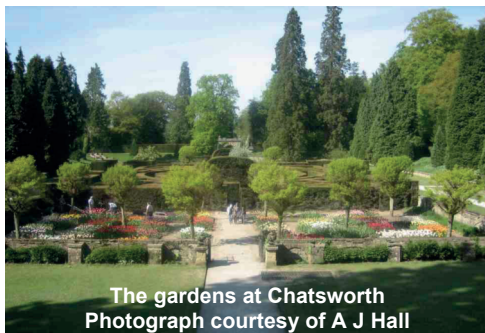
If you'd like to come, please complete the enclosed application form and send it with your cheque, made payable to Kingston U3A (GAS), and an sae to Jacqui Hine, 85 Richmond Park Road, Kingston, KT2 6AF. jacqui@hine.org.uk

Historic Houses & Gardens in the Peak District 11-15 May

Day 1: Travelling by executive coach from our designated pick-up points, our first stop is the National Trust's Baddesley Clinton in Warwickshire, home of the Ferrers family for 500 years. Much of the house was built in the late

1500s by Henry Ferrers, a lawyer, diarist and antiquarian. It was a sanctuary for the Ferrers family and for persecuted Catholics who were concealed from priest hunters in its secret hiding places. We'll continue to the 4-star Cophorne Hotel in Sheffield for our four-night stay.

Day 2: Our guide accompanies us throughout the day as we visit Bakewell in the morning before continuing to Chatsworth (home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire). One of Britain's most famous houses and estates, it featured in the film *Pride and Prejudice*. With its works of art and beautiful gardens, Chatsworth is set in the magnificent landscape of Derbyshire's Peak District National Park.



Day 3: We visit Renishaw Hall and Gardens, home to the Sitwell family for almost 400 years, before continuing to Hardwick Hall and Gardens, another National Trust property. It was built by the famous Elizabethan Bess of Hardwick and is testament to her wealth and status. Hardwick Hall is almost unchanged since she lived there in the formality of Elizabethan courtly life.

Day 4: In the morning we spend some time in Buxton before driving to Haddon Hall, a fortified manor house dating back to the 12th century, and surrounded by terraced Elizabethan gardens.

Day 5: On our way home from Sheffield we visit the Crich Tramway Village in the heart of Derbyshire overlooking the Derwent Valley. This restored period village is home to the National Tramway Museum and its archives.

Hotel: 4 nights in 4-star Copthorne Hotel, Sheffield
www.millenniumhotels.co.uk

Cost: £469 (including executive coach, hotel for four nights sharing a twin/double room on half-board basis, Blue Badge guide for days 2,3 and 4. Single room supplement: £99)

If you would like to join this holiday, please complete the enclosed application form and send it with an sae (not too small, please) to:
Gisela Zürcher-Feiß, 37 The Byeways,
Surbiton, KT5 8HT Tel: 020 8399 4990

Historic Houses & Heritage of Devon

A report of the tour by Delores Boase

Even though I'm a native of Cornwall, I was pleased to be able to visit nearby Devon with my friends in Kingston U3A.

On our way there via Dorset we visited our first National Trust (NT) property. The Royalist Bankes family built Kingston

Lacy in the 1660s and later generations created the Italianate palace that today stands amid extensive grounds. It houses a huge art collection and has lavish interiors. Some of our members said the outlying kitchen and Japanese gardens were worth the walk there.

Devon, and our first visit was to the bustling, historic fishing port of Brixham with its shops and galleries. William of Orange landed here to claim the English throne and Napoleon is said to have spotted it on his way to St Helena.

Built in the 1920s by the D'Oyly Carte family, Coleton Fishacre reflects the style of both the Arts & Crafts and Art Deco movements. During our visit pianists and opera singers were performing in the salon, the sound wafting outside as we visited the gardens.

In Dartmouth the next day we boarded our ferry to travel up the river Dart to Greenway, holiday home of Agatha Christie which she described as the loveliest place in the world. It sits on a hill above the estuary with a steep woodland path winding up to it. We were certainly grateful for the chances to sit down along the way. Little of the

Photograph courtesy of Shailesh Patel



original Tudor house remains and the setting now is more 1950s, when Agatha and her family holidayed there. They were great collectors and the house is filled with their memorabilia. During the war American forces were billeted there. In the library they painted a frieze of battle scenes which Agatha declined to have covered over because of its historical interest.

There was a 1950s-themed event while we were there. Volunteers and visitors were in period clothing and one Miss Marple lookalike was very convincing.

Our last full day began with a guided walking tour of Exeter. Once a Saxon settlement, then a Roman fortified town, the city still has some older buildings and narrower streets within the original city walls. Exeter Cathedral replaced the earlier Saxon minster and is said to be one of the oldest and most beautiful in England. The architectural style varies from Romanesque to Decorated Gothic.

We moved on to Powderham Castle, family home of the Earls of Devon since it was built in the late 14th century. The estate with its ancient deer park covers 3,500 acres. The marble entrance leads to the grand staircase hall which was constructed in the early 1700s with rococo wall decorations and turquoise paintwork. The castle boasts two libraries and a music room with both a piano and a piped organ.

For our final day we visited Killerton, a Georgian mansion built around 1780 for the Acland family. In the 1890s the 12th Baronet installed heating and plumbing and glamorised the house to such an extent that he was accused of spending money as if it were going out of fashion. Sir Richard Acland inherited the house in

1939 and donated the property to the National Trust in 1944. The gift included over 6,000 acres of land and included farms, houses and the pub.

Our thanks to Gisela Zürcher-Feiß and her team for putting together this wonderful tour. And congratulations, too, for ensuring there was a mini Indian summer in Devon for us all to enjoy during our tour there.

Kingston Third Age Orchestra

The K3AO began in 2010 as a Kingston U3A group, but we are now a charity in our own right and welcome players who can rehearse with us on Wednesday mornings in Kingston United Reformed Church. We are actively recruiting first violinists of at least Grade 5 standard.

Our next concert is at 3pm on Sunday, 8 December at St Andrew's Church, Maple Road, Surbiton. On Sunday, 29 March we'll be performing in All Saints Church, Kingston.

If you are interested in joining the orchestra, please check the website: kingstonthirdageorchestra.org.uk and/or contact the secretary, Mary Hayes at mary.h.hayes@gmail.com.

Trevor & Barbara Harrison

River Thames Boat Project

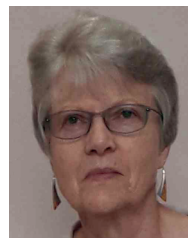
The River Thames Boat Project, a small local charity, has two community boats moored off Canbury Gardens. It runs cruises for the elderly or disabled who wouldn't otherwise get out on the river. It also organises education days on the environment for primary school children.



Apart from four permanent employees, this is all done with volunteers. As the education days are very popular, we'd like to recruit more volunteer tutors. We wondered if any of you with an interest in the river and environmental matters might be interested in volunteering for this role. You would, of course, receive training and support as required. If you are interested, please check the website at: <https://thamesboatproject.org/> or contact Peter Oldham at: peter@thamesboatproject.org

Apologies to Jacqui Humphreys

In an article in August's newsletter Jacqui talked about the Kingston U3A archive and her role as archivist. Her email address at the end was wrong. If you wish to contact Jacqui, the correct address is:



jacquihumphreys3@gmail.com

Monthly Meetings 2020: dates and proposed topics/speakers

Here are the dates for next year's monthly meetings. More information about each talk will be given closer to the time.

Date	Topics/Speakers
6 Jan	Kingston U3A Annual Quiz – prompt start at 2pm, numbers limited
3 Feb	The Cinema Museum – Martin Humphries
2 Mar	Memory Boxes and Time Capsules – Jo Livingston (U3A Member)
6 Apr	House of the Romanov – Siobhan E Clarke
4 May	Footsteps in Summer – Russell George (Please note the date of this talk. The usual early May bank holiday has been moved to Friday, 8 May to commemorate VE day.)
1 Jun	Forensic DNA – Kerri Allen
6 Jul	Changing World of Broadcast Media – Pat Mitchinson
3 Aug	Music in Art – Sophie Matthews and Chris Green
7 Sep	Auerbach, Bacon, Freud, Hockney, Hodgkin, & Kossoff – Colin Wiggins
5 Oct	Measuring Time – Edward Yeadon (U3A Member)
2 Nov	AGM/Stella Reading & Women's Voluntary Services – Carol Harris
7 Dec	Cribs, Cards and Christingles – Mark Lewis

Kingston U3A Executive Committee 2019/2020

Registered Charity No. 1011295

Chair	Dr Ireni Esler	Surbiton	07788 247208 chair@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Lorraine Hellen	Surbiton	020 8390 5718 secretary@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Treasurer	Joy Garvey	Surbiton	020 8399 9323 treasurer@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Vice Chair & Database Manager	Linda Foreman	Surbiton	020 8390 0109 database@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Membership Secretary	Jane Hoyland	Surbiton	020 8399 0163 membership@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Groups Coordinator	Shirley Miller	Petersham	020 8940 8573 groupcoordinator@kingstonu3a.org.uk
General Activities Section (GAS)	Gisela Zürcher-Feiß	Surbiton	020 8399 4990 generalactivities@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Web Coordinator	Diane Wilson	New Malden	07944 333519 website@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Speaker Secretary	Suzie Vernel	Surbiton	07766 012947 speakers@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Newsletter and Bulletin Editor	Susan Hinchsliffe	Kingston	07814 487727 newsletter@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Change of Address

Please send updates to:
Linda Foreman, Database Manager,
54 Berrylands Road, Surbiton,
KT5 8PD or email her at:

database@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Contributing to the Newsletter

Tell us what your group has been doing or the visits and holidays you've enjoyed. We'd also like to receive poems or short reviews of books, plays, films or exhibitions.

Contributions should be no more than 500 words but there's always room for smaller items too. Photographs always help to illustrate your contribution but

don't forget to send a caption and/or the names of people shown in them. Photos need to be in .JPG format and need to be sent as separate files and not embedded in a Word document.

Please send your contributions and photos to:

communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Distribution

In 2020 the newsletter will be posted around the middle of the month in February, May, August and November. If it fails to reach you within a reasonable time, or if it is incomplete in any way, please contact Ann Phillips on 020 8397 0495.