

Kingston u3a Newsletter

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Spring 2022



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www.kingstonu3a.org.uk

The year has started well for us. New members have joined and most of our groups are back to normal. Our online annual quiz was a success: Diane Wilson tells us how it went. Read about the Wine Group's verdict on sparkling wines, and Frances Welsh's memories of the Sudan.

We say thank you to Shirley Bolton, who is giving up her leadership of one of our walking groups. Both she and Gisela Zürcher-Feiß highlight the need for more volunteers to help with running both Kingston **u3a** and its groups. Some Committee members are due to retire soon and we need other members to prepare to take over their roles. It would be possible to share some of the jobs with another member.

Although restrictions are easing, **u3a** will continue to observe any Covid regulations in force at the time. Group leaders are, however, free to enforce their own rules in their homes, so please comply with their wishes. Mask-wearing on public transport may no longer be compulsory but people organising our coach trips can still insist on face coverings. If you are unhappy with this, please contact me at:

chair@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Enjoy returning to your activities but please keep safe!

Linda Foreman

Chair



Group News

Update from Shirley Miller, Groups Coordinator

It's good to report a more positive situation as regards our groups. New ones are starting up, as others renew their activities and meetings. If you are interested in setting up a new group, please contact Shirley Miller at: shirley.miller4@btinternet.com or 020 8940 8573.

Chess

We've had a generous offer from a member of Surbiton Chess Club to start a chess group for us.

Surbiton Chess Club is held at the Willoughby Arms on Monday evenings. All are welcome.

If you are interested, please contact John Foley at: johnpfoley@blueyonder.co.uk



Drama

We are now able to add a Drama Group to our list of activities. This will meet in Surbiton Library on Wednesdays.

If you are interested, please contact Clare Gollop at: 07855 757388 or claregollop@googlemail.com

Mahjong



Mahjong is a Chinese game for everyone. The basics are easy to learn and it can be enjoyed by beginners or experienced players.

The group will meet at 10am on the second Wednesday of the month, in the Surbiton area.

If you are interested, please contact Toni Twaite at: 07799 813475 family.twaite@gmail.com

Opera Appreciation

This popular group is starting up again. We'll meet once every two months in North Kingston at 11.30am, Fridays. The first meeting will be 18 March.

If you are interested, please contact Paul Storm-Larsen at: 020 8409 0354 or paul.sto@blueyonder.co.uk

Walking Group (two hours): Shirley Bolton

In our Winter Newsletter Shirley, the leader of this group, asked for volunteers to help out with and take over the leadership of the group. Sadly no one has come forward and, because of her

own and her husband's ill health, Shirley is no longer able to head up the group, so it will have to fold.

Shirley has been leading this group for over 10 years. Unfortunately some of her members are now too old or frail to continue and others have been adversely affected by Covid, so are not able to take on her role as leader. She says, 'I think a drive is needed to encourage younger and new members to come forward with their time and talents, if they wish the **u3a** to continue for their advancing years.'

Linda Foreman and the other Committee members would like to say a big thank you to Shirley for her work and dedication. Many members have appreciated her work on planning and leading the walks over the years.

If you think you could lead the group, please contact Shirley Miller at: shirley.miller4@btinternet.com or 020 8940 8573.

Please check the Groups & Contacts list in the middle of the newsletter for vacancies in other walking groups that might suit you. And we always welcome new groups doing different distances and routes.

Climate Emergency

In June 2019 Kingston Council declared a climate emergency, which is defined as 'a situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it'. (Wikipedia). Ninety-nine per cent of scientists agree that it is human made



and will need human action to stop it.

This is no longer an interesting discussion point about making a few modifications to our lifestyle. It is an emergency. COP26 did not produce the hoped for results.

If you are concerned about this, want to learn more about what needs to be done and how we can do it, please get in touch with Christine Thompson at: chris.cpt3@tiscali.co.uk

A Sparkling Occasion

Our Wine Group hopes to continue as normal this year. We don't know what will happen in the future but our plans are unchanged at present.

For our pre-Christmas meeting we chose sparkling wines. We blind tasted three Champagnes against three similar types of English sparkling wines. It was remarkable that the English wines put up a good show. We voted for our favourites and overall the French just won.

I would suggest, if anyone is thinking of trying English wines, that the place to start is with sparkling ones, as both white and rosé wines can be very fresh and

exciting. They are, however, priced to compare with French wines and consequently some of the really good examples are expensive.

The range of English wines is expanding fast with new wines coming on to the market every year. English still white wines, more so than red, are fairly expensive and different. It's not a place to expect a tasty bargain – yet.

For a great day out in the spring and summer look on the Internet for 'English Vineyards'. Most now offer tours with tastings in the open air. You'll need to book a few days in advance but expect fresh air, fresh wine and interesting information about the vines and the method of making wine.



We have 10 members at the moment and so are full. This number is determined by the balance between sharing a bottle of wine and how many people we can comfortably fit into a room. But we do have someone interested in joining and, if we can find a few more of you interested in exploring the world of wine, we could see if a second group could be established. If you're interested in wine, do contact me – **Bob Higgins** at: bobhiggins@virginmedia.com

Annual Quiz

Our traditional 'Welcome to the New Year Quiz' in January was cautiously but, as it turned out, wisely an online Zoom version this year. Invitations to all were sent out and initially a fairly slow trickle of the technically confident volunteered to attend. Gradually, after some gentle encouragement, this rose to 10 teams of six, with a few actually being made into seven.

What ... ?

There was a mix of groups who either knew each other and were settling down together around a computer, perhaps sharing refreshments, while others bravely agreed to be randomly put into a team, possibly meeting each other in the online breakout rooms for the first time. But it was from one of these latter groups that our eventual winners came.

Our professional quiz master suggested each team choose a colour. 'What's in a colour?' you may ask. Well, interestingly, it was the **Purple Team** that triumphed, followed by the **Red Team** – imperial and regal colours. Could that be the reason or just a coincidence?

Why ... ?

We had five rounds of 10 questions. Of the more innovative rounds, one was on cakes and another on European national anthems. Well done if you can recognise the Turkish or Estonian anthem. One of our quizzers with a Ukrainian son-in-law did just that. In the cake round another quizzer who had been a schoolgirl in Kent recognised the gypsy tart,

When ... ?

Where ...?

apparently a Kentish speciality. The last round was on films with a sporting theme, so *Seabiscuit*, *Invictus* and *Bend It Like Beckham* were amongst the answers. So that was horse racing, rugby and football as themes.

Apart from our winners who were five points ahead of the field, the results were within a close range of scores, so bravo the quiz master for gauging the standard of his audience.

The winning **Purple Team** were Joyce Hardy, Susan Fleming, Margaret Finnegan, Tom Hill, Shelia Herrando and Carolyn Hartley. They have, of course, won our annual star prize, which is to be the creators of next year's quiz, as well as getting a £10 book token each. Many congratulations to them!

Diane Wilson

How ...?

further trips. I felt rather sad about this. I've organised **u3a** outings for over 20 years and have never been in a situation like this. But it looks as if restrictions are easing, so my team and I are going to get back to finding some trips and outings for our members. We should be able to advertise something in our next newsletter in May.

We could, however, really do with some assistance. If you are interested in joining our team, we'd welcome anyone willing to help us organise the trips and holidays. This could involve anything from recceing a location, working out details of entrance fees, tips and pick-up times, to accompanying a group on the day. Please contact me if you'd like to join us:

generalactivities@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Gisela Zürcher-Feiß

General Activities Report

I'm happy to report that our first outing for two years – a Dixieland Christmas – was very successful. Forty-five of us travelled by coach to Docklands where we enjoyed lunch on the *Tereza Joanne* in the King George V Dock, while being entertained by a Dixieland band.

Unfortunately the outing to Windsor we advertised in the Autumn Newsletter had to be cancelled, as there was not enough interest. Our visit to the Royal British Legion Poppy Factory in Richmond this month and our holiday to the Peak District in May will go ahead.

As the Covid situation has been unstable, it didn't feel right to plan any

London Region Summer School, 26-27 July

This will be held at St. Bride's Institute, off Fleet Street.

Activities include talks, workshops and guided walks. There'll be a wide range of subjects to choose from – Art, Current Affairs, History, Literature, Music, Sciences and Social Studies, with London as a general theme throughout.

The full programme and booking details will be publicised from mid-April and we'll include these in our monthly news bulletin once they're available. Until then, check the website regularly:

www.u3asites.org.uk/london-region/events

Recollections of Life in the Sudan: A project

When my mother died unexpectedly in 1984, I realised that I hadn't asked her about her life in the Sudan, where, in 1933, she joined my father, an employee of the Sudan Railways from 1926 to 1951.

Unlike most people in the same position, however, I was able to find out by interviewing other women who had similar histories. Many of them were more than willing to share their memories with me and allowed my husband to copy some of the photographs in their family albums.

In the years leading up to the country's independence in 1956, the British were in the Sudan to serve and help the Sudanese people to prepare for self-government.

British officials were expected to treat the Sudanese with respect. Most of them had servants who were treated as part of the family. We had a house boy to help with domestic tasks, a cook and a gardener at our home in Atbara, north of the capital, Khartoum. Temperatures in Sudan during the summer were so high that British ex-pats were allowed two months' annual home leave. Such was the mutual respect and loyalty that the Sudanese were happy to return to work when the family came back after that period of leave.

The women who had lived out in the Sudan told me about managing the household in a hot country without a



refrigerator and having to cook on an old-fashioned range, as well as the difficulty in obtaining certain products, sometimes even food. Childcare was also difficult. Imagine finding your baby, left in its pram on the veranda, covered in ants. And having to wear mosquito boots (long suede boots reaching to the top of your thighs) under your evening dress for dinner at an out-station.

I have built up an archive of these women's testimonies (mostly handwritten). They need to be sorted out, typed up and put together in a coherent order. Unfortunately I am no longer able to tackle this task on my own and would appreciate some assistance. If anyone would be interested in helping me with this, please let me know. As I am not on email, please write to me via newsletter@kingstonu3a.co.uk giving me your name, address and telephone number. Many thanks.

Frances Welsh

Monthly Meetings

The meetings listed below will be online via Zoom. We'll send out invitations to all those members for whom we have email addresses. Up to 500 people can participate in an online meeting. For these meetings you are also welcome to come along to the United Reformed Church in person. You do not need to book in advance. The meetings all begin at 2pm. (Please note that these arrangements may have to change if lockdown regulations are re-introduced.)

Date	Topics/Speakers
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7 Feb	Sex, Secrets, Scandal and Salacious Gossip of the Royal Court, 1660-1830 – Sarah Slater
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Sarah is a guide lecturer at Hampton Court Palace and a costumed tour guide. She will disclose the naughty bits of history you would probably not have learned about at school.

7 Mar	Climbing Kilimanjaro – Graham Horn
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Have you ever looked at a picture of Kilimanjaro or seen the mountain and thought you'd like to go up there? Graham Horn did just that and he'll describe the physical and emotional journey, and the fantastic porters who made it happen. He'll show us the flora and fauna, the ever-changing views and the ice caps and crater at the top.

4 Apr	How Magicians are seen in Paintings, Prints and Cartoons – Ian Keable
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Early artists used the magician to symbolise the mysterious and the unknown, associating them with astrology and tarot cards. In the 16th century, Pieter Bruegel and Hieronymus Bosch produced pictures of the conjurer performing the cups and balls trick. The 18th and 19th century saw a proliferation in engravings and lithographs showing the magician both indoors and on the streets. Cartoonists and satirists delighted in linking politicians and skulduggery, with images of them featuring the three-card trick, vanishing illusions or pulling a rabbit out of a hat.

Kingston u3a Executive Committee 2021/2022

Registered Charity No. 1011295

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Change of Address

Please send updates to:

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32 Howard Road, New Malden
KT3 4DP or email him at:
database@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Newsletter Contributions

Tell us what your group has been doing or the visits and holidays you've enjoyed. We'd also like to receive stories, 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. Photos (in .JPG format, please) help illustrate your contribution but don't forget to send the names of people shown in them. Send photos as separate files and not embedded in a Word document to:
communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Distribution

The newsletter is posted out in early February, May, August and November. If there are any problems concerning the newsletter, please contact Susan Hinchsliffe at:
communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk