

Kingston u3a Newsletter

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www.kingstonu3a.org.uk

It's such a pleasure to find out about the activities members have been involved in, both as individuals and as part of their groups. I'm sure you'll enjoy reading about their trips to the National Archives and The Vyne, their walks round sections of the London LOOP, and their dedication to tackling climate change locally. There's news on a theatrical shared learning project and some members share their childhood memories of seeing the Queen's coronation. And Mary Hodgson gives us a preview of the speakers and topics she's organised for next year's monthly meetings.

All this is made possible by some dedicated members who lead and coordinate groups and arrange visits. But we're still looking for more volunteers to help run groups and arrange outings, if our activities are to continue.

This is my last introduction to the newsletter. Later this month I'll be stepping down from the Chair of Kingston **u3a**, as I have served the maximum three years. It's been such a privilege to serve as your Chair but now I'm looking forward to spending more time with the groups, aiming to fulfil **u3a's** motto '**learn, laugh, live**'.

Best wishes

Linda Foreman
Chair



Group News

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Starting up new groups

The number of groups in Kingston **u3a** has dropped from 97 to 77 in just three years. This is worrying, as Kingston has always been top-of-the-range as regards the groups-membership ratio.

We'd like to urge newer and younger members to consider starting up new groups. Being a group leader is not difficult – it's a lot of fun and very rewarding. There would be plenty of help both locally and nationally. Please get in touch with Shirley Miller (details above) if you think you'd like to give it a try.

Coordinators

We'd like to recruit one more coordinator to monitor a few groups. This is an interesting job and involves phoning group leaders four times a year. Again, please get in touch with Shirley (details above) if you're interested.

Sunday Lunch Group 2

Gill O'Donnell is starting a second group. If you'd like to join, please contact Gill: 020 8399 8125,
gill.odonnell@blueyonder.co.uk

Talkback Discussion

It's sad that this group (North Kingston area) has lost its leader. Would anyone in the group be willing to take over? Shirley

could provide a venue if necessary.

Table Tennis 1

This group (New Malden) has gone from being oversubscribed to needing new members. Here's your opportunity to join this popular group. If you'd like to join, please contact Pat Young: 020 8337 8326,
p.young229@talktalk.net

Table Tennis 2

This group (Hampton) also needs new members. If you'd like to join, please contact Lionel Beer: 020 8979 3148.

Wine Tasting 2

Would you like to join a new group? Recently members have contacted me about joining the Wine Tasting group. As we meet in each other's homes, space is limited, so unfortunately we don't have any vacancies at present.

But why not set up another group? If you're interested in joining and setting one up, please let me know. You don't need to 'know' about wine to join! I'd be very happy to help get the group started and the new members could agree how, when and where they wanted to meet.

If several new members are interested, I plan to organise a get-together (with wine) to discuss our next moves. I live in New Malden and so that might be the place we would first meet but there are many other options.

If you're interested, please contact me: bobhiggins@virginmedia.com or 07557 099030, leaving me your phone number and/or email address.

Walking the London LOOP

As part of the **u3a**'s 40th anniversary celebrations, walking groups in the London **u3as** shared out the map of the London LOOP so that every section was covered in early September. Two of our walking groups outline their routes.

Philip Hellen: 'Our group split the Ewell to Kingston Bridge walk (a stretch of eight miles or so) into two outings.

Ewell Pond-Berrylands (6 miles)

'On Thursday, 15 September eleven of us started but five dropped out at the Toby Carvery, Worcester Park Road.'



18th century bridge, Ewell Court Park
Photo courtesy of June Court-Smith

Worcester Park Road-Kingston Bridge (6 miles)

'Then on 22 September 10 of us joined in but, again, six dropped out at Berrylands where we stopped for a rest.'

'We duplicated, and partially triplicated, the central part of the walk (about four miles). Between us we must have walked about 95 miles.

'Seen on our route was this squirrel (above right), one of a number of wooden sculptures, including a snail and a tortoise. You can see them along by

the Hogsmill River, quite close to where Millais painted the background for his work *Ophelia*.'

Philip Hellen



Judith Cowley and squirrel
Photo courtesy of Lorraine Hellen

Baber Bridge-Kingston Bridge (8 miles)

On 9 September, Julian Shute's walking group of seven walked the LOOP from Baber Bridge in North Feltham to Kingston Bridge.

'We'd planned to start at Hatton Cross,' says Julian, 'but flooding on the first section of the LOOP meant we had to start a little further along at a place called Baber Bridge. The walk was about eight miles so, between us, we covered 56 miles.'

Julian Shute



Visiting the National Archives at Kew



The 17th & 18th Centuries History Group recently enjoyed a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour of the National Archives at Kew. The Archives are housed in an attractive modern building only a short walk from Kew Bridge station or from the Mortlake Road stop on the 65 bus route. A lounge area outside the main reading room looks out on to a courtyard with pleasant pools and fountains visited by various water birds.

Temperature and humidity are carefully controlled in the Archives' vast stacks. Quiet trucks typically carry some half-million requested documents per

year from the stacks to the main reading rooms. Still on display at the Archives is a rat, now mummified, which was discovered dead in a box of old documents in the early 19th century. It had gorged itself on so much parchment that it could not escape through the hole by which it had entered. When the rat and a half-eaten document were brandished about the House of Commons, the need to give precious archives a suitable home was recognised.

After 25 years, almost all government records deemed worth preserving are

consigned to the National Archives, so there are collections from each government department. Old War Office records are often requested by visitors wanting to learn about family members who served in the Armed Forces.

For our visit, the staff prepared a splendid array of documents for us to admire. We had selected some of them ourselves using Discovery, the Archives' online catalogue. Others were selected for us by the staff. We were able to admire Mrs Thatcher's engagements diary (such entries as 9am Hairdresser, 10am Cabinet). We studied the Master of the Revels' records of theatrical performances at the Court of James I, including a number of Shakespeare's plays. The bard's name appears, in the relaxed spelling of the time, as Shaxberd (but what's in a name?). We were bewildered by a small medieval map of a Yorkshire town but awed by an immense and detailed 1733 map of North America laid out on 16 backing boards.

A box of mid-17th century state papers included letters signed 'Oliver P' by Cromwell as Lord Protector, on top of others signed 'Carolus R' by the restored Charles II. My favourite is a stern letter from Oliver P to the Great Sultan, warning him not to shelter pirates who had seized English ships. A short, fateful letter from George Washington to the British General Howe notified him that the colonists had signed the Declaration of Independence.

The Kew site includes an exhibition area, bookshop, cafeteria, and a

cloakroom with lockers. On the first floor, there is a computer room where visitors can research family history online, without giving prior notice or needing a reader's ticket.

Anyone wishing to make their own visits to look at the paper or parchment historical records needs a reader's ticket photocard. First you need to obtain a temporary ticket online. On the day of your first visit, bring along the same ID documents that you used to obtain the temporary ticket. An administrator in the computer room will take your photo and should be able to provide you with a permanent ticket quickly.

Visits to the reading rooms need to be arranged well in advance to secure a seat. It is essential to notify the Archives in advance, too, of the documents you wish to consult, using the Archives' online catalogue to select them. This enables the staff to get the documents ready for you ahead of your visit.

We are so lucky to have such a resource close by. Whether you fancy doing a bit of research into your family history or want to see the original of some important historical document, the National Archives is well worth a visit.

Martin Power
Group Leader

You can find out more about the National Archives and the facilities it offers on its website:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

Visit to The Vyne

On 15 September a group of us from Kingston [u3a](#) visited The Vyne, a lovely 16th century manor house owned by only two families throughout its history. It was built (1500-20) by William Sandys, Lord Chamberlain to Henry VIII and sold in 1653 to Chaloner Chute, Speaker of the House of Commons. It stayed in the Chute family until Sir Charles Chute bequeathed it to the National Trust in 1953.

On arrival our party was split into two groups and we were shown round by volunteer guides before the doors were open to the public. Upstairs, above the stone gallery, where the staff were interviewed and entertained, is the Oak Gallery spanning the whole length of the west wing. Used originally for recreation and entertaining, it contained hardly any furniture but had full-length portraits on the walls. Today you can see the linenfold panels covering the walls floor to ceiling in four rows. At the bottom each panel has the carved initials of friends or family, with their crest, coat-of-arms or badges at the top.

The Tapestry Room has oriental-style scenes woven by John Vanderbank around 1720. These have just been restored. In the Print Room hang prints of people, paintings and everyday life instead of wallpaper.

The Chapel, built by William Sandys (1518-27), is considered one of the best in England, although the family never used it. It has lovely stained-glass windows which were taken out and

hidden during the reign of Henry VIII. They were found in a farmer's field in the late 18th century and reinstalled in the Chapel. Heaps of cobalt blue, yellow, orange and green tiles were also found around the grounds. These were laid in front of the altar and pews in the mid-1800s by W L Wiggett Chute.

The tour lasted an hour, after which we headed to the coffee shop for a welcome drink. Some of us then went back into the house, while others took a turn round the estate, where there is a lake with swans and a path leading to walks in the wood. There is also a kitchen garden with fruit and vegetables, flower beds, a wildflower area, rose beds and a summerhouse once used as a dovecote.

The coach picked us up at 3.30pm and we were home an hour later after a most enjoyable day. Many thanks to Jacqui Hine for organising the trip.

Gill O'Donnell

Tackling Climate Change Locally

Did you go along to the [Greenzone](#) event in Kingston Market Place on 25 September? Local environmental groups, green businesses and the council's Climate Action team set out their stalls to promote their messages about climate change and suggest practical things we could all do to help reduce its adverse effects. Kingston [u3a](#) had a stand there 'manned' by Linda Foreman, Denise Dobbs, Jackie Wynn, Carole Hegedus and Bill Higgins and his

daughter. Linda said, 'We made useful contacts and may get a visit to the Veolia Recycling Centre.'



Linda



Denise

Green Activity Locally

But what else is going on in Kingston? Christine Thompson, leader of Kingston **u3a**'s Climate Emergency group, discussed this with campaigner and local activist Marilyn Mason, currently chair of Transition Town Kingston, coordinator of Canbury Community Garden and editor of Kingston Environment News.

In the voluntary sector there is a wide range of environmental groups and initiatives, many of which could benefit from **u3a** members' experience and skills: community gardening; harvesting and conservation projects; campaigning and pressure groups; practical recycling; and repair workshops. One group is working towards establishing a **Library of Things** (www.libraryofthings.co.uk) in Kingston, where you will be able to rent things like DIY and gardening equipment at an affordable rate and learn or share your DIY and repair skills. Another group is planning a local climate emergency centre, the **Kingston Hive**

(www.kingstonhive.org.uk), where anyone could go to learn more about the climate crisis, find worthwhile things to do and meet like-minded people.

On Kingston Council's website at www.kingston.gov.uk/climate you can also check for information on the measures it is taking to reduce the effects of climate change and what it has already achieved. It also has a small team of climate action officers engaging with the local community.

'Doing your Bit'

If you want to do something practical or share your expertise to help our area become greener and more sustainable, **Kingston Environment Forum** website (<https://e-voice.org.uk/kef>) has a comprehensive list of local green groups you could contact. You can also subscribe to the monthly electronic newsletter, Kingston Environment News, at <https://tinyurl.com/yyyylx4t>

And on a Wider Scale ...

... look out for the reports coming out of the next UN Climate Conference (COP27) which takes place in Egypt in November. Its key focus areas are the promise of innovation and clean technologies; the centrality of water and agriculture to climate change; the role of science; biodiversity loss; energy transition; decarbonisation efforts; and finance. Its decisions and actions will affect your grandchildren.

Christine Thompson,
with thanks to Marilyn Mason

Remembering the Queen

I remember the coronation. I was (in the best Adrian Mole vein) 3¼ years old at the time. It was out of the ordinary in the life of this young child. By coincidence it was my mother's birthday. In my naïveté, I thought that this whole event was for her.

Many of the female neighbours were crowded around the tiniest (by today's standards) of television sets, in one of their homes. On reflection I suppose the men were at work, although that doesn't make sense if it were a bank holiday. We didn't own a set at this time, so the venue had evidently been prearranged.

The neighbours were sitting on straight-backed chairs, hunched over towards the set, as if for a better view. They all had their backs to me. Standing outside the group and still shorter than they were en masse, I couldn't see a thing. I don't know that I really cared, although I was curious. I was the only child there. Someone relented and I was pushed forward into the group to see the screen. I was left with this black and white and oh so tiny image of the late Queen on the throne.

I remember thinking that I didn't know what the fuss was about and wondering what all this had to do with my mum's birthday. But it certainly made an impression.

Yvonne Campbell

My story is similar to Yvonne's. I was almost three and we were at some relation's house as we didn't have a telly.



I remember sitting on the floor, looking up at the set, a little brown box with a fuzzy grey screen. You could just about make out the horses and carriages jolting up and down. And I think it was raining. I'm sure I had no idea of the significance of the event but I dare say my mum pointed out the Queen in her lovely frock and the huge crown. I was probably more interested in putting the stickers into my souvenir book, which I still have.

Fast forward almost 70 years. The Queen has died and I'm in Green Park



on a lovely sunny day, looking at all the flowers people have left. The floral tributes are beautifully laid out under the trees or in circles and lines all over the park. The scent of the flowers is overpowering, tinged as it is with that of rotting vegetation. There's an aura of sadness, disbelief almost, but the



messages, pictures and Paddington Bears are testimony to the affection people feel and the sense of loss of someone who has been there all their life.

Susan Hinchsliffe

Six fellow pupils and I were very lucky to be chosen by our school, Surbiton County Secondary, to go and see the coronation procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey.

I was dressed in my mother's mackintosh as it was raining. We walked from Waterloo to Victoria Embankment to take up our position at the side of the road. Hundreds of marching soldiers, sailors and airmen, horse guards, open carriages, in one of which sat Queen

Salote of Tonga, who famously stood up in the pouring rain.

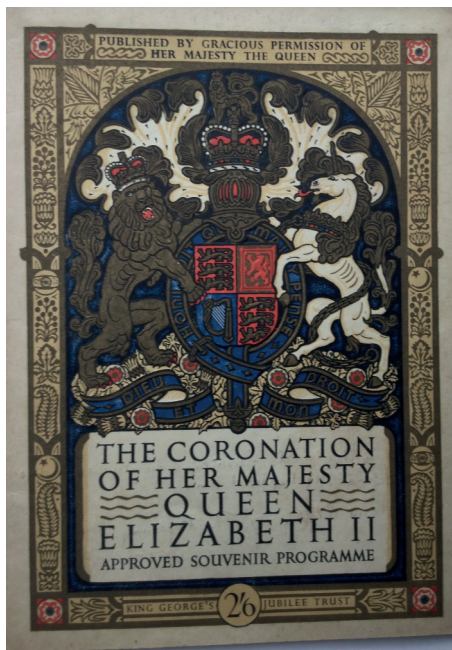
At 10.45am the state coach, drawn by eight grey horses, came into view. The Duke of Edinburgh was sitting on our side – which we girls were thrilled about – but we did glimpse the Queen.

We cheered and cheered, even at the end of the procession when the road sweeper came along to clear up the horse poo!

Afterwards I caught the train back to Surbiton, to our 'rich' friends, who had a television. I was able to watch the crowning of the Queen on their very small black and white screen.

It was a day I shall never forget, even though I saw Queen Elizabeth on several occasions afterwards. A monarch whom no one should forget.

Jane Hoyland



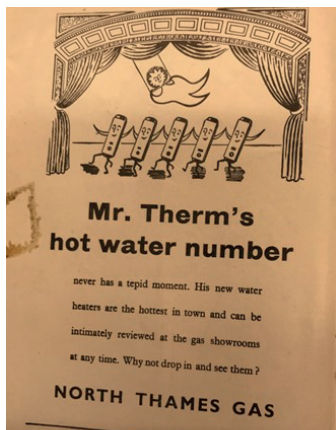
Cary Ellison Archive

Shared Learning Project (SLP) August-December 2022

Kingston University (KU) holds the Cary Ellison Archive, a collection of repertory theatre programmes 1954-1981.

Cary Ellison was a talent scout for the theatrical agency Spotlight. He travelled throughout mainland UK, visiting local theatres to see the repertory season each year and to seek out new actors for the agency.

The SLP is focused on the advertisements in the programmes.



We have been looking at the adverts and considering what we can learn about aspects of cultural and social life during the time when repertory theatre was flourishing. The advert (left) for North Thames Gas made me smile.

As well as the adverts, it's been interesting to spot actors in the various cast lists who have found fame and success in theatre, TV and film. This is a fascinating project which links with the [u3a](#) group members' memories of life in the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

I'm enjoying visiting the KU archives which are in the new Town House building in Penrhyn Road. It's interesting to be travelling back in time to the mid-20th century via the Ellison archive when I'm sitting in a new, award-winning library building.

At the end of the project the KU Archivist plans to draw the research together in a presentation for the Heritage Lottery Fund which has supported the preservation of this collection.

Valerie Milnes

Monthly Meetings 2022: Dates and Speakers

7 Nov **AGM (1.30pm) followed by talk, Your Country Needs You ... – James Taylor**

Dr Taylor, author, art expert and former curator of the National Maritime Museum, returns to give an illustrated talk on how propaganda and humour were used in art and design in World War 1.

5 Dec **History of the Christmas Carol – Adrienne Hesketh**

Adrienne's presentation describes the history of the Christmas carol, Christmas music and poetry.

Monthly Meetings 2023: Dates, Topics and Speakers

Here are the dates for next year's monthly meetings. More information about each talk will be given closer to the time. In 2023 all meetings will be held at the United Reformed Church in central Kingston. Places at the church are limited to 150 but you do not need to book a place. Talks begin at 2pm. Doors open at 1.30pm.

Date	Topics/Speakers
9 Jan	Annual Quiz
6 Feb	Watching the Detectives: History of British TV Crime Fighters – Pete Allen
6 Mar	Odd Corners of London – Jo Livingston
3 Apr	The Rainbow in Science and Art – John Naylor
8 May	The Foundling Museum – Volunteer Guide from the Museum
5 Jun	The Sunbury Embroidery Gallery – Robert Shaw
3 Jul	TBA – Colin Wiggins
7 Aug	Simply Gershwin: The Music of George and Ira Gershwin – Howard Slater
4 Sep	Surviving and Escaping the Nazi Occupation of Poland – Seymour Kelly
2 Oct	The Job of a Laughtime – Brad Ashton
6 Nov	Annual General Meeting A Schoolgirl's War – Mary Smith
4 Dec	Walking into Grandmother's Kitchen in 1940 Madras – Jenny Mallin

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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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