

Kingston u3a Newsletter

Volume 14 Issue 1

Spring 2024



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www.kingstonu3a.org.uk

I'd like to begin my first Chair's remarks by wishing you all a belated Happy New Year. I hope you have managed to cope with the recent cold weather and are now looking forward to spring.

You will see from the Group News section that we have been forced into saying goodbye to our long-serving coordinator and committee member, Shirley Miller. On your behalf I'd like to acknowledge her years of work for Kingston **u3a** and thank her for her dedication.

Her departure has left us in an even more difficult situation and I can't emphasise enough how much we need some of you to volunteer your help. You'll find more details overleaf.

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed articles to this newsletter. They show not only how varied our groups are but how engaged members are in the activities and the enjoyment they derive from them. All this requires organisation and, again, this is where you might become involved in the administration of Kingston **u3a** and its groups.

And I can't end my remarks without mentioning what an entertaining event our annual quiz was. Our thanks go to the question masters who devised some challenging rounds and amusing brain teasers. Well done, too, to the winning team, who also gained the honour of setting next year's quiz.

Best wishes
Joy Garvey, Chair

Your u3a Needs You!

We have often mentioned our need for volunteers to help run Kingston **u3a**. The situation is now desperate and threatens the very existence of our organisation.

With the resignation of speakers secretary, Mary Hodgson, and the retirement through ill health of groups coordinator, Shirley Miller, we have lost two pillars of our administration. Bulletin and newsletter editor, Susan Hinchsliffe, will reduce her workload later this year. As a result, we are making this sincere plea for volunteers in these areas:

- **Monthly Meetings/Speakers:** Our recent membership survey underlined how valued these meetings are. Some thought we should allow more time for socialising at these events. We could continue to invite speakers but perhaps other activities might be possible (beetle drives, craft events, something musical). We would welcome your suggestions and help in organising such events.
- **Groups:** Join a team of helpers to oversee existing groups, promote new ones and keep track of contact details.
- **Communications:** Help to check **u3a**-related websites for new talks and events, correspond with contributors and produce the bulletin. You will need good writing skills and have to be a competent IT user.

Representatives in all areas work closely together to ensure the smooth running of Kingston **u3a**. We'll give you training on

any specialist software we use and you'll initially work closely with those already involved in this work. In most areas, you will need to have an email account with ready access to it.

For further information, please contact: Joy Garvey for Meetings/Speakers and Groups, and Susan Hinchsliffe for Communications. See p12 for contact details.

Group News

We're sad to announce that Shirley Miller has had to resign from her role as groups coordinator and leave Kingston **u3a**.

Shirley has been an excellent groups leader for a long time and both the committee and all our members would like to thank her formally for her excellent work and support over the years.

Her resignation has, of course, left a vacancy and we urgently need someone to take over some of her duties. See details opposite.

Poetry Reading Group 1

This friendly, enthusiastic group is looking for new members.

'We each bring (four or five) poems on a pre-determined theme and take it in turns to read them,' says group leader, Carol Richards. 'This usually results in lively discussions and often the discovery of new poets. We have a coffee break mid-way and usually finish about midday, having decided on a theme for the following meeting.'

'We look forward to welcoming new members. If you are unsure whether a poetry group would suit you, come along

and give it a try.'

The group meets in Surbiton at 10.30am on the first and third Friday of the month. If you are interested in joining, please contact Carol: 020 8399 4465, carol44ditton@gmail.com

Gardening Group Christmas

At the meeting of the Gardening group on Wednesday, 29 November we spent an enjoyable hour creating Christmas table ornaments from garden greenery. The photo shows a selection of the final results along with some of the members.

Jeanette Hobson



MOTO Groups

Since starting the first Kingston MOTO (Members On Their Own) group eleven years ago, I've been delighted to see many more start up. I have a few thoughts about them I'd like to share with you.

Each MOTO group should be thought of as an autonomous entity, making its own rules within the framework of Kingston **u3a** and its members.

Members are usually people living on

their own but may be with a partner who is unable to go out, take part in activities or possibly suffers from dementia. A member may meet a new partner whilst in the group but, if the others are happy for her/him to continue belonging (even if the new partner isn't a group member), then it's their decision.

Most groups settle on having a monthly meeting, probably in a member's house, and agree on planned activities. Usually someone volunteers to keep a record of plans and decisions and may circulate notes about these. WhatsApp is great for keeping in touch. Somebody needs to be the second line of contact in case of illness, indisposition or accident.

There may be visits to local restaurants, theatres and museums, and outings or walks. Some groups have arranged to travel away together and stay at hotels. There's a useful website, [ianVisits \(www.ianvisits.co.uk\)](http://www.ianvisits.co.uk), which lists interesting events and exhibitions and gives helpful contact details.

Over time the group will want to celebrate anniversaries and members' birthdays and this builds a very close friendship in the group. Christmas is always fun, with cards and usually a Secret Santa, as well as a chance to share favourite seasonal foods.

It's worth thinking ahead, as members may age and become infirm. If no new members are admitted for a long time, the group may become unviable. Welcoming new people from time to time can be a bit

difficult but very worthwhile in the long run.

I've had a very good experience in MOTO1, made lovely friends and had some good times. If all the groups are full at the moment, do start one of your own and make it your next project. You won't regret it!

Elinor Parker

MOTO Weekenders

Jacqui Hine started up this group recently. Any MOTO may join but it may be of particular interest to anyone who has mobility issues. If you are interested in joining, please contact Jacqui: 020 8549 1924, jacqui@hine.org.uk

Six go AWOL in Bruges

In late September last year six of us from MOTO4 went to Bruges, where some of



us had been before but a long time ago. For the others it was the first time.

Travel by Eurostar was so easy and comfortable and then it was only a short coach ride from Lille to Bruges.

Bruges is a beautiful city, full of medieval history and, of course, chocolate shops. We sampled all that Bruges could offer, from great restaurants, cafés and architecture to a trip on the canals and, of course, we couldn't resist those many chocolate shops. We even watched a demonstration of how chocolate is made.

A highlight of the trip was a visit to the Ypres, Passchendaele and Tyne Cot Cemetery to take in the full history of the First World War.

The weather was very kind to us and we were lucky to catch the last few days of summer.

In all, it was a most enjoyable and recommendable outing. Roll on next year to see where we shall end up!

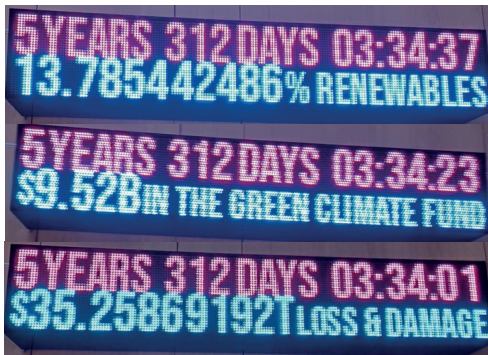
Pauline Dobbie

Visit to the Design Museum

On 13 September MOTO2 group visited the Design Museum in Kensington.

First of all we saw the permanent Designer, Maker, User display with almost 1,000 20th and 21st century items, showing the interconnection between the three parties. For example, we saw objects ranging from traffic lights to road maps (Designer), the Olympic torch and tennis balls (Maker) and the Sony Walkman, Apple iPhone and the Olivetti typewriter (User). We had to laugh at some of the old equipment that we once owned or, in some cases, still have.

On the first floor was the exhibition How to Build a Low-Carbon Home. It starts with the Climate Clock which shows what must be done to tackle the climate crisis and by when. At the top of the screen, in red, it displays a countdown to a deadline: the time remaining to prevent global warming rising above 1.5°C. At the bottom, in blue and green, it shows three lifelines, or actions being taken to slow down the clock. One lifeline is the percentage of energy produced worldwide from renewable sources. Another is the amount of money committed to the Green



Climate Fund, a global fund to support developing countries limit the effects of climate change. The third is the money G20 nations owe poorer countries for loss and damage inflicted by climate change.

The rest of the exhibition looks at how architects and the construction industry are designing and building homes for a low-carbon future. To this end, they are using more traditional building materials like stone, wood and straw instead of reinforced concrete and steel, which take a lot of energy to produce.

The use of timber to build homes has declined as large, high buildings needed stronger materials. Now strong mass or engineered timber (made by gluing, nailing and processing wood pieces into a composite) is being used for new buildings, including the first timber high-rise towers.

You may be surprised to know that straw (stalks of flax, hemp, barley, rice, wheat, rye and oats) can be used in construction. It can be combined with other natural materials – clay or bio-waste resins – to make walls, bricks and insulation. The plants from which straw comes absorb carbon dioxide when they grow, thus making an environmentally friendly building material.

This was a very informative day, particularly with regards to low-carbon housing, as we didn't realise that this type of activity was going on in the building industry.

Entry to the Design Museum is free and the exhibition is on until 10 March.

Denise Dobbs

Climate Matters!

On Saturday, 9 December I joined Brenda Ainsley (u3a UK Climate Emergency Coordinator), other u3a members from around the UK and hundreds of other protesters on the London March for Climate Justice. It coincided with the end of the COP28 Global UN Climate Summit in Dubai.

The march was one of many taking place in the UK and around the world on a Global Day of Action, trying to encourage a good COP28 outcome.

We heard from speakers highlighting both organisations and countries profiting from the climate crisis, and the various injustices being suffered by poorer nations, referred to as the Global South. We marched towards Trafalgar Square waving our banners and following a loud drum ensemble, while onlookers and supporters cheered us on. It was a positive and memorable event but I thought our numbers were disappointingly low.

At **COP28**, agreements were signed for the world to:

- move away from the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) in producing energy
- operate the substantial Loss and Damage Fund. The leading world economies will make fair payments to compensate the Global South for the impacts of climate change and to help poorer countries move to cleaner energies. (See photograph at bottom of p5.)

2023: Hottest Year Ever

The average world temperature was just below the +1.5°C target maximum (above pre-industrial world average temperatures) agreed at the 2015 Paris COP Summit. On the plus side, progress is being made worldwide to limit climate change, including China's rapid transition to greener energy but this year's US election result could also be crucial.

Howard Dalton
Climate Emergency Group

What Happens to our Recycling?

The Climate Emergency group recently visited the Southwark Reuse and Recycling Centre in Lewisham, part of the South London Waste Partnership (slwp.org.uk), where some of Kingston's mixed recycling (plastics, glass, cans and cartons) is dealt with.

We heard an interesting talk and then, toggled up in protective gear, toured the site. The people there convinced us that they do deal with waste appropriately but, sadly, the percentage recycled by the public is still too low.

The next possible visit is 2.30-4.30pm on Friday, 14 June. You need to book yourself a place on the website (slwp.org.uk/your-waste/visit/). From Waterloo station, take the 172 bus from Waterloo Road, along the Old Kent Road to the Commercial Way bus stop (about 30 minutes). Buses are every 10 minutes or so.

If you feel you are not up to climbing lots of metal staircases outside, then there's an interesting video about the site.

Christine Thompson

GAS Outings and Reports

Kew Gardens: Free Visits

Under the Kew Gardens Community Access Scheme Kingston **u3a** has bought 120 reduced-price tickets, which we're offering **free of charge** to those of our members who don't already have their own Kew Gardens membership.

GAS is organising a group visit in April (see details below). Later in the year we'll be offering tickets to our groups. The application form will be in May's newsletter. You will be able to arrange your visit at any time until 31 October this year when these tickets expire.

Please be aware that the tickets allow general entry to Kew Gardens but not to any special exhibitions which might be on at the time of your visit. Note, too, that these tickets are valid **only** for Kingston **u3a** members and you cannot bring along friends and family who are **not** members.

GAS Visit to Kew Gardens

Come and join us on a **free** visit to the gardens, with its glass houses, botanical art gallery and pagoda.

Date: Monday, 22 April

Meeting Time/Place: 10.30am at Victoria Gate, Kew Gardens, Kew Road. Assemble just inside the gate.

Travel: Please make your own way to the meeting point. Take the 65 bus (direction Ealing Broadway) from Kingston (approximately 30-40 minutes, depending on traffic). Get off outside Kew Gardens at Victoria Gate (bus stop R).

Accessibility: At Kew you can book in advance, if available, mobility scooters and wheelchairs (restricted access to some galleries/greenhouses). You must come with a companion and reserve a place for her/him.

Once inside the gardens, you are at liberty to plan your day as you wish. You can stay as long as you like and, when you're ready to go home, the 65 bus stop is on the other side of the road, opposite Victoria Gate.

There are 30 places available for this visit, which we'll allocate on a first come, first served basis. If you wish to come along, please complete the booking form in the centre of this newsletter and send it to: Hazel Burr, 29 Windsor Avenue, New Malden KT3 5EY.
Email: hazelbee46@yahoo.co.uk
Tel: 07817 264959 (only to cancel your booking, please)

Please note: If you already have a membership card for Kew Gardens, you are welcome to join the group on 22 April but please do **not** fill in the booking form which is for **free** entry only. Just turn up (with your card) and join us.

If you are coming on this visit, please keep this page for reference.

Visit to the Bank of England

Join us for a **free** visit to the Bank of England in the City of London. In the

morning we visit the museum and return in the afternoon for a presentation.

The Bank of England was founded in 1694. Its museum has a large collection of items relating to the history of the bank and the UK economy. You may even get a chance to pick up a gold bar if you are strong enough. The museum has two free audio guides – one the Highlights tour, the other Slavery and the Bank. You can access these guides through your mobile phone but please bring along your own headphones.

Date: You have a choice of two dates:

- Wednesday, 13 March or
- Tuesday, 19 March

Meeting Time/Place:

10.15am at Waterloo station, opposite platforms 1-4

Travel: We'll take the Underground to Bank Station, taking Exit 2 on to Threadneedle Street. It's a short walk past the museum entrance in Bartholomew Lane to a coffee bar for refreshments before we head back at 11.45am for security checks and entry to the museum.

There'll then be a lunch break and a chance to explore the area. (The Mithraeum Museum EC4N 8AA, with its underground Roman ruins, is only 10 minutes' walk from Bank Station and may be of interest to you. Entry is free but you must book in advance. See: www.londonmithraeum.com).

We reassemble at the museum entrance at 2.15pm to go through security again before the presentation on the History of the Bank at 2.30pm. It lasts for approximately one hour, after which we will retrace our steps to Waterloo station.

If you wish to come along, please complete the booking form in the centre of this newsletter and send it to Nanette Gray, 190 Acre Road, Kingston KT2 6EU.

Email: nanette.gray.ng@gmail.com

Tel: 07747 088395

If you are coming on this visit, please keep this page for reference.

Visit to Eltham Palace

Eltham Palace was once a medieval palace, some parts of which are preserved in the Great Hall. The palace was a royal residence in Tudor times.

In 1930 the eccentric millionaire Stephen Courtauld and his wife bought the crumbling palace and transformed it into the Art Deco style of the 30s. There's evidence in the house of the Courtaulds' pet lemur, which was very much part of their family.

The 19-acre garden is a mixture of periods with its herbaceous borders, rose garden and rock garden. The water cascades into the moat, over which is London's oldest working bridge. We shall have a 90-minute guided tour of the house.

Accessibility: There are lifts to the first floor in the house. You can borrow a wheelchair but you must come with a companion and reserve a place for her/him.

Date: Thursday, 16 May

Meeting Time/Place:

- 9am: Kingston, opposite the Rose Theatre
- 9.15am: Surbiton, opposite Waitrose, Claremont Road

Cost: Members of English Heritage and the National Art Fund can enter the palace free of charge.

- £30.35 for members of English Heritage (EH) and the National Art Fund (NAF) (coach, guided tour of house and coffee/tea on arrival)
- £42.85 for those not members of EH or the NAF (coach, entry to house, guided tour and coffee/tea on arrival)

Please book early to avoid the disappointment of the visit being cancelled through lack of uptake.

If you wish to come along, please complete the booking form in the centre of this newsletter and send it with your cheque, made out to **Kingston u3a GAS**, to: Jacqui Hine, 85 Richmond Park Road, Kingston KT2 6AF

Email: jacqui@hine.org.uk

Tel no: 020 8549 1924

If you are coming on this visit, please keep this page for reference.

Our Visit to the Foundling Museum

On 18 October, after a short stop for refreshments at the Caffè Tropea in Russell Square, we walked through the streets of Bloomsbury to the Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square. It is on the site of the original Foundling Hospital, founded by Thomas Coram. Handel and Hogarth were early benefactors.

Our guide, Anne-Marie, ensured that we saw the highlights of the museum. We went into the Committee Room where mothers intending to leave their babies, under 12 months old, were interviewed for suitability. Each child was given a unique identification number and a new name. To our amazement, the list of early names included Elizabeth Pope. Coincidentally my friend Liz Pope was standing next to me as we discovered this.



Foster families cared for the children until they were five. They then lived and were educated in the Foundling Hospital until the age of 15, afterwards becoming

apprentices in domestic or military service. Art works displayed in this room include Hogarth's *The March of the Guards to Finchley*. At this point, it's worth mentioning that the Foundling Hospital can be considered Britain's first public art gallery and has many paintings of value.

Anne-Marie unlocked the door to the Handel Gallery, where the displays included the composer's will, manuscripts and a fair copy of his *Messiah*, which he had bequeathed to the hospital.

Today, Coram is a charity group of specialist organisations, supporting children, young people and families.

There is so much from our visit that cannot be included here because of limited space. But why not find out for yourself, as the museum is well worth a visit? Our thanks to Nanette Gray for organising this visit for us.

Maureen Grimwood

u3a Christmas Lunch

On 7 December 40 Kingston u3a members enjoyed a lovely Christmas lunch in the elegant Tudor Room in the Elizabethan Suite at Glenmore House Surbiton, home to the Freemasons.

Those of us who arrived in good time



enjoyed a pre-lunch drink in the pleasant bar area before going into the Tudor Room, where we were seated at four large separate round tables, all beautifully decorated.

To help us get into a festive mood before our lunch, we were treated to a wonderful rendition of Christmas songs by about 30 of the u3a singers under their conductor, Aris Nadirian. The singers actually practise at Glenmore House every Thursday morning. Aris said they were thrilled to be asked to entertain us because, since lockdown, they have had no opportunity to sing before an audience. We certainly showed our appreciation of their performance with loud applause.

It was the precursor to an excellent lunch. The starter was delicious thick and creamy parsnip soup with crème fraîche and nutmeg. As a palate cleanser, a Glenmore sorbet was served before the traditional roast turkey, with all the usual accompaniments. The chef catered too for those with special dietary requirements. Dessert was a lovely apple and blackberry crumble with custard (a welcome change from cream). It was washed down with a choice of coffee or tea.

The laughter level increased as lunch progressed and we got to know our table companions better, or simply reminisced with old friends, some of whom we only see once a year at the Christmas lunch. The gaiety was greatly assisted by the enthusiastic pulling of Christmas crackers, puzzling over the jokes (why can we rarely guess the answers?) and the donning of the obligatory paper hats.

Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held at the United Reformed Church in Kingston on the first Monday of each month unless it is a bank holiday. Doors open at 1.30pm for a prompt 2pm start. Entrance fee is £1. Tea/Coffee and biscuits are available at the end of the meeting.

4 Mar Nelson Mandela: The Triumph of Warmth, Humanity, Generosity – Andrew J Barker

Following the centenary of his birth in 1918 and drawing on his writings, his years in prison and his leadership, this is a portrait of one of the most remarkable men of our times.

8 Apr A Solo Walk across Africa – Fran Sandham

Fran recounts his coast-to-coast walk across Africa, from the Atlantic on Namibia's Skeleton Coast to the Indian Ocean near Zanzibar. This was the first time on record anyone had crossed Africa solo entirely on foot by this route – or at least solo apart from a disastrous donkey.

13 May Aviation's Greatest Pioneers – Andy Richardson

Former RAF pilot Andy will give a brief outline of some aviation pioneers, then invite the audience to choose six, about whom he will then talk in greater detail.

Feeling pleasantly replete, we finally left amid many expressions of appreciation of a most enjoyable and successful occasion. The usual chorus of wishes for a very Happy Christmas and New Year and promises to 'meet up again soon' rang out as we left to brave

another soggy winter's afternoon.

Our most sincere thanks go to Jacqui Hine for organising the lunch. We appreciate all the hard work involved in such an event and we're already looking forward to next year's Christmas party!

Barbara Loftin

u3a Annual Quiz Many thanks to this year's question masters (left) for a challenging and entertaining quiz. Congratulations as well to the winning team, The Chancers (right) with their triumphant score of 105.



Kingston u3a Executive Committee 2023/2024

Registered Charity No. 1011295

Chair	Joy Garvey	020 8399 9323 chair@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Francesca Cura	secretary@kingstonu3a.org.uk
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Database Manager	Chris Cheek	07770 830 083 database@kingstonu3a.org.uk
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Groups Coordinator	Vacancy	
General Activities Section (GAS)	Jacqui Hine	020 8549 1924 generalactivities@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Web Coordinator	Diane Wilson	07944 333519 website@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Speaker Secretary	Vacancy	
Newsletter & Bulletin Editor	Susan Hinchsliffe	07814 487727 newsletter@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Diversity & Inclusion	Lorraine Hellen	020 8390 5718 diversity@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Climate Emergency Coordinator (co-opted)	Christine Thompson	020 3583 0638 climatecontact@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Change of Address

Please email updates to:
Chris Cheek, database manager at
database@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Newsletter Contributions

We welcome reports on your group's activities, **u3a** outings or on your personal interests and experiences. Contributions should be about 500 words but there's room for smaller items, too.

Photos (in .JPG format, please) help illustrate your contribution but please

include the names of any people shown. Send photos as separate files and not embedded in an email or a Word document to:
communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Distribution

Newsletters are posted out in early February, May, August and November.

Please contact Susan Hinchsliffe at:
communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk
if you have any problems in receiving these publications.

Thank you.