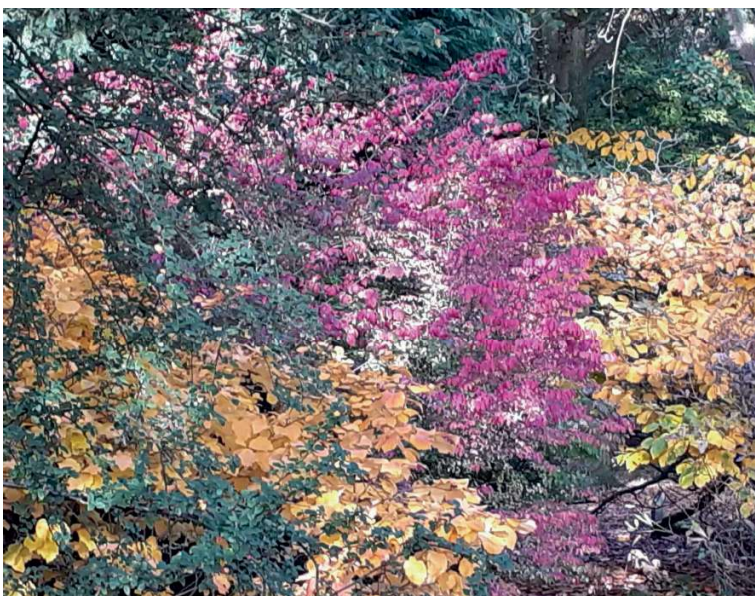


Kingston u3a Newsletter

**Volume 16 Issue 3
Autumn 2026**



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www.kingstonu3a.org.uk

Welcome to a very untypical British summer! Not a drop of rain and heatwave temperatures since the end of May. It's difficult to believe this is our Autumn Newsletter.

We begin on page 2 with our tribute to Gisela Zürcher-Feiß, our former head of Visits, who died earlier this summer.

Reports today are highlighting the effects of global warming and our change in weather patterns. If you would like to explore this further, maybe consider joining our Climate Emergency group. New members are always welcome. The group meets at Surbiton Library at 2-4pm on the third Wednesday of the month.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, 2 November and we are always looking for members to join the Executive Committee. It meets every two months at the United Reformed Church in Kingston. If you're not ready to plunge in, maybe shadow a member of the Committee to see what is involved. Please contact any of the Committee members (see page 12) if you are interested.

That's all for now. Please remember to stay hydrated and enjoy the rest of the summer!

**Luanne Higgins
Chair**

A Sad Farewell to Gisela



We were sad to hear of the death of Gisela Zürcher-Feiß on 14 June.

A member of Kingston **u3a** for over 25 years, Gisela headed up the GAS (now known as Visits) team for most of that time. She was a member of the Association of Group Travel Organisers and arranged, among other trips, a cruise on the river Duoro, a Heritage and Art Tour of Holland, as well as UK holidays in Cambridge and Suffolk, and Devon.

Gisela enjoyed her role. 'It feels good,' she said, 'when people tell us they like coming on our outings because, otherwise, they wouldn't go out on their own and here they meet people they've met before.'

It was moving for all present to see the horse-drawn hearse bearing her willow coffin arrive for her funeral.

We would like to offer our thanks to Gisela for the generous service she gave to Kingston **u3a** over the years.

Annual General Meeting

In accordance with the constitution of the **u3a**, notice is hereby given that the 35th Annual General Meeting of Kingston **u3a** will take place at 1.30pm on Monday, 2 November at the United Reformed Church, Eden Street, Kingston KT1 1HZ.

Liz Richardson, Secretary

We look forward to seeing you at our Annual General Meeting, which precedes our monthly meeting on Monday, 2 November.

If you would like to raise a particular subject at the AGM or have any comments or suggestions, please contact Liz Richardson by noon on Monday, 12 October at the latest.

You can email her at secretary@kingstonu3a.org.uk or phone her on 07931 819849.

We'll take questions on the day but

advance notice would be useful in case we need to check any information before the meeting.

Agenda

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of AGM 3 November 2025 *
3. Chair's Report *
4. Treasurer's Report *
5. Approval of the Examiner *
6. Election of the Executive Committee 2026/27 *
7. Any other business
8. Date of the next AGM

* Items requiring a vote

Subscriptions

You must be a paid-up member of Kingston **u3a** to join any of its groups. This is particularly important for insurance purposes.

Membership of another local **u3a** does not entitle you to membership of Kingston **u3a**.

We shall ask group leaders to check updated membership later in the year.

Membership Renewals

Please renew your membership by

paying your subscription fee during August or September. The **deadline** for payments is **1 October**.

The single annual membership fee is £15 and the joint fee £24 for two members living at the same address.

As renewals by cash or cheque require much more handling by our small team of volunteers, we strongly encourage members to pay by bank transfer or standing order.

If you still prefer to renew by cash or cheque, please submit the form in the centre of this newsletter, being sure to add £0.40 to your cheque to cover the additional bank charge incurred.

Renewal by bank transfer/standing order

You do **not** need to submit a form if you renew by bank transfer or standing order.

Please note: Our bank account for membership payments changed in 2023. If you are still paying your subscription into the old account ending in 4165, please change it to the account number detailed below.

Account name: Kingston u3a

Sort code: 40 26 12

Account Number: 11441027

Reference: Your membership number, your surname and first initial, eg 9876 Smith J

If you haven't paid your subscription renewal by **1 October**, you will no longer be a member of Kingston **u3a**. After that

date, we shall no longer send you our newsletters. You will no longer be covered by our insurance, so should not be attending any of our meetings or groups.

Executive Committee: Election of Members

We would welcome new members on to the Committee.

Members attend six Committee meetings a year and can choose to help with aspects of administration, finance, the database, communications, groups, outings, membership, the website or monthly meetings. Help of this kind would be most welcome and training will be given.

Please note: To be eligible to join the Committee you must be proposed and seconded by two other members of Kingston **u3a** before the closing date shown below.

If you wish to join the Executive Committee, ask someone to propose you and another member to second you. Email your details with those of the proposer and seconder to the Secretary, making sure that you have the permission of all concerned before submitting the names. Send the email to: secretary@kingstonu3a.org.uk by noon on Monday, 12 October.

Alternatively, complete the nomination form in the centre of this newsletter and hand it in to any member of the Executive Committee at the Monday meetings on 7 September or 5 October.

* * * * *

Group News

Potential New Group: Crochet

Crochet is surprisingly enjoyable and accessible. Beyond learning a new skill it offers real well-being benefits.

As a member of Kingston **u3a** I'm exploring the idea of starting a new weekly group centred around crochet, particularly with men in mind, although absolutely open to anyone interested in joining.

The plan is to meet weekly at Wesley's in New Malden – 49 High Street, New Malden KT3 4BY, most likely on Monday mornings. As such there is likely to be no charge to attend the group, beyond buying a drink there.

No experience would be needed at all. Informal tuition and guidance would be available and everyone joining would receive a welcome pack with all the materials needed to get started – so no need to bring anything or buy equipment beforehand.

This is still at the early planning stage, so at the moment we are simply trying to gauge interest. If you are interested, please contact me, **Ian Nussbaum**, at: iandownlondonway@gmail.com or 07852 531072.

Drawing & Painting Group 1

Our friendly group meets at 10am on Monday mornings in a large hall in Ham. We have a few vacancies and would welcome new members of all standards. We have a helpful artist-tutor, Keith Robinson, who is always available to give

advice. His website is
www.keithrobinsonpainting.com

If you are interested in joining us, please
contact **Linda Furnell** at
lmfurnell22@gmail.com



Peter Lamb at the easel

Climate Emergency Group

Our group met on 19 March and we were pleased to welcome Terezie Wickenden of the Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK), where she is involved in various initiatives aimed at addressing climate change and promoting sustainability.

Our discussion gave rise to several important questions. Unfortunately not all the news was good.

The group wondered if RBK had managed to initiate a shared-transport

scheme across the borough, for example car-sharing. We were disappointed that there had been no progress on this. Terezie said it was thought such a scheme would prove too expensive and had other drawbacks. We were surprised by this answer as car-sharing in parts of the USA and Canada has proved successful.

On a different subject, the group asked if RBK had a target to retrofit all significant council buildings (excluding homes). Indeed it has, and the project is called '2030 Neighbourhood Study'. The biggest obstacle is, of course, the financing of such a project.

The use of Climate Bonds (financial instruments designed to fund projects that support climate action) was discussed but this solution had proved to be too risky.

If you would like to see a full list of the questions asked at the meeting or would like to join the Climate Emergency group, please contact Christine Thompson (our group leader) at chris.cpt3@tiscali.co.uk or Bill Higgins at bilhiggins@btinternet.com

Bill Higgins

We have arranged to send a **u3a** representative to the Kingston Environment Forum, which most of us had not known about. This is a regular forum coordinated by Terezie Wickenden of RBK, which aims to bring together the many local organisations interested in environmental matters. We'll report back after our first visit to this forum in July.

Linda Foreman

Visits

HELP, we need somebody!

Have you enjoyed any of our recent **u3a** visits? We'd love you to offer to help me and my team – Hazel Burr, Pamela Crisp and Pamela Townsend – with ideas for and organisation of future trips.

We meet four times a year to arrange the next quarter's visits to advertise in the newsletter. We discuss and approve the ideas, decide who will organise the visits and who will be the support person. Once we've arranged the visit with the venue, the organiser and her support do a recce together to assess the journey, determine transport details, timings, accessibility and, of course, where to have coffee. On the day of the trip the organiser leads the group and her supporter brings up the rear to ensure no one gets lost.

Unfortunately one of our team members, Nanette Gray, has had to step down from the team and I would like to thank her for all her work over the past three years, especially for her popular Bank of England visits. This means we have a vacancy to fill and, without the extra help, we'll not be able to arrange as many visits each quarter. If you would like to join us, have access to email and a telephone/mobile number, and enjoy team work, we would love to hear from you. Please contact me at jacqui@hine.org.uk

Sadly this year we'll not be organising a Christmas lunch open to all members. Most groups seem to make their own arrangements to celebrate and there appears to be little support for a general Christmas get-together.

Finally, you'll see we've simplified the booking form. We don't need your address but must still have your membership number, email address and emergency contact details.

Thank you. We look forward to hearing from you! **Jacqui Hine**

Design Museum Guided Tour

In order that we fully appreciate and understand this Museum's unique concept and designs for modern living, we have booked an exclusive tour by one of its experts.

The guided tour includes an exhibition looking at the development of modern design, designers and makers who shaped the world we live in. It features

almost 1,000 items of 20th and 21st century design, from the angle of the designer, the manufacturer and the user.

There will be time for coffee in the café before the one-hour tour which starts at 11.30am.

Please note: The maximum number of places on this tour is 15.

Date: Thursday 24 September

Meeting Time/Place: 10am on the

concourse in front of the main entrance to Wimbledon Station.

Travel: We'll take the District Line to High Street Kensington. From there it is about a 10/15-minute walk to the Museum. There is no lift or escalator at the Tube station, only the 30 steps from the platforms to street level.

Cost: £28.40

To join us please complete the booking form in the centre of this newsletter and send it with your cheque, made payable to **Kingston u3a**, to Pamela Townsend.

Tel no: 07789 397635.

Please keep this page for reference.

Watts Gallery, Artists' Village, Compton

Watts Gallery, also known as Artists' Village, is near Guildford. It is dedicated to the works of the Victorian painter and sculptor George Frederick Watts and his talented wife Mary Watts, artist, designer and writer.

En route to Watts Gallery we'll stop at Guildford Cathedral for coffee (not included in the price).

George and Mary Watts founded the now Grade II listed building, designed by Christopher Hatton Turner. It opened in 1904 and is the only purpose-built art gallery in the UK dedicated to a single professional artist.

We'll spend the day at the Artists' Village, visiting Limnerlease (the couple's home and studio), the historic Art Gallery

with its contemporary Sculpture Gallery, and finally the Chapel on the hill, commissioned by Mary and decorated by her with help from the local villagers.

There is no guided tour but you can access an audio tour on the Gallery's Smartify App, which can be downloaded before you go or in the Village itself. Please bring your own headphones.

The café there is small and the manager is unable to cater for individual orders on the day. A group lunch of homemade vegetable soup with a bread roll will be available for those who prebook lunch on their application form. Otherwise please bring your own lunch.

Date: Thursday, 8 October.

Meeting Time/Place: The coach can pick you up at:

- **9.30am** Kingston, opposite the Rose Theatre
 - **9.45am** Surbiton, opposite Waitrose
- Price:**
- **Coach:** £24.90
 - **Entrance fee:** £15 or £8.88 if you have a National Art Pass
 - **Group Lunch:** £7.95

Accessibility:

Limnerlease: The coach will drop us as near to the house as possible and there is a lift to the first floor. It will collect us from here and take us down to the Artists' Village for lunch.

Artists' Village: Shop, café and gallery are all on one level. The Sculpture Studio is accessed inside the Gallery down steps or by lift. There is no lift to

the Contemporary Gallery from the shop and the visitors' centre.

Chapel: The coach will park up by the Chapel, situated on a high mound and accessible only up a long set of steps or a winding uphill path. Those not wanting to visit the Chapel will be asked to wait in the coach for members to return.

The coach leaves at 3.30pm for our return.

To join us, please complete the booking form in the centre of this newsletter and send it with your cheque, made payable to **Kingston u3a GAS**, to Jacqui Hine.

jacqui@hine.org.uk, 07817 264959 (for cancellations on the day only, please).

Please keep this page for reference.

National Portrait Gallery: Guided Tour – Queer Stories

Opened in 1856, the National Portrait Gallery was the first public gallery in the world dedicated to portraits. Its collection provides a unique way to understand the past through people and the context they lived in. It tells the story of the nation through the people who shaped it.

Queer Stories explores the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sex/gender-identifying (LGBTQ+) sitters within the collection, showcasing queer lives and liberation through the years. From the legendary Chevalier D'Eon to Virginia Woolf, Gwen John to Elton, the tour explores how queerness has shaped the collection.

Discover a landscape of often hidden histories brought to light. This session may reference adult themes and content and may potentially use strong language.

Our guided tour is scheduled for 11.45am and lasts for one hour. After our tour, members may wish to explore other parts of the Gallery's extensive collection independently. Portraits are arranged chronologically, starting with the Tudor Collection on floor 3 and ending with the newest additions on floor 0.

There's a very pleasant café in the Gallery for refreshments (not included in the price), although we cannot make an advance booking. There are also several other cafés in the area.

Date: Thursday, 26 November

Meeting Time/Place: 10.15am at Waterloo Station opposite platforms 1-4

Travel: We'll take the 176 bus to Trafalgar Square and walk the short distance to the Gallery entrance.

Cost: £22.40

Accessibility: There's a small flight of steps at the main entrance. All floors can be accessed by escalators and lifts.

To join us on this intriguing tour, please complete the booking form in the centre of this newsletter and send it with your cheque, made payable to **Kingston u3a GAS**, to Hazel Burr.

hazelbee46@yahoo.co.uk

07950 687553

Please keep this page for reference.

Reports on Last Quarter's Visits

Denbies Winery

Our tour of Denbies Winery began with a film outlining the history of the estate. The original owner, Jonathan Tylers, bought it in 1734, followed by Joseph Denison in 1787.

The position and height of the original house afforded beautiful views of the North Downs and apparently one could see as far as Crystal Palace, St Paul's Cathedral and Windsor Castle. In 1850 Thomas Cubitt, master builder, bought the estate and, though he was in the process of building Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, set about replacing the existing Georgian house with an Italianate mansion, a more modest version of Osborne House.

Owing to the high position of the property, getting water to it was a problem. The new mansion had 100 rooms but no bathrooms. Hip baths were the order of the day.

Queen Camilla spent many of her school holidays there as another Thomas Cubitt, Baron Ashcombe, the great grandson of the first, was her uncle. This is where she learnt to ride.

Unfortunately the upkeep of the mansion was too expensive and it was demolished in 1953. In 1984 the estate was bought by a water-treatment company and became a pig and cattle farm. This proved to be a loss-making venture and in 1986 a geologist, Professor Richard Shelley, suggested to the then chairman of the water-treatment

company, Sir Adrian White, that the estate would be ideal for a vineyard because of its chalky soil and south-facing aspect. So in 1986, using 268 acres of land, the first vines were planted.

Our tour continued down into the cellars to learn more about what it takes to make the wine. It can take up to seven years to bring a vine to maturity and provide the grapes to make the wine. Varieties such as Chardonnay, crucial for producing top-quality champagne, can take even longer. At Denbies parcels of the same variety of grape are planted across different parts of the vineyard and this gives the fruit grown in these areas its own distinct layers of flavour and character.

Of course, climate change and the weather have a significant impact on a successful harvest. A late frost can be devastating and occasionally fans (large ones) have to be used to keep the air moving so the frost does not settle on the vines.

Ongoing maintenance includes uprooting weeds and, most importantly, too many grapes have an impact on the quality of the grapes, so 'green' harvesting has to be carried out.

The vineyard manager usually tastes the grape juice in September but it is the wine maker who has the final say on when to harvest and this can take place in September or October.

A mechanical picker is used to shake the grapes gently from the vines. For

their premium wines, however, including a wonderful sparkling one (being an English wine, it cannot bear the label 'Champagne'), the grapes are hand picked, which means their skins are kept intact to ensure the excellent quality.

We rounded off our tour by tasting three different wines and so we left on a 'jolly' note, though had no problems finding our way home.

A big thank you to Denbies for a wonderful tour!

Pam Townsend

Visit: Bank of England



As mentioned in our introduction to the Visits section, Nanette Gray organised several trips to the Bank.

Here's a photo Geraldine Palmer sent us of her husband Simon checking how heavy a gold ingot is.

Quiz



We had a good quiz in June with five teams from Kingston **u3a** and a team from Galsworthy House.

Our next quiz will be at 2.30pm on Wednesday, 16 September at Galsworthy House, 177 Kingston Hill KT2 7LX. Book early to avoid disappointment. If you would like to come, email **Jim Trimmer** at: jimtrimmer2003@yahoo.co.uk

Next Newsletter

Our next edition will be out at the beginning of **November 2026**. The **deadline** for sending in copy and photographs will be **Thursday, 8 October**.

Please send your contributions to: communications@kingstonu3a.org.uk

Monthly Meetings 2026

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.

Please note: The Annual General Meeting takes place before the talk on Monday, 2 November.

Date	Topics/Speakers
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- | | |
|-------|--|
| 7 Sep | A Bare Chronicle of Existence: Stories and Letters from Internment in Norway in WW1 – Rebecca Clarke
During WW1 Rebecca's grandfather-in-law Arnold signed up for the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserves on HMS India. A few months later, he found himself floating in the North Sea. He and other men were saved and interned in Norway for the remainder of the war. This is a story of loneliness, love and isolation. You can view some of the family documents after the talk. |
| 5 Oct | Kingston and the River Thames – Julian McCarthy
Our Kingston owes its founding, growth and success to the river. In his illustrated talk Julian McCarthy, Kingston tour guide and local history author, takes us down to the riverside and shows how the river has, over the years, supported and served the town, and why the suffix 'upon Thames' has been and remains historically and socially significant. |
| 2 Nov | 1.30pm: Annual General Meeting
2.30pm: Partition and my British Raj Family – Jenny Mallin
Jenny's father came to England. His sister stayed in India. Jenny explores how differently their lives developed after Partition. |
| 7 Dec | Music, Musicals and Stories behind our Beloved Christmas Music – Frances Fry
The talk is a light-hearted look at some of our favourite Christmas songs, tells interesting stories as to how they came into being and reveals some of her own Christmas memories. You'll be encouraged to join in with the singing. |

Talks and Study Days

There isn't enough space in this issue to detail all the talks and study days available, so please check the following websites for information:

The Third Age Trust: www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events#Events

Surrey Region Study Days: surreynetwork.u3asite.uk/events/

London Region Walks and Talks: <https://lru3a.u3asite.uk/events/>

Kingston u3a Executive Committee 2025/2026

Registered Charity No. 1011295

Chair	Luanne Higgins	07359 970165 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm) chair@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Secretary	Liz Richardson	07931 819849 secretary@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Acting Co-Treasurers	Chris Cheek Anne Davies	07770 830083 (Chris) treasurer@kingstonu3a.org.uk 07791 414610 (Anne) treasurer2@kingstonu3a.org.uk
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Speaker Secretary	Lili Cook	020 8949 1819 speakers@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Newsletter	Susan Hinchsliffe	07814 487727 newsletter@kingstonu3a.org.uk
Diversity & Inclusion (co-opted)	Lorraine Hellen	07986 851959 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:

Teresa Hall, 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 250-500 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.