

Richmond upon Thames u3a

Newsletter - November 2025

Are you a lucky winner?!

Christmas at Kew 2025

As many members will know, Richmond u3a participates in the Kew Gardens Community Access Scheme, allowing us to provide free entry to the Gardens for a number of our members each year.

Kew have allocated 20 tickets for “Christmas at Kew 2025” to Richmond u3a, to thank us for our feedback on the Community Access Scheme.

We have decided to allocate two tickets each to ten of our members, whose names will be drawn at random from our membership list. These will give free entry on **Friday 12th December at 16:20** to the event.

I will contact you shortly by email if your name is one of the lucky winners drawn – please note that these tickets are for use by our members and their partner/guest only – they are not transferrable to friends or family!

Please look out for the email and let me know if you can attend? It’s completely free to our ten lucky winners!

Good Luck!

Group News

1. Walking Netball

Our u3a Walking Netball team continues to love playing our games on Tuesdays. We are improving our ball skills and have had one tentative venture into competing with another team. We won! This gave us a real boost and with the fun we also have each week during our warmups and games, most of the regular players try to make it a fixture on Tuesdays. Our sessions are an hour and we’re at Barn Elms Playing Fields, Barnes, at 11am if the weather is fine and at AELTC Roehampton’s indoor court at 11.30am if it's not.

Except for a break in August, we play right through the year. We always welcome new players who say we are very friendly and inclusive, and they all usually come back after the first session. You don’t have to be a champion netballer, or super-fit, most of us haven’t played since school. If you fancy a team sport, and enjoy contact with like-minded people, come and join us! Please contact Linda Naylor barnesnetball@gmail.com for more information

2. Pickleball

Are you interested in having a U3A Pickleball Social group?

Richmond U3A does not yet have a pickleball group, unlike many other U3As in London and the home counties so this news piece is to try to drum up support for this great sport.

What is pickleball?

Pickleball, a blend of tennis, ping-pong, and badminton, is quickly growing in popularity in the US and UK but is still not widely known about. This sport attracts people of all ages, and health experts note that more seniors are participating as it helps cardiovascular health, flexibility, balance, and muscle strength. In summary, pickleball provides a moderately intensive aerobic workout that enhances heart health as well as being a lot of fun!

Learn the Basics:

Read the one-page explanation of the rules at:

https://www.pickleballengland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/PE_Basic-Rules-1.pdf

Watch the first 7 minutes of this video to get started:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Vk-c8TdC28>

My experience:

So far, I have attended three Monday evening indoor pickleball sessions at Shene Sports and Fitness Centre from 6:30 to 8:00 pm and really enjoy it. The coach, who is an honorary member of Elmbridge U3A—a group known for its vibrant pickleball community—facilitates these sessions. The cost per session is £8.20 but with my Richmond card, this is reduced to £7.50. (A £11 annual fee is required to top up your Richmond card online or at the fitness centre's reception desk before you qualify for this reduction.) The sports centre provides the bats and balls.

Would you like to learn pickleball?

If you would like to join me on Monday evenings to try out pickleball, you should book your 'pickleball social' session at Shene Sports and Fitness Centre, up to one week in advance. The sessions are held in the Richmond Park Academy School's sports hall, located next door to Shene Sports and Fitness Centre. **Please note that the next pickleball social session is scheduled for Monday, 17 November**, as the school requires use of the sports hall for GCSE mock examinations from 3 November to 14 November. Free parking is available on-site and nearby streets. Here is the relevant link to the fitness centre: [Shene Sport and Fitness Centre adult programme - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames](#)

Going forward:

Ultimately we can form a separate u3a Pickleball group either at Shene Sports and Fitness centre or at one of the other institutions located in Twickenham, Hampton, and Teddington that have pickleball courts that are available for booking.

Please contact me at lesleyleak21@outlook.com if you are interested in forming a core group to take this plan forward. (Currently, there are usually about 8 available spaces at Shene Sports and Fitness centre on Monday evenings.)

3. The Welcome Circle: Coffee, Chat, and Connection.

Are you new to our wonderful borough of Richmond, or perhaps just looking to meet new people and expand your social circle? I am delighted to announce the launch of a brand new, simply social group aimed at doing just that!

The **Welcome Circle** is a warm and informal weekly get-together for U3A members. Our premise is simple: we meet for a coffee (or tea!) and a chat in a relaxed local café. There are no agendas, no set topics—just friendly conversation and the pleasure of good company.

This group is particularly perfect for newcomers to the area. It's a fantastic opportunity to:

- **Meet new faces** and establish lasting friendships.
- **Share experiences** and ask for tips about life in the borough.
- **Discover hidden gems**, from the best parks to the cosiest pubs.
- **Feel connected** to our vibrant and friendly community.

Whether you've lived here for five days or fifty years, if you enjoy meeting new people, you are incredibly welcome. Let's get together, share stories, and appreciate the wonderful place we all call home.

Interested in joining us?

Our first meeting will be held soon, and we will meet weekly on Friday mornings in the café at Strawberry Hill House. For more information and to register your interest, please contact Sue Luminati at luminatisue@gmail.com.

Radio Podcast

The November episode of the u3a radio podcast goes live on the 7th of the month and includes the following interviews: a u3a expert on cyber fraud gives tips on how we can stay safe from the scourge of online scams, a billion-dollar global crime whose incidence, helped by the advent of AI, is increasing in leaps and bounds, we talk to the brains behind the popular "Take Ten Songs" course created for u3a members that analyses what really makes a great song tick and we shine the spotlight on the remarkable and little-known story of the "Canary Girls", the female munitions workers who risked life and limb daily in their highly dangerous working conditions making shells, bombs and bullets during the two World Wars.

Click on the link below to listen:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/u3a-radio-podcast>

Learning in the u3a movement

u3a offers members learning opportunities both locally in person and nationally online.

For example, there are:

~ **Online Learning Events.** Attend talks on Zoom led by knowledgeable members and guest speakers. Some of the topics for November are copied below:

In November we explore the Talking Drums of Africa, discuss UK and US constitutions, and dissect popular songs to discuss what makes them hits.

~ **Learning Activities.** Take part in competitions and initiatives with other u3a members.

~ **Interest Groups Online.** Join an online u3a community to attend regular peer-led learning groups.

~ **Subject Advisers.** Get support to set up an interest group or find new ideas for an existing group in your local u3a.

These opportunities and more details can be found on the National website at www.u3a.org.uk/learning