

# Richmond upon Thames u3a

## Newsletter – May 2026

### GROUP NEWS

#### DRAMA GROUP PRESENTATION

##### "The 3rd Act Takes Centre Stage!" by Sue Luminati

Richmond's new u3a Drama Group, 'The 3rd Act', showcased three original sketches at the ETNA Community Centre. I'm happy to say it was a sell-out success, delighting a packed house and proving that our performers have energy to spare. It was a wonderful celebration of what we've achieved together since our group was formed.

All the pieces were devised by the group, and the evening kicked off with '**Dated: Love is Our Business**', taking us back to the 1990s and the offices of a Richmond Introductions Agency. We watched Marjorie and Rose navigate the highs and lows of matchmaking, ending in a 'Mingle and Match' party that required a healthy dose of audience imagination, and certainly delivered on the laughs!

We then took a turn toward the dramatic with '**Trouble on the Ward**'. Written by Les Cummins, this piece was inspired by his own real-life experience. It was an honest look at the friction between a patient and the system. The evening concluded with the high-energy comedy '**The Amalfi Catastrophe**', leaving the audience cheering for *Amore*!

The feedback from the cast has been every bit as moving as the audience's applause. Jim Simler, one of our wonderful performers, noted that 'the support of the group for one another, whatever their talent, was a beautiful thing to behold, and shows how much can be achieved when people work together'. Like many of the performers, Jim had never stood on a stage before, and seeing that growth was a joy for us all.

Our group is a living testament to the U3A motto: **Learn, Laugh, Live**. In a stage of life where the world sometimes expects us to be quiet, we've chosen to be heard. We've discovered that these years aren't for slowing down, but for stepping up. By learning new lines, laughing through our mistakes, and truly living for the buzz of the performance, we've found a community that keeps us sharp and connected. It's a reminder that the '**3rd Act**' is every bit as fulfilling, and is exactly where the heart of this story belongs.

This showcase was a true testament to teamwork, and now we are ready to do it all over again!

**Join Us for the New Term.** We're looking ahead to our next term and would love to welcome some new faces. Whether you've spent years "on the boards" or you've always fancied giving it a go but didn't know where to start, we want to hear from you.

We are particularly keen to engage with anyone with a background in theatre, whether in acting, writing, or the technical side, such as sound and lighting. If you have a passion to share, or perhaps a skill you'd like to dust off, you'd be very welcome.

Keep an eye on the u3a Newsletter for more details, but why wait? If you're ready to step into the spotlight or help us behind the scenes, get in touch with Susy at [susan.hodges9192@gmail.com](mailto:susan.hodges9192@gmail.com) or Hilary at [hilaryshenken@hotmail.com](mailto:hilaryshenken@hotmail.com). We'd be happy to tell you more about The 3<sup>rd</sup> Act.

## **WEEKENDERS RELAUNCH**

**Join Weekenders, share information and have more fun at weekends.**

(Group leaders Christopher Barclay and Libby Barton)

Many u3a members are looking for things to do at weekends. We aim to share information about local activities and to let people know about other u3a members attending. These will include the Sunday morning coffee concerts at the Orange Tree theatre, and the matinees at the Mary Wallace theatre (about once a month normally on Sunday at 3pm). However, there are many other small scale activities we do not know about. We invite Weekenders members to e-mail us about them - for example concerts at local churches. We will then share the information with the group, probably by e-mail, though we might use a website page or a WhatsApp group. Our u3a members are spread over quite large area so many members will see local advertisements for events of which we are unaware.

I will co-ordinate, so email me at [crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:crbarclay@hotmail.co.uk) with any queries and information.

Just to start:

The Mary Wallace Theatre has a matinee for a thriller – Ciphers – on Sunday 31 May.

They are also performing Merry Wives of Windsor in Fountain Gardens for a matinee on Saturday July 18th.

Libby Barton and I will be coming to both of these matinees and will meet any other Weekenders there, so please let us know if you are coming. For the Merry Wives of Windsor we will have a picnic first.

## **PROPOSED NEW GERMAN GROUP**

A new German group, Intermediate/Advanced conversation and discussion is proposed.

If you are interested in finding out more, the first, informal meeting will be on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, from 12.00 until 2.00pm in The Brouge Pub, 241 Hampton Road, Twickenham, TW2 5NJ.

## **POSSIBLE NEW SPORTS GROUPS**

Your u3a needs you! Seeking potential group leaders to start up a Walking Cricket Group and a Tennis Group.

We have been approached by Sport Richmond, who are willing to work with us to set up some new sport groups.

Would you be willing to work with a Sport Richmond representative to set up either a Walking Cricket or a Tennis group? You don't have to be an expert at either of these sports to volunteer. Enthusiasm and basic organisational skills are the most important attributes.

Walking Cricket is a widely played, adapted version of traditional cricket, designed for all abilities. Its primary rule is simple: no running is allowed, so you must walk to score runs, bowl, and field. It is perfect for older adults, those with injuries, or anyone seeking a gentler, more social game.

Can you think of any other sport groups we could ask for help in setting up?

If you would be willing to volunteer, or have ideas for any other sports, please contact the Recreation section leader, Tricia Abrahamsen, at [tricia.abr@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:tricia.abr@blueyonder.co.uk)

## **MONTHLY MEETING – MAY 27<sup>th</sup> 2026**

**Please note: For this meeting we will be back in Clarendon Hall. The meeting starts at the usual time of 2:30 pm.**

Our meeting this month sees the return of Roger Browne who entertained us in April 2025 with a performance of the Great American Song Book. He hopes to be joined by his friend Roy to add the vocals.

### **Roger Browne – The Golden Age of Radio**

Roger is a professional pianist, raconteur and singer. He has been pianist with the internationally renowned band, Manchester Jazz, since 1995, having started his jazz career in 1958. He has accompanied the likes of Marion Montgomery, Stephane Grappelli, Humphrey Lyttleton, George Melly and George Chisholm

In his talk he will reminisce about the popular radio programs before television took over in our living rooms. These include "Take it From Here" to "Round the Horne" to "Letter From America" to "Journey into Space", "Family Favourites", "In Town Tonight", "Down Your Way", "Music While You Work" "Dick Barton – Special Agent" many, many others, and how Radio enriched our post war lives. His talk will include plenty of humorous anecdotes and music from these shows.

## RADIO PODCAST

The May episode of the u3a radio podcast goes live on the 10th and includes the following three interviews: Manya Norris talks about her book that describes how she set out alone to cycle over 2,000 miles along the river Ganges in India to raise money for charity; Jenny Ridgewell, a food writer and author of over 70 books, chats about her latest book Cream Horns & Vol-au-Vents that takes us back to cooking in the 1970's; Melanie Lester, a 72-year-old powerlifting coach and a Team GB competitor, shares with us her journey into powerlifting.

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

## LOCAL NEWS

Received recently from the Green School Trust.

The Green School Trust is currently seeking professionals—whether actively employed or retired—with a broad range of skills and experience to strengthen our Local Governing Board across our Boys' and Girls' secondary schools in Isleworth.

I am contacting your organisation to ask whether any of your members might be interested in this rewarding voluntary role. The key benefits of becoming a school governor include:

- Making a meaningful difference in young people's lives
- Supporting school leadership and helping shape the school's vision
- Contributing to strategic decision-making to improve outcomes for all students
- Bringing your voice, perspective, and ideas
- Demonstrating a commitment to the future of our children
- Giving back to the local community

The role involves attending three on site meetings per year which can be attended virtually, along with three termly school visits linked to a specific area such as health and safety.

If you know of any members who may be interested in becoming a school governor and would like further information, please encourage them to contact me at [s.patterson@tgstrust.com](mailto:s.patterson@tgstrust.com).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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