

Richmond upon Thames u3a Newsletter – September 2026

GROUP NEWS

ESCAPEES – NEW GROUP

We want to introduce our new group - **Escapees** (hope you like the name) - because it's our intention to provide Richmond u3a with new ideas and suggestions for your holiday escapes - short or long.

There are 7 of us - two with specialist travel knowledge and the rest with long experience of looking for different and unusual places to go which have brought memorable experiences and new friendships.

Our purpose is to share with you places we think you will want to visit. Some will be one day trips, others, weekenders plus longer trips into Europe. The success will depend on how accurately we predict what you're looking for. (At the end we have a short questionnaire which we hope you will send back with your feedback).

We will aim to get the keenest prices and relevant quality. The price you pay will be the actual price we have been able to negotiate. The first aim will be to get the best group rates so all Richmond u3a members can benefit. Payments will be organised to protect everybody. Once a booking has been made, payment must be made on time to meet our group commitment. Some initial ideas are:

1. Classic Lodge Hotels : We have been approached by their Sales Director with a good proposal for stays at any of their lodges. One which looked good is Harrogate - [this could be a group escape this Autumn. https://www.classiclodges.co.uk/](https://www.classiclodges.co.uk/)
2. Scotland Highlands Railways Tours. Newmarket holidays are offering 15% off their 4 day trips. (Recommended by the Guardian) <https://holidays.theguardian.com/holidays/scottish-highland-railways-150ca8cefb643a7c04d1d561f9cec63>
3. One day trips of which we have many- these two can be combined in a day: Watts Gallery and Rural Life Living Museum. (<https://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/>

We have put as much information as possible so you can react and come back to us.

We are confident that with your involvement and support we will be having better, fun, value-for- money escapes in the future.

Please let us know what you think – send us an email answering the following questions:

1. Would you find ideas for breaks useful? **Yes or No**
2. Would you be interested in breaks in **UK - Europe - Beyond**
3. What length of breaks would suit you most? **1 day, 3days, 7 days or more.**
4. What other Escapes would you like us to find for you?

We will be getting our own Escapees email address very soon but for the time being please send your answers and any comments or ideas to norma.beagle@gmail.com

MINDFULNESS IN NATURE – THREE WALKS IN BUSHY PARK

Monday October 12, 19 and November 2

MEET Bushy Park main Gate (Park Lane) 10.15 am

Or Pheasantry car park (by visitor centre) 10.30 am

An opportunity to de-stress and relax through mindful interaction with nature in beautiful Bushy Park. Walks will be for around 60-90 minutes and phone/camera free. There will be a coffee stop with time for discussion. Please get in touch if you feel these walks may be for you.

Pat MacDonald is both a Nature Guide and Meditation Instructor

patsy1946macd@gmail.com

POTENTIAL NEW GROUP – WELSH

I have received a request from someone who is trying to learn Welsh and would like someone to talk to. If you are interested please email me (in the first instance) with your details.

norma.beagle@gmail.com I am the section leader for the language groups.

BOLIVIA (a version of the card game Canasta)

After a break for the summer the Bolivia Card Group will restart on Wednesday afternoons from the 7th October at The Park hotel in Teddington.

Bolivia is an exciting version of the card game Canasta and is normally played with partners in groups of 4 but can also be played as individuals.

New members, both beginners and experienced players, are very welcome. Instruction will be given and it is a fairly easy game to pick up.

If you would like to join us please contact David on dmunro@outlook.com for further information.

MONTHLY MEETING – SEPTEMBER 30th 2026

Clarendon Hall, York House, Twickenham at 2.30pm

Barrow to Baghdad and Back Again by Philip Caine

Born in 1950 in Barrow-in-Furness, Philip's working life began in the hotel business. His career developed in the oil industry and 30 years were spent in places such as the North Sea, Algeria, Nigeria, Kazakhstan and Russia. From 2003, he spent 7 years in post war Baghdad working with the American coalition and a further 3 years running oil services companies in Dubai.

His talk covers some of the more colourful parts of his career including working on oil rigs in the North Sea, operating projects in various parts of the world and culminating in the most dangerous place of all . . . Baghdad. The talk is full of interest, anecdotes, humour, and inspiration.

OTHER NEWS

RADIO PODCAST

The September episode of the popular u3a radio podcast goes live on the 10th and includes the following three interviews:

Sharon Parsons, Editor of u3a Matters magazine gives us details about her fascinating career, explains what goes into producing the magazine and shares a sneak preview of what readers can look forward to in the next issue, the Director of the Jane Austen festival in Bath, Georgia Delve, talks about the history of the festival, what happens during the celebrations and why it is growing in popularity year after year, Timothy Walker, gardening expert, author and former Director of the Oxford Botanical Gardens, talks about why so many people embrace the hobby of gardening later in life, shares tips for green-fingered enthusiasts and explains why gardening is so beneficial for both our mental and physical well-being.

Click on the link below to listen:

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