



# BENFLEET BULLETIN

**u3a** learn,  
laugh,  
live

Issue 32: February 2021

W: [u3asites.org.uk/benfleet](http://u3asites.org.uk/benfleet) f [facebook.com/groups/benfleetu3a](https://facebook.com/groups/benfleetu3a)

**FROM THE CHAIR:** Hello Everyone

A belated Happy New Year to you all! Hopefully, with many of us having already had the first dose of vaccine by the time you read this, we may be able to see tiny shoots of hope for an eventual return to more normal life.

Instead of a New Year Resolution, I ask you to consider trying something during Lockdown that you have never done before. Many of you may already have done so. If so please tell us about it and send a photo for our next Bulletin.

Then try something else new whether it be cooking, drawing, knitting, researching, planting, walking, exercising, decorating... Let us know what you have been up to and what you are about to try! Three things for you to think about...

- **My New Lockdown Activity!** Tell us all about your successes and failures with accompanying photos if possible! Please send to Alan.
- **Join our Facebook Page.** We have 84 members so far who share stories and anecdotes, laughs and giggles. Facebook group [Benfleet u3a](https://facebook.com/groups/benfleetu3a)
- **Join our Zoom Speaker talks.** Our 55 participants (more including partners) have really enjoyed the talks so far. Email me for details [marion\\_c@sky.com](mailto:marion_c@sky.com)

Looking forward to hearing from you all, take care and keep smiling!

Marion (Chair)



## FEBRUARY – courtesy of Doreen Wiggins!



*Will winter never be over?  
Will the dark days never go?  
Must the buttercup and the clover  
Be always under the snow?*



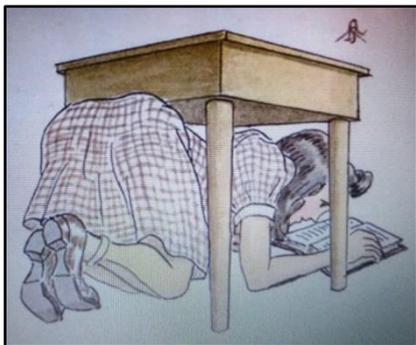
*Ah! Lend me your little ear, love  
Hark! 'tis a beautiful thing:  
The weariest month of the year, love  
Is shortest and nearest the Spring.*

## ZOOM MEMBER'S MEETING –Tuesday 26 January

### A Schoolgirls War was presented by Mary Smith

On the day when we would have had our members meeting we were 'meeting' on Zoom for a fascinating presentation.

Mary tells the story of school life in Maidstone during WW2, featuring recently discovered and exquisite art work of a WW2 school art teacher who documented in paint and pencil the lives of school children and their teachers as the war unfolded.



Studying in air raid

This was at the Maidstone Girls Grammar School opened in 1938 and during the war was school to both local and girls evacuated from London.

Her work shows the disrupted schooling, air raids, doodlebugs and underground shelters. Mary was able to track down and interview around 50 'old girls' and includes anecdotes from many of these wartime pupils.



Lunch and lessons below ground



Running to the bomb shelter

### Some Member's Comments

*I enjoyed the talk very much yesterday. Looking forward to the next two talks.*

*I cannot put into words how wonderful this afternoon's zoom talk was.*

*It was a really interesting talk and I thought the artwork was brilliant.*

*Thank you for sourcing the talk. It was different and very interesting, really enjoyable.*

### **SO JOIN US FOR THE NEXT TALK**

See Activity Calendar at back of bulletin for date and details.

Contact **Marion** via [Chairperson](#) email link or **Alan** via [Webmaster](#) email link for help if you haven't 'zoomed' before.

**Its very easy to take part.**

## MORE FREE ON-LINE TALKS

We have identified another site offering free talks of about an hour on topics that may be relevant and of interest to members.

### How it works:

- Free talks available every Thursday pm.
- There is no on-line interaction with the speaker, so you don't even need a camera or microphone – just a PC, laptop or tablet connected to the internet.
- Visit [www.mirthy.co.uk](http://www.mirthy.co.uk) and register for a specific talk.
- Near the date you will receive an email with a link to the event.
- Just prior to the event time, click the link and it will make contact using your normal internet browser. You do not need to download any software.
- Free talks coming up are:
  - Zeppelin - Ship of Dreams - Thursday 4 February at 4pm
  - Backpacking on a Pension Book (Part 1) – Australia - Thursday 11 February at 4pm
  - Boobies and Noddies: Birds of Ascension Island - Thursday 18 February at 4pm
  - Thirty Years of Travel in China - Thursday 25 February at 4pm

They also run paid for talks on a Tuesday priced at £2-99p per event but there is no requirement to take part.

## KNIT AND STITCH

Pauline Everett is setting a challenge, not only for the Knit and Stitch group, but for all of our members whose fingers are itching to be busy.

She suggests you **knit or crochet a 6 inch square, in any wool, any colour, any pattern** to be used to make blankets. Pauline is happy to sew them together!

These would become part of the United in Kind project "Hug in a Shrug" so that a blanket or "Hug" can be gifted to a wide variety of people across Essex including:

- Socially isolated residents
- The elderly
- The Recently Bereaved
- Local families
- Residents with health conditions
- New parents

These blankets will serve as a warm reminder that they are not alone and to provide comfort at a time when we could all do with a much needed hug now and again. For info visit: [Facebook - Hug in a Shrug](#)

So as many 6" squares as you can and contact **Pauline** via [Knit+Stitch](#) email link. If you have any spare wool please tell Pauline.



# ACTIVITY CALENDAR

## Is there life in the u3a during lockdown?

Answer: **YES.** please see the Activity Calendar on the next two pages, which outlines the activities being undertaken by Groups during February and March.

Remarkably, exactly half our groups are taking some activity ranging from specific topics and challenges, to contact and discussion via email and telephone, zoom meetings and research into agreed topics

Groups undertaking sport or walking are clearly unable to operate but with some inventiveness and willingness, it should be possible for almost all groups to undertake some kind of activity. Examples of what group are doing are:

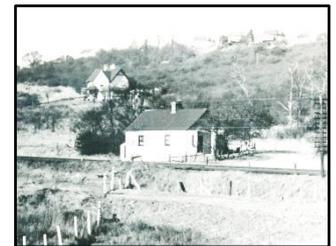
### **Beginners Drawing:**

Past: Owls, Dragons, London, Bowie Piglets, Rooster  
February: Portraits  
March: Flowers



### **Local and Essex History:**

Monthly Research:  
January: Farms  
February: Local Shops  
March: Local Businesses



### **Photography: Monthly Challenge**

January/Feb: My Favourite Things  
February/March:  
My 3 best photos EVER!



### **Culinary Experience**

Group 'COOK-IN' in January  
More in February and March



### **Women in History**

Research into women's achievements through the ages.

Currently, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 - 1762), who was the first person to introduce inoculations for smallpox in the early 1700s, before Edward Jenner, who was credited with developing the Cowpox vaccine, was even born.



## Benfleet u3a – Activity Calendar

GROUP	February 2021	March 2021
Member Zoom Meetings	<p>Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 9 February Somebody Likes YOU! Alan Jones</p> <p>Zoom 2pm Tuesday 23 February The Inside Story. Alan Jones</p>	<p>Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 9 March The Flow of History David Williams</p> <p>Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 30 March Tutankhamun's Egypt Janet Brewster</p>
Beginners Drawing	Portrait Artist of the Month!! With over 20 portraits to choose from (celebrities, animals, etc.)	<p>Topic: Flowers</p> <p>Zoom: 2pm Thursday 18 March</p>
Book Club	Choose a book and review by 15 February	Choose a book and review by mid-March
Comparative Religion	<p>Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 16 February</p> <p>Topic: Hinduism</p>	<p>Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 9 March</p> <p>Topic: Hinduism</p>
Culinary Experience	Monday 22 February: Group COOK-IN	Monday 22 March: Group COOK-IN
Discussion 1	<p>2pm Monday 8 February</p> <p>Discuss topic from 'Todays' issues</p>	<p>2pm Monday 8 March</p> <p>Discuss topic from 'Todays' issues</p>
Flower Arranging	Seasonal arrangements when available	Seasonal arrangements when available
French	<p>Zoom: 10:30 Wednesday 10 February</p> <p>Discuss Family and Free time activities</p>	<p>Zoom: 10:30 Wednesday 10 March</p> <p>Review French quizzes and exercises</p>
Knit & Stitch	<p>'Hug in a Shrug' project</p> <p>Knitting 6" squares for blankets for those needing comfort. Open to all u3a members</p>	<p>'Hug in a Shrug' project</p> <p>Knitting 6" squares for blankets for those needing comfort. Open to all u3a members</p>

Local and Essex History	Research into local shops	Research into local businesses
Local Interest	Challenge: To be advised Members to suggest local points of interest relevant now	Challenge: To be advised Members to suggest local points of interest relevant now
Macs and Wellies Gardening	Answer discuss gardening queries, arrange plant swaps by telephone and email	Answer discuss gardening queries, arrange plant swaps by telephone and email
Meditation	Virtual meditation session am every Tuesday	Virtual meditation session am every Tuesday
Paper Craft	Card challenge: Winter	Continued - Winter
Photography	From 18 January to 14 February Challenge: 'My Favourite Things' Zoom: 2pm Monday 15 February	From 15 February 10 14 March; Challenge: My Best Photo EVER! Zoom: 2pm Monday 15 March
Spanish	Skype: 10am every Wednesday Language conversation – topic chosen previous week	Skype: 10am every Wednesday Language conversation – topic chosen previous week
Wildlife	Observe local wildlife – photos and write-ups	Observe local wildlife – photos and write-ups
Women in History	19 February Topic: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689 – 1762) Contribution to Smallpox eradication	19 March Monthly topic TBA