



# BENFLEET BULLETIN

Issue 34: April 2021

W: [u3asites.org.uk/benfleet](http://u3asites.org.uk/benfleet)

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Bulletin Editor: Alan Aldridge

**u3a** learn, laugh, live

**FROM THE CHAIR:** Hello Everyone

What a difference a few days of good weather makes to how we all feel! The clocks have sprung forward, evenings are longer, Spring is definitely here and hopefully everybody is feeling more positive.



Already we have one or two groups meeting up in gardens, maintaining the rule of six of course, and with full risk assessments. However little steps towards an eventual return to full u3a activity.

Thank you to all of you who have completed the survey for us (It's still not too late to fill it in and send it to me!) and we have almost reached 200 responses from our 300 members. I am now collating all that information and, once that is completed, I will let you all have some feedback on what we have found out!

Thank you to all those crafty ones amongst you who have produced those eggscellent Easter Cards and to those of you who voted. Thank you also to those knitters and crotchetiers who have knitted so many lovely squares or shawls for the Hug in a Shrug venture, particular thanks to Pauline for sewing them all together (over 30 completed at the last count so well done to you all).

Take care everyone until we are at long last able to meet again.

Thank you everyone, Marion (Chair)

## EASTER CARD CHALLENGE

Thank you again for the input of cards and voting. Congratulations to the Winners.



**WINNER**

**Ann**

**Sayer**



**2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Terri**

**Waters**



**3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Annette**

**Firth**

## MEMBER ZOOM MEETINGS

In March we had Member Zoom meetings with David Williams on The Flow of History (The Thames) and Janet Brewer on Tutankhamun's Egypt.

In April, we are pleased to welcome King Henry VIII (as Tony Harris) and Alison Lees, Photographer and Conservationist – Living the African Dream.

Further talks are planned for May see Website Events for full details. If you haven't attended before please contact Marion to receive the regular invitation via Chairperson email link.

**T@3** is continuing at 3pm every Wednesday. Again, please contact Marion if you haven't attended before.

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## ACTIVITY CALENDAR

Many Groups are continuing to operate by Zoom, email and telephone, see Activity Calendar later on, so there is plenty of activity available now in our u3a.

The easing of the COVID lockdown on 29 March, to allow up to 6 people to meet outdoors, now offers some opportunity for additional activities for many groups unable to meet during full lockdown.

However, please bear in mind that these u3a activities do require a risk assessment (template available on our website as previously – see GROUPS) and each member will have to assess their own situation given their current health and if you have had both inoculations.

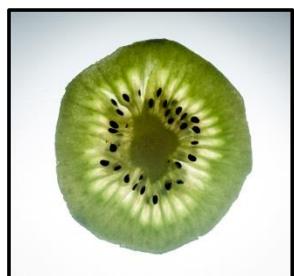
So, our advice is to take CAUTION, one step at a time when members are comfortable with meeting in groups of UP TO 6 OUTDOORS only.

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## EDIBLE THINGS

Not eaten enough over Easter? Some creative examples of things to eat from our Photography Group. View these and other recent u3a activities at our website:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/benfleet> > QUICK LINKS > Select from list.



## **POETRY CHALLENGE FOR ALL MEMBERS – Theme 2020**

For any member to provide a poem or prose on the theme of **2020**. However you view 2020 – to remember or forget, what was poignant, what was funny or heart-warming, all the holidays you took in your mind.

We will publish in the bulletin and on our website. Please forward your contribution at any time to Alan Aldridge at [Bulletin Editor](#) email link. As a starter for 10, below are poems from four members. Thank you to them.

### **2020 a year to remember**

**By Pauline Everett**

2020 a year to remember  
COVID Lockdown March to December  
Promised Christmas would be good  
Boris said we misunderstood  
Track and Trace went apace  
Then it all went very wrong, going on and on whilst our hair became really long and covered our face  
  
PJs and Tracksuits worn all day  
No thoughts of holidays or going away  
Wearing masks to do our tasks  
TV and box sets, snacks and baking  
Overweight agoraphobics in the making  
January New year resolutions  
Government still has no solutions  
Crochet blankets, knitting squares  
Now allowed to walk in pairs  
  
Several U3A meetings held on Zoom  
Really help to lift the gloom  
Once the jab was in my arm  
I felt less likely to come to harm  
Slim down, keep fit and have fun  
All need to be done in 2021.

### **One Year On by Marion Coleman**

What happened to our lives last Spring?  
The virus came,  
And changed the game.  
Destroyed the calm,  
By doing harm.  
Disrupted the order of our days, Made us rethink our usual ways,

Stay in, stay away!

Hide from all throughout the day!

Cover up and wash our hands!

Came the cry throughout the lands!

With bated breath soon we saw,

Statistics rising even more.

People's lives shattered

Oh! How it mattered!

Will we be next?

Test results by text.

Stay away, hide indoors,

Shop on line without a pause.

Clap for carers,

Wave at neighbours.

Yet

One year later,

Nearly over!

Vaccines save us,

And will soon release us!

Just remember how neighbours matter,  
Doorstep callers with their chatter.

Brighten the day with a passing smile,

Soon we were walking mile by mile.

Greeting walkers with a wave,

Memories all we must save.

As in the garden flowers bloom,

Soon we will meet in the outside room.

Life will return to its normal ways,

Forgetting not those terrible days.

Lunch in the garden, Groups on the lawn,

Trips on the coaches will become the norm.

Life will continue but never forget

Just what can happen when careless we get!

## **2020 Pandemic year by Margaret Harle**

Covid 19 brought death & fear  
Worldwide lockdown, people lost jobs  
Events were cancelled, holidays lost  
Pubs & restaurants, services, schools  
found a new focus, a way to survive  
Clubs found ways to keep us in touch,  
to avoid stress, depression & isolation.

"Bubble up" said Boris -people helped out  
Shopped for their neighbours,  
few people went out.

Hands, face, space, sanitize.  
Protect key workers & the NHS  
IT skills soared - work from home,  
learning online, Facetime & Zoom  
We looked forward to Thursdays,  
we could all go out  
to clap on our doorsteps for people who count!

Community spirit, Captain Sir Tom  
Queues for toilet rolls, flour & masks  
Knitting & baking, hobbies & art  
DIY- we all did our part

Brexit & Trump & Main Stream Media  
won't defeat our spirit- we live in hope  
of a New Tomorrow, when we've  
all had our jabs  
and can gather together for  
**LONG WANTED HUGS!**

## **2020/21 A year of COVID by Helen Sutton**

Yes, it was predicted  
A virus in Wuhan  
They call it a pandemic  
Spreading across the world to all mankind  
  
We've suffered the loss of loved ones  
The lockdown came too late  
The Vaccines are here now  
'Goodbye' COVID 19

## **QUIZZICAL LOOKS**

**PUTTING Zs IN.....-** our thanks to Jan and Bill Lane:

All answers include at least one Z.

1. British fashion designer born 1940, very garishly dressed
2. American rock band formed in Houston in 1969
3. 4th longest river in Africa
4. A long river, and a retail outlet
5. US singer known as 'the queen of jazz'
6. A crossing, and a black and white horse
7. A publication, and a cartridge container
8. He said he would be back !
9. German baked pastry usually shaped into a knot
10. Jacobs 6th son
11. Sang 'I'm The Urban Spaceman' in 1960s
12. A disease that animals can pass to humans
13. Award for achievement in US journalism, literature or music
14. Italian dessert of whipped cream, egg yolks, sugar and marsala wine
15. A cold vegetable soup in Spanish cuisine
16. Ahead of their time in 2525?
17. Transgender comedian and marathon runner
18. Film showing the siege and battle at Rourke's Drift
19. Washing powder
20. Jewish phrase for 'congratulations' or 'good luck'
21. A smooth talker

Answers on last page – **NO PEEKING!**

## BENFLEET U3A – ACTIVITY CALENDAR

GROUP	April 2021	May 2021
Member Zoom Meetings	<p>Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 13 April Tony Harris <b>IS</b> King Henry VIII</p> <p>Zoom: 2pm 27 April Living the African Dream Alison Mees Photographer and Conservationist</p>	<p>Zoo: 2pm Tuesday 11 May 2021 Remembering Britain in the 1960s Nigel Dawson</p> <p>Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 25 May 2021 Characters of East Anglia Mark Mitchells</p>
Tea @ 3 All Members welcome	Social Zoom: 3pm Wednesday 7/14/21/28 April	Social Zoom: 3pm Wednesday 5/12/19/26 May
Book Club	Choose a book and review by 19 April	Choose a book and review by mid-May Maybe an actual meeting late May?
Comparative Religion	Group Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 20 April Topic: Compare the 5 religions we have studied	Group Zoom: 2pm Tuesday 18 May 2021 Topic: To be confirmed.
Culinary Experience	Monday 26 April: Group COOK-IN	Monday 24 May: Group COOK-IN
Discussion 1	2pm Monday 12 April Discuss topic from 'Todays' issues	2pm Monday 10 May Discuss topic from 'Todays' issues
Drawing	Topic: Easter Zoom: 2:15pm Thursday 15 April	Topic: The Green Man (NOT the pub!) Zoom: 2:15pm Thursday 20 April
Flower Arranging	Seasonal arrangements when available	Seasonal arrangements when available

French	Zoom: 10:30 Wednesday 14 April Past Tense; Family, Friends, Activity, Interests.	Zoom: 10:30 Wednesday 12 May Past Tense; Family, Friends, Activity, Interests.
Knit & Stitch	'Hug in a Shrug' project Knitting 6" squares for blankets for those needing comfort. Open to all u3a members	'Hug in a Shrug' project Knitting 6" squares for blankets for those needing comfort. Open to all u3a members
Local and Essex History	Research into Old Characters of Benfleet	Research topic: To be advised
Local Interest	Walking Tour of the Rayleigh Heritage Trail WHEN Lockdown allows.	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: Spring	Card Challenge: To Be advised
Photography	To 18 April, Challenge: 'Edible Things' Group Zoom: 2pm Monday 19 April From 19 April, Challenge: the letter 'S'	To 16 May April, Challenge: The letter 'S' Group Zoom: 2pm Monday 17 May From 17 May, Challenge to be advised
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	16 April Monthly topic: Voilette Szabo – WWII Hero Featured in film 'Carve her name with pride'	21 May Monthly topic To be advised

## Answers – Putting in the ‘Z’

- |                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Zandra Rhodes           | 12. Zoonosis        |
| 2. ZZ Top                  | 13. Pulitzer Prize  |
| 3. Zambesi                 | 14. Zabaglione      |
| 4. Amazon                  | 15. Gazpacho        |
| 5. Ella Fitzgerald         | 16. Zager and Evans |
| 6. Zebra                   | 17. Eddie Izzard    |
| 7. Magazine                | 18. Zulu            |
| 8. Arnold Schwarzenegger   | 19. Daz             |
| 9. Pretzel                 | 20. Mazel tov       |
| 10. Zebulun                | 21. Schmoozer       |
| 11. Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band |                     |

## POST SCRIPT

Some ‘crafty’ people in Benfleet have been brightening our Easter Days with their inventive Post Box creations. The one on the right is in Benfleet High Road near St. Mary’s Church opposite Howard’s Fish and Chips and is by a craft group at the ‘Unique’ shop in The High Road near Brook Road.

We don’t know who created the one on the left (maybe YOU do?) but it is in Benfleet High Road by Clifton Avenue.

Thank you to all the creators for making us smile. If you have any other examples of interesting ‘Street Art’ in the district (NOT graffiti) please let me know.

