



BENFLEET BULLETIN

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Issue 40: December 2021 – February 2022

W: u3asites.org.uk/benfleet

f facebook.com/groups/benfleetu3a

Chair: Marion Coleman

Bulletin Editor: Alan Aldridge

FROM THE CHAIR: Hello Everyone

Where did those three months go? The weather has stayed reasonable and I think everyone has been out and about, meeting up with friends and family. It has been a very busy time for your Committee.

At our September AGM we were sorry to say goodbye to some very long serving committee members but delighted to welcome new members on board. Inside you will be able to read about, and begin to get to know, the members you have voted in!

Monthly meetings restarted successfully - still without refreshments and very socially distanced. It's good to see so many of you there. We have continued with a zoom speaker monthly on the second Tuesday, which will continue through 2022. Everyone can join us for this, just let me know if you want to take part.

Most groups are up and running plus some successful new ones. **Iris Mead** has done a wonderful job keeping them all going and staying in touch with all group contacts throughout lockdown. Sadly, she has decided to stand down from the Committee as she feels unable to continue in this role. Indeed, she says it is time for her to join a group or two! Iris will be sorely missed. If anyone would like to come forward to help out, or join the committee, please let me know.

Christmas is rapidly approaching and I hope this year we are all able to enjoy ourselves and meet up with Family and Friends to celebrate together. So, I wish you all

"A very Happy and Healthy Christmas and a fantastic 2022"

Marion



I've asked many people what does LGBTQ stand for. So far, no one has given me a straight answer!



Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars? Their days are numbered!

MEET YOUR NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We have 5 new committee members on-board. Now to meet them:

Shirley Wolfe, Vice Chair

I was born in Rochford Hospital and lived in Leigh-on-Sea with my parents until the age of 11 before moving to Hadleigh. I attended King John School, trained as a secretary and started working life in London but came back to Benfleet and got a job in Rayleigh Council Offices, where I met my first husband. We had two sons and they had two sons each (I ordered a little girl but it didn't happen!)



In 1977, I joined the Little Theatre Company and I am now a life member. I met my current husband there in 1989 and we have been married for 28 years now. In 2004, I joined the East Essex Players and we perform plays at the Palace Theatre in the Dixon Studio three times a year.

We have two beautiful golden retriever dogs and a black cat that rules the roost. I love pottering around my garden and cooking.

As the proprietor of a ladies underwear shop for 28 years, I lived in the flat over the shop, which had its drawbacks! At 7.30am one morning I received a phone call asking "do you sell any of them incontinous knickers?" You've got to laugh!!!!



Rina Munro, Treasurer

Born in London we moved to Benfleet whilst a baby and stayed until I was about 11. We then then moved to Pitsea, where, on leaving school, I got a job in the local Barclays Bank. I returned to Benfleet in my teens and stayed with Barclays until our first daughter was born.



After a few part-time jobs, some of which involved handling cash, my husband and I were offered the opportunity to buy Golden Travel, where he was General Manager. We had to close the office due to his ill health in 2014.

I have two daughters, Paula and Nicola, and three grandchildren, ages between seven and fifteen and I have no pets. I love spending time with the grandchildren, but unfortunately, as my elder daughter lives in Surrey, I do not see as much of the youngest as I would like.

I like walking, gardening and history, am a member of the RHS and have an allotment, where I spend most of my time in the spring and summer. I belong to Marion's history group, which has enabled me to visit villages with historical interest, some of which have circular walks around them. We write reports on our visits to villages, which are on the U3A website.

Sandra Bedwell, Business Secretary

Born in Hornchurch, I have lived in Essex all my life – a true Essex girl! At 10, I got a grammar school scholarship in London, then into the Foreign Exchange at Thomas Cook Head Office in London.

In my first marriage, we set up a Print & Publicity business at Rayleigh Weir. I had 2 wonderful boys. When the marriage ended, I worked part time at a yacht building company in Rochford.

I met and married a lovely man 2 years later. He was a Civil Engineer and we set up a company building bridges, including ones at Stanstead, the new A13 and Lakeside. I did a course on counselling and worked on Parentline helping families under stress. I was National Secretary for a few years for the Lioness Clubs of UK (Lions Organisation) and Chelmsford Club President 3 times. After retiring, we travelled the world, in the Antarctic walking among penguins, the English base and landing on a volcano.

Sadly, Steve passed away before Christmas last year of liver cancer when we were selling our house and re-structuring a bungalow 4 doors away. He spent many of his last hours enjoying designing it and I carried on with everything including overseeing the building! I could not have done it without the help of those wonderful boys. It has been a long haul but I am moved in now and settling now into Steve's design. A lasting legacy!



Denise Phipps, Outings Organiser

I grew up in The Chase in Thundersley, attended St. Margaret's at Bowers Gifford, King John's, and then at Thurrock Technical College. The majority of my working life was spent working in local dental practices as a dental nurse/receptionist and then as a practice manager, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

I am married to Ian and we have two sons & five grandchildren who bring us great pleasure. I joined Benfleet u3a about 6 years ago and belong to the Local Interest and Local & Essex History Groups. I also acted as a buddy to potential new members showing them around and answering any questions they had about our group.

I am now looking forward to taking up my new position on the Committee as Outings Organiser. However, I have some big shoes to fill, as Maria was a fantastic organiser.



Ian Phipps, Outings Coordinator

I grew up in The Chase in Thundersley, attended Dark Lane Primary, Rayleigh Sweyne, various colleges around Barking during my apprenticeship with Ford Motor Company. Whilst with FMC, I had the opportunity to move our family to Germany twice, which was a great experience, particularly for our two sons.



I have been married to Denise for forty-seven years.

I am a retired company director and have been a member of Benfleet u3a for five years. One of my main hobbies is photography and as such I am a member of both Photography and Local Interest. I am also a member of Marion's Local and Essex History Group and prepare the monthly group supplements ready for publication, from member's articles and contributions.

I am now looking forward to taking up my new position on the Committee.



VACANCY: INTEREST GROUPS COORDINATOR

Attractive package:

Salary: **£0 pa.**

Hours: **Flexible**

Member Appreciation: **100%+**

We need to appoint a new Interest Groups Coordinator. This can be on our Committee or as a separate role.

Interest Groups are the backbone of our u3a and this role is vital to ensuring that we meet member wishes and interests and remain a vibrant, active and developing local organisation.

Key Tasks:

Liaise and support Group Contacts in organising and running groups.

Support establishment of new groups reflecting member's interests.

Provide communication and a forum for Group Contacts for discussion and development.

Communication on Group matters including Groups newsletter.

Job requirements: Willingness; Enthusiasm; Able to liaise effectively with our Members and Group Contacts.

Think you could do this? Come and join us and get involved.

Please contact Marion or any other Committee member to discuss and/or clarify further details about this role. Thank you.

MEMBERS MEETINGS UPDATE

Members Meetings at Richmond Hall have been well attended since starting again in September including Tom Way: Wildlife on your doorstep, Nick Alston: The Real Eton and "How are you? I'm fine" by Sue Kelly.

Also, some really interesting ZOOM meetings have been held – and we are hopeful that given the darker nights and less inviting weather there will be greater attendance via Zoom. Two particularly good sessions were:

The Life and Crimes of Agatha Christie by Steve Dimmer on 14 October



Even if you have only read a few of her novels or seen a handful of adaptations in the cinema or on TV, Steve shared such interesting information that you felt you knew so much more about her by the end.

Did you know she has sold 4.5 billion books and they have been translated into 130 languages? Or that Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple are world famous characters? Or that The Mousetrap has the world's longest theatre run and will have 70 years under its belt in 2022? Or that she was still writing in her 80s?

Do you think you could name 4 of her most well-known books? If you need some clues ... 1: an Egyptian river, 2: a train ride, 3: 10 on an island, 4: the alphabet.

The talk was illustrated with film clips, photo quizzes and great anecdotes which made it an enjoyable and fascinating insight into the life of an incredible lady.

Thanks to Sue Day for the summary.



A Grandmother's Legacy: a 170 year old Recipe Book by Jenny Mallin on 9 Nov.

Jenny returned to tell us more about her amazing family background in India. This time she shared with us the story of the 170 year old cookbook full of recipes handed down through five generations of her grandmothers.

We found out how successive generations added spices and adapted recipes to suit what was available in those times. Jenny explained how the fusion of English and Indian changed tastes. The recipe for Rumble Tumble (Scrambled eggs) included green chillies, onions and tomatoes. The Christmas cake recipe used 40 eggs and made a 16lb cake!

Jenny also explained the origins of food names such as "Vindaloo", which came from a Portuguese term (Vinha d'alhos) meaning meat in garlic wine marinade. Another fascinating talk. Thank you Jenny.

Thanks to Marion for the summary.

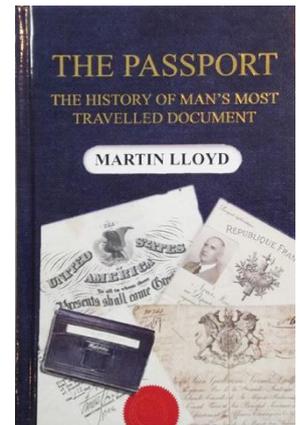
MEMBER MEETINGS FOR YOUR DIARY:

RICHMOND HALL: 2pm Tuesday 30 November 2021

Martin Lloyd: Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies

Thrill to the dramatic account of how a group of assassins brought about a change in the passport regulations: how the unmasking of a spy caused a modification in passport design and how, for one man, the passport itself turned into a killer.

Martin Lloyd is the choice when passports are being discussed. He is an engaging story teller and author with titles published in travel-humour, romance, thriller, history and current affairs.



ZOOM: 2pm Tuesday 14 December 2021

Danielle Barnett: Tis the Season to be jolly



A fun look at the weird, wonderful and somewhat wacky Christmas traditions all over the world.

Danielle is a professional speaker and performer who is the lead singer for the world famous number 1 chart act Urban Cookie Collective who had a big hit with The Key The Secret in 1993 - and she has fronted the act for over 20 years. She still tours alongside a plethora of stars.

28 December 2021: NO HALL MEETING

ZOOM: 2pm Tuesday 11 January 2022

Steve Dimmer: The Life of Walt Disney

RICHMOND HALL: 2pm Tuesday 25 January 2022

Tony Harris: The Life of Churchill

NOT TO BE MISSED

ZOOM: 2pm Tuesday 8 February 2022

Andy Thomas: Unexplained Mysteries and Cover-Ups

RICHMOND HALL: Tuesday 22 February 2022

Mark Lewis: The World of Art Deco



Pearl of Wisdom from your French Group

Avoir de la bouteille

The value, experience and wisdom that one gains with age.

[Literal: having some bottle!]

QUIZZICAL LOOKS

A late Halloween Quiz curtesy of Jan Lane [again]

1. Which 1962 song/group was banned by the BBC for 11 years as 'too morbid'?
2. Which 1922 silent film had Max Schreck as 'Count Orlok'?
3. What is the name of the 282 hectare SSSI near Hindhead, Surrey
4. Where would you find Frank n Furter, Riff Raff and Magenta?
5. Which character was the malevolent ruler of the Winkie County?
6. Which company made vacuum cleaners and the classic 'Teasmade' machine?
7. Which character has snakes for hair and can turn a victim to stone
8. Which character has been played by Leslie Nielsen, Christopher Lee and Gary Oldman?
9. What was singer Melanie Janine Browns nickname?
10. Which group had hits 'She's not there' and 'Time of the Season'?
11. According to legend, which root screams when dug up and kills all who hear it?
12. Which piece of classical music was used as the theme for 'Jonathan Creek'
13. What is a person called who writes a text which is officially credited to someone else?
14. What might a burglar use to open a lock?
15. What is the common name of house plant Chlorophytum comosum?
16. Which political party did David Edward Sutch found?
17. What was the name of the plant in Little Shop of Horrors?

Answers on page 11



Community News - non-U3A activities

Items listed are for your information only and are not U3A organised.

Used Postage Stamps –supporting 1st Thundersley Rainbows:

As a u3a we are not able to raise funds for another charity. However, that does not stop us from collecting items. 1st Thundersley Rainbows are currently running a challenge to collect used postage stamps in aid of the Bone Cancer Research Trust.

We are happy to support this and will pass them firstly to the Rainbows and then once their challenge is over, on to the Trust. So please start saving your stamps and bring them to the meetings where there will be a box for them on the table at the hall **every month. Thank you.**

If you won't be at Member's meetings please pass onto ANY Committee Member.

PS: in case you don't know about Rainbows, this the youngest level of the Guides – for girls aged 5 to 7 years old – exciting, messy, friendly and a lot of fun!

GROUP NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Most groups are now active as life gets nearer 'normal'. Advice on Covid-19 is still on our website and everyone needs to be comfortable meeting up. Groups are vital to our u3a, with opportunity to learn, make friends and enjoy life.

For contact details please see Group Contact pages 10 and 11.

Women in History: after steering the group through the pandemic, **Jean Askew** is standing down. Thank you for your input and effort. Good news: **Sheila Sears** will become group contact. Please contact Sheila to join.

Lunch Club: well attended first two lunches. To join, please contact **Sue Day**.

Vintage Films: so successful it was full before it even started. The group founder is happy to lend out her films, to a very careful user, and we may have another person willing to host a 2nd group. If you are interested, or willing to host, please contact [Interest Groups Coordinator](#).

Grumpy Old Women: meet, have a moan and a laugh over a cuppa, meeting in rotation in each other's homes. To join, please contact **Janet Forey**.

Grumpy Old Men: Where are you all? We are sure a similar group, perhaps over a pint, would go down well. You could meet in a pub or a café, it doesn't have to be in someone's home. Interested? Contact [Interest Groups Coordinator](#).

Art Blue: meet every Tuesday am and have vacancies. This group is self-taught using books, YouTube, etc. and is very supportive with advice if wanted. Interested? Please contact **Marion Coleman**.

New Group Ideas: new group/activity? Any thoughts, ideas and interests and we will support you in any way we can. Several new successful groups have been created through the pandemic. Contact [Interest Groups Coordinator](#)

What have you been doing?

With many more activities undertaken by our groups, we are pleased to share some of their exploits. Access these using the **QUICK LINKS** page on our website.

Firstly, a mention for **Pat Cluness and the Book Club**. Through the pandemic they have simply and quietly kept going, reviewing books of numerous varieties. In 2020 they reviewed 29 books and in 2021 to date 32. Do take a look at their Book Club group page and you might find something of interest to you. Well done all.



Photography: South Weald Park and Wat Tyler Park.



Drawing: Monoprinting and Flower Show. Moving now to 'Body Parts'. Also, an on-going 4 seasons challenge drawing members own garden.



Local and Essex History: fascinating topic reviews including local shops, businesses and farms, Essex Villages and this month Essex Ghosts and Ghouls. Do visit the group page and download numerous supplements.



Local Interest:

Fisherman's Chapel, Leigh.



Lunch Club:

Gambero D'Oro.



Macs and Wellies

Gardening: Hyde Hall



Walking over 5 miles:

East London excursion.



Wildlife

Two Tree Island and Canvey Lake



Wildlife Encounters: Apart from the group visits, we also keep a monthly page open for **ALL our u3a Members** to provide photos of wildlife they have seen.

GROUP CONTACTS

If on-line then click a Subject for the Group webpage.
Click Contact Name to send a web message.

To join a group please call the contact number given below. If full, ON HOLD or for any queries, please contact the [Interest Groups Coordinator](#)

| SUBJECT | CONTACT | MEETING DATE |
|--|---|------------------------|
| <u>Art Blue</u> | <u>Marion Coleman</u> | 10am every Tuesday |
| <u>Art Turquoise</u> | <u>Dot Hopkins</u> | 10am every Thursday |
| <u>Badminton 1</u> | <u>Brian Boyce</u> | Monday pm weekly |
| <u>Badminton 2</u> | <u>Robert Gray</u> | Thursday 7:30pm weekly |
| <u>Book Club</u> | <u>Pat Cluness</u> | Monthly: variable |
| <u>Card & Board Games</u> | <u>Ann Sayer</u> | 2nd Wednesday. pm |
| <u>Comparative Religion</u> | <u>Cheryl Kirby</u> | 2nd Tuesday. pm |
| <u>Culinary Experience</u> | <u>Barbara Webb</u> | 4th Monday. |
| <u>Darts</u> | <u>Chris Hicks</u> | Last Wednesday. pm |
| <u>Discussion 1</u> | <u>Jenny Brown</u> | 2nd Monday. pm |
| <u>Discussion 2</u> | <u>Jean Askew</u> | 1st Tuesday. pm |
| <u>Drawing</u> | <u>Sue Quattrucci</u> | Monthly challenge |
| <u>Family History</u> | <u>Grahame Harris</u> | 1st Tuesday. 2-4pm |
| <u>Flower Arranging</u> | <u>Dot Hopkins</u> | 10am every Friday |
| <u>French</u> | <u>Lyn Aldridge</u> | 2nd Wednesday. 10am |
| <u>Garden Visits</u> | <u>Theresa Sergeant</u> | Restart in 2022 |
| <u>Gardening</u> | <u>Jenny Brown</u> | Monthly: variable |
| <u>Grumpy Old Women</u> | <u>Janet Forey</u> | Start 2022 |
| <u>Knit & Stitch</u> | <u>Pauline Everett</u> | 2nd Tuesday. pm |
| <u>Local and Essex History</u> | <u>Marion Coleman</u> | Various |
| <u>Local Interest</u> | <u>Sue Lewsey</u> | 1st Wednesday. |
| <u>Lunch Club</u> | <u>Sue Day</u> | Various |
| <u>Macs/Wellies Gardening</u> | <u>Bob Munson</u> | Various |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <u>Meditation</u> | <u>Richard Newall</u> | Tuesday. am; every week |
| <u>Naval & Military History</u> | <u>Phil Lloyd-Worth</u> | 2nd Wednesday. 2pm |
| <u>Outings</u> | <u>Denise Phipps</u> | Restart in 2022 |
| <u>Photography</u> | <u>Sue Lewsey</u> | 3 rd Monday. pm |
| <u>Scrabble (2 groups)</u> | <u>Doreen Curran</u> | 2pm Mon. every 2 weeks 2pm Thurs. every 2 weeks |
| <u>Singing</u> | <u>Linda Burdett</u> | 2nd & 3rd Thursday. |
| <u>Spanish</u> | <u>Sheila Radford</u> | Wednesday. pm weekly |
| <u>T@3 (Tea at Three)</u> | <u>Marion Coleman</u> | Zoom 3pm every Wed. |
| <u>Ten Pin Bowling</u> | <u>Jim Regan</u> | 3rd Friday. am |
| <u>Vintage Films</u> | <u>Jenny Brown</u> | 2nd and 4th Thurs. 1pm |
| <u>Walking up to 5 miles</u> | <u>Eve Burgess</u> | 1st Thursday. am |
| <u>Walking over 5 miles</u> | <u>Doreen Wiggans</u> | 4th Thursday. am |
| <u>Walking over 5 miles Group 2</u> | <u>Freda Antoniou</u> | 3rd Wednesday. am |
| <u>Wildlife</u> | <u>Janet Humphrey</u> | 2nd Thursday. am |
| <u>Women in History</u> | <u>Sheila Sears</u> | 3rd Friday. pm |



QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Monster Mash by Bobby 'Boris' Pickett and the Crypt Kickers
2. Nosferatu
3. The Devils Punchbowl
4. The Rocky Horror Picture Show
5. The Wicked Witch of the West
6. Goblin
7. Medusa the Gorgon
8. Dracula
9. Scary Spice
10. Zombies
11. Mandrake
12. Danse Macabre by Saint-Saens
13. Ghost writer
14. Skeleton keys
15. Spider plant
16. The Monster Raving Loony Party
17. Audrey 11





Committee Members

Click on ROLE to send web message

[Chair](#)

Marion Coleman



[Vice-Chair](#)

Shirley Wolfe



[Treasurer](#)

Rina Munro



[Business Secretary](#)

Sandra Bedwell



**[Interest Groups
Coordinator](#)**

Vacant

[Membership Secretary](#)

Bob Munson



[Outings Organiser](#)

Denise Phipps



[Outings Coordinator](#)

Ian Phipps



[Bulletin Editor/Webmaster](#)

Alan Aldridge



[Committee Member](#)

Suzanne Worland



[Committee Member](#)

Lee King



Bereavement and Unwell: Please contact **[Suzanne Worland](#)** to confirm details of any bereavement or illness, and an appropriate card will be forwarded.