



BENFLEET BULLETIN

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Issue 47: September 2023

W: u3asites.org.uk/benfleet **f** facebook.com/groups/benfleetu3a

Chair: Marion Coleman

Bulletin Editor: Alan Aldridge

FROM THE CHAIR: Hello again everyone

Sitting down to write my final piece for the Bulletin (Yes, I really am standing down in September when my extended term of office ends), I began to look back over my four years as Chair.

In September 2019, we were a very active u3a with around 300 members and a good selection of groups.

None of us had any idea that in early 2020 the Covid pandemic would hit us and bring about a national lockdown. I felt very strongly that we had to maintain contact with our members through this period (many other u3as actually had to close). So, with your committee, setting up a Benfleet Facebook group, enabling groups to continue on line, running Zoom speaker sessions, Tea at Three, monthly Bulletins and SIMs Newsletters etc. ensured we survived those horrible times.

Gradually, normal life resumed. We celebrated our 10th Anniversary in 2021 with a lovely afternoon tea, enjoyed a Picnic in the Park for the Queen's Jubilee in 2022, held several "Thank You" teas for group leaders, and danced away the night to the "Music of the Sixties" Band in 2023.

More importantly, our amazing groups increased in both number and choice. Our numbers have remained constant at around 300 and I know Benfleet u3a remains a central focus for so many members.

So, I would like to say THANK YOU to our hardworking Committee and to all of you, our members, who have ensured we have such a flourishing u3a.

I am sure that, whoever is elected as Chair at the AGM, you will give them your support too. I may be standing down but I will still be at the meetings and running my own groups.

Thank you and enjoy the last of the Summer.

Marion, Chair



A Tribute and Thank you to Marion Guiding Light of our Benfleet u3a



It is with deep gratitude, we say thank you to Marion, our stalwart Chair who has steered our Benfleet u3a for an admirable four years. Her unwavering commitment has been a beacon of strength, especially during the challenging tempest of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marion's leadership ensured our ship stayed afloat as we weathered the storm, with activities persevering despite the inability to meet face-to-face. The membership, flourishing at around 300, owes much to her tenacity.

Despite not being that familiar with computers, she orchestrated the successful implementation of monthly Zoom sessions, established a thriving Facebook presence, bringing together 90 members, and, her creation of the 'Tea at Three' Zoom group provided a haven for social interaction during trying times.

Beyond the pandemic's grip, Marion's influence has also been immense. Orchestrating engaging monthly speaker programs, nurturing the growth of the Art Blue group, and fostering the Local and Essex History Group, she enriched our u3a's tapestry. Her involvement in Photography, Macs, and Wellies gardening further exemplified her multifaceted dedication.

Marion's can-do attitude and boundless energy are an inspiration. Her green fingers have given life to a splendid garden, a testament to her creativity. A journey through Canada and Alaska's vast landscapes showcases her indomitable spirit and energy. See Marion's trip A-Z at [202308 – ABC Challenge Canada](#)

As Marion steps down, her legacy endures. Her leadership during the toughest times has etched a deep mark of gratitude in our hearts. Marion's influence is still a positive force, and we extend our heartfelt thanks for a job splendidly done.

Thank you, Marion from ALL of your grateful members.



OUTINGS

Outing details will be advised with a date when bookings will be taken. This will be by email, letter to those without email and on our website.

NO bookings BEFORE the advised booking date.

Full payment date: Full payment must be received by that date. If not places will be offered to other members. We will not be taking deposits for outings.

Cheques: payable to Benfleet U3A. Please write the outing name on the back.

Pick-up and drop-off points are Victoria House Corner, Kenneth/Kiln Road Junction, Kents Hill Road, Tarpots, (Romsey Road), and Pitsea.

Where food is included, advise any dietary/allergy requirements at booking.

Mobile phone: give a mobile phone number in case of need to contact while out.

Photographs: advise at booking if you do NOT wish photos of you to be in the bulletin or website.

Collection to your tickets! Due to difficulties in getting tickets to members we have altered the method. The physical tickets can be picked up at the Members' Meeting immediately prior to the Outing – in person or collected for you. Everyone who has not collected them will receive details by email. Any not collected will be available at the coach when boarding.

Thursday 14 September 2023 - LEEDS CASTLE – in KENT!

Basis: **Coach; Entrance to Castle and Grounds; Multimedia Guide; Access to the Festival of Craft and Design, being held on the site, with associated 'Sublime Sculptures' being displayed around the grounds.**

Status: **OPEN for booking – places still available**

Cost: **£36 per person**

Latest Payment Date: **Tuesday 29 August 2023**

Payment Methods: **Cash, or cheques made payable to Benfleet u3a**

Maximum number of passengers: **48**

For full details visit [**202309 – Leeds Castle**](#)

To book contact Ian Phipps at [**Outings Coordinator**](#)



Thursday 30 November 2023 – Brick Lane Music Hall

Basis: **Coach; Lunch; Show.**

Status: **OPEN for booking – places still available**

Cost: **The total cost is estimated to be £84 per person.** Because of the Music Hall payment requirements this has been split into Coach and Music Hall.

Payment for Music Hall only Lunchtime meal and show.

Cost: **£66 per person.**

Latest Payment Date: **Tuesday 25 July 2023.** New bookings pay with booking.

Payment Methods: **Cash, or cheques made payable to Benfleet u3a.**

Payment for Coach only

Early September a reminder will be sent for the coach payment.

Cost: **£18 per person - estimated.**

Latest Payment Date: **Tuesday 31 October 2023.**

Payment Methods: **Cash, or cheques made payable to Benfleet u3a.**

Maximum number of passengers: **48**

For full details visit 202311 – [**Brick Lane Music Hall**](#)

To book contact Ian Phipps at [**Outings Coordinator**](#)



Advance Notice of planned Outings NOT AVAILABLE FOR BOOKING YET:

- Thursday 14 December 2023 Winchester Christmas Market

Completed Outings:

- Thursday 15 June 2023 – Camden Market



MEMBERS MEETINGS UPDATE

Since the last meeting we have enjoyed three Richmond Hall meetings:

2pm Tuesday 30 May 2023: Marion Coleman: Life and Children of Ghana
An impromptu presentation from personal experiences in Ghana

2pm Tuesday 27 June 2023: Peter Guide: Changing rooms-Interiors through the ages

2pm Tuesday 25 July 2023:
Joanna Larner
Handwriting Analysis - For Fun



Coming Soon (full list of all booked Members' Meetings):

2pm Tuesday 29 August 2023: Karen Lawrie - If you don't use it, you lose it

2pm Tuesday 26 September 2023: Annual General Meeting and then
Sue Spiers - The Big House Mystery



2pm Tuesday 31 October 2023:
The Ladybirds,
singing to raise money for charity.

2pm Tuesday 28 November 2023: Tony Harris - The Pantomime Dame

December: NO hall meeting.

2pm Tuesday 20 January 2024: Bobbie Derbyshire - A Beginning, A Muddle and an End.
Where do Novelists get their Ideas From?

2pm Tuesday 27 February 2024: Barry Seeley - Personal Security

2pm Tuesday 26 March 2024: Siobhan Pierce - From Clown to Corporate

2pm Tuesday 30 April 2024: Paul Spracklin - Adventures in Mexico and plant collecting

2pm Tuesday 28 May 2024: Bernard Lockett

The Heritage of Gilbert and Sullivan

2pm Tuesday 25 June 2024:
Tony Harris - King Henry VIII



For full details of each talk please visit [Events](#)

GROUP NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

For contact details please see **Groups List pages 10 and 11**

NEW GROUPS:

Quiz Group: we have entered a Benfleet u3a team at a local Quiz night in Pitsea on Saturday 7 October 2023. Any more members wishing to take part please contact **Alan Aldridge** at [**Bulletin Editor**](#)

MORE GROUP MEMBERS NEEDED:

Ten Pin Bowling: we meet on the 3rd Friday of each month at 10.30 at the Hollywood Bowl, Basildon. There is always room for one or two more members and we are a group of very mixed ability! Please contact **Jim Regan** (see Groups list)

Scrabble: group has space for new members on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 2pm until 4pm. Please contact **Doreen Curran** for more details.

Lunch Club: still in need of a Group Contact. Suzanne is keeping it going but that can't last forever – **Volunteer please.**

Other groups also have space for new members. Please approach group contact:

Current Affairs Wildlife Badminton 1 Canasta Darts

Proposed new groups:

**Women in History 2 I.T. Group Cardmaking
Poetry Reading Creative Writing**

Potential Members and Group Contacts please contact **Suzanne Worland** at [**Interest Groups Coordinator**](#)

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Your Committee has adopted an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy based on the National u3a Guidance to comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Organisations cannot treat someone unfairly on the basis of 'protected characteristics': ethnic origin, nationality (or statelessness), race, age, disability, religion or belief (including the absence of belief), marital or civil partnership status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender reassignment or political belief.

The policy gives practical advice to comply with the law. It is important that all members are aware of this policy. As far as we know we do comply but if needed members should raise any concerns confidentially with any Committee Member.

You can download the policy at [**Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Policy**](#)

Or, browse to it at: u3asites.org.uk/benfleet > About Us > Constitution and Policies (top right links) > Click Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Policy (top right links)

Or, if you can't access via the internet, then request a printed copy from **Alan Aldridge** at [**Bulletin Editor**](#)

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?

Macs and Wellies Gardening – Great Garden Trail 2023



Singing – attended local concert “Can you hear the people sing”



Local and Essex History – Visit to Eastbury Manor, Barking



Drawing and Painting

Landscapes



SeaScapes



Helen Rubenstein Workshop



Walking over 5 miles

Heybridge Basin



Old Leigh



Wildlife

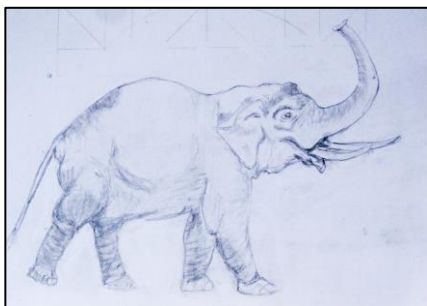
Wallasea-Seals



Canvey Wick



Art 4 Beginners



Photography

Ingatstone Hall



ABC Challenge



Benfleet Yacht Club



Out and About

Ken Slaney flying Spitfire over Benfleet



See all recent activities on our website click [**QUICK LINKS**](#)

Your landline telephones are changing!

You may already be aware that all of our home phones will be changing to digital technology over the next 2 years or so.

This means that our calls will not be the so-called analogue signal (like sound waves) but will be coded into digital segments for transmission. This will give better, more consistent sound quality and will potentially make international calls cheaper. So what's involved?



For those of us that have relatively modern phones, they will connect directly into your existing internet router and work as usual. For the members who do not have or want the internet, the phone companies are required to offer you a 'simple internet connection', dedicated to landline phone operation and nothing else. The cost should be no more than the current line rental.

Those with very old handsets may need to replace them and any directly wired extensions will not work. Some people now exclusively use mobile phones for conversations and if you don't want internet this may well be the best solution.

The digital phone system will fail if there is a power cut (the old analogue lines would have continued working) unless you have a battery backup (most people won't). Again, many people use a mobile phone as the back-up.

This change may disproportionately affect older people and so AGE UK have produced an excellent webpage to clarify issues.

To view click [AGE UK Changes to Landline Telephones](#) Alternatively, go to their website at ageuk.org.uk and in the search box enter 'Landline Changes'.

There are also two other issues. The telephone companies 'may' try and find reasons to charge you extra – resist, they have a responsibility to come up with solutions. And, as always, SCAMS, please be wary of unsolicited phone calls and letters relating to these changes. Always go back to your existing telephone service provider using your regular contact routes as displayed on bills.

PS: As these issues affect older people rather than specifically our u3a, please let me know if you find this article useful and relevant to you or not.

Please contact **Alan Aldridge** at [Bulletin Editor](#)

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.

For any other queries, please contact the **[Interest Groups Coordinator](#)**

Monthly unless stated otherwise

SUBJECT	CONTACT	MEETING DATE
<u>Art 4 Beginners</u>	<u>Sandra Bedwell</u> <u>Sue Quattrucci</u>	4 th Monday. 2pm
<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 1:30pm weekly
<u>Book Club</u>	<u>Pat Cluness</u>	Monthly: variable
<u>Canasta</u>	<u>Doreen Curran</u>	4 th Wednesday. 2pm
<u>Card & Board Games</u>	<u>Ann Sayer</u>	1 st Wednesday. 2pm.
<u>Culinary Experience</u>	<u>Barbara Webb</u>	4 th Monday.
<u>Current Affairs</u>	<u>June Foster</u>	2 nd Monday. 2pm
<u>Darts</u>	<u>Chris Hicks</u>	Last Wednesday. 2pm
<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Jean Askew</u>	2 nd Monday. 2pm.
<u>Drawing and Painting</u>	<u>Sue Quattrucci</u>	Monthly challenge
<u>Exploring World Faiths</u>	<u>Cheryl Kirby</u>	2nd Tuesday. 2pm
<u>Flower Arranging</u>	<u>Dot Hopkins</u>	10am every Friday
<u>French</u>	<u>Lyn Aldridge</u>	2 nd Wednesday. 10am
<u>French Beginners</u>	<u>Lyn Aldridge</u>	2 nd Wednesday. 2pm
<u>Gardening</u>	<u>Janet Heather</u>	Monthly: variable
<u>German Beginners</u>	<u>Margit Barnard</u>	2 nd Monday. 10am
<u>Knit & Stitch</u>	<u>Pauline Everett</u>	Ad hoc activity
<u>Local and Essex History</u>	<u>Marion Coleman</u>	Various
<u>Local Interest</u>	<u>Sue Lewsey</u>	1 st Wednesday.
<u>Lunch Club</u>	<u>Suzanne Worland</u>	2 nd Friday. 12:30pm
<u>Macs/Wellies Gardening</u>	<u>Bob Munson</u>	Various

<u>Meditation</u>	<u>Richard Newall</u>	Tuesday. 11am; weekly
<u>Naval & Military History</u>	<u>Phil Lloyd-Worth</u>	3 rd Thursday. 2pm
<u>Out and About</u>	<u>Alan Aldridge</u>	No meetings-input only
<u>Outings</u>	<u>Denise Phipps</u>	As advised.
<u>Photography</u>	<u>Sue Lewsey</u>	3 rd Monday. 2pm
<u>Play Reading</u> (2 groups)	<u>Shirley Wolfe</u>	2 nd Tues. Gp1 10:30am 2 nd Tues. Gp2 2:30pm
<u>Scrabble</u> (2 groups)	<u>Doreen Curran</u>	1 st /3 rd Monday. 2pm 2 nd /4 th Thursday. 2pm
<u>Singing</u>	<u>Sue Day</u>	2 nd Thursday. 1:30pm 3 rd Thursday. 9:45am
<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Sheila Radford</u>	Wednesday weekly. 10am
<u>Ten Pin Bowling</u>	<u>Jim Regan</u>	3 rd Friday. am
<u>Vintage Films</u>	<u>Jenny Brown</u>	2 nd and 4 th Thurs. 1pm
<u>Walking over 5 miles</u>	<u>Doreen Wiggans</u>	4 th Thursday. am
<u>Walking up to 5 miles</u>	<u>Janet Parish</u> <u>Rita Campion</u>	1 st Thursday. am
<u>Wildlife</u>	<u>Janet Humphrey</u>	2 nd Thursday. 10:30am
<u>Women in History</u>	<u>Sheila Sears</u>	3 rd Friday. 2pm
<u>Wrongs to Rights</u>	<u>Paula Jaques</u>	2 nd Wednesday. 10am

Exciting opportunity alert! Update to our u3a Website

Our u3a is gearing up for a fantastic transformation, and I need your help.

I'm on the hunt for a dedicated volunteer (ideally two!) to learn the ropes of WordPress, our new, user-friendly website platform. If you're comfortable using the internet and familiar with Word, you're already on the right track! No complex coding required – just a keen eye for detail and a passion for quality.

Explore WordPress at your own pace through existing tutorials and trial pages ready for the big migration in about 12 months.

Got a laptop/PC (or maybe a tablet)? Perfect! Patience is key, as you dive into the system's capabilities and assist with content migration and support of our new site.

Join us in this rewarding journey that benefits all our u3a Members.

Contact **Alan Aldridge** at [Bulletin Editor](#) to learn more and be a vital part of our exciting website revamp.



Committee Members

Chair

Marion Coleman



Vice-Chair

Shirley Wolfe



Treasurer

Rina Munro



Business Secretary

Sandra Bedwell



Membership Secretary

Bob Munson



**Interest Groups
Coordinator**

Suzanne Worland



Outings Organiser

Denise Phipps



Outings Coordinator

Ian Phipps



**Bulletin Editor/
Webmaster**

Alan Aldridge



Committee Member

Lee King



Committee Member

Jim Wolfe



Bereavement and Unwell: Please contact Suzanne Worland at **Interest Groups Coordinator** to confirm details of any bereavement or illness, and an appropriate card will be forwarded.