



u3a Upminster Newsletter

March 2021



We meet at the New Windmill Hall, Upminster, RM14 2QH on the **3rd Tuesday each month.**

However, due to current Covid restrictions, our **monthly meetings are held via Zoom**, until further notice. Members will be invited to join the Zoom session **via email.**

News & Notices

London Region of u3as – Winter Talks 2021.

For further information about the range on offer and registration, click [here](#)

This month's subjects include:

8 March – Realms of Gold – John Keats, his Story, and his Poetry On Zoom. 17.00 – 18.00.

22 March – I Can't Believe We Still get Medicines from Plants On Zoom. 17.00 – 18.00

Third Age Trust – Learning Events.

Offering workshops, webinars and interactive sessions delivered by members for members, for free.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Jigsaw Puzzles

Just in case you've not seen the notice previously, please note that thanks to several Uu3a ladies, I now have a large range of 500 and 1,000 piece jigsaws available. Contact me on chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906-433559 if you would like to borrow one – or more.

Diary Dates

Our monthly meeting in March will be held on **Tuesday 16th March 2021 at 2pm, via Zoom.**

March's **Guest Speaker** will be:
Farhana Aktar, Keep Britain Tidy – a talk on Recycling.

Future Guest Speakers' program

- **20th April 21** Paul Barwick - a talk on the death of the MI6 spy Gareth Williams in 2010.

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Upminster u3a Committee – Contact details can be found on our website, click: <https://u3asites.org.uk/upminster/contact>

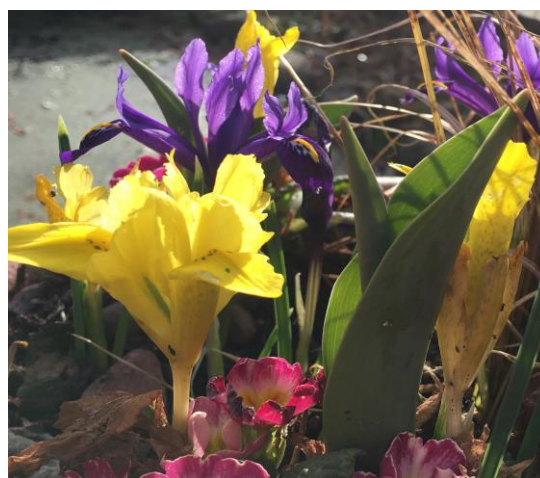


View from the Chair.

March is the month of the spring equinox, when the sun moves into the northern hemisphere, and daylight hours increase. The sunshine feels warmer each day, and we can all start to feel more optimistic. The longer days encourage nature to bloom: the frogs are coming back to the pond. It's such a relief to be able to walk in the country without returning home covered with mud. I even managed to cut the grass (and my fringe, but not with the mower!).

Many of Upminster u3a's groups managed to continue their activities during the past 12 months via email, phone or zoom. Thank you so much for all your efforts to maintain contacts. Soon other groups, which are more dependent on places reopening, will be able to resume their visits and walks and talks and meetings.

Finally, meetings with family and friends are something we've all been waiting for; the day can't come soon enough when we can hug people again. Until then, we remain dependent on electronic media to send a virtual hug to those we hold dear. Be patient and stay safe, hoping 2021 is not a repeat of 2020.



Courtney

Membership Renewal 2021

I am very pleased to say that over 45% of you have already renewed your membership. This year, as Courtney stated in last month's Newsletter, the [renewal fee is £10](#) for individuals, which works out at less than 20 pence per week, which I think is tremendous value. To those who haven't yet renewed your membership, may I remind you that they are due on the 1st April 2021.

Thank you,

Terry Smith - Membership Secretary



Uu3a's Desert Island Discs

A new feature introduced by Chris Slade and Michael Moore

This month's CASTAWAY was Michael Moore

Music:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Touching & Caring | Nina Simone |
| 2. Bring the Family Back | Billy Paul |
| 3. This Love | The Joy Tones |
| 4. The First Picture of You | Lotus Eaters |
| 5. Hazy Jane II | Nick Drake |
| 6. Ribbon in the Sky | Stevie Wonder |
| 7. Strange Feeling | Billy Stewart |
| 8. The Valley Road | Bruce Hornsby |

Favourite piece from the 8 is number 1.

Book: The Complete Sherlock Holmes Stories

Luxury Item: A Comfortable Bed

Chris Slade





Groups Update

History of London

Cutlers' Hall - The Cutlers' Livery Company

The visit that we were to make this month has, of course, had to be cancelled, but I am pleased to be able to tell you that a new date has been offered on **Wednesday 8 September**. Quite a long way off, but something to look forward to perhaps. This will be the fourth HofL Group visit to the Hall and, by common consent, it is considered the best of the tours of the City's Livery Companies.

There is a charge of **£17.50**, but **no** money is required until much nearer the date, once we are sure that we will be able to go.

The available places were offered to the Group members who were due to go this month, but there are just seven remaining which will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you would like to go or would like further information about the visit, please contact Chris Slade at chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906 433559.

Chris Slade

Upminster u3a Coach Trips

Now we have been told that the leisure sector is probably going to open again in time for this Summer your coach trips committee are looking at reinstating some of the trips that had to be cancelled last year. It is too soon to make firm plans, but normal service will resume as soon as possible. We hope to have something definite in time for next month's newsletter.

2020 Holiday to Isle of Wight

This is a message for those of you who booked for the u3a holiday to the Isle of Wight that was scheduled for last June and had to be cancelled. We don't know who you are because you booked directly with Kirby's so we can't contact you individually. We have no plans to run the holiday this year so, if you have not yet asked for the refund of your hotel deposits, you should do so now. The best way to contact them is by email at info@kirbyscoaches.co.uk or you could telephone them on 01268 777777.

There should be no problem, but please let me know if you have any difficulty.

Pamela Freer pamelafreer@samson-freer.co.uk or 01708 222017.



Politics and Current Affairs Group



Inspired by parliamentary Zoom meetings and reassured that we couldn't do any worse than MP's, the Politics and Current Affairs Group resumed its meetings by Zoom at the end of last year. By me adopting the role of the Speaker (minus his accent), the discussions we have had so far have been as animated as always and seemingly enjoyed by all participants.

Now that the Brexit discussions battle is over, apart from the odd skirmish, we have agreed that apart from a general moan and vaccine virtue signalling there is nothing more to be said about COVID. We then took to thinking about the future of the UK and indeed if there will be a future for the UK or should we be talking about England? Is Nicola Sturgeon a better leader than Boris Johnson or is she a one trick pony? What can be done for High Street retail or is the typical British shopper now an on-line animal? Is free speech under threat from the WOKE movement? Should all public toilets be multigender? In fact, anything that anyone raises as an area for discussion. We try to keep each topic to 20 minutes, but I'm afraid the substitute Speaker isn't as good as the real one at keeping control.

So, what do you think about Sadiq Khan's term as the Mayor of London? Are you pleased that there will be a mayoral election? Does it really matter what party they represent as none of them seem to make any difference? (Apart maybe from a bike centred traffic policy, but they seem to be the same on that now that I think about it.)

I must stop now as I must arrange the books in my study into alphabetical order with the very few highbrow books I own clearly on display.

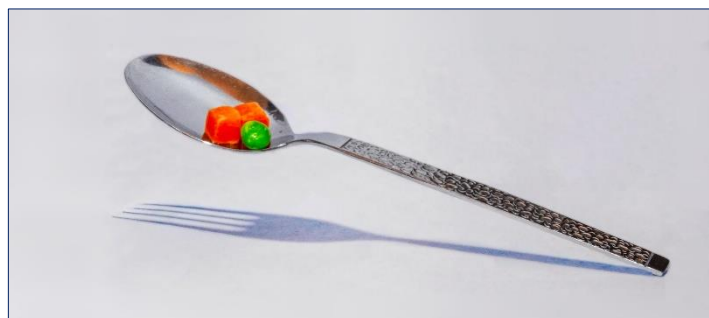
Robert Soper

Photography Group

Until we can meet again in person the group will carry on meeting monthly on Zoom. As well as setting monthly photographic projects that can be done at home and on location at a social distance.

February's task was to capture Shadows. To see some of the February's shadow Photos, please use the link below.

<http://quickconnect.to/Uu3A-photos/photo>



Picture by Dave Faldo

Terry Simms



Cinema Group



Hello there at least the weather is starting to improve and most of my friends and family have had their jab. Here are a couple of things I have enjoyed, whilst we remain for now in lockdown.

Films

[White Tiger on Netflix.](#)

An ambitious Indian driver used his wit and cunning to escape from poverty. This is an odd film, but if you want to see what the real India is like, give it a go.

[The Dig on Netflix](#)

This is a British drama, starring Carey Mulligan and Ralph Fiennes, it is loosely based on the archaeologists who participated in the Sutton Hoo dig, which was an Anglo-Saxon royal burial site. It's a nice and easy to watch Sunday film.

[Gone Girl on Amazon Prime](#)

Starring Rosamund Pike and Ben Affleck, This is a psychological thriller, a great film.

[Bohemian Rhapsody on Amazon Prime](#)

If you like Queen you will love this

TV

[Joanna Lumley's Home Sweet Home](#)

Travel in my Own Land, has been a fabulous series Joanne is a very natural presenter.

[The Sin on Ch 4](#) was an absolutely wonderful series the acting was superb

[Paul Sinha's \(Paul is from the Chase\) TV Showdown ITV 10pm Saturdays.](#) This is a TV-themed quiz show, with celebrity guests, which is great fun.

[Celebrity Best Home Cook BBC1.](#) It was very enjoyable.

Linda Weiss



Poetry Appreciation Group

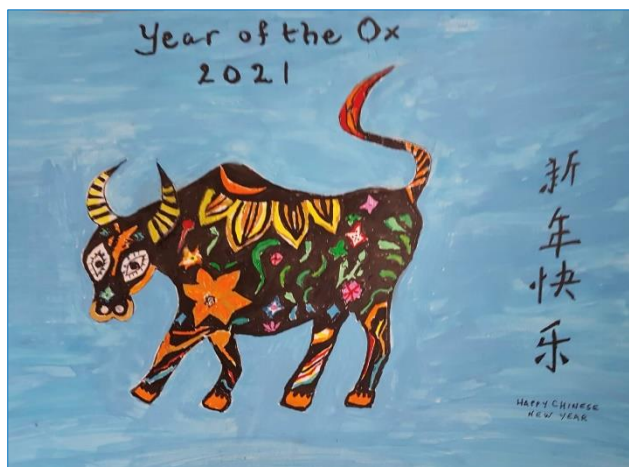
What an incredible year it has been. Our group met on a monthly basis; our last 'physical' meeting being held at the end of February'20. We successfully resumed our meetings via Zoom. I would say I had approximately 75% attendance on Zoom, several declining for various reasons. Obviously, it was not quite the same in all respects, but we managed in a similar format. We discussed and debated on the poets and poetry. I think I can speak for us all, in that the main thing was we thoroughly enjoyed it. I think it was a breath of fresh air in grim times! We are enthusiastically carrying on with our monthly gatherings and we look forward to meeting again in my home, vaccine/restrictions permitting!

Communication in whatever form is essential at this time of the pandemic.

Michelle Blythe

Friday Art Group

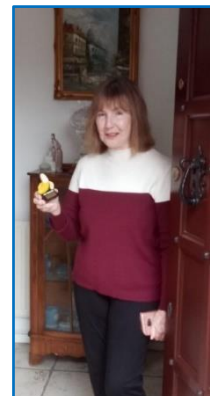
Our Art Group have continued to be productive and encourage each other via WhatsApp and Zoom, as some have a turn in losing motivation during the 'unfriendly' weather and current lockdown! Recent messages, however, seem to be centred around who has been jabbed, which one did you get and how far away was your offered location.



Sandra

Angela receiving her 'Top Banana' Artists' award for her [Psychedelic Ox](#).

The Art Group celebrated The Chinese New Year in paint showing individual responses, images & styles.





Walking with Wildlife February 2021

The first of March marks the start of meteorological spring, and now that the snow has left us it does feel a lot more like spring, with snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils showing everywhere.



There is also an air of optimism about, now that the vaccination rollout has been so successful, and hopefully I will be able to restart walks in early April, assuming that everything is still going in the right direction. Initially it will be in groups of 6, as we were doing before the last lockdown. I will repeat the walk 3 times in the week, in order that I can get as many members as possible of the group on the walk. Last month I asked you all to identify two wildflowers and I hope you managed to correctly identify them. This month I have two fungi to identify.

- 1) The fairy toadstool – but what is its proper name?

Usually seen on the edges of mixed woodland. Its vivid red/orange cap is sometimes flecked with white spots – although these can be removed by rainwater. It has white gills and a slim stem. Beware, it is very poisonous!



- 2) A very tasty mushroom, which is found under oaks and conifers. What is its name?

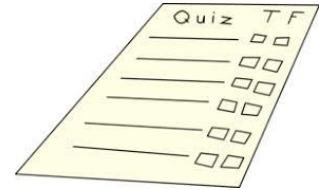
Answers can be found on the last page of this Newsletter.

Terry Smith



Upminster, Cranham & Hornchurch Quiz.

1. Where are there some private tennis courts in Upminster?
2. Upminster Court is a grade II listed building. Who was it built for and who is the current owner?
3. What was the name of the shop that sold fancy goods in St. Mary's Lane?
4. When did Abbs Cross school open?
5. When did Cranham Social Hall open?
6. When was the current London Underground depot built?
7. When was Upminster telephone exchange switched from manual to digital? Also, what location did it move from and to where?
8. Where was the Catholic church on the corner of Champion Road before now?
9. There are names of a few old dwellings along Front Lane that have survived by name only. What are their names?
10. When was the current Robert Beard Youth Club built?



Russ

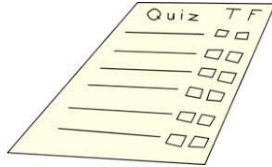
Answers to Walking with Wildlife questions from page 8

- 1) Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*)
- 2) Porcini/Cep/Penny Bun (*Boletus edulis*)

Terry Smith



Quiz Answers.



1. There are two, one off Grosvenor Gardens and the other off Coniston Avenue.
2. It was built in 1905–1906 for Mr. Arthur Williams, a civil engineer who designed and developed steel reinforced piles used to pile the Dagenham jetties on the marshy banks of the Thames. After several changes of ownership, it is now the headquarters and training centre of Uniserve, a large international freight and logistics co., who bought the premises in January 2007. Upminster Court has had many uses – to accommodate refugees during the Second World War, by Essex County Council to house their education offices and by Havering Council for short stay Respite Care Home for Older People and then as a training centre for the council's staff.
3. Beaumonde.
4. Abbs Cross school opened in 1958 as a mixed Technical High School. It is now Abbs Cross Academy and Arts College.
5. The Hall, Front Lane, was built in 1962.
6. It was built between 1956–1958. The District line opened on 24 December 1868.
7. It changed to digital in 1970 (3 December) and was the last manual exchange in London. It moved from Exchange House (between Sunnyside Gardens and Tudor Gardens) to just before The Coopers' Company & Coborn School. The manual exchange opened in 1929 and replaced the one above Green Stores in Station Road that had operated since 1922.
8. It was on the corner of Sunnyside Gardens and St Mary's Lane. Its first service was in 1923.
9. Rectory now Rectory Gardens, Dorkins now Dorkins Way and Brookmans now Brookman Park Drive. The land with the Rectory was sold in 1924 (rectory on the site mentioned in 1610) and was rebuilt further south, still for All Saints Church. Dorkins was a farm. No history found for Brookmans. All these names were found on an old map 6in to the mile 1888–1913. Other names along Front Lane are – Crouchs, Bedlam, Nokes & Mears, Beles and Lambkins.
10. It was built in 1965. It was named after Robert William Beard who amongst other things was a magistrate in Romford who became one of the pioneers for Youth Service Hornchurch.

Russ