



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

We will **resume** our regular meetings at the **New Windmill Hall, Upminster, RM14 2QH**, on Tuesday 21st September'21. Our **last** Zoom meeting will be on Tuesday 17th August'21: members will be invited to join the Zoom session via email.

News & Notices

- **London Region of u3as – Summer School Tuesday 17th August 2021.** For further information and registration, click [here](#).
- The u3a has established a nationwide **Chess network**. More information and how to join up can be found [here](#).
- **View the latest u3a Covid advice for Group activities.** Click [here](#).
- **National u3a partner events** – The u3a has built partnerships across the UK so we can offer seminars, lectures, and visits on a range of subjects, including National Gallery, Royal Institution, Guildhall Art Gallery in London, click [here](#) for further details.

Useful links

Visit our Upminster u3a website to view our current list of active Groups, click [here](#)

Upminster u3a Committee – Contact details can be found on our website, click [here](#)

Diary Dates

Our next monthly meeting will be held on **Tuesday 17th Aug 2021 at 2:00pm, via Zoom.**

This month's **Guest Speaker** will be:
Sarah Slater, 'Working with the Ghosts of Hampton Court'.

Future Guest Speakers' program

- 21st Sept '21 – **Melanie Gibson-Barton, Three Women, one man, glamour, wealth, and heartbreak.**
- 19th Oct '21 – **Lucy Allen, Life of a Stuntwomen.**

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View from the Chair

Welcome to August, which will see our last monthly meeting via zoom since the committee has agreed to return to the New Windmill Hall **in September** – 18 months since Upminster u3a was last there. I imagine the biscuits will be a bit stale by now!

Summer is supposed to be here, and instead we've suffered torrential rain and flash floods. However, it means we don't have to water the garden. It also means I can't cut my grass – all the tadpoles from my pond are now running round the garden as little froglets. I can hardly step outside the back door without worrying I'm going to squash another one.



Image courtesy of Courtney

I feel that life is a little more normal for me than last summer, I'm planning holidays again, and feel more comfortable meeting family and friends indoors. I appreciate that some of you may still have to isolate because of health issues, but I do hope that this too will soon be resolved.

Enjoy the holidays, a change of views, places – maybe even countries. Stay safe and healthy.

Courtney



Membership News

We welcome the following new members, who have joined over the past three months.

Bridget Fackler
Janet Moore
Angela Pavitt
June Farr
Kevin Watkinson

John Buckley
Maria Hudson
Brian Hudson
Ann Hopkins
Christine Willis

Roger Dines
Barbara Burt
Priscilla Saporu
Christine Bramwell
Karen Randall

Our membership now stands at 502.

Terry Smith - Membership Secretary

Upminster u3a's Desert Island Discs

This month's castaway was **Diane Cole**.

1. I've got you under my skin – Frank Sinatra
2. Canon in D Major – Pachelbel
3. Pearl's a singer – Elkie Brooks
4. California Dreamin' – The Mamas and the Papas
5. Make you feel my love – Adele
6. Lay Lady Lay – Bob Dylan
7. Sogno – Andrea Bocelli
8. The Power of Love – Air Supply

Favourite piece – The Power of Love

Book – David Copperfield

Luxury Item – Heavy Duty Moisturising Lotion



If, like me, you know The Power of Love best by the German-based American singer Jennifer Rush, have a listen to Diane's favourite song by copying and pasting [youtubeairsupplythepowerof love](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=airsupplythepoweroflove) into your search engine, or click on the link.

Chris Slade



Groups Update

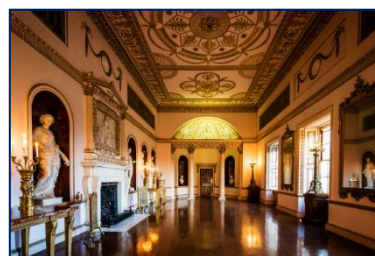
History of London

A limited number of places are available for the visit to Syon House on Thursday 19th August.



Due to a cancellation, one place is available for the visit to Cutlers' Hall on Wednesday 8th Sept. This

location is generally accepted as providing the best of the tours of the City's Livery Companies.



Please contact Chris Slade on chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906-433559 for full details.

Petanque

The Group has recently restarted meeting weekly at Harold Wood Park and we would welcome anybody who would like to have a go. It is free to play, there is free parking and, notwithstanding the "Frenchness" of the game, you are not required to wear a beret, smoke a Gauloises cigarette or carry a baguette under your arm. Please contact Chris Slade on chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906-433559 for full details.

Notice

On Saturday 4th September from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The **Worshipful Company of Cutlers** will open their doors to the public for an exhibition of mud larking finds, including knives, recovered from the River Thames. Over 800 knives recovered by mudlark Graham duHeaume will be on display. He and other mudlarks will be exhibiting their extensive collections during this exclusive event in the historic Cutler's Hall. If anybody is interested in going, please contact Chris Slade at chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906-433559 so that we can, perhaps, travel up together.

Chris Slade



Coach Trips

Lunch and river cruise 29th July was a red-letter day for the coach trips group. We went on our first u3a coach trip since February 2020. 42 members enjoyed a quick look round Ware Town centre then lunch at the Waterside Inn in Ware followed by a leisurely float along the River Lea. Our vessel was a simple open-sided 'double barge' – one of a number built specially to ferry VIP visitors from central London hotels to the Olympic Park in Stratford during the 2012 London games. The seats were comfy, the vegetation along the river was lush and the weather was kind to us, so the outing was a gentle and lovely start to a new round of post lockdown, 'in person', u3a activities.



Forthcoming coach trips

27th August – Penshurst Place and Gardens – Sold out.

15th September – South Coast Art Trail – Visit Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings for a late summer seaside treat plus, for art lovers, the option of visits to the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne, the De la Warr Pavilion in Bexhill and the Hastings Contemporary Gallery to see some first class, mainly British, art. **Places available.**

24th September – Brogdale and Faversham – At Brogdale there is a choice of two tours for you to see, hear about and taste the living history of this heritage fruit tree collection. After Brogdale we will get to the pretty Medieval market town of Faversham in time for lunch. Here you can 'do your own thing' for the rest of the day or join our walking tour to learn about the fascinating history of the town (gunpowder and beer are its greatest claims to fame) and see some of the 300 listed buildings that make the town so attractive. **Places available.**

26th October – Canterbury – We have included a walking tour to introduce you to the city and some of its history but there will be plenty of time after the tour for you to see the attractions that interest you most such as the fantastic cathedral or the ruins of St Augustine's Abbey or the experience of medieval life at the Canterbury Tales attraction. Alternatively, if the weather is right, book yourself on a boat trip or take a walk to one of the lovely gardens in the city centre and just relax. **Places available.**

Full details and booking forms for all the above trips are on the web site. If you can't access the web site **text 07941 295343** with your address and the trips you are interested in, and we will send the details to you in the post.

Beryl, Chris, Lesley, Julia, Pamela



Visits to Places of Interest

I recently sent out an update to all the group members, but it appears that some people are not getting my mass emails because their email system thinks they are spam. If you have not received the update, please be sure to put my email address pamelafreer@samson-freer.co.uk in your email contacts and check your Spam folder regularly. It may be that when you look at your Spam folder it shows it is empty, but if you open it and wait a few seconds it is likely that a lot of emails will appear.

To summarise my latest communication most of the places we had planned to visit are not yet accepting group bookings, so the only group visits currently available for booking are:

Heath Robinson Museum – Wednesday 08th September This was fully booked, but several people have had to drop out so there are now **places available again.**

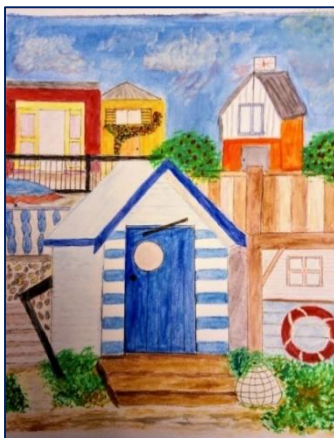
Kew Gardens – Thursday 07th October **Places available.**

If you are interested in either of the above and want more information, please let me know and I'll send you the full details.

Pamela

Friday Art Group

The Art Group finished their term with a trip to Leigh-on-Sea & later a meal at Sorrento's. So, their last few paintings were inspired by the sea & jolly seaside huts. I hope you appreciate their enthusiasm & development after returning together for just a few weeks. At last, hoping with confidence, we can say enjoy the rest of summer & see you in September. *Sandra Ward*





Mah Jong

Our playing will be back to normal from 31st August 2021. All existing Mah Jong group members may just turn up alternate Tuesday/Thursday/both from 1–45 pm. Anyone else may send a request to afwoodhurst@hotmail.com to join later when space available.

Alan Woodhurst

Cinema Group

Hello once again, how quickly the month has passed. Hopefully you can find these programmes on repeat or catch up.



Clarkson's Farm. Amazon Prime.

I never thought I would never recommend, Clarkson's Farm, as I'm not a huge fan of Jeremy Clarkson, I think he's like marmite, you love him or hate him, while I don't hate him, I'm not a fan. The series follows an intense, backbreaking, and frequently hilarious year in the life of Britain's most unlikely farmer, it also gives an insight on how unpredictable life on the farm is for the real farmers.

Lie to Me Channel 5

This is a gripping thriller starring, Charlie Brooks, from EastEnders. A British Women relocates to her husband's hometown to help their marriage. The couple hire a nanny – a decision that will lead to murder, we had to binge watch this one as it was so good.

Films

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, BBC2

This is the true story. A 13-year-old boy is thrown out of school when his family can't afford the fees, due to a famine. He learns how to make a windmill to save his village. This film makes you realize how very lucky we are to be born in England.

Red Sparrow

Red Sparrow, starring Jennifer Lawrence, is an American spy thriller written by Jason Mathews, who worked as a C.I.A. spy for 30 years. The plot is fictional, but elements in the story are true, including the sparrow program. Red Sparrow is the story of a former Russian Ballerina, who is forced by her uncle to undergo espionage training after an accident caused her to give up dancing.

Blood Red Sky. Horror, Netflix

When a group of terrorists hijacks an overnight transatlantic flight, a mysteriously ill Women must unleash a monstrous secret to protect her son. I don't usually watch horror films, but I did enjoy this film.

Linda Weiss



Art History/Appreciation

Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, c1665-1666

Recent meetings have been spent taking a close look at the work of Johannes Vermeer, a foremost artist of the Dutch 17th century Golden Age. Despite extensive research little is known of his life. He remains a shadowy figure in art history – ‘The Sphinx of Delft’ – his native town which he never left. Vermeer died impoverished at the age of 43 and was almost immediately totally forgotten. It was not until the 19th century that his work was rescued from obscurity.

Among the most well-known of the 35 works attributed to Vermeer is ‘The Girl with the Pearl Earring’. A favourite with many members in our group, it came as a surprise to learn that it is not an actual portrait, but rather what the Dutch called a ‘tronie’.



Collectors’ items at the time, tronies were small scale studies of imaginary figures depicting a particular type of character, often wearing exotic costume, or simply an idealised face. In this case a generic young beauty wearing an ornamental turban and an improbably large pearl earring.

She has a timeless quality and cannot be placed in any specific context. Emerging from the soft, dark background, she swivels round as if about to speak. Her enigmatic expression, together with the mystery of her identity has led to her being christened, ‘The Mona Lisa of the North’.

Lost for two hundred years, ‘Girl with the Pearl Earring’ appeared in an auction in the 1890s. She was recognised as a possible Vermeer by a Dutch collector whose bid of two gilders 30 cents (less than £1) was accepted. He bequeathed the painting to the Royal Collection of Paintings, Mauritshuis, The Hague, where she can still be seen.

Chris Mecham



Walking with Wildlife August 2021

This year's Big Butterfly Count runs from the 16th July to the 8th August, and on our walk this month we did a count in Hornchurch Country Park. Armed with a butterfly ID sheet the 11 of us walked along the grass sides to the main path from the visitor centre. We spotted a number of butterflies that were not on the ID sheet, and were not part of the butterfly count, but were identified as skippers, probably Essex skippers.

Butterfly Conservation's BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT
16 JULY - 8 AUGUST 2021

Spend 15 minutes in a sunny spot. Use this chart to note how many of each species you see. Then submit your sightings at www.bigbutterflycount.org or download our free app

Don't forget to join us online with #ButterflyCount

DFN Charitable Foundation
Vivara Vivara.co.uk

Large White	Small White	Green Veined White	Brimstone	Marbled White
Small Copper	Speckled Wood	Meadow Brown	Ringlet	Gatekeeper
Comma	Painted Lady	Peacock	Red Admiral	Small Tortoiseshell
Common Blue	Holly Blue	Silver Y	Six-spot Burnet	Jersey Tiger

Images not to scale

Males and females of some species vary and are not all illustrated on this chart. Please refer to the Big Butterfly Count app or website for more information on how to identify butterflies and moths correctly.

The largest number of butterflies to be seen were whites of various sorts, including both large and small whites and one marbled white.

Also seen were Red Admiral, Peacock, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown butterflies. The sightings were submitted as part of the Big Butterfly Count.

Terry Smith



Poetry Appreciation Group

I am delighted to report that our July meeting was a marvellous event and thoroughly enjoyed by all of us present. We met in my home and as well as exploring **THE MOMENT by Margaret Atwood** (a well-established poet and well known for *The Handmaid's Tale* and numerous other books), together with **MCMXIV (1914) by Philip Larkin**. Our Guest Poet was **AIMLESS LOVE by Billy Collins**, a beautifully crafted piece of poetry. To celebrate our get together in person, we opened with Richard Burton reciting *FERN HILL* and then an **Emily Dickinson poem, HOPE Is the Thing with Feathers**.

A group member celebrated her birthday on the day and shared a very tasty cake with us, which she herself had made!

We have now 'broken up' for summer and look forward to our next meeting at the end of September.

Wishing you all an enjoyable summer.

Michelle Blythe

Upminster u3a Library

We have a very small library. It has been funded by the people who come to meetings in my home and insist on dropping money into a pot. It had a book on London buildings and a book about the designer Thomas Heatherwick – the man responsible for the newest London busses and the ill-fated garden bridge.

It now also has two books on the trees in London, both by Paul Wood.

London's Street Trees tells you where you can see examples of various trees.

London's Tree Walks assume that you will go somewhere and then walk around looking for, and at, trees.

If you would like to borrow one of the books and go exploring (alone or with friends) then contact me. natalie@kehr.co.uk or 07759 734428.

When I decide to investigate trees, I will announce it in the 'At Home Telegram group'. If you are not already on Telegram, contact me or Terry Smith.

The money pot has enough cash for a few more books, so if you can think of other books which might interest our members let me have the details. I am sure the members of my Modern London group and my Visiting Art Galleries Group won't mind if we spend the money helping different interests.

Natalie Kehr



Upminster u3a Photography Group

The July session of the Photography Group met in Leigh-on-Sea where after a morning creating images influenced by Turner Seascapes we had an enjoyable lunch at **The Peterboat**.

To see some of the 'Turner style Seascape' photos, please use the link below.

[Quickconnect.to/Uu3A-photos/photo](https://quickconnect.to/Uu3A-photos/photo)

Terry Simms



Image courtesy of Richard Sullivan

Short Walks Group



Our July walk took us to Greenwich Park. The train to Limehouse was quite busy but we were easily able to social distance. The DLR to Cutty Sark was not busy at all. The trees and the flowers were at their best after the recent rain.

As well as roses in the rose garden there were glorious strips of wildflowers. Time was spent trying to identify them. The mature trees look magnificent. Although cloud was predicted the sun came out.

We had great views of London from the Royal Observatory and then had a well-earned coffee. The final part of the walk was down through the park, past Queen Anne's house, the Maritime Museum, Cutty Sark and back to the underground. It is certainly a walk we will go back to.



Helen Stewart



Creative Writing Group

We continue to appreciate the fact that the five of us are now able to meet in person and read our creations to each other. We're taking it in turns to select one of our past articles for submission in the newsletter and the following story provides an insight into our diversity:

This was written during lockdown when many people acquired a dog for the first time. Hopefully it will help them to understand their new friend.

Woof Woof!

Woof woof! Hello there!

We dogs have many ways of communicating, from audible barks and howls, visual signs with ears, tails etc, to sniffable messages left by various fluids you'd probably rather not think about. Sadly, most humans are rather poor at understanding our language, but I've asked my friend Doctor Dolittle to translate, so hopefully you can understand this little monologue.

Firstly, I must get something off my chest. You humans have given us an awful press over the years.

Why do you use us to describe so many horrible things? A *Dog's Dinner*, or, even worse, a *Dog's Breakfast*, is a muddle or a mess. A *Dog Watch* is an unpopular shift of work, while *Dog Days* are impossibly hot and uncomfortable. A *Hangdog Look* is miserable, and you insult people by calling them *Dogs*. Even *You Old Dog!* is not exactly a compliment. Then there's *Doggy Paddle*, a rather incompetent way of swimming, and as for *Dogging*, well, I'm not even going to go there! It's so unfair when all we want to do is to please you.

I admit we do sometimes annoy you, but it's always due to a misunderstanding. Our brains are hardwired to do a particular job. You have reinforced this by breeding us with others of the same opinion. If we had our way, we'd choose our own mate. After all, who wants an arranged marriage? We'd produce good all round, healthy mongrels. As it is, if we are bred to retrieve game, kill rats, or herd sheep, that's what we will do, whether you like it or not.

Much has been written about our sense of smell, so I won't bang on about it too much here. Just to say that it is up to one hundred thousand times better than yours. When we go out, we need a good sniff around, to find out what's been going on. It's like you getting the news on your favourite device. So please, when we go walkies, give me a chance to do this. After all, I waited for you to read your newspaper before we set off.



u3a Upminster Newsletter

August 2021



We are very happy to use our amazing sense of smell to help you out. We can easily find tiny traces of anything from explosives, drugs or cancer to nice things like truffles. All you have to do is to tell us very clearly what you want us to sniff for. "YOU TELL IT, WE SMELL IT!" is the motto of the Sniffer Dogs' Union. At least it will be, when we form one, and I promise we won't go on strike!

Now, a word about our guardy behaviour. We all do it, some more than others. We used to live in packs. We keep ourselves to ourselves, apart from occasionally for mating, when we like a bit of rough to improve the gene pool. But even though we have exchanged our pack leaders for human masters, we still need to let them know when there are strangers about. So please don't tell us off. Just bring the newcomers in, so we know that they are accepted, temporary members of the pack.

Of course, our natural means of communication with each other is by singing – you are rude enough to call it howling. We inherited the ability from our wolf ancestors, when the sound travelled many miles through the forest, and kept us all in touch. We don't do it much today, but dogs who live in large groups, like fox hounds, do have regular choral sessions. Plenty of singing shows they are happy and healthy. When I go on my holidays to the boarding kennels, I have been known to join in the community singing, usually early in the morning, before our servants arrive to look after us.

I do sing at home occasionally. You humans have invented something with horsehair and guts, which makes a sound just like a wolf howling. My party piece is for my master to put on a recording of my favourite violin music, and I will sing along. I keep beautifully in time and make appropriate facial expressions. It did backfire on him though, when a friend of his brought a human pup round to show off his progress on the instrument. I sang for the whole performance, and nearly drowned it out, which was probably just as well!

You have trained some of us to do wonderful things to help people. We can do anything from guiding blind people through cities, opening drawers and cupboards in their homes, to bringing them their medication when a bleep sounds. Sometimes we just go into a nursing home to cheer them up.

We do truly deserve our title of MAN'S BEST FRIEND!

BY Fiona Richards

Jill Hilton