



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

News & Notices

- **Found after Murder Mystery Evening**
When clearing up after the event, a pretty, silvery, sparkly earring was found without its butterfly. The owner can contact **Chris Slade** on **07906-433559** to arrange its return.
- **London Region Events.** For details of the full range of events, click [here](#).
- **London Region Summer School – will be on the 25th & 26th July'23** - click [here](#).

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](#)

For future news, articles, and feedback, please email **Dave Morrison-Newsletter Editor** Uu3adavemorrison@gmail.com

Please ensure that any articles are sent so the Editor receives them by the 1st of each month.

The Editor reserves the right to amend or omit content.

Diary Dates

Our next meeting will be at The New Windmill Hall, Upminster, RM14 2QH, on **Tuesday 18 April '23**, doors open at 1pm.

Guest Speakers

18th April'23, Sue Benjamin on the 'proposed quarry in Rainham'.

Future Guest Speakers

16 May'23, no speaker for the Coronation party.

20 June'23, Sandra Lawrence on Ellen Willmott - Warley Place.

18 July'23, Veronica King on her career as a store detective

15 Aug'23, Simon Keable on his relative Robert Keable

19 Sep'23, Keith Finch on the reopening of the Windmill.

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View from the Chair

I make no apologies for my words this month as they are not mine but had a profound effect on me when I read them over twelve years ago and still keep me feeling grateful.

The words are moving and more relevant and poignant today.

'With all the spending cuts, it's worth remembering some facts. If you have clothes on your back, food in the fridge, a roof over your head and a place to sleep you are richer than 75% in the world.

If you have money in the bank, some in your purse and spare change in a dish you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

If you have never experienced the fear of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture or the pangs of starvation you are doing better than millions of people in the world.'

These words changed my perspective on life and made me a much humbler person and I'm glad to share them with you.

Susan Mayes

Membership Renewals

I have recently sent out to all members details of the membership renewal.

In last month's newsletter I had said that the membership fee would remain the same for the new membership year, and this is true for individual members. However, the Royal Mail have announced an increase in 2nd class postage from April 2023 and this has meant that the additional fee for postal members has to go up to £26, taking the total membership fee for postal member to £36.

Terry Smith



Notices

Social Committee

Our Murder Mystery event took place on the 22nd March with over 110 attendees. Thanks very much for everyone's support in making this event a success.



We are busy planning for our **Coronation Party** on **16th May 2023** at the **New Windmill Hall** from **1.30pm** until **3.30pm** (doors open **1pm**) and have already sold more than 120 of the 150 tickets available. Entertainment, food and drink is included in the price of £10 for tickets.

Please hurry if you want a ticket and obtain yours from a member of our social committee at a group meeting or from: **Chris Slade - chrisslade1@sky.com** or on **07906-433559**
Annette Gaskin - annettegaskin15@icloud.com



If there are any **Coronation Party tickets** left these will be available for purchase at the April monthly meeting.

Please remember to save in your diary the **27th September 2023** from **6.30pm** until **8.30pm** (doors open **6pm**) at the **New Windmill Hall** for a quiz including fish and chip supper. Details of ticket arrangements will be communicated to all members in a future newsletter and email.



If you have any feedback, suggestions or questions about any of our social events please contact us by clicking on the link on the top, right hand side of the Socials webpage on the Upminster U3A website at: <https://u3asites.org.uk/upminster/page/103071>

Social Committee



Bus Routes - proposed changes

to run between Harold Wood Station and Upminster Station, via Upminster Park Estate.

Click on the link to view the proposed changes:

<https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/bus-routes-346-347-497>

Chris Slade

Tips and Tricks

General IT Tip

Many, indeed most, of Upminster u3a members have a laptop, tablet and a mobile phone, but how many of us know all the features within them that might just possibly help in our daily lives?

So, each month there will be a section with one or more general tips. Tips when using phones, tablets etc will be included in the Practical IT Group section.

General Tip

Problems bending to get your socks on? This simple Sock Aid/Sock Slider is obtainable fairly cheaply from places such as Amazon or Mobility Smart, among others.



Natalie Kehr

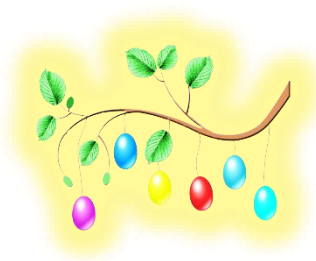


Easter Quiz...

Firstly, you might be interested to read this about how Easter eggs originated:

Throughout history, people across the world have given each other eggs at Spring festivals to mark the seasons.

Early Christians in Mesopotamia dyed eggs in the period after Easter. The practice was adopted by the Orthodox churches, and from there it spread into Western Europe. Eggs represent new life and rebirth. It's thought that this ancient custom was absorbed into Easter celebrations. During Lent, when Christians fasted to mark Jesus' time in the wilderness, eggs were one of the foods that people weren't allowed to eat (apparently, this is why we make pancakes on Shrove Tuesday). So, when Easter Sunday came, tucking into an egg was a real treat.



The first chocolate Easter eggs were made in Europe in the early 19th century, with France and Germany taking the lead in this new confectionery. The first chocolate Easter egg in the UK was introduced in 1873 by Fry's, and estimates suggest that between 80 and 90 million are sold here each year.

Now, for the quiz: Answers revealed at the end of Newsletter:

1. Easter **always** falls between which two dates?
2. In England, what is the name of the fruitcake with marzipan balls traditionally eaten at Easter?
3. What do the 11 marzipan balls traditionally represent on the cake referred to in question 2?
4. Easter Island is part of which country?
5. When Easter eggs were first dyed, what colour was used and why?
6. According to the Bible, what did Jesus and his disciples partake of at the Last Supper?
7. In 1948's lavish musical *Easter Parade*, who starred opposite Fred Astaire as ambitious chorus girl Hannah?
8. Who wrote "Easter Parade?"
9. What was the name of the jeweller who decorated Easter eggs for royalty?
10. A sign was affixed to the top of the cross - stating INRI (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews), which according to the Gospel of John was written in which three different languages?

Chris Slade



Groups Update

Cinema Group

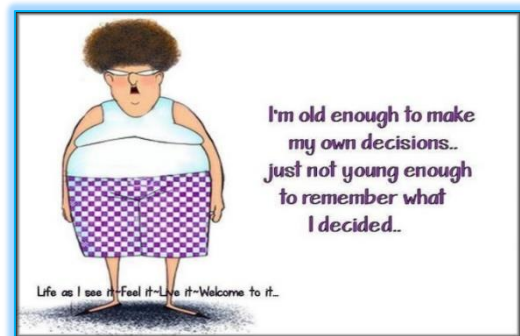
In the early part of March, a lovely group of us met at Wetherspoons for lunch or coffee before we met others in the foyer at Vue Cinema Romford to see "What's Love got to do with it" - this was a romantic comedy that combined humour, heart and family drama in a way that was both entertaining and emotionally resonant. It starred Emma Thompson.

Later in March another lovely group of us went to see "Allelujah" at Vue Romford in the afternoon and getting into a routine of either meeting in Wetherspoons or in the cinema foyer.

"Allelujah" was a warm and deeply moving story about old age. There were issues around older age, which were highlighted.

The twist to the story at the end was very thought provoking. It starred Jennifer Saunders and Judi Dench.

Annette Gaskin



Pétanque

After the usual winter break, we are looking forward to warmer weather so that we can resume play without the need for heavy and restricting winter clothing. We hope to start next month and would welcome new players to join us at Harold Wood Park. Boules are supplied.

Alan Bowdery

Table Tennis

We all resumed after Christmas but were restricted to a smaller room after getting used to the large space of the main hall - which we were allocated while our original room was being refurbished after storm damage last Autumn. It has now been agreed that we should rent a slightly larger room that will give us enough space to be able to use three tables for play. We can still accommodate a few more players if you feel like testing your old skills and memories. Any level of players is welcome. Equipment is provided.

Alan Bowdery



STEMM Group

The STEMM Talk for March, hosted by members Albert & Peter, concerned the computerisation of International Banking Payments in the late 1970's, which in turn resolved the very significant reconciliation problems banks were experiencing at the time.

Peter set the scene of a pre-computerised Banking system which required handwritten entries for each transaction. These were then processed on branch accounting machines. The Head Office of each bank at home and abroad held two complementary accounts (Nostro & Vostro = ours and theirs) to facilitate international payments. Funds deposited in an overseas bank account in the UK were matched by a coded telex request to pay money to the payee from the corresponding bank account abroad.



With approx. 1 million transactions per day the chances of human error were almost inevitable!



Preparation for automation began in the late 60's, with magnetic strips appearing on cheques, detailing branch, and account details, and encoding machines were also being installed in branches to magnetically insert the amount of the cheque in order that processing could be fully automated. The next few years would see a transformation of UK banking systems.

Albert then explained how he came to be involved with the arrival in 1974 of the Banking Automated Clearing System (BACS) based in Edgware. This was before the arrival of internet and broadband, and banks submitted their transactions via magnetic disks for the centralised exchange of entries.

Albert went on to describe the arrival of SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications) in 1973 and based in Brussels, where he worked from its early days. It was a **fully computerised portal** designed for the handling of international payments. It was owned by the banks and became the arbiter of any disputes. At the outset it consisted of 239 banks in 15 countries, going live in 1977. We were shown slides outlining the path these transactions took.

By the end of 2021 SWIFT had grown to a membership of over 11,000 banks and institutions connecting more than 200 countries, processing 42 million messages per day.

A truly amazing feat of international co-operation was necessary to accomplish the conception and implementation of SWIFT, and the current levels of international payments would be impossible without it.

Fay Gerrard



Short Walks

Thames Chase, Pike Lane.

Despite the weather a few of us went on the walk. It had been planned to do a circular walk but because part of the way was muddy, we walked almost the same paths to and from St. Magdalene church.



The church was closed but in the church yard there was a magnificent tulip tree. The former village school in Church Lane has been converted into two dwellings with an entrance probably one for girls and the other for boys. The Millennium beacon in Thames Chase had long gone.

Russ Barnet

Practical IT

Tip to make life easier: How often do you forget where you've left your phone? Or you've gone upstairs and your phone rings downstairs/you go out to do a bit of gardening and the phone rings just inside the back door.

So, the first tip of the month is to spend £1 and always have your phone with you.

Poundland sell the ring on the left in the photo, which can be stuck to the back of your mobile phone or, more likely, to the holder that your phone sits in. Attach a lanyard to the ring, and simply hang it round your neck. **N.B.** Make sure that the ring is in the right place when you attach it as the glue is very strong.



Continues on next page



If you have a tip which makes your IT life easier, please send it to natalie@kehr.co.uk I will also keep a cumulative list of tips and tricks which I will send out to you on request.

If you want help using IT, why not try coming along to the Uu3a **Practical IT Group** which meets on **Saturday mornings**. Contact natalie@kehr.co.uk.

Natalie Kehr

Coach Trips (1)

If you are thinking about and beginning to plan your days out and your visits for this spring, then please do consider joining us on a day coach trip.

On March 31 we had a wonderful, if energetic, trip to the amazing Chatham Dockyard – which you can read about in our article (2) below. It rained a lot, so we all got wet, but our guides were so good and the place was so interesting that no-one seemed to mind.

Our next trip, on **Thursday 27 April is to Michelham Priory, near Hailsham in East Sussex**. This former Augustinian priory dates back to 1229 and is situated with its 7-acre gardens on a moated island. There are only 2 places left for this trip. If you are interested, please contact beryl.patient@btinternet.com as soon as possible.



We will be going to **Belvoir Castle on Wednesday 24th May**. This has been the home of the Dukes of Rutland for some centuries and is near **Grantham in Lincolnshire**. It has been called one of the finest Regency houses in the country, so not actually a castle anymore. It has fine interiors with lots to see and is set on the top of a hill, surrounded by gardens and parkland.

This will be a lovely day out and you can just sit back on the coach and enjoy the views with refreshments on arrival included in the cost per person of £42.00. We will leave Upminster at 8.30 and be back around 6.30. By then the days will be longer, the weather warmer and the countryside will be in full flower. If you are interested, please contact: lesleyuu3a@yahoo.com or collect a booking form at the next monthly meeting.



Later Trips – We are planning trips for every month of this year but are having difficulty in confirming prices for some of them. New trip information will be sent to all members as soon as it is available.

Coach Trip Information and Booking forms are available on the UU3A website and from one member of the Coach Trips group at every meeting. You can find us before or after the speaker begins/finishes speaking, and in the tea break in the small bar room to the right of the stage.





Some people have apparently had difficulty in completing the booking forms electronically, so the Practical IT group have provided the following instructions:

1. Click, or double click, if necessary, to open the booking form in an app which can read it (e.g. Word)
2. Click on Enable editing
3. Use Save As to save the document with a new name in a place in your computer where you will easily find it again. The new name should include your name and the name of the outing.
4. Fill in the form
5. Re-save the form under the same new name
6. Return the form to the organiser as an attachment to an email

Pamela Freer

Coach Trips (2) - *Chatham Historic Dockyard*

44 of us set off on a wet and miserable morning hoping that the weather forecast was wrong.

I had arranged two walking tours of 90 minutes duration each and the guides were very informative but unfortunately the rain started off drizzly, then stopped, but towards the end it was quite heavy. We then retired to get warm and dry in the restaurant and there was time for people to look around various sheds. Some very brave people went on the submarine tour.



The Ropery Tour Guides were very informative, and we were actually indoors for this. The rain had stopped and the sky had lightened, but by the time we came out of the Ropery Sheds the rain came down with a vengeance. Rather wet and

bedraggled we went back to the restaurant and had a hot drink, and cake for some, before we got back on the coach.

The journey home took 1 hour, but considering it was a Friday the Dartford Crossing was not too bad. A very informative and enjoyable day - if rather wet.

Jill Coombes.



Art History/Appreciation

A visit to the Peter Doig exhibition at the Courtauld Institute of Art

Internationally acclaimed and celebrated, Peter Doig is considered one of the most significant figurative artists working today.

Born in Edinburgh, Doig spent his formative years in Trinidad and Canada before coming to London to study art. He achieved success in his early career and continued to live and work in London before moving to Trinidad in 2002.

The paintings on display in the exhibition are all new works. Many were first begun in Trinidad and have been continually reworked since his return to London in 2021. They are full of the sights and sounds of Trinidad – real memories, half-forgotten moments all reimagined and reshaped. Bathed in the heat and light of Trinidad these paintings are seen to convey the 'creative experience of transition.'



Alice at Boscoe's, 2014-2023

Doig's daughter sleeps in a hammock, ghost-like almost translucent against a vivid lush tropical backdrop.

"I never try to create real spaces, only painted spaces ... that's why there is never any specific time or space in my paintings", Peter Doig.

Music appears everywhere throughout these works.

Music Shop, 2019-23

The Trinidadian singer, Shadow, stands outside a music shop peering back at the viewer. Through the shop window are views of Trinidad possibly suggesting that for Doig the island is synonymous with music



The paintings are also full of art history. From his early student days Doig has particularly admired the Courtauld Collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. Throughout his career, they have remained at the heart of his own work.



The Alpinist, 2019-2022

A compelling, dazzling, monumental painting A favourite with the group.

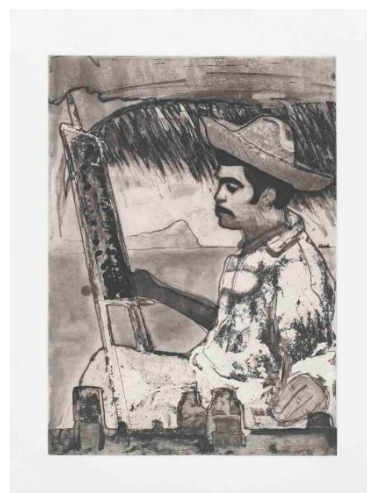
Etching, Derek Walcott Painting

The exhibition also includes a series of 19 etchings inspired by Doig's long-standing friend the Nobel poet Derek Walcott (1930-2017). In the last years of his life, Walcott wrote a suite of poems inspired by Doig's paintings. In turn, Doig produced this group of etchings responding to the poems. They cover a range of subjects, including a portrait of Walcott himself painting.

A most enjoyable visit ending with us sitting by the river outside Somerset House drinking coffee, eating cake and discussing what we had seen.

Peter Doig continues at the **Courtauld Institute of Art until 29 May.**

Chris Mecham



Mah Jong



New beginners course starting Tue. 9th May. Please e-mail afwoodhurst@hotmail.com if interested.

(Details in March newsletter)

Photo shows some of us playing.

Alan Woodhurst



Walking with Wildlife

This month's walk was to be to Thorndon Park North, where there is a lovely visitor centre. At the last minute I learnt that the visitor centre and car park were closed for essential repairs, so I had to switch the walk to Thorndon Park South. The forecast was for showers, so we were prepared, however, we managed to escape most of the rain. Only a brief shower was experienced.

I would normally go out on the walk before the day, to make sure everything was ok, but as we had the last-minute rearrangement, I had to devise a completely new walk.

The blackthorn was really spectacular at this time of year, its white flowers striking against its bare branches. We did not see a great number of bird species, but we did see the beginnings of spring, with flowers emerging.

Anyone who wishes to join the group please contact me on uu3a.terrysmith@gmail.com or by phone 07802212151.

Terry Smith

Writing Group

For our March task James challenged us all to write a sketch.

As usual our creations were all very different, but we thoroughly enjoyed being transported back in time to the 'Morecambe and Wise' and 'Two Ronnie's era' with Carole's two short plays. To read them, click on the link below :-

[thesketchbycarol.pdf \(u3asites.org.uk\)](https://u3asites.org.uk/thesketchbycarol.pdf)

Jill Heaton

Coffee Mornings



Though April Showers may come your way they bring you to our Coffee Mornings for a cuppa and a chat at Roomes Cafe 11am on Tuesday **April 11th** and Tuesday **April 25th**

Angela McDonald



Steam Interest & Modellers

Hello to all u3a members, I know many of you follow our adventures even though you may not be in the Steam Interest & Modellers group.



This month's news starts with a visit to Alexandra Palace for the Model Railway National Festival. The great hall and a side hall were crammed full of model rail layouts some small and others huge. Alongside these were manufacturers and suppliers of every possible product and their services.

My own favourite was a display of "Live Steam". This was an OO train set powered by real steam from a boiler in the tender and super-heated steam to power the model train. Real steam, real chimney smoke.

I have made contact with the group who run the Lodge Farm Park train layout. We have been invited to visit which will include a tour through the workshop of one of the engineers who build and run these trains. Hands on help with the trains plus an open invitation to help out. Let me know if you are interested.



Lastly fancy a visit to Tower Bridge to see its workings including the original steam driven engines. Again, let me know.

Regards malcolmhb@hotmail.com

Tel: 07973 629818



Malcolm Henderson-Begg



Poetry Appreciation

Amidst a brief morning of sunshine, we talked and explored some of the poetry of Brian Bilston which is a pseudonym of Paul Millicheap, who in addition to writing a vast collection of poetry which has been successfully published, he has written a fictional diary, *Diary of a Somebody*. Currently Bilston is touring the UK reading his collections and will be appearing in Colchester in November 2023. He presents a poem a day on social media and this has proved incredibly popular.

The poems we explored were HOW MUCH I DISLIKE THE DAILY MAIL and LINES WRITTEN UPON ARRIVING AT A HOLIDAY COTTAGE AND DISCOVERING THE LACK OF RELIABLE WIFI both with a wonderful humorous element.

Secondly, we looked at a somewhat powerful poem of Charles Causley, TIMOTHY WINTERS. Primarily Causley was a children's poet and, after serving in the armed forces from 1940-1946, he then trained as a primary school teacher in Peterborough before returning to his native Launceston to teach in the village school.

We commented on the observant content of the poetry in the works of both of these poets.

Our Guest Poem was the work of John Donne, one of the major metaphysical poets, which was A VALEDICTION : FORBIDDING MOURNING. He was hailed as a great poet of his time and we discussed the Sunday Times bestseller, *Super-Infinite : The Transformations of John Donne* - by Katherine Rundell, which won the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction 2022.

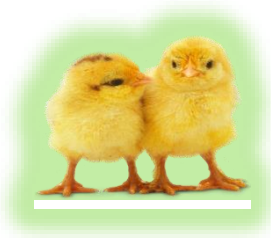
We meet again in April.

Michelle Blythe.





Easter Quiz Answers



1. March 22 and April 25.
2. Simnel.
3. The Apostles (minus Judas).
4. Chile.
5. Red, it represented the blood of Christ.
6. The gospel accounts state: bread and wine.
7. Judy Garland.
8. Irving Berlin.
9. Peter Carl Faberge.
10. Greek, Hebrew and Latin.

Chris Slade

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