



Upminster

u3a

Newsletter



May 2023



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

News & Notices

London Region Events. For details of the full range of events, [click here](#)

** London Region Summer School – will be on 25th & 26th July '23 **

** See 'Notices' on page 3 for full details **

As it's our Coronation Party this month, there will be no guest speaker during May.

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 Barbara Smith - Newsletter Editor uu3abarbara489@btinternet.com

The Editor reserves the right to amend or omit its content.

Diary Dates

16 May'23, *Coronation party*
Ticketed event (**sold out**) please see page 3 for ticket waiting list information



Our next meeting will be at The New Windmill Hall, Upminster, RM14 2QH, on Tuesday 20 June '23, doors open at 1pm.

Future Guest Speakers

- 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

Richard of York Gave Battle in Vain

Although this is the May newsletter I would like to reflect on April as it is a starting point for the warm summer months that lay ahead.

'Though April showers may come our way, they bring the flowers that bloom in May'



That being said it has been a particularly wet month even for April but my face lit up recently when, with my grandchildren, we saw not one but two rainbows arcing around each other. It is impossible not to smile at a rainbow as it means so much to young and old alike. My grandchildren were so excited and I felt quite uplifted both at the rainbow and their sheer innocence.

Once again it is nature affecting us and we need to be thankful for being surrounded by such beauty.

An example of this at the moment is the bluebells in the woods near my home. They cover the ground like a huge blue carpet making the area quite colourful but very serene.

Whether it's rainbows or bluebells or any other part of nature, let's be thankful for the beauty which surrounds us.



Susan Mayes

Membership Renewals

Can I remind those who have not yet renewed your membership that you only have until the end of May to renew. **Your membership will cease** after this time and if you wish to continue you will have to take out a new membership. The current renewal fee of £10 for an individual member is only about 20p per week and represents exceptional value in the current economic climate.

Please either renew by bank transfer or by cheque, sending the cheque to the address on the renewal notice.

REMEMBER that there is no monthly meeting in May, as the Coronation Party is being held, therefore any renewals being paid by cheque will have to be sent to me in the post.

At the April monthly meeting we had a good number of new members and we welcome the following to the Upminster u3a:

Roger Wells	John Purvis	Yvonne Watson	Ann Whitfield	Angela Carter
Linda Tidbury	Sandra Curtis	Susan Baines	Sandra Lawrence	Jacqueline Lowe
Yvonne Orriss				

Terry Smith



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Notices



Please note that the Coronation Party on **16 May** will take the place of the monthly meeting (therefore no speaker in May) and is a **ticket-only event - *sold out*** – please contact Chris Slade if you wish to be added to the waiting list: **chrisslade1@sky.com** or **07906 433559**.

Chris Slade



** London Region Summer School 25th & 26th July 2023 **

St Bride Institute, 14 Bride Lane (off Fleet Street), EC4Y 8EQ

Sessions booking up fast - don't miss out!

This is a popular non-residential event for u3a members only £41 per day including refreshments and buffet lunch with a choice of healthy salads and fruit. You can attend for one or both days.

Full Programme and Application form available from Events page of London Region website

<https://u3asites.org.uk/london-region/events>

Some sessions are now fully booked, but there is currently availability for the following:

Music & Dance: The Royal Muse/Ballets Russes/Ukelele Workshop



Art/Crafts: After Raphael; Quilting Workshop



Literature: Long Dark River

Climate Change: Practical Steps for Controlling Global Warming/London's Energy/Oresme, the Harmonic Series and Climate Change

Social Studies: Indian Success Stories/The Future of allotments/ Please Miss, We're Boys



Science: What have we Learned from visiting the Moon? Riddle of the Rainbow.

Walk: The City from the Romans to Richard Rogers

For enquiries, email: **bookings.lru3a@gmail.com** or Tel: **07774 884 297**

Susan Mayes



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Tips and Tricks

General Tip

I know that at least one person benefitted from last month's tip of a gadget to help with putting on socks. This month's general tip is for motorists.

Keep a piece of blu tack on the dashboard of your car. I use mine to hold my ID whenever it's needed, and to stop parking authorisations slipping out of reach or being caught by the wind and littering the environment. If you are posh you might want to actually buy Blu Tack Grey!

This month's Practical IT tip tells you how to set up a PC so that it is really easy to zoom in and out.

Don't forget to send your tips to natalie@kehr.co.uk

Natalie Kehr

Practical IT

The main event in April was a trip to the Apple store on Sunday 23rd for a private group lesson on using our iPhones / iPads. All 8 of us learned a lot and we hope to arrange future group lessons. If you want to be told about those, please join the Practical IT group.

Meetings are held most Saturday mornings at my home. The Practical IT group does not have a waiting list.

This month's Practical IT tip is to show you the best way to set up your Windows PC so that the Windows Magnifier is always launched and easy to use. Some of you already know how to zoom in and out of your browsers or other apps, but this tip is all you need.

Microsoft Magnifier

We should all **be prepared** for the time when small print on our computers becomes difficult to use. Fortunately, Microsoft provides a Magnifier which can be set up so that it is always available when you want to use it. As usual there are lots of different possible settings, so I will suggest one possible way of setting up and using Magnifier. Once you can use Magnifier you can always go to:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/use-magnifier-to-make-things-on-the-screen-easier-to-see-414948ba-8b1c-d3bd-8615-0e5e32204198> and learn about other options.

Before you start, if you are using a laptop, buy a proper mouse.

Setting Up

Press and release the Windows Key then type Settings. Select Settings > Accessibility or Ease of Access (4th icon from end) > Magnifier, and then turn on the Magnifier switch.

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Change the Zoom increment to 10%. It is better than the default of 100%.

Select Start Magnifier after Sign-in.

Change the Magnifier view to Full Screen

Before leaving Settings go to Mouse Pointer and change its colour and size. I use purple or green and set the size to between 1/4 and 1/3 of the way between minimum and maximum.

Using Magnifier

I use Magnifier by holding down the Ctrl Key and the Alt Key with my left hand and turning the mouse wheel with my right hand.

Moving the mouse to a screen edge reveals different parts of the full screen.

If you are seeing the Magnifier window, simply minimize it. This will keep the Magnifier running in the background ready for when you will need it.

If you find you have accidentally closed magnifier you can always open it by pressing the Windows key together with the + key.

The Magnifier also gives access to Narrator – the App which reads the screen. If anyone feels they need that, I will investigate it further. I have discovered that Narrator doesn't work with my Office 2010 apps, but I assume that it does work with the more up-to-date software.

Natalie Kehr

May Quiz – answers on last page

"Ne'er cast a clout till May (may) is out."



A quote that everyone knows, but what is a clout, and to which May (may) is it referring? Clout is from an Old English word for cloth or clothing, so the saying is a reminder not to be too quick to shed your winter woollies. But till what? There are two schools of thought, either the month of May, or the emergence of may blossom. I prefer the latter alternative.



Now for the quiz questions:

1. Which sweetly scented, poisonous, woodland flowering plant is a birth flower of May?
2. Victory in Europe Day, generally known as V-E Day, was celebrated on which day in May, 1945?
3. In 1961, Alan Shepard was the first American to do what?

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4. Roger Bannister was the first man to run the mile in under 4 minutes in May of which year?
5. Which English writer is the author of the following line, "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May"?
6. What is the more common name for the Mayflower shrub?
7. Which two monarchs did not have coronations?
8. After Charles III, who was the oldest British royal to ascend to the throne?
9. The Coronation throne is made from which material - gold, marble, silver, stone, wood?
10. How old was Charles when he became Prince of Wales?

Chris Slade

Groups Update

Thames River Trips (New Group)

This will be for small groups of approximately 20 - 25 people for a day trip from Tower Pier - going down river to Greenwich and alighting there for a few hours. This will allow people to look round and get a snack or lunch, and then get another boat back and staying on past Tower Pier - up to Westminster and back to Tower Pier late afternoon.



These trips will be at fairly short notice so I can hopefully forecast good weather and we can enjoy sitting up on the top deck enjoying the views and sun.

This will be for spring and summer only. Snacks and drinks can be purchased on the boats.

The current cost of a hop-on-hop-off day ticket is £11.50 per person. This price is for senior citizens - as long as you show your current Freedom Pass. The intention is to try and catch the first sailings 10.00/10.10 from Tower Pier.

If you want to register your interest please contact:

Alan Bowdery

the bowderys@yahoo.co.uk



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Friday Art Group

The Group has been looking at the French artist, Rousseau, renowned for his jungle paintings - despite his never having visited a jungle!

by Kathy Rowland



by Sue Cole



The group then used his inspiration for their interpretations after looking at his use of colour and textured brushstrokes and sometimes surreal images.

by Shirley Ward



by Ann Cochrane

They then analysed Dante Rossetti and again produced their own images of sultry Pre-Raphaelite beauties. Ann used soft pastels after looking at Rossetti's preparatory sketches.

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A few weeks ago, some of the Group visited The National Gallery and actually found Rousseau's painting.



All was followed by a drink, lunch & much chat at a super French restaurant in Dean St. I'm sure that's just how many French artists relaxed, so all in the name of research!

After so many years, since Upminster U3A began, members have developed their skills, knowledge & personal images.

I am so proud of them even though the credit is all theirs! It's a great group who certainly know how to 'Live, Laugh & Learn'.

Sandra Ward

Short Walks

We have two short walks to tell you about this month:

1. Hornchurch Country Park

Starting from the Essex Wildlife Centre we walked in a 'figure of eight' so that we were not too far from cover as there was a high chance of showers.



We saw one of the new *plaques* for the Hornchurch Country Park *History Trail*.

The trail covers its history as an airfield during both World Wars.

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Crossing over the river Ingrebourne, I pointed out roughly where the NW corner of the proposed new gravel quarry would be. The proposed quarry was the topic for our guest speaker at this month's Uu3a meeting.

Despite keeping mainly to made up paths, a short section towards the end of the walk was *extremely muddy*. A few of us finished with a drink in the Essex Wildlife Centre.



Russ Barnet

2. Battersea Power Station

We have done two walks to the newly renovated Battersea Power Station. The power station originally opened



in the 1930's and was decommissioned between 1975 and 1983, then standing empty for 30 years. The architects have kept many original features. It is a vast space which could house St Paul's cathedral. There are fabulous apartment buildings surrounding it as well as multi-million-pound apartments within the power station itself. We were all incredibly impressed with the



architects' designs. It is certainly an area well worth visiting.

After our visit we walked down the Albert Embankment, past the Peace Pagoda and over the Albert Bridge into Chelsea and its lovely houses and ended our walk at Sloane Square.

Helen Stewart

Mah Jong



New beginners welcome, which will be the last chance this year!

Tuesday 9 May &/or 23 May at 1-00 pm.

e-mail afwoodhurst@hotmail.com

or telephone **Chris Slade 07906 433559**

for details.

Alan Woodhurst



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Walking with Wildlife

This is the time of year to see bluebells, and our walk this month took us round Cely woods, where - starting from the car park in Warwick Lane - we took a circular walk south parallel to Aveley Road and into Whitepost Wood. Here there were plenty of bluebells to be seen, and were looking rather splendid. As we approached Whitepost Wood we saw several wrens and robins have a territorial battle.



We walked on through the wood, through the masses of bluebells, interspersed with the white of greater stitchwort, and the yellow flowers of lesser celandine. We crossed Aveley Road to go into Belhus Woods, because at the entrance to the car park there is a lovely display of cowslips. Crossing back over Aveley Road, we walked westward until we reached Warwick Wood. Along the path we identified a number of different trees, and a chiffchaff was calling away to us.

We walked through Warwick Wood where, again, there was a carpet of bluebells and finally back to the car park, from whence we started. Several members of the group mentioned the fact that they heard a lot of bird song.

The bird song, usually by the males, is to attract females and so successfully breed. Some of the bird visitors, like the chiffchaff, have flown from North Africa and the males arrive first in order to set up a territory and then announce themselves with song.

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

Terry Smith

Coffee Mornings



May Each Day of the Week be a Good Day
Especially **Tuesday May 9th** and **Tuesday May 23rd**
For our visit to Roomes Cafe at 11 am for Coffee and a Chat

Angela McDonald



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Rummikub Group 2

This group has now been running since the beginning of this year with 28 members now registered.



We meet up every 2nd and 4th Tuesday monthly at The Windmill Pub, Upminster Bridge, 2pm to 4pm.

Not everyone is able to commit to each session, so it's a 'come as you can' group - with a mixture of experienced players, and beginners, which makes for a fun afternoon. We try to have tables of 4 players per table, but this does depend on the number of people who turn up to play.

The pub has a set aside area where we usually play, but if this area is booked for a private function, they reserve 4 tables within another part of the pub.

There is no fee charged by the pub, but they do ask that we buy a drink when there (can be tea / coffee).

So please consider joining our friendly group.

Shirley Smithson

Poetry Appreciation Group

This month we reviewed two Irish poets, Derek Mahon and W B Yeats. Both poems reflected love lost and love remembered. Mahon wrote MONOCHROME for his estranged wife Doreen, from her early days up until her death, and his thoughts and feelings beyond. He was widely regarded as one of the most talented and innovative Irish poets of the late 20th century and critics have compared his poetry to that of such masters as W H Auden, Louis MacNeice and Samuel Beckett. One of his poems APHRODITE's POOL, published in 1997, could be considered as a work of art. Mahon's final collection of work (Washing Up) was published in 2020 shortly before his death.

Our second poem was that of W B Yeats, WHEN YOU ARE OLD. Yeats is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. He was compelled to move to London with his family in 1886 where he lived for 14 years. He kept a house here for the first half of his adult life, and it was there he met Maud Gonne, a beautiful and socially prominent young woman devoted to Irish nationalism. Yeats soon fell in love with her. He redoubled his dedication to Irish nationalism and wrote nationalistic plays dedicated to her. His love for her never died and over a period of 30 years he proposed marriage to her on four occasions which she refused. Eventually he married a younger woman when he was aged 53. It is this poem,



When You are Old, that he wrote for Maud Gonne.

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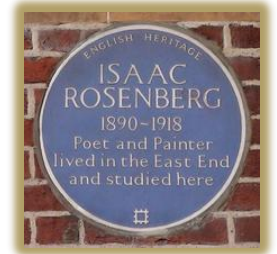
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Finally, our Guest Poem was DEAD MAN'S DUMP by Isaac Rosenberg which had been chosen for our November meeting, but for various reasons had been carried forward to April. Rosenberg may be remembered as an Anglo-Jewish war poet, but his poetry stretches way beyond those narrow categories.

His poetic legacy is thus still being debated. He was a poet, a painter-poet; he was a young poet. He created a small selection of poems and a great many questions. His career was cut tragically short when he was killed while fighting in World War I. This is a sad and beautifully written poem of some length describing, amongst other things, the dreadful conditions in which he and others so bravely served.



*I am pleased to announce that **I am starting up another poetry group** (Group 2). I had a waiting list for some time and thought it would be good to start up another group. Group 2 will meet on the first Thursday of each month with the exception of August and December. Our first meeting starts in May.*

Michelle Blythe.

Modern London Architecture

The Modern London group's May outing will be on Thursday 18th May to The Cosmic House in Holland Park. Visit: [The Cosmic House Ticket & visiting information Charles Jencks \(jencksfoundation.org\)](https://www.jencksfoundation.org)

Tickets to visit this house sell out within minutes of being released but we have one or two spare tickets. The cost is only £5. If you are interested, please email natalie@kehr.co.uk.

Our April visit was to Barking. Before the visit I had no idea that in the 19th century Barking was a major fishing port. The boats used had a well amidships through which water circulated. Fish were kept alive for months and were only killed a few minutes before being sent to market.

The Modern London group also meets in the afternoon of the 2nd Thursday of the month at my home.

Outings are on the 3rd Thursday. There are vacancies in this group.

Our future plans include investigating council housing in this borough. When I first moved here, I lived in a council house. The council built a couple of blocks of flats on my estate. They have been demolished and are being replaced by new blocks. I think it is worthwhile investigating why our council housing has such a short shelf life.

Natalie Kehr



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Art History and Appreciation (1)

Visit to the Alice Neel exhibition at the Barbican Art Gallery



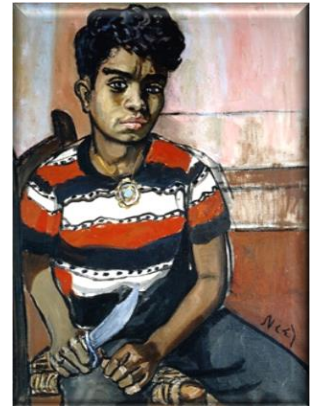
Alice Neel

A modern American artist not well known to us, Alice Neel proved a remarkable artist and a fascinating character. In a career spanning more than 60 years she steadfastly committed to realist painting and particularly to portraiture at a time when both were deeply unfashionable. She was wildly out-of-step with prevailing contemporary art movements of the 20th century and largely overlooked until the latter part of her career.

Alice described herself as “a collector of souls”. She painted an astonishingly diverse array of people from her apartment in New York. Crowned “the court painter of the under-ground”, Alice’s portraits celebrate those who were too often marginalised in society – labour leaders, civil rights activists, Black and Puerto Rican children and women, eccentrics, sex workers and performers. She had an amazing ability to reveal the essence of their characters and psychology. As one sitter reportedly said, “don’t expect to be flattered.”

Georgie Arce

A local Latino boy who Alice Neel adopted as a subject. Even when he wields a knife Alice Neel shows his vulnerability.



Geoffrey Hendrick and Brian

Alice created an alternative cannon of people she believed deserved to be seen. By the 1960s Alice had gained cult status. Her radical portraits and membership of the Communist Party did not go unnoticed by the Government. Finding out she was under investigation she hung a portrait of Lenin on her kitchen wall and never took it down. When questioned about her politics she replied, “I am an anarchic humanist”. She was monitored by the FBI for decades.

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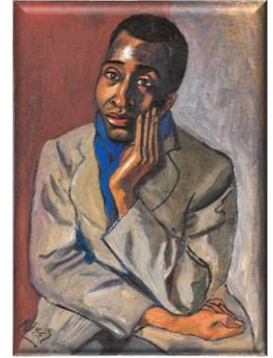
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From the beginning of the 1970s Alice was increasingly recognised especially by feminist art historians and critics. Today her work is highly valued and she is considered one of the great painters in the history of 20th century American art.

Howard Cruse



Alice Neel probably met Howard Cruse through the Communist Party when he was working as a hospital orderly. Although the painting was created 17 years before he published his seminal book, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*, he is pictured as the consummate academic with chin in hand.

This fascinating exhibition displays Alice Neel’s paintings alongside literature and photography giving a view of the changing social and political context of 20th century America through her eyes – “I have felt that people’s images reflect the era in a way nothing else could.”

Chris Mecham

Art History and Appreciation (2)

This group tries to mirror the other groups run by the knowledgeable Chris Mecham. April featured the American 20th century portrait painter Alice Neel. Our meeting in April at my house took place before I had actually visited her very interesting exhibition at the Barbican centre. I therefore only showed pictures on the web. These did not include her most interesting nude paintings.

However, I have booked for a free audio described tour of the exhibition at 18:30 on Tuesday 16th. *This tour is for the blind or partially sighted (ps)*. I have no idea how anyone conducts such a tour but - as this special session is not really meant for us (and we would not wish to deprive anyone who is blind or ps of their place on this guided tour) - please could you wait till the 15th or 16th before booking. If the tour becomes fully booked, I will cancel my booking to free the place for someone who is blind/ps.



Our May visit on the 2nd was to the Wallace Collection. This is the gallery which has the Laughing Cavalier, The Swing and other famous paintings. It also has fantastic furniture and other artifacts.

It is also free, and now does not need pre-booking.

Natalie Kehr



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Steam Interest & Modellers

We have a trip planned to visit Tower Bridge on Wednesday 17th May. The bridge was opened in 1894, having been constructed to blend in with the style of the nearby Tower of London. Originally powered by steam - and the old steam engine and turbines are there for us to see. Entry costs £12.30 and if you are interested, please get in touch.



Malcolm Henderson-Begg.
malcolmhb@hotmail.com
07973 629818

Classical Music Group

As we approach the end of our exploration of the violin concerto, we can reflect on the contrast between the styles of music we've heard. Last month we heard the music of Brahms (1833 - 1897), Bruch (1838 - 1920) and Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893). Three really good examples of the Romantic era expressing a real sense of emotion.

This month we moved closer to our own time as we explored the 20th Century. Starting with the arch nationalist Sibelius (1865 - 1957), with a little aside to explore Finlandia which contains the famous nationalist tune reflecting Finland's recent accession to NATO; and then onto his violin concerto written in 1899 but not performed until the year 1900 (arguably not quite in the 20th Century but close enough!). This rugged piece moves us slightly out of our comfort zone into something a little more challenging but still reflecting the romantic era.

This was followed by the violin concerto by Berg (1885 - 1920) which was going to provide more of a challenge. As we entered the 20th Century, composers began to look for an alternative to the conventional scale system which had been in use for centuries. The conventional scale has just 7 different notes (CDEFGABC for instance) and composers up to now had composed using this and modulating to related keys. Composers began to look at a way of using all the notes in an octave including the 'black notes' (C# D# F# G# and A#) increasing the number to 12. The main proponent of this new note row form of composition was Schoenberg along with his pupils Berg and Webern. Listening to Berg provided some challenges but the whole group stuck with it and were willing to listen to new ideas. Not an area that we intend spending a great deal of time in - we will probably never return but at least an interesting side line.

Following this, composers looked for other ways of composing and the age of minimalism grew from the 1960's. One of those credited with this new era was John Adams and we completed our exploration of the violin concerto with his written in 1993. This brought to an end our exploration of the violin concerto.

Classical Music Group Membership

We are looking to recruit and, perhaps, establish a waiting list of interested u3a members. If you are interested in music, please contact me to establish an interest.

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Handel Hendrix Museum

The composer Handel moved into a new house in Brook Street (behind Bond Street Station) in 1723 and lived there until he died in 1759. In the 1960's Jimi Hendrix occupied a flat next door. In 2001 the house opened as a museum and subsequently the Hendrix flat was added.

For the past 18 months the house has gone through a complete renovation and rebuild and reopens to the public next month. I have been a volunteer and harpsichordist there since 2012.



In the next few months, I intend organising a tour of this unique museum combining the composer Handel with Jimi Hendrix, mainly for the members of the Classical Music Group but open to all members of Upminster u3a. If you are interested, please let me know or keep an eye out for future notices.



Malcolm Henderson

Quiz Answers

1. Lily of the Valley.
2. 8 May.
3. Travel into space, but not orbit the earth. He was also the oldest man to walk on the moon.
4. 6 May 1954.
5. William Shakespeare.
6. Hawthorn.
7. Edward V - the boy king who was presumed murdered before he could be crowned, and Edward VIII.
8. William IV.
9. Wood.
10. Age 9 - he was 20 when he was formally presented with the title.

Chris Slade

