



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"



November 2023

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

News & Notices

London Region Events click [here](#)

Useful Links

Upminster u3a website click [here](#)

Upminster u3a Committee
Contact details click [here](#)

For future news, articles, and feedback,
please email
Barbara Smith, Newsletter Editor
uu3abarbara489@btinternet.com

Newsletter entries must be received by Barbara by the
1st of each month. Thank you.

The Editor reserves the right to amend or omit
content.

For your Diary



Our next meeting will be on
Tuesday 21 November '23, doors open at 1pm

Monthly meeting speaker details
(we now have two each month): [page 2](#)

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Future Guest Speakers at Monthly Meetings

Please note that some speakers are different to those shown in previous newsletters

21 Nov	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 'Sing a Song for Christmas' - Danielle Barnett, professional singer (talking about Christmas traditions, songs and their origin). Gillian Ford, organiser of Upminster Dementia Choir. Gillian is also Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Adults & Wellbeing and represents Havering Residents' Association, Cranham Ward.
19 Dec	Christmas Party (<i>no speakers</i>) – other treats instead!
2024	
16 Jan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Gary Lucas - talk about Hitchcock's Leytonstone Richard Jeremiah-Clarke from Connect Lifetime Mortgages together with Legal and General to talk about Equity Release.
20 Feb	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Veronica King - talking about her time as a store detective. TBA

View from the Chair

I don't really think this column is for looking back generally, but I have to make a comment on the October speaker on DNA, who was one of the most interesting speakers we have had. The content was excellent and the delivery just as good. The proof of this was in the quality and quantity of questions afterwards. It also cleared up the link that we are all connected in some way to 7 African ladies.



Mary and some of the genealogy group were in attendance and received some positive feedback afterwards, although her group is full at the moment. This connects with something we have spoken about at our Trustees' meeting - which was to see if group leaders were interested in sourcing a speaker to highlight their group. Obviously this wouldn't be every month but it is worth considering for the future.



On a more familiar note, winter has arrived, so treat it with respect and sensibly as it can be a difficult time of year for some.

Susan Mayes



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Membership Information

Since our last newsletter we have welcomed eleven new members and a former member who re-joined. They were:

- Susan Ashenden
- Roberta Bailey
- Keith Maybe
- Donna McArthur
- Thelma Ann McGorrighan
- Joan Powell
- Mary Scully
- Miranda Sedgwick
- Philomena Sewell
- 3 members who did not want their names published.

As at the end of September we had 617 paid-up members.

Pamela Freer

Notices and Information

Refreshment Initiative at Monthly Meetings

In order to move in line with other u3as around the country, we have been looking at ways to be more eco-friendly. Our decision was to move forward in the refreshment area first.

It was proposed that individuals should bring their own cup/mug and be responsible for it. Refreshments will still be free - with tea being poured at the hatch in the usual way. You help yourselves to coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits available on two tables away from the serving hatch. Hot water for the coffee will be available at the hatch.

Obviously this is in its infancy and there will be problems both for u3a members and the ladies serving, but I'm hoping we can solve them together to make us a more sustainable u3a.

Thank you in anticipation for your cooperation.

Susan Mayes.



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Additions to our Library

This month the handbook for the National Portrait Gallery has been added to our library. In addition to giving a guide to the most interesting works in that newly reopened gallery, I like it because it gives an easy summary of our history from Tudor times. If you would like to borrow it, or any of the other books in our library, contact natalie@kehr.co.uk. I normally try to bring the library books to our monthly meetings but the next meeting I will be attending will not be until January.

Our library contains books on London buildings, London street trees, and some of the London art galleries.

Natalie Kehr

We are planning to include CDs and film DVDs on the Book Table at our Monthly Meetings. If anybody has either, or both, that they no longer listen to or watch, please bring them along.

Chris Slade.

Speakers at Monthly Meetings

Re the list of **future guest speakers** on page 2, and the fact that some have needed to change/cancel the dates when they come to talk to us at our monthly meetings, although this is not within our control, we will always try our best to advise any changes as soon as we can.

Barbara Smith.

What does positive ageing mean?

"The idea of positive ageing is, what can we do across our whole lives to build and maintain capacity to ensure we can continue to lead happy, positive, fulfilled lives as we get older?" To read more about this subject, just click on this link [**u3a - What does positive ageing mean?**](#)

Within this link is news about The University of York, which will be playing host to **u3a's first ever festival** – a chance for members from across the UK to gather and share the joy of the movement. It will include a wide range of activities, talks, workshops, exhibitions, sports tournaments and concerts that will showcase the vibrancy of the u3a.

There is onsite bed and breakfast accommodation made up of mainly single-bed rooms with a limited number of doubles. Here's the link for further information [**u3a - u3a to host its first ever festival**](#)



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Christmas Party 19 December 2023



The tickets for the Christmas Party were all sold at the October monthly meeting.
 Thank you to everyone for your support.
 If you would like to go on the waiting list, please contact Chris Slade
 on chrisslade1@sky.com or on **07906-433559**.





Barn Dance

Tuesday 13 February 2024 6.15 - 8.30 p.m.

As it will not be possible to sell tickets for this event at the Christmas Party, they will go on sale, **to Uu3a members only**, at the November monthly meeting. Due to the space constraints for such an event, there will only be 100 tickets available. Should they not all be sold, they will be available **after** the meeting - contact **Chris Slade** on chrisslade1@sky.com or on **07906-433559**.

Social Committee

Monthly Quiz

It happened in November, even Russia's **October** Revolution, which, according to the Gregorian calendar started on 7 November.

1. World famous in literature and films, who was born in Wattenscheid, Germany on 11 November 1920 or 1921?
2. Bonfire Night is celebrated on the 5th of November, but in which year was the Gunpowder Plot?
3. On the 28th of November 1919, who became Britain's first woman seated as a Member of Parliament when she was elected for Plymouth, Sutton?
4. What officially opened for the first time on 17 November 1869?
5. What was the name given to the famous speech made by Abraham Lincoln on 19 November 1863?
6. Lewis Carroll's novel Alice's Adventures in Wonderland was published in November 1865. What was the writer's real name?
7. One of the most popular board games ever devised was launched by Parker Brothers in 1935; what was it?
8. November is our 11th month, but what number month was it in the old Roman calendar.
9. What was the name of the dog which orbited the earth on Nov 3rd 1957?
10. Who announced his invention of the phonograph on 21 November 1877?

Chris Slade



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Groups Update

Classical Music Appreciation

Our meeting which took place recently – what a meeting it was !!

The two new members seemed to enjoy themselves as much as us regulars, as we listened to a variety of pieces. These were all items that almost anybody would be familiar with, but perhaps not know where they come from, or how the piece resolves itself into a full adagio or prelude of whatever.

We heard The Toreador Song, from the French opera Carmen by Bizet, Khachaturian's Adagio from the ballet Spartacus (of The Onedin Line fame !), the first movement from Mozart's 40th Symphony (you know - the one that goes diddley um diddley um diddley um dum, diddely um diddely um diddely um) and Die Fledermaus (Sometimes called the Revenge of the Bat – not many people knew that !) by Johann Stauss II.

Whatever stories you may have heard about Mozart, most of them are bunk (Henry Ford: it is garbage with no value and has no meaning in this society).

In each case we had an interesting discussion about the author in the context of where the item fitted in the composer's career.



Malcolm is planning to arrange a visit for the group to the newly expanded and re-opened Handel and Hendrix museum (they were neighbours, but not at the same time !) near Bond Steet Station.

Malcolm performs music there on harpsichord and clavichord most Thursday mornings.



Malcolm, the group leader, is now able to take on additional members. For more details, see **Groups For You on the Uu3a web site** or contact **Chris Slade: 07906-433559**.

Richard Saville



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Short walks: Thames Chase Forest Centre to Cranham Brickfields and back.

As usual, the walk was more of an amble with chatting along the way stopping every now and again to mention something. The Centre was originally Broadlands Farm and a few of the former buildings are still there - the house and the wooden barn where you can hire bicycles.



We walked along a couple of paths both under the cover of trees before coming to open land on the other side of St. Marys Lane. Planning permission has been sought on this open land to build housing some of which are to be affordable and new facilities for Upminster Hockey Club. We continued along the path to the railway line that bisects Franks Wood. It possibly got its name from Frank Scotland who owned land here in the 13th Century and who also gave his name to the Manor of Warley Franks. The wood is classified as a "Site of Importance for Nature Conservation." The path up to the railway line was very muddy in places and we were followed by some horses.

Along made-up paths again, Franks Wood merges with Cranham Brickfields that now has a playing area. We came across a pond that was probably an excavation for brick earth. This pond had a Komodo dragon!



Once past the play area we were in open farmland and then along the full length of Franks Wood by the railway line before retracing our steps to The Centre. A few of us had a well-earned drink.

Russ Barnett

Coffee Morning

Let's hope the weather is better for our next Tuesday morning meetings at 11am on Nov 21st, Dec 5th and Dec 19th at Roomes Café.

Sorry but I will still be absent until at least late December. Missing our chats.



Angela McDonald



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STEMM

We were most fortunate that Professor Richard Folkson came from Cambridgeshire to address us for the third time. Richard was a president of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers. His interest stems from steam engines and Henry Ford. Richard's previous talk was about driverless cars.



This time he enlightened us about alternative fuels. In this age of STEMM-driven change he reminded us that people cannot (or be expected to) articulate what we cannot visualise. Henry Ford is reputed to have said that if he had asked potential customers what they wanted, they would have said faster horses. We are currently on the cusp of the reality of driverless cars, whilst electric and hybrid vehicles are becoming an everyday reality. How can and do we envisage these immense changes....?

This time he shared with us the knowledge contained within the 2nd edition of the book (2022) that was prepared for academia and to enable decision-makers to arrive at responsible data-driven decisions about the future of vehicular transport whilst being cognisant of the impact, of any and all decisions, on the environment.

For those who might be keen to gain a deeper understanding of the underpinning theory, a fraction (163/730+ pages) of this £245 tome can be accessed via

https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Alternative_Fuels_and_Advanced_Vehicle_T/bAGjAgAAQBAJ?hl=en&qbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&bshv=rime/1

Following Sir David King's report (2007 & 2008), in his capacity as Chief Scientific Officer for Transport, and Dame Julia King's and Sir Nicholas Stern's responses 'things began to move'. Stern said that if we did not do something about carbon emissions it would cost more climate change. Dame Julia King nominated electric vehicles as the answer to internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. Richard didn't agree with Julia King so compiled the 2014 edition introducing the world to evidence-based alternative approaches. This 2nd edition was written because so much has changed in the decade since that book's first publication.

Richard took us through the science behind climate change and how the alternative fuels function. Biofuel works but the dilemma rests on whether the land should be used for food or fuel. Hydrogen is the most frequently cited alternative: the first H₂-powered vehicle was driven in 2004! But, this alternative presents eye-watering costs in construction. Electric vehicles use Lithium-ion batteries: therein lie many problems, not to mention sourcing lithium, responsibly, and what to do with 'dead Li batteries', and the costs! What about HGVs? Is it feasible for these road-giants to be EVs?

After a short and thought-provoking discourse on the PM's decision to change the 2030 ban on ICEs to 2035, Richard left us with these concluding thoughts: There is no single technology that can deliver zero emission solutions for all transport sectors due to cost being the most important factor. Legislation needs to permit consumers to choose alternatives.

Lyn Haynes



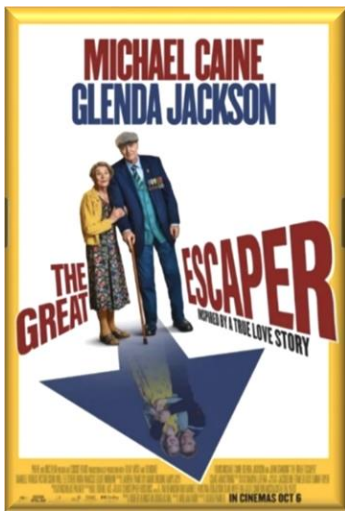
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Cinema Group



The cinema group went to see "The Great Escaper", after some of us met in Zizzi's for a meal before venturing to The Vue Cinema, Romford. This film is based on a true-life event.

A moving and surprisingly nuanced drama offering far more than flag waving nostalgia.

Superb performances from Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson, in her last role before her death this summer. Their ineffable class gives this film real grit, there was something moving and even awe-inspiring in seeing these two icons together.

A film not to miss.

Annette Gaskin

Poetry Groups

A somewhat warm and sunny day greeted us for our meeting of Group One, quite a contrast to Group Two: a dull autumn day.

This month we looked at life of William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, in particular a poem he wrote for Dorothy, *To My Sister*, a kindred spirit with whom he spent a considerable amount of time both before and after his marriage in 1802. In September I enjoyed a visit to their first Lakeland home, Dove Cottage at Grasmere and also a visit to the nearby Wordsworth Museum which showed amazing exhibits of many of Wordsworth's writings. Wordsworth's love of nature and the ordinary man is reflected in much of his work.

We then looked at the work of American poet Emily Dickinson, in particular *There is no Frigate like a Book*, who lived a semi-secluded life in New England in the late 1800s and beyond. After her death, her family discovered over 1,700 untitled, but numbered, poems and writings of Emily's, which had never been published. Shortly after her death they were published and received with great acclaim. She wrote the short verse mentioned above in celebration of books and literature; in it, books are vessels that transport us to far off shores.

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Our Guest Poems were *Hurricane Hits England* by Grace Nichols (Group One) and *Church Going* by Philip Larkin (Group Two).

We meet again in November before our December break.

Michelle Blyth

Coach Trips

Our good luck with the weather ran out when we went on our October coach trip to **Ickworth House** in Suffolk. It had been raining for days and it continued raining – hard - all the time we were there. Part of our visit was a walk round the outside of the buildings and through part of the Italianate garden close to the house



to be told about the family who originally occupied the house and the quirky nature of the building itself. Only 11 brave souls ventured to do this but they were well rewarded by a fascinating talk and an opportunity to see something that was a first for me: a stumpery.

(See separate note below on **Stumperies**).



The estate was in the hands of the Hervey family from 1700, when John Hervey (he became the Earl of Bristol in 1703) inherited it until 1999 when the 7th Marquess of Bristol squandered his fortune and had to move out. The house we see today was the vision of the 4th Earl of Bristol who was known as the Earl Bishop. When he died in 1803 his half-built house was completed by his son, the 1st Marquess of Bristol who also made the major contribution to the landscape as it is now (with designs by Capability Brown to follow). The building is very unusual with a grand rotunda in the centre and two symmetrical curved wings on either side. Only the east wing was lived in. The west wing was built just so the symmetry of the building was maintained and was used as a storage facility. The rotunda was reserved for the family's grand entertaining.

Today part of the house is used as a hotel, and other parts as a restaurant and extensive gift shop but there was still a lot to see in the house. There is a renowned silver collection and some of the family portraits were painted by household-name artists; there are thousands of books and a lot of important furniture. In addition to the grandeur of the family spaces we were able to see 'below stairs' – not just a kitchen but the servants' hall, the Butler's and housekeeper's private rooms, store rooms, the old heating system and more.

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The grounds cover 1800 acres and, had the weather been kind, we would have been able to walk through some of the beautiful woods on well-made trails but we unfortunately had to forego that pleasure, though we could enjoy views of much of the grounds from the upper windows of the house.

I can highly recommend a visit on a dry summer day.

Stumperies



Pictured here is one of the stumps in the Ickworth stumpery

Stumperies became quite a trend in Victorian times when gardeners wanted somewhere to show off their fern collections. They are now enjoying somewhat of a revival. They are simply areas of a garden where unwanted tree root stumps are left to rot and to be used as a form of sculpture. They are wonderful in attracting wildlife and are a great support for climbing plants. Sometimes the roots are piled high but at Ickworth single roots are arranged over an extensive area of woodland garden and they look magnificent.

(Photos taken by Russ Barnett)

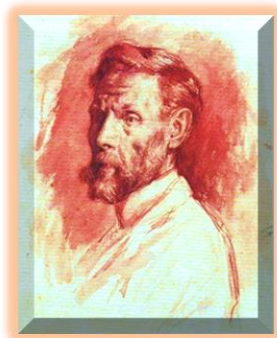
Pamela Freer

Art History/Appreciation: **Picasso, 1881-1973**

During this year, the 50th anniversary of Picasso's death, we have been considering the full range of his artistic work. A legendary figure, he was the most famous original artist of the 20th century with few artists escaping his influence. Work was a way of life with Picasso and his output was prodigious. His last major set of engravings were completed less than a year before his death aged 92.

The Artist's Father

Picasso, 1896



This pastel study of his father was drawn when Picasso was just 15-years-old. His early work impressed us all.

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Extraordinary natural ability and endless versatility led Picasso to explore new modes of expression which were to shape the course of modern art. Perhaps his most significant contribution was the development of Cubism which paved the way for abstract art.

Ma Jolie
Picasso, 1914

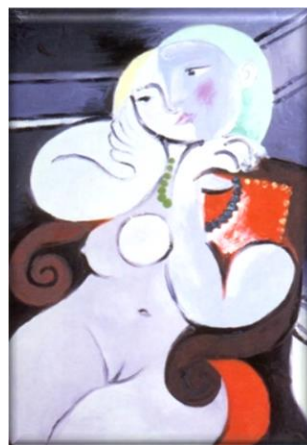


"Why should I try to imitate nature? I might just as well try to trace the perfect circle."

A sensual and charismatic man, during his lifetime Picasso married twice and had many lovers. His women often providing the source of inspiration as these portraits indicate.



Portrait of Olga
in the Armchair, 1917



Nude Woman
in a Red Armchair, 1932



Portrait of Jacqueline
with her arms crossed, 1954

Olga was Picasso's first wife. The model for *Red Chair* was Marie-Therèse, Picasso's young lover, never named but always clearly recognisable by the curving sensuous body. Jacqueline was Picasso's second wife.

Taken as a whole, the versatility of style in Picasso's works can be seen as an assertion of the artist's right to create not merely to represent.

"I paint the way people write their autobiography. The paintings are the pages of my journal ... The future will choose the pages they prefer. It is not up to me to make the choice."

Chris Mecham



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Practical IT

The next Practical IT session will be on 2nd December.**

Perhaps the most important lesson this month is to consult me or Colin at the Practical IT Group before buying anything, and especially before asking someone else to help you remotely. We were told the sad story of someone who needed help installing a printer. The printer owner gave a technician control of his computer. When the printer was installed the technician wanted £169. The owner said he didn't want to pay that much. The technician immediately removed several vital programs from the computer rendering it impossible to use.

The main activity in our sessions in October seemed to be dealing with Gmail problems. But we did discuss putting icons on the desktop to make it easy to access commonly used files. We also installed WhatsApp on a laptop.

I demonstrated charging my phone without having to insert a cable into the device.

When helping someone with eye problems and an Android phone I discovered that it is easy to dictate to the phone rather than trying to type on the tiny screen.

For more details, why not join the Practical IT group? We usually meet most Saturday mornings** at my home. There is no waiting list.

People bring along their laptops, phones or tablets. Between us we usually manage to solve most problems, and we all learn a lot. I send out the occasional newsletter to members of the group (even those who never attend). For details contact natalie@kehr.co.uk.

Natalie Kehr

Quiz Answers

1. James Bond.
2. 1605.
3. Nancy Astor.
4. Suez Canal.
5. The Gettysburg Address - it contained 272 words, and lasted just two minutes.
6. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.
7. Monopoly - it had previously been rejected as being too complicated and taking too long to play.
8. The ninth - November is derived from the Latin word "novem" meaning nine.
9. Laika.
10. Thomas Edison.