



# Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

February 2024



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](mailto: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 20 February, '24 doors open at 1pm

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## Future Guest Speakers at Monthly Meetings

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

20 Feb	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Veronica King - talking about her time as a store detective.</li> <li>2. <b>No speaker</b> (see March, below, as Gillian Ford, organiser of Upminster Dementia Choir, will now be speaking then).</li> </ol>
19 March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mark Carroll - talking about DNA</li> <li>2. Gillian Ford, organiser of Upminster Dementia Choir. Gillian is also Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Adults &amp; Wellbeing and represents Havering Residents' Association, Cranham Ward.</li> </ol>
16 April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Andrew Baker - talking about British Politics.</li> <li>2. TBA.</li> </ol>

## View from the Chair

January has seemed a long month generally because it follows the indulgence of Christmas. Even February is a day longer this year but this does allow us to think of the Spring/Summer days ahead. Also, if you are female and planning to propose to someone it is a leap year so now is your chance!!



February is the month of love embodied for some, especially in the commercial world, by Valentines Day. When asked about this day and love by my young granddaughter I found it hard to explain. It comes in many forms and guises and makes us feel warm and contented but to explain it to a child it becomes very difficult. After chatting about this over a drink and cake with her suffice to say she feels loved by her mummy and daddy (and even her little brother) as they look after her and make her feel happy.

I hope everyone finds some form of happiness, contentment, warmth over the month and they share it with others. Shared, it becomes even more potent.

*Susan Mayes*



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## Membership Information

In January we had an upsurge in new membership enquiries and welcomed 9 new members. Unfortunately, at the end of January, we were informed of the death of another member so the total number of current paid-up members at the end of January was 626.

The new members are: Sandra Bayley, Bob and Janet Bradford, John French, Patricia Jeffries, Debbie Madden, Julie Waterhouse, Jacqueline Watts and one member who did not wish to be named.

*Pamela Freer*

## Notices and Information

A Uu3a member has kindly asked me to let you know that Fred Olsen Cruises have recently been giving an 'affinity' discount of 5% to u3a members **BUT you need to request it at the time of booking and before you pay the deposit.**

**It cannot be applied retrospectively.**

The member, who booked a cruise with them, phoned to book it and simply requested the discount before getting to payment of deposit. They said which u3a they belonged to, and gave their membership number. Nothing more was asked. **The key thing is, it must be requested at the time of booking.**

### Editor's note:

I personally attempted to research this on Fred Olsen's website but I was unable to find any 'advertising' about this particular discount. It has been discussed on the u3a Facebook Keeping in Touch posts. I did an "Olsen" search and these posts / discussions were happening around 22 Jan.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Canary Wharf Lights.

It was rather cold for our visit to see the Canary Wharf Lights. With the aid of a map that was given out, and even after asking some of the many marshalls, we sometimes did not follow the intended route.

The displays could roughly be divided into static or dynamic. For the static ones there was neither movement nor change in colour and these were far less interesting than the dynamic ones that either changed colour or moved, or both.

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The picture on the right, of Neuron, comprised of a series of 6 lights each radiating off a central pole with the lights changing colour in unison. The lights went back and forth like an opening and closing umbrella.



The impression given by the next one, Sign, was of a burning bonfire.

The last one, Idle Time, was two characters projected onto surface.



of a moving display of a very large flat



In all there were over a dozen temporary displays and half that for permanent ones.

*Russ Barnett*

## Monthly Quiz

Much of what happened in 2023 we'd probably rather forget, but can you remember these?

1. What species of tree was cut down at Hadrian's Wall in September, and in what county was it?
2. Who did the Lionesses lose to in the ladies' World Cup soccer final in August?
3. What was the name of The Beatles final song released in November?
4. What became X in April?
5. Who or what turned up at Scarborough on 1 January?
6. Why did Fiona need rescuing In November?
7. The 28th COP conference took place at the end of the year - what does COP stand for?
8. Which country became the 31st member of NATO in April?
9. What was the name of the submersible that, sadly, was lost in the Atlantic in June?
10. What didn't Steven Spielberg do that he'd done four times before?

*Chris Slade*



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## Groups - update

**IMPORTANT NOTICE** - Would any member who knows, or thinks, that they are on a Group waiting list or who has asked to join a Group and been told that, regrettably it is full, please contact me at [chrisslade1@sky.com](mailto:chrisslade1@sky.com) / **07906-433559**.

If I know, I'll try and do something about it, if I don't, I obviously can't.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Thanks to those of you who sent in the following suggestions for new Groups.**

- Rummikub/Card Games** - We do already have both, but I have been advised that The Hub in Harold Wood has a room available which would be more convenient for our members who live that way. A third Rummikub Group there has been suggested, but other options might be possible.
- Bananagrams** - Another suggestion is for this "Addictively simple, and simply addictive" game which could be played at The Hub, the Windmill Pub or in members' homes. A sort of Scrabble-type game, but one where you don't have to wait ages while other players decide where to go, check it out on the internet at [Classic BANANAGRAMS](#).
- Darts** - No specific information on where (possibly Cranham Community Centre), and when to play, as before arranging this, it would be helpful to know if there is, indeed, interest in such a Group. **N.B.** Large stomachs and being able to drink copious amounts of beer are not requirements!
- Cribbage** - Not a Group that we have had previously, but a number of u3as do. Again, no specific details yet, but will be progressed if the interest is there.
- Jewellery and Mosaic Art Making** - Please let me know if such a Group would be of interest to you. Also, the lady who submitted the suggestion feels that each of these Groups would require a person who is able, and willing, to teach these pastimes. Do we have such a member?
- French and Italian**. We have attempted to start language Groups before with little success, as, realistically, they require the leadership of somebody who speaks the language. Is there a Uu3a member who would be prepared to get one or both of these Groups started?

With regard to all the above, if you are, or might, be interested, please contact Chris Slade at [chrisslade1@sky.com](mailto:chrisslade1@sky.com) or on **07906-433559**.

*Chris Slade*





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## Groups – recent activities / outings, etc.

### Coach Trips

#### Coach Trips 1

Last month we published the programme of coach trips for 2024/5. Unfortunately, we have been forced to make a change to this programme already, as follows: The April 30 **visit to Chenies Manor** will now take place the following day – Wednesday 1 May. Full details and the booking form for this trip will be sent out before the middle of February.

#### Coach Trips 2

The **12-16 May holiday** to the area around Bath and Bristol has reached its minimum number to be viable so will definitely go ahead. However, there are still five places available so we have decided to keep the booking open for a bit longer. If anyone is interested please contact Pamela Freer [pamelafreer@samsonfreer.co.uk](mailto:pamelafreer@samsonfreer.co.uk) or **07941 295343** as soon as practical to get full details. Final payment for this holiday is required by 3 March. People coming will be contacted about a week before with payment instructions.

*Pamela Freer*

### Coffee Morning



Come along for a warm up in this chilly weather with coffee and a chat.

Roomes Cafe 13 Feb / 27 Feb - usual time - 11am.

*Angela McDonald*



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## Art History/Appreciation

We began the new year visiting a small, focused exhibition, "Rubens and his Women" at the Dulwich Picture Gallery. Rubens was a superstar of the 17<sup>th</sup> century but has become increasingly unfashionable and neglected over time.

The theme of the exhibition is to challenge the assumption and popular cliché that Rubens painted only one type of woman – the well-endowed object of titillation.



**Venus, Mars and Cupid, c1630**



**The Three Graces mid-1630s**

The term 'Rubenesque' was coined in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and used negatively to describe a 'broad and curvaceous' woman. Fashions in beauty constantly change and in modern times Rubens' depiction of women is not simply out of favour but frowned upon. The exhibition, however, goes a long way in showing the varied and important place occupied by women, both real and imagined, in his world. The way in which his relationships with women inspired his creativity and his career. The roles played by his family members and important female patrons to his deep faith and artistic beliefs.



**The Virgin in Adoration before the Christ Child, c.1616-19**

Isobella Brant, Rubens' first wife, is seen as the inspiration of the Virgin Mary.

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The room entitled "Goddesses of Peace and Plenty" displays large canvasses of extravagant mythological female figures and are paintings which prove the most difficult for a modern audience. These works, however, represent a vision of women as powerful agents bringing peace and prosperity to the world. These women are active protagonists associated with wisdom, peace, fertility and abundance.



**Diana returning from the hunt, c1615**

During Rubens' lifetime, Europe was ravaged by war and he was keenly aware of the negative impacts.

The exhibition displays some wonderful individual works showing Rubens' versatility as an artist through intimate drawings, oil sketches and dramatic paintings. It broadened our understanding of his work and was much enjoyed.



**Portrait of Rubens' daughter, c1620-23, who died aged 12.**

*Chris Mecham*





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## Wine & Cheese Appreciation, Group 3



Photo to the right shows members at our January meeting.

We still have a small number of spaces available, so if you feel like joining us please contact group leader, Chris, via the Uu3a website for details.



## Chris Bottoms

## STEMM

STEMMers were lucky to begin 2024 with a foray into invertebrate research undertaken in the Scottish Cairngorms. John Attiwell (son of STEMM members Chris and Iain) was the survey officer working for the RSPB as part of the Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms Partnership. He shared his experiences from the latter half of 2023 with such enthusiasm and passion.

The main focus of the research was with moths, mining bees, pine hoverflies though he included stunning photographs and information about incidental captures found during the field work..

The Kentish Glory moth, in spite of its name, is now only found in the Scottish Highlands in birch forests; even here they are listed as a threatened species. The adults survive for less than a fortnight; so, in this phase of their metamorphosis, they do not eat but only breed. The males fly by day and night in search of the relatively sedentary females.



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The Emperor moth and Orange Tip butterfly were attractive spring flyers, but the one that took the main focus of the survey (and John's heart) is the Dark Bordered Beauty. This species is on the brink of extinction (Red Data Book Rare classification), with only two known populations in Scotland. This environmental issue has resulted in RZSS undertaking a successful lab breeding project under climate-controlled breeding conditions developed from specialised knowledge of genetics and conservation. Unlike the Kentish Glory, Dark Bordered Tip eggs were not seen in the wild though it is thought that they would be laid in late summer and would hatch in the wild the following summer.

Due to the environmental issue with the extremely low numbers in the wild, their reintroduction release sites are top secret. Though there were no recaptures of marked adults there was evidence of hatched larvae in the reintroduction release sites. Great news! IUCN regulations stipulate that a species must be absent in the wild for 3 years before reintroduction is permitted. The RIC project utilised 15W UV lamps and specific pheromone lures to capture (and release) the invertebrates. In addition to the focus species John cited 11 moth species, bees, bumblebees, butterflies and numerous hoverfly species, beetles that comprised the incidental captures, highlighting British invertebrate diversity.

Treat yourself and take a look at photographs online by clicking on, or typing into Google

<https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/scotland/posts/dark-bordered-beauty-a-suckerfor-suckers>

AND

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/scottish-office/priorityspecies-updates/kentish-glory>

in order to view these beauties without contravening copyright regulations.

The pine hoverfly eggs hatch in the rot holes of the Scots pine and resemble rat-tailed maggots with a breathing tube. The larvae take two years to reach adulthood, enduring being frozen in the rot hole soup! These hoverflies are also undergoing an ex-situ conservation breeding programme by RZSS as they are rare: last seen in the wild in 2022. Commercial forestry is a major cause of ancient woodland reduction and the concomitant impact on this species. There is now some evidence of adults laying eggs in the wild.

*Lyn Haynes*

## Cinema Group



A large number of us attended Romford Vue cinema to see the film **One Life**. Many of us met in Zizzies for lunch before the film; this is a nice way for people to get to know each other within Uu3a.

This is an absolutely incredible and very powerful film, superbly delivered by the strong cast - Anthony Hopkins, Helen Bonham Carter and Johnny Flynn, and many other supporting actors.

It is based on real-life about the man who organised the rescue of 669 children from Prague before World War 2 broke out.

*Annette Gaskin*



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## Poetry Appreciation Groups

It was nice to meet up again with both groups in January. Group 2 met during arctic weather whilst Group 1 met on a warmer day! We explored and discussed the works of Dorothy Wellesley, a lesser-known poet who was married to a member of the aristocracy, was a one-time lover of Vita Sackville-West and ultimately was a member of the Bloomsbury Set. We also looked at the work of Noel Coward, playwright and poet who led a very colourful life which reflected in his poetry and his very successful plays.

Our guest poems were:

**Group 1: Home** by Warsan Shire, a poet with Somali connections; this sparked much debate.

**Group 2: Sailing to Byzantium** by W B Yeats, a beautiful poem written in his later years.

*Michelle Blythe*

## Rummikub 2

Our Group started its second year in January. It was so good to be back after the Christmas festivities.



We meet on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday each month and our session dates for February are 13th & 27th.

So, if you fancy coming along (even if only one of the dates suits you) for a fun games afternoon, with a very friendly group, we meet at 2pm-4pm at The Windmill Pub, Upminster Bridge.



As the pub doesn't charge us for using the room, most of us buy refreshments while we are there, if only tea or coffee.

*Shirley Smithson*



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## Beer Tasting Group: *London, Brewing Capital of the World*

A dozen of us braved a cold and miserable January afternoon to walk across London, exploring its outstanding brewing history and beer heritage fortified, perhaps unsurprisingly, by the odd beer stop here and there along the way!

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, London became the undisputed brewing capital of the world, driven by the growth in its population, an expanding British empire and the onset of the industrial revolution, to develop the most technologically advanced breweries producing the world's first global beer styles - Porter and India Pale

Ale (IPA). Sadly, these once great breweries - the likes of Whitbread (Chiswell Street), Ben Truman (Brick Lane), Red Lion (St Katherine's Dock), Courage (Horselydown, east of Tower Bridge) and Barclay Perkins (Southwark Bankside) no longer exist, but their history lives on at their former sites we visited; these are now converted into upmarket hotels, conference/exhibition centres, luxury flats and housing estates.



The fame and fortune of these breweries and their owners were built upon two new beer styles which probably emerged in the 1710s (Porter) and later in the 1750s (IPA). Contrary to earlier accounts, Porter was not 'invented' as such by Ralph Horwood of the Bell



Brewhouse Shoreditch, nor IPA by George Hodgson of the Bow Bridge Brewery, but instead evolved over time from existing beer styles - aged brown beer (a smoky, sour and vinous ale) and October Ale (a strong pale ale popular with the country gentry and aged for two or more years in their country estates).

A lot of modern research has gone into London's brewing history and its now generally accepted that Porter derived its name from its popularity with London's porters, who carried goods from ships and around the city whilst the strong pale ale shipped to India by Hodgsons and other breweries became known in the 1830s as India Pale Ale. These pale ales, with their high concentration of hops and alcohol, were ideally suited to survive the long and arduous sea voyages to India (4/5 months) and extreme temperature changes along the way, to arrive in the same top condition which would have taken 2 years to achieve in an English cellar.

Should you fancy trying more traditional interpretations of these beer styles, good places to start would be Anspach & Hobday The Porter, Kernel Export India Porter, and Meantime London IPA. More readily available in local supermarkets are Fuller's London Porter and Marston's Old Empire.

Cheers!



*Kevin Kilbey*





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## A Poem

### I'm Fine Thank You

There is nothing the matter with me,  
I'm as healthy as I can be.  
I have arthritis in both my knees,  
And, when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.  
My pulse is weak, and my blood is thin,  
But I'm awfully well for the shape that I'm in.

Arch supports I have for my feet,  
Or I wouldn't be able to be on the street.  
Sleep is denied me night after night,  
But every morning I find I'm all right.  
My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,  
But I'm awfully well for the shape that I'm in.

The moral is this as my tale I unfold –  
That for you and me who are growing old,  
It's better to say "I'm fine" with a grin,  
Than to let folks know the shape we are in.

How do I know that my youth is all spent?  
Well, my "get up and go" has got up and went.  
But I really don't mind when I think with a grin,  
Of all the grand places my "get up" has bin.

Old age is golden I have heard it said,  
But sometimes I wonder as I get into bed.  
With my ears in the drawer, my teeth in a cup,  
And my eyes on the table until I wake up.  
Ere sleep overtakes me, I say to myself,  
"Is there anything else I could put on the shelf?"  
When I was young my slippers were red,

I could kick my heels right over my head.  
When I was older my slippers were blue,  
But still, I could dance the whole night through.  
Now I am old my slippers are black,  
I walk to the store and puff my way back.

I get up each morning and dust off my wits,  
Then pick up the paper and read the "obits",  
If my name is still missing, I know I'm not dead,  
So, I have a good breakfast and go back to bed.

*Constance O'Neon*

*Chris Slade*





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## Quiz Answers

1. Sycamore, Northumberland.
2. Spain.
3. Now and Then.
4. Twitter.
5. Thor the Walrus.
6. She was the sheep stuck at the bottom of a Scottish cliff.
7. Conference of the Parties.
8. Finland.
9. Titan.
10. Direct the fifth, and final, Indiana Jones film.

*Chris Slade*



A tranquil scene to brighten the days of February

