



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



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

Useful Links

London Region Events
Events - London Region of u3as Network

Upminster u3a website
<https://upminster.u3asite.uk/>

Upminster u3a Committee Contact
<https://upminster.u3asite.uk/contact/>

For future news, articles, and feedback,
please email

Mary Sales, Newsletter Editor
Alison Liburd, Deputy Editor
[maupminstereditors@gmail](mailto:maupminstereditors@gmail.com)

Newsletter entries for next month must be
submitted to Mary and Alison by 6pm on
the 28th June 2026.
Thank you.

The Editor reserves the right to amend or
omit content.

For your Diary

Our next meeting will be
Tuesday 16th June

Doors open at 1pm

Inside this Newsletter

Page	
2	Future Guest Speakers/View from the Chair
3	Note from the Editors
4	Notices & Information
5	Trivia and Quiz
6	Poetry Appreciation
8	Play Reading 2
9	Older People's Fair
10	Photography Group
11	Short Walk
12	Places of Interest
14	Coach Trip
15	STEMM
17	Breakfast Club/Membership
18	Art History/Appreciation
20	Papercrafting Class
21	Quiz Answers



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Future Guest Speakers at Monthly Meetings, 2026

16 June	1. The Revd. Dr Nicholas Henderson, accredited lecturer in many historical and international issues arising from his varied life and still a working priest, speaks entertainingly on 3 or 4 of "England's Worst Monarchs" – the choice of monarchs to be made by the audience on the day, with his help! 2. Linzi the charity organiser from Pipp's army talking about animal rehoming.
21 July	1. AGM 2. Andy Stewart, author, historian and public speaker. --"Tall Tales or Real History: Could those family myths be true?" Andy wanted to know whether his Grandad's tales about Russia, the Middle East and WW1 were true – or just "tall tales". In finding out, he came across many truths about all those myths carried down in families.
18 August	1. Wendy Piccanini, Community Partnerships Manager of the Leprosy Mission contrasts the different attitudes to, and treatment of, this still-present disease across the world. The Mission is a British Christian organisation working globally in the continuing fight against leprosy. 2. Sarah from The Windmill Hall talking about the past and their plans for the future.

View from the Chair

A grand welcome, and a huge thank you to Mary and Alison who have taken on responsibility for Upminster u3a's monthly newsletter. We all wish them great success in this new challenge. A huge thank you must also go to Barbara who had to step down from that role, we wish her successful treatment and a speedy recovery to health.

What a strange month was May, going from freezing hail and thunder to a bank holiday heatwave - and that's not something that happens every year! Once again, we live up to our reputation as one of the driest regions in England, despite all that miserable weather we had barely any rain for our gardens.

More changes are coming too, in Upminster u3a, with a new chair and treasurer for the executive committee. We are also looking for one (or more) members who would like to take charge of booking speakers for the monthly meetings. Good speakers are always in short supply (and booked well in advance) so plans need to be made months ahead. I was so disappointed that I had to miss the May meeting as a result of illness, because I was the one who booked Guy Bartlett to come back!

To have grown from nothing to over 700 members in just 10 years is an amazing achievement, and it's all thanks to the members who volunteer to help run Upminster u3a. Thank you, every one of you, we couldn't have done it without you.

Courtney Moita de Deus



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Note from the Editors

Hello everyone,

We are nervously excited to be working together, trying to create an interesting and relevant newsletter for the Upminster u3a members. Before going further however, we would like to thank the outgoing editor, Barbara, for all of her hard work. We will try our hardest to maintain the high standards that she has set.

We decided to take on this new challenge for several reasons, one of which is that it is far from our comfort zone, but isn't doing new and exciting things the main reason for joining the u3a?

We also felt that we would like to contribute towards the upkeep and running of this organisation. Our founding members have achieved so much in such a short period of time; it is our pleasure to try to continue this upward trajectory.

Finally, we are hoping to have lots of fun, as we stumble our way around the new systems that we have been presented with. Please forgive us for any mistakes you may find in the pages below, we are still very much the giggling amateurs, rather than the professionals that we hope to become.

As this is very much a team effort, we would like to invite you onto the team. We would so like to hear from you and to share your stories; stories of how the u3a has impacted your lives. Maybe like us, you have developed new skills, or improved those that you already had. Or perhaps you have made new friends, friends who encourage you to do mad things like edit a monthly newsletter?!! Tell us about your extracurricular outings perhaps, or maybe you find the friendships within your groups worthy of note, and of course, photos are always welcome.

We're excited to get started on this new journey. Together we hope to learn a little, laugh a lot and continue to deliver the same standard of service previously provided by Barbara.

Warm wishes,

Mary and Alison

Please send any items of interest to: maupminstereditors@gmail.com

If by some chance we are inundated with articles, please forgive us if yours does not make next month's newsletter.

Mary and Alison



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Notices and Information

Groups:

Dog walking

The group has now started and had some lovely walks in both Hornchurch Country Park, and Harrow Lodge Park, with lots of enjoyable chatting, both on the walk, and in the cafes afterwards.

We are looking forward to welcoming new members, and please remember that you don't need a dog to join, you just need to be happy in their company whilst you enjoy the walk, the chat and of course, the coffee or tea at the end of our stroll.

If you would like to find out more, please contact me at: chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906-433559

Chess

After a bit of a struggle, there are enough members to get this new group off the ground, but to make it workable, we really need more.

Whether you are experienced, never played before, or somewhere in between, it doesn't matter, all are welcome.

The group will meet at a members' house in Hornchurch, initially at least, monthly on Thursdays, with the first meeting on 18 June.

If you are, or might be, interested, please contact me at chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906-433559
Chris

Coffee Mornings ☐

Please note that Roomes cafeteria will be closed from 8 until 21 June for refurbishment - let's hope this includes the toilets! So, there will be no Coffee Mornings until 30 June.

Angela

Tai Chi

1. Is there anybody amongst our 700+ members who teaches Tai Chi?
2. If there is, and he/she would be prepared to start a group, might anybody be interested in joining it?

For both points 1 and 2, please contact me at chrisslade1@sky.com or on 07906-433559.

Chris Slade



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



June Trivia and Quiz

Trivia

- On 10 June 1720 Mrs Clements invented a method of drying mustard seeds so that they could be made into a powder. Prior to her invention, mustard had been sold in balls.
- National Smile Power Day is celebrated annually on June 15. It is dedicated to spreading joy, boosting self-confidence, and fostering connections through the simple, contagious act of smiling. It is an open invitation to share a grin and brighten someone's day.

Quiz Questions

1. Which cartoon character has triplet nieces named April, May, and June?
2. What takes place near Pilton in the last week of June each year?
3. June is named after Juno, the Roman Goddess of what?
4. What were issued on 1 June 1946 for the first time?
5. On 11 June 1509, Henry VIII married Catherine of Aragon at Placentia Palace which is now known as where?
6. On 17 June 1579, Francis Drake proclaimed English sovereignty over New Albion which is now known as where?
7. In terms of the calendar, what is unique about June?
8. What occurred for the first time in the general election on 11 June 1987?
9. Which 1956 film adaptation of a Rodgers and Hammerstein stage musical of the same name featured the song "June Is Bustin' Out All Over"?
10. What country did the Philippine Islands declare their independence from on 12 June 1898?

Chris Slade



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Poetry Appreciation

We recently re-visited the work of Sylvia Plath, American poet and author. (1932 - 1963)

Plath is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry and is best known for *The Colossus and Other Poems* (1960), *Ariel* (1965) and *The Bell Jar* (1965), which is a semi-autobiographical novel published one month before her suicide aged 30 in 1963. On this occasion we explored the poem, *You're*.

Plath was born in Boston, Massachusetts. In October 1932 she graduated from Smith College, Mass and Cambridge University, where she was a Fulbright Scholar. She married a fellow poet Ted Hughes in London in 1956. The marriage produced 2 children before separating in 1962. Plath suffered a lifelong battle with severe depression, often characterised as a bipolar illness, leading to multiple traumatic treatments.

You're, was included in a second volume of poems titled *Ariel*, which was published by Faber & Faber in 1965 two years after her death. Ted Hughes made substantial changes to the manuscript she left on her desk on the night of her death. The publication precipitated Plath's rise to fame. The poems in *Ariel* are a departure from her earlier work into a more personal area of poetry and Robert Lowell's poetry may have played a part in this shift. In an interview before her death she cited Lowell's 1959 book, *Life Studies*, as a significant influence.

The *Collected Poems* were published in 1981 and included previously unpublished works. For this collection Plath was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1982, making her the fourth person to receive this honour posthumously.

Our second choice was *Revolution of Permanence*, by Adrienne Rich. (1929 - 2012)

This poem encompassed 40 years of Rich's life. The phrase 'revolution of permanence' was coined by Karl Marx, referring to his concept that the creation of a just society does not end with the uprooting of the old order, but must continue to the new, so that you can begin to feel this presence of the future in the present.

Adrienne Rich was born in May 1929 in Baltimore, Maryland and died aged 82 in Santa Cruz, California in 2012. She was an American poet and non-fiction writer. She received many awards for her works, one of note is *Diving into the Wreck*.



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Rich's early poetic influences came from her father - not only to read poetry, but to write poetry. From her father's library she read Ibsen, Blake, Keats, Dante, Rossetti and Tennyson. After graduating from High School she earned a diploma at Radcliffe College, Harvard University. Following graduation Rich received a Guggenheim Fellowship to study at Oxford, after which she visited Florence and did not return to Oxford, but stayed in Italy exploring life and the arts for some time.

Revolution in Permanence (1953 - 1993) is a reflective, politically charged poem which spans four decades of Rich's life and work, featuring continuous struggles, failure of capitalist structures and as Marx quoted 'change is unending, it's a daily process rather than a single event.' In the poem Ethel Rosenberg is a secular vision, but she was, of course, a real woman, who was electrocuted in 1953 along with her husband Julius. They were charged with conspiracy to commit espionage; accused of selling the secret of the atomic bomb to agents of the Soviet Union. After Rosenberg's conviction, 23 motions and appeals for a new trial, reduction of sentence and clemency were made but all appeals were denied.

In 1953, Adrienne Rich married Alfred Conrad, an economics professor at Harvard whom she met as an undergraduate. They settled in Cambridge, Mass and had 3 sons in 1955, 1957 and 1959. In 1955 she published her second volume of poetry and the third collection in 1963. She has, in fact, published more than 15 volumes of poetry and 4 prose works.

In 1976 she began a same-sex partnership with a Jamaican born novelist, Michelle Cliff which lasted until her death in 2012.

Our Guest Poem was *Ser Poeta*, written by Florbela Espanca, a Portuguese poet.

We meet again at the end of May.

Michelle Blythe



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026

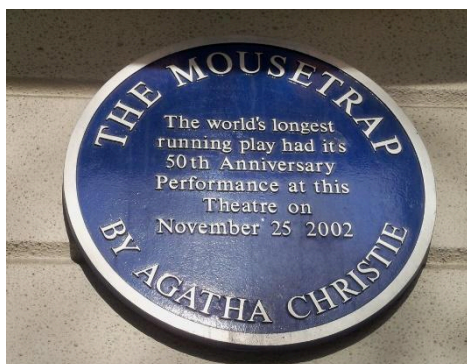


Play Reading 2

We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month between 9.45 and 12.15 in members' homes. Refreshments are provided for a small contribution.

We choose a play to read based on suggestions by the members. Each member is responsible for sourcing the play themselves. We have fun simply reading the play through - no acting skills required!

A longer play may be read over two meetings with an opportunity to chat about the nuances of the play e.g. how it was received initially, how relevant it currently is etc.



At our meeting in February, we read Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*. It was slightly complicated by group members reading from different versions but the changes to language used made it all the more interesting.

For anyone who hasn't read or seen *The Mousetrap*, suffice it to say that it wasn't the butler whodunnit!

At our March meeting, we read *Blood Brothers* by Willy Russell. It was a story of poverty forcing a mother to give up one of her twins, a story of the 'haves and have-nots', a story of nature v nurture. We found it a really good read but mostly, it being a musical, we weren't required to sing!! Unless you wanted to, that is.



Come and join us for a fun couple of hours. Contact the Group Leaders through the website if you are interested in joining us or would like to know more.

Lesley and Liz



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Older People's Fair



asked for them!)

Upminster u3a was invited by Julia Lopez, local MP, to take part in a morning event being held at the Queen's Theatre on 5 May. The event was taking place to inform local residents of what is available to them.

We arrived in time to set up for a 9.30 start, armed with leaflets about the National u3a, our own banner bearing our name and u3a logo – Learn, Laugh and Live – and information sheets setting out the various groups available to members. (We even had a few application forms should we be

Surprisingly, our first 'customers' were some of the other stall holders, representing organisations ranging from lunch clubs to carers' groups. We learnt that carers often welcome the opportunity to use respite time to do something for themselves, something which our u3a can, obviously, offer.



Members of the local community came to visit us in a regular stream. Some hadn't heard about us or the u3a movement at all and it was good for us to be able to provide information about both, being strong supporters ourselves.

We felt that the morning was well worthwhile and we hope that others will have been made to feel that we are friendly and welcoming, and maybe even come to join us.

Lesley and Liz



Photography Group

Last month, despite the cool weather and potential rain, our photo group visited Greenwich; our aim was to capture wide-shot images for our monthly theme.

We started by photographing the Old Royal Naval College and the former Greenwich Power Station from across the river. The clouds and diffused light were perfect for black and white photography, giving the river views a moody atmosphere.

After exiting the Greenwich foot tunnel, three of our group walked to the viewpoint in Greenwich Park. From here we looked across the Thames towards the City of London and the Isle of Dogs. The towers rose above the rainy haze, giving the familiar landmarks a ghostly appearance.

Our walk concluded at 'Ye Olde Rose and Crown', an historic pub dating back to the reign of Queen Elizabeth 1, although it was rebuilt in 1888. Its cast iron fireplaces, wood-panelled bar and hearty food, provided a warm refuge as the rain began to fall. We stayed for lunch and drinks, chatting happily, grateful for the shelter.

It was another memorable outing, showing that even the greyest days have their own charm.



Peter Knight



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Short Walk – Hornchurch Country Park

This walk is another through the park. It is varied and ranges from woodland through to open grass. There is an area of wetland plus some cattle. The park was created from a landfill site in 1980.

Starting off from near the Discovery Centre, we ambled along mainly open grassland to the COVID-19 memorial. This was created in memory of 'all those we have lost and all that we have endured during the COVID-19 Pandemic'. The way back to the Centre was mainly through wooded areas and was via the fishing lake and some of the Hornchurch History Trail.





Russ Barnett

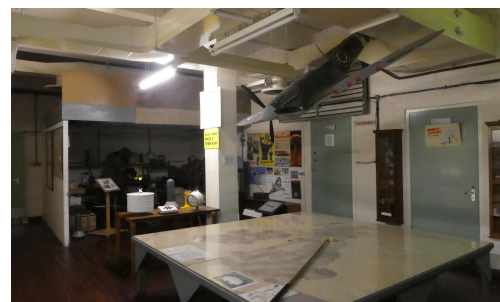
Places of Interest

Secret Nuclear Bunker

The Secret Nuclear Bunker at Kelvedon Hatch is secret indeed. There is a clear sign on the main road which I have driven past for the last 30 years and finally I decided I had to see it. When turning off the main road there is a long winding farm track that leads to a car park, which seems to belong to an adventure playground with zip lines, axe throwing and other adventurous activities. However, at the end of the car park, a steep and narrow path leads through some woods to what looks like the yard of an impoverished smallholding with a couple of machine sheds and, on the side, an unprepossessing bungalow with steps up to a veranda. This was it!

There was no ticket office or gift shop to greet us, just an invitation to come inside, grab an audio tour handset and listen to instructions. The instructions led us down a steep flight of steps to a long corridor and, eventually to the bunker, which is 100 feet underground and encased in 10 feet thick concrete. There was an amazing warren of rooms ranging from offices, storerooms, communications rooms, a hospital, and living accommodation and also fans to draw in clean air, power sources, and a secure water supply. It was built in the 1950s as a site from where the RAF could respond to a nuclear war. Even more amazing were the little films that had apparently been shown to our parents on how to prepare for a nuclear attack.

If you have not been, I can highly recommend it. It is one of the most interesting modern history sites you are ever likely to see.



Bentley Priory

The original Bentley Priory in Stanmore has long vanished into the undergrowth, but the stately home of the same name, which was built on the top of the hill above the site of the original priory, is very much present, albeit in the middle of an up-market housing estate, with its upper floors converted to luxury apartments.



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



As a place to visit, it has two attractions. Firstly, the building itself, which was constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries with a significant input from Sir John Soane. It was at one time the final residence of Queen Adelaide, widow of King William IV and beloved aunt of Queen Victoria, who died in the house. She is remembered in one of the rooms of the museum, which occupies two floors of the house. Secondly, and the most prominent reason for people to visit, is that it was the headquarters of RAF Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain, in fact it is said that it was from here that the Battle was won.

There is a lot of RAF memorabilia, including Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding's office with an interesting video about his life, plus the re-created Operations Room with its maps, including a clever illustration of how, in those pre-computer days, the information on friendly and enemy aircraft movements was processed. Two actual Spitfires stand on the lawn in front of the main entrance.

An excellent café, with home-made cakes and a good selection of freshly-made light lunches, has an open terrace for enjoying a lovely Italianate garden, weather permitting. This garden is all that remains of the once extensive grounds still in the ownership of the charity that now operates the museum, but there are still large expanses of parkland surrounding the house which are preserved for the enjoyment of its new wealthy neighbours.



Pamela Freer



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Coach Trip

On 01 May our coach trip took us to Brighton, specifically to visit Preston Manor and Gardens. This fabulous manor house is presented as it would have been in 1912 when its then owner, heiress Ellen Thomas-Stanford, was preparing for a special party. The outside of the house is nothing special, but inside it is grand, although of a scale that one could imagine living in. There is an audio tour that visitors can follow on their phones, however this is not necessary as the key features are well described in the rooms and much is self-explanatory. The spaces that are open to visitors include quite a few of the 'below-stairs' rooms, which are just as fascinating as the family's own spaces. I can thoroughly recommend a visit to the house to any members who find themselves in Brighton.

However, the house is not the only attraction. There are also interesting grounds to be viewed, including a walled garden plus access through the garden to St Peter's Church, Preston Park, the oldest building in Brighton, dating back to around 1250. It has a number of medieval wall paintings which should not be missed if you are visiting Preston Manor.



We began our visit with tea and coffee (there should have been biscuits too but the staff forgot them) and that was rather chaotic. They had clearly not had to deal with so many people before. As we were too many to fit in the lovely tea room, we were shunted into two rooms in what had formerly been the staff quarters in the basement and very slowly provided with our chosen beverages poured from pots more suited to 2 or 4 people than the 50 people in our group.



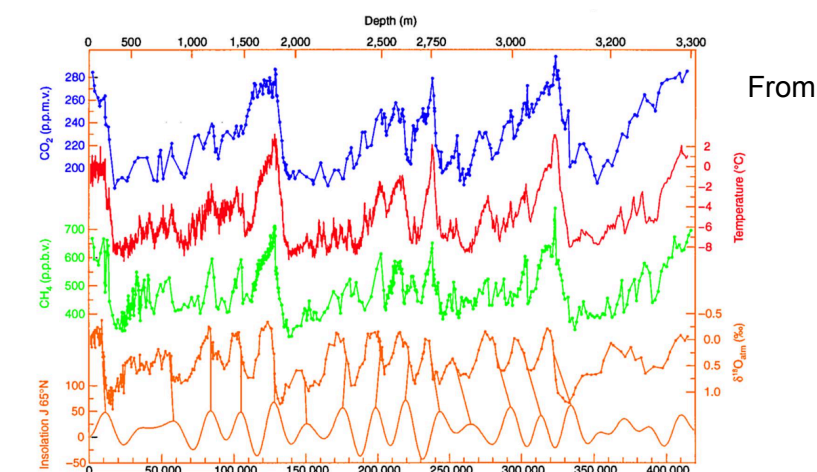
After the visit to Preston Manor we had free time in Brighton to have lunch and do whatever we wanted. I think everyone enjoyed the day. Thanks to Lesley for organising it.

STEMM

For the third time, Prof Alan Aylward led the STEMM group's learning with a fascinating and thought-provoking talk about the "Milankovitch cycles" - a long perspective on climate change (and weather is not climate!).

To demonstrate the long perspective he showed graphs (Figure 1) of the Greenland Glacial period (ice cores from Greenland for 8-10 thousand years). These variations were supportive of current climate patterns, although the cold winters of the 1960s weren't obvious from the graph. The Vostok period covering 100,000-420,000 years was derived from earth cores, and the final graph covered 5 million years (from ocean cores) when the climate was warmer and noisier than now. The historical patterns were worked out from the isotopes in the various cores. The bottom line is that climate change is not new.

Figure 1: 420,000 years of ice core data from Vostok, Antarctica research station with more recent times on the left.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milankovitch_cycles#/media/File:Vostok_420ky_4curves_insolation.jpg

Many 19th century scientists had been considering the question of climatic changes, but Milankovitch's deeper analysis, suggesting a link between orbital motion and climate, was not accepted everywhere, particularly not by meteorologists. However, his work did correlate with Wegener's theory of continental drift in 1924, which used ocean cores.

There are 3 main factors affecting the orbital motion of the Earth: **eccentricity** (the variations in the shape of the orbit from elliptical to nearly circular, with a 25,800 year cycle); **obliquity** (axial tilt, with a cycle of approximately 41,000 years); and **precession** (how the axial rotation changes over a period of 100,000 years). Figure 2



These three factors impact temperatures on earth, including solar radiation, terrestrial albedo, changing luminosity in the sun, and solar radiation peaks. Sunspots are particularly interesting: in 2000 there were 150 recorded, while between 1650-1700 (known as the Little Ice Age, or Maunder Minimum) there were none. The orbits of other planets in the solar system, meteors, and other cosmic events all contribute to climatic conditions on earth. The extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago is attributed to a meteor strike.

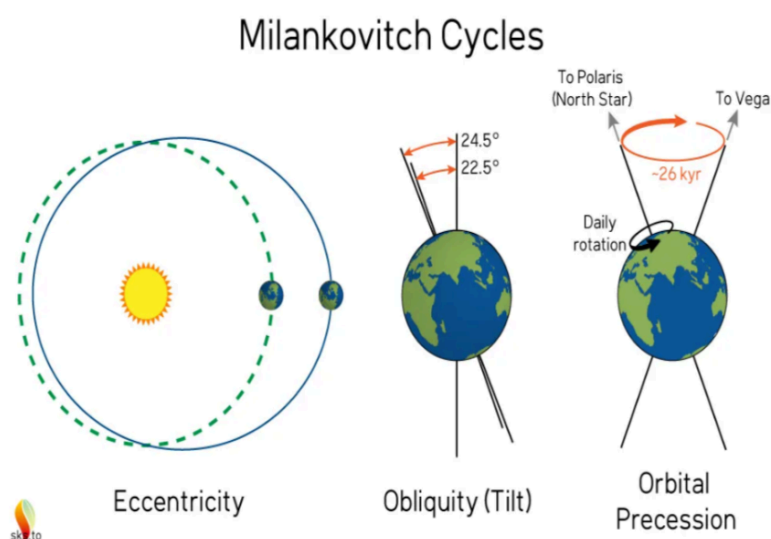
Current climate change culprits include water vapour, carbon dioxide and ozone which absorbs and traps solar and cosmic radiation causing the Greenhouse Effect (GHE), methane, nitrogen dioxide and CFCs. However, without the GHE, it has been calculated that the average terrestrial temperature would be -18°C . Thankfully, the resultant effect keeps us all at an annual average of $+15^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Within all the systems, the feedback loops have complex and interesting effects. For example, increased solar luminosity heats the ice caps, more heat is reflected and radiated; the ice would melt faster, increasing water vapour, and so increasing the GHE.

Everything changes - even the solar system's position in our galaxy is oscillating over time. There have always been ice ages followed by interglacial periods. As one member commented: he didn't even touch on the effects of the industrial revolution on our climate.

STEMMers wish to thank Professor Aylward for another wonderful and stimulating talk.

Figure 2: Factors affecting the orbital motion of the earth.



From <https://geologyscience.com/geology-branches/historical-geology/milankovitch-cycles/>



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Courtney Moita de Deus and Lyn Haynes

Breakfast Club



Our breakfast club has settled on a regular selection of venues to visit based on our desire for a wide selection of good quality food and being able to reserve for our rather large group of up to fifteen people.

In Upminster we visit Sal's, Alaia's, The Station Pantry and Miro. In Hornchurch we have also visited Marley's. In the summer we also go to the Lakeview Palace Cafe in Harrow Lodge Park and The Ledger Building Wetherspoon in Canary Wharf.

There are plenty of other good cafes in Upminster and Hornchurch providing good quality breakfasts that are not large enough to accommodate our group.

I will write about any new venues that we visit in future, as well as submitting pictures from time to time that may entice you to visit. Above are the pancakes with a fruit option from Alaia's.

Brian Makepeace Membership

At the end of our financial year in March we had 714 current members. Since then we have welcomed 23 new members and one former member who re-joined. Some members have told us they won't be renewing and 57 members have allowed their memberships to lapse. This is quite usual at the year-end throughout the u3a movement as people move or become too frail to continue with our activities or simply forget to renew. However, for now, our current paid-up membership is standing at 671.

The new members we warmly welcome are: Julia Boyce, Derek Robinson, Kim Wright, John Waller, Pamela Robinson, Dorothy and Colin Evans, Margaret Murray, Sharon Flack, Peter Siddle, Kathleen Donald, Peter Rees, Christine Lewis, Mary Suckling, Susan McGarry, Janet Macnamara, Helen Jarvis, Ann Hunwick, Julie Dixon, Sheila Endean, Sandra Cox and Sharon Cooper plus 1 member who does not want their name disclosed.

Members who have not renewed will not be receiving this newsletter or any other u3a communications, so if you have a friend who is a member, please check with them that they have renewed if they want to continue their membership. Late renewals will cost £17.00 – the same fee as new membership.

Pamela Freer



Art History/Appreciation

This year's Spring exhibition at 2 Temple Place continues the mission of the current owner, the Bulldog Trust Charity, to provide a London showcase for art works from publicly owned collections around the UK. It is also a focal point for their 2026 cultural and community programme to engage with mental health issues.

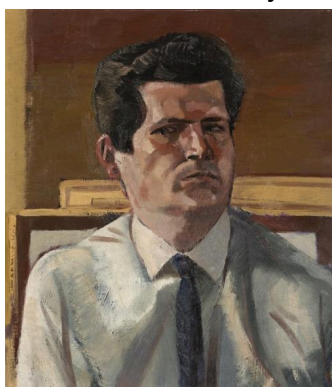
The exhibition, 'The Weight of Being: Vulnerability, Resilience and Mental Health', brings together a diverse selection of works by 20th century and contemporary artists to explore some of the ways in which mental health shapes artistic expression.



Depression by Paula Rego



Commuters 2014 by Ellie Preston



Self Portrait 1966
John Wilson McCracken (1936-1982)



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

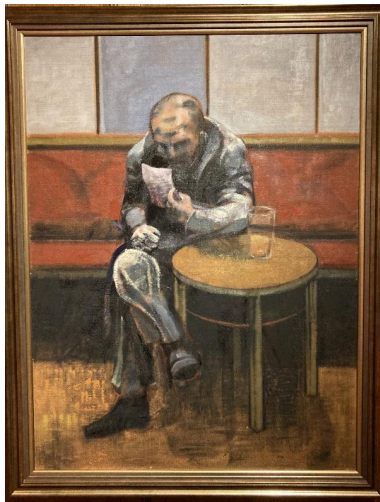
June 2026



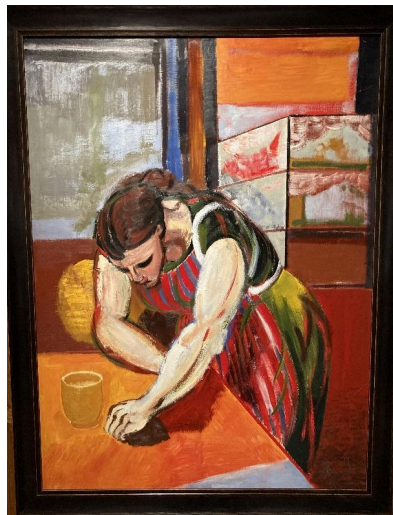
Some of those artists featured grapple with personal, clinically diagnosed, mental health issues, whilst others are the response to the pressures of everyday life or collective social anxieties such as social, political or global events.

Paintings by the artist John Wilson McCracken are woven throughout the exhibition as a connecting thread. In 1956 he gained a place at the prestigious Slade School of Art. Seen to have 'very considerable talent', he was soon on track to have a successful career, everything seemed possible. At the end of his second year, however, he suffered a severe breakdown. Following treatment and a period of hospitalisation, he was denied any opportunity to return to the Slade. Supported by his family, he went home to Hartlepool where he became actively involved in the artistic scene. He taught at the West Hartlepool School of Art and became a curator at the Grey Art Gallery and Museum, involving himself in many community programmes. At the same time, he was producing works reflecting 'profound sensitivity to the emotional and social pressures of his time'. His works are displayed in many galleries across Northeast England and beyond.

"In my figures and heads, I have tried to express the more intense and emotional aspects of existence". John Wilson McCracken



Man in a Pub, 1970s



Woman Wiping a Table, 1982

The exhibition is a timely reflection on the relationship between art, mental health and the strength found in shared experiences.

"... it's great to have the opportunity to visit exhibitions that I'd never have considered and to come away with such a lot to think about and to have one's view of the world challenged in some way ..." Moira



Chris Mecham

PAPERCRAFTING CLASS

Please see examples of the latest work produced by the papercrafting class below.

We run two groups, the first of which is held on the first Monday of the month, whilst the second is held on the second Monday monthly.

We aim to teach different techniques each month, producing two cards that our members are able to take home.

We meet at Cranham Community Centre.

The meeting times are 2.30 - 4.30.

For more information please contact Sheila Burton on: 07949307336

or Shirley Smithson on: 07793056106



Sheila Burton



Upminster u3a Newsletter

"Learn, Laugh, Live"

June 2026



Quiz Answers

1. Daisy Duck.
2. The Glastonbury Festival
3. Marriage, women, and childbirth.
4. Television licences. They cost £2.
5. The Queen's House at Greenwich.
6. California.
7. In both common and leap years, no other month starts on the same day of the month as June.
8. Black candidates were elected to the House of Commons.
9. Carousel.
10. Spain

Chris Slade