u3a Upminster

Newsletter, October 2026

"learn, Laugh, Live"

UPMINSTER

We meet at

The New Windmill Hall, Upminster, RM14 2QH

on the third Tuesday of each month

Date of next meeting:

1:30pm, Tuesday 20th October

Doors open at 1pm, refreshments available at the interval (bring your own mug)

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Useful Links

London Region Events

https://lru3a.u3asite.uk/events/

Upminster u3a website

https://upminster.u3asite.uk/

Upminster u3a Committee Contact

https://upminster.u3asite.uk/contact/

For future news, articles, and feedback, please email

maupminstereditors@gmail.com

Deadline for submission is

Friday 30th October

Social Event

Uu3a annual Christmas Party

Tuesday 15 December 2026

See page 5 for details

View from the Chair

Our u3a celebrates its 10th birthday on 16 October! We will mark the occasion at our monthly meeting on 20 October, with a specially made celebration cake served during the break. As usual, our tea ladies will be on hand to serve tea and coffee - please remember to bring your own cup. Everyone attending can enjoy a slice of cake with alternatives for some special dietary requirements also available on the day.

The Upminster u3a journey started with an advert for a meeting which was to be held at Upminster Methodist Church Hall. Anyone who was interested in joining the new branch, or just wanted to find out more, was invited to attend. It's safe to say the organisers were very surprised at the level of interest. The hall was very quickly filled, with the doors being closed as even the standing room was jam packed. Helpers stood outside taking the details of those who arrived later.

Inside, (with guidance from a representative from the u3a National office) potential members learnt what was needed to form a new u3a. An additional meeting was held for those who couldn't get into the hall, followed by subsequent smaller meetings from which the first committee was formed. An attendee of the first full meeting remembers the speaker's subject was 'A Life in Womans' Underwear'. We needed to find a suitable meeting place, somewhere that would hold such large gatherings at our monthly meetings, the Windmill Hall was the only large venue available locally, and only on Tuesday afternoons. There was a yoga class that followed our meeting so we had to leave promptly. The Joining fee, at that time, was £15 until April 2017 and a very positive atmosphere was created by the new members who crowded into The Windmill Hall, and so Upminster u3a was up and running.

Now onwards and upwards!

Malcolm Henderson-Begg

Editorial

Hello to you all.

A quick reminder that this newsletter is your window to your fellow Uu3a members. We will be happy to advertise any vacancies within the many group activities available. Any articles of special interest that you would like to submit will also be added to our future publications.

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

Mary & Alison

Come Join Us

Groups Update

We are officially launching one new group this month and exploring plans for a second. You can find details on both groups, and how to get involved, below.
If you have an idea for a new group, please do get in touch. In the meantime, you can find full details of all our current groups, and how to contact the Group Leaders, on our website https://upminster.u3asite.uk/groups/ Alternatively, you can email me if you have any questions about our groups.

Denise Hill
Groups Coordinator
dhdh3210@gmail.com

New Group - Board Games

I am pleased to let you know that the Board Games group is now officially active and will be holding its first meeting this month. There are still spaces for some more members so, if you would like to join in the fun, please contact Ann, the Group Leader, via the website https://upminster.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/board-games/ Alternatively, if you would like me to pass on your contact details to Ann, please email me.

The group meets on the 2nd and 3rd Monday of the month in the café at Thurrock Garden Centre 10:30 am - 12:00 noon. There will be a wide selection of board games available. The Garden Centre is easy to get to (370 bus route) and there's a large car park. There is no charge for using the venue, but we would ask that you purchase a drink or snack to ensure we remain welcome guests.

Proposed new group - Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It's all over the news, but what is AI all about? Would you like to know more, but feel unsure of where to start? We are looking to set up a brand new group to explore the world of AI together. This group is open to absolute beginners, as well as anyone who has already started exploring the technology. The goal is to discover how AI can help you in your everyday life, having fun along the way.

AI can be incredibly useful for many tasks such as generating/editing photos; writing letters, articles, songs and creative pieces, researching recipes, holidays and products to buy. The day/time/venue for the group have not been decided yet; a regular slot will be chosen to suit the majority of those who wish to join. If you would be interested in joining this new group, please contact me.

In the meantime, if you want to find out more about AI, the u3a is running a free online course in November – there are limited spaces, so you need to book a place via the *u3a online learning events*, then take the option: ***Preparing for an AI World.*** *This is an online course of four 2 hour sessions about getting started with AI. Monday November 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd at 14:00. Book via the website* (scroll down the page until you see the course).

Bananagrams



Clear your afternoon, dust off your vocabulary and prepare to get seriously competitive about some very small tiles!

Our next **Bananagrams afternoon is Friday 23rd October, from 2pm–4pm**, in the **Windmill Pub's back room**.

Come along early if you fancy lunch and a bit of a chat before the wordplay begins. Then it's time to scramble, spell, rearrange and occasionally insist that *your* word definitely exists!

Whether you're a seasoned tile-slinger or have never played before, everyone is welcome. The rules are easy, the atmosphere is relaxed and there's absolutely no need to be a spelling genius. Dictionaries and phones are officially sanctioned survival equipment!

It's completely free to play, and there's free parking too. We simply ask that everyone buys a drink, helping to ensure the pub continues to graciously host our monthly invasion of tiny lettered tiles. And if you have your own Bananagrams set, please bring it along.

New players and beginners are especially welcome**.** Come for the fun, stay for the questionable vocabulary!

We look forward to seeing you for another entertaining afternoon of words (verbal and tiles) and more laughter.

Pauline 07962213793

Coffee Mornings

The next Chat Ups 😆 are on Tues Oct 6th/Tues Oct 20th/ Tues Nov 3rd at Roomes Cafe usual time 11am , hope to see you there .

Angela ☕

Dog Walking

The dog walking group (which includes those who'd like to come without dogs!) have had a lovely few walks in Thames Chase Forest, followed by a stop off at the Coffee Shop. It is a very friendly group. The dogs love it and we love it!

The next walk will be at Thames Chase Forest at 11am, meeting outside the coffee shop, on Wednesday 7th October.

Catherine

Future Guest Speakers at Monthly Meeting, 2026

20th October	1. **Howard Slater,** Lecturer for over 30 years, describes the life of *Glen Miller* - Swing into the story of the big band leader whose mysterious disappearance adds intrigue to his musical legend. 2. **A representative from Pinney Talfourd** talking on *probate/contest probate*.
17th November	1. **Paul Hounsell**, professional speaker, *Truth Behind Nursery Rhymes*. 2. **TBC**
15th December	**Annual Christmas Party** - No speakers

Information

Social Event

Advance notice of the Uu3a annual Christmas Party which will take place on **Tuesday 15 December 2026** in place of the regular monthly meeting.

In addition to food, wine, soft drinks, and a free raffle, we will be welcoming back Paul Jerrom to entertain us.

Tickets will be on sale at the November monthly meeting and will be just £12.00. As usual, it will be one ticket per person plus one for somebody who is unable to get to the meeting. Tickets are available to Uu3a members only.

Please make sure that you read the November Newsletter for full details.

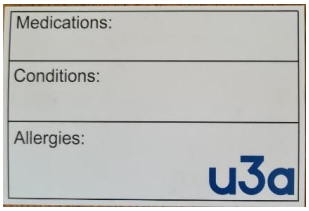
Your Social Committee

Membership and ICE cards

Our current membership rose by another 7 in September, including 5 new members. Membership now stands at 698. We welcome Sarah Richards, Chris White, Stephen Wicks and Minni Gleeson.



All members will, at some point, have been issued with an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card. The card is the same size as a bank card/travel pass, so easy to store. We would ask that you complete this card and keep it with you when you attend any group activities, trips etc so that Group Leaders and trip organisers know what your medical requirements may be and whom to contact should the need arise.



If you would like a new card for any reason, they will be available for you to collect at the monthly meeting.

Liz Short

Quiz

1. Who was the U.S. president at the beginning of the 1950s?
A. Dwight D. Eisenhower C. John F. Kennedy
B. Harry Truman D. Franklin D. Roosevelt

2. Snoopy, Charlie Brown, and Lucy van Pelt are characters from which 1950s cartoon strip?
A. Garfield C. Little Orphan Annie
B. Peanuts D. Blondie

3. Which iconic theme park opened in California in 1955?
A. Six Flags C. Knott's Berry Farm
B. Disneyland D. Universal Studios

4. Who triggered the Montgomery Bus Boycott by refusing to give up her seat?
A. Harriet Tubman C. Coretta Scott King
B. Rosa Parks D. Sojourner Truth

5. Which 1950s music icon released songs including 'Jailhouse Rock' and 'Hound Dog'?
A. Chuck Berry C. Elvis Presley
B. Little Richard D. Buddy Holly

6. Which vaccine was developed in the early 1950s by Jonas Salk?
A. Measles C. Smallpox
B. Polio D. Tuberculosis

7. Which war ended in 1953 with an armistice agreement?
A. World War II C. Vietnam War
B. Korean War D. Cold War

8. Which Disney movie featuring a flying boy was released in 1953?
A. Cinderella C. Alice in Wonderland
B. Peter Pan D. Sleeping Beauty

9. Which fast-food chain opened its first restaurant in 1955 in Illinois?
A. Burger King C. Wendy's
B. McDonald's D. KFC

10. Which first artificial satellite was launched by the USSR in 1957?
A. Sputnik 1 C. Vanguard 1
B. Explorer 1 D. Luna 1

Cast your mind back

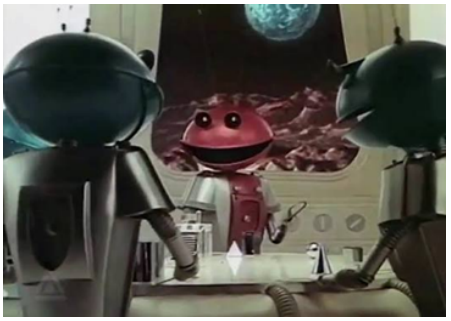


1/ Name the album?

2/ Name the artists?



3/ Who is this?



4/ What did these little guys famously advertise?

Answers on the final page of the newsletter.....

Featured Articles

Harold Court Woods Short Walk

Our walk started and finished in Tyler's Common car park, opposite Harold Court Woods. The woods were opened in 2002.

We made our way along mainly gravel paths, although Harold Court itself was set on a narrow road that also had other dwellings all rather isolated. Near the end of the walk, we took a diversion along a grassy bridleway – no horses encountered but there were plenty of droppings to be found. We had to take care walking as the ground had impressions of their hooves along with some wide cracks in the dry bridleway.





Harold Court was built in Italianate style of white stock bricks in about 1870 as a gentleman's house for William Preston. Since then it has had many lives, ending most recently as flats. In the intervening period, it has had many uses – children's home, 'lunatic asylum annex', TB sanatorium, local hospital and an education college. Harold Court was a replacement for the former Good House Farm that stood on 87 acres and was owned by William Roper. Ropers Lane in Warley was probably named after him.
At the end of the walk, most of us went along to the nearby Upminster Garden Centre for refreshments.



Russ Barnett

Photography Group

Capturing Views from the River: Barking Riverside to Westminster

Our latest photo trip took us along the historic River Thames for this month's theme: 'Views from the River'. We started our journey at the newly developed Barking Riverside, taking the Thames Clipper and heading toward the city centre.
The route offered a different perspective of life along the river, with plenty of architectural and natural variety, marking the changing environment of the river shoreline over the years.



Following OR Chasing us?
By: Ornella



Little & Large
By: David F



Thames Barrier
By: Mike C

We travelled through the industrial design of the Thames Barrier,



Greenwich from the River
By: Lorna

passing by the maritime history of Greenwich, the towering modern Canary Wharf skyline, and the iconic gothic details of Tower Bridge. We finished our trip in Westminster, where we competed with the many tourists trying to capture views of the Houses of Parliament and the newly restored Elizabeth Tower reflecting on the water.
Afterwards, we adjourned to The Lion and the Unicorn pub in Waterloo to enjoy a well-deserved drink and lunch, where we chatted amongst ourselves on the day's event and everything else we u3aers talk about. So a good day was had by all.



Andy's Office
By: Barry

Peter Knight

Poetry Appreciation

After our summer break in August we met in September to celebrate nine years as a Group!

To ease us back into the scheme of things we read and discussed Robert Louis Stevenson's 'To Any Reader' and 'A Child of Air'. We examined his work in detail long ago, together with his travels. Born in Edinburgh in 1850, he was an only child and yet Robert did not follow the family profession of engineering and designing of lighthouses. He had an active and happy childhood in spite of much illness caused by a weakness that dogged most of his life. He died in 1894 at the age of 44. I am sure most of us are familiar with his final version of poems in 'A Child's Garden of Verse', which he started writing in Braemar in 1881. Readers today may know little of the gas lamps and the swaying hills of hay, for they belong to what can only be described as a magical country that does lie outside our prison of modernity. I would encourage anyone to read his wonderful work and this would be an enjoyable introduction to the fascinating and enjoyable world of poetry and prose.

Our main discussion was of Sylvia Plath and Robert Lowell's work; of how Lowell's confessional style influenced Plath, especially in 'Ariel' and 'The Colossus', where there was a more controlled style. In 'Ariel' we discussed the rapid shift in identity, psychological intensity and autobiographical material. These reflect the direction that Lowell helped establish in American poetry.

Plath met Lowell in 1959 at a Boston University Seminar after the poem 'Life Studies' appeared. Lowell's book is frequently regarded as a major catalyst for the confessional poetry movement and Plath was influenced by Lowell's willingness to make private experience poetic material, but she did not simply initiate his style. Her later work becomes much less compressed metaphorically violent, rhythmically unpredictable and mystic. In her poem 'The Colossus' she uses the image of a ruined colossal statue to explore a daughter's grief and futile attempts to reconstruct her deceased father's presence, symbolising loss, mourning and unresolved paternal influence. (Plath's father died when Plath was 8 years old).

Our Guest poems this month were 'Common Form' by Rudyard Kipling and 'July 1st 1916' by Aimee Byng Scott.

Michelle Blythe

STEMM

For our September meeting we were visited by John Attiwell, who is the Community Ranger for Essex Wildlife Trust. John's topic was the 'BUDS in the Blackwater Estuary Project.' Beneficial Use of Dredged Sediment to give it the full monty. Traditionally, the dredged material collected by the ships that dredge the deep water channels into Harwich and Felixstowe are simply taken out to deeper waters and released, where they do no harm. However, this is changing and some of the shingle that comes up with the mud is being used to help fortify the Essex coast. The plan has begun! Already there are new shingle banks growing, where the River Blackwater (the Maldon river) meets the sea, along the Tollesbury and Mersea shores. These were begun by the Mersea Harbour Protection Trust in 2022. The aim of the new shingle banks, quite small at the moment, is to slow down the erosion caused by the waves, give extra protection from the highest tides and lessen the likelihood of flooding. John showed us some aerial photos of the area and we could see that the new shingle was placed neatly, exactly in the way of the incoming tide, only metres away from the original shore. If you are ever in the Tollesbury or Mersea area don't look seaward expecting to see anything untoward, the shoreline looks as good as it ever did.

It didn't take John his full hour to tell us about shingle. Essex Wildlife Trust and the RSPB are both involved in the BUDS Project, because both outfits are driven by a love of wildlife, in this case particularly birds.

John used some of his time to give us a very interesting and well illustrated insight into the birds of the shoreline. Of particular interest are the beautiful Terns. These birds actually nest on shingle beaches and some nests are inundated by high tides, destroying both nest and eggs. The Terns are not born with a knowledge of tides and a high Spring Tide can cause carnage. It is such a shame! New shingle banks mean more nest sites, but the Terns, particularly Little Terns, need encouragement.

We all smiled when John whipped out a model of a Little Tern and assured us that the RSPB has been using such decoys for years. The decoys are placed on the shingle, passing Terns come down for a looksee and some will decide to stay and nest nearby. There was some light hearted discussion about whether a visiting Tern would recognise the motionless model as a phony. The jury is still out.

We had a very enjoyable morning with a real wildlife enthusiast. Our thanks to John and the Essex Wildlife Trust.

Iain Attiwell

Quiz answers:

Quiz:

1. (B) Harry Truman
2. (B) Peanuts
3. (B) Disneyland
4. (B) Rosa Parks
5. (C) Elvis Presley
6. (B) Polio
7. (B) Korean War
8. (B) Peter Pan
9. (B) McDonald's
10. (A) Sputnik 1

Cast your mind back:

1/ The Dark Side of the Moon
2/ Pink Floyd
3/ Andy Pandy
4/SMASH

A little trip down memory lane:-





