

Islington U3A

Newsletter Summer 2018



Find out about our exciting future programme and all our wonderful activities over the last six months

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Monthly Meetings



Thursday 26 July

The British Library

Speaker: Roly Keating, Chief Executive of the British Library

Recent developments at the British Library include the historic move to large-scale digital collecting; the Library's successful and popular 800th anniversary commemorations of Magna Carta; the launch of the Knowledge Quarter, an innovative partnership of over 70 knowledge-based organisations near the Library's London HQ; and the launch in 2015 of Living Knowledge, which sets out the vision and strategy for the Library's growth and development towards its fiftieth anniversary in 2023.



Thursday 27 September

Myddelton's water: a history of the New River

Speaker: journalist and former BBC news broadcaster Nick Higham

The New River — neither new nor a river — was an aqueduct completed in 1613 to bring fresh water from springs in Hertfordshire to the City of London. More than 400 years later it's still part of London's water supply. Today it ends at Stoke Newington but originally it terminated at New River Head next door to Sadlers Wells.



Thursday 25 October

Women Workers in the First World War

Speaker: Christine Coates, former Librarian of the Trades Union Congress and the London Metropolitan University

Christine will talk about women's employment and trade union organisation in the years leading up to the War, the move of women into new areas of work, especially in defence-related industries during the war years, and explore whether working class women improved their pay and conditions



Thursday 22 November

Changes in Greenhouse gases in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution and their impact on global temperatures

Speaker: Roger Hamilton former public sector lawyer

Roger will examine the implications of a warming planet, and what has to be done to control greenhouse gas emissions, including the development of the renewable energy sector. Roger will argue that the current energy revolution, which is both exciting and welcome, is not sufficient to solve the problem, and will consider what else has to be done.

If you missed a talk you particularly wanted to hear, you can find reports of all the monthly talks on the iU3A website – just go to the [News page](#) and there's a link to them after the report of the most recent one

Other dates for your diary

Tuesday 16 September - Outing to Bletchley Park



Once the top secret Headquarters and workplace of the World War Two Codebreakers Bletchley Park is now a fascinating heritage attraction.

We will take a step back in time to learn the stories and experience the extraordinary achievements of the men and women who worked there.

Friday 21 September - Clues Trail in Canary Wharf

Again we will be finding out about a fascinating part of London trying to solve the clues as our teams compete to win the prizes. You can make up a team with people you already know or join one with other members and make new friends. The Trail begins and ends in a pub so do join us for lunch beforehand and stay for drinks afterwards as part of this friendly and fun event.

Monday 1 October - Open Day & 5th Birthday Party



The Open Day is our annual event for members and potential new members to show case everything we do. You can bring the friends you've been encouraging to join, talk to coordinators about their groups' activities, and perhaps sign up to try something new. And there's plenty to chat about while enjoying the birthday cake.

Thursday 22 November - iU3A AGM before the monthly meeting talk

A very important but brief meeting when we elect our committee members and approve the membership fee for the next year. We need your vote to ensure we meet the requirements of the iU3A Constitution.

These events are open to all members.

You can find dates for the monthly coffee mornings and pub lunches on the [What's On Page](#) on the iU3A website

Special Events

Group Coordinators Meeting



Without our group coordinators iU3A wouldn't exist.

At least once a year, the Executive meets up with them to exchange ideas and to say a big thank you. At the recent meeting there was a lively interactive session as part of the Executive Committee's succession planning initiative 'It Depends on Us'. The topics explored included why they are a coordinator, what they like about it and what improvements iU3A can make. Their main reasons for leading their groups were their interest in the topic and they enjoyed doing it. They would like to see iU3A attract a more diverse membership.

These and their other comments will help the Executive Committee's forward planning.

The business part of the meeting focused on what iU3A needs to do to conform to the requirements of the recent data protection legislation and that how the Beacon membership system assists in doing so, and also how we can form new groups when there are waiting lists for existing groups.

Then it was time for drinks and nibbles and socialising.

Summer Party



On a lovely June evening over 100 members enjoyed the beauty of the Olden Garden as they quaffed the bubbly, ate the delicious canapes and engaged in lively conversation with fellow members at iU3A summer party.

The venue is a hidden gem, a peaceful haven in our busy city and provides a glorious backdrop of luscious greenery and floriferousness to our lovely party. A mix of longstanding members and recent joiners enjoyed a jolly and convivial evening. We were reluctant to go home and indeed we stayed well beyond the appointed end time.

Many thanks to Jill McKeown for arranging for us to use the garden, Lesley Delacourt for bringing the wine from France thus reducing the ticket price, to our genial bartender John Ford, to the volunteers on the day and especially to organisers Dee Austin, Sue Welsford and Isabel Dickson for making it such a delightful and memorable evening.

Clues Trail



On a lovely Sunday afternoon in June, around 20 members, divided into three teams, explored the byways and alleys of the City that many of us didn't know existed such as Leadenhall Market pictured here. Our powers of observation and ingenuity were stretched as we attempted to solve the clues set for us by Derek Harwood.

All the teams made it back to the pub within the time limit. While we waited for the scores, we had a refreshing drink, and some indulged in an apple crumble and custard or cream. The results were close and there was some good humoured questioning of the marking although we knew that Derek's decision was final. The 'Poached Egg' team won and were awarded their prizes.

It was very good fun, we learnt something more of the delights of the City and got to know our fellow members better. A big thank you to Derek and Isabel for organising it.

Book Sale



Around 50 members donated over 3000 books to the iU3A book sale. Over several days they were sorted into categories and put into 85 large vegetable boxes. On the day, the boxes were transported in a Street Van to the Walter Sickert Community. Within an hour, the boxes were unloaded and a dozen helpers placed them on three rows of tables with the books clearly displayed. We also set up an area with tables

and chairs for teas at the back of the hall. There were many lovely and interesting books and the display looked splendid.

More members soon arrived to browse and make their purchases. The prices were an enticing 50p a paperback and 3 for £1, £1 for a hardback and 3 for £2 and buyers could choose between their payment going to iU3A or to Islington Giving. The tea and cakes were very popular too and there was a real buzz in the room. Altogether, we took £300 of which £100 went Islington Giving. After the sale, the remaining books were loaded into the van and taken to the Oxfam book shop in Upper Street, where they were received with delight.

It was a great team effort in which around 20 members were involved. Many, many thanks to all of them.

iU3A Out And About

Outings

Open to all members, outings are new this year. As well as offering us interesting places to visit, they are an opportunity to meet members we don't come across in our groups. They will generally provide activities that are not already covered by existing groups.

Our three outings so far, each organised by a different iU3A member with support from Outings Coordinator David McPhail, have taken us to Eltham Palace, the Races at Kempton Park and Ham House and Sandycome Lodge in Twickenham. These photographs capture their friendly nature and fun.



Eltham Palace in April organised by Angela Treves

Kempton
Stone



Park races in May organised by Howard



Ham House and Sandycombe Lodge in
Twickenham in June organised by Cressida
Jupp

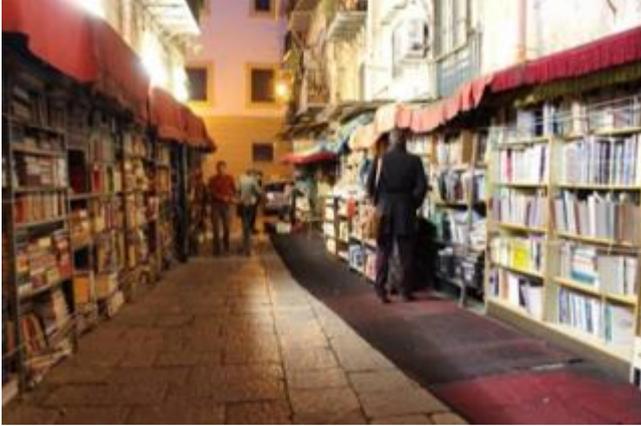
Future plans include the Bletchley Park outing in September and a trip to the Lille Christmas Market in December.

Please do get in touch if you have ideas for other interesting places to visit.

David McPhail, Outings Coordinator outingscoord.iu3a@gmail.com

The Advanced Italian Group in Palermo

Seven members of the Italian group went to Palermo for a week in March staying in a convent in the historic centre. We even spoke Italian, especially after copious glasses of wine.



In four narrow streets in a quiet central spot there is a library known as *Libreria itinerante* with books on shelves some 2 metres high. Pensioner Pietro Tramonte had already collected some 5000 books when decided to make literary culture available to all. The library now has some 50000 donated books, old, new, fiction and non-fiction, which can be bartered for books or a small donation.



At the Teatro dei Pupi the Cuticchio family carve wooden, almost life size rod puppets and show them in their puppet-sized theatre with church style pews. We saw the story of Orlando Furioso adapted from the poems of the sixteenth century Italian poet, Ariosto. Orlando and the knights of Charlemagne, clad in metal armour over red and black uniforms, defeated the white-robed Saracens. All this was played out to the accompaniment of a commentary, military music and deafening explosions

Near the distinctive cupolas of San Giovanni degli Eremiti we had a glimpse of the varied and complex history of Palermo, indeed of the whole of Sicily, taken over by Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans and others. All that remains of the now deconsecrated San Giovanni of 1132 are the cupolas of the mosque on which site it was built. The thirteenth century cloisters remain intact and are a focus point for the 19th century gardens.



During evening Mass the Norman Cathedral in Palermo was closed to visitors. It was in darkness, except for the side chapel with the exquisite altar of lapis lazuli, where the service was held. The lighting emphasized the intense deep blue of this semi-precious stone. It was breathtakingly beautiful and unforgettable.

Roberta Levenison, Coordinator

Advanced French Group 1 in Lille and Lens

In May three of us took the Eurostar and spent three days in Lille. After a journey of less than two hours we arrived in the centre of the charming old town with its lovely mixture of northern French and Flemish style buildings – so near home but such a complete contrast to our usual surroundings. From our little hotel near the Cathedral we could easily wander round the narrow streets, ogling the window displays of the bakers' shops and sampling a few of their products.



The cultural highlight of the trip was a visit to the Louvre at Lens, about half an hour train ride away in the heart of what used to be the centre of the coal mining district. It now boasts two rather forlorn UNESCO World Heritage slag heaps and not much else.

As part of the French government's decentralisation policy Lens was selected to be an outpost of the Louvre. The design competition was won by two young Japanese architects. They have created a series of low profile structures of translucent glass and shimmering aluminium facades, nesting close to the ground and surrounded by very sympathetic and naturalistic planting. The main exhibition gallery is light and airy and is organised in chronological order with exhibits from different countries and artists arranged near each other. The Egyptian, Greek and Roman section was particularly spectacular with several monumental statues including one from Thebes in pink granite depicting four gibbons.



The Musee des Beaux Arts in Lille was a complete contrast and we felt it would have benefitted from the 'less is more' style of Lens to show off the best of its collection. Pieter Breughel the Elder's painting of the Census at Bethlehem brought the revelation to two of us that his works

seen on Christmas cards are not just lovely winter scenes but represent biblical events.

Of course, being in France, food and wine played an important part in our visit including a special regional menu we savoured in a local bistro where a large map provided a much needed geography lesson about north-eastern France and how near Lille is to the Belgium border. Finally, we purchased plenty of goodies to take home and vowed to return to Lille again very soon.

Jenny Baster and Anne Weyman

News from groups

Art in London

Several group members have championed visits to galleries both inside and outside of London. In March, Maggie Butcher led a very successful event to Kettles Yard in Cambridge where we saw Jim Edes' eclectic personal collection. Kettle's Yard reopened after refurbishment in February this year. Formerly the home of HS (Jim) Ede and his wife Helen, it houses the Ede's personal collection of 20th century art including paintings by Ben and Winifred Nicolson, Alfred Wallis, David Jones and Joan Miro and sculptures by Gaudier-Breszka, Brancusi, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth in their original domestic setting. It is a very special and delightful place.

Nearer to home, earlier in the year we have had successful visits to see Jasper Johns work at the Royal Academy which inspired lots of members as new fans. Since April, we have visited Rodin and the art of Ancient Greece at the British Museum (thanks to Ann Russell) and the Picasso 1932 Exhibition at Tate Modern (thanks to Katriona Scott) and to the National Gallery for Monet and Architecture. Not all members either like or are able to join a group visit, so we have now added a regular conversation session in which members share their views on the latest exhibitions to our programme. They are a fun exchange of diverse opinions.

Ruth Gee artinlondon.iu3a@gmail.com

Cooperative Singing



We're well into the first term of the Co-operative Singing Group, and it's really living up to its name. Members have brought along copies of music they've sung and loved in the past, one member has provided a tape of accompanied warm-up exercises and another, who sings in a folk group, has taught us a folk song and improvised harmony. We have all sorts of things we are looking forward to trying in future weeks, but at the moment it's

summer, so we're singing 'Summer is ycumen in' which is a round, and 'Summertime' from Porgy and Bess, with its lovely harmonies. We also looked at 'Singing in the Rain' but we haven't quite had the usual summer in that way yet.

The way each meeting goes is that we generally start with some warm-up exercises, as vocal chords can get a bit rusty if we're not singing all the time; then we may do a round, such as 'Dona nobis pacem' or 'Summer is ycumen in', and a counter-melody song to practise holding a part, before moving on to a harmony piece. All this is interspersed with quite a bit of laughing too. Singing is always fun, and sometimes funny. Music that

members have asked to try includes Songs from the 20s and 30s, Gospel, Classical songs, Folk music, Simon and Garfunkel, Madrigals and a whole range of others. We haven't tried all these yet, of course, but hopefully, in time....

There are usually about 15 of us, but plenty of room for more and since we would like to sing more 4-part harmony in the future, I'm sure the three male members of our group would welcome a few more tenors or basses to add to the balance.

You don't need experience – just an enjoyment of singing. Reading music is helpful but not vital. Some members haven't sung for ages, some have never sung in a group, others sing in quite a few groups. Come along and join us. We'd love to welcome you at 10.30am on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at the Old Fire Station, Mayton Street.

Margaret Pattinson cosinging.iu3a@gmail.com

Classic Film

Islington U3A's Classic Film Group was one of the first interest groups set up when iU3A came into being some four years ago. Since June 2016 Rob Townsend has been its admirable coordinator, introducing an informative and discussion-based cinema event while keeping it accessible to members whose interest in and knowledge of cinema is diverse.

Rob has successfully engaged members with his eclectic choice of classic films, some of which were relatively unknown, but always interesting, be it in theme, cinematography, acting or music. Membership of the group has tripled in two years, and three sessions for each film are now held, with 20-25 members in attendance at each.

Rob has been an avid cinemagoer for over 60 years, having read about and studied film informally for much of that time. His professional life involved educating adults, so that Classic Film Group provided him with a splendid opportunity to combine both. His motivation, in his own words, has been "to share my great enthusiasm for a broad range of classic cinema and to challenge expectations in a friendly, inclusive environment".

Rob's Classic Film group coordination will be a hard act to follow. Members appreciate the tremendous amount of work he put into the role. In future members will share these tasks, take turns and find ways to spread the load that Rob carried singlehandedly.

Pru Lambert classicfilm.iu3a@gmail.com

Craft



I think we all agree that we live in a busy, crowded world and sometimes it is difficult to find a place of sanctuary from all the surrounding cacophony and hurly burly. Well, if you come to the monthly Tuesday Craft Group meetings in Canonbury, you will find an oasis of relaxation and peace. We are a group of ladies - Men! Where are you? Come and join us, we won't bite - applying our skills to various craft-y pursuits - knitting, crochet, tapestry, embroidery etc. There will be a pleasant buzz of conversation covering a wide range of subjects, sometimes with strong views, but always polite - I've heard groups like us referred to as "bitching and stitching" sessions - NOT the Islington Craft Group.

Sometimes we break out and leave the genteel confines of Canonbury to visit places of interest to craft-y people like us. In February we had a tour of The Clothworkers' Hall in Mincing Lane, and in April we visited The Drapers' Hall in Throgmorton Street. The history of Livery Companies is fascinating, and it was interesting to compare the two - the simple elegance of the Clothworkers' and the magnificent opulence of the Drapers' Hall - the Queen is a member, the only livery company to have that honour. They are one of the wealthiest of the livery companies and this is reflected in the splendid rooms and Silver Treasury.

In July we plan to visit Ditchling Arts and Crafts Museum and in the autumn the new Design Museum in Kensington. In between, we will revert to our peaceful Tuesday afternoons, enjoying each other's company and a chance to spend a couple of stress-free hours together with our creative crafts. If you think this sounds appealing and like to knit or stitch in any way, then do join us - your blood pressure will benefit!

Angela Treves crafts.iu3a@gmail.com

Current Affairs



The Group has intensive, friendly and often quite spirited discussions on current events and issues raised by members. They take place over coffee and biscuits. Members often bring along clippings or other materials relevant to the topics. Discussion are wide ranging, covering international, UK and local Islington issues

Recent topics have included:

An assessment of Donald Trump, Brexit Issues, the G7 and international trade tariffs, North Korea, Iran and the Middle East, NHS funding, social media and the impact on youth, youth crime levels and action to reduce, UK productivity and the economy, should the Council allow the angel wings sculpture in the Angel Centre be moved to allow for more development.

Barry Mason currentaffairs.iu3a@gmail.com

Drawing and Painting

The group meets fortnightly at the Walter Sickert Centre. We regularly get between twelve and sixteen people in this group. The work we do is very varied, sometimes drawing in charcoal, pencil or ink, or painting with acrylics, inks or watercolours. We've also done work with collage and texture. Over the summer we'll hopefully get out to draw "en plain air" in sketchbooks

Life Drawing

A new life drawing group has started in the upstairs room of the Drapers Arms on Barnsbury Street. We've met three times now with three different models, and will meet twice more over the summer before reviewing how often the group will meet from September onwards. Currently the feeling is that people would like to meet twice a month. The group members at each session divide up the cost between them to pay the model's fees. There are no art materials there, or boards, but so far we've managed working in sketchbooks, and I've found and booked the models. We've had around twelve people drawing at each session so far. The added bonus of course is the drink after the class. It makes people thirsty after concentrating so hard for two and a half hours.

Ali Shipton painting2.iu3a@gmail.com lifedrawingiu3a@gmail.com

History in a Global Context

We have been studying the period 1700 – 1815.

We are a DIY group, and everyone contributes, choosing and presenting a topic that interests them. Discussion follows the talks. It may be a long topic filling the whole session, or two people sharing a session, or 'shorts' when 4 or 5 people give a 15 minute talk. Examples of a long session have included Queen Anne and the Churchills, Frederick

the Great and Prussia, Catherine the Great, the 7 year War, the East India Company, C18 scientists, plant hunting. Shorter talks have included Wesley and Methodism, Jacobite rebellions, Walpole, Ireland, crime in Georgian London, Carlos III of Spain, decline of the Mughals. In our 'Shorts' sessions we seem to have talked mainly about individuals, Pope Benedict XIV, Goethe, Handel, Gilray, Daniel Defoe, Dr. Johnson.

We have found the long C18 fascinating, we see the beginning of the modern world. We have tried to keep an approximate chronological sequence. We have held off the American War of Independence, the French revolution, Napoleon, Captain Cook, abolition of the slave trade. We intend to press on next year and these topics amongst many others will be discussed.

Carol Mellor globalhistory.iu3a@gmail.com

Leisurely Walks



The new Leisurely Walks group has walks of up to three miles maximum in length and they are conducted at a steady leisurely pace. All group members can come on these sociable walks; there is no need to book a place. There's time for a chat with other members, either over coffee at the beginning or end or during the walk, and we get some fresh air and gentle exercise.

The group has had a walk each month since April. They have included strolls from Highbury fields to Finsbury Park, from Finsbury Park to Woodberry Wetlands, and along the Regents canal. Generally there have been about 10 members on and everybody has enjoyed the varied programme of walks offered so far.

The walks are led by a variety of walk leaders. If you would like to join the group or volunteer to lead a walk, please get in touch.

Derek Harwood leisurewalks.iu3a@gmail.com

Theatre Visits



The Theatre Visits group contains theatre-lovers of a wide range of tastes, from Ibsen to Sondheim, Pinter and David Hare. We see a play, usually at the National, in the West End, or at the Park or Hampstead Theatre. After two or three visits, we hold a meeting at the Draper's Arms to review the previous plays we have seen. The people who come are lively and opinionated, which

makes for a very stimulating discussion. We had one special session on Sondheim before we saw FOLLIES at the National – a dialogue between myself, being a Sondheim fanatic, and a fellow group member, Michael Ratcliffe, former theatre critic of The Observer. Many of the group said the discussion helped them so much in understanding the complexities of Sondheim’s masterpiece. So if theatre is your bag please do join us and meet other like-minded theatre-lovers.

Howard Lichterman theatrevisits.iu3a@gmail.com

Message from our Acting Chair



It’s impossible to do justice to the many individuals who make our programme so interesting, relevant and exciting. What we read about here is a testament to your involvement. Thank you to everyone involved, whatever your capacity. We are living our slogan

It all depends on us

Ruth Gee chair@islingtonu3a.org

