

## ISLINGTON U3A'S SUMMER PARTY

This year's iU3A summer garden party will blossom on Tuesday 30 June.

It is being held in a pretty, secret Islington garden. There will be plenty to drink and food to nibble.

Tickets go on sale soon.



# ISLINGTON UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE



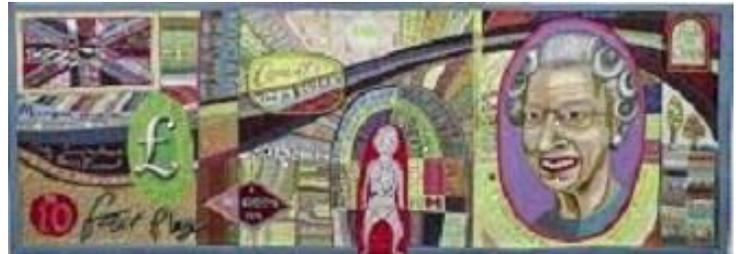
**SPRING 2015**

## **GRAYSON PERRY COUP for iU3A**

"Inspiration is for amateurs" says Grayson Perry, and he will be telling Islington U3A at the June monthly meeting how he uses icons and the work of other artists to build up his own unique statement on our current culture.

Grayson Perry employs the seductive qualities of ceramics and other art forms to make stealthy comments about societal injustices and hypocrisies, and to explore a variety of historical and contemporary themes. The rich layers of embroidery, graffiti, drawings, handwritten and stencilled texts, photographic transfers and rich glazes are alluring. But close up the narratives are about dark subjects such as child abuse, provide a challenging incongruity.

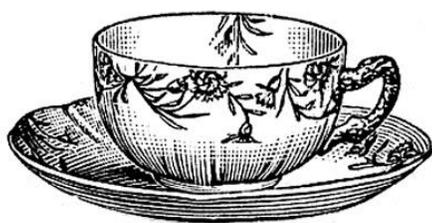
Beyond the initial shock of an apparently benign medium carrying challenging ideas, Grayson's work draws in a wide audience through its variety and humour.



Alongside his art Grayson has written and presented TV documentaries including an hour-long documentary for Channel 4 entitled *Why Men Wear Frocks*, in which he examined transvestism and masculinity in the 21st century; and his 2012 series *All in the Best Possible Taste* which received a BAFTA for Specialist Factual Television. Grayson's recent programme *Who Are You?* resulted in the art from the series being exhibited as a trail in the National Portrait Gallery.

See monthly meetings programme further on in this Newsletter or on the website for more information on the monthly meeting on 25 June and the rest of the 2015 programme.

## MORE LOCAL ISLINGTON U3A COFFEE MORNINGS



More neighbourhood coffee mornings are planned following the initial get togethers in February. The free meetings with tea and coffee as well as cakes and biscuits give iU3A members the chance to get to know others who live nearby.

There's nothing formal; just a chance to chat with up to a dozen people and discover neighbours who are iU3A members.

Around 30 members in total enjoyed one of the three coffee mornings in February. The conversation was lively and engaging, the cakes were delicious and members enjoyed getting to know others from their local area. Those who had recently joined particularly valued the opportunity to meet other members and find out more about what Islington U3A has to offer. We are very grateful to the hosts. Christine Cox, Christopher Elsom & Margaret Harris, and Sandy Huxter have kindly agreed to host the next three. These run from 11am for an hour or so.

30 April      Blackstock Road, near Finsbury Park station

13 May        Theberton Street, off Upper Street

21 May        Colebrook Row, near Angel

To book to go to one of the coffee mornings, please email [Isabel Dickson](mailto:isabel.dickson@islingtonu3a.org). If you would be happy to have a handful of iU3A members round for coffee one morning, or can suggest a good location for a get together, please also get in touch with [Isabel Dickson](mailto:isabel.dickson@islingtonu3a.org).

## What's coming up?

10 June	Walk the borough boundary and raise funds for Islington Giving, as part of Islington Giving week
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30 June	Summer garden party
5 Oct	Our 2nd birthday party and Open Day
26 Nov	AGM

## GROUPS

### Michael Ratcliffe tells all: What it's *really* like being a member of the **German Conversation Group**



We meet every other Wednesday at 10.30 in the delightful Canonbury flat of Inge Newth-Weber. There are five of us, plus Inge. First we charge up our energies on superb, fresh coffee and sticky Bahlsen biscuits (the German equivalent of Cadbury's), then slip into conversation as informally as possible. One minute it's English, then suddenly you realize you're talking German. Sometimes we have prepared something to talk about – an exhibition, play, film or opera we've seen – but many times we just sit and chat as you would at any coffee morning among friends. Inge is a former teacher who has lived here for many years.

She has a gentle and witty manner and is equally good defining the subtleties of a classic poem as explaining why the German word for 'embarrassment' is rarely used and is virtually unknown by many - their skins are thicker than ours, she says.

She corrects us if we ask her to, but not otherwise. This is invaluable. For a group of this kind, we are remarkably uncompetitive and all support each other.

We go out quite a lot. We've been to the Whitechapel Gallery, Somerset House, National Gallery, Royal Academy, National Film Theatre, British Museum (BM) and Estorick Collection - just round the corner from Inge's flat. 2014 was an outstanding year for the exploration of German art and history in London and we talked endlessly about Neil McGregor's superb exhibition 'Germany, Memories of a Nation' at the BM. Naturally, we are always coming back to the inexhaustible subject of the British, the Germans and their ever-complex, mutually rewarding family-relationship, and we laugh a great deal. We never know what's going to come up next.

## NEW GROUPS

### SHORTER WALKS



The shorter walks group walks will be on the first Wednesday of the month, starting on 6 May with a walk in and around Richmond Park, including the Isabella Plantation and Thames Path. More walks will be organised if there is demand and members willing to lead them. The half-day walks will be about 5 miles long, some will be fairly local, while others will involve travel usually within the Freedom Pass zone.

### PETANQUE



This informal group is underway and meets every Tuesday in Caledonian Park. Members are all more-or-less beginners but all abilities are very welcome. Petanque - or boules - is one of those rare sports where men and women can play together on equal terms. It is fun, easy to learn and cheap to play. The group has some spare boules that you can use to see if you like it. It is cheap and easy to acquire your own. Initially, at least, the group will just play and aim to gradually improve together. Longer term, there are established groups in other U3As such as Hillingdon and Richmond, so there is the possibility of inter-group

competitions. The group will decide how things progress.

The London Petanque Club is providing coaching and hands-on encouragement; and Islington Council is very keen to encourage us to use their parks. Also, members maybe interested in the annual national event, the Londonaise, which will be held in Barnard Park on 5-7 June. This offers a fantastic opportunity to both join in and to see some top flight players in action.

### CURRENT ISSUES IN SCIENCE



The group has a meeting every month to discuss a chosen topic, and keeps up to date on exhibitions that members might visit. Some members saw an exhibition about forensics (which is still on) at the Wellcome Collection on Euston Road. The most recent discussion was about bees and why bee populations in many countries are declining? Is it because of a new class of pesticides called neonicotinoids? It's no surprise that insecticides kill bees, but the charge against 'neonics' is that at supposedly 'safe' levels of

crop treatment they may damage long term bee health. The science is controversial but under its 'precautionary principle' the EU has temporarily banned neonics while more research is done. Some people think this is doing more harm than good. The group discussion will give members a better understanding as the controversy continues over the coming months.

## iPAD



The iPad self-help group met for the first time on 16 March and will meet roughly fortnightly. It is over-subscribed - there is a waiting list - but we will try to meet demand; perhaps by creating a second group or flexing the way the group meets.

## FRINGE THEATRE



The Fringe Theatre group chose the Hope Theatre in Upper Street for its first outing. There are over 80 fringe theatres in London with many in Islington. They often feature new writing, festival production transfers and occasionally traditional plays with a modern update. Obviously being fringe, the theatres can be basic, such as above a pub, with not much spent on production. However, it is great fun trying something different and having a friendly drink before or after the performance. All the visits are in the evenings. Group members buy their own tickets and anyone can suggest plays to see.

## BIRDWATCHING



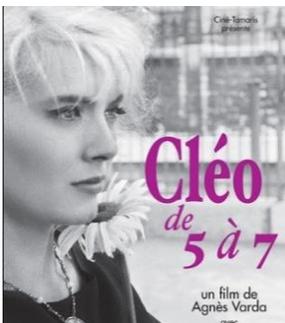
The new iU3A birdwatching group got off to a flying start with a visit to the London Wetland Centre in January where there were a good variety of ducks and other wetland birds. The bitterns were in hiding but three pintail took our eye. The February visit was to Stocker's Lake near Rickmansworth. Goldeneye were the highlight on an attractive watery walk round the lake. There were two recent local outings – to Walthamstow Reservoirs with its winter ducks and a very obliging kingfisher; and to Waterworks Nature Reserve off Lea Bridge Road where the group saw some very showy little grebes. The birdwatching group aims to have one very local trip and one further afield each month. Upcoming visits are planned to RSPB's Rye Meads and Fingringhoe Wick to listen to the nightingales.

**If you would like to join one of these new groups please get in touch via**

**[groups@islingtonu3a.org](mailto:groups@islingtonu3a.org)**

## EXISTING GROUPS

### CLASSIC FILMS



The Classic Films group have been watching the films of Spanish director Pedro Almodovar and preparing for a new season of films by women directors which will begin after Easter.

The group formed a sub-group to short-list the films and vote on the selection. The film will be Agnes Varda's 'Cleo from 5 to 7'. Others that got the vote were Liliana Cavani's 'The Night Porter'; Margarethe von Trotta's 'Marianne and Juliane'; 'Orlando' by Sally Potter; Jane Campion's 'The Piano' and Saudi Arabian Haifaa al-Mansour's 'Wadjda'.

The group meets twice a month at The Old Fire Station near the Nag's Head.

### EXPLORING LONDON

The group continues to find new places to go... so far the 2105 programme has included the Coliseum theatre (enlivened by a wonderful tour guide); Handel House with a private harpsichord recital - the highlight of the visit for several 'Explorers'; The Foundling Museum with its current exhibition of sculpture by Jacob Epstein and wonderful armchairs that play Handel's music; and Two Temple Place which was built in the 1890s for William Waldorf Astor. Still to come... Freemasons Hall, 'Fashion on the Ration' at the Imperial War Museum, Drapers' Hall, Bletchley Park and Greenwich- and that's just the programme up to August.

### CURRENT FILMS



The group's first cinema visit at the beginning of November was to see Mr Turner when we enjoyed the beautiful filming and brilliant performance by Timothy Spall. Since then, trips have been organised every Thursday afternoon when there is something worth seeing at either the Hackney Picturehouse or Islington Vue. So far the group has seen more than a dozen films. Tastes are eclectic; ranging from the more serious such as The Theory of Everything and The Imitation Game to the light hearted Paddington and Shaun the Sheep.

### CRAFT



In January and February the Craft Group made bunting and brooches for Islington Age UK's Music Hall and some members went to the Spring Knitting and Stitching Show at Olympia. They had a great time taking in all the stalls of wools, fabrics, beads and endless various crafts. We came away with plenty of ideas - very inspirational.

As well a working on individual projects, members are also knitting and crocheting squares in a variety of patterns and colours to make a blanket for a good cause.

## LOCAL HISTORY



The group learned about the history of Jews in Islington when historian Petra Laidlaw gave a talk about the early settlement in the Borough. This was based on her book 'The Jewish Communities of Islington 1730s - 1880s'. She showed where synagogues had been established; nothing remains now but subtle traces of where they stood, although one is going to be remembered with a local plaque. In April members will hear about the research one member has been doing on St Mary's Church, in Upper Street.

## OPERA



The Opera group has been watching opera on film at special showings at the Islington Vue cinema. The latest was the Royal Opera House's Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. It was stunning production with innovative staging. Forthcoming cinema visits include the live filming of Bizet's Carmen, Gilbert and Sullivan's The Pirates of Penance and Puccini's La Boheme. The group is also planning an outing to Hampstead Garden Opera's production of Xerxes at The Gatehouse in Highgate.

## YOGA



The group practises deep breathing, warm-up movements, yoga postures and relaxation and (a very short) meditation in an hour long class. Mats and other equipment are provided. The group is friendly and new members are welcome to try a class before joining.

The class takes place at the Walter Sickert Community Centre, Canonbury Crescent, N1 2FB, normally on Mondays at 12.30 -1.30, but there are some Tuesday substitutions for bank holidays.

The Summer term dates are:

April: Mon 27

May: Tues 5, Mon 11, Mon 18 Tues 26,

June; Mon 1, Mon 8, Mon 29

July: Mon 6, Mon 13

# Monthly meetings

Monthly meetings take place at [Resource for London](#) 356 Holloway Rd (next to Waitrose). There is a café where members can meet and chat over tea or coffee before and after the meeting.

The meetings are generally held on the fourth Thursday of the month. Registration opens at 9.45am for a prompt 10.30am start.

## THE LAST MEETING

### **MARCH 26 – Nature, nurture or neither? - the view from the genes** **Prof Steve Jones**



Steve Jones, the entertaining science author and Principal Research Associate at the Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment, University College London, is a world expert on genetics. He believes that genetics and environment are not separate entities, but that height, weight, or personality type can be divided in sections controlled by inherited factors or nature, while others traits are due to differences in the environment, or nurture. See the report on the news pages of the iU3A [website](#)

## PROGRAMME FOR THE REST OF 2015

### **APRIL 23 – A life course approach to ageing** **Prof Diana Kuh**



Healthy ageing is about maintaining wellbeing and optimal function for as long as possible. There is growing evidence that social and biological factors from early life onwards can affect healthy ageing.

Much of this comes from birth cohort studies that follow people from birth across their lives. Prof Diana Kuh Director of the MRC Unit for Lifelong Health and Ageing, University College London will talk about the findings, largely based on one study of British men and women since their birth in March 1946.

She will also present study members' views on what it is like to be a part a study that has been running, so far, for 69 years.

## **MAY 28 - the Wonders of the Antarctic and what it can teach us**

### **Prof Lloyd Peck, British Antarctic Survey**



Marine biologist Lloyd has spent time in the Antarctic, the coldest, windiest, driest and loneliest part of the world where temperatures plummet to -89C and storms rage for months on end. He will talk about the wonders of the Antarctic and what it can teach us about marine life in other parts of the world. Animals in frozen seas are having to adapt to a changing environment as the seas warm up.

## **JUNE 25 - Inspiration is for Amateurs**

### **Grayson Perry**



The Reith lecturer and winner of the 2003 Turner Prize will be discussing "artists and cultures I enjoy ripping off". Grayson is a great chronicler of contemporary life, using wit, affecting sentiment and nostalgia as well as fear and anger to examine his own life and the lives of all of us. His work are realised in pottery, tapestry, photography and classical drawing and brought to a wide audience through television and exhibitions.

## **JULY 23 - Population growth: can we cope with another 80 million every year?**

### **Nina Clarke - Vice Chair of Population Matters**



Nina will talk about population growth worldwide and in the UK; where it is growing fastest; the impact in developing and developed countries and why it matters.

She is currently the Vice Chair of Population Matters and will focus on what can be done to counteract population growth.

## **SEPTEMBER 24 – Under the skin of the Italian Renaissance: through history, fiction and art**

### **Sarah Dunant**



Sarah Dunant has written twelve novels. Her most recent novels, set within the Italian renaissance have highlighted the lives of women, and have been best sellers in Britain and America and have been translated into thirty languages.

She will talk about her visits to churches, archives, museums and art galleries all over Italy, and how she has connected with the emotion, the senses and the heady appetites of the Renaissance as well as the politics and religion.

Her novels include the trilogy *The Birth of Venice*, *In the Company of the Courtesan* and "Sacred Hearts and most recently the first volume of a novel about the Borgia family, *Blood and Beauty*.

## **OCTOBER 22 - Prof John Raftery, Vice Chancellor of London Metropolitan University**



He joined local London Met University last year after a very successful spell at Oxford Brookes University where he served as Pro Vice-Chancellor for nine years.

Professor Raftery is a successful higher education leader and an expert in applied economics, with a strong record of innovation and achievement in both academia and industry. He has lived and worked in Scandinavia, Hong Kong and Australia.

## **NOVEMBER 26 – Protecting post-war architecture Elain Harwood is a historian with Historic England, formerly English Heritage**



Elain lives in Islington and is also a trustee of the Twentieth Century Society. For many years she worked on English Heritage's programme of research and designation of post 1945 buildings, an area of British architecture not greatly understood but which has increasingly come under threat from redevelopment. Elain will look at why this period of architecture is so special, with examples drawn mainly from north London.

**DECEMBER** – no monthly meeting

## Beyond Islington U3A

iU3A members can enjoy the events and activities arranged by the Third Age Trust, the national umbrella body for U3As, and the London Region U3A to which all London U3As belong. You can find out what they offer on the [Other Opportunities](#) page of the iU3A website. The page also contains information from voluntary organisations in Islington seeking volunteers, and from universities looking for older participants for research projects.

### MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR



Islington U3A is growing up. Things that were brand new in our first year are even in danger of becoming annual events. After the successful summer garden party, walking the borough boundary in support of Islington Giving and the Open Day, of course we are planning to do those things again.

But the spirit of innovation and welcoming contributions and ideas from everyone will always prevent iU3A from becoming stale.

You will find plenty of ways to make contact and take an active part or just keep up to date on what's on offer on the website. To get in touch, see the [contacts page](#) of the iU3A website; [www.islingtonu3a.org](http://www.islingtonu3a.org) For queries about [Groups](#) or [Events](#) click to go straight to the relevant page.

Copies of the current and past iU3A newsletters can be found on the [News](#) page.