

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1 Bird Watching Hanningfield
2 Maritime	3 Table Tennis Snooker Luncheon Club	4 Meteorology Wine Circle Ten Pin Bowling Gardeners, Munden VH	5 Discussion Continuing French Poetry	6 Family History (2) Mah Jong Botany	7	8
9 Handicrafts German Whist Table Tennis Beg.	10 Table Tennis Snooker	11 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Painting	12 Country Dancing French Conversation Reading	13 Canasta Sing for Pleasure	14	15 Strollers Stow Maries
16 Meeting 1.30 pm	17 Table Tennis Snooker Aviation	18 Ten Pin Bowling Clock Repairs	19 Continuing French	20 Mah Jong Botany	21	22
23 Handicrafts Astronomy Local History German Whist Table Tennis Beg.	24 Table Tennis Snooker	25 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Painting Family History Writing for Fun	26 Country Dancing Computers French Conversation Music Appreciation	27 Canasta Sing for Pleasure	28	29
30						

I try my utmost to get the calendar correct each month, but I would advise you to always check with your co-ordinator as to the date of your next meeting.

Newsletter Editor: Mrs. Jan. Robertson, Tel. 01245 225657 email Jan8085@aol.com



The University of the Third Age

MALDON AND DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER



**Local & General History
Visit to
Copped Hall & Waltham Abbey**

OCTOBER 2009

VOLUME 1X NO. 5

Reg. Charity No. 1086182

Web Site: www.maldonu3a.co.uk

FROM THE CHAIR



Strollers

Sunday 15th November. Stow Maries~ approx 4 1/2 miles. Parking in Church Lane in the village hall car park.

The walk rises slightly uphill towards Purleigh. There are some good views over the Blackwater and the Crouch. The route passes near WWI airfield (the only one left in England!). The Prince of Wales is just down the hill from the village hall should anybody be lunching.

Any enquiries to Kym Marshall
01621 828417

Local & General History

We meet on **Monday 26 October** when Stephen Nunn is returning to speak to us. His talk this time is "Maldon through the Lens".

Our final meeting of the year will be on **Monday 23 November** and we again have a return speaker. Pip Wright is coming and his talk is entitled "The Diary of a Poor Suffolk Woodman". At the Maldon Little Ship Club at 2.00 pm – All members are welcome.

Please remember there may be road works in the area!

Mary Burd

The new members meeting was held recently and all attendees seemed to enjoy meeting the committee and learning how we run our groups and social events. Whilst at the meeting seven of the new members showed an interest in Family History and, after being told that the current group was full, decided to form a second group of their own under the guidance of Frank Stokes and have already held their first meeting.

The Social Committee held a very successful quiz evening at the Town Hall which yet again proves that our members continue to support all the events arranged by them.

Once again well done the Social Committee.

Alan Buck

From the Treasurer

Please can I remind members to take their cheque books to monthly meetings and to groups that organise outings. All outings and social events should be paid for by cheque payable to –

Maldon & District U3A.

Thank you
Rosemary Case

CO-ORDINATORS

Chairman	Alan Buck	01245 227709	Mah-Jong	Molly Polden	01621 856507
Vice Chairman	Beryl McDonell	01621 842093	Maritime History	Malcolm Case	01245 329435
Secretary	Pamela Turnbull	01376 510084	Meteorology	Malcolm Case John Robson	01245 329435 01621 828236
Treasurer	Rosemary Case	01245 329435	Music Appreciation	Enid Hall John Skuse	01621 891618 01245 224059
Membership Sec.	John Robson	01621 828236	Painting	Joyce Stokes	01245 223579
Speaker Sec.	Joyce Cotterell	01621 858287	Petanque (Boule)	Barbara Arnold	01621 853866
Committee	Paul Costa John Almond	01621 853893 Ex. Dir.	Poetry	Jo Robson	01621 828236
Newsletter Editor	Jan Robertson	01245 225657	Reading 1st Tuesday	Christine Elgin	01621 858146
WebMaster	John Bowen	01245 224677	2nd Thursday	Sheila Epps	01621 850467
Social Committee	Dorothy Denmark	01245 223960	Scottish Dancing	Shirley Grummett	01621 853288
Astronomy	Molly Tring	01621 854732	Singles Dining	Sue Oram	01621 856899
Aviation	David Arnold Fred Lane	01621 853866 01621 816181	Sing for Pleasure	Sylvia Carpenter	01621 854905
Ballroom Dancing	Jo Robson	01621 828236	Snooker	John Williams	01621 828461
Bird Watching	Pat Clements	01245 223427	Spanish Conversation	Wilma Turner	01621 851510
Botany	Veronica Smith	01621 828176	Strollers	Gill Stone	01621 853948
Bridge	Sheila Epps	01621 850467	Swimmers	Gill Rowsell	01621 740619
Canasta	Marian Manning Margaret Dale	01621 828605 01268 765239	Table Tennis	Gordon Hardy Julie Doidge	01245 223012 01621 841205
Clock Repairs	Stanley Clements	01245 223427	Beginners	Beryl McDonell	01621 842093
Computers	Jan Robertson	01245 225657	Ten Pin Bowling	David Arnold	01621 853866
Desk Top Pub.	Jan Robertson	01245 225657	Theatre Group	Enid Hall Sheila Epps	01621 891618 01621 850467
Discussion	Ray Harman	01621 891736	Whist	Molly Polden	01621 856507
Family History	Frank Stokes	01245 223579	Wine Circle	Graham Boswell	01621 828874
Continuing French	Sylvia Carpenter	01621 854905	Writing for Fun	Pat Sizer	01621 892201
French Conversation	Bill Stichbury	01621 855828	Luncheon Club	Mike Wood Paul Costa	01245 222839 01621 853893
Gardeners	Jan Robertson	01245 225657			
German	Jenny Plumb	01245 226112			
Good Companions	Beryl McDonell	01621 842093			
Handicraft	Marian Manning	01621 828605			
Local History	Mary Burd Alfred Couldrey	01621 843020 01245 226259			

If for any reason you do not receive a posted newsletter within a week of the Meeting, (if you did not attend the Meeting) please contact John Robson on 01621 828236

Does anyone know anything about electric bicycles? How practical, how comfortable, how far could an old girl expect to travel on one etc from first hand experience!
Molly Tring 01621 854732

~~~~~

### **Found**

Blue/Grey Anorak left at Jan's Plant Swop. Contact Jan on 01245 225657

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BLACKWATER U3A

Contact:
Dorreen Linton, Chairman
01621 853428

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS U3A

Contact
Heather Richardson Chairman
01245 320205

HEYBRIDGE U3A

Contact
Ruth Tyler, Chairman

NATIONAL OFFICE

19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QH
Tel 020 8466 6139 Email national.office@u3a.org
Web site www.u3a.org.uk
Resource Centre: email: resource.centre@u3a.org.uk

Deadline for next newsletter: Friday, 6th November

Wine Group

After 5 years of happy tastings, outings and presentations the Wine Group is coming to an end. We have had a super time, but now it is time for a change.

Cue drum role.....

A new Wine group is being formed, with Graham Boswell as co-ordinator. Once again it will be a small group, as the gatherings are going to be held in member's houses, starting with the first meeting to be held in Graham's home. I understand the group is almost full already, but for any further details please contact Graham on 01621 828874.

Good luck Graham, and cheers!

Zandra

Petanque (Boule)

We played the match against the Blackwater U3A on Thursday October 8th, but unfortunately we lost 3 games to 2. We lost on games but won on overall points so it was even each way.

It was a lovely afternoon in the sun on our special terrain. It was great for all those of our U3A who worked so hard on building it to see so many people enjoying themselves. Are you interested in playing? Please see me or let me know,

Barbara Arnold 01621 853866.

Snooker

Now that the summer is over and we have all taken our holidays, and other things which may be of more interest than U3A activities I, as the snooker coordinator, am trying to attract some more members to our Tuesday morning sessions at Madison Heights, from 10.00 am until midday. At present there are only three of us who take part and, as you can imagine, it gets a little boring as we always have to play together.

In the old days there used to be as many as ten/twelve members who took part and there was much more variety.

Could I please, therefore, persuade other members of U3A to consider joining us. It costs £4 each for the morning and, at present, we usually play four games every Tuesday. The facilities are good, and there are at least twelve tables in the snooker hall, probably more. If you are interested and would like to join us and want more information, you can contact me on 01621 828461

John Williams

Photography

Mary Richardson who has run this group for some years has decided to finish due to lack of support from both Blackwater and Maldon Groups. Hopefully someone else will start another group sometime in the future.

Aviation

At our October meeting we were going to have to have a talk by Stan Jarvis MBE but he can't make it.

We are very fortunate that Graham Smith, the author of many aviation and history books, can take his place. All of you who heard his interesting talk in February will want to come again.

That is on **Tuesday 20th October** 2 pm at the Maldon Little Ship Club.

Another special meeting for us, so please come along. All members of our or other U3As are welcome. Interested?

Contact David Arnold on 01621 853866

Astronomy

Andy Mowbray gave us a very interesting evening, very persuasively showing that the 'Apollo' really did land on the moon. He said there is a site on the web that puts up a good argument that Belgium does not exist, so people could still get it wrong!

October 26, the meeting will be about the planets, so again suitable for interested non-astronomers!

All welcome. At 7.30 pm WMCC

Molly Tring

Family History

Our next meeting will be on

Wednesday, 28th October

at 2.30 pm and will be held at 49

Hopping Jacks Lane, Danbury.

Please bring your queries, researches and personal histories.

New Group

Our next meeting will be on **Friday, 6th**

November at 2.00 pm and will be held at 56 Augustine Way, Bicknacre.

Frank Stokes

Maritime Group

The next meeting of the Maritime Group will be held at the Little Ship Club on The Hythe, Maldon, **starting at 10:00 am on Monday November 2nd**. We will be discussing our programme for 2010 and into 2011, so please come along with your ideas for speakers and places of interest to visit. All members are very welcome to attend. If you are not able to attend but have some ideas then please phone me, my telephone number is in the Newsletter.

Malcolm Case.



CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON
Thursday, 3rd December Price £20

The combined Christmas Luncheon tickets will be on sale at the October and November monthly meetings. Any tickets left at the end of the November meeting, will be offered to the general membership.

LUNCHEON CLUB VENUES -
Times 12.15 pm

TUESDAY 3rd November at The Hurdlemakers

Co-ordinator: Mike Wood Tel. 01245 222839

WEDNESDAY Due to the close proximity to the Christmas Lunch date, there will be no Wednesday Lunch Club meeting in November"

Co-ordinator: Paul Costa Tel. 01621 853893

Note: If you sign up for the lunches and then find you are unable to attend for any reason, can you please notify the Co-ordinator as soon as possible, as places have to be booked at the venues.



FEEL GOOD! The World's BIGGEST Coffee Morning!

A big thank you to everyone who supported my Macmillan coffee morning in September - the amount raised was £235. You may be interested to know that this was my 8th coffee morning since coming to Maldon and the total collected over these years is £2801.50.

Mary Burd



U3A 2010 Diaries

Size 3¼” x 6” Colour - Dark Green

Price £1.90 per diary

Please **order and pay** for your Diary at the September onwards Meetings or contact me, Jan Robertson, on 01245 225657.

I have about ten left, so be quick if you want one.

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•

• **November Meeting** •

• **Wickham Bishops Village Hall at 1.30 pm** •

•

• Speaker •

• Talk by William Tyler on •

• “Lost Peace” •

•

•

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Thursday Reading Group -Vacancies

This group has been going along merrily since Maldon U3A started- and some of the original members are still there with their noses buried in a book.

However –for various reasons – we find we have a few places available to welcome new readers.

We meet once a month on Thursday afternoons, having read the current book, ready to discuss, criticise, admire and generally have a good time putting it all back together again. This leads us into discovering books we would never have picked up, authors unknown, and areas we know nothing about. Generally we get our books from the Library (marvellous service) and we keep our list of possible titles well stocked so there is no possible danger of running out of ideas.

We try to keep our discussion on the book for the first part of the afternoon but a fair amount of chat accompanies the tea and biscuits. There is also a considerable amount of book borrowing as a result of other enthusiastic finds.

Do make contact if you are interested in joining us.

You're never alone with a book

Sheila Epps Tel 01621 850467

Gardeners

On the 6th October we held our Plant Swop at my house with 36 people attending, it was chaos, standing room only as it was wet and we all had to move indoors. Great fun though and thanks for all those lovely home made cakes. See the recipe of Pauline's Apple cake on page 15

Can I please ask for some more cakes for our last meeting this year on **Wednesday, 4th November**, Mundon Village Hall at 2.30 pm when we will have a Presentation of our Worcester holiday and a talk by Mr. Brian Wickendon, whose garden we visited in St. Osyth earlier in the year. All members are welcome to join us.

Jan Robertson

SOCIAL NEWS

Most people seem to have enjoyed the Quiz last month and you were all very forbearing and kind about the various glitches!

Now we look forward to the Sixties Evening on 22 October, which has proved so popular that we have had to call a halt to the sale of tickets. Perhaps I should explain to new members that the Maldon U3A members are well known for their lack of inhibition when it comes to dressing up for the occasion and we hope that you will enter into the spirit of the evening with suitable abandon. Be prepared to join in and let it all hang out!. Bring drinks and nibbles, as usual; there will be very little in the way of refreshments provided.

By contrast, the Beetle Drive on Saturday 21 November may prove to be a very sedate and dignified affair. If so, it will be the first time! It is a great tonic against the early winter blues and guaranteed to send you home glowing with satisfaction, having laughed the evening away - and, incidentally, full of delicious home-made cake provided by our wonderful team of cake makers. Because of the limited space and the number of tables available, we can only take 65. Tickets are still £3, the same as last year, despite the credit crunch. So don't delay - get your ticket from Janet NOW!!

We are not wishing your lives away but at the next meeting in November we shall have to sell tickets for the Ceilidh in January as we don't sell tickets at the December meeting. This has become an annual event at the beginning of the year, held at the Maldon Town Football Club, with a Scottish band and caller. More anon.

Dd

Note for all Co-ordinators

I hold all the photos and CD's of our activities over the past 11 years and find that there are many gaps for the last few years. Can you please let me have any CD's of your activities that can be added to this collection for posterity.
Jan Robertson

During our tour there were three highlights for me: The glorious east window's theme of Creation and below it an impressive reredos with scenes from the nativity of Christ; secondly in the south aisle the Denny monument with delightful children's carvings around the edge and in The Lady Chapel which dates from the 14th century, the most impressive early 15thC "Doom" painting of the Day of Judgement which is remarkably preserved. Finally as we left, on the arch above the exit of the nave was an interesting coat of arms of Elizabeth I which are unique to a Parish Church.

A most enjoyable day out – thanks go to Michael and Mary for organising it.

Sue Garratt

Quick, Simple "All-In-Together" Apple Cake.

Ingredients: -

¼ lb. Margarine	¼ lb Sugar
2 Eggs	8oz. Self Raising Flour
One Teaspoon Cinnamon	¾lb Thinly Sliced Raw Cooking Apples

Instructions: -

Cream the Margarine and Sugar.
Add the Beaten Eggs.
Fold in the Flour and Cinnamon.
Add the Sliced Apples.
Put in a Greased 9 inch Shallow Cake Tin.
Sprinkle some Sugar on top
Bake in Centre of Oven at 170 Degrees C (Gas Mark 4) for 50 Minutes.

Notes

Important, the Apples are sliced very thinly (not in chunks) and NOT put into Water after slicing.
The Cake Tin MUST be 9 inches in dia, or the mixture may be too deep & therefore soggy in the middle!

Pauline Bowen.

Local & General History - Visit to Copped Hall & Waltham Abbey

Our first glimpse of Copped Hall made one think - What have we come to!! But our visit to Copped Hall was so interesting. Having been shown photographs of the house and garden taken before the fire in 1917, we were filled with awe and admiration for the people involved in the work of restoring it to its former glory. It will still take a great deal of effort and money to complete this and many of the people involved might never see the completion!



We were shown around by very knowledgeable dedicated guides but needed a lot of imagination to visualise the ladies and gentlemen's bedrooms, dressing rooms, lounges and banqueting room.

It was sad to hear of the destruction and pilfering that took place between the time of the family leaving the property and when the trust first took it over some eighty years later.

We had a lovely tour of the grounds and the beauty of these reflects the care being given by the voluntary gardeners especially the vast walled garden that had been completely neglected. Our coffee break in the Court room was delicious with a lovely selection of home-made cakes.

Alfred Couldrey.

We then moved on to Waltham Abbey where some of us picnicked and others went for lunch in local restaurants.

We were met outside the Abbey by a very jovial guide called Neville who was extremely knowledgeable. He told us that the Abbey, which is the local parish



Church, was founded in 1060 by King Harold, who is reputedly buried there. The Church was the focus of many pilgrimages throughout the Middle Ages. Waltham was the last of the English Abbeys dissolved by Henry VIII because the people of the town were able to claim the present nave as their parish church. The ceiling of the nave has beautiful paintings, done on canvas, showing the twelve signs of the zodiac, together with activities, such as ploughing and weaving, appropriate to

each of the signs. In the north aisle there is an oak pulpit and sounding board dating from 1658 as well as an elaborately carved marble tomb of the merchant seaman Robert Smith.



2009 CALENDAR—Dates for your Diary

List of Events and Outings during the year.

Thurs. 15 Oct	Trip to Trinity House, Harwich - Maritime
Thurs. 22 Oct	“Sixties Evening” Maldon Town Hall - Social
Wed. 4th Nov	Gardeners’ Worcester Trip Presentation & Talk
Sat. 21 Nov.	Beetle Drive, Langford Village Hall - Social
Fri. 8 Jan	Ceilidh— Social

Further details of the above events available from your Co-ordinator or in the Newsletter.



Beetle Drive
Langford Village Hall
Saturday 21 November

Start: 7.00 p.m. - doors open 6.30 p.m.

Tickets, £3 per person,

Tea, coffee and cake in interval - Free Raffle

Limited numbers for this event so book early to avoid disappointment!

Tickets available from:

Enquiries:

Janet Buck,
 01245 227709

Dorothy Denmark
 01245 223960

Beetle Drive 21st November

Please reserve me Ticket(s) @ £3 00 each

I enclose my cheque for £.... made payable to ‘Maldon & District U3A’

Name(s) of Member(s)

Phone No.....

U3A Conference in Edinburgh

In September I headed for the U3A Conference on Ageing and the AGM in Edinburgh. I left Maldon aged 70. When the conference closed I was going on 50. The energy, vibrancy and enthusiasm of the 380 who attended not to mention the four superb outside speakers was enough to put a spring in anyone's step.

Each speaker approached ageing from a different perspective. Professor Tom Kirkwood tackled our changing expectations. Professor Felicity Huppert spoke about positive ageing - our roles as individuals and in society. Professor Deary had found the survivors of the 1921 and 1946 intelligence survey of 10 year olds in Scotland and retested their intelligence while Professor John Field looked at lifelong learning. So what advice did they pass on to be happy, fulfilled and enjoy our elder years?

1. Start early. Choose your parents carefully, preferably a couple without the gene predisposing to dementia. Their social class does not matter so long as they have your best interests at heart. If they are rotten to you do not despair. You can alleviate this midlife with your own efforts and living in a society that offers opportunity for all. There is no gene programme for death, only for life. Body cells have to renew themselves and in the process faults creep in. Hardly surprising as while you are reading this every cell in your body is being battered by free radicals and rescued by repair systems
2. Have an above average IQ and be dependable in childhood. Dependable bit important. Intelligence does not alter with age.
3. Eat well. Low fat and salt, lots of vegetables, drink water and a little alcohol. Don't smoke and take lost of physical exercise.
4. Use your Brain. Learning new things extends its pathways and can significantly moderate the worst effects of both physical and mental disease. Ormskirk U3A have been having fun with different brain exercise programmes and showed us a video of Professor Susan Greenfields lecture. Copies of 'Brainfit' sold out.
5. Be generous. Give time, help, care, money if affordable, to family neighbours, charities - it increases your own wellbeing and mental health.

What can we do to change this youth orientated society?

1. Dispel 'the old people are losers' syndrome by example. U3A members are initiating and helping Universities with research, writing for and advising publishers, influencing Government policies.
- 2 Refute accusations that more oldies are a drain on the economy. Research has shown that living longer has contributed 73 trillion dollars to GDP.
- 3 Squash accusations of costs to the health service. Medical innovation not ageing is pushing them up.

An Electronic Prayer

Every single evening as I'm lying in my bed
This tiny little prayer keeps running through my head
God bless my family wherever they may be
Keep them warm and safe from harm
For the're so close to me

And God there is a wish perhaps that you could do
Hope you don't mind me asking but bless my computer too
Now I know that its unusual to bless a `MOTHERBOARD`
But listen just a second, I will explain it to you Lord
You see, that little metal box holds more than odds and ends
Inside those small compartments rest many of my friends
I know so much about them by the kindness that they give
And this little scrap of metal takes me into where they live
By faith is how I know them, much the same as you
We share what life has brought us and from that the friendships grew
So please take an extra minute from your duties up above
To bless those in my `ADDRESS BOOK` that's filled with so much
love

Wherever else this prayer may reach to each and every friend
Bless each E-MAIL INBOX` and each person who hits `SEND`
When you update your heavenly list on your own great
`CD-ROM`

Bless everyone who says this prayer sent up to God.com
Amen

Ray Harman

U3A National Summer Schools

There will again be two summer schools next year, both of which will be held at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester. The dates are 16 - 19 August and 23 - 26 August. Further details will be available later.

Online Courses

For a £10 enrolment fee, members can have access to all untutored UK online courses for twelve months.

U3A News and Sources

Members can listen to U3A News and Sources either via the Third Age Trust website, or request a set of CDs.

Photography Competition

The theme for the 2010 competition is "Coast". If you are interested in submitting an entry, full details are displayed on the notice board.

Wills and Legacies

The Third Age Trust have issued a notice regarding wills and legacies. Please see the notice board for full details.

Spot the mistake

An article published in the following guide -

"The Second Touring Guide to Britain" published by Marks and Spencer/AA.

Maldon, Essex

Just outside the fascinating old town of Maldon lies the site of the one of the great decisive battles of England's early history. The Battle of Maldon was fought and lost in 991 when the English leader, Bryhtnoth, was killed by the invading Danes after a fierce 3 day battle. As a result of this defeat, the English King, Ethelred, the Unready, was obliged to pay an annual tribute of Danegeld to the conquerors: eventually the Danes overthrew him and Cnut became king. Maldon itself is a charming town, famous for its fine quality table salt, mined from a hillside above the Blackwater River. One of its churches, All Saints, has a unique triangular tower, and there are many intriguing shops and welcoming inns in its steep winding streets

Spotted by Ray Levitt

Government funded opportunities for learning are designed around working life despite 'cradle to the grave' promises. This is about to change because of the success of U3A's informal learning example and our representation on the committee that produced the white paper 'The Learning Revolution' published in March 09. Every U3A group should have received two copies of 'Time to learn' produced by the U3A Trust. Local authorities are being asked to make rooms available and Museums and archives to be accessible. The aim is to build a National culture around self organised learning.

Finally there are now 229,000 U3A members nationally and 30 new groups in the offing. In Edinburgh I felt privileged to be a member so thank you Beryl and all those founding and succeeding hard working committee members who keep Maldon U3A flourishing.

A full account of the conference is on the U3A website - www.u3a.org.uk
Websites to explore - <http://ageaction.ncl.ac.uk>.

For cognitive ageing - i.deary@ed.ac.uk

Books to read; 'The Time of Our Lives' by Tom Kirkwood. 'The Private life of the Brain' and 'ID in the 21st Century' by Susan Greenfield.

Wendy Mulville

Quiz Night 24th September

Nine teams took part in a very enjoyable quiz.

The team I was on did well until we got to the rounds on British Royalty and Sport, unfortunately we were not allowed to phone a friend for help. We especially enjoyed the round entitled "Who is it?" when we listened to famous people singing or talking. Do you know what an octothorpe is? I didn't, but I do now, it is the hash key on a telephone key pad.

It was very nice to welcome new members to the evening even though the winning team was made up of six of them.

Our thanks to Question Master Dorothy Denmark, computer whizz Michael Blackwell and question setter Theresa Byles for such an enjoyable evening.
RC

Nautical Notes from the South Coast

Friday 11th September. After an early start, and a good journey, we arrived at the RNLI College, Poole: - a unique venue for conferences, training, dining, and team building, for RNLI members. Opened by the Queen in 2004, the College forms part of the RNLI complex.

After a very nice lunch, we were introduced to Business Manager Graham Turner, and his colleague for our conducted tour. The crew were appointed and we set off towards the burning tanker. The weather deteriorated, with huge waves, heavy rain, and decreasing light. Guided by an overhead helicopter, we were trying to rescue people in the water and a liferaft, at the same time avoiding an approaching tanker, a yacht, and even a submarine. The lights went up, and we filed out, with unsteady gait, and feeling slightly queasy. We had been on the simulator for a virtual reality experience of what a lifeboat crew could face any day.

We saw the sea survival pool, and watched a short film, to show how crew are trained for all eventualities at sea, and passed a fully equipped classroom where equally important lectures are held.

The two storey Riggers Restaurant and Bar is an all glass round affair with an interesting central support column bound entirely with rope, and 60 well appointed bedrooms are available to RNLI volunteers, supporters, and conference delegates.

A visit to the newly unveiled RNLI Memorial concluded our very interesting tour before we set off for Bournemouth and a short stroll on the promenade before dinner.

Saturday 12th September. We are looking for the Waverley amidst the bunting, masts and marquees of the Southampton Boat Show, and there she is:- with her familiar black, white and red twin funnels:- the last sea going paddle steamer in the world. Built in 1946 and last refitted in 2002, passengers have access to three decks, and we can view the engine room where huge piston rods turn paddle wheels, 18ft. in diameter, to give the Waverley a cruising speed of 14 knots.

Passing the Spinnaker building of Portsmouth Harbour to collect more passengers, we had a wonderful view of HMS Warrior, Victory, Aircraft Carriers Illustrious and Ark Royal, Frigates and Destroyers, including the latest stealth Destroyer the Daring. Collecting even more passengers from Yarmouth I.O.W. we eventually left at 1500 for our round the Island trip of 60 miles with running commentary.

The contrasting colours of the coastline really stood out in the afternoon sunshine and we had wonderful views of The Needles before passing on to St Catherine's Point, Ventnor and Bembridge where they are building a new RNLI Lifeboat Station. Approaching Yarmouth in the early evening we passed the Independence of the Seas, currently the largest cruise ship. We had dinner on board, then steamed back to Southampton, watching a glorious sunset, and a distant firework display. The twinkling lights of Southampton Harbour greeted our return, after a long but very memorable trip.

Sunday 13th September. Our Blue Badge guide, Jake, gave us a comprehensive coach tour of Southampton and the surroundings area, pointing out medieval walls which can still be walked. Little else remains of the pre-war city, but redevelopment is ongoing, most recently at West Quay and Ocean Village Marina. Known as the "green city" Southampton has several city centre parks, where memorials to the engineers and musicians of the Titanic can be seen. In fact, one third of those who died came from the Southampton area, including Captain John Smith and Jack Dawson.

Once the home of the Spitfire and Thornycroft Shipbuilding, the University Campus and NHS Trust are now major employers. Across the Itchen Bridge at Netley, the chapel alone survives the Military Hospital from WW1, which covered a distance of ½ mile, end to end.

After lunch there was time for a Harbour cruise on the Blue Funnel Catamaran, Ashleigh R. With much of the ferry work now moved to Portsmouth, Southampton concentrates on Carriers, Containers and Cruise ships, but the credit crunch has taken its toll, and several vessels lay idle. Cruise ships arrive frequently, and we had a close view of the "Oriana". Fruit and flour continue to be imported and huge cranes deal with container ships that line the quay. On the west side is the former site for constructing the Mulberry Harbour and Pluto Line used in WW II.

All too soon, it was time for our return to Maldon, and our ever punctual driver, Daz, ensured we arrived on schedule. Our sincere thanks to Malcolm and Rosemary, for arranging such an interesting 3 day Maritime trip.

Sylvia Cousins



Lunch on board the "Waverley"



RNLI Training School



Inshore Lifeboat



HMS Warrior