



Maldon and District

Newsletter



April 2024

www.maldonu3a.co.uk

Registered Charity 1086182

FROM THE CHAIR

We have now passed the Ides of March, Easter, April Fool's Day, and the end of the tax year on 5th April. This last date is rather odd but nevertheless interesting. In 1752 the 2nd September was followed by 14th September as the Protestants had for many years resisted a change in the calendar made by the Roman Catholics. There was rioting as some folk thought their lifespan of threescore years and ten had been reduced by 11 days. Others objected to paying a full year's tax on 354 days' income. I would too. So, the tax year was extended to end on 5th April rather than 24th March. Previously the tax year had started on Lady Day, 25th March.



Our state pensions also increase on 6th April, and I always check that the increases are correct and have been "triple-locked". Last year, as perhaps many of you will have experienced, I was awarded an extra 25p per week having exceeded the normal lifespan by 10 years. This was accompanied by a letter asking if I wished to appeal against the decision to give me this increase. I could have asked for a Mandatory Reconsideration and received a Mandatory Reconsideration Notice. This process seemed to me to be more suitable for 1st April but at least it shows the attitude of our political masters towards our generation.

Well, what has this do with the u3a, except that no doubt most of our members receive a state pension? Not much perhaps but at least a bit.

We are a charity, and our main aim is the "advancement of education". This is recognised by the Charity Commission and so our subscriptions can be Gift-Aided. For taxpayers this means that, for every £20 paid to the u3a, the u3a can claim £5 from HMRC. This is an important element of our income.

The bad news is that because of the increase in State Pensions and the

current tax regime, many will be paying tax for the first time. The good news is that they will also be able to Gift-Aid their contributions to the u3a for the first time.

Ken Hazell

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our new members:

Janet Jarvis	Geraldine Brannon	Caroline Parker
Anthony Sinclair	Stephen Collis	Gary Wray
Paul Saunders	Dr Keith Wood	Christine Wood

Reminder

Don't forget that there are many on-line learning events on the national u3a website. Zoom talks currently listed include: the Road to Clean Water: Beginnings of a sewage system in Victorian London ; live Cookery Demonstrations and a chance to join an on-line quiz

Just click on the link on our web page



The Silver Line is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

0800 4708090 www.thesilverline.org.uk

MONTHLY MEETING

Monday 20th May

Wickham Bishops Hall

Doors open at 1.15pm for 1.45pm start

Tea/coffee are available prior to the start of the meeting

Speaker: Richard Pusey

Medical history on our doorstep

Richard's talk describes the devastation smallpox had on the population of Georgian England and outlines how Daniel Sutton developed inoculation at Ingatestone. It goes on to talk about leprosy and local leper colonies including the very last in the UK at Bicknacre, which continued into the 21st century.

The obstetric forceps were developed by Essex men whose house is still standing and a famous Chelmsford doctor was the first to develop laryngeal intubation.

Why were bladder stones common in the 17/18th centuries? The talk will tell you why and describes how they were removed along with lots of other interesting local medical stories.

Please remember your membership card

MONTHLY SPEAKER SCHEDULE 2024

<p>17th June</p>	<p>Cherish Watton</p>	<p>The Women's Land Army</p> <p>The history of the WLA. Over 200,000 land girls worked in the WLA from June 1939 until November 1950, many based in our surrounding areas.</p>
<p>15th July</p>	<p>Social Event Afternoon Tea</p>	<p>Strawberries, scones, jam & cream and more.</p> <p>Musical entertainment by the Purleigh Philharmonic !</p>
<p>19th August</p>	<p>Prof. Stephen Brown</p>	<p>CHASE Africa</p> <p>Prof. Brown, a Trustee, will talk to us about the work of this charity to support partner organisations in Africa that enable access to family planning, healthcare and rights, whilst protecting the environment and building resilience to climate change.</p>
<p>16th September</p>	<p>Eve Regelous</p>	<p>Everything Strictly</p> <p>A glittering journey starting back in the '50s when <i>Come Dancing</i> and formation dancing was at the fore up to the latest series of <i>Strictly Come Dancing</i>. Behind the scenes information on a TV favourite.</p>
<p>21st October</p>	<p>AGM Andrew Wiltshire</p>	<p>Fungi & Flagstaffs</p> <p>The fascinating connections between Beatrix Potter, Kew Gardens and mycology</p>

18th November	Tim Turner	Going, going, gone A history of auctions. Tim returns to delight us with this history of the world of auctions.
16th December	Christmas Entertainment	Details to follow

If you know of any speakers that you can recommend please contact our

Speaker Secretary: Theresa Byles

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

It is 71 years since the Great British Storm of 31st January, 1953. Some of us can remember it, and there are several detailed accounts, with one book running to over 800 pages.

For our talk on 25th March, emphasis was given to three events which combined to cause such devastation:

- the full Moon and very high tides,
- the low atmospheric pressure system from across the Atlantic,
- very strong winds coming down from the Arctic.

The resulting tidal surge coming down the North Sea rose five metres above its average level, and was caused by strong northerly winds at high tide forcing an exceptionally large volume of water down the North/South axis of the North Sea into an ever narrowing space. This caused large scale flooding down the east coast of the UK, especially where sea wall defences had been breached

In Essex, the worst affected places were Canvey Island and Jaywick, with serious loss of life, adding to the UK total of over 300. Mersea Island was totally cut off, whilst in Southend the tide rose to 12 inches below the pier, and the Thames rose to unprecedented levels.

Maldon remained relatively unscathed, although the Bathing Lake on the Prom, empty at the time, filled up and overflowed in 12 minutes, and there was flooding at Fullbridge. Heybridge experienced extensive flooding, especially at the Basin, along Goldhanger Road and up to the Causeway. The local WVS did a sterling job in providing sandwiches and tea to the people rescued from their homes, and their services were Nationally recognized.

So, there in one afternoon of u3a, we had Astronomy, Meteorology, Geology and Local History! Value for money indeed!!

There will be no April meeting at the Town Hall as we have our outing to the Military Museum in Station Road, Maldon. For those who have booked please be at the Museum promptly at 2p.m. on **Wednesday 24th April** for our guided tour.

There is also no meeting on **27th May** as this is a BANK HOLIDAY.

Our next meeting at the Town Hall in on **Monday 24th June** at 2p.m. when our speaker will be Max Fox for his talk on Roman Colchester.

Meanwhile enjoy your visit to the Military Museum and keep an eye on the weather forecast!!

Kathy and Sylvia

STROLLERS SUNDAY

Our morning's walk on 17th March at North Fambridge was enjoyed by all despite the weather and the mud, followed by Sunday lunch at the River Breeze cafe and bar at the Yacht Harbour.

Jane Cox



The weather thought it had beaten us when we were first to challenge the elements in February. However, not so much the weather as poor drainage, the ford was clear, but a section of road and fields were flooded.

The Strollers are a resilient bunch and **Sunday 21st April** sees us off on a flat stroll with no steps or stiles. The stroll is similar to a stroll last year with most of the walk on hard standing. Hopefully we will see little or no traffic. We will meet at **10.00** at a lay-by opposite the playing fields at CM3 2LU, Ulting Road. We will walk along Ulting Road, then along Nounsley Road until we cross the river Ter by way of a ford. The walk continues on minor roads where we can take a breather as and when required. The last section of the walk depending on conditions will be across country, but we will carry out an inspection closer to the date. The walk depending on which App or gizmo you are using is approximately 4 miles and 11,000 steps and 2-3 hours.

Mervyn

Our May walk will take place on **Sunday 19th May** in Terling. It will start and finish at the Rayleigh Arms in Terling, CM3 2PW, where we will have lunch. The meeting time is **10.15** for a 10.30 start.

We haven't yet tested this walk so cannot give more details at the present time but will pass on more information nearer the time. To get an idea of numbers, can you please let us know if you will be joining us and whether you would like to book lunch after the walk.

Janet and Jenny

Future dates for the Sunday Strollers group are: 16th June, 21st July, 18th August, 15th Sept, 20th October, 17th Nov.

STROLLERS TOO

The weather brightened, the rain stopped, and eight Strollers Too members had a lovely 4 mile circular stroll around Danbury Common on 26th March.

We set off from The Cricketers Arms down a gentle slope to



the ford at the bottom of Sporham's Lane. A footbridge avoided the need to paddle, and we continued along the road until turning into a field from which another bridge helped us back across the stream and another field.



After a short distance we made our way through a gateway into Danbury Country Park, passing three lakes which brought back happy memories for some of having played with children (and grandchildren) in the woods nearby. After a brief stop to watch the ducks, and a second

photo opportunity the last part of the walk took us through woodland, and a path between houses to arrive at the Parish Church of St John The Baptist, and then onto the ridge with stunning views towards the south and Hanningfield Reservoir in the distance.



More importantly, we could see the pub sign, rocking in the gentle breeze about 400 yards ahead below us, and arrived at 12.30 to a delicious lunch, which completed a great morning out in super company.

John and Val Stealey

Our next walk is **Tuesday 23rd April**. Starting and finishing at the Beehive Pub in Great Waltham, CM3 1ES at 10.15 for a 10.30 start.

There is only a small car park, so we may need to double park.

It is a circular walk along part of the Essex Way, towards Pleshey and back.

Due to recent weather conditions, walking boots or wellingtons are essential.

Please let us know by 15th April if you intend to walk and if you would like lunch. (the menu is available from us on request as the pub has no website)

Steven & Muriel Clarke

Future dates for the Tuesday Strollers group are: 28th May, 25th June, 23rd July, 27th August, 24th Sept, 22nd October, 26th Nov.

THE BIG BALTI

The next curry night will be held on **Monday 27th May** at the Balti Bhujon restaurant, Mill Road, Maldon. 6.30ish start.

To add your name to the list please contact:

Graham Evans

Bob Gowers

GARDEN GROUP

Our trip to RHS Wisley on 21st March coincided with one of the few sunny days of that month.

The gardens looked splendid in the sunshine and the cherry blossom and many other flowering shrubs had made an early appearance.



Our visit in April will be on **Friday 26th** at 11.00 to Bucklers Farmhouse, Coggeshall. The list of attendees is now closed.

Our future visits include:

Tuesday 14th May, 2pm — Furzelea, Danbury. £10 pp inc. tea/coffee & cake

Tuesday 18th June, 2pm — Blunts Hall, Witham. £11 pp inc. tea/coffee & cake.

There are a few places still available on the above visits. Please contact Theresa to add your name to the lists and, if you haven't paid yet, please bring your cheque books to the monthly meeting.



Tuesday 9th July, 2pm — Keeway, Creeksea, nr Burnham

Tuesday 30th July, 2pm— Kamala, Hawkwell

Information and details of these and further visits will be provided in next month's newsletter

Theresa Byles

Kris Taylor

Trip to Bressingham Gardens—Wed 24 July

We are hoping to join forces again with the Aviation group, this time for a trip to Suffolk. The aviators are going to a museum in Flixton which also makes it possible for a visit to Bressingham Gardens.

The cost per person for the coach is £26. If we make a group booking for Bressingham, that will be an additional £8.50 each plus £1 if a guided garden tour is required. If you also want to visit the Steam Museum and ride the Galloper that is an extra £5 each.

The Bressingham Gardens cover 16 acres in total. More details can be found on <https://www.thebressinghamgardens.com/visit-us/>

There is an on-site café and visitors can take their own picnics.

At this stage we are just asking **for firm expressions of interest**. We need to see if a sufficient number of members put their names down to make this trip viable.

This trip is open to all Maldon & District u3a members.

Please make your interest known by email to either Theresa or Kris, or at the April monthly meeting.

MARITIME GROUP

- Monday 6th May Bank Holiday No meeting
- Monday 3rd June Talk by Malcolm & Rosemary Case on the *Irrawaddy river in Myanmar*, from its source to the Andaman Sea.
- Monday 1st July Talk by Linda Cook on the **History of the RNLI**. Beginning with its founding up to present day with some of the developments along the way. Looking at the Southend lifeboats and the work that they do, moving onto examples of rescues around the coast, focusing on the Tower lifeboat station in London. Finally, some information about the training given to crew members and the facilities at Poole.
- Monday 5th August Trip to **Sutton Hoo**, Woodbridge. For details on this trip please contact Malcolm Case.
- Monday 2nd September Trip to **Chatham Dockyard** to see the RNLI 200 display together with visits to the various attractions in the Dockyard, including the National Maritime Museum models.
- Cost pp is £40 including coach and entry. Please bring your cheque to the monthly meeting. For details on this trip, please contact Malcolm Case.
- Monday 7th October Talk by Gordon Davies on **Emigration 1850 style**. In the 1850s over a third of a million people left the UK for a new life in

Australasia, travelling there by sailing ship on a voyage likely to take 3 or 4 months. Who went? Why? What were their experiences en route? What support did they have?

Monday 4th November Talk over Zoom by Roger Butler, with a colourful introduction to all aspects of **Waterway Heritage**. Roger will include fascinating engineering and architecture, historic boats, and plenty of unusual landmarks. He will also weave in some archive images as well as important contemporary features such as the Falkirk Wheel in Scotland. Aspects include grand warehouses and quirky cottages, tall lock flights and sweeping aqueducts, deep tunnels and a vast array of bridges and even tiny bollards. Many such buildings and structures still reflect the work of the original distinctive canal companies, including of course, the famous Roses and Castles canal boat artwork.

Monday 2nd December Talk by Julie Hobby and Chaplain Ruth on the work of the **Seafarers' Centre**, Tilbury. The talk will cover all aspects of their work for seafarers and will include details on how your donations to the centre are used. The talk will be followed by some Christmas cheer, nibbles and discussion on our 2025 programme.

FILM GROUP

For the first time everyone agreed on the two films which were under review at our last meeting. One being excellent, the other one a complete dud.

Official Secrets was well received, and all thought it was very good. This was despite some of us having reservations about so called whistleblowers who have also signed the Official Secrets Act, but sometimes the need to act when faced with a perceived wrongdoing is too great a burden to take on. The film covered events leading up to the Iraq War and the prosecution of Katherine Gunn. Keira Knightley as Gunn, alongside Matt Smith and Ralph Fiennes were all brilliant. Score: 9

However, **Food for Ravens** was just awful. Confusing, difficult to follow and tedious. Brian Cox as Aneurin Bevan was not good, with his Welsh accent competing with his native Scots unsuccessfully. There was so much more that could have been done with the story of Bevan's last days, but this film did not achieve any of it. Score: 2

Next time:

Wildlife – a 2018 drama starring Carey Mulligan, Jake Gyllenhaal, Ed Oxenbould and Bill Camp. In 1960, Jeannette and Jerry Brinson have recently moved to Great Falls, Montana, with their teenage son Joe. When the father loses his job unfairly, Joe takes on firefighting in the hills. It received good reviews and praise for exceptional acting.

Available on BBC iPlayer for over a year.

The Mule – a 2018 crime drama starring and directed by Clint Eastwood. A 90 year old horticulturist and Korean War veteran turns drug mule for a Mexican cartel. The screenplay, written by Nick Schenck, is based on the 2014 New York Times article "The Sinaloa Cartel's 90-year-old Drug Mule" by Sam Dolnick.

Available on BBC iPlayer until 22nd April.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday **24th April**, 7.30pm via Zoom. Get in touch if you would like to join us.

Shirley Macro

Did we ever think that

Having watched Sean Connery's James Bond strapped to a table in *Goldfinger*, we would voluntarily submit to lasers invading our eyes?

The phone would evolve from being the black behemoth in the hall, into a bafflingly ingenious portable sliver that could do everything?

A pandemic would result in unprecedented lockdowns around the world, over two years, preventing all socialising and necessitating 'working from home'?

Extract from *The Oldie* magazine

POETRY GROUP

The next meeting of the group is on **Thursday 2nd May** at **2:00 pm** and meeting in a member's house. The poetry for discussion this month is **Spring**. Several poets have written poems about Spring – Thomas Gray, Thomas Nashe, William Wordsworth, Gerald Manly Hopkins to name but a few.

Jo Robson

Tai Chi I am the group coordinator for Tai Chi classes which are held on **Monday** afternoons **2-4pm** at West Maldon Community Centre. All Maldon group members are welcome.

Peter Harden

BIRD WATCHING GROUP

Visit to Hanningfield reservoir

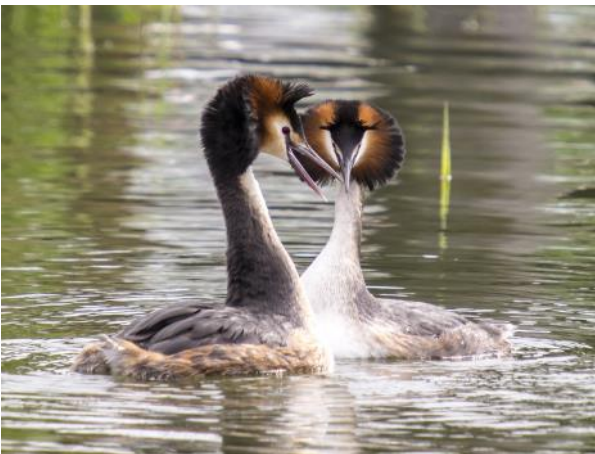
With the breeding season well under way, some birds are keeping a low profile, thereby avoiding predators – and the gaze of birdwatchers.

But not birds like the red crested pochard (pictured), with the males now resplendent in their seasonal plumage. When seven members visited the reservoir reserve on a bright and very breezy Sunday morning, three males could be seen out on the water among a variety of other waterfowl.



This large diving duck – bigger than a 'standard' pochard at 55cm – was thought to be a rare winter visitor, though there are now resident populations around the UK, including escapees from captive collections. A report from the Rare Breeding Birds Panel last year said they are increasing. Of the 22 species assessed, it is the most abundant with 67 pairs reported in one year.

More common great crested grebes (pictured) also put in an appearance. These elegant divers have decorative head plumes and fur-



like breast feathers for which they were almost hunted to extinction in the 19th century in the name of women's fashion. The bird was saved by early conservation laws and the digging of gravel pits and reservoirs.

Though we saw several

on the water, we were not lucky enough to see their distinctive courtship display in which they rise out of the water and shake their heads at each other. Prospective partners are sometimes offered pieces of water weed, perhaps their equivalent of a box of chocolates!

As we made our way back the visitor centre we stopped at a pond where a pair of Egyptian geese, introduced from Africa as ornamental waterfowl, were tending some 11 goslings, a real scene of spring.

Mike Bagshaw

Peter Gaywood

The group's next outing is to Fingringhoe on **Saturday 4th May**, meeting **10am** in the car park.

NB All rendezvous times 10am unless otherwise stated. For details of locations or car shares please contact the coordinators

Birdwatching Group Programme 2024

1st June	Minsmere Reserve	Meet at 11.00 in the car Visitor Centre car park
7th July	Tollesbury	Meet in Woodrolfe Road car park
August	No meeting	
7th September	Maldon Prom	Meet by Rossi's Kiosk
6th October	Heybridge Basin	Meet in the car park
2nd November	Walton on the Naze	Meet in the Visitor Centre car park
1st December	Hanningfield Reservoir	Meet in the Visitor Centre car park

ENGINEERING & INVENTIONS GROUP

New group

In this group, I will show one each from three series of lectures produced by *The Great Courses*. They are:

- a) understanding the world's greatest structures: Science and Innovation from antiquity to modernity,
- b) understanding the inventions that changed the world,
- c) epic engineering failures and the lessons they teach.

There are between 24 and 36 lectures in each series, so it will keep us going for a year before possibly moving on to other series. The lecturer for the first and third topics is particularly outstanding. He uses a number of home-made models to explain and demonstrate the engineering principles.

The Inventions series (by a different professor) looks much wider to inventions in many different aspects of life in a chronological sequence. The Epic Engineering Failures series, while mostly civil engineering structures, also includes other notable failures, including the Boeing 737MAX.

The meetings will be held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month starting at 2pm at my house in Danbury. Our first meeting is **Tuesday 16th April**. If you are interested please email me and I will send you more information

Tony Groves

SOCIAL ORGANISING GROUP



Tuesday April 23rd is

ST GEORGE'S DAY

Come and join in our celebration lunch

at Blackwater Sailing Club,

Basin Road, Heybridge CM9 4SD

12.30 for 1 o'clock

Spud and Pud lunch

followed by a light hearted after-lunch talk

celebrating our Patron Saint

Don't forget to bring you cutlery, plate, bowl and cup

Drinks will be available from the Sailing Club's pay bar

(you are not permitted to bring your own drinks)

Tickets £15, available from Rosemary Case

CROQUET GROUP



It's time to start thinking about those summer sports. The Croquet group's first game is scheduled for **Wednesday 17th April** from 2—4pm. Croquet is competitive yet sociable, enjoyable, active and healthy.

Regular players of the group will be contacted in early April but new members are welcome. Why not come along and have a go. The group meets on the **1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoons** from April until October. There is a charge of £7.00 for the use of equipment and we plan to provide a drink at the end of play. Please note that shoes with flat soles and no heels must be worn and your toes should be covered, so no sandals please.

Maldon & District u3a play with the kind permission of Maldon Croquet Club on the Club lawns at Hatfield Peverel Bowling Club, the Keith Bigden Memorial Ground, Wickham Bishops Road, Hatfield Peverel, CM3 2JL.

If you would like more information, or would like to come along and give it a try, please contact one of the u3a co-ordinators.

Geoff and Shirley Macro

PETANQUE GROUP



It's time to dust the cobwebs off those Petanque balls and head to the Petanque pitch on Maldon Prom on a Thursday afternoon for a couple of hours or so of fun. New players are always welcome to come and give it a try, so why not come along and have a go. The group meets **Thursday afternoons** start time 2.00 p.m. until around 4.00 p.m.

We play on the Petanque pitch opposite the Marine Lake at the Promenade Park, Park Drive, Maldon CM9 5JQ.

No charge is made to play but you must be a member of Maldon & District u3a or one of the Maldon u3a cluster groups.

Car parking is available at the park, but please note that Maldon District Council make a charge. There are usually parking spaces available in Park Drive.

We may be able to loan you some boules to get you started to see if you like it, but you will need to purchase some of your own to play regularly.

We only play if the weather is dry. The season is April to October.

For more details please contact:

Jack Veash

Geoff Macro

AVIATION GROUP

Hello everyone,

It seems an age ago on 21st March that we were enjoying the warm Spring sunshine at the Brooklands Aviation and Motor Museum at Weybridge—it feels like it's been raining ever since!



An excellent day starting with a guided tour of the main features of the museum. Most of us have heard of the incredible Barnes Wallis connection to Brooklands but an amazing connection to Barbara Cartland was new to me!



In the 1930s she was an accomplished powered aircraft and glider pilot based at Brooklands and in that time pioneered the use of an aircraft tow to extend a gliders flight time, techniques which were fined tuned during WW2 to facilitate

airborne troops to be carried into battle such as at D Day and Arnhem.



Excellent photos courtesy of Nikki Izzard

This Month, on **Friday 26th April** , we will have an illustrated talk by Andy Strange about the RAF 'Special Duties' Service and the SOE (Special Operations Executive) – the part they played in Allied support of the Resistance organisations during WW2 delivering and picking up SOE agents, dropping war supplies by parachute and occasionally mounting special bombing and intruder operations against specific targets.

Flying from top secret RAF bases in England from the very early part of the war, by night, they became known as the 'Moonlight' Squadrons. They also supported the 'Lines' system – the system of safe houses and contacts who helped some 5,000 shot down Allied airmen to escape and return to England.



The SD Squadrons and SOE were shadowy and highly secretive organisations. Little was known of their activities until many decades after the end of the war. Their

stories and the RAF airmen who supported them, is one of great bravery, fortitude, and great danger peppered with betrayals and some spectacular operational successes.

Chris Samson

AVIATION GROUP PROGRAMME 2024

Looking ahead to May; Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome are hosting a WINGS & WHEELS show on **Sunday 26th May**.

Five of the Aviation Group are taking Classic Cars to the event and will be grouped together, so we have a base for all to come and picnic and enjoy! More info on the event at Stow can be found on <https://www.stowmaries.org.uk/event/wings-and-wheels-2024-787496241457>

Booking for the event is via <https://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events>
This would be a great family day out with much to see, bring a picnic, and enjoy!

Friday 21st June

A **Show & Tell meeting** in Woodham Mortimer village hall. Members are invited to bring items of aviation or related interest, ideally having a family connection and relate their story. Family memorabilia, parts of aircraft etc.

Wednesday 24th July

A **visit to Norfolk & Suffolk air museum** at Flixton, Suffolk. A superb small museum with many interesting exhibits. More info on www.aviationmuseum.net
The plan is to use the 16-seater Community 360 minibus driven by our own David Gillespie; cost for the transport is £18 pp and entry to the museum is free but donations are appreciated. However, we may team up with Gardens and use a coach if the numbers are achievable.

Let me know if you are interested and I will start a booking list

JUST JAZZ GROUP



David and I are most grateful for the new music fans coming along to our meetings.

Our next meeting is **Monday 15th April** from **7.30—9.30pm**, in the Little Ship Club, Hythe Quay, Maldon . The bar will be open so pop in for a drink, some music and a chat. We look forward to seeing you.

Pete Condon

David Coombes

TENPIN BOWLING

Do you fancy a chat and a cup of coffee with some tenpin bowling thrown in? The bowling, although it is good exercise and a chance to improve your coordination skills, it is not the main reason for coming. In fact, when the group was originally envisaged more than 20 years ago it was as a social group to meet for coffee with the bowling an added extra., and that has remained the case. A good morning is not necessarily a high score, but did you enjoy yourself?



We play every Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 09.45 – 12 noon at Madison Heights, Park Drive, Maldon.

If you are interested, please contact:

Alan Buck

David Coombes

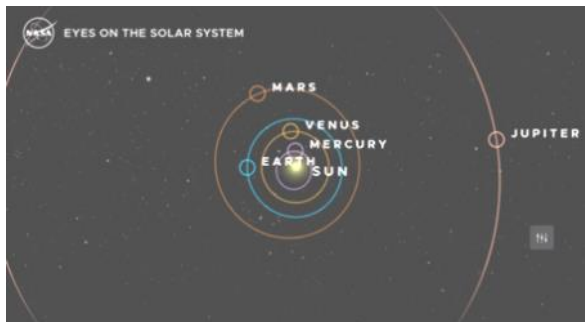
ASTRONOMY GROUP

Our next meeting is on **Monday 22nd April**, starting at 7:30 pm at Chigboro Fishing Club, Chigborough Road, Heybridge. Weather permitting, we will be night sky observing. If overcast, then there will be a presentation and discussion on the nature and scale of the cosmos by Patrick Forsyth.

We are now planning a visit to the **Greenwich Observatory** on **24th June**; this will include a visit to the Planetarium, for more details please contact Malcolm Case.



As darkness falls this month, the constellation of Ursa Major (the Great Bear) can be seen climbing high in the southeast. Look for the distinctive brighter stars that form the 'plough' or 'big dipper' – these stars make up the back and tail of the Bear. Below Ursa Major is a constellation that arguably looks a little more like the creature it is named after. Records suggest that the lion-like pattern we now know as the constellation of Leo was recognised 6,000 years ago. It hosts some spectacular and fascinating stars that are millions of light-years beyond the edge of our galaxy. April is a great month to spot the rocky planets of our Solar System. Mercury orbits just 55 million kilometres (35 million miles) from the Sun, so it never appears far from it in our skies and is often hidden in the glare of sunrise or sunset. This month, Mercury reaches 'greatest elongation', meaning it is furthest from the setting Sun and will be easier to spot low in the west around half an hour after the Sun sets.



Venus is also climbing higher into our evening skies. Look to the west around 11th April to see the brightest planet in our night sky appear to pass close to the Pleiades star cluster in the constellation of Taurus. Also, while Mars still shines in the constellation of Gemini, the outer planets are harder to spot this month. From our perspective on Earth, Jupiter passes directly behind the Sun on the opposite side of our Solar System this month, while Saturn has just re-emerged in the morning skies having done the same a few weeks ago.

The Moon has a couple of conjunctions with the brighter planets this month. On 22nd–23rd April, a 10% illuminated crescent moon will



appear close to Venus (and the Pleiades), while the evening of 25th April will see a 30% illuminated Moon setting in the west near to Mars. The Lyrids meteor shower – meteors, often called ‘shooting stars’, occur when small fragments of rock, dust and ice left in the wake of comets or asteroids, fall into our atmosphere, and burn up. This month brings the Lyrid meteor shower, which occurs as Earth passes through the material left behind the comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher. It's likely there will be an increased number of meteors visible throughout the second half of the month, with the peak of the shower expected to fall on 22nd – 23rd April. This coincides with the new Moon this month (where the Moon lies between the Sun and Earth) and without the glow of the Moon, it will be easier to spot more meteors.

Malcolm Case

Trip to Greenwich—Monday 24th June

The Astronomy members visit to the Greenwich Observatory could provide an opportunity for a general visit to the many Greenwich attractions: Cutty Sark, the National Maritime Museum, the Queen's House, etc. The cost per person for a coach would be £26.

At this stage we are just asking **for firm expressions of interest**. We need to see if a sufficient number of members put their names down to make this trip viable. This trip is open to all Maldon & District u3a members.

Please make your interest known to Malcolm Case or at the April monthly meeting.

GERMAN CONVERSATION

Our meetings are held on alternate **Tuesdays** from **2–4pm** at my house in Wickham Bishops. Our April meetings are on **16th** and **30th**.

Please contact me prior to the meeting if you will be attending.

Howard Broadbridge

MAHJONG

Mahjong has vacancies for new members. We are a small , very friendly group that meet every other Friday in the Linton Room, West Maldon Community Centre.

If you haven't played Mahjong before we are very happy to teach you.

Our next meeting is **Friday 12th April** at the new time of **2–4pm**

For more information, please contact Mags Pell.

PADEL TENNIS GROUP

The session is every **Wednesday** from **2.30 to 4pm** at Padel United, Park Drive Health Club, Maldon. There are three indoor courts plus an outdoor court, and we normally have the use of two courts. We cater for between 3 and 10 members without anyone having to sit out for more than a few minutes and things have gradually evolved such that we get just about the right number.

If anyone is interested in joining the Group or perhaps having a “taster” session, please contact me , Ken Hazell.

Possible new group—Car Enthusiasts

Several of our members have expressed an interest in forming a car enthusiasts group. Is this something that would interest you? Would you be willing to be a coordinator or perhaps share that position with someone else.

If the answer to any of the above is yes, please contact Carol Bates.



Committee members

We continue to look for volunteers to join our committee. Would you be willing to spend a couple of hours a month to attend committee meetings and to assist at monthly meetings ?

Please give this some thought and contact one of our committee members if you feel you could help. Thank you.

RUSSIAN CONVERSATION

One of our members, Irina Vahonina, is Russian and she has started a Russian language activity group. She also speaks Polish, so she is also able to teach that. The emphasis is on conversational language—beginners are welcome.

If you would like to expand your knowledge of foreign languages please contact Irina for more information..

Maldon u3a Publicity

Irina Vahonina and Andy Simmonds are our new publicity coordinators and are making good progress in spreading the word about our u3a and promoting the many benefits that joining can bring.

Our webmaster, Tony Groves, launched a page on **Facebook** with links to our website , and this will provide us with the opportunity to promote some of our groups and activities to a wider audience.

For those of you familiar with Facebook please take the time to look at our page, [Maldon U3A](#), and like it, follow it or comment.

FROM THE EDITOR



Thank you for your contributions, please keep them coming and don't forget to include your photographs. The deadline for the next issue is Monday 6th May.

Kris

YOUR COMMITTEE

Chairman	Ken Hazell
Vice Chairman	Alec Fraser
Business Secretary	
Treasurer	Steven Clarke
Membership Secretary	Malcolm Case
Newsletter Editor	Kris Taylor
Minutes & Speaker Secretary	Theresa Byles
Groups Coordinator	Malcolm Case
Committee	Andy Simmonds Carol Bates

Trustee	Geoff Cory
Webmaster	Tony Groves
Social Group	Michael Childs

Contact the u3a Office

u3a
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Email: info@u3a.org.uk
www.u3a.org.uk

GROUP CO-ORDINATORS

Art Appreciation	Judith Johnston Andy Simmonds
Aviation	Chris Samson
Astronomy	Malcolm Case
Balti Night	Bob Gowers Graham Evans
Bird Watching	Peter Gaywood Michael Bagshaw
Bridge	Gill Cory
Canasta	Iris Slaney
Cribbage	Pat Clements
Croquet	Geoff Macro Shirley Macro
Discussion	Pat Jones
Engineering	Tony Groves
Film Club	Shirley Macro
French Conversation	Ann Lester
Garden Visits	Theresa Byles Kris Taylor
Geology	Sylvia Cousins
German	Howard Broadbridge
Handicraft	Marian Manning Brenda Heal
History— Victorians	Kathy Goff

Just Jazz	Peter Condon David Coombes
Local History	Sylvia Cousins Kathy Goff
London Theatre Outings	Rosemary Case Sheila Childs
Meet & Eat	Joan Cummins
MahJong	Mags Pell
Maritime	Malcolm Case
Padel Tennis	Ken Hazell
Petanque (Boules)	Jack Veash Geoff Macro
Photography	Tony Groves
Poetry	Jo Robson
Publicity	Irina Vahonina Andy Simmonds
Reading Rummikub	Patrick Forsyth Janice Martin
Scottish Country Dancing	Diana Rogers
Sing for Pleasure	Sue Garnham
Strollers Sunday & Tuesday	Malcolm Case
Tenpin Bowling	Alan Buck David Coombes
Wine Circle No. 2	Graham Boswell
Wine Circle No. 3	Mary Burd
Wine Circle No. 4	Ann Goody
Writing for Fun	Patrick Forsyth

Comment on ***Third Age Matters***
via ***Patrick Forsyth***

Schedule of Events – May 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
		1 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Croquet Padel Tennis	2 Ten Pin Bowling Rummikub Petanque Poetry	3 Canasta	4 Bird Watching Fingringhoe	5
6 Bank Holiday	7 Engineering & Inventions	8 Ten Pin Bowling Meet & Eat Padel Tennis Art Appreciation	9 Ten Pin Bowling Royal History-Victorians Scottish Dancing Petanque French Conversation	10 Singing Mahjong	11	12
13 Handicrafts Discussion	14 German Garden Visit Furzelea	15 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Geology Padel Tennis Croquet Photography	16 Ten Pin Bowling Rummikub Petanque	17 Canasta	18	19 Strollers
20 Monthly Meeting Medical History on our doorstep Just Jazz	21 Engineering & Inventions	22 Ten Pin Bowling Writing Padel Tennis Wine Group	23 Ten Pin Bowling Scottish Dancing Petanque French Conversation Wine Group	24 Singing Cribbage Mahjong Reading	25	26 Aviation Wings & Wheels Stow Maries
27 Bank Holiday Curry Night	28 Strollers German Wine Group	29 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Padel Tennis Film	30 Ten Pin Bowling Petanque	31 Canasta		