Learn, Laugh, Live

MALDON AND DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

"Your Membership Renewals are now due by latest 30th April, please see page 3 for details"

April 2020

Reg. Charity No. 1086182

website: **www.maldonu3a.co.uk/**

FROM THE CHAIR

Well, what strange times we now find ourselves in! Here's hoping this finds you all well and not yet suffering from cabin fever.

I hope that you are managing to find ways to stay in touch with family and friends. There are many different formats to help with this. I have one daughter who lives just around the corner and another in Philadelphia and we do a shared FaceTime session, and this allows us to talk and see each other. There are other systems available depending on the type of equipment you have. Hopefully you have someone who can help with this but, if not, please give me a call and I'll try to assist.

I have also signed up for the U3A Trust's newsletter which comes via email, and it has some good suggestions on how to stay in touch. It's quite easy to sign up to by going onto their website, selecting newsletters and putting in your email details.
Of course, a telephone call to someone is one of the easiest ways to stay in touch. It doesn't have to be a long conversation but just to say hello and check all is well could be most welcome, especially to those members who find themselves living alone. The thing is, don't always wait for someone to call you – if you have a telephone number of someone from one of your groups, even if it's a person you don't know particularly well, give them a call. During this time of isolation just hearing another voice, other than that on the radio or television, is especially welcome. I have a few telephone numbers, listed below, of people willing to have a chat.

We will continue to produce the monthly newsletter, so any articles you might wish to contribute would be greatly appreciated. One member has made a good suggestion to keep us occupied – see in newsletter, and I'm sure there must be other ideas that can be shared. We could include articles covering your particular areas of interest, a quiz, poetry or maybe a short story, etc. We await to hear from you.
We will be limiting the number of newsletters printed and will only be sending out to those who do not have email and trust this doesn't cause too many problems. I know getting a printed copy is nicer but, obviously, not really possible at the present time.

The only other thing I really need to say now is, please, do renew your membership. I appreciate we are unable to meet at present, but we do need to keep ourselves going and be ready for when we can start meeting again. I think it will take us all sometime to readjust once this is over and our U3A will be a good starting point to get us back to enjoying our usual activities. Once we can meet again, the Committee will be able to discuss the possibility of pushing back the next membership year to allow for this break. Please use our website, www.maldonu3a, and complete the form. You can then pay online or send a cheque to Malcolm, just follow the instructions.
Bye now, keep well and safe.
Shirley Macro

Malcolm Case: Clare Urry:
Kathy Goff: Margot & Peter Bishop: Jo Robson: (particularly gardening & houseplant tips)

2020 - 2021 Subscription Renewals

Subscriptions: Are due by no later than the 30th April 2020. Please use our website MaldonU3A.co.uk and complete the forms under "Membership Renewal". If you are unable to do this, then renewal forms are available from the Membership Secretary. Each member must complete a separate form. **Annual subscription is £20.00 per person,** which can be paid by Bank Transfer into Barclays Bank, account name – **Maldon U3A; sort code 20-54 -30; Account number 53198995, the reference you use MUST be your forename and surname – with no space e.g. johnsmith**; or if you wish, you can still pay by cheque which should be made payable to **Maldon & District U3A .** The completed form(s) and payment must be made before the **30 April 2020.** We do not accept cash. **The forms and cheques MUST be returned to the Membership Secretary at 30 The Spinnaker, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford. CM3 5GL.**

Data Protection Law and Database: The Renewal forms are used to check our database, please tick the box on the form if your details are unchanged from your original renewal.

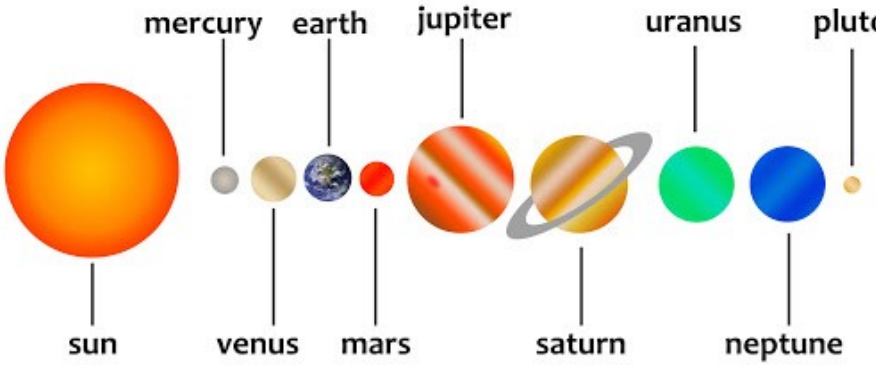
Emergency Contact: Where couples are both members, please avoid using each other as emergency contacts. Please also ensure that you have the consent to use the name and telephone number of the person/s named as your emergency contact.

Gift Aid: Please tick the "I want to Gift Aid" box on the form if you able to gift aid your subscription. Gift Aid operates on the basis that HM Revenue and Customs treat your subscriptions as charitable donations; they assume that you have deducted tax at the basic rate before you pay your subscriptions and HMRC refund this tax to our U3A. We would encourage members who pay more tax than the tax recoverable from their subscription, currently £5.00, to tick the box on the form. The tax refunds we receive form a significant part of our income and help us keep the annual subscription low.

DO IT NOW: You do not have to wait until the end of April.

Please send your forms (even if paying electronically renewal forms must be completed for each member and returned) and cheques to the Membership Secretary at the address given above. **Or use the website** M**aldonu3a.co.uk**. Cheques will not be banked before the **1st May 2020,** however if you pay by bank transfer then your account may be debited immediately. **Membership cards will be posted to you. If you have not renewed your subscription by the 1st May 2020 you will no longer be a member.**

A Bit of Astronomy Information on our Four Closest Neighbours in the Solar System



Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun in our Solar System. Because it is so close to the Sun, it is only observable in the early morning, just after sunrise, or at dusk. In fact, ancient Greek astronomers once believed Mercury was actually two separate objects. It usually appears as a bright "star" with a golden hue. As an evening star, appears in the western sky setting about an hour after the Sun; as a morning star, it appears in the eastern sky rising about an hour before the Sun.

Visible Mornings March 17–April 7, July 15–August 1, November 3–November 22 (brightest and easiest to spot)
Visible Evenings January 26–February 16 (brightest and easiest to spot), May 21–June 11, September 17–October 8

After the Moon, **Venus** is the brightest natural object in the night sky. It is both the Earth's closest neighbour in our Solar System and the planet most similar to Earth in size, gravity, and composition. We can't see the surface of Venus from Earth, because it is covered with thick clouds. Venus has the densest atmosphere of the four terrestrial planets (Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars), which consists mostly of carbon di-oxide. Venus is brightest either just before sunrise or just after sunset, which is why it is often called "the Morning Star" or "the Evening Star."

Visible Mornings June 13—December 31 (brightest July 10–August 13)
Visible Evenings January 1–May 24 (brightest – March 24 -April 26)

Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun in our Solar System. While it is not our nearest neighbour (Venus takes that honour), or the brightest planet in the night sky (also Venus), it is perhaps the planet that most inspires our imagination. Whether as home to "little green men" or as a future outpost for life from Earth, the planet figures heavily into science fiction books and movies. Mars is often called the "Red Planet" because it appears orange-red in the sky, and its surface material contains a lot of iron oxide. Iron looks black, but the element takes on a reddish tinge when it has been exposed to oxygen, i.e., "iron oxide."

Visible Mornings January 1–October 12 (brightest October 4–12)
Visible Evenings October 13–December 31 (brightest October 13–17)

There is a free programme that you can download onto your computer called "**Stellarium**", once downloaded you will need to set the time, date and place, with this done, the programme gives a detailed view of the night sky.

There is also a free App that you can download onto your mobile phone, it is called "**Star Tracker Lite**", this, once on your phone, is very easy to use, just point your phone at the night sky and it will immediately show you the stars/planets and constellations.

Malcolm Case

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

It looks as if we will be unable to do our usual social and educational activities for the next few months, and many of us will be isolated in some way. I would like to make a suggestion which may help to pass the time and keep your mind active.

Take a topic that you are interested in and use any means at your disposal (probably mainly your own books and the internet) to research it. Then write a short account which you could send around for the edification of everyone else. For an example, I am going to look into "methods of navigation from prehistoric times up to and including GPS". I would expect it will lead to about 10 - 20 pages, including lots of pictures.

If you do this, please go into a little more depth than Wikipedia, although that is excellent to get you started! My topic is quite wide ranging, so will not be at great depth. You may prefer to look at a smaller topic, but in much greater detail.

Alison Mainwood

MARITIME GROUP

Due to the current health situation and Government Advice, the Maritime meetings are cancelled; this also includes the Monday 4th May and Monday 3rd August trips which have both been cancelled by the respective venues.

I am hopeful that we can resume our meetings in June at the Blackwater Sailing Club but I will of course let you know nearer the time.

The Maritime trip scheduled for **Monday October 5th** is currently still going ahead, any changes to this then I will advise you.
Please keep safe and well.
Malcolm Case

NO DATES IN MY CALENDAR!!

What can we do now????

Keep in contact with other U3A members

By phone, by email, by post

By Facebook/Facetime/Skype/Zoom/ WhatsApp etc. etc.

Share with us all how you are getting on, successes and failures with our wonderful technology……

Keep Learning…….Keep Laughing…. And Live the best we can…….

U3A

Learn, Laugh, Live

2020 CALENDAR—Likely Dates for your Diary

To be resumed when we can, watch this space

2020

1st October	U3A Awareness Day, Maldon Town Hall postponed from 3 June to 1st October 2020, which is also the International Day of Older Persons (!)
5th October	Maritime visit to Upnor Castle
29th October	Posh Frock Do at The Bull, Great Totham

A Quiz for Maldon U3A from the Maritime Group

This quiz does not require any maritime knowledge. The answers will be in next month's newsletter.
All the questions concern the east coast, between the Wash and Ramsgate, and a bit inland.

On literature

1. Buffaloes in Essex? Name the kitten.
2. His fictitious pier is a long way from the East Coast. Name the river.
3. He wanted to experience some real boxing. He should have chickened out when the heavyweight flew at him, but he didn't duck, and he was knocked out like a cold turkey. He survived to write a classic story based on the East Coast. Name the author.
4. A living author's story based on false news in the Blackwater estuary was a great success. Name the author. (Does she like cider?)
5. Could his death have been prevented by Ellen? Name the drowned man.
6. An author who wrote a journal which would look very relevant this year reported in another book that on one island in Essex a man had had twenty-five wives, and his son had had fourteen. Which author, which island and why so many wives?
7. The Secret Agent and Jim may have met Omar Khayyam here. (But the arrival of Gulliver in the following century has nothing to do with literature.) Which town?

Four on scientific things

8. The singer had a powerful voice, but it was almost magic that her version of 'Home, sweet home' was heard simultaneously in Persia and Newfoundland. In which town was she singing?
9. What connects the originator of the phrase "Big Bang" with Maldon?
10. Known also for his supply of milk to London, he was one of the most important scientists of the 19th century. Name him.
11. In a medical crisis a girl was fed a burger by her father. Name the river.

Historical geography

12. The UK Government had a diplomatic problem in 1978 after an attack by Dutch and German mercenaries in a form of rough justice. One father had to wait with bated breath for the outcome. Where was the incident? (And no, '1978' is not a misprint.)

13. Want some advice? Even if you want some food, stay away from the sisters and don't try to circumnavigate this island. Name the island.
14. This town was destroyed by fire in the 17th century. But, tally ho! with a wild hop we can be on the blackshore. Name the town.
15. The 12th century castle dominated the port. From the top of it, pagodas are visible, but you can no longer see the Blue Danube. Name the castle.
16. Employment in the town has involved busses, and then, much later, making buses. Name the place.
17. Once a major port, arguably once the seat of a kingdom, it has now lost many of its churches. But, as usual in places like this, people say that you can still hear the bells. Name the place.
18. If you wish to nose around this place, remember that there is no light here, and make it quick before the storms come back. Which place?
19. What the patients desired, but had volunteered to go without, was provided by the local fishermen. Name the island.

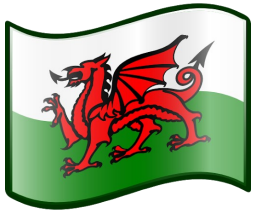
Some on war

20. He stole his lord's horse to escape an ill-judged fight. Who was his lord?
21. After sailing 115 nautical miles there was only a chain separating the admiral from his enemy. Unfortunately for the English, it was not enough. Name the river and the admiral.
22. This island has had a strong military history, but now the soldiers have all marched onwards. A fort was built here to protect the country from invasion, but it only saw action during the Civil War when its strategic position stopped supply ships from breaking the siege of the ancient town up-river. Name the island.
23. A Martello tower was built here. In the Second World War, this place defended the country very effectively with a chained dog, and later with Bloodhounds. Where is it?
24. Oh look! They drop it off the back and then have to get out of the way. (a) Name the island. (b) What were they doing?
25. In the Second World War they made furniture, window frames and torpedo boats. Who?
26. Labelled a Bad Thing in '1066 and all that', he upset his subjects so much that they shut him out of his castle. The first step to recapturing the castle was to burn the bridge, over which river?

by Gordon Davies

(The answers will be in next month's newsletter)

WELSH RHAPSODY



I'm a member of the choir, and we're doing the Messiah
In the Ebenezer Chapel in the dell;
But there's quite a spot of bother, what with one thing and another,
So, our practices aren't going very well.

We used to be quite good, and we always understood
That our singing brought the water to your eyes;
Our conductor used to reckon, if we went to Llanfairfechan,
We could carry off a trophy or a prize.

But Mrs. Elwyn Read, who always takes the lead,
Can't manage all her high notes anymore;
And when Idris, our conductor, informed her that he'd chucked 'er
She fell into hysterics on the floor.

Quite a few were on his side, for it cannot be denied
That her singing voice has quite gone off the boil:
But she had a lot of pals from among the older gals,
Who said they'd stick together and be loyal.

Then our Mr. Dylan Jones and the other baritones
Seem motivated by a strange desire;
They want to give us proof that they can raise the roof,
So, they drown out all the others in the choir.

Though the tenors and the basses also like to show their paces,
They moderate exuberance with tact;
It is quite an ordeal for us, in the Hallelujah Chorus,
When the ladies try to get in on the act.

Mrs. Price and Mrs. Evans are at sixes and at sevens,
And can't agree on any single thing;
The matter of the fact is, that they only come to practice
To argue with each other, not to sing.

Then there's little Dilys Morgan, who always plays the organ,
Who can hardly reach the pedals she's so small;
She causes palpitations when she changes combinations,
And her playing simply drives us up the wall.

In the Bull and in the Royal, where men gather after toil,
They talk about our business round the fire;
Saying what they'd like to do to more than one or two
To rectify our troubles in the choir.

Mr. Griffiths, Milk and Dairy, is circumspect and wary,
And offers no opinion as he drinks;
His sister and his wife take part in all the strife,
So, he cannot say in public what he thinks.

Our preacher, Mr. Powell, is for throwing in the towel,
Our behaviour he describes as mortal sin;
He reckons it's a scandal, the way we're treating Handel,
Suggesting that we turn the whole thing in.

So, I'm singing in the choir, and we're practising the Messiah,
In the Ebenezer Chapel, as I said;
But it's strange that as we grapple with our discords in the chapel
There's the message "Love Thy Neighbour" overhead!

Author unknown

From Bryan Urry

Rosemary's Blog

I am doing my best to stay positive during this horrendous Coronavirus epidemic, at times not easy.

They say (though I'm not sure who they are) be careful what you ask for .... I have joked for a long time that top of my Christmas list is a day a week that no one else knows I've got and then no one can say - Mum/Grandma/Rose/Rosemary can you... will you... shall we... or how about.... and I can please myself what I do. Well now I've got three months of days like that, the novelty has already worn off.

I know that Malcolm and I are extremely lucky, we have each other to talk to, have a home with a garden so we can get fresh air, a daughter living near by who will do any shopping and a very supportive family. Thank heavens for modern technology and we can FaceTime family and friends for a chat.

I have knitting, cross stitch and other crafts to occupy me, I might even work my way through some, if not all of the half finished projects.
I also intend filing all my family history information properly in the albums and folders I already have instead of storing it in a big pile!

Being a member of Maldon & District U3A which has always prided itself on being friendly will certainly help get us through these difficult times. We are not able to attend groups but I think all members have a phone so we can keep in touch and please do. Malcolm and I are always happy to chat, so just give us a ring or drop me an email.
Rosemary

ROYAL HISTORY – STUARTS

So far, we have looked at the lives of James I of England and VI of Scotland, Charles I and the English Civil War. This is bit of a misnomer, as the wars took place in Ireland, Scotland and England and should probably be known as the British Civil War or the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. However, this led to the eventual rise of Oliver Cromwell to the position of Lord Protector of England. With the latest book in the trilogy by Hilary Mantel dealing with the rise and fall of Thomas Cromwell somewhat earlier under the reign of Henry VIII, I wondered if there was any family connection although I had always thought there wasn't. With the assistance of the internet, I found out there was a connection albeit not direct.

Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), Lord Protector of England

Oliver Cromwell was born in Huntingdon, near Cambridge, on 30th January 1599 to Robert Cromwell and his wife, Elizabeth.

Although not a direct descendent of Henry VIII's chief minister Thomas Cromwell, Oliver Cromwell's great-great-grandfather, Morgan Williams, married Thomas' sister Katherine in 1497. It was Morgan and Katherine's three sons who took the surname Cromwell in honour of their famous maternal uncle. This practice was repeated by many of their descendants, who occasionally used the surname Williams-alias-Cromwell. Following the restoration of King Charles II, some of the family members reverted to Williams temporarily to distance themselves from any links to Oliver Cromwell.

Morgan Williams and Katherine Cromwell's eldest son had two sons, Henry and Francis; both used the surname Cromwell. Henry went on to be knighted, as was his father, and of his eleven children by his first wife, Oliver's father Robert was one of the youngest.

Cromwell's later life as a military and political leader is well documented but his modest upbringing and early family life is not. For the first forty years of his life Cromwell remained relatively obscure and he remarked in 1654 that he was "by birth a gentleman, living neither in considerable height, nor yet in obscurity". It wasn't until the English civil wars of the 1640s that he had the opportunity to rise to power.

Shirley Macro

CANASTA GROUP

Canasta group meetings and the Mah-Jong meetings held at WMCC on Friday afternoons have been cancelled for the rest of March, April and May. We will obviously review the June meetings on advice from the U3A.

I'm also writing on behalf of Molly Polden who coordinates the Mah-Jong group as she does not have Internet access so I have cancelled meetings with the WMCC on her behalf, with her permission of course.

Let's hope we all come through this unscathed.

Iris Slaney

LOCAL HISTORY

Due to the health crisis we have postponed the trip 'East Anglian Panorama' which was scheduled for April 27th and I have provisionally re-booked it for **September 29th** (all being well by then of course).

Unless I hear otherwise from members who are booked on the trip, I will shred your cheques and I will start afresh with bookings when possible.

All monthly Local History meetings will also be cancelled until further notice. Sylvia, Jane and I look forward to seeing you all in due course. In the meantime, stay safe and healthy one and all.

Kathy Goff

GET KNITTING

Members of our Maritime Group are aware that we support the Mission to Seafarers in many ways one of which is knitting hats and scarves for sailors!

As we currently have additional spare time why not get your wool and needles out and knit!!

The patterns are below, and any donations will be most welcome and can be given to Malcolm Case, Maritime Co-Ordinator in the future when we reconvene.

Mary Burd.

HATS FOR SEAFARERS

Double knitting wool: No 8 or 4 mm needles and cast on 96 stitches:

Rib Knit 2, Purl 2 for 5½ inches.

Continue in stocking stitch (1 row knit, 1 row purl) until work measures 8½ inches.

Shape crown:

1st row: Knit 7, knit 2 tog. Knit 8, knit 2 tog. Repeat to end of row, knit 1.
2nd row: Purl
3rd row: Knit 15, knit 2 tog., repeat to end of row, knit 1.
4th row and all even rows: Purl
5th row: Knit 14, knit 2 tog. Repeat to end of row, knit 1.

Continue decreasing like this until 26 stitches remain.

Break wool, thread through the stitches draw and sew up.

SCARVES FOR SEAFARERS

Double Knitting – size 10 needles

32 stitches

Knit in garter stitch for 14 inches

Work knit 4 purl 4 ribbing for 18 inches

Knit in garter stitch for 14 inches

Cast off.

Christchurch's New Cardboard Cathedral

Made from 98 giant cardboard tubes, the new Transitional Cathedral holds 700 worshippers and is designed to last for up to 50 years. The tubes are coated with three layers of waterproof polyurethane and most are sheltered by the translucent polycarbonate roof, which glows when the cathedral is lit at night.

No the roof is not collapsing, the front and back of the building are formed of different sized triangles so the polycarbonate roof is in the form of a catenary.

Three old ladies who still think they are teenagers, marvelling at the stained glass window which has pictures from the old cathedral windows (destroyed by the earthquake) incorporated in it.

Inside all the furniture is on wheels including choir stall seen here, altar table, and lectern so that the space can be used for many community events.

from Clare Urry

When all else fails ……

What does the Wine Group suggest??

Your Committee	
Chairman	Shirley Macro
Vice Chairman	Malcolm Case
Secretary	Judith Johnston
Treasurer	Graham Webster
Membership Secretary	Malcolm Case
Newsletter Editor	Liz Samson
Committee	Andrew Simmonds Alec Fraser Penelope McAvoy Jan Robertson
Web Master	Tony Groves
Social Group	Michael Childs
AV Equipment	Mike Flack
Essex Assoc. of U3A's Committee	Malcolm Case

NATIONAL OFFICE
52 Lant Street, London, SE1 1RB

Tel 020 8466 6139 Email national.office@u3a.org

Web site https://www.u3a.org.uk/

Resource Centre: email: resource.centre@u3a.org.uk

Deadline for next newsletter: to be advised, just send contributions

CO-ORDINATORS

Art Appreciation	Andy Simmonds
Aviation	Brian Johnson
Astronomy	Malcolm Case
Balti Night	Bob Gowers Graham Evans
Bird Watching	Peter Gaywood Michael Bagshaw
Botany	Veronica Smith
Bridge	Sheila Epps
Canasta	Iris Slaney
Cribbage	Pat Clements
Croquet	Jean Healey Shirley Macro
Discussion	Bryan Jones
Egyptology	Kathleen Goff Sue Robinson
Family History	Alan Buck
French Conversation	Ann Lester
Geology	Enid Hall
Handicraft	Marian Manning
History—Stuarts	Beryl McDonell
Just Jazz	Jim Light David Coombes
Local History	Sylvia Cousins Jane Coombes Kathleen Goff
London Theatre Outings	Rosemary Case Joyce Cotterell
Luncheon Groups 3rd Wed.	Paul Costa
Meet & Eat 2nd Wed	Joyce Cotterell
Mah-Jong	Molly Polden
Maritime	Malcolm Case
Music Appreciation	Enid Hall John Skuse
Petanque (Boules)	Jack Veash
Poetry	Jo Robson
Reading	Sheila Epps
Rummikub 1	Colin Beckett
Rummikub 2	Beryl McDonell
Scottish Country Dancing	Shirley Grummett
Sing for Pleasure	Sue Garnham
Strollers	Gill Stone
Table Tennis	Louis Gunn
Ten Pin Bowling	David Arnold
Tree Identification	Veronica Smith
Weekenders	Beryl McDonell
Wine Circle No. 2	Graham Boswell
Wine Circle No. 3	Mary Burd Paul Costa
Wine Circle No. 4	Ann Goody
Writing for Fun	Patrick Forsyth

Some useful contacts

U3A newsletter express

www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter

Latest U3A News

www.u3a.org.uk/

GOOD NEWS, GOOD IDEAS!

BBC Sounds podcasts
www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/help/

Welcome to Essex Library Services

Getting online books from Essex Libraries
libraries.essex.gov.uk/e-books-e-audio-e-magazines-and-book-groups/e-books-and-e-audio/

kindle

Add Kindle reader to your phone, tablet or laptop
https://www.amazon.co.uk/kindle-dbs/fd/kcp

National Theatre launches free streaming service
On Thursday April 2 (7pm GMT/2pm EST), London, *One Man, Two Guvnors, starring James Corden, will be livestreamed on the* National Theatre's YouTube channel *and will be available to watch for one more week. New productions will follow each week, along with behind the scenes talks and cast interviews.*

The Silver Line

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 4 70 80 90 www.thesilverline.org.uk

From the Editor

Many thanks for all the contributions to our far from normal newsletter, please keep in contact with any suggestions, articles, useful tips.

Liz Samson