



Learn, Laugh, Live

# MALDON AND DISTRICT

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*“This is the your new Membership Card which you all received by post in May”*

July 2020

Reg. Charity No. 1086182

website: [www.maldonu3a.co.uk/](http://www.maldonu3a.co.uk/)

## **FROM THE CHAIR**



Hello,

I will start in the usual way nowadays and hope this finds you all fit and well. As I am writing this, the sky is somewhat overcast and there's a fresh wind coming in through the fanlight window, somewhat different from the scorching heat of last week. Then I was imagining a beach holiday in the Caribbean, this week a family holiday to Scarborough some years ago comes to mind. Happy days!

This issue's front cover shows a photograph of the new membership card, which you should all have received by now. As mentioned previously, this will be the only card issued to you and remains active for as long as you are a member of this U3A, and should be shown at all meetings and will be scanned when attending the main monthly meetings – once they return! One useful thing about these cards is that you can take a photograph with a smart phone, and it can be scanned from the phone – so if you forget to bring it with you but have your phone and have taken a photo it will be readily available. If you take both sides, the emergency contact information will also be available.

One matter that is a concern to the Committee is the cancellation of this year's AGM. A meeting should be held at the latest this coming September and, although it does seem that more restrictions will have been lifted by then, providing cases of infection continue to decline, having a large public meeting may still be not permitted. We will be looking into other ideas on how we can have some sort of AGM and will get back to you all soon.

I have been in contact with most of the Group Co-ordinators to see how they are keeping in contact with their members and it was lovely to hear back from some of them. It would seem that they are keeping in touch using various methods from emails, phone calls and using online technology, mostly Zoom. The small Geology group even made use of being able to get together outside now and did a Church Wall survey at St Mary's Church, Maldon.

Very best wishes to you all,  
Shirley Macro

## STUART HISTORY GROUP

We tend to keep ourselves to ourselves! However we think it could now be the right time to let fellow U3A members know that if all was normal we would be talking about the Great Plague of 1665 when the small town of Eyam in Derbyshire went into 'Lockdown' for fourteen months thus committing an extraordinary act of self-sacrifice.

We must try and imagine what life for the townsfolk would have been like. There was no connection with the outside world because of course in those times news would have been spread mainly by word of mouth. Its inhabitants were smitten down with no real hope of recovery, even though their family members and neighbours would have given them such as they could. In a cottage, known as plague one, Mary Hadfield survived but lost thirteen relations, including her husband and two sons.

In August deaths in the village reached a peak of six a day. Elizabeth Hancock lost six of her children and her husband in the space of eight days. She buried them in a field having dragged them there one by one. Indeed most of the victims lie in unmarked plots scattered round the countryside.

Each Sunday William Mompesson would preach on a hill known as Cucklet Delph, which lay on the outskirts of the village.

Today's inhabitants are hoping that their lockdown will have ended a lot sooner than their ancestors, so that as usual in August they will be able to celebrate their ancestors survival of 1666.

Beryl McDonell



*The Plague Window, Eyam Church*

## **GEOLOGY GROUP**

As the restrictions on meeting outdoors were lifted recently, the Geology Group took the opportunity to meet at St Mary's Church, Maldon. Three members of the group met on a lovely, sunny afternoon and spent some time looking at the walls of the church. In areas where there are no hard building stones the only resource for important buildings such as churches was pebbles and cobbles. These were gathered from the fields or brought up rivers from the coast – large rounded quartzites, cobbles of vein quartz and many flints. Cementstones, from hard layers in the London Clay, were also brought from the coast.

Flints are often knapped or split to form flat faces, some showing interesting fracture patterns and fossil fragments.

Cementstones are frequently weathered into hollows as they are softer than the mortar and other stones, but they are still important parts of these structures even after nearly a thousand years.

In the search for building material, the remains of older buildings were re-used – for example Roman bricks provided useful straight edges for corners. Richer parishes bought in cut stone, usually forms of limestone, e.g. Kentish Ragstone and French Caen Stone to make the corners and buttresses of towers, lintels, steps and pillars. Thus, early round towers were sometimes replaced by square ones.

In newer walls, pieces of limestone from previously demolished parts can be recognised alongside re-used flint and other materials.

Our survey concluded that the building materials used for St Mary's mainly consisted of cementstone, flints, and quartzite with a selection of Roman brick and tile and limestone pieces. This survey is part of one being undertaken by the Essex Rock and Mineral Society (ERMS) on the Geology in Essex Walls. [www.erms.org/walls-survey1.html](http://www.erms.org/walls-survey1.html)

(Information taken from Pebbles in Essex and Beyond, produced by ERMS)

Our next outing will be a visit to Great Totham Church.

Shirley Macro

## St Mary's Church Walls



Showing cementstone, flint and quartzite



Flint and limestone blocks



Brick with limestone and, possibly, Roman tile decoration.

## DID YOU KNOW ??????????

Honey is the only food that does not spoil and has significant antibacterial qualities.

The average chocolate bar contains eight insect pieces.

France was still executing people by guillotine up to 1977.

In an average lifetime a person will walk the equivalent of five times around the equator.

One piece of space junk returns to earth every day – watch where you are walking!!

The Hawaiian alphabet only has twelve letters – A, E, I, O, U, H, K, L, M, N, P and W.

The lighter was invented ten years earlier than the match.

Charles Darwin was the first person who had the idea to attach wheels to his office chair so that he could move around more quickly.

The Spanish word “Esposas” can mean both “Handcuffs” and “Wives”.

## Hugless - Update

Three months on and what has changed? A bit leaner and fitter maybe, after all the exercise – I can do two miles now in about 45 minutes almost without having to catch my breath, and the scales are where they were in the early seventies (1970s, not age in years). Alas, the shape is not the same: in those days I had muscles which held me in appropriate places; now it is pure flab and sag, but heigh ho!

There has been some progress. I am in a bubble now (something I had not envisaged), am no longer hugless, and have for the first time sat at a table with a companion to eat a meal together – even if I still had to cook it myself! Who knew how hard I was going to find eating alone for 24/7? The next aim now will be to eat a meal cooked by someone else.

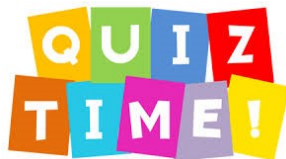
After an initial lack of self-confidence I can now drive and shop for myself. That leaves the problem of hair! I hate seeing old ladies with pony tails – so undignified – but it won't be long now!

Must finish on a positive note. I look forward to rubbing shoulders with you all soon and even, if I'm lucky, sharing a few hugs too!

dd



# How well do you know the United Kingdom?



## Answers Next Month

1. Scotland has more than 790 offshore islands. Which one cannot you visit (because it does not actually exist)?	Jura Hirta Fair Isle Baran
2. Which of these is the UK's largest national park?	Cairngorms, Scotland Lake District, England Snowdonia, Wales Mourne Mountains, Northern Ireland
3. Which author's most famous work was inspired by the incredible Jurassic coastline, from Devon to Dorset?	Lord Tennyson Emily Bronte Thomas Hardy Daphne Du Maurier
4. The UK is famed for its charmingly odd place names. Which of the following is not a real town or village?	North Piddle Nether Wallop Blubberhouses Tiddlyfoot
5. Which 700-year-old ancient tradition takes place at the Tower of London every night at 9.30pm?	The polishing of the Crown Jewels The ceremony of the keys The Beefeater night walk The calling of the raven
6. What makes Tyneham village in Dorset so unusual?	No one actually lives there It fell into the sea due to coastal erosion It was submerged in a flood in 1987 Prince Charles helped to build it
7. Alnwick Castle in Northumberland has been featured in several films and TV shows. Which of the following was not shot there?	King Arthur Downton Abbey Transformers: The Last Knight Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone
8. Which UK city claims to have invented the Chicken Tikka Masala?	Manchester Birmingham Bradford Glasgow
9. How many miles would you need to cycle to cover the length of the mainland from Land's End, Cornwall to John O'Groats, Scotland?	871 874 877 879
10. Wales is home to the longest place name in the world. How many characters does it have?	53 55 58 61

## HMM Algeciras

The world's largest container ship has completed its maiden voyage, arriving in Essex.



HMM Algeciras docked in Thurrock Container Terminal on the River Thames on 14th June after travelling from China via South Korea, the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium via the Suez Canal.

Preparations to welcome the ship, which is 1,312ft (400m) long and 200ft (61m) wide, started more than six months ago.

The ship was built in 2020 and can carry 23964 TEU (standard twenty-foot containers). The vessel has a deadweight of 200,000 tonnes and is registered in Panama.

Malcolm Case

### **BIRD QUIZ** **ANSWERS** Name the bird species from Gordon Davies

- |  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Black tailed godwit (winter plumage)      | 6. Coot              |
| 2. Teal                                      | 7. Tufted duck       |
| 3. Lapwing                                   | 8. Black-headed gull |
| 4. Moorhen                                   | 9. Goldfinch         |
| 5. Mallard (head tucked in, trying to sleep) | 10. Collared dove    |

## BIRD WATCHING GROUP

Maldon Prom is somewhere most of us visit with its playing fields, lakes and the river.

Over the last weeks members of the bird watching group have carried out one-hour observations on different days at different times of the day, different states of the tide to record those birds present at that particular time.

Some spent a pleasant time with few birds whilst others were lucky enough to see a huge number and variety. What is clear Maldon has a large resident flock of **Black Headed Gulls** (*Larus ridibundus*) with its slender dark red bill and legs, head, chin and throat chocolate brown, and upperparts grey with white neck



and breast, that use the Maldon mud as a larder feeding on the worms and small fish found at the water's edge. The other gulls seen were the **Lesser Black Backed** and the **Herring Gull**.

A few years past the sight of a **Little Egret** (*Egretta garzetta*), this small white member of the heron family with its distinctive blue legs and yellow feet would have been cause for some excitement but they are now fully established in the Maldon area and were seen by most of the members.

One of the most distinctive calls of all our common waders is that of the **Oystercatcher** (*Haematopus ostralegus*) with its piercing Kliep Kliep which is the background sound to many of our estuaries, inlets and mud flats. Whilst waders were the most common birds observed it is clear that the barges have a resident flock of **Starlings**, the **Pied Wagtails** still walking with the characteristic wag of its tail amongst the grassy tussocks. The water's edge is still feeding ground for **Black Tailed Godwits**, **Shell Duck**, **Little Grebe**, whilst **Cormorants** fished in the water.

The above is just a snapshot of what can be seen and of course the beauty of nature is that each season is different, and it is there for all to see and enjoy.

## A FEW THOUGHTS ON LOCKDOWN!

We're all being kept in lockdown, and it's very plain to see  
That being kept in lockdown, isn't where we want to be!

But for now, because we're British, we are doing as we're told,  
And staying home, even on our own,  
because we're very old.



We can all go out for little walks but If others come our way, we cross the road, but stop to chat! We've made new friends that way!

And people are so very kind, they bring our shopping now,  
And phone calls from our folks, and friends, bring them all near somehow!

So I've spent time in my garden, though. You wouldn't think it now,  
But it's full of lovely colours so not all the weeds will show!?  
And I'm busy with jigsaws and puzzles, and paperback books to be read,

And I could do with cleaning the house more  
But I'd rather do those things instead!

So hang on in there friends, stick it out now,  
And think of the future in store.

We've missed meals, celebrations and outings, and hols!  
The catch up will be even more!!!!

Forgot that when I take my walk, I use my stick, and stretch!  
And make a visual diary too, by doing a little sketch.

Annette Porte, Maldon U3A and Tiptree U3A



## **WOODLAND OR MEADOW WALK**

I am proposing to have a walk through either or possibly both sometime in August. Let me know if you might be interested to join and we can arrange a day and time to suit, and the venue.

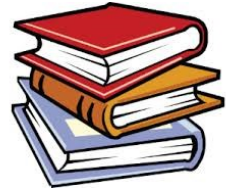
Each walk would not last longer than 2 hours and would be more of a stroll.

Veronica Smith

## Memorable First Lines/Last Lines –

### Can you name the book or play?

(Extra pat on the back if you know the author too)



1. *"Tomorrow, I'll think of some way to get him back.  
After all, tomorrow is another day."*

.....

2. *"But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest a little boy and his Bear will always be playing."*

.....

3. *"Very few castaways can claim to have survived so long at sea as Mr. Patel, and none in the company of an adult Bengal tiger."*

.....

4. *"The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."*

.....

5. *"It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."*

.....

6. *"If music be the food of love, play on, Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting, The appetite may sicken, and so die."*

.....

7. *"All children, except one grow up."*

.....

8. *"Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much."*

.....

9. *"It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs Shears' house. Its eyes were closed."*

.....

10. *"There was no possibility of taking a walk that day."*

**Answers on the back page**

### WINE GROUP 3

Some members of the group discussing their wines through the medium of Zoom!!



Mary Burd

### ASTRONOMY NEWS COMET NEOWISE

This Comet was discovered in late March and brightened as it reached its closest approach to the Sun, inside the orbit of Mercury. The interplanetary iceberg survived solar heating, so far, and is now becoming closer to the Earth as it starts its long trek back to the outer Solar System.

The comet will reach its closest distance from Earth on 23 July - though it will still be about 64 million miles (103 million km) away. Even though Neowise will be at a distance 400 times farther than the moon, you should still be able to see it without having to rely on binoculars or a telescope, although they might help. It will be visible in the northern hemisphere - including the UK - just before sunrise and after sunset.

Throughout July, **Neowise** is moving westwards across the sky and will be low to the horizon. **Neowise** is currently in the constellation (group of stars) called Auriga. The comet will pass through the Lynx and Ursa Major constellations and will be seen underneath the group of stars known as the Big Dipper, or Plough. From the middle of July onwards, the comet will be visible all through the night, but always low in the sky in a northly direction.

Malcolm Case

## LOCAL HISTORY

Hello Everyone

We trust you are well and able to enjoy the lovely weather if only in the garden. Please be advised that there will be no coach outings for the Group this year, but we hope things will improve for 2021.

We do, however, hope to resume monthly meetings once it is considered safe to do so.

Meanwhile here is a short **Quiz** to keep you ALERT!

Keep Safe Keep Well

Best Wishes Kathy, Jane and Sylvia



### LOCAL HISTORY AND ALL THAT JULY 2020

1. When Edward Bright (The Fat Man of Maldon) died in November 1750 how much in Kilos did he weigh?
2. What is Edward Bright's connection with Maldon and District U3A?
3. Maldon was the first town in Essex to receive a Borough Charter. In which year and in whose reign?
4. In which Maldon building will you find an etched image of a shotgun?
5. What is the unique architectural feature of All Saints Church, Maldon?
6. When was Maldon Promenade Park officially opened?
7. St Peter's was the last site of the Maldon Workhouse. Where was it prior to 1883?
8. Where, locally, will you find Petrified Oaks?
9. There are two unique semidetached bungalows in Acacia Drive. What were they originally, and where did they come from?
10. When was the Battle of Maldon?



***Answers next month***

## UPS AND DOWNS OF THE LONG-HAUL FLYERS

Much has been said and written about the sharp decline in migrant birds which spend the summer in Britain. But my wholly unscientific observations seem to show some species bucking the trend this year in and around Great Totham.

Best known of the migrants is the **cuckoo**. The type that visits Britain is the European variety, which travels further north from its wintering grounds in Africa than other species to reduce competition for the birds in whose nests it lays its eggs. There seem to have been more calling this year – and I have been lucky enough to see five, including what looked like a male chasing a female over the sea wall at Goldhanger.

But what of other summer regulars, such as **swifts**, **swallows** and **house martins**? I have seen few swallows this summer, reflecting their decline in recent years. But there have been more swifts in the air over Totham than I have seen for many years. Swifts are among the last migrants to arrive and the first to depart, mating and even sleeping on the wing by shutting down parts of their brain. House martins too seem to be up this year, with pairs nesting under neighbours' eaves.

The same cannot be said for **chiff-chaffs**, whose numbers continue to fall. I have heard few of the calls that give them their name and seen only one. They closely resemble willow warblers, whose undulating song I have not heard for 8 years now. Maybe I've just been unlucky. Neither have I seen any spotted flycatchers. The last one I saw was on the Naze at Walton five years ago. Around 2005, a pair successfully raised a brood in our garden, nesting on top of a box intended for robins!

Another visitor in sharp decline is the **turtle dove**. Sadly, many of these birds fall prey to trigger-happy hunters as they traverse Mediterranean countries on their migration routes. So, I was pleasantly surprised last month when I heard its gentle churring call coming from a copse off Totham Hill Green – my first for too many years.

Let's hope we see more of our increasingly hard-pressed summer migrants next year.

Mike Bagshaw

## San Rafael Swell, Utah

During the winter months one of the things members of the **Geology Group** like to do is study the geology of various places we may have visited over the years in the days when travelling was something we did without too much thought, whether it be locally or overseas!

Last year we were fortunate enough to go on a family road trip which included both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, obviously very interesting geological places. Our journey took us to Salt Lake City where we had dinner with our daughter's friend, and she suggested we took a detour to visit the San Rafael Swell. Laura and her boyfriend were back off to Philadelphia and we were left on our own to eventually make our way back to Denver and decided to take in the extra trip. Once we left the main road it seemed as if we were travelling miles in the bleakest and barren looking land. It was very hot, very dry and very boring. We eventually came to the turn-off to the Swell and it's almost impossible to describe how fantastic the scenery became. It is described as **Little Grand Canyon**.

Eons ago, tremendous geologic upheavals formed a giant dome of rock - a "swell" in the earth's surface. The harsh elements beat against this dome and eroded it into a wild, broken array of multi-coloured sandstone. Wind and water carved this jumble of rock into incredible formations as buttes, canyons, pinnacles and mesas emerged, making the Swell one of the most ruggedly beautiful pockets of terrain in the world. For years the San Rafael Swell has been considered one of the "undiscovered" natural wonders of the American West. The San Rafael Swell is a 75-mile x 40-mile anticline — that's geology for rock bump — a dome of sandstone, shale and limestone that was pushed up during the Paleocene Laramide Orogeny 60–40 million years ago. The Wedge, aka Little Grand Canyon, shows off the amazing valleys, canyons, gorges, mesas and buttes cut into the dome by erosion from periodic flash flooding.



We also came across pictograms dating from around 1500AD painted on the rockface by people of the Fremont culture. They were beautiful and very easy to see.



This was just a quick visit and drive through of a truly wonderful area, there's loads more to see, but one thing we didn't see was other people. There were certainly no other visitors and we had it all to ourselves. A very rare experience.

Shirley Macro

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 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](mailto:national.office@u3a.org)

Website <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Resource Centre: email: [resource.centre@u3a.org.uk](mailto:resource.centre@u3a.org.uk)

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

# CO-ORDINATORS

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

## Some useful contacts



newsletter  
express

[www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter](http://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter)

Latest U3A News [www.u3a.org.uk/](http://www.u3a.org.uk/)

## Memorable First Lines/Last Lines –

### Answers:

1. *“Gone With the Wind”* Margaret Mitchell
2. *“The House At Pooh Corner”* A.A. Milne
3. *“Life of Pi”* Yann Martel.
4. *“Animal Farm”* George Orwell
5. *“A Tale of Two Cities”* Charles Dickens
6. *“Twelfth Night”* William Shakespeare
7. *“Peter Pan”* J. M. Barrie
8. *“Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone”* J.K. Rowling
9. *“The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time”* Mark Haddon
10. *“Jane Eyre”* Charlotte Bronte

## 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](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk)

## From the Editor

Many thanks for all your contributions for this newsletter. I have appreciated the many and varied articles and enjoyed having first read. Please keep them coming. Any suggestions, articles, useful tips etc. most welcome.

Liz Samson