



Maldon and District

# Newsletter



Photo by  
David Whiteing  
Photography Group page 8

**March 2021**

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

Registered Charity 1086182

## FROM THE CHAIR



Hello,

As always, I trust this finds you all fit and well.

It does appear that there is more positive news as far as life beginning to return to normal. With the excellent roll-out of the vaccination, the recent results regarding its effectiveness and the “Roadmap” proposed by the Government, it is quite possible that we will be able to start meeting up again, albeit in a limited way at first. Certainly, something to look forward to.

In the meantime, we will continue with our meetings online – both the monthly one and any of the groups that have been meeting that way. I realise that using the technology available is not something that everyone can or wants to do, but it has been a very useful tool for us and has kept our u3a active during this period.

The last monthly meeting was a talk/presentation given by Steve Scruton. It was thoroughly enjoyable with 100+ members able to watch. Steve entertained us with the story of his love for pirate radio and its recreation off the Essex coast in 2004.

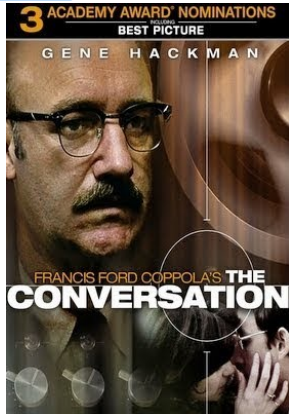
As I write this, the sun is lighting up the room and it feels pleasantly warm. There are daffodils and hyacinths flowering in the garden and it is starting to look very Spring like. Unfortunately, when I mentioned last month that we could look forward to the weather improving, along came the snow and ice! If it happens again, I promise not to mention the weather ever again.

Don't forget to take a look at our website for all the up-to-date information and links to the National website. Also, if you are meeting regularly or even occasionally, send in a report to Liz Samson, our Newsletter Editor. We would love to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Shirley Macro,

## FILM CLUB



We have watched our first two films and met to chat about them. The films chosen were “The Conversation”, from 1974, starring Gene Hackman, and “Fantastic Beasts – the Crimes of Grindelwald”, 2018, starring Eddie Redmayne. Two quite different films and genres, but both receiving similar reviews from our group. The general opinion of “The Conversation” was one of confusion, being unclear about what was going on – but that may well have been the whole point of the film as we watched the Gene Hackman character breakdown and lose touch with reality.

The “Crimes of Grindelwald” also caused some confusion but that may have been more to do with it being a sequel and some of us not having seen the first one. I also discovered why we only had an hour of the film recorded. It had been put out in two parts with the news between and we hadn’t notice this when doing the recording. Once we started to watch, I realised I had seen it before so not too disastrous. We did all agree that the CGI animation was amazing though.

Neither film scored particularly high, but they did lead onto some interesting discussions about them and other films or series we have been watching. We have two more films lined up for our next meeting, **Wednesday 31st March at 3.30pm** on Zoom, plus any others we may have seen. If you would like to join us, please get in touch.

Shirley Macro

## MARITIME GROUP

The next meeting on **Monday 5th April at 10:00 am** is a talk on Zoom titled -

### **“The Royal Navy of the 21st Century A Personal Perspective”**

by Lieutenant Samuel James Williams Royal Navy who is a junior Warfare Officer and Bridge Watchkeeper in the Royal Navy.



Having joined the Royal Navy in early 2017 following a degree in History from the University of Southampton he was deployed to the South Atlantic, Mediterranean, Arabian Gulf and Arctic Circle. Serving in Destroyers, Frigates, Patrol Vessels and Aircraft Carriers in most of the major roles the RN conducts within the 21st century.

A look at the experiences enjoyed at the very beginning of an enjoyable career from the steps of Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth to the Bridge of a modern British Warship. The talk (ideal for Lockdown) will give a personal look at what life in the RN is like in the 21st century. Samuel will answer any questions you may have about the RN's role and continuing necessity at the end of his talk.

Samuel is originally from Maldon, Essex and now lives in South Croydon, Greater London.

Details for the Zoom meeting will be sent nearer the meeting date. This Zoom meeting is open to all u3a members, if you would like to join, then please contact me and I will send you the Zoom details.

Malcolm Case

## POETRY GROUP

The next meeting of the group is on **Thursday 1st April at 2:00 pm** using Zoom.



The poet for discussion is William Shakespeare. Any u3a member is very welcome to join, if you would like to, then please contact:

Malcolm Case

## QUIZ WITH A FLORAL THEME

by Veronica Smith

Answers on page 20



1.	Who wrote 'The Scarlet Pimpernel'?
2.	In which operetta by Gilbert & Sullivan did Little Buttercup appear?
3.	Who sits on the Chrysanthemum Throne?
4.	What are the names of Hyacinth Bucket's three sisters?
5.	Who wrote 'The Sea, The Sea'?
6.	What is the name of Bertie Wooster's favourite aunt?
7.	Who wrote the 'Flower Fairy' books?
8.	What was the name of the famous countess who designed the gardens at Easton Lodge?
9.	Who wrote 'The Name of the Rose'?
10.	Where were you going in the 60s song with 'flowers in your hair'?



Plans are being made for the first ever **National u3a Day** on

**WEDNESDAY, 2<sup>ND</sup> JUNE 2021.**

We want to promote and celebrate the new experiences that come from being in your third age. The idea is that this annual event on the first Wednesday in June, will show the amazing and diverse things that members get up to and challenge preconceptions of what being an older adult means.

Your support with this event will be important and, all being well, it will be a great platform to re-launch our u3a with a view to looking forward to getting back to our usual activities.

More details to follow.

## MONTHLY MEETING



**2.00pm on Monday 19th April 2021**

This will be a **“Live” presentation on Zoom**

by David Allen on

### **The Weird and Wonderful World of the Law**



With more than 10 years’ experience as a popular public speaker, David will take us on an enjoyable romp through the legal world, drawing on his 25 years as a locum solicitor.

With him we shall meet raging judges, dotty clients, and weird cases, and hear about bizarre true-life oddities, daft old laws still in place and political correctness gone raving mad. David is a perfect combination of being hugely knowledgeable and a very skilled and entertaining storyteller.

**Click on the link to join the Zoom session**

Session opens at 1.50pm for a 2pm start

## MONTHLY SPEAKER SCHEDULE 2021

**Initially via Zoom, subject to change**

May 17th	Dr James Taylor	Comic Postcards
June 21st	Roger Browne	The Great American Songbook
July 19th	Steve Price	Close-up Magic
Aug 16th	Simon Waterfield	Historical talks in costume
Sept 20	Andy Bennett	Topic TBC
Oct 18th	AGM	
Nov 15th	Sue Handscombe + 1	Sonority Recorder Consort
Dec 20th	tba	

## ASTRONOMY GROUP

The next meeting is on **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March starting at 2:00 pm** on Zoom. The subject for discussion will be "Astronomers". Details for the Zoom meeting will be sent nearer the date.

Any u3a members is very welcome to join the meeting, if you would like to join, then please contact me and I will send you the Zoom details.

Malcolm Case

## u3a Radio Episode 5



[Click here to listen to the fifth national u3a podcast.](#)

[There is also a link on our website](#)

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The last Zoom meeting took place on 5th March and we discussed our **Architecture** photographs. Below are a small selection of the pictures on our website, take a look on: [www.maldonu3a.co.uk/photography/photography.php](http://www.maldonu3a.co.uk/photography/photography.php)



The theme for April is **Mountains** and for May **Spring**.

Email your entries to [webmaster@maldonu3a.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@maldonu3a.co.uk) before **Monday 29th March**.

Zoom viewing and discussion at **11am on Friday 2nd April 2021**.

Open to everyone, all standards, up to three photos per member.

The only criterion is that you have taken the photos yourself.

Tony Groves [webmaster@maldonu3a.co.uk](mailto:webmaster@maldonu3a.co.uk)

## Proposed MARITIME GROUP Programme 2021

(subject to change)

<b>Monday 5th April</b> Easter Monday <span>zoom</span>	talk by Lieutenant Samuel James Williams Royal Navy on ' <b>The Royal Navy of the 21st Century A Personal Perspective</b> '.
<b>Monday 3rd May</b>	Bank Holiday – no meeting
<b>Monday 7th June</b> <span>zoom</span>	talk by Janet Hall ' <b>The steam tug "Brent"</b> '.
<b>Monday 5th July</b> <span>zoom</span>	talk by Andrea Raiker ' <b>The Maldon and Heybridge Heritage Harbour Association (MHHHA)</b> '.
<b>Monday 2nd August</b>	trip, to be decided
<b>Monday 6th September</b>	5-day holiday to Skipton
<b>Monday 4th October</b>	David Griffith's talk, Part 3, ' <b>Life aboard a submarine</b> '.
<b>Monday 1st November</b> <span>zoom</span>	talk by Dr Megan Barford on ' <b>Maps and Cartography</b> '.
<b>Monday 6th December</b>	discussion on 2022 programme.

Malcolm Case

## SEAFARERS CENTRE TILBURY

For all who have given donations to the centre and on the centre's behalf, thank you. Due to current restrictions and the fact that Governments around the world are not allowing seafarers ashore or allowing crew changes, your donations are very much appreciated.

Please do continue donating, the centre would like knitted items – scarves, gloves, hats, socks, and jerseys. They would also like DVDs, jigsaws, books and toiletries. If you are able to donate anything, then please contact me and I will arrange a collection.

Malcolm Case

## PETANQUE



The article about Petanque in a recent newsletter prompted me to tell you about the (OUR) Petanque Terrain and how it came about.

The initial very small group started in about 2005 when we only had driveways, carparks, or grass to play on. Maldon District Council (MDC) were approached for help, but they had no money at that time, but they were interested to add it to the Promenade Park facilities. They were looking for a lot of money (we had been quoted by MDC £8000 for a professional installation.) We approached all the sports people for grants, but they said that as it was not an Olympic event they would not help.

After months of meetings with MDC they agreed that if we could design and quantify a terrain in the Park to 'International Competition Standard' they would consider it. This was done and a site was chosen, previously the Crazy Golf area. Ideal for us. Unfortunately, still no money.

Then early in 2008 they said that if we could supply the labour, they would supply the materials from what they had left from other jobs. In February they removed the grass layer to be used elsewhere.

So, we organised a team of volunteers from our u3a to start work clearing the area, removing the topsoil, and digging down to a depth of about 300mm (12in.) All these tons of earth had to be dug up and barrowed away to a trailer to be taken away. Hard back breaking work by our members, ladies as well as men. Then hard core was laid in its place and flattened out and finally a layer of fine gravel for the playing surface.

This is just a brief description of the work, but it was all ready to start playing in August 2008. It is not just for our u3a of course but other u3as use it regularly and it is available to every member of the public.

There is very little cost to MDC as there is neither maintenance nor booking costs.

**David Arnold**

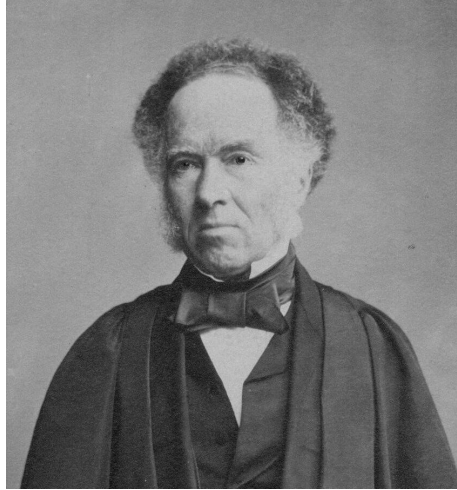
**LONDON LANDMARKS QUIZ**

*Answers*



1.	What is the name of the UK's tallest sculpture, which is home to the world's longest tunnel slide?	<b>ArcelorMittal Orbit</b>
2.	The Thai temple Wat Buddhapadipa is closest to which green space?	<b>Wimbledon Common</b>
3.	Which spectacular London palace opened in 1873?	<b>Alexandra Palace</b>
4.	What is the nickname of The Leadenhall Building?	<b>The Cheese grater</b>
5.	In which borough will you find Leighton House Museum?	<b>Kensington &amp; Chelsea</b>
6.	BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, London, is also known as...?	<b>Neasden Temple</b>

## JAMES CHALLIS FRS



James Challis was an astronomer, physicist and clergyman with Maldon and Braintree connections. He is mostly remembered, perhaps unfairly, for failing to realise in time that he had discovered the planet Neptune in 1846.

He was born in Braintree on 12th December 1803, the fourth son of stonemason John Challis. He attended Braintree School and then Rev Daniel Copsey's school in Braintree. Seeing his talent, Copsey together with Rev Edward William Mathew, vicar of Coggeshall, sent him to try for a place at Mill Hill School, Middlesex, which he succeeded in doing by examination.

He entered Trinity College, Cambridge in 1821 and graduated there in 1825 as Senior Wrangler, and was elected a fellow in 1826. A Senior Wrangler is the top mathematics undergraduate at Cambridge. A Wrangler is a student who gains first-class honours in the third year of the University's Undergraduate degree in mathematics. The title was first announced in 1748 and continues today, except that exams were cancelled in 2020 owing to the Covid-19 restrictions. He was ordained into the Church of England in 1830, and held the benefice of Papworth Everard, Cambridgeshire from the college until 1852.

On George Biddell Airy's appointment as Astronomer Royal in 1836, Challis became Director of the Cambridge Observatory. At the same time he was appointed Plumian Professor of Astronomy and Experimental Philosophy at Cambridge.

Thomas Plume founded the post in 1704, the same year that he founded the library in Maldon. Challis held the position until his death in 1882.

He and his wife Sarah lived at the observatory for 25 years. Sarah was the widow of Rev Daniel Copsey his Braintree teacher. Challis lectured in all areas of physics. He was examiner for the Smith's prize, which included appraising the early work of Arthur Cayley, John Couch Adams, William Thomson (later Lord Kelvin), and James Clerk Maxwell. Challis was referee for Maxwell in his application for chair at the University of Aberdeen. The Adams prize question on Saturn's rings, won by Maxwell in 1856, was set and examined by Challis together with William Thomson.

In 1846, Airy persuaded Challis to join in the search for what we now know as the planet Neptune. Based on irregularities in the orbit of Uranus, John Couch Adams had predicted the location, but he did not advance his findings. Challis reluctantly began his search in July 1846, unaware that Frenchman Urbain Le Verrier had independently made the same prediction. On 23rd September 1846 German astronomer Johann Gottfried Galle, assisted by Heinrich Louis d'Arrest, confirmed Le Verrier's prediction. It soon became apparent from his notebooks that Challis had twice observed Neptune a month earlier, but he failed to identify it owing lack of attention and an up to date star chart. Challis was desperately sorry, blaming his oversight on how far behind he was trying to catch up with work on his other astronomical observations. He conveyed his feelings to Airy in a letter on 12th October 1846. He wrote:

*I have been greatly mortified to find that my observations would have shewn me the planet in the early part of August if I had only discussed them. ... I delayed doing this ... chiefly because I was making a grand effort to reduce the vast numbers of comet observations which I have accumulated and this occupied the whole of my time.*

Challis published 225 papers in astronomy, mathematics and physics. He was re-elected fellow of Trinity in 1870. The Lunar crater Challis was named after him.

He died in Cambridge on 3rd December 1882 and was buried beside his wife in Mill Road Cemetery, Cambridge.

Challis has recently been remembered in the Braintree area when The Branocs Tree pub in Great Notley was renamed The Astronomer.

**Joe Marshall**

## THE BATTLE OF FISHGUARD

The annals of history record the name of Hastings as the site of the last invasion of mainland Britain by Norman forces in 1066. True, this was the last successful invasion, but little is reported about the French invasion of Fishguard, which took place in southwest Wales in 1797, nor of the brave resistance offered by Jemima Nicholas, also known as “Jemima Fawr” (Jemima the Great), who single-handedly captured twelve of the invading soldiers.



In 1797, while Bonaparte was busy conquering central Europe, the newly formed French revolutionary government, the Directory, devised a plan that involved the poor country folk of Britain rallying to the support of their French liberators.

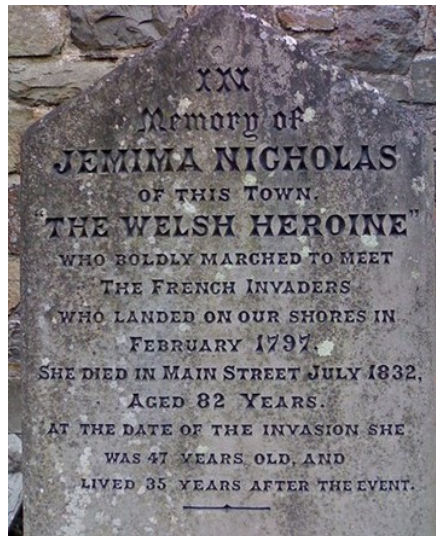
The invasion force consisting of some 1400 troops set sail on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1797, led by Irish American, Colonel William Tate. Unfortunately for him, the best of the Republican army was fighting elsewhere, and Colonel Tate’s force comprised a ragtag collection of soldiers, including many newly released prisoners. His orders were to land near Bristol, at that time the second largest city in England, destroy it, cross over into Wales and march north onto Chester and Liverpool. However, wind conditions made it impossible to land anywhere near Bristol, so Tate set course for Cardigan Bay in southwest Wales.

French warships sailed into Fishguard Bay on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February, and were promptly greeted by canon fire from the local fort. The French nervously withdrew and sailed on until they reached a small sandy beach near the village of Llanwnda. What they didn’t know was the canon was fired as an alarm to the local townsfolk. The ships unloaded and by 2am on the morning of Thursday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1797, the last invasion of Britain was completed. The ships returned to France to report a successful landing.

Once landed it would seem that the French invasion force ran out of enthusiasm, perhaps as a result of years of living on prison rations and being more interested in the rich food and wine locals had recently removed from a grounded Portuguese ship. After a looting spree many of the invaders were too drunk to fight and within two days the invasion had collapsed, and Tate had surrendered to a local militia force led by Lord Cawdor on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1797.

The surrender agreement drawn up by Tate's officers referred to the British coming at them "with troops of the line to the number of several thousand". There were no such troops anywhere in the area at the time, however hundreds, and maybe even thousands, of local Welsh women dressed in their traditional scarlet tunics and tall black felt hats had come to see the fighting between the French and local men of the militia. Perhaps with too much brandy the French mistook the women for British redcoats!

Back to Jemima Nicholls, the 47-year-old Jemima Nicholas was the wife of a Fishguard cobbler. When she heard of the invasion, she marched out to Llanwnda, pitchfork in hand, and rounded up twelve Frenchmen. She 'persuaded' them to accompany her back into town, where she locked them inside St Mary's Church and promptly left to look for some more!



**Shirley Macro**

## BEING A TREE WARDEN

Shortly after I moved to Danbury, I saw an advertisement for a Tree Warden to help the Parish Council. I applied and was interviewed and since then have had the pleasure of visiting residents who need permission to cut down or prune trees in their gardens.

Danbury used to be part of a hunting forest, densely wooded with oak, sweet chestnut, and hornbeam, and many of the remaining trees have preservation orders on them (TPO). Much of Danbury is classified a conservation area and off the main road (A414) the roads are narrow tree lined lanes. Many of the woods beyond are maintained by the National Trust, and the rest by Danbury Council.

As a tree warden I visit each of the properties listed that month, speak to the owners where possible and hear their concerns. We then decide on which limbs or sometimes which trees will be felled. Unfortunately, these are frequently oaks, and driving along roads in Danbury it is sad to see very old trees which have had to be mutilated to allow for modern living; inconveniences like power lines and high goods vehicles intrude into the trees' space.

**Badly lopped oak**



I write up my reports and the Parish Council uses them to advise at the appropriate Planning meeting. Fortunately, most owners are sympathetic and love their wonderful trees, despite thousands of acorns and leaves falling in the autumn.

Anyone can be a tree warden, but it helps perhaps to know a little about trees. We have training and attend courses run by the Tree Council every so often. Being fascinated by trees as I am, I cannot think of a better way for me to help as a volunteer in my community.



**The typical rounded  
outline of a naturally  
growing oak**

**Veronica Smith**

## News from the Trust



This month, we launched Member Link, a new initiative to support u3as.

Member Link collates in one place advice, tips and resources to keep us all connected.

Member link is about the whole u3a community, trustees, members – online and offline – staff and u3as coming together to help and support each other to keep connecting, learning and laughing.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/member-link>

**[Member Link Leaflet](#)**

Click to read the two page leaflet

# YOUR COMMITTEE

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Vice Chairman Malcolm Case

Secretary Carol Bates

Treasurer Geoff Cory

Membership  
Secretary Malcolm Case

Newsletter  
Editor Liz Samson

Speaker  
Secretary Veronica Smith

Committee  
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Tony Groves  
Judith Johnston  
Andrew Simmonds

Webmaster Tony Groves

Social Group Michael Childs

AV Equipment Mike Flack

Essex Assoc.  
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# CO-ORDINATORS

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

**Transcript** 5 March 2021 Sam Mauger, CEO of the Third Age Trust, said

“Hello there. I just wanted to have a catch up with you.

It’s really encouraging now that we have a hopeful way out of lockdown and returning to face to face meetings. What a relief that is for all of us. It will be great to see each other again in real life and not just virtual life. And great that it’s coming when spring is upon us and summer is around the corner. It really feels like a new beginning. We’ve learnt a lot over the last year about keeping in touch.

We’re not going to forget any of that. However, as we come out of lockdown we’re going to be following all the advice and guidance from all the governments from the four nations.

The first bulletins giving advice will be coming out later this month. It’s great to be on the next phase of this u3a journey and I’m looking forward to it so much.”

## FLORAL QUIZ ANSWERS

1.	Baroness Orczy	6.	Aunt Dahlia
2.	HMS Pinafore	7.	Cicely May Barker
3.	Emperor of Japan	8.	Daisy, Countess of Warwick
4.	Rose, Violet and Daisy	9.	Umberto Eco
5.	Iris Murdoch	10.	To San Francisco

## THE SILVER LINE

0800 4 70 80 90 [www.thesilverline.org.uk](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk)

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.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks for all your contributions for this newsletter. Members and co-ordinators have sent in some interesting articles and suggestions. Please keep them coming.

Zoom meetings are easy to join and a good way to try something different or new. All u3a members welcome at all Zoom meetings.

Don’t forget to keep looking at our website for any updates in-between newsletters. [www.maldonu3a.co.uk](http://www.maldonu3a.co.uk)

Liz Samson