

u3a **learn, laugh, live**

Maldon and District

Newsletter



Poppies at Hyde Hall and in the garden - Liz Samson

November 2021

www.maldonu3a.co.uk

Registered Charity 1086182

FROM THE CHAIR



We've made it to November! I find it quite amazing how quickly the months seem to fly by and it's hard to believe that 2021 is nearing its end with another Christmas and New Year almost upon us.

Firstly, I would like to say thank you to all that attended the AGM last month. As predicted, the business side of the afternoon didn't take very long and we then enjoyed a cup, well thermal beaker, of tea or coffee and some very good homemade cakes. It was great to see everyone chatting and welcoming the new members to our u3a who had come along for the afternoon. Thanks to those who helped with the refreshments, setting up the hall and providing the cakes.

The monthly meeting on 15th November will be provided by "Recorders Galore" with Sue Handscombe and Annette Gentleman. I'm looking forward to this as I have fond memories of attempting to learn to play the recorder from schooldays and my Mum frequently asking me to stop. I still have my recorder tucked away in the loft – perhaps Sue and Annette will allow me to join them. Come along and listen as they will guide us through the different sizes of instruments from a 6" plastic Garklein to an 8ft plywood Contrabass.

I was pleased to be able to go along to the first meeting back of the Just Jazz group. It was a lovely evening and, although not a particular jazz fan, I really enjoyed it and may well be along again at another meeting. I will also be going to the Big Balti Night later this month, which is also quite confusing for my family as I really don't care for curry. However, it's good fun with good company and I'm looking forward to going. I would love to hear from any co-ordinators regarding their meetings and how things are going and, of course, come for a visit some time.

My final comment is one that you will hear from me on a regular basis. This is my final year as Chairman, and we will need someone to replace me in that role. Please, have a good think about this and maybe consider putting yourself forward. We have room on the current Committee to co-opt two members and, as you will appreciate, we cannot continue to run without having a fully operating Committee, including a chairman. I wait to hear from you!

Best wishes, Shirley

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Thank you to all who came to our first meeting in the Town Hall in October.

Our next meeting will be on **Monday November 22nd** at 2pm, at the Town Hall. There is an entrance fee of £2.00 to help with costs.

Our speaker will be Margaret Smith for her talk on the "**History of Burnham-on-Crouch**" which has much to offer of historic interest especially maritime.



The talk will last for about an hour with time for questions afterwards.

There will be **NO MEETING in December**.

Looking forward to seeing you. Kathy and Sylvia

BIRD WATCHING GROUP

Eleven members braved a chilly wind to visit the sea wall at Heybridge on November 6th, when birds on view ranged from a buzzard (*Buteo buteo*) to diminutive sanderling (*Calidris alda*) and a common sandpiper (*Aactitis hypoeucos*). A good variety of waders were feeding on the mudflats, with many winter visitors from Europe and some from further afield. They included black-tailed and bar-tailed godwits (*Limosa limosa* and *Limosa lapponica*).

Other waders included curlew (*Numenius arquata*), redshank (*Tringa totanus*). Flocks of dark-bellied brent geese (*Branta bernicla*) have arrived from their breeding grounds in Siberia on their annual 2,500-mile migration. Avocets (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), little egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) and cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) could be seen with an abundance of ducks, including mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), wigeon (*Anas penelope*) and teal (*Anas crecca*).

Our visit ended with much-needed hot drinks at the nearby tearoom.

The group's next meeting is on **Sunday 5th December**, on Maldon prom meeting at 10am by the Rossi's ice cream kiosk. Parking available behind the prom.

MARITIME GROUP

The next meeting is on **Monday 6th December** starting at 10:00am at The Blackwater Sailing Club, Basin Road, Heybridge Basin, CM9 4SD. Please bring your white plastic credit card size bar coded membership card with you, this helps with signing in and is also a requirement of the Club. As at previous meetings, doors and windows will be open and chairs will be spaced to allow for social distancing.



The speaker for this meeting is John Rayment, a member of Thames Sailing Barge Trust. John will be talking about the restoration of the Thames Sailing Barge “Pudge”. “Pudge” carried bulk cargoes on the Thames Estuary and the rivers of Essex, Suffolk and Kent for more than forty years. In 2022, “Pudge” will be celebrating her centenary and during her trading life was involved in the evacuation of troops from Dunkirk and is registered as a Dunkirk Little Ship.

If you have any donations for The Seafarers Centre (see October Newsletter) then please bring them with you to the meeting.



If you would like to join the group, then please contact Malcolm Case

BRIDGE GROUP

The dynamism of our group leader/s led to us playing face-to-face again in mid-September. Since then, we've not heard of any of our number having succumbed to COVID-19 because of our rashness, or for any other reason. So, it's beginning to look like the good decision we all expected it would be. Not all of our group are back yet (doing other things, not quite ready to brave the face-to-face world etc.). Sadly, some will never be.



We always encourage new members to join the group, but it isn't really suitable for total beginners.

One of the most repeated comments in our last few gatherings is "how nice it is to be back playing across a table". And that it is. For all the merits and benefits of playing online during these strange times, it's hard to beat a friendly game with like-minded "chums". It's all very low cost, and friendly competition (mostly).

For just £2 per meeting (2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month, starting at 1.30pm), you get the thick end of three hours of bridge. For another 20p, you can make yourself a cuppa (bring your own mug).

We hope you will come and join us. Our next meeting is **Wednesday 24th November** at West Maldon Community Centre. We look forward to seeing you there.

Peter Hughes

MONTHLY MEETING

Monday 20th December 2021

Wickham Bishops Hall

Doors open at 1:30 for 1:45pm start



Our **Christmas Meeting and Social** this year will be slightly different because some of it will rely on **YOU**.

We shall be holding a relaxed light-hearted seasonal Quiz – nothing too clever or taxing – and hopefully it will make you smile.

There will be prizes!

As usual there will be festive refreshments and entertainments, so make sure that you note the date in your diaries.



Don't forget your membership card to sign in.



2022 u3a POCKET DIARY

If you have ordered a diary for next year, 2022, for collection at the December meeting and haven't yet paid please remember to bring your cheques for £3.50 made payable to Maldon & District u3a.

Diaries can still be ordered if you contact Carol Bates as soon as possible.



MONTHLY SPEAKER SCHEDULE 2022

This is an outline of plans for monthly speakers for the first half of 2022.

Jan 27th	Sam Scott	More than Child's Play <i>Writing Books for Children</i>
Feb 21st	Mike Holton	Don't Judge a Book by its Cover <i>Overview of traditional bookbinding</i>
Mar 21st	Danielle Barrett	Simon Cowell to Dragons Den <i>A colourful life in the Music Industry</i>
Apr 18th	Easter Monday	no meeting
May 16th	Saffron Summerfield	When Birds Sing – Nature's Music <i>Birdsong and Birdcalls with guitar</i>
Jun 20th	Elizabeth Gowing	Unlikely Positions in Unlikely Places <i>A yoga journey around Britain</i>

If you know of any speakers and can recommend them, please contact me.

Veronica Smith
Speaker Secretary

POETRY GROUP

The next meeting of the group is on **Thursday 2nd December** starting at 2:00pm. We will be meeting in a member's house and the subject for this month is "Winter".

This is a broad subject as there are many poets who have written poetry on this subject.

If you would like to join the group then please contact Jo Robson

GEOLOGY GROUP

Our October meeting was another trip out to take a look at the materials used to construct church walls. Unfortunately, only two of us could manage to make it but nevertheless we went ahead and met as arranged. The first church was St Nicolas, Chipping Hall, Witham. This church is the oldest building in the town and dominates Chipping Hill, the ancient heart of Witham, and as with many of our Essex churches is constructed of flints, pebbles, Roman brick and tile.

Our second visit of the day took us to the Parish Church of St Germanus, Faulkbourne. In a very pretty setting in the grounds of Faulkbourne Hall, it is mainly late C12, with C13 alterations, restored in the C19, with walls of flint rubble and some Roman brick, mainly plastered, with dressing of Barnack stone and roofed with handmade red clay tiles.

Barnack Stone: Oolitic Lincolnshire limestone, including some called "Barnack rag", was a valuable building stone first used by the Romans. Quarrying continued in the Middle Ages and the abbeys at Peterborough, Crowland, Ramsey, Sawtry and Bury St. Edmunds all used Barnack stone. The best Barnack stone had been worked out by about 1460 but after the dissolution of the monasteries, supplies became available from demolition of the Fenland monasteries and was reused in Cambridge colleges.

The Lincolnshire Limestone Formation is a geological formation and part of the Inferior Oolite Group of the Middle Jurassic strata of eastern England. It was formed around 65 million years ago in a shallow, warm sea on the margin of the London Platform and has estuarine beds above and below.

Oolite or oölite (*egg stone*) is a sedimentary rock formed from ooids, spherical grains composed of concentric layers.



Shirley Macro

*Modern ooids from a beach on
Joulter's Cay, The Bahamas*

TREE IDENTIFICATION GROUP

After three more successful meetings in October the group members should now be able to identify these trees using their leaves and/or their fruits.

English Oak	Holm Oak	English Elm
Hornbeam	Beech	Silver Birch
Hawthorn	Ash	Mountain Ash
Hazel	Sycamore	Field Maple
London Plane	Lime	Spindle
Sweet Chestnut	Horse Chestnut	

We shall now meet once a month over winter. The dates of the remaining meetings this year are **Friday 26th November** and **Friday 17th December**.

If perhaps you couldn't name these trees with certainty how about joining us?

Veronica Smith

HANDICRAFTS GROUP

In addition to myself, Brenda Heal is now sharing the co-ordinator's job with me.

We now only meet on the second Monday of each month.

Marian Manning

Brenda Heal

DISCUSSION GROUP

The Discussion Group now meets on the **second Monday** of the month at 2pm instead of the first Thursday.

Bryan Jones



Recently I discovered a u3a Chess League. As a result, I have just been soundly beaten by one Derek Simpson, latterly joint general secretary of the UNITE trades union. Amazing who one encounters randomly. He's not the only one to have beaten me by any stretch of the imagination, but it's all good craic. My grade will soon stabilise at a realistic level for my current abilities, then – who knows? – I may even be able to win the occasional game.

It's all done on line through the website <https://www.chess.com/> which is pretty simple to navigate. (If I can do it, anyone can).

Should there be anyone else within our u3a who wishes to join the league, it's very easy to do, and now would be as good a time as any to get on the first rung for the December round of games. (Google u3a chess network <https://u3achessnetwork.org.uk/>).

Peter Hughes



A chance to comment

Member Patrick Forsyth, who is co-ordinator for the *Writing for Fun group*, has a new job.

After preparing a note of his experience in writing, publishing and marketing and surviving two Zoom interviews he has been appointed a member of the national u3a committee which monitors overall commercial activities. The prime revenue generator is the ***“Third Age Matters”*** magazine.

So we now have a direct way of commenting on this, if you have any ideas about the magazine you would like passed on to the right quarter do let Patrick know on:

And watch out for the next issue in which Patrick will have an article published.

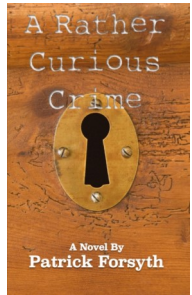
WRITING FOR FUN GROUP

Write right!

The “Writing for Fun” group started meeting face to face again in September (and normally meets on the **fourth Wednesday** in the month). Members write a piece which is read out and discussed at meetings, mainly stories, but non-fiction too, and a good many pieces were written and circulated during the period when meetings were necessarily curtailed.

Some members used the time to write more than usual. Co-ordinator Patrick Forsyth had a novel published at the turn of the year. ***A Rather Curious Crime*** is set in Maldon and concerns a crime that is rather different to how it appears.

Now he has another, ***Once a Thief***, due out in November.



The blurb for the latest reads:

From a life at risk... to lives changed forever

Tracy Hines is in a rut, unsure where her future lies but determined to escape a dead-end job in the nether regions of a supermarket. Then a burst of honesty lands her an unusual apprenticeship and sets her on a new and unexpected course. It is one that begins to change her life and holds out a variety of possibilities for the future.

Meantime a thief has his eyes on what he believes is a particularly good opportunity, albeit one that exposes him to greater risk than usual. When his carefully laid plans do not play out as he hoped a chain of events is set in train that profoundly affects him and others.

Tracy is affected more than most and finds herself surprised, threatened and faced with a puzzle that could change her life still further.

Both books are published by Stanhope Books and available in Maldon Books in the High Street, on Amazon, and u3a members can buy at a special price direct from Patrick (£6.99 instead of the published price of £8.99). Just let Patrick know and he can get a copy to you or bring books to meetings.

NOVEMBER and DECEMBER NIGHT SKY

November 16(-17): Peak of the Leonids Meteor Shower

The Leonids appear from a radiant point in the constellation Leo, which will be in the north-eastern sky for most people. If you can spot the Big Dipper/Plough, you're in the right part of the sky to spot some shooting.

November 19: Partial Lunar Eclipse

Geminid meteor shower: December hosts one of the most spectacular meteor showers in the calendar, the Geminids. Often producing well over 100 meteors an hour, this month's peak between 13 and 14 December coincides with a nearly new Moon. The darker skies this provides means you'll be much more likely to see some of the fainter meteors as they zip across our night sky.

International Space Station over the UK:

Best ISS passes over UK (times may vary slightly depending on location)			
Date	Time	Where will it come from?	Where will it head?
01-Dec	18:02:08	W	ESE
02-Dec	17:14:35	W	E
03-Dec	18:03:50	W	SSE
04-Dec	17:16:15	W	ESE
05-Dec	18:05:34	W	SSE
06-Dec	17:17:53	W	SE

Reproduced from the UK Space Agency.

RNLI - Collection

Thank you once again to those who are filling the small collection pots with their 5p and 20p pieces – or any other coins!!!

I have just banked £34.15. This means in the two years since we started collecting we have now raised £221.30. An excellent total and even more amazing as there has been less usage of coins over the past 18 months.

Please let Malcolm or myself have any filled pots or request one if you want to join in collecting for the lifeboats!!

Mary Burd



TEN PIN BOWLING -Christmas Lunch

The number of bowlers who are coming back to bowl each week is gradually increasing, both Wednesday and Thursday.

About fifty of us are having our 'traditional' Christmas lunch together on **Wednesday December 15th** 12.30 after bowling, in Henri's Restaurant as usual. Turkey or chicken with Christmas pudding to follow. (There are other choices). All bowlers, current players or past, are welcome.

If you would like to come to join us and you are a member of our u3a or you would like more information about Ten Pin bowling please contact me.

David Arnold

VACANCY – "SOUND" person needed

Our member in charge of the AV equipment is standing down at the end of the year. We need a replacement to provide the sound and visual facilities essential for our meetings.



You don't need to be a technical wizard, there are written instructions – help and training will be provided; this would work well with a team of two, or who knows a couple might step forward!

Anyone interested please contact me at the monthly meeting.

Alec Fraser

ASTRONOMY GROUP

Our meeting on the 25th October was again, a very successful observing evening. Although there was light cloud cover we were able to see the "Coloured Bands" on Jupiter together with three of its Moons. Saturn was also visible and we were able to see fairly clearly its rings. Members of the group had brought telescopes and binoculars through which to observe the planets.

Our next meeting, which will be the last for 2021, is on **Monday November 22nd** starting at 7:30 pm at our usual venue, Chigboro Fishing Club, Chigborough Road, Heybridge, CM9 4RE when we hope for clear skies to enable us to have another evening of observing.

Dates for our 2022 meetings

January 24th	February 28th	March 28th
April 25th	May 23rd	June 27th
July 25th	September 26th	October 24th
November 28th		

If you would like to join the group, then please contact Malcolm Case

JUST JAZZ GROUP

The next meeting of the Just Jazz Group will be on **Monday 15th November** at 7.30pm at the Maldon Little Ship Club.

A bar will be provided.

Jim Light

THE SILVER LINE

0800 4 70 80 90 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.

FILM GROUP

Our most recent meeting resulted in a wide-ranging discussion following our viewings of "The Keeper" and "The Outlaw".

Overall "The Keeper" was a far better film and was well received by everyone. Based on the life of Bert Trautmann, it portrayed the hostility shown him as a German goalkeeper playing for an English team so soon after WW2, and how this changed over time during his successful career. As with all these types of film, there are areas of doubt about whether some events actually happened, although there is no doubt that Bert did break his neck in a Cup Final and continued to play. A good film and definitely worth watching – **Score: 8**

However, "The Outlaw" didn't receive such rave reviews. Although there is some merit in looking at this film as an example of the values of the time, particularly with regarding the treatment of women – an implied rape scene which didn't apparently receive any criticism, although the film struggled to get approval from the Hollywood Production Code Administration because of the amount of cleavage exhibited by Jane Russell. Our general view is that this is not a good film, and even allowing for the technology of the time, there's not a lot to be said for it. The acting is poor, the plot is ridiculous and muddles history and the music cartoonish, although some did think the film may have been more tongue in cheek rather than serious. The only redeeming feature was the horse! **Score: 3**

The selections for November are:

"The Price of Gold" – The story of two athletes competing at the 1994 Winter Games – Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding and the events leading to Nancy's attack by an unknown assailant.

"Swallows and Amazons" – a 2016 British Family adventure film directed by Philippa Lowthorpe and written by Andrea Gibb, based on Arthur Ransome's 1930 novel. The film stars Andrew Scott, Rafe Spall, Kelly Macdonald, Jessica Hynes and Harry Enfield.

Both available on BBC iPlayer

We meet by Zoom on the last Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm. Our next meeting will be **24th November 2021**. Please get in touch if you would like to join us.

Shirley Macro,

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The photography group continues to meet monthly via Zoom.

The next meeting is on **Wednesday 17th November at 7:30pm**.

The subject for November is **'Water'**.

Visit the photography page on our website to see the growing and varied selection of pictures.

www.maldonu3a.co.uk/photography/photography.php

New members are most welcome, pictures can be of any standard that you have taken yourself.

A selection of October 2021 'ACTION' pictures



Alec Fraser



Geoff Macro



Andrew Simmonds



Carol Bates

Tony Groves webmaster@maldonu3a.co.uk

GARDEN GROUP

Like the Phoenix, the Garden Group is being reborn.

We shall hold our first meeting on **Tuesday 25th January 2022** at 10.00 at WMCC, at which we shall invite all those interested to offer their ideas for our future programme.

Then on **Tuesday 22nd February** we shall be visiting a local garden of note, to see the snowdrops and other winter flowering plants. This visit will be limited to 20 people and there will be a charge. We hope to follow this with a talk on **Tuesday 22nd March**.

All meetings will take place in the morning. If you would like to be included in the January meeting, please contact Veronica. For the February visit and more details of it, please contact Theresa.

Theresa Byles

Veronica Smith

MAH-JONG

Mah-Jong has places available for new members to join our small group. We meet on alternate Fridays at The Linton Room, WMCC, from 2-4pm.

I'm happy to teach anyone interested in learning to play Mah-Jong.

We are a small friendly group, so why not come along and learn to play and build "The Wall Of China" with us.

Our next meeting is **Friday 26th November**, and last meeting for the year is on **Friday 12th December**. We will restart our group on **Friday 4th February 2022**.

For more information please contact:

Mags Pell

FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks for all your contributions to this newsletter, please keep them coming.

Keep looking at our website for any updates in-between newsletters.
www.maldonu3a.co.uk

Liz Samson

YOUR COMMITTEE

Chairman	Shirley Macro
Vice Chairman	Malcolm Case
Secretary	Carol Bates
Treasurer	Geoff Cory
Membership Secretary	Malcolm Case
Newsletter Editor	Liz Samson
Speaker Secretary	Veronica Smith
Groups Co-ordinator	Malcolm Case
Committee	Alec Fraser Tony Groves Andrew Simmonds
Webmaster	Tony Groves
Social Group	Michael Childs
AV Equipment	Mike Flack
Essex Assoc. of u3a's Committee	Malcolm Case

Contact the u3a Office

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CO-ORDINATORS

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

Deadline for next newsletter: 8th December 2021

Schedule of Events - December 2021

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
		1 Scottish Dancing Ten Pin Bowling	2 Petanque Poetry Rummikub Ten Pin Bowling	3 Canasta	4	5 Bird Watching
6 Maritime	7	8 Bridge Meet and Eat Ten Pin Bowling	9 French History- Stuarts Petanque Reading Ten Pin Bowling	10 Sing for Pleasure Mah-Jong	11	12
13 Discussion Handicrafts	14	15 Geology Scottish Dancing Photography Ten Pin Bowling plus Lunch	16 Petanque Ten Pin Bowling	17 Canasta Trees	18	19
20 Monthly Meeting Just Jazz	21	22 Bridge Wine Group 2 Writing for Fun Ten Pin Bowling	23 French Music App Petanque Wine Group 3 Ten Pin Bowling	24	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day
27	28 Wine Group 4	29 Film Group Ten Pin Bowling	30 Petanque Ten Pin Bowling	31 Cribbage Family History		

Schedule correct at time of publication - please confirm dates with co-ordinators,
especially at this time of year.

Also check website www.maldonu3a.co.uk