

**u3a** learn,  
laugh,  
live

Maldon and District

**Newsletter**



*Happy Christmas and a Peaceful 2022*

**December 2021**

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

Registered Charity 1086182



I hope this finds you keeping fit and well, despite the short days and the ever-present Covid virus.

On a more cheerful note, isn't it lovely to see all the Christmas lights and decorations, enough to brighten the mood even if some of the seasonal goings-on are bit over the top and commercialised.

I hope some of you managed to get along to All Saints' Church in Maldon to see the Christmas Tree Festival. It was great that the Festival was able to take place this year and the Church looked charming filled with trees from the various organisations in the town. Thanks go to Marrie Webster for helping me set up and decorate our offering.

Another event I really enjoyed was last month's Members' Meeting when we were entertained by two members of Sonority with their recorders. How good do they sound when played properly, and who knew there were so many different types? Although the huge contra bass resembles something more akin to flat pack shelving put together without reading the instructions!

Owing to the current Covid situation your committee has reluctantly agreed to postpone the December meeting of Christmas entertainment with refreshments organised by Veronica Smith. The meeting will now take place on Zoom in the form of a light-hearted quiz. I do hope you will be able to join us and take part in some festive fun, even if you have to provide your own refreshments! **Zoom details below.**

It's good to hear that our interest groups are continuing and numbers attending are improving. Our overall membership numbers are good with new members joining but we also need to be getting along to our interest groups to make sure they can keep going into the future. Have a look at the activities available and you will, without doubt, find something on the list to have a go at, even if you have never done it before.

And on the subject of having a go – how about joining the Committee? We have room for two co-opted members and the need will arise before too long for a new Chairman and Vice Chairman. I step down at the end of August next year and if no replacement is found, then no u3a. Please don't let that happen.

More immediately though, we do need a volunteer to take over from Mike Flack to look after the setting up of the audio equipment at our monthly meetings and the occasional group meeting. Please get in touch.

That just leaves me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and here's looking forward to a bright and healthy 2022.

Shirley Macro

**Join Zoom Meeting Monday 20th December**

## **ASTRONOMY GROUP**

Our last meeting of this year, which was on Monday 22nd November was the third consecutive meeting that we have had clear skies leading to some excellent observing.

This month we again observed Jupiter together with three of its moons, Saturn with its rings. Pleiades, Aldebaran, Betelgeuse, Altair and Vega were also easily visible.

The next meeting of the group is on **Monday 24th January 2022** starting at 7:30 pm at Chigboro Fishing Club, Chigborough Road, Heybridge CM9 4RE. Further details will be in next month's Newsletter.

On behalf of the group may we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful and Healthy 2022.

Malcolm Case

## MARITIME GROUP

After a year of holding our meetings initially by using Zoom and since September by meeting in person at the Blackwater Sailing Club we now look forward to being able to continue meeting at the Blackwater Sailing Club in 2022 and to day trips to places with a Maritime interest.

### Planned MARITIME GROUP Programme 2022 (subject to change)

<b>Monday 3rd January</b>	No meeting – Bank Holiday
<b>Monday 7th February</b>	<b>Talk</b> by Gordon Davies on “Brunel and the <i>Great Western</i> ”.
<b>Monday 7th March</b>	<b>Talk</b> by Roger Smith on Southampton Docks, its history including information on various ships.
<b>Monday 4th April</b>	No Meeting
<b>Monday 2nd May</b>	No meeting – Bank Holiday
<b>Monday 6th June</b>	<b>Talk</b> by Andrew Weir the retired Managing Director of Bank Line about the company and its formation.
<b>Monday 4th July</b>	<b>Trip</b> to the national Maritime Museum “Stores” for a guided tour with Dr Megan Barford of the various ancient nautical maps and other artifacts. This is a follow up from Dr Megan Barford’s talk in November 2021. Plan is to leave Maldon in the morning, travel to London by coach, visit the Greenwich Maritime Museum, have lunch and then by coach to the “Stores”. Cost per person to be advised.
<b>Monday 1st August</b>	<b>Trip</b> on the river Medway. Cost per person to be advised.
<b>Monday 5th September</b>	<b>Talk</b> by John Rogers on “An affair with a Dolly” (an essential shipwrighting tool). A light-hearted look at John’s restorations of wooden boats, the intrigue of researching their heritage and the highs and lows of shipwrighting.

<b>Monday 3rd October</b>	<b>Talk</b> by Richard Jones on “Cable and Wireless”. Richard will talk about life aboard a cable laying ship, and then talk about how we talk to our families in Australia or wherever without thinking about it. Satellite or cable? He will give brief history of submarine telephone cables and cable ships from past to present day. He will describe how a cable is laid and repaired, how a route is chosen and surveyed. Old copper cables versus modern fibre optics?
<b>Monday 7th November</b>	<b>Talk</b> by Alison Mainwood on Lighthouses which have been built all around the coasts of many nations to guide mariners away from dangerous rocks and reefs.
<b>Monday 5th December</b>	<b>Talk</b> on the Regents Canal by Simon Gregor. Simon is a Blue Badge Guide for London. He is also a World I and II battlefield guide. Simon currently lives in the USA so he will be talking to us via a video link. This will be followed by a discussion on our programme for 2023.

Full meeting details will always be in the previous month’s Newsletter.

On behalf of the Maritime Group, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful and Healthy 2022.

Malcolm Case

## 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.

## MONTHLY MEETING

Monday 17th January 2022

Wickham Bishops Hall

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

**Sam Scott**

***More than Child's Play***

***Writing Books for Children***

Every book we read should offer pleasure and escapism. The same can be said for children's books - be it through witches and wizards, superheroes, or endearing animals.



Join us to listen to Sam Scott who will speak about her experience in the world of writing for children. She has been writing for fourteen years, and only switched genre to write for children three years ago and counts herself incredibly lucky to be in the position of having her latest book, *Sophie Spirit*, published and available for sale this Christmas.

As a newly published children's author, she would like to share a little of her journey - why she writes, where she finds inspiration, and how she came to be published.



***Don't forget your membership card to sign in.***

## MONTHLY SPEAKER SCHEDULE 2022

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

<b>Feb 21st</b>	<b>Mike Holton</b>	<b>Don't Judge a Book by its Cover</b> <i>Overview of traditional bookbinding</i>
<b>Mar 21st</b>	<b>Danielle Barrett</b>	<b>Simon Cowell to Dragons Den</b> <i>A colourful life in the Music Industry</i>
<b>Apr 18th</b>	<b>Easter Monday</b>	<b>no meeting</b>
<b>May 16th</b>	<b>Saffron Summerfield</b>	<b>When Birds Sing – Nature's Music</b> <i>Birdsong and Birdcalls with guitar</i>
<b>Jun 20th</b>	<b>Elizabeth Gowing</b>	<b>Unlikely Positions in Unlikely Places</b> <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

There will not be a meeting of the group in January.

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 3rd February** starting at 2pm.

We will be meeting in a member's house and the poet for this meeting is Sylvia Plath who was an American poet, novelist, and short-story writer. She is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry.

If you would like to join this very friendly group then please contact Jo Robson

## ESSEX u3a STUDY DAY Marks Hall Arboretum – 11th October 2021

For many years Study Days were organised for all Essex u3a members, usually taking place at the Plume School, Maldon. They included many different activities and learning opportunities taking half or full days each. However, the last event was deemed to be less well attended and it was decided not to continue with that pattern. Then came the pandemic.

Now things are getting back to normal, one or two half day sessions by Zoom were organised, the Genealogy one proving very popular. A visit to Marks Hall Arboretum was another but of course this would work better as a real visit rather than Zoom.

Hence approximately 40 members from across Essex met at the Arboretum and were led away in two groups by one of the professional arborists who work there.

The estate originally surrounded a manor house dating back to the 12th Century, which was later replaced in 1605 by a brick building by the then owner Robert Honywood. The estate passed down through the Honywood family for many generations until



eventually with the death of the childless Frances Emma Honywood in 1895, it was sold at auction. After several owners and 55 years, it was demolished after WWII partly because of damage done to it by the American troops stationed there.

The extensive land was used to grow vast swathes of pine trees by the Forestry Commission and some of those still exist in small patches. Now, the Arboretum is managed to show trees found in different parts of the temperate world as well as our British natives.

For example, current work is progressing on the Himalayas, mounds of soil and rubble which will be covered by trees found in that region. In the area called Gondwanaland are trees typical of Australasia particularly a grove of Wollemi pines and more than 20 varieties of Eucalyptus.

Apart from the acres of wonderful woodland walks there are two large lakes said to have been dug by Cromwell's army, and a huge three-sided Walled Garden which is particularly lovely in the summer. During the winter, large numbers of bulbs will be planted throughout the woodland adding to its beauty.



***This is part of the walled garden showing trees which can grow in dry conditions.***

The Arboretum is run as a charity and funding is precarious. It is open to the public for much of the week and there is a tearoom and Visitor's Centre. It is a beautiful place to visit, especially so on the gloriously sunny day that we had.

<https://www.markshall.org.uk/things-to-see-and-do/arboretum/>

Thanks are due to Sandra Randall who organised the day for Essex Association of u3as and to the two arborists who gave their time for us.

Veronica Smith

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Possible new group

"I was wondering if there is anyone interested in sugar craft lessons. I wouldn't be able to lead the group as I am wanting to learn how to do it! Maybe someone knows of a local group?"

Marie Brewer



## PETANQUE GROUP

The Petanque group finished its last game of the 2021 season on 24th November 2021.

Due to the icy wind coming off the river, even on a bright day, we decided that it was too much to endure, and put our equipment away until next spring. This was despite the best efforts of some of the players who pre-heated their balls in the oven before they played!



We have had an exceptional run this year, I believe we have only had to cancel twice because of wet weather. The regulars will be contacted when we propose to start again, and we would welcome any new players wishing to join us – details will appear in the newsletter.

Geoff Macro

third age **matters** u3a

### **A chance to comment**

Don't forget that Patrick Forsyth is now a member of the national u3a committee which monitors overall commercial activities. The prime revenue generator is the **"Third Age Matters"** magazine (see November Newsletter).

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

## GEOLOGY GROUP

Following our meeting in November we decided to have our winter meetings in an upstairs room at the Oak House, next to All Saints Church in Maldon High Street. For the price of a cup of coffee or tea, this warm, comfortable room can provide enough technical equipment for our needs.

Our first meeting is on **Wednesday January 19th 2022** when Molly Tring will give a talk on "**Man's Search for the Age of the Earth**".

From her research calculations these range from:

Archbishop of Armagh	October 22nd 4000BC
Babylonians	2 million years
Kelvin	20,000–40,000 years
Present	4.5 billion years

The meeting will of course depend on the Covid restrictions of the day, but we should have a fascinating discussion and all interested members are very welcome to attend.

Happy Christmas to you all, and a Healthy New Year.

Sylvia Cousins

## TEN PIN BOWLING

As usual we will be bowling on **December 22nd and 23rd**, then after Christmas on **29th and 30th December**.

Lucky this year that Christmas doesn't fall on a bowling day.

David Arnold

## CANASTA GROUP

We are so pleased to welcome back our members following such a long closure due to the Covid 19 crisis. We are also very pleased to have welcomed new members into the group and are therefore currently at full capacity. This is naturally subject to change for various reasons so If any u3a members are interested in joining us at a future date, I will hold a waiting list.

You can contact me Iris Slaney



## TREE IDENTIFICATION GROUP

Now we are into winter and most of the leaves have fallen from the trees, some may think it difficult to tell one tree from another.

On our November meeting at Blakes Wood, Danbury, the group braved the cold and learned how an understanding of such things as leaf scars, bud scales and lenticels, for example, can easily show which is which.

Our last meeting of the year on Friday 17th December we continued to look at these characteristics and went over all the work learnt about trees since we started.

Our next meeting will on **Friday 21st January 2022**, venue to be confirmed.

Veronica Smith

## READING GROUP

Our Group now meets on the **4th Friday of each month** at 2 pm. This change may mean that some members may find this time more convenient for them and so now would be able to join us.

You would be very welcome to our discussion of the current book followed by a cup of tea.

Please contact Sheila Epps

## JUST JAZZ GROUP

The next meeting of the Just Jazz Group will be on **Monday 20th December** at 7.30pm at the Maldon Little Ship Club.

There will be a bar and bring your own Christmas nibbles!!

We look forward to another convivial evening of Jazz.

Jim Light

## WELCOME

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

Paul Allen

Lorenzo Borrelli

Patricia (Pat) Borrelli

Steve Clarke

You in  
your 3rd  
age

## GERMAN CONVERSATION GROUP

This new group is now meeting fortnightly on a Tuesday afternoon from 2-4pm. The next meeting is **Tuesday 4th January 2022**.

Please contact me for more details or in case we have any changes of plan.

Howard Broadbridge

## VACANCY – “SOUND” person needed

As Shirley mentioned in *From The Chair* 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.

Anyone interested please contact or see me at the monthly meeting.

Alec Fraser

## FILM GROUP

Our latest meeting proved to be another good one and, although we were reduced in numbers, there was still plenty of discussion. As always, the selections produced differing opinions with scores ranging from 9 down to 4.

**“Swallows and Amazons”:** This film is the most recent adaptation of the famous children’s book. Four child actors are well supported by some well-known British cinema and television actors and set in beautiful countryside. It was generally well received for its good acting and story, goodies and baddies and a happy ending. Although one member of our group didn’t really enjoy it. My main concern with it was how well the story would be viewed by the younger generation of today. **Score: 7**

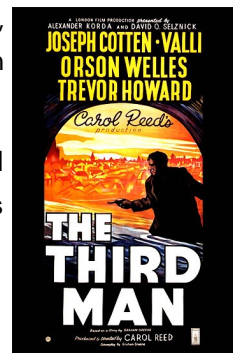
**“Price of Gold”:** This was a documentary rather than a straight film about the life and events leading up to the attack on Nancy Kerrigan and Tonya Harding’s role in it. Interesting to learn about her background and the elitism in the world of figure skating. There was no actual input from Nancy Kerrigan, so the documentary did seem a bit one sided and maybe made to put Tonya in the best light. However, we were still not totally convinced of her innocence. There is a recent film about all this called “I, Tonya” which is worth watching. **Score: 6**

The next films for us to watch have been chosen by Judith Park and are:

**The Third Man** – 1949 film directed by Carol Reed, written by Graham Greene, and starring Joseph Cotton, Alida Valli, Orson Welles and Trevor Howard.

I expect this is one many have already seen, so it will be interesting to see what we think nowadays of this classic film.

**Available on BBC iPlayer until 19th December**



**The Man Who Knew Infinity** – 2015 biographical drama about Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan. It stars Dev Patel in the lead role and Jeremy Irons as Professor G H Hardy.

It concerns the real life of Srinivasa, who grew up poor in Madras, earns admittance to Cambridge University during WWI, where he becomes a pioneer in mathematical theories.



**Available on BBC iPlayer until 20th December**

Next meeting will be on **Wednesday, 29th December**, at 7.30pm. If you would like to join, please get in touch.

Shirley Macro

## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

There will be **NO MEETING in December**, but we do hope to start again in the New Year.

Our first meeting will be on **January 24th 2022**

when David Newman will give a talk on:

"The amazing Major Hay of Goldhanger".



The meeting starts at 2pm at the Town Hall, where we have decided to stay for the time being.

This will rely on your continued support and we would value any comments you wish to make.

You will appreciate it is difficult to plan during this ongoing pandemic. Meanwhile we do hope you have a Very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Best Wishes to you all – Kathy and Sylvia.

## PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The photography group continues to meet monthly via Zoom.

The next meeting is on **Wednesday 15th December at 7:30pm**.

The subject for December is **'Wildlife'**.

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

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

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

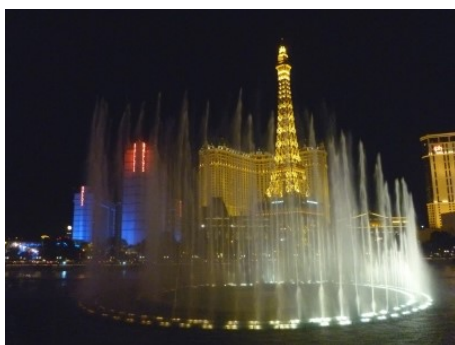
### A selection of November 2021 'Water' pictures



*Peter Hughes*



*Tony Groves*



*Malcolm Case*

## GARDEN GROUP

If you are interested in gardens, come and join our inaugural meeting on **Tuesday 25th January 2022** at West Maldon Community Centre at 10am.

Details of a visit to a local garden arranged for **Tuesday 22nd February** will be given.

We shall also be discussing how we would like the group to go forward and future plans.

Veronica Smith

Theresa Byles

## NEWS FROM THE EAST



October to December 2021

Your regional team keeping in touch with u3as across the six counties of the East of England

Keep up-to-date with activities in the East of England, such as plans for an Eastern Conference in May 2022. The event, a regional part of the u3a's 40th anniversary year, will hopefully be in May and held in Christ Church, Chelmsford. See the link on our website <http://www.maldonu3a.co.uk/index.htm>

## 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](http://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
German	Howard Broadbridge	Wine Circle No. 2	Graham Boswell
Handicraft	Marian Manning	Wine Circle No. 3	Mary Burd
	Brenda Heal	Wine Circle No. 4	Ann Goody
History—Stuarts	Beryl McDonell	Writing for Fun	Patrick Forsyth
Just Jazz	Jim Light		
	David Coombes		

**Deadline for next newsletter: 6th January 2022**

## Schedule of Events – January 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
					1 New Year	2
3  Maritime No Meeting	4  German	5  Scottish Dancing  Ten Pin Bowling	6  Rummikub  Ten Pin Bowling	7	8	9
10  Discussion Handicrafts	11	12  Bridge  Meet and Eat  Ten Pin Bowling	13  French  History- Stuarts  Ten Pin Bowling	14  Canasta  Sing for Pleasure	15	16
17  Monthly Meeting  Just Jazz	18  German	19  Geology  Scottish Dancing  Photography  Ten Pin Bowling	20  Ten Pin Bowling	21  Trees	22	23
24  Local History  Astronomy	25  Garden  Wine Group 4	26  Bridge  Wine Group 2  Writing for Fun  Film Group  Ten Pin Bowling	27  French  Music App  Wine Group 3  Ten Pin Bowling	28  Cribbage  Family History  Canasta  Reading  Sing for Pleasure	29	30
31						

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