



Maldon and District

Newsletter



Spring is on the Way

February 2022

www.maldonu3a.co.uk

Registered Charity 1086182

FROM THE CHAIR



Hope this finds you all keeping well and making the most of any winter sunshine we may have been lucky enough to enjoy. By the time you read this I really hope we haven't been buried in a foot of snow!

Although we are still dealing with the Covid situation, it does feel that things are settling down and we are managing to get back to how life used to be. I've been to a few different meetings, and it was reassuring to see numbers attending beginning to increase. Following the postponement of our December meeting, the monthly meeting in January went ahead as planned. The numbers attending were good, despite having to wear a facemask, and the talk by Sam Scott gave a good insight into writing books, particularly for children.

I'm looking forward to our next monthly meeting on the 21st February, when Mike Holton joins us with his talk "Don't Judge a Book by its Cover". My grandfather was a book binder, but I know little about the skills involved in this work. Please do try to come along a join the meeting, Wickham Bishops Village Hall, doors open at 1.30pm.

One occasion we are planning stages is an event to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the founding of the u3a and, of course, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (oops! Sorry Jubilee). At the moment, the plan is to hold something on the afternoon of our monthly meeting in June. Some summer sunshine would be useful! For the moment though, if anyone has any stories or memories relating to either anniversary, which they would be willing to share, please would you contact me. More details to follow shortly.

Finally, gentle reminder. This is my final year in the role of Chairman, and we will need a replacement by the end of August. Malcolm will also be stepping down as Vice Chairman but will continue as Membership Secretary. It would be lovely to have someone in place to take over the role before the last minute. I'm waiting to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Shirley

GEOLOGY GROUP



The Geology Group continues to meet on the **3rd Wednesday of the month** at 2.15pm at the Oak House in Maldon High Street. Members are encouraged to select and research a topic of their choice, and maybe give a presentation, which can then be discussed by the whole group. January's talk "Man's search for the Age of the Earth" was well researched and a fascinating discussion followed.

Over the centuries, estimates of the earth's age varied widely from a few thousand years to millions. Various techniques were used, such as counting back the generations to Adam, ageing fossils in various strata of the Earth's crust and finding the rate of cooling of the Earth from its molten state. The Archbishop of Armagh, James Ussher, in 1650 began counting all the "begats" in the Old Testament, along with studying ancient Egyptian and Hebrew texts. He concluded that the world began one weekend in 4004 BC, specifically on the evening before 23rd October. This seems laughable nowadays yet in 1650 it was the height of scientific endeavour, and many other eminent scholars were coming to similar conclusions.

The discovery of radioactivity at the turn of the 20th Century changed everything and continues to do so. Arthur Holmes, an English geologist, pioneered and developed the measurement of uranium-lead radiometric age-dating, which has been used on minerals and rocks (including lunar rocks) and meteorites to give what is now a universally agreed Age of the Earth of about 4.54 billion years.

With Summer holidays in mind, we are now looking at the unique geology of Cornwall, where some of the beaches have pebbles of serpentinite, first formed over 300 million years ago when Cornwall and most of the UK was 30 degrees South of the Equator.

Interested members are invited to join us and the cup of tea is nice!

Sylvia Cousins

MARITIME GROUP

The next meeting is on **Monday 7th March** starting at 10:00 am at The Blackwater Sailing Club, Basin Road, Heybridge Basin for a talk by John Rogers on “An Affair with a Dolly” (an essential shipwrighting tool).

A light-hearted look at John’s restoration of wooden boats, the intrigue of researching their heritage and the highs and lows of shipwrighting. This talk is in place of the talk by Roger Smith who unfortunately is unable to give it in March but will be giving it later in the year.



The trip to The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich on Monday 4th July. There will be a sign-up sheet available at the meeting so please bring your cheque books with you.

We will be departing from the West Maldon Community Centre at 8:15 am to arrive at the museum by about 10:00 am where we will be met by Dr Megan Barford who will show us maps both ancient and modern together with other Maritime Artefacts. The cost per person is £20.00, this covers the cost of the coach hire, coach parking and driver’s gratuity. If you would like to go on this trip, then please contact me or see me at the meeting.

Malcolm Case

Planned MARITIME GROUP Programme 2022 (subject to change)

Mon 4th April	No Meeting
Mon 2nd May	No meeting – Bank Holiday
Mon 6th June	Talk by Andrew Weir, the retired Managing Director of Bank Line, about the company and its formation.

Mon 4th July	Trip to the National Maritime Museum for a visual presentation in the museum library by 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 so as to arrive at the Museum by 10:00/10:30 and depart between 3:00/3:30pm. Cost per person, which includes cost of the coach hire, driver’s gratuity and coach parking is £20.00.
Mon 1st August	Trip on the river Medway. Cost per person to be advised.
Mon 5th September	Talk by Roger Smith on Southampton Docks, its history including information on various ships.
Mon 3rd October	Talk 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 a 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?
Mon 7th November	Talk 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.
Mon 5th December	Talk 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.

All meetings are held at The Blackwater Sailing Club, Basin Road, Heybridge Basin on the first Monday of the month, starting at 10:00 am.

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.

MONTHLY MEETING

Monday 21st March 2022

Wickham Bishops Hall Doors open at 1:30 for 1:45 pm start

Danielle Barnett:

From Simon Cowell to Dragons Den



This talk will include aspects of Danielle's life story and will answer the question 'Just what does it take to make it in the music industry?' and explain how she got the chance to appear successfully on Dragons' Den.

Don't forget your membership card to sign in.

MONTHLY SPEAKER SCHEDULE 2022

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	Anniversary Celebrations	

If you know of any speakers you can recommend, please contact me.
Veronica Smith, Speaker Secretary

POETRY GROUP

The next meeting of this very small but very friendly group is on **Thursday 3rd March**, meeting in a member's house at 2:00 pm. The poetry subject for this meeting is "Spring."

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



**It's Double
Celebration Time!**

**Monday
20th June 2022**

u3a
40th Anniversary

As part of the celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Anniversary, and the 40th Anniversary of the founding of the u3a, we will be having a social afternoon at Wickham Bishops Village Hall with refreshments.

We thought it would be a great chance to collect together members' memories and stories in connection with both events. You may also have other memories to share involving any other Royal connections or, maybe, you were involved with the forming of our very own u3a. It could be that somewhere in the loft you may have some photographs we could scan and copy, or memorabilia we could photograph to put on display.

So what we would like is your memories in connection with the death of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth ascending the throne, Coronation stories, Garden Party invitations, etc or other interesting occasions. This also applies to the founding of the u3a, how much of the history of its beginnings do we know, and how our own one started.

Co-ordinators – please could you ask members of your groups if they can help, or just get in touch with me directly.

I look forward to hearing from you with your memories and stories.

Thank you,

Shirley Macro



Birdwatching Group Programme 2022

6th March	Heybridge Basin	Meet in Daisy Meadow car park
2nd April	Tollesbury	Meet in Woodrolfe Road car park
7th May	Minsmere Reserve Suffolk	Meet in centre
18th June	Wrabness Reserve	Meet in Railway Station car park
2nd July	Salcott	Park outside church
No meeting in August		
3rd September	Blue House Farm	Park in reserve car park
2nd October	Cudmore Grove East Mersea	Meet in pay and display car park
5th November	Wallasea Island	Meet in car park
4th December	Hanningfield Reservoir	Meet in car park

All rendezvous times 10 am unless otherwise stated.

All meetings subject to Covid rules in force at the time.

For full details of locations or requests for car shares please contact

Co-ordinators: Peter Gaywood
Michael Bagshaw

BIRDWATCHING GROUP

Nine members braved a chilly February morning to visit the Essex Wildlife Trust reserve at Abberton reservoir to be rewarded with a wealth of wildfowl.

But the star of the show was a marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*) quartering the reed beds for prey, mainly small mammals and waterbirds. These fine birds of prey were once common but declined as marshland was drained, and because of shooting and egg collectors. But they eventually returned to Norfolk from where they spread to other East Anglian wetlands.

A pair of grey herons (*Ardea cinerea*) gazed impassively from a reservoir bank as black-tailed godwits (*Limosa limosa*), a common winter visitor, probed for food in the mud with their distinctive long, slightly upturned bills. The species became extinct as a British breeding bird in the 1950s but has since recovered to nest in eastern coastal areas.

Among the waterfowl on show were a pair of goosanders (*Mergus merganser*) Britain's largest sawbill duck. A rare winter visitor 100 years ago, it is now well established with a widening range.

Other ducks on the water included gadwall (*Anas strepera*), introduced to Britain in 1850; goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), mostly winter visitors from northern Europe which now nest in Scotland; wigeon (*Anas penelope*), another winter visitor from as far away as Russia, and Europe's smallest duck the teal (*Anas creca*). These breed in the moorland pools of northern Britain and Ireland, though again winter visitors come from northern Europe and Russia.

The group's next outing will be on **Sunday March 6th** to Heybridge Basin, meeting at 10am in Daisy Meadow car park.

Mike Bagshaw

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

The photography group continues to meet monthly via Zoom.

The next meeting is on **Wednesday 16th February at 7:30pm**.

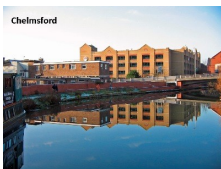
The subject for February is **'Statues'**.

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.

An example of January 2022 'Reflections' pictures



David Whiteing

Tony Groves webmaster@maldonu3a.co.uk

TREE IDENTIFICATION GROUP

Our January meeting was held at the Woodland Cemetery, London Road, with its good assortment of conifers, which we were studying that day.

Right at the entrance is a truly impressive Wellingtonia, one of the many scale-leaved conifers in the cemetery. A surprise was an example of a handsome Lawson Cypress, the dreaded Lawsonia which growing on its own looked nothing like the tall monsters grown in gardens. There are only three truly British conifers, the Douglas Fir, the Scots Pine and the Larch, none of which are growing here, but we found plenty of examples of other pines and cypresses to learn their characteristics.

Pines are most often recognised as conifers because their leaves are needles, but the definition will include any tree with fruit that is a cone. Saying that, included as conifers strangely are yew and juniper, both of which have berry fruit.

Our next meeting will be on **Friday 25th February** venue tba.

Veronica Smith

Planned date is
Monday 14th March 2022

Balti Bhujon Restaurant
Mill Rd, Maldon

6pm for 7pm start

Please phone

Graham Evans or

Bob Gowers

to add your name to the list.



SOCIAL ORGANISING GROUP

AN EVENING OF MAGIC, WITH SUPPER

Hurry, Hurry, Hurry

**BUY
TICKETS
NOW!**

Maldon Town Hall

Wednesday 9th March

6.30 for 7.00 to 10.00



Supper a choice of:

Cod or Chicken with Chips followed by Apple Pie.

Please give your choice and dietary requirements when ordering your ticket from:

Rosemary Case

Price only £13.00

Tickets limited to 60 Maldon and District u3a members.

Hurry and order by **Monday 28th February.**

Don't forget to bring your own knife, fork, spoon and plates; also your drink, glass, cup for coffee and sauces etc.

We look forward to seeing you there, Mike Childs SOG co-ordinator.

LONDON THEATRE OUTINGS

We are hoping to restart Theatre visits very soon. As you know we advise all members on the theatre group list by email as soon as we order tickets. If you would like to be included on this list please email me and I will add you to the list.

Rosemary Case

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

First of all, our thanks to everyone who attended the first meeting of the year at the Town Hall.

Our next meeting is on **Monday February 28th** at 2pm at the Town Hall, when our speaker is Tony Tuckwell for his talk "**The Only Coastal Way is Essex**".



This is a beautifully illustrated talk on walking the Coastal Path of Essex from Harwich to Southend covering about 350 miles.

So please come along and maybe invite other u3a friends to join you on what should be a very pleasant and informative afternoon, and very good value for a £2 entrance fee. Kathy and Sylvia

We are organising a coach trip on **Monday April 25th** called '**An East Anglian Panorama**'.

The cost is £51 and as well as a guided tour includes morning coffee and a two-course lunch.

We need at least 30 people to make this trip viable. If you are interested in coming with us, please contact me for more information.

Kathy Goff

STROLLERS TOO

Tuesday February 22nd walk around Hanningfield Reservoir, Nature Reserve.

Meet at "The Fishing Lodge" car park, South Hanningfield Road.

Ordnance Survey map 167, Ref 737 978

Time 10.00 for 10.30 start

Lunch at the Fishing Lodge Cafe, choose your meal before the walk.

This three and a half mile walk will stop at the Visitor Centre for a 10/15 minutes coffee break half way.

If you wish to join us, contact Mike Childs



STROLLERS

The first Sunday Strollers of 2022 is on **February 20th**. The walk is some three and a half miles long starting at the car park opposite the South Woodham Ferrers Yacht Club, Marsh Farm Road, South Woodham Ferrers CM3 5WP.

The walk is mainly along the banks of the river Crouch.

Please meet at 10:00 am for a 10:30 am start.

Lunch can be taken at the Whalebone Pub, Old Wickford Rd, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, CM3 5QU. A table is booked for 1:00 pm, **please let me know whether or not you will be joining the walk and whether or not you will be staying for lunch by no later than the 16th February.**

Malcolm Case

ASTRONOMY GROUP

The next meeting of this small but very friendly group is on **Monday 28th February** starting at 7:30 pm at Chigboro Fishing Club, Chigborough Road, Heybridge, CM9 4RE. If weather conditions allow, then we will be observing the night sky, if not, then there will be discussions on Astronomy in general, Space in general and telescopes in orbit above the Earth.

Some objects to view in the night sky - on the 18th March the blue stars of Pleiades, the giant red star Aldebaran and Mars will be visible in the southwestern sky. Early risers will see, low to the southeast, Saturn and Jupiter as well as Mercury. March is also a good month to see the International Space Station.

Please bring your telescopes, binoculars or monocular with you, if possible, if not then there should be several telescopes through which you will be able to observe the night sky.

We are planning a visit to Bayfordbury Observatory for Friday 11th March, if you would be interested in going, then please contact me for full details.

If you would like to join the group or just come along for an Astronomy taster, then please contact me.

Malcolm Case

Help spread the word!

Although we have been pleased to welcome over 40 new members this year, our membership is still below pre-pandemic levels.

We have produced some distinctive publicity materials; we now need your help to use them to spread the word:

- In conjunction with the other u3as in our cluster group, we have printed a small (A5) **poster**. This is suitable for any community noticeboard and doesn't take up much space.
- We have our own tri-fold **leaflet** which can be handed out at a community event.
- Where the poster isn't suitable, or as a hand-out, we have a **business card**.
- For community events, we have a 3ft wide outdoor **banner** in a similar design to the business card. This can be used on its own, or we can have a gazebo with bunting and displays from our interest groups.



front



back

We ask you to:

- Look around for suitable noticeboards and ask for a poster that you then put there.
- Look out for plans for future suitable community events (including such things as fetes, open gardens, Platinum Jubilee etc) where we could have a presence.

Limited quantities of posters will be available at the monthly meetings from Shirley Macro; leaflets and business cards from Malcolm Case.

TENPIN BOWLING

Isn't it odd that when you have been looking at something for ages another person sees it completely differently and you suddenly have a new point of view?

A recent member of our Tenpin bowling group said that what they like about the group is that when people are not actually taking their turn everyone is friendly, chatting and smiling and looking really happy. The bowling, although it is good exercise, is not the main reason for coming.

In fact, the group was originally envisaged (20 years ago) as a social group for people like us to meet for a coffee morning with bowling added.

A good morning is not a high score (thank goodness!), but did you enjoy yourself?



We are gradually getting back to our pre-Covid numbers but if you are interested in joining us, please contact me.

David Arnold

WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

Jerry Anderson
Jo Anderson
Sue Golden
Frank Golden
Claire Harris

Martin Harris
Beth Jeffries
Russell Jeffries
Henry Miller
Valerie Miller

You in
your 3rd
age

East of England Regional Conference

Thursday 19th May
with Patrick Forsyth as
one of the speakers.

Details on our website
www.maldon3a.co.uk

Click on the link here to reserve your place

<https://forms.gle/RX14gTp7Ttor9sbaA>

East Region together in conference

u3a
100th Anniversary

THE U3A — PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE

Thursday May 19
10.30am to 3.30pm

Inspiring speakers offering challenging thinking



Gervase Pflim
Author and educationalist



Liz Thackray
National u3a chair



Patrick Forsyth
Author and trainer

Super venue



Christchurch United Reformed Church,
New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0AW

* Free parking * Buffet lunch * Networking

Book your FREE place online at
<https://forms.gle/RX14gTp7Ttor9sbaA>

FILM GROUP

The film selections for January were "Judy" and "Hector." Both films were based around central troubled characters from different backgrounds and environments, and the impact on their lives. The general view of "Judy" was of a good, well-made film with a superb portrayal of Judy Garland by Rene Zellweger. The film showed using flashbacks how poorly she was treated as a child actor, and how this impacted on her later life. She died at the age of forty-seven.

Score: 7.5

"Hector" is a film showing the life of a homeless man and his journey to a shelter in London for the Christmas period. A much lower-key film than the blockbuster "Judy" but perhaps more meaningful. It was quite moralistic in places and did make us question how we perceive the homeless. It did sometimes feel a bit sanitised but overall, we felt it was a good film, again with excellent acting, especially Peter Mullan in the title role. **Score: 8**

The two films for this month are:

"Rory's Way" - Rory MacNeil, played by Brian Cox, is an ageing Scotsman whose health is deteriorating, leading him to visit his estranged son and family. Rory's boorish manner initially fails to charm San Francisco's citizens, but then a chance encounter leads to an unconventional relationship with museum curator Claudia (Rosanna Arquette), revealing Rory's softer side.

"The Wee Man" - (also released as John Burns) is a 2013 British gangster film starring Martin Compston and John Hannah. It depicts the true-life story of Scottish criminal Paul Ferris. Teenager Paul grows up in a crime-ridden area and is hired by a mob boss. He proceeds to rise through the ranks until the boss's son and a rival gang set him up to be arrested.

Both films on **BBC iPlayer**.

Our next Zoom meeting will be on **Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 7.30pm**.

If you would like to join, please get in touch.

Shirley Macro

GARDEN GROUP

We were delighted that 20 or so people turned up for the inaugural meeting of the Garden Group at WMCC on Tuesday 25th January, with several more who were unable to attend, contacting us by email and phone.

Over tea and biscuits, the decision was made to move the day and date of future meetings from March onwards to the **second Tuesday of each month**. However, it was also agreed that the real purpose of the group is to visit local gardens of note and larger national gardens further afield. That means that sometimes the whole of a Tuesday might be needed and then we shall probably not need WMCC very much.

The garden visit for February is to **Ulting Wick**, Crouchmans Farm Road, near Hatfield Peverel, particularly to see the snowdrops. The maximum number permitted is 20, so priority will be given to those who were present on Tuesday, with the others on a waiting list.



The visit is arranged for **Tuesday 22nd February**.

Attendees will be offered tea and biscuits to start, and the talk and tour will finish with soup and a roll. Travel will be by car, sharing where possible. Theresa will be sending details to those able to come.

It was acknowledged that it is unreasonable to expect a garden visit every month, but we shall try to book as many as possible both near and far.

Veronica Smith

Theresa Byles

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
Essex Assoc. of u3a's Committee	Malcolm Case

Contact the u3a Office

u3a

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u3a learn,
laugh,
live

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www.u3a.org.uk

Deadline for next newsletter: 9th March 2022

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		

Comment on ***“Third Age Matters”***
via ***Patrick Forsyth***

third age **matters** u3a

Schedule of Events – March 2022

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
	1 German	2 Tenpin Bowling	3 Poetry Rummikub Tenpin Bowling	4 Mah-Jong	5	6 Bird Watching
7 Maritime	8 Garden Group	9 Bridge Meet and Eat Tenpin Bowling Evening of Magic	10 French History-Stuarts Tenpin Bowling	11 Canasta Sing for Pleasure	12	13
14 Discussion Handicrafts Balti Evening	15 German	16 Geology Photography Tenpin Bowling	17 Tenpin Bowling	18 Mah-Jong	19	20 Strollers
21 Monthly Meeting Just Jazz	22 Wine Group 4 Strollers Too	23 Bridge Wine Group 2 Writing for Fun Tenpin Bowling	24 French Music App Wine Group 3 Tenpin Bowling	25 Cribbage Family History Canasta Reading Sing for Pleasure	26	27
28 Local History Astronomy	29 German	30 Film Group Tenpin Bowling	31 Tenpin Bowling			

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

Also check website www.maldonu3a.co.uk