

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

Maldon and District

Newsletter



RHS Hyde Hall Photo by Theresa Byles

March 2026

www.maldonu3a.co.uk

Registered Charity 1086182

FROM THE CHAIR

Last month I had the pleasure of visiting the Handicrafts group. Members were making beautiful travel jewellery boxes from purchased kits. Other items made over the past few years include, decoupage, decopatch, basket making, knitting, crochet, embroidery of all types, Dorset buttons, card making, Christmas decorations, glass painting, bag making, fimo work and many others.



Marian has been running this group since 8th September 2008. A small core kept it going through the covid restrictions and the group has now had a resurgence, following those lean times. So much so that the group is full.

For those keen to make things with their hands, one of our new members, Paula Jacobs, is starting a knitting and crochet group that will meet at the Blue Boar Hotel in Maldon on the first Wednesday of the month beginning on 1st April. Contact Paula for more details. paularjacobs@googlemail.com

On page 7 in the newsletter you will find information about a proposed visit to Copped Hall. I first visited this Georgian mansion about 20 years ago when it seemed to me that the task of saving the house and its grounds was impossibly ambitious, but the Trust is doing a wonderful job. I look forward to a return visit – please do join me.

Theresa Byles

Chairman

FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you for your contributions, please keep them coming and don't forget to include your photographs. The deadline for the next issue is **Wednesday 8th April**. Kris Newsletter Editor news.maldon3a@gmail.com

What's new?

NEW GROUPS

Groups collecting start up members are currently:

Book (reading)

Poetry (reading)

Climate change

Walking football

Spanish conversation

Wine tasting – an additional one

ALSO: Groups currently with vacancies include:

Astronomy

Geology

Writing for Fun

Knitting/crochet

MEETING: there will be a meeting for all those signed up to the potential new groups on **Friday 27th March at 10.30 at the Oak House, High Street, Maldon** to explore where we are, who wants what and how we go forward. All are welcome to attend. Meantime do sign up for potential new groups at our monthly meetings or email membership_maldonu3a@outlook.com

If you want to join an existing group, just contact the coordinator (see pages 22/23). Patrick Forsyth

WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome our new members:

Tina Belcher

Vicky Warner

Jeanette Wroe

Kim Church

Robert Church

Robin Chaplin

Sandie Chaplin

Ken Bing

Margaret Bancroft-Hall

Kevin Eden

Grant Wells

Reminder

Don't forget that there are many on-line learning events on the [national u3a website](#).

Another site is [Friends Extra](#) which lists discounts available to u3a members.

Just click on the links on our web page www.maldonu3a.co.uk

MONTHLY MEETING

Monday 20th April

Wickham Bishops Hall

Doors open at 1.15 for a 1.45 start

Lucy Allen

From Titanic to Batman:

The Highs & Lows of a Stuntwoman's Life

With over 30 years experience, Lucy reveals the thrills, challenges, and behind the scenes secrets of stunt work—plus, enjoy a 10-minute film of Lucy in action.

MONTHLY SPEAKER SCHEDULE 2026

18th May	Borley Rectory, the most haunted house in England <i>Bryan Thurlow</i>	Following a visit from a professional ghost hunter in 1929, a national newspaper declared, 'Borley Rectory, the most haunted house in England.'
15th June	Copped Hall <i>Philip McKinder</i>	Following on from his excellent talk on the 1952 Lynmouth Flood Disaster Philip returns to tell us about Copped Hall, a fine Georgian Mansion currently under restoration. A visit has been arranged, see page 7.
20th July	Summer Entertainment	Music and Memories– the return of Steve Scruton & Ian Wyatt with a trip down memory lane. Afternoon tea. Ticketed event

17th August	Action for Family Carers <i>Rebecca Loader</i>	Action for Family Carers is a local charity which has been supporting carers in Essex for decades.
21st September	Maldon's Lost Railway <i>Stephen Nunn</i>	Stephen will take us on a pictorial adventure from Witham to the end of line at Southminster and all stops in between.
19th October	The Commonwealth War Graves <i>Barrie Sears</i>	Barrie will talk about the important work of the CWGC and its educational charity, the CWG Foundation
16th November	AGM followed by a Quiz	A quiz from our own u3a member, Linda Allen
21st December	Musical Entertainment <i>The Purleigh Phil</i>	They're back by popular demand with Christmas music & songs. Festive afternoon tea Ticketed event

If you know of any speakers that you can recommend please contact our Speaker Secretary: Margaret Harker

Teapots, Cups and Saucers wanted

Thank you to all who have searched in those cupboards and found some unwanted crockery. For those of you that still haven't looked then if buried deep in a cupboard or sitting at the back of a shelf you happen to have a medium sized teapot or some cups and saucers you no longer need, I'd be very pleased to take them off your hands. Some of our regular monthly meetings involve afternoon tea with teapots on the tables and these events are so popular that we need extra teapots and crockery.

Please get in touch or bring them along to the monthly meeting if you can help, and I'll give your unused crockery a new lease of life !

Thanks, Shirley Macro

MEET & EAT GROUP

The Meet & Eat Group is a small friendly lunch group that meet on the **2nd Wednesday** of each month at a different venue chosen by each of the members. We are a mixed group of male and female members. The group is full at the moment but if you are interested in finding out more you can contact me.

We do not exceed 12 in the group to enable us to get bookings in most restaurants. If you are interested please contact me and if I get a good response I would consider starting a second group.

Joan Cummins

GUITAR & UKULELE GROUP

The Guitar and Ukulele group continues to thrive with more new members joining each month.

We work on new material while also playing our favourite songs, each person can choose the songs they would like to play from our growing playlist. This group is about having fun, laughing and making music.

We play a wide range of music and are currently up to playlist number seven with eight on the go.

We are still welcoming new members or if you would just like to come along and sing you would be made welcome.

Our meetings are on the **1st and 3rd Tuesday** of each month from **10.00 until midday** in the Linton Room at the WMCC. There is plenty of free parking and each two hour session will be £3.

Contact **Steve** if you would like to join.



[The Silver Line](#) is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. 0800 4708090 www.thesilverline.org.uk

VISIT TO COPPED HALL – FRIDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER

Our main talk in June this year will be on Copped Hall, a fine Georgian mansion near Epping Forest, which is currently under restoration. It is superbly sited on a ridge overlooking its landscaped parkland and can be seen from the M25.

Following a major fire the Copped Hall Trust saved the mansion and gardens by purchasing them in 1995. The aim of the Trust is to permanently protect the site, and carefully restore Copped Hall and its gardens for educational, cultural and community benefit.

To follow on from the talk, we have arranged a visit to the Hall and parkland on **Friday 11th September at 10.00am**. We will have a guided tour which covers the grounds, the Walled Garden and three floors of the Mansion. The tour takes approximately 2.5 hours with a break halfway for tea, coffee and home-made cake. Please note that the grounds are sloping and uneven, and there is no step-free access inside the Mansion.

The price, including the refreshments is **£15 pp**. I need to confirm with the Trust that this visit is going ahead, so please book your place with me promptly.

Cheques payable to Maldon u3a with the name of the trip on the reverse can be handed over at the main Monthly meeting or posted to me at 10 Hopping Jacks Lane, Danbury CM3 4PN or you can pay online. If you are paying by bacs please let me know when you have made the payment.

Maldon & Dist u3a Sort code: 60-13-37 a/c 49774476 reference: Copped Hall

Please note that this is a self-drive event, open to all our u3a members. Car sharing is a possibility. I hope to arrange an option to go for a late lunch afterwards at a local pub – The Horseshoes in Upshire. This will depend upon interest and numbers.

Thank you. Theresa Byles

ROYAL HISTORY GROUP

Our next meeting is **Thursday 12th March** at 10.00 at the WMCC. We have now moved onto the Windsor era, the period following on from the death of Edward VII until now looking at not only the royal families but also events that were happening in the UK and around the world at this time



Why not join us? Kathy Goff

AVIATION GROUP

Hello everyone,

Regrettably, our original speaker for our February meeting had to cancel due to illness, instead I put together an illustrated talk about the First Great Escape in WW1 by RFC pilots from Holzminden POW camp in July 1918.

Twenty-nine men got over or rather under the wall of which ten made “home runs.”

Added to this I showed an image from Google Earth of Maidstone Girls Grammar School clearly showing the three sets of steps leading down to the WW2 air raid shelters that were the subject of the talk given by our speaker at the February main meeting at Wickham Bishops. It's amazing what you can see flying around in a simulator without upsetting the good folks of Maidstone!



Coming up this month on **Friday 27th** we have Andy Strange as our guest speaker – Andy will give us an illustrated talk entitled ***The Battle of the Beams***, all about the rapid advances in electronic guidance of both attacking and defending airforces during WW2 and their bearing on modern aviation guidance systems. Much of this technology was designed and produced in our county by the likes of Marconi and EEV at Chelmsford, Ecco at Southend, Kelvin Hughes and Plessey at Ilford with of course testing at “Radar Hill” , South Woodham Ferrers.

May and June Visits

If you wish to join us on the visits to Brooklands in May or Duxford in June, please let me know soonest as the coaches are filling up—note that we are combining with the Garden Group on both occasions.

Cheques payable to Maldon & District u3a with the name of the trip on the reverse can be handed over at the main Monthly meeting or you can pay online. If you are paying by bacs please let me know when you have made the payment.

Maldon & Dist u3a Sort code: 60-13-37 a/c 49774476 using the reference Aviation-(name of trip)

Wings & Wheels at Stow on Sunday 24th May. If you have a classic car or motorbike and would like to join us (currently we number 5 confirmed), let me know as I am preparing the booking application at present.

Friday 24th April Speaker: **Andrew Colley or John Neil**
The Man Who Tested Parachutes This is the story of an ordinary man who took extraordinary risks, and the men and women who served alongside him. It also pays tribute to the young recruits who died before they were able to take part in the key battles for which they were being trained.

Thursday 21st May Visit to **Brooklands Museum** combining with the Garden Group who will go to RHS Wisley.
Coach cost---£30pp; Group entry cost---£19.99 (based on 10+); 1 hour guided tour---£5pp (based on 12 in group)

Sunday 24th May We plan to have members with classic cars or motor bikes at the **Wings & Wheels show at Stow Maries** on Sunday 24th May. Let me know if you wish to join us---drivers of the classic get in free but passengers have to buy a ticket via [www.stowmaries.org.uk /events](http://www.stowmaries.org.uk/events) page.

Monday 22nd June Visit to **IWM Duxford** combining with the Garden Group who will go to Audley End house and garden.
Coach cost---£25pp; Group entry cost---£23.10 (based on 15+ in group); self guided trip.

Friday 31st July TBA

All our meetings, unless stated, are held at **Woodham Mortimer Village Hall** at **11.00**, doors open at 10.30 for coffee, biscuits, gossip etc.

Chris Samson

PADEL TENNIS GROUP

The session is every **Wednesday** from 2.30 to 4pm at Padel United, Park Drive Health Club, Maldon. We cater for between 3 and 10 members without anyone having to sit out for more than a few minutes.

If any one interested in joining the Group or perhaps having a taster session please contact: Ken Hazell.

FILM GROUP

The films under review for February were:

Allelujah – It was generally agreed that this 2022 film about the goings-on at a small geriatric hospital threatened with closure was at times rather strange. Based on an Alan Bennett play and filled with well-known actors, it had excellent dialogue and acting, particularly Jennifer Saunders, but became a bit jarring with the change of theme when it became clear that patients were being added to a list and “helped” on their way. It did also highlight quite important issues around the closing of smaller local hospitals and the work of the NHS. This point was particularly made clear with the final scene set during Covid. **Score: 7**

One Life – This was one of the rare occasions when we all agreed that this is an excellent film. Based on the true story of Nicholas Winton who, with the support of many others, managed to successfully transport by train children from German occupied Czechoslovakia in 1938–39. Superb acting by both Anthony Hopkins as the older Nicholas and Johnny Flynn as the younger man. Very emotional at times, tissues needed! **Score: 10**

Next time:

The Damned United – a 2009 British sports drama film based on the bestselling 2006 novel *The Damned Utd*, a largely fictional book based on the author’s interpretation of Brian Clough’s ill-fated tenure as football manager of Leeds United in 1974. Starring Michael Sheen as Brian Clough, Timothy Spall as Peter Taylor and Colm Meaney as Don Revie.

Available on BBC iPlayer until Saturday, 21st March

The Eternal Daughter – 2022 Gothic mystery drama starring Tilda Swinton in a double role as both a middle-aged filmmaker and her elderly mother who are guests at a mysterious hotel.

Available on BBC iPlayer

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday, 25th March at 7.30pm via Zoom.**

New members welcome, please just get in touch.

Shirley Macro

RNLI Collecting Pots

Thanks goes to everyone who continue to fill their small Tiptree jars with 5p and 20p coins for the RNLI. Our collecting pots last year raised £231 for which the local branch of the RNLI are very grateful.

Thank you again and if you wish to join in jars are always available at the Main meeting or Maritime.

Mary Burd Malcolm Case

HANDICRAFT GROUP

We are a small, very friendly group who meet on the **second Monday** of each month, **10.00 – 12 noon** in the Linton Room, WMCC. We are now up to full numbers. However, if you are interested in joining the group in the future we are running a waiting list. Please contact us for further details.

Marian Manning

Brenda Heal

GEOLOGY GROUP

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 18th March** when we will continue to look at the geology of the last 65 million years with emphasis on the UK and especially Essex, but showing how this area was affected by worldwide events at this time.

We meet at the West Maldon Community Centre at 2p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month and would be pleased to see interested new members with or without geological knowledge. We are all asked to do some research, usually via the internet, in readiness for discussion at our monthly meeting.

Why not come along and meet our friendly Group for Geology, tea and biscuits

Sylvia Cousins

TENPIN BOWLING

Do you fancy a chat and a cup of coffee with some tenpin bowling thrown in? We play every **Wednesday** and **Thursday mornings** from 09.45 – 12 noon at Madison Heights, Park Drive, Maldon. The cost is £9 per session which includes shoe hire and tea/coffee & biscuits..

If you are interested, please contact:

Alan Buck

David Coombes



LONDON WALKS

London Walks take place on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

We meet a professional guide at **11.15** to be taken on a 2-hour guided walk. The distance walked is not vast as we stop many times to be told interesting and entertaining information.

Contact Julie to reserve your place. As the number of u3a members wanting to join our Walks is increasing, I need to know many weeks in advance in case I need to employ a second professional guide. Please continue to refer to www.walks.com for the details of each Walk.

Please note the **NEW TIME of 11.15.**

After the Walk you are free to enjoy London as you wish. Travel arrangements are made by yourselves.

There were no walks in January or February, but we are looking forward to our first 2026 Walk later this month.

The itinerary for 2026 :

The cost for each Walk is **£11 per person.**

**16th June £10.20 for the boat trip plus £11 for the Walk. Lunch is extra.

17th March	The Quack Doctor's Tour	Meet at Southwark Cathedral
21st April	The Famous Square Mile	Meet at Monument Station
19th May	Hampstead Village & Heath	Meet at Hampstead Station
16th June **	All day outing – a 45 minute guided boat trip from Little Venice to Camden. Lunch at Andy's Greek Taverna, followed by a 2-hour London Walk entitled Old Camden Town. Our day will finish in Camden at about 5pm.	Meet at Warwick Avenue Station. Note meeting time of 11.00
21st July	Darkest Victorian London	Meet at Monument Station
18th August	The Blitz	Meet at St Paul's Station

15th September	Rock n' Roll Covent Garden	Meet at Tottenham Court Road Station
20th October	Revolting London	Meet at Tower Hill Station
17th November	London's Secret Village	Meet at St Paul's Station
15th December	Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol & Seasonal Traditions	Meet at Tower Hill Station

Payment by cheque in advance please –payable to Maldon & District u3a. No later than 8 days before the Walk please.

ONE CHEQUE PER EVENT.

Julie Lake

KNITTING & CROCHET GROUP

The first meeting of the new Knitting & Crochet group will be on **Wednesday 1st April at the Blue Boar, Maldon from 10.00 until 12.00.**

If you are already a keen knitter/crocheter and would like to share your knowledge with others or would just like to have try at a new hobby please get in touch or speak to me at our monthly meeting when I will have some samples of work.

Did you know that men dominated crochet & knitting throughout most of history so we would be pleased to see some of you at our meetings.

Future meetings will be the first Wednesday of the month at the Blue Boar.

Paula Jacobs

THE BIG BALTI

The next curry night will be held on **Monday 30th March at the new venue of Bengal Nights, Heybridge Square. Parking available behind the restaurant.**

To add your name to the list please contact the following.

Graham Evans Bob Gowers

GARDEN GROUP

This year's garden visits are proving popular with good numbers already for all our trips. Please reserve your place as soon as possible. For the self drive garden visits it may be possible to arrange car share. Please let us know if this is something that would help.

Cheques payable to Maldon & District u3a with the name of the trip on the reverse can be handed over at the main Monthly meeting or posted to Theresa at 10 Hopping Jacks Lane, Danbury CM3 4PN or you can pay online. If you are paying by bacs please let us know when you have made the payment.

Maldon & Dist u3a Sort code: 60-13-37

a/c 49774476 using the reference gardens -(name of garden)

Tuesday 14th April at 2pm £15 pp inc refreshments

Mayfield Farm, Hungerdown Lane, Ardleigh, CO7 7LZ

Mayfield Farm is a seven-acre garden which only a few years ago was largely a field, with a huge glasshouse and polytunnels. Now filled with many beautiful beds and borders, the owners have also created a secret garden and planted yew hedging for topiary. Over 100,000 bulbs have been planted in the garden during the past few years to create a wonderful spring display.

Thursday 21st May - all day £30 pp for the coach

Visit to RHS Wisley/Brooklands

We anticipate that there will be enough RHS members with joint membership so there will be no entrance charge. If this is not the case we will advise you nearer the date. We will leave WMCC at 8.30 and be dropped off at Wisley before the Aviation Group go on to Brooklands. We will return to Maldon 17.30/18.00.

Tuesday 9th June at 2pm £10 pp inc refreshments

Ransomes, Wigborough Road, Peldon, CO5 7RA

A two-acre country garden with a focus on biodiversity. The colourful cottage garden leads to a meadow and young tree shelter belt. Wildflower meadows, dead hedging, log piles and a large lily pond create a haven for wildlife. An orchard, soft-fruit garden, an apiary and a productive vegetable garden with greenhouse and potting shed provide both homegrown produce and a plant nursery for the garden.

Monday 22nd June—all day

£25 pp for the coach

Visit to Audley End/Duxford

please pay for the coach now

This is an English Heritage venue and we hope that there will be sufficient uptake (15+) to qualify for the group rate of **£20.12 pp**, (unless you are a member of English Heritage).

Tuesday 14th July at 2pm

£10.50 pp inc refreshments

Keeway, Creeksea nr Burnham on Crouch CMO 8PL

Large, mature country garden with stunning views over the River Crouch. Formal terraces surround the house with steps leading to sweeping lawns, mixed borders packed full of bulbs and perennials, formal rose and herb garden with interesting water feature. Further afield there are wilder areas, paddocks and a lake.

Unfortunately we are unable to go ahead with the Sandringham trip owing to lack of interest.

Theresa Byles

Kris Taylor

SOCIAL ORGANISING GROUP

Planning is under way for some social events during the year, and so far they include a Magical Evening , a Quiz, a visit to the Royal Opera Storage facility in Thurrock and , to commemorate 25 years of our Maritime Group a Sea Shanty evening.

Make a note in your diary that the Sea Shanty evening will be on **Tuesday 8th September** at the Blackwater Sailing Club. Details of other events will be in next month's newsletter or notified by email.

It is unfortunate that it is necessary to hold some of the events in the evening, as we know that many of you prefer not to drive at night, but it may be that we have willing drivers that could assist. If you have a suggestion for any events that you think would interest our members please let either Margaret or Brenda know.

Margaret Harker Brenda Heal

Our walk on **Sunday 15th February** had to be cancelled due to heavy rain. However, we all met up at The Oak House, Maldon for a delicious Sunday roast.

On **Tuesday 24th February**, the sun was shining, so we set off from Beeches Road for our walk to Beeleigh. It was very muddy and slippery in places, but as we were all wearing the correct footwear it was not a problem. Our first stop was Beeleigh Falls, which looked spectacular.

As we strolled on, there was the sound of birdsong, and early signs of spring.



When we reached Beeleigh Abbey, there was evidence of major clearance, fencing, and planting of saplings. This large area is to be used as a natural home for wildlife and farm animals. It is very likely that we will repeat this walk next year, to see what progress has been made.

After passing under the bypass, we followed the path to the Leech garden, which was once owned by two local sisters, Edna and Joan Leech, who were killed in an air crash in 1971, and the garden

was left to the people of Maldon in their will. It is now maintained by Maldon Town Council and a team of volunteers for the use by the town's residents. It features a wide range of native and ornamental trees and shrubs, along with views towards Beeleigh Weir.

From there it was a short walk to The Oak House for lunch.

Finally, the last leg of our stroll took us down Cromwell Hill, and back to the start. We all agreed that it was a lovely walk for the start of the year.

Gill Stone

STROLLERS

On **Sunday 22nd March** (note the change of date) we'll be walking from near **The Cricketers Arms in Danbury**, where we'll return to have lunch. We'll meet at 10.15 for a 10.30 start from the free National Trust car park which is just across the green opposite the pub. Car sharing would be helpful. Penny Royal Road, CM 4ED <http://www.cricketersarmsdanbury.com>

The walk is 4 miles long, firstly going gently downhill on a quiet country road. After this, we cross a field and a short footbridge which has a horizontal bar each end (take care for those with knee or hip problems). This is followed by a steady walk up through Danbury Country Park and a residential area to St John the Baptist church, and then back down to our cars and the pub.

We have booked lunch for 12 walkers, and they required a £10 deposit per person, which we've paid. If you would like to join the walk, please let us know.
Val and John Stealey

STROLLERS TOO

Our next walk on **Tuesday 24th March** will be the Rail Trail Walk from Wickham Bishops.

Meet at St Bartholomew's Church car park (CM8 3LA) at 10.15 for a 10.30 start. The walk will take us across fields to Langford Road which we cross to join the Blackwater Rail trail, walking as far as the disused St Peter's Church. From there we will make our way back through the old orchards to the church car park. The walk is 3.7 miles.

As there are currently no pubs in Wickham Bishops we will drive to The Green Man in Little Braxted (CM8 3LB) for lunch (no deposit required).

We are aware that due to the Sunday strollers changing their date, this walk is only 2 days after but we hope you can still join us.

Please let us know if you are coming and if you will want lunch.

Muriel and Steven Clarke

PETANQUE GROUP



It is time to dust the cobwebs off those Petanque balls and head to the Petanque rink on Maldon Prom on a Thursday afternoon for a couple of hours or so of fun. The first session of the 2026 season is scheduled for **Thursday 16th April**, hopefully a dry day!

New players are always welcome to come and give it a try, why not come along and have a go, we play from 2.00 pm until around 4.00 pm.

We play on the Petanque pitch opposite the Marine Lake at the Promenade Park, Park Drive, Maldon Essex CM9 5JQ.

No charge is made to play but you must be a member of Maldon and District u3a or one of the Maldon u3a cluster groups.

We may be able to loan you some boules to get you started to see if you like it, but you will need to purchase some of your own to play regularly. Car parking is available at the park, please note Maldon District Council make a charge

We only play if the weather is dry. The season is April to October.

Contact u3a co-ordinators Jack Veash or Geoff Macro for more details.

JUST JAZZ GROUP

Our next meeting is **Monday 16th March** from 7.30—9.30pm, in the Little Ship Club, Hythe Quay, Maldon . The bar will be open so pop in for drink, some music and a chat. We look forward to seeing you.

Pete Condon David Coombes

ASTRONOMY GROUP

The next meeting of the Astronomy group is on **Monday 23rd March**, starting at 7.30pm at the Chigboro Fishing Club, Chigborough Road, Heybridge, Maldon for a talk by Sylvia Cousins on **Astronomy 2026**.

u3a members are very welcome at the meeting.

Malcolm Case

MARITIME GROUP

Monday 6th April—No meeting—Bank Holiday

Monday 4th May—No meeting—Bank Holiday

Monday 1st June – Trip to Dover Museum and Dover Commercial Docks

Monday 6th July – talk by **Don Baines on Dunkirk Heroes—The Story of Two Barges**. The two barges are Pudge and Centaur, both Dunkirk little ships, based in Maldon. Don's talk tells us about the barges' contribution to the success of Operation Dynamo in May–June 1940.

Monday 3rd August – Trip to Sheerness Docks and Maritime Museum

Monday 7th September – talk by **Roger Butler**, by Zoom, on the tiny archipelago of **St Kilda** which lies forty miles west of the Outer Hebrides – you won't find it on any road atlas! These isolated islands have a unique history, and the last residents were evacuated in 1930.

Monday 5th October – talk by **John Johnson–Allen** via Zoom on **Rosslyn Wemyss, Admiral of the Fleet: The Man Who Created Armistice Day**. The life of a Naval officer from 1877 to 1919 through peace, war and then peace who managed the successful evacuation of 140,000 troops from Gallipoli and, later, was the British Naval representative at the Armistice negotiations.

Monday 2nd November – talk by **Jimmy Byam Shaw** on tank testing of ship shapes and design.

Monday 7th December – talk by **Stephen Nunn on Maldon's links with the Battle of Trafalgar (1805)**. Our overwhelming victory over the French and Spanish fleet off Cape Trafalgar on 21st October 1805 gave the Royal Navy its most famous triumph and confirmed a long tradition of naval supremacy. There are some surprising links between Maritime Maldon and this famous event.

u3a members are very welcome at the meetings and on trips.

Malcolm Case

DONATIONS for SEAFARERS CENTRE, TILBURY

The centre is again asking for donations of knitted hats, gloves, scarves, jerseys, any colour and size. Coats, clean, are also asked for as ships are coming from warmer climes and the crew do not always have warm clothing. They also ask for jigsaw puzzles (complete), DVDs and books. Also, toiletries suitable for male and female and sweets and chocolates with long use by dates.. All donations are always gratefully received and on behalf of the centre, thank you. If you have any donations, then please give them to me at a monthly meeting or at a Maritime meeting.

Malcolm Case

The State Pension and the Triple-Lock.

Those of us in receipt of the State Pension or approaching State Pension Age may well have heard of the Triple-Lock. It will affect the level of the Basic State Pension. Politicians frequently claim that it cannot be afforded but the current government have confirmed that it will be retained until the end of this parliament.

So what is the Triple-Lock?

The Triple Lock was introduced in 2011. The Basic State Pension would increase each April by the greater of:

*** 2.5%**

***The increase in prices.** This is measured by the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) in the year up to the preceding September.

***The increase in average earnings.** This is measured by comparing average earnings in the previous period May to July with those for this period in the year before.

A little background to the Basic State Pension will, perhaps, help explain why we are in the current position and why, in fact, there are two Basic State Pensions, the Old and the New.

In 1908, the Lloyd George government introduced the Old Age Pension. This was 5/- per week and payable from age 70 and was paid out of general taxation. It was not intended that the Old Age Pension would be sufficient to live on.

Over the years the pension has increased and the political argument as to whether it should be sufficient to live on has continued. The increases, it seems, were intended to take account of the increase in the cost of living but were at the discretion of the government.

In 1961, the Graduated Retirement Benefit scheme was introduced by John Boyd-Carpenter. This provided units of pension benefit according bands of earnings. It was discontinued in 1975. This pension increases in line with the CPI.

A second State Pension, called the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme or SERPS was introduced in 1978 by Barbara Castle. This provided pension benefits as percentage of earnings. It is interesting that pensions under SERPS were intended to increase in line with average earnings so the pensioners would enjoy a share of any increase in general prosperity.

This Scheme was altered to the Second State Pension Scheme in 2002. These two schemes are together known as Additional State Pension. If one was a

member of a satisfactory Occupational Pension Scheme run by your employer, then you could contract out of the pension from these schemes. The effect of contracting-out was that one paid lower National Insurance Contributions but there was a deduction from the Additional State Pension earned called the Contracted-Out Deduction (COD). Additional State Pension ceased to accrue in April 2016. Those in payment increase in line with the CPI. The increase in the COD from year to year is rather unpredictable because of the way it is calculated.

There are now currently two levels of Basic State Pension for those with the full earnings record. The 'old' Basic State Pension is for those who attained State Pension Age before 6th April 2016 and the 'new' Basic State Pension for those attaining State Pension Age on or after this date. The difference is intended to allow for the fact that those in receipt of the 'old' Basic State Pension should be in receipt of some Additional State Pension.

The 'old' Basic State Pension will be £184.90 per week from April 2026.

The 'new' Basic State Pension will be £241.30 per week from April 2026.

The Triple-Lock applied from April 2012 but was not honoured in April 2022, this being justified by the Covid pandemic. If the Triple-Lock had not been applied from 2016, then I calculate that the Basic State Pensions would be £165.65 and £216.38 respectively from April 2026. It seems that the Triple-Lock has helped by about 1% each year from 2016.

Many, if not all of us will have received a letter from the Department for Work & Pensions headed "ABOUT THE GENERAL INCREASES IN BENEFITS". This gives the weekly amount payable from April 2026 although the benefit is actually paid into our bank accounts four-weekly. The format may be a little confusing but I have underlined above the items that appear in this letter. Those of us over 80 are entitled to an extra £0.25 per week. This has never increased and I will resist any comment.

Ken Hazell

(Ken's article also appeared in the Maldon & Heybridge Life)

YOUR COMMITTEE

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GROUP COORDINATORS

Art Appreciation	Judith Johnston Andy Simmonds
Aviation	Chris Samson
Astronomy	Malcolm Case
Balti Night	Bob Gowers Graham Evans
Bridge	Gill Cory
Canasta	Iris Slaney
Cribbage	Pat Clements
Country Dancing	Diana Rogers
Croquet	Geoff Macro Shirley Macro
Discussion	Pat Jones

Engineering	Tony Groves
Film Club	Shirley Macro
French	Ann Lester
Garden Visits	Theresa Byles Kris Taylor
Geology	Sylvia Cousins
German	Howard Broadbridge
Guitar & Ukulele	Steve Collis
Handicraft	Marian Manning Brenda Heal
History—Windsors	Kathy Goff
Just Jazz	Peter Condon David Coombes
Knitting & Crochet	Paula Jacobs
London Theatre Outings	Rosemary Case Sheila Childs
London Walks	Julie Lake
Meet & Eat	Joan Cummins
MahJong	Jane Rainbird Elaine Brady
Maritime	Malcolm Case
Padel Tennis	Ken Hazell
Petanque (Boules)	Jack Veash Geoff Macro
Photos for Fun	Tony Groves
Rummikub	Janice Martin
Sing for Pleasure	Sue Garnham
Social Events	Margaret Harker Brenda Heal
Strollers Sunday & Tues	Malcolm Case
Tenpin Bowling	Alan Buck David Coombes
Wine Circle No. 4	Ann Goody
Writing for Fun	Patrick Forsyth

Schedule of Events – April 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
		1 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Knitting/Crochet Padel Tennis	2 Ten Pin Bowling Rummikub German Conversation Petanque	3 GOOD FRIDAY	4	5 EASTER SUNDAY
6 EASTER MONDAY	7 Guitar/ Ukulele Engineering	8 Ten Pin Bowling Meet & Eat Art Appreciation Padel Tennis	9 Ten Pin Bowling Royal History Country Dancing Petanque French Conversation	10 Singing Mahjong	11	12
13 Handicrafts Discussion	14 Garden Group Mayfield Farm	15 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Geology Padel Tennis Croquet Photos for Fun Zoom	16 Ten Pin Bowling Rummikub Petanque German Conversation	17 Canasta Astronomy	18	19 Strollers
20 Monthly Meeting My life as a Stunt Woman Just Jazz	21 Guitar/ Ukulele London Walks	22 Ten Pin Bowling Writing for fun Padel Tennis	23 Ten Pin Bowling Country Dancing French Conversation Petanque	24 Aviation Singing Mahjong Cribbage	25	26
27 Astronomy	28 Strollers Wine Group	29 Ten Pin Bowling Bridge Padel Tennis Film—Zoom	30 Ten Pin Bowling Petanque German Conversation			