

Blackwater u3a Newsletter

April 2024



Spring is here

u3a

Reg. Charity No. 1113334

From the Chair

Here I am in March and I am back, but as you will be reading this in the April edition I expect you didn't know I had gone! Just goes to show how well oiled the committee have become, no I don't mean from alcohol. Although having said that....

A lot seems to have happened while I was away, for instance we seem to be keeping our Newsletter. Yay, what happened? Well first we have to thank Anita Sanderson who although not feeling she had the skills or experience to fulfil the role that Frances has been holding for so long, she was brave enough to put her name forward and at least be prepared to have a go, even if only in a stop gap position, rather than as she put it let it fail. AND then Di Martin, yes the wife of deputy Chairman Ron, clearly not wanting him to have all the fun, said she would step in. So well done to both ladies and a big round of applause and very well done to all concerned as Gerry Davis is continuing to maintain continuity by standing in when Frances is absent and Roger Wilson is continuing to train Esther Pugh in the Publishing role and I continue to make a 'Pig's Ear' of being chair and we all continue to submit our articles on-time and receive a very informative and colourful Newsletter. And long may it continue. So keep those articles coming in and if you get an urge to volunteer come and join the committee - we can always find a job for you and if we can't then you can have mine.

Now speaking of making pigs' ears, here or 'ere or ear is a timely reminder that my article for next month's Newsletter in May will be the 'Chairman's AGM Report'. However as we are, or rather I am, currently in March and you will be in the beginning of April I have to tell you that the AGM is at the beginning of May so next month for you but 6 weeks for me (I just had to go and have a lay down in Tesco's in order to regain my attention span, yes I know, but what is one to do; I suppose I could have tried the chilled isle in Lidl!! My only consolation is that I think we are all in 2024.

Assuming you are still with me and I didn't leave you by the chiller cabinet in Tesco's, as I was saying, our next Monthly meeting, for you anyway (I think), will be the AGM on 1st of May. You may remember I missed last year's and ended up writing these articles, so don't do what I did and miss it, especially if you would like to vote me out, as you never can be sure what will happen. Apparently you get a lovely little booklet produced lovingly by our Secretary Gill, which tells you the order of service which you can follow along to and say 'I do' in the right places or when I say we are now on Agenda number (X) you can all shout oh no we're not, so pick it up before taking your seat rather than just sit on it, the booklet that is, not your hands.

Ron is away in April and we will all see you in May at the Annual General Meeting. All the best meanwhile.

Allen

Deadline for the May Newsletter

The deadline for the next Newsletter will be Friday 19th April 2024. Please continue to submit items in the usual way to Frances Butcher until further notice.

fabbutcher@talktalk.net

Annual General Meeting Nominations

Nominations are welcome for the Blackwater u3a committee. If you would like to nominate someone, or nominate yourself, please contact the secretary, Gill Swanson, on 07975 920460 and she will make the necessary arrangements.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday 1st May at our AGM.

Pothole Preventing Robot – an Update



For those of you who were interested in the article in the last Newsletter the good news is that the trials in Hertfordshire were successful but the bad news is that Essex County Council has shown no interest (as far as we know) in this new technology.

The vehicle which has been developed stands at about head height at the highest point.

Ron Martin

Membership

Thank you to all those members who have already renewed their subscription. Chris Daines, our Treasurer, was very busy at the March Meeting!

It has been decided that we will not be issuing Membership Cards as such as so many remain uncollected, which is a waste of time and materials. Instead, members will be emailed a version which can be downloaded and kept on phones or printed off, if and when required. Those members without emails will be dealt with separately.

Membership Secretary, Sue Watson 01621 842455

Treasurer's Request

When making payments by Bank Transfer please make payments for the following categories:

Membership Payments/Dairies

Sort Code: 60-13-37 Account No: 49519611

Account: Blackwater U3A

Quoting: 'Membership' or 'Diary'

Group Activities/Events

Sort Code: 60-13-37 Account No: 49532057

Account: Blackwater U3A No 2

Quoting: 'Theatre' / 'History' etc.

Payments by cheque should be made payable to 'Blackwater U3A'.

Payments can also be made at the Monthly Meetings by Debit/Credit Cards.

Thank you

Chris Daines

Table Tennis 1

Our group at present has 28 members signed up and whilst we generally get 18 to 20 coming on Mondays we cannot take on anymore. I can take your name and put it on our waiting list.

Co-ordinator, Peter Harden 07754 536639

Table Tennis 2

We meet on Thursday afternoons at West Maldon Community Centre between 2.30 and 4.30 pm. We have four tables for our use and play doubles and singles, depending on numbers. The group is now full, however I am happy to add names to a waiting list.

Co-ordinator, Kath Little 07762 312838

Petanque Group

The Petanque group is extremely popular, consisting of members from Blackwater, South Woodham Ferrers, Limebrook and Maldon. Attendance is averaging over a dozen at a time and total membership is nearly thirty. Play takes place every Tuesday afternoon starting at 2.00 pm during the summer months (BST) in the Maldon Promenade Park.

Co-ordinator, John Mundy 01621 854065

Support and Befriending Group

If you are in need of some help or support, please telephone one of the following numbers and they will try to put you in touch with someone who can help.

Sheila Rowsell	01621 740820,
Dennis Eraut	01621 829758,
Christine Wright	01621 853171

Golf Group

The Blackwater u3a golfing group plays twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month at 10.30 am. All members have a list of dates and venues. If you are interested in joining, please speak to the

Co-ordinator, John Rowsell 01621 740820

Places of Worship

Our March meeting took place at Kelvedon and Feering, where we were given a most interesting and informative talk by Rev. Simon Garwood.

St Mary the Virgin Church, Kelvedon



A church has stood on this site for over 850 years. St Mary the Virgin is a Grade I listed building, dating back to the 11th century. The north-west corner of the nave was probably built early in the 12th century and consists of flint-rubble. A north aisle and arcade were added around 1230, followed by a south aisle (also with an arcade) around 1250. The chancel was extended around 1360 and a clerestory added in the 15th century. The north chapel and vestry date to early in the 16th century, whilst in the 19th century a south chapel was built, and the south porch almost entirely rebuilt. The building was Grade I listed in 1967.

The original churchyard is no longer used for burials but there is an extension to the churchyard on the other side of Church Street

All Saints Church – Feering



The parish church stands in a rural setting close to Feering Village Green. The church contains many fine features not least the glorious East window which glows jewel like and contains many scenes from Our Lord's Passion. Although the porch and south front of All Saints, Feering was rebuilt in brick around 1500 AD the main body of the church dates back to 13th century when it must have replaced a Norman nave since the parish once belonged to Edward the Confessor.

The altar piece, a painting by John Constable showing the risen Christ was given to the church in 1965 but this has since be replaced by a copy, the original may now be seen in St Mary the Virgin, Dedham.

Our April meeting will on Friday 5th April at 11.00 am when we shall be visiting St Laurence Church in Blackmore. This has been arranged by Jim Skelly. We shall meet at West Maldon Community Centre at a time to be arranged. There is a public house and a tearoom available nearby for those requiring refreshments.

Co-ordinator, Geoff Pugh 01621 843297

Reading Group

This month's book was our first American novel for a while – 'Malibu Rising' by Taylor Jenkins Reid. I think we expected it to be 'chick lit' but although it was more than that and dealt with some serious issues – infidelity, unplanned pregnancies, adoption, fame and its drawbacks, duty above self interests, sexuality, a future career destroyed by medical diagnosis – it was not a very popular choice and not one we felt we could recommend to others.

The story centres on the four Riva siblings, children of the very successful singer, Mick Riva, who abandoned his family more than once, for another woman. We know two things at the start of the book – there will be a fire and there will be a party, the party of the year in Malibu, organised by eldest daughter, Nina, which everyone who is anyone is determined to attend and be seen. However, unlike previous parties, this one turns out to be the party where truths are finally told and acted upon and all the lives of the siblings are affected. The fire – well, this is where Mick Riva again leaves his mark, literally, but from the ashes of the fire all the siblings, particularly Nina, have their lives changed, a bit like the phoenix rising from the ashes. Nothing will be the same.

It was an easy read. Did we warm to the characters? The male ones do not come out of it well, apart from Hud, and the female ones tolerate situations for the sake of family, which was, at times, frustrating to read. Marks ranged from 4 to one very enthusiastic 9, making an average of 6. The author is well known for 'Daisy Jones and the Six' which has been serialised on television, so if you liked that, you may well enjoy this insight to 1980's American life of sun, sea, sand and surfing.

Co-ordinator, Gill Swanson 07975 920460

Card and Board Games

Our March meeting was once again a happy afternoon of games including Canasta, Rummikub, Labyrinth and a card game called Nines. We welcomed one new member making us 16 people, most changing games halfway through. Tea and biscuits in the middle of course. Our next meeting will be on April 2nd in the Linton room.

Co-ordinator, Sheila Rowsell 01621 740820

Play Reading Group

At our March meeting we read 'Breath of Spring' by Peter Coke, an author we have previously enjoyed. The play is set in Dame Beatrice's flat overlooking the Albert Memorial. She has taken in lodgers, Miss Nanette Parry, Brigadier Albert Rayner and Miss Elizabeth Hatfield. Together with her friend Lady Alice Miller they discuss the possibilities of raising some funds for 'deserving' causes. The maid, Lily, who has been in Holloway for stealing and dealing in furs, admits to Bee that she has taken one from the neighbours' flat. They make a plan to secretly return the fur which is successfully achieved. This leads them to the idea of stealing furs to make money. Lily discovers their plan and elects to add her expertise to the group.

The plot unfurls as one of the lodgers inadvertently steals a fur which belongs to another member of the group. The police get wind of this and arrive to make enquiries. The group think the game is up, but, fortunately, this seems to be the only reason for their visit. But there may be other ways to make money!!

Co-ordinator, Anita Parkes 01621 857730

Newsletter delivery

Every month, a copy of the latest Newsletter is put onto our website. However, because not everyone has access to the internet, paper copies of the Newsletter are also available at the monthly meeting. If you or someone you know can't get to the meeting to pick up a copy, it is possible for copies to be posted to your home address. If you would like your copy sent by post, please let me know and I will add your name to the list. There is a fee to cover postage costs, currently £10 per year. This should be paid direct to Treasurer Chris Daines and payment options can be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Peter Holmes 01621 854108 peterholmes4427@gmail.com

Nature Walks



Twelve of us took advantage of a dry morning to visit Lauriston Farm near Goldhanger. The journey was not for the fainthearted. Leaving the main road behind, we followed a rutted unmade track for several minutes carefully navigating the huge puddles, the mud and the potholes and veering from one side of the road to the other to avoid the worst of the surface. Many thanks to the drivers!

We were welcomed by Spencer Christy, the Farm Director, who explained that the farm has been a charitable, community owned farm for the last few years following the principles of Biodynamic Farming and providing day placements for adults with learning or physical disabilities who work alongside the staff of 12.

Students with special needs from a local college were visiting while we were there.

The farm of 205 acres includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and we saw lapwings,

skylarks and a large flock of Brent Geese taking advantage of this.

André Kleinjans showed us around the farm and explained some of the principles of Biodynamic Farming. The North Ronaldsay sheep running free in the fields were a great sight. The two-acre garden was impressive; here André and his wife Monique have set up plots and a large polytunnel where a range of crops are

grown. The underlying beliefs of this style of farming seems to underpin all that they do. The vegetables, along with meat and wool are available to purchase at Maldon Market every Thursday morning if you would like to try them. Before enjoying a cuppa, we took a look at the Shetland cattle in the barn.



Our meeting on the 19th April will be a walk in the woods, hopefully to see bluebells. Car share leaving from West Maldon Community Centre at 9.30 am to Thrift Wood, Corner of Old London Road and Rectory Road, Woodham Walter.

If you are not a member of the group and would like to be, get in touch with me.

Co-ordinator, Gerry Davis 01621 843217

Community Garden



The community Garden continues to look good.

Co-ordinator, Dorreen Linton 01621 853428

Local News

Walk for Life in aid of Farleigh Hospice

This family-friendly event takes place on 12th May 2024 and is suitable for keen walkers of all ages and abilities, and dogs are welcome too. Everyone taking part will receive a t-shirt at the start and a medal at the finish line. Walkers can choose between two scenic canalside routes, which both finish at Teledyne E2V in Chelmsford:

12 km from Paper Mill Lock

24 km from Heybridge Basin

Here is a link to our website with all the information you need

<https://www.farleighhospice.org/events/walk-2024>

Stow Maries Fund Raising Event - Elvis - 12th April

As you probably know we hold a few events each year to help raise money for the upkeep of our village's church (sadly missing a proper roof at the moment after thieves stole the lead) and community hall. Our first major event of this year is **'Elvis - Memories of a King'** by award-winning tribute act, Dean Fenton of Cold Norton. This will be at 7.30 pm on Friday 12th April in the Smythe Hall, Stow Maries, CM3 6SL. Tickets are priced at £15 per person and must be obtained by ringing 01621 828415, or by email to peterj.taylor47@btinternet.com.

'Elvis fodder' (e.g. burgers and hot dogs) will be served at the interval - BYO drinks.

I hope that you will support our efforts.

The Maldon Society

Our speaker for Thursday, 4th April will be Adrian Wright

Shaking Planet - Earthquakes including Essex

His illustrated presentation considers earthquakes on a world scale including large events in Assam, Alaska and New Zealand as well as the much smaller one in Victorian Essex with its impact on the Maldon area. The way in which geological research in the 1960s led to a breakthrough in our understanding of these earth movements is examined.

Pre-registration

As our monthly talks are proving extremely popular with the Cygnet Room being filled to capacity, pre-registration is strongly advised for both Society members and members of the public to reserve your seat. Please email: maldonsociety@aol.com or ring Dorreen on 01621 853428.

The doors to the Cygnet Room behind The Swan Hotel, High Street, Maldon will open at 6.30 pm with the meeting beginning at 7.00 pm. Drinks may be bought at the Swan Hotel's bar. There will be our usual raffle which helps to raise necessary funds towards the cost of room hire and cost of speakers.

Thursday, 2nd May meeting will be the Annual General Meeting of the Society which usually takes about 15 minutes. This will be followed by an Archive presentation with photographs and voices on the subject of fish and fishing in Maldon: A Fishy Story!

History and Science

Our last lecture was by Dennis on the 'Early history of the Moot Hall up to the 16th century and the D'Arcy family'. The first Moot Hall was sited in front of All Saints Church in a half-timbered building in Butchers Row.

The Moot Hall as we now know it had been called Darcy's Tower for many centuries but who built it? Recent research by John Smith a local historian has provided new evidence and this is published in 'Transactions' in articles from 2017, 2019 and 2022. Scientific testing of one of the bricks from the bottom of the staircase dates this to 1390 plus or minus 30 years.

Robert D'Arcy did not come to Maldon till 1401 and had no reason to build a tower for defence and did not own the land. Lord Fitzwalter owned the land and he had been one of the officials helping to put down the rebellions in Maldon and England, known now as the Peasants' Revolt against Richard II, so would not have been popular in the town. It is likely he arranged its building using Low Countries craftsmen and bricklayers reflected in the designs of the arches and windows and superb spiral staircase. It is one of the first brick buildings in Britain.

Robert D'Arcy, a lawyer, started with no property but within his lifetime had accumulated a vast selection of properties and land in Maldon and surrounds including the Tower and adjacent mansion. Later in the 1500s his grandson sold off the properties to Edward VI and Mary and Elizabeth in order to buy St. Osyth's Priory and lands and become the Baron. Much more information was given about the family and its links to the Tower and Maldon sites. Royalty sold the properties to private owners and eventually the Tower was sold to the Corporation and became the Moot Hall and prison.

Our April meeting is a visit to Purfleet Magazine (gunpowder production), Museum and Heritage centre. It includes several displays about local history, both world wars and a special section on the Gurkha Regiment. On Wednesday April 10th we will meet at 9.30 am at West Maldon Community Centre and go by car share for a guided visit after refreshments at 10.30. There is a café nearby for lunch. Please sign up or let Dennis know in advance if you would like to come.

Co-ordinators, Dennis Eraut, Geoff Pugh and Peter Holmes

Local Theatres Group



King Arthur -
Mercury Theatre
Colchester
Thursday 30th May 2024
at 2.00 pm
Tickets: £25.50

Camelot is in trouble. King Arthur knows that if he doesn't turn things around,

this civilisation will be forgotten, and be known as nothing more than a rather dull time in British history. But when three hapless squires approach him about changing that legacy... a legend is born.

Teaming up with one of UK theatre's best comedy writers and directors, **John Nicholson** (*Peepolykus*), award-winning funny men **Le Navet Bete** (*The Three Musketeers*, *Treasure Island*, *Dracula: The Bloody Truth*) are back with a brand-new laugh-out-loud show for the ages. A comedy for the whole family, this hilarious retelling of the Arthurian legends will have audiences crying with laughter and become part of the legend themselves

Payment to be made by 5 April 2024 please



The Diana Ross Story:
In the Name of Love –
Chelmsford Theatre
Sunday 16th June 2024
Tickets: £28.00

Prepare to be taken on a spellbinding journey to visit one of the greatest musical

stories ever told, that of Diana Ross and The Supremes.

Experience a chronological history of hits from a career culminating in millions of record sales, fronted by two international Diana Ross performers, Cheri Jade (The Supremes) and Tameka Jackson (Solo Career.) From Ain't no Mountain High Enough to I'm Coming Out, this night of hits is a must for any Diana Ross fan.

Payment to be made by 5 April 2024 please



Mousetrap 70th Anniversary – Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Wednesday 17th July 2024 at 2.30 pm

Tickets: £28.00

The Mousetrap is the world's longest-running play. This thrilling West End production is THE genre-defining murder mystery from the best-selling novelist of all time... case closed! As news spreads of a murder in London, a group of seven strangers find themselves snowed in at a remote countryside guesthouse. When a police sergeant arrives, the guests discover – to their horror – that a killer is in their midst! Which one is the murderer? Who will be their next victim? Can you solve this world-famous mystery for yourself?

Now celebrating 70 years, The Mousetrap has kept millions of people from every corner of the globe on the edge of their seats. Could you be next? Starring **Todd Carty** (*EastEnders*, *The Bill*) and **Gwyneth Strong** (*Only Fools and Horses*, *EastEnders*) – don't miss this classic in Colchester!

Payment to be made by 1 May 2024 please



Chelmsford Theatre

Wednesday 9th October 2024 at 2.30 pm

Tickets: £36.00

Following its triumphant success in the West End where it won the

Olivier Award for Best Comedy, *Pride and Prejudice* (*sort of)* is a unique and audacious retelling of Jane Austen's most iconic love story.

Men, money and microphones will be fought over in this irreverent but affectionate adaptation where the stakes couldn't be higher when it comes to romance. This award winning production features a string of pop classics including Young Hearts Run Free, Will You Love Me Tomorrow and You're So Vain.

It's the 1800's, It's party time, Let the ruthless matchmaking begin.

Payment to be made by 3 July 2024 please

Bank Transfer Payments:

Sort Code: 60-13-37

Account No: 49532057

Account: Blackwater U3A No 2

Quoting: Local Theatre plus Arthur / Diana / Mouse / Pride as appropriate. Please note if you wish to have tickets these **MUST** be paid in advance so we can ensure purchasing them. Thank you.

Co-ordinator Janet Watson 0795 292 5164

Card Makers Group

March has been a very quiet month for the card makers due to illness. However, a few cards have been made at home. I am hoping to start classes again in April and will notify all members in due course.



We would welcome more members to our small group, either with or without experience. If anyone would like to know more about the classes please phone me on my mobile. 07747667184.

Wishing everyone at u3a A Very Happy Easter.

Co-ordinator Kathy Leggett 01621 852377

Shakespeare Group

We have now finished reading Twelfth Night and most of us did not feel this was one of Shakespeare's best plays. No doubt a stage performed version would be funnier. Another play of his with cross dressing and confusion of identities.

Our next play reading is back to one of his history classics, Henry V. Our two April sessions are on the 12th and 26th at 2.00 pm in West Maldon Community Centre. Anyone new is welcome to join us as we start a new play.

Co-ordinator, Dennis Eraut 01621 829758

Tai Chi

With 45 members signed up we are still taking new members as we have a fluctuating number that turn up. Sometimes only 21 members and it seems unfair to stop others joining and finding whether Tai Chi is for them. Best to say our membership is fluid and if everyone turned up we could still fit in the hall. I would appreciate hearing from any member who has dropped out for whatever reason, and I will remove you from our list.

Co-ordinator Peter Harden 07754 536639

Walking Group

If you are joining us for walk in April please meet at West Maldon Community Centre at 10.00 am on Thursday April 25th for a walk to Beeleigh. Please wear good walking shoes or boots as it could still be muddy along the canal or river Bank.

Sylvie

Co-ordinator, John Mayes 01245 222530

Birdwatching

Unfortunately our birdwatching meeting in March was cancelled due to rain.

Our next visit will be Friday 5th April, car share from West Maldon Community Centre at 9.30 am. We will be visiting Abberton, Essex Wildlife Trust reserve, hoping for the first of the new arrivals of Nightingales as well as other birds.

Our May visit will be to Fingringhoe, as usual meeting at West Maldon Community Centre at 9.30 am for car share

Co-ordinator, Stephy Eraut 01621 829758

Flower Arranging

As our February meeting was the nearest to St David's Day we chose to use daffodils in a spiral arrangement (see attached photos).

With Easter fast approaching our March meeting saw the members using this as the theme for their arrangements.



Our meeting in April will take place on Tuesday 23rd in the Linton Room from 9.30 am. The theme for this meeting will be 'April showers' with members choosing their own design to depict this.

Co-ordinator, Di Martin 01621 856347

Art Appreciation



Five members of the Art Appreciation Group travelled to the RA (Royal Academy) on 27th January to view an exhibition entitled 'Impressionists on Paper'. The Impressionists were a group of artists who painted in a more realistic way using ordinary subjects, free brush work and outdoors as opposed to the conventional, studio based painting that preceded them. There was a greater choice of paper types available and the Impressionists took a more experimental approach to their use. Their work on paper is less well known, using watercolour, pastels, charcoal, inks and coloured paper. The exhibition included artists from 'Degas to Toulouse

Lautrec' and others we were less familiar with. We all enjoyed the exhibition comparing our views on works we liked and those found to be challenging or less attractive. Thanks to Dennis for suggesting and organising the visit.

This picture, which we all admired, of the son of a friend, was painted in pastel on paper by Degas.

Val Wilson

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 23rd April when our own Jim Skelly will present a talk on two of the British 'Greats' - William Hogarth 1697-1764 and his contemporary (though slightly older) Sir Joshua Reynolds 1723-1792. Both gave very different views of the social scene of the time.

For May book the day Wednesday 29th (not Tuesday when it is shut). We will visit the lovely Munnings Museum and have lunch outside in the garden from the café (weather permitting) before we enter the exhibition of loads of art works with the theme of Horses. Travel by car share and let me know if you are coming. New members very welcome.

Co-ordinator Dennis Eraut 01621 829758

Real Ale Group

Our February meeting was held in Burnham at the White Hart Hotel. The 31 bus got all six of us there for 12.20 and back later. The food was very good and we were able to sample three different beers, although we did try one other.



Apprentice, Wibblers 3.9% score 8
Brewers Gold, Crouch Vale, 4.0% score 7.8
The Bitter, Adnams Southwold, 3.7% score 7

Results were all close as you can see.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 27th March in Chelmsford, looking for a pub somewhere near the bus station.

Co-ordinator, Paul Allen 01621 856303

Community in the Cup

I am sure many of you will have heard of Community in the Cup but not necessarily understood what it is nor the involvement that Blackwater u3a has.

Community in the Cup has operated on a National Basis for several years and in Maldon for about 15 months. It is a monthly meeting organised by the Longfields Medical Centre with the assistance of The Maldon United Reformed Church. Although organised by a medical centre it does not attempt to offer a clinical service. The whole ethos is to get local charities and statutory bodies who offer services to meet the social needs of the community which enable them to function in their homes.

The leader from the Longfields Medical Centre is a Social Prescribing Nurse, Sarah Osborn. Her role is to bring together the local community and the services, statutory and voluntary, which are available to all in a relaxed atmosphere over a cup of tea and biscuit, all free. Some of the services which attend on a regular basis include

The Fire Brigade, Guide Dogs for the Blind, u3a, Age Concern, Parkinson Society, Maldon CVS, the Police, Carers, Macmillan and Dementia charities.

The Maldon URC offer the peaceful venue, the free unlimited tea and coffee, which is supplied by Tesco, and a listening, non judgemental ear for those who have the need. In addition, they provide the opportunity for those who attend to undertake some form of craft - decorating stones seems to be the current favourite - but there are others.

What do we do? At every meeting we have a table with leaflets and copies of our magazine manned by two members. Our role is to explain what the ethos of the u3a is and what it offers in Maldon. We are not 'selling' Blackwater specifically but the u3a movement in general. Naturally we tend to emphasise our u3a and we have recruited several new members. Currently there are six Blackwater members on the rota, meaning each is on duty once in 3 months, but we do have a need for extra volunteers; it is amazing how often an Interest Group meeting clashes with The Community in The Cup meeting, which is the last Tuesday of the month at 10.00 am until noon.

To find out more contact me or better still go along to Maldon URC on Market Hill on the last Tuesday from 10.00 am.

Roger Smith
07506 593136

Art Group



These are some examples of work done during the last month by members of the Art Group.

Co-ordinator, Anita Sandison 01621 741351

Rummikub Group

There were twelve members so that made three groups of four which was great. It was good to have Christine Wright join us and the winners of the groups were Janet, Linda and Sue - well done.

It is a very good game because it makes you use your brain and the time goes quickly. If anyone would like join us you would be very welcome.

Co-ordinator, Patricia Harding 01621 843099

London Theatre Group

Thank you to all those who have already paid the £17 coach fare for our trip on 25th April. Just to remind you - I give out the tickets on the coach now, so all you have to do is be ready to board the coach at West Maldon Community Centre at 9.15 am on Thursday 25th April. If you arrive by car please park at the far end of the car park. Please contact me if you have any questions about the trip.

Co-ordinator, Brenda Broom 01621 841520

Meditation

Our meetings have been on hold for a few weeks, but we will resume on Monday 15th April and I look forward to seeing you all again. New members are very welcome and if you are thinking of joining us please ring and speak to me first.

Co-ordinator, Di Reddish 01621 810653

Canasta Group

We will meet as usual in the Linton room on Thursday 18th April. Will our regular players please let me know if you're **not** coming.

Co-ordinator, Stephy Eraut 01621 829758

Speakers' Corner

I'm sorry that Steve Lester wasn't available to talk about the Titanic in March, but I have re-booked him for the August meeting. However, it seems you enjoyed the video about Essex. There is a part two, but hopefully we don't have to show it for a while yet!

April 3 rd	Dodgy Scales and Delivering the Mail Part One, Mike Fogg
May 1 st	Annual General Meeting
June 5 th	Saving Lives at Sea, Linda Cook from the RNLI
July 3 rd	Dodgy Scales and Delivering the Mail Part Two, Mike Fogg
August 7 th	The Titanic, Steve Lester

Speaker Organiser, John Hayes 01621 843855

Members on Their Own (MOTO) Group

In March we enjoyed a visit to the Viola and Pansy Festival at Meadowcroft Nurseries and our Tapas Night at Salero was great fun.



In April we shall meet as much as possible for coffee and a cream tea at a local pub.

If you are interested in joining this group or finding out more about it, please contact the

Co-ordinator, Robyn Slade 01621 928536

Committee Members 2023/4

Allen Griffiths	Chair	01621 732191
Ron Martin	Vice Chair and Database Manager	01621 856347
Chris Daines	Treasurer	07973 342283
Gill Swanson	Secretary	07975 920460
Esther Pugh	Committee Member	01621 843297
Sholto Morton	Minutes Secretary	01621 929238
Janet Watson	Groups Co-ordinator	07952 925164
Jenny O'Connor	Monthly Meeting Coordinator	07903 959450
Liz Walden	Website Manager	01621 852689
Sue Watson	Membership Secretary	01621 852941
Roger Wilson	Committee Member	01621 842455

Newsletter Production:

Editor	Frances Butcher	01621 853352
Publisher	Roger Wilson	01621 842455

Joint groups with Maldon U3A

Singing for Pleasure	Jacky Holmes	01621 854108
Tenpin Bowling	Alan Buck	01245 227709

April Programme

As well as the schedule on the back of this booklet, please check the Events page on the Blackwater U3A website and the Newsletter items for the latest up to date information.

Local U3A contacts (Our Cluster Group)

You will find details of the other members of our Cluster Group on their websites.

Maldon	http:// www.maldonu3a.co.uk/
Heybridge	https://u3asites.org.uk/heybridge
Limebrook	https://u3asites.org.uk/limebrook-maldon/home
Burnham on Crouch	https://boc-u3a.org.uk/
Dengie	https://u3asites.org.uk/dengie/home
Crouch Valley	https://u3asites.org.uk/crouch-valley/home
South Woodham Ferrers	https://swf-u3a.org/

And of course, a reminder of our own website:

Blackwater U3A <https://u3asites.org.uk/blackwater/home>

Rotas for Refreshments

APRIL	Flower Arranging and History & Science
MAY	Birding and Card and Board Games
JUNE	London Theatre and MOTO

Doors will be open for helpers and co-ordinators setting up at 1.30 pm. Doors are open for other members at 2.00 pm. If you have insufficient members between your groups, please contact me in advance.

Welcome Team:

Jenny and her buddies will be on hand to welcome new members.

Set-up and Clear-up rota

APRIL	Nature Walks and Card Makers
MAY	Cribbage and Family History
JUNE	Petanque and Reading

When setting up the hall please start with the row furthest away from the speaker, leaving sufficient gangways as normal. When clearing up, please do not put the chairs away until requested by a committee member.

Thank you all for your co-operation, *Janet Watson*

Co-ordinators

Interest Groups Co-ordinator	Janet Watson	07952 925164
Art	Anita Sandison	01621 741351
Art Appreciation	Dennis Eraut	01621 829758
Birding	Stephy Eraut	01621 829758
Canasta	Stephy Eraut	01621 829758
Card and Board Games	Sheila Rowsell	01621 740820
Card Makers	Kathy Leggett	01621 852377
Community Garden	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Cribbage	Terri Hardcastle	01621 929656
Family History	Geoff Pugh	01621 843297
Flower Arranging	Di Martin	01621 856347
Gardening	Stephy Eraut	01621 829758
Golf	John Rowsell	01621 740820
History and Science	Dennis Eraut	01621 829758
	Geoff Pugh	01621 843297
	Peter Holmes	01621 854108
Local Theatres	Janet Watson	07952 925164
London Theatres	Brenda Broom	01621 841520
Luncheon Club 3	Sid Sutton	07711 258802
Meditation	Di Reddish	01621 810653
Memories	John Mundy	01621 854065
MOTO	Robyn Slade	01621 928536
Nature Walks	Gerry Davis	01621 843217
Petanque	John Mundy	01621 854065
Places of Worship	Dawn Mundy	01621 854065
Play Reading	Anita Parkes	01621 857730
Reading	Gill Swanson	07975 920460
Real Ale Group	Paul Allen	01621 856303
Rummikub Group	Pat Harding	01621 843099
Scottish Dancing	Diana Rogers	01621 853841
Scrabble	Sylvia Harden	07840 369496
Shakespeare	Dennis Eraut	01621 829758
Short Walks	Di Martin	01621 856347
	Robyn Slade	01621 928536
Social Group	vacant	
Table Tennis 1	Peter Harden	07754 536639
	Jack Veash	07388 420968
Table Tennis 2	Kath Little	07762 312838
Tai Chi	Peter Harden	07754 536639
Walkers	John Mayes	01245 222530
Wine Group 1	Frances Butcher	01621 853352
Wine Group 2	Paul Allen	01621 856303

April 2024 Programme

RED INDICATES A MORNING MEETING

BLUE INDICATES AN AFTERNOON MEETING

BLACK INDICATES UNSPECIFIED TIMING

Monday	Tuesday	Wed'day	Thursday	Friday	Sat	Sun
1 EASTER BANK HOLIDAY	2 Petanque Card and Board Games	3 Monthly Meeting	4 Table Tennis 2 Maldon Society	5 Places of Worship Birding Wine Group 1	6 MOTO Local Theatre	7
8 Table Tennis 1 Tai Chi	9 Petanque	10 Art History and Science Cribbage	11 Play Reading Scottish Dance Reading Table Tennis 2	12 Golf Singing Shakespeare	13 MOTO	14
15 Table Tennis 1 Meditation Short Walks Tai Chi Gardening	16 Petanque Scrabble	17 Art Family History	18 Rummikub Table Tennis 2 Canasta	19 Nature Walk Newsletter Deadline	20 MOTO	21
22 Table Tennis 1 Tai Chi	23 Flower Arranging Petanque Art Appreciat	24 Art Real Ale	25 Walkers Scottish Dance London Theatre Table Tennis 2	26 Golf Singing Shakespeare	27	28
29 Table Tennis 1 Meditation Tai Chi	30 Petanque					