

Blackwater u3a Newsletter

February 2024



A selection from our card making group

u3a

Reg. Charity No. 1113334

From the Chair

Hello everybody and a very Happy New Year, I hope you all had an enjoyable Christmas and farewell to 2023, so on with 2024.

My first topic this month is about this Newsletter. If you have not attended any monthly meetings recently you may not have heard that our Newsletter Editor, Frances, announced she will leaving her role very soon. I am sure you will all agree she has done a remarkable job fulfilling a very useful role for a very long time. We are therefore in urgent need of a replacement if the Newsletter is to continue - and I am sure that none of us would want to say goodbye to our excellent Newsletter Magazine (Screaming face emoji).

We were also to lose our publisher Roger Wilson, but he has agreed to carry on for another year while training up a replacement, provided we can find someone else to take over the role of Editor. (Well done Roger, top man).

In the issue of last October our Secretary, Gill Swanson wrote an interesting article about the history of the Newsletter from its humble beginnings over 20 years ago when Blackwater u3a was first formed to the present day, complete with a photo of the first issue February 2006 in black and white. It would certainly be a pity to see its demise after all this time. Even if we only produced a simple on line issue it would still require an editor and therefore if you have ever fancied editing, please step forward ASAP.

I also hope that you will not be perturbed by signing in the next time you come to our monthly meetings, as we are attempting to establish who comes and how often so that we know whose opinion to ask about improving the content and interest of the meetings.

Finally, I would also like to mention that we are changing our membership forms and streamlining our processes in the hope that you will rejoin. This will assist us with a whole raft of administration issues such as members' insurance cover so we crave your indulgence and would be grateful for you rejoining as early as possible when the time comes.

Allen

Blackwater u3a



**YOUR TIME • YOUR SUGGESTIONS
YOUR SKILLS • YOUR IDEAS
YOUR ENTHUSIASM • YOUR HELP**

Please contact any committee member if you would like to be more involved.

Deadline for the March Newsletter

Due to an impending eye operation, the deadline for the March Newsletter will be WEDNESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY. Please send items to fabbutcher@talktalk.net in the usual way and anything received after this date will be included in the following edition.

Membership Fees

This is a gentle reminder that come 1st April 2024 it will be time to renew your membership of the Blackwater u3a. I do hope you will be happy to continue with your membership.

Renewals

Last year, renewals seemed to go on for a long time. This year, if I haven't received your completed Renewal Form and payment by 31st May 2024 your membership will be deemed to have lapsed and you will no longer be able to attend any group activity. However, you are, of course, able to rejoin the Blackwater u3a. Renewal Forms will be available from March, online and at the monthly meeting.

From this month, February, we have decided to reinstate Signing-In for the Monthly Meeting. Myself or a member of the Committee will be sitting in the lobby of the West Maldon Community Centre to check you in. The information will give us an idea of who and how many attend and also allow us to identify new members.

Membership Secretary, Sue Watson 01621 852941

Art Appreciation

Our meeting in January was on Henri Toulouse -Lautrec and the talk was given by Dennis. Toulouse Lautrec, the French Post Impressionist was born of aristocratic parents who were first cousins and he inherited a bone disease. When he was a child he had fractures of both femurs and his legs never grew to normal size. He eventually reached 5feet 1inch but he also had a strange appearance and people regarded him as very different. He left his home for the art student life in Paris settling in Montmartre. He showed early talent as a child drawing and painting at every opportunity. With his drawing pad he frequented the cafés, night clubs, bars and theatres of Paris in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

He was not very famous for his paintings but achieved great fame for his dazzling posters advertising cafés and night clubs such as the Moulin Rouge or music halls which were distributed all round Paris for ordinary people to see. He did also paint many portraits and horse studies but never landscapes. He introduced a number of new techniques with ideas from his study of Japanese prints such as cropping and varying lines of perspective. In his later years he made a number of studies of women from the brothels. He was very influential in the development of Art Deco and Modern Art.

The next meeting is a visit to The Royal Academy on February 27th to see 'Impressionists On Paper'. A chance to see their work of drawings, pastels, gouache and water colours. Seventy-seven works from Degas to Toulouse Lautrec. We will travel by train from Chelmsford, meeting at the Park & Ride at 9.00 am. You need to buy your ticket and book entry in advance for 11.20 am and let me know if you are coming.

Co-ordinator, Dennis Eraut 01621 829758

Local Theatres Group

Payment can be made by

Bank Transfer Payments: Sort Code: 60-13-37 Account No: 49532057

Account: Blackwater U3A No 2 Quoting: the reference for your choice(s) of show

Swinging at the Cotton Club – Chelmsford Theatre

Friday 23rd February 2024 at 7.30 pm Tickets: £24.00



Featuring The Lindy Hop Dance Company and The Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra. Take a step back into the 1920s and 1930s New York City and through the doors of Harlem's hottest nightclub, The Cotton Club. Swinging at The Cotton Club is the action-packed show celebrating the music and dance of New York's most celebrated nightclub of the era. In this show the exhilarating dance and music of the Cotton Club is recreated by the fabulous Lindy Hop Dance Company, alongside The Harry Strutters Hot Rhythm Orchestra, featuring American vocalist Marlene Hill and compere/vocalist Megs Etherington.

Quote Local Theatre (Cotton)

Payment to be made by 9 February 2024, please.

The Importance of Being Earnest – Mercury Theatre, Colchester

Friday 1st March 2024 at 7.30 pm Tickets: £15.00



Jack Worthing is living a double life. To escape his dull country existence, he has invented a younger brother Ernest, whose scandalous behaviour requires Jack to travel to London regularly. A lush period design, this gold-standard comedy guarantees a Wilde night out! Once in the city, Jack becomes Ernest, a playboy with a decadent reputation. He

is head over heels in love with Gwendolyn Fairfax, the daughter of a formidable Lady Bracknell. When his best friend Algernon discovers that Jack has a secret identity and a beautiful niece called Cecily, he heads down to the country posing as the delinquent brother Ernest. Sparkling with razor sharp quips.

Quote Local Theatre (Earnest)

Payment to be made by 9 February 2024, please.

Agatha Crusty and the Village Hall Murders – Great Totham Village Hall

Friday 22nd March 2024 at 7.30 pm Tickets: £7.00

Agatha Crusty (pronounced Croosty) is a crime novelist. She's also pretty adept at solving crimes. And when her sister-in-law Alice invites her to spend a few days with her in the village of Chortelby, it's not long before she gets caught up in a series of murders which seem directed at members of the All Saints Village Hall committee. From Toby, the Vicar, and Eleanor, Chair of the committee, to Harry Knott the caretaker and identical twins Olivia and Oliver Truscott-Pratt, there are plenty of suspects. And with an investigating officer as incompetent as DI Twigg, there are plenty of laughs as the murders begin to pile up. But, while packed full of wit and very funny scenes, this is also a genuine murder mystery with an ingenious plot which will tax the little grey cells of the audience at the same time!

Produced by Maldon & District Dramatics Society.

Quote Local Theatre (Agatha)

Payment to be made by 9 February 2024, please.

Swan Lake – Chelmsford Theatre Studio

Sunday 28th April 2024 at 2.00 pm

Tickets: £13.00



Out hunting, Prince Siegfried chances upon a flock of swans. One among them transforms into the beautiful human Odette and he is immediately enamoured. But

Odette is bound by a spell which keeps her captive as a swan during the day. Can Siegfried free her?

Tchaikovsky's sensational score combines with the evocative imagination of choreographer Liam Scarlett and designer John Macfarlane to heighten the dramatic pathos of Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov's quintessential ballet classic. Swan Lake remains to this day one of the best-loved works in the classical ballet canon.

Quote Local Theatre (Swan)

Please note if you wish to have tickets these **MUST** be paid for at least 6 weeks before the event to ensure we can purchase.

Co-ordinator, Janet Watson 07952 925164

London Theatre Group

With an almost full coach for our trip to see Les Miserables on 25th April I will need to collect £17 from all those coming to cover the cost of the coach, parking fees and a group tip for the driver. You can pay this either in cash to me or by bank transfer by the monthly meeting of the 3rd April, please. I will have the tickets to give out on the coach on the day. I am still collecting names of anyone who might step in at the last minute to take the place of someone who has to pull out - I have used two names from the list already!

Co-ordinator, Brenda Broom 01621 841520

Reading Group

December saw us return to someone who is becoming one of our favourite authors, and that is Clare Pooley. 'The People on Platform 5' is the story of a group of commuters who take the same train each day, sit in the same seats and never exchange a word to each other until one day, one of them nearly chokes on a grape he is eating and those around him spring into action to assist. We meet middle aged Iona, a force to be reckoned with; Sanjay, a caring, empathetic nurse who suffers panic attacks; Piers, a seemingly successful money trader; Emmie, a stunning millennial; David, stuck in a marriage rut and teenager Martha, a victim of sexting and bullying.

The centre of this group is the dynamic Iona but as the friendships develop we learn that all is not well in her world, and the other members each have their own issues to deal with. By the end, in a mutually supportive environment, each person has faced their problems and is in a much better place by making positive changes in their lives. There are many issues that this book deals with - age discrimination, gambling, coercive control, unrequited love, keeping the spark in a long standing relationship, hiding the truth from family members – but she gives resolutions to the problems.

We loved the book and warmed to its characters (except Emmie's controlling fiancé) and hope to be reading more of her in the future. A resounding 9 was the mark for this story.

Our January read was 'The Lost Man' by Jane Harper. Set in the outback of Australia, it tells the story of three brothers. When one of them, Cameron, is found dead at an old landmark known as the Stockman's grave, the family try to determine why he was found in this isolated place with his car nowhere nearby. Was it suicide? As the story unfolds we learn that the brothers have suffered at the hands of a tyrannical and abusive father, now dead. Nathan, the oldest, is ostracised in the local town after an incident, Bub, the youngest is trying to succeed on the family farm and Cameron, the 'golden boy' turns out to be not quite the perfect son and husband. The twist at the end when the mystery of the death is revealed was a surprise to all of us. Some felt it was a bit of a slow burn while others were absorbed from the start, but we all enjoyed the story and want to read more of her work. We felt that she creates the atmosphere brilliantly (you could almost taste the dust of the land) and builds up the fear and suspense. Another great read that we would recommend with an average mark of 8½.

Co-ordinator, Gill Swanson 07975 9202460

Places of Worship

Eighteen members attended our first meeting of 2024 which took place at 'Assumption of Our Lady' Catholic church in Victoria Road. The first Catholic place of worship in Maldon after the Reformation was set up in an old, converted Forge in Silver Street. In 1896, a piece of land on which the church now stands was purchased.

The present church was built in 1924/25 from designs by Geoffrey Raymond of Scoles & Raymond of Basingstoke, Hampshire. The church is in the 14th century decorated style of Gothic and was opened by Bishop Doubleday on the 18th November 1925.



Deacon Quentin Hall then gave a talk covering some historical aspects of Roman Catholicism and explained some current beliefs and practices of the church.

Our February visit takes place on Friday 2nd at St Mary the Virgin, Church Street, Maldon at 1.30 pm. We will hear a talk about the 'Friends of the Friendless Churches'.

Co-ordinators Geoff Pugh 01621 843297 and Dawn Mundy 01621 854065

Play Reading

At our December meeting we read *Straight and Narrow* by Jimmie Chinn. This is a play about a gay couple which manages to address itself to the pitfalls common to most aspects of family life. It is a play with many humorous moments shot through with intensely moving undertones. After you read it you come away having laughed a lot but feeling there is so much food for serious thought.

In January we read a comedy by 'H' Connolly.

Len Hincliff is a pompous and chauvinistic captain of Thetford cricket team and takes cricket as a very serious business. The team is faced with the unexpected challenge of an all women cricket team. This calls for some thinking on the men's behalf on the sanctity of cricket, although not before several revelations rock the foundations of the cricket club. After 25 years Len's ex-girlfriend appears on the scene with the addition of Len's son. As well as the shock of finding himself a father he has to face the shame of having his nickname 'snuggle-bum' revealed to the team plus face the threat of his wife leaving him. All is not lost as Len sees the error of his ways, and with good humour accepts defeat in cricket and credibility which in turn wins back his wife.

After the meeting we enjoyed a lovely Group lunch at the Queen Victoria.

Co-ordinator, Anita Parkes 01621 857730

Cribbage Group

Our December meeting was split into two parts; we played crib for half the meeting and then enjoyed Christmas nibbles and a good chat. We also welcomed a new player, John W. Mary won the prize for the highest score and received a chocolate selection box.

Our January meeting also welcomed another new player, Neil, so our numbers are looking good. Our star player definitely seems to be Mary, as she scored the most points again and this time with a grand total of 23 - well done Mary. It is good to have so many friendly faces meeting together to play this very interesting card game.

Co-ordinator, Terri Hardcastle 01621 925696

History & Science Group

For our December meeting we were very fortunate to get hold of a world expert Archaeologist/ Anthropologist - John Walden. He is a Post Doctoral Scholar in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University. He currently directs fieldwork at a Late Classic Maya Centre in the Belize River Valley.

The first inhabitants to develop a distinct culture in what is now Belize were the Maya. The Maya civilizations in Belize date back as early as 1500 B.C. and reached their peak between 300 and 900 A.D. The Maya's contribution to society in Belize includes the design and engineered buildings, the creation of the modern calendar and the development of the written language.



Many ceremonial sites and temples dot the Belize landscape. Only a few sites have been restored. More areas are discovered each year and artifacts are found anywhere within the country.

The largest of Belize's Maya sites is Caracol (The Snail), located in the Cayo District. The largest pyramid is 'Caana' which rises 140 feet from its base. The whole site is undergoing excavation and renovation.

Xunantunich (Maiden of the Rock) was once a major ceremonial centre during the Classic Period. It comprises six major plazas and is surrounded by more than twenty- five temples and palaces.

La Mila, the third largest site in Belize, is a ceremonial centre with more than twenty-four courtyards and over eighty-five structures. On this site stands the Great Plaza, one of the largest public spaces in the Maya world. Recent archaeological finds have included major burials with many jade goods.

Our thanks go to John for a most interesting and informative talk, and we look forward, hopefully, to a return visit in 2024.

At our January meeting we watched DVDs from Professor Jennifer Paxton. Firstly, one on life in the 13th century looking at life within the different levels of society from Lord to Peasant. She explained the distribution of land and the different obligations at each level and the importance of the Parish Church. Economic activity was centred on agriculture and wool.

Our second DVD was on the disastrous reign of Henry III. It started well with William Marshall in control whilst he was a child. When he re-issued the Magna Carta his reign deteriorated because of his continual disagreements with the Barons, especially over patronage and foreign policy. Professor Paxton explained how much we can find out about this period from ‘Rolls’ of parchment that were kept on every matter of law and debate.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 13th February at 2.00 pm when we have a guest speaker, David Williams, who has spoken to us before. The subject is Wren's Churches, all built after the fire of London. Just how many are there? Come and enjoy their beautiful design.

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

Card and Board Games



Eighteen members met on December 5th to enjoy a shared Christmas lunch. Wonderful food and excellent company. Our year has been great fun, learning new games, sharing the teaching and replaying all the favourites.

We meet on the first Tuesday of the month, between 2.00 and 4.00 pm in the Linton Room at West

Maldon Community Centre. John and I wish you a happy New Year and look forward to another year of fun and competition (never serious).

Co-ordinator, Sheila Rowsell 01621 740820

Golf Group



The Blackwater u3a golfing group play 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

Table Tennis 1

Our group meets on Mondays from 9.15 till 11.45 am at West Maldon Community Centre. We are a mixed achievement group and have a good time with a little instruction from the better players. We are currently getting 16 plus players, with several welcome newcomers, and rotate play so that everyone gets a game with different partners. We can still accept more players at present.

Co-ordinator, Peter Harden 07754 536639

Deputy, Jack Veash 07388 420968

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.

New members are welcome with or without previous experience and a bat can be lent if necessary. Sensible non slip trainers are essential. The cost is £3 per session which includes refreshments. For further information please contact

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 1.30 pm during the winter months (GMT) in the Maldon Promenade Park.

Co-ordinator, John Mundy 01621 854065

Art Group

We got off to a good start in 2024 and plans are in development for a lively year. The suggested optional Group Project for February (start on 14th) is anything in Acrylics! I will set up a couple of Still Life arrangements but any reference material could be used.

During January we worked individually and here is a selection of work in progress, using water colour; pen and ink and pencil.



Jenny Riley



Chris Walker



Jim Palmer



Kaye Hayes



Maureen Taylor



Val Wilson

Co-ordinator, Anita Sandison 01621 741351

Nature Walks

December

Our December walk was to be a walk round the Promenade Park led by Gerry. The object of the walk was to investigate the wide variety of trees growing there. Unfortunately, Gerry was taken ill the day before, so Janet and I stepped into the breach with me guiding the group around Gerry's meticulously planned route and Janet providing information about each tree, obtained from a leaflet supplied by Gerry.

If, like me, your main reason for visiting the Prom is to get some exercise, you may not have noticed some of the more unusual varieties of trees that have been planted over the years. To name just a few, if you go to the far corner of the children's playground, hidden behind the maze, there is a beautiful Foxglove tree which has purple 'trumpet' flowers and candle shaped seed cases in the winter.



At the top of the slope leading down to the sandpit is probably the largest tree in the park, a magnificent Monterey Cypress and, at the bottom of the slope, two Cabbage Palms which have survived everything the British weather can throw at them.



In addition to the specimen trees, there are several imposing avenues, including the two rows of Horse Chestnuts, planted to commemorate Maldon men who died in the First World war and the avenue which snakes around the field adjacent to the boating lake, planted to remember those lost in the Second World war.

Peter Holmes

Continued on page 20

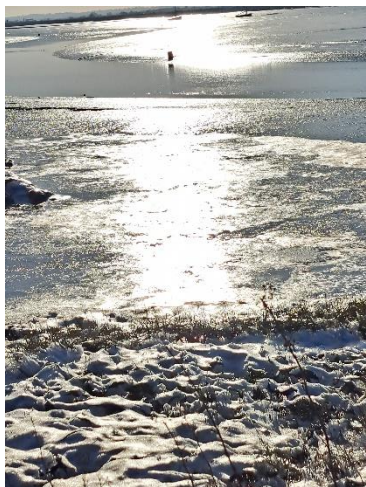
Nature walks continued

January

It was a beautiful sunny but cold morning as we set off for a stroll around Heybridge Basin. It was so cold that the parking meters were not working at Daisy Meadow; that's another story.



The bright sunlight made it difficult to distinguish the numerous birds feeding at low tide. We spotted Brent geese, godwit, redshank and teal amongst numerous others. The yellow of the gorse flowers and the red of the rose hips contrasted with the wintry coastline.



Thanks to Terri Hardcastle and Esther Pugh for the lovely photographs and have a look at the website for more beautiful photos of the walk. Some of the group had not walked part of the path before. It had been quite muddy in one section when I pre-walked it the previous week but the icy conditions were in our favour as the mud was rock solid. Welcome refreshments awaited us at the Lock Tearoom.

Our meeting on the 16th February will be a short walk around the sea wall at Goldhanger. Car share from West Maldon Community Centre at 9.30 am.

For the 15th March I have booked a visit to Lauriston Farm near Goldhanger. This will include a walk, a talk about biodynamic farming and a hot drink. £6 in cash payable on the day. Numbers are limited so please book a place with me. We will leave West Maldon Community Centre by car share at 9.30 am.

Co-ordinator, Gerry Davis, 01621 843217

Members on Their Own (MOTO) Group

Suggestions for February 2024

Thursday 1st at 11.00 am The Art Society at Wickham Bishops Hall. The Art of Durer: A Journey into The Man and His World – Shirley Smith

Saturday 3rd at 10.30 am Coffee at St Marys Church, The Octagon

Saturday 10th at 12.30 pm Lunch at El Guaca, 122 High Street, Maldon CM9 5ET. *Please let me know if you want to come and I will book a table.*

Saturday 17th at 10.30 am Coffee at Serendipity

Co-ordinator, Robyn Slade 01621 928536

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

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

Wine Group 1

Our next meeting will be on Saturday February 10th, at Frances and Brian's house. We look forward to getting together again, with a glass or three of course, after a New Year break.

Co-ordinator, Frances Butcher 01621 853352

Shakespeare Group

We have now finished Henry IV part 2 and in February are starting our next play which is 'Twelfth Night'. This is our sixteenth play. Anyone is welcome to join us, just contact me.

Co-ordinator, Dennis Eraut 01621 829758

Annual General Meeting

Please note that our AGM will be on Wednesday 1st May at 2.30pm. We look forward to seeing you there.

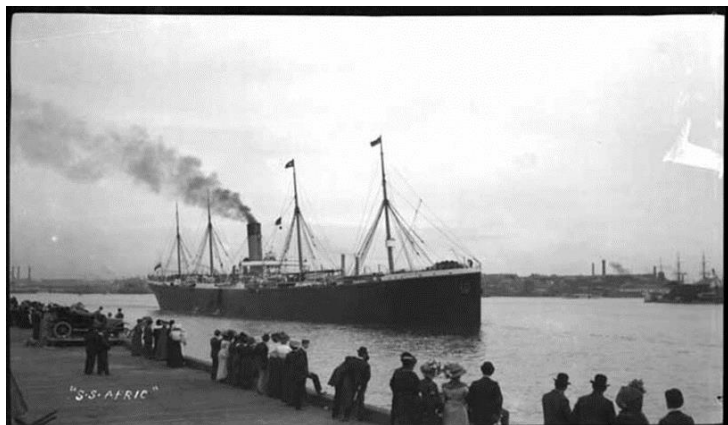
u3a Committee

Family History Group

Nine members attended our first meeting of the year.

One of our group showed us her family links to the Huguenots and their movement from the East End of London to a lace making company in Braintree.

Since our meeting in November 2023, some research was done on one of Peter Holmes relatives – Bertha Emma Westley - who travelled in 1913 to Australia with her husband and child (Peter's mother) on a vessel s.s. Africa. Sadly, her husband contracted influenza and died as a result in 1919. He was buried on 6th March 1919 at Healesville, Melbourne, Australia. A great number of records and documents were found on <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/> - the National Archives of Australia. Anyone who has relatives who lived in Australia may find this very useful as you can do a name search.



On delving further, both mother and child returned to the United Kingdom between 1919 and 1921 and initially lived in Higham Ferrers, Northampton. Bertha eventually settled in

Bradwell and lived there with her sister. She died and was buried there on the 3rd April 1970.

Doing research on the s.s. Africa it was discovered that she was a steamship built by Harland & Wolff and launched in 1898, involved in shipping between Liverpool and Australia. Following the outbreak of the First World War, the vessel was requisitioned by the Australian government for use as a troopship. She completed six troopship voyages; however, on the 12th February 1917 she was sunk in the English Channel after being torpedoed by the German submarine SM UC-66.

Our Next Meeting will be on 21st February in The Linton Room at 2.00 pm.

Co-ordinator, Geoff Pugh 01621 843297

Rummikub Group

For the Christmas Meeting I got some nibbles, Robyn made some sausages rolls and Sheila made a teacake. They were delicious and they all went. We only had one game for the twelve of us and it was good fun.

At the January meeting there was thirteen members so that made four groups, three of three and one of four players. The two Sylvies won in their groups, Marg won in her group and I won in my group!

You can't say who the outright winner is because your might have three games and the others might have five or four games. You have to really use your brain it is such a good game.

I wish everyone a HAPPY NEW YEAR

Co-ordinator, Patricia Harding 01621 843099

Short Walks

Five of us met up on a sunny but breezy morning for a leisurely stroll from West Maldon Community Centre to Spital Road making our way towards Morrison's via the foot/cycle path. As is our usual custom we stopped for a hot beverage before making our way back to the Community Centre.

Our next walk will take place on Monday 19th February, meeting outside West Maldon Community Centre at 10.00 am. If you are interested in joining us for a leisurely stroll please contact either myself, or Robyn.

Di Martin (01621 856347) or Robyn Slade (01621 928536)

Joint Co-ordinators

Canasta Group

Ten of us met for the first Canasta group of the year on Thursday 18th January and our next meeting will be in the Linton Room at West Maldon Community Centre at 2.00 pm on Thursday 15th February.

It would be good to have a full complement of 12 so we could have 3 groups of 4. I have 12 names on my list as regulars and I appreciate plans have to change at the last minute, but if you think you can't make the meeting please let me know.

Co-ordinator, Stephy Eraut 01621 829758

Flower Arrangers



Our entry in the All Saints' Church Christmas Tree Festival

As January's meeting was the nearest to Valentine's Day we chose this as our theme.



Our next meeting will take place on Tuesday 27th February, in the Linton Room from 9.30 am. At this meeting we will be celebrating St David's Day by using daffodils in a spiral arrangement.

Co-ordinator, Di Martin 01621 856347

Card Makers

There have been no card making sessions in January due to my own illness. However we have all been busy at home making cards for two members whose



Birthdays are being celebrated with a coffee morning at the end of January.

I hope to be able to commence my sessions again in February. They will still be Tuesdays at 10.00 am and Thursdays at 2.00 pm.

Wishing all u3a members a Happy and Healthy 2024.

Co-ordinator, Kathy Leggett
01621 852377



Walking Group

We finished the year with a walk around the seawall to the Promenade Park before ending up at Sophie's Kitchen for a lovely lunch to round of a good year of walks all arranged by John.



The programme for the start of 2024 is:

February 22nd Morrisons car park

March 28th Heybridge Basin, Daisy Meadow Car Park

Co-ordinator, John Mayes 01245 222530

Tai Chi

Tai Chi has become so popular we have a 'full house' for our Monday afternoon meetings. Although we cannot accept any new members at the moment, if you are interested please contact me and I will put your name on a waiting list.

Co-ordinator, Peter Harden 07754 536639

Speakers' Corner

February 7th

March 6th

April 3rd

May

Our Street, Brian Carline

The Titanic, Steve Lester

Dodgy Scales and Delivering the Mail Part One, Mike
Fogg

Annual General Meeting

Speaker Organiser, John Hayes 01621 843855

Local News

ANYONE FOR (SOCIAL!) TENNIS? Fancy some regular friendly outdoor exercise complete with home comforts when the weather warms up a bit? For less than the price of a cup of coffee each week you could have annual membership of the tennis section at Forresters in Great Totham. The club is currently small and keen to encourage new members. Social midweek tennis sessions where you can just turn up and play with other like minded people are at 10.00 am on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays (weekend social sessions are at 11.00 am for small extra membership cost). There are four courts and people are used to mixing in with whatever number turns up. Unlike larger clubs in the area it has the full benefit of the Clubhouse during the day for whatever food and drink incentives you need! - including a members discount of 10%, plenty of free parking and mature grounds with copious seating. If you're nervous of being a bit rusty you could always contact the club's tennis coach for private or joint refresher sessions. The club is LTA registered. If you're more competitive there are opportunities to play in local leagues. If you're interested, in the first instance please telephone fellow u3a member Judy Lea on 01621 858875 for more details.

The Maldon Society

Wilkins & Sons – Farm, Factory & Family

Our speaker on Thursday March 7th will be Mr Nicholas Wickenden. He will be giving the history of this very well known company from Tiptree.

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. It is important that anyone who is interested in coming along pre-registers by emailing: maldonsociety@aol.com or rings Dorreen on 01621 853428.

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	David Arnold	01621 853866

February 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

FEBRUARY	Wine Group 2 and MOTO
MARCH	Art and Art Appreciation
APRIL	Flower Arranging and History & Science

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

FEBRUARY	Wine Group 1 and Reading
MARCH	Golf and Real Ale
APRIL	Nature Walks and Card Makers

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

February 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 MOTO Table Tennis 2 Card Makers	2 Places of Worship	3 MOTO	4
5 Table Tennis 1 Meditation Tai Chi	6 Card Makers Petanque Card and Board Games	7 Monthly Meeting	8 Play Reading Scottish Dance Table Tennis 2 Card makers Reading	9 Golf Singing Shakespeare	10 MOTO Wine 1	11
12 Table Tennis 1 Tai Chi	13 Card Makers Petanque History and Science	14 Art Cribbage	15 Rummikub Table Tennis 2 Card Makers Canasta	16 Nature Walk	17 MOTO	18
19 Table Tennis 1 Meditation Short Walks Tai Chi Gardening	20 Card Makers Petanque Scrabble	21 Art Family History N'letter Deadline	22 Walkers Scottish Dance Table Tennis 2 Card Makers	23 Golf Singing Shakespeare Local Theatre	24	25
26 Table Tennis 1 Tai Chi	27 Card Makers Flower Arranging Art Appreciat Petanque	28 Art Real Ale	29 Table Tennis 2 Card Makers			