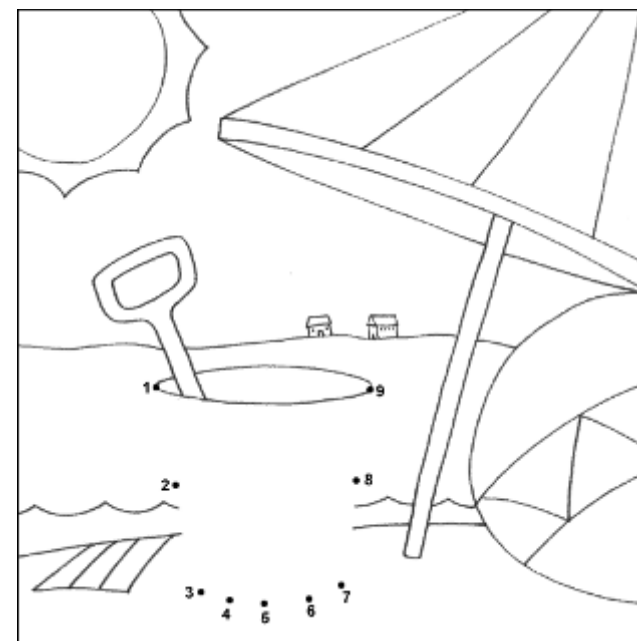


## August programme

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Table Tennis	2 Petanque Community Garden	3 Monthly meeting	4 Garden visit	5	6	7
8	Science & Tech visit Table Tennis	9 Community Garden	10 Art Group Luncheon Club 3 Patchwork	11 Reading	12 Golf	13	14
15	Table Tennis Scrabble	16 Petanque Woodturning Theatre visit Community Garden	17 Art Group Woodturning Luncheon Club 1	18	19 Photography	20	21
22	Table Tennis Wine Group	23 Community Garden	24 Art Group	25 Craft	26 Luncheon Club 2	27	28
29	BANK HOLIDAY	30 Community Garden	31 Art Group				

# Blackwater U3A newsletter August 2011



[www.blackwateru3a.co.uk](http://www.blackwateru3a.co.uk)

Reg. Charity No. 1113334

## From the Chair

### Birth of a new U3A?

Plans are well formed now for the launch meeting of a new U3A. We have arranged to write to all the people on our waiting list which is over 60, and to send through the officers to all the members on the waiting list for Maldon U3A, which is around 30. We plan to put up some posters around the town and hopefully to get some publicity in the local newspaper and radio to advertise the formation of a new U3A.

The launch meeting will be held at West Maldon Community Centre on Friday September 16<sup>th</sup> from 2.00 till 4.00. We hope on that day to have enough interest to form a new U3A and a steering committee to start the process.

Do you know anyone who might wish to join? If so, please chat to them and tell them about the joys of belonging to a U3A and get them to get in touch with one of our committee and come along to the meeting. The name will be decided by those who wish to join the new group. I have a few suggestions and I would be interested in any ideas you may have to put to the new group.

I will give a short talk at the event about the U3A, and Peter Thorpe, Chairman of Heybridge U3A, (who have no waiting list) will give one on Interest Groups. There will be time for questions and, of course, refreshments and time to talk to some members of the committees of Blackwater, Heybridge and Maldon U3As. So spread the word!

I would be interested to hear from anyone about what they consider to be the best thing of their time with the U3A. What counts more than anything else? *Dennis Eraut*

### September newsletter deadline

Deadline for the August newsletter is Friday 26th August. Contributions to [ian@ianlinton.demon.co.uk](mailto:ian@ianlinton.demon.co.uk) 51 Washington Road, Maldon, CM9 6BN

## Coordinators

Interest Group Coordinator	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Art	Anita Sandison	01621 741351
Art Appreciation	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Birdwatching	Peter Leggett	01621 852377
Community Garden	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Crafts	Sheila Wallis	01621 856667
Family History	Geoff Pugh	01621 843297
French beginners	Val Wilson	01621 842455
Gardening	Jennifer Fowler	01245 222834
Golf	Alan Chapman	01621 816860
History	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Local Theatres	Sheila Rowsell	01621 740820
London Theatres	Gill Cato	01621 740153
Luncheon Club 1	Di Johnson	01621 828490
Luncheon Club 2	Kathy Leggett	01621 852377
Luncheon Club 3	Pam Mills	01621 874883
Maldon High Street	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Maritime Group	John Wallace	01245 225093
Music Appreciation	Mani Koenig-Roach	01621 854235
Patchwork & Quilting	Molly Middleton	01621 859914
	Gill Reeves	01621 855845
Petanque	George Wallis	01621 856667
Photography Group	George Wallis	01621 856667
Reading Group	Pat Wade	01621 740253
Rural Essex	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Science, Tech, Medicine	Alan Chapman	01621 816860
Scrabble	Sylvia Harden	01621 858506
Social Group	Barbara Brand	01621 853218
Spanish	Sue Watson	01621 852941
Table Tennis	John Mundy	01621 854065
Walkers	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Wine Group	Stella Bradbrook	01621 854235
Woodturning	Charles Middleton	01621 859914
<b>Joint groups with Maldon U3A</b>		
Astronomy	Alan Chapman	01621 816860
Ballroom Dancing	Jean Smith	01621 843054
Singing for Pleasure	Jacky Holmes	01621 854108
Snooker	Brian	01621 842619
Tenpin Bowling	David Arnold	01621 853866
Scottish Dancing	Shirley Grummett	01621 853288
Trouble-Shooters	Liz or Bryan Jones	01621 857031

## Current Committee Members 2011/12

Dennis Eraut	Chair	01621 829758
Val Wilson	Vice-Chair	01621 842455
John Wallace	Vice-Chair	01245 225093
Adrian Stockton	Treasurer	01245 225081
Dawn Mundy	Secretary	01621 854065
Barbara Brand	Social Activities	01621 853218
Dorreen Linton	Interest Group Coordinator	01621 853428
Sheila Rowsell	Committee Member	01621 740820
Sheila Wallis	Committee Member	01621 856667
Peter Holmes	Co-opted Member	01621 854108
Gill Cato	Co-opted Member	01621 740153

### Local U3A contacts

Maldon—Joyce Cotterell 01621 858287  
 South Woodham Ferrers—Heather Richardson 01245 320205  
 Heybridge—Peter Thorpe 01621 850828

## News update

### Note from your Treasurer

Organisers of events should be aware of the following:

- In future all members' cheques should be made out to 'Blackwater U3A'. I am hoping to phase out the use of the name 'Blackwater U3A No. 2 Account'. (For the next few months use of the old name will be acceptable.)
- If an event organiser does not know the exact sum that is required to be paid out, then they should contact me well in advance so that payment options can be discussed.
- Obtaining the two signatures required on our cheques can take a few days, so please give me as much time as possible to contact another signatory.

*Adrian Stockton, Treasurer*

### Macmillan Cancer Support

Thank you so much to the many people who supported this event by coming along to our garden, bringing things to sell, buying things, giving donations, and especially to those who also gave their time to help us on the day. We made a final total of £540. The doll, whose name was Emilia was won by Barbara Bicknell. *Sheila and John Rowsell*

## Third Age Trust

All correspondence received is collated and presented in the Third Age Trust File which is available for members to view at the Monthly Meetings. All flyers received which advertise U3A merchandise, trips/ events, study days, website addresses and advice sheets are displayed on the noticeboard at the monthly meetings. Contact Dawn Mundy, Secretary if you have any queries.

**Chess:** Dick Chapman of Watford U3A is planning to set up 'U3A National Chess by Email'. Interested? contact Dick: dickchapman@ntlworld.com

**TV general knowledge quiz:** The Chase - The TV Company are looking for contestants with good general knowledge. Do you want your name in lights? Contact: [www.itv.com/thechase](http://www.itv.com/thechase) or email: [thechase@itv.com](mailto:thechase@itv.com)

**Sri Lanka:** Does a Tour of Sri Lanka appeal to you? The event takes place in January 2012 - contact Gina Pointing 01202 880362 of Ferndown U3A also at [ginapointing@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ginapointing@yahoo.co.uk)

**AGM:** The 28th AGM of the Third Age Trust takes place on 18<sup>th</sup> September. The Blackwater U3A Committee will not be attending, but have completed and forwarded proxy voting papers in respect of the two proposed resolutions. In addition, the vacant position of Chair, the two vacant positions of Vice Chairmen and the Election of the East of England Trustee have also been voted upon. The detailed correspondence and copy of the completed voting forms can be viewed within the Third Age Trust File at the monthly meeting.

**Copyright licence:** We have just received from the Third Age Trust a poster that states, "The Institution of Blackwater U3A has a Copyright Licence for Adult and Community Learning (ACL): The Third Age Trust & Local U3As. The Licence is effective 1st August 2011 - 31 July 2012. This Licence enables Co-ordinators and members to copy extracts, within clearly defined limits." Further details on: [www.cla.co.uk](http://www.cla.co.uk)

## Speakers' Corner

Our monthly general meetings feature a wide variety of guest speakers. The meetings are held at West Maldon Community Centre on the first Wednesday of the month. Remember doors now open at 2.00.

**September** - Barbara Meyer, wild life photographer and conservationist with special interest in big cats. Barbara will have items for sale that support the Big Cat charity.

**October** - Colin Baldy, Director of Music at St Mary's Church, Maldon, author, conductor, singer, actor, musician, a leading light of the Maldon Festival of Arts and more who will share general knowledge about the voice, sing for us, and share his musical experiences.

## Table Tennis Group

Sessions take place on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> (when applicable) Mondays at West Maldon Community Centre from 11.45 am to 1.30 pm. (please do not arrive before 11.40) Fee £3.00 per session. Please note during August table tennis will be available every Monday. It is a very friendly group. Balls and bats are provided and coaching is given. The group has been running since April 2010 and new members are always welcome.

*John Mundy Table Tennis Coordinator 01621 854065*

## Art Group

During August, we continue our outdoor visits, starting at 10.30am



Aug 10th	Beeleigh hamlet
Aug 17th	Hylands House
Aug 24th	Tesco car park
Aug 31st	Tiptree Heath

We will return to Mundon Victory Hall in September, but if the weather is good, use the hall as a base for sketching in the village.

Please contact Anita on 01621 41351 [asandison@gmail.com](mailto:asandison@gmail.com) for details.

## Scrabble Group

Meetings are every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month - July 18<sup>th</sup>, August 15<sup>th</sup>, September 19<sup>th</sup>, October 17<sup>th</sup>, November 21<sup>st</sup>, December no meeting. More members are welcome. *Sylvia Harden - 01621 858506*

## Refreshments & Meet & Greet rota

September	Table Tennis Group
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## Social Group

### BBC Television Centre tour – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Our trip to the BBC got off to an inauspicious start as the date coincided with the date chosen for the public sector pension demonstrations! However, our driver managed to avoid most of the congestion and we arrived at White City in good time to have lunch in the impressive new Westfield shopping centre.

Our tour of the huge 13 acre BBC TV site started with a visit to the Newsroom which is the hub of the BBC's worldwide news network. Nearly 4000 staff are involved in gathering, reporting, compiling and editing the news reports for the various programmes. We also found out



that the presenters don't just read the news but are trained journalists who write their own scripts. This allows them the freedom to ad-lib and change the presentation as events unfold. A typical TV studio was next where game shows, talk shows and the like would be recorded in front of a live audience. The studio was surprisingly small but could be quickly adapted to any requirement by means of movable scenery, curtains, lights and seating. Then it was on to the weather centre where we found out that, when doing the forecast, the presenter only sees a blank screen. The computer-generated weather maps are superimposed during transmission.

In one of the dressing rooms, we were told about some of the bizarre requests made by certain pop divas, including fitting out the entire room in white and for a basket of live puppies to be supplied. Not surprisingly, the latter was refused! Finally, in a mock studio, five U3A 'volunteers' were given a chance to try their hand at being either a news presenter or a contestant in a 'fastest finger on the button' quiz show. A fitting end to a very interesting and informative day.

*Peter Holmes*

### Great Bardfield Lodge Experience

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September. A trip to the lodge and vineyards with Ploughman's lunch and wine tasting. £17.50 plus car share

*Barbara Brand 01621 853218.*

## Gardening Group

### Capel Manor Gardens

In less than an hour we were at the site which is the home of the London Horticultural College, standing in 30 acres of an old estate in Enfield. We were taken through the different areas by a well informed young tutor for over 2 ½ hours, but it was so interesting that the time flashed by. Guided through open areas of streams, ponds and bog gardens, we passed by reconstructed ruins built over the earlier medieval foundations and on to the Georgian house, now part of the College.

There was a giant scented Grandiflora Magnolia growing up past the first floor windows, with other tall scented shrubs whose perfume in past times would have counteracted the odorous smells of the world outside. Onwards past lavender lined borders of perfumed roses and award-winning beds



designed by students, we came to grape-filled greenhouses.

Finally, we came to a group of small gardens, each different in design and planting, some of which had been prize-winning Chelsea gardens. In the Trial Ground, the different coloured heucheras, penstemons and kniphofia, along with the fruit trees and vegetable garden were all thriving.

After lunch, we sat and relaxed, some in the cottage garden, while others enjoyed either the wild garden or the modern more formal garden, a perfect ending to a most enjoyable day. *Ronald Diss*

Thank you so much for all your kind wishes and lovely cards.

*Jennifer*

### Forthcoming events

**Thursday August 4<sup>th</sup> Helmingham Hall.** Entrance £6, coach £12, total £18. Light lunch or bring your own picnic. Coach leaves West Maldon Community Centre at 10.30. Helmingham Hall has an old garden surrounded by a moat and wall dating from 1740. It has been extensively redesigned over 20 years by Lady Tollemache, a Chelsea Gold Medal winner. Herbacious borders, knot garden, extensive vegetable garden and much else to see, so please do come as it should be an interesting day.

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September - Visit to Buckingham Palace** state rooms and garden highlights. Coach leaves West Maldon Community Centre at 9.30.

*Jennifer Fowler 01245 222834*

## Maritime Group

**August** There will not be a meeting in August.

### Thursday 29 September - Greenwich

Our September meeting is being organised jointly with the Art Appreciation Group. It is a whole day visit by coach to the National Maritime Museum complex at Greenwich. We will have most of the day to explore the NMM, the Queen's House, the Royal Observatory Centre, (all free), or the Meridian Courtyard and Planetarium (entrance fee). Please sign up on Dorreen's Art Appreciation Group list.

### Timing of future Maritime Group meetings

This year we have experienced a few clashes with other interest group meetings so, after consulting with most of our regular members, we will change to the FIRST Monday afternoon in the month, instead of the fourth Monday. This will take effect from October. We will continue to meet in the Linton Room of the West Maldon Community Centre at 2.00 pm for our 'indoor' meetings.

*John Wallace 01245 225093*

## Music Appreciation Group

There were five of us at our Music Appreciation Group. We'd not had a meeting last month for many reasons, so it was truly good to get together again. We had decided to continue with the letter B and on this occasion to listen to just two pieces of music. A special request was for an opera. We listened attentively to Bellini's 'I Puritana' right to the end of the first act. Many operas can be just listened to but this one, we all agreed, needed to be seen as well. We wanted to see the chorus acting their parts as loyal Stuarts and Cromwellians; poor Elvira, believing she'd been deserted by her lover Arthur; finally when all ends with the lovers being joyously united.

We did not really have time for our second piece which was Brahms' Third Symphony but we did have the music on while having our refreshments and discussing Bellini's work. Our next meeting will be at Dorreen Linton's home on the second Thursday of September, 8<sup>th</sup> September, when the letter will be C. Please ring her to let her know whether or not you will be there on 01621 853428 *Pat Willis*

## Rural Essex Group

### Visit to Lauriston Farm

On arrival at the farm, Spencer gave us an introductory talk about the history of the farm from when the farmhouse was bought by his parents twenty five years ago and five year later when the land came up for sale. After many years of travelling and learning, Spencer is now working on the 210 acres which are managed using biodynamic techniques and produce rare breed beef, lamb, mutton, fruit and vegetables, pure breed chickens and eggs, jams, chutneys, wool and honey. It provides the creation and maintenance of a conservation habitat for estuary birds and other wildlife.



The farm gives student work experience programmes for the local schools and colleges as well as volunteering opportunities. The rare breed on the farm is the classic 'Crofter's Cow' from the Shetland Isles and is well suited for the salty marsh meadows and the harshness of the climate at Lauriston. The breed of lamb is also a good breed for these conditions. Over eighty percent of the area is designated as a 'site of special scientific interest'. All the land is entered into a conservation scheme run by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs called High Level Environmental Stewardship. We learned about the management requirements for organic cattle and sheep livestock systems.

The Red Hill area is two acres and dates back to approximately 2,000 AD as a former saltworks. It is now listed as an ancient monument. Another historic area is the Decoy Pond dating back to 1550 this is another ancient monument which was used for catching ducks, and as many as 20,000 ducks a year were trapped for the London markets. The grazing marsh dates back to the 1500s. It is a twelve-hectare field inside the sea wall that has not been flattened or drained and still retains the profile of the saltings. Finally the group were shown the pure-bred hens which are good layers as well as good meat birds. The afternoon ended in the meeting room with tea and homemade flapjacks cooked by Spencer. After the three hour tour, the group I am sure will each take home a memory of the visit from which they will have learned about this form of farming.

**Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> October** - our guide Mike Sandison will give us a guided tour of Chafford Gorge. Please meet at West Maldon Community Centre. It will be an afternoon visit (time to be arranged). *Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

## Golfing Group

Our July golfing session was to be at Forrester Park Golf Course near Great Totham. However, on arrival, we were shocked to discover that the cost for playing 18 holes at this course was £25, well over twice the price we normally have to pay. Consequently, most of our members went to the nearby Braxted Park Golf Course where they only had to pay £12 to play on this very picturesque and challenging course. Incidentally, this is where we are booked in to play for our August golfing session (Friday 12<sup>th</sup> at 10.00am)

Finally, our golfing thought for this month is: "Golf is twenty percent mechanics and technique. The other eighty percent is philosophy, humour, tragedy, romance, melodrama, companionship, camaraderie, cussedness, and conversation." *Grantland Rice (1880-1954) American Sportswriter Alan Chapman Golfing Group Coordinator 01621 816860*

## Swimming Group

As previously reported, after 10 years of helping U3A members to improve their swimming, Gill Rowsell has decided to retire as our instructor. As I had no response to my request for someone else to take up her mantle or whether anyone would like to continue with fortnightly social swimming, swimming has now ended. I know everyone who came thoroughly enjoyed it and we all thank Gill for her help and patience and for all the fun we had. *Anne Kellard*

## Photography Group

The Photography Group met at Stowe Maries airfield on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> July to take photos for the proposed tapestry project being undertaken. We plan to review the photos taken at our August meeting which will be on Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup> at 10am at my house. *George Wallis*

## History Group

### Visit to Mersea

The group met our guide Alan who gave us a potted history of West Mersea, lying off the coast of East Anglia between the estuaries of the Rivers Colne and Blackwater. Mersea is the most easterly inhabited island of Britain and was described by a Victorian author as 'sunrise land.' We visited the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul with connections to St Peter's Chapel and the probability of Cedd and his monks establishing a church at West Mersea. The church is one of 50 listed buildings in West Mersea and dates back to 654. The present church dates back to 960. Different periods of history are shown - Roman tiles, Tudor roof trusses, Saxon carving, wall paintings from 15<sup>th</sup> century. The founding of five bells by Thomas Gardiner in 1717 reputedly inspired Sabine Baring-Gould to compose 'Now the Day is Over' to fit the five chimes. Another feature is the recent addition of the Fisherman's stained glass window where the question was asked 'can you see the fishing smack in the design.' We walked along the Coast Road with Alan pointing out the various historical features before arriving at the Old Village, where the residents at that end of the town are called Lannees. We walked up the picturesque lane to the City Road sign showing the water line of the 1953 floods. There he told us the tale of the composition of the Colchester coat of arms.



The group met up after lunch at the Mersea Museum where Pat gave us an introduction. The museum has had the addition of a Resource Archive Centre since our last visit and, with several computers, it makes a useful resource for visitors and local schools. The collection of children's books, games and toys will be of interest to any children visiting. There was an example of a punt and punt gun with gear which was used by Charlie Stoker, a wildfowler, and built by Bill Wyatt in December 1919. A similar boat would probably have been used by Walter Linnet at Bradwell. Our visit to Mersea ended with members experiencing going underground with torches to the burial site of the Romano British Barrow. The passage was excavated in 1912 and in the centre is a wider area where burial remains were found. This was in the form of a lead box containing a glass bowl which had the cremated bones inside. It is now in Colchester Museum. We all signed one of the visitors books which were started 99 years ago.

**Eltham Palace** - 13<sup>th</sup> September. There are now a couple of places left for this visit and a couple of members are now unable to come. So if you would like to come with us please ring me so I can tell you about payment.

**Glemham Palace** - 11<sup>th</sup> October. The visit is full. **History talk Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November** – Tim Howson will give a talk about the architecture of Maldon High Street buildings at 2 pm. at West Maldon Community Centre, cost £3 per person. *Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

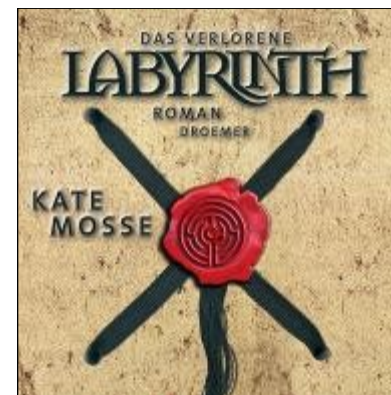
## Petanque Group

10 members of the Petanque Group met this afternoon and enjoyed a couple of matches each. We will be continuing to play during August as most of us prefer not to holiday during the peak periods, we also may have grandchildren to look after. We will be playing on the first and third Tuesdays of the month, starting at 2pm. All are welcome.

We have been invited by a winter league based in Witham to enter a team this coming season. Starts in September/October, on a Sunday, 11am with teams of 3 - 6 persons. We hope that we will be able to field a team and we will be taking to members to gauge their reaction. *George Wallis*

## Reading Group

'Labyrinth' by Kate Mosse was our book for July. It is set in both the Middle Ages and present day France and begins with the discovery of two skeletons during an archaeological dig. The two main characters, Alais and Alice, are both headstrong women who seem to have few friends. The book tells the story of the Cathars. It is a long story, full of historical detail and tells of events in 1209 and the crusade against the Cathars in Occitania (now part of southern France). Reviewer Val McDermid says "Labyrinth is a reader's Holy Grail, mixing legend, religion, history, past and present in a heart wrenching thrilling tale."



The book does have a 'Grail' element but not as we usually imagine the Holy Grail to be. We discussed what we thought of the Grail in this book and had mixed conclusions, one thought being that it was a quest. In fact Grail stories don't begin until the middle ages. Group reactions to the book were mixed and the score averaged out as 7 out of 10. Our next book is 'Middlemarch' by George Eliot which we will discuss on August 11<sup>th</sup> at the home of our coordinator Pat Wade. *Sheila Wallis*

Further details from the coordinator *Pat Wade 01621 740253.*

## Birdwatching Group

What is the perfect epitome of an English Summer's day? It is seeing Thaxted Church spire across the fields of gently-waving corn under an azure blue sky with fluffy white clouds. It is also sipping tea in the country garden of the five hundred year old cottage of our hosts, Barry and Pat. Here, full of many and various summer flowers, the colours reflected the warmth of the sun. Where else is there heaven?

Indeed we did find heaven elsewhere when, Barry an extremely knowledgeable guide, led us to Sweetings Meadow, a two-acre ancient orchard and grassland owned by Essex Wildlife Trust. Here, he identified many rare plants such as Bee, Pyramidal, Twayblade and Common Spotted Orchids of which species, seven have been discovered there.

Next we strolled from the Cottage to Barry's eight-year-old arboretum with its £100 rare indigenous Service Tree. Then around a farm reservoir, covering about three acres. More wild plants were seen including one with the strange name of "Jack get up from bed before noon". For the photographers amongst us, the wild plants afforded an exciting opportunity to capture images of subjects that did not disappear on being approached. Also seen were a pair of singing Whitethroats, a Great Green Woodpecker playing peek-a-boo with us on a tall post, Rooks and a pair of Tufted Ducks.

Back in the cottage garden for our picnics, we enjoyed Barry's anecdotes of his thirty- two years in the Essex Police Force protecting wildlife and his wildlife travels with Pat. The afternoon was spent in the very ancient eighty-acre beautiful West Wood. More orchids were discovered. We gazed in awe at three hundred year old Oaks, the tap-roots of which penetrate the earth as deep as twice the trees' height. The trunks of trees twisted over many years by prevailing winds were seen. For a while, we waited in silence for one or both Buzzards to return to their lofty nest. Alas, the earlier flash of one of them passing through a clearing had to be sufficient.

So ended, on 1<sup>st</sup> July, the last expedition of our 2010-2011 Birdwatching programme, a programme which included the woodland, reservoirs and marshes of Essex also the mountain slopes, lochs and seashores of Scotland. Watch this space for more exciting events in 2011-2012.

*Peter Leggett Coordinator, 01621 852355*

## Science, Technology & Medical Group

This new group meets on the second Monday of the month at 9.30am, with alternate site visits of science, technology or medical interest followed the next month by a talk/presentation in the Linton room at West Maldon Community Centre. Last month we had a technical talk where Roger Smith gave an excellent and informative talk on the history of steam. (see report below) As a follow-up to Roger's presentation, our next meeting will be a guided tour of the world famous Longshop Steam Museum at Leiston in Suffolk on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> August. The proposal is to meet at West Maldon Community Centre car park at 9.30 am and to travel by car share to Leiston. We will stop en route at an eating venue known by Roger, which he says provides the most mouth-watering meals. (PS if it turns out to be that good, we may even stop for a bit to eat on the way home!) *Alan Chapman*  
*Group Coordinator 01621 816860.*



### History of Steam

On Monday July 11 the group was given a most informative, entertaining and illuminated talk entitled 'Steam from first to twenty first century' chronicling significant historical events from man's first realisation that steam had some kind of power through the varied and wonderful inventions great engineers have made to harness steam's latent energy. Stevenson and Watt are household names when we think of steam, but they didn't discover an application for steam power. That fell to Hero of Alexandria around AD70. Then nothing until the late 15<sup>th</sup> century when Leonardo Da Vinci designed his 'Architonnerre', a steam cannon. Industrial applications of steam didn't begin until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century with stationary steam pumps and, eventually, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, locomotives. From there everything is history, as they say.

We don't perhaps realise the part played by steam in our everyday lives. The cookers, TVs, and light switches we turn on only provide us with energy because of a steam turbine. It may be gas, coal or nuclear powered but it is steam that does the work. Well done Roger, you must have spent many hours preparing your presentation; how disappointing for you that only three of us were there to enjoy it. Hopefully, more of the group will attend the associated trip you have arranged for a visit to The Longshop Steam Tractor Museum in Leiston on 8<sup>th</sup> August. *Brian Lane*

## Local Theatre Group

### **Busybody at the Mercury Theatre, July 11<sup>th</sup>**

The opening scene consisted of the cleaner discovering a body in her boss's office, and she calls the Police. It soon emerges that, despite the Superintendent's efforts to interrogate the staff, it is the busybody cleaner that holds centre stage in the investigations as she drops hints to the hapless detective.

In the best traditions of the 'whodunnit' all the cast have a motive for murdering their employer, but in a clever twist to the plot, he turns up alive and the body is the fatal outcome of a sub plot. The murderer is exposed, thanks to Busybody and everyone lives happily ever after. All in all a good night out. *Ronald Diss*

### **Forthcoming events**

**Tuesday August 16<sup>th</sup>** - 'The Pitman Painters' on national tour prior to opening in the West End. See write up in your Cliffs brochure or at the monthly meeting. Palace Theatre, Westcliff. One ticket remaining, £22.50.

**Friday September 9<sup>th</sup>** - 'The 39 Steps' at the Cramphorn Theatre, Chelmsford. £10.Full

**Monday October 10<sup>th</sup>** - 'Death by Fatal Murder' at the Civic Theatre, Chelmsford. Two tickets remaining £17 each.

**Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup>** - The Christmas Soiree performed by the Cameo Players at Hylands House. No price as so early. I would like to start collecting names to give me an idea of how many seats to reserve.

Please sign up at July meeting or phone me. All trips are by shared car.  
*Sheila Rowsell. 01621 740820*

## Art Appreciation Group

**Ranger's House, Greenwich** on Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> September. We will be leaving West Maldon Community Centre at 8 am. There are 6 spaces left for this visit. Coach £12 and £6 for the guided tour of the Ranger's House.

*Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

## Community Garden

### *Plans for the future.*

We would again like to put compost on the area including the grass in the Autumn so we will need some donations please – watch out for our begging bowl. The garden now has a spring collection of plants, and the summer display is building up but we need late summer and autumn plants.



Could members please give plant donations towards this season of the year. Remember our colours are blue and yellow. Please ring to find out meeting times.

*Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

## Wine Group

The next meeting will be on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August at 7.30pm at the home of Frances and Brian Butcher, telephone 01621 853352. To find out more about the Wine Group, please telephone Stella on 01621 854235

## Walking Group

Anyone is welcome to join us when we start back in September. The walks are usually between 5-6 miles and most of the group usually have a snack lunch at a local establishment, although car shares do mean there is a choice. On Thursday September 4<sup>th</sup> Sheila Harris will be leading the walk around Coggeshall. We will be leaving Tesco car park at 9.30 am.

*Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*