

March programme

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1 Petanque	2 AGM Swimming	3 Music Appreciation Rural Essex	4 Birdwatching	5	6
7 Table Tennis	8 History visit Theatre visit	9 Art Group Luncheon Club 3 Patchwork & Quilting	10 Reading Group Ballroom Dancing	11 Golf Singing for Pleasure	12	13
14 Science, Technology, Medicine	15 Petanque Woodturning Theatre visit	16 Art Group Luncheon Club 1 Woodturning Swimming	17 Family History	18 Photography	19	20
21 Table Tennis Astronomy visit	22 Art Appreciation	23 Art Group	24 Walking Craft Group Ballroom Dancing	25 Luncheon Club 2 Singing for Pleasure	26	27
28 Committee meeting Garden visit Maritime Group	29	30 Art Group CAB talk Coach trip Swimming	31			

Blackwater U3A newsletter March 2011

AGM 2011



www.blackwateru3a.co.uk

Reg. Charity No. 1113334

News update

Citizens' Advice Bureau presentation

30th March at West Maldon Community Centre. You are all invited to attend a presentation by Irene Rose, Manager of the Maldon & District Citizens' Advice Bureau. We have been fortunate to be able to book the main hall from 2.00 - 3.30pm when Irene will inform us of the services offered by the CAB, of details of new Government legislation and will be happy to answer questions. Please sign up at the monthly meeting, or telephone 01621 854065. *Dawn Mundy*

Can you volunteer to support students' reading at Plume School?

I am pleased to report that 9 members have volunteered to visit Plume School to help students in years 7 and 8 with reading. We aim to begin the programme on 2nd March. Please contact me if you wish to be involved or are interested to find out more.

Asdan Bronze Award programme at Plume School

Volunteers are needed to work with older, less able students as they follow the Asdan Bronze Award programme. The students would benefit greatly from adults who could share their expertise, and knowledge of the local area. Some of the project's modules are Health and Safety, Sports and Leisure and Expressive Arts. The programme is timetabled in blocks of one hour. Would you like to engage the interest of young people in their surroundings and in local history? If you are interested in supporting students at Plume School, please contact Dawn Mundy 01621 854065 or email dawnrosemary@fsmail.net

Maldon Choral Society concert

Maldon Choral Society presents Gloria by Vivaldi and Requiem by Faure, conducted by Dr Gillian Ward Russell on Saturday 16th April 2011 at 7.30 pm at United Reformed Church, Market Hill, Maldon. Tickets: £10 available from Tourist Information Office, Wenlock Way, Maldon, 01621 856503 or reserved by telephone 01621 853220.

Coordinators

Please take note that our next meeting will be in the Linton Room after the April monthly meeting. Please let me know if you have any items for the agenda.

Dorreen Linton

New groups

We now have three new groups – Science, Technology and Medicine, Luncheon Group 3 and Comparative Religions. If you are interested in the new groups, please contact me or the coordinators. *Dorreen Linton*

Third Age Trust news

The Retirement Show in Manchester 11-12 March - contact Julie Travers 0208 4666139

U3A Online Videomaking Group: Interested in uploading videos, adding comments, or using the forum? Contact Geo Meadows of Hagley U3A – geowarm3@gmail.com – find out more at <http://vimeo.com/groups/62178>

Reading U3A - 18-23 April in Snowdonia, North Wales. Five nights half board at £455 per person.

Contact Audrey Jones on 01189 413889. email jazzer@mypostoffice.co.uk

Gift-Aid

I will soon be making my annual submission to HMRC to reclaim Gift-Aid on subscriptions we receive from UK tax-payers. The mandate forms completed last year remain valid until cancelled by the members concerned. Can I please ask any tax-paying members who have not completed a mandate to do so now; it returns an additional 20+ pence in the pound to our funds. Gift-Aid Mandate forms are usually available at the signing-in table. The team there should also have a list of all mandates that have been registered. *Adrian Stockton, Treasurer*

Social Group

Thursday 30th June - BBC Tour leaving at 9am. The trip is almost fully booked. The cost is £20.00 as we have been able to reduce the price. Please make payment and confirmation at the March meeting.

Thursday 13th July - The Royal Savill Gardens and Thames Cruise. The price of £40 will include coach, tour of the gardens, 2 course lunch, river cruise and afternoon cream tea on the boat.

Monday 19th September - Visit to Great Bardfield Lodge Experience, including a tour of the 17th century Grade II listed farmhouse, ploughman's lunch in the farmhouse and tour of the vineyard with wine tasting in the walled garden.

Friday 21st October - Social evening

Friday 18th November - Dance.

Barbara Brand —01621 853218

Luncheon Club 3

This new group meets on the second Wednesday of the month, starting 9th March, at various hostelrys in the Maldon district and surrounding area. Please phone me if you would like to join the group. *Pam Mills, Coordinator 01621 874883*

Scrabble Group

The group is now meeting and Sylvia Harden would be pleased to hear from anyone else who is interested in playing Scrabble - 01621 858506

Garden News

Plant discounts, we have been offered 50% discount off Thompson and Morgan seeds and 15% off plants, including perennials, annuals, vegetables and fruit (seeds and plants) as well as a range of gardening sundries. If there is enough interest, we would place orders for members with one point of contact and one payment. The first order has to be a minimum of £100. I have sent for the catalogues and they should be available as this newsletter is distributed. Please sign the form if you are interested.

Outing to Hampton Court RHS Flower Show on Saturday 9th July - Maldon Horticultural Society have invited anyone who is interested to join them. The cost is a bit complicated; If you are an RHS member it is cheaper to buy your own ticket £22.50 and pay the coach fare (£13.50 for MHS or £15 for others) For non-RHS members cost is £29 + coach. For more information contact Rita Davis 01621 851848

Gardeners Question Time, 31st March 7.30-9.00pm, cost £3. We have been invited to Red House, Messing just outside Tiptree. The panelists are the founder members of Castle Hedingham Gardening Society. The principal role of Red House is to provide work experience for adults with a learning difficulty. Any funds which are raised by events such as this are ploughed into the company to help the services provided. This appears to be a good cause to support. Perhaps some of you would like to go. Plants and refreshments will be on sale!!

Anglesey Abbey

A group of us visited Anglesey Abbey to enjoy the snowdrops, amazingly for February it was a beautiful day with the sun shining and blue sky. Anglesey Abbey was originally a priory, most of the original building has disappeared. Eventually it became a private mansion and was called an abbey. It was bought at auction in 1926 by Huttleston Rogers Broughton who was to become the first Lord Fairhaven. The house was then empty and in a poor state of repair with very little land. Over a period of time Lord Fairhaven purchased more acres and transformed a desolate landscape into a beautiful garden, a blend of formal design and open parkland. The house became a home full of treasures where he could entertain his "Horsy" friends.

We walked through the garden with the Head Gardener who was an excellent guide full of information and ready to answer any questions. Either side of a winding rather narrow path were wide beds which displayed winter flowering shrubs such as several varieties of *Viburnum Bodnantense* both pink and white, honeysuckle, *Sarcococca* all fragrant.

Dogwoods of every colour and an interesting bramble grown for its silvery white stems in winter provided a wonderful background. This part of the garden was sheltered and there were croci, Hellebores of every colour, and masses of small *Iris Reticulata* - deep and pale blue, purple and cream and snowdrops. The outstanding part of the garden, to my mind, was a glade of the most beautiful Silver Birches with white bark. They have been planted close together so they have grown straight and tall. Truly it was like fairyland. The trees are sprayed with a pressure hose to keep the bark free of lichens and other diseases and to make them shine.

Eventually we reached the woods and the snowdrops. The original ones planted a while ago are gradually disappearing from the banks, The new varieties for which Anglesey is famous are all labelled and so different from our garden ones in shape height, petals and even colour. We learnt how and when to move them and much about how they grow and multiply. Somehow I expected great drifts of flowers as there are at Beningfield. We did catch a glimpse of the herbaceous borders and there were many lovely statues all over the garden. We ended our garden walk with an unexpected conducted tour of the outside of the building and it was free! We must thank South Woodham Ferrers for inviting us to share this wonderful trip. The good news for those of you who could not come that it is very likely that we will go back again next year in the summer when we can go into the Abbey.

Forthcoming visits

Monday March 28th - Visit to Hyde Hall 11am. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre at 10.45. We may stay for lunch so check arrangements with your driver. Pay at Hyde Hall plus £2 to driver.

Thursday April 14th - Visit to Barnards Farm, West Horndon 11.30am. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre at 10.30 am. Cost £6. Lunch is available at reasonable price or bring a picnic. £2 to car driver.

Monday May 9th - Plant Swap at Lodge Farm 2.30.

Monday May 23rd - Visit to Byndes Cottage, a private garden at Pebmarsh. 2pm, cost £5 including tea. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre at 1.10. £2 to driver.

Monday June 13th - Visit to Cobwebs near Rochford, 2.30. Cost £4 including tea. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre 1.45. £2 to driver.

If you would like to come please sign up and pay up as I need to know numbers.
Jennifer Fowler 01245 222834

Rural Essex Group

The Council for the Protection of Rural Essex is helping to keep the greenspaces within our County. We are very lucky around the Maldon and District area as we still have a large coastline and marshlands which are not suitable for building. We learned about the impact of proposed large developments both for wildlife and for residents of the County. The speaker illustrated the pressures of a rising population and its effect on our countryside using maps that showed planned airport development and new roads.

Next month's Maldon Society talk is on the Wallasea Island Wild Coast project at 7.45 on Thursday 3rd March at United Reform Church Hall.

On Monday 11th April, the Group will meet at West Maldon Community Centre at 1.30 for a car share to Tiptree Heath. We will have a guided walk around this 61 acre site, formed on the sandy gravel ridge left by the last Ice Age. It is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its three heather species and a rich variety of wildlife. Come along and find out more.

Dorreen Linton 01621 853428

Speakers' Corner

This is my final Speaker's Corner. After 6 years of arranging our monthly speakers, I have handed over this 'poisoned chalice' to a committee sub-group who, from March, will be responsible for hiring our monthly meeting speaker. During the 6 years that I have been booking these events on your behalf the speakers' usual fee and expenses have been steadily increasing making the job of Speaker Coordinator increasingly difficult to provide an entertaining and wide variety of topics within a limited tight budget. However, with the agreed increase in speaker budget, I am confident that the sub-committee will be able to book interesting and possibly famous personalities.

Hopefully, over the last 6 years I have been able to provide a variety of speakers talking on various topics with the aim of trying to cater for most tastes .

Obviously, not always successfully - Do you remember the gardening lady from Kent who when trying to tell a joke, seemed to laugh at her own joke before she finished telling us the punch line. But, on a high note, do you remember 'Canine Partners' with speakers Clare and Lindsey helped by the real star of the show, Annie the dog. They showed how their specially-trained dogs helped disabled people to cope at home. The highlight of the presentation was Annie's opening of the demonstration washing door and emptying the contents into a laundry basket and dragging the basket to a hypothetical washing line.

Alan Chapman 01621 816860

Ballroom Dancing

Come and enjoy a sociable afternoon and learn a few new steps. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 2:45pm – 4:15pm at West Maldon Community Centre. For further details contact *Jean Smith 01621 843054*

Refreshments & Meet & Greet rota

April	Beginner's French Group
May	Geology Group

Future speakers

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.

April speaker – 'Hidden Treasures of Korea'

Our speaker for April is Mathew Jackson who is going to give an illustrated talk on 'Hidden Treasures of Korea'. He comes from The Korean Spirit and Culture Promotion Project which is a not for profit organisation to promote Korean history and culture in the wider world. Korea has been very much in the news recently with border disputes and is a country with a marvellous artistic heritage. He will talk on the ancient wonders of Korea such as the intricate gold working done in 700 AD or the beautiful Buddhist sculptures of Sokkuram done in 800 AD and the paintings and early printing of 1300 AD. The Japanese even learned their pottery techniques from the Korean masters. Not only will he cover the old, but also bring us right up to date with their modern technology, their steel, shipping and construction industry, their Information Technology - how many of you have an Asus computer or laptop, and semiconductors - Samsung. It promises to be a very informative talk. I have studied Korea's artistic heritage and am full of admiration for its beauty so enjoy it. *Dennis Eraut*

May speaker - 'Odd Corners in the Square Mile' by Sholto Morton

'This talk is an extension to 'The Origins of the Street Names of the City of London' that Sholto presented some three years ago. We will hear about London's odd street names, its Livery Companies, Lord Mayors and Sheriffs, churches and traditions. Sholto's delightful talks are informative, amusing and a celebration of our capital city. Sholto's professional life began in his home town of Edinburgh when he joined a Scottish insurance company. For the last 35 years he was a Lloyd's Broker in London's Square Mile. During this time he was the insurance broker to the Post Office. This may account for the fact that, in his words, he is an old insurance broker living in an old Post Office!

Theatre Group

Murdered To Death at Civic Theatre, Chelmsford

More Jeeves & Wooster than Poirot & Marple, this Ian Dickens' production is an amazingly funny comedy/drama set in the lounge of a family house in 1936. Characters include Victor Spinetti as Bunting, the butler who is alleged to be '*always on the sherry*', Colonel Craddock, a war hero who isn't, and Pierre, a slick Parisian art dealer whose main enterprise seems to be peddling forgeries. The plot involves a murder (naturally) and blackmail as well as a complex web of 'previous relationships'. The investigation is led by Joan Maple and (Acting) Inspector Pratt, who also leads the laughter creation. The lovely scenery complemented the well-choreographed face and body gestures and the excellent script. With name mispronunciations and the bungling Inspector Pratt who proudly states "*a good detective can spot a villain a mile off - especially at close range*" and a catalogue of other absurdities. The audience warmed to this uproariously funny production which kept us guessing to the end. A great night out! *David & Bev Wilkin*

Upcoming events

This month I can give you the whole list chosen by members for the forthcoming months. If you are unable to sign in and pay at the monthly meeting, please phone me to book your place.

March 8th - The Rivals, Mercury Theatre, £7.70. FULL

March 15th - Private Lives, Mercury Theatre, £15.25. FULL

April 20th - The Cirque de Glace. Russian ice skating stars at Cliffs Pavilion, £22. Seven seats left, but I may be able to get more.

May 27th - Cowardly Custard, a hit Noel Coward review, Civic Theatre, £16.50.

June 22nd - Dinner Ladies. The catering staff of BBC TV's hit sitcom written by Victoria Wood, Mercury Theatre, £12.75.

July 16th - Busy Body, a comedy thriller, Mercury Theatre, £12.75.

People do drop out of visits due to illness or commitments so, if you wish to see something that is showing FULL, it is worth putting your name down on my waiting lists. *Sheila Rowsell 01621 740820*

Art Appreciation Group

Our February meeting featured a talk on Vincent Van Gogh by Alan. We will report on this in the next newsletter.

The Ipswich School of Art

A visit has been arranged to view the exhibition and for a guided tour of the School on Tuesday 22nd March. We will be leaving West Maldon Community Centre for a car share to Ipswich. Time to be given later.

Dorreen Linton 01621 853428

Theatre Group – London

Love never dies at Adelphi Theatre

It was a lovely day for a trip to London with my friends Anne and Barbara with a nice lunch then a show. I had not seen 'Phantom of the Opera' so it took me a little time to understand the plot. The music is superb and the acting excellent. Ramin Karimloo a Canadian born in Iran took the lead as the Phantom. Sierra Boggess played Christine - she sang beautifully but her diction could have been better. She is an American from Denver, Colorado. Jack O'Brien (director) is also an American so a very international production. The star of the show, however, is a local lad from Walthamstow. Daniel Dowling played Gustave Christine's son. He sang well and had a charming acting style. A very good show and another U3A great day out. *Jean Healey*

Following on from last month's meeting I am now well into selling the tickets for the next show in London – The Lion King on Wednesday 18th May (matinee). The price is £30 per person plus coach fare. If you would like to come on this trip please let me know, either by email cato662@btinternet.com or by phone 01621 740153 (answerphone connected). *Gill Cato*

Golfing Group

Our February golf meeting was at the Woodham Mortimer driving range where 11 members of our group were given lessons by Ken Little (our professional golfing instructor) in the art of using our *Driver Woods*. This should now result in us being able to hit these 'annoying little white balls' further than usual when we next visit a golf course. This will in fact be on Friday 11th March where we will be at the Three Rivers Golf Course at Cold Norton.

Finally our golfing thought for the month is:
"Golf is not a game of great shots. It's a game of the most misses. The people who win make the smallest mistakes." *Gene Littler (American professional golfer)* *Alan Chapman, Golf Group Coordinator 01621 816860*

Art Group

The Art Group now meet at the Village Hall in Mundon from 10.30 - 12.30pm. New members are welcome. Initially we will work for a couple of hours on our individual projects. *Anita Sandison 01621 741351*

History Group

In February the group were treated to two meetings. The first given by Bryan Rivers (husband of Sylvia, one of our members) giving the story behind the Maldon Bypass. This was a back-in-time view of Maldon and the changes made around the Causeway and Beeleigh area. Comments and information were given by members who had been involved in the planning.

The second talk was by Robin Carpenter of Essex County Council Historical Houses Department who is passionate about maintaining our historic houses in the county. His talk covered the Clockhouse Way, Coggeshall Silver End, Frinton Park Estate and Bata Estate. It is amazing to think that these developments were thrown together for a quick answer and yet, 90 years later, are still standing and occupied. We heard how Crittall homes had metal windows, doors, and stairs which meant they were draughty and very noisy. Members were able to join in with comments on the Bata development, having visited it in 2007.

I could say a lot more about the above talks but there is no space. I will be trying to arrange a visit to Bata – watch this space.

Forthcoming visits

Tuesday 12th April – Bury. I still have spaces on this visit.

Thursday 21st April - Olympic tour. If you think you may like to go on this please let me know and I will put your name on the reserve list.

For all other events please see February newsletter and those who have signed up please pay so as to secure your place. *Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

Reading Group

Our book for February was a murder mystery by the American author Anita Shreve. The title, 'Eden Close', was an immediate enigma – for whoever heard of a person called Eden? Eden suggests a wonderful place, bright, untainted... but Shreve's Eden is a person who knows nothing of paradise at the point the novel begins, and she is indeed 'closed in'. Shreve writes about family secrets and the novel describes several families, all unhappy in their own way. The oppressive atmosphere in the families is recreated physically in the weather... hot and wet. It sounds like the Deep South but is in fact New England. The structure of the book is not straightforward; it moves back and forward in time, the narrator varies, as do the tenses; the author gives few clues to help the reader solve the mystery. We had mixed responses to the novel; one member only managed to finish the book out of duty, others felt they would not read anything else by Shreve, and a couple of us felt that, should one of her books come our way, we might read it! We are looking forward to reading 'The Shadow of the Wind' by Carlos Ruiz Zafón for our next meeting on March 10th. *Anita Sandison*

New members are very welcome. *If you would like to join us, please contact Pat Wade on 01621 740253*

Table Tennis Group

Sessions take place on the 1st, 3rd and 5th (when applicable) Mondays at West Maldon Community Centre from 11.45 am to 1.30pm (please do not arrive before 11.40). Fee £3.00 per session. It is a very friendly group - balls and bats are provided and coaching is given. The section has been running since April 2010 and new members are always welcome.

The Burnham & District Table Tennis League has a number of both Blackwater and Maldon U3A members competing in the league. In Division 2 Maldon U3A after 14 matches have dropped to 7th place, they have 6 wins and 66 points. Maldon U3A member Norman Hayes continues with his fine form, 29 wins - 71% win ratio. Ray Cheung (Blackwater member) has won 12 matches - 57% win ratio. Ray has been absent which is one of the reasons why the team had dropped a place. Maldon D, newly promoted to Division 2 have moved up a place to 3rd from bottom. A recent 8-2 victory over Maldon C has helped ease relegation fears. After 13 matches they have won 3 matches, drawn two and scored 54 points. Rob Sach has been the pick of the U3A members, with 12 wins. In Division 3 Maldon U3A B team continue in 5th position and have played 13, won 8 and drawn 2. Tony Murray continues to be the star with 27 wins - a win ratio of 82%. In Division 3 Maldon G are still 2nd from bottom - played 15, won 1 with 29 points. Julie Doidge has now won 5 matches – a 17% win ratio. On the social side, Blackwater U3A took part in a quiz night to support the League. It was a tough competition as 19 teams took part with the Blackwater team finishing 7th. Our team was John and Dawn Mundy, George and Sheila Wallis, John and Brenda Wallace. *John Mundy 01621 854065*

Science, Technology & Medical Group

You may have heard through the grapevine that we are proposing to start a new group with the aim of discovering and learning more about Science, Technology and Medical matters. The proposal is to meet at 9.30 am at West Maldon Community Centre on the 2nd Monday of each month to attend interest lectures by Dennis Eraut on medical topics, Roger Smith on technology issues and Alan Chapman on science subjects. We are also considering visits to science, technology and medical venues during the summer months. At present, nearly 30 members have signed up to join the new group and we hope shortly to announce when and where we will hold our inaugural meeting, so watch this space. *Alan Chapman, Group Coordinator 01621 816860*

Music Appreciation

Our Music Appreciation Group has begun again I'm happy to say. From now onwards, meetings will be held in our own homes. There were seven of us at my home for the first meeting. Manni, as always, brought to the meeting something different in the persons of John Adams (American) and Kurt Attenburg (Swedish), both 20th Century composers. Attenburg's Symphony No. 6 (Ballad without Words) was awarded 1st prize in a world-wide competition sponsored by Columbia Records and was declared to be "a work of strength, beauty and nobility". Certainly I enjoyed its flowing Adagio and its final Vivace in which the instruments held lively 'conversations'.

John Adams' 'Chairman Dances' followed. This was set in China during Nixon's three-day stay in Beijing in 1972. It has been described as "Foxtrot for Orchestra". Adams said of this: "It has become my most choreographed work including versions performed by The Royal Ballet and New York City Ballet. For me it was rhythmical, jolly, lyrical and light-hearted. Then came his 'The Wound-Dresser', scored for baritone voice, reeds, winds and string instruments and inspired by Whitman's poem of the same name, he having visited wounded soldiers in the American Civil War. Some of us 'felt' Benjamin Britten in this piece: haunting, flowing and a depth of feelings and sorrow. Another Adams: 'Fearful Symmetries' - this had a definite jazz quality about it suggesting train journeys. He does in fact call it "My travelling music".

We ended with a great favourite, Albinoni's Adagio in G minor for strings and organ. During this, Manni asked us to recall either where we had heard the piece or just "where we are now". We all, on our own, in Wells Cathedral, punting on the River Cam, in the South of France, in our gardens, in the countryside, on a mountain, by a river/sea. Some of us moved around in a variety of these places as the music changed its mood. A successful first-of-the-year meeting. I so enjoyed having you all in my new home and thank you for coming. The next meeting will be on the first Thursday 3rd March at Dorreen Linton's house. Please phone her if you intend to come. *Patricia Willis.*

Mani Koenig-Roach, Coordinator 01621 854235

Swimming Group

Swimming begins again on 2nd March. *Call Anne 01621 853045*

Walking Group

The group went on a walk around Danbury, visiting the lakes, woods and Danbury Common. Due to wet weather in the few days prior to the walk, Dorreen changed the walk en route as necessary. We finished at a distance of 5.5 miles at the Cricketers where members enjoyed a sociable time over light refreshments. Please ring Dorreen to ask meeting place for our next walk. The area to be walked may change according to the weather conditions which will effect the surface underfoot. Our walks are usually between 5-6 miles and may be approximately 20 minutes drive (car shares will be available) to the venue. We meet on the 4th Thursday in the month either at Tescos or West Maldon Community Centre car park depending on the venue. Please check with the coordinator for starting venue. Besides our walks, there are Fitsteps walks which are held on the first Monday in the month at various venues in the Maldon Area. Please see noticeboard for information or contact *Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

Petanque Group

Eleven members turned up for our regular Tuesday meeting – six ladies and five gents. After a couple of games we retired for a well earned hot drink on the Prom. If you would like to join us, we meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month at 1.30 pm at the terrain in Promenade Park. *George Wallis - 01621 856667.*

Photography Group

Eight members of the Photography Group met at my house on Friday morning, 18th February when we viewed photos taken by members during the Winter. We next meet at 10.30 am on Friday 18th March at Hyde Hall. We plan to have lunch afterwards. The April meeting will be at 10am on Friday 15th at my house. All are welcome. *George Wallis - 01621 856667.*

Beginners's French Group

The Group continues to meet regularly to practice basic conversational French and we are gradually building our vocabulary and improving our accents. With regret the group members have decided that they are unable to accept new members as they meet in each other's houses and the numbers that can be accommodated are limited. Also, the programme of learning is beyond the point that new starters could be integrated. The group will offer support and advice on the way they started to anyone wishing to start 'Beginners French 2'!

Val Wilson 01621 842455

Current committee Members 2010/11

Dennis Eraut	Chair	01621 829758
Alan Chapman	Vice-Chair	01621 816860
Adrian Stockton	Treasurer	01245 225081
Dawn Mundy	Secretary	01621 854065
Jennifer Fowler	Membership Secretary	01245 222834
Val Wilson	Minutes Secretary	01621 842455
Dorreen Linton	Interest Group Coordinator	01621 853428
Barbara Brand	Social Activities	01621 853218
Sheila Rowsell	Committee Member	01621 740820
John Wallace	Co-opted Member	01245 225093
Sheila Wallis	Co-opted Member	01621 856667

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

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	Ken Johnson	01621 828490
French beginners	Val Wilson	01621 842455
Gardening	Jennifer Fowler	01245 222834
Geology	Anita Sandison	01621 741351
Golf	Alan Chapman	01621 816860
History	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
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
Maritime Group	John Wallace	01245 225093
Music Appreciation	Mani Koenig-Roach	01621 854235
Patchwork & Quilting	Molly Middleton	01621 859914
	Gil 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, Technology & Medicine	Alan Chapman	01621 816860
Scrabble	Sylvia Harden	01621 858506
Social Group	Barbara Brand	01621 853218
Spanish	Sue Watson	01621 852941
Swimming	Anne Kellard	01621 853045
Table Tennis	John Mundy	01621 854065
Theatre & concerts	Sheila Rowsell	01621 740820
Walkers	Dorreen Linton	01621 853428
Wine Group	Stella Bradbrook	01621 854235
Woodturning	Charles Middleton	01621 859914
Joint groups with Maldon U3A		
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

Birdwatching Group

The enthusiasm is growing. More U3A members wish to participate in one of the best relaxing, therapies life has to offer- the watching of birds. Who better to encourage this indulgence than the two exponents who the Group met during February. First, John Buchanan, our friend and guide who took us along the sea wall at Heybridge Basin. His love of birds, his knowledge and his enthusiasm are outstanding. He managed to turn a morning of very strong and tiresome wind into an enthralling situation, more like a theatre attendance where Nature also played a part. For, as the sky momentarily cleared and the sun shone on the gleaming mud flats, a black cloud of Brent Geese descended there, with unique and characteristic growling sound. Truly, a wonderful climax to the show. Also fascinating were seen; Redshanks, Dunlin, Curlews, Blacktailed Godwits and Green and Ringed Plovers, with other birds on the mud flats and in the eddies busily feeding. Finally the 'curtain' came very slowly down, in the form of the sea covering the wide open spaces.

Next Alex Bass, lecturing with sound and visual slides at the Henry Dixon Hall in Rivenhall End, positively revelled in his subject entitled 'A Year in the Wildlife of Bocking'. We were, for the second month running, guests of Braintree and Witham U3A. Outstanding were his pictures of the beautiful Bocking and Blackwater reserve. These showed extensive, varied and some quite rare flora and fauna. His excellent imitations of bird calls will be memorable. Finally, Alex will definitely be placed on our list of guides, particularly for our deferred trip to Lakenheath probably to take place in mid-June next year – ie 2012. We will be looking for the illusive Golden Oriel.

Future expeditions

Hanningfield Reservoir, Essex Wildlife Trust - Meet at West Maldon Community Centre car park at 8.45am on Friday 4th March. Guide David Petts with lunch at the Café on the Water overlooking our birdwatching route. As this trip is FULLY BOOKED please will any necessary cancellations be notified to me ASAP so that people on the reserve list can be substituted.

Rainham Marshes, RSPB - Signing up forms will be available on Wednesday 2nd March at the U3A AGM. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre car park at 8am sharp on Friday 1st April. Lunch at Reserve's Café. RSPB members, please bring your membership cards, otherwise an entrance fee will be charged.

Dawn Chorus - Tuesday 3rd May at 4.15am at Chigborough Lakes, hopefully followed by a cooked breakfast – more details to follow.

Later events

These were detailed in the February newsletter and are on the Blackwater U3A website.

Peter Leggett, Coordinator. Mobile phone number on the day of each event - 07881680260

Astronomy Group

The Blackwater & Maldon U3A Astronomy Groups, which usually meet at West Maldon Community Centre at 7.30pm on the 4th Monday of the month have been invited by Sir Patrick Moore (the well-known presenter of the BBC programme 'The Sky at Night') to spend a day with him at his home at Selsey near Chichester on 21st March. Hopefully, weather permitting, we will be able to use the numerous telescopes that Patrick has in his garden and, you never know, the Group might even appear on the next 'The Sky at Night' programme. *Alan Chapman, Coordinator 01621 816860*

Coach trip to London

It seems every year about springtime we have a coach trip to London. This year our proposed visit will be to South Kensington on Wednesday 30th March where the newly-formed Science, Technology and Medical Group can visit the Science Museum, the Art Appreciation Group can visit the Victoria & Albert Museum, Bird watchers, the Natural History Museum and the Garden Group & Walking Groups can even take a leisurely stroll in nearby Hyde Park. All of this is possible for the cost of a return ticket on our hired coach at £12 per person. Our coach will be leaving West Maldon Community Centre car park at 8.00am on 30th March and returning to Maldon about 6.00pm. If you wish to come on the trip, please send a cheque for £12 (made payable to Blackwater U3A No 2 account) to Alan Chapman at 2 Spring Road, Tiptree CO5 0BD.

Alan Chapman (Coach trip coordinator, 01621 816860)

Family History Group

All meetings are held on the third Thursday in the month at 1.30 pm in the Linton Room at West Maldon Community Centre. Beginners and new members welcome. *Coordinator Ken Johnson 01621 828490*

13:30 - 14:00 Memories 14:15 - 14:30 Website of the month
14:30 - 15:00 Main topic 15:00 - 15:20 Tea & biscuits
15:20 - 16:00 Questions & answer session or main topic continuation.

MONTH	MEMORIES SUBJECT	MAIN TOPIC	SPEAKER
March	Memories extracts	Monumental inscriptions	Angela

For full 2011 programme, see Family History page on the website. With all question and answer sessions it would be very helpful if you can let me know your questions in advance. This then gives an opportunity to find the right person to answer and or do the necessary research to get a meaningful answer rather than just give a best guess at the meeting *Roger Smith*