

## October programme

| Monday                            | Tuesday                                     | Wednesday                                   | Thursday  | Friday   | Saturday | Sunday |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|--|----------|--------|
| 3<br>Table Tennis<br>Garden visit | 4<br>Petanque<br>CommGarden                 | 5<br>Monthly meeting                        | 6<br>Music<br>Appreciation<br>Rural Essex<br>Birdwatching | 7  | 8        | 9      |
| 10<br>Theatre visit               | 11<br>History visit<br>CommGarden           | 12<br>Art<br>Luncheon Club 3<br>Patchwork   | 13<br>Reading<br>Ballroom                                 | 14<br>Golf<br>Singing for<br>Pleasure            | 15       | 16     |
| 17<br>Table Tennis<br>Scrabble    | 18<br>Petanque<br>CommGarden<br>Woodturning | 19<br>Art<br>Luncheon Club 1<br>Woodturning | 20<br>Family<br>History                                   | 21<br>Photography<br>Social event                | 22       | 23     |
| 24<br>Science/Tech<br>Astronomy   | 25<br>CommGarden                            | 26<br>Art                                   | 27<br>Walking<br>Craft<br>Ballroom                        | 28<br>Luncheon Club 2<br>Singing for<br>Pleasure | 29       | 30     |
| 31<br>Table Tennis                |   |   |   |  |          |        |

# Blackwater U3A newsletter October 2011



**U3A**

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

Reg. Charity No. 1113334

## From the Chair

### A new U3A

I am pleased to say we had a very successful launch meeting for the new U3A on 16<sup>th</sup> September. The hall was packed, we had several representatives from Maldon, Blackwater and Heybridge U3As, including all the chairmen. About 70 people came who were interested in hearing about the new U3A. I was concerned we would not get a big enough number, but we need not have worried. Due to the publicity in town, we had many who had heard about the U3A from posters or friends.

I gave a 10 minute talk on the U3A and what it was, then Peter Thorpe, Chairman of Heybridge, gave a talk on interest groups. Later, there was a vote to form a new U3A which virtually all agreed and so a new U3A was born! What was even more encouraging, we were able to persuade nine volunteers to make up the Steering Group to start the work.

We were able to form all the essential posts such as Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary. On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September, some of our committee and the new group met with Zazia Pratt from The Third Age Trust and Margaret May, the Essex U3A representative, to start all the paper work. After some debate, the name of the new U3A was agreed, and it is to be called Limebrook U3A. The new Chairman is Paul Madge and the new Membership Secretary is Beverly Hunt.

The next meeting of the new U3A will be on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October at 2.00 at West Maldon Community Centre and new members will be welcome to join. That leaves us with just a small problem; not all the waiting list members for Blackwater or Maldon have elected to join the new U3A. That we will discuss in our Committee.

*Dennis Eraut*

### November newsletter deadline

Deadline for the October newsletter is Friday 21st October. 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  
 Limebrook—Paul Madge 01621 855883

## News update

### 2011 Brain of Essex U3A Quiz

Blackwater took part in the 2011 Brain of Essex Quiz and came a very creditable third out of thirteen contesting U3A teams. My thanks go to all team members for their efforts. My special thanks go to the members of our Craft Group who gave up their craft meeting and joined us at Chelmsford where they provided refreshments for everyone taking part. The downside of winning in 2010.

*George Wallis*

### Quiz in Maldon

Those of you who love quizzes, go for this one. The Maldon U3A Social Group is arranging a quiz at Maldon Town Hall on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00 pm. There will be tables of 6, cost £3 and bring your own drinks and nibbles. Please contact Janet Buck 01245 227709 if you would like a table.

### Charity Soup lunches

First Tuesday of the month this year at Maldon Little Ship Club. 12 – 2, minimum contribution £3.00.

4<sup>th</sup> October - Maldon Pioneers

1<sup>st</sup> November - Sea Change

6<sup>th</sup> December - RNLI

Details from Diana Rogers 01621 853841 [diana.rogers2@btinternet.com](mailto:diana.rogers2@btinternet.com)

### Maldon Choral Society concert

Brahms Requiem, conducted by Dr Gillian Ward Russell on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30 pm at the United Reformed Church, Market Hill, Maldon. Tickets £10 in advance from Tourist Information Office, Wenlock Way, Maldon, 01621 856503. Reserve by telephone 01621 853220 or £12 on the door.

### Plume School

In a few weeks the volunteer support readers will return to Lower Plume School, Mill Road to provide students with the opportunity to read aloud on a one-to-one basis or within a small group. The reading sessions take place in the school library during registration time, 8.30 – 8.50 am. If you would like to join the existing group of Blackwater and Heybridge U3A members, please contact Dawn Mundy 01621 854065 or [dawnrosemary@fsmail.net](mailto:dawnrosemary@fsmail.net)

## Third Age Trust

### Shared Learning Projects – Applications close on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011

**British Library - 'The restoration of green London.'** On 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012, we begin to look into the restoration and creation of green spaces and the effects on wildlife and people. The team of U3A members will share their learning and discoveries with each other. For an application form email

[Kay.denny@btopenworld.com](mailto:Kay.denny@btopenworld.com)

### **King's College London - 'Nurses Stories: women who chose to become nurses.'**

The first part of this project resulted in the compilation of biographies of 900+ nurses with details recorded on a database. On 6<sup>th</sup> January 2012, a team will work to produce a short publication and make additional database entries. Good computer skills are essential. For an application form contact

[johnjeanmorgan@greenbee.net](mailto:johnjeanmorgan@greenbee.net) **British Postal Museum & Archive.** The project will begin on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and involves research and work across two areas: Sports and Participation in the Post Office/Royal Mail and Bringsty Common Oral History Material. Good computer skills a necessary. For an application form email [alanclayden@ymail.com](mailto:alanclayden@ymail.com)

Correspondence providing information on these projects will be displayed at the October meeting. Alternatively contact Dawn Mundy 01621 854065 or [dawnrosemary@fsmail.net](mailto:dawnrosemary@fsmail.net)

## Second Luncheon Club

The August lunch was organised by John and Fay Hill and held at Forresters Golf and Country Club. The lunch was enjoyed by twenty-three members. The occasion marked the end of the couple's time with Blackwater U3A as they were moving to Faversham in Kent the next day. A farewell card and small gift were presented to them. *Kathy Leggett, Coordinator.*

## Luncheon Group 3

On a sparkling September day the Group lunched at The Ship Inn at Burnham-on-Crouch, having travelled by bus and car. An excellent meal for everyone. The next lunch will be on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October. If you would like to join us, please telephone me. You will be most welcome. *Pam Mills 01621 874883*

## Scrabble Group

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

## 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.

**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.

**November**—Tom Corby, "Behind the scenes at Buckingham Palace," a light-hearted, anecdotal account of Tom's life as the Press Association Court Correspondent, the only writing journalist accredited to the royal household. It will include his daily routine behind the gilded railings and his travels around the world with the royal family. Tom is a member of Chelmsford U3A.

**December**—Blackwater U3A celebrate Christmas! Our very own John Hayes will be there to entertain us. Tickets for the Christmas Lunch will be on sale at the November monthly meeting.

## Historical Buildings in Maldon

The groups discussed the latest information they had discovered about our High Street and various ways the material could be kept, and how more information could be found. Future dates of meetings and buildings of interest at this end of the High Street where little information is known were discussed. The group then heard about the William John Cooks Charity from Michael Ennals who is one of the Trustees of the Charity. When William Cook died he gave all his real Estate and the residue of his personal Estate, upon trust to sell and convert the same, and he directed that the proceeds arising therefrom should be invested, and that the Trustees shall apply the income of the Charity in relieving either generally or individually, persons who are not less than 60 years of age being in conditions of need, hardship or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities calculated to reduce the need, hardship or distress of such persons. He was able to give us a brief history from the minute book and records of the last forty years quoting the various changes in rent which formed the income for the Trust from Nos 23 and 25 High Street and the number of recipients and the amounts they received from the Trust. We heard who the various shopkeepers were and their trades and the conversions in 1973. The three years it took to persuade the Charity Commission to vary the terms of the Will. We will not be meeting in October but on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November we will be visiting the Moot Hall. Please ring Dorreen for more information.—01621 853428.

## Poppy Appeal 2011

This year marks the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries of the Royal British Legion and The Poppy Appeal. On 10<sup>th</sup> October at 2.30 pm at Maldon Town Hall, there will be a presentation ceremony for the 35 Poppy Collectors for Maldon and Heybridge who have served the Poppy Appeal, all as volunteers, for five years or more. The presentation of the appropriate certificates and badges will be made by the High Sheriff of Essex, Lady Ruggles-Brise, DL. Those collectors between them have given more than 680 years of service to the Appeal. The longest serving (and she will be doing so again this year) has been a collector for an amazing 68 years!

However, we shall need many more than these 35 dedicated collectors and the others who volunteered with them last year. For example, Morrisons, Tesco and Wickes have generously offered sufficient time so that we shall need collectors to cover 350 hours at their doors. In addition, we are looking for volunteers to collect in Maldon High Street and for door-to-door collections. In addition to Maldon and Heybridge our area also covers Langford, Latchingdon, Purleigh and the Woodhams Mortimer and Walter.

Sadly, the work of the Legion and the funds raised by the Poppy Appeal are as urgently needed now as they have been in previous years. The personal and family tragedies of our service men and women and their families are, as we know all too well, still happening. Please volunteer if only for a couple of hours, between 29<sup>th</sup> October and Remembrance Sunday on 13<sup>th</sup> November. Is it too much to ask in return for what others have sacrificed for us? Please call or e-mail Sholto Morton on 01245 222353 or [sholto.morton@talktalk.net](mailto:sholto.morton@talktalk.net)

## Music Appreciation Group

Our next meeting will be on Thursday October 6<sup>th</sup>, when the letter will be C. Please ring Manni to find out the venue on 01621 854235. *Pat Willis*

## Refreshments & Meet & Greet rota

|          |                        |
|----------|------------------------|
| November | Woodtunring/Art Groups |
|----------|------------------------|

## Buckingham Palace and Garden Visit

The visit started with the State Rooms which were all beautifully decorated with gold leaf everywhere and lit by huge glittering chandeliers. The picture gallery had many large paintings of royalty and notable dignitaries, painted by eminent artists and some framed by Faberge.

This gallery led on to a blackened room with many brightly lit glass cabinets full of the Queen's collection of Faberge objets d'art made from diamonds, emeralds, rubies, enamels precious metals and carved stone. Small blue enamelled cornflowers with diamond centres, gold spikey seedheads so tiny but exquisite lily of the valley, mini carved animals, picture frames in gold filigree, boxes, miniatures and a tiny Chelsea Pensioner all shone and sparkled in the bright lights. Diamond encrusted eggs of all sizes with gemstone decorations were given each Easter morning between members of the Russian royal family.

Continuing on to the large room with a huge television showing the creation of Kate's wedding dress and the decoration of her shoes. In the centre was the dress itself, so very simple and elegant. The next room had the cream coloured wedding cake, some tiers removed for keeping but replaced with mock ups to show the complete design which included hundreds of different tiny roses, lily of the valley and other symbolic flowers with lattice work around the tiers, all made from icing sugar. A fitting tribute to the skill of the confectioners.

Onward through more beautiful rooms, past elegant statues, to the terrace and the garden tour. Capability Brown designed the natural 35 acre garden of beautiful lawns and lakes. Many ancient trees provided welcome shade. Some had been planted by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Many mulberry trees of different varieties were planted by previous kings.

The present Queen takes a great interest in her garden and has had many beds of various roses planted to give colour and perfume throughout the summer. It was very pleasant walking round the garden, although a few more beds would have made it more interesting. Our tickets were stamped at the exit allowing us to return for another Palace only visit and part garden. Unfortunately they had to be signed as they cannot be passed to anyone else. What a shame!

*Wendy Diss*

## Social Group

### Visit to Great Bardfield Vineyards

The group was met by Alan Jordan and chatted over coffee. Alan told us about the vineyard. The soil and climate at Great Bardfield Lodge are similar to the Alsace region of France, so Alan planted varieties of Bacchus and Reichesteiner grapes. The fruit is picked at the end of September, although, looking at the size of the grapes when we visited, they are very small due to this year's dry weather.

The fruit is then taken to the Purleigh winery for 6 months to be processed, then returned to be bottled and labelled. An average of 6,000 bottles is produced and half the wine is held back for sale to local venues. Pruning takes place during December or January and usually takes one man a month to complete. Alan's daughter is being trained up to take over from him. The group enjoyed the wine tasting session trying four varieties before a ploughman's lunch. Alan explained that wine is produced in the first year and the next year, after the turning of the bottles, the sparkling variety is produced.

The group then wandered around the large garden where Alan told us more about the history of the buildings. The Grade II listed lodge was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was once owned by Anne of Cleves. A hectare of the 1,000 acre estate is a vineyard surrounded by farmed fields and ancient woodland where fallow deer roam. The barn was built by Flemish carpenters and is the largest span barn in the country as well as on the continent, this is evident because of the split king posts. I think the disappointment for some was the fact that tours of the house were not available. Alan's daughter and family are moving into the house and, with boxes and containers, it is not possible. We understood that we are the last group to visit under the present arrangements. *Dorreen Linton*

### Forthcoming events

#### *Fish & chip evening*

Friday 21st October, West Maldon Community Centre 7..30.

#### *English Country Dancing*

Friday 18th November, West Maldon Community Centre 7..30..

*Barbara Brand 01621 853218.*

## History Group events

*Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October* - Glemham Palace. The visit is full.

*Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November* – The Architecture of Maldon High Street Buildings by Tim Howson, Assistant Conservation Officer, Maldon District Council. West Maldon Community Centre 2 pm. £3

*Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December* - Talk by Stephen Nunn. West Maldon Community Centre 2 pm. £3

*Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January* –History of the British Museum. West Maldon Community Centre 2 pm. £3

*Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February* – History of Bourne Mill, Colchester. West Maldon Community Centre 2 pm. £3

*Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March* – Dickens and London Exhibition at the Museum of London. Travel by train. I have 20 tickets for this event at £5 each + train fare.

*Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April* – Legal London. Please reserve your seat on the coach by paying £10 to Barbara Brand, Social Group.

*Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> September* – Bawdsey Manor. Having put out a list last month it seems as if the 5 hour tour is popular so I will be booking a visit. I will need to collect money to secure our place.

Please see the September newsletter for other dates for your diaries.

### National Trust history talks

The Cramphorn Theatre, Chelmsford is organising National Trust Talks in the evening.

*Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October* – Rites of passage (clothes for birth, marriage) I will put out signing up sheets so members can car share.

*Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

## Family History Group

The September meeting was attended by thirteen members. Initially, we discussed the planning of topics and content of future programmes. The majority of members use Family Tree Maker and subscribe to Ancestry and we started looking at a few of the features that come with this software programme. Our next meeting will be held on 20<sup>th</sup> October and the programme will be:

1.30 – 2.00 pm – Memories, subject 'Collections'

2.00 – 2.30 pm - Website/s of the month

2.30 – 4.00 pm - Exploring Family Tree Maker, a practical demonstration of creating a family tree with an opportunity to delve further into the attributes of this software.

There will be an interval to allow for refreshments. New members are always welcome. *Geoff Pugh 01621 843297*

## History Group

### Visit to Eltham Palace

Little remains of the original palace (1295) the moated enclosure, moat bridge, and the great hall acquired by Edward IV in 1305. However, the house tour gave members a flavour of the luxury in which Stephen and Virginia Courtauld were able to live. In 1933, the Courtaulds were looking for a property near to London to house their art collection, establish a garden and entertain guests.

The guide led us from one room to another where we could see the elaborate fixtures and fittings in the 10 rooms visited. The house has modern technological devices, including underfloor heating, electric clocks, built-in central speaker system and a centralised vacuum cleaner with built-in pipes and sockets in the skirting of each room. Some of the rooms had wonderful views over London. Their pet lemur, Mah-Jong, lived in a large centrally-heated cage with tropical scenes painted on the wall and a bamboo pole gave access to the ground floor where he would feed.

The Courtaulds were keen horticulturists - Stephen had a passion for orchids which he raised in the glasshouse and Ginnie for roses. The moat was re-excavated and the gardens set out in various forms of formality. Lawns, mixed borders, a sunken rose garden and a woodland garden were included in the design. The palace's 19 acres of gardens are a mix of 1930s garden design as well as medieval elements, including a fifteenth-century stone bridge and an oak bridge over the dry moat. The 1930s planting is a mixture of informality in the Japanese rockery, formality in the rose garden, and a series of enclosed rooms make up the rest of the gardens.

The Courtaulds moved into the house in 1936, but gave up the lease in 1944 and moved to Scotland, and then to Africa in 1951. After the Second World War, Eltham Palace was used by the Army Education Corps and, in 1992, English Heritage took responsibility for the site. A programme of repair and restoration has been carried out together with the purchase of some of the original furniture.

*Dorreen Linton*

## Table Tennis Group

Sessions take place on the 1st, 3rd and 5th ( when applicable ) Monday at West Maldon Community Centre. Four tables are available for play. Time 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 provided. Coaching is given and new members are welcomed. The group has been running since April 2010 and numbers playing have grown with the turnout often over twelve people.

### Burnham Table Tennis League

The winter season is now underway. In Division 3, Maldon U3A A team started with a 5-5 draw at home to Woodham F and then lost 7-3 to Woodham E. Team members played so far: Bill Puxley, Tony Rees-Ford and Richard Skidmore. Maldon G have started very well winning 10-0 against St. Lawrence B who could only field 2 players. Playing for the team was John Mundy who won two singles plus helping to win the doubles. The winning formula continued with a 7-3 win against Woodham F with a much changed side consisting of three Maldon U3A members - Ross Wheeler 3 wins, Rob Sach 2 wins and Bill Stichbury 1 win. Maldon H has 3 U3A members from 3 different U3A groups. The team has played three matches and lost all three matches - 3-27 in games. The U3A members are Dorothy Malone, Woodham, Keith Lawson, Blackwater and Bill Stichbury, Maldon. Both Dorothy and Keith are playing in the league for the first time. John Mundy recently played for Rayne in the Braintree third division against Black Notley. It was a tough debut with all John's three matches going the full distance of five sets, winning only one match and losing two, especially disappointing to lose the last match 14-12 in the fifth. *John Mundy 01621 854065*

## London Theatre Group

Planning for the next trip to London on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2011 is well in hand, when we go to the Royal Albert Hall to see the Classical Spectacular. I am now collecting money for the coach - £9 per person. Please make cheques payable to Blackwater U3A. As I am away for the October monthly meeting, I wonder if you would all be so kind as to post your cheques to me - Gill Cato, "Melandra", Summerhill, Althorne, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6BY. This would be a great help. You can get in touch with me using my email: [cato662@btinternet.com](mailto:cato662@btinternet.com) or phone 01621 740153 (answerphone attached), and I will answer all enquiries a.s.a.p.

## Birdwatching

For wondrous views, Scotland has its mountains and, in England, there are hills and dales, but Essex has a unique beauty of its own. Here, the immense space where the treeless land and sky come together is epitomised at Wallasea Island where we were on 9<sup>th</sup> September. To the southeast, we could just make out the low hills of north Kent. To the right, were the distant tall blocks of buildings in Southend and easterly was Foulness Island and the North Sea.

Yet for any unused to wild and lonely country, reassuringly north across the Crouch was Burnham. It was through the senses that Wallasea was so stimulating. The call of the flocks of Redshanks and Ringed Plovers, the whisper of the receding tide, the smell of the sea and the sight of the teeming hungry birds flying in and foraging on the gradually-exposing mud flats were magical.

In 2006, mud flats and salt marshes were created by moving the existing north seawall and allowing the tide to flood in, to create Allfleet's Marsh. This was done by Defra to replace habitat that was lost to port developments in South-east England. The RSPB manage Allfleet's Marsh. The next phase of work will start soon. Earth imported from Crossrail, the new rail route under London will raise the level of the land to create mud flats, salt marsh and saline lagoons. New paths totalling fifteen kilometres will eventually allow much more access to the coast.

The project, the largest of its type in Europe, will also help reduce the risk of flooding and is being financially supported by the Environmental Agency for its contribution to the replacement of intertidal habitats. Jeff and Gwyneth Delve, our RSPB guides, had an infectious enthusiasm for wildlife, which was matched by their expertise. Together we identified over thirty-five bird species. Our enjoyment was further enhanced by mild dry weather with a light wind and finally, even more, by our lunch at the Creeksea Ferry Inn.

**Goodbye.** On 26<sup>th</sup> August, we bade a sad farewell to one of our longest-standing Birdwatchers. He joined my very first expedition at the end of 2005 and has been loyal, since then. I am, of course, referring to John Hill. We wish him and Fay a new good life in Faversham, Kent.

**Gift.** Members, Ron and Gill West, have made a surprisingly generous donation to our U3A. This is in the form of a telescope and tripod. Many thanks to you both and long may continued use of this equipment be shared with you on our birdwatching expeditions.

*Peter Leggett, Coordinator, 01621 852377*

## Local Theatre Group

**'The 39 Steps'** - A small group went to the Cramphorm Theatre, a rather intimate space, to see 'The 39 Steps,' a story by John Buchan. This production owed more to the film version of the story directed by Alfred Hitchcock and was staged by an amateur company, Early Doors Productions. Although based on Buchan's adventure story involving spies, secret organisations, feminine interest and a nationwide manhunt, this adaptation had a cast of four playing a multitude of characters - sometimes extremely effectively and humourously, but not always.

Richard Hannay, played by Lionel Bishop, gets involved with a female spy who is immediately murdered and it appears a secret organisation, namely The 39 Steps, is involved. Obviously Richard Hannay becomes a wanted man and so begins the nationwide manhunt. This gives the opportunity for a certain amount of melodrama and a series of improbable situations. The scenery was minimal and, on the whole, used ingeniously and to good effect. However, if you had attended this performance expecting a thriller, you would have been disappointed as it was more of a farce, albeit a well-acted one. The four members of the cast worked extremely hard, especially Justin Cartledge and Martin Harris who swapped hats and characters with bewildering ease! That said, the audience appeared to enjoy themselves and appreciated the hard work of the small cast.

*Sue Watson*

### Forthcoming events

**Monday October 10<sup>th</sup>** - Death by Fatal Murder at the Civic Theatre. £17. (Full)

**Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup>** - A Christmas Soirée at Hylands House by the Cameo Players. £14. This is proving very popular with fifteen seats already reserved and taken. A further fifteen seats have therefore been reserved and there are some places still available. However, as payment has to be immediate, please could cheques be written and given to me at the October meeting.

Sheila has been having a wonderful time away and we greatly look forward to her return and demonstrations of throwing a spear, a boomerang and playing the didgeridoo - which should take care of a few monthly meetings (with appropriate First Aiders in attendance).  
*Jenny Wall. 01621 860549*

## Art Appreciation Group

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November** – Meeting at West Maldon Community Centre at 2 pm. £3

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January** – Alan Chapman will be giving a talk on a well-known artist. West Maldon Community Centre 2 pm. £3

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February** – Talk on the Braintree Textile Archives. West Maldon Community Centre 2pm. £3

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March** –Afternoon visit to the Beecroft Gallery, Westcliff, with a possible morning visit to another venue.

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May** – Sholto's London Walk, travel by train. There will be a maximum of 12 for this event.

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June** – All day visit to the Red House, Bexleyheath which was the home of William Morris, founder of the Arts and Crafts Movement. A coach has been booked, please make cheques payable to Blackwater U3A for £14. Details of admission charge later.

## Rural Essex Group

**Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> October** - Guided tour of Chafford Gorge with Mike Sandison. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre at 1.00 pm for afternoon visit.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November** – Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project. Our local Essex Wildlife Trust has arranged a talk by Chris Tyas at The Friends Meeting Place, Butt Lane, Maldon at 8 pm. £1.50 donation.

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January** – Time Teaming Tollesbury – A talk on the archaeology of Tollesbury. Ed Heigham has kindly agreed to give a talk and will be bringing along flints and artifacts found on site. West Maldon Community Centre 2 pm. £3

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March** - Talk on the history, wildlife and management of Epping Forest. West Maldon Community Centre 2 pm. £3

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May** – Guided visit to Priory Fields, Bicknacre. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre 1.30 pm for car share. £3 + car share.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> June** – Guided visit to Galleywood Common. Meet at West Maldon Community Centre 1.30 pm for car share. £3 + car share.

*Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

## Walking Group

We travelled to Coggeshall for the start of our September ramble. There was a slight hitch when we arrived in Coggeshall, we found it was market day and the public car park was full. Alan came to our rescue and told us of a side road where we could park, many thanks Alan. We set off in the sunshine to walk footpaths on the Marks Hall Estate. Arriving at the visitor centre, we went into their excellent café for refreshments. The countryside around Coggeshall is gently undulating and looked lovely in the autumn sunshine. A walk of 5½ miles on good footpaths and with good company. *Sheila Harris*

The next walk on 27th October will be led by Brenda Broom and will be starting and finishing at West Maldon Community Centre at 9.30 am and will be a circular route around the Beeleigh area and along the sea wall to Northey Island and back to the Centre. Distance approximately 5 – 6 miles. New members are always welcome. The walks are between 5-6 miles and most of the group usually have a snack lunch at a local establishment, although car shares mean that there is the choice. Please come along with ideas for future walks for the coming months.

*Dorreen Linton 01621 853428*

## Maritime Group

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> November – Canals**

Short illustrated talks by three of our members on some of the world's major canals. George Wallis will cover the Panama Canal, Dennis Eraut the Caledonian Canal and John Wallace the Suez and Kiel Canals. 2.00pm at West Maldon Community Centre.

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December - History of Seaplanes on the Solent**

Roger Smith will give us the second part of his illustrated talk. 2.00pm at West Maldon Community Centre.

John Wallace 01245 225093

## Petanque Group

On Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September, the Petanque Group had a match with Heybridge U3A. The result was Blackwater 4 Heybridge 1, 60 points to 36. Thank you to all the team for playing so well. We will be having our practice sessions on the first and third Tuesday of the month, weather permitting, throughout the winter. All are welcome.

*George Wallis 01621 856667*

## Garden News

Most of us have finished harvesting fruit and vegetables from the garden, or maybe the allotment, and now it is time to start planning next year's planting. I have received three different catalogues from Thompson and Morgan, Seeds, The Kitchen Gardeners and The Fruit, all 2012. Again they are offering 50 percent off all seed orders. Fifteen percent applies to seed potatoes, bulbs, onion sets, fruit, plants and garden equipment. Our bulk order has to total £100. If we do want to order using the individual packing service (which would be easier for me) this will cost each person an extra £1.95. If you are interested in trying to make up a bulk order or seeing the catalogues please contact me.

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November** - Quiz and planning afternoon with tea. 2pm at The Linton Room at West Maldon Community Centre. Cost £3. Please come and enjoy a lighthearted afternoon and bring ideas for next year. Wendy and I would like some feedback of this year's programme too. We can take criticism! We look forward to seeing you.

*Jennifer Fowler 01245 222834.*

## Reading Group

The first part of this month's book, 'The Junior Officer's Reading Club,' was about Patrick Hennessy's experience at Sandhurst. Some of his training was hard: he quotes the nuclear, biological and chemical warfare training as a nightmare. He also highlights some of the pettiness which he encountered, but he enjoyed the camaraderie. So eager were the men to put into practice their training that they became euphoric when they were going to war. Once the action started, the book became more interesting. The author was a caring officer, aware of his great responsibility for his men, which he describes as being like that of a primary school teacher, and it was clear that he empathised with them. We found the book interesting rather than enjoyable, but enlightening to those who had no awareness of military life. Our next book is 'The Legacy' by Katherine Webb which we will discuss on the 13th October. If you enjoy reading and would like to join us please let us know. *Pat Wade (01621 740253)*

## Photography Group

At our September meeting, we viewed our photographs of wrecks and were pleased with the results. Our topic for October will be Structures, in the widest sense. For November, I am proposing autumn/winter colour.

*George Wallis 01621 856667*

## Science, Technology, Energy & Medical Group

The STEAM Group usually meets on the second Monday of the month at 9.30 am, with alternative site visits of science/technology interest, followed by a talk the next month at West Maldon Community Centre usually on a science, technology or medical subject. Our next talk will be on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November in the Linton room, starting at 9.30am when Dr Tosck will be giving the group a talk called 'Radiation therapy, the inside story.'

Our next site visit will be on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October (Note was originally to be 10<sup>th</sup> October). We will meet at 9.30 am at West Maldon Community Centre car park for car share to The Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey.

Our meeting dates for talks next year will be Mondays 9<sup>th</sup> January, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 14<sup>th</sup> May, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 10<sup>th</sup> September and 12<sup>th</sup> November. Dates and venues for site visits will be published in the December newsletter.

*Alan Chapman, Coordinator 01621 816860*

## Golfing Group

Our September golfing session was a return to the Rivenhall Golf Course near Witham, having played their Acorn Course early in the year. On this visit, we tackled the Oaks Course which, unlike the Acorn Par 3 course, had very long sections, most in excess of 400 yards. Here, Ken's tuition on using our woods can be very useful. On the subject of Ken (our professional golfing instructor), we are scheduled to meet Ken at our next meeting when we return to our winter home at Woodham Mortimer Golf Driving Range on Friday October 14<sup>th</sup> commencing at 11.00 am. Ken will be taking us for putting practice.

Our golfing thought for the month is " Golf is good for your soul. You get so mad at yourself, you forget to hate your enemies." *Will Rogers, USA Golfer 1934*

*Alan Chapman, Coordinator 01621 816860*

## Art Group

We have returned to Mundon Victory Hall, 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.