



NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2024

MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN – JEANETTE ROTHWELL

The Annual General Meeting of Leigh-on-Sea u3a took place on 11th April 2024, with 83 members attending. I began the meeting by extolling the virtues of joining a u3a and even becoming a committee member. I thanked all our wonderful members who had worked so hard throughout the year, especially Committee Members, Group Leaders, the Beacon Administrator, Website Manager, those helping with refreshments, and Sally Hayes who has compiled and edited the Newsletter since 2013, and those who have stepped up with other help at various times.

This was followed by the reading of the Finance Officer's report.

However, when we reached the item on the Agenda that called for the election of officers and committee members, there was simply no response whatsoever! It was remarked that the officers could have come from the present committee but, without the addition of any more committee members, the remaining 5 Trustees could not cover the running of our u3a without further assistance.

No further action could be taken at the Annual General Meeting which meant we had to move on to the Special General Meeting at which the assembled members accepted that this u3a could only exist until 30th April 2024 (which is the end of the membership year), after which all its activities would cease.

Yes, it was all very disappointing but inevitable if nobody was prepared to assist with the running of our lovely U3A and the existing committee would now carry out the dissolution as stated in the Constitution.

My grateful thanks to everyone involved over the year of my chairmanship. Your support has been invaluable!



Our last Committee:
Christine Davies, Jo Gluck, Sheena Walker, Jeanette Rothwell,
Christine French, Viv Ormsby.

OBITUARY

We regret to announce that one of our long-standing members – Sheila Weir – recently passed away. She was a member of a number of Groups, including Art Appreciation and Lunch 2. She will be sorely missed, and we offer our condolences to her family.

BEACON

A reminder that Mary Watson is our Beacon Administrator, and Group Leaders – or any member – may contact her for help and information until 30th April.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

All Reports written by the Group Leaders unless otherwise stated.

LUNCH GROUP 1 (Jo Gluck)

3rd April – We had a most enjoyable meal at Cubanos although it was somewhat tinged with sadness due mainly to the sad news that Sheila Weir had passed away the previous day, and that it might be our last meal together if the u3a folds.



SCRABBLE (Duncan Horner)



I compile this report having sadly returned from the A.G.M. and to the demise of our branch. On a personal note, I joined just before the world went mad with Covid. Jan was in the Chair, followed by Sally and lastly Jeanette. All 3 have done an excellent job with the backing of their respective committees, thank you ladies.

It is strange, possibly being the newest formed group to suddenly be writing the final report. In March we welcomed a new member to the group and had 6 present and being sufficient for 2 tables of 3. I made my first mistake and set up in 2 rooms, it appeared I was in the minority and next time we have sufficient for 2 tables I will ensure we are in one room. Both tables enjoyed a pleasant afternoon, with the usual

tea/coffee and biscuits.

We met early in April as I am on holiday for the 3rd Tuesday, how fortunate to be able to complete that final group. There were only 4 players, I got it right this time and we used 1 board so all in the same room. A good afternoon was had and we completed 4 games in total, with the obligatory tea/coffee and biscuits. Although brief, having only set up in January, it has been a pleasure to share a few afternoons with like-minded Scrabblers.

LUNCH GROUP 2 (Barbara Slade/Sheena Walker)

27th March – We returned to Brakan, a Turkish restaurant along the London Road in Leigh. Fourteen of us sat together taking over the whole restaurant. Our starters came and we sat waiting for the pitta bread basket which never came. When we asked for the bread to accompany the starters, we were told that it would be served with the main meal which we thought was odd. After a long pause the pitta bread came and we enjoyed a delicious meal. The complimentary Baileys and whiskey were very much enjoyed before heading home. *(Report by Barbara Slade)*

24th April – We shall be lunching at GustoSi in Leigh Road – a lovely Italian restaurant.

LOCAL HISTORY (Sally Hayes)

15th March – We were pleased to welcome Simon Deacon, a local surveyor, born, bred, grew up and schooled in Southend, who has completed a lot of research into various topics of local interest. He gave a most interesting, illustrated talk about Chalkwell and Westcliff, including the building of the Chalkwell Estate, with wonderful views down to the Estuary, the Crowstone (pictured in Priory Park) and the beginning of the railway. He has a number of topics under his belt, and we hope to welcome him back later in the year.

19th April – A local history walk, organised by Sheena and Maureen. We had a lovely walk through old Leigh, stopping to hear all about the many historical buildings we passed and associated stories. The weather only let us down when we got to the Leigh Heritage Centre so we popped in there to look around until the rain stopped.

After tea and cake at the Hatch we continued with a walk along the cinder path, over Gypsy bridge and along to Church Hill. We walked in St Clement's church gardens and along past the library to Billet Lane. Fisherman's Chapel was our final place of interest before returning to where we started at Osborne's in the sunshine!



(Report by Sheena Walker) (Photos from Sue Haykir)

NB from Sally – My grateful thanks to Sheena and Maureen for organising this walk, in which I was unfortunately unable to take part.

17th May – May meeting cancelled as the Group Leader and our “catering executives” will be on holiday! We shall continue on a private basis with over 20 of the group wishing to carry on. Thanks everyone!!

CHURCH VISITING (Susan Bond)

29th February – A dozen members of our Group spent some time at St Lawrence's Church, Eastwood. The Deputy Church Warden, Mr Martin Newman, gave a talk on the history of St Lawrence and pointed out some of the interesting features of the building.

St Lawrence is protected as a Grade 1 listed building. Like many similar churches across Essex the walls are of ragstone rubble with some pudding stone flints. At one time all the exterior walls of the church were covered with a cement rendering but this was removed in the early 1970s. The Chapel of Eastwood

is first mentioned in 1100 A.D. when it was granted to Prittlewell Priory by Robert of Essex. The present Nave dates from the 12th century and is thought to be the original Norman church which probably replaced an earlier wooden Saxon building.

In the 13th century the south wall of the Nave was pierced by three Early English bays which enabled a South



Aisle to be built, although parts of the original Norman window surrounds are still clearly visible in this south wall. Around the same time the Chancel was added (probably in place of a demolished semi-circular apse which would have stood at the east end of the original church). At some time in the 13th century the lower part of the tower was constructed at the west end of the church. The wooden roof of the Chancel is 14th century whereas that of the Nave is actually 15th century. A squint has been cut through the angle of the Chancel wall to give a view of the High Altar from the South Aisle. The sill of one of the 14th century south windows appears to be a sarsen stone of a Saxon coffin lid. On the outside of the south wall of this aisle, providing protection to the ancient wooden south door, is the 16th century Porch. The buttresses and brickwork alterations constructed in red Tudor bricks.

In the 14th century the North Aisle was formed by piercing the north wall of the Nave with two wide arches which spring directly from the original wall. At the west end of this North Aisle is an unusual 15th century 'Priest's Room'. This two-storey oak framed chamber, fronted by an oak screen, may have provided the accommodation for a monk when the Church was served by Prittlewell Priory. The original box pews were removed during the 1860s. At the same time as the ornate late 12th century stone Norman Font with its intricately carved circular bowl was moved to its present position near the north door.



The upper stage of the tower was added in the 19th century but the broach spire needed restoration in the late 20th century as the cedar wooden tiles or shingles used to clad the tower proved very tempting for the local woodpeckers. The tower houses six bells which are played on a regular basis.

Our thanks to Mr and Mrs Newman for providing us with tea/coffee and biscuits during a very interesting and informative visit.

22nd April – The next meeting of the Church Visiting Group will be to St Andrew's Church, Rochford, at 10:30. Any members of our u3a are welcome to join us. We shall be meeting at the church (which is adjacent to the golf course) and I understand that there is plenty of parking at the location.

QUIZ GROUP (Sally Hayes)

27th March – A disappointing attendance, but it was Easter week and several members were on holiday. But those who came were rewarded with a very small chocolate egg each, and the winning table were each given a Crème Egg. Questions were based on Spring months and Easter, and posed by Sally.



24th April – The next and final Quiz. Thanks to all members for their support since 2016 (with the obligatory break for Covid!)

WINE APPRECIATION (Viv Ormsby)

19th March – We met at Bob and Jan's for Bob's Bargain Selection. We started off with a very slightly sparkling white: Animus Vinho Verde from Northern Portugal. All agreed this was very pleasant and a steal at £4.79 from Aldi. On to the reds, Cepa Lebrei Rioja Crianza from Spain, again very acceptable and not too heavy or heavy on the tannin, £5.99 from Lidl. Next, a Malbec, Uco Valley, Argentina. Normally our favourite red but really disappointing. Smelt and looked good but failed to deliver on the palate. Avoid at £6.29 Aldi.

As a treat, Bob included a delicious Armitor Ruby Port from his own cellar.

Thanks to Jo for supplying a delicious selection of cheeses and Jan for adding the crackers and other delicious nibbles.



WALKING GROUP (Leo Sleight)

17th March – Four brave souls gathered at Bell Wharf in the wind and rain for the trek to Eastern Esplanade and lunch at the Castle Hotel, which was decked out in preparation for St Patrick's Day celebrations.

After a good repast and relieved to find calmer weather, we returned to the Southend Central Bus Terminal for dispersal home. At least this was a mud-free walk, unlike the previous month!



14th April – "Hadleigh Country Park": A loop Walk.



A fine day with dry paths enjoyed by all. On reaching the ponds on the lower slopes we were lucky enough to hear excited chatter among the frogs, while hundreds of feet above us three great buzzards circled over their domain. Further out and from a resting point there was evidence of rabbit activity, and on the return leg of the loop unusual wildflowers were noticed. Although hilly in places, everyone completed the walk without difficulty to enjoy an excellent lunch at 'The Anchor' Benfleet.

ART APPRECIATION (Eddie Bailey)

10th April – Only five of us met up this month with the subject of Futurism. Futurism was launched by the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in 1909. On 20th February that year he published his Manifesto of Futurism on the front page of the Paris newspaper Le Figaro. Among modernist movements, futurism was

exceptionally vehement in its denunciation of the past. This was because in Italy the weight of past culture was felt as particularly oppressive. In the Manifesto, Marinetti asserted that 'we will free Italy from her

innumerable museums which cover her like countless cemeteries. What the futurists proposed instead was an art that celebrated the modern world of industry and technology; it emphasized dynamism, speed, technology, youth, violence, and objects such as the car, the airplane, and the industrial city.

Futurist painting used elements of neo-impressionism and cubism to create compositions that expressed the idea of the dynamism, the energy and movement, of modern life. Chief artists associated with futurism were Giacomo Balla, Umberto Boccioni, Gino Severini.

Vorticism was essentially the British equivalent to futurism, but Wyndham Lewis the founder of the vorticists was deeply hostile to the futurists.

After the brutality of the WW1, many artists rejected the avant-garde notions of futurism and other pre-war movements, by using more traditional and reassuring approaches, a phenomenon described as the "return to order".

MARITIME and AVIATION GROUPS (Tony Weber)

MARITIME GROUP

10th April – We had a good turnout, using all available chairs! The quiz, compiled in his usual diabolical way by Phill, was won by myself.

Ringling the changes this time, we had the main topics raised and discussed before moving on to the One Fact Wonder. Topics discussed included: The Escort Carrier HMS Slinger, the Daniel Adamson, the SS Cap Arcona, Voyages on the sailing ship Sorlandet, Five Small Vessels on the National Maritime Museum's Register of Historic Ships, the Icon of the Seas and the Indian Carrier Vikrant.

The OFW was on Surviving Active Steamships, and the subject resulted in a lot of duplication. The New Zealand Steamer Earnslaw of 1912 was covered by Eddie and Phil; Nick and John came up with the American Queen, a paddler operating on the Mississippi; John presented the Norwegian Skiblanda of 1856; Tony presented the Kingswear Castle of 1924 and Richard offered the American paddler Norwich, which dating from 1836, is the Oldest Steamship in the World.

8th May – The next activity of the group will be a visit to the Museum of Power, near Maldon, and the Burnham and District Museum in Burnham.

AVIATION GROUP

27th March - The Aviation Group had another well-attended meeting with the extremely hard quiz, ably set by Phill, comfortably won by Ray.

The One Fact Wonder was on Russian jet airliners.

Offerings included the Irkutsk MC21; the UAC IL96400M; The Aeroflot 593 flight of 1994; the History of Russian jet fighter development; the Sukhoi SSJ100; The TU 104 and finally the supersonic Tubolov 144. It was interesting to hear how much recent sanctions have affected the Russian aircraft industry.

Topics raised and discussed included Operation Jujutsu of the early 1950s; The Italian involvement in the Battle of Britain; the "grass cutter" grid by Adolf Galland on Littlehampton in 1944; the Story of Channel Airways; a 1945 report on German nightfighters derived from PoWs; the Air War in Ukraine; the Lockheed Aurora CP140 and the E7 Wedgetail.

24th April – The next meeting when the OFW will be on the Italian Air Force.

OUTINGS GROUP

This Group was under the leadership of Margaret Dowding and Pat Watkins, with the assistance of Alan Jaspar and Barbara Pickney, but is now closed. Thanks to them for taking on this role, although sadly it didn't quite take off!

WEBSITE

Our thanks go to Christine Major for keeping our website up-to-date. This will obviously now close down at the end of April.

NEWSLETTER

I hope you have enjoyed this final Newsletter. It has been my privilege and a joy to compile and edit the Newsletter since 2013, and I shall sorely miss it, as well as being a member of this u3a since 2008 and a Committee member over the years, a member of many Groups, including East London, Insight London, Playreading, Rummikub, Outings, Scrabble, Local History, Quiz (the latter two as Leader). I have made many friends and enjoyed so much. It is said that 'life is what you make it', and that is so true of u3a – such an opportunity to get out and about and learn so much. It will certainly leave a big void in my life, as I am sure it will for many more of you. Such a sad time, but life moves on, and I am sure we will all find more to keep us occupied, and I hope to keep in touch with some special friends, and no doubt to bump into a few more of you around the town.

So, with a little tear in my eye, I say farewell to the u3a, but not goodbye to friendship. **(Sally)**

AND FINALLY (and it really is finally....)



Thank you to all contributors.
Editor: Sally Hayes