

APRIL 2023 NEWSLETTER

I'm compiling this newsletter just when the weather can't make its mind up as to if it is winter or spring! The blossom is just appearing so the signs are there but the temperatures are extremely haphazard.

Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of the Newsletter — we love to get news of what is happening in your groups and the photos are an added bonus. Do keep them coming by email to: debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk.

FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

5th April 2023

Charlie Haylock — How different dialects developed in spoken English. Charlie is an historian of spoken English, a dialect specialist, an authority on his native Suffolk and a bestselling author.



3rd May 2023

Toni Neobard — For better or far worse! A look at marriage through the ages.



7th June 2023

Peggy Rose Griffin (pen name Daisy Bourne) will be speaking on the History of Nursery Rhymes

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Wed 3rd MAY 2023 @ 2pm

RAYLEIGH u3a AGM

Followed by our speaker at 2.30pm

All AGM paperwork has been emailed to members, is on the website and is also available at the Secretary's table at our Members Meetings.

As always we are looking for members to join the Committee — it is not particularly an onerous job as we only meet once a month on the third Friday of every month at the Mill Hall between 10 and 12 noon. There are four Officer roles (Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer) on the Committee and then usually 8-10 general Committee Members. It is for these general roles which we are looking to fill. Most Committee Members do take on a role of some kind such as editing the newsletter, helping with our equipment or organising events but you could just start by general helping out when needed.

- Please do think if you would like to help — our u3a is built on our volunteers — and without members stepping up, we would not be able to offer all the things we do. It is a great way to keep using your skills and meeting people. I myself, joined one January and by the May I had been elected as Secretary! You don't need to have years of u3a knowledge, just a willingness to help.

If you would like to chat about becoming a member of the Committee, just let me know and I will pass on your details to one of the existing Committee Members who will be in touch with you. You could also sit in on a Committee Meeting to see if it might be for you.

They say we should do something brave when we get the chance — maybe this is it for you! Many thanks. debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk

u3a Trust
www.u3a.org.uk

Have you looked at the Trust's website recently? There is so much on offer — online learning, events and workshops plus some very interesting articles. You can also sign up to their Newsletter by scrolling to the bottom of the page and entering your details.

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

PATCHWORK & TEA — Patchwork at work

Do you recall, way back in October of last year, a display at the u3a monthly meeting of Lap Quilts that the Patchwork Group had made?

Well we finally delivered them to Sweyne Court in Rayleigh just before Christmas. We were unable to go into the home to deliver them personally but the manager was delighted with our efforts. Wendy Edwards put aside her sewing and spent an afternoon wrapping each one in Christmas paper.

Later Pam Rand and I delivered the packages to the Care Home. We hope the residents who received the quilts will get as much pleasure from them as we had in their sewing.



A big Thank you to the Patchwork Ladies : June Barnbrook, Lorraine Chaplin, Wendy Edwards, Gwen Greenwood, Gay Groombridge, Maureen Harris, Lesley Lovett, Pat McDowall, Lynne Morgan, Maureen Parker, Pam Rand, Maureen Scott and Irene Stokes.

I wonder what we will tackle next? An idea is already in the pipe line...

Kate Sawyer

Visiting Essex Churches Group 1

Our Visiting Essex Church Group was the very first group to start when Rayleigh opened its doors in 2007. We also have 6 of the original founder members of the Rayleigh U3A in the Group, and are still going strong.

We now have vacancies and would like to invite any members to come along and join us. We meet on the second Monday of each month. The churches we visit always give a very enthusiastic and informative talk about the church, architecture etc. and often about the surrounding area.

We end up with a “pub” lunch which is always a good opportunity to socialise and get to know one another. We are a very friendly, easy going bunch and would very much like to welcome new members.

We are still finding some real gems in the county! Please contact us as we would love to hear from you – details below.

Sue and Terry Taylor
01268 786405
Email: susan.taylor106@outlook.com

Photo taken at a recent visit to St Michael’s at Aveley — the church was built in 1120.



Visit to Southend’s Planetarium & Museum



25 members of Serendipity 6 and Visiting Interesting Places in Essex Group visited Southend Museum & Planetarium. Due to the large number of interested members, we arranged two visits to the museum and planetarium.

The planetarium is quite small but the interesting talk from the astronomers was fascinating and very educational. Staring up into the dome we learnt about our solar system, how to recognise the many constellations/planets and how best to star watch at home with binoculars or telescopes.

The museum is currently showing an exhibition ‘EKCO: 100 Years of Design & Innovation in Southend’ showing the development and history of EKCO the well-known Southend based company which became a global brand and was once one of the largest employers in the area. EKCO had a huge impact on local people and the development of Southend and even contributed to Britain’s success in WWII. It featured original EKCO radios, televisions and domestic plastics produced between 1920 and 1970.

The Museum also has an exhibition about the earliest dated Anglo-Saxon princely burial in England. Many of you may remember the proposal for a road widening scheme between Priory Crescent, Prittlewell and the railway line and the 4 year Camp Bling with peaceful protestors. After discovering arguably one of the richest Anglo-Saxon burials in this country, the scheme never went ahead. There is a display of some of the most significant artefacts from this burial.

Visiting Interesting Places Group at Holy Trinity Church Rayleigh

We visited our local church to find out all about the recent church refurbishments and were given an interesting tour by Gordon Simmonds and Ann Jolly. We walked around the outside and inside of the church discovering how the parish church which dates mainly from the 1380's as a wooden building then a Norman church.

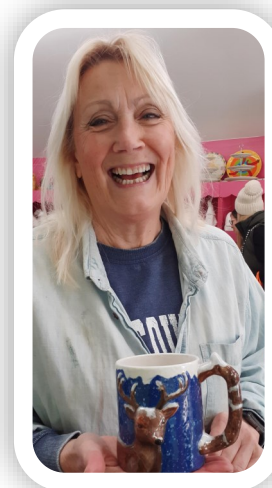


The major refurbishment was completed last year and was a huge undertaking. The old paint was stripped from the interior walls, areas of weak plaster renewed using traditional methods and repainted with lime wash. Existing floor tiles were taken up and replaced with pale stone slabs. All electrical cabling, lighting and heating has been renewed. The chancel floor has been extended into the nave and the pulpit, lectern and font have been repositioned. There is a new organ and oak choir furniture. Now the building is lighter and more welcoming with a feeling of spaciousness.

Val Whitehouse & Photo – Jim Whitehouse

CERAMICS GROUP

This group meets on the 1st Monday of every month. Here is a photo of a new member, Jacky, and her first attempt at painting on ceramics. Excellent!



RAYLEIGH U3A COMMITTEE

After a very productive Committee Meeting, we then went to the Coal and Earth Turkish Restaurant in Rayleigh. A time to chat, relax and have a laugh.



Serendipity 5 goes to the Cliffs

The fourth Friday in February found 25 members of Serendipity 5 on a visit to the Cliffs Pavilion Theatre, not to see a show, but for a back stage tour. The General Manager who provided the background to the theatre met us.



We learnt that work began on the original Cliffs Pavilion during the 1930s. It was intended to be a small 500-seat theatre incorporating the art deco style of the times. However, with the outbreak of World War 2 the building work was halted. The site remained boarded-up until 1959, when the original building was levelled. It was then moved to one side and slightly closer to the edge of the cliff to form the basis of a larger 1500 seat Cliffs Pavilion, which opened in 1964. Then from July 1991 to December 1992,

the building was closed again for re-development, to provide better access and the seating capacity increased to its present 1630 seats. With funding from Southend Borough Council and design by Tim Foster Architects the stairs were rebuilt and repositioned to provide more ground floor space and a new Foyer Bar added. The new balcony added to the auditorium provided the extra seating. Since re-opening, annual audience figures increased from 200,000 to about 340,000.



The stage manager then ushered us into the stage lift, which was large enough to accommodate a double decker bus. This is used to move scenery from the road to the stage for the various productions. The scenery for large productions frequently required up to five very large vehicles for transportation from theatre to theatre. Our stage manager said that his team would require two days to set up for large performances that could change every week. Frequently odd spare days would be filled with one-day shows. The performers of these one day events would usually bring their own sound equipment and sets, all of which required integrating with that of the theatres.



After admiring the new refurbished dressing rooms, we thanked our two guides for a very interesting and informative day. We then made our way to the Pavilion Bar with its magnificent view over the estuary and concluded with a fine lunch.

Visiting Interesting Places in Essex Group Visit Chelmsford Museum

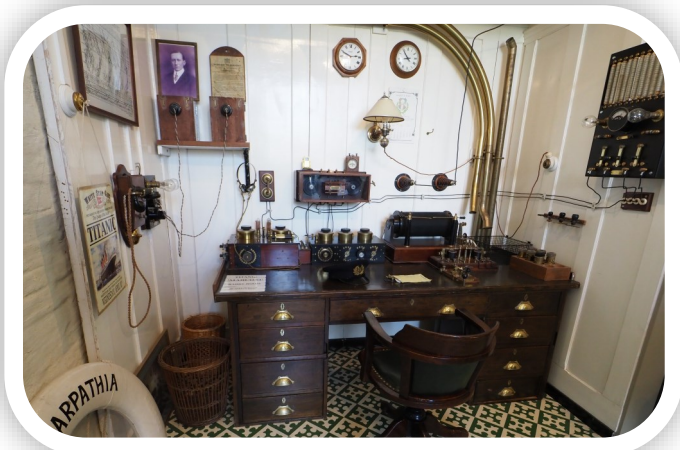
On a bright sunny day in February, 15 members of the Visiting Interesting Places in Essex Group visited Chelmsford Museum.

There were excellent displays in the Essex Regiment Museum and a marvellous room with lots of exhibits about Marconi (Chelmsford being the birthplace of Radio).

The museum houses lots of different rooms with exhibits ranging from prehistoric times to the 20th century as well as natural history and even a live bee hive.

The visit was followed by a pleasant lunch in the adjoining Hive Café.

Val Whitehouse



Photos – Jim Whitehouse

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY 2 GROUP

On Monday 13th February, on a bright morning the group had a great outing to East Hanningfield. Here below and on the next page are a small selection of captured moments.





Thank you to our talented wildlife photographers!

Gardening Group Visit Dragons

Members of the Gardening Group went to view the hundreds of different species of snowdrops (Galanthus) at the gardens of Dragons just outside Writtle.



Dragons is a very pretty 3/4-acre garden planted to encourage wildlife with meandering paths that lead to ponds and a stream and overlooks farmland. There is a scree garden and two summer houses, one overlooking the stream. There were also hellebores in bloom and various interesting shrubs and trees.

The owner Margot talked to us about the various species of snowdrops and how a single snowdrop bulb – Galanthus plicatus ‘Golden Tears’ - sold for a record-breaking £1850.00.

Val Whitehouse & Photo by Jim Whitehouse

Educational Event at Saxon Hall

Tuesday 27th June 2023

Tickets £25.00

11.00am—3.15pm

Tea/Coffee on Arrival

Talk by Tony Harris:

Jack the Ripper — Sherlock Holmes Names Him

Two Course Lunch with Tea/Coffee & Mints

Talk by Tony Harris:

**Secret London — Things you never knew about the
Capital**

Tony Harris is a professional comedian, raconteur and actor who specialises in talks with his unique blend of history and comedy



**Tickets on sale from April Members Meeting or by emailing:
valerieskam@gmail.com or by phone: 01268 786172**

Educational Event at Saxon Hall

Tuesday 27th June 11.00am to 3.15pm

Tea or Coffee on Arrival at 11.00am

2 Course Lunch 1.00pm

Classic Hunters Chicken

or

Chef's Creamy Mixed Fish Pie

or

Vegetarian Option -

Roasted Mediterranean Vegetable Lasagne

**Lunches served with Fresh Vegetables &
Potatoes**

Apple Strudel with Cream

or

Hot Cherries & Rossi's Ice Cream

(Suitable for Vegetarians & Gluten Free)

Tea or Coffee & Mints

MEMORY MATTERS

In July 2020 Rayleigh u3a was approached by the University of Hertfordshire to take part in an online study into memory in the general population. This was sent out to members to take part if they wished. We have now been sent the published results of this study which we have permission to share with the members. There are two reports and the second one will feature in the June Newsletter.

Everyday Memory Errors in Healthy Adults Across the Lifespan:

Results From an Online Survey

- No matter how good our memory is, we are all prone to forget something at least occasionally, or experience memory errors when completing everyday tasks. For example,
- one may forget someone's name (retrospective memory error), why they came into a room (absent-minded error), or even miss an important appointment (prospective memory error). Generally, there is little information about how frequently these memory failures occur in daily life because most research has been focused on studying laboratory tasks of memory and attention. Moreover, previous questionnaire studies of everyday memory did not include all types of memory errors that may occur in daily life (i.e., prospective, retrospective, and absent-minded errors). It is also unclear how frequently people across the adult lifespan expect such everyday memory errors to occur in age groups other than their own.

To address these gaps in the current knowledge, researchers at the University of Hertfordshire developed a new everyday memory questionnaire encompassing all three types of everyday memory errors. The questions were created based on the real data collected from previous diary studies in which young and older individuals recorded memory errors every time they experienced them in their daily lives.

This new questionnaire was circulated on various social media platforms and several branches of the University of 3rd Age (U3A) for a period of 10 months between July 2020 and April 2021. Participants had to rate the frequency with which they experienced three different types of memory errors in their own life and then rate how frequently they expected people in their 20s, 40s, 60s and 80s to experience the same memory errors. In addition, participants completed questionnaires about their mood, business and demographic details.

For the first study aim, concerning the frequency of everyday memory errors across different age groups, responses from 773 participants were analysed. Participants were divided into five age groups. In addition to 194 young (aged 18-39) and 100 middle-aged (aged 40-49) adults, there were 158 older adults in their 60s (aged 60-69), 248 adults in their 70s (aged 70-79) and 73 adults in their 80s and 90s (aged 80-96). Results showed that whilst there was no age difference in the overall frequency of memory errors (regardless of the error type), young adults reported experiencing prospective memory errors (remembering to do something in the future) more often than any other age group

By contrast, participants in their 80s and 90s reported experiencing retrospective memory errors (for example, forgetting names, words, and so on) more frequently than any other age group. No age differences were found in the frequency of absent-minded errors. Surprisingly, all age groups indicated experiencing retrospective memory errors more frequently than the other types of errors, which contradicts the findings from diary studies, showing that the most frequently reported memory errors, especially in young and middle-aged adults, are prospective memory errors.

For the second study aim regarding how people view memory functioning in others, the data from 695 participants were analysed. Results showed very strong stereotypical views towards memory and ageing. Irrespective of participants' own age, all participants believed that memory errors would be most frequently experienced by those in their 80s and least frequently by adults in their 20s. Such strong stereotypical views are surprising given the results of recent diary studies showing no significant age effects in the total number of recorded memory failures, and younger adults recording more frequent prospective memory failures than older adults.

In summary, this study showed that the newly developed questionnaire can assess the frequency of all three types of memory errors in everyday life (prospective, retrospective and absent-minded) across the adult lifespan, and can be used in the future clinical and research work on memory functioning in everyday life. Furthermore, this study confirmed that there still exist strong stereotypical views towards memory and ageing, which highlights the need to raise awareness on this matter in our society and reduce age-related stereotypes.

The research team at the University of Hertfordshire would like to thank all those who kindly volunteered to take part in our study and extend special thanks to the Chairs of many U3A branches for helping us with the recruitment. Your help and contribution to our research is greatly appreciated.

*For any follow up questions, please contact Dr Brigita Brazauskiene
b.brazauskiene@herts.ac.uk*

*Dr Brigita Brazauskiene
Dr Ioanna Markostamou
Professor Lia Kvavilashvili*