

JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER



I hope everyone enjoyed the celebrations for the Coronation. A new Carolean era is ahead of us so let's see what that brings!

Thank you to our two contributors to the 1953 Coronation photos request. Dressing up was obviously the theme of the day.



The 1953 Coronation Party in Poynton Road, Tottenham — John Pomfrett

I was the winner of the Fancy Dress Competition dressed as a toy soldier. The rules stated that the costumes should be homemade out of crepe paper.

After being crowned the winner there was a 'Steward's Enquiry'. My Mum had tailored the uniform out of crepe paper but on a fabric base.

After much debate, I kept the prize although I have no memory of what I actually won !



Jill Cann, our Treasurer, sent in this photo of herself dressed as Queen Elizabeth I. It looks like she must have won a prize too as she is being presented with a doll.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 3rd May and was well attended. The reports and accounts were approved and all the documents can be found on our website.

Three new members were elected onto the Committee — Juli Fowles, who is taking on the role of Educational Events Coordinator, Debbie Bamber taking on the role of Membership Secretary and Stuart Evans. Our thanks to these members for supporting the work of the Committee.

We said thank you to four members who were retiring from the Committee after completing their terms and presented them each with a little gift: Amanda Lowe our former Membership Secretary, Val Skam our former Educational Events Coordinator, Sheila Farrant a former Newsletter Editor (who was unable to be at the meeting) and Elaine Woodcock.



Ray Lowe (Chairman), Jill Cann (Treasurer)
and Jane Reeve (Secretary)



Elaine Woodcock



From Amanda Lowe:

Thank you to Gwen who supported me in the role of Membership Secretary. I am sad to step down but it is not the last you will see of me. I will continue to support Rayleigh u3a as a volunteer.

Thank you to my team of helpers Linda Osborne, Alison Yarham, Anne Surety and of course all the Committee.



Jane, presenting to Val Skam

FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

7th June 2023

Joanne Larner's talk is entitled: **Richard III — Saint or Sinner?** She presents the questions and mysteries surrounding his life and the conclusions she has reached about him. Did he usurp the throne? Did he murder his brother(s)? Did he poison his wife to marry his niece? Was he the ruthless tyrant of Shakespeare? Did he murder the 'Princes in the Tower'?



5th July 2023

Linda Scoles will be giving a light hearted talk on the difficulties of becoming a British Citizen.

A Reminder that there is no Monthly Meeting in August and we will return to the Mill Hall on Wednesday 6th September.

King Charles III Coronation Commemorative Gift

The Committee decided to give all Members a commemorative gift to mark the Coronation of our King. These were distributed at our May Meeting.

If you were unable to attend in May, the gifts will be available at our next couple of meetings — please ensure you bring (or collect) your membership card with you so it can be marked as having received your gift.

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. Closing date for the September Newsletter is 10th August.

NOTICES

Sadly we have been informed of the death of one of our members, Pam Johnson, who passed away on 21st April. We have sent condolences from Rayleigh u3a and if anyone would like more details, please contact Jill Cann on 01268 747635.

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 at June Members Meeting or by contacting:
valerieskam@gmail.com or by phone: 01268 786172
or juli.fowles@gmail.com - phone: 07944 310554**

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INVOLVED WITH STARTING A NEW GROUP???

Many of our interest groups are full with a number of members on waiting lists.

If you are one of those members and/or just fancy becoming involved in starting a new group, then please get in touch with your Group Coordinator, Paul Reeve for more information.

We are currently looking to begin the following new interest groups: -

Book Reading
Cooking
Gardening
Music Appreciation
Strolling
Sunday Lunch
**Serendipity / Visiting Interesting
Places**
Wine Tasting
Yarn Group
(Knit & Natter / Crochet & Chatter)

You do not need to be a subject expert — just have a willingness to learn as you go along with people with a similar interest.

To find out more details or to have a chat about what you can offer - please add your name to the sheet on the Group Coordinators table at our Monthly Meetings, telephone Paul Reeve on 07825 430159 or email: paulreeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

SERENDIPITY 1

On 2nd May, the members of Serendipity 1 took an exclusive walking tour of the Clifftown and Royal Terrace areas of Southend-on-Sea.

We were led by Tracy, a local historian, author, raconteur, storyteller and magician, who operates her business under the title, Mystery on Sea.

We strolled at a comfortable pace for around 90 minutes and were told tales of ghosts, mysteries and the fascinating history of the area, of the famous and infamous, scandalous and curious residents and visitors, all mixed with magic and fun.

Afterwards, several of us went for a meal at Tomassi's.



Thank you to Juli Fowles for the editorial and John Myers for the photographs.



Ceramics

We had a lovely morning being creative, chatting and sharing experiences, holidays, love of animals and general interests etc.

If you would like to join our sociable group, contact Paul Reeve Group Coordinator.

We meet at Clay Cottage, Lubbards Farm, on the first Monday of the month, 10am to 12 noon.

Thank you Amanda Lowe for the details.

SERENDIPITY 5

May found Serendipity 5 visiting Europe's first traditional Hindu Temple - BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, popularly known as Neasden Temple. It is dedicated to the worship of the old traditions of the Hindu faith. It is a masterpiece of traditional Hindu design and Indian workmanship in the heart of London. A Mandir is a Hindu place of worship. In the ancient Indian language of Sanskrit, Mandir refers to a place where the mind becomes still and the soul floats freely to seek the source of life.

Our tour started with a video presentation that outlined the Hindu faith and went on to show his Holiness Parmukh Swami Maharaj whose vision and inspiration lead to the construction of the Neasden Temple. Using 5,000 tons of Bulgarian limestone and Italian Carrara marble it was hand carved in India before being transported and assembled in London, like a 3D jigsaw. Completion took two and a half years and opened in 1995.



The Mandir is entered through a richly carved portico of soaring teak columns and oak panels. There is a pillar-less assembly hall that can accommodate 2,500 worshipers and is used for assemblies and festivals.



We were invited to attend the Hindu service in the Mandir inner sanctum where seven ornate shrines are to be found. The multitude of exquisite and intricate scenes carved on the marble pillars, ceilings and central dome are truly amazing.

We concluded our tour with a visit to the Shayona Indian restaurant with its traditional Indian décor, to experience some authentic tastes of India.

Bob White

SERENDIPITY 5 GO FISHING

March found Serendipity 5 making a visit to the London Aquarium. This is located in the old County Hall building on the London South bank. The admission cost is a hefty £32. However, two for one ticket's are available with a timed entry but only on-line. So with travel cards clutched we made our way to Westminster, gave Parliament a wave and crossed the bridge to our destination. This was our first venture into the capital since Covid, which probably accounted for a lower turnout than usual.

Our visit began with a walk across the top of the shark tank, on very thick glass. I didn't like this bit because the optical illusion gives you the impression that you are actually

stepping into the tank. The staff guy assured us that it was perfectly safe, but these are real sharks we're talking about here, not toothless minnows who are just going to swim up and give you a smile, these have teeth. I actually started shaking as we skipped across the glass pavement but this was only a few minutes into our visit and, as leader, I felt I had to be brave – not a good start!



The first big tank that you come across is an open-top pool full of three foot wide rays. After that comes the first multi-story tank which is absolutely huge, filled with mountainous rocks and towering columns of stone, together with a full-size skeleton of a whale and they've got some big fish that you wouldn't want to mess with. Big chunky fish with heads the size of a dustbin. There's a glass tunnel that takes you through the tank, where the rays floating six inches above your head glide around watching you. The next tank is even better; it's colossal and has a few Easter Island heads inside. This is where those sharks live, the big ones. It stretches over five floors you start in the basement and rise up through the floors winding around the tanks.

It's very relaxing watching fish swim round and round. There don't seem to be very many rules for the fish. Quite often you will see a shoal of small fish gently sauntering around in formation, and a big shark will come storming through the middle of them, scattering them in all directions, but I suppose when you're a shark you can do what you like.



There are a lot of tropical tanks with beautiful coral reefs; each containing very brightly coloured fish, all purples and pinks, sunshine orange and electric blues, Nemo and his many pals were in evidence. Jelly fish were also to be seen cavorting around performing their own amazing graceful ballet.

The zones have been decorated in keeping with the environment. The rain forest zone is warm and humid with dangling green ferns and vines with lush coloured vegetation. This is the area where you can see python's, crocodiles, poisonous frogs and leaf cutter ants at work. Rainforests are crucial to the development of new medicines; compounds found here are already used to treat cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

The final section is the Arctic zone. The temperature immediately drops, and we find Penguin Beach, with a dozen or more Penguins prancing around playing catch me if you can. I found it difficult to appreciate that they were birds. They have two layers of feathers, the bottom layer is thick and dense to keep them warm. The top layer is waterproof to protect them from the cold waters in which they swim.

The feedback from our group was very positive, but nobody wanted to swim with the sharks! *Bob White*

A Visit to Willingale

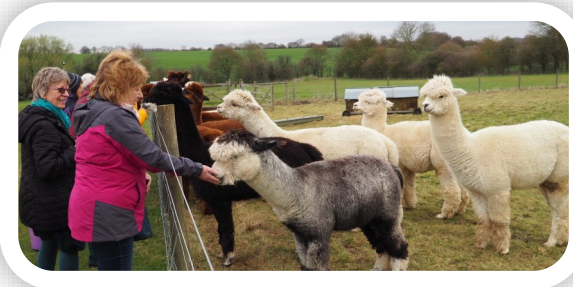


Members of the Visiting Interesting Places in Essex Group visited two churches in one churchyard at Willingale. Why two churches only a short distance away from one another?

It is thought that in the 14th century the village population greatly increased due to the flourishing woollen industry in the area so rather than pull down the existing small 12th century St Andrews & All Saints Church to rebuild a larger one, the D'España family retained St Andrews

and the D'Ou family built a second church St Christophers on the already consecrated land. Both families were manorial proprietors in the area. This is the only example of two churches in the same churchyard in Essex.

We were given an interesting talk about both churches and learnt that St. Andrews Church is now managed by the Churches Conservation Trust whilst St. Christophers holds regular services.



After a marvellous lunch in a pub in Fyfield the Group went to the nearby Butlers Farm Alpacas to visit and feed the alpacas and look around the shop on site, purchasing goods made from alpacas fleece.

Editorial: Val & Photos – Val & Jim Whitehouse

A Visit to the Essex Police Museum

We visited the Essex Police Museum and found out some fascinating information about the history of the Essex Police Force and enjoyed a visit to the Force Control Room watching the 999 and non-emergency calls being taken by police and civilian staff.

The Essex County Constabulary was established in 1840 and today is one of the UK's largest non-metropolitan police forces with over 4,000 police officers.

The force area consists of city suburbs, large urban areas, industrial areas, rural villages,



London Stansted Airport and two of the UK's major ports Harwich and Tilbury. The force also polices one of the largest expanses of coastline of any force in the UK. It covers 1420 square miles and has a population of around 1,800,000.

The Museum contains over 25,000 historical items dating back to the Victorian era including uniforms, truncheons, handcuffs together with evidence found at crime scenes and the members of Visiting Interesting Places in Essex and Serendipity 6 found it an extremely interesting place to visit. We even tried on hats and helmets dating back over the years!

Val Whitehouse & Photo by Jim Whitehouse

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

The Local History group started in September 2022 with a meeting in Rayleigh Town Museum. We are now meeting monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 2pm at the Mill hall.

We are intending to be active in our researches and so far have had contributions from members about the changes in the church during the Sixteenth century, the Peculiar People (a religious sect of the Nineteenth century), and a wartime childhood among other things. The aim of the group is to be active in researching and also to visit historical places and have outside speakers.

Local history does not only have to be about Rayleigh. At the last meeting one of our members showed pictures of Rochford. In future meetings we may look at historical objects and discover more about the sources available for researching. *Val Foley*

ART GROUP

April - This month the art group made ATC cards. They are like a business card for artists. The idea being that you exchange with other artists .

It was fun to do. The cards were then put together and drawn out at random to win an Easter egg.



May - The theme this month was Spring Flowers.

This is some of the work from the group. We had a lovely morning - very creative.

Amanda Lowe



UPCOMING EVENTS

(See Events Noticeboard at Main Meetings for more details)

Tuesday 27th June - Educational Event at Saxon Hall with tea/coffee & 2-course lunch (see earlier poster for details) 11am to 3.15pm. Talks by Tony Harris.

Tickets: £25 per person on sale at **June Monthly Meeting**

Contact: Val Skam: valerieskam@gmail.com or 01268 786172 or juli.fowles@gmail.com or 07944 310554

Thursday 10th August - Coach Trip to The Forgotten Gardens of Easton Lodge. Includes tea/coffee & cake, guided tour, entrance to the gardens and coach. Pick-ups from 9am, returning approx. 4.30pm

Tickets: £22 per person on sale at **June & July Monthly Meetings**

Contact Jane Reeve: janereeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk or 01268 770324

Monday 18th September - Talk for All at Cloister Hall, Holy Trinity Church. "Insights of a Provincial Auctioneer" Talk by Steve Lester—includes tea/coffee & biscuit. 1.30pm to 3pm.

Tickets: £3 per person on sale at **June, July and September Monthly Meetings**

Contact Juli Fowles: juli.fowles@gmail.com or 07944 310554

Saturday 23rd September - Quiz Night at Main Hall, Holy Trinity Church 7pm - 10pm

Tickets: £5 per person on sale at **June and July Monthly Meetings**

Contact Val Whitehouse: val_whitehouse@yahoo.co.uk or 01702 512717

FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Wednesday 18th October 2023

STUDY DAY at JUBILEE ROOM AT SAXON HALL

“ROYAL OCCASIONS & CEREMONIES”

In this special Coronation year the Speakers taking part in our Study Day are representative of those who support Royal Events in many different ways making them such resplendent & memorable occasions.

Morning Coffee/Tea and a 2 Course Lunch. Tickets available at July & September Monthly Meetings @ £27.50 per ticket

Organised by Past Chairmen Maureen and Pete Huntly



Tuesday 5th December 2023

CHRISTMAS LUNCH AT SAXON HALL

More details to follow nearer the time. Tickets will be on sale from the September Monthly Meeting.