



Newsletter Edition No. 96 - April 2020

Dear Members

Welcome to the April edition of the Rayleigh U3A newsletter.

You will be aware that Coronavirus has completely disrupted the normal life of most of the world including the UK. While only a small percentage of the public have contracted the virus, the Government has decided to safeguard the more vulnerable sections of our population by asking us to avoid proximity with other people.

This of course means that we can no longer hold monthly general meetings at the Mill Hall, arrange Talks for All, Study Days, Quiz Shows, Coach Trips etc. All members have been advised that the planned events during March were cancelled or postponed (either by email or phone).

The following meetings/events have also needed to be cancelled or postponed: -

- 2nd April** **Main members meeting at Mill Hall**
- 4th April** **Spring Quiz night at Holy Trinity Church Hall**
- 6th April** **Talks for All - History of Magic at the Royal British Legion Hall**
- 7th May** **Main members meeting and AGM at Mill Hall**
- 14th May** **Coffee morning at WI Hall**

Members who have bought tickets should keep them for the new date (if made). However, if they are unable to make the new date, a refund will be given.

It is probable that other events will need to be cancelled/postponed and we will keep you informed. Our AGM is due to be held on Thursday 7th May and it will be necessary to delay this. Please keep an eye on our website where we will publish any further information.

Group activities are subject to the same restrictions. The advice from the Government is quite clear, avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.

We were expecting to welcome new members at our April meeting but sadly that will have to be delayed. New members' cards and renewal membership cards will be issued at the first meeting after the emergency.

These are sad times. Let us hope that none of our members become seriously ill from this virus and that they receive help from their family and friends where needed. Let us look forward to the future when we can again enjoy the friendship and activities of our U3A.

David Fryer-Kelsey
Chairman

RAYLEIGH U3A ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Thirteenth Annual General Meeting of the Rayleigh U3A was due to take place on **Thursday, 7th May 2020** at Mill Hall, Rayleigh commencing at **2.00 pm**. Due to Coronavirus, this has been postponed until a suitable date is possible.

A copy of the Draft Minutes of the AGM 2019 and the audited Accounts will be displayed on the Secretary's noticeboard at the monthly meeting prior to the **newly arranged date** of the **AGM** and will also be available to view on the website.

This year we are looking for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair as our current holders of these posts are finishing their terms of office. Nomination Forms for the Officer and Committee vacancies are available on the Welcome page of the Rayleigh U3A website and from our Secretary Debbie Bamber.

Any motions which you would like to raise at the AGM will need a Proposer and Seconder and should also be submitted to the Secretary.

If you require assistance or **nomination forms**, please contact Debbie by email debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk, or phone **01702 554282**, or post your request to 3 The Saltings, Hadleigh, Benfleet, SS7 2BD.

AGENDA FOR THE AGM

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Approval of Minutes of the 12th Annual General Meeting (2019)
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report & Approval of Accounts.
6. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts for 2020
7. Election of Officers and Committee Members
8. Any other Business
9. Closure of the formal part of Meeting.

GROUP CO-ORDINATORS' REPORT

You may have noticed two new faces at our desk at our recent monthly meetings. Our term comes to an end shortly and we are very pleased that Rosalinda King and Val Foley will be your new joint Group Co-ordinators. Our very best wishes go to Roz and Val in their new venture.

David & Heather Fryer-Kelsey, joint Group co-ordinators

NEWS FROM AROUND YOUR U3A

The following two Christmas celebrations were, unfortunately, omitted from the February newsletter.

SERENDIPITY 6 CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS



30 members of the Serendipity 6 Group celebrated Christmas early at The Bellhouse in Eastwood.

A great time was had by all.

CHURCH VISITING GROUP 2 CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

20 members of the Church Visiting Group 2 went to The Royal Oak in Great Stambridge for their Christmas Lunch.



A great time was had by all and some members even dressed up for the occasion!

CHURCH VISITING GROUP 2 - ST. MARY'S CHURCH, RUNWELL

Members of Group 2 went to St Mary's Church in Runwell, a magnificent mediaeval building which has an interesting and mixed history. It is a Grade II * listed building dating back to the 13th century and is made of Kentish ragstone, puddingstone and early, possibly Roman tile.

In 1907 a complete structural restoration was carried out, the chancel was extended, the seating reordered, and a new screen added. The original mediaeval screen can be seen in Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh.

There are 4 ancient bells in the tower that have all been recast, 3 of these date from 1591. Most of the stained-glass dates from the 19th century, however, a small window is a compilation of mediaeval glass fragments from the 15th century.



Such a lovely church is well worth a visit and we were made very welcome.

CHURCH VISITING GROUP 2 VISIT to RAMSDEN BELLHOUSE

In February we visited St Mary the Virgin Church at Ramsden Bellhouse, a Grade II listed building dating back to the 14th Century. It has many interesting features including a wooden tower with a hipped spire. We were given an interesting talk on its history and an example of bell ringing.



We visited the gravestone of Grace Millane who was allegedly murdered in 2018 in Auckland, New Zealand whilst backpacking around the world. A service had been held at Brentwood Cathedral with hundreds of mourners and she was laid to rest there.



A VISIT to ST MARY & ALL SAINTS CHURCH by CHURCH VISITING GROUP 2

We were fortunate to be able to arrange a visit to St Mary's & All Saints Church in Stambridge before Rayleigh U3A meetings had to be cancelled due to the current COVID-19 situation.

With a depleted number we were given an interesting talk about the church which was originally believed to have been constructed of stone around 1020 to 1040 but there may have been a wooden church on the site before that time. Gradual development and alterations between the 13th and 15th centuries have changed the church to the building we see today with only the north wall remaining.

It is a Grade II*listed building and shows interesting examples of ragstone, flint, septaria, puddingstone and brick with red plain tiled roofs and small weather boarded spire.



FISH/CHICKEN & CHIPS LUNCH

On a cold, wet and windy day we all gathered to enjoy a great lunch supplied by Kings of Rayleigh, followed by tea and cakes and two raffle prizes of afternoon tea at Squires.

Our speaker, Steve Short, talked about Morecombe and Wise and other known actors and actresses. He also incorporated a little magic.

A great time was had by all.



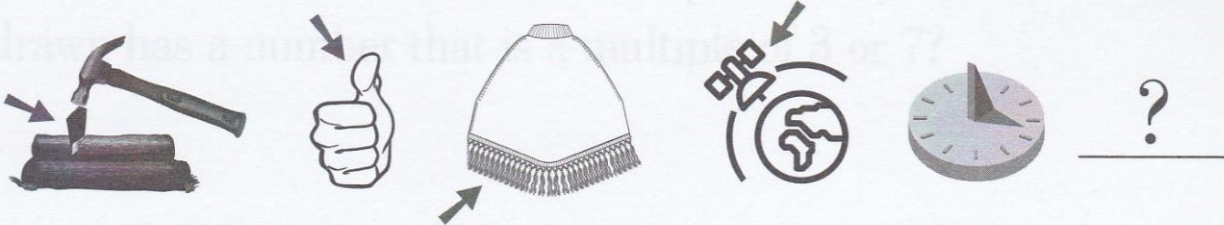
SERENDIPITY GROUP VISIT


Relaxing, listening to passages from Charles Dickens, in Charles' house. Very interesting and then off to lunch. What a great way to spend a wet cold Thursday with friends.

PUZZLE (answer is at the bottom of the last page)

THE NEXT IN LINE

Which one of the three animals at the bottom of the page comes next in this sequence?





STORY FROM OUR WRITERS' GROUP

RON

I would like to introduce you to Ron. A man of simple tastes, Ron was born in 1927. He was about 5'9" tall, of average build but strong, due to his work as an asphalter. His dark hair was swept back from his forehead and kept in place with a dab of brylcreem. With a ready smile, his blue eyes were always warm and bright. Coming from the back streets of London, he had a rough and ready upbringing. Ducking and diving, his kind and caring nature attracted many friends.

Ron loved to have a bet. Horses, greyhounds, he loved it, but he wasn't very good at it. He had a few modest wins but normally the dead cert turned out to have 3 legs and would limp in last. Every Saturday morning, he would study form, marking his choices and writing out a complicated combination bet that his former schoolteachers would have been astonished at.

There were no betting offices in the 1950's and so Ron became a bookies runner, taking bets from people and phoning them into shady characters who collected the money once a week.

This must have paid well because Ron was the first person in his street to own a telephone and a 12" black and white television, which was always going wrong. The only channel available was BBC and it had an indoor aerial that had to be in a certain position. If this got moved, or the signal was weak, he had to move it around the room until the picture settled down. Sometimes it only worked if he stood on a chair, on one leg with his eyes closed. Very frustrating when he had a bet on.

The neighbours loved these new-fangled gadgets and were always knocking to use the phone, "I've left fourpence on the side."

The television was even more popular, and they turned up, dressed in their Sunday best to watch the coronation. They crammed into the front room, waving Union Jack flags and shouting when the picture went fuzzy. Ron and his wife Edna missed most of it, too busy making sandwiches and endless cups of tea.

They couldn't see or hear much anyway because of all the old ladies chatter. "Ooh, don't she look luvly? Look at all them people." "See little Anne and Charlie there? Ain't they growing up?" "Cor bet that crown's heavy. Poor love, she looks scared to death." "Shame 'er Dad went an' died. He was a luvly man."

Once the television overheated, Ron got the beer out, the chairs were pushed back, the carpet rolled up and Ron put his music on. Max Bygraves, Lonnie Donegan, Mrs. Mills, Winifred Attwell - Ron had the lot. He kept his 78" records in his beloved radiogram, carefully cleaning them at the end of every party. After a few drinks, Ron and Edna would take to the floor, jiving and singing and grabbing anyone nearby to join in. A good old knees up in true cockney fashion. Even the old ladies were grabbed and, giggly after a few port and lemons, they lifted their skirts and danced up and down the room. The party ended with Ron dancing with the broom because he had exhausted everyone else. Ron wasn't really used to drinking and the next morning he was found outside, looking down the drain in search of his false teeth which had been lost down the toilet. Thankfully, they were probably floating along the River Thames by then and he had to invest in a new set.

As a foreman, Ron had the use of an old van and was able to take his family out at the weekends.

They went with friends to Southend one day and were having a good old sing song on the way home. Bessie, a rather large lady was stamping her feet, when the floor of the van gave way and her legs were left dangling above the ground. The journey back was a bit scary because they were worried in case the seats followed the floor and they all ended up in the road.

In between races, Ron thought he was a dab hand at DIY. He was very much in demand along the street, turning his hand to any job, not always successfully, but with a good heart. He was often called upon to replace a roof tile or unblock a drain, repair a car or decorate a room.

One Christmas, Bessie and her husband Bill were invited round to Christmas dinner. Realising that the old wooden table was too small, Ron made a hinged flap on one end, supported by a leg. They sat around the table while Edna proudly served up her usual huge roast dinner. As the man of the house, Ron was awarded a turkey leg and he tucked in with gusto. Unfortunately, the leg under the flap gave way with a bang, and his dinner landed on the floor. The crafty cat, who was lurking under the table, hoping for any tit bits, was overjoyed. He grabbed the turkey leg and made off with

it, before anyone could catch him. Ron's usual sense of humour had deserted him, but, luckily, Edna always cooked too much food, and the turkey had two legs, so he got his Christmas dinner after all.

The cat was an important part of Ron's family. The house was in a slum clearance area, so he was always busy catching mice. He was also a great playmate for Ron's daughter. She would dress him up in doll's clothes and tie him into her doll's pram. Walking him up and down the street she would collect bits of privet hedge to cook for tea. She was sensible enough to know that cats couldn't eat privet hedge, so she kindly gave him toffees instead. Unfortunately, they made his teeth stick together and Ron had to put a stop to that.

He loved his garden and spent many hours in his greenhouse and trimming the shrubs. He appeared one afternoon with cuts and grazes on his face and arms. When questioned what had happened, he confessed that he always climbed into the recycling bin to stamp it down. "You get much more in it then, you see." But on this morning he had forgotten to wedge it into the corner, and it had careered off up the garden path with Ron hanging on to the sides. It had crashed into the gate at the end and he had toppled out. At the age of 80 he was very lucky not to have done more damage to himself, (or the gate).

Sue Cairns

NATIONAL OFFICE

A member recently queried with National Office why the TAM magazine was still posted in plastic wrapping (non-recyclable and non-compostable). She recently received the following reply: -

Hi Val

I am pleased to tell you that from April, Third Age Matters will be delivered in a paper wrapper.

Best wishes

Joanne Smith

Editor, Third Age Matters

Good to know that suggestion(s) can be listened to and change will be implemented.



NATIONAL OFFICE are asking U3A members to get involved in the U3A DIARY PROJECT.

It is stated that, "The current situation is impacting on people in lots of different ways and you will all have your own experiences, thoughts and reflections on what this time is like for you and how it is affecting you, both on a practical and on a psychological level. We would really like to capture all of this as part of a UK WIDE U3A LIVING HISTORY PROJECT".

DIARISE YOUR EXPERIENCE AS PART OF A UK WIDE U3A LIVING HISTORY

This could be a written reflection, or you might want to use different media such as pictures. The diary could include what you did, what your household is like, difficulties you're facing and how you're combatting them, what you think was the most important bit of the day – whether this was something you heard on the news, a contact you made or an activity you discovered. Please write the date on everything you submit. We want to build up an archive and want as many U3A members to participate as possible. You do not need to be identified if you do not wish – we will anonymise any submissions.

Interim Learning Manager, Alison May said, "We've had a fantastic response – thank you so much for being part of this UK-wide Shared Learning project. Your enthusiasm is inspiring, and we are delighted to receive examples of your work.

If you want to get involved with the Diary Project, please let us know – email: diary@u3a.org.uk
Or if you want to send your contribution by post, please mark it **Diary Project** to: **156 Blackfriars Road, London, SE9 8EN."**

NATIONAL OFFICE

advise that their phone line **020 8466 6139** is still open (remotely) Monday to Friday: 9.30am to 4.30pm.

They have shown on their website links to guides to tools that will help us stay in touch and connected with our friends and family and U3A. Some of these links have been written in house and some are links to external articles that can help. They have also given links to some learning resources.

Details are listed below:

WHYPAY?

A guide prepared by the national office to help U3As to register an account and set up a conference call in WHYPAY?

ZOOM (PHONES AND TABLETS)

A guide prepared by the national office to help U3As create an account and set up a meeting in Zoom using a phone or tablet.

ZOOM (DESKTOP)

A guide prepared by the national office to help U3As to create an account and set up a meeting in Zoom using a Desktop PC.

WHATSAPP - MAKING A CALL

SKYPE

Make and receive free voice and video calls over the internet using a computer, web browser, or mobile phone

FUTURELEARN

Explore online courses to continue studying and connect with experts.

U3A SOURCES BLOG

Keep in touch with what is happening in U3A during these difficult times.

U3A NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Get the latest information from U3A to your inbox or read the archive of newsletters.

TELEGRAM

Telegram is a cloud-based mobile and desktop messaging app.

FRIENDS AGAINST SCAMS

Please stay safe and vigilant as fraudsters increase their activity in times of uncertainty and confusion. If in doubt don't pay it and check with your fellow members. This website may be helpful.

Answer to PUZZLE: **monkey**

Each image in the sequence begins with a three-letter abbreviation of a day of the week: **WED**ge, **THU**mb, **FRI**nge, **SAT**ellite, **SUN**dial. The **MON**key is next.

Copied from MENSA calendar.