



# Rayleigh u3a



Registered Charity No 1134068

Learn, Laugh, Live  
Newsletter April 2021

Issue No 101

## Message from the Chairman

Welcome to the April edition of the Rayleigh u3a Newsletter.

A big thank you to all of those members who have sent in articles, photographs poems and paintings and to those Group Leaders who have managed to keep their groups running through lockdown and sharing their news.

We hope you find it interesting.

According to Boris' four-stage plan: from 29<sup>th</sup> March groups of up to 6 people (or two households) can meet outside and in private gardens so let us hope the weather is kind to us and we can meet our friends and family again.

The vaccine programme is steadily progressing so that most of us have had one if not two vaccinations –it is obviously key to our route out of lockdown.

On a lighter note, Jim and I recently became grandparents for the first time and now have a beautiful granddaughter called Willow.

Take care and stay safe.

Val Whitehouse

**Wishing you all a very Happy Easter**  
**Best Wishes from the**  
**Rayleigh u3a Committee**



## Sad News



It is with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of some of our members recently. Wendy Eady sadly passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> February and is photographed here with her husband Fred of 54 years. Many of you may have met Fred and Wendy at the various events and monthly meetings.

We also learned of the passing of Harry Brickwood on 15th February. Harry (Henry) had been a member of the Rayleigh u3a for many years, organising gardening holidays but is perhaps best known for his leadership of the Wine Appreciation Group for twelve years until 2020.

Another one of our members Gladys Partridge sadly passed away on 7th March, Gladys who was 92 years old, had been in Southend Hospital for an operation.

These deaths were not COVID related.

## Digital Photography Group 2

June Jennings has sent this photo in- her Dad is third from the right in the front row. At the time he was a navy pensioner and had been recalled to train recruits. Good job we don't have to wear masks like these!

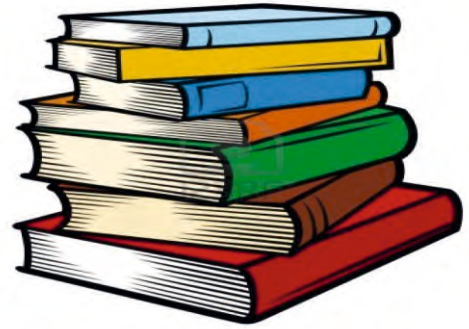


Collage photo- These are a few of the images the Group has for their upcoming Zoom meeting with the theme 'Smile'. They are from June Jennings, Jackie Soilleux and David Clarke.



## **Book Reading Group 2**

Like most other groups we have not been able to meet since September, but we have kept in touch with books that we have read and would recommend. The book that we all enjoyed was “Where the Crawdads Sing” by Delia Owens. It is set in the Marsh lands of North Carolina and is the story of Kya, abandoned by her parents when she was 6 years old, it tells how she bonds with nature and the creatures around her. It is beautifully written, there is a murder, a mystery and a love story as she grows into a beautiful young woman and a court trial. Definitely a book we would recommend.



Over the past months there have been many books available on Kindle, some for as little as 99p. Of these we would recommend Blood Orange by Harriet Tye, The Husband's Secret by Liane Moriarty, A Place Called Freedom by Ken Follett. A psychological thriller with a very clever ending is Our House by Louise Candlish. I would also mention the Seven Sisters series by Lucinda Riley. After reading the first (entitled The Seven Sisters) they can be read in any order. They have been on sale on Kindle for 99p. Now that the vaccination programme is well under way and restrictions are being eased, let us hope that this dreadful situation will improve and we will be able to meet up before too long.

**Janet Quinn Group Leader**

## **Book Reading Group 3**

Our last book before the library closed at the beginning of January was 'The Nightingale' by Kristin Hannah.

The book is set in Nazi-occupied France and tells the story of two sisters whose lives and temperaments are vastly different. As the war develops both sisters find themselves responding in different ways to the dangers that surround them - one in creating an escape route out of France for ditched allied aircrews and the other sister in helping to save the lives of Jewish children when their parents are sent to the death camps.

It is an exciting and absorbing read and to be thoroughly recommended.

### **Borrow Box**

Because the Libraries are closed at the moment we've found Borrow Box a useful source of reading material. Using Borrow Box allows you to borrow books on line. To members of Essex libraries it's all free, you can download books onto your tablet, computer or even onto your phone. And use them in the same way you might a Kindle. It's also possible to download audio books in the same way. Books maybe reserved if those you require are not available. So how do you do this? First you need to visit the App store on your computer, tablet or phone and download the Borrow Box App onto the device that you wish to use. Install the App and enter the required information, you will need your library number and password. Then away you go, you can search for books by name, author or genre. If you type Borrow Box into Google it will normally direct you to the App store and give examples of how to install and use Borrow Box. Good luck.

**Margaret White Group Leader**

**Paintings from the Art Group** - The Group have been set a few projects and have shared their work. The dog is by Amanda Lowe and the mountain scene is by Richard Holmes.



## Moon Walking

Whilst going for a walk along the River Crouch, Battlesbridge late one afternoon the sky was still quite bright and I caught a glimpse of the moon, which at the time, the bottom half looked like it was below a cloud but looking as though it was balancing on a wire. A little further along the walk, and another glimpse, it appeared as if it was a shining full moon perfectly balanced between the power lines!

Linda Osborne



## News from the Wine Tasting Group

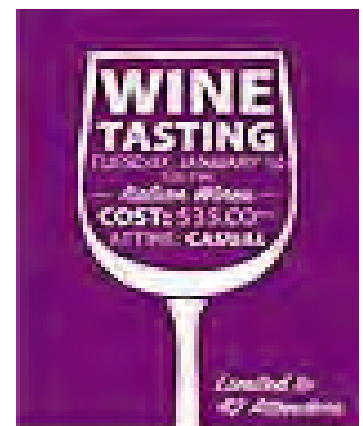
Like many others the Wine Appreciation Group has not been able to meet since February 2020 due to covid but has recently moved online and has used Zoom to keep in touch.

Although it has not been possible to operate as normal, i.e. compare notes on tasting the same wine, we have at least been able to maintain the social side of the group which is as important as the wine drinking (honestly!).

It has proved popular and we will continue to “Zoom” on our regular meeting night each month until such time as we can meet again in person.

If any groups are looking for ways to keep in touch it is well worth checking out Zoom on its website, [www.Zoom.us](http://www.Zoom.us) (NB Zoom.co.uk is a different company).

The basic version is free and not difficult to use. There are a number of pages and videos on the Zoom website which you can access using the “Zoom Help Centre”, including “Getting Started for New Users”, which can help you get started.



## THE CENSUS

On 14 November 1800, the attention of the House of Commons was called to the fact that there was a deficiency of our knowledge with regard to the real state of our population. The following week The House of Lords considered knowledge of the population to be essential to every state, in order to its being able fully to avail itself of its resources, or to provide for its wants. Thus, began the start of our Census returns. Various parish and ecclesiastical enumerations had taken place before that date, mainly in connection with the payment of tithes. The information collected was used

1801 was the year for the first official government census and it has continued to be taken at ten years intervals since then. The 1801-1831 Census returns provided the Government with the number of houses and those unoccupied, number of occupants and of employment. Very little of these records still exist.

By 1841 the Census provides us with more information. Enumerators could round down the ages of adults to the nearest multiple of 5. The age of children was recorded. Occupations were shown but not relationships and only whether or not they were born in the county. Where people were living was frequently quite vague –in the village or just the name of the street given. This made it difficult to know precisely where one's ancestors resided.

As the years have gone by more questions were asked in the Census as it was realised this would help in planning for our future. The 1911 Census was completely different from earlier ones in that forms were issued to each head of household to complete in his/her handwriting. Questions included how long they had been married and for the wife, how many children she had had, how many were alive and how many dead. The number of rooms in the house had did give some idea of the conditions in which they were living, also how many households there were in each building. Instead of being entered into Enumerators' books the actual forms completed by the head of the household have been kept and can be viewed.

The 1931 Census was completely destroyed by a fire (not related to the war) in 1942 and no census was taken in 1941, which is why the 1939 Registration document is so important.

The Government decided there was a need for another census in 1966 as it was a time of rapid change and development, and it was thought ten years was too long to wait for information which only a census provides. It applied to 1 in 10 households. I happened to be included in this. Although I do not remember the questions, my memory of it was that it took longer to complete than the one in 1961.

According to UK privacy laws, 100 years must elapse before the public can access census records. I am looking forward to the beginning of next year when the 1921 Census records will be released.

There can be many puzzles connected with the census. I know of at least two families who are missing from the 2001 Census as the Enumerator did not collect their forms. Sometimes people are entered twice –they may have committed bigamy or are living with two families. I found a relative entered twice in 1881, once with the Mother who ran the farm and again with the Father who ran the Butcher' shop. Ages may not be correct especially if the wife was older than the husband. The fact that a place of birth may be incorrect may simply be that they do not know where they were born and sometimes just a change from a local name to a nearer place name. Names could be entered in full, shortened to initials or abbreviated or with the family nickname.

Margaret Bristow



A different and novel way to celebrate Valentine's Day. Our members Linda and Ray Osborne and Andy and Ann Surety had afternoon teas delivered to their two homes and had a zoom afternoon tea. As you can see Linda and Ray were having a romantic time in Paris (well they wish they were there). Andy and Ann were obviously remembering those old favourites Love Hearts. They told us the food was lovely and came from the Laughing Pear in Rayleigh. Always good to support a local company.



## The Square

Margaret lifted the corner of the net curtain and tapped on the window. The dog looked up but, unperturbed, continued to squat in the centre of the tiny lawn.

A red-faced woman rushed into Margaret's front garden and held him by the collar, pulling him out onto the pavement. "Rufus, you bad boy. Come out. Come on."

She looked up at the window. "I'm so sorry. He slipped his lead while I was talking to Joyce. I've been trying to catch him. He's not mine, you see. I've been walking him for Dorothy. It's her hip, you know. Plays her up in this damp weather." Margaret nodded and smiled, opening the window. She knew all about pain.

"Haven't seen you before. I'm Barbara. I live across the other side of the square. Have you lived here long?"

"About a year, but I was usually at work. I'm Margaret." "You must come over for a coffee. Come tomorrow, 10.30. Number 73A. Dorothy's flat. Must dash. Rufus! Stop pulling." And Barbara was half dragged across the road, around the side of The Square.

Margaret had been attracted to the ground floor flat because of The Square. She'd viewed it during the spring and loved the rows of the former grand houses surrounding the small square of parkland. The grass was lush and there were benches set out under the shade of tall trees. Colourful shrubs were in bloom and there were drifts of daffodils and crocuses.

She'd imagined herself there, reading and enjoying the peace in this tiny haven, away from the hustle and bustle of London life. But she hadn't had much opportunity to do that. An accident at work had changed her life and she needed a walking frame until her back was stronger. She'd lost her confidence and was afraid to leave the flat. It was a lonely existence. The girls from work had called in at first but not recently. She sighed and reached for her book.

There was a knock at the door at 10.45 the next morning. It was Barbara. "Aren't you coming, Margaret? Oh! I hadn't realised that you were incapacitated. Never mind. Come along. I'll help you." The next thing Margaret knew, she was being bundled into her coat and helped out of the front door. "Got your key? The girls are looking forward to meeting you" And Barbara found herself being guided across the road and into The Square. She looked around and was dismayed to see damaged benches and graffiti sprayed onto the paths. The grass was in need of cutting and the bushes were overgrown. The daffodils had been trampled down and rubbish lay on the ground. "Whatever's happened here, Barbara? It was so beautiful last year." "Vandals got in. Some idiot left the gate unlocked. And old Bill passed away after Christmas. He looked after it all.

Dorothy's flat was warm and welcoming. Joyce had brought warm homemade scones and soon the four ladies were deep in conversation. Margaret mentioned the state of The Square and found that they all missed sitting over there on a warm day. "Most people are at work and rarely go there. It's us old uns that use it" said Dorothy. "Well," replied Barbara, "If it's us old uns that use it, us old uns are going to have to sort it out. I'll see if I can drum up some interest from the other residents. We'll all meet at Margaret's next Tuesday. All right Margaret?" And Margaret nodded obediently.

The following Tuesday, Margaret had made a Victoria sponge cake and set out her best china. She'd had a busy week and was feeling quite excited. Barbara took charge and told them all about the response from the neighbours. "Most of them aren't bothered. But I met a lovely policeman called Jack who's about to retire. He said he'll cut the grass but needs help with the rest and another chap said he'll look at repairing the benches."

Margaret raised her hand to silence the chatter of excited voices. "I used to work in the garden centre. That's where I hurt my back. I've contacted them and they've agreed to give us some of their spare stock. Plants and shrubs. They'll deliver them next week."

So, the next dry day, the four ladies were busy in The Square, scrubbing the graffiti off of the paths and cutting back the bushes. Weeding and planning new flower beds. They were soon joined by other people who missed their Square.

Jack retired and Barbara formed The Square committee, organising work parties and social gatherings. By Summer, the Square was full of colourful blooms. The old uns spent many happy days there, pottering amongst the flower beds and making new friends.

Margaret was never lonely now.

Sue Cairns



## *You Have My Hand*

*It' as though you took my hand and lent me comfort,  
Generously, you shared your delights with me,  
And I marvelled at those ordinary scenes,  
Those that I had walked past in other times,  
Taken for granted, too busy to linger,  
It could wait - another day another time,  
But now, you took my hand and lent me comfort.*

*I needed every moment you gave me,  
Squabbling starlings, unassuming sparrows,  
Greedy wood pigeons eating all I provided,  
A devoted pair of collard doves,  
The blackbird, an old friend,  
A garden, a pond, a haven,  
I savoured every moment you gave me.*

*I breathed it in and held it close,  
Those swathes of bluebells,  
First sightings of chiffchaffs and blackcaps,  
The arrival of swallows, swifts and cuckoos,  
Butterflies dancing to delight a walk,  
Peacocks and bright yellow brimstones,  
I breathed them all in.*

*I smiled at the simple pleasures,  
Avocet chicks and groups of goslings,  
A flash of red the cinnabar moth,  
The striking black necked grebe,  
Majestic owls and balletic hobbies,  
Shining yellow wagtails and yellowhammers,  
I craved these simple pleasures.*

*And so, as this year closes,  
Your rhythms have comforted me,  
Delightful brent geese arriving as always,  
Teal and wigeon regaining bejewelled plumage,  
Redwings and blackbirds feasting on berries,  
Early snowdrops peeping through,  
As this year closes - you have my hand.*

January 2020 to December 2020  
Janet Butcher

## The Tale of the Cracked Pot

A water bearer had two cracked pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water.

At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and half pots full of water to his house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made.

But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

"I am ashamed of myself, and want to apologise to you. I have been able to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts" the pot said.

The bearer said to the pot "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw and planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back you've watered them".

"For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house.

Moral: Each of us has our unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape. Remember to appreciate all the different people in your life.

Anon

Submitted by Irene Tyson



### Photo taken by Liz Baker in October 2007 of most of the first Committee Members of Rayleigh U3A

(Left to right)

Roger Baker, June Morris, David Carlton, Sue Taylor, Doreen Bodey, Maureen Huntly, Marian Allan, Irene Carter, Laurie Denny, Janet Carlton and Fred Carter.

Frank Bodey was on the Committee but not in the photo.

Sadly, Doreen, Marian and Janet are no longer with us.

