

# Rayleigh



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

## Newsletter Edition – No. 62 – July 2014

### FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

At our monthly meeting on Thursday July 3<sup>rd</sup> you are all invited to share in celebrating the 7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Rayleigh U3A. Our Founding Committee Members have been invited to attend and to mark the occasion with the cutting of a special Celebratory Cake. This day will also be our Groups Presentation Day organized by Groups' Coordinator, Bob Wren plus the official launch of the Poetry Group's Book, 'In Our Own Words'.

Thanks to the efforts of our Educational Events Committee led by Maureen Huntly a programme of eleven "Talks for All" has been put in place with the first at the WI Hall, Rayleigh on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July with a talk by Penny Waters on 'Herbal Medicine'. The remainder of the talks, which are scheduled throughout the Autumn, Winter and Spring, will cover a diverse range of subjects which we hope will cater for all tastes.

Thanks to the Social Events Committee led by Jane Godfrey we have 'Jazz on a Summer's Evening' with Kenny Baxter's Jazz Band to look forward to at the Rayleigh Club on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July. This event sold out very quickly. Tickets will be on sale again at the July meeting for the Barn Dance at Hullbridge Community Centre on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October.

The Walking Group holiday to Cornwall, organized by Liz and Roger Baker, and the Serendipity Group holiday to Somerset and Dorset, organized by Linda and David Clarke, were both a great success and blessed with good weather.

July is our last meeting before we meet again on 4<sup>th</sup> September when we will have William Tyler talking about 'The 60's (Fifty Years On)'.

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer break.

Sincerely,

**Pete Huntly**

**Chairman, Rayleigh U3A**

### Monthly Meetings

**Our Groups' Presentation Day, organised by Bob Wren, will form part of our monthly meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> July starting at 2.00 p.m. Table displays will be set up by Group Leaders to enable them to show and explain their group activities for the benefit of members.**

**Please remember that there will not be a monthly meeting in August.**

**At the next monthly meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup> our speaker will be Wm. Tyler. He is paying us a return visit and this time his talk will be entitled 'The 60s Fifty Years On' Wm. Tyler was awarded the MBE in 2009 for spending a lifetime in adult education. He currently lives in Witham and gives talks all over Essex, mainly historical, bringing the subject to life.**

## **A Member's Comments.**

We have had many interesting and informative lectures and talks over the years since Rayleigh U3A was established, but I feel motivated to comment on the 3 interesting and diverse talks given in April this year.

Most of the members at the monthly meeting will have been surprised and captivated by the frank talk given by a lady born and raised on the wrong side of the track, who made quite serious mistakes and paid the price with a long prison sentence. The talk was given without any self pity or arrogance, and she served her sentence as a well behaved prisoner. Using as she thought her shrewd upbringing to get any easy job in an open prison on a farm thinking about feeding chickens and lambs, she was rudely brought to reality when presented with a pig sty. Following making eye contact with one of the pigs and falling in love, the germ of a successful business 'Giggly Pigs' was born. On completion of her term, she established the business which now employs 35 people and it is a tribute to her tenacity and dedication to improve her lot in life.

By contrast, the lecture given at the W.I. Hall in Rayleigh organised by the Science group was heart warming, interesting and informative. It was given by a very smart lady who was the front spokesperson and chief fund raiser for a charity 'Mercy Ships'. Established with one second hand cruise ship, I think in the 1950s, the ship was converted to a floating hospital crewed by volunteers who gave their services not only free but paid for the privilege by providing their own fares and accommodation costs while on the ship from 2 weeks to 10 months. Consisting of doctors, dentists, nurses, engineers, ancillary staff and cooks to name a few, they provided medical treatment to many of the deprived and poorest areas of the West Coast of Africa. They treat, educate and train locals, dig wells for fresh water and are welcomed by many of the regimes on the West Coast some of whom are, to say the least, dubious, but they are well treated and helped by the countries by waiving docking fees and given some security. They now have two ships and such is their success, they have commissioned a third built to their own specification.

On completion of the lecture, Maureen gave her many thanks and a donation to the charity on our behalf.

The lunch and after dinner talk by the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Lord Petre, who is the Queen's representative for our county was informative and enlightening as to what goes on in the county. After an excellent meal with plenty of variety for both lunch and sweet the speech was delivered in a very informal manner and he made light of his duties which are far more influential than he would have us believe. He has an extensive staff who plan important visits to the county by royalty as well as by foreign and business dignitaries. The position goes back to the 1600s and two of his own ancestors held the post, the first he informed us was a very dubious character. He added that the post of Lord Lieutenant is now filled throughout the country by both men and women. A most entertaining and thoroughly enjoyable afternoon.

I am sure for those members who attended all three talks and those who managed only one or two, on their behalf I would like to say thanks to the committee members who research, select and organise these lectures for their tireless and unpaid dedication which makes the Rayleigh U3A so successful.

**Brian Dennis**

## ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT A National Trust Property



We have all seen photos of the legendary St. Michael's Mount just off the coast of Cornwall in Mounts Bay, but what was its purpose; a fort, a monastery, a family home? You are right whichever you choose. In its history it has been all three.

Approached by foot across the causeway at low tide or by a short ferry journey as the tide comes in, during a recent educational holiday organised by Liz and Roger Baker, we experienced both. It is a steep climb to the top, passing the heart shaped cobbles of battlements with canons in place from its day as a fortress in the War of the Roses, the Cornish Rebellion against Edward VI and the English Civil War,



into the castle, originally the site of a Benedictine Monastery, now a family home of the St. Aubyn family but rarely used by them today. For the use of the family and their supplies, there exists a funicular railway from the quay, through a tunnel in the gardens, into the bedrock and up to the top of the building. This is not available to view but it is good to know that the St. Aubyn family didn't have the hard trek up to and down from their living quarters.

Perhaps most striking for me was the room known as the Chevy Chase, the refectory for the priory, with its elaborate decoration, shields and its large dining table.

I can picture myself relaxing in the Smoking Room with a drink or two.

Within the Mount is a simple medieval church dedicated to Saint Michael and still used for Sunday services from the end of May to the end of September.

Unfortunately, in our visit, we had to choose between the tower or a visit to the beautiful gardens that surround it.

**Robin Blake**



## Winning Windmill

On 14<sup>th</sup> May, Trevor Rand, who runs the volunteers at Rayleigh Windmill, was up in London with Matt Harwood-White from Rochford District Council. They had been invited to the National Museums and Heritage Awards ceremony as Rayleigh Windmill, now a small museum, had been shortlisted for a prize.

There were several categories and Trevor and Matt waited to hear the result; in the Customer Service category, beating off competition from other museums, the national winner was – Rayleigh Windmill! Winners in other categories included the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Mary Rose museum. Rayleigh Windmill is staffed by volunteers from Rayleigh and the judges, to a packed audience of several hundred people representing some of the biggest museums in the country, commented on the incredible work by the volunteers and the service they provide to the community. Trevor was personally congratulated by the chairman of the panel, the Director of the Imperial War Museum.

For details of volunteering at the windmill, please contact Trevor Rand, Peg Foster or myself.

**Ian Haynes**



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### Notes from the Secretary – July 2014

A few snippets which may interest you -

- Richard Skinner, a member of the Plymstock U3A ([riskinner@virginmedia.com](mailto:riskinner@virginmedia.com)) would like to hear from any classical music group leaders who use the Naxos Classical Music Library.
- The publisher of Popular Patchwork magazine is offering U3A members 1 year`s subscription (13 issues) for a one-off payment of £37.40 (U3A rate for credit/debit card payment) This is a saving of 32% against the shop price and is a 13% discount off the normal credit/debit card rate. U3A subscribers will also receive a free copy of Harriet Hargrave`s `All in One Quilter`s Reference Tool` worth £11.99. To take up this offer please call: 0844 543 8200 quoting code ex49 or visit [www.subscription.co.uk/ppw/ex49](http://www.subscription.co.uk/ppw/ex49).
- RDF Television in Bristol is producing the 5<sup>th</sup> series of the popular antique programme `Secret Dealers` and is currently looking for people with treasure lurking in their living rooms to take part. If you are interested you can call on 0117 970 7674 or email [secretdealers@rdftelevision.com](mailto:secretdealers@rdftelevision.com).
- Parliamentary Outreach now has a noticeboard in the members` area of the U3A website providing interesting information about tours and events.

Jackie Soilleux

### Information from Members

Several group leaders have asked us to emphasise to Members the importance of providing all requested information when making applications to participate in events, outings and holidays. Where applicable, this includes mobile phone numbers, ICE (in case of emergency) contact names and phone numbers, and joining locations (when coaches are being used for transport).

Failing to give the required information at the outset only puts more work pressure on group leaders. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

In our U3A we have an enthusiastic poetry group who have just published their first book of poems they have written themselves. As a taster, two of these poems follow:

### Holidays by Air

Off to the airport to catch the plane,  
Not a second to lose, nor a moment to gain,  
My case is too heavy, what can I lose?  
Do I really need ten pairs of shoes?  
Or that thick woolly jumper I always take?  
To leave it at home could be a mistake.  
I know that Tobago is 30 degrees,  
But a sudden cold snap could make me freeze.  
Gatwick itself is a place to behold.  
Like an ant heap upturned the young and the old  
Scurry hither and thither to be first in the queue  
At the check-in, to get a window view.  
At last! All aboard, ensconced in my seat,  
Safety belt fastened, my bag at my feet.  
The plane is now airborne, not quite supersonic.  
“Yes please! I’ll have a large gin and tonic.”

*Ann Davison*

### It Isn't Quite Fair

It isn't quite fair  
That men lose their hair  
Whereas women's coiffure looks brand new  
And that gents disappear  
By their eightieth year  
But ladies exceed ninety-two

It doesn't seem just  
That my joints are all bust  
And I can't get around like I could  
And why should it be  
That it's harder to see  
And my hearing is not very good?

It isn't quite right  
While my brain is so bright  
With a lifetime of learning and lore  
That technology change  
Pushes things out of range  
And I don't understand any more.

Well, I shouldn't complain,  
At least I remain,  
And I've had lots that life has to bring.  
Or so I am told;  
Oh dear .... now that I'm old  
I just can't remember a thing!

*Ian Haynes*





## GARDENING CORNER

It has been a splendid spring in contrast with 2013. Growth and flowering are 3 weeks early and, apart from the inevitable repairs and replacements of plants that became waterlogged during the winter storms, surprisingly, a large proportion of those `risky` plants survived the onslaught and, despite a `field day` for slugs and snails, everything is now on target for a beautiful summer. Fruit blossom had a frost free ride and it looks like another good harvest again but of course nature can do nasty things beyond our control, so fingers crossed.

### PRUNING

Spring flowering shrubs and trees are now just right for pruning and shaping, removing any suckers that appear from ground level (SOME SHRUBS AND TREES ARE GRAFTED) and growth from below the grafting point will not appear with the same leaf size and shape. If this is the case, remove it. As a general rule `pruning just after flowering` applies to most herbaceous shrubs and trees and the new growths have time to mature before the onset of winter. It is worth mentioning that if you have a Box hedge with bare or brown patches, dig it up and burn it. Box blight is untreatable and will spread rapidly and kill the rest. Cutting back to green areas won't help.

### A – Z of PLANTS and SHRUBS



#### Exochorda Macrantha – The Bride

A splendid, easy to grow shrub with masses of white flowers in early spring on dark green foliage.

Fast grower but responds well to hard pruning every year.

**Hardy Fuchsias** This is one of my `good doers`. The following are tried and tested and will survive all but the hardest of winters.

**Hawkshead** – Clusters of white and pink flowers all summer



**Magellanica** – Makes a large dense bush but prunable after flowering in autumn



**Tom Thumb** – As the name suggests can be trained as a mini standard



Others like **Rose of Castille** (not shown) are bigger but trainable.

**Have a wonderful Summer – Brian Kersey 01268 743959**

### Introducing Walking Group 4



We've only just started and new members are very welcome. I'm an experienced walk leader and currently chair of Leigh-on-Sea & District Holiday Fellowship (HF) Rambling Group. I've many walks both local and further afield to bring to the group including Constable Country and Epping Forest. I'm happy to adjust to the capabilities and interests of group members and if you've got a favourite walk that you'd like us to do, then please let me know. Our walks are between 4 and 6 miles long and may include a pub lunch. We walk at a leisurely 2 – 2½ mph, which is about 1 mph slower than the Ramblers. We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month at Victoria Rd Car Park, Rayleigh for car share, at 10.00am. Our next walk will be on the 19<sup>th</sup> July with an optional meal at the Generals Arms, Little Baddow. This very scenic walk is about 5 miles long and proceeds along the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation towpath for about a third of its length. The photo shows the Paper Mill Lock where we'll stop for our own refreshments, or buy something from the popular tearoom.

**If you'd like to join us on the 19<sup>th</sup> July, please e-mail me at: [peterabrey78@hotmail.com](mailto:peterabrey78@hotmail.com) or phone me on 01268 777245.**

**Peter Abrey – Group Leader**

## 7TH ANNIVERSARY OF RAYLEIGH U3A

When I retired in 2006 I knew I wanted to get the most out of my retirement years. Like all members of U3A we cross the threshold of our retirement years with a feeling of trepidation, curiosity and excitement. I had no idea what the forthcoming years would hold for me.

A friend rang one day to tell me about Marian Allen, a member of Basildon & Billericay U3A who lived in Rayleigh and who wanted to start a U3A here and was looking to gather together a Steering Committee. A group of us were invited to meet in Marian's home seven years ago and made a plan. There was a lot of work to be done before we could launch 'Rayleigh U3A'. A decision was made by us all to apply for a grant from the Essex Community Foundation for which we needed to put together an Equal Opportunities Policy, Code of Practice and a Mission Statement plus write our Constitution. Our Treasurer Fred Carter had to produce projected accounts showing estimated income and expenditure and a Business Plan for the formation and continuation of the Rayleigh U3A. We each took on a role, mine as Secretary to Marian as Chairman holding minuted formal meetings for all of the above plus deciding on our U3A name, a hall and a date for our first meeting. We put advertising posters in shops, the library, RRVS, in the local newspapers and waited. We took advice from the Third Age Trust. Our Membership Secretary Irene Carter got the forms printed in readiness. Brian Kersey took on the role as Speaker Finder for our future meetings.

Following all our efforts we were delighted when a grant was awarded and so the countdown began until our very first meeting on the first Friday in October 2007 - we were all excited but nervous, would anyone come?

Suddenly the queue started at the door, we could not believe that sixty nine people would be keen to join us. We had eleven groups under the guidance of Sue Taylor within weeks. Marian asked the Founder Members to start the first group which was 'Church Visiting Group' and we are still going strong. Roger Baker started a 'Walking Group', quickly followed by Brian Kersey with his 'Photography Group' and others followed in quick succession.

The Holy Trinity Hall was ideal for our meetings and we grew from strength to strength and numbers. When we reached 250 strong we realised that we had outgrown our hall and entered into negotiations with Mill Hall. As luck would have it they had a vacant afternoon on the first Thursday in the month at a reasonable rate. We had our new home.

I was honoured when Marian asked me to take on the role as Chairman in the first year and the next four years were a huge learning curve for us all. Our numbers are now 450 members. We have over 60 groups, a social diary of events and a calendar of educational 'Talks for All'. As a U3A we are innovative, regenerating with each year....and formidable as the Committee helped to launch the Rayleigh Grange, Hullbridge, Hadleigh, Hockley and Canvey Island U3A's.

Our lifetime and working skills are put to good use by taking on roles as Committee Members, Group Leaders and organising within our Groups. Jane Godfrey has recently taken over the role of Social Events from myself using her skills as an Events Manager organising an excellent programme of events for us all to enjoy. Jane has a Social Events Committee who help make decisions, help at events, sell tickets, etc. Many members are Volunteers within the Rayleigh U3A, helping at the monthly meetings, making refreshments, putting notices on our Exhibition Boards, answering questions at the desk all under the guidance of Membership Secretary, New Members Secretary and our Volunteer Coordinator. The 'Talks for All' Education Team put together a series of talks with some subjects suggested by yourselves. We have a monthly newspaper started by Janet and David Carlton as one sheet seven years ago and now has coloured photos and articles written by members and a four strong Editorial Team (Roger and Liz Baker & Irene and John Tyson).

A need for different types of Volunteers became evident as we grew, now we have Fred Carter who looks after the Microphone System and David Clarke and Pete Huntly who set up and give members up to date information before every monthly meeting using our laptop, screen and projector. Two of our Founder Members started a book stall which is today run at every meeting by a team of volunteers including Don and June Cooper and Doreen Oliver.

Reflection makes me realise how much we have achieved in seven short years. For myself I have found fulfilment, many hours sitting at a computer, a very full calendar, lots of friends and an enriched retirement with many more years to enjoy. I hope all of you who are reading this feel the same. A great deal has been achieved by so few for so many to enjoy.

I have a great deal to thank Marian for as she started me on my U3A journey and I am so pleased that my husband Pete agreed to take on the challenge as Rayleigh U3A Chairman this year.

### **Maureen Huntly**

Ex Committee Secretary, ex, Chairman, Ex Social Events Secretary, Educational Talks Coordinator, Committee Member, Group Leader and Happy U3A member.

## STEERING GROUP COMMITTEE in 2007

Marian Allen (*Chairman*) Maureen Huntly (*Secretary*) Fred Carter (*Treasurer*) Irene Carter (*Membership Secretary*)  
Brian Kersey (*Speaker Finder*) Sue Taylor (*Group Coordinator*) Committee Members : Ron Allen, Terry Taylor, Barbara and George Dunmore, Doreen and Frank Bodey, Janet and David Carlton, Betty Herbert and Eileen Harrold

**THE AIMS OF RAYLEIGH U3A** in 2007 and are as relevant today as they were then.

To encourage and enable older people no longer in full time paid employment to help each other to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experience.

To demonstrate the benefits and enjoyment to be gained and the new horizons to be discovered in learning throughout life.

To celebrate the capabilities and potential of older people and their value to society

To make U3As accessible to all older people.

To encourage the establishment of U3As in every part of the country where conditions are suitable and to support and collaborate with them. **Maureen Huntly**

### Talks For All

*Researched and arranged by Education Committee Members.*

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July at the WI Hall  
Penny Waters - **'Herbal Medicine'**

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> October at Holy Trinity Hall  
Claire Ivey MNCH (Acc) - **'Hypnotherapy'**

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October at WI Hall  
Shiela Billins - **'Student Nurse Training in the 60's at The London Hospital'**

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> October at Holy Trinity Hall  
Bill Fulton, Chairman of the Essex Association of the Western Front Association –  
**'The Human Face of the Great War'**

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November at Holy Trinity Hall  
Roger Smith - **'History of Stowe Maries Aerodrome and its Future'**

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November at WI Hall  
Chris Tyas, RSPB - **'Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project'**

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November at Holy Trinity Hall  
Tom Doig **'Old Photographs – Identification and Dating'**

**All Talks Begin at 2pm – 4pm**  
**Tickets on Sale at the July Meeting at £2 each to cover the cost of hall hire and refreshments**

**Details of Committee members are available on the website.**



**Please note that contributions for the September Newsletter should be with the Editors by the 10<sup>th</sup> of August.**

Please send articles for inclusion to:

Liz and Roger Baker – [rogerbaker99@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rogerbaker99@hotmail.co.uk)  
Irene and John Tyson – [jatyson1@aol.com](mailto:jatyson1@aol.com)

### Social Events

All tickets for the Jazz Night on 17<sup>th</sup> July are now sold. Just to remind those of you who have tickets, they will serve the hog roast at 8.30 p.m. so if this is much later than you would usually eat and could be a problem, do have something to eat before you come. I have only had 3 vegetarian requests, so if you haven't told me you are vegetarian, please let me know as soon as possible. Hopefully this will be a very enjoyable evening for everyone. There will be seats and tables for all so I do ask you not to arrive before 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. start as you will not be able to get in. The band must have time to set up.



The next event is the Barn Dance at The Hullbridge Community Centre on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> October. This seems a long way off but as we do not have a meeting in August, tickets are now available at £16. This includes a supper of jacket potato with a choice of filling, and music by the Famous Potatoes. Sure to be a fun evening so have your cheque book with you at the July meeting to buy your tickets! Lots of people paid with cash for the Jazz Night tickets and I had quite a large amount of cash to look after, so I would appreciate cheques, if possible, so that I don't have that extra responsibility.

On Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November, we shall have another of our popular Quiz Nights led by David Lutterloch at Trinity Hall, Rayleigh. Tickets at £4 will be on sale at the September meeting. There will be a Maximum of 12 teams, each with a maximum of 8 people. Bring your own drinks and nibbles.

Many thanks to those of you who support these events, and if anyone has an idea for a function I am always happy to consider a new venture.

**Jane Godfrey** Social Events Secretary

IT IS A GREAT HELP IF, WHEN PURCHASING TICKETS, YOU HAVE YOUR CHEQUE MADE OUT TO RAYLEIGH U3A FOR THE APPROPRIATE AMOUNT AND YOUR PHONE NUMBER ON THE REVERSE