

# Rayleigh



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

**Newsletter Edition – No.61 – May 2014**  
**This Month's Meeting Thursday 1st May**  
**Speaker - Geo. Fradgley – 'The Island of Mauritius'**

**FROM THE CHAIR**

Dear Members,

I am honoured to become Chairman of Rayleigh U3A and to be part of a Committee who will encourage our members to start/lead more Groups and work in conjunction with the Education Committee, now chaired by Educational Events Coordinator, Maureen Huntly, to research and plan a programme of Speakers for the monthly meetings, a series of 'Talks for All' during the autumn and winter months and plan a Study Day for 2015.

Welcome to the new members of our Committee - Membership Secretary Gwen Greenwood, Social Events Coordinator Jane Godfrey and Fred Carter Speaker Secretary; the reformed Education and Social Committees and the new band of Volunteers who make our meetings and events run so smoothly. A list of the committee members with all their contact details can be found on our website at <http://www.rayleighu3a.org.uk/>

Forty-two of our new members came together for a Coffee Morning on 9th April to find out more about our U3A. Group Leaders spoke about their groups and encouraged the new members to think about starting new groups. Committee member Doreen Blake now has special responsibility for liaising with new members.

Our Social Events Committee is working hard planning a varied and interesting series of events throughout the year. If you have ideas for future social events you would like to put forward please contact Jane Godfrey.

At this month's meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May there will be an opportunity to buy tickets for the 'Jazz on a Summers' Evening' to be held at Rayleigh Club, Hullbridge Road on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July. This is a new event organized by Jane Godfrey and her Committee. Tickets will be £20 and include a hog roast, dessert and a fun night of jazz music brought to us by Kenny Baxter and his band.

As a Family History Group Leader I am organizing a coach trip to the National Archives on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June. If you would like to go please get in touch.

Our Speaker this month is Geo. Fradgley who will talk about the beautiful island of Mauritius.

Sincerely,

*Pete Huntly*

**Chairman Rayleigh U3A**

**This Month's Speaker**

Our speaker at the monthly meeting in May will be Geo. Fradgley. He is a tour guide in Suffolk but on this occasion in his relaxed and friendly manner he will be talking about the tropical paradise of the island of Mauritius



## Theatre Trips

Many thanks to those of you who completed and returned your questionnaires about theatre trips. Especial thanks to those who offered help of any kind. These offers have been recorded and we will call on you if necessary.

It seems that most people are interested in musicals, both in London and locally, ballet, opera and London plays. We will probably concentrate on these types of shows but if anything else interesting comes along we will notify you. Those of you who are on E-Mail will be notified this way when shows become available. If you are not on E-Mail and would like to be advised by text, please ensure that we have your mobile contact.

The main way of advertising will be on the Groups/Theatre website, the same site on which you get your bi-monthly magazine, so please check the website regularly. We will also advertise trips at the monthly meetings.

Please be aware that there is no provision for refunding ticket money once the tickets have been purchased. Please also be aware that no names were automatically carried forward from the old Theatre Group.

If you would like to see a particular show/play we can always see if we can get a group price. Let us know the details. Some London plays give a group reduction for as few as 6 people.

If you don't know us, please come to the Theatre Trips desk in the Bar area at the monthly meetings and say 'hello'. We look forward to seeing you on future trips.

Sandra and Joan

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### **GROUP LEADERS' DAY - A REMINDER**

To all Group Leaders and Committee Members who are attending.  
GROUP LEADERS' DAY on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup>. May 2014  
to be held at Saxon Hall, Aviation Way SS4 1AX

*Doors will open at 9.15 a.m. for a 9.30 a.m. start*

### **Next Month's Speaker**

Our speaker at the monthly meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup> will be Frank Last. His talk is entitled 'Badgers and the Badgermen'. Frank has had a life-long enthusiasm for badgers and is Chairman of the Essex Badger Protection Group. The welfare of badgers is of course a currently sensitive countryside issue on which there are divided opinions.

## Churches of Great Expectations

Recently our church visiting groups combined for a trip to visit two North Kent Churches and Rochester Cathedral. The day proved memorable in many respects, not least because the sun shone (and we all know how that saying goes).

During the morning we visited two churches which are both cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. The object of the Trust which was created in 1969 is to ensure that 'redundant' churches are kept in repair and cared for, in the interests of the Church and Nation, for present and future generations.

St. James's Church, Cooling and St. Mary's, Higham are both small churches set in very remote, bleak locations which are no longer used regularly for services although they remain consecrated and are both beautiful and atmospheric.

The churches are well known for their links with Charles Dickens. He is thought to have set the opening chapter of *Great Expectations* in St. James' Churchyard where there is a row of childrens' tombstones (now referred to as Pip's graves). Dickens wrote of them as *'five little stone lozenges each about a foot and a half long .....and were sacred to the memory of five little brothers of mine .....!'*



In fact the graves belong to the children of two families who died in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Dickens also had strong connection with St. Mary's, Higham which became his parish church when he moved into Gad's Hill Place in 1859. He lived in Higham until he died in 1870 and would have known the church well. In 1860 his daughter Katey was married there.

Both churches were memorable in different ways, however, I particularly enjoyed the tale of a vicar who managed to get two nuns pregnant during his time at Cooling. It just goes to show that nothing really changes in life!!!

Rochester Cathedral proved to be an inspiring building with a wonderful history whilst continuing to provide a sense of peace and security for today's visitors.

As we looked at medieval floor tiles in the presbytery our guide informed us that a few of the tiles were laid the wrong way round, apparently to remind us that only God is perfect and we mere mortals make mistakes. He also said that they were hard to spot so I stopped listening to him and am pleased to say that I spotted two.

So.....a salutary lesson was learned about the fallibility of man at both the churches and the cathedral – also perhaps (on a more mundane note) that some of us don't listen all the time.

It was a superb trip and I think it could make a good day out for members should you feel like following in our footsteps. If the sun should shine you will know that you too have joined the 'righteous'.

Irene Tyson

With many thanks to Irene and Fred Carter for organising the trip.

## A Walk around Chelmsford

We started our day with a 'free' ride from Rayleigh to Chelmsford on the X30 (using our bus passes) but as we are a walking group we thought we should then use our legs to visit the many places of interest in our county town of Chelmsford. However, before we walked, our Group naturally needed to refresh itself with morning coffee or hot chocolate courtesy of Costa !

Chelmsford Cathedral was the highlight of our walking tour. It was only in 1914 that the church in the centre of Chelmsford became a cathedral in the newly-created diocese of Chelmsford.

Subsequent later developments of interest in the Cathedral saw the south porch extended in 1953 to mark Anglo-American friendship after World War II and the many US airmen stationed in Essex. In 1954 the Cathedral was additionally dedicated to Saints Peter and Cedd. In 1983, the interior of the Cathedral was extensively refurbished with a new floor, seating, altar, Bishop's throne, font and artwork. In 1994 and 1995, two pipe organs were installed, the first in the nave and the second in the chancel. The stained-glass windows were all installed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2000 a sculpture of "Christ in Glory" by Peter Eugene Ball was placed above the chancel arch. In 2004 two further major works of art were commissioned, and are now in place: Mark Cazelet's "Tree of Life" painting in the North Transept and Philip Sanderson's altar frontal in the Mildmay Chapel.



The Cathedral is of course not the only building of interest in Chelmsford – the Georgian Shire Hall has an interest all of its own and the town's industrial heritage is also noteworthy.

Jackie Soilleux  
Walking Group Three

### **New items available for sale on the Information Desk**

Did you know that in addition to the U3A badges we sell at £1.00 and key rings at £1.50, you can now purchase some U3A pens in gunmetal grey at £1.00, useful trolley coins with a combined key ring for £1.00, U3A pencils with rubbers for 10p each and, for those who of you who still use a desktop computer there are U3A mouse mats at £1.00.

Also I would like to remind you that there is a SUGGESTION BOX at the entrance and if you have any ideas for improvements to your U3A experience please put it down in writing and I can pass these comments on to the committee for discussion at the next meeting. I will be around near the entrance at the monthly meetings if anyone wishes to speak to me personally, or email me, with their ideas of what you would like to see on the information desk.

If you are now able to access the newsletter via your computer using our website and therefore no longer require a hard copy, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can change the records.

Please could you have your new Blue U3A card ready for checking when attending the monthly meetings.

Gwen Greenwood  
Membership Secretary

## BIRDWATCHING 2

February's meeting was held at Hanningfield Reservoir on the 11th and it was another wet and windy day. Despite the weather, we had a pleasant walk through the woods and visited 2 of the hides where we saw Shoveler ducks, Swans, Cormorants, baby Grebe and Great Crested Grebe (in courting mode).

Also in evidence were Canada Geese, Coots and Tufted Ducks.

After a couple of hours we retired to the information centre and settled down to hot chocolate and cake where we saw through the viewing window Great tits, Blue Tits and Long Tailed Tits.

Everyone enjoyed the day and it was decided the next watch would be at Rainham Marshes on 11th March.



The visit to Rainham Marshes turned out to be our best visit yet.

Good weather and some really interesting "spots".

It started with a Reed bunting on the way to the first hide.

At the first hide we spotted a Little Egret, Great Crested Grebes and baby Grebes and Pochard.

The next and largest hide brought great rewards spotting a Peregrine Falcon high up on a pylon.

The third hide (overlooking the main scrape) yielded views of Lapwing, Canada Geese, Shelduck, and Teal.

Of special interest were the Pintail, Gadwall and (best of all) a Ruff.

Finally back to the café where we enjoyed a hot drink and hot sandwiches and views of Greenfinch, Robin and Pheasant around the static feeder.

A great visit and next time we decided we will visit the newly opened Bower's Marsh at Pitsea on 8th April.



The visit to Bower's Marsh at Pitsea was a curtailed visit due to the polar conditions (the call of a hot drink was too much to resist).

Interestingly we met Canvey U3A birdwatchers and they too were off to find more Mediterranean conditions in the way of Wat Tyler Park's café.

Despite our brief visit we managed to see Shelduck, Shoveler Duck, Corn Bunting.

Our next meeting will be a return visit to either Hanningfield Reservoir or Two Tree Island.

I won't mention who managed to lock their keys, spare keys, handbag and mobile phone in their car having to resort to the AA to break into the new car to retrieve (all ended happily if not a little cold).

John Edwards  
Group Leader  
Birdwatching 2 Group

## Contributions to the Community

As a direct result, 5 years ago, of our former Madam Chairman, Maureen Huntly, introducing Alan Hudson and me to the independent local charity, Southend Blind Welfare Organisation (SBWO) in Hamlet Court Road, a sporting group was created for them. Blind and partially sighted members of SBWO started going Tenpin bowling at the Kursaal, Southend, on a regular basis.

Over time, we linked up with the National Blind Tenpin Bowling Association, a national charity which organises postal competitions of trios matches in the winter and doubles matches in the summer. Between 50 and 60 teams nationwide, from Glasgow to Portsmouth, compete fortnightly over approximately 11 matches each season, with the top 12 teams meeting for a head-to head fun weekend in Crewe or Wigan to find the national champions and for everyone to socialise with like-minded people. Even the adorable guide dogs are allowed to relax and play in a safe and friendly environment.

During the past three years, the two teams from SBWO have managed to reach the National finals and have finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> in 2013 and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, the previous year. Participation and stimulation in the community and greater awareness to the general public is a benefit to all concerned.

At a tangent, our local Round Table has a website 'Colourthon.org' and hold, every year, a half marathon walk to raise funds for Essex Charities, currently 88 of them will be represented this year.

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>. July at 8.00 p.m. I, with others, will be joining a thousand or more walkers raising money for deserving organisations and if any U3A members would like to support me in this venture, you don't have to walk - but you can make a donation at my Groups' Coordinator's desk at our regular monthly meetings at the Mill Hall or contact me via our website. Every 50p will be put to good use and many thanks.

Bob Wren - Groups' Coordinator

### **'TALKS FOR ALL'**

From your Education Committee

The ethos behind U3A is self-help and education. Simply explained, retirement gives you time and opportunity to find out more about things that interest you.

The Education Committee is a group of like-minded people who enjoy researching and finding speakers who talk about many and varied subjects. We have a speaker at most monthly meetings and then in the Autumn and Winter we have a programme of six afternoon talks. Subjects have included Essex Pub Signs, authors, editor of Evening Echo, City of London Blue Badge Guide, Police work, to name but a few.

We have now introduced 'Talks for All'. If you would like to have a speaker talk about a subject you want to know more about, then contact me and my team for help to find one.

To add to our list of speakers for the last three years, we have had a Study Day – the subjects have been 'Family History', 'Victorian London' and 'Festival of Words' introducing speakers who talk about different aspects of the subjects chosen. The next one will be in 2015 and the subject is as yet unknown so please let us know your ideas.

At the Speaker's lunch for 2014, Lord Petre from Ingatestone Hall spoke about his role as Lord Lieutenant of Essex. We have previously had Authors, an Auctioneer and a Hypnotherapist .....Who will be next? If you would like to suggest a speaker for 2015 Speaker's Lunch, then we would love to hear from you.

Remember this is our U3A so why not make it happen for you and for us all!

Maureen Huntly, Educational Events Coordinator

## 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



## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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## STOP PRESS

### Social Events

Some dates for your diary

Jane Godfrey – Social Events Coordinator

#### Thursday 17<sup>th</sup>. July 2014

Jazz on a Summer Evening at the Rayleigh Club with the  
Kenny Baxter Band.

Price includes Hog Roast plus dessert (Veg. option available)  
Tickets £20 on sale at the May meeting

#### Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>. October 2014

Barn Dance at Hullbridge Community Centre.

Music by The Famous Potatoes.

Buffet consisting of Jacket Potatoes with a choice of fillings.

Tickets £16 on sale at the June meeting.

#### Saturday 1<sup>st</sup>. November 2014

Quiz Night at Trinity Hall, Rayleigh

Quiz Master David Lutterloch

Teams of up to 8, max. 12 teams

Bring your own drinks and nibbles

Tickets £4 on sale at the September meeting.

*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*

#### **A NOTE FROM YOUR EDITORS**

Now that we are publishing the Newsletter earlier in the month, so that we can achieve better distribution arrangements, it is important that Group Leaders' and Members' contributions for publication are received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the normal monthly meeting (e.g. 10<sup>th</sup> June for the July edition)  
Please cooperate with us in this regard.

**Please send articles for inclusion to:**

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