

Rayleigh



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Newsletter Edition – No. 64 – November 2014
This Month's Meeting Thursday 6th November
Speaker - Prof. Jules Pretty OBE

FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the November Newsletter bringing you up to date news on events and talks to take place throughout the winter months ahead. Thanks to our team of reporters and the editorial team for all their hard work. This is a busy time of the year for everyone thinking about forthcoming Christmas Celebrations and the planning and shopping that it entails. It is all worthwhile when you enjoy the company of friends and family.

I know you all look forward to the Rayleigh U3A monthly meetings or your Group Meetings, Social and Educational Events but none of these would be there to enjoy if it were not for the people who use their skills, knowledge and expertise to put this programme together for you.

If you would like to contribute a little of your time to continue to make Rayleigh U3A the success it is then we would like to hear from you. There are vacancies on the Committee as the incumbents have served their time in office according to our Constitution and therefore have to stand down but they are willing to help train new Committee Members in the vacant roles.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Peg Foster who has stood down as Volunteer Coordinator. Peg has held this post for 2 years and is a familiar face as you enter the meetings at Mill Hall. She made sure there was always someone on hand to help when needed and to do refreshments. Peg has decided to step down from her Committee role as she has recently had heart surgery and is allowing herself time to recover. She hopes to be able to come along to our meetings again soon. I know you will join me and the Committee in thanking her for taking on the role as Volunteer Coordinator.

To summarise the vacancies on the Committee are:-

Vice Chairman, Treasurer (No. 1 Account), Social Treasurer, Groups' Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator and Committee Member.

To give of yourselves is the greatest gift you can give at this time of year and so many people rely on the lifestyle that Rayleigh U3A enables them to lead. Please think about it and then give me a call on 01268 777398 to discuss or email me at pa.huntly@btinternet.com You will also find within this Newsletter an invitation to all those who are interested to know more to attend a pre-Christmas get together with the Committee. I am delighted to tell you that we already have a member who has come forward to train as Social Treasurer pending election at the next AGM.

I can assure you that 2015 will be a great year for you, me and all our members if we continue to organise a programme of events, groups and meetings but we cannot do this without your help. Please make 'yourself' a Christmas Gift to Rayleigh U3A.

Sincerely,
Pete Huntly

Chairman, Rayleigh U3A

**Commemoration of the
First World War**



**Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red
5 August – 11 November**

I wrote in the September edition of this Newsletter about the wonderful display of red poppies in the church at East Bergholt, which our Church Visiting Group Two witnessed in their visit to the church in July, and which commemorated the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

An even larger commemorative display of poppies is being installed in the dry moat of the Tower of London, and Roger and I saw this installation taking place by a large group of volunteers. By 11th November, Armistice Day, the moat of the Tower will be turned into a sea of red, with one poppy for each of the 888,266 British and Colonial soldiers killed during the War. The poppies will encircle the iconic landmark, creating not only a spectacular display visible from all around the Tower but also a location for personal reflection. The scale of the installation intends to reflect the magnitude of such an important centenary creating a powerful visual commemoration.

The poppies have been hand-made by 50 potters at the Derby studio of ceramic artist Paul Cummins and are being progressively installed in the moat according to a design of stage designer, Tom Piper. The official unveiling of the project was on 5th August, as it marked 100 years since the first full day of Britain's involvement in the First World War. The project is entitled 'Blood swept lands and seas of red, where angels dare to tread' and this title was chosen because it appeared in the will of an unknown soldier and it just seemed to fit.

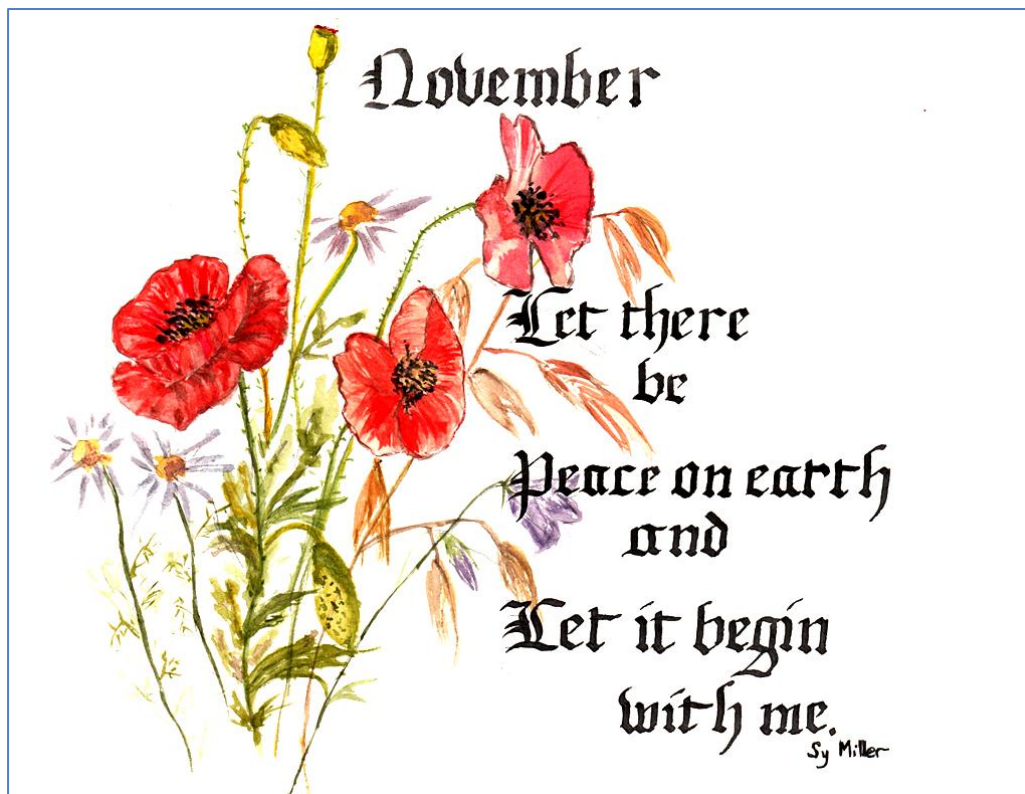


As part of the installation a mound has been created from which the Last Post is being sounded at dusk every day, preceded by the reading of a selection of names from the Roll of Honour of those who died. The Tower of London was thought appropriate as the site for this memorial because it was where troops swore their oath of allegiance and assembled before their deployment to the Western Front. It served as a symbolic ceremonial setting off point for regiments who had been stationed there.

Each of the poppies will be available to buy at £25 once they have been taken down after 11th November. The proceeds will be distributed between six armed forces charities including Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion.

A visit is being made by members of Serendipity Group Two to view this unique commemoration.

Liz Baker



Lettering is fun! In this age when computers seem to be taking over so many things, it is interesting to re-examine the source of letters we see every day.

I have chosen to use the Gothic or Black Letter style for my piece because it helps to convey the strong message I wished to send.

By the twelfth century, letter forms became more compressed as materials became more expensive and the demand for books increased. The term Gothic is linked to architecture of the period and the style helps convey a sense of history – having been used in old manuscripts and books for the Church.

I find calligraphy a fascinating and absorbing skill. In our group we learn and practise many different styles of writing and presentation using a wide variety of techniques. Hand lettering takes care and time together with a great deal of practice. However, developing writing skills to use for special occasions is both satisfying and rewarding.

Irene Tyson Calligraphy Group

Membership Renewal for 2015

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a form to enable you to renew your membership of Rayleigh U3A for 2015. Please complete all sections of the Renewal Form, including an E-Mail address if you have access to E-Mail so that we can advise you promptly about U3A matters.

We hope you will wish to renew your membership but if for any reason you do not wish to, we ask you to advise the Membership Secretary, Gwen Greenwood, promptly. We have a 'waiting list' of people keen to join our U3A and we wish to accommodate them as soon as we can.

Rayleigh U3A Calendar 2015

These calendars have been produced by the talented members of our two Digital Photography Groups led by Brian Kersey (Group 1) and June Jennings & Jackie Soilleux (Group 2)

Available for sale at the next Monthly Meeting. A bargain at £4

Bird Watching Group 1

One morning we arranged for our group of 12 to take the boat Discovery from Wallasea Marina hoping to see the Seals and other Wild Life.

On leaving the Marina we were surprised at the number of very expensive boats on display. We set out at mid day, on the way we explored beautiful and remote deserted creeks, in the hope of viewing fantastic estuary wild life, and Wallasea Island has probably the biggest selection of birds of prey.

The Wallasea Island Wild Coast Conservation and Engineering Scheme aims to transform the Island back into intertidal coastal marshland on a scale never attempted before in the UK and largest of its type in Europe. Our RSPB guide who accompanied us on the boat told us that Cross Rail are dumping all the soil from the underground project in London, men are working 24 hr shifts to achieve this. Also that Cross Rail had paid millions of pounds for the land and donated it to the RSPB. This project is targeted to be finished in 2018.

We were well rewarded with seeing over 40 Seals some with their older cubs, basking on the mud flats, some had this rusty colour picked up from the clay. We watched them leaping into the water looking for all the world just like dolphins in their movement.

Our RSPB guide was left with few birds to talk about. The seal sightings made up for the distinct lack of waders, we did see Canada Geese, Shelduck and Seagulls, and one Peregrine Falcon in flight, but as we have learned wild life can be very arbitrary.

Arriving back at 2.00pm we all agreed it was a fantastic outing, and finished off with a meal at the Yacht Club overlooking the River Crouch.

Heather Flemmings



Photograph supplied by David Fryer - Kelsey

N.B. If you would like to try watching birds along with butterflies, animals and wild flowers, why not accompany us on one of our visits to parks and nature reserves in Essex and sometimes further afield. We are a small, friendly bunch who do not take our hobby too seriously but love nature. We meet in the mornings of the second and fourth Tuesday of every month.

Contact David on davefk@lineone.net or 01702 203455.

ART GROUP

As Sylvia Lester is no longer able to host a Watercolour Group I am willing to co-ordinate a NEW ART GROUP to cover all abilities and mediums. I have been painting in acrylics for some years and feel that there must be U3A members out there who would be interested enough to join a group, meeting at the W.I. Hall, Bellingham Lane for 2 hours a week with or without tuition. Obviously we need numbers to cover the cost of hire, etc.

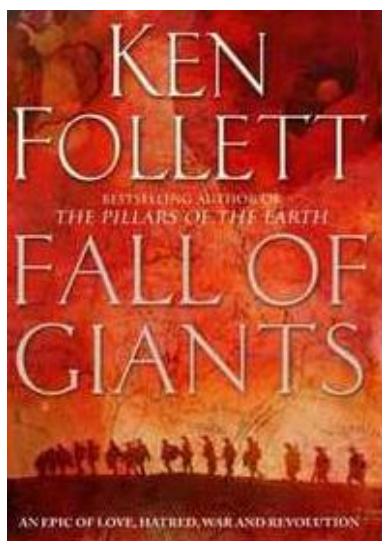
IF YOU ARE AT ALL INTERESTED

Please ring BRIAN KERSEY on
01268 743959 or e.mail brian.kersey@sky.com
to discuss all possibilities

NEWS FROM BOOK GROUP 2

Our last recommendations appeared of interest to the Rayleigh U3A membership and at the invitation of our Editors, we have selected two more recommendations, the first of which we are sure will be enjoyed as much by men as women.

Ken Follett's *Fall of Giants* is the first of the Century trilogy



A huge novel that follows five families through the world-shaking dramas of the First World War, the Russian Revolution, and the struggle for votes for women.

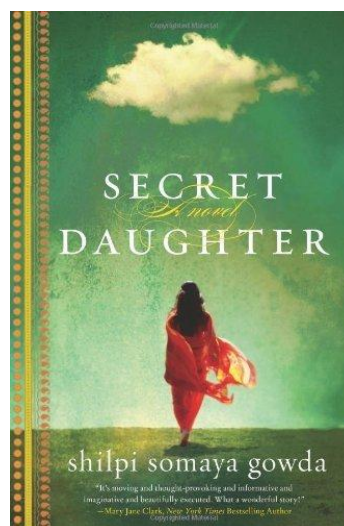
In a plot of unfolding drama and intriguing complexity, *FALL OF GIANTS* moves seamlessly from Washington to St. Petersburg, from the dirt and danger of a coal mine to the glittering chandeliers of a palace, from the corridors of power to the bedrooms to the mighty.

Yes, it is a huge read (perhaps better done on an e.reader – currently it's a bargain on Amazon - £1.49) and we all thought it was the best book we'd read this year.

Somer's life is everything she imagined it would be. She's newly married and has started her career as a physician in San Francisco until she makes the devastating discovery she never will be able to have children. The same year in India, a poor mother, Kavita, makes the heartbreaking choice to save her newborn daughter's life by giving her away. It is a decision that will haunt her for the rest of her life, and cause a ripple effect that travels across the world and back again.

The book is compulsively readable and deeply touching. **Kath Hands**

And now for something completely different:



Tai Chi classes

Now that the summer is over and autumn has definitely arrived maybe you don't know what to do on Monday mornings. Why not come along to our Tai Chi classes? Every Monday from 11 until 12, in Rochford.

All of us who have been learning it for a couple of years, or a couple of months, agree that it has improved our **posture** and our **balance** – not unimportant as we get older.

Although our sifu (Tai Chi tutor) says he does not teach **old** people, but people in later years who have lively minds. Therefore, tailor made for U3A members!

As well as learning how to stand well and use our muscles in ways that they are designed for we have to concentrate and learn sequences of movements. So these tax our **memories** – again a useful skill!

In order to learn the moves we need focus, so Tai Chi is a good way to clear our minds of unnecessary, or troubling, thoughts.

In this way Tai Chi is a type of **relaxation** and **meditation**.

And all this for just £4 a session! Can you afford not to do it?

So many types of research are telling us that exercise is good for us, especially in preventing problems as we age.

If you are interested in learning Tai Chi or just finding out more about it give me a call. The first taster session is always free so that you can make your mind up about continuing.

Oh, and we have a lot of fun too.

Linda Robson Tai Chi Group Leader

01702 555185

GARDENING SPOT

After a very dry end to a lovely summer, lower temperatures and more unsettled days ahead, clearing up becomes more urgent with some preparation for next year on the agenda. If you have access to well-rotted manure, work this into areas you may wish to use for planting new shrubs and trees. The next few weeks are an ideal time to plant while the soil is still warm and the worms are still active. Alternatively, before planting, work a handful of blood, fish and bone into the planting holes (twice the size of the root ball).



I have often been asked what to do with dahlias over winter. They are surprisingly hardy and the job of lifting and storing is not always successful as it is very easy to damage the brittle tubers en route. The usual method was to lift and shake off the soil and lay out in a tray to dry before storing in newspaper and dusting with Flower of Sulphur. The sale of this is now banned, which leaves the tubers to open rotting, so I leave them in the ground letting the foliage and flower stems die down naturally but be careful not to let water get into the

hollow stems (just bend them over horizontally) then mulch with a 2 inch layer of wood chips or bark to keep them snug till Spring. I have some that have been in for 5 years!

If you have them in pots just keep them in a shed or garage to die down naturally then repot in Spring when showing signs of growth.

Hydrangeas

Do not cut off flower heads or stems when finished. These protect the new buds forming for next year's growth which will appear in Spring when you can then remove the old heads completely when seeing new growth.



Buy some plugs of violas to give you a winter long display in tubs and they will self-seed too!

Happy Gardening **Brian Kersey**

Notes from the Secretary

There are lots of exciting events taking place in the lead up to Christmas and into the New Year. Brief details are shown below:

1. There is a House of Lords Debating Event on 28th November, preceded by eight 'talking days' across the country. Members are invited to join any of these (please e-mail lin.jonas@u3a.org.uk) stating U3A and your preferred location. Some locations are getting full, but plenty of availability in others.
2. The U3A are running a new photography competition 'yoU3A' which invites U3As to submit photographs which will communicate the essence of U3A. When U3A were putting together their new range of publicity materials, they really struggled to find photographs of U3A members engaging in a wide range of activities, so are really hoping that members will take this project on.
3. A forthcoming seminar on Publishing your Own Books will be held on 18th November in London. Closing date for applications is 7th November
4. Managing Growth. A seminar is to be held in Doncaster on 20th November. The closing date for applications is 7th November.
5. A screening of Cinderella on 19th November at the Odeon, Covent Garden.
6. U3A Christmas Concerts on 10th December at the Queen's Chapel of the Savoy.

For details on any of these, please see the Third Age Trust website at www.u3a.org.uk or find on the Secretary's Board at the Monthly Members Meeting or contact me on jsoilleux88@gmail.com

Best wishes

Jackie Soilleux, Secretary

SOCIAL EVENTS

The social events calendar has been quite busy recently. The Barn Dance on 4th October was a great success although only 52 tickets were bought by Rayleigh U3A, the rest going to Hullbridge U3A. Everyone there seemed to have a very good time and numerous people, including myself, admitted to not having laughed so much for a very long time.



Quiz Night

The next event will be The Quiz Night on 1st. November. Although ticket sales started off very slowly, there are now very few left. I am sure this will be an enjoyable evening as always.

The final event for 2014 will be our Christmas Lunch. Last year quite a number of people made it known that they did not enjoy the musical entertainment and the fact that some members were dancing at a lunchtime event. It is impossible to please all of the people all the time but I have taken notice of the comments, and changed the format this year, as well as the venue which will be The Rayleigh Club, Hullbridge Road, Rayleigh, upstairs in The Crystal Suite. There will be quiet seasonal background music, and the money saved by not having a musician has meant that the ticket price has stayed the same as the past few years at Saxon Hall. I hope this will not put off the more energetic as I hope to arrange at least one event next year when we can all enjoy dancing.

Tickets for the Christmas Lunch are now available at £25 each.

This includes a glass of wine, 3 course meal, tea or coffee and mints.

If you would like to be on a table with a particular group please let me know and I will do my best to arrange it.

Tables are for 10 people.

If you have an idea for a social event, please feel free to approach me.

I am always happy to listen.

Jane Godfrey Social Events Secretary



TALKS FOR ALL

Researched and arranged by Education Committee Members

Maureen and Pete Huntly, Pat and John Pomfret, Irene and Fred Carter, Chris and Dave Towell

Tuesday 11 th Nov 2014	Roger Smith - 'History of Stow Maries Aerodrome and its future'
Friday 21 st Nov 2014	Chris Tyas, RSPB. Talk on 'Wallasea Island Wild Coast Project'
Friday 28 th Nov 2014	Tom Doig 'Old Photographs - Identification & Dating'
Tuesday 10 th Feb 2015	Jane Robinson 'Reflexology'
Tuesday 24 th Feb 2015	Paul Howard 'Many Hats of my Policeman's Career and my role in The Boxing Day Tsunami'
Tuesday 17 th March 2015	Martyn Lockwood 'Victorian Murders in Essex'
Tuesday 21 st April 2015	Louise Giles & Llorien Walsh 'The Detective Project'

**ALL TALKS FROM 2PM – 4PM AT HOLY TRINITY HALL (EXCEPT FRIDAY 21ST NOV AT THE WI HALL)
TICKETS ON SALE AT THE NOVEMBER MEETING - £2 EACH TO COVER THE COST OF HALL HIRE
AND REFRESHMENTS**

Special Invitation

The Chairman and Committee of the Rayleigh U3A invite members who are interested in becoming involved with the running of our U3A to a pre-Christmas get together.

You have skills that will help 450 men and women get the most out of their retirement years. You can use the skills you have learnt whilst working, bringing up your family or in your leisure pursuits.

You are invited to join us for tea/coffee or sherry and mince pies

Date: Friday 21st November at 11am

Where: Mill Hall Rayleigh in the Committee Room to the left of the main entrance

Please confirm if you would like to attend by ringing the Chairman, Pete Huntly on 01268 777398 or by email pa.huntly@btinternet.com This will be a relaxed and informal event for you to find out about the Committee vacancies and discuss them with the people presently carrying out the roles.

Please understand by coming you are not committing yourself.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you on the 21st November.



COMMITTEE VACANCIES FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

Vice Chairman - To assist the Chairman, standing in when needed at meetings, etc.

Treasurer No. 1 Account - You will have numerical skills and enjoy managing the main account for our U3A - paying invoices, dealing with expenses and liaising with the Social Treasurer.

Groups' Coordinator - One or possibly two people to work together looking after existing group leaders, helping members start new groups and talking to members at the monthly meeting.

Volunteer Coordinator - You will have a list of members who volunteer to help at meetings and events. It is the role of the Volunteer Coordinator to contact members and arrange for them to undertake jobs from welcoming members at monthly meetings to doing refreshments. Very social role. Meeting people.

Committee Member - To attend Committee Meetings and carry out duties as agreed by the Committee.

The roles can be undertaken for as little as one year or for as much as five years (three years in the case of the Vice Chairman and Treasurer).

Details of Committee members are available on the website.

Please note that contributions for the January Newsletter should be with the Editors by the 10th December.

Please send articles for inclusion to: Liz and Roger Baker – rogerbaker99@hotmail.co.uk Irene and John Tyson – jatyson1@aol.com

This Month's Speaker

The speaker at our November meeting is Prof. Jules Pretty OBE. He is a Professor of Environment and Society and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Essex in Colchester. He is also an author and writes on the importance and relevance of nature for people and explores the relationship between people and the land. His talk is entitled 'The Edge of Extinction: Travels with Enduring People in Vanishing Lands' and this is the title of his new book.



Rayleigh U3A
Registered Charity No. 1134068
Membership Renewal 2015

The membership fee due 1st February, 2015 is £20 per person. To renew your membership please complete this form and send it with your cheque to the address below. Membership will be deemed to have lapsed if Renewal Application forms are not received by the Membership Secretary by **31st January, 2015**. Please note that you may be asked to produce your Membership Card when attending meetings and joining groups.

Please renew my/our membership of Rayleigh University of the Third Age

I enclose my/our cheque payable to Rayleigh U3A for £20/£40

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE (ALL SECTIONS OF THIS FORM SHOULD BE COMPLETED)

Title	First name	Surname
Mr _____		
Mrs/Ms _____		
Address _____		
		Post Code _____
Phone _____		
E-mail _____		
Signed		Date

Please let us have your comments or suggestions about anything you think would improve our U3A.

GIFT AID

Rayleigh U3A is a Registered Charity and we can therefore claim back tax on your subscription. If you have already completed a Gift Aid Declaration you do not need to submit another one. If you have not yet submitted a form and are now able to do so please contact:

Pete Huntly, Gift Aid Coordinator at pa.huntly@btinternet.com or on 01268 777398 to request a form.

This does not affect your personal tax position in any way, enables us to maintain our subscription at £20 and provides extra income to improve our services to members.

Please return to -
Membership Secretary:-
Gwen Greenwood
149 Bull Lane
Rayleigh SS6 8NU

Phone: 01268 774882 E-mail: gwen3a@btinternet.com