

Rayleigh



Newsletter Edition No. 94 - November 2019

Dear Members

Welcome to the November newsletter.

Once again, we have reached the last edition of the year. Our thanks to the Editorial Team, Sheila Farrant and Viv Smith who work very hard to produce it, but they do need continued contributions. If you have a piece for the Newsletter about U3A activities that you have enjoyed and are planning, or items of general interest to our members, please send to Sheila Farrant at sh.fa.40@gmail.com or Viv Smith at vivsmith1949@hotmail.co.uk.

Inside you will find details of the social and educational events, monthly meetings and speakers who will entertain and perhaps educate you.

Please join me in thanking the Committee and volunteers who work year in and year out to keep our U3A lively and engaging.

In May 2020 Val, Heather and I will have served our terms and will hand over to our successors. There is always a need for members to serve on the Committee and bring in new ideas and enthusiasm. If you feel that you could contribute, please contact me or our Secretary, Debbie Bamber.

The next newsletter will come out at the beginning of February, then April, June, September and November. This slight change to the schedule will fit in better with the holiday dates.

Our next monthly meeting will be on Thursday 7th November when Dr James Taylor will talk about Brilliant British Humour in the forgotten art of the picture postcard 1840 – 1950. A subject familiar to Southend inhabitants. I hope to see you there.

As this is the last newsletter before Christmas may I on behalf of the Rayleigh U3A Committee wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Best Wishes,

David Fryer-Kelsey, Chairman



GROUP CO-ORDINATORS' REPORT

Two new Groups started up: French Conversation and I Pad for Beginners.

Doreen Little has been collecting stamps for the RNIB from 400 venues since 1996 and has so far raised a total sum of £250,000.

She keeps a Sooty Box by the Posters at the monthly U3A meeting and she would much appreciate if you could donate Foreign/ British stamps and/or Foreign coins. She would much appreciate your help in this. Thanks.



REMINDER Festive Coffee Morning at the W I Hall on Thursday 14th November at 10.30 am to include Mince Pies. It will be nice to have you meet up with your fellow members in informal surroundings.

Heather and David Fryer-Kelsey
Group coordinators

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

Rayleigh U3A are part of the Essex Association of U3A's network and so our members can attend their events and study days too. Do check out the events below that have been arranged and if you attend one, perhaps you could write a quick piece for the next newsletter too!

Music Workshop will be held on **Sunday 24th November 2019** at Broomfield Village Hall, 158 Main Road, Chelmsford CM1 7AH at 9.30am. This is a day for everyone – if you can sing or not. The workshop will include brain-training, work on breathing techniques, co-ordination and communicating with others but most of all singing! You'll leave with a sense of euphoria and achievement and hopefully, a willingness to carry on singing. The cost of the day is £12 which includes lunch.

Geology – Sunday 1st March 2020 – to be held in Broomfield

Advanced Genealogy – Thursday 2nd April 2020 – to be held in Chelmsford

The Study of Trees at the Arboretum will be held on **Monday 11th May 2020** at Marks Hall, Coggeshall, Essex, CO6 1TG Please note the Marks Hall will be closed to the public on this day. The Arboretum forms an enviable collection of trees originating from every temperate area of the world and miles of leafy woodland walks to explore and enjoy. The day will begin at 10.30 am with the Senior Arborist taking you through the differing areas of the world's trees. Following the lecture, you will be free to explore **and enjoy a picnic (please bring your own lunch)**. The cost of the Day is £10.00 (there will **not** be food available to purchase on this day).

Please note that this day will be on uneven ground, it will also involve steps and grassed areas which may not be suitable for those with reduced mobility or wheelchair users.

For more details and to book, visit the Essex Association Website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/essexassociationu3as/home> and click on Events.

NEWS FROM AROUND YOUR U3A

TIPTREE FARM TOUR AND CREAM TEA

44 members travelled by coach from Rayleigh to Wilkin & Sons on what turned out to be a gloriously sunny day. We had a tractor tour of the farm from which we learnt about the traditional and new cutting-edge technologies involved in fruit farming. Some of us even picked some delicious strawberries! A visit to the museum and shop was followed by a delicious cream tea in the tea rooms before the return home.



A VISIT TO ESSEX FIRE MUSEUM

Members of Serendipity 2 and 6 and Church Visiting 2 made up an eclectic group visiting the Essex Fire Museum. We were given an interesting and often amusing talk by Roger Pickett, an ex-fire fighter from Grays and the founder of the museum. We even saw two engines go out on a shout!



CHATHAM DOCKYARD



Our visit to Chatham Dockyard – Salute to the 40s went very well. Although there were crowds of people there it is such a big place that we were able to visit everything with ease.

Lots of people in period clothes, old vehicles, music and dancing from the 40s – it was great fun.

Alongside is a photo of members Amanda and Ray Lowe.

This is a group in uniform singing ‘Blue Birds over the White Cliffs of Dover’ – brought a tear to many an eye.



NEWS FROM THE PATCHWORK GROUPS

Thank you to all who supported the Patchwork Groups’ charity activity by buying raffle tickets for the Rainbow Quilt.

Following the draw in September’s monthly meeting we were able to send to Southend Toy Library the grand sum of £170. As a local charity they rely very much on the support of local people and groups like the U3A and were delighted to be able to put the money towards a day out in London for families who need a break.

The winner of the quilt was Sheila Fletcher and she was delighted with her prize (and has already had many compliments on her new acquisition).

We are already starting to think of what we can do for next year in raising more funds for charity and look forward to your support.

Kate Sawyer - co-ordinator of Patchwork Groups 1,2 & 3

CHURCH VISITING GROUP 2



Church Visiting Group 2 visited St Mary the Virgin Church in Bulphan, a beautiful church built in the 15th century then partly rebuilt in the 19th century. A very interesting talk about the history of the church was given by Ronald Porter, one of the Church Wardens, and delicious refreshments were provided by his wife.

For all its glorious timberwork it is rather a strange church to look at and its exterior does not at all prepare one for what lies within. It is in excellent structural and decorative order. Amongst many beautiful items in the church there are scrolls of text over the windows painted on zinc which is very unusual, and it was

lovely to see that there are still pews. Sadly, the church's congregation is almost down to single figures. It is well worth a visit to anyone who has not been there.

SERENDIPITY 6 - A MEMORY OF SUMMER

In June 22 members of Serendipity 6 met at the cafe at Paper Mill Lock for coffee before our trip on the barge Victoria. It was a lovely day and we set off slowly through the lock and down the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation towards the next lock where we turned around for our trip back. The scenery was delightful, and we were able to be outside on the little deck enjoying views as we wandered through the Essex countryside. Drinks were available so we were well looked after. On our return we drove to the Cricketers just up the road where we had an excellent lunch in very attractive surroundings.



All plates went back to the kitchen clean so we must have enjoyed it. All together a lovely summer day out.

PUZZLE - Colourful Rhymes (answers on last page)

Each clue leads to a pair of rhyming words in which the first word is a colour: -

1. Eco-friendly monarch
2. Medium-rare writing fluid
3. Bland-coloured potter's stuff
4. Sad female sheep
5. Bleached windy - day toy
6. Dark path for a train
7. Cowardly member of a string quartet

WALKING GROUP 3 at HADLEIGH CASTLE



SERENDIPITY GROUP 1 - visit to the Royal National Lifeboat Institute at Southend Pier

On October 10th Serendipity Group 1 gathered at Southend Pier and took the train to the end of this magnificent Pier to be greeted by RNLI retired Crew Member John Speller.

We were treated to a very interesting talk and an opportunity to try on the many layers of equipment used by the Crew Members. Fred Carter (ex. U3A Treasurer and Speaker Finder) donned the heavy life jacket and helmet with communicating microphone system.

We saw a lifesaving dinghy and large Lifeboat and were told about the shoreside Lifeboat and Hovercraft. An extremely well-equipped Lifeboat Station which is self-funding and supported by many as one of our oldest charities. Previously boats with oarsmen were used.

We should feel proud to support a Lifeboat Station that has saved so many lives. A really interesting and awe-inspiring visit enjoyed by us all including a new member you may have noticed in the photograph!

Maureen and Pete Huntly – Serendipity Group 1 Members.



THE SCRABBLE GROUP



New members are always welcome.

SPEAKERS AT MONTHLY MEETINGS

Thurs 7 th November 2019	DR JAMES TAYLOR	BRILLIANT BRITISH HUMOUR in the FORGOTTEN ART of the BRITISH POSTCARD: 1840 - 1950
Thurs 2 nd January 2020	TOM WAY	WILDLIFE ON YOUR DOORSTEP
Thurs 6 th February 2020	DAVID CLARKE	ANCIENT WONDERS OF JORDAN
Thurs 5 th March 2020	CHARLIE HAYLOCK	ECCENTRIC LOOK at the COUNTRYSIDE
Thurs 2 nd April 2020	CHRIS TRURAN	DABS and DNA DETECTS CRIMINALS
Thurs 7 th May 2020	MELANIE GIBSON BARTON	"BRUGES, IT'S MORE THAN JUST CHOCOLATE"
Thurs 4 th June 2020	JANET BREWER	TUTANKHAMUN'S EGYPT

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thurs 14 th November 2019	FESTIVE COFFEE MORNING	10.30 am to 12 noon WI HALL, RAYLEIGH
Sat 23 rd November 2019	AUTUMN QUIZ NIGHT	7pm to 10 pm HOLY TRINITY CHURCH HALL, RAYLEIGH
Mon 25 th November 2019	TALKS FOR ALL "CHRISTMAS GREETINGS" followed by AFTERNOON TEA	2 pm to 4 pm ROYAL BRITISH LEGION HALL, LONDON HILL, RAYLEIGH SOLD OUT
Mon 10 th February 2020	FISH & CHIPS & LUNCH TIME ENTERTAINMENT	11.30am – 2.00pm BRITISH LEGION HALL, 2 LONDON HILL, RAYLEIGH SS6 7HP TICKETS £12.50 (including lunch) AVAILABLE at NOVEMBER MEETING
Mon 9 th March 2020	TALKS FOR ALL "THE CROWN JEWELS & ROYAL REGALIA" Brian D'ARCY	2pm to 4pm ROYAL BRITISH LEGION HALL, LONDON HILL, RAYLEIGH TICKETS £3 (including tea/coffee) AVAILABLE at NOVEMBER MEETING
Sat 4 th April 2020	SPRING QUIZ NIGHT	7.30pm to 10.30pm HOLY TRINITY CHURCH HALL, RAYLEIGH TICKETS £4 AVAILABLE at JANUARY MEETING
Mon 6 th April 2020	TALKS FOR ALL "THE HISTORY OF MAGIC" John FIELD	2.15 pm to 4pm ROYAL BRITISH LEGION HALL, LONDON HILL, RAYLEIGH. TICKETS £3 (including tea/coffee) AVAILABLE at JANUARY MEETING

The Speaker at our Thursday 2nd January 2020 Monthly Meeting

is **Tom Way** the famous **Wild Life Photographer**

A talk by Tom Way emphasising all the fantastic wildlife there is to see and photograph on our doorsteps, from Deer to Hedgehogs and from Owls to Foxes. Tom will not only be showing you his wildlife images from our local areas but also describing all the stories behind how he took the images. He also branches out to talk about our coastlines and the northern areas of the UK showing images of the very charismatic Puffins and Red Squirrel.

FISH & CHIPS & LUNCH TIME ENTERTAINMENT

(Chicken and chips also available)

with **Steve Short** *in company with Morecombe & Wise*

MONDAY 10th February 2020

11.30am – 2.00pm



British Legion Hall, 2 London Hill, Rayleigh SS6 7HP

Join us for a Traditional Fish & Chips or Chicken & Chips Lunch with Entertainment from Steve Short who brings to life the story of Morecombe & Wise, their unique comedy magic act and their life story. A trip down memory lane.

Tickets: £12.50 - available from November monthly meeting

(early booking recommended – if you cannot attend monthly meeting, please phone Amanda to reserve a ticket(s) on 01268 784792 or email her at amandalowe@rayleighu3a.co.uk).

TALKS FOR ALL – MON 9TH MARCH 2020

by Brian D’Arcy RVM (Ex. Yeoman Warder & Curator of the Crown Jewels) titled:

‘THE CROWN JEWELS & ROYAL REGALIA’

They were brought to the Tower of London over 7 hundred years ago. Brian will tell you stories about the Monks of Westminster who were found to be stealing them and Colonel Bloods attempt to steal the Crown Jewels from the Tower in 1661. What happened to the Crown Jewels in the Civil War? Where did the largest diamond come from? Who was the Queen carried to her Coronation? And which Crown was only allowed to leave the Country? All will be revealed in due time.

The Crown Jewels are priceless, representing far more than the precious stones and gold. They symbolize hundred years of British history and are still used today on State Occasions.

Please note that Brian is not an historian but a teller of stories, all true of course. And told in a most enlightening way.



STORIES FROM OUR WRITERS' GROUP

MY FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL

Someone recently asked me if I remembered my first day at school and immediately the years flashed backwards, and I was five years old again. A sad, scared, five-year-old whose life would never be the same again.

After days of rain it was the sun that woke me. It had found a chink in my peach coloured curtains and sent a sliver of light playing over my eyelids. Still sleepy, I lay still thinking about all the things I would do that day. If it was sunny, I could build castles in my sandpit then maybe race around barefoot chasing Dusty who would yap excitedly and bare his tiny white teeth as he tried to bite my toes. Afterwards, Mummy might fill the paddling pool and I'd lie on my back in the warm water pretending that I was at the seaside. Then suddenly I remembered, and my tummy did a double flip.

My door whispered over the carpet as Mummy pushed it open.

'Margaret are you awake?'

'Mummy....' I felt my eyes fill with tears.

A line appeared between her eyebrows.

'Now don't start that again, Margaret. We've talked about this. You have to go to school and that's that. It's the law. Now, can you get dressed please.'

Her voice was unusually sharp and reluctantly, I crawled out of bed. She pointed towards my school uniform hanging on the outside of my wardrobe and stood watching while I struggled with the scratchy grey gym slip and the plain white blouse with buttons that refused to do up. Everything I put on felt stiff, uncomfortable and unfriendly. I hated it.

Downstairs in the kitchen, Lois, my baby sister, was sitting in her highchair covered in baby porridge. When she saw me, she gurgled and waved her spoon. I didn't respond. At that moment, I hated her too. She'd get to spend the day with Mummy. She didn't have to go to school. Then, I saw something that made me forget to be miserable. Daddy's hat was on the table. I loved my Daddy but didn't get to see him much. Mummy said that it was because he had a very important job and had to go away on business a lot.

'Is Daddy home?'

Mummy nodded. 'He'll be down in a minute. Now eat your cereal.' She was holding her body very straight. Her face was stern and looked as though it was carved out of stone.

I stared at her. She was very pale and there were dark rings around her eyes. Like a panda, I thought. Something was wrong, I sensed it. Perhaps she was sad because I was going to school. Perhaps school was a bad place and she didn't want to send me there but had to because it was 'The Law' which had to be obeyed. My stomach turned over again.

A floorboard creaked and Daddy came through the door.

'Daddy...' I cried and flung myself into his arms burying my nose in his jacket, smelling tobacco, the stuff he splashed around his face and the toothpaste he used. All his familiar smells that I missed so much when he was away.

MY FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL (continued)

He didn't say anything, but he hugged me close. Very close. 'Daddy, you're strangling me,' I said, and he laughed and let me go. He led me to where my breakfast was set out and all the time, I was eating my Rice Krispies he sat by my side as I talked to him. I asked if he could take me to school that day but before he could say anything Mummy butted in.

'No, he can't Margaret. Daddy is much too busy. Now eat up your breakfast quickly, we have to go soon.'

Then she turned towards the sink and started punishing the dishes, making such a clatter that Lois stopped playing with her porridge and stared goggle-eyed.

I looked at Daddy and he gave me a wink, but I noticed he didn't look at Mummy. It was strange. Usually, they hugged and kissed a lot but today they were acting as if they didn't know each other.

School was okay, I think. I can't remember much about it. Our teacher was called Miss Read. She had tight grey curls and a sweet smile that made her eyes twinkle. She showed us where to hang our coats in what she called the cloakroom. All the pegs had a different picture on them. Mine was a butterfly. I know I liked the chairs in the classroom; they were wooden and made to fit small people so that their legs didn't dangle. At break time we all had a tiny bottle of milk with a straw. I didn't much like milk, but I drank it just to be polite.

After we had lunch, we went outside to play. I just stood in a corner and watched the bigger children. Some were racing around chasing balls while others skipped or did handstands up the wall. They all seemed to be having a good time so maybe school wasn't so bad after all.

I think I would have enjoyed it more if I hadn't been so worried that perhaps no-one would collect me at home time. Mummy had been quiet as she walked me to school and when the time came for us to line up and go inside, I looked around for her, but she'd gone, although all the other mummies were still there. If Miss Read hadn't been holding my hand, I would have run after her. It made me sad to think that perhaps she couldn't wait to get rid of me.

In the event she was there, holding Lois's push chair and wearing the blue dress that I liked. She also had sunglasses on, although the sun wasn't shining, and was standing apart from the other mummies who were grouped together in a cosy little circle.

'Mummy,' I yelled and rushed towards her. All the way home I ran on ahead - couldn't wait to see Daddy again. But when I burst through the door, he'd gone, and I never did see him again.

Much later my mother told us that he had gone to live with a new lady a long way away but at the time she didn't say very much.

At the beginning I said that my life was never the same again and that's true. My mother was unhappy a lot of the time and had to work very hard, bringing us up so she was too tired to do fun things with us. At least I had school which I grew to like a lot, but I used to feel sad for Lois. At least I remembered my father which she never did.

Janet Baldey

LIVE SCREENINGS to be shown at the ODEON CINEMA, SOUTHEND



ROYAL BALLET - CONCERTO - ENIGMA VARIATIONS – RAYMONDA ACT III

From the Royal Ballet's classical origins in the works of Marius Petipa, to the home-grown choreographers who put British ballet on the world stage.

Date(s): **04/11/19, 05/11/19, 08/11/19**



NT LIVE: HANSARD

See two-time Olivier Award winners, Lindsay Duncan and Alex Jennings, in this brand-new play by Simon Wood, broadcast live from the National Theatre in London.

Date: **07/11/19**



BOLSHOI BALLET: LE CORSAIRE (2019)

On the bazaar square of Andrinopolis, the Pachais struck by the beauty of Medora and tries to buy her, but the lovely young woman is not for sale.

Date: **17/11/19**



NT LIVE: PRESENT LAUGHTER from THE OLD VIC

Matthew Warchus directs Andrew Scott in Noel Coward's provocative comedy Present Laughter.

Date: **28/11/19**



ROYAL BALLET - COPPELIA (2019)

A classic return to The Royal Ballet repertory with Ninette de Valois' charming and funny Coppélia-a story of love, mischief and mechanical dolls.

Date: **10/12/19**



BOLSHOI BALLET: THE NUTCRACKER (2019)

On Christmas Eve, Marie receives a Nutcracker doll as a gift. At midnight, the doll comes to life and finds himself in a battle against the Mouse King.

Date: **15/12/19**



ROYAL BALLET SLEEPING BEAUTY

A classic of Russian ballet, it established The Royal Ballet both in its new home after World War II and as a world-class company.

Date(s): **16/01/20, 19/01/20**

Running time **180 mins**



BOLSHOI BALLET LIVE: GISELLE (2020)

The young peasant girl Giselle dies when she learns that the man she loves, Albrecht, has betrayed her. Against her own will, she joins the Wilis, vengeful spirits of brides, who condemn Albrecht to dance until he dies of exhaustion.

Date(s): **26/01/20, 29/01/20**

Running time **150 mins**



ROH - LA BOHEME (2020)

Richard Jones's character-led production perfectly captures La Bohème's mixture of comedy, romance and tragedy, with striking designs by Stewart Laing.

Date(s): **29/01/20, 02/02/20**

Running time **150 mins**



BOLSHOI BALLET LIVE: SWAN LAKE (2020)

Prince Siegfried is summoned by his parents to choose a bride. However, he encounters a mysterious swan-woman by the lake, Odette, and is captivated by her.

Date: **23/02/20**

Running time **165 mins**



ROYAL BALLET - MARSTON & SCARLETT (WORLD PREMIERES)

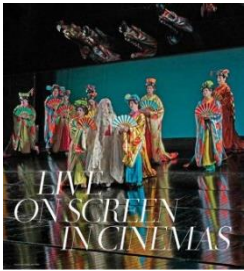
The inspiration for her first work for The Royal Ballet Main Stage is the momentous life and career of the cellist Jacqueline du Pré.

Date(s): **25/02/20, 01/03/20**

Running time **150 mins**

LIVE SCREENINGS FROM THE MET OPERA, NEW YORK

to be shown at CINEWORLD BASILDON



MADAM BUTTERFLY running time **192mins**

9th Nov starts 17.55

Anthony Minghella's vividly cinematic staging of Puccini's tale of unrequited love returns to our screens featuring soprano HUI He in the devastating title role. One of the most frequently staged operas of our generation, Madam Butterfly follows the story of a young Japanese girl, Cio-Cio San, who falls in love with Pinkerton, an American naval officer. Tragedy unfolds in the sweeping production which is a perennial favourite. Pier Giorgio Morandi conducts one of opera's most beautiful and heart-breaking scores.

Plácido Domingo adds another role to his remarkable repertoire, singing Sharpless for the first time and is joined by a cast that also includes tenor Piero Pretti as Pinkerton, and mezzosoprano Elizabeth DeShong as Suzuki.



AKHATEN running time **211mins**

23rd Nov starts 17.55

Star countertenor Anthony Roth Costano headlines as the revolutionary Pharaoh who transformed ancient Egypt. Director Pelim McDermott, whose productions include the hugely successful Satyagraha by Philip Glass, returns to the Met to bring this contemporary production to life, with a virtuosic company and dramatic staffing that features acrobatics and juggling. The striking soprano J'Nai Bridges makes her Met debut as Nefertiti with Karen Kamensek conducting Glass's ritualistic and hypnotic score.



WOZZEK running time **92 mins**

11th Jan starts 17.55

After wowing audiences with his astounding production of Lulu in 2015, South African artist William Kentridge now focuses his extraordinary visual imagination on Berg's other operatic masterpiece set in an apocalyptic pre-World War environment. Met Music Director Yannick Nezet-Sequin is on the podium for this important event, with baritone Peter Mattei making his highly anticipated role debut as the title character. Soprano Elza van den Heever is Wozzeck's unfaithful mate, and the commanding cast also includes tenor Christopher Ventris as the Drum-

Major, bass-baritone Christian Van Horn as the doctor, and tenor Gerhard Siegel as the Captain.



PORGY AND BESS running time **195 mins**

1st Feb starts 17.55

The Gershwins' modern American masterpiece has its first Met performance in almost three decades, starring bass-baritone Eric Owens and soprano Angel Blue in the title roles. This new co-production with English National Opera and Dutch National Opera was hailed as a triumph at its premiere in London earlier this year. Featuring the much-loved arias 'Summertime' and 'I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'', director James Robinson's stylish production transports audiences to

Cattish Row, a setting vibrant with the music, dancing, emotion, and heartbreak of its inhabitants.

If you wish to join a group for any of these screenings or would like further details, please phone Sheila on **0772 409 5299** or email her at sh.fa.40@gmail.com .

PUZZLE ANSWERS

1. green queen 2. pink ink 3. grey clay 4. blue ewe 5. white kite 6. black track 7. yellow cello