

NOVEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER



Our Monthly Members Meetings are moving back to The Mill Hall from January 2023!

Following the decision that the Mill Hall would not be closed and redeveloped, Rayleigh u3a Committee have taken the decision to move our main monthly meetings back, starting from our meeting on Wednesday 4th January 2023.

We look forward to welcoming you all back!

Doors open at 1.45 pm and our speaker will commence their talk at 2.30 pm.

FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

2nd NOVEMBER 2022

Bernard Lockett's talk includes the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, a historical background and review of their works. He is an author and speaker, also a Trustee of the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival that takes place annually (now in its 25th year) in Harrogate.



4th JANUARY 2023

Nick Dobson — Christmas in the Trenches. An illustrated talk on how British servicemen and civilians in Blighty celebrated Christmas during WW1.

NEWS FROM THE SECRETARY

The main headline for this issue is that Rayleigh u3a are moving back to the Mill Hall from our January meeting. This will give us more space and therefore we hope to welcome more members.

We have had several new members this year, which is fantastic, however we desperately need more members to come forward as group leaders to provide groups for these members to join. You do not have to be an expert in any subject or activity to set up a group - an interest and a keenness to learn is all that is required. Do get in touch with our Groups Co-ordinator – Paul Reeve – if you have an idea you wish to discuss.

Another plea is from our equipment team. This is a small team with a big commitment to transport and set up our sound system every month. If one of them is unavailable, this potentially puts our meeting at risk if we have no system for our speaker. Please speak to one of the sound team at the next meeting or email me on janereeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk if you can offer support.

Many thanks!
Jane Reeve

SUMMER QUIZ NIGHT

On Saturday 6th August, Val and Jim Whitehouse organised a fun and successful Quiz Night for our members, friends and members of other local u3a's. There were nine teams in all and here is a photo of the winning team and their prizes!

Many thanks to Val & Jim for all their efforts in making the event most enjoyable!



ICON OF THE SKIES—THE CONCORDE STORY & AFTERNOON TEA

Held on Tuesday 6th September at the Royal British Legion Hall, this event proved very popular with over 60 members attending.

Following his previous talk for us on the Red Arrows, this time Guy Bartlett gave as a fascinating talk backed up by film of the fastest passenger aircraft of all time — Concorde.

First flown in 1969 this iconic vehicle was ahead of itself in many ways. Guy shared his experience of supersonic flight with us describing the Concorde as the perfect synergy of technology and design. There will never be another like it, when it flew overhead people would stop and look up, as many of us can remember doing.

Guy was an excellent speaker sharing many stories, fact and figures with us while holding our interest.

Following the talk we had a delicious afternoon tea served by the lady volunteers who help at the Royal British Legion. Many thanks to Val Skam for organising this event and to those who helped on the day.

BUMPER CROP OF NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS!

CRIB CLUB



As you can see, we are celebrating the re-opening of our Crib Club, and a belated celebration of our 10th anniversary, which should have taken place in April 2020. The Rayleigh U3A Crib Club was formed on the 21st April 2010 with the idea of competitive cribbage that was based on a visit to a Spanish U3A Crib Club in Moraira, Spain.

We currently have 17 active members with a maximum of 20. We meet once a month on the 3rd Monday in the evening. About 50% of our members are original Crib Club Founder Members.

The game is very competitive. We all have individual score cards and we compete for 3 bottles of wine. There is also a booby prize of a Toblerone bar of chocolate which is often fought over. We all hope to keep going for another 10 years!!

David and Jackie Sheffield

WALKING GROUP 3

The Walking Group who meet on 2nd Tuesday every month were this time led by Clifford and had a great morning exploring around East Hanningfield.

After a 4 mile walk, they enjoyed a delicious pub lunch.



GARDENING GROUP

A lovely photograph of the Gardening Groups taken at a recent visit to Writtle University Gardens.



PATCHWORK and TEA

Thank you to everyone who bought patchwork items at the September Monthly Meeting. We raised a total of £55.50, and with a little extra fundraising effort, we were able to donate £75.50 to the Nehemiah Project. Thank you again for your support.

At the October meeting we displayed the lap quilts we have made, which we are donating to Swayne Court for Christmas. The theme was 'Red and White' and each member of the group produced 3 blocks (12.5 inches squares from half a yard of fabric). It was an exercise in planning and careful cutting. These blocks were then joined together to create lap quilts of 9 squares. There are 14 of us in the group, so some produced more blocks and we had 9 quilts in total.

Patchwork and Tea meet on the 3rd Wednesday of every month.

Kate Sawyer



WALKING GROUP 2

This group meets on the last Friday of every month. They have sent this photograph to a recent walk taken at Pagelsham where they were enjoying the river Roach walk.



ART GROUP

The Art Group meet on the 1st Thursday of every month and here is a photograph taken at their meeting in September, where they were experimenting with pastels.



VISITING INTERESTING PLACES IN ESSEX GROUP

Members of the Visiting Interesting Places in Essex visited the Moot Hall in Maldon. A guided tour of the Grade I listed Moot Hall included details of how the Moot Hall has stood at the centre of Maldon life for over 600 years.

Sir Robert D'Arcy originally built the tower and throughout its history it has been a prison, court room and council chamber. The building now consists of three floors of brick construction with walls at least two feet thick and a lead roof.

The tour ended with a climb to the top of the tower with 360-degree views across Maldon town, the Blackwater Estuary and surrounding countryside which was spectacular. During the visit we were lucky enough to view the exhibition of James Cook's work of pictures created by using a typewriter and a range of different types of typewriters. We then had a very pleasant lunch at the White Hart pub.

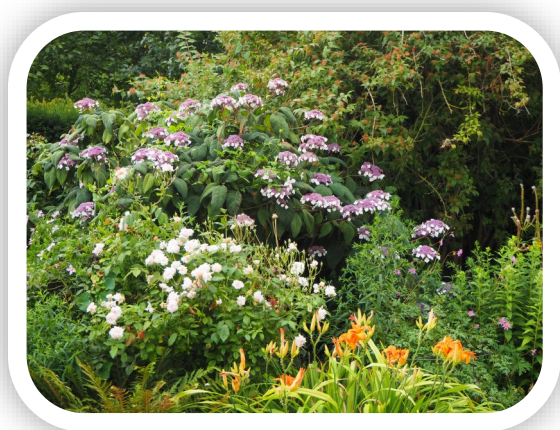
Val Whitehouse



SERENDIPITY 6 VISIT FEERINGBURY MANOR GARDENS

A very pleasant lunch at Pennywood Garden Centre café was followed by an interesting walk around the 10 acre gardens of Feeringbury Manor, which originally belonged to William the Conqueror.

It is a peaceful garden with many interesting plants, shrubs, ponds and a stream leading down to the River Blackwater.



SERENDIPITY 6

On the 28th September 15 members of Serendipity 6 enjoyed a very informative Heritage Walk of Rayleigh guided by Mike Davies, Chairman of the Town Museum. The walk was based on the Heritage Plaques throughout the town. Every plaque has a story to tell about the people, places and buildings in Rayleigh.

We were to learn that the Museum is housed in the oldest secular building and that there was an area of correction, with stocks, just outside the Church. Rayleigh also had 23 public houses. After the walk we looked around the Museum and enjoyed a welcome cup of coffee.

Thanks to Margaret Rawson for the article — she also said that they were so absorbed in the talk that no-one remembered to take any photographs!

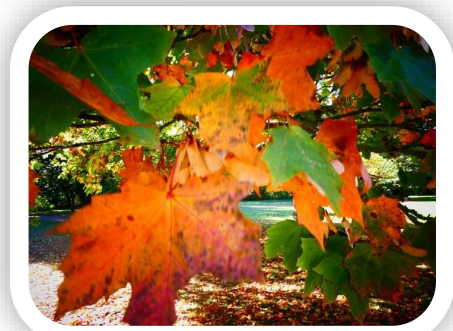
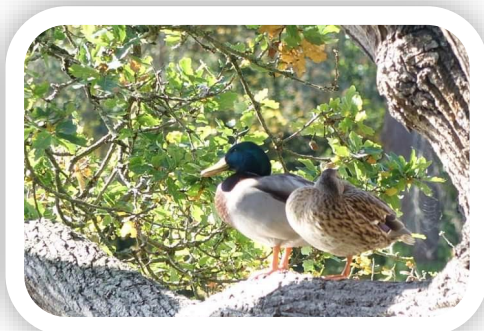
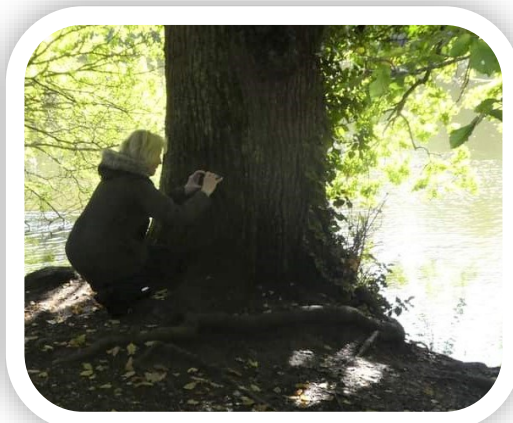
ABOARD THE VICTORIA TRIP ALONG THE RIVER BLACKWATER

Members of Serendipity 6 organised an enjoyable and peaceful boat trip on board The Victoria along the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation from Paper Mill Lock.



DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY 2

Thank you to the Digital Photography 2 Group for these beautiful images they took during a recent walk in the countryside — taking in the Autumn sun in the heart of nature.



**Thank you to everyone who
contributed to this months
Newsletter! It's so good to see what
everyone is up to and what they are
enjoying with u3a.**

**Do share your Group news with us
by sending in photos and/or articles
for the next Newsletter to Sheila**

Farrant or June Jennings:

Sh.fa.40@gmail.com

jjkent1903@gmail.com

COMMITTEE UPDATE

We have welcomed a member — Juli Fowles — who has been co-opted onto our Committee to shadow Val Skam in her role as Educational Events Organiser with a view to taking over the role when Val Skam retires from the Committee in May.

If you would like to see how the Committee work, with a view to possibly being interested in joining us, please do speak with Ray our Chairman, Jane our Secretary or any other member of the current Committee and we can arrange for you to sit in on a meeting.

It's a great way to share your skills and enthusiasm to keep Rayleigh u3a lively and interesting!



CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Tues 6th December 12.30 at Saxon Hall

Tickets—£30 per person

A few tickets for this event are still available and will be on sale at our November Monthly Meeting, or by calling Debbie Bamber on 07947 064799 or by emailing debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk

Menu Choices

Starters

Roasted Squash & Sweet Potato Soup

Cod, Prawn & Herb Fishcake with Homemade Chunky Tartare Sauce

Duo of Sweet Melon with Maraschino Cherry, Honey Sweetened Berries & Ginger Coulis

Main Courses

Roast Norfolk Turkey with Pigs in Blankets, Apricot Stuffing, Roast Potatoes & Seasonal Festive Vegetables

Herb Crusted Salmon with Grilled Asparagus, Creamed Leeks & Dauphinois Potatoes

Vegetarian Option

Parsnip, Cranberry & Chestnut Loaf with a Sage Cream Sauce, Roast Potatoes & Seasonal Vegetables

Desserts

Christmas Pudding, Winter Berries & Brandy Custard

Rum & Raisin Cheesecake with Chantilly Cream

Chocolate & Orange Mousse with Orange Shortbread & Crystallised Orange

Followed by

Tea or Coffee & Mince Pies



JULY AND THE HEAT IS ON

Our garden pond is busy, blue tits, goldfinches and robins with fledglings all enjoying the water, and a pair of blackbirds appear to be collecting nesting material again. There's the usual chaos I enjoy from the adult starlings and their juveniles, while wood pigeons and collared doves strut about the lawn. A robin fledgling is already bold, often being the first to appear in the morning when I deliver their birdseed. It's our little entertainment zone.

On a visit to the parched marshland of Wallasea, bird numbers were lower than our previous visits, much as we'd expect at this time of year. But there was still an interesting selection, including a flock of elegant avocets, numerous groups of Canada and greylag geese, a small cluster of grey plovers and several shelducks – one of them chaperoning fifteen fluffy youngsters! There was a variety of small birds too - corn buntings, skylarks and meadow pipits, and a lone yellow wagtail.

We walked around the marsh through a continuous flurry of fragile wings as butterflies appeared from the clumps of thistles and wildflowers. Mostly it was marbled whites, meadow browns, gatekeepers and Essex skippers that danced around us. It was also pleasing to see dozens of burnet moths with their distinct colouring of red spots on black wings and buzzing style of flying. Out on the riverbank a group of seals including a couple of seal pups were lounging and along one of the dusty trails, a lively hare leapt along in front of us, stopping frequently and looking back, checking on us, before deciding it was time to take his leave and disappear into the long grass. It was a rewarding day at Wallasea even though it had been on the quiet side for birds.

With temperatures still on the rise, we decided to enjoy the shade of Havens and Belfairs Woods. There were hardly any birds about, so it turned into another butterfly extravaganza, at least they were enjoying the heat. We managed to identify thirteen different types flitting around us. The highlights were brimstone, speckled wood and silver washed fritillary.

Heatwave time and after a few days in hiding behind closed curtains we ventured out to Bowers Marsh, with some trepidation, and not because of the heat. We've already seen, on previous visits, the serious impact Avian Flu is having on the gull colony at Bowers. It's heart-breaking to see so many dead gulls. This is happening to various seabird colonies in the U.K, it's tough to look at and I feel the sadness of it. But I'm focusing on the positives and the new life. How else to handle it? And we certainly had some positives, like the superb views of a red kite majestically gliding around the sky. Hedgerows lively with reed warblers and their fledglings and several sightings of hovering kestrels. On the lagoon were black-tailed godwits, shelduck chicks looking like little humbugs and a swan with her five cygnets. There was so much new life to feel optimistic about.

Many thanks to our member, Janet Butcher — for sharing her journal entry for July describing walks she takes and the wildlife she sees. So descriptive — I almost felt I'd been with her!

Here are a some items from the Trust's website which may be of interest to you:

u3a members help shape future of design of everyday items

Earlier this year, more than 2,000 u3a members participated in a survey with Design Age Institute on the most frustrating everyday objects as we age. The compelling findings have been compiled in a report, and show the biggest stress factors identified in homes were packaging-related, with over 60% of all respondents choosing packaging as their main frustration.

Things such as struggling to open a carton of orange juice, or peel back plastic wrapping on food, can cause enormous frustration. Other everyday household items which were identified as causing significant frustration and annoyance include:

Duvet covers 13.3%
TV remotes 5%
High cupboards 5%
Keys and locks 3.5%

Sam Mauger, chief executive of u3a, says: "The results of the report will not come as a shock to the many members of u3a who have struggled for years with everyday household objects in packaging that seems only to make their lives more difficult. "Something as simple as trying to open a carton of orange juice can cause enormous frustration. But it does not need to be the case. This is an opportunity for businesses to sit up and take notice, and ensure future designs are inclusive and fit for purpose."

You can read the full report on the Trust's website (details above) on the Social Impact page.

u3a Radio Podcast

The u3a radio podcast, set up in 2020, showcases the amazing things happening across the movement. It's created by a team of u3a members who all have radio experience and features interviews with members, interest group leaders, Trustees, national volunteers and Subject Advisers.

The entire series is available to listen to on our [YouTube channel](#), and since January 2022, has also been available to listen to on podcasting platforms including [Spotify](#), [Google Podcasts](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#) .

Seated Yoga

Join Nancy Taylor & Liz William's 'Yoga at Home' Series 1 'Exploring Seated Yoga.' Starting on Friday 18 November at 10am for 4 weeks, this is a free online 1 hour session via Zoom to explore how Seated Yoga can help you, especially if you have problems with mobility.