

Rayleigh



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Newsletter Edition No. 69 - September 2015

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

Welcome back to the autumn programme for the Rayleigh U3A. I hope you have enjoyed the summer sunshine with your family and friends.

The coming months are packed with a variety of Social and Educational events, with I hope something for everyone. To test the brain cells we have our ever popular Study Day on 13th October, with experts describing various Significant Anniversaries being celebrated this year, followed by our always popular Quiz Night on 21st November – tickets are only £4 for an excellent Saturday Night’s entertainment. You can enjoy your favourite music to listen or dance to on Friday 16th October at Hullbridge Sports and Social Club Hall at our Autumn Disco dance. Tickets are only £7.50 - bring your own nibbles and enjoy reasonably priced drinks at the Bar. This will be a fun filled night for us all to enjoy.

A totally new event is our ‘Afternoon with the Wyatt Family’, bringing you an insight into the world of writing, cartoons, publishing and modern day techniques used to produce books, games and films. This event is only £5 to include tea and cakes at the British Legion Hall on Friday 27th November. The year will be rounded off with our Christmas Lunch to be held this year at the Westcliff Hotel on Thursday 3rd December. I look forward to seeing you then

Remember a lot of people give a great deal of time in organising these events for you to enjoy, so please support them. Tickets for all these events will be on sale at the Monthly Meetings.

You will find a couple of pleas within the Newsletter for volunteers. Our volunteers are valued contributors to the smooth running of our U3A so if you are able to give up a little of your time to help, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Val Curtis – I am sure she would love to hear from you. Val’s contact details and those of all other committee members were published in our May Newsletter or can be found in a password protected document on our website on the Newsletter page.

**Pete Huntly
Chairman, Rayleigh U3A**

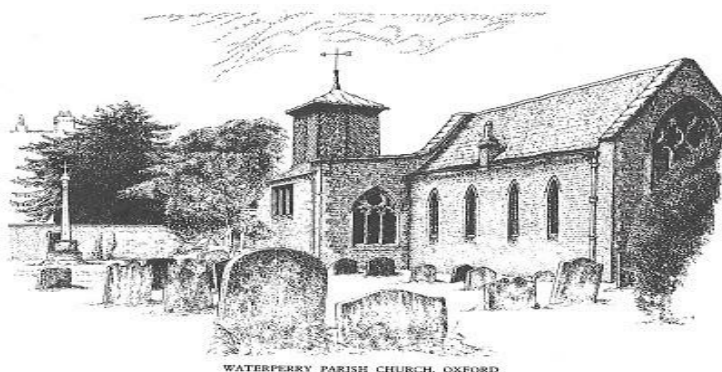
NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Serendipity Group 2

In July, the Group made a return visit to the 'Art in Action' exposition held annually for four days in Waterperry Gardens in Oxfordshire. The event showcased a wealth of talent, craftsmanship and expertise in arts, crafts and music with over 400 exhibitors demonstrating their skills and displaying their work of jewellery, metalcraft, wood carving, ceramics, print making and art. Two skills that particularly impressed us were the wood carving of David Patrick-Brown and those of Joanna Williams, the first lady blacksmith we have ever seen.



In the grounds of Waterperry Gardens is the lovely old church of St. Mary the Virgin, mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. Visiting this church was an uplifting experience, listening to readings,



and providing the opportunity for moments of meditation and reflection. A Dutch male-voice choir rendered Gregorian Chants in the Church. Its singing was of the highest quality and very relaxing to listen to. The windows in the north side of the chancel are some of the oldest in the country, dated around 1220.

The herbaceous border in the gardens at Waterperry is 60 metres long and is backed by the mellow old brick of the kitchen garden. The long display and contrasting shapes and heights is achieved by careful juxta-positioning of early, mid- season and late varieties. Our visit in July was of course mid- season and we were fortunate to see a colourful display of delphiniums, achillea, verbascum and phlox.

We were blessed with excellent weather for our visit, and even the M25 behaved itself, so everyone enjoyed the day.

Marilyn and Les Poole

The Newsletter Editors will welcome any articles and photos relevant to our Rayleigh U3A activities for publication in the next Newsletter in November. Please hand them to Roger and Liz Baker or E-mail to rogerandlizbaker@gmail.com



Church Visiting Group 2

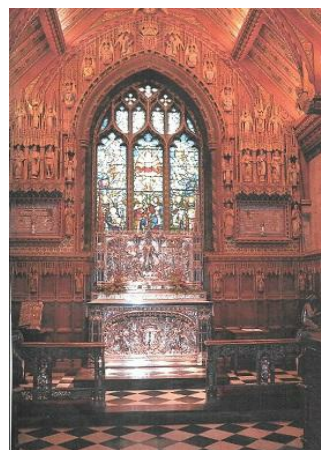
In June, we visited the parish church of St. Mary Magdalene on the Sandringham Estate, just a few days before Princess Charlotte was christened there. The Royal family have worshipped in this church ever



since the then Prince of Wales bought Sandringham in 1862 and their family outing to the Christmas Day service has become as much of a royal tradition as Trooping the Colour. The Princess was to be christened in a 9th century Greek font which is considered to be one of the church's finest features.

It is a beautiful church to visit. It was built in

the 16th century, therefore perhaps not as old as some churches we visit, but the royal connection makes it special. It is a Grade II listed building constructed of an unusual rust-coloured sandstone called Carrstone. The interior decorations are exceptional. The church has a silver pulpit and a silver 17th century processional cross presented to Queen Alexandra as a tribute to Edward VII. Many of the stained glass windows date from the 16th century.



During our visit the Verger told us how the church is filled with highly personal memories for the current Royal family. The present Queen's father, George VI, was not only christened in the church but also lay in state there after his untimely death in February 1952.

LINE DANCING

Our Line Dancing class has been going for over a year now, but we need more members. Maybe you have enjoyed line dancing in the past and would like to come back to it, or it is something you would like to try? Either way you would be very welcome. It is an enjoyable way to exercise both mind and body.

We are a happy, friendly class which meets every Tuesday afternoon between 2.00 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. at Castle Hall, Castle Lane, Rayleigh. We have an experienced, professional teacher and the cost is £5 per class and your first class would be free.

If you are interested, please give me a call on 01268 778029 or send me an E-mail at joanchapman32@talktalk.net

Joan Chapman

U3A DIARIES for 2016

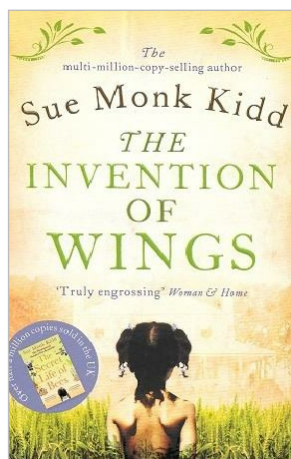
The new U3A diaries for 2016 are now available for sale at £3.00 each. These diaries will be on the Information Desk, situated near the entrance, at the monthly meetings starting in September.

A NEW RECOMMENDATION FROM BOOK GROUP 2

This month we unanimously agreed that this was a book we would all recommend to everyone. Written in vivid detail it presents a compelling and disturbing account of life in the Southern States early in the 19th century.

THE INVENTION OF WINGS

by Sue Monk Kidd



The Invention of Wings is a powerful story of the contrasting lives of black and white women in Charleston during the 35 year period beginning in 1803 when Sarah Grimke, to her horror, is given a slave girl Hattie, known as Handful, on her 11th birthday by her Father a rich judge, plantation and slave owner, who considered it perfectly normal to give a 10-year-old slave to his daughter, a slave who would be expected to sleep on the floor outside her mistress's bedroom and to do whatever was asked of her.

In alternating chapters, the book follows the lives of Sarah and Hattie, giving a compelling and disturbing account of life at that time. This allows different perspectives on their related tribulations and their similar yearnings for racial and gender equality as they both harbour guilt feelings and endure hardships.

The story is based on historical fact, as Sarah and her sister Angelina, were real people who played leading roles in the abolition of slavery, racial equality and feminism. The author has very cleverly created other very believable characters in her story, producing for our Group, a thought provoking and compelling read.

Kath Hands

Education Committee Events - Autumn 2015

Significant Anniversaries in 2015 - at Saxon Hall on Tuesday 13th October

We are happy to report that almost all the tickets have been sold for this exciting event. Speakers from the Military, the National Trust, a local Historian, and a man who revels in working every day with aircraft past and present; these fascinating people will talk about subjects they know and love - the Battle of Waterloo, the Magna Carta, the history of our town of Rayleigh and the Battle of Britain. There are now only six tickets left - £15 each including morning coffee and biscuits, hot buffet lunch and afternoon tea and pastries

The Wyatt Family Afternoon Tea - at Royal British Legion Social Club on Friday 27th November

Every year we look to introduce something new and exciting to our calendar of events and this year is no exception. If you are intrigued to find out about how one talented family have careers in publishing, writing books, illustrating cartoons and the use of modern technology to produce books, games and films, then come along and meet them.

Other Events

We have speakers giving Talks about four of our important Emergency Services in January, February and March next year. Tickets at £2 each will be on sale at the October meeting.

Maureen Huntly - Educational Events Coordinator

Imposter in my flower bed

Early morning, as I looked around our garden enjoying the rose scented air, I was feeling quietly pleased with the colour palette of the little patch of garden in front of me, a mixture of pale and deep shades of pink and mauve with splashes of white. Although I must admit that most of this harmonising was probably accidental. Well, I kidded myself, this is just like those show gardens we saw at the Chelsea Flower Show in May. Bring on the Pimms and enjoy this attractive flourish while it lasts! (Except I wasn't actually going to pour myself a Pimms as it was rather early in the morning.)

I had a couple of favourites at Chelsea out of all of those truly stunning show gardens. 'The Laurent-Perrier Chatsworth Garden' (designed by Dan Pearson) and 'A Perfumer's Garden in Grasse' (designed by James Basson). The naturalistic planting of 'A Perfumer's Garden' depicted such a scene of tranquillity. I could just imagine a warm evening as the sun is fading, lazily sitting at the rustic wrought iron table, positioned in the shade of two large old olive trees, enjoying a simple and very peaceful moment. And then the Chatsworth garden with its stunning use of really large pieces of gritstone boulders and rocks to create a feel of the actual Chatsworth garden in Derbyshire. A garden that provides areas of both wildness and formality that we love visiting.

Of course there were many other striking show gardens and beautiful planting schemes to delight the visitors. Some may not have excited me but I can still certainly appreciate the effort, passion and probably tantrums that went into creating them. Flowers and plants at the very peak of perfection, designers and garden teams at the top of their game, it's good to celebrate such creativity. Okay, I will admit that the crowds can make walking round the show and actually getting up close and personal with the gardens difficult, and a glass of Pimms or Champagne comes with an eye-watering price tag, but I still found it a flower and perfume filled joy. I come away, inspired and full of ideas, most of which have remained just that, ideas!

It was then, in this moment of reverie, I saw it. The imposter in amongst my pink and mauve vision of Chelsea. A dahlia had bloomed. Not one of my favourite dahlias in mauve and white, ruby, or the velvety deep burgundy shade of Karma Choc. No, this was yellow, acid yellow in fact. Ouch! A shrill statement rising up from all that gentle pink and mauve. "Where did you come from", I said aloud, "I thought you were supposed to be 'Bishop of Leicester', in a pretty shade of pale pink". Not so, it seems. Perhaps I would get used to it. Acid yellow, an edgy comment in amongst the safe and boring?

I left it a while to think about it, but, 'the dahlia which was not a pink 'Bishop of Leicester', really couldn't stay there. For one thing I kept talking to it, how ridiculous is that, common sense had to be restored.

Now, as luck would have it, I had planted this exuberant yellow dahlia in a pot. Note that it was now 'exuberant' and not 'acid' – I was getting comfortable with it. And so, picking up the pot I moved it around the garden until I found it some friendlier companions where it could shine out in all its glory.

It was now well into the afternoon, order had been restored to the flower beds. Time to relax, time to enjoy, time to pour that glass of Pimms.

Janet Butcher

Speakers at our Monthly Meetings

The speaker at our September meeting is Andrew Babicz in a talk about the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh. Andrew is a Polish Scot who started as an apprentice gardener at Inverewe Gardens on the north-west coast of Scotland with the National Trust for Scotland and went on to work at the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden, Wisley, Kew Gardens and Hampton Court Palace Garden. He also spent a year working in nurseries in Holland.

In October our speaker will be Prof. Carolin Crawford talking about the Sun, our nearest planet. Carolin is the Public Astronomer at the Institute of Astronomy in the University of Cambridge. She is also an Admissions Tutor, College Lecturer and Fellow of Emmanuel College, and the Professor of Astronomy at Gresham College.

Gardening Corner

September brings shortening days combining with those late flowering perennials starting to 'do their stuff'. This has been a difficult year in the garden with wildly fluctuating temperatures and around 5 weeks without measureable rainfall. I have 9 x 40 gallon water butts around the garden and bungalow collecting roof drainage from 5 positions some linked in pairs or 3s. Incidentally, do you know that you can claim rebates on your Water Rates if you supply them with details of your water diversion to butts? A drawing will usually suffice and satisfy the water company.

Now for some more 'good-doers'. Hardy perennials like phlox, asters or chrysanthemums are giving or will give a good show for the next couple of months. When they finish flowering, cut hard back and, if the weather is still mild, take some divisions which will settle fairly quickly. Failing this, buy some large plants which are usually cheap when without flowers and divide those. Most of the above are frost hardy and providing you water them in well they will make a 'flying start' next year.

This is a good time to trim your hedges or take off long growths from flowering shrubs. Also dead head regularly all your perennials.

The plant of the month is **MELIANTHUS Major** (illustrated). A shrub which makes a 'sub-tropical statement' at the back of a border with its large serrated blue-green leaves. It originates from the Western Cape of South Africa. Hardy once established, fantastic for flower arrangers. Can reach 4 feet if grown well. Can look a bit tatty in winter, but pruning in spring brings vigorous new growth. Has insignificant dark red flowers in summer which can yield seed. For more details on growing and seed, see Google.



Good gardening !

Brian Kersey Tel: 01268 743959 E-mail: brian.kersey@sky.com

ONGOING GROUP VACANCIES

As with most U3As up and down the country where monthly meetings are held, only about 50% of the membership attend these meetings. Therefore, the notices of Group Activities and other events which are on the Notice Boards and displayed on various Groups' tables are not seen by everybody.

The detailed notice below is self-explanatory and if anyone is interested in finding out about a specific activity, you can contact the Group Leader direct via our web-site, or get in touch with me to deal with your enquiry. Contact details are on your membership trifold papers or via the web-site.

BOB WREN (Groups' Coordinator) Tel: 01702 525311 E-Mail: bob_wren@hotmail.com

GROUPS with VACANCIES as at 01/08/2015

Bird watching	Ceramics	Conversational French (1 only)
Digital Photography Grp. 2 (2 only)	Keep Fit	Knit and Natter
Line Dancing	Papercrafts	Real Ale
Scrabble (2 only)	Strolling	Tai Chi
Tenpin Bowling	Walking Grp. 3	Walking Grp. 4
Visiting Essex Churches Grp. 1 (2 couples, with own transport)	Wine Appreciation	Visiting Essex Churches Grp. 2 (2 only, with own transport)

CAN YOU HELP?

It doesn't matter whether you joined in 2007 or 2015, all members of Rayleigh U3A are equal stakeholders entitled to enjoy the many benefits of membership and are equally responsible to ensure that we continue to thrive in the future.

Our past success wasn't an accident, it was a result of the planning and dedication of the minority of members who have served on the Committee, led an activity group or worked in many of the other volunteer capacities over the last 8 years.

Anyone who has helped to run your U3A will tell you that the greatest enjoyment is in seeing fellow members learning, socialising and making new friends within our wonderful organisation. BUT past performance is not a guarantee of future success and our long term health is contingent on developing new ideas and, most importantly, bringing on board new volunteers at all levels.

At present we have new Committee members doing vital jobs which they would never have believed that they could do a few years ago, we have Group leaders who have gained the confidence to arrange activities which they could never have imagined to be possible, and the unsung heroes who produce the newsletter, sell tickets, make refreshments, sell books, man the door at meetings, put out tables and chairs, do washing-up etc. However we need more of you to come forward and help.

Whether or not you recognise it, every one of you has some ability/talent that could be used to benefit other members. Please talk to your group leaders, or a Committee member, or give me a ring in confidence, to discuss how you could help.

With the above in mind I am going to ask your newsletter team to publish details of any particular jobs where we need volunteers. An immediately pressing requirement is as follows:-

Technical Team – We are looking for a few members to join Fred Carter and myself in looking after our PA system, laptop computer, projector and associated items. This would involve working with us as a team where we would all be familiar with the equipment so that eventually any of us would be able to set it up, and operate it, at the monthly meetings. The equipment is also occasionally required for educational and social events. It's not rocket science so why not come and join us.

David Clarke
Vice Chairman

01702 204559 07941 8132650 clarked46@talktalk.net

HELP REQUIRED FOR THE BOOK STALL

Don and June Cooper have been managing the book stall since the early days of our U3A. This is a very sociable and interactive area at our monthly meetings and one we would not want to lose. With time being the enemy for us senior citizens, we need to share the logistics of carrying and storing the 5 boxes of books to each meeting. We still have volunteers to manage the table on the day, but the task of moving the books now needs to be shared by others.

If one or more of you feel that you could assist with transporting and/or storing the 5 boxes, please come forward and let me know. It would be a shame to lose this facility for the lack of shared assistance. Many thanks.

Bob Wren (Group's Coordinator) 01702 525311

Thanks, Brian

Brian Kersey's 'Gardening Corner' in the March 2014 edition of this Newsletter extolled the virtues of Alstroemeria, a plant which frankly we had not heard of. Always looking to introduce something new to our garden, we followed Brian's recommendation and bought some Alstroemeria plants, particularly the variety 'Indian Summer'. This summer they have come into their own, the striking bronze colour, as portrayed in this photo, making a real impact in our garden.



Liz and Roger Baker

SOCIAL EVENTS

Do you enjoy music from the 50s and 60s? If so, come along to the HULLBRIDGE SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB on FRIDAY 16th October at 7.30 p.m. Take a trip down memory lane recalling the sounds and sights of that time. See your idol on the big screen as you dance to great numbers. Watch video clips of the fashion and events of the era. This event comes highly recommended by several of our members. It's a bit different, so why not come along and give it a try! Tickets are £7.50 each. You are welcome to bring your own snacks/nibbles but NO DRINK PLEASE as there is a pay bar.

Our annual QUIZ will be held on SATURDAY 21st NOVEMBER at 7.30 p.m. at HOLY TRINITY CHURCH HALL. Our quizmaster, as usual, will be DAVID LUTTERLOCH who always produces an excellent quiz for us. Teams should be up to 8 people. If you have a complete team, it helps if one person comes and buys tickets for the whole team (helpful, but not essential). If you are coming along on your own or as a pair, let me know, and I will group you with other people to make up a team. Due to the size of the hall, we are limited to 12 tables of 8 and last year's quiz was a sell-out, so how about sorting your team out now? Ticket price remains the same at £4 each. Bring your own drinks and nibbles.

The CHRISTMAS LUNCH on THURSDAY 3rd DECEMBER is at the WESTCLIFF HOTEL at £25 each. This year, in an attempt to make things easier for our members and the Social Committee Team, we have produced a printed reservation form (included with this Newsletter). On the form are all the details regarding the lunch including food choices and the transport to and from the hotel. I think it better for members to be able to complete the form to make their choices at leisure, at home, rather than in a queue at the monthly meeting. Members can then either post their completed form to me together with their cheque, or hand it in at the September meeting. I appreciate that there will still be some queuing, but if choices have already been made and cheques completed, it should help things along.

Tickets for all 3 events will be available at the September meeting. I do hope that our programme of events appeals to most, if not all members. I am always happy to listen to any suggestions for new ideas you may wish to put forward for the future.

DON'T FORGET YOUR CHEQUE BOOK. For bookkeeping purpose, I have to ask for a separate cheque for each event, although I am happy to accept cash for the quiz as this is a small amount.

Jane Godfrey
Social Events Coordinator

RAYLEIGH U3A Social Committee

Christmas Lunch at the Westcliff Hotel on Thursday 3rd December 2015

This year's Rayleigh U3A Christmas Lunch will be held at the Westcliff Hotel, Westcliff Parade, SS0 7QW at approximately 1.15pm.

The Committee have listened carefully to the various comments from members about previous Christmas lunches and have endeavoured to cover all points.

The cost will be £25.00 per person to include three course meal with coffee and mints, wine and orange juice on each table. Piped music for dancing AFTER the meal with quiet lounge/bar area for those who prefer.

Tables are for 8, 10 or 12. If you are not in a group to fill a table, please let me know if there are any members that you would like to sit with and I will do my best to arrange this.

As parking at the hotel is difficult we have arranged coach transport (98 seats) to and from the hotel, included in the ticket price, but we are unable to make a reduction for those who wish to make their own travel arrangements, or for those who book after the two coaches are full.

The coaches will pick up from Webster's Way at approximately 12.00 noon, then in Eastwood Road at Trinity Road, Clarence Road and the Oakwood Pub. They will leave the Westcliff Hotel at approximately 4.30pm to return home. All times to be confirmed nearer the day.

Reservations should be made by completing the form below and returning it with a cheque in payment (made payable to Rayleigh U3A) to Jane Godfrey, 14 Lakeside, Rayleigh SS6 9LA

If you have any queries, please give me a call. 01268 781249 jangra14@btinternet.com

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To: Jane Godfrey, Rayleigh U3A.
Please reserve.....places for the Christmas Lunch on Thursday 3rd December 2015 at Westcliff Hotel I/We attach a cheque payable to Rayleigh U3A for £.....(£25.00 per person)

I/We wish to join the coach at Websters Way / Trinity Road / Clarence Road/ The Oakwood Pub, Eastwood / wish to make our own way to and from the hotel. (Please delete as applicable)

For lunch, I/we wish to have the following (please delete and show numbers, as applicable)

STARTERS: Cream of vegetable soup / In house cured Scottish Salmon with dill and mustard dressing / Pear date and walnut salad with port wine dressing (v)

MAINS: Roast Turkey served with pigs in blankets, sage and onion stuffing / Pan fried Sea Bass fillet with spinach, clam and saffron broth / Wild mushroom, fennel and blue cheese filo parcel with a sweet red pepper sauce (v)

All main courses are served with Chef's selection of seasonal potatoes and vegetables.

DESSERTS: Traditional Christmas pudding served with Brandy sauce / Chocolate and praline truffle with caramelised hazelnuts / Orange, whiskey and marmalade tart with orange sorbet.

IF YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENTS, please let me know.

Name(s)..... Tel.No.....

Address..... Mobile No.....

..... Email

DON'T FORGET. Keep reminder of food ordered and coach pick-up points.