

# Rayleigh



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

## Newsletter Edition No. 74 - July 2016

### FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

Welcome to the July Newsletter.

I am delighted to say that Groups' Co-ordinator, David Fryer-Kelsey has offered to take on the role of Vice Chairman and this has been approved unanimously by the Committee.

I would also like to say thank you to David and Heather Flemmings for organizing a very successful and enjoyable Group Leaders and Volunteers Day. It was an opportunity for both Group Leaders and Volunteers to ask questions and share ideas. You too can form your own Group and pursue a particular interest with like-minded people. Talk to David and Heather about the support available to you to make this possible.

The Educational Events Committee led by Maureen Huntly have been very busy planning events for later in the year including a Speakers Lunch at Saxon Hall in October with UK Space Agency Research Fellow, Dr. Lewis Dartnell. Tickets are selling very fast for this event so to avoid disappointment I recommend you buy your ticket now as places are limited. Other events include a talk about the History of Tea including a tea tasting and afternoon tea in November. A Study Day is in the planning stage for March 2017 and also a further programme of 'Talks for All'.

Events to look forward to organised by the Social Events Committee led by Jane Godfrey include a trip to Gravesend in July via the ferry at Tilbury to enjoy the Pocahontas Promenade Tour, among other attractions, the ever popular Quiz in October and of course the Christmas Lunch.

Some of the above events are already listed on the Events page of our website and others will follow as details are finalised.

July is our last meeting before we meet again on Thursday 1st September when we will have Malcolm Gaskill talking about '17th Century Migration to America'.

I hope you all have a happy and enjoyable summer break.

Sincerely,

Pete Huntly  
Chairman, Rayleigh U3A

## SOCIAL EVENTS

I hate to mention Christmas at this time of year but needs must. The Christmas Lunch has been booked for several months now and plans are well under way. It was decided to return to The Westcliff Hotel as this proved to be a popular venue last year. It will, once again, be a three course meal, followed by tea/coffee and mints. It also includes two bottles of wine per table and coach transport to and from the hotel for the first 98 members to book. I know that some people will prefer to make their own travel arrangements but we are not able to make any reduction for those who don't wish to use the coaches, or who book after the coaches are full. The date of the lunch this year will be Thursday, 8th December (NOT THE FIRST THURSDAY IN DECEMBER, as is usual) 12.30pm for 1.00pm.

The ticket price will be increased by £1 this year to £26. Ticket prices have remained the same for the last 4 years but due to extra costs at the hotel and for hire of the coaches, this small increase is necessary.

A reservation form will be available to print-off in the September Newsletter and it would be helpful if members wishing to book for the lunch, would fill in the form and bring it with their cheque to the September meeting. There will be forms available at the meeting for those who don't have access to the internet.

Also on sale at the September meeting will be tickets for our Autumn Quiz which will be held this time at The Hullbridge Sports and Social Club on Saturday 22nd October 7pm for 7.30pm. Tickets are £4.50 each, teams of up to 8. You can bring your own snacks/nibbles but not drinks, as there is a reasonably priced pay bar.

The reason for the change of venue, is that having had to cancel The Race Night (due to lack of support) earlier this year, the Hall Management agreed to transfer the booking to another date so, rather than loose £130, that booking is being used for our Autumn Quiz. I hope we have our usual sell out! Ever the optimist!!

Jane Godfrey

Social Events Co-ordinator.

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## SPEAKERS AT FORTHCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

**July – Anne Anderson** a former Senior Lecturer on the Fine Arts Valuation degree courses at Southampton Solent University.

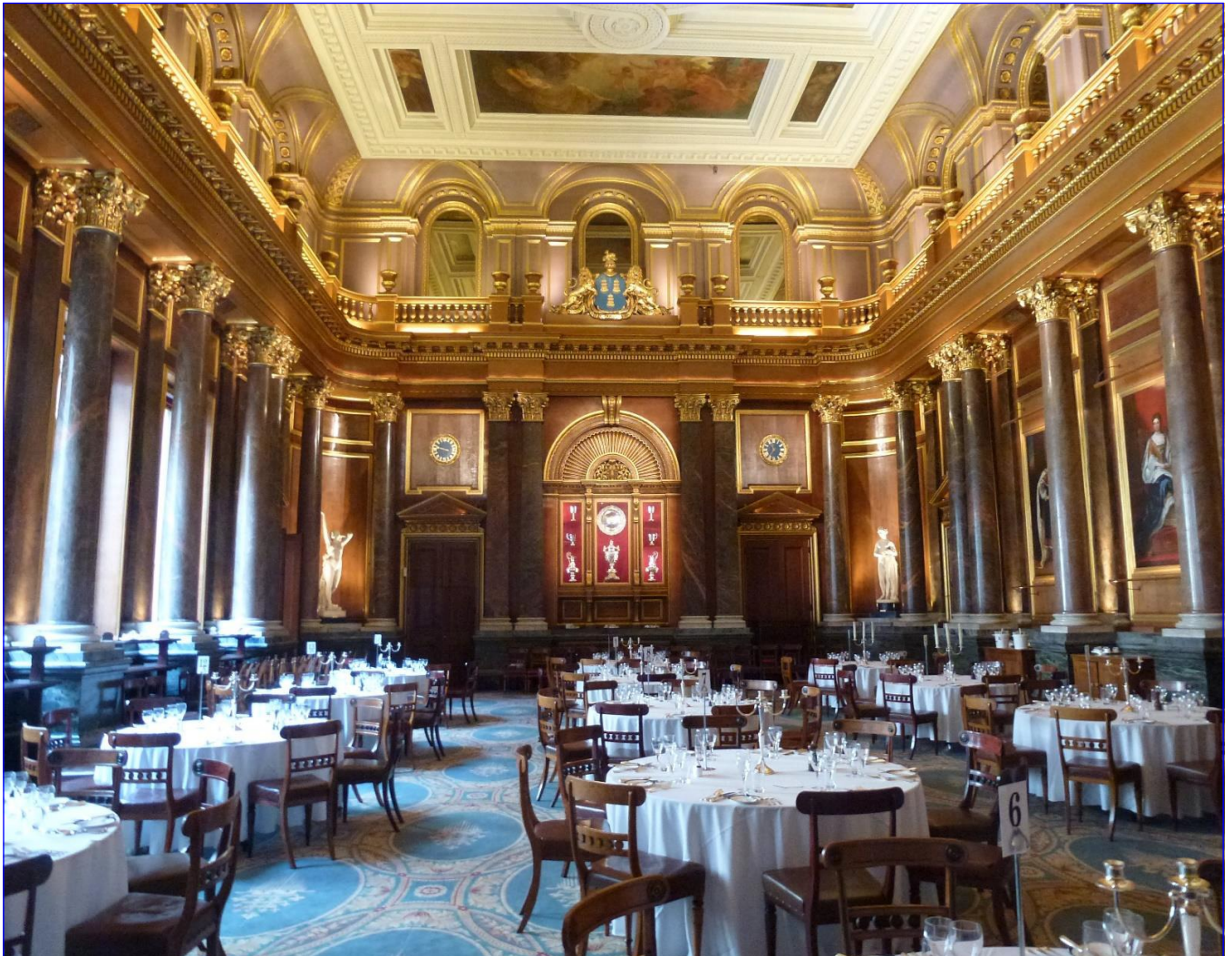
**September – Malcolm Gaskill** a Professor of Early Modern History at the University of East Anglia with a particular interest in the social and cultural history of England, Europe and North America 1500 – 1800.

**October – Christopher Somerville** author, writer and broadcaster about country walks, life in remote rural and island communities.

**November – Dr. Scott Anderson** MA, PhD, FNAVA, ASFV. Previously on 'Flog It' and a NADFAS Lecturer.

# The Drapers' Hall

Throgmorton Avenue, London EC2



The Drapers' Company was founded over 600 years ago and is incorporated by Royal Charter and is one of the Twelve Great Livery companies in the City of London. As its name indicates the Drapers' Company was once involved in the drapery trade, the trading of woollen cloth, in the City of London. Today it administers charitable trusts.

Linda and David Clarke organised a tour of this magnificent Livery Hall for their Serendipity Group. We were greeted by a guide who gave us a comprehensive tour giving us the opportunity to visit many of the rooms containing special collections of art, silver and artefacts. This collection has been created and developed over the centuries.

The Livery Hall itself was breath taking in its entirety set beneath the dramatic ceiling paintings, depicting Shakespearean scenes by 19th century artist Herbert Draper and is undoubtedly one of the country's finest event spaces. Often used in films as a double for Buckingham Palace, the room displays the Drapers' Company's collections of royal portraits and a sample of its silver collection.

Further details can be found at <http://www.thedrapers.co.uk>.

Maureen Huntly,  
Serendipity Group 1





## Gardening Corner

After a slow start to summer, it has been amazing to see the rapid growth that followed a mild, wet winter (including weeds). If you have fruit trees it is good practice to remove any non-fruiting shoots down to a few inches, to channel the strength for forming fruit including Apples, Pears and Plums.

On the floral scene, continue to feed Roses with a high potash feed, to encourage new buds – of course removing any dead-heads on a regular basis.

There are some exciting new Hydrangeas available this year (if you have room). HYDRANGEA ASPERA “HOT CHOCOLATE” is an outstanding variety with reddish brown leaves and with a pink lacecap and blue/violet flower heads. Flowering time: July to September. A partially shaded area is preferred, not exposed to the wind.

### BRIAN KERSEY

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## NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY – JULY 2016

I would like to bring to your attention the forthcoming events and information notified to me by the U3A Trust. The full information/booking forms on these items can be found on the U3A Trust website at [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk) or [info@u3a.org.uk](mailto:info@u3a.org.uk) , telephone 020 8466 6139 or please feel free to telephone me on 01702 552426 or email at [jsoilleux88@gmail.com](mailto:jsoilleux88@gmail.com). Information will also appear in the Third Age Matters magazine, in addition to being displayed on the Secretary's Notice Board at the Members Meeting in July.

**RHS U3A Group** discount offers on gardening and days out.

**U3A Trust AGM** to be held in Nottingham on 27th August.

**2017 Diaries.** These have been ordered and will be available for purchase from September onwards. Price £3.

**U3A Photography Competition – Britain's Wildlife.** Entries are still welcome up to 31st August. Please see website for more details.

**ITV Documentary – Stories & memories of the 1966 World Cup** – Blakeway North, a television production company based in Manchester is making the above documentary on behalf of ITV, and would love to hear from U3A members who have a funny or interesting story connected to the day. If that is you, and you would like to share it, please contact Jasmine MacNabb, Assistant Producer, on 0161 817 6650 or email her at [jasmine.macnabb@blakeway.tv](mailto:jasmine.macnabb@blakeway.tv) by July.

**Digital Photography Group 2** on the 9<sup>th</sup> May went to Norsey Woods, Billericay. The weather was good and we managed to take some very interesting photographs, including this one.

Norsey Wood is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a Local Nature Reserve, and as an ancient coppice woodland with a wide variety of plants and animals, largely as a result of the varied geology, history and management of the site.

The rides and pathways are thought to date back to Iron Age times. The earliest written evidence for the rides is a map of 1593. They have been described as the oldest known woodland rides which still exist today.



**Jackie Soilleux and June Jennings**

Co-Leaders of Group 2



## **From Group Co-ordinators – Heather Flemmings and David Fryer-Kelsey**

Our 'Thank You' lunch for our hard working Group Leaders' and Volunteers went very smoothly and the feedback we got at the time showed that it was a most enjoyable and social occasion. About 55 people attended the meeting. We would like to thank Pete and Maureen Huntly and Bob Wren for helping to put it together. Our guest speaker, Vic Botterill, gave an interesting and fun talk entitled 'Moments, Memory and Magic' or the three M's

For such early days the placing of new members seems to have gone rather well, with people being placed in a variety of groups and some preferring to wait until they had a few meetings under their belt. One of our new members has started a Family History Group and Book Club 4 and we have a second Patchwork Group. Just a reminder, since the vacancy list went up at the June meeting, Kate Sawyer has Patchwork vacancies and says beginners are very welcome.

David Sawyer now has one vacancy on Music Appreciation 2.

Remember to look at the noticeboard at the monthly meetings for a list of vacancies in groups. Or visit the Group Co-ordinator's table where we can advise you.

We would love to hear from you about your ideas for group activities or approach your group leaders directly for their assistance.

All who came to the meeting were pleased to have name labels and thought it very helpful. It would be good if Group Leaders wore their lanyards and name cards at monthly meetings so that members interested in their group could approach them directly. Those Group Leaders who were not at the meeting, could you please pick up your lanyards and name cards at our desk at the monthly U3A meeting.

David and Heather

Group Co-ordinators

SPEAKERS LUNCH  
WITH DR LEWIS DARTNELL AUTHOR OF  
*'The Knowledge'*

**Wednesday 12th October 2016**  
**12 for 12.30pm**

Saxon Hall, Aviation Way, Southend on Sea SS2 6UN  
Two course lunch including coffee/tea and mints

**TICKET £20 – ON SALE AT JULY MEETING**

Dr Dartnell will take us on a journey of discovery which will be thought provoking and entertaining throughout:

*"If the world as we know it ended, what knowledge would be needed to rebuild civilisation?"*

*"How do we begin producing essentials such as food, power, medicines, or making metal out of rock?"*



EDUCATION EVENT  
TALK BY LUCY CHAPPELL FROM

**TWININGS**

*'History of Tea'*

**TUESDAY 29th NOVEMBER 2016**  
**2pm - 4.30pm**

Saxon Hall, Aviation Way, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6UN  
Includes tea tasting and afternoon tea

**TICKET £12 – ON SALE AT JULY MEETING**



## CHURCH VISIT GROUP 2

In April fifteen of our group visited St. Mary the Virgin Church in South Benfleet. St Marys Church, which is one of the oldest landmarks in South East Essex, has recently had some major restoration. It is believed that the foundation stones of the existing St Marys Church were laid in 894 AD. There is a model of a Viking ship inside the church today.



A Saxon wooden church was built on the site, before the Norman Conquest, which was owned by the Abbey of St Marys in Barking. In the year following 1066, William the Conqueror granted Benfleet, with many other manors, to St Peter's Westminster and to this day the

advowson of Benfleet church is still retained by St Peter's Westminster.

The oldest wall of the current church is the west wall and the outer door was the one which now leads to the sacristy. Rebuilding, restoration, remodelling and additions were made around 1300 and 1440. The vestry books date from 1679 onwards and it is about this time that the roof of the nave was replaced with the present tiled roof.

The church still has a roode screen and the panels on the front are filled with paintings representing six male and six female saints: St. Thomas of Canterbury, St. Nicholas, St. Edward, St. Francis, St. Martin, St. Christopher, St. Frances, St. Clare, St. Joan, St. Catherine, St. Osyth and St. Cecilia.

In the tower are six bells, the oldest dating from the 15th century. A tall wooden spire once crowned the tower but it was blown down in the late 18th century and the present short spire was substituted in 1785, the date on the weathercock.

Except for a few fragments in the north aisle all the stained glass is modern.

After looking around the outside of the Church we had a lovely pub lunch at the Bread and Cheese.



## Serendipity 1

On Thursday, 9th June, we visited the Mansion House in Valentines Park. We toured the building and heard about the history of the house. In the beginning it was a farm but was purchased in c1696 by Elizabeth Tillotson, the widow of the then Archbishop of Canterbury and niece of Oliver Cromwell, who built her home on the site.

From then on it was purchased and reformed by several owners – the most notorious being Robert Surman, a participant in the South Sea Bubble financial fiasco, who lived in the property for 30 years from around 1724 with his wife and two young daughters.

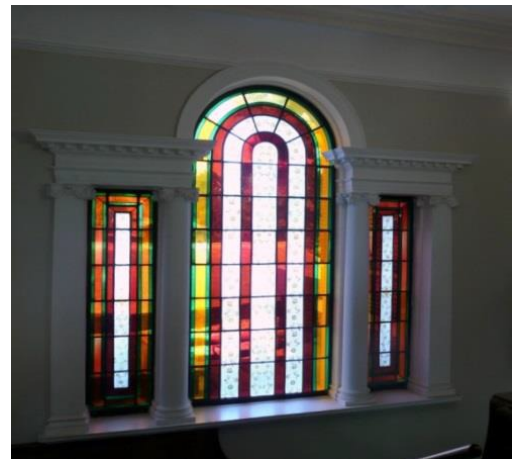
The last person to live in the Mansion was Sarah Oakes who lived there from 1838 until her death, after which the Redbridge Council acquired the property in 1912. Since then it has been used as a home for wartime refugees, a hospital, public health centre and council housing department.

It is now a popular visitor attraction and venue for events. What was once the servants' quarters on the top floor are now six contemporary studios, used by local artists and designers (the studios are open three times a year to the public).

The building possesses some beautiful glass windows and in the grounds of the house there was more to see but unfortunately we did not have time – perhaps next year.



Valentines Mansion



The 18th century Venetian Window

## A Note from the Newsletter Team

We need your contributions in order to keep the paper going. Please send in your notes on the work your group are doing; the outings you have been on; any interesting facts that you have gleaned etc. Send your notes to Sheila Farrant at [sh.fa.40@gmail.com](mailto:sh.fa.40@gmail.com) or contact her on 01702 520833 or 0772 409 5299.

June Jennings, Sheila Farrant and Joan Anderson

The News Team