

NOVEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER



Here we are in November and Christmas is looming ever nearer. Just a reminder that there is no Monthly Meeting in December, but of course we do have the Christmas lunch planned at Saxon Hall on 5th December! It will be a great way to start to celebrate the festive season with friends and group members.

Tickets will be on sale at the November meeting at £35 per person - menus available at the meeting, or by emailing me on debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk

Despite the very changeable weather, we have been very encouraged by the increase in numbers attending the Monthly Meetings - it is good to see so many members and thank you for remembering to bring your Membership cards with you so we can scan them. Just a reminder for you to complete the reverse of your Membership Card with your ICE (In Case of Emergency) details.

We held our second New Members meeting on 13th October. Previously we only took on new members once a year, but it was decided to encourage membership throughout the year and so the previous format of an annual New Members meeting was scrapped.

We are now inviting all new members every four months to join us for an informative afternoon where they learn about Rayleigh u3a, the u3a Trust and what they can expect from their membership. They get to meet other new members and hopefully make new friends. We had a fun quiz, lots of tea, coffee and biscuits and also some Group Leaders attended to share their stories and information about being a Group Leader.

The feedback has been very encouraging and we all had an enjoyable afternoon! Thanks to all those who helped make it a success and we would like to take this opportunity to welcome all our new members to Rayleigh u3a.

Thank you to all the contributors to this edition of the Newsletter — we love to get news of what is happening in your groups and the photos are an added bonus. Do keep them coming by email to: debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk. Closing date for the February 2024 Newsletter is 12th January.

NOTICES

Sadly we have been informed of the deaths of three of our members. We have sent condolences from Rayleigh u3a to their loved ones.

Sue Bevell - passed away in August
David Towell - passed away in August
John King - passed away in September

FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

1st November 2023

The story behind the legendary meeting in Africa in 1871 between the missing explorer Dr David Livingstone and the ambitious news reporter Henry Morton Stanley. Speaker Fran Sandham is a lecturer and freelance writer whose talks have been described as informative, fascinating, illuminating and delivered with pace and wit.



A Reminder - There is no meeting in December

3rd January 2024

Our first meeting of the New Year and we will be welcoming John Sharpe with a Musical Extravaganza!

QUIZ NIGHT

The Quiz Night was held on Saturday 23rd September and was well attended. A lively and enjoyable time was had by all. Here is a photo of the winning team. Well done to all who attended and thanks to Jim and Val Whitehouse for organising the event.



ROYAL OCCASIONS STUDY DAY

18th October 2023

Sadly it is only just over a year since our dear Queen Elizabeth II died. What followed was a repeat of history - the return journey of the Monarch to London, the Lying in State followed by the nation grieving at Her Majesty's funeral and burial in St. George's Chapel Windsor. The new King was proclaimed and the planning put in place for the Coronation on 6th May this year.

Maureen and Pete Huntly, past Chairman of Rayleigh u3a requested the Committee allow them to put together a fitting tribute in the form of a Study Day acknowledging Royal Occasions and Ceremonies that play a vital role in marking any Royal Event.

The day began at Saxon Hall with the Town Crier/Toastmaster Tony Appleton in all his regalia welcoming guests as they arrived then introducing the entertaining and knowledgeable Speakers throughout the day.



His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, is the King's personal representative in Essex and spoke of her voluntary unpaid role involving every aspect of life in Essex, including being involved in the planning and greeting Royal Guests when visiting the County. Awards to Essex people for their service to others and involving the young people in ceremonial occasions.

Patrick Wilkins spoke of his worshipping in St Paul's Cathedral and was invited to become a Wandsman - eventually becoming secretary of the Wandsmen and putting in place security at Royal Occasions. He remembered with affection the Platinum Jubilee Service for HM Queen Elizabeth II only last year organised by his team.

Lunch was superb as always at Saxon Hall.

Our Town Crier introduced himself after lunch and told of his colourful uniform which cost £8,000, his tricorn hat emblazoned with large red, white and blue feathers as he clutched his ever present handbell. At 87 years of age he keeps fit by swimming every day to allow him to give service to the community with his presence at many special occasions.

To close this special event was Keith Baldwin, a retired member of the Royal Horse Guards who recalled spending many hours on horseback on ceremonial duties. He explained the differences between the various Guards regiments and detailed the training of horses and men for ceremonial occasions. An amusing speaker who made us smile as he recounted tales from the 'back of a horse'.

Everyone seemed satisfied with the day, the speakers, lunch and the knowledge that a u3a member was to receive an MBE at Buckingham Palace - a Royal Occasion and Ceremony to happen in ten days.

Maureen and Pete Huntly

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

SERENDIPITY 6—TRIP TO CINEWORLD

Ten members of Serendipity 6 ventured forth to Cineworld at Festival Leisure in Basildon. We enjoyed coffee and biscuits whilst the manager, Phil ably assisted by Jane, told us the history of the cinema.

We were shown round the different screens, firstly we saw a small studio which could be hired for birthdays or special events. Nothing prepared us for the 4DX screen – the seats leapt and shook and every one of our senses was blasted by the special effects! We emerged to visit ScreenX with screens to the front and sides which further disturbed our equilibrium.

We then went to the calm of the nerve centre of the cinema which was strangely deserted but consisted of computer controlled projectors worth millions of pounds.

It was a fascinating visit but I think we will do without any special effects when we next visit the cinema!

Jill Cann & Lesley Kilminster



THEATRE TRIPS - THE FINAL CURTAIN



ACT ONE

In 2007 a group of friends felt a need for a u3a Group in Rayleigh. They formed a Committee and Rayleigh u3a was born. Various groups were set up including a Theatre Group run by Helena Maxwell and Jean MacKenzie.

The Group proved very popular with 30+members. They held regular meetings to discuss the shows which were on offer and suitable dates. Having taken up a spare ticket for Hairspray, I was adopted into the Group and organised my first theatre outing, which was to see The Mousetrap. We had several enjoyable theatre visits in the days when a train ticket was £7.35 each and theatre tickets ranged from £19.50 to £29.50.

The Theatre Group had a long waiting list and on a train journey to London, I said to Helena and the Chairperson who were sitting opposite me - 'I'm thinking of starting a second group'. The next day at the monthly meeting at the Mill Hall, the Chairperson stood up and announced that I had offered to start another Theatre Group! Kathy Kay offered to help me with the administration and Theatre Group 2 was born.

ACT TWO

Kathy and I organised several trips in conjunction with Group 1, but unfortunately Helena had family commitments and Jean moved away, as did Kathy. That left two groups and a long wait list and ME! I decided to close both Groups and organise Theatre Trips open to all members of our u3a. I asked for help and several members offered, and still do in various capacities. Joan Gardiner stepped up and offered help and support in the organisation of trips and we have worked happily together for the last eleven and a half years.....in excess of 60 Theatre visits, both locally and in London.

ACT THREE

Times change - we all grow older, commitments alter and now most members prefer coach travel. Indeed it is impossible to rely on train travel these days!

We now feel is the time to bring the curtain down at the end of the year, on this very popular part of our u3a, in the sincere hope that someone will come forward to continue to lead this. We have so many happy memories of our visits and have made many friends we might otherwise not have met.

CREDITS

Many thanks to all the people who have helped behind the scenes over the years. To Liz Denney, Jackie Burrell, Pat Murray, Jenny Wittridge, Angela Harris, Marlene Bates, Toni Marriott and, of course to all the Chairpersons and Treasurers who have been invaluable in

supporting us. Apologies to anyone we have omitted to thank.

Special thanks to Wendy Edwards, the Treasurer during Covid and lockdowns, who had the unenviable task of actioning the refunds to members of four shows during these times.

Finally we would like to thank our designated Theatre Agent at Ambassadors Theatre Group (now Group Line) - Theresa Baker—for all the assistance and advice she has given us.

We will see through any trips booked and paid for up until the end of the year.

Thanking you for your support,

Joan and Sandra

LONGER WALKS GROUP

The longer walks group enjoyed their inaugural circular walk of 6.8 miles around Stow Maries airfield via Purleigh. Thirteen members enjoyed lovely views and nice weather.



WALKING 3 GROUP

Walking Group 3 enjoyed the fine weather this October beginning in Southchurch Park and along the pier and back before lunching at the cafe in the park.



Interested in Joining the Patchwork & Tea Group?



The Group is looking for new members. It is held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 2.00pm - 4.00pm in the Cloister Rooms at Holy Trinity Church.

Do you recall, that at the October 2022 Rayleigh u3a members meeting there was a display of lap quilts that this group had made? The photo above is of some of the members delivering them to Sweyne Court in Rayleigh. This was just one of the projects they have worked on.

If you are interested in joining—the 1st session is free. It is a combination of a little teaching along with tea and cake, plenty of chat and getting on with whatever you want to do. The Group work mainly with sewing machines but a few members prefer to hand sew.

Please contact Paul Reeve, add your name to the sheet on the Group Coordinators table at Monthly Meetings or email him at: paulreeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk or Telephone: 07825 430159 for further details.

EXISTING GROUPS WITH VACANCIES

BADMINTON (every Monday and Tuesday at 4pm at Rayleigh Leisure Centre)

CERAMICS (1st Tuesday morning)

CRIB CLUB (3rd Monday evening)

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY (2nd Monday)

GARDENING 2 (3rd Thursday)

LOCAL HISTORY (2nd Wednesday afternoon)

REAL ALE (3rd Wednesday lunchtime)

SIT AND SEW (2nd Wednesday afternoon)

STROLLING 2 (2nd Monday)

VISITING ESSEX CHURCHES 1 (2nd Monday)

Interested? Contact Paul Reeve as detailed above.

NEW GROUPS

Thanks to Paul Reeve our very busy Groups Co-ordinator, and some willing volunteers, we are lucky that we have several new groups waiting to get started. Details are on the following pages.

Our Groups are all run by members with an interest in a subject or activity. Leading a group is often more of a facilitating role – keeping in touch with group members and making arrangements of where to meet for example.

Some Groups are run by all their members – each member taking a turn in arranging an outing or venue, or a topic for discussion. Others will be led by a member with a specific interest who wishes to share their knowledge and involve the other group members.

For example – you may love playing snooker and after speaking with Paul, find out there isn't a **Snooker Group**. So you find a venue (there's one in Rayleigh I think!), pop in to find out if you can book a regular time slot and then ask Paul to advertise for like-minded members to join you. Costs can be shared between members and as easy as that, we have a new Snooker Group up and running!

Or you may speak some Spanish and would like to keep it going – ask Paul if there are any interested members. You can meet up at someone's home and all have a chat about your levels of Spanish conversation and how you wish to progress. You may decide on a topic for the first meeting such as Eating Out for example and then you can all help each other brush up on your language skills, or help those with no Spanish to learn some helpful phrases. You may have obvious different levels of the language so maybe a **Spanish for Beginners Group** or **Spanish Conversation Group** might be best.

Paul will be with you all the way to help you set up and get members interested so do speak to him if you have any ideas or are willing to start a possible new Group.

We had a quick discussion recently and came up with other possibilities - perhaps a **Current Affairs Group**, a **Non-Fiction Book Club** and even a **Home Cinema Group** where members choose a film, watch it together and then discuss afterwards.

There are endless possibilities—it just needs someone to take the plunge and start the process. Since the beginning of this year we have had 55 new members join and we need some new groups for them to be part of.

Some existing groups do have vacancies but where a group you belong to is full, maybe you would be willing to start a second Group?

Do call Paul or email him if you would like to have a chat– it would be great if we could expand our Groups for 2024!

paulreeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk or call on: 07825 430159

***NEW GROUP STARTING * YOGA GROUP**

We are very fortunate in Rayleigh u3a to have a new member keen to practice Yoga and is willing to provide some gentle tuition to a group on a regular basis.

Whilst not having any qualifications, Sue has been practising yoga with the u3a for 15 years in Spain. Now back in the UK she is missing it and wondered if members would like to join her in doing a class.

The class would have a maximum of 10 members, be a 1 hr duration and everyone goes at their own pace. Location is yet to be decided.



Hatha Yoga is about Harmony of mind, body and spirit and helps keeping the body supple and moving.

This is a slow gentle yoga and is perfect for people over 60 it is done by breathing, stretching and holding a pose for a short length of time.

Doing Yoga exercises will help maintain muscle and balance, keep the aging process at bay and still the mind.

Contact our Group Coordinator, Paul Reeve at the monthly members meeting for more information or to register interest in joining this new group or add your name to the sheet on the Groups table.

Email paulreeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk or tel. 07825 430159

WE ARE STARTING ANOTHER KNIT & NATTER GROUP



We already have someone willing to be the Leader of this group so if you like to knit and natter, then this will be of interest to you!

*** NEW GROUP STARTING SOON ***

WAFFLING FOR MEN

Current Affairs, Football, the Weather, Cooking (!)
Whatever it is, you name it, and we will talk about it!!!



*** NEW GROUP STARTING SOON ***

COFFEE & CONVERSATION FOR LADIES

Current Affairs, Fashion, the Weather, Cooking –
whatever it is, you name it, and the Group will talk about it!!!



**If you would like to find out more or
would like to join one of these new
groups,
then add your name to the sheet on the
Groups Board or contact
Paul Reeve
at the Group Coordinators table,
telephone him on 07825 430159
or email to
paulreeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk**

Learning Events

u3a members can join a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free with their membership! Visit the Trust's website at www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events to book your place.

Most of these opportunities are presented by members themselves; sharing their knowledge or skills with others across the movement. We also have a wide range of talks on offer from well-known speakers and organisations, plus in-person events at venues like the Royal Institution.

The website is constantly being updated with more and more interesting topics so do make a point of looking regularly.

Coming up soon are:

Into the mind of an artist. Van Gogh - Tuesday 7th Nov @ 10am via Zoom

Van Gogh and some of his most famous work Towards the end of his life, Vincent painted some of his most famous paintings which reveal more precious clues about his thoughts and state of mind. Although speculation and mystery still surround his works maybe, through these, he continues to speak to us, today. What do you think he was telling us?

Sir Thomas Lipton— Thursday 9th Nov @ 2pm via Zoom

From cabin boy to Tea Tycoon to International Yachtsman - join Neville Lyons from Guildford u3a in tracing the extraordinary 'rags to riches life' of Sir Thomas Lipton. Our Speaker, Neville Lyons, has already given two talks in this u3a series, relating to the history of the J Lyons catering empire. Neville's grandfather was cousin to that company's co-founder, Sir Joseph Lyons. The fact that Sir Thomas and Sir Joseph were close friends and both came from humble backgrounds resulted in Neville's inspiration to research for this talk

The Curious history of Labyrinths and Mazes - Friday 10th Nov @ 10am via Zoom

Join Dr Julie E Bounford, social historian and author, based in Louth, Lincolnshire for this talk on labyrinths and mazes. The curious history of mazes does not run in a "steady straight" line, but, instead, begins with the labyrinth: a simple motif that is no doubt familiar to us all. With its true origins still shrouded in mystery, the chronicle of the labyrinth, and more recently of the maze, spans the past four thousand years, taking many twists and turns. It is a truly fascinating social history.

Cryptic Crossword for Beginners - Six Zoom sessions, 10.00 to 11.30, on Tuesdays 5th, 12th, 19th of December 2023 and 9th, 16th and 23rd of January 2024.

This six-session course will teach you how to solve cryptic crosswords. It starts with the simplest ideas and easiest types of clue and gradually builds to the more advanced aspects of clue solving. At the end of the course you will understand how cryptic clues work, be able to solve clues at an intermediate level of difficulty and know how to develop your skills further. This is a stimulating course that can lead you to an enjoyable new pastime.