

JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

Our AGM at the May Meeting was well attended with over 140 members. We presented Val Foley, who was stepping down from the Committee and from her role as Speaker Secretary, with some flowers to say thank you for all her hard work for the u3a over the last four years. We also welcomed Amanda Lowe back onto the Committee.

After a plea for new Committee Members, we were delighted that a couple of members came up to speak to members of the Committee after the meeting and they are being invited to our next Committee Meetings.

At our May Committee Meeting, Amanda Lowe has taken on the role as Volunteer and New Members Co-ordinator, Stuart Evans has taken on the role of Speaker Secretary and we have co-opted Jean Birch onto the Committee after she joined us as a visitor. We are looking forward to welcoming another couple of members to our Committee Meeting in June.



If you may also be interested in finding out more about joining the Committee, please do get in touch. Next year we will be looking for a new Chairman, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer so coming onto the Committee beforehand is a great way to see what these roles entail.

Debbie Bamber, Newsletter Editor

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 September 2024 Newsletter is 15th August.

NOTICES

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

Olive Martin —passed away in April

FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

5th June 2024

Martin Lloyd's talk is entitled 'Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies' and is a dramatic account of how the actions of a group of assassins brought about a change in the passport regulations; how the unmasking of a spy caused a modification in passport design and how, for one man, the passport itself turned into a killer.



3rd July 2024

'A Beginning, a Muddle and an End' - a talk about where authors get their ideas from. Author Bobbie Darbyshire gives an entertaining and informative talk explaining how the complex world of character, location, plot and subplot arrives in a writer's mind.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 5th June - Main Monthly Meeting 1.45pm Mill Hall

Wednesday 3rd July—Main Monthly Meeting 1.45pm Mill Hall

Friday 12th July—New Members Meeting by invite

AUGUST—NO MONTHLY MEETING

Wednesday 4th September—Main Monthly Meeting 1.45pm Mill Hall

Friday 20th September—Study Day at Saxon Hall with lunch

Tuesday 3rd December 2024 - u3a Christmas Lunch!



Study Day with 2 Course Lunch

**Starry, Starry Night—An Introduction to
the Universe**

&

**Would You Believe — We Put a Man on
the Moon?**

**Talks by Jerry Stone, Freelance Presenter of
Astronomy & Space Exploration**

Friday 20th September 2024

Doors Open at Saxon Hall 10.30am

Tea/Coffee on arrival

First Talk 11.00am

2 Course Lunch, Tea/Coffee & Mints

Second Talk - finishes by 3pm

Jerry Stone is a space expert, presenter and broadcaster. He was on Sky News covering Tim Peake's mission on the International Space Station. He is a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society, the Chairman of the Space Habitats Committee of the Space Renaissance International & a Senior Associate of the Space Studies Institute.

Tickets £32 per person

On Sale at June & July Meetings

Email: juli.fowles@gmail.com

Fish & Chips Social Event

On 19th March we held our very popular fish and chips lunch with Steve Short, the entertainer. It was held at the British Legion Hall and we had 84 members attend. The food was supplied by the Kings Restaurant and was excellent — they always deliver on time and the food is lovely and hot!

We had a slight hiccup as we thought Kings were providing cutlery and condiments as they had on our last occasion in 2022, but unfortunately this year they didn't. Janet Butler, the Manager of British Legion, came to the rescue - what a star!



After a nice cup of tea or coffee we settled down to hear Steve Short's presentation on the life of magician David Nixon, accompanied with original footage from his shows. Steve entertained us with his magic performed originally by David Nixon. Maureen Philpot, Brian Keech and Alan Wilson assisted Steve which made it very amusing. Thank you to them.

We finished well on time and our last job was to take all the rubbish to the Rayleigh tip, then home to a well-earned glass of wine.

Thanks to all our volunteers - Val and Jim Whitehouse, Wendy Edwards and Keith Leathers, Alison and Laurie Yarham, Jenny & Brian Tuck, Stuart Evans and Jill Cann. Without these members who give their time and effort, events like this would not be possible. Lastly we would like to thank the staff of the British Legion especially Janet Butler who always make the event run so smoothly.

*Amanda and Ray
Lowe*

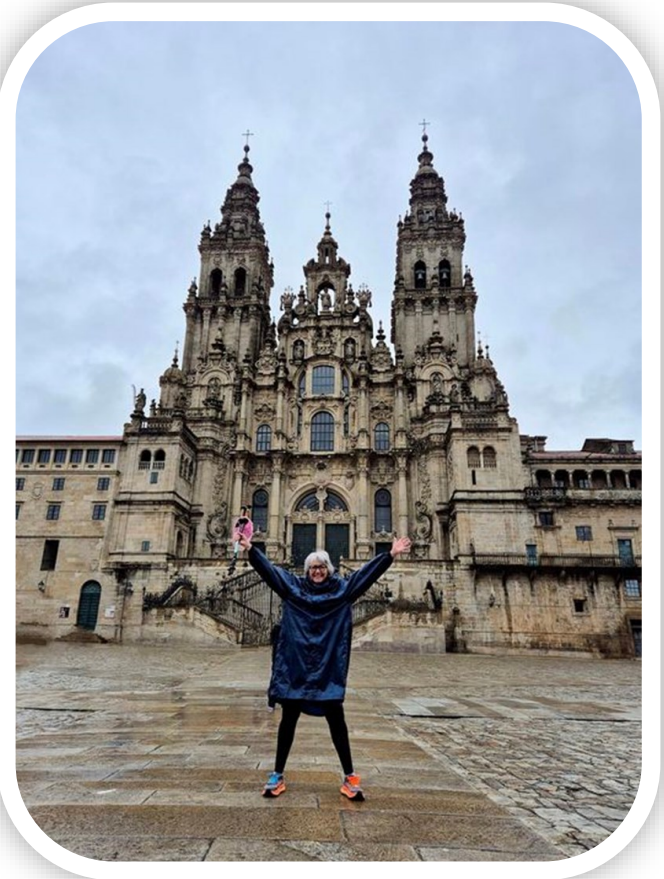


Well Done Jackie!

Our intrepid ex-Secretary of Rayleigh u3a - Jackie Soilleux has just completed an amazing feat by walking **120km in nine days** on the famous Camino de Santiago pilgrim way!

On deciding it was something she wanted to experience, Jackie trained for several months, walking and exercising locally and then travelled to Portugal to embark on her epic journey. Staying in hostels, walking with fellow 'pilgrims' and experiencing sunshine and rain, she finally arrived in Santiago de Compostela in NW Spain.

Here she is outside Santiago Cathedral before collecting her Compostela Certificate from the Pilgrim's Office. What an achievement Jackie!



LATEST NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS COORDINATOR

As membership of Rayleigh U3A continues to grow, we continue to increase the opportunities for our members to join new interest groups. We have a new u3a member who is prepared to begin a second Sunday Lunch group and much interest has already been shown in joining this group.

The Coffee and Conversation for Ladies idea has really taken off and we now have three active groups. I will continue to advertise as there may be demand for at least one further group. I have also begun to advertise a Ladies Inn (not a spelling mistake) Conversation Group which will be for those ladies who may wish to meet at lunchtime to include alternative refreshments..... !!!

Following the success of the Waffling for Men Group, this is now full so I am beginning to advertise for those who might be interested in beginning a second group.

After discussions with some of our members, I have advertised a Walking with Dogs group (not just for dog owners btw) and will gauge interest in this and the other new groups mention over the coming months before we begin running these.

If you are interested in the above or would like more information about any of our groups, then please contact me via my email paulreeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk or telephoning on 07825 430159.

Paul Reeve, Groups Coordinator

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

Strolling 1

Strolling Group 1 enjoyed the spring flowers in the walled garden during a walk around Priory Park.

Val Skam



Waffling for Men

Below is a photo showing Les Collins being presented with the WfM Cup by our Chairman and WfM member, Ray Lowe.

Les is the inaugural winner of this (soon to be highly regarded) trophy for achieving the highest score in our group visit to CJ's tenpin bowling alley in Hockley.

There are various other trips planned so who will be the next winner?.....

Paul Reeve



Serendipity 6

The Serendipity 6 Group visited Moot Hall in Maldon. Moot Hall is a Grade 1 listed building which has a 600 year history from 1420. 17 members attended and below is a photo of us enjoying a very nice meal after our visit.

Jenny Perry



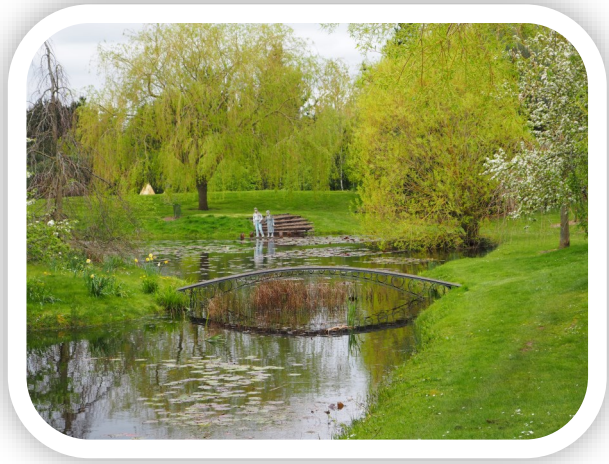
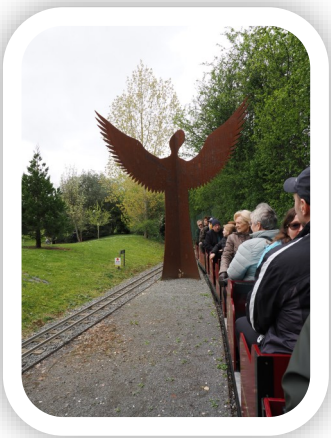
GARDENING GROUP visit Barnard's Farm

Members of Gardening Group visited Barnard's Farm set in 22 hectares of garden and woodland. We went on the miniature railway for a ride around the garden, spotting some of the sculptures as well as travelling past the signal box, halt platform and going through tunnels and arriving back at the station.

In the garden and woodland there are over 80 sculptures, a stream, ponds, and the National Malus Collection of crab apple trees with their beautiful blossoms. Some of the daffodils were still in bloom and the bluebells were just popping their heads out. A vintage car was on display and a light aircraft was on the grass runway.

A lovely time was had by all, followed by lunch in a local pub.

Val Whitehouse



VISITING INTERESTING PLACES IN ESSEX

A Visit to Bosted Airfield Museum — The Bosted Airfield Historical Group was formed in 2000 by Richard Turner, who gave members of V.I.P.E. Group a very interesting guided tour around the Museum. He had been researching the history of the airfield since 1994 and the Museum was officially opened in May 2011.

Located on the old airfield site in Langham it has a B26 Marauder aircraft cockpit 'Mr. Shorty' which is the only example in the U.K., a collection of uniforms, bomber and fighter exhibits, photographs, documents, memorabilia, artefacts and many stories from Bosted village residents telling how the airfield affected their lives.

The Bosted Airfield was an U.S. Airfield during WWII then R.A.F. from 1945-47.

Despite the torrential rain, hail and gale force winds, it was a very interesting visit!

Val Whitehouse



LONGER WALKS GROUP

The longer walks group enjoyed a 7.5 mile walk in April from The Chequers PH in Goldhanger, where we also finished with a lovely meal. Only 7 of us walked this time but very enjoyable. Thanks to Dave and Lesley Kilminster for planning the route, and for organising the weather, which was gorgeous.

The idea for the group is to take on longer walks than the other walking groups offer, so something a bit more challenging. We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, and we usually end with lunch together. We can't guarantee the weather but can guarantee a good walk with good company.

We do have spaces for a few more members, so if you are interested, please put your name down at the next meeting.

Peter Dixon – Group Leader



SERENDIPITY 6 visit London

The day started with a visit to the Tower Bridge Experience on the banks of the River Thames. We learnt about the history of the bridge, completed in 1894, and experienced the high level walkways taking in the stunning panoramic views of London. We watched the traffic going over the bridge through the glass floors!

We discovered the stories of the people who have worked and maintained Tower Bridge. When the Bridge was first built it raised 20-30 times a day, today it opens on an average of 2-3 times. We followed the blue line commemorating the people of Tower Bridge then went into the Victorian Engine Rooms where the original steam engines, coal burners and accumulators that once powered the raising of the Bridge have been preserved and learnt about the architects, engineers and technicians who built and laid the foundations.

We walked to the George Inn, built in 1676, which is the only surviving galleried inn in London for lunch.

A visit to The Old Operating Theatre Museum & Herb Garret which is housed in the attic of the early 18th century church of Old St. Thomas' Hospital in the afternoon showed us an

insight into the history of medicine and surgery. The original timber framed Herb Garret was once used to dry and store herbs for patient's medicine and in 1822 an operating theatre was installed.

We finished our day in London with a walk through Borough Market to Southwark Cathedral, London's oldest Gothic cathedral.

Val Whitehouse



VISITING ESSEX CHURCHES - All Saints' Church, Rettendon on Monday 13th May

This is All Saints' Church at Rettendon - that Church on the hill that you can see from miles around.

The views from the church grounds are amazing - to the east the Crouch Estuary, to the south the hills of Rayleigh and to the west the Langdon Hills are a notable landmark.

A Grade One listed Church well worth a visit.

Pete & Maureen Huntly



VISITING INTERESTING PLACES IN ESSEX visit two **Museums in Canvey**

The Visiting Interesting Places in Essex Group visited the Bay Museum which was a Cold War defence building planned and built from 1962-1963 as a Degaussing Range Station.

The DG Station would have sent out a wire loop out to the middle of the Thames, which still remains somewhere on the seabed to this day. There would have been two loops from the station wired up to surveillance equipment. These loops were used to pick up electrical signals caused by magnetism from passing ships. In WWII magnetically detonated mines were placed around the English shoreline, especially the Thames by the Germans, which would then detonate if a ship passed over one. The DG Station or Canvey Loop would have monitored to see if passing ships had a device (electrified wire loop) wrapped around them to demagnetize the ships and therefore make them immune to magnetic underwater mines. This building was manned solely by women.

The Museum housed many items of interest including a number of historic military artefacts from the two World Wars, the Korean War and Falklands War.

We had lunch in Canvey Island's reputedly oldest building, the Lobster Smack, which dates back to the 17th century and is Grade II listed and then in the afternoon went on to the Canvey Transport Museum.

We had a ride on a classis bus around Canvey Island hearing about various places of interest and their history. Then a visit to the Transport Museum built in 1934 which houses a collection of over 30 preserved commercial vehicles. Classic examples from the rapidly vanishing chassis makers like ARC, Bedford, Bristol, Guy and Leyland plus legendary body builders like Eastern Coach Works, Duple, Harrington and Massey Brothers.

While many vehicles are fully restored, others are being rebuilt and undergoing maintenance by their owners or groups of members in the workshops or pit area.

Val Whitehouse



KNIT AND CROCHET GROUP

The Knit & Crochet Group is home to a diverse number of ladies. We meet monthly to knit and/or crochet an eclectic range of items - we also set the world to rights with our wide-ranging opinions and check out one another's baking skills! Featured here are some of our current projects.

Liz Hawthorn



Just a flavour of what some of our groups have been up to! Do check out the Groups Board at the Main Meetings to see Groups that have vacancies and speak to Paul Reeve, our Groups Coordinator, to see if they may suit you.