

Issue 118



SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

So the sun has finally shone and hopefully we have all enjoyed the summer in our gardens and out and about, making the most of it! Our u3a may have been quiet during August, but behind the scenes we have been busy and have a new member to welcome who has been co-opted onto the Committee - Sheila Davis. Events are planned which you will see advertised within the newsletter and at meetings.

Amanda Lowe and I took our first theatre trip, since taking over from Sandra and Joan, to see Operation Mincemeat in July which was a great success and thank you for all the lovely comments. We were very pleased to have completed it without losing anyone and are looking forward to the next one!

Debbie Bamber, Newsletter Editor

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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

Friday 20th September - Astronomy & Space Study Day at Saxon Hall with lunch - tickets available £32pp for 2 course meal with tea and coffee

Wednesday 2nd October - Main Monthly Meeting 1.45pm Mill Hall

Wednesday 16th October - Fire Safety & Basic Life Support Talk at Rayleigh Fire Station - tickets available £3pp

Wednesday 6th November - Main Monthly Meeting 1.45pm Mill Hall

Tuesday 3rd December 2024 - u3a Christmas Lunch - three course lunch with tea/coffee at Saxon Hall - tickets available £37pp

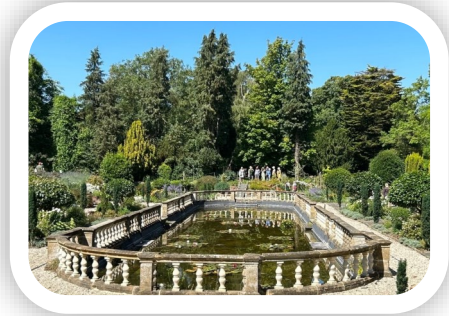
For more details on the events and how to get your tickets, please see articles within this Newsletter.

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 November 2024 Newsletter is 15th October.

FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

4th September 2024

Gary Matthews from the Gardens of Easton Lodge will be giving an illustrated talk on 'The History of Easton Lodge—the Countess and her Gardens'



2nd October 2024

Did you know that Alfred Hitchcock was born in Leytonstone on 13th August 1899? Gary Lewis will be giving a talk on how Hitchcock's birthplace influenced his films.



6th November 2024

Mike Davies is the Chairman of the Rayleigh Museum Management Group and will be giving us a talk on the History of Rayleigh

New Members Meeting 12th July 2024

We welcomed 30 members to our New Members Meeting on 12th July held at Holy Trinity Church. These meetings are proving very popular and are always lively and fun.

When a member joins Rayleigh u3a, they are a member of the New Members Group looked after by Amanda Lowe and stay in this group for their first year with us. They are invited to our New Members Meetings which are held three times a year and this gives members a chance to meet with other new members, make friends and even start up a new group!

We always have a quiz, which becomes quite competitive and refreshments are served on arrival and during the break. We also invite a few Group Leaders to talk about how they started their groups, a selection of Committee Members speak about their roles within the u3a and we also let members know a bit about the u3a Trust and their wider role.

There's always lots of laughter and questions so if you are a new member, do make sure you attend one or more of these meetings - it's a good start to enjoying your membership with us!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Study Day with 2 Course Lunch Friday 20th September 2024



We are hosting a lunch at Saxon Hall which will include two talks by Jerry Stone, Freelance Presenter of Astronomy & Space Exploration.

The first entitled 'Starry, Starry Night—An Introduction to the Universe' followed by a delicious 2 course lunch with tea and coffee and ending with the second talk entitled 'Would You Believe — We Put a Man on the Moon?'

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

Tickets are £32 pp and are available to buy at the September Meeting or by emailing: juli.fowles@gmail.com

FIRE SAFETY & BASIC LIFE SUPPORT Wednesday 16th October 2024

We have been lucky enough to book a talk and demonstration with the Community Wellbeing Officers based at Rayleigh Fire Station.

They are qualified and equipped to demonstrate basic life support, use of a defibrillator and CPR. They also demonstrate the 'Raizer' lifting chair for people who have fallen and cannot get themselves up again, and talk about their joint roles for East of England Ambulance Service and Essex County Fire and Rescue. Finally they give a presentation on fire prevention in the home, use of smoke detectors and evacuation, and take referrals from anyone who would like a Home Safety Visit. Refreshments will be provided.

Tickets are £3 pp and will be available at the September & October Meetings or by emailing: juli.fowles@gmail.com

We would encourage members to attend this talk if possible as there will be many tips on staying as safe as possible in your homes.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Tuesday 3rd December 2024

Saxon Hall

Open to All Members



Tickets for our very popular Christmas Lunch will be on sale at the September, October and November Meetings.

A three-course lunch with tea, coffee and mince pies - it is always a great way to get together and enjoy each others company.

You can reserve a table for your Group or share your table with other u3a members.

Tickets: £37 per person

Book your tickets and lunch choices at the Monthly Meetings or by emailing debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk for more details.

THEATRE TRIP



Thursday 30th January 2025 @ 2.30pm

Tickets: £37.50
(Own transport)

**Available at the Theatre Trips table at the Monthly Meetings
or by emailing: debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk**

Music Event @ The Mill

We have been offered a discount on tickets for a music event at The Mill Arts and Events Centre for 8th February 2025. Details are below:

*We are pleased to offer Rayleigh U3A members an exclusive 20% discount on tickets to see the internationally famous pop band **The Korgis** play live at Mill Hall Rayleigh on **8 February 2025**. The Korgis (best known for their hit "Everybody's got to learn sometime") are playing their time machine show which as well as their own original music, features cover versions of classic hits from the 60's 70's and 80's. U3A members can get 20% off the ticket price (standard price £19.50) by entering **the promo code U3A20** when ordering tickets from the following link: <https://bit.ly/4fut1yI> Offer runs from now until 30 September (subject to availability).*

Mark Austin from Rayleigh Live Music Events informs us: Please inform your members they must purchase their tickets via the Eventbrite ticketing platform to obtain the discount. The Eventbrite ticket link can easily be found by typing into google "Eventbrite Korgis Rayleigh". If anyone has any difficulty redeeming the discount they can contact me by email at markhaddonaustin@gmail.com or by calling me on 07740 699765 and I will be happy to help.

PAST EVENTS

Talk for All - 'Grace Darling and the Fine Art of Saving Lives at Sea' by Dr. James Taylor M.A.

On 20th May, 50 members enjoyed a talk from Dr. James Taylor, a former Curator of Art at the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. He talked about how Grace had a very humble background as one of 9 children and became something of a national treasure when, with her father, she braved atrocious conditions in the North Sea in September 1838 and helped to rescue 9 people after their ship, the SS Forfarshire hit the rocks a distance from her father's lighthouse, the Longstone, off the Farne Islands.

Painters came from all across the world to paint her, she apparently became quite frustrated by the long hours of sitting for them, but many of these paintings remain on display to this day, and it was interesting to see the various styles of artwork. In addition, we learned that plays, songs and poems were all written to mark her heroism, and many souvenirs such as embroideries and china plates were produced depicting a lone Grace rowing bravely into the storm.

Many individuals and organisations sent gifts and sums of money by way of respect and thanks, including £50 from Queen Victoria. The money was put in trust for Grace and she became very eligible but turned down all her suitors, remaining single till her premature death at 26, from pneumonia.

Thanks to those who supported the event and to Jim and Val Whitehouse and Elaine Woodcock for their help on the day.

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

CO-ORDINATOR - PAUL REEVE

Alongside the very successful Wine Appreciation Group, we have now started a Wine Tasting and Social Evening Group as well. The group meet monthly, taking turns at hosting and it is proving very popular for some strange reason! (You can see a report from Stuart, the Group Leader, later in this newsletter). The group size has to be such that it can be comfortably accommodated in members homes and so is presently full. There is no reason why we shouldn't begin another group or two - please contact me should you be interested.

I am pleased to report that we will be beginning two new groups in September - Play Reading and a Quiz Group. Posters for these will be displayed on the Groups Notice Board at our September meeting and I hope we can properly start the groups as soon as we have a few members coming forward to join.

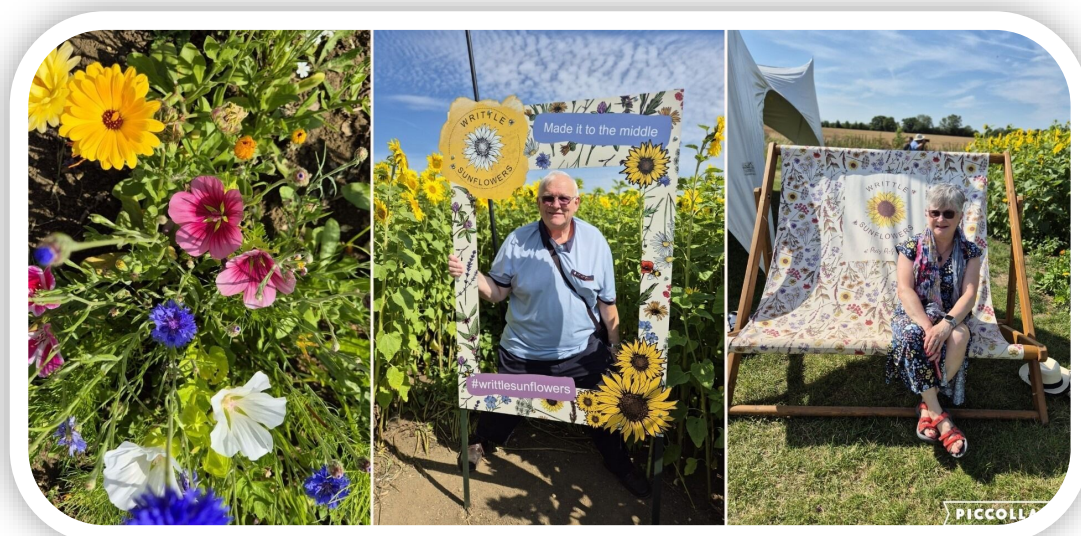
As always, please do let me know if you are interested in starting up a group - you can start small - as they say 'from little acorns, mighty oaks grow'!

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

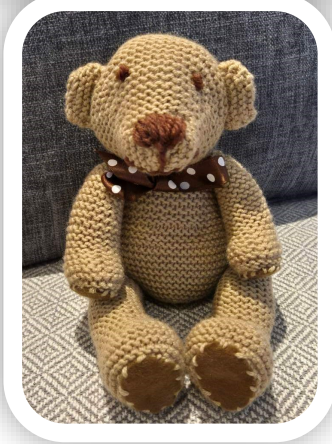
The Digital Photography Group had a great morning amongst the Sunflowers and wild flowers in Writtle at the end of July. We took lots of great photos, as you can see below and had a lot of fun too! The visit ended with a trip to a tea room for well-deserved refreshments.

Amanda Lowe and Jim Whitehouse



KNIT & CROCHET

Two of our group members have been lucky enough to welcome new grandchildren recently so were busy knitting to order!



WAFLING FOR MEN



Members of our Waffling for Men Group recently attended a cricket match at the County Ground in Chelmsford.

A very pleasant day but for the Essex team losing to Worcestershire in the final two overs. Other events and trips are planned over the coming months including a tour of the Basildon Tractor plant.

The group is presently full but we are looking to begin a second group if there are men out there interested. Contact our Group Coordinator, Paul Reeve, for further details.

WALKING GROUP 3



June found Walking Group 3 taking a round trip walk to Chalkwell via Two Tree Island and Old Leigh.

Here you can see them enjoying a well earned lunch at the Golf range, Leigh, after their walk.

Our July trip found us walking around Shoebury Garrison in not so sunny weather, although some of us were hopeful by wearing shorts!

Anita Waite & Kevin Bailey



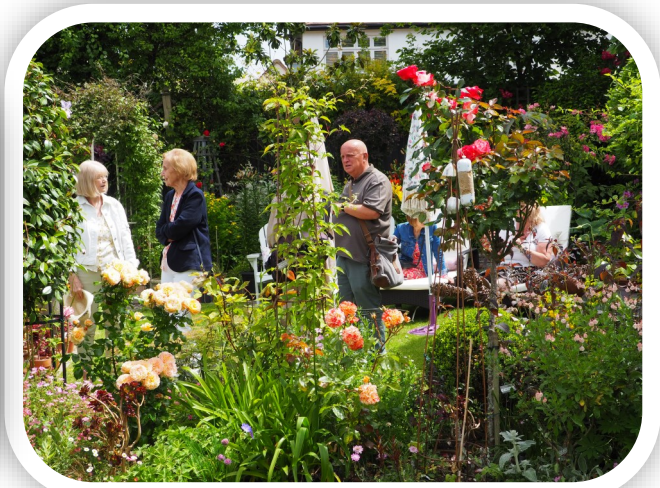
GARDENING GROUP VISIT ISABELLA'S GARDEN

You will need to spend plenty of time seeking out all the varieties of plants and artefacts within this town garden in Leigh on Sea if you visit Isabella's Garden. Elizabeth, the owner, loves her plants which bloom throughout the seasons, with differing flowers and colours every month in the garden showing a wide variety of plants including succulents and cacti which can be seen in the greenhouse as well in the conservatory.

She is also a lover of roses, over 60 varieties in the garden, as well as an extensive collection of clematis and agapanthus. There is a wildlife pond, lilies and water features, as well as many garden ornaments which are to be found hiding within the shrubbery and throughout the garden.

We were able to sit peacefully in the many seating areas which have been placed around various parts of the garden to enjoy the various vistas, relaxing and drinking tea or coffee with a sumptuous cream tea made by Simon, Elizabeth's husband.

Val Whitehouse



COOKERY

The Cooking Group have been active for over 4 years - we meet at my house so I do have to limit the numbers. We decide what we are going to cook at the previous meeting, then the ingredients are purchased, and the cost is divided between the members who attend the meeting.

The meal is prepared by the members, working in small teams, then cooked and enjoyed by all the attendees. We meet on a Friday starting at 10.30 and finishing by 2pm. You can see a picture of our delicious Chicken, Ham and Leek pie made at the last meeting.

Ray Lowe



SERENDIPITY 6 Visit the Monastery of St. John the Baptist

A visit to the monastery in Tolleshunt Knights near Maldon, organised by one of the group's members Margaret Rawson, started with refreshments and then a tour around the many buildings on the site including the chapel. We were told about the history of the monastery and the current plans including the new church which is being built.

The Monastery of St John the Baptist is a monastic community for both men and women and is the oldest Orthodox religious community in the UK. The community is distinctive in that it is a double monastery, consisting of both women and men living the monastic tradition of a Christ-centred prayer life. Currently, there are just under 40 monastics in the community, the majority of whom are nuns, with a smaller number of monks.

The Patriarchal Stavropegic Monastery of St John the Baptist had its beginnings largely in the person of St Sophrony of Essex. After his departure from Mount Athos, where he had been a disciple of Saint Silouan the Athonite, and his subsequent move to Paris, he was to live in a Russian old-people's home, assisting the priest there. There were also a few nuns living at the home at this time. By 1958, St Sophrony had six people living around him, seeking the monastic life. Realising that such a situation could not continue, he went to Tolleshunt Knights, near Maldon to inspect a property and in early 1959, the new Community of St John the Baptist was formed.

Val Whitehouse



LONGER WALKS GROUP

July's walk was from Ingatestone. There were 11 of us on the walk in the countryside around Ingatestone, including Ingatestone Hall and St Mary's Church at Buttsbury. Ken enjoyed taking photos of the ancient door. We were blessed with lovely weather again. Unfortunately the walk was longer than anticipated, covering some 8.5 miles before lunch! Still, we all had a good time but we were certainly ready for our lunch at The Bell in Ingatestone. Spaces are available and if you are interested in joining, please contact our Group Coordinator, Paul Reeve, for further details.

*Peter
Dixon*



THE OENOPHILES

In case you are wondering what on earth are the Oenophiles, the definition is one of wine connoisseurs! However, we don't pretend to be connoisseurs, just a group of people who enjoy a glass (or two) of wine. The aim of the group - Wine Tasting - was not to show how much or how little we knew about wine, but to enjoy a nice social occasion, in good company, and obviously quaffing a glass of the grape juice.

The saying goes that if you can remember it, you weren't there! Well, I can remember enough to know what a great first three meetings we have had ! The first, hosted by Jan, was a 'getting to know each other' with each of us bringing a bottle of wine to try. A variety were tested, including an unusual orange wine from Seville.

Our second meeting, hosted by Paul and Jane, involved trying various wines and guessing the cost of each one. I'm not sure who won and I guess they can't remember either! A lovely night was had by all.



Our third gathering, hosted by me, involved a quiz, whereby you had to match the wine you tasted to a list of descriptions. There were six wines tasted and twelve descriptions, including a dummy description of mango and orange fruit juice which one person assumed was one of the wines tasted! I'm giving no names away (Jan!) The winner of the quiz that evening was Jane – well done! I think it's safe to say we are meeting the intentions of the group and I look forward to our next meeting in September. Hic!

Stuart Evans

COFFEE & CONVERSATION FOR LADIES GROUP 3

Our first meeting was on April 30th this year. We meet monthly on a Tuesday in the Roebuck in Rayleigh between 11am - 1pm. It's a venue that enables people to chat and have a late breakfast if required with refills of coffee or tea. Ideal!

We are currently a small friendly group with spaces should anyone wish to join. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 1st October. It's a chance to get out of the house and meet new people and to chat about whatever comes up to talk about.

Sheila Davis

SERENDIPITY 5

June found Serendipity 5 visiting Barnard's Farm at West Horndon on the A128. The day was one of those days when you think that Summer may have come at long last, so our first stop was to the coffee shop for refreshments. Barnard's Farm consists of 55 acres of gardens and woodland, owned and managed by the Christabella Charitable Trust and Bernard and Sylvia Holmes who live in the house on site.

There is a range of flower, fruit and vegetable gardens. This includes a living wall, herbaceous borders and a Japanese garden. Following one of the marked trails through the managed woodland paths there is a lot to see and will take you to the long avenue; this leads you to the largest of the lakes.

There is much to enjoy within the gardens, including a significant collection of over 80 sculptures disposed throughout the gardens, providing some interesting surprises. Many artists and nationalities are represented and the collection includes works by Elizabeth Frink, Jean-Marie Fondacaro, Antony Gormley, Thomas Heatherwick, Nicolas Lavarenne, Bernard Holmes, Charmaine Cox and Monica Young.

Barnards farm is a pleasant way to while away a sunny afternoon, the grass car park is close, so ideal for picnic's. The woodland has well kept paths with an abundance of wild life to be seen. We saw a hare scooting for cover as we tracked down the sculptures from the map. In addition to the gardens there is a museum with a collection of magnificent classic cars and bicycles, the oldest of which was made in 1903 and the youngest in 1927. Although this is only open on selected days, it is possible to peek into the garage for a glimpse. However, with the sun taking its toll on Serendipity 5, a 30 minute trip on the narrow gauge railway, seemed a fitting way end to the day. *Bob White*



VIPE GROUP visit ARTS & CRAFTS CHURCH

In June the Visiting Interesting Places in Essex Group had a very interesting visit to St. Mary the Virgin Church in Warley, an unusual church in the Arts & Crafts & Art Nouveau style built in 1902. When we entered the church all the lights were turned off, so we had a wonderful view of the illuminated nave.

In 1940 a bomb dropped in the church grounds and many of the windows were sadly blown out so had to be replaced. The Grade I listed church's décor is beautiful with a mixture of metal, mother of pearl, aluminum leaves, silver, marble and walnut furniture and much more.

(Cont) If anyone is interested in visiting churches this is a must, our group thoroughly enjoyed visiting this one and an excellent lunch at the Thatcher's Arms afterwards. The church is open 2.00pm – 4.00pm Thursdays until October.

Beryl Shelford



THREE GROUPS visit CREEKSEA PLACE

A visit to Creeksea Place was enjoyed by members of three groups: Serendipity 6, Visiting Interesting Places in Essex and the Gardening Group. We had an interesting tour around the grounds and inside the house and a lovely cream tea in the marquee.

Arthur Harris who came from Prittlewell built Creeksea Place during the reign of Elizabeth 1st in 1569. It remained in his family for five generations after which it passed to the Mildmay family when Arthur's great granddaughter married Lord Mildmay. The current owners are the Bertorelli family and they too, coincidentally, have had five generations of ownership of this lovely historic Manor House during the reign of another Queen Elizabeth.

In a House with so much history, there are many myths and legends. There are tales about secret tunnels from the House to the nearby River Crouch used for smuggling. However, what is true is the fact that there are no cellars in Creeksea Place, due no doubt to the relatively high-water table. Nevertheless, there is the remains of a gravity-fed fountain pipe that runs from the House to one of the lakes.

Val Whitehouse

