

FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Christmas and on behalf of the Committee and myself, may we wish you a very happy and rewarding 2025!

Spring and its' brighter days will soon be with us and Spring also brings our Membership Renewal time and we hope that you will continue to enjoy your membership of Rayleigh u3a. Details are in the Newsletter and we would be very grateful if you could do so online as it makes the process much easier - just remember to check you are paying it to the correct account! If you have signed up for Gift Aid, please do see the small article in the Newsletter about eligibility.

As always, a Membership table will be ready at the February and March Members Meetings for us to take cheques if this is your preferred option.

80 of our members enjoyed our wonderful Christmas Lunch at Saxon Hall early in December. The food, as always, was very tasty and the atmosphere was very convivial, with lots of chatting and laughing. We had a Christmas Quiz with prizes for the winning tables, as well as table games and a draw for each of the lovely Christmas table plants.



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 April 2025 Newsletter is 18th March.

FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

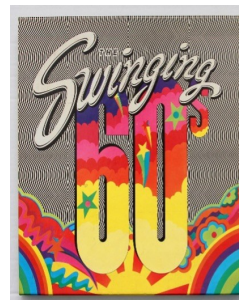


5th February 2025

Our speaker for the February Main Monthly Meeting will be Jane Piper, giving a fascinating talk entitled 'Fashion to Die For'.

5th March 2025

Our speaker for March will be Andrew Baker who has spoken at previous meetings. The topic this time will be the 'Swinging Sixties' - which most of us will remember!



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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

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

Saturday 29th March - Spring Quiz Night 7pm Holy Trinity Hall

Tickets available at the Monthly Meetings

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

Wed 7th May - AGM and Main Monthly Meeting 1.30pm Mill Hall

Thurs 15th May - 'Are you Palace Ready?' Talk & Cream Tea 2pm

British Legion Hall - Tickets available at the Monthly Meetings

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

Early date for your diary!

Tuesday 2nd December 2025 - u3a Christmas Lunch @ Saxon Hall

NOTICES

Sadly we have been informed of the death of **Laurie Denney** who passed away in December. Laurie was an original member of Rayleigh u3a, along with his wife Liz. He started a very popular Bird Watching Group and he and the group members visited many different places to watch the birds. He most recently attended our Fire and First Aid Talk at Rayleigh Fire Station. We have passed our condolences to Liz on behalf of our members.

We also have been informed about the death of another long-term member **June Jennings** who passed away in January. June used to co-lead the Gardening Group and was also an ex-editor of this Newsletter and still proof-read the newsletter for me. I, for one, will miss her help and support as I am sure many will. Again we have passed on our condolences to her family from us all.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2025 – 2026

Note: For renewals, no applications forms are needed. If, however, your personal details have changed i.e. address, phone number, email address etc, please notify Debbie Bamber by phone or email – details below.

**Membership fee = £20 (Associate Fee = £16.50)
must be paid no later than 31st March 2025**

Payment options:

Payment by Standing Order – Complete a Standing Order form and hand it in to your bank or if you use internet banking, you can set it up yourself using the details below.

Payment by Bank Transfer – using the details below:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Account Name: | Rayleigh u3a Subs |
| Sort Code: | 54 – 30 – 60 |
| Account Number: | 42232678 |
| Reference: | Your surname and postcode e.g. Smith SS6 1AB |

Payment by Cheque – made payable to **Rayleigh u3a**.

Important: Please write your name, address and postcode on the back of the cheque.

Please send your cheque to:
Debbie Bamber, Membership Secretary
3 The Saltings,
Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex SS7 2BD

Payment by Cash – If you are unable to use any of the options above, we will accept cash at the monthly meetings. Please place it in an envelope with your name and address clearly written.

If you have any queries regarding membership renewal, please do not hesitate to contact Debbie on **07947 064799** or email: **debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk**

A Standing Order form is available for download from the Rayleigh u3a website.

DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018. By renewing my membership of Rayleigh u3a, I consent to the holding of my membership records on a secure database for the administration of Rayleigh u3a in accordance with the published Rayleigh u3a data protection and privacy policy, which can be seen displayed on the Secretary's notice board at monthly meetings or the Rayleigh u3a website.

If you would like your Membership card sent to you, please send a stamped addressed envelope to Debbie Bamber (address above) who will post it to you once they have been printed.

GIFT AID

Just a reminder to those members who have completed Gift Aid Forms - to be eligible for us to claim back the 25% from HMRC for your membership, you **must** make the payment from your **own personal bank account** or your **joint account**.

Unfortunately last year we had to reject some claims as their fees had been paid from someone else's (usually their partners) bank account so were not eligible. Your co-operation would be greatly appreciated.

For members who have not completed a Gift Aid form, we would encourage you to do so as it is a valuable source of income for us. To be eligible you need to pay UK Income tax and complete a form which can be found on the website, or copies are always available on the Membership desk. We claim the money back annually from HMRC so there is nothing more for you to do. Many thanks!

BOOK STALL

One of our most popular stalls at our Monthly Meeting is the Book Stall run by Les and Carol Shrubsole and Stella Lutterloch. There is always a huge array of different genres of books and all at a bargain price of 30p each! You can browse and buy and also bring in your own books to donate to the stall for other members to buy. It's a great way to refresh your bookshelves every few months!

Les has informed me that they have more books at the moment than they have room for, so please do come and buy, but please hang on to your books at home until they have some more space!

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

We are delighted that we have had some members come along to see what goes on at a Committee Meeting with a view to possibly standing for a vacancy, but we would still encourage any one interested to get in touch with our Secretary, Jane Reeve on: janereeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk or by speaking to her or one of the other members of the Committee at a Monthly Meeting.

Other than a little spare time, and lots of enthusiasm (and ideally some computer skills for some of the roles) there are no specific requirements to be on the Committee and we would encourage you to look on our Website: <https://rayleigh.u3asite.uk/> on the Information tab and by clicking on Rayleigh u3a Documents where you can see the Role Descriptions for yourself.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF AGM

**The Eighteenth Annual General Meeting of the
Rayleigh u3a
will take place on Wednesday 7th May 2025.
At The Mill Hall, Rayleigh
commencing at 2.00pm
followed by our Speaker at 2.30pm**

A copy of the Draft Minutes of the AGM 2024 and Draft Accounts will be displayed on the noticeboard at the March & April Meetings, will be emailed to members and will also be available to view on the Rayleigh u3a website.

We have vacancies for Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Groups Coordinator and Committee Members

For more information, please contact the Secretary, Jane Reeve

Nomination Forms (available at the March & April Meetings, on the website and will be emailed) must be returned to the Secretary, by Wednesday 9th April 2025

Any motions which you would like to raise at the AGM, will need a Proposer and Seconder, and should also be submitted to the Secretary by 9th April 2025.

Jane can be contacted on 07931 584140 or
janereeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk

FUTURE EVENTS



Spring Quiz Night

Sat 29th March 2025

**Tickets Available at
February & March 2025 Monthly
Meetings - £5 per ticket**

7.00pm — 10.00pm

Main Hall, Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh

Come and join us for a light hearted Quiz Night with prizes for the winning team. Join a team and make new friends. Bring your own drinks and nibbles—a pen and paper can be useful too. Free prize draw too.

THEATRE TRIPS

After a great trip to see Calamity Jane at the Cliffs Pavillion, Amanda Lowe and myself will be meeting to find some shows for our 2025 programme of trips.

We will be sending out another poll for you by email to show your interest in various shows and would be very grateful for your responses so we can book those that will be the most popular.

Are You Palace Ready?

A Fun, Engaging and Interactive talk with
Cream Tea.

Thursday 15th May 2025. 2.00 - 4.00pm

Rayleigh Conservative Club

Table manners are a challenge!

What to do if you find you have a cherry stone in your mouth?

What is the right moment to lay your napkin on your lap?

And of course, is it cream or jam first?

All these questions will have you guessing and laughing, but etiquette is really about consideration for others.

Find out if you are Manners-Perfect, in case that Royal Invite should arrive!



JANE  **MALYON**
SPEAKER, AUTHOR & TEA LOVER

**Tickets: £10.00 pp which includes a Scone, Cream,
Jam & Tea/ Coffee**

Available at March & April Monthly Meetings

NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

LOTS OF CHRISTMAS LUNCHES!



GARDENING GROUP

Members of the Gardening Group enjoyed a festive lunch at The Camelia - a very fitting venue I thought!

SERENDIPITY 6 AND VIPE GROUPS

Members of Serendipity 6 and Visiting Interesting Places in Essex Groups came together for a delicious meal at The Bellhouse.



SCRABBLE

Ten members of the Scrabble group met for an After Christmas lunch at Gambero's in Rayleigh in January. The food was excellent and we all had a lovely time, lots of chatting and laughing. It was really good having time to talk, no pressure from the staff at Gambero's to vacate our table so we will definitely be doing this again.



CERAMICS GROUP

A member painted this breakfast set for a gift for her sister and brother-in-law. She took it to Kenya to give them as a Christmas gift.

Well done Rani! The group is looking forward to 2025 and being creative!



Amanda Lowe

STROLLING

In October, we enjoyed the sunshine and watching the turtles at Southchurch Park following an interesting guided tour of the House.



In November we looked around the Garrison area and seafront at Shoebury on an unexpectedly warm and sunny day.



Val Skam

WAFFLING FOR MEN

The November meeting of the Waffling for Men group saw the members enjoy a return to CJ's Bowling Alley in Hockley.

After a tense two games, Pete Dixon became our latest recipient of the WfM Cup and the rest of us, whilst gracious in defeat, drowned our sorrows along with lunch at the venue.

Plans are now well advanced for various outings in 2025 which all members of the group take turns in organising.



KNIT & CROCHET GROUP

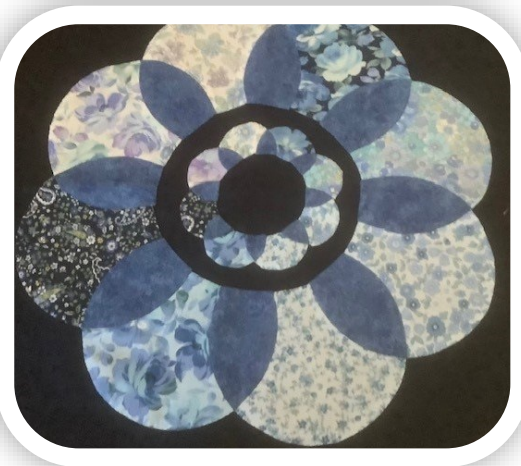
Here are a few of our recent projects produced by our very talented members! We also enjoyed a festive afternoon before Christmas with lots of goodies to eat!



Liz Hawthorn

SIT AND SEW GROUP

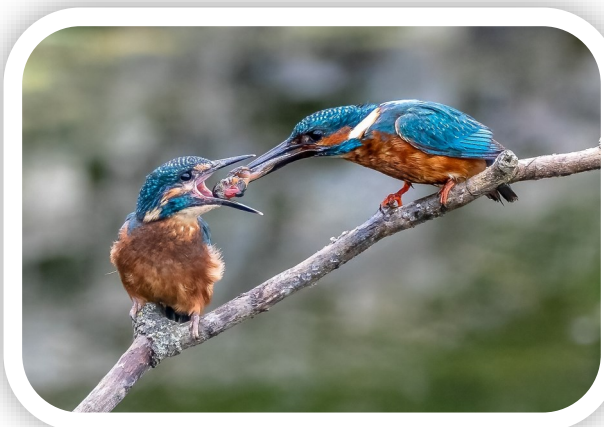
The Sit and Sew group has continued meeting on the second Thursday of the month. In January we were a small but select number, but still enjoyed tranquil afternoon of chatting and hand sewing. Some of us visited the Knitting and Stitching show at Alexandra Palace last year and this is a finished "Sew Motion" kit that was amongst our myriad of marvellous purchases. Hand stitched and appliquéd, it is ready to be quilted and turned into a beautiful cushion.



We would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year filled with love, laughter and lots of happy stitchery.
Lesley Lovett

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

It was party time at our last meeting of the year! Everyone contributed with nibbles, cake, sausage rolls and quiche plus non-alcoholic wine, tea and coffee.



The group brought photos they had taken over the year which were projected on a screen. The photo shown was taken by Ken Grace. It was a great end to the year.

We are a very friendly group and you do not have to have fancy camera or any skills. We meet on the 2nd Monday of each month. Meetings are held in different locations and we have speakers a couple times year held at Holy Trinity Church in Rayleigh.

Our February meeting will be portrait photography with our models being a mum and 3-month baby plus retired police dog. If you are interested in joining the Group, do contact Paul Reeve. *Jim Whitehouse & Amanda Lowe*

SERENDIPITY 5 HAD FUN AT THE POLICE MUSEUM!



Quite the rogues gallery!!

SERENDIPITY 6 VISIT SHOEBCURY GARRISON

Members of the Serendipity 6 Group met at the Serendipity Café for coffee then walked around the Shoebury Garrison site.



The Garrison has many Grade II listed buildings including the Garrison Church of St. Peter & St. Paul, barracks, powder magazines, gunnery drill shed, hospital, former light & heavy quick firing batteries. There is also a clock tower, memorial, pill box, cannons and searchlight emplacement, a lake and of course the sea wall.

We were lucky with the weather and enjoyed a walk ending up back at the Serendipity Café for lunch after which we looked at the interesting photographs and records in the Museum.

Val Whitehouse

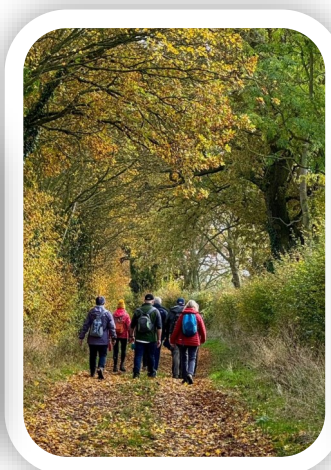
LONGER WALKS GROUP

In October, the Longer Walks group met at Sandon just outside Chelmsford and undertook a circular hike of just under 8 miles taking in Danbury Country Park, Little Baddow and a stretch of the River Chelmer. It also included a lane known locally as Grace's Walk. Lady Alice Grace, of who the place is named after, reputedly haunts the lane. She was supposed to have walked that route on her way to the place where she drowned herself at Sandon Brook apparently suffering an unhappy marriage.

Afterwards, the group had most welcomed refreshments at the Crown pub in Sandon.

Our November walk was a circular walk from the Rose and Crown in Great Waltham, via the historic village of Pleshey. Some beautiful countryside, and some interesting buildings, Langleys, a large estate and grounds which has been in the private hands of the same family for over 300 years, Holy Trinity Church at Pleshey, and the remains of the Norman Motte and Bailey castle. We finished the walk at the Rose and Crown with a lovely lunch.

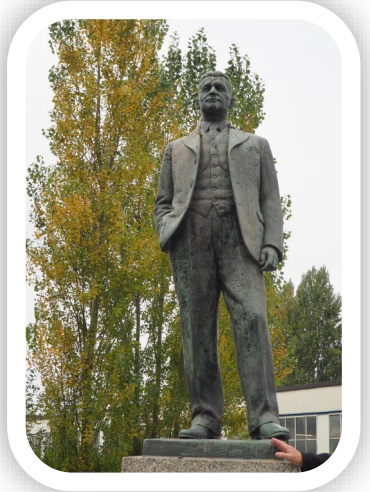
Peter Dixon & Paul Reeve



VIPE VISIT THE GARDEN CITY OF BATA

Members of the VIPE Group visited the Bata Shoe Company in East Tilbury and spent a fascinating day looking at exhibits, records, newspapers and photographs illustrating the life and times of the Bata factory and those living on its residential estate. A talk about the history of Bata was followed by a walk around the buildings that still exist on the estate.

The Bata Shoe Company was established in 1894 by Tomas, Anna and Antonin Bata, the eighth generation of Bata family shoemakers in the rural town of Zlin, Czechoslovakia. The company originally employed 15 people each one making a complete shoe which were a luxury item. Tomas Bata went to America to look at machines and visited Henry Ford's factory to learn more about goods made on a conveyer with the idea to make shoes with one person doing one job. By 1912 the company employed 600 full time workers and in 1938 65,000 employees. It was the conversion to mass production that made this possible. Thomas Bata believed that businesses had a responsibility to their employees and the Bata 'Garden Cities' were created.



In 1932 620 acres of land in East Tilbury were purchased and the Bata estate began. Workers were provided with housing, schools, college, canteen, doctors' surgery, medical centre, library, grocery shop, post office, butchers, a farm, recreational facilities including a swimming pool, tennis courts, a ballroom and a cinema. It even produced its own newspaper The Bata Record costing 1d. Bata employees also had shares in the company.



Bata eventually owned 5,300 stores in Europe, Asia and North America and in 2004 was recognised by Guinness World Records as the world's largest shoe manufacturer and retailer. Due to economic pressure from overseas countries the factory downsizing began in the 1980's and the factory eventually closed in 2005.

Val Whitehouse

ART GROUP



The last meeting of the year was followed by cake made by Nicola, owner of Clay Cottage.

The card was made by Diane Langford and Steve is busy painting. We have had fun and lots of great work has been produced.

Here to 2025 creativity! *Amanda Lowe*

