

## JUNE 2025 NEWSLETTER

Although the weather commentators tell us we have had the warmest April/May for many years, I'm not sure why I am then wrapped up in long sleeves, a cardigan and long trousers as I write this! Don't we love the British weather? Mind you, what would we have to talk about when we catch up with one another!

I have received another bumper crop of articles from your Group Leaders and I do hope you enjoy reading what some of our members have been up to. Please continue to send me little items and photos as this is what makes our newsletter so interesting.

We have started to make a schedule of inviting some of our Groups to display their creations at our main meetings - at the May meeting we had some beautiful works of art from the Ceramic Group - I do hope you got the chance to see them for yourselves as the photo really doesn't do justice to the vibrant colours on the pieces.



**\*\*PLEASE DO NOTE THAT OUR JULY MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 2ND JULY HAS HAD TO BE CANCELLED\*\***

Enjoy the summer - whatever it brings and take care,  
Best wishes, Debbie (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](mailto:debbiebamber@rayleighu3a.co.uk). Closing date for the September 2025 Newsletter is 19th August 2025.**

### **NOTICES**

Sadly we have been informed of the deaths of two of our members.  
*John Earle - passed away in April 2025*  
*Maureen Bakewell - passed away in April 2025*  
We have sent condolences on behalf of Rayleigh u3a to their families.

# A Welcome from our new Chairman

I would like to thank you all for the support that you have given Ray Lowe (Chairman) and Jill Cann (Treasurer) over the past few years and I look forward to working with the new committee as we move forward. I welcome Anita (Treasurer), Ann, Kevin and Liz who have joined us. Debbie has now been voted in as Vice Chairman and I look forward to using her vast knowledge of the running of our u3a.

U3a has certainly grown since I became a member before Covid landed and changed our lives, the last 5 years seems to have gone so quickly. The number of interests groups, thanks to Paul Reeve, has grown over this time and has seen an increase in the membership numbers as well which now stands at 415 and is nearly the maximum that we can take.

As you will know we have had to take the sad decision to cancel our July meeting and this follows a late notification from Rayleigh Mill that they are closing for 2 months to carry out important maintenance.

Our sound system has been replaced and reports from members has been encouraging with an improvement to audio quality. As I have now taken on the role of Chairman, we are looking for 1 or 2 other members who feel that they would like to become involved with the setting up of the audio and visual equipment - it really is very straightforward. Please talk to any of the committee, Jim Whitehouse or Laurie Yarham.

In the meantime I look forward to meeting you all at our next meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> June.

Regards, Ray Osborne

## Talk for All—Are you Palace Ready?

On Thursday 15th May, a sizeable group were entertained at the Rayleigh Conservative Club, by Jane Malyon, TikTok sensation, @afternoontejane, entrepreneur and owner of The English Cream Tea Company, based in White Roding.

Jane spoke for 30 minutes, full of warmth and humour, about the history and tradition of the very British custom of afternoon tea. We learned how it should be done to look the part in genteel company; who knew there was a 'right' and a 'wrong' way to lay your napkin across your lap, that tea should not be stirred to create a cyclone effect, but gently north to south, and surprisingly, it is quite acceptable to discretely dispatch a cherry stone into your hand!

We then had our tea and scone and put our new knowledge into practise, but I'm sure no one was being assessed! Afterwards Jane took several questions from the group, and many people had interesting anecdotes to share. I think we all enjoyed the afternoon and are now at least ready for Tea on The Village Green!

Juli Fowles, Educational Events

# FUTURE MONTHLY SPEAKERS

## 4th June 2025



Our speaker for the June Meeting will be Howard Slater on the topic The Good Old Days! This is a musical interlude to include Ella Fitzgerald with Louis Armstrong, Elvis, Cliff Richard, Liberace, Joe Loss Orchestra, Ambrose Orchestra and Kathy Kirby just to name a few. One hour of total reminiscing of the music of the 40s and 50s accompanied by videos and power point slides with a brief synopsis of the artist.

## 3rd September 2025

Our speaker for September will be Howard Slater, a retired Metropolitan Police Scenes of Crime Officer who will be giving a talk entitled 'A Funny thing happened on the way to the Old Bailey'.



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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

**Tues 17th June - Talk for All from Safer Essex Roads Partnerships  
2pm Bar Lounge at the Mill Hall - Tickets £3 each**

**Wednesday 2nd July - Main Monthly Meeting Mill Hall  
\*\* CANCELLED \*\* Due to works being carried out.**

**Thurs 17th July - Theatre Trip to Starlight Express @ The  
Troubadour Theatre, Wembley (more details in newsletter)**

**No Monthly Members Meeting in August**

Wednesday 3rd September - Main Monthly Meeting 1.45pm Mill Hall

Wednesday 1st October - Main Monthly Meeting 1.45pm Mill Hall

**Thursday 2nd October - Theatre Trip to Fiddler on the Roof @ Cliffs  
Pavillion**

**Future Date for your Diary:**

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

# AGM REPORT

Our AGM at the May Meeting was well attended with over 165 members. The business of the meeting went smoothly with members engaged in voting on several items. The Accounts for 2024 and the Trustees Annual Report for 2024 were both approved and Jim Whitehouse was appointed as our Independent Examiner for the Accounts for 2025. All paperwork is available to view on the Rayleigh u3a website.



Both our Chairman Ray Lowe and our Treasurer Jill Cann were leaving the Committee as their terms of office were completed. We presented them both with gifts to say thank you for all their hard work for our u3a which was greatly appreciated by us all.



We were delighted to have received several nominations for Committee roles, all of whom were voted unanimously into their positions. They are:

- Ray Osborne** – Chairman
- Debbie Bamber** – Vice Chairman
- Anita Waites** – Treasurer
- Ann Jolly** – Committee Member
- Kevin Bailey** – Committee Member
- Liz Hawthorn** – Committee Member

Although we now are in a much stronger position on the Committee, we will be looking for a Secretary to replace Jane Reeve in May 2026 and also a Group Co-ordinator to replace Paul Reeve.

If you may also be interested in finding out more about either of the above roles, or in joining the Committee, please do get in touch. Joining the Committee beforehand as a co-opted member is a great way to see what these roles entail.

*Debbie Bamber*

*Sincere apologies to my fellow Committee members but couldn't resist posting this photo!*

*Just shows how 'hands on' they are at meetings or should I title this... Hands, Knees and Bum..psydaisy!*



**Thursday 2nd Oct 2025**  
**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**

**Tickets: £39.00**

**At the Cliffs Pavilion, 2.30pm.  
Please put your name on the list  
at the Theatre Trips desk at the  
Monthly Meetings.  
Payment will be due in June.**



**\*\* NEW TRIP \*\***

**Wednesday 14th January 2026**

**THE BODYGUARD**

**Tickets: £36.75**



**At the Cliffs Pavilion, 2.30pm. Please put your name on the  
list at the Theatre Trips desk at the Monthly Meetings.  
Payment will be due in October 2025.**

# TALKS FOR ALL

## **Tickets still available at June Meeting** **Presentation from Safer Essex** **Roads Partnership (SERP)**

**Bar Lounge upstairs at The Mill Hall, Rayleigh**  
**Tuesday 17th June 2025 2pm - 4pm**  
**Tickets £3.00 (Hot drink included)**

SERP is a multidisciplinary team with one aim, to reduce the number of accidents on the roads of Essex. One area of focus is in supporting mature drivers to continue to drive with confidence, safely and for longer.

The Mature Driver presentation recognises the wealth of experience and tolerance of older drivers and being confident behind the wheel is important to freedom, independence and wellbeing. But while vision, hearing and perception may diminish with age, the focus is to inform and enable us to maintain a positive outlook to driving.

The interactive experience will involve PowerPoint display, opportunity to test your reactions, and to experience a variety of driving situations with virtual reality headsets. It will also be possible to find out more about a free Driving with Confidence course.



## **PAST EVENT: SPRING QUIZ**



*Val Whitehouse*

This year we had 11 teams for our Spring Quiz Night with our regular Quiz Master Terry keeping us engaged and on our toes with a mixture of subjects covered in the 8 rounds and Adverts & Cryptic Television marathons.

The results were pretty close and everyone seemed to have enjoyed this fun night out.

# LATEST NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS COORDINATOR

Welcome to another year of being a member of Rayleigh u3a. Hopefully you have now all collected your new membership cards and remember to take this with you to all Rayleigh u3a events.

Please also complete the ICE details on the back of the card as this can be very important in the event you have an accident whilst attending. Keeping the card with you whenever you are out generally would of course be equally helpful to others should the unthinkable occur.

We are continuing to increase the opportunities for our members to join new interest groups. Our new Pétanque group held their first get-together in April and is already full with a number of members on the waiting list. My thanks to Alan Jilley, Geoff King and Tracy Symons for taking this group forward.

We hope to start another Coffee and Conversation for Ladies group in June. The idea has proved very popular and hopefully this one will be equally well supported.

- Another group beginning on the 4th Friday in June is a second Rummikub Group at Rayleigh Conservative Club premises from 11.00 to 13.00, This is being organised by Jean Birch and whilst we have considerable interest already, there are still some places available if you are interested in attending.

By the time you read this, I will have been Axe-Throwing with other members of our Waffling for Men group and providing I survive, I will update you on that and other news in the next newsletter!

**Finally, I wanted to let you know that I will be standing down from the Group Co-ordinator role at the next AGM in May 2026. The job has proved to be the perfect way to meet with both well-established and new members alike and it is very rare that I can walk down Rayleigh High Street these days without seeing one or two of you out and about.**

**I do now though need to make way for someone else to take over this very rewarding position and the earlier I am able to bring someone up to speed, the easier a handover will be next year.**

**Even if you are only remotely interested, do please contact me and I can explain about the sort of things I get involved with. Thank you in advance.**

Paul Reeve, Group Coordinator  
paulreeve@rayleighu3a.co.uk / 07825 430159

## **CURRENT GROUP VACANCIES as at mid-May**

**ART (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday morning)**  
**BADMINTON (each Monday and / or Tuesday afternoon)**  
**CERAMICS (1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday morning)**  
**COFFEE & CONVERSATION FOR LADIES 5 (New Group to start - day and time tbc)**  
**DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday morning)**  
**DRESSMAKING CIRCLE (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday afternoon)**  
**FAMILY HISTORY 2 (4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday)**  
**PATCHWORK & TEA (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday afternoon)**  
**REAL ALE ( 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday lunchtime)**  
**RUMMIKUB 2 (4<sup>th</sup> Friday morning)**  
**SIT & SEW (2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday afternoon)**  
**SUNDAY LUNCH 2 (1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in the month)**  
**VISIT ESSEX CHURCHES (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday)**  
**WALKING GROUP 5 (2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday morning)**  
**WAFFLING FOR MEN (4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday)**  
**WINE APPRECIATION (2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday evening)**

If you are interested in the above or would like more information about any of our groups, then please contact me via my details below or come and see me at the Monthly Members Meetings.

*Paul Reeve*

## **CREATIVE WRITING GROUP**

### ***The Attic***

*I climb, breathe this frowsty smell of childhood games  
I smile, years melt like a morning fog  
To hide and not be caught  
This frisson of nostalgia builds, the door opens  
On another time a different world  
I step inside a cave of riches to indulge  
Above a square of fractured blue where  
Soaring clouds zip on high  
Floats this moment to days gone by*

*Muffin waits his saddle bare  
I long to ride if only I dare  
The easel stands a triangular statue  
Time taken in its stride reveals a scripted clue  
I hear Susie calling, counting  
Signals to haste my search  
Boxes, cycles, china, books, a child's cot, Grandma's trunk!  
This dusty chest of antique treasure  
Holds childhood dreams of mystical pleasure  
The shelf on high once out of reach  
Holds the answer to my search that  
Golden years have turned to bronze  
The key turns  
With forgotten squeeze I lift to discover  
The secret memories of familiar wonder*

*Pearl Jarvis April 2025*

# NEWS FROM OUR GROUPS

## STROLLING 2

Eight members enjoyed a glorious walk/train ride along Southend pier. We had coffee and chat, then later a lovely fish and chips meal on a beautiful sunny day .Thank you every one!

*Carol Hyde*

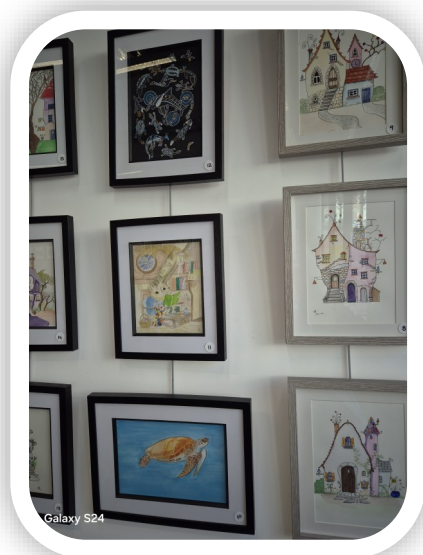


## ART GROUP

The members of the Art Group spent a lovely time at an exhibition of Sheila Loveridge's work in Southend Library. What fabulous art Sheila produces!

We then went on to enjoy a coffee and a chat. It was a great way to spend a Thursday morning.

*Amanda Lowe*



## New PETANQUE GROUP

On the 14th April the newly formed Rayleigh u3a Pétanque Group held its inaugural session in King George V Playing Field.

With nearly a full complement of members two Terrains were needed, one on the Council grit terrain and the other marked out nearby on the playing field. This enabled four teams to play constantly in a mini Tournament with the different Terrain surfaces making the games more challenging.

All went well, the weather was kind, and everyone had a fun time with lots of positive feedback from the Group afterwards.

*Group Leaders - Alan Jilley and Geoff King*



## New PLAY READING GROUP

The Play Reading Group held their first meeting yesterday and it was generally felt to be a success. We read a two part psychological thriller, a one act comedy and two group members read a humorous duologue.

We already have next months' scripts lined up and are looking forward to more laughs and a few surprises!

*Liz Hawthorn & Carole Morris*

## **VIPE visit THE DOGS TRUST**

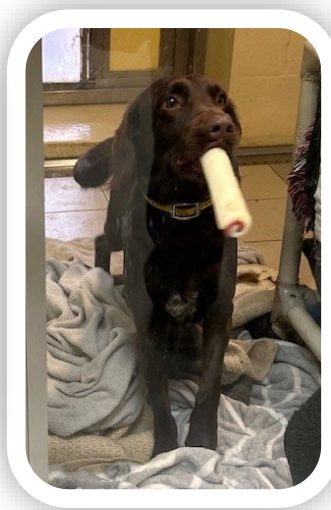
Founded in 1891 as the National Canine Defence League, the charity changed its name to the Dogs Trust in 2003. The Basildon Rehoming Centre opened in 2014 and is one of over 20 centres in the UK. The VIPE group had an interesting tour of the centre where we were able to see the state-of-the-art facilities dedicated to the health and welfare of abandoned, rescued and handed-over dogs.

On arrival, the dogs are quarantined to make sure they carry no contagious diseases before being assessed by the training and behaviour experts prior to being offered for rehoming. Different kennel blocks cater for the varying needs of the dogs, with quieter blocks for those that cannot cope with too much noise or are stressed or traumatised.

The centre has a huge exercise area for walks and several outside play areas, as well as an inside area for when the weather is inclement. There is also a dedicated puppy play area. The on-site veterinary suite can deal with medical treatments and has its own operating theatre and hydrotherapy tank. The centre also holds Dog Schools that anyone dog owner can sign up for.

Seeing the homeless dogs was a moving experience but it was reassuring to know that this centre is doing its best to help them move on to a better future.

*Shirley Page*



## **WINE APPRECIATION GROUP**



The Wine Appreciation Group met at the Lowe's house this month. The wines all came from Chile and to accompany the wines, tapas were enjoyed by all. It was a fun night!

*Amanda Lowe*

## **SERENDIPITY 6 take to Crime in London**

Nine members of Serendipity 6 travelled to London for a Police and Crime walking tour. We arrived at Covent Garden and immediately entered the "Nags Head" for refreshment and to meet our guide Francis, a retired police officer.

We saw the famous Bow Street police station home of the famous "Bow Street Runners" and Magistrate's Court. The fascinating tour included Blue Plaques of famous crime writers amongst which were Charles Dickens and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Charing Cross Police Station hid behind the façade of a London mansion but as we stood there an assortment of about fifteen police officers emerged and then disappeared into a "paddy wagon" one of the many Cockney words which we often use without knowing the history behind them. As we wended our way, tucked behind Whitehall, we passed Great Scotland Yard Stables and a highlight for most of us was a horse box pulling up and two magnificent police horses were led into the stables.

Just as our feet were beginning to complain we found ourselves at the Civil Service Club where we were to have lunch. A delicious repast was a suitable conclusion to an excellent day out organised by Lyn and John Vanderheide.

*Jill Cann*



## **SIT & SEW GROUP**

The Sit and Sew group has continued to meet on the second Thursday of the month. Members have enjoyed hand embroidery, English Paper Piecing and hand quilting. There is always a warm welcome, a cuppa, and lots of chat.

One of our members recently completed a small Autumn themed wall hanging. Techniques that she used included raw edge applique and hand quilting. A beautiful project using lovely Liberty lawn fabrics.

We do have space for another person to join us, so if you are interested in a gentle afternoon of hand sewing, then please get in touch. No previous experience necessary.

*Lesley Lovett*



## KNIT AND CROCHET

After we found out at one of our get-togethers that we were all fans of Call the Midwife, we booked a day trip to Chatham Dockyard where they film some of the outside scenes, with a tour and afternoon tea.

We arrived at the coach depot to find that we had all colour co-ordinated our outfits with a blue and white theme and all six of us were wearing denim jackets – 3 white and 3 blue! Arriving at the dockyard we had something to eat and then toured the dockyard which was so interesting, with historic buildings, exhibitions and much more.

Meeting our guide for the tour, we were very excited to hear that they were actually filming Series 15 on location that day and so all the 'streets and alleys' were decked out with props and there was a real hustle and bustle of sound and lighting engineers, camera operators, costumes all the while we were being taken around – it was very atmospheric. We also literally bumped into a main cast member getting out of her car to go to the location – she was delightful and allowed us to take photos and chatted to us. However, I'm afraid that we had to agree not to post any details of the filming so you will have to wait until next year when it comes to our screens!

The tour was very interesting as our guide explained certain locations and where they were seen in an episode, showing us photos. Amongst other things, we learned how they make the snow and how they digitally change certain features on a building to fit the script. We then toured a building which was full of props and costumes that had been used in the show, and certain sets that had been replicated for us to view, as they would have been filmed in a studio, not on location.

After lots of photos being taken, a staff member suggested we view the walled garden which was delightful and full of colour and blooms – a highlight I think for all of us. We returned to the restaurant for our Afternoon Tea and then wandered around the RNLI Lifeboat exhibition and a Lego exhibition of wrecked ships which was very cleverly done.

We all agreed it was a fabulous trip and our thanks to Liz for arranging it. Sadly two of our members were unable to come, but we managed to fill their spaces. We will have lots to talk about at our next Knit and Crochet session!

*Debbie Bamber*



*Violet Buckle's Shop*

