

RAYLEIGH GRANGE u3a

Newsletter - Edition No. 160 2024



**Welcome to the May
Newsletter**

***Next monthly meeting at the Grange is on
Wednesday 1st May at 2.00 p.m.***

Our speaker will be **Nick Dobson**

Underground Guide to London Place Names

**A virtual tour of London by tube stopping off to look at the stories behind
London place names.**



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello and welcome to the Rayleigh Grange u3a May newsletter.

There's so much going on it's difficult to keep up with news for you all. Firstly, our new website is up and running. If you connect using the old web address you will be diverted through to the new one. Bear in mind that it's all in its infancy at the moment so there may be some bugs that need ironing out. Congratulations to Ken for all his hard work - it's good to have someone running that part that knows what he's talking about.

Membership numbers are buoyant again and rising with a number of new members in the pipeline ready to come in.

The Open House meeting was such a success that we have booked the Cedar Centre for the next three months.

We had a visit at our committee meeting from two ladies, Janet and Sue from Wickford, who are thinking of starting up a u3a in Wickford and wanted some advice.

Our newsletter editor Ann, being a founder member of our Rayleigh Grange u3a, and our Committee members gave them lots of advice and it looked like they went away with a smile on their faces.

Excursions of all types are coming through now - thanks to Jackie and her team with lots of variety for the discerning traveller. Thank you ladies.

The Charity Commission website came under scrutiny this month when Dave interrogated its database and it showed that we are 4th best in performance. This was against all the u3a's in Essex - there you go I told you we were good.

Again, thanks to all our volunteering members who, without their help, we just wouldn't keep going.

Take care and keep well everyone.

Bill Keays
Chairman

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

BIRD WATCHING GROUP



Lapwing

We picked a lovely warm, sunny day for our monthly trip out. We had intended to visit Chafford Gorge but the Visitors Centre, with all its amenities, was shut so the majority of us moved on to Rainham Marshes. A lot of work has been done at Rainham since our last visit. The boardwalks through the reedbeds had been replaced by a gravel path which obviously needs less maintenance. They have also rebuilt the bank where the kingfishers used to nest (until a fox dug them out!!). Hopefully the kingfishers will soon return. We managed to identify 21 different birds plus a water vole that disappeared into the reeds at great speed.

Photographs by Steve Rix



Crested Grebe



Heron



Shoveler Ducks



Swan

**Peta Turner
Group Leader**



QUIZ – General Knowledge (1)

1. Name the butterfly pictured on page 1.	2. Which is the only non-royal country house in England to hold the title of Palace?
3. Which is the only halogen to be liquid at room temperature?	1. What does a cartomancer do?
5. Who was the first English monarch to abdicate?	6. What does a hexophile collect?
7. What acid can be found in your stomach?	8. The Apgar score is used to evaluate the health of what?
9. What textile is only genuine if it is hand woven in the Outer Hebrides?	10. In which book might you find Bigwig, Hazel and Fiver?

Answers on page 15

OUT AND ABOUT GROUP TRIP TO CHINATOWN



In late March 23 of us set off for London. We met our guide, Heng Chen, at Leicester Square and then proceeded to walk through the square and into the nearby side streets which is where Chinatown is situated.

There were many red lanterns and decorations still hanging over the streets which were part of the Chinese New Year celebrations. We were told about the different traditions associated with the new year such as the giving of money in red envelopes to the children.



As we walked around what is a relatively small area near Soho, she told us about the different animals which are connected to the different years and how the Chinese calendar differs from our own. This year is the year of the dragon.

The Chinese population there has increased significantly and is now over 100,000. There are also many students from China living in London.

London's original Chinatown was in the East End where Chinese employees first came in the 18th century, settling in Limehouse. By 1914 a Chinese community was growing with new restaurants and shops catering for sailors.



After WW2 there was a move away from Limehouse as rebuilding began and cheap rents made it easier for restaurants to be opened in the Soho area. There are now over 100 restaurants offering many different styles of Chinese cooking. There are dozens of shops including herbal remedy treatments, hairdressers, pharmacists, reflexology specialists and travel agencies, and some most acclaimed bars and pubs.



Chinatown now has a very impressive gate on Wardour Street.

We were given a little too much detailed information about the Chinese alphabet, but after it started to rain, we went along Gerrard St. to find the restaurant for our lunch. We sat at two large round tables and after working out the menus, ordered our meals. The food and service were excellent.





After lunch some people went to the nearby Chinese supermarkets, some went to visit galleries, some to the pub and some went home.

Ann Clarke-Overy

With photographs by Ann C-O, Maureen Cheesewright and Barbara Oliver

SOME MORE HANDIWORK FROM THE KNIT AND NATTER GROUP





QUIZ – General Knowledge (2)

<p>2. What is the most common month of the year for someone in the world to give birth?</p>	<p>3. First approved in 1998, what is the best-known brand name under which the drug Sildenafil is sold?</p>
<p>4. There are only two actors who were nominated for Oscars in every decade from the 1960's to the 1990's. Jack Nicholson is one. Who is the other?</p>	<p>5. Which two Countries were formed by the "Velvet Divorce" of January 1993?</p>
<p>5. What sport would you be playing if you competed for the Sudirman Cup?</p>	<p>6. Which city in 1990 became the first British city to be the European Capital of Culture?</p>
<p>7. In the 2023 Formula One season which was the only non-Red Bull Driver to win a Grand Prix?</p>	<p>8. The German car manufacturer Volkswagen is based in which city?</p>
<p>9. In which racquet Sport did Australian Robert Fahey hold the men's singles world championship from 1994-2016?</p>	<p>10. In which James Bond movie did Madonna have a cameo role playing a fencing instructor?</p>

Answers on page 15

OUT AND ABOUT GROUP VISIT TO ALL HALLOWS CHURCH AND TEMPLE PLACE



All Hallows by the Tower

Twelve of us arrived at All Hallows Church for our guided tour. The church is situated right next to the Tower of London, but some parts of the building are much older. Susan, our guide, began by showing us a Saxon Arch dating back to the 7th century. Next, we saw a beautifully ornate font cover carved by Grinling Gibbons. Fortunately, the church survived the Great Fire of London in 1666 through the efforts of Admiral Penn, a naval commander at the time. His son, William Penn, was baptised at All Hallows. He later went on to found Pennsylvania in the USA. Despite surviving the Great Fire, much of the church was destroyed by bombing in the Blitz so the current building dates from the 1950's. The vicar at this time was Revd Tubby Clayton founder of the Toc H movement. Toc H was established in 1915 in Belgium with the opening of Talbot House. This gave soldiers a place to rest from the horrors of the trenches. All Hallows is the guild church of Top H. Its proximity to the Thames means All Hallows has many maritime links and artefacts including the Crow's nest from Shackleton's ship, the Quest. We also saw many models of ships and stained glass windows dedicated to shipping companies and seafarers.



Revd Tubby Clayton's tomb



Shackleton's Crow's Nest

We thought our tour was finished, but Susan had more to show us in the crypt museum. This is located in what remains of the original Saxon church. Here they discovered a Roman tessellated floor of a late 2nd century domestic house. There were numerous Roman and Saxon artefacts, church plate and ancient registers dating back to the 16th Century. We had all enjoyed our visit and tour of All Hallows.



Saxon Arch

Following lunch, we travelled to Temple station for the second half of our day. After a short walk we arrived at 2 Temple Place, a magnificent building created as an office for William Waldorf Astor in 1895. The building is decorated with the most exquisite carvings and stained glass windows. Clearly no expense was spared when creating this building. It was the perfect setting for The Glass Heart Exhibition. This explored the history of glass over the last 170 years including many current glassmakers using different techniques and materials to create some spectacular pieces of artwork. One of the most intriguing was a glass chair! We also saw an underwater scene created in glass, showing the harmful effects of litter such as plastic and fishing nets on the sea.

Everyone agreed it was a good day.

Carol Payne

GLASS EXHIBITS FROM THE GLASS HEART EXHIBITION



FRIDAY PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP



An ICM photo which is an alternative camera shot



WINDSOR CASTLE AND RIVER CRUISE – 25th MAY

Our trip to Windsor started shockingly early as we had been advised to leave Rayleigh at 7am and there were rumours of some members turning up in their pyjamas, thankfully they thought better of it!

By arriving early we were able to get through the security lines and enter with plenty of time to start exploring the castle and get a good position to watch the Changing of the Guard ceremony at 11am. This happens 3 days a week and is very popular. It took place in the courtyard outside St. George's Chapel and we were fortunate as it involved a change of battalion. A member of the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards dressed in bearskin was replaced by a member of the Queen's Gurkha Signals. The Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas played an interesting mix of music which included the theme from Game of Thrones and Sweet Child of Mine by Guns N Roses.



St George's Chapel was a very beautiful and moving place to visit. Within the chapel are the tombs of 11 monarchs including Queen Elizabeth II, George VI, Henry VIII and Charles I.



The castle is the longest occupied palace in Europe and has been used by the reigning monarch since 1100. The staterooms were wonderful examples of Georgian taste in architecture and the range and quality of the art, furniture, china, etc. on display was quite overwhelming. It was interesting to see the work that went into restoration following the Windsor fire in 1992 and how they were to be able to save many works of art on the day of the fire. Unfortunately, we were unable to take photos, but there are plenty to see on the Windsor Castle website.



One of the most popular exhibits was Queen Mary's Dolls' House which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. It was designed by one of the leading architects of the day, Sir Edwin Lutyens. Over 1,500 of the leading artists, crafts people and manufacturers created items, including miniature books with original stories by authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle and Rudyard Kipling. The house also features a working record player and a flushable toilet.

Our day ended with a short river trip down the Thames and we then returned to Rayleigh after a long, but very enjoyable day.

Jackie Dillnutt



ANSWERS – General Knowledge (1)

1. Peacock Butterfly	2. Blenheim Palace
3. Bromine	4. Tells fortunes using playing cards
5. Richard II	6. Corkscrews
6. Hydrochloric Acid	8. Newborn babies
9. Harris Tweed	10. Watership Down

ANSWERS – General Knowledge (2)

1. September	2. Viagra
3. Michael Caine	4. From Czechoslovakia - the Czech Republic/Slovakia
5. Badminton	6. Glasgow
6. Carlos Sainz	8. Wolfsburg
9. Real Tennis	10. Die Another Day



SPOTLIGHT on The Women in History Group

What you may wonder is there to talk about concerning this subject. **THERE IS SO MUCH.** The members of the group have compiled a list of women they would like to research and discuss and we then come together each month armed with information, from a very wide variety of sources, which provides us with a platform that leads us in many different directions.

The list of women is very wide and varied. Catherine Parr (1512-1548), Mary Anning (1799-1847), Gladys Aylward (1902-1970), Helen Sharman (1963---), the Mitford sisters all six of them (1904-1996), just to name but a few. We have discussed upwards of 20 women who have made their mark on the world in one way or another.

Our last discussion was about Queen Elizabeth I. Such a wide-ranging discussion which began with her childhood, with all her problems, through to her life as the sovereign, her loves, her ministers, and on to her death. She was a very complex personality with many sides to her character. This led to discussion about her father and mother (Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn) and her siblings (Edward and Mary). All these characters obviously led us into discussion about the changes in religion in this country and all the problems that entailed. We then launched off into discussing slavery which apparently Elizabeth supported by funding the likes of Drake to plunder, not just the Spanish for their gold, but into bringing members of other races back as slaves which then led us to discuss modern slavery and the importance of learning from history.

Our discussions obviously include the place of women in society at the time, again sending us off into many different avenues, men, women, children, property, you name it we discuss it; it's sometimes difficult to separate our 21st century values, morals, and legality from the era we are discussing, but we usually finish with agreement on all sides, assisted by tea/coffee and biscuits provided by our group leader Linda.

Barbara Oliver



GARDENING NOTES

JOBS FOR THE GARDEN IN MAY

- Pull spent tulip stems and allow the foliage to die down, feeding the bulb for next year. Come summer, when the leaves have faded away, you can lift the bulbs, allow them to dry on wooden racks or newspaper and then store them indoors somewhere cool and dry to replant in the autumn.
- Pick off scarlet lily beetles and their brown grubs. Tell-tale signs of trouble are holes in the leaves of affected plants, e.g. lilies and fritillaria. Left alone they can soon eat their way through all the leaves.
- Any frost-damaged leaves should be pruned back to the next healthy bud or side shoot. Frost-damaged plants often recover so don't immediately pull them up, but wait until summer giving them time to regrow. If there's no sign by mid-summer you can pull them up.
- Prune forsythia after flowering. If you don't do this every year they quickly get unmanageable and flower less well. Using sharp loppers and secateurs cut a quarter of the old growth to the base. Also remove diseased, dead, dying and wispy stems cutting them to the ground. Finally prune stems that have just flowered to two buds above the previous year's growth.
- Start hardening off seedlings of beans, tomatoes and other plants sown indoors or acclimatizing the plants. French beans can be particularly delicate so keep under glass. Allow a couple of weeks for the process taking care not to expose them suddenly to strong winds or rain or scorching midday sun.
- Get in supports for floppy plants before they grow away.
- Tie in climbers and trim hedges before they get out of control.
- Plant up some summer containers – scented pelargoniums will last all summer, herbs make great pots too.

CHURCH VISITS GROUP
APRIL VISIT TO ST. NICHOLAS, CHIGNAL SMEALEY



Our April Church Visit was to the charming little church of St. Nicholas in the village of Chignal Smealey near Chelmsford. We were late in arriving at the church due to a road closure – the only road into the village – and were directed on a lengthy detour. We finally reached our destination and were greeted by Linda our guide. The little church is set in an attractive churchyard in the middle of the village. It had been a mass of primroses which were now going over – it must have been a lovely sight a week or so ago. The church is unusual in that it was built of Tudor brick in the early sixteenth century. The north aisle was added in 1847 in brick of a reasonably good match from bricks which were made at a nearby brickfield. Even the font is of Tudor brick. There was almost certainly an earlier church on the site and it is believed that the ancient bell, fragments of stained glass and the indent of a brass come from the earlier building.





The chancel screen and six benches on the south side of the nave are sixteenth century, there is an early seventeenth century pulpit and a late seventeenth century communion table. The beautifully carved wooden altar comes from the closed church of Chignal St. James which is now a private dwelling. The Essex historian Philip Morant held the living from 1735 – 1743. This little church had a warm and even cosy feel – just as our welcome with hot refreshments had been.



Our lunch venue was the 15th century Angel Inn at Broomfield where we enjoyed an excellent and reasonably priced lunch served by efficient and friendly staff.

Ann Rawlinson
Group Leader



FROM THE EDITOR

You may have noticed that our published speaker for May has changed as John Field, with his talk the Amazing World of Magic, cancelled giving little time for another speaker to be arranged. Thankfully our Speakers organiser, Donna, worked her magic and was able to book Nick Dobson with his virtual tour of London by tube – an Underground guide to London place names.

How colourful the newsletter is this month with the lovely pictures of the Chinatown visit and those excellent photographs from the Friday Photography Group. It doesn't have to be Group Leaders to contribute to the newsletter as this month we have excellent contributions from Carol Payne (Out and About) and Barbara Oliver (Women in History).

The year rolls on and May is upon us – let's hope that the weather soon warms up and the rain stops so that we can enjoy all that has been planned for us in the coming weeks.

The deadline for receiving articles for the June 2024 Newsletter is

Sunday 26th May 2024

rgu3newsletter@gmail.com

Ann Rawlinson

Newsletter Editor

Our next monthly meeting at the Grange will be on **Wednesday 5th June** when the **Ladybird Singers** are coming along to help us celebrate our **15th Anniversary**

GROUP CALENDAR

If you are interested in joining any of these Groups please contact the Group Co-ordinator

GROUP	DAY	TIME	GROUP LEADER
AD HOC HISTORY	To be advised		Donna & Steve Lowe
ART APPRECIATION	3 rd Wednesday	2.00 – 4.30 pm	Geoff Pearce
BADMINTON 1	Thursday – Fortnightly	10.00 am	Jacqui Butcher
BADMINTON 2	Wednesday – Fortnightly	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Geoff Pearce
BIRD WATCHING	4 th Wednesday	10.00 am	Peta Turner
BOOK GROUP 1	4 th Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Angela Bartlett
BOOK GROUP 2	Last Thursday	3.30 pm	Jackie Dillnutt
BRIDGE	2 nd Wednesday	7.30 pm	Dave Westall
CANASTA 1	2 nd Monday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Doreen Brown
CANASTA 2	3 rd Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Edna Webb
CANASTA BEGINNERS 1	3 rd Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Clarke-Overy
CANASTA BEGINNERS 2	2 nd Wednesday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Jane Gee
CHURCH VISITS	3 rd Wednesday	10.00 – 1.30 pm	Ann Rawlinson
CINEMA	Wednesday (various)	Afternoon	Christine Shaw
CRIBBAGE	4 th Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Susan Neil
DISCUSSION	3 rd Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Doreen Brown
FAMILY HISTORY 1	1 st Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 2	1 st Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 3	2 nd Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FAMILY HISTORY 4	4 th Wednesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Ann Rawlinson
FILM APPRECIATION	3 rd Monday		Joan Hanscomb
FUTURE LEARN DISCUSSION	As and when	4.00 – 5.00 pm	Pam Green
GARDEN GROUP	Various		Theresa McAninch
IPAD/TABLET	2 nd Friday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Mark Wiseman
KNIT & NATTER	2 nd Thursday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Ann Clarke-Overy
LUNCH SUNDAY	3 rd Sunday		Susan Neil
LUNCH WEEKDAY	2 nd Wednesday		Edna Webb
MAHJONG	Tuesday – Fortnightly	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Keith Robjent
MARITIME HISTORY	1 st Monday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Sue Howarth-Reading
MINDFULNESS/MEDITATION 1	2 nd Friday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Carol Bright
MINDFULNESS/MEDITATION 2	4 th Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Carol Bright

OUT AND ABOUT	Various Days		Ann Clarke-Overy
PETANQUE 1	1st/3rd Monday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	
PETANQUE 2	2nd/4th Friday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	
PHOTOGRAPHY MONDAY	Various		Geoff Kittle
PHOTOGRAPHY FRIDAY	3rd Friday	10.00 – 12.00 pm	Maureen Cheesewright
PUDDY GALORE	4th Tuesday	4.00 pm	Anne Berry
RUMMIKUB 1	1st Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Jane Gee
RUMMIKUB 2	2nd Thursday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Pam Green
SCRABBLE	3rd Monday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Wendy Bedwell
SHAKESPEARE APPRECIATION	3rd Friday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Paula Whittle
SHORT MAT BOWLS	Tuesday – Fortnightly	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Susan Neil
SINGING FOR PLEASURE	1st/3rd Tuesday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Joan Wayman
SOLO WHIST	2nd Monday	10.00 – 12.00	David Lobley
TABLE TENNIS	1st/3rd Friday	1.30 – 3.00 pm	Maureen Saveall
TENPIN BOWLING	Tuesday – Fortnightly	11.00 – 3.00 pm	Jacqui Butcher
THEATRE/EVENTS	Various times & days		Doreen Brown Edna Webb Susan Neil Ann Clarke-Overy
TRIVIAL PURSUIT	4th Tuesday	2.00 – 4.00 pm	Steve Barns
WALKING MIDWEEK	3rd Monday		Gwen Bushell
WALKING SUNDAY	Last Sunday	10.30 – 12.30 pm	Christine Shaw
WINE THURSDAY	Various	7.00 pm	Susan Neil Ann Newman
WINE FRIDAY	Various	7.00 pm	Susan Neil Ann Newman
WOMEN IN HISTORY	Last Friday	2.30 – 4.30 pm	Lynda Rooke
u3a MONTHLY MEETING	1st Wednesday	1.30 – 4 .00 pm	Various Speakers

For specific dates please liaise with your Group Leader.