

DISCOVERY

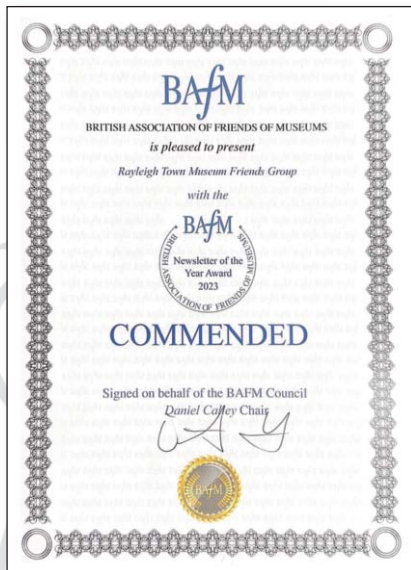
RAYLEIGH TOWN MUSEUM FRIENDS MAGAZINE • ISSUE 38 • JANUARY 2024

MUSEUM RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

Over the years our Newsletter has evolved from a Black and White A4 sheet to a 12-page full colour Magazine. We pride ourselves on our professionalism and the quality of the quarterly magazine which often brings positive comments from Friends, supporters, and Sponsors.

We are members of a number of heritage trade bodies one of whom is the BAFM (British Association of Friends of Museums). Each year they hold a "Newsletter of the Year award" and, without any great expectations, my colleague Peter Everingham sent off a copy of our Magazine to the judges as our entry.

A significant number of entries were received, and we were amazed when the latest edition arrived, and we read the results. Six groups were shortlisted; mainly National Museums such as Birmingham Museum, Southampton City Art gallery, Oakwell Park (a Grade one listed Elizabethan manor House) and us.



Copy of the certificate.

help offset the cost. Also, many thanks to all our authors who provide the text on a variety of local stories. New contributors and ideas are always welcome.

Mike Davies.



Latest BAFM Magazine.

The judges stated in very complimentary terms about our entry, and I quote "as well as articles there were several advertisements from local firms, which had evidently helped fund the very professional design and production of the magazine. Funding this sort of publication can be difficult for small groups and the Friends of the Rayleigh Town Museum have been very successful."

We received a "Highly Commended" certificate which is now on display in the Museum.

The professionalism is thanks to Azzurro Marketing, who produce the magazine for us, and special thanks to all our advertisers, who



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Can I please wish all our readers a healthy and prosperous 2024.

Not sure about you, but the older I get the days, weeks, months and years seem to rush by in an instant and that's the same for all the diverse displays and exhibitions you can see in the Museum.

You will see elsewhere in the magazine the amazing achievement in our receiving the 40,000th visitor in just a little over seven years, and I am already planning how to celebrate the 50,000 landmark when that milestone arrives.

We value the financial support from all our sponsors and supporters, but I would like to give specific thanks to Rayleigh Town Council who are fully committed to the heritage of our town in many

► continued from page 1

ways; in our case by paying our museum rent. The Museum's footfall makes a significant financial contribution to the retail trade in town, evidenced by all those local businesses who sponsor the Museum, fully justifying the support we receive from the Town Council. Greatly appreciated.

The Management Group of volunteers work hard all year, a number behind the scenes unnoticed, without whom we would not be able to function as efficiently as we do. I often explain to people that we are, in fact, running a commercial business entirely with volunteers. We are legally required to comply with all the various statutory regulations, which include, health and safety, employment law, welfare of both volunteers and visitors, financials, maintenance, indeed I sometimes think that "if it moves" it has a regulation we have to be aware of and comply with. WOW.

All of this is, of course, to present the Museum, whether to visitors, or those viewing our various social media outlets, with the best possible experience. Some advance information for you is that one of these "back of house teams" is working hard on a brand new - super improved - Website. Watch this space.

Mike Davies,
Management Group Chairman

Museum Friends

Dear Friends...

Here we are at the beginning of another New Year! We hope you all enjoyed the Christmas festivities and are looking forward to the year ahead and we would like to wish all our Friends a happy and healthy New Year.

The Friends Group continues to do well and we thank everyone who is supporting us during very difficult times. Your contributions are much appreciated and enable us to keep the Museum fresh and interesting with different new exhibitions and items to encourage regular visits.

Unfortunately, there are still a small number of Friends who have not amended their standing orders to reflect the new membership fee (£13 for a single and £18 for a family) and currently still owe £3.00 for this year. It would be much appreciated if these current standing orders were amended and the balance paid prior to the next renewal on 1st May 2024.

We hope to see some of you at in the Museum or at one of our events this year. Take a look at our forthcoming events programme in this issue and current plans for Friends trips this year. More details of events can also be found on our website and will be updated regularly.

If you have any questions on membership or wish to receive e-mail copies of communications and magazines, please e-mail us with your details on the address below or leave a message at the Museum on 01268 773535 and we will contact you.

Peter & Leigh Everingham, RTM Friends Co-ordinators.
E-mail: friends@rayleightownmuseum.co.uk

Friends' Special Discount



Peak Security
Tel: 01268 777232

10% off any intruder alarm or CCTV system
www.peak-security.co.uk

**You must show your Rayleigh Town Museum Friends membership card to obtain your discount.*

Kirbys

Telephone 01268 777 777
Visit www.kirbyscoaches.co.uk
Email info@kirbyscoaches.co.uk
Follow @kirbyscoaches

BEST DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES
CAREFULLY PLANNED ITINERARIES
WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO?

Request your copy of our 2024 Day Trip & Holiday Brochures today!

coach tourism 2020 WINNER

71 YEARS 1952-2023



Rayleigh Writers

The idea to start a writers' group in Rayleigh came about as a result of a questionnaire circulated to residents

asking for ideas to improve their local library. Our first meeting was held in 2001, and we have continued to meet at the library ever since. From the start it became clear that our writers were a lively, friendly bunch who enjoyed each other's company, so much so that our regular gatherings were soon augmented by additional activities that have recently included a writing workshop and a summer social.



A Rayleigh Writers meeting in the library.

An early initiative was the decision in 2003 to publish an anthology of short stories and poems under the title, Writers Reign. The following year, hot off the press, it won a First Prize Certificate in a national competition organised by the David St John Thomas Trust and Writing Magazine. Astonished rather than surprised we sold the book in support of a local hospital charity, and, having done so, promptly began a second book. The publication and sale of anthologies has since been a core activity of the group.

We not only write and produce our anthologies but sell them at craft fairs and other events throughout the county. In 2010 the Writers took to the stage for an evening of readings and recitations as part of the Essex Book Festival, an activity that later featured in some of our launch evenings for published books.

Three years later, we were awarded a 'Special Certificate of Recognition for Services in Rayleigh' by Rayleigh Town Council and, at the request of the Council, adjudicated a



Presentation of donation to Essex Air Ambulance.

children's illustrated poem competition, funding one of the prizes.

More recently, in June 2023, the group presented the Air Ambulance with a cheque for £1,200 bringing its charitable giving to £9,700. And we're not

through yet! Another anthology, our ninth, has recently been published and is presently on sale at various events and venues, including Rayleigh Museum. Now bearing the title,

Essex Tales it will, yet again, be sold in support of the Air Ambulance.

Apart from its charitable endeavours the group exists to encourage a regular writing habit among its members, a number of whom have pushed ahead with their own projects that have resulted in the publication of novels, the winning of prizes in literary

competitions and the publication of poems and prose in national magazines.

New members, whether they be established or aspiring writers, are welcome to attend our monthly meetings at Rayleigh Library beginning at 2.30pm on the second Thursday of each month. Membership costs the exorbitant sum of £1 per meeting attended. We look forward to seeing you.

Richard Banks



Family florist in the heart of Rayleigh. Beautiful gifts. Specialists in Wedding Flowers and Funeral Tributes. All bouquets fresh and lovingly hand made.

When only the very best quality will do, take a look at the sumptuous designer creations our expert florists can create for you.

You'll discover the very finest luxury bouquets and stylish arrangements, showcasing premium flowers and cutting edge floral design to optimum effect.



Same day local delivery available on orders received before 3.00pm, Monday-Saturday only

54 Eastwood Road Rayleigh, Essex .

Tel: 01268-777983 Free phone: 0800 056 1214

www.courtsofrrayleigh.co.uk

SEASONAL FLOWERS • GIFTS • OCCASIONS • WEDDINGS • FUNERALS

Friends' Special Discount

Harmony Window Fashions

128b High Street, Rayleigh

10% off all our Blinds, Curtains and Shutters



*You must show your Rayleigh Town Museum Friends membership card to obtain your discount.

The Diphtheria Epidemic in the 1930s – Reminiscences of a Rayleigh Schoolgirl (part 7)

In the 1930's local Council schools in Essex used to have a school dentist visiting infant and junior schools once a year to give dental treatment. I had to have two molars removed that were decayed.

There was a downstairs office room that in Rayleigh junior school that was set up for the surgery. I believe there was a charge for the treatment and I imagine some parents at that time couldn't always afford the fee. I remembered feeling very scared and the nasty smell of the gas. It was a very quick procedure and I think my twin sister, Maisie, also had teeth removed. We returned home to our temporary abode in Trinity Road, Rayleigh.

It was 1933 and at that time there was an epidemic of diphtheria sweeping the country, mainly amongst children.

My mother was really concerned because one of my gums wouldn't stop bleeding. She phoned the doctors in the early hours of the morning - I imagine it was from a phone box

because those days ordinary people couldn't afford them.

Our local GP was Dr Fiddes, a lovely man, very elegant and the spitting image of Sir Anthony Eden. He plugged the gap with what seemed to me a wad of cotton wool soaked in iodine. He came the next day because I'd developed a raging temperature. My three sisters weren't allowed to come up to my bedroom and I believe they had to stay off school. Dr Fiddes came every day and took "swabs" from my throat which had to be sent away to be analysed. Then once he moved a membrane from the back of my throat and pronounced "the crisis was over". The first time I'd heard that word as I wasn't yet six years.

The doctor gave me an injection in my stomach, which didn't hurt. The ambulance came and the men wrapped me in blankets and took me off. I remember my oldest sister crying. She was 13 and would have known how serious it was, as local children had died, including my playmate named Coker. I can't remember her first name.

I seem to recall the ambulance tearing along with the bell ringing until we reached the isolation hospital, which was at Sutton Ford the other side of Rochford on the river Roche. There was a drive through large gates. First there was the Matron's house, a large red brick Edwardian house with flower beds. Then there was a bungalow which was the game-keeper come gardener's lodge. The hospital was a long bungalow consisting of two wards for diphtheria patients, one male and one female, and two wards for scarlet fever of each sex.

I believe there were six beds in each ward. I was annoyed as I was put in a baby's cot. A young nurse gave me a painful jab in the bottom. Then I had a doctor to visit. Actually, doctors only visited on rare occasions and apparently all the other staff were "carriers" of Dip.

Visitors weren't allowed in the wards and could only see us

Diphtheria.

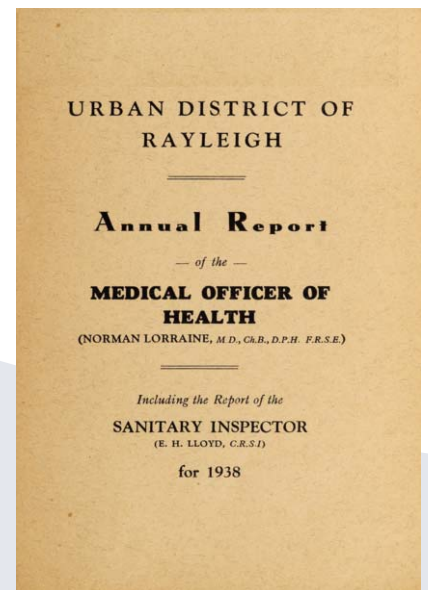
More cases of Diphtheria were notified during 1938 than have been notified during each of the last five years as will be seen from the table of notifiable diseases shown under the different years, 1934-1938. Twenty-six cases were notified of which number four were later denotified as the diagnosis was not confirmed on investigation at the Hospital. There was an outbreak at Rawreth in October but fortunately of a fairly mild character and I am pleased to be able to report that no deaths occurred in this parish as a result of notifiable diphtheria. Of the twenty-six cases notified, fourteen were residing in the Rawreth area.

I regret that a boy, aged 6 years, who was notified as suffering from Diphtheria and who resided in Rayleigh died from Diphtheria a few hours after admission to the Hospital. Once again, I would point out to parents the desirability of calling in their local medical attendants as soon as a child complains of sore throat, has a temperature, and generally feels out of sorts.

An adequate supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept in stock for the use of practitioners for the poorer inhabitants of the District.

In regard to Immunisation against Diphtheria, a local Scheme has been prepared and received consideration by my Local Authorities of Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh. When this has received the approval of the Ministry of Health it is hoped that the scheme will be put into operation during the year 1939, and when the scheme has received the approval of the Local Authorities, the local Branch of the British Medical Association and the Ministry of Health, full details will be given in my Annual Reports.

Extract from Annual Report of the local Medical Officer of Health 1938.



Urban District of Rayleigh Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1938.

LOVELY LIBBYS

● Gifts ● Boutique ● Tearoom





Beautiful Gifts, Stylish Boutique & Traditional Tearoom

All Under One Roof in the Heart of Rayleigh

- Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm (closed Sundays)
- Tearoom Hours 9.30-4.30

Eastwood Road, SS6 7JD
Telephone: 01268 774466



through closed outdoor windows. It was several days before I was allowed out of bed to talk to my parents.

Milk was prohibited and we could only have beef tea which we had from a beaker or a feeder. I can't remember the food, only that it was a strict diet. We each had a chamber pot which the nurses helped us with until we could go outside to lavatories under cover.

It was a very outdated building with a huge kitchen range down one end and gas stoves heated up the water then.

I befriended a dainty little girl I believe called Valerie whose mother was later to be a teacher of mine at Rayleigh senior school, now Fitzwimarc. We were such pals that we were able to leave on the same day (which was six weeks later). One day a gypsy girl was rushed in and they vacated us to the boy's ward. Sadly, when we returned there was a vacant bed as her

family didn't trust the hospital and left it too late to save her.

To exercise our legs once walking, the gardener had built us a little tricycle which we happily pedalled around through the flower garden. One day we were allowed outside the big gates to pick bluebells in a little copse.

We had a bath on the day of our leaving. It was an ancient hip bath made of stone. The only bath I'd had for six weeks as the nurses had to give us a bed wash every morning.

I had another week's stay at home before returning to Love Lane school. I had fallen behind in my class work and was banned from PE for a year. I had to sit in a wheelchair to watch my sisters and playmates until I'd got the strength back in my legs.

Nowadays, fortunately, children can have a "jab" against measles, mumps, rubella and diphtheria etc. to prevent them getting all those ghastly diseases which most of us had to go through.

Ruby Shannon nee Savell

DIPHTHERIA is deadly



protect your child by IMMUNISATION

*The best time is just
before the first birthday*

Ask at your Local Council Offices,
School or Welfare Centre

Poster of a Diphtheria Immunisation Campaign.

Ode to Rayleigh Town Museum

*Discover the beauty of Rayleigh lore
In every corner there is something more
Our museum though small is rich in grace
A sanctuary of our history to embrace*

*In Rayleigh's heart a treasure trove we keep
A museum that allows your thoughts to leap
The windmill that was a majestic sight
The sails that turned with all their might*

*So step inside and let the past be your guide
Explore the history of the charabanc ride
In each artefact is a tale to be told
Where stories, legends and memories unfold*

*With unique pencil sharpeners and lots of books
Children's activities need a closer look
Pocket money toys within to explore
Historic DVD's and so much more.*

LB

Keep on suffering from back and neck problems?

Ten's of thousands have found an effective and natural solution.

For those of you who are still searching for a solution, aiming to leave the pain and the discomfort behind, we would like to introduce the diagnostic and treatment modalities used by Life

Chiropractic Clinics, the largest group in Essex, with more than twenty years experience and over thirty Chiropractors, Massage therapists and Rehabilitation Specialists.

Our team is ready to accurately diagnose and treat your complaint.

Chiropractic Initial Consultation - £48

What's Included:

Chiropractic, Orthopaedic & Neurologic Examinations
Posture Check • Digital X-Rays* • Diagnosis

Call to book today: **01268 774 008**

Quote: 'Museum' when booking

WE CAN HELP TREAT:

BACK, NECK & SHOULDER PAIN • HEADACHES
& MIGRAINES • SCIATICA & MUCH MORE...



CHIROPRACTIC
CLINICS

9 High Road, Rayleigh, SS6 7SA

A TOUCH OF HEALTH, A WAY OF *life*
www.lifechiropractic.co.uk

*X-Rays only taken if medically required.

Marcos Tapas Bar
Spanish Restaurant & Wine Bar

Friends' Special Discount

Any time Monday to Thursday *25% Off Food Only

*Must be booked and declared in advance.

Telephone: 01268 773311 www.marcosbar.co.uk



We are all familiar with the popular television series "Dads Army", but did you know there was a more sinister and secretive group who operated in and around Rayleigh in WW2 which was part of Britain's secret Resistance army?

In 1940 the

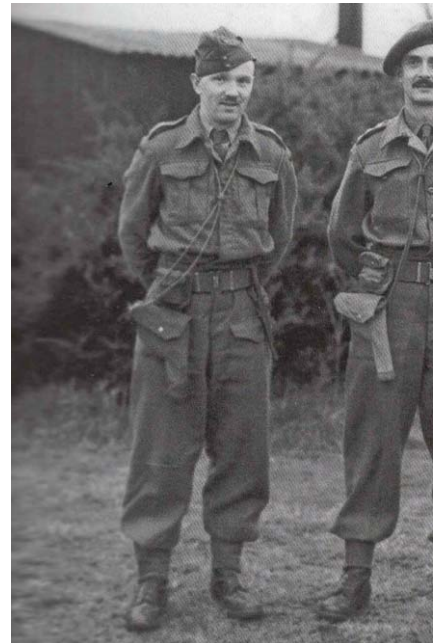
Government set up a contingency plan, to include Rayleigh, under which a resistance force would be set up to deal with a likely German invasion, code name "Operation Sea Lion". 28 units had already been set up in Essex, totalling nearly 200 men with group leaders in both Rayleigh and Rochford. These units were to be known as auxiliary units, part of the British resistance movement, and if the Germans had invaded, they would have gone underground to secret hideouts, such as Hockley Woods and Thundersley Common, to carry out

observation and sabotage along the same lines as the French resistance.

By day they were ordinary working men; many had served in WW1, and included farmworkers, schoolmasters, village shopkeepers, dentists, poachers and even the occasional vicar. Recruitment was by personal recommendation. This was "Top secret", even from family and friends for many years. Indeed, it was not until 1996 that the Ministry of Defence finally released somewhat scanty details of this organisation. Some took the secret to their graves.

However, I can advise that the Rayleigh Patrol included: Lieutenant Bob Baptie (one of his daughters was a great supporter of the Museum) Sergeant Len Downes, Private Jack Murphy, Private Ray Cottis who lived in Bellingham Lane, Private Eddie Southam, Private John Tomlinson, and Private Frank Hunt (until he was called up).

Arthur Gabbitas of Rawreth lane was in the regular army and a member of the Royal Signal Corp. He helped to train the auxiliary at Colehill House in Wiltshire where members were armed with Thompson machine guns, phosphorous hand grenades and "sticky" bombs. Mr Gabbitas was a member of a much smaller signals group, mostly detached from both the Home Guard and auxiliary. These three-man units were stationed around the coast with a fully prepared and operational hidden hideout for use after the invasion.



Second Lieutenant Robert Baptie is on the right in this photograph.

A Rochford nurseryman, Bert Cocks, was also a member of the local group and wrote an excellent book, "Churchill's Secret Army 1939—45". He stated that one of the requirements to join these auxiliary units was to know every local hedge, culvert, drainage system and bridge in the pitch black within a five-mile radius of their home. Part of this unit's

camouflage was that they were members of the local Home Guard with the same uniform and they sometimes undertook usual Home Guard duties.

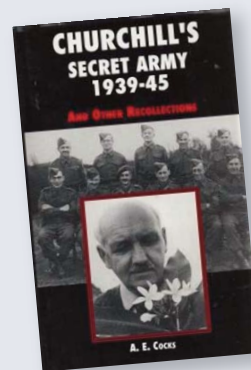
Special training was given in sabotage and dirty tricks denied to ordinary members of the Home Guard and in many cases even that given to full time combat servicemen. Don Handscombe from Thundersley who was a farm

A. R. Adams Ltd
INDEPENDENT FIFTH GENERATION
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

RAYLEIGH : 01268 743102
THORPE BAY : 01702 586383

117 HIGH STREET, RAYLEIGH
 141-143 THE BROADWAY, THORPE BAY

Established 1900
Funeral Director of the Year 2015



manager during the day, recalled one training session observed by officers of blowing up a dummy railway bridge with the officers getting a bit too close and were blown off their feet.



Type of equipment held. Note the knuckle duster.

Royal Engineers dug underground bunkers in such places as Hockley Woods, Plumberow Mount, and elsewhere which were equipped

with weapons, explosives, and other sabotage equipment. Each man was responsible for his own personal hideout with absolute security the byword.



Winston Churchill actively encouraged and supported these units, indeed would have loved to have joined them but was not allowed to do so by his Majesty King George VI. The risk of invasion had significantly reduced by 1942 but the "stay-behind" units, as they were sometimes referred to, remained on alert until 1944. Indeed, a plan was considered to use some of these men as part of the "D" day invasion but was not proceeded with.

One true story that sums up this little-known part of WW2 is that when one of the auxiliary privates asked his Sergeant a question "sarge we only have six weeks rations, what do we do after that time? The response..."no need to worry sonny as your life expectancy is only a few days".

My thanks for help with this article from "Scott" at Phoenix radio.

The British Resistance Organisation Museum is based at Parham in Suffolk.

Books on the subject are available to read in the Museum and include:

The Last Ditch by David Lamb

Churchill's Secret Army 1939--1945 by A.E. Cocks

Churchill's Underground Army by John Warwicker

Mike Davies

Rayleigh Town Museum's 40,000th Visitor!

On Wednesday 22nd November, 2023, Rayleigh Town Museum reached a milestone when it welcomed it's 40,000th visitor through the doors since opening in April 2016.



As you can see from the photograph, Chairman Mike Davies was delighted to inform Matt Turner that he was the 40,000th visitor to the Museum

and presented him with a certificate as a memento of the occasion. Matt will also receive a year's Friends membership in recognition of this.

Mike Davies also commented: *"We have come a long way. After just seven years of being open we were overjoyed to have our 40,000th visitor come in. We love being part of the community and we will carry on celebrating Rayleigh's amazing history through our Museum and our exhibitions."*

Leigh Everingham

esw

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



ESW comprise a team of dedicated professionals who are approachable and always on YOUR side. We are a dynamic, proactive firm and our services are very competitively priced.

We act for a large number of clients ranging from sole traders and partnerships through to family companies and larger corporate concerns; within a variety of industry and trade sectors.

- ◆ FREE initial, no obligation, consultation
- ◆ Competitive rates and fixed fee quotes
- ◆ Out of hours appointments
- ◆ Client parking at rear

Always on YOUR side...

162-168 High Street, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7BS
Tel: 01268 77 69 69 Email: info@esw.co.uk

www.esw.co.uk

Now incorporating ...

Qualified solicitors at
www.eswlegal.co.uk

esw
LEGAL

Friends' Special Discount

COURTS OF RAYLEIGH
FLORIST

Courts of Rayleigh
54 Eastwood Road

5% off cut flowers

*You must show your Rayleigh Town Museum Friends membership card to obtain your discount.



Margaret Abrams – A True “Rayleighite”

Mum was born in Rayleigh on 13th January 1934. Life was, as she often described, so much simpler and more straightforward. She described a childhood, even when the war started, as a time where she and her friends



Margaret with her younger sister Maureen..

made shows to perform and had dance lessons from one of her friends who had proper lessons, and how her dad would hammer metal Blakies onto the soles of her shoes to make them tap when they did dance routines on the metal table that was in fact a shelter to get under in the event of an air raid. She would say that they waved to the lorry loads of soldiers as they drove by the house in the hope that they would throw a chocolate bar to them.

She also told stories of playing cricket and rounders on the main A127 and the roundabout. Imagine that now!



Margaret and motorbike racing!

Mum would tell us about her life growing up in Rayleigh. How her mum had grown up in the house called Ferndale which was the family home in Stile Lane and how her mother's parents had ideas that their children would all live in houses he had built along the lane. Mum's dad (our grandad 'Puppa Peck) had different thoughts though, and when they married, they moved into 7 Arterial Road and had mum and later her sister Maureen.

Mum told us how she left school and went to work in Hattons the newsagents (her cash register now resides in the Rayleigh Town Museum) and how she cycled everywhere, even to Canewdon to see her boyfriend of the moment, even though she wasn't supposed to date someone from over there due to the superstitions held around the area.

She told us of motor bike races to Great Yarmouth where she had all the gear and “bullet” written on her helmet, which always seemed strange to us as she seemed so worried

about speed of any kind when us kids were around.

She loved to go to the speedway to see the Rayleigh Rockets at Rayleigh Weir and also to go dancing in the dresses that she had made with as many petticoats to make it stand out!

Mum only moved once in her life and that was at age 24 from 7 Arterial Rd to 457 Eastwood Road Rayleigh when she married our dad. Memories of mum as the three of us were growing up



Margaret on her wedding day.

 **PALMERS**
SOLICITORS

FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR ALL YOUR LEGAL NEEDS

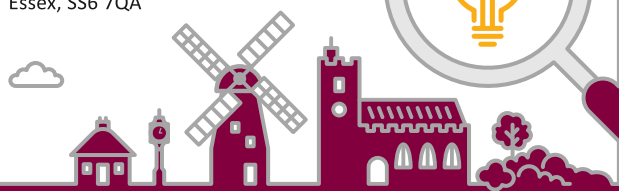
Should you ever need advice in relation to any legal matters, our team specialise in:

- Conveyancing
- Wills
- Employment law
- Divorce and family law
- Construction
- A range of commercial services

For more information, please contact our Rayleigh office on:

 **01268 988488**

105A High Street, Rayleigh,
Essex, SS6 7QA



www.palmerslaw.co.uk

Palmer's is a partnership and the partners are solicitors of England and Wales. Palmer's is authorised and regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority SRA No: 58939

Friends' Special Discount

10% off wax removal services
& 5% off any Hearing Aid purchase*

*Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer.
Valid on presentation of membership card.

ECE
Essex Clear Ears

Telephone: 07862 269 275
www.essexclearears.co.uk

were of her constantly being busy with something!

Mum was always resourceful and loved a bargain at "her boutique" (the jumble sale). She was always there for us all. As we all started to grow up mum became a childminder so that she could buy those extras, and still be there to cook dad's dinner and be there after school for us. She also was an encyclopaedia sales woman who did amazingly, she took French students in who needed to improve their spoken English, which developed a lifelong friendship. Later on, she worked in a care home and went on to being a home help, walking miles between her elderly clients and sometimes back to the high street for various errands.

As time moved on and we all grew up and flew the nest it was time for mum and dad to enjoy doing things that they wanted to do. Mum started to research her family tree and travelled up to London when she couldn't trace any more locally. She traced a lot of family around the world which gave her great pleasure especially when she was able to meet lovely relatives from America and New Zealand. She spent hours and hours updating journals so that we all, have those stories and history and when the Museum at Rayleigh opened, she would tell everyone that they must go and visit it. She wrote articles for the museum magazine and delighted in reading other people's articles.

Gradually times changed and travelling lessened due to



Margaret in more recent times.

mobility problems and mum occupied time with different things such as knitting for charity. Mum's teddies, Santas and mice are very well travelled as she would give them to anyone that she felt deserved one. She was great with Sudoku and word games of all kinds and loved a good

quiz, a gameshow and cards with dad and friends.

Mum really was born and bred, a true Rayleighite and she would love to know that a little bit of her history is known by many!

Alison Poynton (nee Abrams)

BARRINGTONS

RESTAURANT & GRILL

Friends' Special Discount

Any time Monday to Thursday *25% Off Main Menu

*Must be booked and declared in advance. Max table of six.
Excludes any special offers. Terms and conditions apply.

Telephone: 01268 745388 www.barringtongrill.com

EVENTS FOR 2024

January to March - Castle Exhibition

We will be displaying the last of the timbers, previously held in storage. This timber is 10ft long and we believe it formed part of a lintel.

March - Railway Exhibition

Sunday 17th March at 2.30pm - Talk: "The Photographs of Edward Francis".

12th to 14th April - Titanic Exhibition

April/May

- A display of Edward Francis Photographs by Paul Taylor. Edward Francis lived in Rayleigh and gifted Rayleigh Mount to the National Trust in 1923. Some of these photographs are new to our collection.

June/July/August - Rayleigh Schools Exhibition

13th to 15th September - Maps Exhibition

October and November - Remembrance

December - Christmas Exhibition



Established for over 25 years!

During this time we have built a reputation for quality and value for money. Supplying made to measure products in keeping with the latest trends, from Roller Blinds, Curtains, Shutters, Awnings to Luxaflex Smart Powerview Range. Products to suit everyone's needs and budget.

Please feel free to pop into our showroom to see our extensive range.
Or call us to arrange a free home appointment at a convenient time for you.

HarmonyBlinds
of Rayleigh Ltd

128b High Street, Rayleigh, SS6 7BU T: 01268 778377

www.harmonyblindsfrayleigh.co.uk

Rayleigh Community Groups

Have you ever wondered just how many little groups, clubs and societies exist that go unnoticed by the great majority of people.

For example, have you ever heard of the "After 8 Club", named as they meet after 8pm!!! or the MNO club. I was originally advised that this stood for the "Mums' Night Out" club but someone else told me they always met in the middle of the month, and these three letters MNO, are from the middle of the alphabet.

Well, in this article I want to tell you about two local groups that meet in Rayleigh Library.

First, we have the Rayleigh "Knit and Natter" group who



Some of the Knit and Natter group hard at work.

meet in Rayleigh Library on Wednesdays between 10am and Middy. You can take along a pattern that you may already have started on, or you can get involved in some wonderful community projects, perhaps ask for help with something you are making, or even get started for the very first time with knitting or crocheting with tips from this very friendly group. I am not sure what takes priority, whether it's knitting or nattering, I think a combination of both. It's free to come along, no need to make a booking, why not give it a try, men and women of all ages, you're promised a most warm welcome.

If you are more into sewing, embroidery, patchwork, macramé (a form of textile produced using knotting, rather than using weaving or knotting techniques—yes, I had to look that one up on the internet !!) then the Rayleigh Library Thursday "Craft and Chatter" group is for you. This group meets on a Thursday between 10.30 and 12.30. Again, simply bring along whatever project you are working on at



Craft and Chatter group with their Christmas tree, December 2023.

home and enjoy spending time on your hobby in great company. If you would like some help, inspiration, or guidance then at least one person in the group will be able to assist. It's free to go along, why not give it a go. No need to book in advance.

These are just two of many local groups that meet regularly in one of the many little venues around town. If you are a member of such a group and would like a mention, just drop me a line and I will be delighted to include it in a future edition.

Perhaps the Rayleigh Canasta club, or the Wyvern Community Transport, just let me know and I can include.

Mike Davies

Don't want to miss a beat?

You won't, with discreet, never-before-heard hearing technology that's effortless to use.

Introducing the **ALL-NEW Genesis AI** from Starkey Hearing technology reimagined to deliver superior sound, comfort, and durability.

GENESIS^{AI}




ECE
Essex Clear Ears

Find out more about our latest hearing technology

Friendly AI-powered hearing solutions for every need

www.essexclearears.co.uk


Call us today on 01268 780 625

Friends' Special Discount

PIZZA EXPRESS
91 High Street Rayleigh

Any time Monday to Thursday
***20% Off Food Only**

*You must show your Rayleigh Town Museum Friends membership card when requesting your bill to obtain discount.





Photos from the Echo Archive

- 1969 - High Street Rayleigh

Another excellent view from the collection showing a busy scene in the High Street from an unspecified date in 1969.

The businesses seen here include Howard's Dairies (to left of photo) and, in Eastwood Road, A. Rees Bookmaker. Then in the Dollmartons building are Stephen's Florists, Sketchley Cleaners, Smith's Footwear (this family-owned



enterprise also had premises at 136 High Street, although remarkably there were five other shoe shops trading in Rayleigh at that time) and Yardley the

chemist. The property to the right is Vernon Collard (here since c1960, before moving in 1980 to what is now The Factory Shop). Finally, the frontage

of A.R. Adams Funeral Directors is visible, a constant on this site since the 1930's. Also captured in this image are three of their funeral vehicles departing the premises, including what appears to be a pre-war Austin Princess hearse.

Other items of interest are; looking at the roofs - the old VHF television aerials shaped as either an "H" or "X",

the GEC manufactured street lamps installed in 1955 and in the foreground the infant prams of the day.

Peter Everingham

Behind the scenes at The Museum

Here is a selection of newly donated badges. Our Tuesday team polished them up, ready to go on display. If you would like to join us on a Tuesday, please let us know.



Above top; polishing the badges.
Above left; ARP Badge.
Above and Left;
Essex Regiment badges

2024 FRIENDS TRIPS

For the latest information on our trips, visit the website:
rayleightownmuseum.co.uk



Friends' Trips for 2024

This is all very much 'in the air' at the moment. The plan is to arrange a private visit to Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome to include a guided tour and then tea/coffee and cream tea. The cost of this is likely to be between £18 and £20. I am looking at coach transport but think this will be a prohibitive cost and we will need to go by our cars. Likely time of visit, late May/June.

Then looking into a trip to Eltham Palace and Gardens near Greenwich later in the year. If you are interested in any further details when they are available, please contact me on lindalan@rayleightownmuseum.co.uk or 01268 773535 (Museum – leave a message) or 01268 774463.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the new year. In the meantime, all the very best for 2024.

Regards, Linda.



The Museum is currently open Wednesday, Friday and Saturday between 10am and 4pm.

Stacey's
 AUCTIONEERS AND VALUERS
 Since 1947



Free Antique Valuation Days held every month at our auction rooms in Rayleigh!

We also offer free no obligation home visits for large consignments.

See staceyauction.com for dates or call a member of our team on 01268 777122.

Open Late Mondays/Tuesdays from 5-7pm.

Essex Auction Rooms, 37 Websters Way, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8JQ (road at the rear of the Museum).

T 01268 777122 www.staceyauction.com

Thank you to our Museum Sponsors

We would like to thank them for their generous support and look forward to working with them in the future.

A.R. Adams



THE SPREAD EAGLE



Supported by:
RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL

Would you like to become a sponsor?

The museum is entirely managed by volunteers and needs the support of our visitors and friends. Why not become a sponsor and help secure the museum for future generations.

