

Welcome to the April Edition of our Newsflash

Speakers Meeting

Our Monthly Speakers Meeting is on 1st April at the Leigh Community Centre
Doors open at 2.00pm for a 2.30pm start

A History of Nursery Rhymes - a talk by Peggy Rose Griffin

Bring back some childhood memories with this talk and learn the origin and basis of some of the rhymes.



Membership Renewals

We can now confirm the Membership renewals sessions, as follows:

Wednesday, 2nd April - 10.00 - 12.00) .. Room 5
Friday, 4th April - 10.00 - 12.00)
Monday 7th April - 14.00 - 16.00) .. Room 6
Friday 11th April - 14.00 - 16.00)

All sessions to be held at the Leigh Community Centre.

Subscription fee for 2025/2026 is £15. We now have a card reader for those who wish to pay by this method, otherwise cheques made payable to Leigh Estuary u3a or, preferably, cash. If you are able to download a renewal form from our website and fill it in before you come, that would be most helpful, as would the correct change if paying by cash. We are unable to do renewals online or take payments by bank transfer.

If you are unable to come to any of the sessions, you can send a completed downloaded form, together with your cheque and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Julie Carter, 4 Avenue Road, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 1AX

For those members who have joined since the New Year, you have already paid for 2025/2026. We now have your new membership cards and, if you have not received yours before the next Speakers Meeting on 1st April and you will be there, please see us at the back of the hall and we will have your card ready for you to collect.

Gift Aid Section of the 2025/2026 Renewal Form

As you will know, our membership renewal form includes a section asking you to sign up for Gift Aid. It is a way for us, as a registered charity, to claim an extra 25p from the taxman for every £1 you pay to us for your membership. So we can increase our funds without it costing you anything and in turn help keep overall membership costs down.

For you to make that declaration, means that you must be liable for more Income Tax and Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid on all your donations to any charity and community amateur sports clubs, etc., in the year and if you are charged with no tax or less tax than the membership fee paid to our u3a, then you cannot make a gift aid declaration.

We can also backdate claims up to four years to include your earlier membership years if you overlooked signing in any of those years; so, this year the form includes some extra boxes you can tick, allowing us to not only claim gift aid for the current year but also those earlier years and all future years you remain a member until revoked.

Since this is a benefit to our u3a, and if you are able, we do encourage you to sign the gift aid section of the membership form when renewing. We also encourage you to tick all boxes if you can do so and are willing to allow us to claim the extra 25p/pound paid. If 260 members sign up to gift aid that is almost £1,000 additional income to our u3a.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the committee members or our Treasurer for more information.

New Website

We are currently in the process of changing our website. Several years ago we moved away from the u3a Trust SiteBuilder website system to adopt our own using WordPress; that move was made because at the time it was felt SiteBuilder was outdated and very 'clunky' and awkward to use.

The u3a Trust have now managed to catch up and have themselves adopted WordPress for their new SiteWorks (the system that has replaced the old SiteBuilder). As a result of that change, your committee have agreed to return to the fold and our new website will soon be hosted by the u3a Trust. This has several benefits including better support and cheaper to run.

More details will be given once up and running (expected to be May 2025) but **Group Leaders** are likely to receive several emails to check all is working as testing takes place and we would ask that you **please do not ignore** but action as requested.

Group News

The following Groups all have vacancies:

Canasta on Wednesday 1.30 – 4.30pm
Craft Group
French Intermediate and Fluent
Just Sew
Pétanque on Wednesday 10am
Tap Dancing has 4 spaces
Table tennis on Wednesdays and Fridays



Details for the above groups and their co-ordinators can be found on the Leigh Estuary u3a website under the Groups section or by contacting the Groups Co-Ordinator, Jim Jennett at jimjennett@btinternet.com.

Days Out by Coach Group Leader Valerie Lewis reports that they have had a fabulous response to the first trip with 2 more in the pipeline, as well as a very exciting Xmas one. Barry has done a great job sourcing and booking these as he has a good relationship with Cooks Coaches. Mandy is banking cheques and doing the trip write ups. I am left with the booking admin and Beacon! That's how it has worked out and fingers crossed will continue to be successful. They make a good team.

Group Co-ordinators If you have any Group spaces or Group news that you would like to share with the LEu3a members, please contact Trish at: leu3anewsflash@gmail.com

Scam Watch

Bernard Hetherington, one of our LEu3a members has the following tales to tell:

* Some years ago, I received an email from a friend on the following lines: "We are in Yugoslavia on holiday and our documents have been stolen. Could you help us out by sending money to us at ...?". I recognised it as a scam and contacted joint acquaintances to confirm that they were not away.

* Recently, my email was hacked. I couldn't receive emails for 4 days so no-one could contact me, and my list of addressees had been wiped so I couldn't contact anyone by email either. Some of my addressees received an email, purporting to be from me, with a sad tale on the following lines: "My friend is terminally ill with cancer and I am trying to send her an Amazon voucher today, for her birthday, but my Amazon account has been frozen. Could you help me by sending one to ...?" One of my family contacts in Germany tried to comply but luckily there was a hitch and she phoned me to tell me she was having trouble, so I was able to kill it, and no money was sent.

* Last week, my friend (he's over 80) received an email, purporting to be from his son (so they had got the son's name) saying that he had had to change his phone number. The emailer claimed to be most embarrassed to have to ask this but, because he had changed his phone number, he was having trouble contacting his bank. Would my friend pay these two invoices that were due today and, of course, he would reimburse my friend. My friend tried to pay them but, luckily for him, he made a mistype and, when he contacted his bank, the bank advised that it was a scam.

Please pass the message: 'If you receive ANY message asking for money, treat it as a SCAM. Do not respond until you have checked and double checked and triple checked. Those of us of higher numbers on the age scale used to be able to trust people. Sadly modern life has moved on.

Thank you Bernard – wise words indeed. Let's be careful out there!!

Origins & History of April Fools' Day

Have you been caught out on 1st April? Do you still play a prank on your family members or friends that day? Most importantly have you ever wondered how the custom came about? There is no definitive answer to its origins, but it is suggested by some historians that April Fools' Day dates back to 1582, when France switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. In the Julian Calendar the new year began with the spring equinox around 1st April. People who were slow to get the news or failed to recognize that the start of the new year had moved to 1st January and continued to celebrate it during the last week of March through to 1st April became the butt of jokes and hoaxes and were called "April fools." These pranks included having paper fish placed on their backs and being referred to as "poisson d'avril" (April fish), said to symbolize a young, easily caught fish and a gullible person. There's also speculation that April Fools' Day was tied to the vernal equinox, or first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, when Mother Nature fooled people with changing, unpredictable weather.

In British folklore, April Fool's Day is associated with an event from the 13th Century in Gotham in Nottinghamshire. According to legend, King John decided to 'acquire' some of the land of Gotham for a hunting lodge. Naturally this was not popular with the townsfolk and so they decided on a cunning plan to dissuade the king by 'playing the fool'. When the king's men arrived in the town, they found the townspeople doing all sorts of crazy things such as trying to drown fish. This was enough for the king's men to counsel the king to choose somewhere else for his lodge, as Gotham was obviously full of madmen. Ever since then, according to legend, April Fool's Day has commemorated their trickery. April Fools' Day spread throughout Britain during the 18th century. In Scotland, the tradition became a two-day event, starting with "hunting the gowk," in which people were sent on phony errands (gowk is a word for cuckoo bird, a symbol for fool) and followed by Tailie Day, which involved pranks played on people's behinds, such as pinning fake tails or "kick me" signs on them.

April Fools' Day Pranks - In modern times, people have gone to great lengths to create elaborate April Fools' Day hoaxes. Newspapers, radio and TV stations and websites have participated in the 1st April tradition of reporting outrageous fictional claims that have fooled audiences. In the days leading up to April 1, 1857, London residents received an official-looking invitation printed on Tower of London stationery and bearing a crimson wax seal. The leaflet offered admission to "view the annual ceremony of washing the lions" on 1st April. Such an event could have indeed taken place two decades earlier but the Tower's famous menagerie, which for 600 years featured bears, leopards, lions and other dangerous beasts, had closed in 1835. Nevertheless, a certain number of would-be spectators showed up for the display, only to learn they'd fallen prey to an April Fools' hoax.



Leave it to the Brits to concoct one of history's most memorable April Fools' Day pranks. On 1st April, 1957, the BBC aired a segment in which a Swiss farming family harvested long strands of pasta from their spaghetti trees. In England at that time, spaghetti was still an exotic delicacy with mysterious origins, so many viewers bought the report hook, line and sinker. Some even called in to ask how to grow spaghetti trees of their own. The BBC reportedly suggested, "Place a sprig of spaghetti in a tin of tomato sauce and hope for the best."

For the average trickster, there is always the classic April Fools' Day prank of covering the shampoo bottle lid with plastic wrap under the screw top, swapping the contents of sugar and salt containers or bubble wrap under the rug.

If you would like to write a few words on a topic close to your heart, have an anecdote from a group meeting or something you think readers would be interested in, please do get in touch. Would you consider becoming a regular contributor to a section? Email: leu3anewsflash@gmail.com

Quiz

Thanks once again to our Quiz setter, Shirley Eastwood, who sends in a quiz for us every month. Shirley does an excellent job and I would like to thank her on your behalf.

1. Which is the oldest monarchy in the world?
2. What are the Meldrew's names in One Foot in the Grave?
3. Who sang the theme tune to OFITG?
4. What are the 2 National parks in Devon?
5. Which breed of dog won Crufts this year?
6. When is St. David's Day?
7. What are the 2 bones in our forearms?
8. What does NSPCC stand for?
9. What are the first 4 books of the New Testament?
10. Phrenology is the study of what?
11. Who painted The Laughing Cavalier?
12. Who were the 3 main actors in The Sting?
13. How many farthings were in an old pound?
14. Which is the smallest city by population in the UK?
15. What is another name for a Chinese gooseberry?
16. Which instrument did Stephane Grappelli play?
17. Which Bee Gee married Lulu?
18. Which river touches the most countries?
19. Which is the only horse to win the Grand National 3 times?
20. What is the capital city of Greenland?

April Fools' Day Pause for Thought

Better a witty fool than a foolish wit - William Shakespeare

The greatest lesson in life is to know that even fools are right sometimes - Sir Winston Churchill

A fool flatters himself, a wise man flatters the fool- Edward G. Bulwer-Lytton

It is human nature to think wisely and act foolishly - Anatole France

I have great faith in fools: self-confidence, my friends call it - Edgar Allan Poe

If every fool wore a crown, we should all be kings - Welsh Proverb

Mix a little foolishness with your prudence: It's good to be silly at the right moment - Horace

We're fools whether we dance or not, so we might as well dance.- Japanese Proverb

For fools rush in where angels fear to tread - Alexander Pope

I sometimes wonder if the manufacturers of foolproof items keep a fool or two on their payroll to test things - Alan Coren

Talk sense to a fool and he calls you foolish - Euripides

You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time - Abraham Lincoln

Our wisdom comes from our experience, and our experience comes from our foolishness - Sacha Guitry

Any fool can make a rule, and any fool will mind it - Henry David Thoreau

Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me - Chinese proverb

A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools - Douglas Adams

Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools talk because they have to say something - Plato

Wise men don't need advice. Fools won't take it - Benjamin Franklin

The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself a fool - William Shakespeare

He who is born a fool is never cured - Proverb



Quiz Answers

1. Japanese (600 BC)
2. Victor and Margaret
3. Eric Idle
4. Dartmoor and Exmoor
5. Whippet
6. 1st March
7. Radius and Ulna
8. National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
9. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John (the Gospels)
10. The study of the conformation of the skull
11. Frans Hals
12. Robert Redford, Paul Newman and Robert Shaw
13. 960
14. St. David's (approx. 1760)
15. Kiwi fruit
16. Violin
17. Maurice Gibb
18. The Danube
19. Red Rum
20. Nuuk

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