

Welcome to the February 2026 Edition of our Newsflash

Speakers Meeting

Our Monthly Speakers Meeting is on 3rd February at the Leigh Community Centre
Doors open at 2.00pm for a 2.30pm start

Sight Lost – a talk by Liz Payne

Liz will be talking about her work with ‘*Southend in Sight*’, the local sight loss charity who assist adults, children and families with advice, equipment and social activities.



Group News

The following Groups all have vacancies:

- * Art for pleasure
- * Board Games
- * Bridge (Intermediate)
- * Church Visiting
- * Craft
- * Cryptic Crosswords
- * French Conversation
- * Guitar
- * Just Sew
- * Maths for Fun
- * Photography
- * Poetry
- * Quiz
- * Ukulele
- * Table Tennis Monday / Wednesday / Friday



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.

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

Survey

We have received the following email via the Essex Network u3a web page about a survey that Essex County Council would like our members to complete.

“The council is keen to understand why people are using Concessionary bus passes less than before. Concessionary bus passes let people aged 66+ and people with certain disabilities to use the bus for free between 9am and midnight (or all weekend). Improving Concessionary bus pass use is important because: Using the bus helps older people and those with disabilities stay connected to friends and family, to access health and care facilities, as well as high streets and retail centres

The funding bus providers receive from Concessionary bus passes is vital in helping services retain commercial viability. Fewer trips by concessionary pass holders can threaten the sustainability of routes across the network, affecting communities throughout Essex.

The survey asks about people's travel habits and views on using the bus, so the Council can help understand how to better improve services for residents across the company. The survey closes at the end of February

Here is a link to the survey: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EssexBusSurvey/

Scam Watch

Watch out for emails claiming to be from online payment system PayPal saying you have bought a high value item such as an iPhone. The messages ask you to call a specific number if you did not make the purchase. But, once dialled, it will put you through to a scammer who will try to gather your personal information. Never give out any personal information or bank details to anyone you are not 100% sure about. If you think your account has been compromised, change your password and security questions.

Scammers peddling dodgy spray foam loft insulation - As households continue to face high energy bills, scammers are targeting vulnerable people with dodgy, non-existent insulation and costly offers, according to Which? magazine. For example, one elderly victim paid more than £3,000 for dodgy spray foam insulation, which he later had to pay over £2,000 to remove before he could sell his house. Spray foam insulation has several disadvantages, including high cost and safety concerns, and it could even reduce your property's value.

Criminals are taking advantage of online banking to defraud the public. They pretend to be from somewhere official, for example, your bank, or the tax office. They contact you via email, phone or social media, and then warn you of fake suspicious or criminal activity on your bank account. They state that they've set up a safe account for you to transfer your funds into. However, this is actually their account.

- A genuine official from the Police, your bank, HMRC or any other trusted authority will NEVER call you to ask you to verify your personal banking details, PIN or password, or threaten you with arrest.
- Never transfer money into another account unless you are 100% certain of the owner of the account.
- Your bank will never set up a “safe” account for you.
- If you are a victim, contact your bank as soon as possible, as they may be able to help stop the transfer.

Let's be careful out there!!

Member's Contribution

Two Tree Island by John Weaver (with extra information from Essex Wildlife Trust)

Two Tree Island is a small island lying north-east of Canvey Island and south-west of Leigh-on-Sea. It covers 257 hectares (640 acres) and is connected to the mainland at Leigh by a single span bridge. It was reclaimed from the Thames Estuary in the 18th century when a seawall was built around the salt-marsh. It was originally intended to be used for farming but is now a nature reserve, run by Essex Wildlife Trust, and the eastern half is part of the Leigh National Nature Reserve. It is a firm favourite for walkers and birdwatchers. At the western end were two bird hides; overlooking a purpose-built scrape or lagoon where waders feed to the west and Benfleet Creek/Canvey Island Leigh Beck to the southwest. Both hides were destroyed by vandals in 2019. However, the lagoon and creek can still be viewed from where the hides stood and at other locations on the island's west side. There are two more bird hides on the east side, one over the scrape and one over the former landfill reservoir. On the western section is the Lagoon Hide, where curlew, dunlin, avocet, redshank and gulls nest here. Look to the skies and you'll see kestrels, crows, and black headed seagulls. A nest watch has been organised for some years following a serious case of avocet egg stealing.



They tried to make the island a tourist attraction, with a Giant Wheel, erected in 1924 and which was over 250 feet in diameter. It looked fantastic and slowly spun for the crowds but unfortunately it was not a great financial success, and finally closed in 1926.

A new wildlife-friendly lookout, Monty's Lookout, has been installed at Essex Wildlife Trust's Two Tree Island nature reserve in Leigh-on-Sea. The lookout is not only a place to enjoy the spectacles of nature, but also provides a habitat for some of the important species that call this reserve home, including insects, birds and even bats. Overlooking the serene western lagoon at Two Tree Island, Monty's Lookout is in pride of place to witness the fantastic bird life that the island supports throughout the year. The new lookout is inviting, fully accessible and is made from re-purposed shipping containers complete with a shingle habitat roof and a wall made from log and stone filled gabions that allow more light into the lookout and provide a habitat for invertebrates. Inside the lookout reclaimed hardwood shelves line the walls as well as a display of engaging interpretation panels to educate visitors about the wildlife they can expect to see and the habitat around the lookout.



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.

In Memoriam

In memory of these wonderful people who died in 2025 but have entertained us for many years Who are these famous people?

1. Bonzo
2. The Prince of Darkness
3. Champion of chimpanzees
4. Popeye in "The French Connection"
5. Dr. Kildare
6. Sybil!
7. Yorkshire's finest umpire
8. Cheers Norm!
9. Sundance Kid
10. She wrote "Rivals"
11. He painted "The Singing Butler"
12. Jackal author
13. Mrs. Bucket
14. Hot lips
15. Who's sorry now?
16. Smaller Cleopatra's street?
17. His Dad got on his bike
18. Mildred's hapless husband
19. She sang "Jack in the box"
20. Scottish man of many faces

February's Pause for Thought

There are six myths about old age: 1) that it's a disease, a disaster. 2) That we are mindless. 3) That we are sexless. 4) That we are useless. 5) That we are powerless. 6) That we are all alike - Maggie Kuhn

Age isn't a number, it's an attitude – Mark Twain

Aging seems to be the only available way to live a long life - Kitty O'Neill Collins

It's paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone - Andy Rooney

You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing – George Bernard Shaw

If I had known I was going to live this long, I'd have taken better care of myself - Anonymous

Birthdays are good for you. Statistics show that the people who have the most live the longest - Larry Lorenzoni

You are only young once, but you can stay immature indefinitely - Ogden Nash

Old age is an excellent time for outrage. My goal is to say or do at least one outrageous thing every week - Maggie Kuhn

You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old - George Burns

I feel about aging the way William Saroyan said he felt about death: 'Everybody has to do it,' but I always believed an exception would be made in my case - Martha Beck

Old age is like everything else. To make a success of it, you've got to start young - Theodore Roosevelt

Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter - Mark Twain

Do not grow old, no matter how long you live. Never cease to stand like curious children before the great mystery into which we were born - Albert Einstein

As soon as you feel too old to do a thing, do it - Margaret Deland

Aging is not 'lost youth' but a new stage of opportunity and strength - Betty Friedan

The longer I live, the more beautiful life becomes - Frank Lloyd Wright

Old age is always fifteen years older than I am - Oliver Wendell Holmes

I suppose real old age begins when one looks backward rather than forward - Mary Sarton

Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old - Franz Kafka

Getting old is like climbing a mountain; you get a little out of breath, but the view is much better! - Ingrid Bergman

We don't grow older, we grow riper - Pablo Picasso

Growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional - Walt Disney

Old age isn't so bad if you consider the alternative - Maurice Chevalier

Wrinkles should merely indicate where the smiles have been Mark Twain

Life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer you get to the end, the faster it goes – Anonymous

Quiz Answers

1. Billy Bonds
2. Ozzie Osbourne
3. Jane Goodall
4. Gene Hackman
5. Richard Chamberlain
6. Prunella Scales
7. Dickie Bird
8. George Wendt
9. Robert Redford
10. Jilly Cooper
11. Jack Vettriano
12. Frederick Forsyth
13. Patricia Routledge
14. Loretta Swit
15. Connie Francis
16. Cleo Lane
17. Norman Tebbit
18. Bryan Murphy
19. Clodagh Rogers
20. Stanley Baxter

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