

DECEMBER 2023/JANUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

We are now coming to the end of the year and the nights are swiftly drawing in (but only for a few more weeks) and before we know it we will be welcoming in 2024!

In this final newsletter of 2023 there are some great examples how our u3a gets involved in the local community : the **Art and Craft Experiments** group being highly creative for a local half-term initiative in Lostwithiel, the **Ukulele Workshop** providing entertainment in St Blazey and Lanivet and Brian Marriott from the **Strummers Ukulele Sing Along** group teaching ukulele to pupils at the Beacon Academy in Bodmin.

Season's Greetings to you all!

OPEN MEETING MONDAY NOVEMBER 6TH

At our Open Meeting on Monday 6th November, Kirsty Mitchell gave us a fun and highly interactive introduction to British Sign Language (BSL) , after a little bit of practice most of us had managed to fingerspell our names, as well as learn a few basic phrases. By the end of the session we all felt we had increased our deaf awareness substantially.

Kirsty, in her role as Manager of Lostwithiel Community Centre, also gave us an update on what's been going on at the Centre - which, as she said, are "lots of things" - and the challenges involved in running such a popular and vibrant hub which is celebrating its 40th Anniversary. You may have seen some of the Centre's feedback forms and boxes in shops in Lostwithiel : you can find out more from their [website](#) which also includes the feedback form. A few of our groups use the Centre's rooms for meetings so we are grateful for the facilities provided right here on our doorstep.

Also at the meeting, new member Sharon Wood talked about two possible new groups : a Walking Group with dogs and a Reading Group.

Pat Beasley

We were very saddened to hear that Pat Beasley passed away unexpectedly in early November. Pat, who some of you will have known most recently as the Group Leader for the Garden Visits group, was also a volunteer for the Lostwithiel Museum, leading guided walks around the town, as well as being a local WI member. She will be much missed by her many u3a friends and our thoughts are with her daughter Tanya and her family.

Membership Survey 2023

Many thanks to everyone who completed the recent membership survey - we had a good response and the Committee is currently looking at the results which will help to guide us in the future. Thank you also to those who have kindly offered to help at events such as our Open Meetings. More information about the survey will follow in the New Year.

Online u3a Learning Events

You may already know about this, but for those of you who use the internet there is a wealth of online learning material on the national u3a website - you can easily sign up to receive regular updates which are also trailed on our own website. Here is a flavour of some of the many available in December and January : **The Art of William Morris, Climate Change and the Oceans, When Art and Literature meet at Christmastide** and **How to better insulate your home**. The wide range of online talks, workshops and courses are free with your u3a membership!

To find out more visit the national u3a website [here](#)

The next **Open Meeting** is at 2pm on **Monday 15th January 2024** In the Church Rooms where our guest speaker is **Stephen Lay**, a local retired mining consultant, who will be talking to us about **Mining on the Dark Side**, the world beyond the romantic Poldark image of mining. Plus, in our regular Community Slot, Amanda Tamblin, Practice Manager at the Lostwithiel Medical Centre, will be giving us the latest news from our local surgery.

N.B. This meeting is slightly later in the month than it would be usually because of Bank Holidays and prior room bookings

UPDATES FROM OUR GROUPS

Acoustic Guitar for Beginners

The group is aimed at people who want to start learning to play the guitar. It meets in the Scout Hut in Lostwithiel on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10.00am until 12.00pm.

Art & Craft Experiments

Group members were kept very busy making felt apples and flowers and crocheting bees, birds and apples for a local half-term project which culminated in a ceremony in St Bartholomew's Church on October 27th - organisers were highly delighted with the results! The Art & Craft Experiments group meets regularly on the last Friday of each month – 10.30am to 12pm, either out and about or at a local venue.

Art Appreciation

The group had a great trip with the Lerryn Area Minibus to Dartmouth on 26th October visiting various galleries in this picturesque town. On December 1 the group will take the train to the ever-popular Krowji at Redruth.

Beverage 'n Banter

If you enjoy a cup of Coffee/Tea (refill included) & a biscuit in an informal atmosphere & would like to meet up with other u3a Members - this could be the Group for you! Cost just £3 per head. Takes place on the first Monday in the months that alternate with our usual Open Meetings; the next meeting is at 11am on **Monday 4th December** in the Fowey Valley Hotel Lostwithiel.

Group contact : David Platt 07484124490

Bird Watching

The proposed calendar for our next season of bird field trips (September 2023 - August 2024) is now on the website. The next two trips planned are the Camel Trail in December and Bude and Mear Lake in January. Though primarily we are a bird watching group we do in reality take an interest in all wildlife we come across, from mammals, insects and butterflies to plants and fungi. You do not need to be an expert, all are welcome and if you enjoy photography do bring your camera. Group contacts: Marion May 07903 710303 and Jasmina Goodair 07974 700883

Bridge

The group has expanded again over the last couple of months and our novice players have been doing their homework so are filtering into the main group. We are, of course, still happy to offer assistance whenever needed. As a result we can no longer fit into my home - and we've also worn out our card tables! - so are trialling a venue in town. Group contact: Jenny MacDonald 01208 873933

Creative Writing

Topics we've written about since the beginning of the year are - *Out of the Blue, The Clock, House of Cards, The Twenty Pound Note, The Postman's Knock, Still Waters* and, more

recently, *Neighbours*. This very informal writing group meets on the second Tuesday of each month in the Royal Oak; members write on an agreed topic and then share what they have written. Although this group is now full, Creative Writing 2 (*see below*) is still taking new members.

Creative Writing 2

The group has recently welcomed new members and our latest themes have included "Circus" and "Sea". This very informal group meets on the last Wednesday of the month at the Royal Oak at 2pm. Group contact : David Bridges 07891724221.

Day Trippers

The Day Trippers, who aim to use just public transport for their trips, went to Exeter for the Christmas market at the end of November and will be having a break in December before visiting Falmouth at the end of January. The 2024 programme for the next few months is now on the website and includes proposed trips to St Ives, Newquay and Padstow and Looe and Polperro.

Electric Bikers

The group has pedalled an impressive 74 miles during November : Victoria to Mawgan Porth (28 miles), Lanhydrock to Ruthern Valley (19 miles) and Temple to Slaughtersbridge (27 miles) The group is full but if you have an e-bike and are interested in joining please ring group contact Brian on 07530507091

Family History

Our "resident expert genealogist", Bren kindly hosted this meeting on October 19th. Not surprisingly, the somewhat stormy weather did impact attendance somewhat; however those who were able to attend did enjoy some private research time with Bren's expert guidance. At our meeting on 15th November Dave Annal, a very experienced presenter, talked to us about "*Walls come tumbling down*" and at a very special event in December at The Red Store in Lerryn, Emma Simms, an expert on DNA and its uses in family history research, is leading a 4 hour workshop.

French

Meetings are held on alternate Tuesdays 2-3.30pm in the Lostwithiel Community Centre Reading Room (where the mobile Post Office is held). The last meeting of 2023 will be on 5th December and we will restart fortnightly from 9th January 2024. New members very welcome! The group is very informal and of mixed ability, but not really suitable for absolute beginners. Most of us have some school French. We share our knowledge of the language and experience of French life and culture with each other. There is always a lot of laughter and "déviation" along the way! Group contact: Veronica Ashworth 01208 873397

Garden Visits

The group will be taking a break over the winter months and will hold a planning meeting early in the Spring to plan their programme of visits for 2024.

Lunch Group

Twenty of us enjoyed a superb lunch at Stepping Stones restaurant in Wadebridge towards the end of October . Thank you to Sheila for organising and the staff for making us so welcome. The Lunch Group is a friendly group of singles and couples who meet for lunch on the 4th Wednesday of each month at as many different locations as we can find within 30-40 mins of Lostwithiel! Between us we have discovered some really good places to eat. The lunches

usually start at 12.30 for 1pm. Members take it in turns to organise and host the lunches, so if no one volunteers there's no lunch!! If you are interested in joining please contact us to have your name put on the waiting list. Group contacts: Sheila MacKinder 01208871357/Val Andrews 0754 815 9226

Photography

The *Photographer's Eye* - our very first members' Zine - is back from the printers! It is such a great showcase of the varied work which our members produce. At Photo Extra in November the group looked at the importance of light in our photography. The Photography Group's page on the Lostwithiel Area u3a website has links to some wonderful images on their Flickr page. Group contacts : Stephanie Thomas 01208 841484 and Lindsay Southgate 01208 873371

Poetry

Currently, our meetings are held monthly every 1st Friday of each month at 10.30am in the Reading Room at the Lostwithiel Community Centre. In October the subject was "Meetings and Partings". Group contact: Josephine Child 01208 871284

Pop and Rock Music Appreciation

In November the theme was "Colours" and tracks chosen included *Pink Champagne* (Georgie Fame and the Blue Flames), *Blue Lights* (Jorja Smith), *Velvet Green* (Jethro Tull), *White Rabbit* (Jefferson Airplane), *Black and Gold* (Sam Sparro) and *Colours* (Donovan); in October we had a Free Choice session and we heard tracks ranging from Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and Fats Domino to T Rex and Paul Simon with a bit of Ane Brun, Captain Beefheart, Tom Waits and Hedluv + Passman in between! The theme for the December meeting is - unsurprisingly - *Festive Tunes*.

Quizzes

There will be no in-house quizzes for the time being but the group will try again soon!

Scrabble

The group would be delighted to hear from any new members. They are a friendly little group and not over serious, playing purely for enjoyment. The group meets fortnightly on Thursdays at 2.00 pm at the Royal Oak. All equipment is supplied. For more details please contact Jon Hancock 01208 269456

Strollers

We meet every two weeks on Monday mornings. Walks are as flat as Cornwall permits and are usually less than 2 miles. We try to include refreshments at the end but this is dependant on venue opening times. We are not all drivers so rely on the goodwill of strollers with cars to access the various venues. In early November we luckily had sunshine for our walk along part of the Clay Trail from Wheal Martyn. On December 4th the group plans to stroll from Respryn to Bodmin Road Railway station and on December 18th will take on the Wadebridge Riverside circular walk crossing the 'Bridge on Wool' across the River Camel to Egloshayle and returning through the riverside park to the 'Challenge' suspension bridge and on to the John Betjeman Centre for refreshments. An opportunity for last minute Christmas shopping in Wadebridge! Group Contacts : Veronica Ashworth 01208 873397 and John Wood 01208 831657

Strummers Ukulele Sing Along Group

After being approached by Beacon Academy in Bodmin in April, group contact Brian Marriott offered his services for an after-school club to teach ukulele. Brian takes up the story : "*We had a meeting at which I agreed to do four Monday afternoons in June teaching two groups of 25*

children age 9 for 45 minutes. I then compiled a song book which the school printed for the children's use. This went down so well that I was once again asked if I would like to do another four weeks (in November) I compiled another song book for these sessions to incorporate some Christmas Songs". Brian adds, "It has been a real pleasure to teach and encourage the children to sing and play ukulele."

Fun sing along Ukulele group meet every Monday 2 to 4pm at Lanhydrock Memorial Hall. New Members and Beginners are welcome. (we can loan you a ukulele and get you started), Come along for a great Monday afternoon sing along, Contact: Brian on 07530507091

Theatre

We are a very lively, active and friendly Group meeting every 3rd Thursday morning of the month when members choose and help organize trips. We go to live and live-streamed theatre, music and dance in and around Cornwall and beyond.

We use public transport where possible. When cars are required transport depends on availability of drivers. Group contact: Carol Williams 01208 871077

u3Art

Members use a variety of drawing and painting media and at present has limited space for one or two new members of any ability. Currently the group is meeting in the Oasis Room at Lostwithiel Community Centre, usually on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month, from 2pm to 4pm. Group Contact: Trish Penrose 07780 713276

Ukulele Workshop

In October we had two most enjoyable gigs. Our first visit was to the **Over 60s St Blazey Group** and was very well received with a lot of nice comments. They all joined in singing along which is always good. Some of the audience came from Trewoon Club who now wish us to visit them in the New Year. We also played at **The Lanivet Music Memory Group** (for those with Dementia) where we always get a great feeling seeing the lively reception we receive. It is a pleasure to play for Maureen and her many helpers who put so much time and effort into their group.

Several of our members play in other groups but hope to be available next March to once again play at the Church Rooms for Cancer Research UK, this time with the Champagne Ladies. Several of our members also belong to St Austell u3a Ukulele Group. We work with them sharing ideas and music. We continue to meet on a Friday afternoon at the Scout Hut. Group contacts : Alan Pearce 01208 872592/Cezar Leon 07900 694520

Walking

On the 14th November a group of twenty walkers took on the three mile "Town and Country" circular walk around **St Germans**. The weather kept dry - despite the various forecasts - and the walk ended at the Stable Yard café which was being used as the location for the café in the BBC tv series *Beyond Paradise*. As the Christmas episode was being filmed, group members were treated to some early festive decorations! For a full report of that walk, including some lovely photos - plus a report on the Deerpark Forest to Herodsfoot walk on 28th November - please [click here](#) to visit the Walking Group's page on our website.

Wine Appreciation

At the October meeting at Christine's house the group sampled some **Pinot Gris** from South Australia (a definite "Thumbs Up"!) a **White Sangiovese** from the Emilia-Romagna District of Italy (the label design was considered to be the best feature) and an enjoyable Austrian

Zweigelt (very smooth and particularly low in tannins). The group's schedule for 2024 will be announced shortly on the website. Group contact: Michael Furminger 07715546026

You can find out more about our groups on our website