

# LOSTWITHIEL u3a APRIL/MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the April/May edition of the Lostwithiel Area u3a Newsletter. Now the clocks have changed and we have spring forward into British Summer Time here's hoping for some sunnier and warmer days ahead! In this issue we have news of a vacancy on the committee and a report on our last Open Meeting plus updates from our groups including a new group contact/leader for the Garden Visits group, the Theatre Group in the audience for *Hell's Bells* at the Lostwithiel Community Centre and u3Art holding a bric-a-brac sale for the LCC.

## Open Meeting Monday March 4th 2024

At our Open Meeting on 4th March in the Church Rooms, our guest speaker was **Sue Newton**, County Organiser for the **National Garden Scheme** who gave a very informative and well received talk about the National Open Garden Scheme. Sue's presentation - **Beyond the Garden Gate** - told us about the history of the scheme and with a very impressive and colourful slideshow, took us on a tour of some of the gardens in Cornwall open this year as part of the scheme, including many smaller private gardens open by arrangement together with Sue's own delightful garden in St Blazey.

It all began in 1859 in Liverpool, with William Rathbone, a wealthy philanthropist, who funded nursing skills for the community of Liverpool which was experiencing enormous poverty at the time. With advice from a certain Florence Nightingale about how to expand nursing services for the community, a district nursing service was born. Funding sources were sought to continue the expansion of community nursing services and 1927 saw the introduction of a countrywide scheme to open large private gardens for the public to enjoy, with an admission fee on entry to raise much needed cash. Our own Lanhydrock House was one of the four Cornish gardens involved and this began the National Garden Scheme. £19 million has been raised since those early days, with 1984 seeing the first donation to Macmillan nurses. For 2024 there is a stunning selection of over 60 gardens for visitors to enjoy in Cornwall, including some new gardens, and the NGS is always looking for more garden owners kindly agreeing to open their gardens as part of the scheme. With 3,500 gardens, 500 volunteers, and generations of bakers and tea makers, as Sue summarised at the end of her talk - essentially it's about raising money and cake! For more information on the NGS please visit their website [here](#)

## Annual General Meeting Monday May 20th

Don't forget that following our next Open Meeting on May 20th we have our Annual General Meeting in the Church Rooms in Lostwithiel. The whole committee will need to stand down at the AGM and we will soon be starting a formal process asking members to nominate people to sit on the committee. Please look out for the AGM calling papers in your inbox over the coming weeks.

## Role of Groups' Coordinator - vacancy on the committee.

After serving as our Groups' Coordinator since May 2021, Annie Singer will need to stand down at the 2024 AGM in May as per our u3a constitution which states that *"No-one may hold any specific officer position in excess of 3 years without an interval of at least 1 year between the periods of*

service”.. This means we will need someone to take over from Annie, who over the last three years has provided tremendous support for Group Contacts and Leaders, both existing and new, helping them with the smooth running of their groups.

As Annie says “*It is a very interesting role which gives you the opportunity to be in regular contact with the Group Leaders and Contacts, keep up-to-date with the exciting range of activities they offer, support the introduction of new groups as well as offer advice and support to existing group leaders*”. If you would like to find out more about what the role entails, do not hesitate to contact Annie on 01208 871272 or at [annie.singer@talk21.com](mailto:annie.singer@talk21.com). Our next Groups' Coordinator will of course receive much support from Annie during the transition period.

## **Afternoon Tea February 23rd**

Nearly fifty members were treated to an afternoon of cream teas and a musical extravaganza at the Fowey Valley Hotel at the end of February. It was a wonderful way to round off our Tenth Anniversary, with everyone enjoying some very tasty treats and also some great music from our very own Ukulele Workshop, under the direction of Alan Pearce. Many thanks to everyone at Fowey Valley Hotel for helping to make it such a memorable occasion - as well as the Committee members who organised it.

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Our next Open Meeting is on **Monday 20th May** at 2pm in the Church Rooms, Lostwithiel where our guest speaker is **Mike Temple** from the charity **Mercy Ships**

*This is the first in our new season of Open Meetings - take a look at the display board at the Open Meetings - as well as our website - to see the range of exciting, varied and educational programme of talks we have arranged for the forthcoming year!*

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## **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**

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 recently held a lunch and planning meeting for 2024 at the Royal Oak and kicked off their programme with a visit to St Ives on March 22nd, taking in the Tate Gallery where they viewed Finnish artist Outi Pieski’s exploration of identity, culture and environment particularly of the Sami people from northern Scandinavia.

## **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; because of Easter the next meeting is at 11am on **Monday 8th April** in the Fowey Valley Hotel Lostwithiel. The group has just celebrated its first anniversary!

## **Bird Watching**

The group will be off to Respryn in April and Looe Island in early May. . 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.

## **Bridge**

After trialling venues in town we are now established happily in the Scout Hut, still on Wednesdays. However, we now skip the refreshment break and leave earlier to enable some to be home in daylight and others to get a meal before going off to an evening activity. Those who miss their cuppa bring a flask!

As we now have this lovely space and ample tables we are happy to invite more players to join our group. If you would like to try an afternoon's bridge with our group please contact Jenny MacDonald on 01208 873933

## **Creative Writing**

Another year and the group is still going strong. It will soon be twelve years since the group started and the number of stories written over the years must run into hundreds. The collective creative energy generated could, possibly, power the whole of Lostwithiel [maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration!]. For our February topic we decided on *Every Thursday morning*. Although this group is now full, Creative Writing 2 (*see below*) is still taking new members.

## **Creative Writing 2**

In arranging our meetings we try to avoid clashing with other group meeting dates. We also are trying to change our meeting venue to avoid distracting noise and perhaps interfering with pub diners! Our most recent story theme was *Workshop*

This very informal group meets on the last Wednesday of the month, currently at the Royal Oak at 2pm. Group contact : David Bridges 07891724221.

## **Day Trippers**

The Day Trippers aim to use just public transport for their trips. The 2024 programme for the next few months is now on the website and includes proposed trips to Newquay and Padstow (with the open top bus) in April, Looe and Polperro in May and Fowey to Mevagissey Ferry trip in June. The next planning meeting is on 11th April 2024 10.30am at The Royal Oak

## **Electric Bikers**

The Electric Bikers have been hampered by the rainy weather but did manage to get a few rides in. Recent Rides Dunmere to St Kew, Liskeard to Seaton, Taphouse to Polruan and Carnglaze Caverns to Jamaica Inn.

## **Family History**

In February Rebecca Smith from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, entertained us with her knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm telling us about the sheer size and value of their archives.

Our March meeting was a "private research" session, where we explored hints 'n' tips and also the "matching" benefits of registering for Rootstech which then links you to cousins who've done the same! Di also shared her new "timeline" discoveries via familysearch which indicated relatives travelling not just to America & Australia around 1850-1875 but also New Zealand which she previously had no idea about. Bren is leading our April meeting - again devoted to "private research" and sharing successes and/or seeking further help!

## **French**

Meetings are held on alternate Tuesdays 2-3.30pm in the Lostwithiel Community Centre Reading Room (where the mobile Post Office is held) 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 "*déviaton*" along the way! Group contact: Veronica Ashworth 01208 873397

## **Garden Visits**

We are delighted that Irene Eliot has kindly volunteered to be the next Group Leader/Contact for the Garden Visits Group. A planning meeting has been scheduled for Thursday 11th April at 10.30 at the Royal Oak to agree a schedule for the coming months.

## **Lunch Group**

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. Coming up we plan to visit Flory's in Bodmin for April and Stepping Stones at Wadebridge for May.

### **Photography**

The year is flying by and we have had some great activities already this year. We continued in March with a Field Trip to Boscastle and in April we are joined once again by Adrian Langdon with a talk entitled "How to photograph wildlife". This is the second part of the wonderful talk Adrian gave us last year and will concentrate more on mammals, insects such as butterflies and dragonflies and reptiles ... though a few birds may drop in. The Photography Group's page on the Lostwithiel Area u3a website [here](#) has links to some wonderful images on their Flickr pages. 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. As it was St. David's Day on the 1st March, the topic was Welsh Poets and for our meeting on the 5th April the subject will be *Childhood*. Group contact: Josephine Child 01208 871284

### **Pop and Rock Music Appreciation**

This theme for the February session was Covers - and tracks we "covered" included Jimi Hendrix (Bob Dylan), Pat Boone (Deep Purple), Seal and Matthews Southern Comfort (Joni Mitchell), The Bee Gees (The Beatles) Sinéad O'Connor (Bob Marley) and White Stripes (Dolly Parton)

Our March meeting was a Free Choice session and we had a very diverse range of tracks from NEU!, Kraftwerk, Vinegar Joe, Chris Stapleton and The KLF to Gentle Giant, Nirvana, Georgie Fame, Wishbone Ash, Pink Floyd, Hummingbird, Mick Jagger and Dino Baptiste. Plus we had our first *Tenuous* track which featured Les Paul and Mary Ford with *How High The Moon*. In April our meeting theme is New Wave and Punk - so we expect some shorter tracks!

### **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**

The Strollers are currently resting while looking for a new Group Contact/Leader

## **Strummers Ukulele Sing Along Group**

Strummers are now back up and running after the Lanhydrock Hall closure. 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**

Highlights from the last couple of months include : *Hell's Bells* performed to a full house by the Miracle Theatre at the Lostwithiel Community Centre The group had 18 members attending, an excellent turnout on a very wet Saturday night. The play and the acting was brilliant - all the more so with a cast of just three actors playing all the various characters At the end of the performance the cast came out to take 3 curtain calls to well-earned applause.

*Jam Jazz* in the refurbished Old Library at Bodmin.was another most enjoyable evening of jazz and several of us went to see a streamed performance of *Vanya* at the Merlin cinema in Bodmin, a one man "tour de force" by the actor Andrew Scott who played all the main characters just using voice changes and mannerisms (*last week Scott was announced as best actor by the Critics' Circle theatre awards for this role - Ed.*). We also managed to fit in the *Canterbury Tales* at Mount premises, Warleggan where David Mynne's astonishing rendering of a selection of Chaucer's tales was engaging, clever, uproariously funny - and also true to the original text.

We are a very lively, active and friendly Group meeting every 3rd Thursday morning of the month when members choose and help organise 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. For more information please see our [webpage](#).

## **u3Art**

In January we compiled a new list of "themes" to work to for those who wish to. The first theme was to produce "portraits" of trees in charcoal and pencil, concentrating on tonal values and form rather than colour, allowing us to concentrate on the varying shapes of different types of trees.

We then moved on to "unusual skies/weather" in any medium. Members brought in their own photographs or found pictures in the group's art books. The aim was to depict different weathers by making the sky the focal point of the painting. Our third theme was "sponge painting" using natural sponges instead of brushes and either watercolour paint, acrylic paint or inks. We discovered that using a sponge can produce remarkable textures easily, and is excellent for painting foliage, clouds, rocks, breaking waves, walls, buildings, etc, etc. Please see our webpage [here](#) for more examples of our work

During February U3Art held a bric-a-brac stall, with items donated by the group members and friends - all proceeds went to the Lostwithiel Community Centre and we raised approx £82.

The group is at present at full capacity, given the size of our venue, but if anyone is interested in joining, we can always take contact details in case we have a space in the future. Group Contact: Trish Penrose 07780 713276

### **Ukulele Workshop**

We are a group of enthusiastic ukulele players who are keen to improve our skills and make our music more interesting to listen to by introducing more advanced chords/rhythms/riffs/arrangements/instrumentals etc. We continue to meet on a Friday afternoon at the Scout Hut - and as mentioned earlier we provided the music for the Lostwithiel Area u3a Cream Tea at the Fowey Valley Hotel on Friday 23rd February.

Group contacts : Alan Pearce 01208 872592/Cezar Leon 07900 694520

### **Walking**

On 12th March, following one of the wettest February on record, walk leaders Carol and Sue chose a relatively wet and mud free walk along the Camel Trail (almost 6 miles and 12,000 steps) from Borough Arms, Bodmin to Wadebridge. Undaunted by slightly damp and drizzly weather fourteen stalwart members of our walking group enjoyed an easy unchallenging walk and a nice chat along the way. Some wildlife was seen, including some Canada geese and mallards, a few lesser spotted cyclists and walkers with dogs. Most of the group then dipped into various cafes and shops in Wadebridge, before using their bus passes to catch the No 11 back to Borough Arms to collect cars for return to Lostwithiel. All in all a pleasant way to spend a few hours, with promise of better weather and many more walks to come.

### **Wine Appreciation**

For 2024 we will continue with a regular fixture of 3pm on the last Monday of the month. The location will be either in a members home or the Café at the Community Centre. We plan to go to other locations for visits to tastings and vineyards. For our February meeting at Alison and John's home the theme was Romania. All the wines came from Wadebridge Wine and were around the £10 mark. It was an enjoyable afternoon! Group contact: Michael Furminger 07715546026