



DECEMBER 2025 / JANUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

*- working together and helping ourselves to
bring learning to life!*

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monthly Meetings are held at the Mint Methodist Church, Fore Street, Exeter
Doors open 10.00 a.m. u3a Business starts 10.45 a.m. The Speaker takes the floor at 11.00 a.m.
The meeting is streamed live with a recording on Youtube (link emailed to members by Ann Harper)

Thursday 27 November

Reconstructive surgery in limited resource settings - pain, perils & pleasures.
Prof Vikram S Devaraj MBChB FRCS(Eng) FRCS(Plast) PG Dip Clin Ed SFHEA DL

Thursday 18 December

CAROLSING

Join us and our u3a choir for carols, readings and mince pies



* Featuring the u3a choir and YOU *
Join us for coffee and mince pies from 10.15

A chance to get into the Christmas spirit with our annual carolsing.
Enjoy Christmas songs and readings (both secular and sacred,
funny and serious)

Choose your favourite carol to sing and enjoy the singing of the
u3a choir!

Thursday 22 January

GROUPS FAIR

The annual **Groups' Fair** will take place on Thursday, 22nd January
2026 - taking the place of the Monthly Meeting.

It will be at the Mint, 10.30am-12noon. This is an opportunity to speak
to convenors and find out more about our Groups. Convenors and all
members - look out for more details.



OUR COMMITTEE 2025/26



Terry Ansell
Virginia
Rosenfeld
Ann Harper
Rosie Hydar

Ian Murray
Annabel Nater

MJ Morgan
Anne
Barwell
Mark Hall
Harriet
Smith
Sue Spence
Elaine
Thornton

Message from the Chair, Terry Ansell

Forward planning seems to be our current theme. I have mentioned on a couple of occasions the need for succession planning for Convenors, Committee members and all who help to run Exeter u3a. This work continues and will do so as the inevitable passage of time brings about the need for change. Volunteering to assist the convenors of your groups is a good starting point as this shares the workload and with a little build up of experience, allow convenors to take a holiday in the secure knowledge that the running of their group may continue in the safe hands of their assistant(s).

Your committee has already started planning for future events. You will see in this issue of the Newsletter that the Groups Fair will be held towards the end of January 2026, on the date we usually hold our monthly meeting. This provides an opportunity to meet convenors of groups in which you may have an interest but not yet approached the convenor. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate all convenors at the Fair but hope that a good selection will be available to meet you. If you have an interest in a Group not represented, then Annabel Nater, Groups Coordinator, or any Committee Member will assist to either put you in contact with the relevant convenor or provide further information.

Your Committee has also started to think about the next AGM in May 2026. We will need to hold the usual elections for membership of the Committee, but we've been thinking about how Exeter u3a might need to change to better meet member needs. I raised the question at the October monthly meeting, whether members thought a Question and Answer session would be helpful to learn more about the Committee or Exeter u3a, and put forward proposals or issues that the Committee should consider. A show of hands by those in attendance, indicated that this would be useful.

Our Website: www.exeter.u3asite.uk - Visit it regularly to keep up to date with what's new!

Finally, the treasurer has procured a contactless payment module to trial the usefulness of providing members with the means to pay their annual and PFVs fees by contactless payment card. We know not everyone wishes to dispense with cash, and that is fine you will still be able to pay by cash, but the Committee believes this is a step to modernize our accounting, reduce or remove the need to handle cash and streamline our administration; we hope you agree and embrace this development.

Whilst still a few weeks off, may I on behalf of Exeter u3a and Committee, wish you well for the forthcoming festive season and a happy New Year.

Live, Laugh Learn.

Terry Ancell
Chair



Your u3a needs you

Groups are the life blood of the u3a, and we need to ensure that we have a wide range of groups to retain existing members and attract new members. At a recent Committee meeting we discussed the following actions needed from members to keep our groups alive.

Could you help your convenor by becoming a co-convenor? For example, to give them peace of mind if they are away on holiday or unable to attend a meeting for any reason.

Is the group you want to join full? Could you, with our help (see below), start a new one?

Using Beacon helps you to manage your group....

- You will know that everyone attending your meetings is an Exeter u3a member, and, therefore, covered by our insurance.
- You can easily get in touch with your group members, being sure that you are complying with Data Protection.

Existing convenors, would you like to encourage one of your group to become a co-convenor? Perhaps they could help with Beacon or other admin tasks? We've had reports of non-members joining groups because Beacon wasn't checked so it is really important that we all use Beacon.

**We are here to help... Please contact us by emailing us at:
groupscoordinator@exeteru3a.org.uk**

Thank you

Annabel Nater and Anne Barwell, Groups Coordinators

UNIVERSITY LIAISON

UNIVERSITY LIAISON - FORTHCOMING EVENTS

THE EYE: HOW IT WORKS, ITS MALADIES AND SOME INSIGHTS INTO WHAT'S POSSIBLE

A Talk by Dr Conor Ramsden, Consultant Ophthalmologist and Clinical Lecturer, Royal Devon University Hospitals. Wednesday, 17th December 2025, 11.00am-12.30pm, G18, Medical School Building, St Luke's Campus

Conor Ramsden will present a session describing the anatomy and physiology of the eye, helping to understand what can go wrong. He will cover some of the more common eye conditions (cataract, glaucoma and macular degeneration) and discuss how they are treated. He will also introduce some of the of the research he has done over the years and describe future avenues which he is pursuing here in Exeter.

WHAT THE SEA REMEMBERS: THE FILMS OF MIDWAY AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II

A Talk by Debra Ramsay, Lecturer in Film and Television Studies and Director of the Exeter Screen Studies Research Centre

Thursday, 8th January 2026, TIME AND ROOM DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED, Streatham Campus

World War II in American film has received a great deal of academic attention, as genre (Basinger, 1986), as history (Chambers and Culbert, 1996) and as memory (Burgoyne, 2013). Few (if any) however, have considered how the war film has at best misrepresented, at worst erased, warmaking as environmental disaster. By tracking the representation of a single battle, the Battle of Midway (June 1942), in three American films from the 1940s to the last decade, Debra Ramsay will expose a long history in American war films of effacing the environmental impact and legacy of industrial warfare. The Battle of Midway was a pivotal moment in the Pacific war. It is the subject of an award-winning documentary by Hollywood director John Ford, and has since been represented in two blockbusters, one directed by Jack Smight (1976), the other by Roland Emmerich (2019). In her talk, Debra will investigate how, from Ford's film to the 1970's epic and the digital effects of the 21st century, specific strategies of representation have evolved in the American war film, creating a dangerous visual rhetoric that perpetuates a perceptual binary between human activity and the natural world.

Emmerich's film ends with the intertitle, "the sea remembers its own", but the spaces represented in the films do not so much 'remember' humans as carry the tangible traces of human violence, with sometimes devastating effects. Debra will argue for a new perspective on war films, one that considers not just what they ask us to remember, but what they cause us to forget. It has never been more vital, as conflict and climate change converge, that we identify and interrogate the representational strategies of past conflicts, in order that we might recognise and challenge those of future and current wars.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE FUTURE OF LAW AND REGULATION

A Talk by Ana Beduschi, Professor of Law

Wednesday, 28th January 2026, 2.00pm-3.30pm, Matrix Lecture Theatre, Building One, Streatham Campus

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer science fiction but an integral part of everyday life. A prime example of this rapid progress can be found in healthcare, a field where AI has already achieved significant development. It assists doctors in interpreting scans, supports patients at home, and influences decisions about our health and wellbeing.

However, as these systems become more capable, important questions emerge. Should we trust them? Who is responsible when errors occur? Are current laws and regulations robust enough to keep pace with technological innovations?

In this talk, healthcare will serve as the running example, highlighting both the potential and challenges of AI. Ana will explore how AI, especially generative AI and new types of AI agents, is transforming healthcare, the opportunities it presents, and the risks that must be considered. She will also examine the types of safeguards and oversight needed to ensure AI continues to serve humanity rather than the other way around.

Short bio:

Ana Beduschi is a Professor of Law with a Personal Chair at the University of Exeter, Law School. She is also currently serving as the Strategic Lead on Fair and Inclusive Society at the Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (IDSAI) at the University of Exeter. Her research and teaching concentrate on law and technology, particularly artificial intelligence, with a focus on data protection law, international human rights law, and privacy.

Webpage: [Professor Ana Beduschi](#)

To book a place or register interest, please email us at exe.u3a.uni.liaison@gmail.com, with names, membership numbers and emails of ALL who wish to attend, including the date of the event in the subject line of your email.

UNIVERSITY LIAISON - REPORTS ON PAST EVENTS

THE VIRTUES OF THE DEAD

In early November, about 20 members listened to a fascinating talk on an unusual topic – The Virtues of the Dead. Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, Dr Ed Skidelsky guided us through his website of the same name and showed us how to access a wealth of information about how people in the past saw fit to commemorate their dear departed. epigraphs.net. This is an interactive database of epitaphs from churches and cathedrals across the UK. You can search it by region, date, name or virtue-concept - "earnest", "benevolent", "pious" etc. - so as to uncover trends and correlations. His hope is that Virtues of the Dead will become a resource for all researchers in, for example, language, social history, social anthropology and philosophy, who are interested in cultural change in modern and early-modern Britain. As always, we had some good questions to ask Dr Skidelsky. Some members even shared their knowledge of places both locally and in London where they knew of interesting memorials. Please have a look at the website –the content is amazing – and there is an opportunity for interested members to get involved.

Our Website: www.exeter.u3asite.uk - Visit it regularly to keep up to date with what's new!

NOTE: Dr Edward Skidelsky's upcoming book, *The Language of the Virtues*, examines the historical and cultural significance of virtues and why they have declined in modern society. The book explores how modern science and the secular state have undermined the concept of virtue, and it suggests the need for local forms of community to preserve moral life.

Carol McCullough

NEWS

READING GROUP 3

I'm very sad to report the death of another of our reading group members. Rob (known to many as Bob) Dightam died in October after a short stay in a care home. Rob was a valued member of our group, but had been ill for a number of years. He was one of only three male members of our group. His contributions were always interesting and insightful. We do like the different choice of books and viewpoints we get from men. So, we have a vacancy now for a man. If interested please give me a ring – details at back of newsletter.

We choose a variety of books to read. Our last book – Gabriel's Moon by William Boyd – was liked by everyone in the group. This is unusual. On the whole we like a bit of disagreement, but despite the general approval of this book, we still managed an interesting discussion. We'd recommend it.

Ruth Sanders

EXETER U3A AT THE INTER DEVON U3A QUIZ

15 October was the date of this year's annual Inter Devon u3a Quiz. Two teams from Exeter battled through traffic jams caused by an accident on the M5 to Sidmouth - home of last year's winners. Honiton Hopefuls triumphed on the day but our teams acquitted themselves very well, coming 2nd and 6th out of 13 teams, and cunningly avoiding the obligation to host and set next year's quiz. A fun afternoon out was had by all.



Steph Ward

U3A DAY AT THE RACES

Two of us joined u3a members from across Devon at Newton Abbot Racecourse.



Dee Mc Vee of Okehampton u3a arranged a discount rate for us for the Paddock Enclosure on a Race Day in September. It was my first time and we had a great day, despite some heavy rain showers.

We had very good views of the races from our Grandstand seats, with some exciting close finishes just below us. We viewed the horses paraded around the Paddock and had lunch and drinks. In fact, there was a lively atmosphere amongst the regulars viewing screens in the bars!

Dee will repeat the arrangement for next year – see below.

Jane Chappell and Jan Rolfe

Dee McVey Chair of Okehampton u3a has negotiated a reduced entry fee to the races, at Exeter racecourse, of £10pp on 7th April 2026. If you'd like to go please let Dee know so she can give them an idea of numbers and they can set their systems up to take our payments.

Please provide the following information to Name, contact phone number and u3a you are a member of.



PROPOSED COACH TRIP TO THE RHS BADMINTON FLOWER SHOW

Wednesday 8 – Sunday 12 July 2026

The gardening group is interested in organising a coach trip to this, the RHS (Royal Horticultural Society) Flower Show which will replace the Hampton Court Palace Show in 2026.

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-badminton-flower-show>

Being in Gloucestershire, it's within much more reasonable distance of Exeter than other RHS Flower Shows. We have 20-odd members of the group interested in going, but ideally would prefer more people – the more you have, the cheaper the coach hire! As yet we haven't decided on a day, but it's likely to be Wednesday 8 or Thursday 9 July to (hopefully) avoid weekend crowds on the roads. If you'd be interested in joining us, please email the convenor MJ. We'll aim to make a decision about the viability of the trip before Christmas and then look for quotes from coach companies before working out a price per head.

M.J. Morgan & Phil Slater
Gardening group

GROUP MATTERS

**SEE END OF NEWSLETTER FOR EXETER u3a GROUPS TIMETABLE
FOR CONTACT DETAILS FOR GROUPS, SEE PAGE 19
FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT EACH u3a GROUP, VISIT THE GROUP PAGES ON
THE WEBSITE: <https://exeter.u3asite.uk/groups/>**

GROUPS IN PAID-FOR VENUES: All members (including group convenors) attending groups in paid for venues pay £1.50 for each session of each group they go to, payable in arrears. This includes members attending by Zoom or any other online method.

Rosie Hydar, Exeter u3a Treasurer, e-mails all relevant members after the end of each quarter to advise how much they owe and how to pay it. Payment by bank transfer is preferred but for members who do not use on-line banking, payment can be by cash or cheque to Rosie at monthly meetings or by post. **Please note that Paid For Venue fee statements will be coming out shortly. Please make sure that all payments are carefully labelled with your name so that they can be allocated correctly. Thank you.**

GROUPS' CUSTOM AND PRACTICE

Policy on Taster Sessions for Non-Members

Non-members of Exeter u3a who might like to 'try' a group before registering with us, can now attend **two groups**, either **two meetings of one group or one meeting of two different groups**. The Convenor must be contacted before attending and 'visitor' marked against the non-member's name. The visitor's name and the name of the group should be given to the Treasurer, Rosie Hydar, for tracking purposes (details in List of Contacts).

Groups Meeting In Members' Homes: Please remember that it is customary to make a contribution to the host in respect of refreshments.

Car Sharing Policy – The following practice is recommended: the **trip organiser** is responsible for informing group members of **the total estimated fuel cost for the journey, outward and return**. Each car group should then divide this total cost by **the number of passengers plus the driver** and each person should pay this sum.

Risk Assessment Advice - Individual members are responsible for their own safety.

Make sure you are aware of, and take into account, any warnings about risks like steep steps or uneven paths and advice about appropriate footwear or clothing. Group convenors will be responsible for advising members if a site is not suitable for those with mobility problems.

GROUPS STARTING

CHESS

Chess group starting. All levels accepted.

Due to the few interested, being away recently, the venue and time/day is not confirmed yet. Hopefully, it will be this month. The venue probably will be the library.

Di Pitkeathly

BEGINNERS' LATIN

For those with little or no Latin who would like to know more. Not many people speak Latin nowadays (there are some!) but it is the foundation of several modern languages, and pops up in many places such as familiar sayings, technical terms, even adverts - try an internet

search on 'Carpe diem advertisement'. The group would follow the Oxford Latin Course Book I which covers grammatical features, illustrated by text based on the life of the poet Horace, and also includes plenty of interesting cultural information.

If you would like to consider joining, please come to the Latin and Greek stall at the U3A groups fair in January. Alternatively, contact the Groups Coordinator, Annabel Nater. Meeting time and place can be arranged between those who sign up.

Barbara Hodder

CLASSICAL GREEK FOR BEGINNERS

This is an opportunity for those with little or no knowledge of Classical Greek to begin a course which should lead eventually to the ability to read passages, perhaps slightly adapted, from Greek authors such as Herodotus. All that would be initially required is the course book. Each month I will set a section to be studied and after a month send out an email with answers to the exercises and translations of the Greek passages tackled. We could then meet up once a month to look at any problems people have encountered and I can answer questions and provide further explanations as required. This method has worked successfully over the last few years for a course in Latin which has now reached GCSE standard.

Joyce Burgess

NEW GENEALOGY GROUP



Our existing Genealogy Group has become so popular that we are considering starting a new General Genealogy Group next year. This group will be for those new to genealogy or those wanting to expand research done by family members or using one or two resources. We hope to meet on the second Wednesday of each month (starting on 11th February) between 2.30pm and

4.30pm at a member's home.

The existing Genealogy Group continues to meet on the second Friday morning of each month for experienced Genealogists.

If you are interested in joining a Genealogy Group then please email Shivaun or look at the information on the Groups' pages of the website.

Shivaun Gammie

GROUPS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

READING GROUP 1

We are reading "The Other Side of You" by Sally Vickers for this month's meeting at the Cosy Club. We gather together on the 4th Tuesday of the month from 2pm to 4pm in the Snug, armed with a coffee or tea.

Currently we have a few spaces and would warmly welcome new readers into our fold.

Please contact the convenor.

Lucina Swain

CHINESE AND JAPANESE BRUSH WRITING

Joy in Japanese Brush Writing. 7 month's study with Eric Bransden.

Well it all began over a year ago at a couple of group fairs, where I was first aware of convenors touting their wares and encouraging folk to sign up and try out new things. I spotted Eric at his table, armed with ink, paper and brushes, and those interested could sit beside him and, stroke by stroke, build up Chinese / Japanese characters called KANJI. I loved the flow, the focus on thick lines turning to thin and vice versa. The artist in me was hooked!



So in January 2025 I became Eric's sole pupil in the Monday morning class, kickstarting my week with motivation, inspiration, new learning, gradual improvement and real satisfaction. Although the class is termed "Chinese and Japanese Brush Writing", Eric's skills and wide knowledge make it much richer than that. I have learned about Japanese history, geography, customs and culture. Eric has taught me to read and write the two syllabaries HIRAGANA and KATAKANA where each symbol represents a sound. And of course, the intriguing and beautiful KANJI characters used by both the Chinese and Japanese.

On starting the lesson, Eric will have prepared rice paper on top of a felt writing mat, weighted down with a BUNCHIN. To the right is a long handled brush, leaning on a BRUSH REST, and a smooth black slate INKWELL. Already I have collated several scrap books and art books, filled with my practice strokes from class and my homework. I'm very proud of my work and love to practise when I'm out and about.

I can now write out and read two HAIKUS. Here's the most famous haiku by Matsuo Basho, entitled THE OLD POND.

FURU IKE YA
(behold an old silent pond)
KAERU TOBI KOMU
(a frog jumps in)
MIZO NO OTO
(the sound of water)

Eric has given me handouts on many themes but one of them, a musical score of a Japanese Song entitled RED DRAGONFLIES has enabled cross - fertilisation with another group as I am the piano accompanist of the u3a choir. We have started learning the melody and in the Spring term we will learn the Japanese words too!

If there are readers out there who are interested in joining the class, you cannot fail to enjoy the sweep of your brush, the glistening of the black ink, the taste of new words, the building of knowledge, the joy of Japanese.

Come join us!

Lucina Swain.

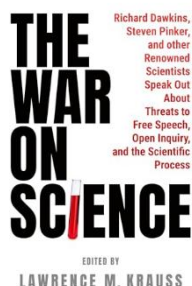
SCIENCE GROUP



Our Website: www.exeter.u3asite.uk - Visit it regularly to keep up to date with what's new!

The Science group is looking for new members. Many meetings take place on Zoom. The next couple of meetings are described below. Please contact David Northrop, the convenor, if you want to try out a meeting.

Science Group Wednesday 3 December via Zoom at 2pm.



The War against Science. - a review of the current anti-science movement - how and why, what the impact will be and what can scientists do about it - largely using climate change and anti-vax as examples.

This is a very serious development and rational free-thinking people need to take action. Speaker: Diane Newell.

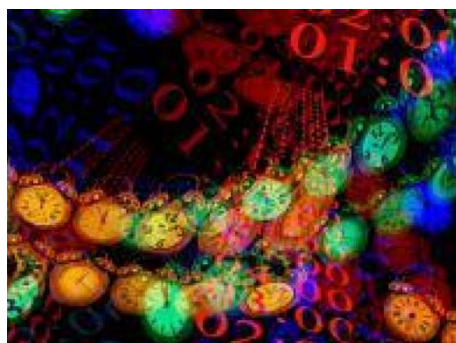
Here is a book on the subject:

Science Group Wednesday 7 January 2026 2pm via Zoom

Is Everything Relative?

Peter Atkinson, Stokesley and District u3a, Yorkshire & the Humber

Peter is a retired engineer who is now attempting to understand all the stuff he should have understood whilst studying for his physics degree way back in the late 1960's. Hopefully he can now explain some aspects of modern physics to others.



We explore the thoughts and insights of Albert Einstein in a non-mathematical way as he developed his "Theory of Special Relativity", exploring why everything is relative and what it means to say the speed of light is constant. This leads to amazing conclusions about the nature of time and space.

Science Convenor David Northrop

GROUPS WANTING NEW CONVENOR

CINEMA GROUP

A new Convenor is wanted for the Cinema Group from January 2026.

We have aimed for members to meet at cinemas to share viewing of an interesting film, with the chance to meet and chat in cafes before films. No group bookings. We buy our own tickets, with or without Cinema Membership. It could be run in other ways e.g. more like a Book Group, to meet monthly to discuss films seen.

Anyone interested please contact Jane Chappell

Jane Chappell

GROUP NEWS

WALKIE TALKIES AND THE WALKING GROUP TIE THE KNOT!

Following extensive discussions, it was the overwhelming view of members of both groups that it would be beneficial for everyone if there was one group combining all facets of our walking activities under a common leadership. So as of November 1st, it became reality, and now all new walk notifications, general updates and reminders will be sent, organised and monitored by Dave & Mike.

The format of the different walks remains the same i.e. Walkie-Talkies, Striders and Hikers with typical distances of 3-5 miles, 5-7 miles and 7-10 miles, and all members are welcome to participate in any of them. The Short Weekly Walkers meanwhile will continue with 0-2 miles under separate leadership as before. As always, members are encouraged to contribute walks, and we are happy to say that there is a full programme of walks at all levels through to the New Year.

We will no doubt raise a celebratory glass to the new union at our Christmas lunch in December as we look forward to what should be an exciting 2026.

Mike Arstall and Dave Bassett

NEWS FROM GROUPS

GARDENING

To conclude our 'season' of visits, we were able to book private group visits to a pair of remarkable and well-established gardens, much cherished by their long term owners.

SUTTON MEAD

In early September we headed for the outskirts of Moretonhampstead to visit Sutton Mead, a family home situated beautifully in the landscape. It was surrounded by lovely gardens including a woodland area (recently suffering from ash die-back, unfortunately), an extensive orchard and large pond. The owners have been there for over 45 years and some things planted as young plants are now giant specimens! The weather was mainly good but the heavens did open at one point, which was our cue to head to the conservatory for the obligatory tea and cake...



REGENCY HOUSE



For our last visit of 2025, in early October we visited Regency House at Hemyock, a former vicarage at the end of a wooded drive and over a small ford.

The extensive garden included a walled vegetable and fruit area, lake, ponds, bog plantings and sweeping lawns and included many interesting and unusual trees and shrubs planted by the owner over many years.

Our affable host, Jenny, not only provided us with a comprehensive list (with locations) to help us identify the very large number of plants but also outlined the history and development of the garden. Another excellent visit in good weather rounded off, as usual, with welcoming tea and cake.



M.J. Morgan & Phil Slater

DEVON AND EXETER LOCAL HISTORY

With our second year, coming to an end, we have had presentations on a range of subjects, with members coming forward to help and enrich the meetings.

It is not possible to cover all of the topics but the following give a flavour to our subjects.

Exeter Streets

Suggested by two of our members we looked at the streets in Exeter within the walls.

Gandy Street, formerly called Correstrete in 1265, the street gained notoriety as a rumoured inspiration for Harry Potter's Diagon Alley.



Stepcote Hill

This one of the oldest surviving parts of Exeter. Its name comes from the Old English word for steep, rather than from step, and cote for enclosure. In 1270 it was referred to as Styppecotehyll, and had become Stepcote Hill by 1588.

Devon and Exeter through the ages.

This was in two parts since it covered a wide spectrum.

The Romans.

The Romans settled in Exeter where the current city stands today in AD55. However, between 70 to 75 AD the Roman army left Exeter and most of the military timber buildings in the fort were demolished. Subsequently the Anglo Saxon and the Normans came along.

Victorian era

The first railway arrived in Devon to Exeter St Davids station in 1844 from Bristol. Going west, Isambard Kingdom Brunel's atmospheric railway proved a failure. However, he finally built a railway to Plymouth over the Tamar bridge into Cornwall in 1859.



Lost Industries in Exwick

The presentation was given by a member who lived in Exwick. She said 'my great aunt worked in the armaments factory during the war, which then became the Mother's Pride Bakery; family friends were involved with the laundry and Exwick Grist Mill. Further along the road I had dealings in a professional capacity with the woodworking factory Beach Brothers.'

Drogo Castle

The Drewe family is a historic, prominent family in Devon, known for their ancestral estates, including The Grange in Broadhembury and the construction of Castle Drogo. The presentation was centred on the history rather than the building itself. Once again we had a full and entertaining afternoon.



Medieval Churches



The Parish of St Thomas grew up late in the Middle Ages and had no close connection with the City of Exeter across the river, which had nineteen parishes within its walls in the thirteenth century. In the year 1160 during the reign of Henry II the important Benedictine Norman Abbey of Bec-Harle founded an English cell at 'Covic'.

The collection of topics we discussed will hopefully continue to attract members to the group in 2026. For various reasons we will be moving at New Year to St Sidwell's Community Centre.

Derek Smithers

HISTORY-ON-THE-MOVE

NEWTON ST. CYRES 18th September

For thirteen years we HOTM'ers certainly have covered ground in Devon. Guide-of-the-month, Helen Gordon, found a brand new destination, the village of Newton St. Cyres. The Northcotes, rich textile merchant family of Crediton, bought NSC from Plympton Priory and in turn sold it to the Quicques in the Tudor era. For 500 years the Quicques' Manor was just a stone's throw from the parish church connecting the two by a passerelle over the now A377.

We met in the Parish Church which is dedicated to St. Cyricus and St. Julitta. Three year old Cyricus and his mother, Julitta, were tortured to death by Emperor Diocletian (304 a.d.). Midge Kelly of the NSC History Group enlightened us on the significance of an array of wall plaques, hatchments (corruption of achievements), bosses, grotesques, heraldry, and ornate memorials. The earlier church was rebuilt in the Early Perpendicular Style from the wealth derived from the woolen industry. Crenellations, a five sided turret, niches, and statues on top of counterforts were added over the years. All of us huddled close to the life sized effigy of John Northcote. So many 'Johns' to behold: 'Kneeling John', 'Standing John' and 'Praying John' together with symbolic accomplishments. First and second wives' faces are encircled with chiseled odes to their respective fertility. Wife No. 1, Elizabeth Rous's reads "My fruit was small; one son was all; that not at all". (Son died unmarried 1619). Second wife, Susanna Pollard's reads: "My Jacob had by me, as many sons as he, daughters twice three". An astounding 18 children! (Jacob is a Biblical reference). On the south wall is a very touching oval memorial commemorating the early death of Exeter College, Oxford student, Sherland Short, relative of Thomas Quicke, Esq. Young Sherland is asleep amongst stacks of dusty, darkened books. He died at age 17, 'up' at Oxford. (1632). Midge offers interesting



speculations as to why there happens to be an enormous and rare coat of arms of the unpopular James II (1685-1688).

Outside and overlooking much of the Village, Helen explains why and how the main route north had to be reconfigured. Cottages were being demolished even as late as 1959 for the wider and straighter road. Down along West Town amongst the 15th – 17th c. thatched cob cottages are “Laundry Cottages”. The



laundresses had to wear white gloves when hanging out the washing for the Quicks. Bundles of handkerchiefs were tied up with blue ribbons. Other cottages are evidence of the once thriving coopers, wheelwrights, tanneries, cider works,

butchers, blacksmiths and miners. NSC possessed the first commercially successful manganese mines in the 17th century, used to make green bottles, and for bleaching. Lead and silver were also mined; all on the property of the Lord of the Manor, the Quicks. With so many white washed dwellings the early stagecoach drivers referred to NSC as “The White City”! Even in the moonlight the walls shimmered so much so that in WWII they had to be camouflaged in mud-wash. On the picturesque Pump Street we all posed for a photo on the ancient footbridge over the ford. A lovely photo exuding HOTM spirit! The ford was the venue of village fairs, and even used by travelling circuses for washing elephants. Alongside the ford is the former Agricultural Inn which, according to Helen, was closed in 1909 because of a raucous clientele. Lively dances were held on an upper floor and needed large wooden props to keep the ceiling from collapsing. Helen ended her Village Centre tour at a junction of three additional tours: Aboretum of the Quick Manor, further up West Town or Station Road to The Beer Engine. Our guide really instilled within us a sense of the once upon a village life.

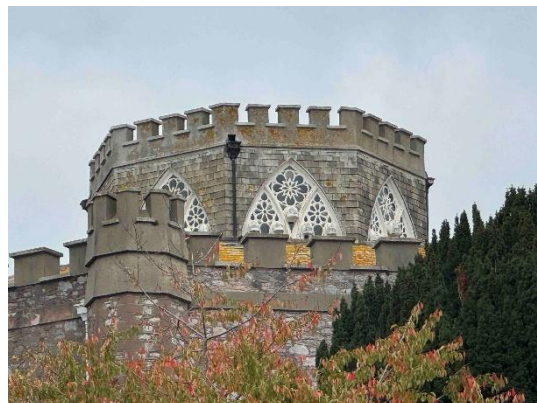
Leslie Moss, September 2025

TEIGNMOUTH 16 October, 2025

Around thirty of us gathered at the Teignmouth Train Station eagerly anticipating Karen Henson's first HOTM tour. Our guide-of-the-month began with reminiscences of her childhood summer vacations in this Town. To her the Pleasure Pier (1865) must have seemed like a mini Las Vegas; pocketful's of “Polos” were won by her at the pinball machines. Over on Back Beach, she described the sensation of multiple mackerel tugging on the sparkling fish line.



Our attention is drawn to all the land between the station and the sea. Here in the 16th and 17th centuries there were marshes, tidal pools, salt pans and Brimley Brook. Like Dawlish (D. Allanach 2018 & 2024), Teignmouth was transformed into a Victorian fashionable watering place. Land was reclaimed for elegant terraces, crescents, Assembly Rooms and the Royal Hotel. The Pleasure Pier divided the beach. Men on the East side; women on the West. Clusters of bathing machines to protect modesty. We strode over to West Teignmouth to the unusual



Picturesque Gothic St. James Church. Its octagonal shape was thought to deter the Devil? Alas, we were let down by the churchwarden. The interior's magnificent lantern/belfry remained a mystery for us. 1500 worshippers could be accommodated; some even paying for pews up front.

We ventured down lanes of former smoke houses (fish) to various harbors where Newfoundland cod fishing, shipbuilding, granite, china clay, oyster, nets and rope industries once thrived. (China clay exports continue today). Some of us HOTM'ers had not known that Teignmouth provided eight ships for the Armada versus Exeter's three; Plymouth's four. Nor had we realized that the harbors were badly bombed during WWII. 21 raids by the enemy who were intent upon destroying Morgan Giles Boatyard used by the US Navy. (1940-1944) From one of the harbors, the infamous David Crowhurst set sail. Later on we are shown Keat's House where his "Endymion" was completed. At 30 Teign St. is the handsome home of the prolific maritime painter, Thomas Luny. When his arthritis became intolerable, the artist had paint brushes tied to his arms.

We paused at The Jolly Sailor Pub. Teignmouth, according to Karen, was the last town in the Country to have been invaded. In July 1690 a few French ships broke off from Admiral Hilarian de Tourville's fleet (off Torbay) to see what havoc they could make. 240 houses were burnt; churches defaced, pillaged inns and pubs. The Jolly Sailor, however, survived, because it served as the HQ of the French Navy. The devastation occurred during the early years of King William's (of Orange) reign. Was an embittered James II plotting to regain his throne? Cannon balls are still visible on a house in French St. How many U3A'ers would love to have a house embellished with cannon balls? Karen gleefully pointed out that The Jolly Sailor is, consequently, the last pub in the Country to have been invaded!

On The Den, a vast green park, our guide had us imagine the scene during the Victorian times. Here one would promenade in order to be seen. Incessant strolling from the whalebone arch to the lighthouse in order to be recognized as someone of importance. Karen certainly captured our imagination, and piqued our sense of history. REAL H.O.T.M. ETHOS!

Leslie Moss

SHORT WEEKLY WALKS



We have continued with our weekly walks, enjoying a particularly balmy day walking from Joney's Cross, Aylesbeare Common, in September. This was a new walk for our group, but we shall certainly be repeating it.

Janie Smallridge

WALKING GROUP

We've had a busy last month or so with merging the Walkie-Talkies with the Walking Group (Striders and Hikers) as mentioned in the Group News section. Meanwhile our activities have continued throughout with the same energy and enthusiasm across all three walking levels.

Reflections over this whole year and our mixture of distances and locations, we have successfully negotiated tricky bridleways of brambles and nettles, rambled along many a quiet country lane and traversed soggy fields and thick woodlands. All can be found in our latest collection of walks from Buckfast to Holne, Uffculme to Culmstock, Bovey Tracey to Lustleigh, Newton St Cyres to Exwick and Stoke Canon to Brampford Speke. And, still somehow, we have all made it home, safely, every time. so far. That's what days out with us are about...plus...Guaranteed finely tuned company and the freedom to have lots of fun and lively conversations along the way.

I am attaching a few shots to illustrate some of our most recent walks.

Culmstock: Lunch alongside the River
Culm:

Views across Uffculme:



Bovey Tracey walk through the woods to Lustleigh:



Back to Bovey on the former rail road track:



Newton St Cyres- The start of the walk. All looking smart and alert:



And finally, we are looking forward to our WG Xmas party for 11 December , but there are walks arranged for the rest of November and December. With a new schedule of walks to be planned for 2026. Mike and I welcome anyone looking to join up to improve their fitness and enjoy some very friendly company.

Dave & Mike

DRINKS EVENING

To all those who turned out for the Drinks Evening at the Leonardo Hotel in November! 12 in all and a real fun evening. An extra bonus, the hotel gave us 15% discount on drinks!

The Group covered everything from Nuclear Fusion to herding cows (activities best kept separate). Apparently, herding beef cattle is trickier as they are not so obliging as dairy cows – which are looking for some urgent light relief on their udders. We decided to ignore the state of the country, the world and the planet in general, and the nearest we got to politics was a brief visit to *The Archers* and a general disgust at the scriptwriter who decided Nigel would fall of a roof and be 'written out' = mass exodus of u3a listeners! Mrs Dales Diary came up as an aside – but not for long as most of us could not remember it?!

Our Website: www.exeter.u3asite.uk - Visit it regularly to keep up to date with what's new!

We did disagree about whether to put jam or cream first on our scones, but agreed that pickle-ball was fun! Apparently, it was invented by a couple of chaps, who returned from a game of golf to find their families were bored – they had tried to play Badminton but no one could find the shuttlecock! So, they decided to invent a game involving different balls and rackets – to suit all abilities.

We had some confusing conversations about Eric and James Ravilious. Mixed them up a bit! Eric was an official 2nd world war artist, killed while on commission in a plane crash in Iceland, while his son James was a British photographer, who specialised in recording the rural life of North Devon. The U3A *Art and Artists group* had been researching Eric, so some members put us right! That is the great thing about these get togethers. You meet people from various groups and learn a lot about other subjects.

Talking about learning a lot, we heard about a young soon to be bride wooed by her Merchant Navy fiance, with exotic stories of her sailing the tropics and spending her day sunbathing; Only to find herself, shortly after, on an old iron ore bulk carrier in the North Atlantic in February, followed by nights out in Gdansk Poland during the Solidarity uprising. (Some people have all the fun)

We discussed the switch from Active Gas nuclear reactors to Pressurized Water Reactors, debated government long term planning - or rather the lack of it - and even dabbled with thermonuclear fusion research! Thanks merchant Navy man. I am still trying to absorb all the Science!

Elizabeth Vousden

LIST OF CONTACTS

COMMITTEE

Chair	Terry Ancell
Vice Chair	Virginia Rosenfeld
Treasurer	Rosie Hydar
Secretary	Ann Harper
Minutes	MJ Morgan
Secretary	
Groups	Annabel Nater
Coordinator	
+ Accessibility	
Officer	
Membership	Ian Murray
Secretary	
Committee	Anne Barwell
Member	
Committee	Mark Hall
Member	
Committee	Harriet Smith
Member	
Committee	Sue Spence
Member	
Committee	Elaine Thornton
Member	

CONTACTS FOR NON-COMMITTEE OFFICIALS

University Liaison	Carol
Project	McCullough
Newsletter Editor	Virginia Rosenfeld
Rolling News	Keith Shaw
Web Admin	Bob Cottis
Beacon Admin	Dave Parsons Mark Hall Elaine Thornton
Speaker Team	Frances Berry

CONTACTS FOR GROUPS

REMEMBER to contact the member named below before attending a group

Anthropology	Penny Amraoui
Art and Artists	Andrew Staley
Birds, Trees and Bees	Colin Johnson
Books and Life	Nichola Watson
Bridge	Ruth Sanders Liz Batten
Canoeing	Sue Kidd
Chess	Diana Pitkeathly
Chinese and Japanese	Eric Bransden
Brush Writing	
Choir	Julie Crichton-Smith
Cinema	Jane Chappell

Circle Dance	Jill Ashby
Classical Music	Colin Farlow
Crafts	(temporarily suspended)
Creative Writing to Share 1 & 2	Loran Waite
Crosswords	Marion Ricketts
Cycling	Ian Murray
Devon & Exeter Local History	Derek Smithers Mark Hall
Discussion Circle	Chris Grundy
Discussion 2	Annabel Nater
Drawing for Everyone	Loran Waite
Economics	Jacqui Barnicoat
Exercise	Penny Matthews
Food Matters	Jonathan Peat
French Conversation Advanced	Annabel Nater Marie-Laure Despres
Games for Fun	Liz Batten
Gardening	Phil Slater M.J. Morgan
Genealogy	Shivaun Gammie
Genealogy – short term introduction	Shivaun Gammie
German Conversation History	Alan Caig Mark Hall
History on the Move	Leslie Moss
Italian Conversation	Stephanie Barnes
Italian Conversation Two	Julia Briggs
Italian (Avanti in Italiano)	Linda Cowey
IT	Dave Parsons
Joy of Performing	Linda Lewis
Joy of Poetry	Amrita Mohan
Joy of Poetry 2	Loran Waite
Language	Joyce Burgess
Latin (Intermediate)	John & Joyce Burgess
Les Francophones	Marie-Claude Arstall
MahJong	Steph Ward Gillie Collyer
Modern Western Square Dancing	(temporarily suspended)
Novelists	Frances Canning
Parliamo Insieme	Anne Staley Marie-Claude Arstall
Parlons Francais (Advanced)	Alice Lemaitre
Parlons Francais (Intermediate)	Alice Lemaitre
Patchwork, Applique, Quilting	Nichola Watson Daphne Andrews
Philosophy 1	Trudi Learmouth
Philosophy 2	John Browne Philip Ralli
Philosophy 3	Simon Borrington
Photography	Kris Frank

Our Website: www.exeter.u3asite.uk - Visit it regularly to keep up to date with what's new!

Pickleball	Minna Egan
	Ian Murray
Play Reading	Stephanie Barnes
Quilting Bees	Amanda James
Quizzes	Jane Chappell
Reading Group I	Lucinda Swain
Reading Group III	Ruth Sanders
Reading Group IV	Marion Ricketts
Reading Group V	Anne Barwell
Reading Group VI	Faith Wood
Reading Group VII	Frances Obee
Saturday Supper Club	Brian Cousins
Science	David Northrop
Scrabble	Marcia Hampson
Short Weekly Walks	Janie Smallridge
Spanish	Paul Mattausch
	Burrows
Still Life Drawing	Mirren Baglin
Table Tennis	Finn Ibsen
	Frances Canning
Tennis	Kay Mathews
Transport	Paul Palin
Travel	Ian Murray
Ukulele	Chris Durbin
Walking Group	Dave Bassett
	Mike Arstall

Exeter U3A – Groups Timetable – see Newsletter List for Contact Details.
Subject to change.

Day	am	pm
Mon	Pickleball - weekly Discussion Circle – 1 st of month Reading Group 6 – 3 rd of month Convenors Café – 2 nd of month (bi-monthly) Crosswords – 3 rd of month IT Support – 4 th of month Parlons Francais (Intermediate) – alt weeks Parlons Francais (Advanced) – alt weeks Chinese and Japanese Brush-Writing Novelists Group – 1 st of the month	French conversation (adv.) – 1 st & 3 rd of month Quilting Bee – 1 st of month Art & Artists – 2 nd of month Bridge – 2 nd & 4 th of month Reading Group 4 – 3 rd of month Creative Writing 1 – 3 rd of month Creative Writing 2 - 4 th of month Anthropology – 4 th of month Avanti in Italiano – 2 nd & 4 th of month Latin – alt weeks 2 nd & 4 th of month Devon and Exeter Local History – 4 th of month Circle Dancing – alternate weeks
Tue	Scrabble – weekly Short Weekly Walks - weekly Choir – 1 st & 3 rd of month Italian Conversation – 4 th of month Walking Group (7-10 miles) – 4 th of month Joy of Performing – 1 st and 3 rd of month Still Life Drawing – 3 rd Tuesday	Patchwork, Applique & Quilting – 2 nd & 4 th of month Drawing for Everyone – 1 st of month Travel – 2 nd of month Play Reading – 2 nd of month Reading Group 7 – 2 nd of month Reading Group 3 – 3 rd of month Reading Group 1 – 4 th of month Table Tennis – usually 1 per month Ukelele Group – alt. Tues from 11.02.25 Philosophy 1 – 3 rd of month
Wed	Exercise - weekly Cycling – 4 th Wednesday Still Life Drawing – 3 rd of month Les Francophones - weekly Philosophy 2 – bimonthly Italian Conversation 2 – last of the month	Science – 1 st of month German Conversation – 1 st & 3 rd of month German Beginners Conversation – 1 st and 3 rd of month Italian Conversation – 2 nd & 4 th of month Language – 3 rd of month (autumn & winter only) History – 4 th of month Parliamo Insieme - fortnightly Philosophy 3 – 4 th of month Reading Group 5 – 4 th of month Quizzes – 5 th of month Food Matters – 1 st of month Joy of Poetry – 1 st of month Joy of Poetry 2 – 2 nd of month
Thu	Philosophy 2 – 1 st of month (alternate months) Walkie Talkies – 1 st of month Walking Group (5-7 miles) – 2 nd of month Economics – 2 nd of month History on the Move – 3 rd of month Monthly Speaker Meeting – 4 th of month Discussion 2 - 1 st of month	Spanish – 1 st & 3 rd of month Circle Dancing – alternate weeks Table Tennis – Usually 1 per month Photography – 4 th of month Books and Life – 4 th of month History on the Move – 3 rd of month
Fri	Tennis – weekly Genealogy – 2 nd of month Canoeing – last of month (May-Sep only) Topsham Social – 1 st of month	Mahjong – weekly Board Games for Fun – alternate weeks Transport – 2 nd of month
Sat		Saturday Supper Club – 2 nd of month (evening)
Sun		Poltimore Afternoon Tea – 4 th Sunday

Cinema – depends on film showings

Gardening – Varies depending on season, activity, garden opening times or host availability