DECEMBER 2026 / JANUARY 2027 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 26 November

ALAN PEWSEY Dartmoor Search & Rescue Team - Ashburton

Thursday 17 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 28 January 2026

An Audience with the Lady Katherine Rosemary Griggs



Travel back in time with the Lady Katherine and learn about her life in Tudor Devon. Born into the prestigious and well-connected Champernowne family, Katherine witnessed the reigns of Tudor monarchs from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I.

Author and speaker Rosemary Griggs has been researching Devon's sixteenth-century history for years, focusing especially on one well-connected family —the Champernownes She loves telling the stories of the forgotten women of history — the women beyond the royal court; wives, sisters, daughters and mothers who played their part during those tumultuous Tudor years: the ***Daughters of Devon.***

OUR COMMITTEE 2026/27





Terry Ancell
Virginia Rosenfeld
Ann Harper
Rosie Hydar
Ian Murray
Annabel Nater
MJ Morgan
Mark Hall
Harriet Smith
Sue Spence
Elaine Thornton
Pam Spencer

Message from the Chair, Terry Ancell

The festive holidays are fast approaching along with various Christmas meals and group gatherings. I wish you well for the holiday period and hope you get to see your family or friends and enjoy the celebrations. Many of our groups are continuing to meet in the lead up to the holiday period but please do check to ensure that alternative dates have not been set or a meeting cancelled due to a clash with the Christmas and New Year bank holidays.

We continue to look for people to sit on our committee especially from the AGM in May when some existing committee members are standing down. Equally, we look for volunteers to assist the meet and greet team as well as the speaker team. If you think you could contribute to these teams, please contact Anne Barwell (Meet and Greet team) or Frances Berry (Speaker Team) who I'm sure would be pleased to explain the role and perhaps arrange for you to give it a try.

We are progressing with our focus on reducing costs and have now reached the stage where distribution of our Newsletter is solely by email. However, the committee will be discussing further streamlining of the distribution, so please keep an eye out for further information in the coming months.

Finally, our monthly meeting in December is being brought forward to the 17th when we will once again hold our 'Carolsing'. The Exeter u3a choir will sing a few songs interspersed with a few carols, so please do consider coming along to join in or simply listen.

Live, Learn Laugh.

Terry Ancell, Chair

Free u3a online talks, workshops and courses

u3a members can access a wide range of free online talks, workshops and courses through their membership. Most sessions are led by fellow members, sharing their expertise, with additional talks from notable speakers and organisations.

All events are bookable via Eventbrite. Please ensure you can attend when booking and cancel if you're unable to make it so others can participate. Events are exclusively for u3a members. Sign up to the events mailing to get our monthly online events straight to your inbox.

A flavour of what's coming up in December (and available for booking):

- **Capturing your youth: memoir writing in 12 easy steps,** Thursday 3 December at 10am
- **What does AI know about me,** Tuesday 8 December at 10am
- **The science and history of common medications for heartburn,** Wednesday 9 December at 10am

Book these and plenty more on the events page of the u3a website (www.u3a.org.uk/events)

Queries to learning@u3a.org.uk

A Call for New Meeters and Greeters for Monthly Meetings

Our small team would be very pleased to welcome new members to help greet people as they arrive for the Monthly Meetings at The Mint.

If you come regularly to these meetings you will be aware of someone greeting you and providing help and information when needed – that's us!

We usually work in pairs so support is available if needed.

This is an important role, making all our members feel welcome, and particularly visitors and new members who may not know how these meetings work. If you could help with this, just a few times a year, or would like to find out more, we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Please email Many thanks everyone.

Anne Barwell, Meeter and Greeter Team

UNIVERSITY LIAISON

REMEMBERING BERTRAM BROCKINGTON

The members of the University Liaison team, past and present, are very sad to report the death of Bertram Brockington, one of our founder members. Bertram had suffered from several serious health issues in recent years and died on October 6th, aged 82.

Bertram was a 'Plymouth boy' - a lifelong supporter of Plymouth Argyle - with a PhD in Chemistry from Plymouth Polytechnic (now Plymouth University). As was said by the celebrant at Bertram's funeral, he had a deep interest in 'the human condition' - science, music, art, literature and philosophy.

Bertram had been a counsellor at the Victory Centre in Exeter before retiring to enjoy being in nature and spending time on his passion for fishing. In retirement he took piano lessons and joined several groups in Exeter u3a.



Bertram (far left) and Team with University Staff - MOU Signing 2016

Bertram, Maggie Teuten and I were all very keen to develop a link between u3a and the University of Exeter and worked hard to make contacts there from 2013 onwards. Bertram was a driving force in getting a formal Memorandum of Understanding signed on 3rd March 2016. He was very proud to see the article we had in u3a Matters earlier this year to mark our tenth anniversary.

Bertram was a lovely man who will be very much missed by his wife Veronica, his daughter Alice, his many friends and by us - the Liaison team.

Carol McCullough (for the team)

FORTHCOMING EVENT

THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT: FINDINGS FROM THE COPE STUDY ON HEAT PREPAREDNESS

A talk by Dr Jennifer Lay, Senior Lecturer and Co-Director of Global Engagement, Department of Psychology and Dr Jack Evans, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Psychology

Wednesday, 9th December, 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Lecture Theatre 1 (LT1), Queen's Building, The Queen's Drive, Streatham campus

Summertime often brings ice cream, short-sleeves and, if we're lucky, a little less rain. However, as temperatures gradually rise, so does the risk to our health – and particularly so for older adults. This talk explores how we can assess and enhance older adults' preparedness for hotter temperatures. **Jennifer Lay** and **Jack Evans** will delve into the science behind tracking momentary heat exposure and the effects on our bodies, our perceptions of heat risk, and how we cope with to hot temperatures. Honing in on Exeter and the surrounding area, they'll share findings from the COPE study on older adults' daily life experiences of hot temperatures in the summer months of 2025-26. Finally, they'll discuss how adaption isn't just up to the individual, but to the community.

To register for a place at this event, please email us, stating your name, the title of the event and your u3a membership number, at exe.u3a.uni.liaison@gmail.com

MAKE SURE YOU DON'T MISS OUT! University Liaison events are sometimes organised at fairly short notice, outside of the two-monthly *Newsletter* schedule. If you are new to Exeter u3a and/or have never registered for any of our events, make sure you sign up to our University Liaison database. You will then get an email direct to your inbox with details of any events and research opportunities. Send your full name, u3a membership number and email address to our administrator at **exe.u3a.uni.liaison@gmail.com**

You can also regularly check our webpage:

https://exeter.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/exeter-university-liaison/

REPORT ON PAST EVENT

SLEEP BY DESIGN: HOW OUR GENES SHAPE SLEEP, CIRCADIAN RHYTHMS, AND HEALTH

At the beginning of October, this excellent talk by **Dr Andrew Wood, Associate Professor of Statistical Genetics and Health Data Science**, was attended by nearly fifty members of Exeter u3a. The high attendance showed how sleep is very important to us all and yet we know little about the mechanics of how we sleep, despite its being something we all try to do every night!

Andrew started his talk by asking us for our own experiences of sleep to show how sleep was very personal and variable, and he went on to explain the dimensions of sleep - time, length, how easily we fall asleep, fragmentation (broken sleep), and sleepiness in the daytime. Research has shown that there is great genetic variation across all the dimensions. He referred to Circadian rhythms - the 24-hour body clock which through the effect of light, links our body rhythm with the outside world; our DNA defines our personal rhythms. The hormone melatonin is the body's biological dimmer switch and it prepares the body for sleep. Darkness leads to the production of more melatonin; daylight and blue screen light switch off the production of melatonin so it doesn't prepare the body for sleep. If this dimmer switch isn't working, it can prevent the vital repairing of the body that occurs during sleep, in what we learnt was the N3 stage of the sleep cycle. This is the deepest part of the cycle, when the brain waves are slower and it is hard to wake us. This stage gets shorter as we age at the rate of 5% per decade. In addition, as we get older, we create less melatonin, and have weaker Circadian rhythms.

Andrew compared the influence on sleep of Biology and non-modifiable factors: our genes and our age, with Our World and modifiable factors: context and life-style. While DNA is not deterministic and the level of light, work, age, health, and behaviour etc. matter, our genes have more than 50% influence on our sleep experience. In the case of extreme sleep disorders, it is likely that these are due completely to genetic factors but not to one gene that can be identified.

The reason for studying the genetics of sleep is fourfold: to get a better understanding of the biology of sleep; to understand why people differ; to identify potential therapeutic targets; and to understand the links with diseases such as coronary heart disease. The research has involved the study of identical and non-identical twins and has shown that duration, timing, insomnia, and daytime sleepiness all show evidence of heritability. Sleep is a complex trait in genetics. For example, while the A-allele is associated with *increased risk* of insomnia, there is *no single* sleep or insomnia gene.

Looking at the process of research, we learnt about the important role of the UK Biobank data and its 2026 questionnaire. However, questionnaires are limited in terms of the number of questions that can be asked and additionally there is the problem of self-reporting and perception errors. Other research methods are 1) Polysomnography which involves the subject sleeping in a laboratory, wired-up to various devices; whilst giving excellent data, the sleep experience is very unrealistic and the number of participants is very limited; 2) Accelerometers which enable large numbers of participants, with less burdensome equipment, in a real life context.

The most reliable data so far has been produced by the UK Axivity AX3 Device, which allowed more precise genetic analysis of sleep phenotypes to see which DNA changes are linked with sleep fragmentation.

In terms of the link between poor sleep and adverse health, researchers have looked at whether poor sleep causes coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, anxiety disorders and major depression, as commonly thought, or whether it is the reverse and these conditions cause poor sleep. Andrew concluded that Mendelian Randomisation has shown causal links between insomnia and increased risk of coronary heart disease and depression and someone who is genetically a morning-person has a better mental health outcome; however his research has found that there are no robust causal links between poor sleep and type 2 diabetes, obesity and BMI, and having a stroke.

Andrew's very informative and engaging presentation stimulated a very lively question and discussion session, with some interesting and varied questions from our members. It is a fascinating area of research and Andrew explained that there are many possible aspects still to be investigated such as DNA ancestry (see note below) and comparing sleep patterns and disorders in other parts of the world, particularly in places where there are periods of greatly reduced daylight.

Trudi Learmouth

Note: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0032qn4 *Start the Week* 12 October 2026 - Pontus Skoglund, geneticist and leader of the Ancient Genomics Laboratory at the Francis Crick Institute, explains how ancient DNA is transforming our understanding of human evolution, migration and disease. His research, and the Institute's exhibition *We Go Way Back* (until July 2027), reveal how genetic evidence can uncover forgotten lives and rewrite histories we thought we knew. https://www.crick.ac.uk/news/2026-07-16_uks-first-ancient-dna-exhibition-now-open-at-the-crick Thanks to Eiizabeth Vousden for this link.

GROUP MATTERS

SEE END OF NEWSLETTER FOR EXETER u3a GROUPS TIMETABLE AND CONTACT DETAILS FOR GROUPS
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 come out quarterly. 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).

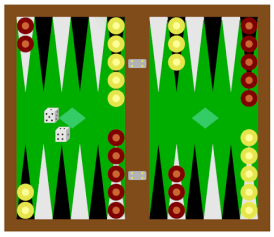
Groups Meeting In Members' Homes: Please remember that it is customary to make a contribution to the host in respect of refreshments.

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 LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

BACKGAMMON



Huey Walker has started a Backgammon group and is seeking new members. They meet on the first Monday of the month from 10.30 until 12 at the Cosy Club in Southernhay Gardens.

GROUPS NEEDING NEW CONVENORS

We have a number of dormant groups needing a new convenor. Some have been active until recently, others for a longer time.

CINEMA
CRAFTS
CROSSWORDS
CYCLING
MODERN WESTERN SQUARE DANCING

If you are willing to be the convenor or interested in any of these groups, please contact Annabel Nater, our Groups Co-ordinator (groupscoordinator@exeteru3a.org.uk). An initial meeting will be arranged to discuss a way forward.

NEWS FROM GROUPS

GARDENING

Visit to Ashridge Court, North Tawton

Our final excursion of the year was a private visit to the 6-acre garden at this estate. The estate dates from the 1100s but the current owners have only been there since 2012 and have since been restoring the garden to its early twentieth century Arts & Crafts heyday. The owner gave us a detailed tour of the entire garden (mainly tree and shrubs) and the huge walled garden which is also in the process of being restored, although not to the design prior to the first world war when it took a huge team of gardeners to maintain it! En route we enjoyed the sight of a rare Lion's Mane fungus (pictured), guarded by a hornets' nest below.





Quiz

In early November, we dodged the pouring rain outside (do gardeners never stop mentioning the weather?) to socialise over a garden-themed quiz at the Mint. Gardening group 'hardy perennials' were joined by some members of the Quiz Group and a light-hearted hour of quizzing ensued, with a team comprising Tim, Shirley and Phil coming out on top.

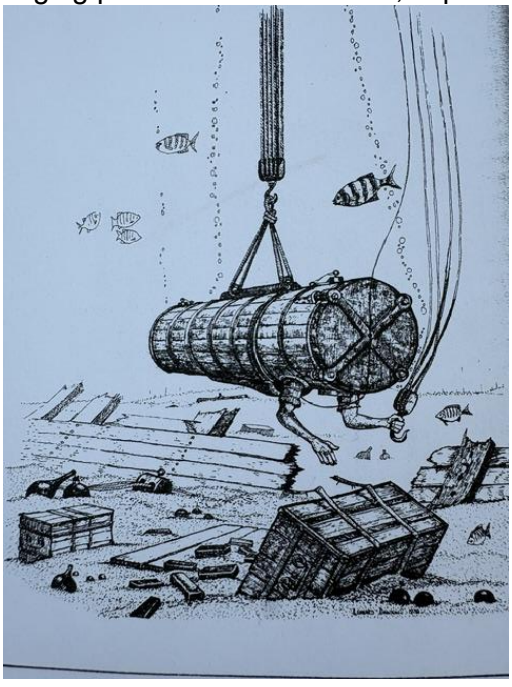
M.J. Morgan & Phil Slater

HISTORY ON THE MOVE

17th September NEWTON ABBOT

'Guide-of-the-month', David Moss, really inspired us to stand up and take notice of "Nieweton abbatis" or former "The New Town of the Abbots of Torre Abbey". We u3a'ers were often scanning upwards taking in an exuberance of architectural styles: Victorian, Edwardian baroque, Italianate renaissance, Venetian School, Jacobean, Corinthian and Art Nouveau to name a few. How could The Daily Telegraph in 2023 have dared to report that NA was amongst the ugliest towns? The potted history unfolds in the shadow of the early 13th century St. Leonard's Tower. St. Leonard's Chapel of Ease. St. Mary's (mother church), high up Wolborough Hill, is reputed to be the where the last Mass celebration took place in the 16th c. There were many reasons why this Town thrived becoming a center for entertainment, industry and education. Our guide stressed the importance of communication as in ancient roads that passed through to Brixham, Exeter, Torquay. Newton Abbot was a staging point for The Crusades, exploration, buccaneering and fishing industries. Such

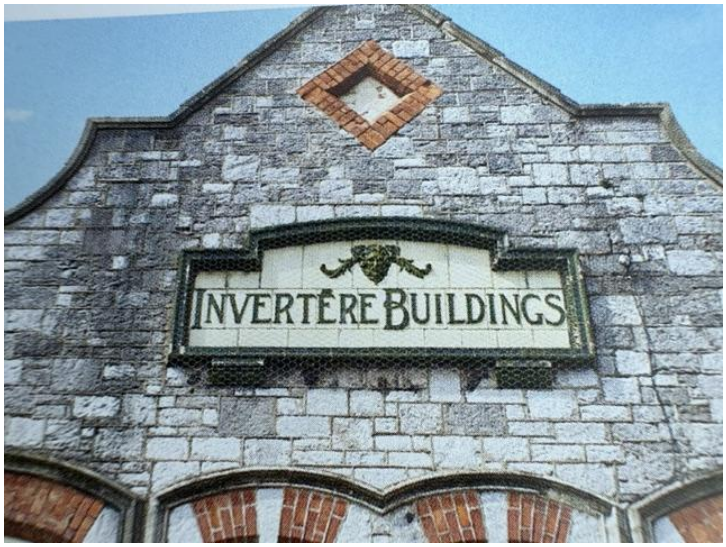




importance warranted a feast for Charles I's visit (1625) which cost £55.5.0 or £15,000 in today's money. Fertile soil was another factor which gave rise to sheep, wool, fell-mongering, leather industries. Apple trees provided a lucrative cider business. Drinking cider was for health, yet, beware of gout or "Devonshire Colic or traces of arsenic from the River Lemon. Another economic shot in the arm was the extensive Cod fishing. 100's of men would gather at the Dartmouth Inn in hope of being recruited on the boats bound for Newfoundland. Ball Clay (decomposed granite) business flourished as well to the point that Josiah Wedgewood put in large orders. Another entrepreneur, James Templar, built the Stover Canal for easier transport for ball clay, dried cod, and granite (1792). Incidentally, for centuries dried cod was considered as currency. As for granite which came down from Haytor, Dartmoor on granite tracks, much was used for building the

British Museum, London Bridge, The National Gallery. The Templars' manor house, Sandford Orleigh, was eventually bought by George Baker and his young wife, a former slave from Bulgaria. Both residents were regarded as celebrities at the time. In order to deter peeping toms, and sightseers, signs were posted on the estate warning trespassers of the danger of the poisonous plant, Hymenophyllum. This was only a fern! In 1846 the railway comes to Newton Abbot turning the Town into a large industrial hub. Among the interesting people, and people with flare, was John Lethbridge. Lethbridge switched careers from a wool merchant to the inventor of the first diving machine. This contraption resulted from experiments conducted in his fish pond. Having salvaged ship wrecks heaving with gold, he became a millionaire.

Another gentleman with flare established The INVERTERE Company. Invertere, Latin, for 'to turn about'. This company manufactured reversible warm and rainproof coats.



From St Leonard's Tower we are off to explore most of the above which gave impetus to the development of the Town. David traces the footprint of the former 13th c. nave of the St. Leonard tower. The nave and chapel were demolished in 1836 for traffic flow. Our guide points out the incorrect history carved on the base of The Prince William of Orange's monument (opposite the Tower) referring to the David Allanach BRIXHAM tour earlier in June. We walked to the former Lloyd's Bank. Here are more exquisite Beerstone carvings including the motif of the beehive. This is symbolic for industry and for hard work. On to the former workhouse designed by George Gilbert Scott. (1901) David recounts the scandalous treatment. Appalling cruelty knew no bounds. Matron and staff are exposed and the former in retirement died speedily and mysteriously. Now it is Union Street where despite the parallel parkers and running engines, our guide vividly describes the full-fledged riot of 1908. The Conservatives have just won over the Liberals. Emmeline Pankhurst who is amongst the celebrating crowd is blamed. Rioters hurled her to the ground intending to toss her in to the river in a barrel. Fortunately, some of the 100 policemen bundled her off to safety. We cannot omit the Passmore Edwards Library and Technical & Arts School (1904). Edwards, a Cornishman, hired fellow Cornishman, the architect, Sylvanus Trevail. Together they went all out with the richly decorated yellow ceramic molding brimming with symbolism. One of the reasons for the impressive building was that Passmore's mother came from Newton Abbot.

Throughout this tour there was a vast amount to learn, live and laugh about, but, alas, our u3a Newsletter space does not permit such a detailed report. David Moss, you have served us well, regaling us with bizarre stories of fascinating Newtonians, and, of course, history, "HOTM-esque" style.

15th October SHALDON, DEVON



The last warm autumn day was made even more glorious by 'Guide-of-the-Month', Elaine Slingsby. For most of us Shaldon seemed somewhat neglected being so close by to Teignmouth. However, we discovered that this pleasingly upmarket village possesses a strong independent history. This proud and attractive village has a sense of humor, i.e. the leaning broomstick alongside the door of Wyche Cottage, the sign on a front door, "Beware of Grumpy Old Man", a weather vane denoting a crown fashioned out of an old trash can lid, and an actual butcher and bakery shop followed by the facetiously named house, "No.1 The Candlestick Makers". Shaldon and Teignmouth are connected by the Teignmouth Bridge. The earlier 1827 wooden one was at the time the second longest in Europe. A few meters shorter than Pont-de-Lyons, France.

Eighteen of us u3a'ers arrived at a milestone, literally speaking. This curiosity – Grade II listed – shows distances in miles, furlongs and perches. The latter are also known as poles or rods = 5 and ½ yards. No time for mathematical members to calculate furlongs and perches for our guide has us heading northwards to Ringmore area (Anglo-Saxon for large open space). Ringmore is much older than Shaldon, entered into the Domesday Book. Large ship building yards were once on the present-day playing park. Ships and war ships were built before the River Teign silted up west side. This industry was transferred over to Teignmouth. Incidentally, much of Shaldon was built over reclaimed river sand. At a look out cum folly our guide showed us sketches by JMW Turner. In 1811 the artist filled six sketchbooks from this vantage point. Meandering southwards via lanes overhung with thatch, more follies, and the remains of the boatyards of sailors, we paused at the old Wyche Cottage. This dwelling became the model for the popular china teapot. A wealthy Scandinavian, Dagmar, had this cottage built as a vacation house. The Village Green, despite much consternation from many residents, was transformed into a bowling green. One of the objections was the probability of bowls crashing through villagers' windows. Never in the local lawn bowling history has that ever happened. Nevertheless, a high explosive WWII bomb ricocheted off The Green leaving an immense crater nearby. The





Hunters' Lodge (1650) is lavishly adorned with stags' heads and garlands. Lord Clifton, proprietor, wined and dined fellow hunters here. Over on the beach of red sand (decayed Permian Beccia), Elaine explains why there are so many Shaldon 'connections' (relatives) who now exist in Newfoundland, Canada. This phenomenon might be explained by the long Shaldon fishing year cycle. Apparently, Shaldon ships carrying clay set sail for Liverpool's potteries, load up with salt, then to St. John's, NFLD, followed by fishing for cod; head for the Mediterranean to off load salt cod; pick up fruit bound for Plymouth and Bristol. Year in; year out. Further up the steep hill are the Botanical Gardens and a Zoo given to the village by the wealthy Homeyard family. William Homeyard invented "Liquifruta," a popular cough medicine. His wife, Maria Homeyard, wanted the brand name on her husband's tombstone. The St. Nicolas' parish priest forbade such an epitaph. Therefore, Maria Homeyard had it engraved backwards, ATURFUQUIL, more Latin sounding. Our tour was cut short due to another recent landslide. We couldn't walk Ness Drive nor to the "Smugglers' Tunnel" through the gigantic Ness headland exiting at the secluded, current-free cove. Thank you, Elaine, for a beautifully written script and presentation. As you boarded the S & T Ferry, we wondered if we'd be so privileged to have another tour, say, Babbacombe down the road.

Leslie Moss

LANGUAGE GROUP

We were treated in October to a very interesting talk given by Peter Budgell about the **Norwegian Language and the country of Norway**. I was surprised to learn that several languages are spoken in Norway: Norwegian and the Sami languages. Norwegian can be spoken with many different accents, but is basically the same throughout the country. However, it can be written in 2 different forms. Bokmål is used around Oslo, in national newspapers, business and higher education and Nynorsk in Western Norway and the fjords. There are also several branches of the Sami language which are spoken across Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Many words are similar to English (music = musikk; station = stasjon) but there are also some 'false friends' (sky = cloud, gravy juice; gift = married, poison). I useful phrase if you visit Norway is Jeg snakker ikke norsk = I don't speak Norwegian. We had the chance to try translating a passage written in Norwegian. It looked very difficult but became easier when it was read aloud and several of the words, when spoken, were similar to English or German. Peter ended his talk with a little information about the Norwegian people and their food.

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday, November 18th** from 2.30 to 4.00 in the Wesley Room at the Mint. The topic will be **'Pet Linguistic Hates'** – a chance for us to air our personal feelings about the use – and mis-use – of our language. On **Wednesday, December 16th** a **Language quiz** will bring 2026 to a close. All are welcome to join us. There is no need to let me know – just turn up.

Albanian January 2025

Albanian is an Indo-European language – the only surviving representative of the Albanoid branch, so has no close relatives. There are two dialects: Gheg in the north and Tosk in the south, but mutually intelligible. Standard Albanian, based on Tosk, is the official language of Albania and Kosovo (over 90% speak Albanian with small percentages speaking Bosnian and Serbian). Albanian is also widely spoken in Montenegro, N. Macedonia, Serbia, Greece and Italy and surprisingly it's the 6th most spoken language in Switzerland!! There are 7.5 million speakers world-wide.

Because Albanian was written relatively late in the Roman script, thankfully the pronunciation is just about phonetic, so there is no problem in reading Albanian, unlike

English spelling! Alphabet of 25 letters (as ours but no 'w') and additional 11 double letters – 36 in all. BUT most vocabulary is very unfamiliar and, according to the Guide Book, Albanians are rather pleased their language is difficult and that the alphabet has 36 letters! There are torrents of congratulations if a foreigner manages to speak any Albanian at all!

Joyce Burgess

NOVELISTS GROUP

Teignmouth Book Fair — 7 November 2026

A u3a review

Books are a uniquely portable magic, and on 7 November that magic multiplied by the thousands.

We writers from the u3a Exeter Novelists' group decided to have a fun day out in Teignmouth. We hired a table from the lovely Dawn and set up shop at the Teignmouth Book Fair.



Diverse and eclectic? That covered our books, the other exhibitors and the visitors. Between us, we had books by Ed Adams, Ward Benedict, Alison Deare, Dennis Humphreys, D A Parsons and Lynne Pearl. Crime, mystery, historical fiction, espionage, romantasy, science fiction, memoirs, road trips… quite a few bases.

The visitors brought just as much variety. They arrived with tote bags and bundles of books; some had a paperback casually tucked into an outside coat pocket. Everyone had something to say: what they liked, who they were reading, and whether it was traditionally published or indie, paper or eReader.

Some were budding writers. Most were avid readers. And they had Opinions. Oh yes. We gave as good as we got!

It was a treat to meet so many readers, fellow authors and exhibitors, along with a few librarians on scouting duties and speakers preparing for events later in the day. The conversations were as much a pleasure as the books.

We also amused ourselves with a rotating selection of A4 signs. Here's a sample. Please don't groan:

- **Plots hatched. Minds blown.**
- **Ask us anything—we'll make something up.**
- **Unreliable witnesses. Ask us anything. Accounts may differ.**
- **Good company. Questionable characters.**

- **Building characters. Plotting regularly.**

And there were more. We believe in keeping a little stock in reserve.

One day in Teignmouth. Countless stories. Plenty of opinions. We went home delighted—and with plenty to talk about at our next meeting.

Five stars.

Ed Rashbrooke

POETRY GROUPS

On 1 October, National Poetry Day, our groups, Joy of Poetry 1, 2 and 3, jointly presented a successful event at the Mint to celebrate our art form. We aimed, by revealing a variety of beautiful and accessible poems, a number of which were written by our own members, to demonstrate how enjoyable poetry can be and how it can express ideas and emotions in its own unique way.

We were pleased to welcome about 45 u3a members and visitors to our audience. This was the first of what may become Exeter u3a group-led 'special events,' showcasing the achievements and friendships that occur in our vibrant special interest groups especially when a 'family' of the same or similar groups organize these presentations, as we did.

Exeter u3a already has three 'Joy of Poetry' groups, two of which broadly speaking are for people with some knowledge of poetry, and the other for members new to poetry or returning to it. All these are on Wednesdays. Our new group, 'JoP 4,' on Thursday afternoons will have its inaugural meeting on 3 December and will again cater for people with some poetic knowledge and experience. All our groups contain a mixture of poetry written by our own members – though this is by no means compulsory! – and poems old and new, whether well-known or hidden gems, that members have found and brought to share with the group.

So, if you would have liked to join us but couldn't manage Wednesdays, why not consider joining our Thursday group? Details of all the groups are on the website and in the newsletter. Our meetings are in central Exeter venues and the atmosphere is always friendly and supportive.

Loran Waite

QUIZ GROUP

Exeter Quiz Group Wins Again

On Thursday 23 October Exeter u3u once again sent two teams (named after local sporting venues) to the annual Inter Devon u3a Quiz, hosted by Honiton u3a, last year's winners. Questions covered a wide range of topics and included a fun "Sweet Treats" Round with cryptic clues leading to popular confectionery answers. A total of 12 teams took part with Sandy Park performing brilliantly to win the quiz and the dubious honour of setting next year's quiz, while St James Park came home in the middle of the field. Most importantly a very enjoyable afternoon was had by all.

Steph Ward



Lyn Haken and Mandy Bryant from the winning team being presented with the trophy by Richard Spoerry, Chair of Honiton u3a.



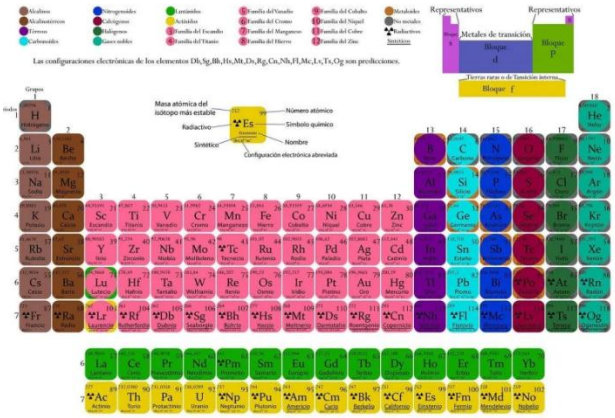
The Exeter u3a teams (one in the background of the other)

SCIENCE

Wednesday 2 December 2pm via Zoom.

A Guided tour through the Periodic Table of Elements

by Simon Cains , High Wycombe U3A.



Simon explains the nature of the atom, and the structure of the electron 'orbits' around the nucleus.

He shows how the periodic table has groups of elements with common properties, with some classic demonstrations of fires and explosions, celebrating many British discoveries.

Wednesday 6 January 2pm at The Mint.

A talk by Martin Young, a member of our Science group, regarding his recent role as consultant for the film 'Pressure' about weather forecasting for the D-day landings and will include a short snippet of the film. The talk will not be heavily science-based as there is a cross over with Arts and History, so this talk is open to all Exeter u3a members. But please contact the Science Convenor in advance if you wish to attend.

Martin will cover:

- The background to D-Day and the importance of the weather forecasters
- Right for the wrong reasons - how accurate were the weather forecasts for D-day?
- His role in *Pressure* as a meteorological adviser
- Did *Pressure* deviate from actual history?
- A brief comparison with modern day weather forecasting skill/techniques.



An aerial view of Allied Naval forces engaged in Operation Overlord on 6 June 1944

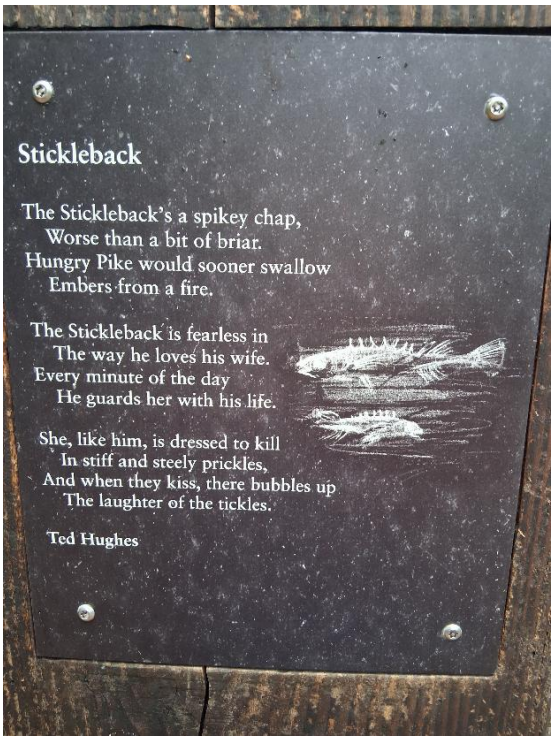
David Northrop

SHORT WEEKLY WALKS

As Autumn approaches we have enjoyed a favourite walk on the Common at Hawkerland, where the ponies who had grazed over the summer months were being returned (with their foals) to Dartmoor for the winter. The gorse also held a real atmosphere of Halloween with the dense covering of spiders webs. One member, who was taking an even shorter route than others on a Stover Park walk, was entertained by all the beautifully engraved nature poems of Ted Hughes.

Hawkerland Dartmoor foals





Hawkerland spiders webs



Janie Smallridge

WALKING GROUP

I am starting to feel that we've come nearly full circle for 2026…with a handful of walks to go, but plenty of mileage and memories clocked again for this year!

To share these last couple of months, simple photos with brief comments may best sum up the true spirit of our upwardly mobile bunch…



Andy's walk from Ottery St Mary to Newton Poppleford. Hikers meet 'extra friendly' deer on walk near Wiggaton!



Elaine's Walkie-Talkie walk around Silverton. What a lovely village with its history and olde worlde homes, plus views to impress us townies.



Crediton via Sandford and Upton Hellions circular. Striders explore Mid Devon hamlets. After a shakey start with no country bus turning up, we skipped over to the bus station to be rescued by Stagecoach buses. Though an hour late, much to smile about our fortitude and

luck, as the day got better. Group at Upton Hellions church with lunch over and ready to go again…..squeezing in a snapshot.



Branscombe, Beer to Seaton. One of my favourite walking areas with some challenging hills, particularly coming away from Branscombe beach after lunch there. See the steepness of a long, long hill. Hikers only need to apply for this one! Fantastic backdrop view and coastal area.



A lot easier now ..On top at last…



Beer harbour and beach…Ready to take the next set of steep rising steps … Seaton just around the corner?

The Walkie-Talkie walk 3 September went to Teignmouth. Lovely day, from the bus, walking from top of Dawlish road, down to Teignmouth seafront - views across to the Ness and Torbay. Along the prom and boarded the Shaldon Ferry, oldest foot ferry in the country! From there up to the Ness and through Smugglers tunnel exiting on the Ness beach. Some had much deserved drink/vittles in the Ness Hotel, others back to the village. Perfect day, we were blest with sunshine and warmth!



Just a few days ago, Cathy's Walkie-Talkie walk for November from the Tally Ho to Northbrook and Ludwell Valley drew another good crowd…highlighting the strong support for shorter walks nearer to home. (No pics, sorry!).

A set of further rambles are planned ahead, together with our annual Xmas meal/walk/party in December and then, capped by a 30th December mystery walk (again this year) …if you dare???

A little early for the festive celebrations just yet, but much to enjoy along the WG way.

Dave & Mike

LIST OF CONTACTS

COMMITTEE

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

CONTACTS FOR NON-COMMITTEE OFFICIALS

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

CONTACTS FOR GROUPS- REMEMBER to contact the member named below before attending a group. Convenors please contact groups coordinator for any changes.

Groups	Contact Name	Tel Number	Email
Anthropology	Jock Campbell		
Art and Artists	Andrew Staley		
Birds, Trees and Bees	Colin Johnson		
Backgammon	Huey Walker		
Books and Life	Nichola Watson		
Bridge	Ruth Sanders Liz Batten		
Canoeing	Sue Kidd		
Chinese and Japanese Brush Writing	Eric Bransden		
Chess	Di Pitkeathly		
Choir	Julie Crichton-Smith		

Circle Dance	Jill Ashby		
Classical Music	Colin Farlow		
Classical Greek	John Burgess		
Creative Writing	Andrew Mackay		
Current Affairs	Mary Wormington		
Devon & Exeter Local History	Derek Smithers		
Discussion Circle	Chris Grundy		
Discussion 2	Annabel Nater		
Discussion 3	Frances Canning		
Drawing for Everyone	Vic Webb		
Economics	Jacqui Barnicoat		
Exercise	Penny Matthews		
Finding your Voice	Linda Lewis		
Food Matters	Gail Meldrum		
French Conversation Advanced	Marie-Laure Despres		
Games for Fun	Liz Batten		
Gardening	Phil Slater M.J. Morgan		
Genealogy (Stage 1)	Shivaun Gammie		
Genealogy (Stage 2)	Shivaun Gammie/ Maeve Kolitz		
German Conversation	Alan Caig		
History	Mark Hall		
History on the Move	Leslie Moss		
Italian Conversation	Stephanie Barnes		
Italian Conversation 2	Lisetta Tripodi		
Intermediate Italian	Diana Pitkeathly		
Italian Conversation 3 (Avanti in Italiano)	Linda Cowey		

IT	Dave Parsons		
Joy of Performing	Linda Lewis		
Joy of Poetry	Amrita Mohan		
Joy of Poetry 2	Loran Waite Sydney Fisher		
Joy of Poetry 3	Loran Waite		
Joy of Poetry 4	Sydney Fisher Loran Waite		
Language	Joyce Burgess		
Latin Int. & Beg.	J & J Burgess		
Latin Int. 2	Barbara Hodder		
Mahjong	Stephanie Ward		
Novelists	Frances Canning		
Parliamo Insieme	Anne Staley		
Parlons Francais (Advanced)	Alice Lemaitre		
Parlons Francais (Intermediate)	Alice Lemaitre Nichola Watson		
Patchwork, Applique, & Quilting	Daphne Andrews		
Philosophy 1	Trudi Learmouth		
Philosophy 2	Phillip Ralli		
Philosophy 3	Simon Borrington		
Photography	Kris Frank		
Pickleball	Minna Egan Ian Murray		
Play Reading	Stephanie Barnes		
Quilting Bees	Amanda James		
Quizzes	Jane Chappell		
Reading Group I	Lucina Swain		
Reading Group II	Pam Spencer		
Reading Group III	Ruth Sanders		
Reading Group IV	Jan Stobo		
Reading Group V	Anne Barwell		
Reading Group VI	Faith Wood		
Reading Group VII	Frances Obee		

Reading Group VIII	Clare Flinn		
Saturday Supper Club	Brian Cousins		
Science	David Northrop		
Scrabble	Marcia Hampson		
Short Weekly Walks	Janie Smallridge		
Spanish 1	Paul Mattausch Burrows		
Intermediate Spanish	William Rawson		
Still Life Drawing	Mirren Baglin		
Table Tennis	Finn Ibsen		
Tennis	Kay Mathews		
Transport	Paul Palin		
Travel	Ian Murray		
Turkish Conversation	Carole Low		
Walking Group	Dave Bassett Mike Arstall		

Exeter U3A – Groups Timetable – see above for Contact Details.
Convenors – please contact groups coordinator for changes.

Day	am	pm
Mon	**Pickleball** - weekly **Discussion Circle –** 1st of month **Reading Group 6 –** 3rd of month **IT Support –** 4th of month **Parlons Francais (Intermediate) –** alt weeks **Parlons Francais (Advanced) –** alt weeks **Chinese and Japanese Brush-Writing** **Novelists Group –** 1st of the month **Classical Greek** – 2nd of month **Anthropology** – 4th of month	**French conversation (adv.) –** 1st & 3rd of month **Quilting Bee –** 1st of month **Art & Artists –** 2nd of month **Bridge –** 2nd & 4th of month **Reading Group 4 –** 3rd of month **Creative Writing 1** – 3rd of month **Creative Writing 2 –** 1st and 3rd of month **Anthropology –** 4th of month **Avanti in Italiano –** 2nd & 4th of month **Latin – alt weeks** 2nd & 4th of month **Devon and Exeter Local History** – 4th of month **Circle Dancing** – alternate weeks **Finding Your Voice** – 2nd and 4th
Tue	**Scrabble –** weekly **Short Weekly Walks -** weekly **Choir –** 1st & 3rd of month **Italian Conversation** – 4th of month **Walking Group (Hikers, 7-10 miles) –** 4th of month **Still Life Drawing –** 3rd of month **Current Affairs** -1st and 3rd of month	**Patchwork, Applique & Quilting** – 2nd & 4th **Drawing for Everyone** – 1st of month **Travel** – 2nd of month **Play Reading** – 2nd of month **Reading Group 7 –** 2nd of month **Reading Group 3 –** 3rd of month **Reading Group 2** – 3rd of month **Reading Group 1** – 4th of month **Table Tennis –** usually 1 per month **Philosophy 1 –** 3rd of month **Joy of Performing –** 1st and 3rd of month **Joy of Performing 2** – 2nd and 4th of month
Wed	**Exercise** - weekly **Still Life Drawing** – 3rd of month **Les Francophones** - weekly **Philosophy 2** – bimonthly **Italian Conversation 2** – last of month **Chess** – weekly **Poetry 3** – 3rd of month **Intermediate Spanish** – 1st and 3rd of month	**Science** – 1st of month **German Conversation** – 1st & 3rd of month **Italian Conversation** – 2nd & 4th of month **Language** – 3rd of month (autumn & winter only) **History** – 4th of month **Philosophy 3** – 4th of month **Reading Group** 5 – 4th of month **Quizzes** – 5th of month **Food Matters** – 1st of month **Joy of Poetry** – 1st of month **Joy of Poetry 2 –** 2nd of month **Parliamo Insieme –** fortnightly **Genealogy (Stage 1)** – 2nd of month **Classical Music** – 2nd of month
Thu	**Philosophy 2** – 1st of month (alternate months) **Walking Group (Walkie Talkies 3-5 miles)** – 1st of month **Walking Group (Striders 5-7 miles)** – 2nd of month **Economics** – 2nd of month **History on the Move** – 3rd of month **Monthly Speaker Meeting** – 4th of month **Discussion 2 -** 1st of month **Discussion 3** – 3rd of month **Reading Group 8** – 3rd of month	**Spanish** – 1st & 3rd of month **Circle Dancing** – alternate weeks **Table Tennis** – Usually 1 per month **Photography** – 4th of month **Books and Life** – 4th of month **History on the Move –** 3rd of month **Joy of Poetry 4** – weekly
Fri	**Tennis** – weekly **Genealogy (Stage 2)**– 2nd of month **Topsham Coffee Morning** – 1st of the month **Canoeing** – last of month (May-Sep only)	**Mahjong** – weekly **Board Games for Fun** – alternate weeks **Transport** – 2nd of month
Sat		**Saturday Supper Club** – 2nd of month (evening)
Sun		**Poltimore Afternoon Tea** – 4th Sunday