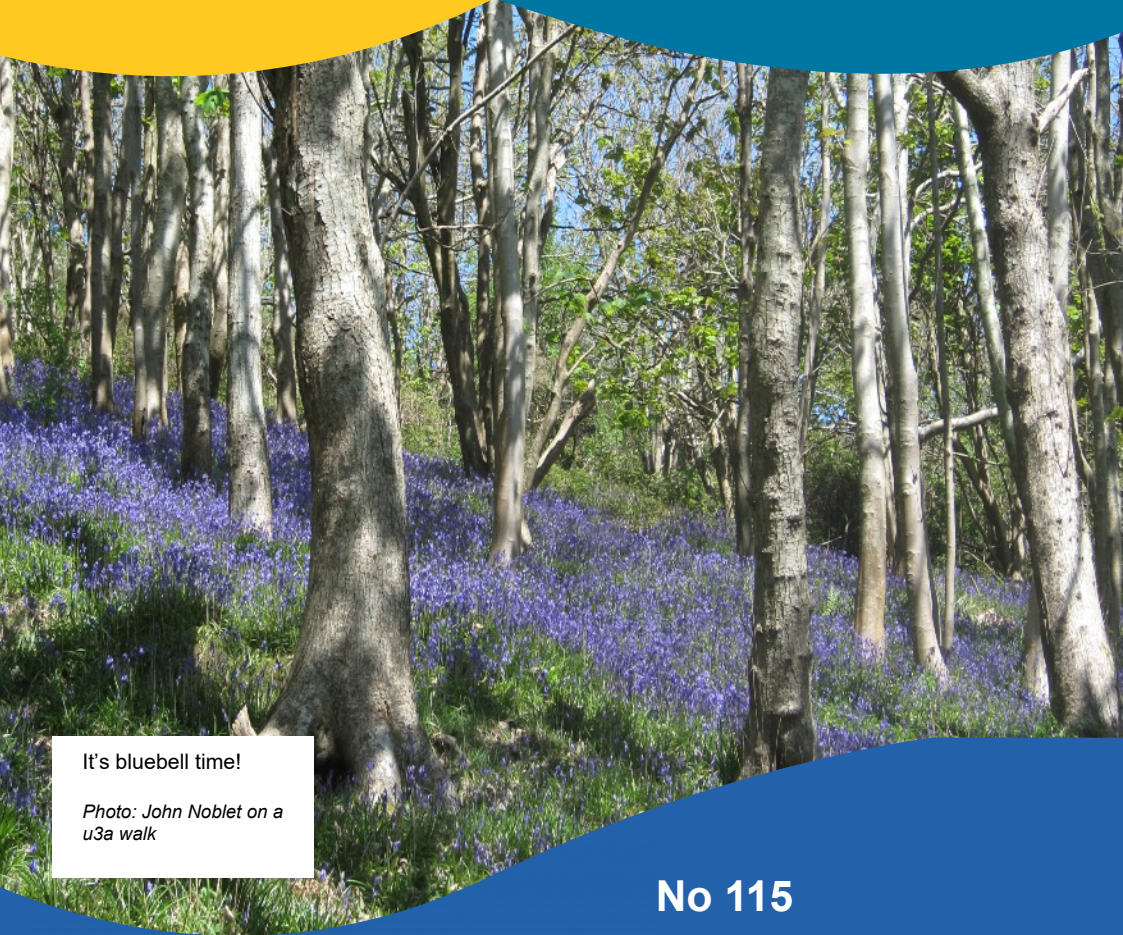


Tavy District u3a

THE NEWSLETTER



It's bluebell time!

*Photo: John Noblet on a
u3a walk*

u3a

No 115

May 2022

Who's Who in Tavy District u3a

Chair	Paul Ward
Secretary	Randall Williams
Treasurer	Angela Pitt
Membership	Tony Rose
Groups Liaison	Sonja Armstrong
Newsletter Distribution	Caroline Lorenzi
Speaker Secretary	Jane Ward
Two Moors Liaison	Randall Williams
Catering	Isobel Davies
Equipment	Graham Foster

Events Committee
Norma Woodcock
Chris Webb
Janet Hunt
Shirley Smith

Remember:

Contact details of all
Group Leaders and
Committee members
can be found in the
password protected
area of the website

Webmaster: Jan Draper
web@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk

Newsletter Editor: John Noblet

The deadline for the next Newsletter is 20th June 2022

Send contributions to johnnoblet@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Just when you thought it was safe to come from behind the sofa I'm back, and I am delighted to have another opportunity to serve as the chair of Tavy District u3a. My first duty is to thank the outgoing committee and the group leaders for keeping our u3a going during one of the most difficult periods we have known.

Covid has claimed some casualties: we have lost some groups and we now have about 350 paid-up members compared with a little over 400 before the pandemic. However, we are still here, and we are looking toward the future. We have a new and enthusiastic committee that has had its first meeting and by the time you read this we will have met again.

We have identified several priorities we believe to be important, including raising our profile in the local community and recruiting new members, but we rely on you, our members, to let us know what is important to you. We are conducting a survey asking simple questions along the lines of what do you like about u3a and what could we do better? Please do complete it. This is your chance to help develop Tavy u3a in the way you want. The events and theatre trip organisers are back in action and have some tempting offers that I hope many of you will sign up for and enjoy. If you are interested in being involved with running your u3a, we still need a volunteer for the role of vice-chair and we will soon be looking for a public relations and publicity officer.

All u3as are operationally independent registered charities that are members of the Third Age Trust. They are not "branches" of the national organisation - and the national officers get grumpy if we use that word - but they are required to conduct their affairs in keeping with the principles of the u3a movement. As we come out of the restrictions imposed by Covid this is a good time to remind ourselves of those principles, which are the "Third Age Principle", the "Self-help Learning Principle" and the "Mutual Aid Principle".

Eligibility for membership of the u3a is not defined by age. Membership is open to all in their "Third Age", which is defined as no-longer being in full time employment. Prospective members do not need to be fully retired. u3as endeavour to be inclusive organisations and ensure that all who want to join can do so irrespective of age, gender, religion, disability etc.

Our interest groups operate according to the self-learning principle. The groups are made up of and are facilitated by our members. We learn for the pleasure of learning, not for qualifications, and we help one another by sharing, with no expectation of financial gain, our knowledge, skills, and interests. Group leaders (or convenors, or facilitators) may or may not have qualifications in the topic of interest and there is no distinction between learners and teachers.

We are all u3a members. In accordance with the Mutual Aid principle, we help one another, and we all contribute to our u3a, whether that be as an officer or committee member, a group leader, by organising events, contributing to the newsletter, or making the tea. We can all contribute something.



From the Chair *Continued*

I recently heard the analogy of a bank account. If we keep taking from the bank account, and not putting something back, the account runs down and fails. But, if we keep putting something back in, no matter how small, then the account grows and thrives. It is the same with your u3a; all contributions are valuable and valued.

This is a big year for the u3a movement and Tavy District u3a. It is the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the u3a movement in the UK and, in the autumn, it will be Tavy District u3a's 20th birthday! We have started to think about how we might celebrate these events. There is already talk about having an inter-u3a quiz, probably in the autumn, with our neighbouring u3as, and a "picnic in the park" event in the summer but let us have your ideas. How would you like to celebrate these special anniversaries?

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our monthly meetings. All members of your committee will be sporting a blue u3a lanyard and ID badge so that you can recognise us. Please do come and have a chat. We want to hear from you.

Keep well, and look after yourselves and one another.

Paul

May Day

Many folklore customs have their roots planted firmly back in the Dark Ages, when the ancient Celts had divided their year by four major festivals. *Beltane* had particular significance as it represented the first day of summer. Still celebrated today, we perhaps know *Beltane* better as May 1st, or May Day.

Down through the centuries May Day has been associated with fun, revelry and perhaps most important of all, fertility. The day would be marked with village folk cavorting round the maypole, the selection of the May Queen and the dancing figure of the Jack-in-the-Green at the head of the procession. Jack is thought to be a relic from those enlightened days when our ancient ancestors worshipped trees.

These pagan roots did little to endear these May Day festivities with either the established Church or State. In the sixteenth century riots followed when May Day celebrations were banned.

The May Day festivities all but vanished following the Civil War when Oliver Cromwell and his Puritans took control. Legislation was passed which saw the end of village maypoles.

Dancing did not return to the village greens until the restoration of Charles II. 'The Merry Monarch' helped ensure the support of his subjects with the erection of maypoles. These can still be seen on some village greens. May Day is still celebrated in many villages with the crowning of the May Queen.

Locally, of course, there is the Obby Oss in Padstow, the Hobby in Minehead and the May Queen in Lustleigh to say nothing of Flora Day in Helston a week later.

Summer is coming. Enjoy it!

John Noblet

Speaker Programme 2022 Part 3

Below is the programme for May to July 2022. Please note that it will **not** be possible to attend the meeting on Wednesday 4th May via Zoom; it simply won't work! We will be returning to hybrid meetings in both June and July.

Thank you to those who have been in touch with me since the last newsletter with speaker suggestions. Further suggestions are always welcome. Please feel free to e-mail me –

Jane

Wednesday 4th May 2022 – 2pm – at Tavistock Town Hall.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS PRESENTATION WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE ON ZOOM

David Buncle – 21st Century Falconer

David will be known to many of you from a previous meeting to which he brought a number of his birds. This is another opportunity to meet David and some more of his amazing birds-of-prey. Learn a little of the history of this “sport of Kings” and how David’s boyhood fascination led to a varied career amongst some of nature’s most spectacular predators.

Wednesday 1st June 2022 – 2pm – at Tavistock Town Hall and via Zoom.

The presentation itself will be via Zoom

“Climate Reality” - Brenda Ainsley

Brenda is a u3a member, a trained Climate Reality Leader and Community Lead for Plastic Free Cotgrave. She is also a Green Flag Assessor for Eco Schools. Brenda leads various Eco and Climate Groups for the u3a and has presented three National Talks. She jointly leads the 'Countdown to COP 27' online group for Trust u3a. In November, 2021, she set up and led four workshops during the COP26 Climate conference in Glasgow, with an emphasis on Intergenerational Climate Activism.

This talk is about the Climate Reality Project which was founded by former US Vice President Al Gore. Every effort has been made to ensure that all facts are verified and refer only to Peer Reviewed research. Brenda will draw on the work of institutions such as NASA and the Meteorological Office, along with that of many academic institutions. She will provide up to date examples from both the UK and around the world. There will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end.

Wednesday 6th July 2022 – 2pm – at Tavistock Town Hall and via Zoom

“Poisons in the Garden” - Dr Frances Howard

Dr Frances Howard, Tavy District u3a member and Fellow of the Linnean Society will be well known to many of you from previous plant related presentations. To quote Frances:

“Do you need to worry when your grandchild...or the dog, eats holly or mistletoe berries? Do you know which plant acts like Novichok? Which is the most poisonous plant in your garden?”

Come and listen to Dr Frances Howard, FLS.....and find out!”

Member Survey Update

At the time of writing, we have had over 140 responses, 40% of the membership. We're very grateful to those who have taken the trouble to respond but we're really keen to get an even better response.

If you haven't already done so, please take the time to complete it – according to Survey Monkey, the average time it takes is less than 10 minutes. The survey is available until 7 May at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DX29SL7 or, if you'd prefer to complete a paper copy, give me a ring on 487318 and I'll put one in the post.

Once the survey period is over, I'll put the results on the website and circulate a link to those as well as putting a summary in the next newsletter. As a taster however, some provisional findings are:

Interest groups get the highest rating for importance, closely followed by the newsletter. Friendship and social contact gets a slightly higher rating than opportunities for learning.

Here is a "word cloud" showing members' responses to the question asking what they get out of their membership – the bigger the letters, the more members used those words.

making new friends new things holidays theatre trips Joined like-minded people Social
events Social contact going monthly talks development part subjects
monthly meetings Bridge activities sharing interest meeting
talking interest others groups things Friendship
Walking learning visits Meeting people joining groups
Meeting new people making opportunity many trips Attend
interesting talks See friends Chance enjoy made friends Belonging History group
people

Opportunities for improvement flagged up include:

Have a higher visibility "meet and greet" facility at monthly meetings.
Re-instate regular new member coffee mornings.
Find ways to open up new interest groups in popular subjects.

The committee are already taking action on these. No fewer than 45 suggestions for new interest groups were received. While not all of these suggestions will come to fruition, we are confident that some will. Where members said they would like to be put in touch with others sharing the same interest, this has already been done for the most popular choices and will be done at the end of the survey whenever more than one member has expressed an interest in the same subject.

More details of the findings next time.

Randall Williams

Tavy District u3a Code of Conduct

One of the drier tasks of the committee is to keep up to date a number of policies and procedures that underpin the way the u3a operates. It has just reviewed and updated those policies and they are now available for reference on the Governance page of the website. One new item is a Code of Conduct for u3a members – we have agreed to adopt the code recommended by the Third Age Trust, which is reproduced below.

Tavy District u3a members are expected to conduct themselves in line with the Movement's Guiding Principles. They are also expected to treat each other with dignity and respect. Specifically:

- Members are expected to know, follow and promote the Principles of the u3a Movement at every opportunity.
- Members must always act in the best interests of Tavy District u3a and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring their own, another u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Members are expected to use Tavy District u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable objects/purposes.
- Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Tavy District u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- Members are expected to abide by Tavy District u3a's procedures and practices.
- Members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times.

The Principles of the u3a Movement appear as a separate document on the Governance page.

Meet and Greet Volunteers

Replies to the survey indicate that we need to work harder to make monthly meetings welcoming to first time visitors.

We are therefore asking for volunteers to take it in turn to meet and greet visitors.

You will be equipped with a u3a branded sash and a "Can I help you?" badge and we would have perhaps four volunteers on duty on any particular day.

If you are willing to volunteer to be on the rota, please contact **Randall Williams**

Springtime Birdwatching

Our March outing was to the Nature Reserve between Moretonhampstead and Dunsford. We met up at Steps Bridge car park and did a circular walk through the woods.

Weather was overcast and cold but dry with little wind. The wild daffodils were out in abundance which brightened up the whole area no end but there was a distinct lack of bird life - even robins were in short supply which is most unusual. The only chattering was of people walking their dogs and conversations between ourselves of course.

However, all was not lost! We still managed to clock up 12 different types of bird, even if it was only one or two of each. At one point a military helicopter (nickname - Petrol Budgie) passed low and noisily overhead but was soon out of sight. However, the highlight of the day was a sighting of a pair of dippers that stayed around for some time and enabled Hywel to take this lovely picture.



The Walled Garden Café in Dunsford itself is our favoured place for lunch after visiting Steps Bridge.

We had to sit outside in the covered area as they had a big group inside but there was no wind so we didn't get cold and, of course, it was also much healthier Covid-wise!

In April we met at Stover Country Park but due to illness and other commitments and mishaps we were a group of just two! Nevertheless, we had a good day.

The forecast heavy rain did not materialise and at lunch time the sun came out to warm us while we picnicked by the bird-feeder, as did the numerous squirrels. There was plenty of coming and going on the feeder while we ate and we had a marvellous sighting of a nuthatch when he came to sit on a branch quite close to us calling loudly. Searching for a mate maybe?

As is usual in Spring there was plenty of nesting going on. We watched a coot gathering material to build a nest and others nearby already sitting on theirs.



Springtime Birdwatching *Continued*

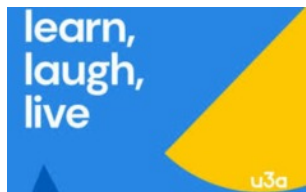
On an island the swans had built a huge nest and there was also a small one amongst the reeds topped by a Mandarin duck. I managed to get pictures of male and female Mandarins. The male is a proper show-off isn't he? So colourful!

We were planning to go to Lydford Gorge in May with the hope of seeing Pied Flycatchers amongst others but at present the area around the hide is closed for maintenance so we shall wait and see! As enthusiastic bird watchers we are always open to suggestions when it comes to venue so if you've been somewhere you found particularly interesting bird-wise please let me know.

Rosemary Edwards



*Photos by Hywel Edwards,
Rosemary Edwards and
Christine Dew*



Remembering

I recently went with another u3a member to visit a bench situated on the banks of the River Tavy near Hill Bridge in Creason's Wood. Every time I go down there I wonder if it has been damaged. So far I have only heard from people who have sat on it having their picnics. There is a plaque saying it is dedicated to Rüdiger Lorenzi who collected fungi here. I often wonder what people think about this foreigner collecting strange fungi in the outer reaches of Peter Tavy.

We used to find Chanterelle in abundance. Once Boletus Edulis, sometimes called Cep or Penny Bun. We also collected baskets full of field mushrooms.

Do other people forage for wild mushrooms or other wild fruits?

Caroline Lorenzi

Ford Park Cemetery

The second group to visit Ford Park Cemetery recently had good weather.

I had never been there before but took along the plot number for the grave of a relative buried there in 1907 hoping to find it. As well as enjoying the guided tour I was helped to find the grave by one of the volunteers. I hadn't expected to find a headstone as it was a parish burial. While we had our coffee and cake the lady checked the computer again and told me the grave had been reused. A completely unrelated person was also buried there years later and had a headstone, so I was able to return and take photos after our tour ended.

Encouraged by this success I decided to walk on into the city centre and made my first visit to Marks and Spencer for two years. With no idea of the adventure ahead of me I went to Royal Parade to catch the bus back to Tavistock.

Heaps of people were queuing, so the bus was obviously late. Staff were saying they hoped everyone had been to the toilet as we would be going the long way home. The fire on the moor had closed the main road back to Tavistock so travel was somewhat eventful. We set off at 2.30pm and followed the normal route as far as the Plessey roundabout at Roborough. With police cars blocking access to the moor the bus turned round and went all the way back along the A38, over the Tamar Bridge, up to Callington and then home via Gunnislake. I finally got in my door at 4.45pm but it was a lovely ride on a double decker and I must have seen hundreds of lambs enjoying the sunshine. The journey home took so long that I was able to send my grave photos out to cousins in Australia and get a reply all before reaching Tavistock!

Pam Morris



Another u3a member, who shall remain anonymous, wondered why a defibrillator was at a cemetery.

**The deadline for the next Newsletter is 20th June
Please send to johnnoble@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk**

Christmas in March

Wine Appreciation Group 2

We had planned to meet at the Annex in late December, but Covid put paid to that so we rescheduled and enjoyed a lovely evening there in late March.

We chose three wines to share between the seven of us and we each picked two tapas from the menu well guided by Joan Jones, who knows the restaurant well.

Mike Barry made an excellent choice of a white American Chardonnay to start our evening followed by two reds, the first a South African Pinotage, the next a Merlot chosen by Ian Rush.



In true tasting fashion we swirled sniffed and tasted the wines before drinking. Cheers!

Bob did an excellent job of pouring equal shares for the seven of us much to our amusement. The waiter did not match the pouring success and he provided an extra glass of red wine. The appropriate change of glasses and the delicious tasty tapas which we shared around the table impressed us.

Just a word of warning: book an early table. We met at 16.30 and by 18.00 the place was extremely busy, no surprise really, a great night out.

The group is open to new members and meets monthly in our homes, with one or two wine tasting vineyard visits on this summer's agenda. You are welcome to join us.

Bob Naybour

Mah Jong Groups

The Mah Jong Group meets in the Red and Black Club, every fortnight, on a Tuesday morning at 10.30.

If anybody would like to join them, they would be welcome.

If you don't know how to play, the Beginners Mah Jong Group will be starting a session soon. If you would like to learn, you are very welcome to come along.

Contact Mary Piper for more details of either group.

Cream Tea and Questions

On the 10th February a group of Tavy District u3a “intelligencia” met in the newly decorated and comfortably furnished Parish Rooms for a wonderful cream tea. The “down side” to the afternoon was that we had to answer questions before the cream tea was served and answer more questions after it!

It soon became clear that a lot of hard work and planning had taken place to make this afternoon a splendid success. The questions were ingeniously contrived and were divided into 6 categories some of which weren't as obvious as their titles seem to suggest. Who could know that the Danube flows through 10 countries? I know now, although I couldn't name many. It seemed obvious that the food and drink round was going to be the easiest but far from it, it turned out to be the most challenging for all the groups. Thank you Janet!

The cream tea was delicious. Your scones were perfect, Janet. Thank you and Shirley for helping to prepare and serve the tea and do the washing up afterwards. Thank you, Chris for ably reading out all the questions and Norma for keeping the scores.

And the winning group! The only group with a solitary member...but at least she had total control over the answers and didn't have to negotiate with anyone else! I know whose team I'm going to try to get on next year!!!

Tentatively, we are starting to join in activities that we so enjoyed before Covid, which although they are slightly different because of the mitigations we have had to make, it is wonderful to begin to slowly approach something a little closer to normal.

Once again thank you Janet Hunt, Norma Woodcock, Chris Webb and Shirley Smith for all your hard work, culinary skills, intelligence and ingenuity. Let's hope The Cream Tea Quiz becomes an annual event.

Steph Steer

Love Your Garden?

We would like to form a new u3a Gardening group. We would intend to meet once a month at our homes for a cup of coffee or tea. Our aims are to:

- Share our love of spending time gardening with others of like mind.
- Enjoy the early buds of green as they emerge in spring, the full colour of summer and the rich tones of autumn.
- Share information and tips for greater success, to solve problems together.
- And perhaps arrange occasional garden visits.

If you are interested, please contact us

Sheila and Bob Naybour



Roger's Rant

Being the inventive sort is not good for the mind or sleep. It doesn't shut down and works away on it's own trying to get a better solution. I tried it. Peddling that is. To try to generate electricity to light a bulb using a car alternator driven by a bike. Grossly hard work just to light a 40 Watt bulb. Almost as good as going to the gym! I gave up and just turned on the switch for the mains electric, paid the bill, and forgot it.

Guilty as the rest of us, that's me. As part of the generation that has "never had it so good" we have used more energy than we needed or wanted with cruises, big cars, flights, larger houses than we need, and careless attention to home insulation. Not a thought to energy prices or embodied carbon. I have left factory lights on 24 hrs and unnecessary machinery operating.

But times, they are changing. Are higher energy prices to be welcomed? They will cause hardship, but they will also focus attention on this imperative and possibly unwelcome subject. We all hate a change in culture especially at express speed.

Have we become so used to just turning on the switch that we have given up? In just a few years home generation has become more than possible. We are even talking about using electric cars. (I would have to peddle an awful lot to get one of those to move!).

Are we procrastinating? I am guilty too. "I must look at that sometime", "what's the point in investment since I'm such a wrinkle that I won't get to see the payback".

Prices are going up. A forecast 10-15% is not unreasonable by the end of the year and energy prices are a big part of this. But it is surely not all gloom and doom. We now have the means to solve energy problems. Home generation prices are relatively going down. If we wish, we can do something about it; if not for ourselves then for our surviving partner or to put back a bit that we have used?

As the adverts say, "now for the science bit". Government/local authority will install insulation, new gas boiler, and other renewables for free. Yes, this is real. I have had them installed for free! But the problem is the electricity prices especially if a heat pump is installed to replace oil heating. We live in the sunny West Country and solar panels to heat water and/or make electricity are now economical with lowering paybacks. My 24 panels keep us off grid for about 10 months a year. So, bring on the electric car and home charging.....

Well, that's it. Relax. That's the end of today's unpopular Roger's rant. Just keep taking the pills and stay vertical!

Roger Plumb



The Newsletter Editor wonders what the Current Affairs Group have been discussing recently?

Group Leader's Coffee Morning

On Thursday 7th April eighteen intrepid group leaders and members of the committee met up at the Parish Rooms. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss the way forward as we emerge from the pandemic, and for the new committee to introduce themselves.

Paul Ward opened the proceedings and gave everyone an overview of the committee's aims. He then introduced Tony Rose, our membership secretary and Beacon administrator, who talked about the benefits of using Beacon to manage the groups. He is proposing to run a training session for the group leaders in due course.

Angela Pitt, the u3a treasurer, also pointed out that Beacon could be used to manage group finances and that all monies collected should be paid into the u3a funds, and not managed by group leaders. Also, anyone wishing to start a new group can apply to Angela for a start up grant of £50 for materials and room hire to get the group going.

A very lively discussion then took place between the group leaders, so much so that yours truly didn't need to say very much apart from "hello" as all the topics we wished to cover were covered.

It is proposed that there are further opportunities for group leaders to meet up informally over coffee during the year, dates to be decided.

It was very nice to meet and talk with those of you who were able to attend; please do come and say hello at the monthly meetings

Sonja Armstrong (Groups Liaison)



Coming Soon!

u3a
40th Anniversary

Music Appreciation

The Music Group re-started several months ago with the easing of Covid restrictions. At that time we were able to sit in the well-aired conservatory to enjoy our music choices. More recently, dates for our meetings have become rather erratic as I have been preparing to move house, but there were delays along the way as two potential buyers in succession fell by the wayside. It's now third time lucky and getting there but no firm moving date yet.

Members of the group have been very resilient as, having been told there would be a longer break between meetings because of the move, I have been ringing them at two or three days notice to say I'm still here, please come, which they did wherever possible. Many thanks to them for being so understanding.

I will be moving to Crapstone - a lovely name - does anyone know the origin? The new location is fine for most members and has the advantage of better parking facilities. However, there may be a vacancy in the group in the not too distant future if anyone is interested, so watch this space.

Janice Willie

Poetry Group 3

We have continued to "meet" most months using a variety of safe formats, zoom, face to face outside and a hybrid of both.

This January we decided to get to know Walt Whitman, an American poet, essayist and journalist, born in 1819. He was the 2nd child of a family of 9 and reportedly his childhood was unhappy. He left school at 11 and went straight to work to support his family. He started as an office boy and then as an apprentice in a printers where he learned typesetting. He was never able to pursue formal education and took many jobs in the printing world and in government offices to make ends meet. He tried to earn a living by teaching from time to time but didn't find it an enjoyable occupation.

His most important work was "Leaves of Grass" an anthology of his own work, that was first published in 1855 using his own money. He continued to revise and redraft it for the rest of his life. He is considered to be one of the most influential American poets. Ezra Pound said of him, "America's poet...he is America!" another said, "You cannot really understand America without Walt Whitman, without the Leaves of Grass." Whitman himself gave you the impression of his patriotism. His work is written in free verse and celebrates the importance of the individual and the average common place person. He celebrates the diversity of the America and the American experience. He was significantly impacted by the civil war and wrote many poems about it which have a haunted quality to them

Although he didn't invent it he is considered to be the father of free verse and employs it all time, using it to show the natural cadence and pacing of language. He often uses the repetition of key phrases throughout a verse.

We didn't know much about him or his work but we were really surprised at his prolific output, how accessible his work is and how much we really enjoyed his sensitive and empathic poetry. He is one of the successes of our poetry journey.

Steph Steer

Woodtowners Book Group

Despite all the restrictions imposed by Covid, our members have succeeded in reading and discussing a new novel every month during 2020 and 2021. No mean feat in difficult times! Most of these books, borrowed from Devon Library Trust, were written recently and altogether cover a wide time span and far-flung geographical locations.

Daphne du Maurier, writing *The House on the Strand* in 1969, takes us back to life in 14th century Cornwall, experienced by her modern characters in their drug-induced state. Her detailed knowledge of the history of the local families was especially interesting to members who have visited the area.

Kate Moss describes life in Carcassonne in *The Burning Chambers* at a period of unrest and struggle in the 1560's in France. We see a family coping with violence within and outside the city walls in the woods surrounding a great castle and even in the dungeons of Toulouse.

Salman Rushdie's early work, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, takes us on a monumental journey of 100 years. His fictional dynasty is created by the Portuguese Catholic family of Da Gama and the long established Jewish Zogobys. The tale is filled with eccentric spice merchants and powerful women exerting their spell over everyone they come across. Cochin (Kochi) and Bombay (Mumbai) and modern Andalusia in Spain are all settings for the rise and fall of this multicultural trading empire.

William Boyd invokes international high society at the time of *La Belle Époque*, the turn of the 19th century. The principal character, Moncur, a gifted piano tuner, escapes from the domination of his Presbyterian Scottish father to work in prestigious company around Europe. This leads to spells in Paris, Trieste and St Petersburg and smaller French towns like Biarritz and Nice.

After fighting a duel, he subsequently flees and travels as far as the Sanderman Islands....and all for the sake of love!

For life between 1930 and 1950, we have to travel to Australia near Melbourne with Peter Carey. In his novel, people participate in the wide ranging long distance Redex road rally. *A Long Way from Home* does, in fact, take us all round the coastal areas of Australia. The woman driver, Irene, whose skill is paramount to the success of the enterprise gains little credit for her courageous efforts. Attitudes of that period influence life style and events. The harsh treatment in the Northern Territories of the native Aboriginal population is clearly described. The map reader on the journey, Willie, takes refuge on a ranch where the workers lead segregated lives and receive brutal punishments. He represents the difference in attitude towards a pale-faced individual and his family of colour.

We now enter the 21st century!

In recent times, there has been a move encouraging authors to give a new slant on classic works. In *Vinegar Girl*, the theme of *Taming of the Shrew* is taken up by Anne Tyler. Jane Austen's *Emma* is retold by Alexander McCall Smith. But in both cases, our group decided that the classic play and novel are far superior in style and depth of character. However, one benefit is that the original works are read in order to make a comparison. Although set in the present, the social attitudes about society and class structure of the past are inherent in the framework of the novels. Both of these deal with strong young women who strive to express themselves or to influence other people.

In *Vinegar Girl*, a dictatorial father insists his research assistant Cherbakov marries his daughter Kate in order for the young man to gain an immigration passport. The shambolic wedding reflects the comical Shakespearian original and there is a happy outcome to this light-hearted tale.

Woodtowners Book Group *Continued*

Village life, following the mysterious disappearance of a teenage girl on the Yorkshire Moors, forms the framework for *Reservoir 13* by Jon McGregor. His style is unique, each sentence is short and non-sequential. Each of the 13 years unfolds with the ever present rhythm of nature in the woods, the Moors and the village customs. We see the children grow up and mature as the years pass by. At times the tension is palpable. The mystery of the lost girl is not resolved but her memory lives on. As in some real life cases, she is never forgotten.

Michelle Obama's autobiography *Becoming* gives a realistic insight into the hard work and determination needed by an Afro-American young woman living in Chicago. Becoming a lawyer in a prestigious practice was a crucial stage in her life as this enabled her to meet Barack. With her own family's support, she had achieved her ambition of attending Princeton through her perseverance. Her attempt to combine a family life with her husband's political

career and to instigate worthwhile projects as First Lady of the United States over a period of 8 years is described in great detail. The warmth of her character shines clearly throughout her journal.

But we see a different USA in *The Mandibles* by Lionel Shriver. This fictional novel shows a dysfunctional country of the future. A reversal of power occasions the rise of the Spanish speaking Mexican population. The ensuing anarchy after the collapse of the dollar and the closing of the international borders lead to desperation. The fear and loss of freedom once enjoyed by many is shown by a family obliged to flee their city home. Only in a zone beyond governmental control can any hope of freedom be found. Is this a tale for the 21st century?

Our reading group continues to enjoy discussing a diversity of topics found in our novels. Perhaps more members would like to do the same?

Frances Stephens

Wheal Maria Memories

The Newsletter Editor included a photo of Bedford Cottages at Wheal Maria to illustrate Val's article in the last Newsletter. It has prompted more memories:

The houses in the photo are Nos. 17/18 and 19/20 Wheal Maria. The mother and son in the photo are Jean and Stephen Wadling (hope I have spelt it correctly).

I have seen it many times before. Jean grew up in No. 4 and after she was married with a young family in the 1960's, living in Plymouth, Jean and her husband rented 19/20 from the Earl of Bradford Estate as a holiday home. Her nephew David Young, the Dartmoor artist, has lived in Nos. 1/2 since he was a small boy.



Val Blair

Walking Groups



Tavy District u3a walkers at Devon Great Consols recently

Photo: John Noblet

Forthcoming walks are as below. **All are welcome but remember that you MUST book in advance with the leader beforehand by text or phone.** Bring a drink and a snack.

Tuesday 10th May

Meet at Pixon Lane at 9.40 to car share to Zoar SX524806

Park on roadside opposite row of cottages.

Walk Horndon, Hill Bridge Leat, Hilltown and Wheal Jewell. Bring lunch. 4 miles.

Caroline Lorenzi

Thursday 26th May

Meet at Pixon Lane at 9.40 to car share to Warren House Inn. SX674809

This a circular walk to see the fields of bluebells on Challacombe Down.

Bring a snack and a packed lunch, optional refreshments at the Inn on our return.

Good paths which can be muddy and a steep climb at the end, about 5 miles.

Chris Webb 07840 718419 or Jennie Youngs

Tuesday 14th June

Midsummer Day Out! Meet Pixon Lane at 9.15 to travel to Milehouse P&R. Catch scenic bus over the Torpoint Ferry to Whitsand Bay. Walk from Polhawn (SX423498) to Rame church, then coast path to Cawsand and Cremyll. 6.5 miles

John

Thursday 23rd June

Meet at Pixon Lane to leave at 9.15 to travel to Bude, parking at Helebridge. SS216036

This is a circular walk along the coast to Bude and back along the Bude canal.

Coastal path a little up and down and canal path very good.

Bring a packed lunch, plenty of refreshments available in Bude. About 5 miles.

Chris Webb 07840 718419 or Jennie Youngs

Theatre Group

Sadly, **This Land**, the story of the Mayflower, which was due to be performed this September has been cancelled. This is the second time that this has happened, the first because of Covid, this time it was apparently not the story the collective wished to tell in a changed world. TRP and the Wampanoag community are apparently embarking on a new co-creation journey, so watch this space!

You can now book for **Coppelia** on Thursday 6th October, tickets £32. Payment date June meeting. You can book at a meeting or by email at tavyu3atheatre@gmail.com

We will be looking to book **Sleeping Beauty**, **A Matthew Bourne** ballet for this November, as soon as booking opens.

2023

Then onto next year! So far we have booked:

The Commitments (musical)- January

The Mousetrap (70th anniversary tour)- March

Best Exotic Marigold Hotel - April

You will be able to sign up for these and **Sleeping Beauty** from the beginning of May.

The Theatre Royal now has a reasonably full schedule running into next year, which also includes:

Six (a musical)

Peaky Blinders (Ballet Rambert)

The Magic Flute (WNO)

Swan Lake (BRB)

Shrek a new musical)

So please let me know if you would be interested in seeing any of these in addition to what we have booked. If there is sufficient interest we will book them.

Carole

Coffee Morning for New Members

Before the pandemic, these used to be a regular event and the committee now intends to reinstate them.

The first will be on Friday 27th May at The Wharf, from 10.30 am.

An invitation will be sent to all members who have joined since the beginning of 2020.

Members of the committee and some group leaders will be present to explain the opportunities available for making the most of u3a membership.

The Events Committee

There are lots of exciting visits planned for the summer months and as usual you can sign up and pay at the u3a meetings in the Town Hall, or contact the committee member identified for each visit and they will help you place your name on the list and sort payment. Sadly, at the moment we are unable to take bank transfers for our events.

- **Coach trip to Exeter and Exeter Canal** Tuesday 24th May. The coach will leave opposite the Bedford Hotel, Tavistock at 9am and will be back around 6pm. Final travel information will be sent out to those going on this visit around a week before you go.

Contact Shirley

- **NEW Gentle Guided walk**, about 1½ to 2 hours, around Devonport on Wednesday 22nd June. This will start from the Mutton Cove car park. There is no arranged transport, so a bus or your own car. There is **no charge but please sign the list** so the Events Committee know who is planning to join this walk.

Contacts Chris or Norma

Coach trip to Bodmin Jail and Lanhydrock Thursday 7th July £25. This will be a 2-hour guided tour around the jail – “an exciting interactive experience”, and then we will coach to Lanhydrock NT for lunch. There will be enough time to visit Lanhydrock House and have a look around the gardens. The coach will leave opposite the Bedford Hotel, Tavistock at 9am and will be back around 6pm.
DON'T FORGET YOUR NT CARDS!

Contact Janet

And Finally

You will know that the plan was to plant 5,000 trees as part of the 40th Anniversary celebrations and perhaps you were one of the thousands who contributed.

North Bovey were ahead of the game. They started with Victoria's Jubilee and have planted trees for significant events ever since then.

This is the result on the village green.

Photo: John Noblet

