

## The Events Committee

### Thursday 16 November

Come and have a jolly afternoon at the u3a annual Quiz and Cream Tea in the Parish Rooms starting at 2pm.

£6 to be paid on the door. Limited numbers.

Contract Norma

We are busy planning our 2024 outings, more details in the next Newsletter.

### And Finally.....

Margaret Garton's offering this month is a selfie after trying to contact her insurance company to make a claim.

Our best wishes for a speedy recovery.



**u3a**  
Tavy District

## Tavy District u3a

# THE NEWSLETTER



Tavy District u3a at the Tavistock Wellbeing Fair to mark u3a Day

No 124

November 2023

**u3a**

## 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       | Angela Pitt      |
| 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](mailto:web@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk)

**Newsletter Editor: John Noblet**

**The deadline for the next Newsletter is 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Send contributions to [johnnoblet@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk](mailto:johnnoblet@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk)**

## Higher Uppacott

Most Tavy District u3a members will be familiar with Higher Uppacott as this lovely old building is passed on the road over the moor from Tavistock to Ashburton. But possibly not that many have been inside.

The Rocks N Ruins group did just that on a rather wet and blustery day in October and it was a very worthwhile visit.

Higher Uppacott is a medieval farmhouse (longhouse) dating from the 14thC in which both people and cattle were accommodated under a single roof. It has been classed as a Grade 1 listed building of national importance because it is one of the few remaining examples of this historic building type, which has retained its lower or shippon end (cattle shelter) in its original unaltered state.

One of the things that makes Higher Uppacott so special is that its development from its medieval beginnings through to the present day is still clearly evident within the fabric of the building. It tells its own story through key architectural features. This development also vividly illustrates the major changes in domestic family life and the social structures of Dartmoor farming folk over the centuries.

### John Noblet



Photos by Chris Blumer

### Quote of the Month

The trip was fascinating, not my usual thing so shows it's great to try something different!

Thank you for the opportunity.

Overheard by Janet Hunt

## Walking Group



The ferry from Padstow to Rock gave the Walking group a lovely walk along the beach to St Enodoc Church. We then enjoyed a picnic in the grounds of the church which nestles in the sand dunes above Daymer Bay, Cornwall.

From the 16thC to the middle of the 19thC the church was virtually buried by the dunes but it is now a beautiful spot to visit. John Betjeman, the poet 1906-1984 is buried in the graveyard.

**Chris Webb**



## My Forever Home

It is now nearly a year since I moved into St John's Court. I have not regretted it for a moment. Moving is, of course, very stressful, and mine was not lacking in that. But I settled into the flat very quickly, and have never looked back.

I was fortunate in that I was leaving a house I no longer wished to live in, and when I shut the front door for the last time it was with a profound sense of relief. Moving from a four-bedroomed house to a one-bedroomed flat has its challenges, and I had to get rid of a lot of 'stuff'. But I can honestly say that I do not miss any of it. I have all that I need, and while I only have one bedroom there is only one of me.

For anybody who is feeling that running a house - and a garden - is becoming a trial rather than a pleasure, I can heartily recommend this way of life. You have your own front door, and your home is still your own private sanctum. Four times a week there are coffee mornings or afternoons in the main lounge downstairs, and you can go or not as you feel inclined. There is a manager here five times a week, who can help with any problems that may arise. And you don't have to worry about the roof leaking!

There is a real sense of community here, with the more able happy to look out for the less so. In a few years' time that might be me! There is a garden to enjoy that you do not have to maintain, a well-equipped laundry, and plenty of parking. I am on the second floor, and have far more natural light than ever I had in my house. I sincerely hope that this is my 'forever' home.

**Felicity Luckman**

## FROM THE CHAIR

Our membership continues to steadily increase without actively recruiting. When I checked the list on Beacon recently, there were 456 of us, and our treasurer tells me that we have signed up 70 new members so far this year. Our membership is as large as it has ever been and is growing organically, so why did a group of committee members man a u3a stand at the Tavistock Community Wellbeing Fair in Butchers' Hall on the 6<sup>th</sup> October? The u3a serves a variety of purposes. Although founded on the principle of continuing education in later life, it does far more than that. You don't need me to remind you that the u3a has a major social and informal support role. The "Third Age" brings with it many challenges. As we get older, we may be faced with any number of chronic health problems that make life more demanding, and we may have to endure losses of friends and even partners. As one wag once stated, "Old age is not for wimps, but it is better than the alternative".



The u3a's strap line is "learn, laugh, live" and that sums up our activities and role nicely. We undoubtedly learn a lot, or at least I do. The variety of speakers and topics we have enjoyed at the Wednesday meetings has been remarkable and our groups cater for a huge range of interests. However, one thing I notice at our speaker meetings is the buzz of conversation between members meeting up, having a chat, and enjoying a cup of tea or coffee together. Groups often become closely knit and members become good friends whose friendship extends way beyond the group and often beyond the u3a. If my Italian group is anything to go by, there is often a great deal of laughter, and our events, theatre visits and holidays enhance our enjoyment of living. So, in my opinion Tavy District u3a is undoubtedly a "wellbeing" organisation and an asset to the community. I am delighted that we had a presence at the Community Wellbeing Fair where we received a steady stream of visitors, some of whom will probably join up. We gave out about 40 copies of the newsletter to people who seemed genuinely interested. We were also visited by members of some of the other community groups who wanted to know more about the u3a and what we do. A reporter from the Tavistock Times came by and wanted a quote and took a photograph of our stand that was adorned with our craft banner, u3a branded bunting and a handsome new roller banner. I would like to extend a big "Thank You" to my fellow committee members who helped prepare for the Wellbeing Fair, and/or attended on the day. We couldn't have done it without you.

I believe we have raised Tavy District u3a's profile a little, but this is only the first step. Many of you work hard to make our organisation the success it is, and we owe it to you and the town to make Tavy District u3a better known. Your committee will be exploring putting attractive posters on community notice boards, having our meetings listed in Tavy Links and attending future community events. However, we can all play a part. "Word of Mouth" is often the most successful way of advertising. So, if you have friends or acquaintances who are not members and you think they would enjoy being with us, invite them along to a speaker meeting. If it is not for them, that's fine, but I suspect they might be tempted.

Best wishes to you all.

**Paul**

## Speaker Programme

**B**elow are the details of the next three monthly meetings, all of which will take place in Tavistock Town Hall at 2pm.

Before turning to these, our October speaker, Prof. Vicki Goodwin promised to provide some website links which I now have. Here they are:

### NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/exercise-guidelines/physical-activity-guidelines-older-adults/>

### Age UK

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/health-wellbeing/exercise/>

### Make Movement your Mission

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=make+movement+your+mission](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=make+movement+your+mission)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MakeMovementYourMission/>

### Getting up from a fall

<https://youtu.be/mbUp9ODetbM>

Thank you to those who have provided me with speaker suggestions since the last newsletter. Do keep these coming and, as I have said before, do not hesitate to suggest yourself! I am now starting to book up 2025!

**Jane Ward**

## PROGRAMME –NOVEMBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024

**WEDNESDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2023 2pm – Tavistock Town Hall**

**Rip off Britain - Stories from a Trading Standards Officer.**

*Speaker: John Hillier, former head of Trading Standards in the Vale of Glamorgan*

The title of this talk is self-explanatory!

**WEDNESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023 2pm – Tavistock Town Hall**

**Trulli, Madley, Deeply – an illustrated presentation with music.**

*Speaker: Richard Haigh*

Richard will be known to most of you from previous Italian-themed talks.

## Forthcoming Walks

### Thursday 9th November

Meet at Pixon Lane at 9.30 to car share to Bere Alston train station.

A circular walk down to the River Tamar, along the river bank flood barrier and under the Calstock Viaduct on the Devon shore. Return via footpaths through Butspill woods. Easy paths and lanes, gradual descents and inclines, about 4-5 mls. Bring a packed lunch.

This walk will be led by Val Blair.

Contacts: Chris Webb or Jennie Youngs

### Thursday 30th November

Meet at Pixon Lane at 9.30 to car share to Peter Tavy.

Moorland walk around Peter Tavy, some ups and downs, about 5 mls.

Lunch at Peter Tavy Inn after the walk. Please book in with Jennie a.s.a.p.

Contacts as above, Chris and Jennie.

### Thursday 14th December

Meet at Pixon Lane at 9.30 to car share to Calstock.

Walk from Calstock to Cotehele via the Danescombe Valley and back along the river.

Bring NT cards if you wish to see the Christmas garland and enjoy a coffee and snack in the restaurant or bring a packed lunch. About 5 mls, a few steep paths.

Contacts as above.

## Birdwatching in Action



These photos of a heron on the Llangollen Canal were taken by Rosemary Edwards. Now you see it, now you don't!

## Fascinating Fog

Fog is like your first grown-up friend of the opposite sex: fascinating, irritating, romantic and dangerous.

Fascinating because it can demonstrate one of the weirder properties of water; irritating in that it's not easy to forecast, making warnings of a frosty night look silly; romantic when seen from a hilltop in a summer dawn, lying in a great shallow sea across the valley; dangerous if motoring madness gets hold of the traffic careering along the A38 nose to tail in 20yd visibility.

Warm air can hold large quantities of invisible water vapour, but if it cools down it contracts and therefore has to get rid of some, and lo! it becomes visible water droplets. You folk living along a river valley will know all about this. After a clear calm night you will see the fog forming before dawn as the temperature drops, then clearing again as the sun comes up. (If you're up that early you could also let the dog out and do a bit of gardening before breakfast.)

That is radiation fog. Ground fog is a sub-variety but to tick this off your list it has to be below eye-level. People living on the coast are lucky, because they can have another type: sea-fog. Places like Wembury or Salcombe can shiver in a damp greyness while Tavistock goes shopping in sunshine. The trouble here is that the sea around our southwest coast is never all that warm; in early spring it gets down to about 8°C (46°F), rising to 14-16°C (57-61°F) in late summer. We often get a relatively warm moist wind blowing in off the Atlantic. In winter it is chilled from underneath by the sea and its water vapour condenses out into a miserable wet sea-fog.

If you live on the Moors you can enjoy another type of dampness: hill-fog. It's the same moist air blowing off the Atlantic, forced upwards by higher ground and thereby cooling as it rises, again condensing its water vapour into fog. This is nothing more than low cloud, of course, and in fact there is no difference between fog

and cloud. They're the same thing, except that one is on the ground, the other in the sky.

You can see steam fog when the hot sun shines on wet roads after a shower or in a cold bathroom when you run the hot tap. Freezing fog happens when the temperature is below 0°C, the water-droplets will be super-cooled and freeze on contact with your windscreen. Urban fog, otherwise smog (smoke particles and fog), is rare these days though not yet completely banished.

In the old days, when everything was either better or worse than today, fog was definitely in the latter category. Esther, on her first trip to London (in *Bleak House*) found that the streets were so full of dense brown smoke that scarcely anything could be seen. She asked whether there had been a fire. 'Oh dear no, miss,' she was told, 'this is a London Particular.'

It was an 1853 Particular because of the thousands of domestic fires, all burning the cheapest coal, pouring out vast quantities of smoke which hung in the still air, trapped by the inversion of temperature common to foggy nights. The thermometer falls quickly near the ground, but a little way above the air is warmer, which stops the normal rising and mixing circulation.

You may have heard the media people talking about 'heavy' fog. There's no such thing. There is *fog* – visibility below 1000m (1100 yards); *thick fog* – when you can see for less than 100m (110yd); and *dense fog*, when the world vanishes beyond 20m (65ft). The last two make for dangerous driving, especially as visibility can go up and down very rapidly as you move in and out of dense patches.

Fascinating, irritating, romantic and dangerous.

Meteorology is always surprising.

Ivor Williams

## Speaker Programme *Continued*

In this presentation he takes a three-part look at Salento, the extreme end of Puglia; a combination of strange stone houses, the Italian way of dealing with crises, and musical joy. Please be prepared to sing and be surprised by the connection with Brixham.

Please be prepared to sing and be surprised by the connection with Brixham. To quote Richard, "Not to be missed at any cost".

However please note that as this is our Christmas meeting with Christmas catering, **you will need to register for the meeting in advance as space is limited.**

I shall circulate further details shortly – with a hard copy to those who receive this newsletter by post – but you should note that the deadline for responding – by e-mail (preferred) or phone - is **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November.**

**WEDNESDAY 3 JANUARY 2024 2pm – Tavistock Town Hall**

**The Secret World of the Undergrowth**

*Speaker: John Walters*

John is an ecological consultant, wildlife artist, speaker and photographer who has worked for the BBC and David Attenborough. His talks include wonderful photographs and video clips – I have heard him speak before. He is, amongst many other things, a member of the Buckfastleigh Action for Nature Group.

## Bridge Club and Lessons

The u3a bridge club continues to thrive and meets every Tuesday afternoon in the Red and Black club, an ideal venue as there is parking on hand. We play Rubber Bridge and offer a relaxed and sociable atmosphere, with a break half way through for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat with fellow players. There is no need to have a partner; members just turn up as and when they wish to play.

We have room for more members so if you are a bridge player and wish to try us out, do come along.

Alternatively, if you wish to learn how to play Rubber Bridge, the club will be offering its usual annual 10 week course, starting on Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. "Graduates" of the course are invited to continue developing their skills at the club itself where they are able to experience the club atmosphere while continuing to play with their teacher.

Val Turner will be running the course and can be contacted either by phone or by email.

You can also contact Chris Webb

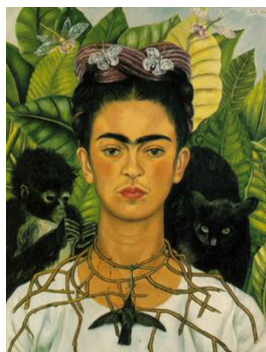
Liz Johnson

## Art Appreciation Group

Since last October the group (6 to 9 members) led by Liz Heaton has enjoyed a fantastic journey through art and artists, the cultural influences that shaped them and how they in turn influenced their culture. In the last newsletter Liz introduced the first two of an eight part series of "The Art That Made Us" which explored the key artistic influences from Y Gododdin a Welsh poem in Saxon times to Stormzy at Glastonbury. Continuing on that topic we have enjoyed six more episodes where the art experts and others explore key moments in UK history, including radical political change, religious upheaval, social movements and disasters and how they are captured in creative work including jewellery, paintings, pottery, buildings and much more. Absolutely fascinating! Here is an example from the programme synopsis on the BBC website:

*"During the reign of Elizabeth I, Protestants and Catholics use art, language and new technology to wage a battle for power in the Isles. Elizabeth has a dangerous rival in Mary Queen of Scots, who promotes her brand through jewels and fine Scottish gold work. Created amid political and religious turmoil, the Penicuik Jewels are both a demonstration of beautiful craft and emblematic of a pivotal point in British history."*

William Morris in the Victorian era was more direct, reacting against the ugliness of the industrial revolution, he wanted to return to the simplicity and honesty of medieval design and craft and bring the countryside into people's homes in the city. He is considered to be one of the most influential artists of his time.



Following this journey through time and art we moved across the Atlantic to Frida Kahlo (right above), feminist, artist and fashion icon. In three programmes Frida is revealed to us as the passionate, political and exceptional artist she was.

We are now starting a three part series on "The Art of France" which promises to ably entertain us.

The group discusses each programme over coffee and biscuits and invariably agrees that we have not only learnt a great deal but we could easily watch the programme again and find out even more.

Ginnie Parker

**The deadline for the next  
Newsletter is 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

## Visit to Coleton Fishacre



Tavy District u3a went to Coleton Fishacre on a very wet and windy day.  
This is what it should have looked like. Photo © National Trust

## Weekenders



The Weekenders really enjoying their bus and train trip to Exeter, with a lunch at Comptoir Libanais

## Visit to Coleton Fishacre

Wednesday 20th September was a very stormy day. However, in the teeth of the gale forty five intrepid u3a members (and one coach driver) set off for a day out to see the National Trust property of Coleton Fishacre.

If it had been a clement day Plan A included a stop in Brixham first, but the torrential rain made it prudent to deploy Plan B, i.e. a coffee stop at Marks & Spencer's en route, and an earlier arrival at the once country home of the D'Oyly Carte family. Due to the high winds the 30 acre gardens were closed to the public which left us with more time to explore and immerse ourselves in the atmosphere of this beautiful house.

Richard D'Oyly Carte founded the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company as well as the Savoy Hotel in the 1870's and is synonymous with the productions of Gilbert and Sullivan. By 1913 his son Robert had inherited both companies and together with his wife, Lady Dorothy, were generous patrons of the arts and designers of the time. It was on a sailing trip around South Devon that they first saw the valley leading down to Pudcombe Cove and its potential for a country retreat on the site.

They employed architect Oswald Milne, a student of Sir Edwin Lutyens, to design Coleton Fishacre; to sit in harmony with its surroundings and reflect the lifestyle of outdoor living that the D'Oyly Carte's enjoyed.

The house nestles at the head of the valley and is orientated to look south, to maximise both the natural light and the views down the valley to the sea, which can be seen from all the main living spaces and bedrooms.

Built in 1925 in the Arts and Crafts style the stone was quarried from the gardens, and although larger than most of us would ever aspire to, the house is not enormous by National Trust standards. We all agreed it had a 'domestic' and cosy feel to it that would suit very nicely as somewhere easy to live in, and would have provided a more relaxed lifestyle than London for the family. The simplicity of

design works so well here because it showcases the quality of materials used in its construction.

Looking from the house, the gardens lead your eye down the valley and are RHS accredited. When open they afford many paths through formal, exotic and naturalistic planting ending at the bottom with the sea, a cove and access to the South West Coast Path.

The interior of the house is Art Deco in style with some fine architectural details. Although much of the interior was empty when the National Trust took over in 1982, there were some original pieces contemporary to the D'Oyly Carte family such as Lalique glass light fittings, some Raoul Dufy designed fabric, and some witty tiling in the bathrooms, amongst others. The house is now authentically refurnished through purchases by the Trust, and donations of period furniture by the public. The effect gives an evocative glimpse into the life and times of the 'Jazz age'.



A grand day out, our thanks go to the Events Committee for not giving up on the day. For being plucky and adventury in all matters, vegetable, animal and mineral, the very models of a modern Major-General.

**Hannah Miatt**

## New Creative Journaling Group

No creative juices necessary! No previous experience needed - just an interest in recording something or several things in which you have an interest.

A Creative Journal may be mostly text or more likely, include things like colour, pictures, cut outs from magazines, drawings, tracings, glue sticks, watercolour pencils, photographs, stamps, Post cards, old tickets, cards, poetry, wildlife, pressed leaves, flowers, material, music - it may become a memory book recording family events or favourite walks or holidays or a Birding diary or a favourite recipes or a dieting book recording food, exercise and hopefully, results we might be hoping for!

A Creative Journal is a very individual visual record of things important to you. I am one of the founder members of our u3a Painting and Drawing group and am offering this new group to share ideas, friendship, encouragement and creative skills. I worked as a recreational therapist for many years, encouraging people to develop their interests or start a new one.

There is a large choice of inexpensive journals, plain or decorated in many different shapes and sizes to buy or you can make your own. If you have access to a computer you may choose to make digital pages for printing, I can also help with this if you choose this route.

If you are interested or require more information, please give me a call

**Dee Searight**



## Theatre Royal Backstage Tour

At the time of writing we still have some places available on the Backstage Tour of the Theatre Royal at 1pm on Friday 15th March. The Tour takes place during the run of the play *And Then There Were None* based on an Agatha Christie novel - some of us will be seeing this a day earlier.

The Tour lasts about 90 minutes, most of which are spent standing and walking - there is only limited opportunity to sit down. It is led by members of the Technical Department who provide a fascinating insight into what happens behind the scenes to make any production possible.

Tickets are £15 each and if you would like to go please email me at [tavyu3atheatre@gmail.com](mailto:tavyu3atheatre@gmail.com).

**Carole Thompson**

## Comedy of Errors

Almost at the 'camp follower' stage for the travelling Pantaloons Theatre Group, thirteen Weekenders went to see them put on an hilarious production of Shakespeare's farcical Comedy of Errors at Clearbrook Village Hall.

Quite a challenge for a story which involves at least a dozen characters being performed by only four actors. But the highly talented Pantaloons didn't let us down....

The scene was set with a welcoming 21st century style song and dance routine from the 'sponsors' of the event - the Ephesus Tourist Board..

Thereafter the complex story of two sets of baby identical twins separated at birth during a shipwreck - depicted in the cradle by coloured cans of Coke and different coloured small tubes of Pringles - continued with the Pantaloons hilariously interspersing and interpreting the Shakespeare prose with a sense of the ridiculous. We made our way through the journey of the adult twins who finally met (a Pringle with a Coke...doh) having lived either in Syracuse or Ephesus. Quick changes of clothes, wigs and even accents became the complicated norm. Mistaken identity, beatings, wrongful arrests, theft, an inviting bottom wagging sexy maid and lust (we averted our eyes to all that) was acted superbly by the four with a great sense of comedy. Phew.

A highlight was a comedic 'come on down' style game show seeking to find from the audience the matching twins. Our Weekender Teresa Cooper, from Tavistock, gamely entered into the fun by volunteering to be dressed as the kindly Duke - thereby happily pleasing the Tourist Board that someone had travelled so far to be in Ephesus.

Loud, boisterous and bawdy, yes - but hey nonny nonny...

Margaret Garton



## Recorder Group

On Friday 8 December at 11.00 am, the recorder group will be playing in St Eustachius Church as part of the Christmas Tree Festival.

It will be an informal recital, so you can either sit and listen or stroll round and enjoy the Christmas trees at the same time.

There is no charge but you will be expected to pay the entry fee for the Christmas Tree Festival.

Randall Williams

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## Painting and Drawing

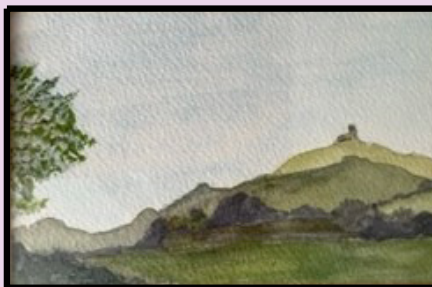
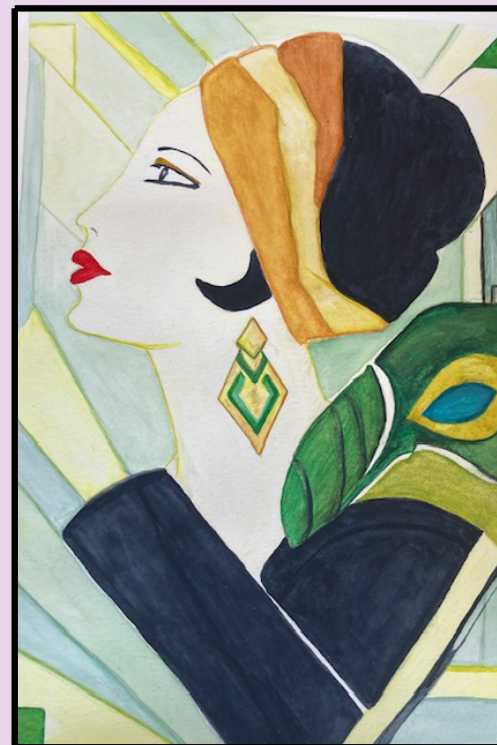
Our u3a art group, "Painting and Drawing," is a warm and welcoming community of artists of all skill levels. We meet twice a month, on the second and fourth Tuesday mornings, from 10 am to 12 midday, in Tavistock Library. Our sessions are filled with creativity, support, and lively conversation.

We use a variety of media, including acrylics, watercolours and pastels, and explore a wide range of topics, such as Art Deco, animals, the colour blue and flowers. When the weather permits, we occasionally paint outside to capture the nuances of colour and light, adding a new dimension to our learning.

The best part of our group is the sense of community. We're all here to learn and grow together, and we're always happy to share tips and techniques. We also have a lot of fun and have made many new friends!

If you're interested in joining our group, please contact Jane Perona-Wright. Details can be found on the u3a website.

Judy Cuckston



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Send contributions to [johnnoble@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk](mailto:johnnoble@tavydistrictu3a.org.uk)

## Garden Visits Group



It was an absolutely beautiful day when the Garden Visits group went to Daymer House. After an interesting journey there (Greystone Bridge was closed for repairs), we enjoyed our picnic overlooking the sea, and visited the lovely garden at Daymer House. The tea and cakes were very fine and we had plenty of time to enjoy the surroundings!

We peeped at the spire of St Enodoc Church where Sir John Betjeman is buried in the churchyard, and then it was time for home. A good day out!

### Janet Hunt



Lynne having fun!



The tea and cakes were good.

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## Diners Delight Group Lunch at the Wet Wok



The Diner's Delight Group lunched at the Wet Wok, at West Hoe in Plymouth on Thursday 31 August.

For the organiser, Andy Paskins, it was a difficult day. All the arrangements had been made and we had booked a table for 12 people. This was quite good as the number of eating out events organised have reduced since the onset of Covid-19, and also the number of people attending has been lower.

At the last moment, Andy's wife had to be taken to the Tavistock minor injuries unit with a suspected stress fracture of her right foot, and Janet Hunt stepped into the breach to take over as organiser at the last minute. My thanks to Janet.

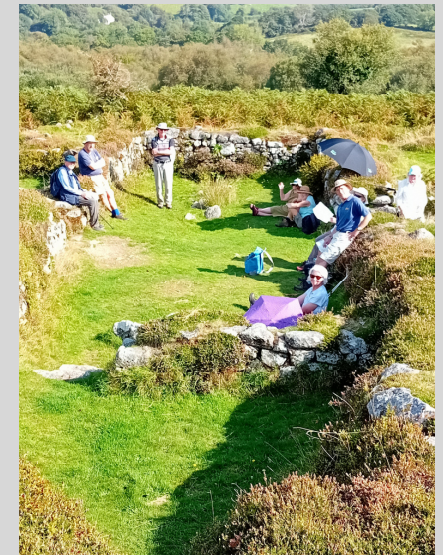
Lunch however went ahead successfully but with three fewer people than had been expected, Caroline was discharged from Tavistock Hospital and made her own way home by taxi leaving Andy able to make lunch. Unfortunately Chris and Tony Rose couldn't attend owing to car problems.

We had three tables in the veranda area to accommodate the remaining nine, which allowed good views of Plymouth Sound and the rapidly changing weather. The fare was also excellent.

We were also able to welcome Frank and Jennie Palmer and Mike and Tricia Spry to the group and hope to see more of them at future events.

Andy Paskins

## Rocks N Ruins



The Rocks N Ruins Group went to the Hound Tor Medieval Village on one of the hottest days of the year. Photo by Don Lewis.



Seen by John Noblet in Topsham

## Vineyard and Vistas in Jersey

At the suggestion of two of our members, the group expanded its horizons and took a trip to Jersey at the beginning of October.



Our first evening was spent enjoying an excellent meal, (not to mention the wine), in a local restaurant. The following morning, we took a bus from our base in St Helier, in the south of the island, to La Mare Wine Estate on the north coast. The island measures only 9 miles by 5 miles, so it's easy to see a lot within a short time. Equally good news is that the buses are frequent, reliable and reasonably priced.



Originally called Elms Farm, La Mare includes a beautiful farmhouse built in 1797. The six-acre estate had originally been devoted to apple trees, but the farm and its buildings fell into disrepair. The farm was bought by a local family and the vineyard was established in 1972. It is Jersey's only working vineyard and

distillery, and its products now include chocolates and preserves. The first impression was that the estate is very well organised and attractively laid out. There is a function room, cafe and gift shop where we browsed while waiting for our pre-booked tour.



The tour started in the vineyard, which produces four varieties of grapes, and we enjoyed the sunshine while our guide, Angela, told us about the process of growing vines. It takes four years for a new vine to produce grapes that can be considered for winemaking. This is not a business that can turn a quick profit! New plants are shielded from the appetites of abundant local rabbits by having their stems encased in covers, a similar design to tree guards.

The vineyard is surrounded by apple trees that help to protect the tender plants from the coastal winds. Some, but not all, of this year's grapes had already been harvested; the timing of harvesting is critical to ensure the grapes are in their optimum condition.

## Wine Appreciation Group 2

We moved on to the winery where we watched three short videos describing the winemaking process, while we sipped samples of their white, rose and red wines. The rose is the most popular and had sold out in the shop; the remaining bottles were reserved for tastings and for selling by the glass in the cafe. Meanwhile, we heard the clattering of a heavy downpour on the roof of the winery and realised that we had only just avoided getting soaked. By the time we emerged it was back to glorious sunshine as if nothing had happened. Guests have access to the beautiful gardens surrounding the farmhouse, so we lingered for a while before deciding what to do next.

The estate is close to a well-known natural feature called Devil's Hole and the suggestion was made that some of us might take a walk to see it. Devil's Hole is a natural crater in the solid cliff measuring about 100ft across and plunging 200ft down. It was caused by the sea eroding the roof of what was once a cave, until it collapsed and formed a crater. The National Trust in Jersey has erected a viewing platform so that you can peer down into the depths of the crater - quite an awe-inspiring sight. It became a popular attraction in the 19th

century and there is a photograph on display showing intrepid Victorian visitors scaling the cliff on an inadequate-looking ladder.

We finished looking at the information board and were ready to head back when we spotted a bird of prey hovering over the rocks below. It became clear that it must be a peregrine falcon, as they are known to live in this location. Several of us managed to capture this fantastic bird on our cameras, albeit that it appeared as a small dark silhouette against the beautiful blue sky. On the way back we were also privileged to see several choughs, a member of the crow family with a distinctive red beak and legs, that were reintroduced to the area by Jersey Zoo.

The walk was a bonus to round off our visit to this lovely area with its beautiful countryside and traditional granite buildings.

All that was needed to make it a truly memorable day was a delicious evening meal in good company with several more bottles of wine. Not a problem!

**Chris Rose**

