



Newsletter December 2022

Dear member,

First of all, may I wish you a very happy Christmas from Crediton u3a. There is no monthly meeting this month as we are holding our Christmas Dinner instead. However, there is still the coffee morning on the previous Tuesday. In January, we will be very privileged to hear Natalia Letch talk about the Ukraine and Russia. I'm sure this will be a most important and interesting talk.

Sadly, we had to cancel our trip to Bath as insufficient people wished to go. I would like to apologise to all those who signed up and were disappointed. The Crediton u3a website has also been out of action recently due to major problems at the national level. Some level of service has been restored and the site can be accessed by searching for Crediton u3a in google. However, we have lost all our pictures. Most of the links within the site are working but some are not. Hopefully things will improve soon. If you are a group leader, and you have some photos that could be displayed on your page, could you send them to Ian Fenn at ianfenn2@gmail.com, even if they have been supplied before, they are probably now lost. We would also like a new photo for our welcome page, and we are running a competition for a photo for this slot. The subject is up to you but should somehow reflect on Crediton, or u3a. A small prize will be awarded for the photo selected by the committee.

Liz Ouldrige (Chair)

Important dates

Tuesday December 20th: Monthly coffee morning at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am,

Wednesday 21st December: Christmas Lunch

Tuesday January 17th: Monthly coffee morning at 'The Hayloft' Mole Avon Country Store from 10:30am,

Wednesday January 18th: Natalia Letch "Russia and the Ukraine"

November's Talk by Brian Lane-Smith: 'Jumping Jo Beyrle, the story of the first American paratrooper in Europe'

Joseph R. Beyrle was born in Muskegon, Michigan, on August 25, 1923, to poor immigrant parents. In 1942, after completing High School, Jo enlisted with the parachute regiment and after training successfully, went with his regiment to England. In April 1944, Joe Beyrle was one of three paratroopers selected from the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment to take part in two covert missions into Nazi-occupied France to deliver gold coins to the French Resistance. Later he took part in BIGOT (British Invasion of German Occupied Territory), an operation that may have been the inspiration for 'The Dirty Dozen' film.

On June 5, 1944, the night before D-Day, he again parachuted behind enemy lines into Nazi-occupied France, landing on the roof of a church in St. Come-du-Mont. His mission was to demolish two bridges. Later he was captured by the Germans. Over the next seven months, Beyrle was held in seven German prisons. He escaped twice and was recaptured both times. Beyrle's third escape in January 1945 was successful. Encountering a Soviet tank brigade in the middle of January, he raised his hands, holding a pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes, and shouted in Russian, 'Amerikansky tovarishch!' (American comrade!). Beyrle was eventually able to persuade the battalion's commander to allow him to fight alongside the unit on its way to Berlin. Beyrle began a month-long stint in a Soviet tank battalion, where his demolitions expertise was appreciated.

At the end of the war, embassy officers in Moscow, unsure of his bona fides, placed him under Marine guard until his identity was established through his fingerprints. Beyrle returned home to Michigan on April 21, 1945, and celebrated V-E Day two weeks later in Chicago. His unique service earned him medals from U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin at a ceremony in the Rose Garden of the White House marking the 50th anniversary of D-Day in 1994. Beyrle died in his sleep of heart failure on December 12, 2004.