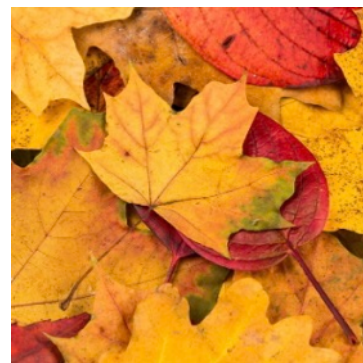




u3a learn,
laugh,
live
exe valley



Our Website <http://u3asites.org.uk/exevalley> Facebook [Exe Valley u3a](#)

National Website <http://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Newsletter 190 – November 2023

Our meeting this month ...

Wednesday 15th November

2pm Old Heathcoat School Community Centre

Hedgehogs – In Need Of Your Help And Getting Connected

Stephen Powles



Hedgehogs are struggling with their numbers declining dramatically over the last 30 years. In this talk I explain how to make your garden hedgehog friendly then go on to show how one village came together to create a hedgehog superhighway of interconnected gardens.

... and next month

New Venue

Wednesday 20th December

2pm Cherith Hall

The British Music Hall

New Venue

A combination of history, personal engagement and the Good Old Days.

Tim Dyke

Tim will explain his own interest in the Halls, look at the story of Wilton’s Hall and others, show film of some acts from a century ago, and invite you to join the Edwardian stars in some perhaps forgotten songs. (This will be altogether different to his previous talk on this topic). It would be lovely if you could come in some sort of Victorian / Edwardian dress to add to the atmosphere and get us in the festive mood – even if it’s only a feather in your hat. After all, as Chairman Sachs used to say, “This time, it's chiefly YOURSELVES!”

News from the Committee

At our most recent meeting our Secretary Chris Redhead reported back on the u3a National AGM which she had attended "online" on our behalf. Amongst all the procedural items Chris became aware of the Third Age Trust Trading Ltd (TATTL) which offers items to u3a members at discount prices and also can provide advice on legal and other matters. The committee thought it was worthwhile to bring this to your attention; further information about TATTL is available on the National website.

There are a number of **forthcoming events** that you may wish to put in your diary.

A **Quiz evening** with questions set by York Dawson is to be held on **Friday 22nd March**. Further details regarding location, refreshments and cost will be provided nearer the time.

A **Treasure Hunt** arranged by Vicky Stuckey is to be held on **Thursday 9th May**, probably to finish with a pub lunch.

The talk from **Ann Widdecombe** has been confirmed for **Wednesday 30th October 2024**. Please note that this is in addition to the usual Monthly meeting.

Reminders

As we approach the end of the year the committee wish to remind group leaders of the need to provide information of their "accounts" to the Treasurer Paul Sadler.

Most importantly, please remember that our December meeting (and all subsequent meetings) will be held in the Cherith Hall. This will be a lively, fun filled afternoon provided by Tim in his inimitable style to be followed by tea, coffee and mince pies. There will be no charge for entry or for the refreshments.

Membership Renewals for 2024

It is now time for members to renew their subs for next year which are due by 1st January 2024 so our Treasurer can refill the coffers. We will be delighted to start receiving your subscriptions from this month.

There is a renewal form at the end of this newsletter which has details on how you can renew your subscription for next year.

1. You can pay with cash, cheque or by card at a monthly meeting with a completed form (forms available at the meetings) or post to our Treasurer.
2. You can pay by BACS online and you do not need to fill in a Renewal form if you are renewing the same membership class as last time and no other details have changed. **Please identify your BACS payment with your Membership number** (this was sent out in an email to you recently), not your name. Please be aware we have changed our bank to Lloyds this year so new bank details are on the form.

Please note you cannot renew using PayPal and this is no longer available via the Members' Portal to Beacon on our website.

Any problems please email me jriddif68@gmail.com or ring 01884 258091.

Newsletter

Please send reports to Lynne Lyddon by **9am Friday 15th December**. When sending reports for the December Newsletter can you please make sure you include the dates you will be

meeting in December and January as groups often have a break over the Christmas period. Thank you!

New Members

We extend a very warm welcome to two new members this month, **Myfanwy Jane Morris** and **Barbara Pearce**. We hope you enjoy your time with us.

Welfare Officer

Marilyn Dawson

Marilyn prefers to be contacted by email. If you know of anyone who is ill or has been admitted to hospital, or anyone who has a special anniversary to celebrate, please email Marilyn with details and she will send a card on our behalf. We will also add an item to the monthly committee agenda so that Marilyn can let the committee know via the secretary if she has sent anyone a card. It would also be helpful if group leaders could keep Marilyn informed of anyone in their group who they think should receive such a card.

News from the Interest Groups

Art Appreciation Gina Brown, Keith Bush, John Massey

At our October meeting Patricia gave us a talk on the French painter James Tissot.

Tissot was given the forenames Jacques Joseph, but he anglicised his name to James while still in his teens. He enjoyed artistic success in France, and his works also sold well in England. He moved to London in 1871 and specialised in highly finished depictions of contemporary Victorian life, with particular emphasis on the more elegant strata of society and the fashionable dress of its female members. However, a profound religious experience in 1885 brought about a dramatic change in his art. From then on he concentrated on painting biblical subjects – including a huge series on the life of Christ - in a traditional representative style, travelling extensively in the Holy Land to study its landscapes.

Patricia took us through the phases of Tissot's work – such as his contributions to the *Japonisme* craze - while also explaining the historical background. For instance, he fought in the Franco-Prussian war and took part in the Paris Commune of 1871.

Patricia brought in a framed copy of the painting illustrated here, *The Garden Bench* (1882). A favourite of hers, it has pride of place on her wall. We could see why.



Our next formal meeting will take place at the **OHSCC on Thursday 16 November at 2pm**. We'll be completing our exploration of the Four Elements in art by sharing images on the theme of *Fire*. **New group members are always welcome.**

Boules

Tuesday Boules Janet Phythian. Thursday Boules Jill Riddiford

These groups will restart in the Spring.

Bridge

Tuesday Bridge Doreen Burton

Tuesday Bridge group are still playing online at 7.30pm most weeks. We have also managed to meet up to play on quite a few Wednesday afternoons as well for those in the group that prefer not to play online. Meanwhile if anyone wants to join us, please get in touch.

Thursday Social Bridge Vicki Stuckey

We meet every week, taking it in turns to host and are a very friendly, social group. Richard has started some revision which has been very useful and hopes to do more in the coming months.

I'm stepping down as group leader after many years at the end of this month, but Tricia has kindly volunteered to take over.

Canasta Sue Dark

This Group meets on the **2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month** in each other's homes.

Craft Elaine Wright

The group is meeting on **Monday November 13th at 2pm** at Carol's house to make woven purses / bags and Japanese doll bookmarks.

Cribbage Keith Dawson

Our normal routine is to play on the **2nd and 4th Monday afternoon each month**.

Discussion Marilyn Dawson

A very depleted group met to discuss 'Is it appropriate for the government to use the RNLI to rescue migrants from the channel.' The RNLI, a mostly voluntary organisation, is dedicated to rescue everyone from the sea. They are called by the Coastguard when boats get into trouble and make no distinction as to who to save. Perhaps if the government funded them to some degree their freedom would be compromised. In 2021 when Nigel Farage accused the RNLI of being a 'taxi service' for people traffickers, their daily donations from the public increased by 3000%! Having watched TV programmes of RNLI rescues with volunteers continually risking their lives, we admire them for their bravery and commitment.

Trying to find something light-hearted to talk about was just about impossible and we talked briefly about the awful Israel/Gaza war.

On a happier note, we planned our bring and share Christmas meal at Wendy's home. We will meet on **1st December at the later time of 11:15 am**.

Folk Dancing John & Hazel Ridd (Tiverton u3a)

We meet on the **2nd and 4th Wednesdays** of the month, **2pm – 4pm in Halberton Village Hall.**

All welcome - the dances are walked through and explained well, and everyone is very kind and friendly. Hazel and John Ridd 01884 820438

French Conversation Deborah Lal

Gardening Joan Kelly, Jo Jeffrey, Carol Powney

We meet at **The Arboretum in Newton St Cyres** near Exeter on **Monday 13 November at 2pm.** Access is through the churchyard, so parking is in the village car park EX5 5BW and take a short walk up to the church gates.

Afterwards, at 3pm, we will go to Bernaville Nurseries for tea/cake.

Local History David Meredith

Devon has a long tradition of folk songs and stories and we were delighted to be entertained at our November meeting by singer and musician Jim Causley and folklorist Mark Norman at the Cherith Hall. Mark told the stories and Jim sang the songs. A truly wonderful afternoon celebrating our home county heritage and of course ending with the Devon national anthem – “Widcombe Fair”.

Next month on **Thursday December 14th at 2pm at the Cherith Hall**, we welcome Exeter based historians and authors, Roy and Lesley Adkins, who will jointly present their talk entitled “**Jack Tar - Life in Nelson’s Navy**”.

Whereas much is known about Nelson, his officers and achievements, the talk will describe everyday life on board for the ordinary seamen, often called ‘Jack Tars’. The name probably derived from ‘tarpaulin’ and when tar was put on hats and coats to keep dry. Conditions were harsh, scurvy was common until lemons and limes were introduced and ship’s biscuits were hard, often full of maggots and weevils.



After 1740, rations of ‘grog’ – a mix of rum and water – replaced the daily ration of half a pint of neat rum twice a day! Nelson’s blood became a slang word for rum but it seems unlikely that his body was preserved in a barrel of it, more likely brandy!! These and many other sea faring stories and traditions will feature in the talk along with details of sailors from the south west.

Doors open at 1.30pm ready for a 2pm start. Admission £2 to include refreshments. All u3a members welcome to attend.

Towards the end of another year, I would like to thank all the helpers who make our meetings possible - providing sound and projection, collecting money and acting as banker, helping in

the kitchen and with room set up and clearance, the Cherith for providing such a pleasant environment and of course to all the members who come along on the second Thursday.

Lunch Club Wendy Cook

September - The u3a lunch was held at Toucan cafe and Bistro in Bampton. Twelve of us attended having pre ordered off the menu.

The food was very tasty and enjoyable. We received a warm and friendly greeting from the staff and excellent service. They even provided a dish that was not on the menu for one of our group. A lovely time was had by us all.

October - Despite torrential rain, standing water and debris-scattered roads, a brave dozen diners made it to the Anchor Inn at Exbridge for the October Lunch Group meeting.

Following a disastrous flooding in December 2012, the Anchor has been extensively refurbished and is now an excellent and popular venue for locals and travellers alike. It has a large, bright dining area at the rear which leads onto a splendid garden overlooking the Exe.

Our twelve diners chose a wide variety of dishes from their menu, all of which arrived in quick succession. Portion sizes were very good and the food was delicious.

A good time was had by all and we will keep the pub in mind for possible future visits in the years ahead.

The next meeting of the Lunch Club is on **Thursday 16th November** at the **Mount Pleasant Inn, Nomansland.**

Mah Jong Heather Edwards

The group is currently full, but we do have a Reserve/Waiting List that you are welcome to join. This would give you the opportunity to play, during holiday times for example, on an ad hoc basis until there is a permanent space in the group. Contact Heather for further details.

We meet on the **first Friday in the month**

MOTO (Members On Their Own) Wendy Cook

Our main topics at the October coffee morning seemed to be holidays, the jab and its after effects and tractor rallies, quite a varied range as usual.

Sandra is organising the lunch trip to **Spelt in Bampton on 5th November.**

We shall be meeting for coffee again on **Saturday 25th November at 10.30 at the Flying Pickle**, you are welcome to join us.

If any of you have any ideas for outings for the members please feel free to arrange them.

Poetry Margaret Wallwork

Sadly we were unable to meet this month as our host was struck down with Covid.

Our Compasses theme transfers to **November 23rd, 2pm at Tim's.**



Rambling Ray Rice

New members are most welcome to join us. Our walks are largely 4-5 miles in length, and we usually manage to find a pub or other venue in which to enjoy a convivial lunch, usually finishing around 2pm.

Reading

Reading Group 1 Alison Rice

Our book this month was an unexpected choice – **Muppets in Moscow**, by **Natasha Lance Rogoff**, a fluent Russian linguist. It recounts the long and bumpy road as to how the author (the Executive Producer) managed to transfer a Russian version of Sesame Street from New York to Moscow in the 1990s. As to be expected there is a litany of cultural clashes, assassinations of sponsors, and a vivid description of the tensions in post-Soviet society.

After four years hard slog, trying to bridge the cultural divide ‘Ulita Sezam’ was ready in 1996 with Russian producers, script writers, educationalists, actors and puppeteers. It was a great success and ran for 10 years before the dead hand of Putin descended.

We had a wide-ranging discussion that included Peppa the Pig, Listen with Mother and even Muffin the Mule! Some wondered how such brash entertainment for children could ever be successful and avoid transmitting the culture of western imperialism and capitalism.

However, we all gave the book 8 out of 10 for a roller-coaster ride through Russia’s switch from communist to free-market capitalism and how slowly the Russians were adapting to it.

Our next meeting will be on **November 27** at **Alison’s house**.

Reading Group 2 Chris Redhead

Manhattan Beach by Jennifer Egan

This book is mainly set in and around Brooklyn and Manhattan Beach in the 1930s and 1940s and concerns ostensibly respectable families who are hugely involved in the criminal underworld and what happens to their associates. Some very grisly happenings if you weren’t loyal. It seems to be written for an American audience who would be more familiar with the area and some of the terminology so it was hard to get into at first and slow to develop any kind of interesting story. The author was perhaps trying to incorporate a lot of historical detail at the same time as developing a narrative but the themes got confused and the continuity got lost at times. Some incidents weren’t developed enough and some just dropped out of sight. There was one theme of the sea and the characters’ relationship to it, and the contrast between the calm surface and the dark things underneath the surface. There were a lot of nautical details that not everyone was familiar with.

Some of us felt that it really didn’t get going until near the end with the dangerous diving scene and the shipwreck overseas and perhaps the end was a bit too neatly tied up. It was mostly an easy read once you got into it but not really gripping until almost too late and not all of us sympathised with the main character, Anna. It certainly produced a lengthy discussion.

We next meet on **December 4th** at **Wendy’s house**.

Reading Group 3 Sheelagh Bourdon

Our book this month was **Ordinary People** by **Diana Evans**. The book is a portrait of black middle class family life in suburban London. Melissa has a new baby and does not want it to change her. Michael is still in love with her but cannot get close enough to her to stay faithful. Damian has lost his father and intends not to let it get to him. Stephanie just wants to live a normal happy life on the commuter belt with Damian and their three children but his bereavement is getting in the way. The book is described as “an intimate study of identity and parenthood, sex and grief, friendship and ageing and the fragile architecture of love. There were mixed reactions to the book. They ranged from “really enjoyed it”, “easy to read”, “the story just flowed along” to “too descriptive”, “reading it was like wading through treacle”.

Despite not everyone enjoying the book, we had a very pleasant morning and had welcomed Karyl, our group co-ordination, to our meeting.

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 23 November at 10.30** when we will be discussing “The Night Manager” by John le Carre.

Skittles

Tuesday Skittles – Kathy Senior

This group meets at The Half Moon Tiverton. The group is full, but if you would like to contact Kathy she will be in touch should a vacancy arise.

Thursday Skittles – Jill Riddiford

We have got off to a good start this season and who knew you could have so much merriment refining a Risk Assessment! But we now have a safer method of returning the balls to the next player as there isn't a separate channel to return them. At present our group is full.

What we have noticed Chris & Gina Brown

We talked about the following topics:-

- The historical origins of the current Israel/Gaza conflict.

- Dunkeswell airfield and WW2 museum.

- Coade Stone and local examples of its use.

- The dangers posed by electric vehicle batteries.

- Textile recycling.

Many other issues were discussed and an interesting and stimulating session was enjoyed.

The next meeting will be **Tuesday December 5th at 10.30**.

Wine Group Helen White, Deborah Lal

As only four members were able to attend Wendy's on 8th November we didn't have our usual wine tasting meeting but instead spent a pleasant evening discussing such things as the forthcoming December and January meetings. On **Wednesday 13th December** we will meet at Wendy's to share festive nibbles and drinks and in January hope to have our traditional lunch in our favourite local pub, getting back to our normal wine tasting in February.

We meet on the second Wednesday of the month and welcome new members in the New Year – please see Helen or Deborah.

World History Helen Booth

We travelled to the South Seas in our October meeting when Dave Harvey told us about Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl and his 1947 Kon-Tiki expedition. Heyerdahl wanted to demonstrate that people from the Americas could have colonised Polynesia. Leaving from Callao in Peru, Heyerdahl and his five companions drifted 5,000 miles across the Pacific on a hand-built balsa-wood raft reaching the Tuamotu Islands of Polynesia in 101 days. The expedition became the most talked about adventure after World War II, with a book relating to the voyage selling over 50 million copies in 74 languages and the word Kon-Tiki becoming a buzz-word for anything exotic. Heyerdahl made other voyages trying to prove his theories of contacts between ancient peoples, but his personal life suffered. He was married three times, with one of his wives saying they were divorced because he was never at home!



On **November 20th**, as usual at **OHSCC, 2pm in Room 2**, Patricia Bailey will tell us about Angela Burdett-Coutts, 1814-1906, known at the time as the richest heiress in England. A philanthropist, she spent the majority of her wealth on scholarships, endowments and helping a wide range of causes, being, amongst many other things, involved in shaping the early days of the RSPCA and NSPCC.

DIARY

NOVEMBER

Monday 13th

2pm Craft Carol's house

2pm Cribbage *Contact Group Leader*

2pm Gardening Group 2pm at the Arboretum Newton St Cyres. 3pm Bernaville.

Tuesday 14th

11am Tuesday Skittles The Half Moon Tiverton

7.30pm Bridge Online

Wednesday 15th

2pm Monthly Meeting Old Heathcoat School Community Centre

Hedgehogs - In Need Of Your Help And Getting Connected - Stephen Powles

Thursday 16th

10am Thursday Skittles Half Moon pub, Tiverton.

12 noon Lunch Club Mount Pleasant Inn, Nomansland

2pm Bridge *Contact Group Leader*

2pm Art Appreciation OHSCC

Friday 17th

Monday 20th

2pm World History OHSCC Room 2

Tuesday 21st

11am Tuesday Skittles The Half Moon Tiverton

7.30pm Bridge Online

Wednesday 22nd

2pm Folk Dancing Halberton Village Hall

Canasta Contact Group Leader

Thursday 23rd

10am Thursday Skittles The Half Moon, Tiverton

10.30am Reading Group 3

2pm Poetry Tim's house

2pm Bridge *Contact Group Leader*

Friday 24th

Saturday 25th

10.30am MOTO Coffee Flying Pickle, Tiverton

Monday 27th

2pm Reading Group 1 Alison's house

2pm Cribbage *Contact Group Leader*

Tuesday 28th

11am Tuesday Skittles The Half Moon Tiverton

7.30pm Bridge Online

Wednesday 29th

Thursday 30th

10am Thursday Skittles The Half Moon, Tiverton

2pm Bridge *Contact Group Leader*

DECEMBER

Friday 1st

11.15am Discussion Group Christmas Lunch Wendy's Home

Mah Jong Group Contact Group Leader

Monday 4th

2pm Reading Group 2 Wendy's house

Tuesday 5th

10.30am What We Have Noticed *Contact Group Leader*

11am Tuesday Skittles The Half Moon Tiverton

7.30pm Bridge Online

Wednesday 6th

Thursday 7th

10am Thursday Skittles The Half Moon, Tiverton

2pm Bridge *Contact Group Leader*

Friday 8th

Monday 11th

2pm Cribbage *Contact Group Leader*

Tuesday 12th

11am Tuesday Skittles The Half Moon Tiverton

7.30pm Bridge Online

Wednesday 13th

2pm Folk Dancing Halberton Village Hall

7pm Wine Group Wendy's House
Canasta Contact Group Leader

Thursday 14th

10am Thursday Skittles The Half Moon, Tiverton
2pm Bridge Contact Group Leader
2pm Local History Cherith Hall

Friday 15th

9am Newsletter contributions to Lynne

Monday 18th

Tuesday 19th

11am Tuesday Skittles The Half Moon Tiverton
7.30pm Bridge Online

Wednesday 20th

2pm Monthly Meeting Cherith Hall
The British Music Hall - Tim Dyke

New Venue

Thursday 21st

10am Thursday Skittles The Half Moon, Tiverton
2pm Bridge Contact Group Leader

Friday 22nd

LOOKING AHEAD

2024

JANUARY Monday 1st Subscriptions due. **MARCH** Friday 22nd Quiz evening
MAY Thursday 9th Treasure Hunt **OCTOBER** Wednesday 30th Ann Widdecombe

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Chair | Mike Turner | 07885 515630 |
| Vice-Chair | Deborah Lal | |
| Secretary | Chris Redhead | |
| Treasurer | Paul Sadler | |
| Programme Organiser | Joan Kelly | |
| Beacon Administrator | Jo Jeffrey | |
| Membership Secretary | Jill Riddiford | 01884 258091 |
| Group Co-ordinator | Karyl Huntley- Sadler | |
| Minutes Secretary | Joan Kelly | |
| I.T. & Printing | Carol Boote | |
| Socials & Meetings | Anne Bush | |
| Publicity Officer | Could this be you? | |
| Committee Member | Eric Oakley | |

NON-COMMITTEE

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Website Manager | Wendy Cook |
| Welfare | Marilyn Dawson |
| Newsletter Editor | Lynne Lyddon |
| Technician | Tim Dyke |
