



Chat from the Chair

Looking forward to our 10th Anniversary Year! Do look out for mention of the different events we have planned.

Over the last year I have been most impressed with the ability of our membership to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances we have encountered in relationship to covid-19. Our groups have adapted and met over Zoom, have met socially distanced in members' gardens and when restrictions were lifted in July responded by organising activities so that once again you could meet together, socialise, learn, laugh and live, as the motto goes. So a huge thank you to our Group Organisers who have led our groups so well and a grateful thanks to those of you who have set up new groups.

I am aware that not all of you have been able to get out and about again and would like to mention our 'Coffee and chat' sessions via 'Zoom' on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday mornings in the month when a number of us have joined together for a chat about many different subjects, some serious discussion and much laughter. We also offer presentations via Zoom on the 4th Thursday morning in the month and **on 27th January John Vigar from Norfolk will be showing us his 'Crenels and Merlons'**. Sure to be a fascinating session. You are most welcome to join us at these sessions. See pages 5 and 7.

Our Social Committee have been active and worked hard to respond to your requests, and as ever have organised some fabulous sessions such as the Fireworks Cruise in November. They are planning some Coffee mornings for our 10th Anniversary as well as many other activities. A tremendous amount of work is required to ensure that everything runs smoothly and as before they have spent many hours organising **the Post-Christmas lunch which with much regret is now postponed to Thursday 17th February. Please see page 3.**

Our return to 'in person' monthly meetings in the Pavilion was possible because of the dedication and commitment of our committee, liaising with the Pavilion, writing risk assessments, organising the collection of slips and much more. Our committee, Social committee, Meeters and Greeters and other volunteers have ensured that everything has run smoothly. Importantly our newer members have been able to meet up in the café on the 'Link Up' table. We have trialled hybrid meetings from the Pavilion and in December, 23 members logged on from their homes to a successful 'live' session streamed straight from the Pavilion with thanks to the technical skills and perseverance of our 'Hybrid committee'. Additionally I am delighted to announce that I have booked all our speakers for 2022 and they can all offer to present over Zoom, just in case! After much consideration and due to the increase in Covid infections **we have decided to cancel our booking of the Pavilion for the morning of 13th January and so Jenny Baker and Derrick Holliday will now present 'Splendid Architecture' via Zoom.** With their superb photography this will definitely be worth watching. Please see page 2.

Thank you to all of you who responded to my request via e-mail for an Assistant Treasurer. A number of you apologised for not coming forward but I did appreciate your responses and a few of you seriously considered the position. I am delighted to announce that our committee have co-opted Stephen Rixon to our committee who will join us as Assistant Treasurer, ably guided by Richard Morgan our Treasurer who is standing down at our AGM in May.



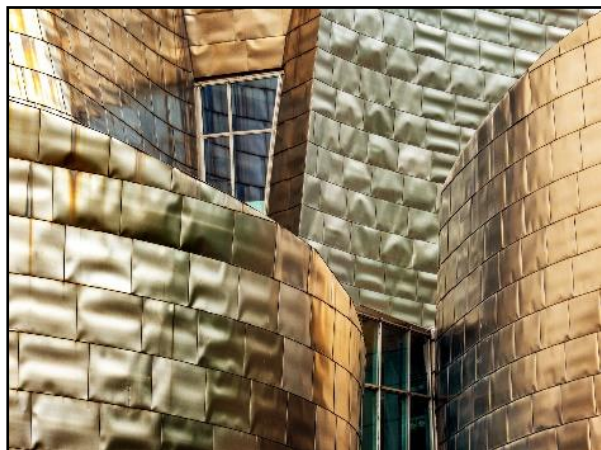
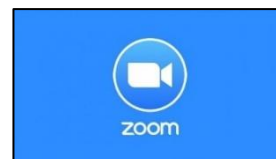
A special thanks to our committee who have worked extremely hard over this last year with all the additional work that running an u3a in a pandemic brings. There are so many of you I would like to thank individually that it would fill an entire newsletter and so please accept my thanks as together you do make a positive difference to our flourishing u3a. Happy New Year. Onwards and upwards!

With very best wishes,

Christine Chittock, Chair and Speakers' Coordinator

Next monthly meeting: 13 January 2022 – now on Zoom only

We were going to return to Exmouth Pavilion for our next monthly meeting on Thursday 13 January 2022, but in view of the Covid developments with the spread of the Omicron variant, the committee has decided that it would be safer for everyone to offer this as a Zoom only presentation. This will be from 10:15 for a 10:30 start. Zoom connection details are on page 5.



The subject is 'Splendid Architecture' with Jenny Baker CPAGB-AV ARPS and Derrick Holliday ARPS.



Jenny and Derrick, who are both members of Exmouth Photo Group as well as our u3a, are both experienced and talented photographers. They enjoy finding out about the history of the places they visit and select photographs which combined together in an Audio Visual (AV) will tell a story as we see in their AVs, including Jenny's 'Glass Church' in Jersey and Derrick's 'Reconciliation' about Coventry Cathedral.



Photo of the Guggenheim Museum of modern and contemporary art by Jenny Baker. The museum was designed by Frank Gehry and inaugurated in 1997.

Covid-19 information

Government website: The position on Covid-19 and the impact of the Omicron variant is constantly changing. As always, we advise everyone to continue to keep fully informed on the latest national information, guidance and support on Covid-19 by referring to the official government website – <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>.

Devon County Council website: Guidance from Devon County Council is at <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/> – and note especially "Continuing to wear face coverings in crowded and enclosed settings is a small action you can take to protect yourself and others".



Lateral Flow Tests: We thought you would appreciate knowing that when we return to our monthly meetings in the Pavilion, we are planning to add the following request to our Covid arrangements: "We recommend that you undertake a lateral flow test (LFT) on the morning of our monthly meeting and as close to the meeting as possible. Only attend if you have a negative result. To avoid queues, we will take it on trust that you have undertaken a LFT."

Hybrid meetings: For those who remain reluctant to join groups which are meeting indoors, the option of running groups as hybrid meetings using Zoom works very well and allows everyone to join in. More details are on our Connect & Learn website at <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn/video-calls>.

Group news

Dear All

As I write this the government have not put any restrictions which directly affect the running of our groups. I know that all the Group Organisers and members will take responsibility for their own safety and make decisions pertaining to their groups. I would like to thank the Group Organisers for their support over what has been a very difficult year.



On a more positive note, I have 3 new groups hoping to start and I will contact you once they have been organised.

I would to wish you a Very Happy, Healthy and Safe New Year

Lyn Holmes,
Groups Coordinator
groups@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Social Group News

I will start this on a positive note and wish you all a Very Happy and hopefully Peaceful and Healthy 2022.

Now moving to not such good news in that it has been decided, in light of the ever-increasing spread of Covid, to postpone the Post-Christmas Lunch to a later date - **Thursday 17th February**. The Social Committee will, of course, be getting in touch very shortly with all members who have bought tickets with further details.

Returning to more positive information, there are still a few tickets available for our Bird Watching trip arranged for **Monday 28th February 2022**. The price for this trip is £12.00 per person plus £3.50 for a hot pasty (which will be available on board). There will be a choice between meat or vegetarian pasty. If you would like to join us on this trip the details for payment are as follows:

- **Option 1** - Please send a cheque to Mrs Lyn Holmes – payable to Exmouth & District u3a. Also please don't forget to state your preference for either meat or vegetable pasty. Finally would you also please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for a reply.
- **Option 2** – To pay through Internet Banking (details sent direct to members).



Another positive note on which to end and that is we are planning an interesting and varied programme for 2022 – so FINGERS CROSSED.

Alice Robson,
Social Committee

New Member Meetings - A Participant's Perspective

Our branch continues to attract new members. You are all very welcome! Here is a comment I received recently from two of our new members. Thank you, Steve and Lynda:

"Being new to U3A and recently retired my wife, Lynda, and I really appreciated the opportunity to attend a new members meeting.

Over a cup of coffee at the Ocean, we enjoyed the chance to chat with other new members about why they had also been attracted to the U3A and to learn more about the many groups and social opportunities within the Exmouth & district branch from committee members, Lyn and Olwyn.

Whilst there is lots of information available online, for us we really appreciated the chance to meet in person".

Steve & Lynda Rixon



Sheila Clarkson
New Members Organiser

Group News – Walking Group 1

At our annual meeting in early December, Jenny, Ann and Christine gave up their roles running the group. Many thanks to them for their time and effort in keeping the group going over the years. Yours truly was elected the new leader – not much of an election as I was the only candidate!

For the last walk just before Christmas, Gill led just four of us along the old estuary path to Lympstone. This was the first time I have walked on the old path which runs on the river side of the railway line as opposed to the new asphalt path we are all familiar with on the land side. It does offer a slightly different view of things.

Walking up through the village we called in at Gulliford Cemetery which is adjacent to the main Exmouth Road at the junction with Meeting Lane. You could just about spot it from the top deck of the 57 bus if you knew where to look. An interesting wander around the small but restored cemetery with Gill giving us a bit of the history. Here on the right is a photo of us at the Cemetery.



Our walking dates of 2022 have been circulated to the group with almost all dates filled with a name against them.

A happy New Year to all members and we look forward to our walks throughout the year.




Regards,

Mike Holbrook
Group Organiser

Details of monthly meetings for 2022 – our 10th Anniversary Year

You are most welcome to join us for our monthly meetings at **10:00 for a 10:30 start to approx. 11:45**. These are **usually in The Exmouth Pavilion** (although **January's meeting will be only via Zoom – see page 2**). When we meet in The Pavilion, we have a 'Link Up' table in the Pavilion Café for new and recent members; a chance to get together and have a chat and find out more about our u3a. Our Social Committee is in the main hall and you can find out about forthcoming activities and outings. Please see our newsletters and emails with details of our arrangements with regard to Covid-19. We will keep you informed of any changes – <https://u3asites.org.uk/exmouth/events>. As you will see we have a most interesting programme for our anniversary year including many references to Devon.

Our presentations on the fourth Thursday in the month are at 10:15 for 10:30 to 11:30 via Zoom. The connection details for these Zoom presentations and for all our other u3a meetings (including the meeting on 13 January) are in the members' edition of the newsletter and in emails sent direct to members. This is for u3a members only, so please don't share these Zoom details with anyone else. If you experience difficulties, email John Hunt at johnh@exmouthu3a.org.uk. In the unlikely event that we are having problems with this link at the time, please keep an eye on your email inbox at the time for further information.

Date	Presenter	Description
2022 Thurs 13 th Jan via Zoom	Jenny Baker CPAGB-AV ARPS  Derrick Holliday ARPS 	'Splendid Architecture' – via Zoom only <p>Jenny and Derrick who are both members of Exmouth Photo Group as well as our u3a are both experienced and talented photographers. They enjoy finding out about the history of the places they visit and select photographs which combined together in an Audio Visual (AV) will tell a story as we see in their AVs including Jenny's 'Glass Church' in Jersey and Derrick's 'Reconciliation' about Coventry Cathedral.</p> <p>Full details are on page 2.</p>
Thurs 27 th Jan via Zoom	John Vigar https://www.johnevigar.com/ <i>Photo – C Chittock</i>	'Crenels and Merlons': We have a return visit via Zoom by John Vigar from Norfolk who entertained us last January with his superb talk on John Betjeman. As described by John this should be a fascinating talk. "Battlements have been a feature of British architecture for over a thousand years. Many of our iconic buildings feature them as an integral part of their design. Where would our medieval castles be without them – or our church towers? Yet for such a common architectural feature it is amazing how little they have been studied or the vast spread of their influence mapped. <p>The medieval use of battlements, of course, was firmly grounded in defence. The crenels –the gaps – and the merlons – the uprights – were first employed to create safe places from which to fire on your attackers. Very soon, though, they became a status symbol and only those on good terms with the Crown were allowed to put them on their houses."</p> 

Date	Presenter	Description
Thurs 10 th Feb	Gary Holpin https://www.facebook.com/GaryHolpinPhotography/	'A Photographic Journey Around the South West Coastal Footpath' Devon photographer Gary Holpin describes how a walk along the South West Coastal Path transformed his life. He is a semi-professional Landscape Photographer, passionate about Devon and the South West and specialises in vibrant coastal scenes.
Thurs 10 th Mar	Professor Peter Edwards https://italianreflections.wordpress.com/	Cataclysmic Italy' Sitting on the boundary between the African and Eurasian tectonic plates Italy has faced many geological disasters. A welcome return by Peter Edwards who entertained us last March with his illustrated talk on 'The Death of Venice' and then in April with his illustrated talk on 'Greek Temples in Italy'. Peter was a Professor in Engineering Mathematics and is passionate about Italy and visits whenever he can.
Thurs 7 th Apr	Maggie Duffy http://www.maggieduffy.co.uk/	'Devon Historical and Hysterical' Folksinger/song writer/poet Maggie will entertain us with her legends /poetry/dialect /songs and stories of Devon along with her guitar. Some of her songs have gained National recognition. Writing 'Peace for the Child', earned her a meeting with Sir Terry Wogan, and a session at the fabulous Maida-Vale Studios in London.
Thurs 12 th May	Dr. Todd Gray https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/history/staff/gray/	AGM followed by 'Devon and the Slave Trade' A welcome return by Todd Gray. As Todd says: "The history of Devon's involvement in African slavery can be contentious, mostly because of its legacy in race relations but also because we are still learning about it."
Thurs 9 th June	Members	'10th Anniversary Celebrations' Entertainment by and for our members. Display of a 10 th anniversary quilt by our own quilting group. Cutting of a 10 th Anniversary cake. As a vibrant, active and friendly u3a we will certainly have much to celebrate thanks to our wonderful members and volunteers.
Thurs 14 th July	Janet Few https://thehistoryinterpreter.wordpress.com/	'Coffers, Clysters, Comfrey and Coifs: life at the time of the Mayflower' Meet Mistress Agnes and Master Christopher and immerse yourself in 17 th Century life and discover the meaning of some rather unusual terms. A fascinating time in history.
Thurs 8 th Sep	Dr. Julia Neville https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/history/staff/neville/ https://www.devonhistorysociety.org.uk/devon-suffrage-activists-index/	'Devon Suffrage Activists – and what they did next' As you will discover in this talk women were active in the suffrage movement in Devon including in our own Exmouth and District area. Julia is an Honorary Research Fellow at Exeter University interested in twentieth-century social change. Recent work and publications include Early Victorian Schools and Devon Suffrage Activists. She supports community history projects and is Project Manager for a research collaboration on Devon in the 1920s.
Thurs 13 th Oct	Group Organisers and members	'Celebrating our Group Activities' Come and find out about our 100 Interest Groups and see and chat to some of our Groups and their Organisers showcasing their activities.
Thurs 10 th Nov	Wendy Richards Wood https://speakernet.co.uk/talk/2527/women-of-the-rnli-in-person-or-on-zoom	'Women of the RNLI' An overview of the RNLI with specific emphasis on the role of women historically, including during the World Wars, and up to the present day. A keen sailor, Wendy is the Volunteer Community Presenter and Publicity Officer for Teignmouth RNLI and currently the only presenter in the region who can offer a talk on the role of women in the RNLI.
Thurs 8 th Dec	Dr. Todd Gray MBE https://humanities.exeter.ac.uk/history/staff/gray/	Christmas in Devon' Another welcome return by Todd Gray. Todd describes a period with church, family and celebration – and without holiday cards, Christmas trees or outdoor festive lighting. Find out about different traditions and changes in celebration over time.

Christine Chittock, Chair and Speakers' Coordinator – speakers@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Zoom Coffee & Chat

These sessions are via Zoom and usually on 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday mornings from 10:15 for 10:30 to 11:30.



Zoom Coffee & Chat sessions are open to all our members and are a good opportunity for a chat. You may have something you would like to share on a 'show and tell' basis, particularly any activities you have participated in as a group member. So why not make yourself a cup of coffee and tea and join us; you will be most welcome. The Zoom connection details are the same as shown at the top of the previous section on page 5. *(Photo by Christine Chittock)*

Dates for January and February 2022:

6th January and 20th January; 3rd February and 17th February.

Although we send an email to all members the day before the monthly meetings and the monthly Zoom presentations reminding everyone about these events and giving the Zoom connection details to make connection easy, we do not routinely do this for everyone the day before these Zoom Coffee & Chat sessions. I have recently been sending reminders about these sessions to those of you who are on the Connect & Learn email circulation list, but if you are not on this list and would like to be sent reminders about these Coffee & Chat session by email the day before, please let me know by emailing me direct on the email address below and I will be happy to add you to the list.

John Hunt

Newsletter Editor

newsletter@exmouthu3a.org.uk



Winter scenes from Ian McLaughlin



Winter scenes from Hazel James

Review of Dr Geri Parlby's 'Saints, Snakes and Pawnbrokers' – Thursday 9th December 2021 in Exmouth Pavilion



Geri delivered a fascinating, informative and entertaining talk, full of illustrations taking us through the many different traditions associated with the festival of Christmas. Our attention was held from start to finish with the variety of material and associated stories used by Geri, clearly involving an incredible amount of research. With so many Christmas myths and traditions we could have been overwhelmed with information but not so as Geri had selected her material very well, choosing the unusual, the intriguing, the familiar as well as the unfamiliar and introducing each section with pertinent illustrations and well-chosen words.

Thus with mistletoe which we associate with kissing underneath, Geri explained there are around 1500 species of mistletoe around the world, growing parasitically on trees. In France apparently mistletoe is seen as a good luck charm which people often give to friends as a New Year's gift to wish them luck for the coming year ahead.

Having Christmas trees indoors is something that we become familiar with from a very young age but it was not always so. The tradition is believed to have started in sixteenth century Germany and is associated with the German preacher Martin Luther. Apparently as the story goes, one night before Christmas, Luther was walking through a pine forest and thought how beautiful the trees looked with the stars shining through the tree branches. So it was that he brought a tree into his house and decorated it with candles to represent the stars.

As Geri explained Queen Victoria is sometimes credited with starting the tradition of indoor Christmas trees. However, it would seem that honour should more likely be associated with Queen Charlotte the German wife of King George III. A special occasion with family gathered around the tree with sweetmeats, toys and wax candles.

Terminology is all important when considering the different traditions for rewarding children's good behaviour at Christmas time. We learnt that Saint Nicholas born in 270 AD in what is now the country of Turkey is the patron saint of pawnbrokers. Tradition has it that he was dedicated to helping others and generous in giving. The name we know as Santa Claus evolved from Saint Nicholas's Dutch nickname, Sinter Klaas, a shortened form of Sint Nikolaas.

We discovered that the red clothing we associate with Father Christmas wasn't always so being depicted in seventeenth century illustrations as green. The reindeer pulled sled is thought to have originated from Scandinavia and 'Rudolph' the red nosed leader was an American advertising creation.

Unfortunately as we heard not all is merry, happy and peaceful at Christmas time in a number of European countries and parts of the USA as there are some very dark traditions such as the goat-demon Krampus who punishes naughty children, beating them with his birch stick and licking them with his snake tongue.

However, we ended on a high thanking Geri for an excellent talk and extending warm wishes to all our members for a very Happy Christmas.

Review and photo by Christine Chittock, Chair and Speakers' Coordinator

Editor's note: Geri Parlby's website is <https://www.gparlby.co.uk/>. And if you want to know more about the origins of some of these traditions, the BBC Radio 4 series 'You're Dead to Me' has episodes on Medieval Christmas at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0b97gdq> and Victorian Christmas at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p07xl3bm>. Well worth a listen.

Zoom presentation on 23 December 2021 – Fit for the Future

For our Zoom presentation on the fourth Thursday in the month in December (on 23 December), I presented a session which I called **"Fit for the Future"**. Quite a few members joined us via Zoom for what I hope was a fun session as we led up to Christmas and as we prepared to keep fit in the New Year! For half-an-hour from 10:30, we shared a selection of video clips of some simple stretching exercises from Standing Pilates and Qigong classes. Some members just watched – but some rather brave members tried joining in at home at the time! Our 'workout' was followed by relaxation and a chat as we looked forward to Christmas.

For those of you who were present, or those of you who are curious and want to see what this was all about, here are the links to the videos I used:

Rachel Lawrence (The Girl with the Pilates Mat): Standing Pilates for Seniors (exercises to improve strength and mobility (full video is 25 minutes):

<https://youtu.be/Wx8pOiolCsl>

More at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIfUrFyAWGeB6kMaEVRqR5Q>



Cara Bradley (from mindful.org): Two-minute Mindful Practice:

https://youtu.be/yxPV7_7eLtM

More at

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>



Lee Holden: Morning Qigong exercise (for more energy) (10 minutes):

<https://youtu.be/AcO8kMK-dyl>

More at <https://www.youtube.com/c/HoldenQiGong/featured>



Lee Holden: Qigong Shaking for Stress Relief (2 minutes):

<https://youtu.be/XhOZLeQNfrM>



What do you think of these? Are they useful? Have you got any suggestions for other videos which help to keep us fit? There's a lot available, for example the Third Age Trust (the national u3a) commissioned Mr Motivator to create some fitness videos for us last year, six videos each less than 10 minutes long – <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsB2t41TNozHaM3tH5SzD6J5tiHMhrjxP>. Please let me know your suggestions, and then I could share this with others.

And just a reminder for the future. These Zoom presentations are usually **on the 4th Thursday morning of each month from 10:15 for 10:30 to 11:30**. At these events our own members give a presentation on a variety of topics from 10 mins to 60 mins. Occasionally these sessions are led by an external presenter, taking advantage of inviting speakers from further afield. We have been running these sessions since April 2020. Do join us in the future! (Zoom connection details are on page 5).

John Hunt

Newsletter Editor and Committee member

newsletter@exmouthu3a.org.uk

Exmouth & District u3a online – our digital world

With winter now upon us, when you are not actively involved in our u3a meetings there is always a lot to see and do online at any time that suits you – and from the comfort of your own home (or wherever else you happen to be in the world!). There are a number of ways we can connect with each other (as well as email):

- Our Exmouth & District u3a website: <https://u3asites.org.uk/exmouth/home>
- Our u3a YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC_Wy5Vkb2C1itp1JhKtxAA
- Our u3a Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/exmouthU3A>
- Our u3a Connect & Learn website: <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn> (and especially our Ideas and news page – at <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn/ideas>).

Each month we will look at each of these in a bit more detail. This month it's the turn of our u3a's **Connect & Learn website** at <https://sites.google.com/view/connectandlearn>.

Our motto is 'Learning Together – Something for Everyone'.

To see what's on offer please go to the "Topics" tab. These topics are available to access and use at any time whenever you want.

- **Introductory videos** - "improve your life, one skill at a time"
- **u3a resources** - local, national, international and online
- **Library resources** - free ebooks, journals, newspapers, magazines, music and other resources
- **Exmouth Community Arts**. I have now also set this up with its own website - www.exmoutharts.co.uk - so that this may be made available to for the general public and so to a wider audience.
- **BBC resources** - audio, video and websites
- **The Open University** - free online courses
- **A guide to MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses)** - free online courses
- **Using computers, laptops and tablets**. There is now an expanded and updated version of this in the separate "Computers" section. Click on **Computers** or the "Computers" tab.
- **A guide to reliable health information on the internet** - health information you can trust
- **Happiness - A plan for action** - a 10-point plan with lots of resources
- **Videos on YouTube** - a guide to finding your way round millions of videos
- **TED Talks** - thousands of interesting talks
- **Learning languages** - a wide range of learning material - including broadcasts, websites, apps and online courses
- **Online Music** - exploring a number of ways to access free music online



To help us through these difficult times, I have created some special features. To see them, just click or tap on the links immediately below (or click or tap on the separate subject tabs):

- **Our ideas section for things to do during these unusual times** - get inspired - take a look now!
- **Our basic guide to using computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones** - to help you with technology
- **Our basic guides to videoconferencing and teleconferencing** - to keep us all connected

Plus this time last year I created our online **Astronomy for Beginners Group** and our online **Mindfulness & Meditation Group** - open to everyone! The resources are all there to look at in your own time.

Our next edition



I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter, and thank you to our contributors this month. What other things would you like to see in future editions of the newsletter? If you have any views or comments about this newsletter, or if you wish to contribute any articles for the next newsletter in February, please contact me using the email address below. Photos, art, short articles and stories and poems from more members would be especially welcome. **Photos of winter views would be particularly appreciated.** The deadline for receipt of copy for next month's edition is **Monday 24th January**. Thank you very much.

John Hunt

Newsletter Editor

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