

NETWORK NEWSLETTER



(Registered Charity No. 1029470)

Vol XXIV

March /April 2024

Issue 3

1,000+ local u3as

- u3a committee members
- Interest group members
- Interest group convenors



12 regions and nations

- England (comprising 9 regions)
- Northern Ireland
- Wales
- Scotland



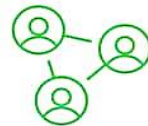
u3a

One u3a movement
with 400,000
members at
its heart



The Third Age Trust

- The Board of Trustees made up from our membership
- Trust Volunteers including Beacon Volunteers
- Staff team
- Committees and working groups



Networks and clusters

- More than 80 informal groupings of u3as around the movement
- Network Link brings all the networks and clusters together

Contacts

First Wednesday 09:30 am	Amblers
First & Third Thursday 12:30 pm	Art
TBC	Badminton
Friday 2:00 pm	Bridge
Second & Fourth Monday 2:00 pm	Bridge - Duplicate
First Wednesday 2.00 pm	Creative Writing
Third Tuesday 10:00-12:00 am	Craft & Chatter
Alternate Thursdays 10:00 am	Dance
Third Tuesday 10:00 am	Digital Photography
First Tuesday at 10:00 am	History
Last Thursday 2.00 pm	Learning Spanish Together
Third Monday 2:30 pm	Literature
Fourth Monday 2.00 pm	Mahjong
Second & Fourth Wednesday 2:30 pm	Needles, Pins & Patchwork

A Word from Your Chair . . .



Dear Member, Is it just me, or has Spring seemed a long time coming this year? My diary tells me the clocks go forward on 31st March when British summertime begins. I can't wait for those longer, lighter evenings.

In February, our 'Bring a Friend' coffee morning was very well attended and several new members joined us on the day. Our guest speaker, Ian Ringer, from the Cornwall Advanced Drivers Institute gave a useful talk on safer driving techniques. Speaking of speakers, our newly co-opted committee member Louise Kitley is looking for interesting, entertaining speakers for our coffee mornings. If you would like to suggest someone please let Louise know. You'll find her contact details inside this packed issue of Network, along with pages of news and articles from u3a members. A jolly good read!

March 16th is the date for our Quiz Night at Lifton Community Hall. Quiz teams are swotting up and raring to compete for a glittering trophy. Once again, our thanks to Quizmaster Mark Leavis for setting a programme of fiendish and fun questions to stretch our little grey cells. Thanks also to Val Maybank and Iris Lindsay from our Events Team for organising another popular evening's entertainment.

Our next coffee morning falls on Good Friday, March 29th. We tried to book Central Hall a week earlier but it wasn't available. I know this will be a problem for some but I hope many of you will start the Easter weekend by enjoying refreshments in the company of u3a friends. I hear there may even be hot cross buns . . .

So enjoy the many benefits your u3a has to offer and encourage others to join us. Meanwhile, I leave you with this thought: 'The trouble with retirement is that you never get a day off.' Abe Lemons
Be kind to others.
Be good to yourself.

Georgie Adams

Monthly Meeting Hosts

January: Literature

April: Pub Lunch 1

July: Rocks and Ruins

October: Stretch and Relax

February: Mahjong

May: Needles and Pins

August: Rummikub

November: Spanish Conversation

March: Pub Lunch 2

June: Religions

September: Strollers

Coffee Morning Refreshments. This is an opportunity to show appreciation for the efforts of the host group and to be charitable, so please give generously – Thank you.

Current Membership -- We currently have 227 members.

National Office News - Sign up to receive regular e-mailed monthly Newsletters on the National Office website at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter>. Previous editions are available on-line in the archive.

ICE - In Case of Emergency – contact information is so important. If you have not already done so, PLEASE let Judi Graham at u3ajgraham@gmail.com have details of your nominated person to contact.

Diary Dates

Monday 11 ^h March	10:00	Committee Meeting, Edymead Hall
Saturday 16 th March	19.30	Quiz Night – Lifton Community Hall
Friday 29 th March	10:15	Coffee Morning - Central Methodist
Friday 26 th April	10:15	Coffee Morning - Speaker Laura Langman

Media / PR Group - Have you experience or have an interest in Social Media or Marketing? Don't want to be on the committee but would like to be involved, then we would like to hear from you as we try to improve our profile on Social Media and Marketing in the Community. Can you help? **Intrigued** or have you any suggestions? then please speak to **Peter Penhorwood**

Two Moors Network Contact - Volunteer

WOULD YOU LIKE A NEW CHALLENGE?

Then why not volunteer to become the Two Moors Network Contact within the South West Region, where you will have the opportunity to meet other Network Contacts and u3as from within the region and share experiences.

The Two Moors Network grouping of u3as comprises 7 local u3as who have chosen to work together for support and the mutual benefit of the members of the u3as concerned. These are Callington and Launceston from Cornwall, East Dartmoor, Moor's Edge, Okehampton, Tavay and West Dartmoor, from Devon.

The Network is very informal with no constitution or procedural rules, no committee, and no bank accounts, instead, the u3as take it in turns to organise meetings and events.

Interested and want to find out more?

Contact Malcolm Tulip

These are our Websites/Facebook pages.

As you may or may not know our new website is now up and running, and it is aimed at giving a very brief overview of Launceston & District u3a for prospective new members.

In the attached document you will find a link and a QR (Quick Response) code to the new site.



Launceston's own new u3a website:

<https://www.launcestonu3a.org.uk>

Launceston's original full website link:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/launceston/welcome>

This has links to the National u3a website.

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



There is a Public Facebook page available to the public at large <https://www.facebook.com/launcestonu3a.org.uk>

There is also a closed/private Facebook Group, Launcestonu3a, which you can join. (Speak to a committee member if you do not have access)

Louise Kitley



A special, warm welcome to Louise Kitley who has kindly volunteered to join the u3a committee as a co-opted member. Louise has loads of great ideas and we will keep her very busy. Louise will be focusing on putting together a programme of speakers for our coffee mornings.

Appeal for Speakers

Are there any members or do you know anyone who would be willing to give a talk (free) for 20 to 30 mins at our coffee mornings? Do you know of anyone from a charity or community group who would like to speak? We would like to have a speaker more regularly so if you can help please contact me Louise



Speaker: At the Coffee Morning on the Friday 26th April we have Laura Langman from the National Energy Action charity coming along to talk to us about fuel poverty, energy advice, and improving energy efficiency in our homes.

Groups

“Learning Italian Together” and “Learning Spanish Together”

I am starting two new interest groups. The first called “Learning Italian Together” and another group called “Learning Spanish Together”. The groups are aimed at people who are beginners but have interest and enthusiasm to learn.

The Learning Spanish Together group started on Thursday 25th and will be held on the last Thursday in the month at my home from 2pm to 4pm.

The ‘Learning Italian Together’ group has not yet started, and I would like interested people to contact me so that we can choose a date that suits them all, or, if necessary, more than one date.

It is very important to mention that anyone who is interested in either of these groups should first purchase “Living Italian” or “Living Spanish” and read the first 2 or 3 chapters and answer the questions before the next get-together. This will show them very quickly whether they are going to cope with the work with ease or with difficulty. There are audio tracks that go with the book, which I have available, and I can send these via an email link, or if this is not possible, I can send a CD.

I would also be willing to lead a classical music appreciation group and it would be helpful for anyone interested in this to contact me.

Brian Pollard

New Music Appreciation Group

This is being held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, at my home in North Hill

The objective is to discuss pieces of classical music we like, explain why we like it, and why it was written. We hope each to hear music we have not heard before, and perhaps to hear music we already know, in a new light. I have a very large selection of classical music from the 12th to the 20th centuries and if there is a wish to hear music that is not in my collection, this can be arranged via Amazon music, which has 30 million music tracks to choose from.

It will be possible to watch opera excerpts, or even a whole opera, if that is what everyone would like to do.

If you are interested please contact me.

Brian Pollard

Articles and pictures about your Groups for Facebook and Network

This is a follow up to Rosemarie's request at the February Coffee Morning. Rosemarie is Launceston u3a's public facebook co-ordinator (<https://www.facebook.com/launcestonu3a.org.uk>), who posts regularly about what's been going on and future events. She would like to mention all Launceston Groups in her posts, but as so many never communicate, she has very little idea of what your Group does.

So....as well as keeping Rosemarie up-to-date with your goings on, Mark would be VERY pleased if you'd write a few words once in a while for inclusion in "Network". What is the Art group's current project? – are you still studying Betty Edwards? and maybe your fellow members would like to know about it. Where have Walkers & Strollers been lately? any suggestions for local walks? & how about the Pub Lunch groups recommending their latest venues? Are the craft groups working towards anything – maybe thinking of this year's Christmas Market - & other groups – has anything interesting or amusing happened to you? Creative Writing – maybe a few stories to entertain us? Stretch & Relax – do you have anything to say? Photography – any specific subjects that you'd like us to see?

Mark and Rosemarie would be so pleased to hear from you in words and pictures, so do try to give them something to work with in their endeavours on behalf of Launceston u3a.

Editor



PROGRAMME FOR HISTORY GROUP 2024

JAN	No meeting at New Year
FEB	Joint meeting with Rocks and Ruins Dartmoor Trails and Transport
MAR	History of the Isle of Sheppey Kate Baird assisted by Malcolm Wright
APR	Prominent North Devon families Ruth Wilson
MAY	Visit to Plympton St. Maurice Peter Adams
JUN	Robert Hooke; Science and History in Stuart times Phil World
JUL	Giants and Missiles Mike Ryalls
AUG	Ancient Egypt Karin Baker
SEPT	Visit to Wheal Martyn or Delabole Quarry Peter Adams
OCT	History and Ourselves Peter Adams
NOV	Victorian Photography Malcolm Wright
DEC	Hadrian's Wall (to be arranged)

Pete Adams

WEST COUNTRY CHURCH VISITING



We meet at 1pm, [unless otherwise stated] on the 3rd Thursday of the month at Pennygillam Industrial Estate down near the far end, past Pennygillam Auto Centre.

Car sharing is recommended as country churches are often on narrow lanes. Please reimburse your driver at the agreed rate. If you intend to make your own way to the venue, please let Kate or Caroline know.
Kate Baird ---01566 773702 or Caroline Yeo-----07971 290296

We like to have tea and cake after our visits at a suitable nearby venue.

March 21st Lewtrenchard, Thrushelton, Devon.

April 18th Breage and Sithney, Cornwall.

May 16th Atherington, High Bickington and Yarnscombe, Devon.

June 20th St. Columb Major and Withiel, Cornwall.

July 18th Colebrook and Down St. Mary, Devon.

August 15th Werrington and North Petherwin, Cornwall.

Sept 19th Whitchurch and Sampford Spiney, Devon.

Venues subject to change if recce indicates not suitable.

Kate Baird



u3a Art Group

Over the last two terms, the Art Group has been exploring line and portraiture. We have had to leave our comfort zones and try some very different styles of drawing and painting. Here are just a few examples from a truly prolific and adventurous output!

The Art Group usually meets every first and third Thursday of the month at the Pipers Pool Methodist Chapel and Community

Hub. We assemble at 12.30 for a 1 o'clock start (after our packed lunches and social catch-ups). Finish time is about 3.30pm.

Our style of learning together is to choose a theme for a term and then pursue, session-by-session, challenges that build our knowledge, skills and confidence. At the end of each session we display and discuss our drawings or paintings ... and it is always amazing how our own indifference or dislike of our own work gets overwhelmed by the positive feedback and encouragement we get from the other group members!

Whilst absolute beginners are welcome, the very basic instruction is best got from the many and excellent Youtube demonstrations ... and then the Group will provide a warm and supportive environment in which to develop.

The Art Group is led by Peter Stephenson and Steve Reynolds. Please contact either for further information.

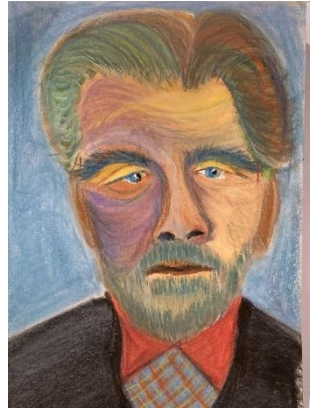
Portraits a-plenty!



Bev Hill



Steve Reynolds



Helen Hamilton



Richard Derrick



Maggie Wilson



Linda Newman



Angie Page



Nicky Harvey

Rocks and Ruins



Garry and I are arranging a visit to **Launceston Castle** for the next Rocks and Ruins meeting on **Friday April 5th**

The castle is run by English Heritage and in order to obtain free admission for our group, it is important that you reply to this email by **Saturday 9th March** to let us know if you can attend the visit. If you are already a member of English Heritage, please bring your card with you.

We plan to meet at the castle at 10.00 and the visit will take approximately 1 hour where you will be free to explore the ruins, visit the exhibition and climb the steep steps to the tower.

When numbers attending are known, we plan to contact Eagle House hotel to arrange for tea/coffee to be purchased individually. Please let us know if you would like to be included.

Access notes: Visitors in a wheelchair can be given access to the staff car park (by prior arrangement only, please let us know ASAP if this is required).

There are six steps leading up to the shop. The main staircase to the keep has 64 steps (there are a number of resting places on the way up and handrails are provided). There is disabled access to the outer bailey, exhibition and shop (a side gate to the shop allows for wheelchair or mobility scooter).

We look forward to hearing from you

Garry and Judi Graham



Flower Festival

A Time To Celebrate



For the people of Launceston, the church of St Mary Magdalene is inviting us to join with them to celebrate the 500th anniversary of its dedication in 1524.



Launceston in Bloom, in collaboration with Launceston u3a, is helping to celebrate with a flower festival at St Mary's church from June 13th to 16th. Invitations to create a floral display are being sent to Launceston u3a and other local associations. There are limited spaces for displays so, if you are interested in taking part, please contact one of the festival team as soon as possible:

Jenny Groves
Rosemarie Lane
Marina Brumby

Marina Brumby

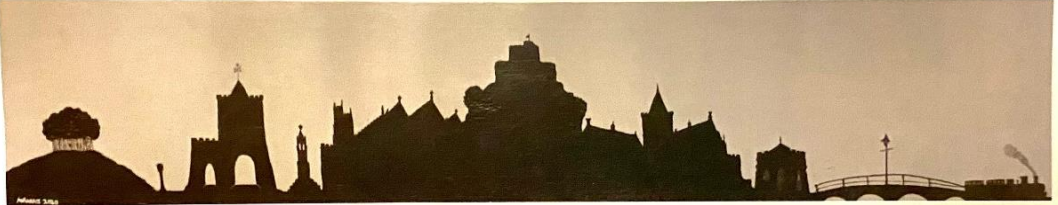
Keeping In Touch



For members who may be under the weather, notifying Marguerite Bowhay will prompt a thoughtful "Get well soon" card. So please do get in touch with a committee member if you need a card sent to cheer up the recipient.

Landmarks in silhouette

THE ANCIENT MARKET TOWN OF LAUNCESTON IN CORNWALL



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

The artwork from left to right shows

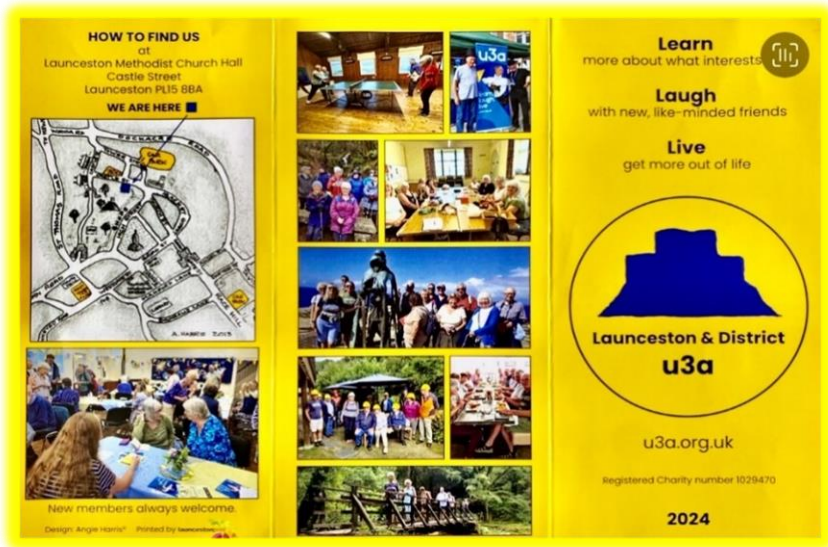
1. The Trees: Known as 'the nearly home trees', Cookworthy Knapp is a group of beech trees on a hill, and a welcome sight to homewardbound travellers.
2. The Dunheved Cross: A carved granite cross marking the coronation of King Edward VII, now positioned between the local health centre and the A30.
3. The Southgate Arch: Originally 12th century, and the only remaining town gate of three entrances to this walled town.
4. The War Memorial: The Monument of Remembrance was built in 1919 on the site of the old Butter Market.
5. St Mary's Church: Located on the site of an earlier 13th century church, this Anglican church has a carved granite exterior and was completed in 1540.
6. The Castle: Built in the 11th century by Robert, Count of Mortain – the halfbrother of William the Conqueror.
7. The Town Hall: A Victorian building of 1881, with a Guildhall and stained glass windows.
8. The Roundhouse: A focal community point in 1829 for political and religious purposes.
9. St Thomas or Prior's Bridge: A medieval packhorse bridge built over the river Kensey.
10. The Steam Railway: A restored narrow-gauge Victorian railway where locomotives make short journeys into the surrounding countryside.

This intriguing artwork was created by Launceston & District u3a vice-chair Angela Harris, drawing on the creative silhouette style made popular in Victorian times. It shows some of the most well-known landmarks in and around the ancient market town of Launceston in Cornwall, close to the Devon border. Planning the layout and sequence of the different features was painstaking and took a great many hours, admits Angela, who used acrylic paint to create the work. “The hardest part was planning it so that all the landmarks balanced,” she says. “I worked from the middle out, with the ruins of the castle roughly in the middle, and tried to ensure it was more or less in geographical order. Its dimensions (approximately 91.5 x 15.25cm) were so unique that it couldn’t be done on a standard easel, so I had to use an ironing board instead.” The work has now been gifted to the local community, and is a tribute to a much-loved historic town and region.

This article was recently featured in the Third Age Matters Magazine Thanks Angie Harris

Look at our new Trifold Leaflet

Kindly designed and produced by Angie Harris
If you are able to put a leaflet in shops, newsagents, surgeries, on local notice boards that would great – Please speak to any of the committee for leaflets - Thank You.





January Monthly Meeting
The Host Group: Literature
Group Leader: Kate Baird

At our coffee morning in January, Kate Baird kindly gave a very informative talk about Launceston Cancer Support Group. They meet at the Orchard Centre every first Saturday of the Month at the Orchard Centre. The u3a coffee morning was hosted by the Literature Group and an amazing £80 was raised for this really important cause.

Launceston
Cancer Support Group

10:00-12:00
1st Saturday of each Month

The Orchard, Blind Hole, Market St, Launceston. PL15 8AU
*Starting - 4th November

Everyone is Welcome. We are a social group that meets for coffee, cake and a chat with people in similar situations.

Free refreshments, information and support

email@ageukcornwall.org.uk
01872 266383



February Monthly Meeting The Host Group: Mahjong Group Leader: Wendy Hurford

Our hosts for February were the Mahjong group. The chosen charity of the day was British Heart Foundation and the sum of £80 was raised. Thank You.



A buzz of conversation filled the room as it was our 'Bring a Friend' to u3a coffee morning. There were lots of new faces as members brought along friends and family members who might be interested in joining our u3a.

Our speaker on this occasion was Ian Ringer from Cornwall



Advance Drivers who gave a very interesting talk about safe driving and advanced driving courses. For more information go to:

www.cornwalladvanceddrivers.com/



Here is a reminder of the 2 mnemonics that were used in the Advanced Driving talk:

I.P.S.G.A

INFORMATION - make the most of understanding what you can see.

POSITION- Are you in the right place for all round safety?

SPEED - Is it a speed to maintain the safety of other road users?

GEAR - Are you in the right gear for the circumstances?

ACCELERATION - gently when it is safe to do so!

P.O.W.D.E.R.Y

PETROL - Have you got enough?

OIL - Check the oils/fluids

WATER - Check screen wash and coolant regularly

Damage - Check wheels for damage - tyres for slits and punctures - lamps and reflector covers for breakage. / mirrors for breakage.

ELECTRICS - Are Exterior / interior lamps working, check horn is working.

RUBBER - Tyre pressures and tread depth including the spare. Tyres must have a tread depth of at least 1.6mm. Advanced drivers prefer a minimum of 3mm tread depth. Check windscreen wiper blades.

YOURSELF! - Are you fit to drive? Are you taking medication which might dull reaction times. More to the point, are you maybe feeling the effects of getting older. You feel more tired than usual or notice a pattern change in your daily routine...

IF IN DOUBT...CHECK IT OUT!.... DON'T DRIVE!

Personally, my recent experience of crashing my car whilst driving when feeling unwell is a prime example of what not to do!

Should anyone want to borrow my Roadcraft Handbook on driving I have one to borrow for a short loan.

Marguerite Bowhay

u3a Goes Birding

Wednesday 24th January, a bright and clear day for a u3a adventure out on the River Exe for a river cruise to see the many birds on the estuary at this time of year. Many would say a foolish thing to do in January but the coach to Exmouth was warm and full, not just of people, but of the chatter of friends and family out away from the post-Christmas gloom. On arrival we were met by a member of the Stuart Line Cruises staff who handed out our boarding passes and pasty tickets while we were still on the coach.



We were in plenty of time to invade a small café for a quick drink and comfort break, before boarding the boat. We couldn't have been in better hands, the

upper deck soon filled up with keen bird watchers and when the chill seeped in despite blankets and very attentive staff supplying waiter-service for drinks hot and cold, some of us went down to the lower deck. Here was warmth, hot food and drinks, and in my mind, a better closer view of the river and its abundant life. Pasties were booked and enjoyed by many as we cruised up the river.



The trip was hosted by Derek Carter, RSPB ornithologist whose intimate knowledge of his subject and the coastline made for a very interesting and amusing commentary. He gave a running commentary for the voyage, feeding us with

all sorts of nature related information about the estuary and its rich bird life and important status in the birding and conservation world, as well as pointing out places of interest on shore.



The cruise began along the edge of Pole sands, here we saw Curlew, Oyster Catchers, gulls and Brent Geese, unfortunately a military aircraft flew over at this point and disturbed all the birds. If you were a tick box kind of person then the list of possible sightings given to us as we boarded was a useful tool. We were lucky enough to see a Great Northern Diver as the Captain manoeuvred the boat round and I now know the difference between a Shag and a Cormorant. Of the many birds to be seen were Shelduck, Pintail, Red-breasted Merganser, Golden Plover, Redshank and GreenShank, Bar-tailed Godwit, Dunlin and Turnstone, Great Crested Grebe and my all-time

favourite, and one bird I really wanted to see – Avocet, so many of them.



Our journey up to Topsham was enhanced by the sighting of not one, but two different seals, Grey and Common resting on some moored barges.

A good camera and binoculars were a must, I had the latter but not the former so no fabulous photos of birds for me. To my mind sometimes just looking and absorbing the sight and sounds is better than focusing on capturing a photo. As in all good adventures, we were home in time for tea.

A huge thank you to Iris Lindsay for her organising skills in arranging all of the trip. I'm sure everyone would agree we had a fabulous, memorable day.

Rosemarie Lane

National Theatre Live at Launceston Town Hall



On Thursday 22nd February 5 members of Launceston u3a attended a National Theatre screening of Vanya, an adaptation of Chekov's famous play. The whole one hour and 45 minutes was performed by one man – Andrew Scott – taking 8 different parts. These screenings are filmed at live

performances and often give a much better view, including close ups, than the theatre audience is able to access.

I have to admit that initially we thought that maybe this is a bit too “high brow” for us, but the play had enjoyed a six week sell-out run in London, so we thought “OK, let’s give it a go”.

It was the most spell binding piece of theatre I have ever seen. Andrew Scott played this range of diverse characters and emotions brilliantly and was totally convincing.

The next Town Hall performance at 7.00 pm on Thursday 21st March is “The Motive and the Cue”, currently showing at the Noel Coward Theatre in London. This is a tale, described as fierce and funny, depicting a rehearsal of Hamlet, starring Richard Burton, played by Johnny Flynn and directed by John Gielgud, played by Mark Gatiss and the clash of style and age between the two. Also featuring Tuppence Middleton as Elizabeth Taylor.

Tickets are £10 each, whilst the price of tickets for the London theatre performances range from £72.50 to £195.00.

My ulterior motive in submitting this article to Network is that I should very much like this Town Council initiative to continue and it will if there is sufficient support. If you'd like to know more, then check it out on launceston-tc.gov.uk/whats-on-in-launceston-town-hall.

Pauline Chester



Sterts project – its beginning!



By the end of March the new Sterts theatre building project should be under way and everyone involved with Sterts is very excited about the new possibilities this will introduce.

The project will replace the fragile canvas structure with a more robust steel framed building to extend our season and host a much wider range of arts, heritage and environmental events. This project is being funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Community Ownership Fund.

Meantime, we have two shows booked in the Studio – PERI MENO, WHAT NOW? on Friday 19th April & BIKE by Bodkin Theatre (Carn to Cove) on Saturday 11th May. We are also delighted that once again ED BYRNE will bring his show to the theatre on 13th September and tickets are already on sale and indeed selling fast, so don't miss out.

There is a new Victorian melodrama currently in rehearsal which includes music, singing & comedy. It has been especially written for Sterts and weaves together myths and legends about the Beast of Bodmin Moor. It is directed by local Phil Croft, who has come back from directing in London especially for this production. It will be the first Sterts production in the new Theatre in August & September.

Our **Box Office** is open Monday to Friday 10.00am to 1.00pm at Sterts Theatre & Arts Centre, Upton Cross, PL14 5AZ
Website: www.sterts.co.uk

Sue Vernon

Walkers Group

It was an interesting and eventful walk on Dartmoor. We started at Merrivale and climbed up to Kings Tor and then returned across the boggy moor back to Merrivale. The weather was ok at the start – bright – a little drizzly, but as you can see it soon changed very quickly to a horrible thick mist. A little worrying at the time but thanks to Mike and Iris for getting us back safely.





Guess who's coming to dinner?

A new feature for members to enjoy and contribute to pick a guest list of 5 or 6 people you would like to share an evening with anybody at all – dead or alive, who would you choose and why?

The Third dinner party “hosted” by Hugh Beswetherick

. My Six Dinner Party Guests

In selecting my guests I have put them together in pairs, wondering how these unique characters would bounce off each other. For each character I have included one of their quotes. Come along to the Religions group if you wish to explore such characters further.



Muhammed Ali

I liked his way of poking fun at everyone, putting the pompous in their place; and all with a twinkle in his eye. And he could box!

"Float like a butterfly. Sting like a bee. You can't hit what your eyes don't see."

Spinoza

His life was lived simply and in poverty as a lens grinder and yet his philosophy was profound. Spinoza's key to life lies in the effort to understand, starting with yourself but also encompassing others and the universe.



"I have striven not to laugh at human actions, not to weep at them, not to hate them, but to understand them."

Eddie Izzard

An unconventional person even for a comedian. His/her rambling monologues go off into all sorts of weird directions and into a variety of languages.

“You’ve got to believe you can be a stand-up before you can be a stand-up. You have to believe you can act before you can act. You have to believe you can be an astronaut before you can be an astronaut. You’ve got to believe.”



Gurdjieff

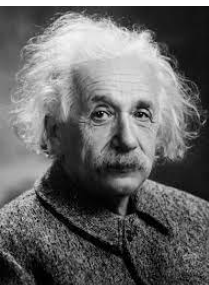
A philosopher born in Russian Armenia over 150 years ago. His teachings called “The Work” aim to increase our consciousness through a variety of practices involving the mind, body and emotions.

“Conscious faith is freedom. Emotional faith is slavery. Mechanical faith is foolishness.”

Spike Milligan

Born in India, for which he always retained a love, he was a gunner in WWII which eventually led to his shell shock, which I think stayed with him for the rest of his life. He highlighted the absurd, first in the Goon Show and later as a writer and a TV comic.

“There is a time to live, a time to die, a time to laugh, and at no time are the three of them very far apart.”



Einstein

His scientific thinking is world famous but his unique mind ranged over a wide range of subjects including religion.

“Weak people revenge. Strong people forgive. Intelligent people ignore.”

Adventures in Finland

You have to love snow, not mind being cold and enjoy taking ten minutes to get dressed to embrace a trip to Finland in January.

In March 2023 I saw a Launceston Travel Facebook post for a trip to see the Northern Lights, flying from Exeter, what could be better. It seemed too good an opportunity and something to look forward to in the dark January days. I put my hands up to not being an intrepid traveller so was a little non-plussed by the list of recommended clothing and the need for some extra travel insurance covering specialised winter 'sports' i.e. snowmobiling and husky sledging.....

Through the following months my eldest daughter Rebecca, who was fulfilling one of her dreams too and coming with me, and I began gathering the items we needed. We are both avid walkers so had some thermal layers already but following a trawl through TripAdvisor reviews on this TravelSun trip, we realized we would need more – head torch, thermal waterproof mittens, goggles and plenty of thermal socks as well as those very handy disposable hand and foot warmers. Thankfully snowsuits and boots were provided.

Exeter airport had two flights on the Sunday morning we left, one to sunny Lanzarote, one to Enontekio, our destination. Unfortunately, the check-in conveyers weren't working so a backlog of people man-handling their suitcases to the groundcrew meant we took more than an hour to get through to air-side, and with no time to linger our flight was called. Flying is unnatural in my eyes, give me a boat any day but sometimes these things need to be embraced, happily it was a short 3.5 hour flight.

We arrived in Enontekio airport sometime after 3 p.m. local time. There was snow, more snow than I could imagine. Did I mention I like snow? I do.

Enontekio is a municipality in northern Finland, about 300 km inside the Arctic Circle with approximately 1,800 inhabitants, covering 3,200 square miles, close to the Swedish border - we crossed into Sweden twice on our travels. The administrative centre of Enontekio is Hetta, the small town where we stayed. About one fifth of the population are indigenous Sami people.



As we disembarked from the plane we were entranced by the falling snow which sparkled in the airport light. A short coach drive from the airport we stopped to be fitted with our cumbersome but necessary snowsuits and boots, our guide telling us we needed big roomy boots to fill with warm socks. Fifteen minutes later we arrived at Hetta.

The family-run hotel was basic but comfortable and warm and the food for the five days we were there was filling, basic and tasty, with lots of choice. Three hot meals, a warm bed, hot shower and no washing up, bliss.



That first evening our representative Lisa told us what to expect and advised the Aurora Borealis was likely to be visible a little later that evening. Keen to see it, Rebecca and I suited up, oh my, what a palaver, and ventured out. You can't begin to imagine the cold. Instantly your breath freezes on your snood and buff and the condensation froze on the inside of my glasses, so they were no good for the duration. Luckily I can still see distance, just no good for seeing my phone camera clearly, even if I was willing to take my gloves and mittens off (three pairs, silk, thermal, waterproof).

We trudged in the deep snow behind the hotel into the semi-darkness and saw a weak Aurora display, unfortunately the only time we did see it as the following days there was always light cloud cover. It was quite magical being out in the snow that evening. The light of the few houses around could be seen through the heavily snow-laden trees. This area of Scandinavia has only recently come out of months of 24-hour darkness so all of the houses still had white fairy lights in their windows and in the tree-filled front areas.

Monday morning, early, 9.30 and the sky only just beginning to lighten and it's -30° , according to the thermometer across the road on the supermarket display. Sunrise was around 9.30 with full light about 11.a.m. with the light beginning to fade about 3 p.m.

Our adventure for the day was a snowshoe trek across the frozen lake across the road from the hotel, our guide was a delightful, knowledgeable, bearded Frenchman called Hugo. First lesson – how to put on snowshoes wearing gloves, second lesson, how not to fall over in them – tricky on both counts. It soon became apparent how difficult it is to talk when you have a mouth full of wet balaclava. As the days wore on and the temperature warmed up to only -20° , we found it was alright to uncover your mouth and still live, you just got a cold nose, and sometimes frozen eyelashes. The lake stretched for miles either way, a vast white space, silent except for the lovely crunch of snow. Hugo told us there was a comforting three feet of ice between us and any running water. Across the lake we entered the Boreal Forest which covers the northern hemisphere. 'Here be no dragons', just bear, wolverine, wolves, arctic hares and the odd Elk! After teaching us how to get up in snowshoes after we had fallen down, an undignified process, we stopped for a cup of Glogg, a non-alcoholic version of mulled wine, definitely needed to warm us up.

That evening we had an organised forest trek to see the Aurora, out into the forest behind the hotel, the path lit by candles, in the snow to a clearing with a fire, more Glogg but no lights. You can imagine we slept well that night, especially as we had gone tobogganing with a few fellow-travellers to the Visitor Centre about a 25-minute walk along the road.

Day two, a little nervous of what was to come, but ready to embrace another adventure, this time with huskies. A short mini bus drive found us being taught the rudiments of husky sled driving and a lot about the

dogs themselves. I opted to drive first, Rebecca on the sled under a reindeer skin hiding me at the 'controls' – a bar that read 'Never let go' (shades of Titanic!) my feet on the bars either side with a metal brake bar across middle. Our team of five dogs were marginally quiet, with the exception of one young dog who was moving the sled even though it was still tethered to a post.



We are number seven in a line of eight sleds. We are untied and this young dog sets off out of line pulling the whole team, and I'm standing on the brake as hard as I can. We signalled for help as the team overtook other sleds and between myself and one of the guides, we managed to stop the sled. Phew. The young dog was taken off the team and we were left with just four dogs who were very able to pull us. It was a thrilling drive out, we changed drivers halfway round and then were invited to unharness the dogs and take them back to their kennels. To say they are strong is an understatement. Hugely

impressive dogs who love to be outdoors working and were more than happy to be petted and fed treats.

If that wasn't enough adventure for one day, another awaited us at 10 p.m. when we set off by coach hours' drive away to do a snowmobile drive deep into the countryside to see the Aurora. We can't say we weren't given plenty of opportunities to see them. Snowmobiles are big, think a Harley Davidson with skies. Simple driving instructions, crash helmets on and we were off. It was cold, at one point my left eyelids froze together, good job Rebecca was driving. We crossed roads and the Swedish border and drove on into the woods, the scenery lit up by our headlights, the deep snow showing multiple animal print lines. Exhilarating in a different way from the huskies. We fell into bed at 2.30 a.m.

Day three, up bright and early, to go and see some reindeer. I was

surprised, they weren't as friendly as I had imagined, very placid, but not wanting any human contact even though they were domestically bred. The history of reindeer herding and the Sami people is deeply embedded into history throughout Scandinavia although within the last 100 years they have not been well treated by the authorities and it is only now they are better represented and respected. Well, I got up close, fondled a reindeer's ears, which she didn't appreciate and then, side by side, on a very hard sleigh at walking pace, Rebecca and I had our reindeer ride. I was disappointed by this time, my head wanted a Dr. Zhivago ride, sleighbells ringing, and a fast pace, but it was not to be.

Later we walked to the Visitor Centre again in the silence of falling snow, thick frozen Cornish mizzle, so light you don't notice it, but enough to cover foot prints and bring out the snow ploughs later. Here we found some good things, coffee, excellent cake and a fascinating exhibition on the Sami people. By the time we walked back at 4 p.m. the moon was up and the falling snow was sparkling in the lights.

Day four, time to go home. A day spent waiting for the coach to the airport. I ventured out on my own bundled up in my own padded coat and boots, to take some photos of the hotel but at -17° I didn't linger.

Our flight departure was delayed by an hour and a half, due to a delay with the inbound flight, so we had a long wait at the airport and later flight home. I cannot speculate on the whys and wherefores, although we all had a good idea which involved delayed flight compensation claims, but we were utterly dismayed to be told on arrival at Exter that 84 pieces of luggage had been left in Finland, mine and Rebecca's included.

My car keys were in my suitcase.....

Luckily, I was staying the night in Exeter with Rebecca and my dear son-in-law drove to meet us in Okehampton the next day with my spare set of keys. Our luggage was eventually repatriated to Gatwick six days later and I finally got my case back – lucky me all that washing to do.

It was definitely an adventure, definitely worth it and I would definitely do it again, only with less livestock and more snowmobiling.

Rosemarie Lane

Annual Walkers/Strollers/Amblers Walk

The 1st of February was a beautiful day for our annual combined walkers/strollers/ambblers outing. 25 of us started and ended at The Archers Arms at Lewannick. We had a good 4 mile walk and then were treated to a lovely pub lunch. We all agreed that it had been a really good event. It's so good when groups with similar interests can mingle, chat and get to know each other better.



Thank you Sue and June for arranging this amazing event.

My Favourite Season - Mary Masters

I recently inherited my grandmother's book of poetry that was first passed down to my mother, then to me (The Oxford Book of English Verse 1250-1918 published 1939, all 1,172 pages of it). As I was one of a dozen children who were always encouraged to read – well, she was a teacher! – in the interim years it's become rather battered with the covers falling off and childish scribbles on a few pages, but when I started thinking about the seasons, for some reason I reached for the poetry book. As I paged my way through I was surprised to discover just how few poems there are that specifically mention any of the four seasons and even fewer that mention specific months – most often found were April or May. Personally, I don't really have a 'favourite' season.



I really enjoy seeing the spring flowers and the trees growing that first mist of green as the new leaves start to appear but I don't enjoy the fact that my kitchen and dining room windowsills are crammed with pots and trays to get flower and vegetable seedlings going.

Summer's warmth and the succession of blossoms in the borders are a joy but the lawn in a North-facing garden needs back-breaking work.

Autumn means apples to join the strawberries, raspberries, French beans, runner beans and an inexhaustible supply of salads and tomatoes but already there's the dreaded 'winterising' to start, cutting back the yards of growth on the wisteria and clematis and the mountains of dead-heading.



In a way, I suppose winter could be my favourite because growth and productivity almost comes to a full stop, but that's the time when the real hard graft takes place with storm damage to fences and trellis to repair – difficult without a pair of willing hands to steady the ladder.

With each new season there are things to look forward to and things to dislike or even dread but each one as it arrives is welcomed and endured as part of the proof that I'm still alive and kicking and enjoying my little oasis.

Recent article in Launceston Life Magazine

LAUNCESTON

life

Live life to the full with Launceston u3a

AN UPDATE FROM NEW CHAIR, GEORGIE ADAMS...

Joining Launceston u3a many years ago was one of the best decisions I've ever made. Now, as recently elected chair of Launceston u3a, I'm keen to pass on the many benefits of becoming a member.

Back then, as a self-employed children's author writing on my own, I was looking around for a friendly walking group for company - and some much-needed exercise! Since then, I've walked countless miles in Devon and Cornwall and have made many good friends.

Launceston u3a is one of over 1,000 u3a groups throughout the UK, run by the voluntary efforts of members. All groups are members of the Third Age Trust which is a registered charity. Membership is open to all those no longer in full-time employment, allowing the opportunity to make the most of life by continuing creative, educational or social interests in a friendly environment.

We have over 20 groups spanning a range of interests. Once a month (except for December) u3a members meet for a coffee morning at Central Methodist Church Hall.

So come along to one of our coffee mornings and meet us. You're sure of a warm welcome. Who knows? Perhaps like me, joining Launceston u3a will be one of the best decisions you'll make.

For further enquiries and information about Launceston u3a please contact Mark at businessu3a@gmail.com, follow on u3a Facebook or visit u3asites.org.uk/launceston

Georgie Adams, Chair - Launceston & District u3a



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Lost Article Request

Have you picked up or have an article written by Tessa Baker about her recollections of VJ Day? The article has gone missing and she would dearly like it back.

Editor



Community Focus - Each month we will be including a focus article on local community groups. If you have a particular interest in a community group and you would like it to feature, please let us know or send in an article



Launceston and District Twinning Association brings together people from the Launceston area with people from Plestin-les-Grèves in Brittany.

Twinning is a great way to make new friends (both English and French) and to experience life in Brittany – not as an outsider but as part of the local community. Many long-lasting friendships have been formed as a result of the Launceston-Plestin link and new ones are being formed each year, with families, individuals and couples from both side of the Channel experiencing the fun and laughter that comes from enjoying local life in another country.

Our french twinning friends are coming to Launceston at the end of April 26th to 29th and we have some new families who wish to come and twin with families/couples from the Launceston area.

I was wondering if any u3a members are interested in hosting a couple - in their 60s - for the weekend.

They arrive late on Friday evening - the Saturday has organised events in the town - the evening being at home with the hosts or getting together with other families. On the Sunday it is a free day and in the evening there is a reception, meal, barn dance in the town hall. They leave on the Monday.

Jenny Worth
Launceston Twinning Association





Charles Causley Trust

The Charles Causley Trust exists to keep alive the memory of the late Charles Causley (1917 – 2003), raise the profile and appreciation of his work and promote writing and other arts in and around the community in which he lived.



Charles Causley is acknowledged as one of the finest of all 20th century English poets, earning him many awards including the Queen's Gold medal for Poetry in 1967 and the Heywood Hill Literary prize in 2000. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and was awarded a CBE in 1986.

A very small team of volunteers supports the “pop-up” shop in Merchant House which provides a high street presence in the town centre. Currently stocked with a good selection of second-hand, fiction and non-fiction books. Causley's poetry books are also for sale to raise funds for the Charity together with a selection of Causley Collectables. If you would like to support the Trust by volunteering, we would very much like to hear from you.

The Trust has been awarded a grant to develop the garden at Cyprus Well, Charles's home on Ridgegrove Hill, where he lived with his mother, Laura, from 1952. However, the money is for plants and possibly a bench, but not the labour or indeed expertise to create a low-maintenance garden – skills sadly lacking in the current team of volunteers. Is there any member (or Group) of the Launceston and District u3a who would like to offer either advice on planning such a garden and/or helping to realise this project?



Many of Charles' poems include references to flowers and herbs which were in his garden (although he was no gardener!) and we would like to include as many of these as possible.



If you are able to help with advice or planning for this project, please get in touch with Anna Butler.

There are other volunteering opportunities, so please make contact or call into Merchant House [Tuesday to Saturday, 10.00am to 1.00pm (but flexible)] if you would like to learn more.

Anna Butler, u3a Member



The Lawrence House building in Castle Street is still the subject of an extensive refurbishment programme and not expected to reopen for some time. The off-site storage facility has now become available to the volunteer Operations Team and work has started on bringing together the Museum collection from its various temporary storage locations. It will be systematically checked and reorganised, and documentation reviewed, ready for its return to Lawrence House when refurbishment is completed.

Meanwhile the window of the Museum Pop-up at No 13 High St is now showing a display of interesting artefacts from the Victorian Kitchen in Lawrence House, which was furnished and equipped with items from that period. Perhaps some of them were still around in the family when you were children and will bring back memories. A photo of the window is shown here. Come along for a closer look and see what you can recognise.



The window display will be changed at intervals until the Pop-up itself reopens on April 2nd with a new exhibition. This first exhibition of 2024 is in planning – details next time.

For the latest news of the Museum please go to our website lawrencehousemuseum.org.uk.

Lesley Barker
Volunteer Assistant Curator

Network

The members of the editorial team are as follows:

Editor: Mark Leavis

Assistant Editor and Proofreader: Angie Harris

Email copies sent by:

Mark Leavis

Committee News etc.:

Mark Leavis

And of course, articles and photographs submitted by **you** the
Members!

Thanks to all who contributed to this issue of Network.

**LAST DATE FOR SUBMITTING COPY FOR THE NEXT
NETWORK IS
Monday 6 t h M a y**

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Contact Numbers (Continued)

Last Wednesday 11:30 am	Pub Lunch
Third Wednesday 12:30 pm	Pub Lunch 2
Third Wednesday 10:30 am	Religions
First Friday 10:00 am	Rocks & Ruins
First Monday at 2:00 pm	Rummikub
TBC	Scrabble
Alternate Mondays 10:30 am	Spanish Conversation
Mondays 2:00 pm	Stretch and Relax
Alternate Thursdays 9:30 am	Strollers
Sunday	Sunday Lunch
Tuesdays 10:00 am	Table Tennis
Alternate Thursdays 9:30 am	Walking
Third Thursday	West Country Churches



Launceston and District u3a Committee 2023-24

Role	Name
Chair	Georgie Adams
Vice Chair	Angela Harris
Business Secretary	Mark Leavis
Minutes Secretary	Peter Adams
Treasurer	Judy Pollard
Groups Coordinator	Judith Graham
PR/Publicity	Peter Penhorwood
Committee Member	Malcolm Tulip
Committee Member	Marguerite Bowhay
Co-opted Committee Member	Louise Kitley

Other useful contacts

Role	Name
Audio-Visual Equipment	Mark Leavis
Network Editors	Mark Leavis Angie Harris
Website	
Facebook Public Page	
IT Technical Advisor	Steve Reynolds
Events Team Contact	Georgie Adams