

CVu3a UPDATE

Edition: Seventy Two – Dec2025/Jan 2026

Editor: John Hayston.

Contact: Johnhayston1@gmail.com

A very warm welcome to those new members who have joined us since the last newsletter was sent out.



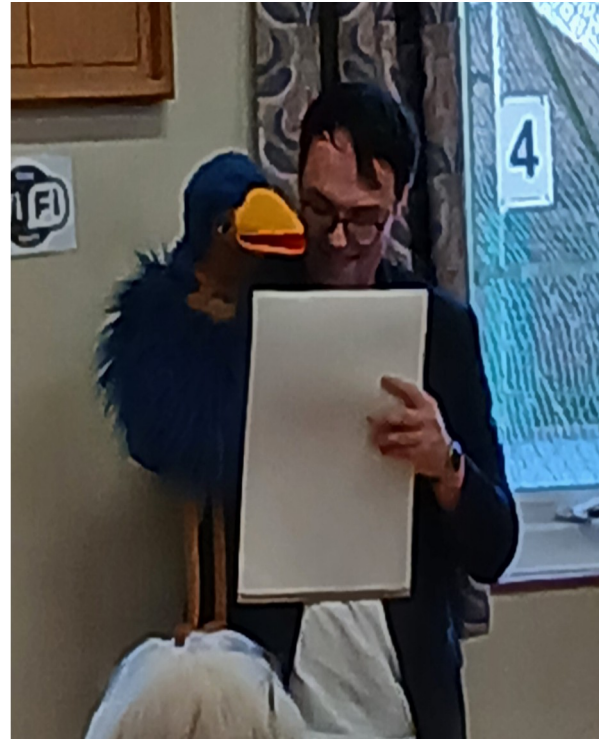
Wishing all Culm Valley u3a members and associate members a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2026.

December Meeting

The December Meeting was truly brought to life by Jude Coram's marvellous magic act, which captivated members from start to finish. Jude's show was a delightful blend of classic sleight of hand and witty banter, keeping the audience both astonished and thoroughly entertained. His approachable style encouraged plenty of audience participation, with gasps and laughter echoing around the room as tricks unfolded in unexpected ways.

Particularly memorable were Jude's card illusions and his uncanny ability to predict the choices of willing volunteers. The act struck just the right balance of mystique and light-hearted fun, making it accessible to all ages and backgrounds. By the end, many were left wondering "How did he do that?"—a sure sign of a successful performance. Jude's professionalism and engaging stage presence truly made the December gathering a standout event. If you ever have the opportunity to see him perform, he comes highly recommended. All in all, his magic act added a sprinkle of festive wonder to our meeting and was enjoyed by everyone present. Many thanks to Gill for organizing not only the act but all the lovely food and drink and table decorations too!





January Meeting

Cvu3a have a break from monthly meetings during January

Next year's speaker programme is nearly complete and will be revealed in January's Update. Without sticking my neck out I'm confident we can look forward to another year of interesting and informative talks from our guest speakers as well as some fascinating personal experiences from our own members. If you aren't in the habit of coming to our monthly meetings at Willand Village Hall (2pm on the first Thursday of each month February-December) why not give them a try in 2026 and Learn, Laugh and Live the u3a way. It's a chance to meet other u3a members too.

Gill Sole, Speaker Coordinator

Please Save Your Stamps

Please remember to save your Christmas stamps and bring them along to the next monthly meeting in February 2026. They will be collected and sent off to the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Linda Grantham

Discovery Days Needs Your Help!

Can you help organise Discovery Days?

Will you help plan 6 trips per year?

Please contact either Gill Sole or Paula Longdon if you can contribute.

Thank you



News from Interest Groups

Photography

The group met in Cullompton for their November meeting on a chilly but fortunately dry Monday morning.

This month's meeting was a photographic treasure hunt organised by Dave Long. A few days earlier Dave identified some interesting and amusing sites along the High Street. The group was tasked with finding these sites with the aid of some cryptic clues and providing a photo of each. These included the town hall clock, the Queen Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee memorial and the site of the old Police station. As usual the final spot was a local café for a very welcome cup of coffee. A great time was had by all.

The theme of this month's challenge was Pink, and as usual the standard was very high. The result was a tie between Dave's firework photo and Barry Wilson's shot of a rose in the rain.

Next month's competition will, not surprisingly, be of the subject of Christmas, and we are looking forward to seeing some wonderful festive photos from our members.

Barry Wilson



Art in Action

This month Art in Action has been occupied with wet on wet watercolour painting. We had a workshop with Chris Howe from Somerset, he explained and demonstrated a lot of techniques, we did enjoy the session





Creative Writers

Our word this time was “Autumn”. With glorious colours of gold, orange and rustic leaves; conkers, acorns and fungi all around us at this time of year ... There had to be so much to write about. And yet we arrived feeling dissatisfied with our efforts. It was a drizzly day, but Hazel’s home was warm and welcoming. The table was piled with goodies, and we relaxed and just nattered. Most unusual for us. But we simply enjoyed one another’s company.



Refreshed by the ‘Happy spice cake’ and the ‘Laughing juice coffee, we decided to make a start.

Chris began with her rather interesting inner dialogue about the passing of the seasons with pauses for rest and reflection. We found this fascinating; rather like listening to the relentless voice in the head. It was written in the style of outside looking in. I must try that. She writes of the fallen leaves making a ‘carpet of colour – fungi of many shapes and sizes. ‘All is decomposing to enrich the ground for the next year’s growth, with thousands of tiny creatures doing their work of transforming death into new life.’



Paula was missing. Off singing Jingle Bells with her two-year-old grandson and weary of being woken at 6.30 am every morning by this bundle of energy. Pssst ...if you see her, just say: ‘jingle bells. She might sing for you as she is well rehearsed.

But Pat who was missing last month driving home after some time away, was with us. And brought with her Cedric and Martha (see a previous

newsletter from May, I think.)

This brought smiles to our faces. As the feeding shelf had been removed from their garden due to a problem with rats living under the decking, they were having to seek food in other gardens. Gallantly, Cedric offers to take Martha out to dine and coyly, she accepts. Meanwhile we have a banter going on between the personified seasons. No glorious colours or leaves from Pat, but a tale of destruction caused by torrential rain. An autumn without mercy.

Hazel read her poem of a walk through the woods. I loved the following:

Fairy houses in the tree roots hide
Curving away so you can't see inside.
Ivy covering the entrance way
So, they can't be seen as they work and play.

I remember walking in such a wood with my small grand daughter, leaving acorns and feathers by the carved door of such a fairy house. One evening, she begged me to take her over to the woods which were opposite her house, in the dark so she might see the fairies. Magic. I carried her over there, taking a torch but sadly we saw no fairies. But they had taken the feathers we had left by the little door to make a fairy dress.

Hazel goes on to describe the incredible fungi, toadstools as big as dinner plates, some tiny little flakes. And the sudden appearance of a deer.

Linda brought a piece she had written a few years ago after watching the antics of birds on the patio. She ended with:

Most years have fled
Leaving behind happy and haunting memories
Of distant times, and those who touched our lives.
The leaves, just like our years, which too are shed.

In her writing, Sue had taken on the personality of a great 900-year-old oak tree. A thoughtful piece. I loved all of it but here is a taste for you:

... Autumn arrives with warm showers and more wind which strengthens my roots as I gently rock. My leaves turn brown, orange and red in a glorious show along with the other trees that live near me. I love the feeling of the rain and wind on my leaves; they have begun to feel parched and as they dry they flutter to the ground like a million butterflies. My acorns are also dispensed to the forest floor, grabbing their chance of life'.

As we all enjoyed writing our shared story, we decided to do another one. And Linda has written the beginning. And as we are all female, we thought we would write in the voice of a male. We like a challenge.

New Neighbours

Having just retired, I decided to sell my house in the city for a quieter life in the country. Much as I had enjoyed the art galleries, museums and theatres, in London, I longed for a simpler life. I wanted to take up fishing and perhaps join the ramblers' association.

After months spent looking for the perfect spot, one Sunday afternoon, after a pub lunch, I found it. Tucked away on the outskirts of a Kent village was a rather interesting old cottage. Apart from a few nearby houses, it was secluded so I reasoned there would be no problems with neighbours.

So many boxes containing a lifetime's possessions to be unpacked. My late wife had been a hoarder of all sorts and I had never got round to sorting it. Well, now was the time. But the pub was just a

short walk away, so over an evening pint, I was able to meet some of the locals. The house closest to mine had sprouted a FOR SALE sign and I was keen to know more. Apparently, the previous owner had died the year before, so the house was on the market to be sold at auction. Little did I realise that my peace was about to be shattered. Sue will continue this for the next Newsletter.

oOoOoOo

Keep cosy, LJRM - Scribe

Quilting

This month the sewing room has been a hive of activity!

As ever, the group continue to work on a mixture of their own individual projects. The current seasonal group project, the log cabin Christmas tree, is now completed by many of the group - whereas some others haven't even started it yet!

In the last session of this year, we all completed either a stuffed Santa, or a Rudolph decoration. We then made our way to the Bakehouse in Cullompton for a tasty lunch, a good old natter and a Secret Santa exchange, where we all received some fabulously inventive and creative gifts.

We have discussed some plans for the new year - so, as well as a new group quilting block type, called foundation piecing, each person will also choose their own challenge and if they need help and support with any tasks, the elders (in Quilting Terms!) will be on hand to offer advice and expertise.

Time now to get prepared and cozy up for Wintertime ...Christmas is not far away now! Have a Merry Christmas, one and all - and Happy New Year too!

The group is run by Lin Arnold and we meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month - 9.30 to 12.30 in the Club Room at Willand Village Hall. Anyone wanting more information can contact Lin on Impish4me@gmail.com or talk to her, directly, at the monthly meetings.





Craft

The last session of the year took place with not only a Secret Santa but homemade goodies to share washed down with Fizz. To avoid the Fuzz it was non- alcoholic. We couldn't be found drunk in charge of embroidery needles now could we.

We all made re-usable Christmas Gift Tags, so we were all doing the same thing, but as always with individual spins. We even had a guest, as Barbie came back to join in the fun. It was so good to have her in the fold again, even for a few hours. I think she enjoyed it!

Christmas Greetings to you all,
Lorna





Our November Quiz

Saw Yvonne and Sheila challenging us on inventions, countries, music, and words which included the letters NOV. The Autumn theme included a picture round on leaves - if you could identify beech, hazel and horse chestnut you were off to a decent start.

In the first of our December quizzes Liz and Andy, in addition to serving up some Quality Street (thank you) tested our knowledge on coins, fashion, pop/rock stars who went it alone after a successful career in a group, collective nouns (it's a Thunder of Dragons, by the way) and some Christmas-themed dingbats.

Thanks to all four for a great variety of questions.

Our final quiz of 2025 is on Friday 19 December at Willand Village Hall, 10.30 for 11.00

Petanque

The active, fun loving, amicable members wish to send Season's Greetings to all "UPDATE" readers and trust you will all have a Merry Christmas and enjoy a Happy, Safe and Healthy New Year! We would like to take this opportunity to reach out to ALL readers and invite everyone to join us on a Friday morning at 11.00 a.m. in the gardens of The Walronds in the centre of Cullompton, to experience the pleasure of playing our enjoyable sporting pastime. We have plenty of spare boules for you to sample, so why not give it a go!

Contact "Richard T" by Mobile on 07816 337456 or Email: farmerzboy@icloud.com

Jazz

With Christmas almost upon us, here is a great chance to boost your festive spirits! Join us when we meet on the evening of Wednesday 17th December in Uffculme. The poster shown below gives details of the line-up of talented musicians who are booked to play live jazz music at the Magelake Pavilion from 7.30pm when Gordon's Algiers Strutters Jazz Band takes to the stage. NOT to be missed!

We wish to take this opportunity to wish all members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Safe and Healthy New Year.

Contact Richard for jazz events details - M: 07816 337456. Email: farmerzboy@icloud.com

New Orleans and Traditional Jazz

17TH DECEMBER 2025

GORDON'S ALGIERS STRUTTERS

Dave Martin
Trumpet

Tony Mann
Trombone

Nick White
Clarinet /Sax

John Noddings
Banjo/Guitar

Colin Fulcher
Bass

Andy Moyes
Drums

GORDON'S JAZZ CLUB

at
Magelake Pavilion,
Uffculme,
Devon
EX15 3DP
7.30 - 10.00
Doors open 6.45.
£10 p.p.
Cash only

3rd Wednesday
In every month

For more information visit
Gordon's Algiers Strutters on Facebook,
Email - gordonsjazzclub@hotmail.com
Or phone Jane - 07799014173

Gordon's Jazz Club
is a not-for-profit group of Jazz
lovers,
aiming to promote and support
New Orleans and Traditional Jazz

Walkers

18 members met at Mamhead, 10am 21.11.25 Forestry England car park for a 4.7mile walk around the forestry tracks, where the obelisk stands to guide mariners into Exmouth harbour, revealing stunning views towards the Exe estuary and out to sea, Portland Bill visible as luckily, we enjoyed a beautiful clear sunny day. Lunch was had at the Brightside Diner, on the A38 next to Exeter racecourse.





Walkers 9th December

Storm Bram made a serious effort to interfere with our plans but the intrepid walking group were having none of it and met as arranged at the gates of Killerton Park for the last group walk of 2025. Admittedly our numbers were rather lower than usual, a sensible faction deciding to give it a miss as the forecast was so dire. But the tracks were not nearly as muddy as feared, the wind not as strong and the rain never sideways so we were a happy band who returned for our end of season bring and share buffet which we felt we'd definitely earned!

Our next walk is 15th January 2026 am - details in the next edition of Update.

Contact gill.sole@yahoo.com to join the group.





Interest Groups information

Group	Contact <small>Please click on name to email</small>	Venue, Day & Time
Art in Action	Rachel Kingdom	2 nd & 4 th Monday each month 13.30 – 16.30 Club Room, Willand Village Hall
Beginners Spanish	Josy Tidmarsh	Weekly at The Bakehouse, Cullompton
Beginners Jewellery	Julie Murphy	Contact Julie
Boules/Pétanque	Richard Taylor Mobile: 07816337456	Every Friday 11:00 and 14:00 Weather dependent
Bridge	Maggie Lambert	2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th Thurs of the month 14.00-16.00, Club room, WVH
Colour Pencils	Sue Hooper-Lawrie	1 st & 3 rd Monday each month 13.30 – 16.30 Club Room, Willand Village Hall
Craft	Linda Arnold	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday each month 9:30 to 12:30 Committee Room, Willand Village Hall
Creative Writing	Hazel Newman	3 rd Tuesday each month 14.00
Dog Walkers	John Hayston	Contact John for more information

Group	Contact Please click on name to email	Venue, Day & Time
French Conversation	Sally Graham	1 st Monday each month at 11:00
French Conversation #2	Julie Murphy	2 nd and 4 th Tuesdays each month at The Bakehouse, Cullompton from 15:00 to 16:30
Gaming	Jean Turner	1 st Monday each month 10:30 to 12:30 Club Room, Willand Village Hall
Genealogy	Walter Longden	2 nd Wednesday each month 10:30 to 12:30 Hayridge Centre
History	Alison Waple	3 rd Thursday each month plus various other days
Jazz Appreciation	Richard Taylor 07816337456	Contact Richard
Mahjong	Jean Turner	2 nd Monday each month 10:30 to 12:30 Club Room, Willand Village Hall
Mixed Media Art	Annie Forster	Kentisbeare Village Hall 2 nd and 4 th Wednesday each month. 9:30 to 12:30
Photography	Sue Childs 07398 686612	Last Monday each month
Quilting	Linda Arnold	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday each month 9.30 to 12.30 - Committee Room, Willand Village Hall.
Quizzing	Martin Newman	1 st and 3 rd Friday each month at 11:00 - Willand Village Hall
Reading	Sally Graham	3 rd Thursday each month, 14:30 upstairs at Cullompton Library
Sewists	Yvonne Doherty	Contact Yvonne for more information
Soloists (But not alone)	Jenny Day 01884 840786/	Contact Jenny

Group	Contact Please click on name to email	Venue, Day & Time
	07770 985840	
Strollers 1 & 2	Elieen Turner & Jackie Sim	2 nd Tuesday each month @10:30 4 th Tuesday each month @10:00
Theatre/Cinema/Music	Daphne Dowsing Carole Eden	Contact Daphne or Carole
Walkers (4-6 Miles)	Gill Sole	3 rd Thursday each month a/m
Wine Appreciation	John Hayston	Please contact John for more information.

If you have an idea for an Interest Group, please get in touch with Groups Co-ordinator on email: cvu3agroupscoord@gmail.com

Contact Emails for current Executive Committee members:

Email	Current role holder
cvu3achair1@gmail.com	John Hayston
cvu3afinance@gmail.com	Judy Morris
cvu3abussec@gmail.com	Paula Rees
cvu3agroupscoord@gmail.com	Sue Hooper-Lawrie
cvu3amemsecretary@gmail.com	Alison Waple
marian.luck@beacon.u3a.org.uk	Marian Luck

Monthly Meetings:

Monthly Meetings are held on the FIRST THURSDAY of each month, except January. The meeting starts at 2pm, with members arriving any time after 1.15pm. We hold our meetings at Willand Village Hall, Gables Road, Willand, EX15 2PL. Check monthly newsletter for more information about arrangements for upcoming meeting/s.

Suggested Venues for Group Meetings

John Tallack Youth & Community centre, Meadow Lane, Cullompton. Ex15 1LL.

Email: info@jtc.org.uk Website: www.johntallackcentre.org.uk

The Walronds, 6 Fore Street, Cullompton.

Email: Info@walronds.com Website: www.walronds.com

The Bakehouse, 3 High Street, Cullompton.

Email: enquiries@thebakehousecullompton.co.uk Website:

www.thebakehousecullompton.co.uk

Phone: 01884 35222

The Steamer, Five Bridges, Cullompton.

Email: hello@the-steamer.co.uk Phone: 01884 904960

Willand Village Hall, Gables Road, Willand. Bookings contact: Frances Wilcox.

Email: bookings@willandvillagehall.org.uk

Willand Health & Community Centre, (opposite Village Hall) Bookings contact; F. Wilcox

Email: info@whacc.org.uk

Cullompton Library, (part of The Hayridge Centre). Contact; Rachel Kidd.

Email: Cullompton.library@librariessunlimited.org.uk. Phone; 01884 824555

Go to <https://www.devonlibraries.org.uk/web/arena> to pre book a computer time slot by using the iCAM booking system or directly. [https://lu.imil.uk/Account/LogOn?](https://lu.imil.uk/Account/LogOn?ReturnUrl=%2fbookings)

[ReturnUrl=%2fbookings](#)

Opening hours (Staffed): Monday-Friday – 09:00 – 17:00 Saturday – 09:00 – 13:00

Square Corner, The Square, Uffculme, Ex15 3AA: <https://www.squarecorner.org.uk/book-online>

Bridwell, Uffculme, are happy for large groups to meet there. If you are planning to hold a meeting in the Orangery for 8 or more people, please email cafe@bridwell.co.uk to book the group in and let them know numbers and if you are planning to eat or not.

Kentisbeare Village Hall, EX15 2AA Contact Melanie on email –

villagehall@kentisbeare.net the Booking Secretary.

If you know of any other suitable venues, please let us know.

Deadline for items for UPDATE is always the 10th of the month.

Please send to johnhayston1@gmail.com