

CVu3a UPDATE

Edition: Seventy-Eight– June/July 2026

Editor: John Hayton. **Contact:** Johnhayston1@gmail.com

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

June Speaker

Chris Redhead gave an enlightening talk with many slides, about the Isle of Iona history and her time spent living and working with the Iona community.

In 1997 just after her husband died and her 2 children were grown up and self-sufficient Chris gave up her teaching job and decided to go on a pilgrimage of her own and set off in an old camper van around the UK eventually arriving at the Abbey on the isle of Iona, on the Southwest Scotland coast

Here she worked and lived for 8 years helping to run the community there and following a Christian life helping people who struggled with their life.

The community on Iona was started way back by Saint Columba in 563AD with his 12 helpers. A monastery was built and became the hub of Christianity for Scotland and northern England.

Later the Vikings destroyed the monastery and Benedictine abbey, then after they left a new Iona community was born. Founded in 1938 by George MacLeod, a Presbyterian minister from Glasgow, the ecumenical community originally brought together unemployed workers and divinity students to rebuild the ruined abbey, today this progressive Christian movement continues to use the restored abbey as a base, focusing globally on social justice, peace and spiritual renewal. Many volunteers visit, stay, work here from all parts of the world.

Many people visit and stay on Iona today as tourists; money spent on Iona (Souvenirs, tours etc) being used to fund the altruistic work of the community.

Next Monthly Meeting

Our speaker on 2 July is **Justin Newland** and the talk is **The Limits of Empire - how Drake's Circumnavigation changed history**

Justin, a Somerset author and entertaining public speaker, will explore England's coming of age in the Elizabethan era. At the beginning of Tudor times Britain was a small island on the edge of the continent of Europe. But sparked by the imperial vision expressed in *The Limits of Empire*, an influential 1577 treatise by Dr. John Dee, royal advisor to Queen Elizabeth 1 and by Frances Drake's extraordinary circumnavigation of the world, England moved onto the world stage.





Notice for future Monthly Meetings

Please note that we are reinstating a payment to attend the monthly meetings. Initially this will be £2.00 per person for the remainder of 2026. From February 2027 the charge will be £1 per person.

Newton Abbot Race Day 27th May 2026

Here are a few photos from the regional day out at Newton Abbot Races. The weather was glorious, the food was excellent, and, as always with fellow u3a members, the company was wonderful. We all had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Our CEO, Iain Cassidy, came down from London to join us. By the end of the afternoon, he was delighted to be £12 and a few pence up—although, having spent £20 to get there, he was not really ahead! Sorry, Iain—just teasing.

Although I didn't win anything I had a great day with some members having wins or places in all races.

I am sure that everyone who attended would like to thank Dee McVey, Chair of Okehampton u3a for organizing the event and I am looking forward to more events, not necessarily horse racing - in the future.

Well done, Dee.

Marian Luck

Council Rep for the SW Region





A day of horse racing was enjoyed on Wednesday, 27th May, at Newton Abbot races. Dee McVey, chair of Okehampton u3a, kindly arranged the visit and for u3a members to have the Teign hospitality suite for the day. This included tea/coffee, a buffet lunch and a cream tea. It was also family fun day and the Racing Foundation was promoting Autism in Racing.

They are raising awareness of autism to everyone and creating autism friendly sensory spaces at racecourses. We were joined by Iain Cassidy, our C. E. O. and Marion Luck, Beacon Administrator. The weather was glorious and the view from the balcony rather special. Jimmy Frost, grand national winning jockey, now trainer, came to see us. We listened to a talk by Conor Shoemark, ex-jockey, who rode for Dan Skelton. Conor took some members across the track, passed the winning post and up to the last hurdle to watch a race.

It was good to meet fellow u3a members from Castle Cary, Burnham on Sea, Preston and Livermead. We look forward to visiting Jimmy Frost's stables in Buckfastleigh again at the end of June or the beginning of July. Dee has already arranged another hospitality day at Newton Abbot races for us at the end of October.

Keith and Linda Grantham

New Speaker Co-ordinator Needed for 2027 Programme

The speaker slot at every u3a monthly meeting is a treasured tradition and the focal point which draws our members together at Willand Village Hall to meet, chat, listen and learn. Topics are varied and the speakers range in experience from those on the professional circuit to the enthusiastic and courageous member who offers to share their lived experience with us. All are equally appreciated and make for a varied programme with, hopefully, something for everyone throughout the year.

After 4 years of putting Culm Valley's programme together I will be relinquishing my role as Speaker Co-ordinator at the end of the 2026. So we are looking for a volunteer (or volunteers) to take over this position for the 2027 programme, work for which should ideally start in the Autumn of this year.

The role roughly divides into two parts -

- selection of speakers from a variety of sources available* and written confirmation of each engagement,
- introducing speakers at the monthly meeting and giving thanks at the end

* Speaker databases for SW Region/recommendations from members etc/submissions to our website.

If you feel more comfortable with one aspect of the role i.e. admin or public speaking but are concerned about the whole thing, why not discuss sharing it with another member and play to your different strengths.

I hope to hear from you if you are prepared to give some of your time to this key role, which provides so much enjoyment to members, and I feel sure you'll find it a really rewarding and enjoyable way to support our u3a, as I have.

Do please email me gill.sole@yahoo.com with any questions.

Thanks, Gill

Please Keep Saving Your Stamps

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

Sad News

Deepest condolences to family and friends of Joe Channer, CVu3a member since 2020, who passed last week.

News from Interest Groups

To find contact information and meeting details please see the Interest Group Information section further on in this newsletter.

Sewing

Although we were a smaller group this time, you certainly wouldn't have known it from the amount of creativity going on! The tables quickly disappeared under piles of fabric, colourful felt, sewing projects, threads, patterns, scissors and crafting bits everywhere you looked — absolute crafty chaos at its finest!

There was plenty of sewing, hand crafting, chatting, laughter and sharing of ideas throughout the session, with everyone busy creating something different and inspiring. It's always amazing how much talent, imagination and enthusiasm can fit into one room, no matter the size of the group. From carefully stitched projects to felt work taking shape piece by piece, it was another lovely reminder that crafting together is just as much about friendship and fun as it is about the finished makes.

And overseeing the entire operation from start to finish, making sure standards were maintained (and probably hoping for treats and attention!), was our beautiful furry supervisor, Hettie the Dog. Thank you everyone for another fabulous, fabric-filled session — already looking forward to the next one!

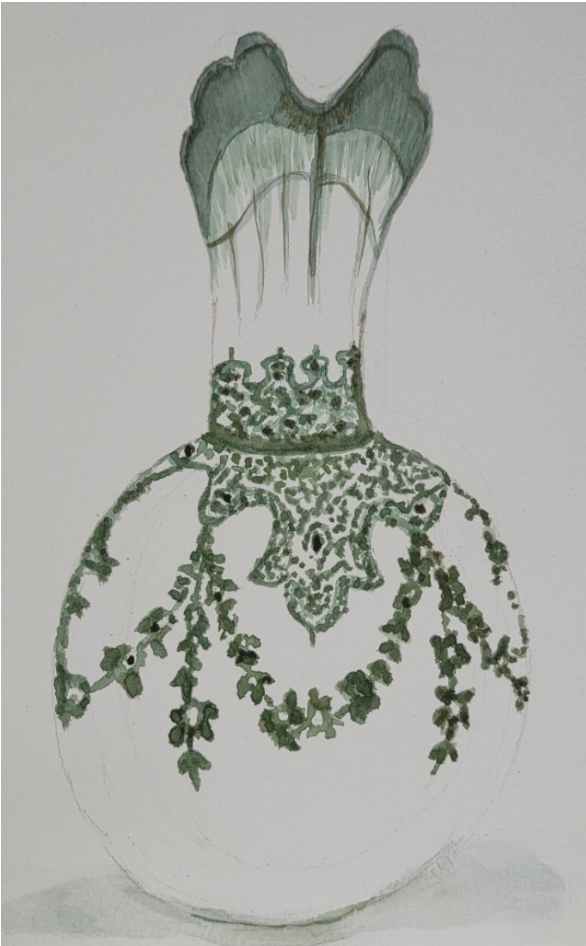
We currently have spaces available so if you wish to join please contact Yvonne.





Art in Action

Still life and group members own projects have been the focus this month.







Creative Writers



Our theme this month was 'Letters' which we found extremely thought-provoking. From 31 December 2025 Denmark ceased collecting mail and all their post-boxes have been removed. They have changed to a system of personal mail collection points.

When Linda went to post a letter recently, she was dismayed to find the postbox swathed in black plastic. Were we about to follow Denmark's initiative? Using the poem 'Nightmail' written in 1935 by W.H. Auden, she compared his description of the contents of letters when he wrote that poem, to the digital communications used now. We are all old enough in our group to remember travelling on a steam train and writing and receiving a variety of letters. But the art of letter-writing seems to have died out. Last week, a shiny new letter box has replaced the one

in black plastic, and it wears a solar-powered hat. This allows us to drop off a parcel up to the size of a shoe box in the drawer which is below the letter slot. Of course, you need an app on your phone to receive proof of postage by email or text: not by letter. I wonder what W.H Auden would think of that.

With her poem, Hazel took us through the alphabet, describing the variety of letters and communications one might have received. From 'Anniversary cards' through 'Junk Mail a-plenty' then 'Questionnaires about local facilities' to 'Zebra-striped envelopes. Every letter of the alphabet was covered.

Pat gave us an amusing scenario of Jackie, the agony aunt of a newspaper, ordered to 'brighten up her column' by the editor. Faced with a pile of predictably boring letters from readers, her heart sank. But one letter caught her interest. It described the old, old story of a man stringing along a mistress with endless excuses while maintaining his home and family. As she read, she realised the main character in this sad tale was the editor of the newspaper. Nice one Pat.

Just as the W.H. Auden poem works well with the regular rhythm of the words echoing the train's journey on the track, Chris gave us a poem full of tension. She captured the 'waiting and hoping' to receive news; and 'the relief of receiving' a longed-for letter. And 'the reading and reading again and again' ... Indeed, those hand-written letters were precious to us, unlike the dashed-off emails of today. And unlike the emails, those letters became our treasures, bringing our long-departed loved ones to mind as we re-read their hand-written messages of yesteryear.

In the footsteps of the late Joyce Grenfell, Sue took us back to the nursery with another sketch. Here, the little ones are learning their letters. Treading on shaky ground she asks:

"Children, can you think of a word that begins with B?"

"No, not that word Noel."

A light-hearted ending to our meeting.

oOoOoOo

Shared Story 3 – Beginning – Sue

A Lonely Life

Sid watched the small boat approach the island through his kitchen window. It would still be some time before his visitors arrived. The tide was high and the waves jostled around the craggy rocks.

Sid rubbed his equally craggy face releasing a shower of dandruff from his shaggy eyebrows. His clothes reeked of stale urine, curry and old, unwashed man.

Eventually he heard a knock at his door. He did not rush to open it: He hated visitors and he was revolted by the sort of visitors to whom he was forced to play host.

Two men dragged in a huge box that was rocking from side to side with someone or something malicious inside.

'What the hell have you brought me now?' blurted Sid.

The lighthouse seemed to ring with the roar from the box, but Sid accepting his role, just shrugged and told the guards they had better leave before he opened the box. Eventually Sid took a crowbar to the box which exploded open and ...

Chris will continue this next month. I can't wait to see what's inside the box.

oOoOoOo

The Scribe - LJRM

Craft

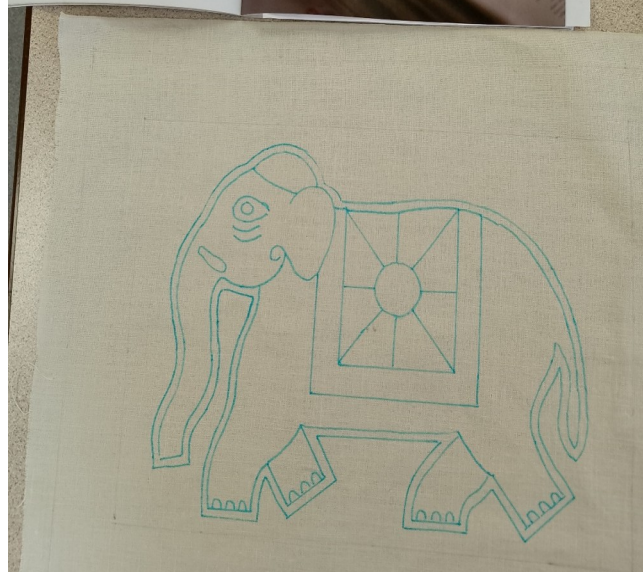
Our June meetings are all about sharing our own projects and as always there is quite a mix from our talented group.

This week we have had a wet felting picture, clay plaques, papercraft, an ENORMOUSE hare and embroidery in our mix.

In July we are revisiting the craft of Iris Folding, which inspired us last year and we wish to explore more in preparation for later in the year when cards are traditionally sent.....'

If you fancy this craft or wish to explore any new techniques, then please contact me as we have some spaces and would love to add new skills that you may have to our repertoire or share ours with you.

Lorna





Walkers

21st May Clatworthy round reservoir walk

After a circuitous route to get there, the lovely 5 and a bit mile walk around the reservoir, fuller than on previous occasions, proved to be sunny and warm. The clockwise route took us through the memorial forest and down to the water. Keeping this to our right, there was no chance we could get lost! The grassland was swathed with beautiful azure bluebells, still in full bloom, and fishermen, ducks and geese graced the water. An early picnic had a fantastic view of the reservoir. A detour by two intrepid walkers around the iron fort and a walk through the woodland proved a treat with the sighting of a deer running across the path. A good climb up to the dam and to the cars ended a very enjoyable outing for us all.





Walkers

Our June walk is a return to Woodbury Common and the Pebblebed Heaths National Nature Reserve for the Route 1 walk on the East Devon National Landscape website, billed as having Panoramic Views, Iron Age Hillfort (Woodbury Castle) and bountiful wildlife. The 4.6 mile walk is dog friendly and should take us c2.5 hours, followed by a pub lunch (optional).

Starting at Woodbury Castle Car Park EX10 0JB. Meet at 10.00am

Music (Ukes & Co)

The big news for the ukulele group is that we have moved. Not just when, but also where. We are now meeting on a Friday morning from 10:00 at Markers Community Hall in Uffculme. It has parking on the road and a couple of disabled spots if needed. The postcode is EX15 3DZ. If you would like more detailed instructions give me a call - Sue 07398 686612

We are still playing and singing a lively mix of music and would welcome experienced players and beginners. George Harrison was a keen ukulele player and once wrote 'Everyone I know who plays a ukulele is crackers. You can't play one and not laugh'. George was a keen collector of ukuleles and I have to admit it is easy to follow in his footsteps. You start with one but are so easily tempted to buy another. However, if it was good enough for George Harrison, its good enough for everyone else.

We are organising a trip in May 2027 to see The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain in Exeter. Let us know if you would be interested in going. Tickets are selling fast. In the meantime, come and join us for a fun morning of music and laughter. Sue Childs



Discovery Days

The trip to Kent's Caven and Torbay has been put on hold until a new guide is found. Details will be shared when available.

We are pleased to announce a day tour of Agatha Christie's Torbay and Kent's Cavern on Thursday, 24th September 2026. This outing features guided tours of both sites, afternoon cream tea, and coach travel, totaling approx £48 per person. We will share the full agenda with u3a members soon. If you are interested, please save the date. We hope you can join us for an enjoyable and memorable day!

Sheila McLeod & Paula Longden

Group contact information and meeting details are in the Interest Group Information section.

Photography

This month the group visited Knightshayes Court on a drizzly Monday morning.

Although the weather was not very kind, we were still able to walk around the parklands and gardens, and visit the house.

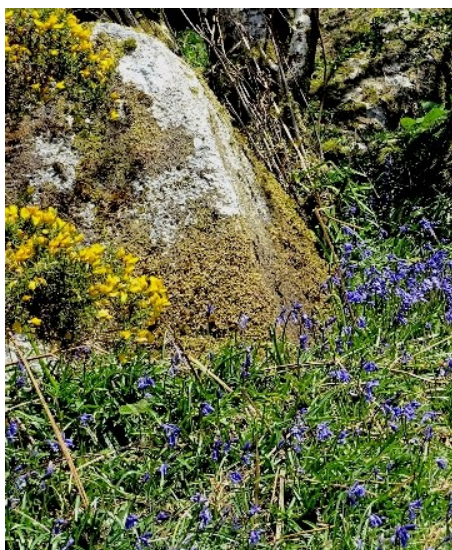
This month's challenge was alphabet based, and each person was given 4 different letters and tasked with taking a photo of an object beginning with each of those 4 letters. Fortunately, as we did not see a xylophone or zebra certain letters were excluded!

After a very enjoyable morning, as usual we finished the meeting with a coffee and chat about the visit and our photos.



A very closely fought monthly competition saw Trish win with her two fantastic photos "Yellows and blues" and "Rocky bells" taken at the previous meeting in Widdecombe.

Next month we are all really looking forward to taking some action shots at a dog agility session.



Jazz Appreciation

Gordon's Algiers Strutters Jazz Band will provide Summer's evening musical entertainment in the Magelake Pavilion, Uffculme, near Cullompton, from 7.30pm until 10.00pm. Our regular interest

group attendees will be delighted if other Culm Valley u3a members choose to join us for this occasion. Come along and be amazed at the talented musicians who choose to live in our beautiful area of Southwest England!



GORDON'S JAZZ CLUB

New Orleans and Traditional Jazz

17TH JUNE 2026

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**

Early arrival and
Prior seat reservations
are not essential,
but helpful,
to ensure a prompt start.

GORDON'S ALGIERS STRUTTERS

BRIAN DOWN
TRUMPET

CHARLIE HEARNshaw
CLARINET/REEDS

TONY MANN
BASS

DAVE MARTIN
TROMBONE

JOHN BAKER
BANJO

CHRIS STOCKINGS
DRUMS

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

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

Interest Group Information

Group	Contact Please click on name to email	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	Please Contact Julie
Bridge	Maggie Lambert	2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th Thurs of the month 14.00-16.00, Club Room, WVH
Craft	Lorna Knowles	1 st & 3 rd Wednesday each month 10.00 to 12:30 Committee Room, Willand Village Hall

Group	Contact Please click on name to email	Venue, Day & Time
Creative Writing	Hazel Newman	3 rd Tuesday each month 14.00
Discovery Days	Paula Longden	Various
Dog Walkers	John Hayston	Contact John for more information
Drawing (formerly Coloured Pencils)	Sue Hooper-Lawrie	1 st & 3 rd Monday each month 13.30 – 16.30 Club Room, Willand Village Hall
French Conversation	Sally Graham	1 st Monday each month at 11:00 -12.30
French Conversation #2	Julie Murphy	1 st Monday each month 15:00 to 16:30
Gaming	Jean Turner	1st 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, Cullompton Library
History	Alison Waple	3 rd Thursday each month plus various other days
Jazz Appreciation	Richard Taylor Mobile: 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 Last Wednesday each month. 9:30 to 16:30
Music (Ukulele)	Sue Childs Mobile: 07398 686612	Every Friday morning from 10:00 at Makers Community Hall, Uffculme
Outsmarted	Sue Hooper-Lawrie	We stay in our own homes and meet online on various days and times!
Pétanque	Richard Taylor Mobile: 07816 337456	Car park at the CCA Fields Every Friday 11:00 and 14:00 Weather dependent

Group	Contact Please click on name to email	Venue, Day & Time
Photography	Barry Wilson	Last Monday each month
Quilting	Linda Arnold	1 st & 3 rd Tuesday each month 9.30 to 12.30 - Club Room, Willand Village Hall.
Quizzing	Martin Newman	1 st and 3 rd Friday each month at 11:00 Club Room, Willand Village Hall
Reading	Sally Graham	3 rd Thursday each month, 14:30 upstairs at Cullompton Library
Sewists	Yvonne Doherty	2nd Wednesday of each month, 9:30–12:30 Willand Village Hall
Soloists (But not alone)	Jenny Day Tel: 01884 840786/ Mobile: 07770 985840	Contact Jenny
Strollers 1 & 2	Elieen Turner & Jackie Sim	2 nd Tuesday each month @10:30 4 th Tuesday each month @10:00
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
cvu3abeacon@gmail.com	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@librariesunlimited.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](https://lu.imil.uk/Account/LogOn?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